TopSpeed®

May 26, 1998

Dear Colleague

By now, we hope you've seen that Clarion 5 Enterprise Edition has exciting new technologies that can directly benefit you. This letter has two purposes: to announce *an even more exciting technology* we're incorporating into Clarion 5, and to tell you about how Enterprise Edition technologies can fit in with *your* long range business goals and programming objectives.

The Vision

Perhaps more than other current Rapid Application Development tools, TopSpeed offers you **a clear and coherent picture of how we will fulfill your programming needs in the next several years**. Developers using other tools simply don't have *realistic* options to reuse existing code for deployment on new platforms. They're still "hitting the wall" due to product and language limitations. They're still experiencing what InfoWorld calls "DLL Hell"—the maintenance nightmare associated with system files or virtual machine classes that can be overwritten by other applications. These limitations raise questions about how competitive products can sustain growth in developer productivity in coming years.

TopSpeed has answers to all the specific problems noted above; so as a developer, you won't be slowed down by technology and/or platform changes. More importantly, we have a new answer, a *new vision*—one that will *further* **increase your productivity by an order of magnitude**.

This new technology is simple to explain. **The wizards that currently help you build applications and procedures are being programmed to *learn***. They'll *learn* your application preferences. They'll *learn* the way you work. They will cut the time that it takes you to customize a wizard-produced application by an order of magnitude. It's simple. Run a wizard, and get *exactly* the application you want. It will increase your productivity, perhaps like nothing before. This is going to provide continuing, increased payoffs every year. It reduces the most expensive part of software development and deployment—programmer labor costs—perhaps more than any single product, ever.
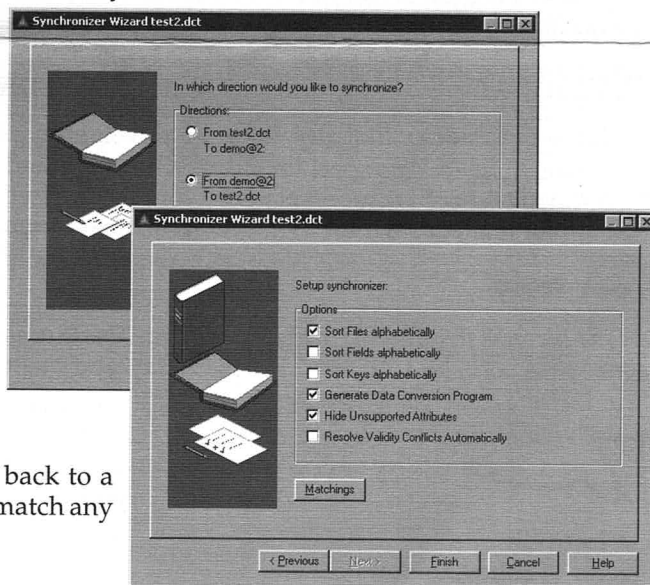
The automation/productivity gains that Enterprise delivers at each stage—design, development, deployment, and maintenance—allow you to **forget repetitive programming tasks and concentrate on *your* vision**. By that we mean the unique business processes and solutions that constitute the real value of your software.

The 20,000 Foot View

At a 20,000 foot view, there are two major benefits that Clarion 5 Enterprise Edition delivers to current Clarion developers. *Development automation* is the first. Just as important is *automating database design and deployment* via intelligent utilities. The Synchronizer, in particular, can help you expand the market for your applications. It delivers *true database independence*, so you can move your applications to any Client/Server database.

