■ SCREEN TOUR

WOW: The Ultimate Java for RPG Programmers

by Dan Riehl

I RECENTLY WAS TREATED TO A DEMO of a new product that I just had to share with you. As a long time Cobol and RPG guy, I (like many of you) have no desire to jump into the world of writing Java applications. But I do want to be able to provide the Web-based applications that many companies need. Well, the aptly named product WOW lets me generate Java applications with no knowledge of Java — just a small amount of SQL knowledge. It's really cool.

What Is WOW?

WOW (for Web Object Wizard) is a new product developed by PlanetJ Corporation. The product allows companies to develop Web-based iSeries applications with incredible speed. With no previous product knowledge, I was able to get a very cool Java application up and running in about five minutes. The application presented a nice Web page containing editable data that I generated by simply entering a SQL statement into the WOW design tool. WOW is a 100 percent Java-based Web application development tool and runtime engine that creates "data centric" Internet/intranet/extranet applications.

The benefits of using this tool include the ability for companies to develop Web applications significantly faster than alternatives without the need to learn Java, JSP, WebSphere, and so on. Applications are flexible, and get this: *You can make enhancements and changes to applications while they're live.*

How Does WOW Work?

Using a Web browser-based development interface, WOW lets you create applications by specifying SQL statements and configuring application metadata. You create SQL in a simple point-and-click fashion using WOW's SQL assistant (Figure 1).

Not only can you use WOW to access the iSeries database, but you can easily access and manipulate data stored in any relational database, including DB2 UDB, Oracle, and SQL Server. Applications execute within WebSphere, Web Logic, or the Tomcat application servers.

Why Do You Care?

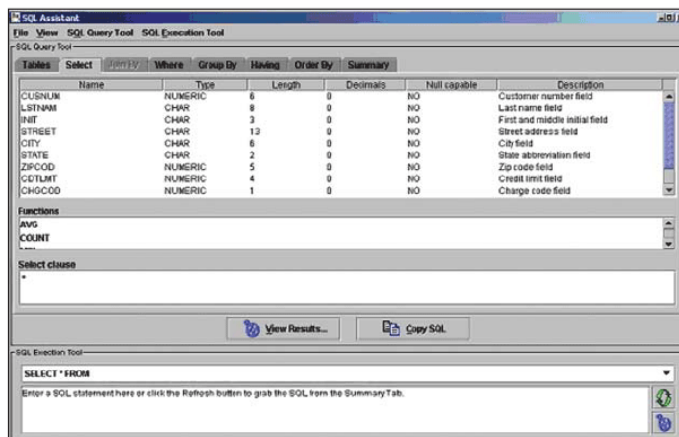Many shops are looking for ways to increase customer service

FIGURE 1
WOW's SQL assistant

and reduce costs through Web-based interfaces to their back-end iSeries databases. The problem many iSeries shops are having is that it is difficult and costly to acquire or develop the skills needed to build and support the applications.

WOW does not require Java skills for most applications. One well-known banking company built a currency management application in seven minutes from start to finish. Another company created an application that connects its vendors to purchase orders stored in its ERP database. Wabash National used WOW to build a corporate-wide warranty management system that has increased its claims processing over 90 percent (Figure 2).

The ability to create these powerful Web-based applications in minutes is highly interesting to iSeries shops without Java programmers. WOW provides iSeries shops with the ability to access any of their data and call RPG programs with no programming.

What Do You Need to Know to Use WOW?

Not much. The product uses SQL, so SQL skills are valuable. WOW provides a point-and-click SQL builder as well. Complex applications may require the use of Java to customize business

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processes and behavior.

A version of WOW that provides features similar to Query/400 is available for free! Just send a note to *info@planetjavainc.com,* and you'll receive a link that lets you download this version. The more advanced editions of WOW provides additional features (Figure 3).

Give It a Try

You can give WOW a try; you don't even have to download anything.

At *planetjavainc.com/html/demo.html,* you can sign up to try out WOW using PlanetJ servers. If you want to load WOW at your site, simply send an e-mail to *info@planetjavainc .com* for a download link. You can also view interactive videos at *planetjavainc.com/html /demo.html.* To discuss your needs with PlanetJ, call 760-432-0600. ■

*Dan Riehl is an **iSeries NEWS** technical editor, as well as president of and an instructor at The 400 School (www.400school.com). You can e-mail Dan at driehl@ 400school.com.*
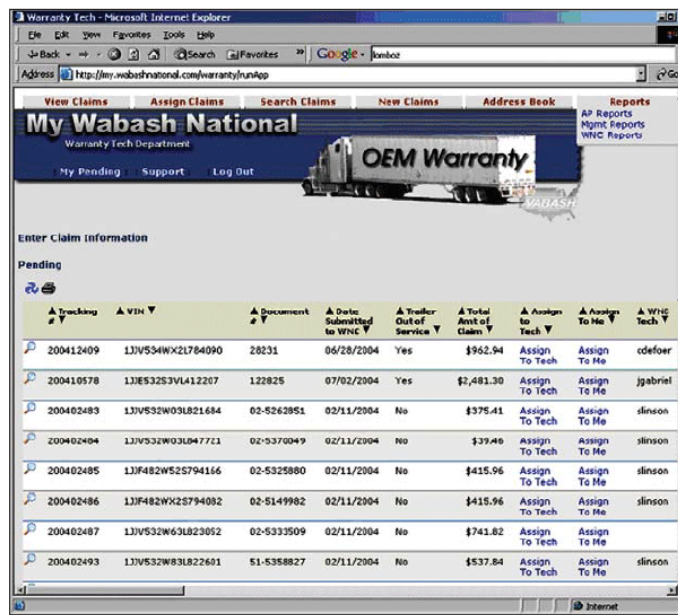

FIGURE 2
Wabash National's warranty management system

FIGURE 3
WOW 6.2 Versions, Features

VERSION	FEATURES
Entry Edition	Query support similar to Query/400
Standard Edition	Unlimited query support, Excel/XML/PDF downloads, detail views
Professional Edition	Standard edition features plus full dynamic query support with runtime prompting plus user authentication support, table associations for linking data
Enterprise Edition	Professional edition features plus fully supported record updates, deletes, and inserts; powerful report generation, intelligent graphing, and sophisticated security management

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