A Home (Page) in Every Port

Beginning in BBj® version 9.0, BASIS bundled BBj with a built-in Jetty Web Server. Therefore, every installation of your BBj server application allows for the creation of a default home page that provides countless opportunities for improving interaction with the users of the system.

If you're a developer, this custom home page can help your customers know what features and functions your product is capable of, and what new supplementary modules might be available, thereby improving customer satisfaction and increasing sales. The default page can also help BBj integrate more tightly with a corporate intranet or provide a starting point for creating one. Another great option is the ability to include tutorials and instructions for applications online, right in BBj itself. Custom error pages can provide a similar role, getting users the help they need when they don't find the applications they're looking for. Read on for more details of valuable ways to put the default home page to work for you.

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Product Page

The BBj installation includes a custom home page that presents the features and benefits of BBj. Developers can create custom pages for their own product, detailing and describing what features make their product great. This can build interest in the product and show what new features are available. In addition, this default page can include links to samples or demonstrations, or even a call to action with a link to the developer's website or an email request for more information. Web pages are all about providing information to users. It is important to keep in mind that information should include some sales support so developers can help their customers find the products and features they need to succeed.

Intranet Page

Another great use of the default web page is integration with a corporate intranet site. Organizations often have an employee start page with contact information, calendars of upcoming events, company policies, and tools for working at the company. The design of the default page can match the company's internal style to help make BBj and developer's applications feel like the company standard. Getting users looking at BBj's built-in default will help educate and inform users about how to use the tools BBj and custom applications provide.

Some organizations may not have an internal home page. BBj's default page is a great option for getting started with one. Collecting key information like upcoming meetings and after hours contact information and publishing it in a central location for all corporate users to see will make any organization more effective. Smaller organizations may have avoided doing this because of the hassle of installing and configuring a web server, but since they have already done the work of installing BBj, they can leverage that effort and just use the built-in web server.

How-To Page

User education can be challenging as different users need to know different functional areas of their applications to get their jobs done. The default home page can provide many varying categories of information about the installed application – from getting started tutorials to in depth articles about specific processes. Having a central location for documentation is a great way to provide the information users need to keep working and to learn how to work more effectively.

Documentation appears in many different structures and forms. Some users want to follow a step-by-step example, some prefer to pour over reference documentation, while others want to view a video. It is important to make all of these forms available to your users, and the default home page is a great way to do that.

Error Page

When something goes wrong, users need to know what to do to correct the problem. The default error page is a good place to present that kind >>

Figure1. BBj default page

Figure 2. Configuring the default Web Server pages in Enterprise Manager

of documentation. Perhaps the most important thing to provide from an error page is a link to restart the application, either BUI or JNLP, so users can get back on track. It might be worthwhile to include simple tips such as clearing caches or whatever is appropriate for the application. Contact information that includes phone numbers, email addresses, and links to developer websites are great to publish on an error page, as well as the default home page. If something does go wrong, there is no wasted time searching around for who to call; users have what they need to contact the support team directly.

BBj's Default Page

BBj provides a default page with several helpful links, including the BUI Showcase, accessed by clicking the smartphone images as shown in **Figure 1.**

The default page also provides a link to launch Enterprise Manager so that users can quickly configure their new installation. BASIS customers can easily contact us via the Facebook, Twitter, and Linkedin links, and view demos of new functionality on the BASIS YouTube Channel. The default page helps developers connect with BASIS and receive the latest BBx updates and BASIS news.
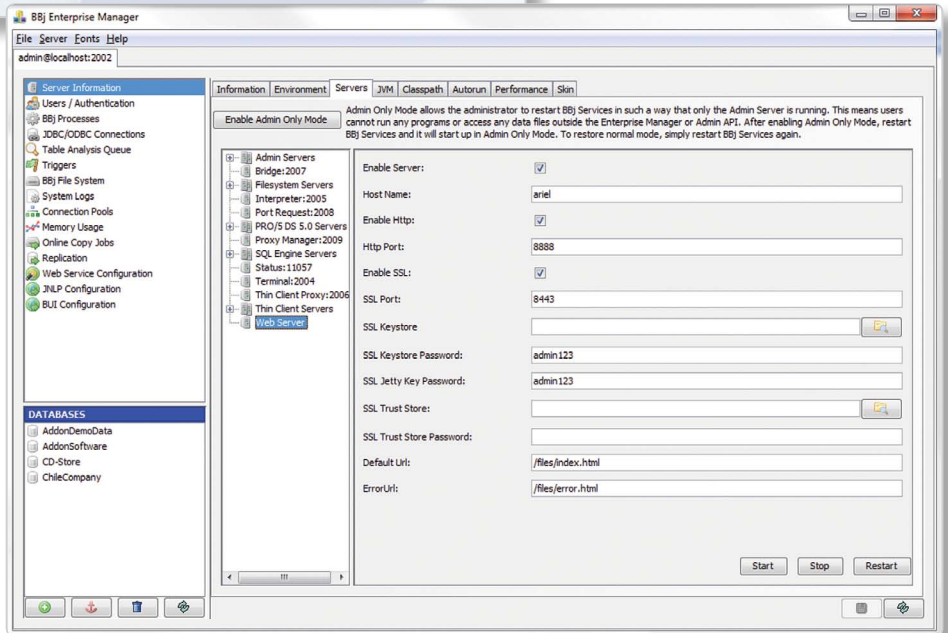
Enterprise Manager provides the configuration for the default URL and the error URL, each specified as relative paths. For example, to replace the default index with myindex.html, simply supply the relative path /files/myindex.html to redirect the user to the new location. The actual file myindex.html should be saved in the htdocs directory in BBj's home directory. See **Figure 2**.

Summary

The default home page provides many opportunities for both developers and corporate IT departments alike to stay in contact with their users. Providing

information about how to use the product as well as contact information when users run into trouble can help users succeed. The default home page also can help BBj integrate with a corporate intranet, or even serve as one if necessary. Most importantly, it gives developers a way to stay in contact with customers about the products they have purchased. Customizing the default home page is a valuable way to provide you and your customers a "port in a storm" and a "portal" to the organization. ◼