

Seagate Crystal Reports 5 and 6

OLE Objects

Overview

This document helps you understand how OLE objects are treated in version 5 and 6 of Crystal Report Designer and Seagate Info Report Designer, by comparing the differences between linked and embedded OLE objects. Also included are instructions on inserting a picture into a report, and tips on troubleshooting OLE objects.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
INSERTING OLE OBJECTS INTO A REPORT	2
COMPARING LINKED VS. EMBEDDED OBJECTS	2
<i>Linked objects.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Embedded objects.....</i>	<i>3</i>
INSERTING A GRAPHIC/PICTURE AS AN OLE OBJECT	3
Using the Create New option	3
Using the Create from File option	3
<i>OLE and the Picture command</i>	<i>4</i>
UNDERSTANDING OLE OBJECT LIMITATIONS	4
CONTACTING CRYSTAL DECISIONS FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT	5

Introduction

Often when a graphic, spreadsheet, or some other object is inserted into a report, it may be necessary to change that object. Normally to make the changes, the following steps would have to be done:

1. Exit Crystal Report,
2. Open the original application,
3. Change the object,
4. Return to Crystal Reports,
5. Delete the object originally inserted, and
6. Insert the newly revised object.

All of these steps can be avoided using Object Linking and Embedding (OLE). OLE allows you to insert objects (OLE Objects) into a report from other applications (OLE server applications) and then use those applications from within Crystal Reports (CR) to edit the objects if necessary.

Inserting OLE objects into a report

There are several ways of inserting OLE objects into your application.

You can cut the object from an OLE server application and paste it in your report using the Paste Special command on the Edit menu. If the object can be pasted in multiple formats, you decide which format to use. For example, when you're inserting text from a Microsoft Word document, you can paste the text as Microsoft Word document text (which can be edited in Word) or as a metafile which is simply a non-editable picture of the text. Using the Paste Special command you can place either embedded or linked objects.

You can create a new object or import an existing one using the OLE Object command on the Insert menu. You can place either embedded or linked objects this way.

Finally, you can drag and drop an object from an OLE server application. You do this by opening CR in one window and the OLE server application in another, then dragging the object between the two. When you drag an object into a report, the object is embedded, not linked.

Comparing Linked vs. Embedded Objects

Since linked and embedded objects each have different properties, it is important for you to consider the capabilities of each when deciding which OLE format to use.

Linked objects

When you insert a linked object, Windows copies a snapshot of the data from a file that already exists. Only the image of the object is added to your report. The actual data remains with the original file.

When you open the object from within your report, the original file is opened inside the application that was used to create it. Any changes you make directly change the original file.

If you want the data in your object to remain available to other applications, and to always reflect the most current changes to the data, link the object to your report.

Embedded objects

You can create an embedded object from within CR, or you can create one using a file that already exists. The data, as well as the image of the object, is saved with your report.

If you want to create a new object for your report from scratch, or if you want to copy the information from an existing file and edit the data without ever affecting the original file, embed the object in your report.

If you change the original object, the embedded object does not change.

If you edit an embedded object, changes you make to the object are stored with the report file; the changes do not affect the original.

Inserting a graphic/picture as an OLE object

You can add already existing graphics/pictures to your reports as OLE objects or you can create new graphics/pictures from scratch.

Choose the OLE Object command from the Insert menu. The Insert Object dialog box appears. You have two options when it comes to OLE objects. You can:

- Insert an existing object
- or -
- Create a new object directly in CR using in-place editing.

Using the Create New option

Select the Object Type you want to create.

The associated program will take control of CR allowing you to create the object in place.

Using the Create from File option

1. Type in the full path of the object you want to insert.
 - If you do not know the path, click the Browse button to locate the object.
2. Check the link option if you want the object automatically updated. A frame approximating the size of the object (or icon) appears.
3. Position the OLE object where you want it to appear in your report.

OLE and the Picture command

If you place pictures in your report using the Object command on the Insert menu, the picture can be treated as either an embedded or linked object.

If you place pictures in your report using the Picture command on the Insert menu, however, Crystal Reports converts them into static OLE objects to enhance online and printing performance.

Static objects do not support in-place editing. If you want to edit the object in place, you will have to convert it to an editable type of object using the Convert command on the Edit menu.

Understanding OLE Object Limitations

- When you double-click an embedded OLE object, CR changes its menus and toolbars to those of the object's server application. When you are finished editing, click outside the object and the CR toolbars reappear.
- Windows 3.x shipped Microsoft Paintbrush (PBRUSH.EXE) as the native bitmap editor. Windows 95 is shipping Microsoft Paint (MSPAIN.T.EXE) as the new bitmap editor. While Windows 95 knows to register and convert PBRUSH.EXE OLE bitmaps as MSPAIN.T OLE bitmaps, the opposite is not true. You can open a report created in Windows 3.1 containing OLE bitmaps using Windows 95, however you can not open a Windows 95 OLE bitmap report in Windows 3.x. Thus, if you are going to be working back and forth between these two operating systems, it is best to create the reports under Windows 3.1 instead of under Windows 95.
- Crystal Reports only supports bitmap files as linked or embedded OLE objects. If a .jpg or .gif file is inserted in the report as an OLE object, it will be displayed as an icon only.

It is possible to insert .jpg images into the report as static pictures (Insert|Picture). However, it is not possible to insert .gif files as static picture images. The error message "Unrecognized bitmap format" will be displayed.

- When a multiple-page Word document is inserted as an OLE Object, only the first page is displayed. If the Word OLE Object is double clicked, the entire Word document is then displayed.
- OLE Objects are not supported when exporting the report to the following formats:
 - Excel
 - Lotus
 - Text
 - Word Perfect
 - Quattro Pro
- A report was distributed to a client, and when the report was run on the client's PC, the error message appears:

“Some links could not be updated because their sources are presently unavailable”

It was discovered that the client created his bitmap image using another graphic application (such as Corel), while the developer made his bitmap in MS Paint.

In order for a graphical OLE Link Object to function correctly, the bitmap association on the development and client PC must be to MS PAINT (if using Win95).

To change the association of a bitmap file:

1. In Windows Explorer, open the View menu and choose Options.
2. Select the File Types tab.
3. Ensure that Bitmap Images is to open to MS PAINT.

Crystal Reports should be shut down and reopened if an re-association is done.

NOTE

To test if an application is an OLE Server by double clicking that image in an OLE Container application (Word for example), and if a mini edit screen appears, then it is an OLE Server application. A edit screen would not appear if the application is not an OLE Server application.

Contacting Crystal Decisions for Technical Support

We recommend that you refer to the product documentation and that you visit our Technical Support web site for more resources.

Self-serve Support:

<http://support.crystaldecisions.com/>

Email Support:

<http://support.crystaldecisions.com/support/answers.asp>

Telephone Support:

<http://www.crystaldecisions.com/contact/support.asp>