

DeltaMaster clicks!

01/2007

Greetings, fellow data analysts!

Who says that there is no educational value in television? MTV, for example, has successfully enriched the vocabulary of millions of Europeans with colorful words, such as “to pimp”. In a 30-minute broadcast, MTV viewers can watch how a team of experienced mechanics use their skills, creativity and passion for detail to transform the most boring, broken-down clunkers into a customized party mobile (better known in modern German as “the ride”). The products of their labor usually bring a smile to the viewers’ faces – be it out of amusement or pity. But even critics must admit that the “pimped rides” integrate clever constructions and cool ideas that don’t just turn heads but also deliver the ultimate “Fahrvergnügen” – driving experience.

Fortunately, you don’t need a cameo television appearance to embellish your reports in *DeltaMaster*. In this edition of *clicks!*, we will delve beyond our usual serious, minimalist reporting style to showcase *DeltaMaster*’s customization options.

Sincerely,

Your Bissantz & Company team

PS. Speaking of educational television: “Lying with Statistics*”, our 2002 study and appeal for reason when dealing with numbers, hit the small screen back in October 2006.



Meeting of the minds

OLAP expert, Nigel Pendse (right), and Dr. Nicolas Bissantz discuss the benefits of sparklines based on a data-dense, ledger-sized management report.

Purchasing control

March 1, 2007

Learn how transparent purchasing can save your business money in our latest compact business seminar (hosted in cooperation with EDS Business Solutions).
www.bissantz.de/beschaffung

Miss manners

Get Bella’s latest tips on the proper way to use sparklines.
www.bella-consults.com

OLAP Seminar

February 6-8, 2007

Learn how to build data warehouse systems, including data preparation with SQL, OLAP modeling and MDX programming, in this informative seminar.
www.bissantz.de/olap-seminar

DeltaMaster@Work

Join us on January 25, 2007 in our Nuremberg office to get better acquainted with our solutions. To sign up for this free workshop, contact Mr. Liepins at liepins@bissantz.de.

Archive

Download archived editions of *DeltaMaster clicks!* at
www.bissantz.de/clicks/en.

* “Quarks & Co”: October 17, 2006 in WDR; A PDF summary in German is available at www.bissantz.de/pub/Luegen_mit_Statistiken.pdf

Tip of the month *Integrating images into Flexreports and combination cockpits*

As you well know, creating charts in *DeltaMaster* is unbelievably easy. When viewing your cockpit or analysis results, simply switch from *Table* to *Chart* in the *View* menu. But did you also know how easy it is to integrate external images from your PC, a network server or even the Internet into *DeltaMaster* reports?

Think of the possibilities! You could:

- Enhance your sales statistics with pictures of individual articles.
- Visualize product variations such as color, material or structure.
- Include a picture of the respective branch manager or office building.
- Add customer or subsidiary logos.
- Display a map of the sales region for a given service center.
- Incorporate the national flags of your international subsidiaries.
- Specify the creditworthiness of an individual customer on a five-star scale.

Turnover	Luxury Division	Custom Made	Standard Models
2000	0,00	55.009	0,00
2001	16.109.123	115.987.059	16.916.907
2002	17.999.682	129.253.335	18.950.447
2003	19.370.848	148.768.609	20.375.908

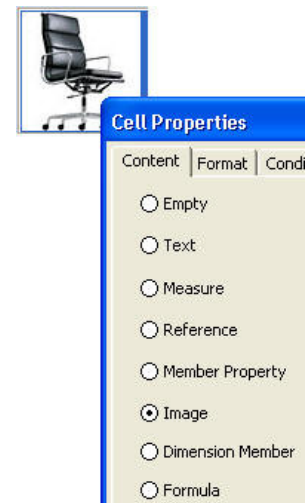
Some of you, who are since devote disciples of data density, may question the added value of images such as these: Isn't it usually easier to recognize a full product name than a picture, flag or logo? Isn't there a greater risk for confusion and error? Doesn't decorative imagery just waste space?

