



**Unibase 8.1 Enters QA Cycle - More Keys, Verbs, Features Come**

Whenever Fred skips an issue of "The DMAC Technical Review", most Unibase users figure that the next release of Unibase will have a lot of "new stuff." Yep, Fred's been hard at work on the Unibase 8.1 release. This article will summarize most of the new features. As always, testing has fallen upon the shoulders of those who requested the features. When this testing is complete, Unibase 8.1 will go into general release. Thanks to all who have helped.

One big change centers around web access of Unibase. WebBase has been made easier and easier to install and use, but it still involves too much administration for most Unibase clients when run from LINUX.

With Unibase 8.1, WebBase will initially run on Microsoft IIS. If this approach does not make the web access of Unibase (WebBase) sufficiently easy for DMAC clients, then Unibase 8.1 will be tested running on Microsoft Terminal Services. So, Unibase Release 8.1 wiggles sideways to allow Unibase operation under Microsoft IIS and Microsoft Terminal Services. We will see how DMAC clients like this approach.

Later this year [www.dmac-webbase.com](http://www.dmac-webbase.com) will link to a new test bed for users to try Unibase under first Microsoft IIS then later Microsoft Terminal Services. Stay tuned.

As part of this wiggling for Microsoft IIS and Microsoft Terminal Services, user "zapping" has disappeared. No one should miss that.

The Field Back (FLDBACK) key can now skip over Protected Fields. The same client is working on an improved algorithm to skip over Protected Fields going forward. Too much deviation from the present will mean this is controlled by an environment variable.

The "define file" verb now allows number folder names if quotation marks are used. The "alt key" combination that works in the 16-BIT version has returned to the main keyboard rectangle in the 32-BIT version. Also all versions now support "Alt Function" keys. As the possible number of user definable keys grows, users wanted more places to put them on the keyboard.

A new set of panning keys at steps equal to ten percent of the main panning keys (which users can set by job) has been added. Everyone is still trying to do image entry without having to use a mouse.

A new control function, <vrec#>, allows user access and the ability to change the verify and new document flags associated with each record. In addition the user can use the six undefined flags in each record. Of course this is only until the flags are used by DMAC. This is not really a limitation because the use will grow from client requests and we at DMAC do a good job of getting rid of potential conflicts.

Image Entry now supports a Unibase type of dithering when TIFF images are zoomed in any direction. This improves the readability of the TIFF images under large magnification. This is one you have to see to believe. We thank the client for suggesting it.

Fmt-to-Fmt duplication now propagates error corrections in verify mode.

Global variables are now associated with an operator, not a computer.

A ton of new, different TIFF variations can now be displayed. Seems like we get a new weird TIFF about once a month. Boy, that standard is not forced to be as rigorous as Fred used to think.

The above gives a quick run through of the new 8.1 features that seem worth mentioning (and Fred has not

forgotten). The large list of solved problems brought about by Windows XP and its service pack 2 just do not need to be mentioned.

Virus checkers have become such a headache that Windows XP and Windows 2003 Server problems are bland in comparison. At least Microsoft-created problems are somewhat logical as Microsoft moves towards a standards based environment. Most virus checker problems are just poor code in the virus checker and DMAC cannot fix that.

### **Dithering Makes Images Fuzzy; So the Images Will Be Clearer**

Unibase Imaging easily allows user or project designer to zoom in or out on any image or snippet of an image. Large screens allow a lot of pixels to show the results. And everyone has a color monitor.

So when a Unibase client said DMAC could make its zoomed images clearer by making them fuzzier; we technical people at DMAC were amazed. Jon Klein our brilliant marketing director held classes and explained how our eyes can integrate fuzzy stuff so that it is clear. Now we technical people at DMAC were willing to try to make things fuzzy so they were clearer. Of course, this is the bi-tonal tiff image we are talking about. That means the image starts out with each pixel either black or white.

The way you make a fuzzy image is called "dithering". You cannot dither with just black and white pixels we techies learned. You must dither with at least shades of gray. So now inside Unibase if you zoom an image for any reason, the image portion displayed is changed to a grayscale and then dithered.

### **Do Fuzzy Images Look Clearer? - Yes! Try Unibase 8.1 And See**

Where is the gotcha? Well it does take more machine CPU cycles to dither. On fast machines you cannot tell. On slow machines (Some Unibase users still have 40-MHz machines.) it may not be worth the tradeoffs. So there is an environment variable (UBNODITH) that turns off dithering.

### **Need For More Choices Dictates An "Alt keys" Comeback**

In Unibase by DMAC the main rectangle on the keyboard at one time allowed Alt keys to be assigned with any of the special Unibase key functions. When Microsoft Windows came along, this alt key function sometimes conflicted with what Microsoft then called "shortcut keys".

Well, Alt keys are back by popular demand in release 8.1. Many Unibase users wish to assign more and more special keys as well as have as many different keys available as possible in three different keyboard overlays. No longer is a Nixdorf or a Cade keyboard overlay used just to emulate these old key to disk systems. Users today just think of the overlays as ways to make all keystrokes easy and quick to reach.

