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Editor's View

Where are We Going?

Microsoft clarifies FoxPro's future. We want to know what you're doing with FoxPro now.

By Tamar E. Granor, Editor

There will be no Visual FoxPro 4.0. Fortunately, while this statement is true, it isn't because Microsoft has abandoned FoxPro. It's because they've decided to bring the version numbers of their various development products into synch (as they did previously with end-user products). So, the next version of Visual FoxPro will be called 5.0.

In fact, not only has Microsoft *not* abandoned FoxPro, they've finally issued a clear statement of their intentions. There are also some good signs on the marketing front.

In February, Information Week published an article claiming that FoxPro's demise was imminent. Microsoft issued some statements at the time (see the News page of the May issue for one of them) to clarify the situation, but promised a more detailed statement later. "Later" is now. You'll find the complete text of this "open letter to the FoxPro community" in this issue.

The letter is signed by Tod Nielsen (General Manager for Visual FoxPro) and Bob Muglia (Vice President of the Internet Platform and Tools Division). It says clearly that, not only will VFP 5.0 ship in the Fall of this year, but that work will begin on the next release of VFP after that. The letter also describes some of the changes in both VFP5 and the version to follow.

A few weeks before the statement was issued, a direct mailing was sent for VFP/Mac. The mailer is the best piece of Visual FoxPro marketing I've seen - it clearly describes what makes VFP worth having and stays away from the idea that VFP is only for maintaining legacy XBase applications. It emphasizes VFP's object-orientation, rapid application development and client-server features. (The piece does, however, promise a few features that aren't available on the Mac.) If this is the future of FoxPro marketing, we're going to be quite happy.

Where are you now?

With Visual FoxPro 5 on the horizon, it's time for us to find out where you really are now. Based on forum traffic and discussions at conferences and user groups, it's clear that many of you are still working in FoxPro 2.x while others have fully embraced Visual FoxPro. Still others are using both and some are working in FP 2.x while learning VFP. In order to give you the best magazine, we need to know which products you're using now and what you anticipate in the near future.

Here's a list of questions to help us plan the direction of FoxPro Advisor. Please send us your answers. Be sure to number each answer.

1. Classify your level of application development/programming experience: Non-programmer, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced.
2. How large is your organization (in revenue and/or employees)? If you are a consultant, how large are your clients?
3. What is your position and job function?
4. How many users typically work with the applications you develop?
5. What is your involvement with software and hardware purchases: Evaluate new products, advise on what to buy, decide what to buy, authorize the purchase, make the purchase.
6. How do you see your involvement with application development changing over the next year?
7. List the computer platforms you use FoxPro to develop for: Windows, Windows 95, Windows NT, DOS, OS/2, Macintosh, UNIX, other.
8. List the versions of FoxPro you use.
9. How do you see your involvement with FoxPro changing over the next year?
10. Describe your involvement with client-server development.
11. How do you see your involvement with client-server changing over the next year?
12. Describe your involvement with Internet/Intranet/Web development.
13. How do you see your involvement with Internet/Intranet/Web changing over the next year?
14. What other development tools do you use?
15. How do see your involvement with these tools changing over the next year?
16. List the parts of FoxPro Advisor you enjoy the most.
17. List the parts of FoxPro Advisor you enjoy the least.
18. How would you like FoxPro Advisor to change over the next year?
19. Which technical/developer conferences have you attended in recent years? List all you can recall, with conference name, city, and year.
20. Which technical/developer conferences do you expect to attend in the next year?
21. What are the most important factors in choosing a conference?

If you choose, you can add your name, address and other contact information at the end and let us know if we can contact you to talk about your views.

Thanks for helping us to make FoxPro Advisor serve you better.