1985 - 2005
BBx Generations – Our Progression in Time

In this 20th anniversary year of the first version of BBx®, it is appropriate that we reflect on our product history and revisit the journey through the various generations of BBx. As we begin the passage, we start with the original BB^X, then continue through various PROGRESSIONs, onto PRO/5®, Visual PRO/5®, and then to BBj®, the latest generation of BBx.

BASIS International Ltd., founded on the principle of providing a platform independent Business BASIC interpreter and database, christened their first version, Business BASIC eXtended, which they later translated to the commonly known BBx. The Business BASIC community received the first release of BBx in October 1985 with warm approval and responded with purchases far in excess of BASIS' initial expectations.

The technological and commercial appeal of the product was in its ability to free the Business BASIC applications from expensive proprietary hardware and operating systems while adding extra functionality to an established language and database. BASIS followed the first version with progressively more functional versions of the product, giving rise to BB^{X}Progression/2® in 1987, followed by BB^{X}Progression/3® two years later.

BASIS shipped a few utility programs with the language and interpreter, but it was not until the release of TAOS: The Developer's Workbench® in 1991 that BASIS responded seriously to the challenge of providing development tools to the Business BASIC community. TAOS was, and is, a powerful character-based rapid application development tool, which provided the data dictionary concept and extended utilities. Later the same year, BASIS released BB^{X}PROGRESSION/4® and, in 1992, delivered the beginnings of a network capable database to the product with the BB^{X}PROGRESSION/4 Data Server.

In the early nineties, the software development world moved quickly to a Graphical User Interface, but BASIS initially remained focused on the character environment. Responding to the challenge, BASIS introduced an extended and renamed line-up of products with the 1995 release of Visual PRO/5, a GUI version of the language. For the first time, BASIS engineered a product for a single platform; Win/32. Also in that same year, BASIS introduced the next release of the character-based version with a new shortened name, PRO/5, followed by the introduction of the PRO/5 Data Server®. The user community clamoured to gain access to their data and BASIS responded with the release of the BASIS ODBC Driver® (Open Database Connectivity).

With widespread use of the BASIS ODBC Driver, BASIS recognized the need for an enhanced data dictionary definition product. BASIS extended the early TAOS data dictionary with a concept of virtual table definitions and views, and released the new graphical Win/32 tool in 1997. When BASIS released version 2.0 of the PRO/5

suite of products the next year, BASIS accompanied Visual PRO/5 with graphical development tools designed to ease the burden of handcrafting GUI solutions; ResBuilder® and GUIBuilder®. Both of these GUI solutions delivered drag-and-drop screen design along with an easy way to manage the event queue.

In 2000, BASIS entered the new century with an ambitious and innovative product direction based upon the company's original development philosophy. This new direction was to relieve the application developer of the burden of most of the overhead associated with keeping pace with the rapid technology changes in the industry while still delivering a platform independent language/interpreter, database, and suite of development tools. The new challenge was to deliver a platform independent GUI and CUI product. BASIS scoured the technology landscape looking for just the right solution and chose Java as the new technology on which they could deliver the promised solution. The network-computing paradigm and the cross-platform deployment options made the Java platform the obvious choice. A Business BASIC interpreter built on top of Java, what a dream! BASIS began building the newest BBx generation with Java; BBj.

The first deliverable components of the new technology included a new system administration component, the BBj Enterprise Manager. The four components of future BBx/BBj releases were now set; language/interpreter, database, development tools, and system administration. In 2000, BASIS released the BBj Enterprise Manager, along with the database components, BBj Data Server and BBj ODBC/JDBC.

BBj 1.0's release the next year began a predictable sequence of annual releases of new versions of the four components of the new technology. The language continues to benefit from the new object-oriented syntax structure with significant new features at every major release. The release of the BBj IDE (Integrated Development Environment) greatly enhanced the development tools, based upon the Netbeans open source project that accompanied the release of BBj 2.0 in 2002. Two years later, BASIS re-christened the database component the BASIS DBMS with the release of BBj 4.0, which saw the introduction of AES-128 encryption and a preview of BLOBs support in BBj, PRO/5, and Visual PRO/5 databases.

BBj 5.0, the latest of the BBx generations, brings enhancements to all of the components of the product suite; BASIS DBMS, SYSGUI enhancements to the language/interpreter, BASIS IDE with code completion and the new FormBuilder, and delivery of a new OS platform, the Apple Macintosh, to name a few. BASIS' many amazing accomplishments adorn the BASIS product roadmap with the promise of many more to come. We look forward to another 20 years of delivering to you, our customer, the necessary tools to create and deploy your best software business solutions.