

**Thank you for installing Visual Report Writer version 3.0 Alpha I.**

**Please read the following notes carefully, so that you are acquainted with this Alpha release quickly.**

### **Registration**

No registration is required with the Alpha I of Visual Report Writer 3.0. Alpha I will work until June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. For further testing of version 3.0, you will need to download the next releases.

### **Installation**

Visual Report Writer 2013 – 3.0 is developed with Visual DataFlex. The Alpha is based on Visual DataFlex version 17.0, while the final release is targeted to use version 17.1 of Visual DataFlex. If you do not have a version 17.0 Client License running on your PC, the setup will automatically install one for you.

### **Supported platforms**

- Microsoft Windows XP SP 3 (32 bit)
- Microsoft Windows Vista SP 2 Home Premium or higher (32/64 bit)
- Microsoft Windows 7 Home Premium or higher (32/64 bit)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003 SP 2 (32 bit)
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008 SP 1 (32/64 bit)

### **Alpha I – status**

#### **Integration library**

This Alpha I of Visual Report Writer is a Developer Edition. Developer Editions of Visual Report Writer come with a Library to let you integrate reports in your Visual DataFlex applications. However, the Alpha I comes without integration library.

#### **Language support**

Version 3.0 Alpha I of Visual Report Writer comes without support for different languages. This means that the only language supported in the product is (US) English, more languages will be added in later versions.

#### **Documentation**

The documentation for Visual Report Writer version 3.0 has not been updated. Expect updated documentation the beta phase.

### **What is New in version 3.0?**

#### **A new, Interactive Previewer**

The new Previewer is interactive, which means that when a user clicks on an area in the Previewer, the programmer can catch the event and act upon that.

An example: Create a simple Customer List in Visual Report Writer. If the user clicks on the Customer with Customer Number 99, open a View in the application with the Customer with Number 99, and let the user change the address, or phone-number.

The Interactive Previewer also features a Search facility.

## Reporting in the new Web Framework

Visual DataFlex Studio 17.1 comes with the first version of the new web framework. This is a strong, AJAX based framework that makes it very easy to develop web applications. Version 3.0 of Visual Report Writer is especially geared towards integrating reports in the new web framework. The delivery formats can be either PDF or HTML. At a later stage you can expect the inclusion of "web forms" within Visual Report Writer.

Alpha I does not come with an integration library. Check [www.dataaccess.eu](http://www.dataaccess.eu) for the download of a "2.1+" library. If you want to start exploring the possibilities of reporting with Visual Report Writer in the new web framework, the 2.1+ library offers you the opportunity to do that, based on PDF (not HTML) in combination with the latest released version of Visual Report Writer (version 2.1).

To see several examples of Visual Report Writer reports used in the new web framework, with explanations of how it's done, go to:

<http://demo.dataaccess.eu/livevisualreportwriter>

Several [blogs](#), published by Vincent Oorsprong about this, can be found [here](#).

## Web Framework Previewer

Simply create a report in Visual Report Writer. Then use the new Integration Wizard to generate the dialog that will launch that report in the web application. The great thing here is that development as you are used to doing it in Windows will exactly match the reporting development you are going to do for the web. It makes it very easy to deliver "pixel-perfect" operational level reports in the browser - no need for knowing HTML or CSS.

With Visual Report Writer you get:


- Single tool development for multi-platform deployment
- Rapid development, very effective maintenance
- No hassle!

## Export to Excel

A much-asked-for feature is the capability to export to Excel. Version 3.0 allows exporting to either the 2003 compatible format (.XLS) or the 2007+ format (.XLSX).

Another option is to choose for exporting "Data only" or to export to Excel "Formatted" whereby the Excel sheet will mimic the graphic design of the report as well as possible.

Here is an example - look at the simple Customer List below as it looks in the Previewer of Visual Report Writer:



The screenshot shows a report previewer window. At the top left, it says "Printed 4/18/2013". Below this is a table with 8 columns: Name, Address, City, State, Phone, Email, Cr. Limit, and Balance. The table contains 6 rows of customer data.

Name	Address	City	State	Phone	Email	Cr. Limit	Balance
210 On Clark DataFlex Data	210 West Clark Street	Champaign	IL	217-555-3598	210@clubs.com	1,399.00	932.00
228 Fuel Express Pizzas & Food	Hwys 228 & 28	Floyd	IA	641-555-2387	228fuelpizzafood@quickbite.com	47,534.00	22,855.00
3A Software	1600 Technology Circle	La Mesa	CA	619-555-5246	3asoftware@yahoo.com	16,383.00	7,051.00
500 Plus News Magazine	128 Cottonwood Avenue	Hartland	WI	262-555-3675	500plus@newsmagazine.com	0.00	0.00
A & B Car Rental-Baranof Motor	1009 Sawmill Creek Road	Sitka	AK	907-555-9228	abcarrental@who.com	6,441.00	2,382.00
A Child's Garden	690 West Dunne Road	Morgan Hill	CA	408-555-7787	achildsgarden@eve.com	0.00	0.00

When exported to Excel as "Data Only," it looks like this:



## Ellipses on clipped objects

Some times a value of a field can be too large to fully fit and show in an object. Especially when it comes to (financial) figures, it can be a risk if people don't interpret the information correctly. New in version 3.0 is the option to show Ellipses (...) on clipped fields indicating that the object is not fully visible. This option can be set per report. Check the Report Menu / Report Options.

## Sum Functions

New Sum Functions make it much easier and flexible to deal with creating totals. For instance when a sub-total is created for a section, the result can be shown in the Footer in the section, as well as the Header.

