

Introduction

Building on the proven performance and flexibility of Version 8.5, Crystal Reports 9 introduces a host of new leading-edge features for more powerful report design, delivery and integration. This document provides a high-level overview of key new features and enhancements, which fall into 5 main categories:

- 1 Power
- 2 Productivity
- 3 Flexibility
- 4 End User Interactivity
- 5 General Usability Enhancements

Power

Crystal Reports 9 introduces several new powerful features to address complex reporting requirements and to maximize the value of existing reports.

Report Parts

Report Parts provide an innovative rapid development approach to enabling the delivery of key content to individual users via wireless devices or portal applications. With Report Parts, report information is no longer bound to the page view. Specified parts of existing reports – charts, summary tables, key values, etc. - can be identified and integrated into portal or wireless applications. There is no need to recreate a report specifically for use within web and portal environments.

When used in conjunction with Guided Navigation (discussed below), Report Parts provide a tailored experience for end users to step through and view only the most critical information from one or more reports.

SQL Commands

Crystal Reports 9 has extended SQL commands imbedded within the designer to provide unlimited SQL control that will support any read functionality that the database supports. For example, unions and sub-selects can now be supported. You may also add parameters to the SQL commands and store them in the new Crystal Repository (discussed below) so that they can be shared and reused between reports.

Unicode Support

Crystal Reports 9 provides full support for Unicode strings. This enables Crystal Reports to display any Unicode data (any language) as well as to present multiple languages in a single report.

Productivity

With Crystal Reports 9, key features and enhancements have been added for increased productivity and reduced resource requirements when creating and integrating reports.

Crystal Repository

The Crystal Repository stores report objects – including custom functions, SQL commands, text objects, and bitmaps - in a central library allowing for centralized management, sharing and updating. Repository objects can be used across multiple reports. Updating is a single- point process where the update is applied to one instance of the object and it is automatically applied across all reports that use the object. Use of this new productivity-enhancing feature can greatly reduce the time and effort required for creating and maintaining large volumes of reports. As well, using this feature can help increase the quality and consistency in your reports.

Custom Functions

Crystal Reports 9 introduces the ability to reuse business logic through the creation of custom, formula-language-based functions. Written in either Crystal or Microsoft Visual Basic syntax, Custom Functions provide more power than regular formulas as they can be customized, reused and shared across multiple reports (when used in conjunction with the Crystal Repository).

Custom Templates

Crystal Reports 9 now offers the ability to create customized templates. With standardized formatting and logic, Custom Templates provides a quick solution for applying a consistent look and feel across all your reports.

Formula Workshop

An enhancement to the Crystal Reports Formula Expert, the Formula Workshop provides a single, centralized place to develop and maintain formulas and custom functions. The Formula Workshop also provides a new codeless Wizard, enhanced error tracking, and auto complete for easier creation of formulas and custom functions.

Flexibility

Crystal Reports 9 provides rich developer components for integrating reports into all major enterprise application development platforms – Java, .NET, and COM. A separate object model is provided to support each environment, yet developers can reuse code across multiple platforms for faster and more seamless report integration across all applications.

Java SDK

Crystal Reports 9 introduces a 100% Java SDK, a strong integration solution for developers to create and deliver reports in a Java application within a J2EE environment. A server-based Java report viewer renders reports to pure HTML or to WML for support of mobile clients.

Updated Microsoft Visual Studio .NET SDK

Crystal Reports 9 significantly extends report design and integration capabilities for developers using Crystal Reports for Visual Studio .NET. Developers upgrading to Crystal Reports 9 can take advantage of the benefits of new report viewers, more data access, additional exporting options, the fully functional standalone designer, and much more.

Enhanced COM SDK

Crystal Reports 9 continues to provide support for open COM-based components for rapid integration of reporting into applications. In conjunction with the Crystal Enterprise Report Application Server, Crystal Reports 9 offers the end user more functionality and independence than ever.

End User Interactivity

Crystal Reports 9 continues to provide innovative solutions for rich out-of-the-box end user interactivity, analysis, and customization. In conjunction with the Crystal Enterprise Report Application Server, Crystal Reports 9 offers the end user more functionality and independence than ever.

Interactive, Zero-Client Viewer

Crystal Reports 9 introduces a rich, new zero-client viewer for improved end user interaction with reports. It includes advanced smart search features for key data retrieval and enhanced exporting including the ability to export search results grids to Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, and HTML (which can be pasted into Email). Recipients of the results grid can then link back to the report and automatically navigate to the relevant data.

Guided Navigation

Guided Navigation provides seamless navigation paths between report objects. Data context is passed within navigation links to help users navigate from one key report object to another report object within the same report or in an entirely different report. Guided Navigation can either be created without code in the Crystal Reports designer or can be custom coded in a ASP or JSP page.

End users may view objects as a full report page or as a Report Part. Together with Report Parts, Guided Navigation simplifies the development process of delivering information to portals and wireless devices.

Support for Microsoft Office Smart Tags

Crystal Reports 9 includes support for Microsoft Smart Tags in Office XP. This enables end users to insert key report objects - including charts and tables - into Microsoft Outlook, Word, or Excel documents for instant viewing and refreshing* right from within the document.

**Refreshing of Smart Tags in Microsoft Outlook documents is supported via the Page Viewer only.*

General Usability Enhancements

Crystal Reports 9 also includes several enhancements to existing features for improved usability. Key enhancements include:

Side-by-Side Installation

- Support for installation and use of Crystal Reports 9 on the same machine as previous versions of Crystal Reports without any compatibility issues

Database Query Engine – Re-architected for increased power and speed.

Enhancements include:

- New database drivers for Oracle 8 and SQL-based DAO
- Support for multiple databases in a single report
- Improved client-side linking

Exports

- New Excel Exporting offering a fully format or a data only export to Excel
- Support for vector-based images for higher quality output
- New HTML Export with support for cascading style sheets
- Export search results from the Interactive Viewer in data grid format to Word, Excel or HTML for use in other documents. Link to parent reports form these result grids.

Cross-tabs/ OLAP grids

- Summaries on Running Total fields
- Choice of vertical and horizontal summary display
- New editable labels for summaries
- Percent of summary
- Support for relative positioning within a section

Charting

- New Gantt and Gage chart types
- Formatting improvements including: support for date-time, and numeric X-axis, in-place formatting, and enhanced conditional formatting

Formula Enhancement

- Formula debugging including display of formula error information at runtime
- Extension of formula string limit to 64,000 characters
- Full support of Unicode strings for access to new data types
- New Formula Workshop with improved error tracking and auto complete
- Support for Memo fields

Explorers and Wizards

- New Report Explorers for easier object-oriented viewing and editing of complex reports
- Repository Explorer to view the repository objects available for use in the report
- All Explorers are now dockable for better control of your desktop real estate
- Integrated Data Explorer (within the Design Wizards and Experts) for easier, faster design

What's New

- Re-architected Report Design Wizard for a simplified design process