

Rockin' With FoxPro

Whil Hentzen

BG Final edit/spell check completed 11/26/95. Returned to Whil for review and submission. Congrats and Godspeed, Whil.

Version icons: NONE

Platform icons: NONE

Figures: NONE

File for companion disk: NONE

Whil, FYI, in all articles except the editorial and tips, we need an intro here using the *_Intro* style. You can hold a gun to author's heads, and they won't write 'em. You'll usually end up doing it.

What do you say when you're asked to join the All-Stars? Well, first of all, you say "Yes." But I'm still a little cowed, following in the footsteps of Hart, Slater and Grommes. As Bob has previously mentioned, this has been an orderly and planned transition—well, as orderly as could be between two guys who are both working 100 hour weeks. As you know, Bob's demands grew greater than the time he had available, and something had to give. Fortunately, having written for *FoxTalk* for several years, I was in a good position to jump in.

The changing of the guard is a good opportunity to review what's worked in the past, and to preview what we might see in the future. As you're aware, *FoxTalk* has been the high-end technical journal for FoxBase and FoxPro for nearly a decade, and we're committed to keeping this ground. FoxPro has grown to be such a huge product that it would be virtually impossible for any single publication to cover it A through Z—and fortunately, there are a number of excellent resources that serve the various needs of FoxPro users and developers. Our niche is the serious, professional developer who is interested in developing robust, high quality custom and vertical market applications with the various dialects of FoxPro, and who doesn't need introductory lessons in the product. We are going to continue to target these individuals.

A primary concern of many of you is, specifically, "How is Hentzen going to balance FoxPro 2.x and VFP?" and more generally, "What am I going to get out of FoxTalk in the next year or two?" Let me first explain what my work-a-day world looks like. There's often a concern that someone on the author/speaker circuit has lost touch with the real world—that they spend so much time writing that they don't really deal with customers anymore, and that their viewpoints become more theoretical than practical. While I've had my share of the "circuit," my business is writing custom apps. I run a shop with about a half dozen people, and all we do is custom Fox work. About a third is DOS, believe it or not, half is FoxPro for Windows 2.x, and the remainder is VFP. As I'm writing this, I'm wrapping up the delivery of a FoxPro for DOS app that has to run on about 50 486/33s with 4M of RAM out in the field.

This isn't intended to be a sales pitch for my firm—rather, what I'm saying is that we have the same needs as many of you: supporting DOS 2.x legacy apps, working with Windows 3.1 on machines that don't have a local hard disk, and trying to explain to a potential customer about the "tradeoffs" (isn't *that* a diplomatic way of putting it?) of running a VFP app on an 8M Win 3.11 machine.

I'm just as interested in close to the edge (or over the edge? <g>) work in VFP as the next guy, and we're certainly going to be at the forefront of VFP coverage in *FoxTalk*, but I've got one foot firmly planted in the real world as well.

What does this mean to you? First and foremost, you're not going to be stranded if your bread and butter still comes from earlier versions of FoxPro. No, I don't think we'll be dealing much with FoxBase or FoxPro 1.0 anymore; there *is* a limit, after all. But FoxPro 2.x apps are going to be with us for a while, and

we'll continue to cover these platforms as well as state of the art development techniques with Visual FoxPro.

Second, remember that FoxTalk has been the high-end publication for FoxPro developers for nearly a decade. I remember when I started reading it back in the late '80s. I considered myself fortunate if I understood half of the articles, and I know many of your professional careers have grown up paralleling FoxTalk as well. As I mentioned, we are committed to providing high level, in-depth techniques and strategies for FoxPro developers. You won't find articles like "How to use DO WHILE" or "Writing your first application with VFP's wizards" in FoxTalk. These subjects are covered well in other publications, and our readers have no interest or need for them.

However, we are going to increasingly spend time not only on complex technical issues, but also on the strategic use of the tools we have. In other words, we're not going to be content with showing you how to create the latest cool class library or super duper builder, but we'll go one step further and help you make this knowledge a competitive advantage in your business. The information you find in FoxTalk will not only help you write better programs, but also to deliver them with higher quality and to help you or your firm make more money doing so.

I am passionately interested in making this happen, and I'm very interested in hearing from you about what you're looking for. Please contact me on CompuServe at 70651,2270 whenever the urge strikes. Our goal is to help you write and deliver better FoxPro 2.x and 3.0 applications. As I've been known to say before, "Software is always better when written at 105 decibels."

Let's rock.