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BBj PDFs - Perfectly Displayed Formats

PDF (Portable Document Format) is the industry standard for distributing documents to users on virtually any operating system. BASIS now embraces PDF technology for creating documents and reports as all three BBj® print API's support PDF creation.

- SYSPRINT PDF leverages those reports that have been around for years
- BBjForm PDF provides a higher level API for creating documents
- BBJasperReport Utility allows quick binding of an SQL query to a report

With the cross-platform success of PDF files, this is a great format for creating and distributing reports for your Windows, Mac, and Linux users alike. In the past, it was possible to use operating system specific print drivers to create a PDF file but it was often challenging and perhaps expensive and required an extra step during the installation process. BASIS built PDF support right into BBj so there are no extra steps to create PDF documents and reports. This article takes a closer look at generating these PDF files in all three ways.

SYSPRINT

The most exciting and probably the simplest PDF feature to implement is SYSPRINT support for PDFs. Many applications have reports specially customized for your users. Years of work have gone into creating these reports and tuning them to precisely match user requirements. Wouldn't it be

great to output these same reports without having to change any code? Now, with PDF printing, you can create and save documents without having to change existing program logic. Using new PDF functionality only requires the addition of modes to your open statement or to the printer alias. For example,

```
open(rpt,mode="pdf,file=/home/report.pdf")"LP"
```

or in the config.bbx file

```
ALIAS LP SYSPRINT "printer" PDF,FILE="/home/report.pdf"
```

You may specify the mode either in the open statement in your program or in the alias for the printer device in the config.bbx file to avoid needing to change any existing application code.

BBjForm

BBjForm provides a higher level API for creating documents and reports. Whereas SYSPRINT depends on specifying the location of text character by character, BBjForm has a text layout engine to smoothly wrap words from one line to the next without the need for positioning mnemonics. BBjForm's higher level API frees the developer from much of the text layout details that return little benefit for the amount of time invested. Features like fitted fields, custom paragraph alignment, and drawing functions facilitate the creation of professional looking forms. The ability to create a BBjForm as a PDF is the icing on the cake, allowing developers to save a report to the portable file format just as easily as printing it out.

BBJasperReport

Finally, BBj provides a BBJasperReport utility that is based upon the world's most popular open source reporting engine, JasperReports. JasperReports streamlines the process of creating documents that use data sources for populating fields and rows of data. Use the JasperReports family of tools, e.g. iReports, to design your document graphically and then connect that report to a database. Once your report is ready, you can easily create a PDF with the API call **BBJasperReport::exportToPDF**.

Summary

Committed to the industry standard PDF file format, BASIS greatly simplified creating documents and reports for your users. Proceed with confidence that users can view your reports exactly as you create them. Whether you turn SYSPRINT reports into PDFs, create PDFs with BBjForm, or use BBJasper to create dynamic reports graphically and backed by SQL queries and/or SPROC's, all of these options support a variety of users...Perfectly Displaying Formats! ■

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