

THOSE SUPPORT *People*

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The Promise of Business Intelligence

by Bob Andreini, InfoPlanIT

The promise of Business Intelligence is simple. Bring greater success to the company by increasing the accuracy of time-sensitive business decisions made throughout the organization using reliable data. Getting the right information to the right people at the right time is what Business Intelligence does to improve the chances of success. Success means streamlining operations and maximizing value from existing product lines. Shortening product development cycles and creating more focused marketing while improving relations with both customers and vendors are other key factors to overall success. Success is the promise of Business Intelligence.

Traditionally, analysis and reporting on enterprise data have been in the domain of either IT or dedicated analysts. Now, using the building blocks of a Business Intelligence solution, analysis and reporting can be placed in the hands of the people that need it the most, the decision makers.

Unification of disparate data sources, interactive analytics, integrated collaboration, and faster, more accurate decision processing are all implicit in the promise of success of a Business Intelligence solution. A solution tailored for marketing intelligence can identify trends in product performance and allow marketing managers to respond to customer behavior quickly. A solution that analyzes production performance and identifies bottlenecks where and when they occur can enable

(See *Intelligence*, page 3)

What the Economic Recovery Means to MANMAN Users

by Bill Langenbahn

Allow me to introduce myself. I have joined the sales department at tSGi and am a relatively new employee with the company. I am, however, no stranger to MANMAN nor to Hewlett-Packard products, having retired from HP computer sales in early 2000. As the “new guy,” and because I was in sales with HP, my assignment is to work my way through our databases, calling MANMAN users to

(See *Recovery*, page 6)

Trusted Advisor

Ten Years Ahead of My Time

I’ve never been shy about “tooting my own horn,” (see title above) which is to say I’ve pointed it out to others when I’ve had a good idea or when I’ve succeeded at some project. I’ve also written many paragraphs in this space during the last eleven years apologizing for my mistakes and admitting many errors. So this column combines both, as I kick myself for not finishing a great project in the early ‘90s.

Over ten years ago I realized that most companies using MANMAN didn’t have control over the quality of the data in their Financial and Manufacturing databases. There was a lot of “dirty data”— inconsistent and incomplete information about basic entities like parts, customers, and vendors. How could MANMAN ever work if the data driving everything was assured to produce bad results?

(See *Trusted Advisor*, page 4)

From Shaggy's Desk

Well, the CAMUS Combined User Conference has come and gone. Everyone that attended seemed to come away with new knowledge on some interesting subject. We, of course, had our booth with lots of information on our Support Services, and announced that we have lowered our prices on the Level II, III and IV Support services that we offer. If you don't have anyone at your company with HP knowledge of how to keep up with your MPE, check into our Level II options. At the Support Group, inc. we always have something to offer every MAN-MAN company out there. Call us to request more information or visit our web site at www.supgrp.com.

I just have to mention that at the conference, the CAMUS Board Of Directors awarded me a beautiful trophy, the 2004 SUPERSTAR AWARD! They gave it to me for being the South Central RUG Chairman and taking our local RUG on the road to Tulsa, OK and having such a successful meeting. I was very surprised and pleased to receive it. If you want to see a picture, it's on the members only section of the CAMUS Web site under conference pictures Set 2 (75 pictures) P1010036. And check me out in my brunette wig! 'Til then, here's a little picture of me dancing in a go-go cage to tide you over.

If you didn't get a chance at the conference to meet our new Account Manager, Bill Langenbahn, then you are in for quite a treat! When I think of Bill, the word "Character" comes to mind. While I'm working part-time he is in the office on the phone, so it's OK to take his calls. You might just enjoy it!

I have been telling you about IFS as a replacement ERP Package for MANMAN for years now. They are discussing new pricing models, so give us a call at 800-798-9862 to see what they have to offer now.

I'm always looking for ideas and locations for my RUG meetings, so if you can host 25-30 users at your location, and possibly include a plant tour, please let me know. And help CAMUS keep up the good work by attending your local RUG. That way you can be on top of what SSA Global is doing with MAN-MAN. Our next meeting will be held in October or November.

Bye y'all see you next issue.

Shaggy



NAME THE SOFTWARE PACKAGE CONTEST

Terry doesn't like the name of his revived software package (see Trusted Advisor column on the front page of this issue). PM:ATS is too restrictive (it should ultimately handle more than just Part Maintenance) and lends itself to funny pronunciations.

