

Sage Abra HRMS

What's New in Crystal Reports® 2008

Crystal Reports 2008 is a powerful, dynamic, and actionable reporting solution that helps you design, explore, visualize, and deliver reports over the web or by building them into custom applications. Users can consume reports with stunning visualizations, conduct on-report business modeling, and execute decisions instantly from the report itself—reducing dependency on IT and developer resources.

With Crystal Reports, you can:

- Empower users to explore reports interactively.
- Create compelling reports with stunning visualizations.
- Develop powerful data mashups.
- Save valuable report-design time.
- Enjoy comprehensive report deployment options and an improved report designer.

Interact: Empower Users to Explore Reports Interactively

The following features can help improve your experience.

Interactive report viewing – On-report sorting, filtering, and reformatting allow you to explore information interactively without querying the database again. Optional parameters support complex, user-driven filtering scenarios. You can answer more questions with fewer, more flexible reports—significantly reducing dependency on developer and IT support. Filtering panels and sorting buttons can be built into the report as needed.

Parameter panel – The report designer and viewers have a parameter panel so that parameter values can be set without refreshing data. Report designers build panels into their reports prior to publishing them. Parameters are displayed on the panel so that report consumers can find them readily, make changes, and have the new values applied directly to the saved data.

Sage Crystal Dashboard Design integration – Import Shockwave Flash (SWF) files generated from Sage Crystal Dashboard Design software, into your reports and benefit from improved design-time integration and visualizations. Enhance reports with what-if models that enable users to make important decisions dynamically without leaving the report file.

Adobe Flex integration – Integrate reports with operational workflows by building Adobe Flex applications into reports. Using Adobe Flex Builder or Adobe Flash Builder, you can create a user interface (UI) to access report data and to integrate with external web services. Data in a report can be passed to Adobe Flex, making it easier to create a flexible UI even when you don't have access to your data through web services. Adobe Flex can do tasks such as database write-back and invoking operational workflows directly within Crystal Reports.

Professional-Grade Reporting for All Employees

Recent enhancements in

Crystal Reports 2008 let you

create compelling reports with

stunning visualizations, benefit

from comprehensive report

deployment options, and enable

better-informed decisions for

all employees, all while saving

development time with improved,

integrated, report-design tools.

Visualize: Create Reports with Stunning Visualizations

The following features help designers create dynamic, powerful reports:

Adobe Flash integration – A wide variety of data presentation options are now available through Adobe Flash. SWF files can be integrated into a report (either built in or linked through a website), and report data can be shared with SWF through FlashVars for compelling, interactive, and information-rich reports.

Powerful cross-tabs – Custom row and column calculations can now be inserted into a cross-tab, which is useful for reports that benefit from a table structure. The cross-tab table structure makes reports much faster to build and maintain.

Flexible pagination – Report designers can customize page size and page breaks. A single report can combine portrait and landscape page formats, and the white space at the end of groups can be removed by compressing page footers

Crystal Reports software enables users to consume reports with stunning visualizations, conduct on-report business modeling, and execute decisions instantly from the report itself—reducing dependency on IT and developer resources.

Design: Develop Powerful Data Mashups

The following features enable data to be pulled from various sources.

Integration with Sage Crystal Dashboard Design, Adobe Flex, and Adobe Flash – Developers can produce powerful mashups (hybrid web applications) by pulling data from various sources. They can embed SWF files without coding and add powerful visualizations to reports.

Web services data driver – Integrating with various web services can be difficult and complex due to a variety of implementation types. This new data driver offers additional web access to web services by providing support for remote procedure call (RPC) encoding of SOAP messages, SSL-secured web servers, and compatibility with Web Services Security (WS-Security) protocol. It adapts to custom logon requirements such as email address or user name and password. Developers combine the flexibility of XML and web services with report formatting and visualization to deliver reports that link data to interactive data mashups, such as integration with third-party mapping systems.

Design: Save Valuable Report-Design Time

The following features let designers work faster and smarter:

Built-in bar-code support – Report designers can generate bar codes with only a few mouse clicks by using the new “turn to bar code” function in the context menu. They can convert fields to Code 39 bar codes without any coding or extra steps. Additional bar-code fonts are available from third-party vendors.

Enhanced designer features – Designers can be more productive with features like global formula search, duplicate formula, duplicate running total, autocomplete field names, and the “find in field explorer” feature.

