

Product Announcement

Available for immediate release



ddxPort – Integration without modification

November 28, 2005

NOTE: THE INTENT OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS TO INFORM DASH CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS ABOUT VISION, UPCOMING AND IN-PROCESS DEVELOPMENTS TO ASSIST THEM IN THEIR PLANNING EFFORTS – *AND TO SOLICIT FEEDBACK*. PORTIONS OF THIS PRODUCT ENHANCEMENT HAVE BEEN RELEASED, BUT MANY ARE AS YET STILL UNDER DEVELOPMENT. THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT SIGNAL IMMINENT RELEASE OF A FEATURE OR PRODUCT, AND IMPLIES NO SPECIFIC DELIVERY SCHEDULE. **FEATURES, PRODUCTS, TIME-LINES, AND OTHER DETAILS DISCUSSED WITHIN ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE, REMOVAL WITHOUT NOTICE.**

ddxPort Feature Objective

Expand usage of ddx products by easing if not eliminating complex integration efforts. Allow ddx products to consume, deliver and archive structured documents produced from most host-systems as well as stand-alone software without modification or code that is invasive into the host or other software. The end result should work with a variety of hosts and databases, as well as documents produced from non-host applications (documents, forms and reports from MS Word, Access, Excel, CAD, etc).

Overview

ddxPort technology enables users of Dash's *ddxSuite* (*ddxConnection* and/or *ddxArchive*) to easily and non-invasively integrate new structured documents and systems into their delivery and archive systems. (i.e.: With no modifications). This is done by 1) providing a means to allow a user to "train" ddx to recognize a document type from a user-developed "map" of the document, and 2) based on map details, allowing ddx to retrieve additional information about that document that may be needed to properly deliver and/or archive it. After this map exists, processing a document (delivering and archiving) is as easy as printing to Dash's new *ddxPrinter* (print driver).

This is not OCR – therefore scanned documents will not be processed in the manner described here. However, there are implications from which users may receive OCR-related benefits. In the end, *ddxPort* may be able to facilitate OCR. See the discussion on OCR implications below.

This process assumes that the document and/or the host database has all of the information required, and is accessible from ddx. Consistent document format and structure (at least for a few special elements of the document) is critical to the operation of *ddxPort*. This feature will be available for Windows 2000, XP and 2003 environments.

Day to Day processing

Once a *map* is developed, delivery and archival are as easy as printing. Simply print to the Dash *ddxPrinter*. You can now print the form or report over and over again. If a map exists, the rules contained within the map are used to determine how the document is processed by ddx – and it is handled automatically. If a map does not exist, you are asked if you would like to save the document (as a PDF), print it, or cancel.

The document map, however, is a critical first step and must come before day-to-day operation.

Mapping

The process begins by capturing a document as a PDF using *ddxPort*'s print driver. Then using this captured document as a template, you "teach" ddx how to recognize that type of document the next time it encounters it: you will create a "map" of the form or report. This map is used to automatically "fill in" ddx parameters, like fax number, email addresses and/or archive key information.

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Each map contains the rules that tell ddx how to process a document, and where to retrieve that information from. Within it are a variety of attributes about the captured document:

- What is the Form Identifier – a piece of text on the document that uniquely identifies it as a specific type of report (My Costing Summary Report) or form (Invoice). This value should be constant each time you print the document. It must be unique across the entire company. A form ID number is envisioned as most common approach, although report headings may suffice.
- What is the Document's key – this is used to mine a database for additional information if it is required. Example: Invoice Number. This value will most likely vary each time you print the form.
- Data used for processing can come from a variety of sources:
 - Printed Values: Other elements of text that appear on the document itself may be used to fill in ddx parameters. These will be identified within the document map. These values could vary at the time you print each individual document – like customer name or date.
 - Fixed Values: these are values that you can enter, but will remain the same each time you print the document – like a Division code or Archive "Document Type".
 - Mined Values: When data is needed, and does not appear on the document itself, *ddxPort* can retrieve the data from an external database – like your ERP system. Parameters include:
 - Connection Information, like an SQL Server connection string or ODBC DSN Name.
 - Document-level SQL Statement – for gathering from the host's database information pertaining to the document - it's delivery preferences and archive settings. Only 1 item should be returned with this SQL statement, as it relates to the entire document. This statement is likely to return a variety of ddx parameters, like Division, Archive Y/N, Fax Cover-page parameters, etc.
 - 1-to-Many SQL Statement – for gathering repeated ddx parameter entries from the host system database. For example, you may wish to retrieve a list of drawings to be sent with your document. The 1-to-many SQL statement may return a list of results that will be used to facilitate this, or other repeatable ddx parameters.

Implications for Scanned documents and OCR (Optical Character Recognition)

With the advent of *ddxPort*, users that scan paper documents *may* also receive benefit from the new technology. Dash has no plan to supply OCR capabilities embedded within it's products – but is open to the possibility of integration with 3rd party OCR packages.

Many OCR software packages exist on the market today. Some of those packages are capable of producing searchable PDF output – for example, Scansoft's Omni-Page Pro™ (on which our preliminary tests were run). While the state-of-the-art in OCR technology still only yields a 95-98% accuracy rate, our customers indicate that this may be sufficient for their archival needs – particularly because *ddx* is capable of indexing documents in multiple ways. If one method is inaccurate, the potential that others are also inaccurate is small.

ddxPort technology includes the capability to read data from many types of PDF documents. Therefore, it is our vision to make it possible to create maps from documents that are scanned, then OCR-processed to produce searchable PDF. This is an avenue which we will continue to explore.

Status as of 11/28/2005

Dash currently has *ddxPort* in an SQL Server-based production environment, is in the process alpha testing various refinements and additions to the product. Not all features described above are included at this time, and many have yet to be developed. Notably absent at this point in time is a ODBC compatibility – which will limit the immediate impact on many existing *ddx* customers. However, much of this exists in the production/alpha/beta environment today.

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Various interim releases over the coming months are highly likely to contain pieces of this vision. Indeed, portions of the ddxPort underpinnings have already been released to all ddx users as of November 15, 2005. We expect continued evolution of the concept in the future although it is unclear how quickly and to what extent as we continue to gauge market interest.

We believe that this is a promising direction and will continue to pursue – although market demand can, and will effect our plans. Packaging and pricing for this new product feature has yet to be determined as of this writing. It is, however, viewed as likely to be available only in the Enterprise editions of the ddxSuite. Please contact Dash or your sales representative for current information.

Please send any and all feedback, comments and questions to Jim Van Hecke at Dash – james.vanhecke@dashdev.com.

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