The Synchronizer imports the structure of any database into a Clarion database dictionary *automatically*. It brings in every bit of metadata—field properties, constraints, etc.—that it can access. That means you can run Clarion wizards against every part of any company's database. It means you can apply your own custom templates and procedures—the ones that represent the product that you've built and sold as your bread and butter application—to any existing database, desktop or Client/Server. It means you can define a new table, link it to an existing table, create it on the database server, and then build your application around those tables to easily extend a business solution (for example, adding a custom contact manager to a pre-packaged accounting system).
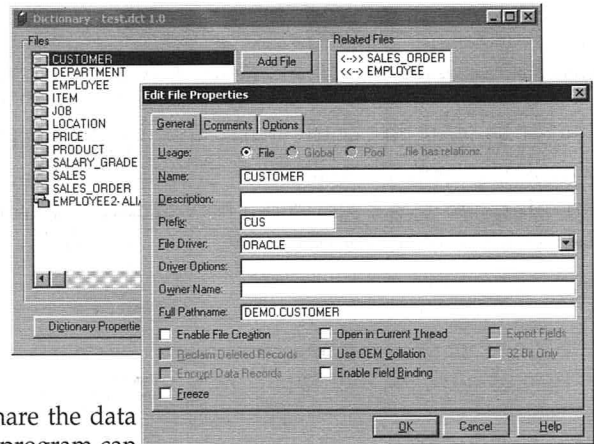
More importantly, if you are a consultant, you can come back to a site months later, automatically update your dictionary to match any

changes the Database Administrator has made since you were last there, and then *automatically* synchronize and recompile your application. *What other tool can do that?*

Desktop database developers also reap major benefits from Synchronizer. Here's why **Synchronizer is an essential tool for every Clarion programmer who creates applications for a living**:

- *It's the ultimate database utility.* It's almost as simple as thinking about changing the data structure, and it's done—completely *automatically*. It updates the structure, the data, and the application. If you thought the CPD 2.1 database utilities were powerful, you ain't seen nothin' yet. Synchronizer *automates* the transformation of data from one structure to another.

- *It answers the prayers of Clarion developers who use Btrieve.* Clarion developers' traditional affinity for this database (and its successors) has been a double-edged sword. As an affordable, reliable, low-maintenance, high performance database, nothing beats it. But working with a database you don't have the .DDF for is a bear. The DDF creation utility in the Dictionary Synchronizer is top quality. It *automates* creating or editing tables.

- *It delivers true database independence.* Every developer needs to share the data sometime. Whether exporting data to another format so another program can read it, or transforming the entire database and working from then on with the new format, Synchronizer *automates* it all. It even moves arrayed fields to databases that don't support arrays!

The Roadmap

Enterprise Edition is for *developers who provide software solutions for a living*, whether for desktop databases, Client/Server databases, or (with the Clarion 5 Enterprise Web Edition) for deployment inside browsers. The "enterprise" name comes not from the concept of usage by businesses whose far-flung users require access to remote databases, but instead refers to *any business enterprise*. In other words, any software designed for business use.

There *will* be a Clarion 5 Professional Edition, which we expect to release six months after Clarion 5 Enterprise ships. Professional Edition will benefit business owners, power users, and software developers who are *not necessarily* full-time programmers.

Knowing this, when should *you* move up to Clarion 5 Enterprise Edition? You will accrue some *very significant benefits* by jumping on the Enterprise bandwagon *now*:

- *You'll learn with everybody else at the same time.* When everyone in the forums and the newsgroups are on the same level—just getting to learn the technology—there are always more basic questions and answers in the discussion groups. It makes the learning easier, and more fun.

- *You'll hit the ground running.* You'll be in a position to deploy a very improved, more powerful application as soon as Enterprise is officially released.

- Members of the TopSpeed Development Centre are spending a great deal of time on the Enterprise beta newsgroup. Enterprise Edition is our biggest product ever, and *your input will be tremendously important*. You'll have *access to the thinking behind each new feature*, because when someone asks "why?" they'll take the time to explain. Right down to the blow by blow of how the inspiration for the new widget class came to them while they were riding the train one afternoon!

- *Receive a 100% credit (up to $900 total) towards your Enterprise upgrade price for any of the components you already own.* Many Clarion developers already own Data Modeller, Team Developer, TopSpeed Deployment Kit, or Business Math Library.

The timing, of course, like any software development schedule, is subject to change. But so far, Enterprise is progressing quickly. We expect to release *beta two* around the time this reaches your hands. Betas one and two have concentrated on the Synchronizer and component integration (e.g., the TopSpeed Version Control System is now a 32-bit applet that runs within the development environment). We expect things to move very swiftly.

Order Now

It's time for you to jump on the band wagon. *This is enabling technology that can grow both your business and your programming portfolio.* Call **800-354-5444** today, and mention *offer code EE4* when you order.

Sincerely,

John Iacovelli
Director of Sales Communications