He's been toying with some ideas: "Maintainer for MANMAN" (MTM) and "DQ/3000", the Data Quality front end for MANMAN. We don't like those either. So, if this new software package is interesting to you, name it and claim it for the 1993 price of \$1995 (one winner only, to be selected by Chuck Combs, Marketing Manager at tSGi).

Intelligence

(continued from page 1)

production managers to take the appropriate action in near real time. A solution that consolidates service, support, and purchasing history can be very valuable to account representatives in order to track up-sell and cross-sell opportunities. These are a few examples of where Business Intelligence can have a direct impact on corporate performance.

The three key elements of the promise of Business Intelligence are reliable data presented to the right decision maker at the right time. The result is a remarkable increase in the accuracy and timeliness of business decisions. Better decisions improve overall corporate performance. Improved performance increases profits. Success!

In the past, companies had to purchase specialized hardware and software to produce Business Intelligence solutions. Add the length and complexity of the implementation of these solutions to the cost, and for many small to mid-sized organizations the price was out of reach. Today only a few software companies are developing Business Intelligence solutions that are comfortably within reach of everyone.

The Support Group, inc. has partnered with InfoPlanIT, LLC to enable their clients to fulfill the promise of Business Intelligence. The affordability, flexibility and scalability of the InfoPlanIT software meet the needs of any size organization. There are five basic software modules that can be purchased independently or together as needed.

DATA INTEGRATION—This module allows companies to take data from their source systems, consolidate it, and develop a reporting system that is intuitive for their end users. Depending on your requirements, you may need to consolidate data from different sources and create relationships that do not exist, such as a common definition of customers across the enterprise. The Data Integration module allows companies to decide where they want their reporting to be performed. By off-loading the reporting pressure from your host system, you are extending its life while providing increased accessibility of information to your end users.

REPORTING—The Report Writer provides an intuitive Graphical Interface that allows users to easily create reports and distribute them across the enterprise via

Windows or Web delivery. These reports can then be run and saved in a variety of formats including Excel, PDF, Rich Text and HTML. The Report Writer and Report Viewer have a very robust set of features including text and graphics integration, barcode generation, form generation, group summary levels and parameters. It includes a database wizard to help ease the generation of SQL statements. All this gives your users a significant amount of reporting capability and accessibility to their data compared to what host based report writers are capable of.

ANALYSIS—The On-Line Analytical Processing (OLAP) module enables users to create extremely powerful “cubes” of data. These data cubes can be used by any authorized end user within the organization to easily slice, dice, cross-tabulate and filter the data creating a virtually unlimited number of views into the data. The analysis is accomplished without having any knowledge of how MANMAN or any other system stores the data. The power of OLAP allows users to spot trends and develop root-cause analysis scenarios. By empowering the users to analyze their own data, a typical OLAP implementation can reduce the number of host- and end user-based report requests by half. The analysis can be done via a Windows or Web application and is easily exported to Excel.

GRAPHICS—The Web-based Graphics module is the basis of our Digital Dashboard allowing you to develop Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and high performance management graphics. The KPI's enable your users to quickly measure the pulse of your organization and decide if they need to spend some time analyzing the data or get on with their day. High-end performance graphics allow management to visualize the data, quickly spotting trends, opportunities and problem areas. When problems or opportunities are spotted, the data can be easily filtered and segmented. For further and more detailed analysis you are able to drill down into OLAP cubes for detailed reports.

ENTERPRISE INFORMATION PORTAL —The Enterprise Information Portal (EIP) provides a Web-based environment that allows organizations to distribute information to their users. This information can be static or dynamic. Examples of static data are documents like Excel, Word, PDF files, MANMAN and Quiz Reports and plain Web-style HTML content. The EIP becomes the delivery vehicle for the Report,

(See Intelligence, page 10)



Trusted Advisor

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In 1993, as a result of internalizing the severity of this problem, I developed a Part Maintenance Approval and Tracking System for MANMAN, to assure that every attribute in MANMAN about a Part or Product was at least reviewed by the proper person before being added to the Item Master. This system replaced all MANMAN Part and Product Add and Change (Maintain) functionality and tracked who changed every field and when. It also maintained a detailed audit trail of what the values of each field were on a particular date and time.

