

June, 1995

Editor's View

For The Greater Good

A number of FoxPro's 3rd party vendors have looked past their own self-interest to support the community as a whole

By Tamar E. Granor, Editor

A few years ago, a number of towns around here (including mine) joined together to buy police cars. By buying as a group, they were able to get a much better price. No doubt, each town had to give up a feature or two they wanted, or accept a few features they didn't really want, but on the whole, it was a good deal for everyone involved, including the car dealer, who sold a whole lot of cars at once. No quota problems that month.

I'm always pleased when I hear about arrangements like this one because they indicate that people have looked beyond their own, immediate needs to the broader good. Several recent announcements in the FoxPro community show the same spirit. (You'll find the specifics in recent FoxPro News columns.)

The first item is the announcement of the Codebook-Compliant and Codebook-Compatible standards. Recognizing that many FoxPro developers base their applications on Flash's FoxPro Codebook model, a number of vendors have committed to making their products work with that model. Developers will no longer have to choose between the Codebook model and other products. They'll all work together.

Similarly, the announcement by Neon Software that the Visual FoxPro version of their application generator, FoxExpress, will offer a professional version bundled with FoxFire! and PhDBase is good news for all. Both FoxFire! and PhDBase are must-haves for many developers—the ability to use them seamlessly with FoxExpress just makes everyone's job a little easier.

Finally, Tom Rettig developed and placed into the public domain a method for extending Visual FoxPro's data dictionary. Tom's EDC (Extended Database Container) class library allows you to add your own properties to the database without directly modifying the DBC. Of course, EDC will be used in the Visual FoxPro version of Tom's product, Tom Rettig's Office.

It would be easy for the developers of third party products for FoxPro to take the attitude that buyers' dollars (or francs or deutschmarks or yen) are a limited resource and that any purchase of someone else's product might cut into their own sales. They might also assume that giving things away by placing them in the public domain encourages people to expect more for free. Instead, many of the leading third party companies have taken the broader view—that making everything work together and providing important utilities strengthens the market for all. Bravo to all concerned for looking at the community as a whole instead of only at the individual bottom line.

The More Things Change

We have some changes in this issue. After more than two years of answering readers' questions, Steve Freides has decided to move on. We'll miss his insights in areas like configuration and networking. But Steve has promised to continue writing articles.

Ted Roche takes over as co-author of Q&A. Ted's written several articles for FoxPro Advisor, as well as being a Microsoft Support MVP (read that as he's good at answering questions), and a speaker at a number of the regional FoxPro conferences. He's a regular at the FoxPro sub-group of the Boston Computer Society. (In addition, as I write this, Ted and I are in the process of writing a book about Visual FoxPro.)

Another change. Drew Speedie, our Tips editor, came to me and complained that he was up to his knees in tips. If he couldn't use them faster, he said, soon he wouldn't be able to walk. What else could we do? We gave Drew another page. Starting in this issue, we'll offer three pages of your Tips, Tricks and Traps each month.

Conference Time

By the time you read this, the Spring conference season will be in full swing. FoxPro Advisor is co-sponsoring three upcoming gatherings. If you're ready to learn about Visual FoxPro, the time has come.

Starting things off is the Mid-Atlantic FoxPro Database Solutions Workshop on May 5th and 6th in Chesapeake, Virginia. The success of last year's workshop took the organizers by surprise when more than 600 registered. They're ready for the onslaught this year. Call (804)498-8579 or send a message to 73707,461 on CompuServe for details.

Early June will be crammed with FoxPro information. First up is the Minneapolis FoxPro Users' Conference.

The very next week, FoxTeach '95 will take place in Toronto. This very professional conference has expanded to three days and, of course, will also focus on Visual FoxPro. Call (800)265-1362 or mail 70632,3172 for details.

I'll be speaking in Virginia and Toronto and you'll find other FoxPro Advisor writers at these conferences. In fact, Drew Speedie is speaking at all three. We look forward to seeing you there.

Of course, don't forget to save October 22-25 for the first FoxPro Advisor conference in Phoenix. See the ad in this issue for details.