FLEXlm Application Licensing
Getting a Handle on Application Usage
By Nick Decker and Greg Grisham

Y ou poured a heck of a lot of problem solving, time and money into the applications you've built. Now, how are you protecting that investment and tracking users? BASIS now gives you the means to allow your application to count users, check licenses in and out, and even support multiple features for each major component of your application.

As an extension of Globetrotter's FLEXlm licensing, BASIS can now support application-level licensing for our Customers. FLEXlm licensing is the process of coordinating access to software invocation. A license manager acts as a librarian to "check out" access to a specific application.

We have extended this license manager functionality to allow BASIS developers to include the checkout feature in their application code. With it, a developer can package his or her entire application into one installation medium (e.g., CD or Web downloads) and let the licensing mechanism control what code can actually be utilized. Various modules can be licensed separately. This simplifies deployment and facilitates demonstration versions while protecting the source code.

FLEXlm has already been integrated into over 20,000 products and is considered the standard license manager in the open systems marketplace. More than $40 billion of installed third-party software uses FLEXlm, and now your application can too. BASIS first introduced application licensing in December 2000 with the release of PRO/5® and Visual PRO/5® 3.10. With application licensing, your BBx® or BBj® program can tap into the security and flexibility that GLOBEtrotter's FLEXlm licensing offers. You no longer have to worry about a "homemade" licensing solution – you can use the same one on which more than 2,000 other software companies rely.

How It Works

BASIS has installed an automated License Server that can create license files 24 hours a day, all year long. This is a natural progression to selling software via the Internet. When licensing is attached to an e-commerce application, Customers can purchase, install and license software for themselves whenever it is convenient for them.

A BASIS license contains information that identifies the serial number, number of users and node-specific information of the system on which it is installed. Application licensing appends similar information regarding what specific application module can be run and how many connections will be allowed to that application. This makes it ideal for an ASP (Application Service Provider) application. The days of allowing unlimited connections to an application are gone; Customers can buy only what they need with concurrent licensing (i.e., connections at one time, from anywhere).

What the Developer Needs to Know

To implement application licensing in his or her application, a developer will need to supply BASIS with information so that we can add the application to our automated

licensing generator. This includes information to uniquely identify the user's system and how many users the developer wants to allow to access the application.

Then, the developer will need to add the check-in and checkout (LCHECKIN, LCHECKOUT) verb and function (LCHECKIN is a verb, but LCHECKOUT is a function as it returns a handle to the license object) and their functionality to the application. BASIS documentation contains detailed instructions on how to do this.

Implementing these routines requires centralized access to the licensed modules. The user checks out a license upon entering the application and checks in the license upon exiting. The code for controlling this activity is then saved using the SAVEP command, thereby protecting any errant access.

BASIS is experienced with mission-critical applications. Incomplete installation, modification of the license file or license configuration problems can invalidate license behavior. But FLEXlm licensing allows an application to continue processing, just with a periodic, real-time unacceptable, pop-up message acknowledging a license error, even in cases in which the license file has been illegally changed.

Contracts

Developers wishing to implement FLEXlm application licensing will need to sign a contract with BASIS that includes disclosure of the following information:

- Company Specifics
- Annual reporting methodology
- Applications and their legal names
- Audit specifics (both parties)
- Cancellation policy
- Signatures
- License File Generation Information, including

> Application Name
> User units
> How to check status
> Version control
> Update methodology (new applications or version updates to applications)

In addition to greater security, application licensing can benefit your product in many ways. You can make your application freely available to anyone and control access and purchasing via licensing. Everyone can download a demo version, try it out and purchase it electronically any time of the day or night, 365 days a year. You can license modules of your application separately, each with different user counts and revision levels, if you'd like. You can use it to safeguard access to your e-commerce application or implement an ASP solution. And best of all, this industry standard is very easy to integrate. **BASIS**

www.

Find out more information about adding the verbs and functionality to use FLEXlm application licensing at
www.basis.com/onlinedocs/documentation/index.htm