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The Quick Answer
The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Q&A
September 2003
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Sesame Seeds

Easy Merge Letters, Labels & Envelopes with Sesame Data

WILLIAM HALPERN

WE are continually asked why Sesame does not include a built-in word processor. The answer is rather simple. One of the two best word processors in the world — Microsoft Word or WordPerfect — is probably already installed on 99% of the computers our users will be sitting in front of. We did not want to compete with these fine products. We wanted to utilize their power and versatility to complement Sesame.

Almost anyone who works with a database manager needs a way to print merge letters, envelopes or mailing labels using the data in their records. We have already shown that Sesame has three ways of doing this:

- Free-Form Sesame reports.
- Printing-related programming commands.
- Sesame ODBC with an external word processor.

All of these methods are powerful and available to Sesame users. They each have their strengths and weaknesses. Your choice depends on your needs and skill levels. Each will require some familiarization and practice.

It gets easier

However, our potential customers have been asking for a really quick and easy way to perform mail merge operations from Sesame. We have it for you. No special functions, no programming, no additional drivers are required. Merge procedure # 4 (our favorite) is a simple delimited ASCII file export.

Built into Sesame's export facilities are several features that make this procedure fast, flexible, easy to accomplish, and compatible with both Microsoft Word and WordPerfect. It's even better, in our opinion, than what you can do with Q&A. These features are:

- The ability to export data, on-the-fly, from a group of selected database records, without leaving those records. (Not possible in Q&A.)
- The ability to include in the export some or all of the fields in those records.
- The ability to automatically include a field name header record in the export file. (Not supported by Q&A.)
- The ability to export blank (empty) fields as true nulls or blanks. (Q&A exports an empty field as a *space* which *is* a value.)

What does all this mean? Combining these Sesame export capabilities with the built-in text file merge capabilities of both Word and WordPerfect makes creating a merge document from your Sesame database as easy as this:

1. In Sesame, you retrieve and sort the records you want to include in your merge document or mailing labels.
2. Select *Export* from the Spec Window in the lower left corner of the screen. Click on the fields you want to include in your letter, or simply click *Set All*. Click *Run*.

3. At Sesame's ASCII Export options screen, click *Field Name Header*, then type in a filename (it's best to use a ",txt" filename extension) and location for the export file. Leave all the other settings at their defaults (comma separation, delimit strings, and double quote delimiter) and click *Accept*.

4. Open Word or WordPerfect and use the program's Wizards or menus to create your merge letter, envelope, or labels, selecting your data source as Text Files (*.txt) and choosing the export file you just created in Sesame. Insert the merge fields in your document using the facilities provided, and you're ready to merge print.

It's important to understand that this final step #4 needs to be performed only once for each combination of merge document/merge data file. Both word processors enable you to associate (link) a merge document (including an envelope or mailing label template) with your data source filename. This way, the next time you open the same merge document, it will automatically connect with your Sesame export file, even when the database records included in that file have changed.

The point is, you do *not* have to re-create the merge document each time you want to print the same merge letter, envelope or label. All that is required is that the structure of the associated merge data file — along with its filename and location — remain the same.

Another important thing to remember is that you can automate, with macros, most if not all the steps in Sesame and your word processor.

With WordPerfect, you have to take a slightly different tack to get the best results. In WordPerfect Office 11, for example, you click *File/Open* and select your export file. You then choose *Convert from ASCII (DOS) Delimited Text* and import the file as a *Merge Data File* with *First record contains field names* checked. You then save the resulting file as a WordPerfect document named something like *Sesame Merge*, which WordPerfect saves with a ".DAT" filename extension.

You can now start a new document, select *Sesame Merge.dat* as your data source merge file for it, and insert your fields. When you're ready to print, click on the *Merge* button and select *Merge to a new document*.

In WordPerfect, the key is opening the export (text) file *first*, letting it run an automatic conversion on it, then saving the resulting file it as a WordPerfect *merge data file* to merge with your document.

Check your documentation

Both Word and WordPerfect have good help and documentation on merging with external data from a text file. We can't go into this in detail because the steps vary between the two products, between different versions of the same product, and may additionally depend on the operating system you're using. Suffice it to say that the average user should be able to learn how to do a merge printing with a Sesame export file — in either word processor — in just a few minutes.

It's as easy as "1-2-3-4"! Okay, we stretched it by one, but it really *is* easy — and it brings all the power and versatility of the two word processing giants to your Sesame data. Do it just once and you will be amazed at how fast you can create and merge-print your information. If you save your merge document, you will be able to simply retrieve a different set of data, export it to the same filename, and print a new set of merge letters in a flash.

Our very first try at a printing a merge letter using this procedure took only five minutes — and most of that was spent typing the body of the letter.

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Sesame Seeds

Sesame Report Writer Brief

ERIKA YOXALL

IT goes without saying that reports are a key part of any database management system. You work hard to get the data into your databases. Now you want to organize and summarize that data in a way that can intelligently inform you about important conditions, trends, and relationships between the various kinds of information in your database fields and records.

Sesame's Q&A Translator will translate your existing Columnar reports. We bring in your Retrieve Spec information, Column/Sort Spec information, and Derived Columns. The difference in mechanics between Sesame's report engine and Q&A's means that translated reports may require some tweaking in Sesame to get them to look "just so," but we've been able to do most of the work for you in the Translator.

Since so many future Sesame users have been asking for the lowdown on creating reports in Sesame, we thought this brief would be helpful. Though we cannot possibly cover all the features and capabilities of Sesame's Report Writer in the course of an article, this brief will give you a good introduction to them.

The mechanics

At its heart, the Sesame Report engine is an HTML (*Hypertext Markup Language*) generator. It produces web pages. When you print directly to the printer, Sesame calls your operating system's HTML printer to do so. When you request Print Preview, a web page is generated and displayed in your default browser. Regardless of the type of output, the Report Writer produces HTML. And this provides some valuable advantages:

- HTML is a highly ***transportable*** format. The reports you produce can be displayed and printed on any platform.

- HTML is a highly ***importable*** format. All the Microsoft Office products know how to open a web page. Microsoft Word (WordPerfect, too) will open it as a page. Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Access will automatically locate and import tables in the generated Sesame report. Our report HTML is generic enough to work with almost any browser.

- Sesame's Report Writer produces a ***multi-purpose*** document. Nobody will need a special "snapshot" viewer to view Sesame reports. They can be treated like normal documents. They can also be emailed (and will be nicely displayed by most email readers) or uploaded to a Web site as web pages without requiring conversion.

- We can make use of the built-in capabilities of web browsers. The HTML standard expects the browser to handle certain page layout issues. By taking advantage of this, Sesame ***requires less of the user***. The browser will arrange the data so that it fits on the screen. If you then print the report, the browser will automatically arrange things to fit on a printed page. This allows you to simply lay out your data, knowing that it will be arranged to fit. You can take full advantage of screen size and scrolling if you do not intend to print, rather than being bound to paper widths.

- HTML allows for ***interactive*** reports. If you produce a report containing hyperlinks, those links can be followed by clicking on them, just like any other web page.

On the other hand, this approach to report design introduces some conceptual hurdles.

- Sesame's Report Writer has no Page Layout settings, such as margins and paper size. The browser manages all of that.