The best part was that it was written in a generic way so that it could easily be changed to track all of the elements in the basic “static Master” database files including those for Customers, Vendors, Agents, GL Accounts, Work Centers, Employees, etc. My lofty goal was to control all of the basic data in the entire MANMAN system.

The design was based on defining Users and Fields and then linking them together in a hierarchy to form “responsibilities.” This allowed a workflow method to be assigned to the MANMAN “ADD a Part” functionality. I created a sizable “meta data repository” database with 60 datasets to describe the environment and to store the field values and change history. There were only two programs: UT123 for IT folks to maintain the repository and MA123 for Users to add, change, and delete parts.

UT123 allowed IT to set up the meta data repository. This repository is like the data dictionaries used by tools like QUIZ or UDMS but goes a lot deeper and also contains information about Users and relationships. I delivered an editable MPE Job to run UT123 (the first time during installation) to set up all the fields in the IM for Releases 6, 7, 8, and 9. (It will work for 10, 11, and 12 too.) It included meta information about each field like Field Name (ITNO, for instance), Field Description (“Part Number”), Field Type (ASCII), Field Length (18), Field Format (A18), etc. IT users would have some work to do to initially set up the User meta data and define the links between Fields and Users, but there usually weren’t that many people really responsible for maintaining Parts, so it wouldn’t be a huge job. It would take some careful planning though.

Because my Field meta data was maintainable and

extensible, it was easy to add new fields that were not in the original ASK design for the IM, in case the site had MANMAN mods using the “user definable” fields in MANDB. This led to the ability to have fields that were not in MANMAN at all! So I had a method to maintain and track MANMAN Part information in a controlled way and the ability to add an unlimited number of Fields outside of MANMAN without modifying any MANMAN part maintenance commands.

MA123 evaluated my meta data about which User was running it and allowed various Part Maintenance functions. It knew whether the Part had been added to MANMAN yet and if not, it had a Workflow listing showing the user which new Part’s Fields were awaiting his/her input (i.e. a pending work queue).

It was a great design (toot, toot) that I developed in parallel with my EDiX™ software, using many of the same meta data functions. I was proud of the fact that there was no ASK code or references to their subroutines or INCLUDE files. It was completely generic and would work on any IMAGE database on any HP3000, even non-MANMAN apps.

The workflow was particularly ingenious for its time (one toot over the line?). Each User was assigned a set of Maintenance Levels which correlated to each Field Maintenance Level. For instance, a User could add value for some Fields on a new Part and change different Fields for existing Parts. A Workflow Routing could be maintained with UT123 to define who would set initial values for each set of fields on the IM. It was possible to define those who could initiate a Part Add or to allow anyone to add a Part with only the Part Number and a Description. The Workflow Routing would then, for instance, designate that a Purchasing User must set the Buyer and Planner Code and the Lead Time, followed by a Cost Accounting User who set costs, then an Engineer to review everything before “Releasing the Part” into MANMAN. Optionally, the part could automatically be added to the Item Master when the value of the last Field required was set, no matter what order it was done.

Every Field had to be set by an authorized User before the Part could be added to MANMAN. Then, only certain Users could change values in particular

Fields, providing accountability and responsibility for tracking.

My Setup Job initialized basic validation patterns for fields validated by standard ASK (like “A”, “B”, or “C” for ABC CODE and 1 through 8 for ORDER POLICY CODE). Furthermore, each field could be validated against a user-definable pattern. It was very flexible in allowing ranges, equality, and greater/less than in this validation to ensure that the data was at least within prescribed bounds.

This “Part Maintenance: Approval and Tracking” system (PM:ATS) could also validate fields to values in MANMAN. For instance, IT could configure a validation of INLOC (IM Primary Inventory Location) to INVLMAS (Inventory Location Master), something MANMAN cannot do unless Comin Variable 164 is set to 0. Or they could validate Vendor Code if they wished (how can you have a Prime Vendor if the supplier is not already set up? ASK allowed that).

The PM:ATS system had the ability to default some fields during the Add process and to make users completely unable to change some fields (MRP High Level Code, for instance). On the other hand, it could allow “super power users” (IT, usually) to change fields which MANMAN would not, like Actual Costs, to correct mistakes yet leave a clear audit trail.

Extend this concept to the other fields in the other static data datasets and you can see where I was headed. I had a good Reference Manual and the demo was self-installing from 5 1/4” diskettes. There were even advertisements describing features and benefits with a price of \$1995.00. Looking back ten years, I wish I had finished that project. But instead, I dropped it to work full time on EDiX™ and never looked back. Until now.

