

JACKIE'S Forum

IBM DB2 Web Query Report Broker



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I am really pleased to devote this column to a new solution from IBM for DB2 Web Query report scheduling and distribution.

IBM has just started shipping an add-on to DB2 Web Query called DB2 Web Query Report Broker (5733-QU3). With the advanced scheduling capabilities and the ability to email reports in a variety of formats including PDF, MS Excel spreadsheets, and Active Reports; access to your business data is now opened up to a whole new community both inside and outside your company.

I don't want to make this article into a long list of the advanced capabilities within Report Broker. This information is available in the latest version of the DB2 Web Query manual which can be downloaded from the IBM website. I also think that it is a little early to be writing about in-depth technical tips for using Report Broker when many of you have not even heard of it yet.

Instead, what I have decided to do is give you three examples of how Report Broker can be used in your company. Suppose that Jane, in marketing, recently saw a PDF report that you had printed for her boss. She has come to you and asked if you could send her the same information in an Excel spreadsheet with today's final numbers in it. Before installing Report Broker you would have had to create a second copy of the report, this time choosing Excel output. Either IT would have to run the report the following morning and email the spreadsheet to Jane or she would have to be told where and when to access the new report to run it herself.

With Report Broker you simply right click on the report that Jane has already seen and select schedule. At this point you

can specify when you want the report to run with various scheduling options. You might, for example, say that you want it run once at 4:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. Even though our report originally produced a PDF file during scheduling you can select a spreadsheet as the output. The system will automatically email the spreadsheet to Jane as soon as the report is run. If the spreadsheet is particularly large, Report Broker can be told to create a zip file and email that to Jane.

Or, instead of emailing the spreadsheet, Report Broker could add the spreadsheet output to a folder on the Web Query home

page. When Jane selected the report the spreadsheet would open without having to be rerun.

Now suppose that your CEO runs a quarterly meeting with his executive team and he would like his executives to receive a PDF report about the

status of the company financials prior to the meeting. IT has designed a composite PDF report that contains all of the details that the CEO wants to see. This report is then added to the schedule to be emailed to all executives on the 2nd day of every quarter. Since the executives tend to change fairly frequently in this company, Report Broker will access the up-to-date distribution list from the company's email server.

In our third example (my favourite) you can now keep your 424 sales reps up-to-date about this year's orders, for each of their customers. In your company the sales reps do not have an IBM i user ID and they spend a lot of time on the road.

In some tools that I have seen, to send each sales rep his own report you would have to run the report 424 times with different selection criteria each time. With Report

Broker you run the report once and by having the sales rep as the primary sort field, the system will automatically burst the report at the end of each sales rep's data and email the appropriate portion of the report to the rep. In addition, the system makes sure that each individual sales rep's report contains report headers and footers.

What can greatly enhance this approach is to email each sales rep an Active Report. An Active Report is an HTML page that contains not only the data the sales reps wanted to see but also analysis capabilities.

Combining the simple and straight forward analytical capabilities of Active Reports along with using Report Broker to email these reports to anyone inside or outside your company is a very powerful solution to information access. Remember that when Report Broker emails reports the end users do not need to be registered either to the IBM i or to Web Query. This can be a significant cost savings and dramatically increases your potential audience.

Please Call Me

I know that many of you, possibly even most of you reading this column have DB2 Web Query. I would really like to hear how you are using the product in your company. If you are developing a reporting application I would be very interested in your future plans. Please email me and let me know what you are doing or plan to do with DB2 Web query. Thanks and happy reporting.



Jackie Jansen currently works with Information Builders specializing in DB2 Web Query. Jackie is a frequent speaker at Technical Conferences and User Group meetings. Contact her at jackie_jansen@ibi.com.