- The Report Writer has no real "pages" in the traditional sense. A report is one long document. Pages only come into play if you actually print the report, at which point the browser, again, takes over and prints it to fit your printer's settings and capabilities.

You do not create a Sesame report by placing sized objects on a canvas. There is no need to fuss with drawing and resizing and aligning things. The data will always fit. We believe this will work very nicely for most Sesame users. There will be some who must have finer control than HTML allows. For such needs, Sesame's SBasic Print command set is rich, and supports requirements like precision printing and absolute positioning.

The interface

The current report writer norm is a striated or "banded" interface a la Microsoft Access, Crystal Reports, ACT! and many other programs. We have not taken this approach for a variety of reasons. Instead, Sesame's Report Writer interface uses a simpler "building block" approach. You simply drop elements representing text and data into the desired report section in the order you want them to appear in the output.

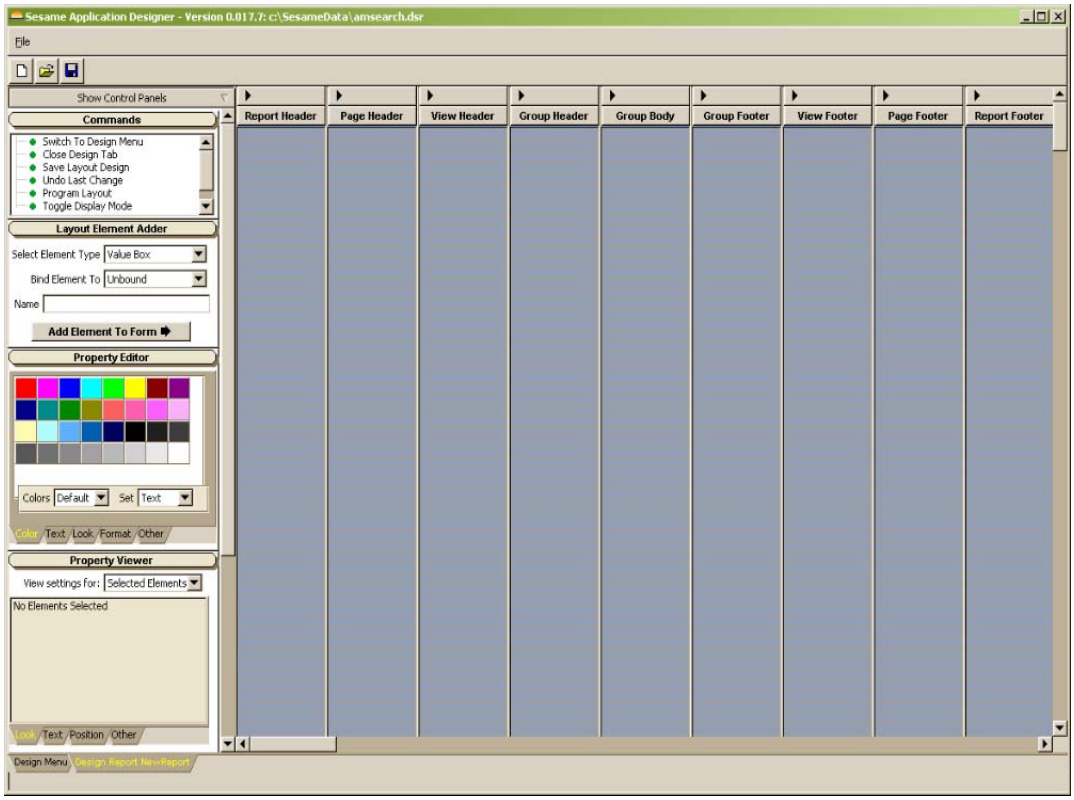

Figure 1. A new empty report in Report Writer.

You can set properties such as font and color on these elements using the same interface as the Sesame Form Designer. You can also specify whether you want the data arranged as a columnar report or as a merge letter (Freeform report). Report elements can be set to display a field value and/or programmed ("derived columns") using the full SBasic command set. The screen shots throughout this article will show the additional details.

Miscellaneous

Some additional points worth mentioning are these:

- You can attach Saved Specs (Retrieve and/or Sort) to a Report. If either or both specs are not attached, Sesame will use the current result set and sort order. For example, you can attach a Sort Spec, but still retrieve the particular records you want to include in the report.

- You can create "Derived columns" by placing an unbound value box element on the report and setting it's value in programming. (An "unbound" value means that it is not a field in the database.)

- Elements can be made invisible, so that they can be referred to in programming but will not appear on the report output.

- As desired, you can use static text elements and/or programming to add raw HTML to the report to create fancy formatting — especially in Freeform Reports.

- A Report can contain multiple views, each with it's own elements and settings. For example, you can create a single report that first prints a columnar table of overdue account information, then prints a merged collection letter for each of those accounts.

Figure 1 shows a new empty report. There is a column for each section of the report. Columns can be opened and closed by clicking the ▶ button at the top of each section.

Here's how the nine Report Designer columns break down:

Report Header — prints once at the beginning of the Report.

Page Header — prints once at the top of each page. This should be used in a limited manner, if at all. The Report Writer generates HTML, which does not handle the concept of "pages" in a predictable way. In addition, the browser will attach it's own page header and footer when printing, unless you clear these via the browser's Page Setup feature.

View Header — prints once at the beginning of each Report View. Views are explained further ahead.

Group Header — prints each time a Group Break occurs. Column headers for Table Reports should be placed in this section.

Group Body — prints for each record in the report. Column content for Table Reports should be placed in this section.

Group Footer — prints each time a Group Break occurs. Summary calculations for columns (Subtotals) in Table Reports should be placed in this section.

View Footer — prints once at the end of each Report View. Summary Calculations (Grand Totals) for the entire View should be placed in this section.

Page Footer — prints once at the bottom of each page. See Page Header for limitations.

Report Footer — prints once at the end of the Report.

