

# Visual DataFlex Roadmap 2011

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# Where we are now

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- Over the last five years our major VDF development projects have been
  - A completely new development Studio
  - A new Windows menu system
  - Windows application skinning
  - Integrated table and DD modeling in the Studio
  - A new set of Windows grids
  - And of course, many other new features
    - As Stephen said, check out the “What’s New” section
  - What to do next?



# WebApp

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- WebApp deserves and is going to get some major attention
- So lets talk about AJAX



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# History of VDF AJAX

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- 2004
  - The birth of a new, modest, unnamed WebApp project
  - Started as a way to create a better WebApp sample
- 2005
  - Added AJAX style features to the sample
  - It was felt that these changes were needed to create a proper sample
- 2006-2008
  - The AJAX framework emerges
  - Used new WebApp sub-classes and JavaScript classes to build real AJAX style applications
  - No longer just a sample
- 2009
  - The AJAX Library Emerges
  - AJAX becomes the recommended way to write WebApps
- 2011...



# What's Next?

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- We've been evaluating the current AJAX framework and web application market and concluded that
  - AJAX technology has staying power
    - It has remained the top method for writing professional web-applications
  - DataFlex style applications have staying power
    - There is a real value in bringing DataFlex style applications to the Web
  - AJAX, WebApp and the VDF Framework is a powerful combination
  - The current AJAX framework and its implementation is really, really good

# VDF 2011 and WebApp

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- AJAX = WebApp
  - As of VDF2011 (17.0-17.1) AJAX will be fully integrated into VDF
  - AJAX will no longer be just a recommended way of writing WebApp applications. It will be *the way* to write WebApp applications
  - We are still defining exactly how we will do this and what it will mean to the product
  - We have a general idea of what we want to do
  - We would like to share with you what we are currently considering
  - We are giving you this information early so we can get your feedback
  - Here is our *proposed* WebApp roadmap for the next couple of years



# Our WebApp AJAX WebApp

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- Supports the DataFlex style of application on the web
  - Focused on data entry and reporting style applications
  - Concentrate on our core strength
- Make it feel more like an application than a web page
- Lower the entry point for creating professional looking data entry web-applications
- Developers should be able to write basic Web applications from within the Studio
- Developers will need a minimum of HTML and JavaScript knowledge to write this application
- However, more advanced developers will be able to use JS/CSS and HTML to do great things



# WebApp Proposal

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- Full Integration of AJAX into Visual DataFlex
  - It will no longer be a library
  - Old samples removed, new samples added
  - Better documentation, better integration into the help system
  - Easier installation
  - Dealing with legacy WebApps to be determined



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# WebApp Proposal

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- Web Framework changes
  - Extend and complete the AJAX Framework
    - Support ability to build *complete* applications
    - just like windows
  - Redefine the balance between HTML and JavaScript
    - Rely more on JavaScript as the basis for building our web controls
    - JavaScript is the future
  - Create web controls directly in the WBO
    - Code to create web controls will be represented as VDF objects
    - Controls can be defined without HTML or JavaScript
    - Still maintain ability to generate web-pages in HTML and JavaScript
  - Application in a page

# WebApp Proposal

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## – Studio Integration

- Automatic menu generation of views and reports
  - Just like windows
- Preview of pages that use WBO based web controls
- More wizards
  - create WebApps
  - create web-views
  - create web-reports



# WebApp Proposal

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- Web control improvements
  - Incremental improvement of our web controls
  - Provide ability to add third party web-controls
- Security system
  - Extend the WebApp login / user rights system
  - Possibly add this to the windows framework
- Keep it low level extendable
  - Capable of being used with other visual frameworks and controls
    - e.g., Ability to create iPad applications as demonstrated here

# Windows and Other

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- While WebApp will be an area of focus we will not ignore the other parts of VDF
- We have a list of non WebApp enhancements and features we'd like to pursue
- We are in the process of evaluating what can and should be done next
- We are not prepared to discuss the specific items
- However, there is one item that has been requested over and over and clearly came to the top of everyone's wish list



# Longer File Names

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- We want to extend the allowable length of table names
  - Allow longer SQL table names
  - Allow longer embedded table names
- It is our goal to provide this in our next release



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# Visual DataFlex and You

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- Your needs play an essential part in our development
- We listen to you
- We treat you as a member of the development team (except we are nicer to you)
- As mentioned earlier, you won't get this kind of attention from most companies



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# That reminds me of a story

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- Four devices, an iPod, an iPhone/3, an iPhone/4 and an iPad walk into a (genius) bar and sit on their docking connectors. They look around for some microphones to hook up with...



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# We Provide *Continuity*

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- It matters
- While you don't always demand compatibility, you need continuity
- We understand that moving *your* successful application forward requires continuity
- We know this and respect this
- We know that you are counting on us help make your applications better, year after year
  
- As we all move down the road DAW is committed to providing this continuity



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Thank you



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