
Appendix B

Creating a Report Dictionary

Introduction

For any Xbase database platform, you can create a report dictionary file that provides descriptive information about database fields. When a report dictionary file is available to R&R, the descriptive field information appears in the Status Bar when the user highlights a documented field on a report layout. You can also specify that this field information appear in all field lists in R&R by selecting either “Report Dictionary Descriptions” or “Both” in the Field Lists box on the Options ⇒ Preferences dialog (see Chapter 6, “Setting Defaults,” in *Using R&R* for information about the Preferences dialog settings).

In the Runtime, field descriptions are available when you run the interactive query interface using the RI_QUERY field in the runtime control file.

For example, if you have a database file BENEFITS.DBF that contains the fields HLTH_INS and LIFE_INS, you can provide comments such as “Name of health insurer” and “Name of life insurer” for those fields in a report dictionary file. When an R&R user is inserting fields on a report, the comments will appear in the Status Bar (and, optionally, in the field list itself) when the user highlights LIFE_INS or HLTH_INS in the Field menu.

You can use the R&R Dictionary Maintenance Utility or your database software to create a report dictionary; the dictionary file must have the extension DBF. To make the report dictionary file available to R&R, you must enter the name and directory of the file and its index in the Files box on the Default File Settings dialog (accessed by selecting Options ⇒ File Settings).

Contents of Report Dictionary Files

A report dictionary file must include fields for the database name, field name, and description for every field you want to document. It can also include an optional field that lets you specify whether or not you want R&R to display the field’s type, length, and number of decimal places along with the field description you supply in the dictionary file. When the user highlights a documented field, R&R uses the database name and field name to search for a match in the dictionary file index, then displays the

corresponding information in the Status Bar (or in the field list). Do not include the path or extension with the database name in the dictionary file.

Figure B.1 lists the fields in the report dictionary file. The first three fields (TABLE_NAME, FIELD_NAME, and COMMENT) are required.

Note that the report dictionary field names are defaults that can be overridden with entries in RRW.INI. To override these default field names, you must edit the [Report Dictionary] section of RRW.INI. Use the form <default fieldname>=<override fieldname>. For example, to specify a field name of FILE to override the default field name TABLE_NAME, include the following entry:

```
TABLE_NAME=FILE
```

Field Name	Type	Length	Contents
TABLE_NAME	Character	8	Name of database file that contains the documented field.
FIELD_NAME	Character	10	Name of database or predefined calculated field.
COMMENT	Character	80	Description of database or predefined calculated field.
EXTENDED	Logical	1	Optional switch for displaying field type, length, and number of decimal places.
FORMULA	Memo		Calculated field formula.
FIELD_HIDE	Logical	1	Logical value controlling whether a given field appears in field lists in R&R.
FILTR_HIDE	Logical	1	Logical value controlling whether a given field will be available for use in a Runtime query.
INST_HIDE	Logical	1	Logical field controlling whether a given field will appear in instant report layouts.

Figure B.1 Fields in Report Dictionary Files

When the EXTENDED field contains a true value, R&R will precede the field's description from the COMMENT field with additional information, including the field's type as well as the field's size in the database file and number of decimal places, where applicable. If you do not include the EXTENDED field in the dictionary file, or if the field is empty, R&R assumes a false value.

The lengths given in Figure B.1 indicate the maximum number of characters of each field that R&R will read. If the fields in the dictionary file are longer, R&R will ignore the additional characters. If the value of EXTENDED is .F., R&R will display an 80-character comment. If EXTENDED is .T., R&R will truncate the comment as necessary, in order to display the additional field information.

FORMULA is a memo field that can be used to supply a predefined calculated field to R&R reports. If a value is specified for TABLE_NAME, the field “belongs” to that table and will be available whenever the table is used in a report. In this case, the expression for the predefined calculation can include references to field names from the specified table (including other predefined calculated fields from that table), constants, R&R functions, and UDFs. If TABLE_NAME is blank, the field is treated as a “constant” calculation and is available to all R&R reports; in this case, the field expression can include references to other “constant” predefined calculated fields, constants, R&R functions, and UDFs. Although you cannot edit a predefined calculation within R&R, you can copy its expression as the starting point for a new calculated field formula.

FIELD_HIDE, FILTR_HIDE, and INST_HIDE are “security” fields that can be used to control which data is visible to the user.

- If FIELD_HIDE has a true value, the field specified by that report dictionary record will not be included in R&R field lists; in addition, any existing report that uses the specified field will not run in either interactive R&R or the Runtime.
- If FILTR_HIDE is true, the specified field will not be available for use in a Runtime query.
- If INST_HIDE is true, the specified field will not be included in instant reports.

Indexing Report Dictionary Files

Report dictionary files must be indexed on the UPPER of TABLE_NAME concatenated with the UPPER of FIELD_NAME, as in UPPER(TABLE_NAME)+UPPER(FIELD_NAME). The index file must have the same name as the dictionary file. If your index files are in tagged MDX, CDX, or WDX format, the tag must have the same name as the dictionary file and the index file.

If a default index extension is specified in your configuration, R&R will try to locate the report dictionary index file by using the dictionary file name with

the default index extension. If no default index extension is specified, R&R will try to locate the report dictionary index file by attaching the extensions NDX, MDX, NTX, IDX, CDX, and WDX to the report dictionary file name until it finds the index file.

R&R will search for the report dictionary index file in the directory where the dictionary file resides, then in the default index directory, if one is specified, and then in the startup directory.