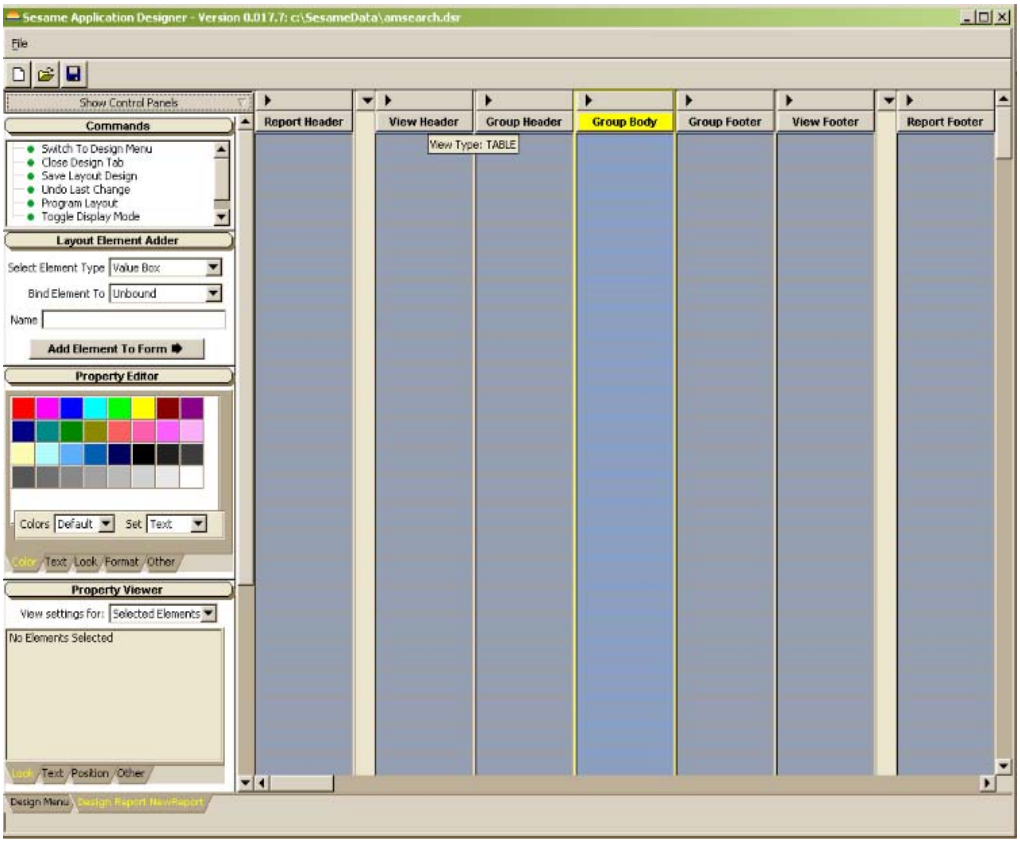

Figure 2. Here, the Page Header and Page Footer sections are closed. (Compare with Figure 1.)

In Figure 2 the Page Header and Page Footer sections are closed (so not shown) and you can't see the mouse pointer. When this screen was grabbed, the mouse pointer was hovering over the View Header section title. Where appropriate, the section title displays a pop-up tooltip showing its properties. In this case, you can see that this View is of *type Table* (as opposed to Freeform). Clicking the section title brings up a property editor, where section properties can be changed.

The Group Body section is active as indicated by the background color and highlighting. When you add elements to a report using the Layout Element Adder, they are placed in the active section.

Figure 3 on page 9 shows what a basic columnar report might look like. This report is based on the AMSEARCH database — a translated Q&A database that we often use for development-related testing. It was created in less than three minutes, including formatting enhancements. All the properties of the report are visible in the Property Viewer, though each element placed on the report always shows either two or three pieces of information, as follows:

1. Type of Information: This is also partially indicated by the element's color. There are four "families" of elements:

- ***Static (Brown)*** — the information type is "Static Text" or "Static Picture." (Note: Since this document was produced, the color code for Static has been changed to Gold.)

- ***Value Box (Blue)*** — the information type is always "Value."

- ***Page Layout (Grey)*** — the information type indicates which page layout element will be used. The choices are: Space, Newline, Page Break, and Line.

- ***Summary Calculation (Purple)*** — the information type shows the type of summary calculation to be performed. Choices are: Sum, Average, Count, Variance, Standard Deviation, High, Low, and Median.

2. ***Element Name***: This is the name by which the element can be referred in programming. It is enclosed in

Continues on page 9

@Help

EDITED BY WILLIAM HALPERN

XP Server Won't Support Enough Users

I just replaced my old Windows 98 machine that I used as a server for Q&A with a new Windows XP machine. I read where you have said that Q&A runs fine in XP. However, all of my people can't work in the same databases anymore. It seems that some can get in and work but not all of them. I get messages that my user count has been exceeded. Is there something with Windows XP and Q&A networking that doesn't match? I have 13 user licenses.

Jonathon

The problem here is not with Q&A. If you read the message carefully, you'll see it is a Windows message. Q&A runs perfectly fine in Windows XP. The real issue here is that Microsoft took steps to make sure that you could not really use XP as a server. They want you using Windows 2000 or 2003 *Server*. Windows XP Pro only allows 10 connections, Windows XP Home allows only five connections. You need to upgrade to Windows 2000 or 2003 Server to get additional connections. (This was not the case with Windows 98.) It is a good idea to run a dedicated file server if you have more than five users sharing databases. In the past you did not need a true server operating system, just a dedicated machine, but that is no longer the case. As stated in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

> *"This behavior occurs if the computer reaches the maximum number of inbound connections that the computer can host.*
>
> *For Windows XP Professional, the maximum number of other computers that are permitted to simultaneously connect over the network is ten. This limit includes all transports and resource sharing protocols combined. For Windows XP Home Edition, the maximum number of other computers that are permitted to simultaneously connect over the network is five.*
>
> *This limit is the number of simultaneous sessions from other computers the system is permitted to host … Note that this limitation applies only to inbound connections to Windows XP. When you use Windows XP, unlimited outbound connections can be established to other systems."*

What this means is that XP is a wonderful workstation for Q&A, but a very limited file server.

XP Not Initializing Network

Every time I reboot my new XP workstations, Q&A can no longer find it's databases on the network. I get a message that the "Drive is Not Found." When I look in my computer, the drive is there with a small red "X" on it. If I click on the drive, it opens up and then Q&A will work again. How can I fix this?

Brandy

When you boot or reboot, XP isn't waiting long enough. By default XP does not wait for the network to initialize before logging you in. So you get these occasional boots where XP does not reconnect to mapped drives even though you have selected "Reconnect at Logon." There are two fixes. The one for XP Professional is simple and can be accomplished by anyone.

In Windows XP Professional:

From Start/Run, type *GPEDIT.MSC* and turn on the following group policy:

Computer\Administrative Templates\System\logon\ Always wait for the network at computer startup and logon

In Windows XP Home there is no group policy component. The only way to accomplish it is to create a new registry entry.

> **Warning** *Registry editing is for experts only and should not be attempted if you are not familiar with this type of operation. Improper use of the Registry*

Stumped? Send your Q&A questions to **@Help, The Quick Answer, Marble Publications, Inc., 1927A Harbor Blvd, Costa Mesa, CA 92627** or email to **mailbox@quickanswer.com**. Include your name, address, phone, and your Q&A version number (and whether DOS or Windows) and a detailed description of the problem. We'll publish those questions we feel are of general reader interest; individual responses aren't possible.

Editor can cause damage to the Operating System and render the machine un-bootable. Do not attempt this if you are not confident with registry tweaking! Even if you are, make sure to back up the registry before attempting this.

In Windows XP Home :

Use Start/Run, enter *regedit* and search the registry for this key:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Winlogon

Make sure the following is present:

```
Valuename   =   SyncForegroundPolicy
Value = 1
```

If it's not there, try adding it.

Field Names in Programming

I am faced with a problem that needs fixing. I am still programming in Q&A 5.0 for DOS, but I am trying to use the Sesame recommended way of doing this — that is, using field names instead of field [#XXX] numbers.

My trouble is that some field names yield a "program error" when used in a programming statement like this:

```
XLU("extdata.dtf",  key,  "extkey",   "NºSS",
destfld);
```

Q&A won't accept "NºSS " as a valid field name. Same for "TEL/CITY" used elsewhere

I tried to change the spelling (such as changing NºSS to NoSS) without success, although many other field names did work fine. Eventually, I turned back to field #XXX to keep my program working.