Correct...but...then again, there are always situations (e.g. when creating marketing material) when a little embellishment doesn't hurt. And since we want to give you the knowledge to meet any situation face on, we will explain how this works in this edition of *clicks!*.

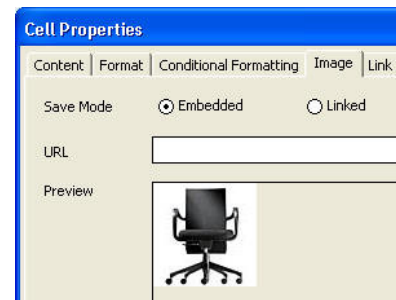
DeltaMaster allows you to integrate images into two types of cockpits: *Flexreports* and *combination cockpits*.

Static images in Flexreports

Flexreports allow you to design each cell with individual content and formatting. As a result, you can add an image to a cell with no further ado. Just go to *Cell properties* and select *Image* in the *Content* tab.



Now switch to the *Image* tab, so you can enter the *URL* or the location of the file. In the *URL* input field you can either enter a Web address (e.g. <http://www.bissantz.de/start/clicks.jpg>) or a reference to a file on your local computer or a file server. So-called UNC paths (e.g. `\\server\share\path\file_name.ext`) are supported as well. *DeltaMaster* can display BMP, GIF, JPG, PNG and other raster graphics. The image that you select will be displayed in the *Preview* window.



With the *Save mode* function you can determine if *DeltaMaster* should *embed* the picture or simply *link* to it.

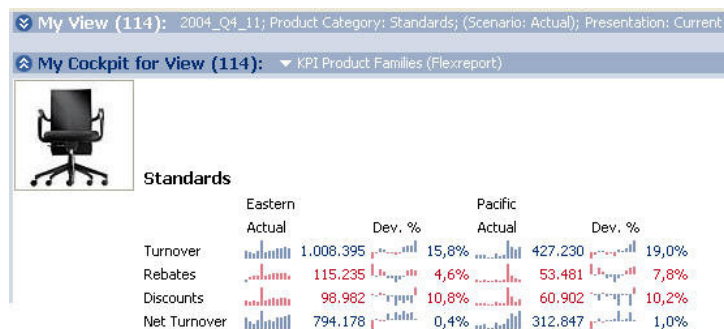
- If you *embed* the image, *DeltaMaster* will save a copy in the analysis session (.das file). Since this makes the file proportionally larger, this can cause problems if you want to send the files as e-mail attachments. On the other hand, embedding the image ensures its availability, since it will be displayed even when the report recipient has no network access.
- If you simply *link* the image, *DeltaMaster* will only save its respective address. The few additional bytes of space have no significant effect on the size of the .das file. Here, it is important to consider if the author and the report recipients all have access to the same network, etc. If the linked image is not available for any reason, the respective cell will be empty but the report will still be readable.

Dynamic images in Flexreports

An other exciting option is to display different Flexreport images depending on the current view. Let's say that you want to see the exact product (i.e. in the correct color with the appropriate branch office, branch manager and country) that you have selected in the *My view* window. To support these needs, *DeltaMaster* can dynamically identify the address of the image as a URL, path or file name. Using wildcards, you can even access the selected member's name, which can be used in the address of the image file.

The following example demonstrates this full breadth of this functionality:

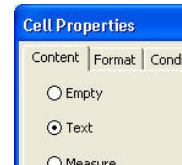
Chair Inc., has three main product lines (Standard Models, Custom Made, and Luxury Division). The company wants to build a cockpit containing the most important information on the selected product line with a sample picture of one the products. In contrast to the first sample screenshot on page 2, we want the cockpit to display just one product line at a time. The three sample pictures are `luxury_division.jpg`, `custom_made.jpg` and `standards.jpg`, which are all located in the folder: `C:\myImages`.



