

DeltaMaster clicks!

01/2008

Greetings, fellow data analysts!

Pictures first learned how to move at the end of the 19th century. These early "motion pictures" were little more than individual images shown in quick succession. This innovation soon spread into other areas and in 1928, the first news ticker was launched in New York's Time Square, where it remains its trademark over eighty years later. In London, a Reuters ticker that runs across the entire facade of a building also serves as a landmark of the city's new Canary Wharf business district.

You might be asking yourself where we are going with all this talk of movement. The answer is... anywhere you want! With *DeltaMaster* you can create informative tickers and publish them to all kinds of other applications. The *TickerPortal* makes it all possible. We'll show you how to bring it all into motion in this edition of *clicks*!

Best regards,

Your Bissantz & Company team

Up-to-the-minute stock updates dash across the facade of a building in London's Canary Wharf district. In New York, the "zipper" scurries along Times Square, while a multi-row replica runs on the Morgan Stanley building. And where will *your* ticker be?
Images: telegraph.co.uk, nytimes.com



DeltaMaster Matinee

12 February 2008, Mannheim
Thomas Wieland, Business Director for Knauf Bauprodukte, will be our guest speaker.
www.bissantz.com/matinee/en

'Industry Reporting' power seminar

18 February 2008, Nuremberg
The battle against anorexic reporting and useless BI shelfware has begun!
www.bissantz.com/ir

OLAP seminar

18 - 21 February 2008, Nuremberg
The first of six seminars in 2008 covers data preparation (SQL), OLAP modeling and MDX programming.
www.bissantz.com/olap-seminar

DeltaMaster@Work

31 January 2008, Nuremberg
Create reports that make a statement!
www.bissantz.com/news/deltamaster@work.asp

Archive

www.bissantz.com/clicks/en

Tip of the month Automatic sparkline exports with the TickerPortal

Back in *DeltaMaster clicks!* 10/2005 we introduced the *SparkTicker*, a tool which allows you to publish large volumes of data as sparklines. These subtle, yet omnipresent charts display valuable background and historical information as an infinite loop and are as accurate as your data sources allow.

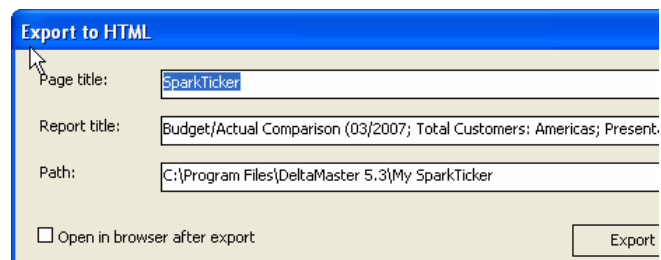


Beyond your *DeltaMaster* environment, this feature can be very useful in other applications such as:

- Corporate homepages (e.g. www.bissantz.com)
- Intranets, portals and other sources of internal corporate information
- Active Desktop (as a dynamic enhancement to your current Windows desktop)
- Self-running presentation screens for corporate reception desks, meeting rooms, cafeterias or even tradeshow exhibition areas
- Anywhere you can use an automatic presentation that requires little to no interaction

In scenarios like these, you will need to export the ticker charts from *DeltaMaster* to another application. You can do this in two different ways:

- You can Save the images manually by clicking the respective link in the *SparkTicker* window of the analysis session. *DeltaMaster* will then save the currently displayed chart to a simple HTML page which displays the chart as a ticker.



- You can automatically export *SparkTicker* charts using the new *TickerPortal* option in combination with *ReportServer*. Once this option has been activated, you can generate a large number of tickers that are updated regularly with no further work on your part. In other words, you can use jobs to create ticker images and transfer them to a Web server via FTP, for example, just as you would do to create and distribute .das or Office files.

This edition of *clicks!* will focus on the automatic export function.

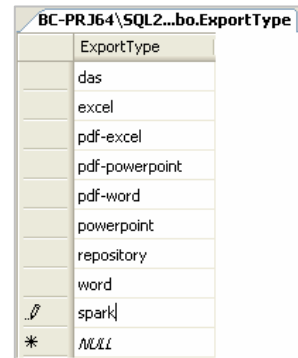
Licensing

In order to use the automatic export function, you will need both *ReportServer* and a separate *TickerPortal* license. No further software installations are necessary. Although the *TickerPortal* functionality is available in *ReportServer*, you can only use it with a valid license.

You can request an evaluation license so that you can test its functionality in detail and build your own applications.

Modifying the definition database

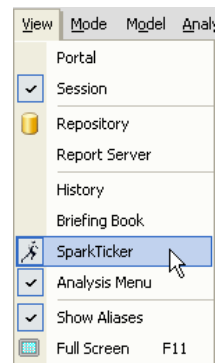
First, you will have to make a small change in the definition database, where *ReportServer* saves the definitions and properties of its jobs. *ReportServer* accesses this database, which is typically implemented either in Microsoft Access (“*ReportServer.mdb*”) or as a relational database in Microsoft SQL Server, via ODBC. In the “*ExportType*” table, you will need to add a new row called “*spark*”. After you have made this change, *ReportServer* will be able to export tickers.