1. **Are there forbidden characters or symbols in field names (at least when used in programming expressions)?**

2. **If a field name is changed in database redesign, does Q&A give you a programming error, or warn that the field does not exist if used in programming?**

It seems that changing a field name in Program > Set Field Names automatically changes the name in the programming! Is this true? If so, it's pure black magic!

Jean Louis

Yes, Q&A does perform some "magic" to get around the illegal things it lets you do like putting superscripts and slashes (not to mention arithmetic operators, spaces, etc.) in fieldnames and using these crazy names in programming. When you change a fieldname at the Q&A Set Field Names screen, Q&A attempts to change that name anywhere it is used in programming. Q&A also will try and figure out if a field named "2" refers to the name or the number "2", and will actually let you do numeric calculations in text fields. And, most of the time, it gets it right. However, the practice is very bad from a programming standpoint. Sesame simply will not allow you to do these things in the first place.

But you already have all of these names in your database and need to get on with your work. I suppose you are not familiar with the other "magical" Q&A feature called "pound-quote" syntax. Whenever you can't get a field name to be accepted in a Q&A programming statement, proceed it with the pound sign (#) and then enclose the actual name in quotes, like this:

```
#"NºSS"

#"TEL/CITY"
```

Disk-Drive Door Open Error—Again

We just upgraded to newer and faster computers. Now, when we press "W" for Write and try to Get a document, instead we get the message: "Your disk drive is not ready, close the door if it is open." I forgot the workaround for this. Can you point me in the right direction?

Jaguar

The problem you are experiencing is that you have copied or reinstalled your Q&A files from a different location and you have set up the Write module to have a "default" font set. The next time the message comes up, just press escape and open a new document. Press Ctrl-F9 for the Font Assignments screen. Clear the Font File name line and any assigned fonts, then re-enter them from scratch. If you're using Q&A 4.0 for DOS, you can press F8 to make these settings your defaults for all new documents. If you're using Q&A 5.0 — because of a known bug — you should *not* assign a Regular font when making this screen the default for new documents. Now your new documents should be fine. With old documents, you will probably still get the message. Escape and open them, reset their fonts and resave the document. This should solve the problem.

Interacting with MS Office Programs

We have recently installed Q&A in Windows in a small partition. I know I should be able to use Word/Access/ Excel with the data now, but is that possible if Q&A is on the small partition and the Office software is on the bigger partition? Wouldn't they both have to be on the same drive? Thanks for any help you can send my way!

Connie

It does not matter where your Q&A data files are located or what version of Q&A you are using, you *cannot* directly interface with MS Office or any other Windows

product. Q&A is not ODBC compliant and has a proprietary database format. The only way to "port" data from Q&A to other applications is to export it in a format compatible with the other program and then use that program's import capability to bring it in. This is not at all difficult with the tools that Q&A provides. The export capability is excellent. In Q&A for DOS, you'll find Export on the File/Utilities menu. In Q&A for Windows, you'll find it under the File menu. The basic difference between the two is that in Q&A for DOS, you specify what records to export *after* selecting the export method. In Q&A for Windows you can specify the records by retrieving them first or by using a Saved Spec after defining the export.

For the most part, the best way to get data from Q&A to any other program is to export it in comma-delimited ASCII format with quotes around text values. This means that the exported data will be in a plain text file that any program capable of importing data can read and that each field of data will be surrounded by double quotes (""), and separated from each other by a comma(,). It also means that each record ends with a carriage return.

For the ultimate in ASCII delimited format, open the exported file in Notepad or WordPad. It will be in a format like the following. (This will all be on one line):

```
"09/01/2003","The  Quick  Answer","Tom
Marcellus","Marble    Publications","949-722-
9127"
```

Add a new line above the first line in the file that provides names for each field, like this:

```
"Date","Publication","Editor","Company","Phone"
"09/01/2003","The  Quick  Answer","Tom
Marcellus","Marble    Publications","949-722-
9127"
```

Notice that the line you add does not have to line up with the fields on the rest of the lines, it just must have the *same number* of fields. This will tell any program you interface with what the fields are in each of the subsequent records. You do not have to use the same fieldnames that Q&A uses for the data. Resave the file and you are ready to use your Q&A data in other Windows programs.

This is also one of the best ways to merge Sesame data with other programs. The benefit Sesame will provide is that you will be looking at the set of data you want to export and it will be in the sorted order you want. One click will take you to the export screen. Sesame will even create the filename header for you. You will find more information on this in the accompanying article in this issue, "Easy Merge Letters in Sesame."

Images in Q&A for Windows and Sesame

I'm interested in Sesame. Is it possible to create a database with multiple stored images? I'm a photographer and I would like to organize photos as individual records in a database. Each record would contain information on a given photograph and also show the image. My questions are as follows:

- I have a 4000-plus record database of images already created in Q&A for Windows 4.0. Will I be able to transfer this into the Sesame database with provisions for the addition of scanned photographic images?

- What are the limitations with this idea? Is it possible to enlarge the image stored in the Sesame database to view selected image areas, or is the size fixed?

Do you see problems with these ideas?

Lyndon

All of what you want to do can be done in Sesame except for the photo transfers. Sesame is only limited by the amount of memory in your computer. There is no "practical" limit to the size of a database other than the 2GB Microsoft memory limit. So, you can create very large databases with many, many records. Transferring any data format, other than images, from Q&A to Sesame is a snap.

However, Sesame does not *store* images in the data file like Q&A does. Sesame stores the path and filename of the image and displays that image when the record is displayed. Your images from Q&A for Windows would not translate to Sesame. Q&A for Windows cannot even export those pictures. They are embedded in the code of the records. The only way to get them out of Q&A for Windows is one-at-a-time copy and paste operations from each record to a different graphics program. Then you will have to save them and give each file a name. This is why most people do *not* use Q&A to store pictures. It is a bad idea! They are non-retrievable for use anywhere but in Q&A. After this arduous task of getting them out of Q&A, you can use them in Sesame or another program. Sesame supports .BMP, .JPG and .PNG image file formats.

In Sesame the image is displayed in the field you define in the record. The image file is stored separately on your hard drive. The displayed image cannot be blown up or changed on-the-fly from within Sesame since Sesame is only acting as a simple image viewer (not a graphics program).

We have, in the past, had other clients who have done just what you are doing. In very short order, depending on the type and size of the images they are pasting into Q&A, they find that their databases quickly approach the GB range and they start to experience corruption problems. It is not the data, but the images that are the issue. In Sesame, a database that displays

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square brackets (for example, **[Name]**.

3. Description: Shows information appropriate to the element type.

- ***Static Text***: Shows text.
- ***Static Picture***: Shows filename of image to display.
- ***Value Box***: Shows database field name or "Unbound."
- ***Page Layout***: N/A.
- ***Summary Calculation***: Shows element name to summarize.