Since the procedure for static images (*Cell properties, Content: Image*) was not designed for wildcards, *DeltaMaster* interprets the names as being unchangeable. In order for the displayed image to correspond with the changing views, the address must be composed of variables. This is possible with:

- Text
- References
- Member properties
- Formulas

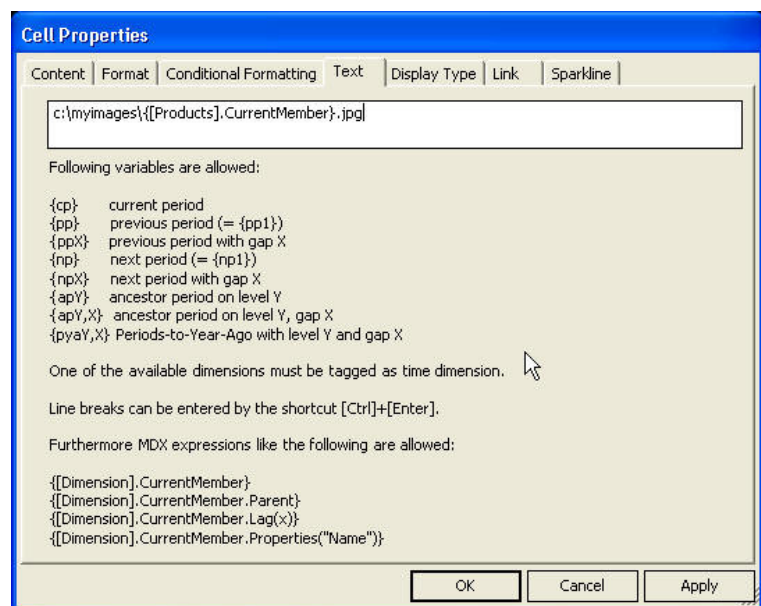
Now, go the *Content* tab and select *Text* (yes, *Text*) to dynamically add text from various components and access the name of the selected product line. The *Display type* secures that the character string is interpreted as the address of an image and not as pure text. *DeltaMaster* in turn tries to load and display the designated image.



Now enter the path where the image is located in the input field of the *Text* tab (see the opposite screenshot). The element

`{[Products].CurrentMember}`

is an MDX expression, which stands for the name of the selected member in the product dimension.



Now, when we switch our view to standard models, the text reads: `C:\Chair\Products\standards.png` – the complete path to the image that we want to display.

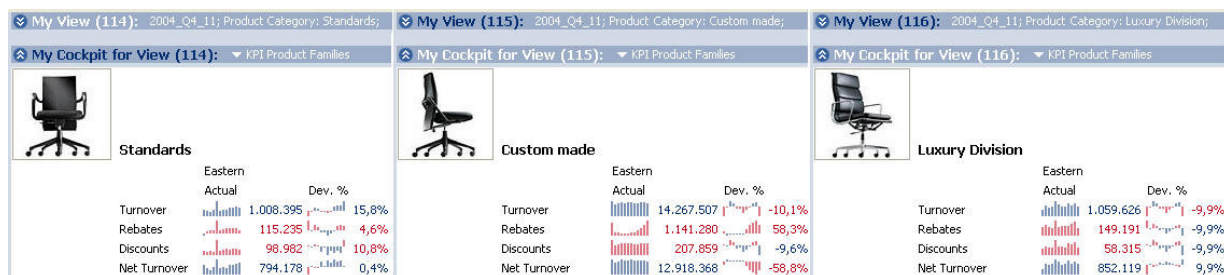


If we select *Image* as the *Display type* under *Cell properties*, *DeltaMaster* will load this exact file and place it in the appropriate Flexreport cell.

If you want to use this feature, that doesn't mean that you have to store an image for each member or member combination. If *DeltaMaster* cannot load or display an image based on the dynamically calculated address, the address will be displayed as text instead. The same applies when you explicitly choose *Text* as the *Display type* in the *Cell properties*.