## Previous and Next function

At a certain point in a report it might be useful if it were possible to know the value of the Next record. An example, a bit trivial perhaps, but just to illustrate the use of it: Group the Customer List per State, and per State, add a comment with the last Customer in the State.

One way to do it is to add a Details section below the original Details section that contains a function to show this comment:

```
if next({Customer.State}) <> {Customer.State} then return "This  
is the Last Customer."  
end
```

The details where this text is not appropriate (all, but the last one) are suppressed in the Section Expert with this function:

```
return next({Customer.State}) = {Customer.State}
```

The result will look like the below report.

**Printed** 4/19/2013

Name	Address	City	Phone	Email
<b>State</b> AK				
A & B Car Rental-Baranof Motor	1009 Sawmill Creek Road	Sitka	907-555-9228	abcarr
<b>This is the Last Customer.</b>				
<b>State</b> AL				
Addie Record & Boutique	5948 Saint Stephens Road	Eight Mile	251-555-5803	addiere
Amplified Version	8303 Dauphin St	Mobile	251-555-9488	amplifie
Better Living Products	10895 AL Highway 108	Boaz	256-555-1311	betterliv
Brads & Nors	2051 Summit Boulevard, Ste 18	Birmingham	205-555-0665	barnes
Commershial Bank Of Ozark	280 North Merrick Avenue	Ozark	334-555-8731	comm
<b>This is the Last Customer.</b>				

## **Enhanced text and object manipulation**

### **Size to font**

Texts are shown in an object, and its font can be resized at will. Re-sizing the font will not change the size of the object. The new Size to Font enhancement makes it easy to resize the object, to fit the font (size) in use.

### **Copy formatting**

New in version 3.0 is the option to set the properties of multiple objects to be the same as the current properties of one object. This is done by selecting multiple objects (keep the Ctrl-key pressed while doing this) and with a right-mouse click open the context-sensitive menu to "Make same Format". The format of the first object that was selected will be applied to all other objects.

### **Align to baseline**

Earlier versions of Visual Report Writer supported the option to align objects in several ways. Align Bottom, was one of them. But in cases where multiple objects used different font sizes, this would align the objects correctly, but not the text. Selecting multiple objects and Aligning to Baseline will take care of this.

### **Suppress if zero**

A simple click in the checkbox to Suppress if zero is added to Visual Report Writer.

### **Change Data source**

With DataFlex, changing from one type of database to another is really easy. It is therefore not surprising that developers are programming on one database, and then possibly deploying on different types of databases. With Visual Report Writer, it's now just as easy to switch the connection from one type of database to another. If the database structures between the two databases are different, fields from one to the other can be "mapped" as accustomed to in the existing Check Database logic.

### **HTML Export, PDF Export and web reporting**

HTML is a new format to export to in Visual Report Writer 3.0. The options are to export as single file, or as multi-file.

A special feature that is used for delivering HTML reports in the new web framework is not to export to a file, but in memory pass the data on to the web application server that delivers the report in a new Web Report Viewer.

An existing feature in Visual Report Writer has been the possibility to export to PDF. What is new is that reports can be presented in the new web framework as PDF using the new Web Report Viewer.

To see examples of what this looks like, please go to:

<http://demo.dataaccess.eu/livevisualreportwriter>

Here you will find several examples based on PDF as well as HTML, including some interactive use as well. For each report you will find explanations of what the sample contains and how it was developed.

### **Deploy more easily**

One goal of Visual Report Writer has always been to make it very easy to deploy reporting solutions based on it. It comes down to reducing the number of necessary files and their dependencies and requirements on the underlying Operating System.

In version 3.0 the number of components has been reduced by two, because the dfapi30.dll and dynapdf.dll are no longer needed.

In case no multi-language capabilities are needed, only the Visual Report Writer OCX and the VRW.db and df\_collate.cfg are needed. For multi-language capabilities, the language.db need to be added to that.

And to make it even easier, a setup program will be made available separately to copy the files, at a selected location.

For deploying reports for the web, a Web Deployment License is needed for each server (virtual or physical).

### **So, what is the further planning for Visual Report Writer 3.0?**

The following features are scheduled for version 3.0, but did not make it into Alpha I:

#### **Arrange Objects**

Visual DataFlex developers are accustomed to a nice feature - the Arrange Objects tool - that spreads and nudges objects as needed. This feature will be added to Visual Report Writer in version 3.0.

#### **New locking method**

In earlier versions of Visual Report Writer the report definitions as they are stored in the .VRW file could be locked. This meant that if a report is not opened with the same Visual DataFlex Studio license in use, the report could not be opened or changed. This locking mechanism has changed and an alternative way of locking added: simply provide a pin-code to lock it, and make sure to use the same pin-code to open it again.

#### **Printer-tray selection**

Visual Report Writer comes with an extensive library for integrating reports in Visual DataFlex applications. One of the most elaborate functions that is supported by the library is to give the developer as much control of printing as possible. Version 3.0 of Visual Report Writer offers an enhancement to switch paper-trays on a printer. For example: The first page and the last page of a report are sent to Tray 1, which typically holds thicker paper for the front-page. The other pages, the content of the report, are printed on regular weight paper.

In 2nd Quarter of 2013, expect the release of version 3.0 of the Standard Edition as well as the Developer Edition.

#### **Reporting bugs, comments and suggestions**

Please report bugs to [support@dataaccess.eu](mailto:support@dataaccess.eu). If you have a HelpDesk Express account you can also enter reports directly at <http://hde.dataaccess.eu>. Make sure to provide as much detail as possible to define and reproduce the problem that you are reporting.

Upon your report, you will be invited to use an account on our help-desk support system for reporting future issues.

For further communications and information, there is a forum devoted to [Visual Report Writer in the Data Access Worldwide Support Forums](#).