

# Tuning In A Global Picture

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Although our products have been sold internationally for years, BASIS hadn't been directly involved with the multilingual issues that developers faced everyday. As long as BASIS products were capable of running in countries all over the world, internationalization issues, such as having all of an application's messages and end-user interfaces in one language or another, were primarily developer issues. But the Windows world has changed all this.

Some parts of the user interface in a Windows application, however, are not under the control of the application's developer. The Visual PRO/5® Print Preview and the screens displayed in the BASIS standard installation routine are parts of the user interface not under the developer's control. And end users expect these parts of an application to be in their own language. To meet these demands, developers could, for example, write their own installation routines in different languages, but that's a lot of extra effort, and testing and adaptation of these custom routines would have to happen with each new revision of the product.

In addition to end users' demands, different countries have different laws and guidelines concerning products sold internationally. In Germany, for example, we face a special situation that requires all parts of a software application visible to the end user to be available in German. Both to make the programs easier for end users and to embrace international guidelines, BASIS began an internationalization effort with Visual PRO/5 2.1. We've found that our foray into the Windows world requires more than the addition of a GUI interface to the language.

## Standard And Custom Dialogs

For Visual PRO/5 2.1, we started with two features frequently used by end users and relatively simple to make multilingual: the Installation and the Print Preview programs. Because most of the tools in Visual PRO/5 make use of the Microsoft Foundation Classes that underlie standard Windows dialogs, about 80% of Visual PRO/5 features are automatically supported in any language supported by Microsoft. Developers anywhere in the world working in Windows 95, Windows 98 and Windows NT 4.0 can use the Regional Settings under the Windows Control Panel to set their machines to display any one of about 75 different languages or dialects. (In Windows NT 3.51, the developer must be logged in as an Administrator to change the computer's language.)

Most of the Visual PRO/5 user interface will display in the language or dialect selected under Regional Settings. The other 20% of Visual PRO/5 features, however, contain custom BASIS messages, dialogs or tools. These parts of the product were manually translated. We couldn't afford to translate these parts into *all* 75 languages and dialects, so we chose the six most popular languages among our user base after English: German, Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch and Swedish. (If a developer's machine is set to a language or dialect other than these six, the custom messages, dialogs and tools will display in English.)

## Installation

Within the installation program, we opted to retain the Choose Setup Language message

box because we've heard from some programmers that although English is not their first language, they prefer using it for technical tasks. Therefore, we have given developers the option of keeping the installation program in English even if the machine on which the software is being installed is set to a different language. The same language chosen for the install program will appear in the uninstall program and the license and registration program.

## ***Print Preview***

The most important enhancement of the Print Preview feature is its multilingual capability. If the machine is set to one of the six standard languages, then the print preview feature will automatically load using that language. This will require no extra work for the user or developer.

Other enhancements in the 2.1 release include improved printing control, the ability to zoom in and out of the preview page, keyboard navigation, and full compatibility with Windows 95 and Windows 98, and Windows NT 3.51 and 4.0. Now the print dialog box automatically comes up when the Print toolbar button or menu item is selected, allowing the developer to select a printer and to print a range of pages as well as an entire report. When printing a report, the report is now entered into the print queue as one print job, instead of one print job per page as in older versions. The new view options include the ability to zoom in and out of a page in preset percentages from 25% to 200% of the actual size. A new drop-down list is included in the toolbar to make it easy to change views. Text is now readable even in smaller sizes, and the screen appearance of the report matches the printout appearance. Other additions include the ability to turn off the Toolbar and Status bar, allowing a larger report viewing area. Keyboard navigation using the arrow keys and Page Up and Down keys has also been added.

## ***FutureSpeak***

As we all know, it's a global marketplace these days, and BASIS plans to continue its internationalization effort. Other parts of our products, however, are more difficult to deliver in multiple languages. For example, readme and release notes files are often in active development until just prior to product release, making these documents almost impossible to deliver in translated versions at the time of the software release. But BASIS is committed to continue its effort to make future product releases as easy for non-English speakers as possible.