The “big click” happened when I attended a session at the Combined Users Group meeting in Chicago in May, presented by vendors who addressed the non-CAMUS crowd about UCCNet and the requirements for Global Trade Item Numbering (GTIN). The session in the ANAUG Track, titled “UCCNet: An Overview with Implementation Strategies” by Ambrose Marton, was an eye-opener for every user in the room.

It seems that the world standards bodies (Uniform Code Council and European Article Numbering Association) in charge of UCCNET’s GTIN implementation have defined 151 attributes for a Part and that every company will have to set and maintain at least 20 or 30 of them. And UPC codes (and equivalents with other names) are changing from 12 digits to 14 digits. Hmm. So my little system could capture that info and automatically send updates through the Internet to UCCNet every time there was a Part Add or Change in MANMAN. Eureka! I could just add a new PM:ATS Field called “USEUCCNET” and allow values of “Y” and “N” and go from there, allowing all 151 Part attributes if necessary.

Keeping up with acronyms is my other part-time job, so here’s another one: PIM. PM:ATS is a PIM (Product Identification Management) tool. Think of a CRM (Customer Relationship Management tool) for Products. It’s a front-end to your ERP system that is specialized for a particular purpose.

And what if we added a feature called UT124, Part Data Audit and Repair, to use my meta data validation information to report range and value discrepancies and inconsistencies in your existing Item Master? Extrapolating further, it could even repair fields (or try to) like Addresses and other critical information in your system that is out of spec. At least it could profile the existing data for you.

Every article I’ve read in the last year about data integration being the next big thing (and there are a lot of such stories) warns that dirty data is the culprit in most EDI or B2B failures. So, I’ve revived my Part Maintenance and Tracking system. I’ve talked about it around the office for the last month, even found the source code and made it work. But I doubt that it’ll be priced at \$1995.00 like the original. Call me if you are interested in a Beta demo and we can discuss its value to your organization. What is clean data worth to you these days? Oh, and about that UCCNet compliance requirement... ❖

—Terry H. Floyd, Chairman,
Blanket Enterprises

.....
There are 10 kinds of people
in this world:
those who understand Binary
and those who don’t.
.....



Recovery

(Continued from page 1)

discuss our array of support product offerings. Chuck calls it "Dialing for Dollars," but I promise not to interrupt your dinner hour.

Over the past six months, I have phoned my way through our HP list and am up to the P's in the DEC/VMS list. I have placed more than 600 telephone calls and spoken with more than 150 representatives from companies that have been or are users of MANMAN. I am, therefore, declaring myself (with all due humility) to possess the most current knowledge on the effects of the economic recovery on the MANMAN community. Here is how I have seen the recovering economy affect our family of MANMAN users, some of whom have already benefited and others who have yet to see the effects of recovery.

Twenty percent of the companies that I've contacted have migrated off of MANMAN. They are primarily larger companies, with revenues greater than \$250 million, or companies who were purchased during the past three years by larger companies and were part of an integration and mass movement to another ERP system. A surprising thirty percent have made the decision to "Homestead" on MANMAN until there is a compelling reason to migrate. Half of the companies with whom I have spoken are in the process of selecting a replacement system, in the process of migrating, or planning to migrate as soon as the capital is available.

The recovery is like a tidal wave. Many are intent on riding the wave and others run the risk of being swamped. Companies on the wave report that business is booming. They are in the electronic component, medical, automotive manufacturing and building products industries. Aerospace, electronic assembly, consumer goods manufacturers and those companies in heavier manufacturing industries are sort of like surfers who believe that the "tsunami" is in the area. They are paddling around intent on catching the wave when it rolls in.

We here at the Support Group inc. have developed product offerings for the surfers and the homesteaders. We have a reputation for delivering excellent "Help Desk" MANMAN support products, but we also offer a range of additional services for those of

you with migration plans or programs for you who are homesteading.

For those of you not planning to migrate, we not only offer our traditional support products, but also can provide a Disaster Recovery warm site for your MANMAN application. Additionally, in partnership with our sister company, Entsgo, Inc., we sell and implement MANMAN replacement systems like IFS, eXegeSys and SoftBrands. Our other sister company, asp4edi.com, has B2B and EDI experience to add eCommerce capabilities to MANMAN to satisfy the specific demands of your trading partners. We can also act as your hosting service for EDI/B2B, becoming, in effect, your electronic commerce department.