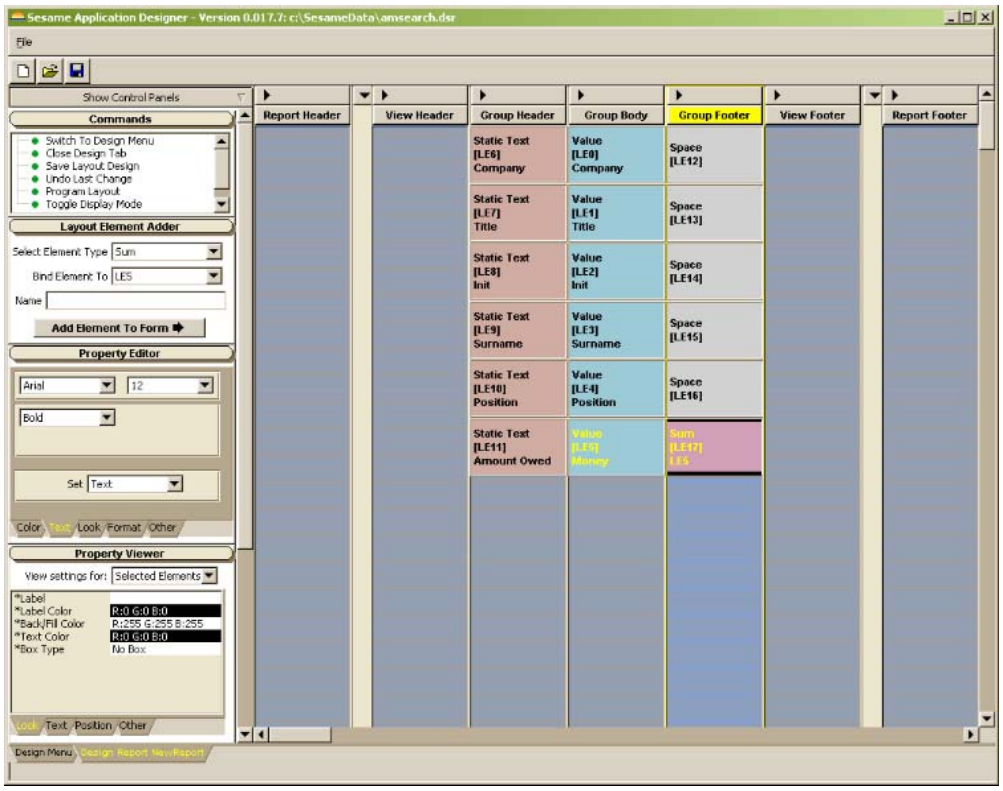


Figure 3. A basic columnar report layout in Report Writer.

Property changes are made to selected elements. You select/deselect elements by clicking on them. You can press Shift-click to select multiple elements. Selected elements are indicated by highlighted descriptive text. The active element also has black bands.

In the example shown in Figure 3, LE5 and LE17 are selected, and LE17 is active. As in Sesame's Form Designer, the active element determines what shows in the Property Viewer. The active element is also the one that can be moved using the keyboard. Elements can be moved only within their section, either by dragging with the mouse or using the keyboard (active element only).

This Figure 3 report has six columns, as shown by the six blue Value Boxes in the Group Body. Each column has a header, indicated by the brown Static Text elements in the Group Header. The Money column is summed in the Group Footer, as shown by the purple Summary Calculation element. The five grey Spacers in the Group Footer are placeholders to make the Summary Calculation element line up with the column it is meant to sum.

For comparison, Figure 4 shows the corresponding Q&A for DOS Column/Sort Spec (which, incidentally, took longer to create because of all the text enhancements).

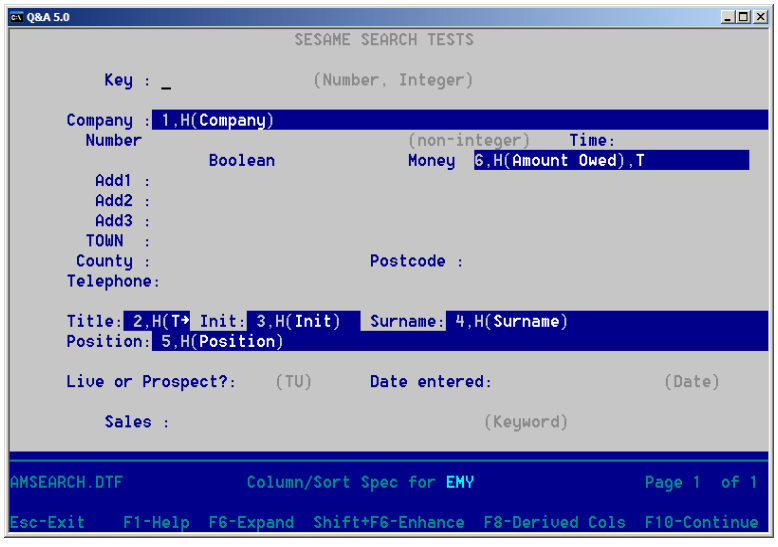


Figure 4. The Q&A for DOS Column/Sort Spec. Compare with Report Writer's counterpart in Figure 3.

The Sesame screenshot in Figure 3 shows one of the

two ways that Report Writer displays elements — Layout View. The *Commands* Control Panel contains an option not available in Form Design — Toggle Display Mode. This command switches between the two display modes, retaining selections. The other display mode (Format View) is shown in Figure 5.

Format View shows the elements with sample data. The sample data is displayed with the correct setting for color, font, alignment, format and the like, applied. In Figure 5 you can see that all the elements in the Group Header are in boldface. The two Money elements (still selected) are right-aligned, and the one in the Group Footer is also in boldface. In this view, selection is indicated by the background color, so that the correct font color settings can be displayed. Each element has colored bars indicating its type, for reference.

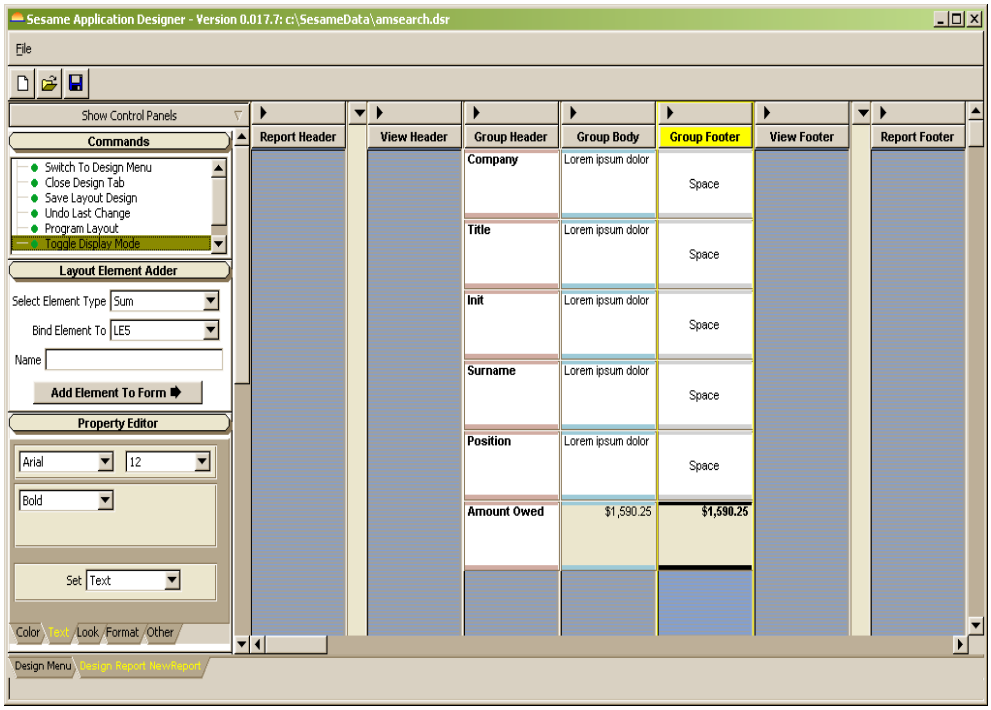


Figure 5. An example of Sesame Report Writer's Format View.