Hyperlinking wizard – Designers save time by automatically creating the formulas required to hyperlink to a document stored in Crystal Reports Server.

Single edition – Crystal Reports 2008 comes in a single edition that provides quick access to the features you need to meet any application and user requirement. Report samples and developer documentation are available as free, optional downloads.

Multilingual reporting – During product installation, you can choose a working language by selecting the language packs you want and then switching the report designer UI to use any of the packs that are installed. Report-content locale can be set explicitly for each report file. This setting controls sorting, grouping, and formatting that matches the local language customs and conventions.

Deploy: Comprehensive Deployment Options

The following features provide multiple ways to deploy reports:

Data-driven publishing – You can publish personalized reports such as employee rosters, departmental reports, and the cost of recruiting reports to thousands of recipients in a single publishing session. Also known as report bursting, data-driven publishing allows IT personnel to create multiple reports based on different data sources, personalized for each recipient, combined into a single file (such as Adobe PDF), and distributed to a dynamic list of recipients—all with a single action. Content can be archived, printed, or emailed. This makes scheduling faster and easier and gives you the ability to conduct personalized high-volume reporting. Data-driven publishing is available in Crystal Reports Server.

Improved XML exporting – You can render reports in almost any format and enjoy faster and easier integration with industry-specific business processes—without any custom coding. Extensible stylesheet language transformations (XSLT) are embedded in the report file and are triggered by users from within the viewer when exported to XML. This provides a powerful, flexible hook for transforming Crystal Reports data and integrating it into other applications.

.NET report modification software development kit (SDK) – The report application server (RAS) SDK is now available for users of the Crystal Reports .NET application programming interface (API) without the use of an RAS. Report modification, such as changing database providers or adding, removing, or creating report objects, can be achieved with the RAS SDK through the .NET SDK.

Java runtime engine – Crystal Reports, version for Eclipse, is a separate download that includes a Java runtime engine optimized for deploying Crystal Reports .rpt files in your Java application. It supports both thick-client and web applications and includes an integrated development environment (IDE) tool for the Eclipse IDE, a Java runtime engine, and a simple report-design tool integrated into the Eclipse IDE.

Web applications for external use – External distribution of web applications embedding the runtime engines is now available for one fixed price with the Crystal Reports runtime server license.

What's Changed

The following changes have been made to Crystal Reports:

- To reduce download time, **report samples and the sample database** are accessed through separate downloads on the start page of Crystal Reports, as are **.NET developer documentation, merge modules, and MSI files**.
- The **report designer component (RDC)** is not supported in Crystal Reports. Developers wishing to use Crystal Reports in a component object model (COM) application should use the precursor of Crystal Reports 2008 (Crystal Reports XI, release 2). **Advanced dynamic HTML (DHTML)** viewers have been removed from Crystal Reports because improvements to DHTML viewers make additional viewers unnecessary.
- **Java reporting component (JRC) and Java SDK documentation** are available through the free download for **Crystal Reports, version for Eclipse**.

QUICK FACTS

Summary

Crystal Reports software is an intuitive reporting solution that helps you create flexible, feature-rich, dependable reports that are tightly integrated into both thick-client and thin-client applications.

Business Challenges

- Reduce dependency on IT staff for report design, development, and deployment.
- Give users the ability to readily visualize the potential outcome of business decisions.
- Expand access to data over the web.
- Add business-critical information to reports without coding.

Key Features

- **Report design** – Create highly formatted, interactive, and professional-looking reports using a complete set of layout tools and design controls.
- **Application development** – Leverage cross-platform support for both Java and .NET HTML, allowing developers to focus on application business logic rather than tedious, time-intensive coding.
- **Report delivery** – Export reports to popular formats, such as Adobe PDF, Microsoft® Office, and rich text format.

Business Benefits

- **Save report design time** with a stand-alone report designer or a design tool integrated within Microsoft Visual Studio® 2008 without leaving the development environment.
- **Provide a flexible development environment** with separation of application development and report-design tasks so that developers can focus on application development while report authors can focus on report design.
- **Increase report use** by creating compelling reports with stunning visualizations.
- **Enable faster, better-informed decisions** at all levels of the organization with interactive report exploration and controlled sharing because reports can be previewed in HTML and published to the web.

For more information about Crystal Reports, please contact your local Sage Business Partner, call us toll-free directly at 800-424-9392, or visit our website at: www.SageAbra.com