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Time Flies

It doesn't seem possible that it's been five years since the debut of FoxPro Advisor, but it's hard to remember life without it, too.

By Tamar E. Granor, Editor

The old saying goes "Time flies when you're having fun." We must be having fun because I can't believe that it's five years since the first issue of FoxPro Advisor. As with so many other things, it's hard to believe five years have gone by, but at the same time, it's hard to remember a time when there wasn't a FoxPro Advisor.

To get a sense of where we've been, I took a fresh look at the first issue of FoxPro Advisor. When it came out in early 1993, FoxPro for Windows was a brand new product. A lot of the pages in that issue were devoted to helping people begin to work in what was, for most, a new environment. As we enter 1998, a lot of pages of FoxPro Advisor are devoted to integrating the Internet and other technologies into applications; for most of us, that's the latest in a series of new environments and paradigms.

The changes in the last five years are amazing. The original versions of FoxPro 2.5 for DOS and Windows were released in January, 1993. FoxPro 2.6 increased compatibility with dBase and 2.6a added international capabilities, though the basics of using the product didn't really change.

Didn't change, that is, until the release of Visual FoxPro in July '95. That change was substantial with the introduction of object-orientation (believe it or not, FoxPro Advisor's first article on OOP appeared in the March '93 issue!), the database container, direct support for client-server and more. VFP 5 was released in September '96 and built on VFP 3's foundation while offering tremendous improvements in developer tools. Although the next version of VFP isn't due until sometime this year, the importance of the Internet and of ActiveX in what we do has increased dramatically over the last year or so.

FoxPro Advisor has reflected these changes during its life. As the amount of information developers needed to know took off, the size of the magazine increased. When it became clear fairly early on that new developers were coming to FoxPro regularly, we added Miriam Liskin's FoxPro Fundamentals column. When we started to receive lots of short tips, we devoted a column to those. And when the number of tips coming in kept growing and growing, we expanded that column. We continue to look at what's going on in the development world and adjust our coverage whenever we think it's necessary.

Looking at the first issue of FPA and the issue you're holding, I see both similarities and differences. Mac Rubel still entertains and educates us monthly with his Functional FoxPro column, but it's been a long time since that column could have been called "Function of the Month." The question-and-answer column has changed its name (several times), its writers and its place in the magazine, but it's still answering readers'

question and digging deeper into the issues they raise. Although the topics themselves have changed, we still try to have every issue offer a mix of information, including some you can put to work right away and some that help you prepare for what's coming next.

Of course, Advisor has been helping Fox programmers since long before FoxPro Advisor started. The first ad for FoxBase II appeared in the November '84 issue of DataBased Advisor and the first article on that product was in the January '85 issue. George Goley's monthly "Fox Files" started in 1987. So, when FoxPro Advisor debuted in February '93, it was a continuation and expansion of DBA's coverage of FoxPro.

As FoxPro Advisor moves into our second half-decade, we will continue to give you timely and useful information. The changing nature of application development (see Editor's View in the January issue for some of my thoughts on this) makes this task a lot more complex than it was in 1993, but we know we're up to it. Let us know how we're doing by sending your comments to FoxPro@advisor.com.

DevCon Time is Coming

Speaking of time flying, DevCon '98 is already on the horizon. If you haven't done so already, mark your calendars for May 17 to 20 and plan to be in Orlando. Microsoft will unveil the next version of VFP, code-named "Tahoe", and a host of experts will offer sessions on a variety of VFP topics.

Going to DevCon is one of the best ways I know to learn what's going on, improve your skills, make connections with other developers, and be a part of the FoxPro community.

Point - CounterPoint

I don't usually use this column to talk about what's in the magazine. But this month, we have something a little different. On facing pages, Jim Nelson and Yair Alan Griver square off on the issue of the Hungarian naming convention that's widely used by VFP programmers. I think each of them makes some good points. After you've read both pieces, let me know what you think about this argument, and how you feel about this kind of material in FoxPro Advisor.