## Going GUI One Window At A Time

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ompanies that need GUI, know it. If you're asking yourself whether your company or your customers' companies really need GUI, there may honestly be no compelling technical reason. The character-based application works great. The programs are solid. Maybe only a few executive types are asking for it. So why go to all the time and trouble of reinventing your solid, character-based app?

Attention and attraction to your application. Winning more "mindshare" in your customer base. Expanding your customer base. Even if you don't change a single business rule in your application, the perception to the new interface is that you have a stronger, better, modern product. Maybe you've even lost some customers in the past to other products that lacked the functional strength of yours but had a graphical interface. Now, it is your turn to convert some customers to your application. Like it or not, a graphical interface with a bitmap overlay is the ultimate fishing lure.

So where do you begin? First of all, it is important to note that Visual PRO/5® can support your character application and your GUI enhancements in the same operating environment. This means you can evolve your application gradually, or one module at a time. The idea is to think in terms of ADDING GUI to your application and not replacing your character interface.

There are several advantages to this approach. You

- Don't have to completely quit enhancing your application until you are done
- Can develop your GUI style parameters and try them out in one program before you do
  the others
- Clearly identify to your customer your commitment to the application and your technical abilities to stay on top of the industry
- Build the scripts and programs that will facilitate converting the rest of your application
- And probably most important, attract new business with the slicker, more contemporary application

Since Visual PRO/5 will support both a character and graphical interface within the same application, you can effectively add the graphical functionality while enhancing the application itself. You don't have to separate GUI development but can parallel your GUI development and functionality development within the existing code. You can get immediate feedback. You aren't developing in a vacuum. Obviously, this has some risk associated with it, but the critical purpose here is to sustain and enhance the business rules so that you are not completely reinventing the wheel.

Before you begin, you will need to develop a set of style parameters, much like you did for your character screens. ResBuilder™ makes this a reasonably painless task. More importantly, modifying these parameters as you test is much easier than editing numerous PRINTstatements. As you build more and more standardization in your screens, you can then store them in a static resource file so that you or any subsequent programmers working on that same application can cutand paste, eliminating the potential for



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