We can help during your process of selecting a replacement ERP system for MANMAN, as well as during migration. Entsgo has database knowledge and is equipped with software tools to make quick work of data conversion. tSGi's Level III support product provides MANMAN expertise to manage your MANMAN application with your computer resident in your facility or in our data center in Austin. After you have migrated, we offer Level IV support to host your MANMAN data and make it available to you for review or audit purposes.

Like you, the times have impressed the need for change on us. In addition to restructuring our products to meet your changing needs and challenges, we have recently reduced the price of our Level II, III and IV offerings. So wherever you are in your MANMAN life, remember we have the interest and ability to reduce your stress level. Like the surfers say, "No worries, mate!" ♦

Supply Chain

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Who is a candidate for RFID technology? If you are a Wal-Mart or Department of Defense supplier you will be mandated to implement RFID technology at the case and pallet level within the next 1 to 5 years (depending on the volume of business you do with each of them). Wal-Mart's top 100 suppliers have already begun the implementation process, with BETA testing taking place in Wal-Mart Distribution centers in Texas.

How do you get started with RFID? Analyze your company's business relationships to identify those customers and/or vendors that are or will be requir-

ing RFID technology. Similar to the introduction and implementation of Bar Coding technology, you will need to integrate the RFID systems with your ERP system. You will probably need to add additional database tables/data sets to accommodate required information that your system currently does not store. You will need to write or acquire an RFID to ERP system interface. You will need to be able to write the information to the RFID tag and update the ERP system with success/failure messages. This sounds simple, and in many cases it is.

For information on how asp4edi.com, inc. can assist you in the analysis, design, and implementation of RFID technology, contact us at **800-798-9862**. With over 50 years of combined ERP integration experience and expertise in RFID applied technology methodologies we are in a position to insure success of your RFID initiative today and in the future.❖

1-800-798-9862
www.supgrp.com

SSA Going Public

SSA announced that they intend to file for an IPO, so maybe we'll all be able to buy stock in another profitable and growing ERP vendor. If you wish, you can view their 300-page S-1 filing through Hoovers like I did. Is the fact that they are contacting MANMAN customers about "buying their way out" of their restrictive Usage Contracts (which Computer Associates initiated for MANMAN users) related to the IPO? Maybe one has to mitigate exposure to scrutiny of questionable business practices before going public these days.

We think the only thing really wrong with CA's "UMF" contracts was that they did not take into account the fact that MANMAN sites had already bought the perpetual license to their software. To offer a contract that gave up those rights without a detailed explanation was an oversight on CA's part that caused many MANMAN sites to "give away" their perpetual licenses. Now SSA is addressing that problem in a straightforward way. Amen to that.❖

Support Services available from the Support Group

LEVEL I (BASIC PHONE-IN SUPPORT)

This value-priced service is generally meant for those companies who have a good working knowledge of MANMAN and require minimal support. Our goal is to work in accordance with the original documented MANMAN reference and training manuals.

LEVEL II (EXTENDED PHONE-IN AND DISASTER RECOVERY SUPPORT)

This service is intended for companies that need extended hours of phone-in support, more detailed help, and our Disaster Recovery Services. Our Disaster Recovery service is considered a warm site for major disasters and will cover your business-critical operations. This level is especially recommended for companies with minimal IT support in their organizations.

LEVEL III (REMOTE MANAGEMENT/ OUTSOURCING OF SYSTEMS AND APPLICATION OPERATIONS)

This service is intended for companies who need extensive IT help with MANMAN, or for companies who are migrating to another system and have shifted MANMAN resources in support of the new system.

LEVEL IV (OFF-SITE MANAGEMENT/ OUTSOURCING OF SYSTEMS AND APPLICATION OPERATIONS)

This service is intended for companies with no MANMAN IT expertise. Companies that prefer to completely outsource their operation and companies who are migrating to another system will benefit from this service.

LEVEL IV-B (AUDIT RESPONSE/OPEN ACCESS)

This service is intended for those companies that have made the transition to a new ERP system and need to periodically access historical information and/or respond to potential audits but don't want responsibility for maintaining an HP3000 for 7-10 years as required by auditors and regulators.