ExportType	NULL
das	
excel	
pdf-excel	
pdf-powerpoint	
pdf-word	
powerpoint	
repository	
word	
spark	
*	NULL

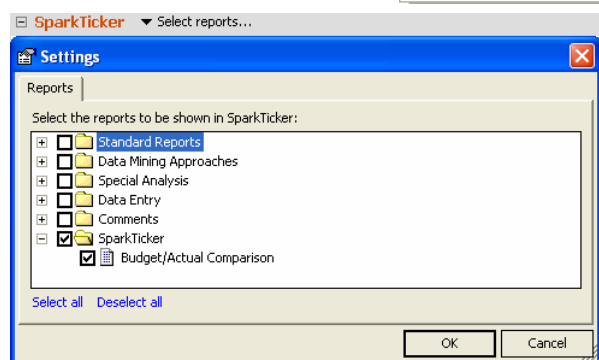
Export goods: SparkTicker reports

If you do not currently see the *SparkTicker* in your analysis session, you can activate this option in the *View* menu of the main toolbar.



Now open the analysis session which you would like to use as your *Report source*. In the *SparkTicker* window, you can *Select the reports to be shown* in the ticker with your mouse.

It makes sense to store all *SparkTicker* reports into a separate folder of the briefing book as shown in the screenshot to your right. Currently, you can create a ticker using pivot tables, measure charts/lists rankings, time-series analyses, SQL drill throughs and *Flexreports*. (For more information about *Flexreports*, please read *DeltaMaster deltas! 5.3.0*, feature #13).



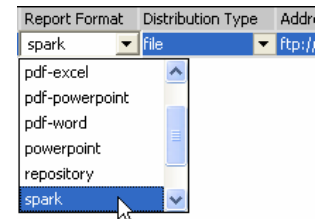
Export unit: folder

DeltaMaster processes jobs in the export process on a folder-by-folder basis. All reports in a folder will be merged into a single chart in the same order that they appear in that particular folder. If you want to create individual sparklines like those on our *DeltaLife* site (www.bissantz.com/sparklines/deltalife.asp), you simply have to create a separate folder for each sparkline and then save a report that shows the

desired value. The *Briefing book generator* supports you in this task (see *DeltaMaster clicks!* 06/2006 for more information). To help you maintain an overview of these folders, you may wish to organize them in a system of parent folders.

Adding a job in ReportServer

In the *ReportServer* job, simply select the “spark” *Report format*, which you have just added to the definition database. In next column select the *Distribution type*, such as “ftp” for uploading images to a Web server, “mail” for sending them by e-mail, or “file” for saving them to a directory.



The right address

Since *ReportServer* automatically names the export files, you simply have to enter the path under *Address*. Please note, however, that this folder must already exist, because *ReportServer* cannot create a new folder and will otherwise interpret your entry as a file name. You can use variables such as “@IMN” for the name of the current generator element; the resulting term, however, should again be the name of an existing folder.

The created files will be named “sparkX.png” and, where applicable, “sparkX.xml”. In this case, X is the ID of the corresponding report folder in the *Briefing book*. You can view the ID in the analysis session if you hold the *Alt* key while mousing over the folder name. This ensures that *ReportServer* can locate the charts under the same name for regular updates.

If you want to upload the charts to an FTP server, you must write the address in this form:

ftp://user:password@server/path

Although user name, password and path are not required entries for *ReportServer*, they are generally required for accessing an FTP server.

Output files

ReportServer will generate a bitmap file for each folder and, if applicable, a second file containing the numerical values for the integration into other applications.

- The bitmap is a PNG (Portable Network Graphic) file. This format supports compressions without losing quality and is supported by all standard Web browsers and other display programs. The size of the charts can be very large if the source reports are as well. Although a width of several thousand pixels is normal, the file size will usually only be a few kilobytes. If the report contains line/column sparklines or trend barometers, these will also be exported 1:1 to the ticker. *ReportServer* also accounts for tolerance corridors in line sparklines as well as the ticker size (i.e. small, medium or large) during the export process.
- If a report contains column sparklines, *DeltaMaster* will generate a second file in XML format containing the coordinates of the individual columns, the time frame which they are referencing

and the actual value of the numbers. This ensures that external applications, such as a script on a Web server, have all the information they need to generate tooltips providing detailed information on each column. The XML file has the same name as the corresponding bitmap file but with an .xml ending (instead of .png).

Usage

After you have exported the charts, you can use them on your Intranet site, a portal or other external applications. Exactly *how* you integrate the *DeltaMaster* or *TickerPortal* data into your system depends on the individual target system. Please contact your Bissantz team if you require any assistance. If you use a Microsoft IIS Web server, for example, we have ASP scripts that combine several tickers into a window and display the last update as a tooltip. You can then customize these scripts to your individual requirements. The scripts move using the <marquee> HTML tag, which is not officially part of the HTML specification but is supported by all standard browsers.



The screenshot above shows a multi-row ticker showing sales analysis KPIs based on our “Chair” reference model. The first five rows show the net revenues, rebates, labour costs and their budget deviations for the entire business and the four main sales regions. The data derive from a pivot table with column sparklines. Rows 6-8 show *Ranking* reports, which contain the top revenue-generating products and customers broken down by the two main sales groups. The last row shows a listing of current stock prices.

Questions? Comments?

Just contact your Bissantz team for more information!