Figure 6 shows the actual report produced by the sample Sesame Report Writer design.

In Figure 7 (next page), we changed the Report design a bit, adding a Static Text element in the View Header to print the title along with some font enhancements. We also added elements in the View Footer to give us an overall total, again, with some font enhancements. The dialog box shows the properties for the Group Body. The Break Element is set to LE0, which shows the Company name. The Break Value is 1. This will cause a Group Break each time the first letter of the Company name changes. Figure 8 (next page) shows the report this design produces.

These records were retrieved from AMSEARCH and sorted by Company. Each time the first letter changes, the group breaks and subtotals.

Company	Title	Init	Surname	Position	Amount Owed
Canterbury Brewers Plc	Mrs	J.	Booth	STC	$2,455.00
Knight & Lee	Mrs	J H	Shute	STC	$1,663.35
L M G Fibrenyle	Mrs	S	Cascarino	STC	$3,728.97
Leominster Construction	Mr	I W	Scales	STC	$1,888.02
Liverpool Polytechnic	Mr	R J	Ilree	STC	$1,693.35
LLOYDS BRITISH TRAINING	Mr	G.	Brigham	Manager	$1,291.99
London Borough Lewisham	Ms	S P	Greatorex	Lecturer	$1,224.00
London Borough of Bexley	Mr	H	Pritchett	Accountant	$1,041.30
Long Ashton Research Station	Mr	S O	Bell	E H O	$1,060.00
LYONS SEAFOODS LTD	Dr	A	Bradley	Librarian	$1,047.69
MANCHESTER NORTH AC	Mr		Campbell	STC	$3,648.00
Mattesons Wall's Ltd	MR	G	Williams	Buyer	$2,224.00
Matthew Hall (M & EE) Ltd	Mr	F.	Trigg	STC	$1,760.00
McGregor Cory Uk	Mr	J	Weller	Director	$1,047.78
Merseyside Fire Brigade	Mrs	J	Maxwell Jones	Training Officer	$1,144.78
MERSEYSIDE INNER AC	Mr	M G N	Lyon-Taylor	Branch Manager	$1,107.81
Merseyside TEC	Mr		ASHDOWN	Director	$1,236.41
Midlands Electricity Headquarters	Mr	J D	Lloyd	STC	$2,388.35
Midlands Electricity Headquarters	Mr	C P	Hooper	Owner	$1,719.60
Midlands Electricity Plc	Mr	M	Hewson	Director	$1,076.28
Ministry Of Agriculture & Fisheries	Mr	W	Benzie	STC	$2,902.02
Ministry Of Agriculture Fisheries & Food	Mr	A	Cauldbeck	Director	$1,633.50
					$38,982.20

Figure 6. The report produced by the Report Writer design in Figure 5.

Figure 9 (next page) shows a redesign of the sample report to demonstrate the use of programming. The Group Header now has only three column headers. The Group Footer has also been reduced to three elements to match. There is a new unbound Value Box called LE18 in the Group Body. The following elements in the Group Body are set to *Not Visible*: LE1, LE2, LE3, LE4. This leaves three visible elements in the Group Body — LE0 (Company), LE18 (Unbound) and LE5 (Money).

Using the Programming Editor, we programmed the unbound element (LE18) as follows:

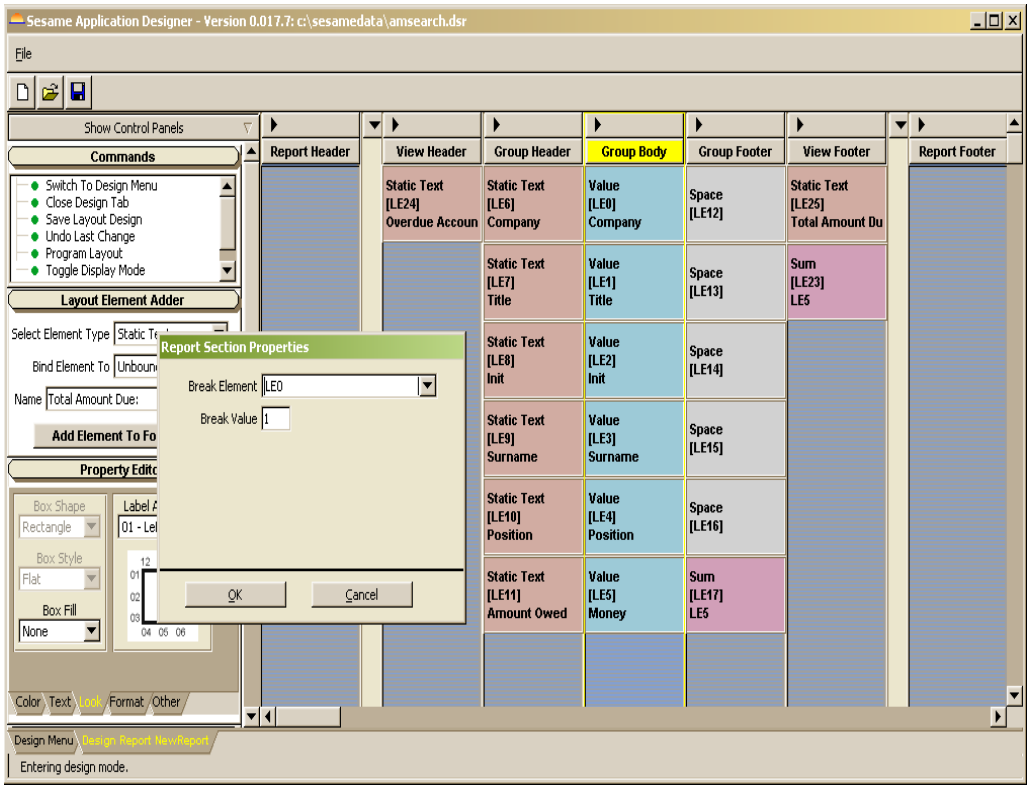


Figure 7. Modified report design with added elements and fonts.

```
LE18 = LE1 + " " + LE2 + " " + LE3 +
@Newline()  +  LE4
```

This will behave like Q&A does if we set columns to be invisible, then use a derived column to concatenate the values. The report produced is shown in Figure 10 on the next page.

Freeform reports

The sample report in Figure 11 (next page) shows how a Freeform report might look. The View Type is set to Freeform, as indicated by the tooltip. The elements are placed in the Group Body in the order they are to appear.

Unlike a Columnar report, a Freeform report does not attempt to rearrange the data in columns. It simply prints the elements, one right after the other, repeating for each record.