MANMAN Audit Tool

For those of you looking to be Sarbanes-Oxley compliant, there's a new MANMAN Audit Tool available. It's the first product to comprehensively allow you to monitor who is updating any file in the MANMAN system. This includes General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable transactions, Purchase Orders and Sales Orders changes, Customer and Part Master file updates, etc. The MANMAN Audit Tool uses Image Logging to gather the date, time, user name, and before and after values of any data in MANMAN you wish to audit. A new List command allows your users to inquire by part number, order number, or other keys to view who has made updates to MANMAN.

Features:

- Provides full data auditing compliance for Sarbanes-Oxley requirements.

- Extracts Added, Changed, and Deleted records from cryptic Image log files and stores them in an easy-to-read Image database format for quick retrieval by your users.

- Can develop Custom Audit Trail reports using your report writer.

- Utilizes user-friendly field names—instead of telling the user IM COSTARR(3) changed, the Audit Tool tells the user 'Assembly Labor Cost.'

- Excludes selected files and programs from the audit trail process.

- Retrieves and stores additional data elements that are relevant in a MANMAN environment.

- Supports multiple database groups and accounts, and works with non-MANMAN databases.

The MANMAN Audit Tool takes over where Image logging leaves off

Image logging captures a great deal of information regarding your database activity. However, the log files require a substantial amount of selection and manipulation. It is also important to retrieve additional information from the database that is not stored in the Image log file that is relevant in a MANMAN environment.

For example, if a user changes a Sales Order scheduled ship date, an Image log file will capture the Sales Order number, the old scheduled ship date, and the new scheduled ship date. But because the Sales Order line number is not in the Image log file, the audit trail record is of dubious value. Using the record pointers contained in the Image log file, the MANMAN Audit Tool retrieves the Sales Order line number and stores it with the data.

The MANMAN Audit Tool knows which integers are 'dates,' and formats them before displaying them to the user. Field descriptions are listed in addition to Image field names.

The MANMAN Audit Tool also simplifies the process by helping you manage your log files. The Audit Tool Utility automatically switches to a new Image log file, closes the current Image log file, processes the log and moves all the relevant data to the Audit Tool Image database. It can also purge the Image log file so that space required on your system is minimal.

The MANMAN Audit tool is available for all releases of MANMAN/HP.

For more information on the new MANMAN Audit tool, and a free 60 day trial copy,
call us at **800-798-9862**.



FORTRAN Procedures and Methods

Changing EXTIN to Core-to-Core Conversion with WRITE

by Terry Floyd, January 24, 1998

HP's EXTIN procedure has been around for many years (from early 1970's RTE through MPE) and is used to convert ASCII (EXtErnal) fields to binary (INternal) fields, thus the abbreviation for EXTIN as External to Internal. In Fortran, it has been phased out and replaced by the use of a special variation of the WRITE statement.

Called a Core-to-Core conversion (because it is a memory location to memory location transfer), the form is:

```
WRITE(STRING(b:e),FORMAT)VARIABLE
```

Where: STRING is a Character Variable containing the ASCII data [in bytes b(eginning) through e(nding)]
 FORMAT is a label for a FORMAT statement or (in FORTRAN77) a Format spec
 VARIABLE is an Integer, Double Integer, Real or Double Precision variable or array element

The inverse conversion from binary to ASCII (INEXT) can be accomplished with the READ statement

```
READ(STRING,FORMAT)VARIABLE
```

which will convert binary data from the VARIABLE to the STRING locations.

An example:

```
INTEGER CCODE
CHARACTER BUFFER*80
.
.
.
WRITE(BUFFER(11:15),'(I5.5)')CCODE
```

This will move integer values stored in CCODE to bytes 11 through 15 of BUFFER, forcing right justification within the field width. A value of 5 would appear as; ' 5' with blanks in bytes 11 through 14 and the ASCII value for five in byte 15.

Another example:

```
REAL MCST
CHARACTER BUFFER*256

3000 READ(BUFFER(1:10),3000)MCST
      FORMAT(F10.4)
```

This will move the ASCII numbers stored in byte 1 through 10 of the BUFFER area to a real number called MCST with 4 decimal places.



An Easy QUIZ Performance Fix

by John Malcosky, asp4edi.com

The biggest knock QUIZ takes is in the area of performance. OK, it's interpretive, and so is "Compiled" QUIZ—but there are a few steps that can improve QUIZ's speed, in some cases dramatically. Here's the easiest one to implement.

