BASIS Engineering 1998: A Year In Review

By Kevin King

All of us at BASIS International began 1998 with a commitment to deliver quality products on time, every time. This commitment particularly inspired the engineering organization and has led to a more productive team atmosphere. We've been striving to make BASIS an extremely responsive and reliable resource for our customers.

What did we accomplish in 1998? In a nutshell, we updated and revamped our entire product line. Let's take a brief trip down memory lane and recall some of the highlights of the year.

Visual PRO/5®

Visual PRO/5 2.0 was released as advertised with a myriad of enhancements. These enhancements include a variety of new visual controls to expand the GUI capabilities of the product. To assist our customers in their quest for rapid application development, we expanded the product with ResBuilder™ and GUIBuilder™. ResBuilder is a graphical interface development tool that allows developers to drag and drop their way to beautiful screen layouts. Once the screens are built, developers can use GUIBuilder to attach code to each control defined in ResBuilder. The synergism of these applications provides Business Basic GUI developers with the fastest development tool set on the market today for developing new applications and retrofitting legacy character-based code into modernized GUI applications. Visual PRO/5 also comes with a graphical user interface for the configuration file--Configurator. The Configurator makes even the most complicated configuration file easy to modify and maintain.

We also spent time working on the Visual PRO/5 client for the PRO/5 Data Server® for Novell Netware. Today, customers are able to work with fully functional Visual PRO/5 and PRO/5® applications on even the most complex Novell systems.

PRO/5 2.0

Although not as flashy as its GUI counterpart, PRO/5's character-based development environment is very important to many BASIS customers. That's why we spent a great deal of time in 1998 on improvements to a vital part of the PRO/5 product--the file system. Now developers can work on files that are up to 4GB in size on selected operating systems that support the Large File System standard.

BASIS ODBC Driver® 2.0

Following the hiatus since the release of BASIS' ODBC Driver Rev. 1.1, we released the faster and more robust ODBC Driver 2.0, redesigned and rewritten from the ground up. This 32-bit driver now works with all third-party tools. The new architecture greatly simplifies maintenance, so we can fix problems and do optimizations quickly.

The PRO/5 Data Server

Advisory locking was one of the most requested enhancements for our PRO/5 Data Server for Microsoft Windows NT. The latest release of the PRO/5 Data Server now runs as an NT service and supports advisory locking, much like its UNIX counterpart.

Basic Web Utility

BASIS provided a clear migration path to web development with the addition of the Basic Web Utility. This toolkit of BBx programs drastically cuts the learning curve for developing web applications because it provides a browser interface using familiar BBx syntax. The Basic Web Utility is available via free download at www.basis.com/products/utilities.html and is included with the current release of Visual PRO/5.

TAOS: The Developer's Workbench®

Many of you know that TAOS: The Developer's Workbench has been available for a long time without a maintenance release. We have decided to meld TAOS and Visual PRO/5 together in the next generation of Business Basic, so we made our final 1.32 maintenance release to address the most significant issues reported for TAOS 1.31.

As we developed and released these products, we strove to provide our customers with as many of their requested features as possible. There are other features that require a new architecture to implement, and we have added them to our database of enhancements for the next generation of BBx. This next generation is due to be released during the fourth quarter of 1999.

As we look toward the future, we see a hard and bumpy road, but the revamped product will be well worth the wait and the trouble. BASIS will begin the new millennium with a modernized BBx that expands the traditions of portability and flexibility: applications written once and deliverable on any and all platforms--from character-based to GUI applications, from dumb terminal to web browser.

That's a quick review of the year and a small peek into the Business Basic of the future. Come along for the ride. The future looks bright and the prospects are great for the Business Basic community.