This sample report instructs Sesame to print the word "Dear" followed by the value in the Title field followed by a space followed by the value in the Surname field, and so on.

The report produced is shown in Figure 12 on the next page.

For those coming from Q&A, Sesame's Report Writer may take a little getting used to. But, we've tried to follow Q&A's report design philosophy of simply listing what you want in the order you want it. We think you'll get the hang of it quickly, and find it easy, fun and helpful to work with.

Overdue Accounts

Company	Title	Init	Surname	Position	Amount Owed
Canterbury Brewers Plc	Mrs	J.	Booth	STC	$2,455.00
					$2,455.00
Company	**Title**	**Init**	**Surname**	**Position**	**Amount Owed**
Knight & Lee	Mrs	J H	Shute	STC	$1,663.35
					$1,663.35
Company	**Title**	**Init**	**Surname**	**Position**	**Amount Owed**
L M G Fibrenyle	Mrs	S	Cascarino	STC	$3,728.97
Leominster Construction	Mr	I W	Scales	STC	$1,888.02
Liverpool Polytechnic	Mr	R J	Ilree	STC	$1,693.35
LLOYDS BRITISH TRAINING	Mr	G.	Brigham	Manager	$1,291.99
London Borough Lewisham	Ms	S P	Greatorex	Lecturer	$1,224.00
London Borough of Bexley	Mr	H	Pritchett	Accountant	$1,041.30
Long Ashton Research Station	Mr	S O	Bell	E H O	$1,060.00
LYONS SEAFOODS LTD	Dr	A	Bradley	Librarian	$1,047.69
					$12,975.32
Company	**Title**	**Init**	**Surname**	**Position**	**Amount Owed**
MANCHESTER NORTH AC	Mr		Campbell	STC	$3,648.00
Mattesons Wall's Ltd	MR	G	Williams	Buyer	$2,224.00
Matthew Hall (M & EE) Ltd	Mr	F.	Trigg	STC	$1,760.00
McGregor Cory Uk	Mr	J	Weller	Director	$1,047.78
Merseyside Fire Brigade	Mrs	J	Maxwell Jones	Training Officer	$1,144.78
MERSEYSIDE INNER AC	Mr	M G N	Lyon-Taylor	Branch Manager	$1,107.81
Merseyside TEC	Mr		ASHDOWN	Director	$1,236.41
Midlands Electricity Headquarters	Mr	J D	Lloyd	STC	$2,388.35
Midlands Electricity Headquarters	Mr	C P	Hooper	Owner	$1,719.60
Midlands Electricity Plc	Mr	M	Hewson	Director	$1,076.28
Ministry Of Agriculture & Fisheries	Mr	W	Benzie	STC	$2,902.02
Ministry Of Agriculture Fisheries & Food	Mr	A	Cauldbeck	Director	$1,633.50
					$21,888.53

Total Amount Due: $38,982.20

Figure 8. The report produced by the design shown in Figure 7.

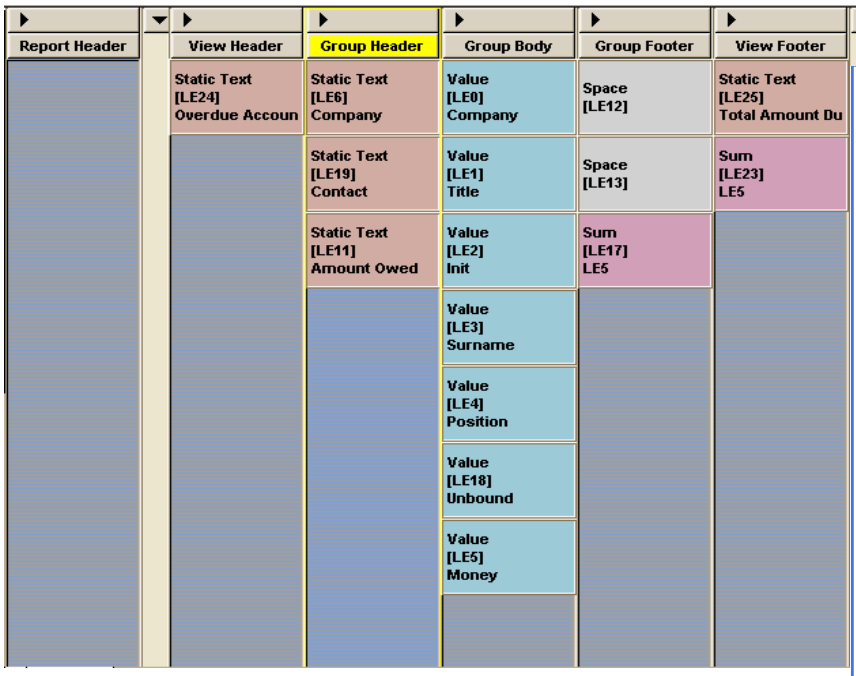
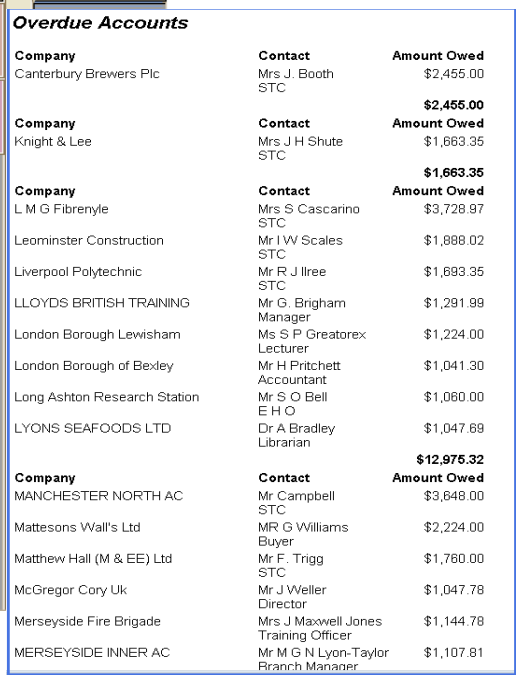


Figure 9. A "derived" (programmed) column added to the report.



Overdue Accounts

Company	Contact	Amount Owed
Canterbury Brewers Plc	Mrs J. Booth STC	$2,455.00
		$2,455.00
Company	**Contact**	**Amount Owed**
Knight & Lee	Mrs J H Shute STC	$1,663.35
		$1,663.35
Company	**Contact**	**Amount Owed**
L M G Fibrenyle	Mrs S Cascarino STC	$3,728.97
Leominster Construction	Mr I W Scales STC	$1,888.02
Liverpool Polytechnic	Mr R J Ilree STC	$1,693.35
LLOYDS BRITISH TRAINING	Mr G. Brigham Manager	$1,291.99
London Borough Lewisham	Ms S P Greatorex Lecturer	$1,224.00
London Borough of Bexley	Mr H Pritchett Accountant	$1,041.30
Long Ashton Research Station	Mr S O Bell E H O	$1,060.00
LYONS SEAFOODS LTD	Dr A Bradley Librarian	$1,047.69
		$12,975.32
Company	**Contact**	**Amount Owed**
MANCHESTER NORTH AC	Mr Campbell STC	$3,648.00
Mattesons Wall's Ltd	MR G Williams Buyer	$2,224.00
Matthew Hall (M & EE) Ltd	Mr F. Trigg STC	$1,760.00
McGregor Cory Uk	Mr J Weller Director	$1,047.78
Merseyside Fire Brigade	Mrs J Maxwell Jones Training Officer	$1,144.78
MERSEYSIDE INNER AC	Mr M G N Lyon-Taylor Branch Manager	$1,107.81

Figure 10. A report that produces a subtotal when the first letter of the company name changes.