Example: A QUIZ job reports on all of the sales of a product type, since 01/01/01, for a customer type. It might look like this:

```
ACCESS SOEFIL LINK TO SODFIL      &  
      LINK TO PROMAS              &  
      LINK TO BILMAS              &  
      LINK TO CUSFIL
```

```
SELECT IF SOEENT >= 10290 AND PROTP=1500 AND BILTYP="01"
```

```
REPORT Stuff...
```

The use of the SELECT FILE option, in place of the single SELECT, will dramatically increase the speed of this example, as in:

```
SELECT SOEFIL IF SOEENT >=10290  
SELECT PROMAS IF PROTP=1500  
SELECT BILMAS IF BILTYP="01"
```

If the original single SELECT statement is used, QUIZ will assemble all the records needed to fulfill the requirements of the ACCESS statement before looking to see if the current retrieval set (record complex) is to be selected.

If the SELECT FILE approach is used, QUIZ will reject the SOEFIL records not meeting the requirement of being on, or after, 01/01/01 and not retrieve the rest of the records in the ACCESS statement, but go on to the next SOEFIL record. The same logic applies to the other SELECT FILE statements, with QUIZ going back to retrieve the next SOEFIL record as soon as a record that doesn't meet the selection criteria is picked up. This simple fix can drastically reduce the number of records QUIZ needs to retrieve to achieve the same results and improve performance, accordingly. ♦

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Intelligence

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providing a wealth of dynamic data that is accessible based on Role-based security. The EIP can be a way for your organization to very quickly set up an Intranet or Extranet. By implementing the EIP as an Extranet, you are able to provide information to your customers and business partners accessible via Role-based security. Additionally the EIP allows the development of Web-enabled applications unique to your business and accessible by your internal and external users.

All of these products are designed to be integrated with and run independent of your ERP system. They work with a variety of ERP systems such as MANMAN HP/DEC, MK, Oracle, SAP, eXeSys, Made2Manage, and AccountMate. The Business Intelligence applications developed on one platform are easily migrated to another platform if you decide to switch, thus protecting your investment.

If you have any reporting or analytical needs, check out the InfoPlanIT software products to see how they can work for your organization. For more information, contact tSGi at 800-798-9862. ♦



INTEGRATION INTERCHANGE NEWS

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RFID Spurs Supply Chain Improvements

Improving the Supply Chain with Applied Technology
RFID to force improvements to supply chain processes

by James S. Greeney
asp4edi.com, inc.

In the beginning, any item in the supply chain had to be manually tracked. In the early 1970's I worked at an auto parts store. There were 3 days each week when all we did was receiving. Each item had to be manually checked against the packing list, discrepancies noted, and remediation of errors initiated. This was the standard way of reconciling shipments in those days.

Then came bar codes and scanners. This technology improved the process significantly. Granted, we still had to look at each item to scan it, but we did not have to manually check it off the packing list. The software at the time could "auto-magically" do the reconciliation and we would only have to initiate the remediation step (usually a number of telephone calls).

Although some might disagree, the process was improved in the early 1980's with the adoption of EDI messaging. Companies were now capable of reconciliation through document exchanges with their suppliers and customers.

The process was improved again in the late 1980's with the advent of ubiquitous e-mail software. Now we could have the system contact the offending party with the errors encountered through standard text messaging. This eliminated many of the problems encountered with phone calls.

Fast forward to the 21st century. We now have the technology to track products without human intervention. By applying radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, companies can know exactly where products are in the supply chain.

RFID tags can be read by an RF (radio frequency) transmitter/receiver, commonly referred to as the reader. As the RFID tag passes through the generated RF Electromagnetic field, it uses the power generated by that field to activate its transmission capabilities. The reader then receives this transmission as a digital radio signal. Some of the data stored on the tag identifies the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN), Quantity, serial number(s), date(s) of manufacture, lot number, and manufacture location(s).

In the coming years we will see RFID technology advance even further. It will become possible to modify the data stored on the tag to include routing information as well as any cross-dock details that are necessary.

By eliminating the need for human intervention we can now track items within a case that is loaded on a skid/pallet without the need to de-palletize the shipment. This will save a significant amount of time in the receiving and shipping operations. *(see Supply Chain, page 6)*

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