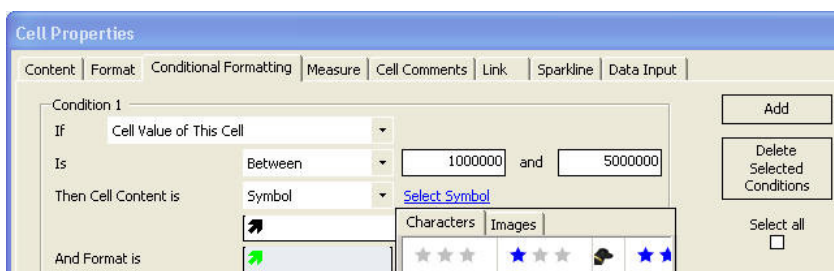
Since *Reference*, *Member properties* and *Formula* can also return alpha-numeric data, you can also use these cell types to create image addresses. As with *Text*, the *Display type* determines if *DeltaMaster* tries to load and show an image or if the character string alone is displayed in the cell.



Images in conditional formats

Conditional formatting offers a third possibility to integrate images into Flexreport cells. This tab under *Cell properties* allows you to create rules to determine the display "value" and the *Format* of a particular cell. When the condition is fulfilled, *DeltaMaster* will apply the format setting and will then change the cell value to display respective content. If you want to display an image, choose *Image* or *Symbol* under *Cell content*.

- *Cell content = symbol*: When you click the *Select symbol* link, you can choose a **standard Symbol** or **Image** that should be displayed when the condition has been met.
- *Cell content = image*: When you click the *Select image* link, you can choose an **custom** image that should be displayed when the condition has been met.



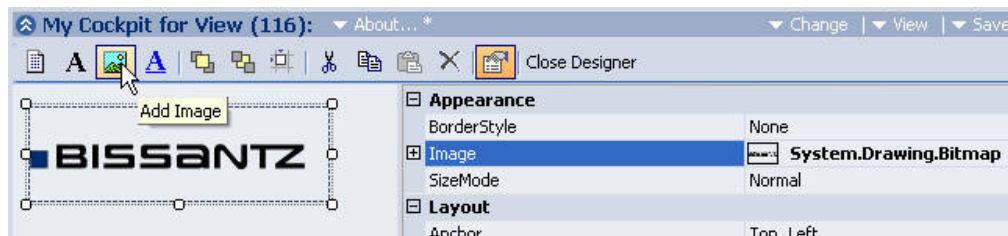
The standard images presented above are stored in the “res\ExceptionImages” directory of the *DeltaMaster* installation directory (e.g. C:\Program Files\DeltaMaster 5.2\res\ExceptionImages). You can save alternative charts, symbols, icons or other standardized images for *conditional formatting* to this location.

If you want to use conditional formatting with images on a cell containing a picture, the conditional image will override the static one. This combination, however, is rarely used in practice.

Images in a combination cockpit

Combination cockpits offer two different ways to integrate images: as objects or wallpaper.

Using the toolbar (*I want to* menu, *Open designer*), you can *add images* to the cockpit and arrange them on your workspace as you would any other objects. Just create a position frame in the *Designer* and then choose the image file in the properties window (see image below).



You can place the image behind all other objects, a feature that you probably know from Windows desktops, PowerPoint or Web sites. If the image is smaller than the designated area of the cockpit, *DeltaMaster* will tile the image starting from the upper-left corner. Now, click on an empty space in the combination cockpit. *DeltaMaster* will then display a *wallpaper* input field, where you can select the image.

Bella says: Use with caution!

Please keep in mind that when you integrate images into your reports, the data-pixel ratio will suffer and you will report less information using more space. The serious, minimalist reporting style that we advocate doesn't need pepped-up gimmicks. We recommend only to integrate images into reports when they truly add value for your readers and help them understand the situation more intuitively.

Questions? Comments?

Just contact your Bissantz team for more information!