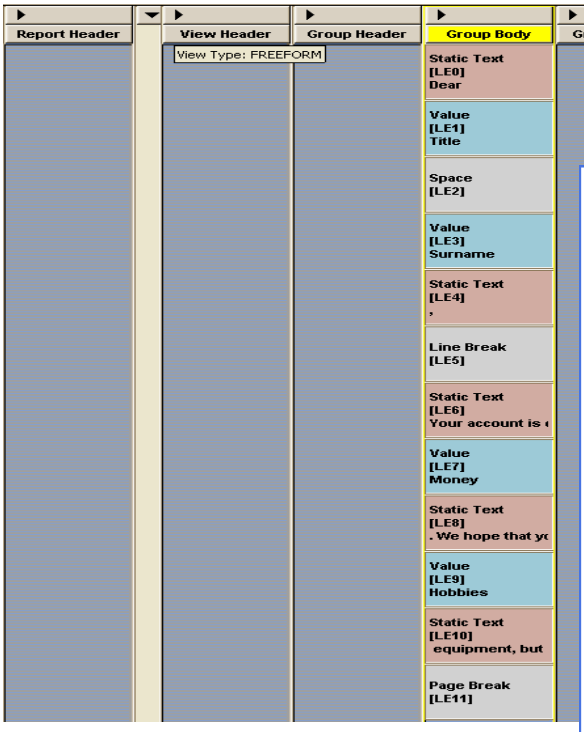
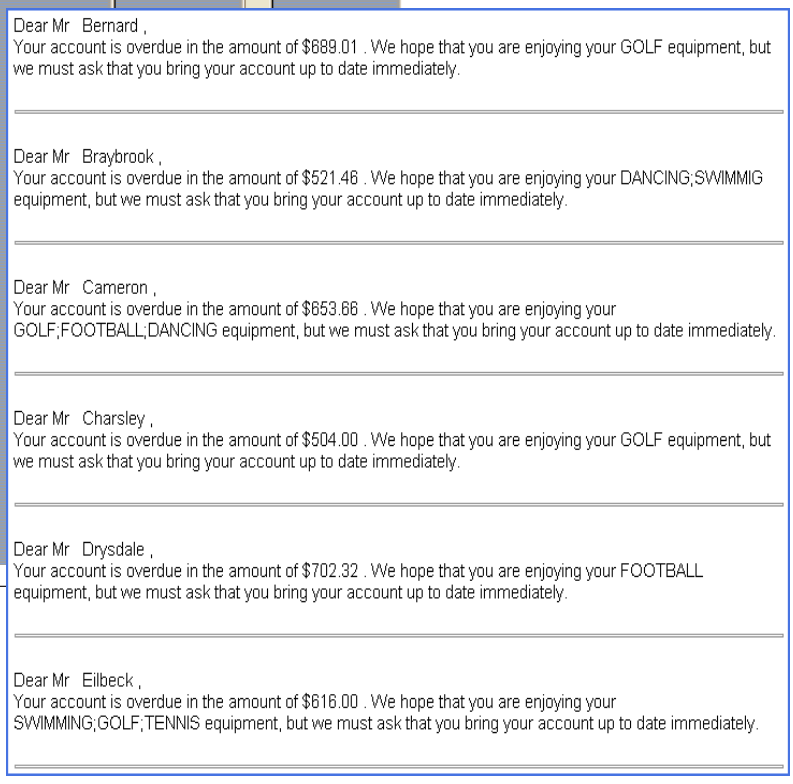


Figure 11. A Freeform report design in Report Writer.



Dear Mr Bernard ,
Your account is overdue in the amount of $689.01 . We hope that you are enjoying your GOLF equipment, but we must ask that you bring your account up to date immediately.

Dear Mr Braybrook ,
Your account is overdue in the amount of $521.46 . We hope that you are enjoying your DANCING;SWIMMIG equipment, but we must ask that you bring your account up to date immediately.

Dear Mr Cameron ,
Your account is overdue in the amount of $653.66 . We hope that you are enjoying your GOLF;FOOTBALL;DANCING equipment, but we must ask that you bring your account up to date immediately.

Dear Mr Charsley ,
Your account is overdue in the amount of $504.00 . We hope that you are enjoying your GOLF equipment, but we must ask that you bring your account up to date immediately.

Dear Mr Drysdale ,
Your account is overdue in the amount of $702.32 . We hope that you are enjoying your FOOTBALL equipment, but we must ask that you bring your account up to date immediately.

Dear Mr Eilbeck ,
Your account is overdue in the amount of $616.00 . We hope that you are enjoying your SWIMMING;GOLF;TENNIS equipment, but we must ask that you bring your account up to date immediately.

Figure 12. Output from the Freeform report design in Figure 11.

Erika Yoxall is the technical coordinator for Lantica Software, LLC.

@Help cont'd from page 8

more than 2GB worth of images could be very small in its own right and require very little memory.

Bill Halpern is co-owner of Professional Computer Technology Associates (PCTA) in Newtown, Pennsylvania and is President and CEO of Lantica Software, LLC. 215-598-8440. bill@pcta-usa.com, www.pcta-usa.com.

Quick Tip — Date Comparisons in Programmed Retrieves

Testing Sesame the other day, I stumbled across what I thought was a bug. The following programmed retrieve did not work:

```
Any  Field:  {ContactDate  >01/01/2003}
```

It retrieved *all* the records.

Experimenting, I found that using the same criterion in the field itself worked fine:

```
ContactDate:   >01/01/2003
```

Then I found that the programmed expression works with quotes around the date:

```
Any  Field:  {ContactDate  >"01/01/2003"}
```

I went to Q&A 5.0 to confirm how Q&A works and found, to my surprise, that Q&A behaves *exactly* the same way!

So the rules are: **(1)** in the date field itself, you must *not* put quotes around the date; **(2)** in a programmed retrieve, you *must* put quotes around the date.

I thought I had found an instance where Sesame searching differs from Q&A. But I was wrong — they work exactly the same way in this case.

—Alec Mulvey

Quick Tip — Finely Adjust Layout Elements on Sesame Forms

Moving layout elements on Sesame forms is simple—you simply drag them to where you want them, or use the re-size handle at the bottom right corner of the element to resize them. This can sometimes be tricky, though. You can't always get the element exactly where you want it. Or you find that you only want to make the field shorter, but the height adjusts as well. Sesame has the answer! Just select the element (or elements) and forget the mouse. Use the arrow keys instead:

- *Shift* + *left/right arrow* adjusts the element's width.
- *Shift* + *up/down arrow* adjusts its height.
- *Ctrl* + *left/right arrow* adjusts its horizontal position.
- *Ctrl* + *up/down arrow* adjusts its vertical position.

Easy! And with far finer control than using the mouse.

—Alec Mulvey

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