As to the conflicts with Microsoft definitions, the user who requested the return of the Alt keys says, "So what?" Can't have everything.

### **New Power For Unibase Client Designers With <irflags channel#>**

Ever wanted to store a bit of information with each record in Unibase? Well, the new AID language control function <irflags channel#> gives the client designer access to the flags stored in the Unibase interrecord gap. What initially started out as a "read-only" control function capability became a "read-write" capability.

Eight logical bits represented as either zeros or ones in a text string eight characters long are available. Two of these are currently DMAC defined; the record verified flag and the new document flag. The others may some day be defined.

Aside from making a mess, what is a good use for such power? Well, if you are an old timer, like Fred, you remember, "Statistical verification." In Unibase statistical verification it was possible to verify every xth (1 - 50)

record when verification time came. This approach never worked well because of paper shuffling to get to the correct record. And the record verified was a stratified choice not a random choice.

Now with Unibase Imaging it is easier to have the correct image displayed for statistical verification. You could dust off your tables from that old military standard for bullets and use an AID fileedit to mark which record to verify. Since the military standards worked very well for predicting total accuracy, you could set the accuracy of the verification process as you wish. Enough said.

### **Fmt-To-Fmt Duplications Automatically Correct in 8.1**

For years Unibase by DMAC allowed the verifier to change a record field labeled as a record-to-record duplicating field and Unibase would automatically correct all of the records of the same format (same as a template for newbies) that had the same error in the same field (you know what I mean). That was good.

A few years ago a client suggestion helped DMAC add a feature that enabled the duplication error correction process to continue if the format changed but the new format had the same field as a record-to-record dupe field.

Recently a client asked if we could handle the case of Fmt-to-Fmt duplication. Now if a verifier finds an error in a record field that is in a format-to-format dupe-flagged field, the error correction propagates forward until the keyed data in the same format is different from the corrected data. Another cool automation, yes?

### **Folders With Names Beginning With Numbers Now Legal In Text Files**

As DMAC clients become more skilled with using text folders (files) for many different requirements, the naming of the folder became an issue. Some clients wanted to name a text file starting with a numeric character.

So now, if the folder (file) name is enclosed in quotation marks, the Unibase AID Language allows the file description to contain a numeric character as the first character in the define text file statement.

### **“Insert After” Key Added To Unibase by DMAC**

The ability now exists to insert a record AFTER the record the keyer is looking at, instead of BEFORE the record. The default key combination for this function is {REC} {TAB}. That is, the operator presses function key 3, followed by the tab key. Of course this key function can be placed on any of the various levels of a key on the keyboard. The description of this capability in keyboard mapping is “IN A”.

### **Save A Keystroke Feature Unibase Skips Over Protected Fields When Keyer Is Backing Up**

Those in the “key-for-dollars” business know how hard it is to save a keystroke. One of DMAC’s good clients came up with this way to always save a keystroke if the keyer is backing up in a record and encounters a protected field. The thought was that if the field is protected, why ever stop on it. Until a reason comes up for stopping on a protected field not even an environment variable will surround this feature.

### **Alt Joins Unshifted, Shift, And Control Function Key Options**

As Unibase features grow, and the clients need to relate these features to a single keystroke (One keystroke saved is worth \$10,000; remember that saying?), new ways of obtaining keystrokes becomes mandatory.

So, Unibase now has added twelve more definable keys on the data/image entry keyboard. This comes by allowing user definable keystrokes based on the Alt Function keys.

So now, whether you, the designer, use the Graphical User Interface or the Menu User Interface, you can set up more keys to speed your work. At last count there were hundreds of choices in Unibase – so you cannot have all

available for each job. But you can optimize how the keying process works by job if necessary.

### **Ten Percent Panning Keys Appear - Should They Be Called TenPan?**

Several articles appear in this newsletter talking about more space to have user-defined keys on the keyboard. The new Ten Percent panning keys are the type of new-breed key functions requiring this space.

Everyone probably knows what this is, but let us review. In Unibase Imaging you can set how far the image moves when you pan it left, right, up or down with a single keystroke. You do this in the Standard Job creation window. Well, what happens if what you want to see falls on the line between two views?

Mouse people just wiggle (about 10 keystrokes minimum elapsed time) the mouse scroll bar. Now in Unibase you can use the Ten Percent Panning key. These keys (one for each panning direction) move the image an amount equal to ten percent of the distance moved by the regular panning key. Cool, no?

Of course where you put the Ten Percent Panning Keys could be a problem. DMAC chose to put the default location under the Alt Function keys 1 to 4. So, from now on we all can refer to this area as TenPan Alley.

### **Useless Information 103421: Not All Popup Stoppers Run on XP Pro**

Lost a little time over this one. Someone who normally uses XP Home set up his Popup Stopper on XP Pro. Did not work.

So now Popup Stoppers join Fred's list of virus protectors and backup programs that do not behave well in a professional, networked, multi-user-in-the-same-task environment.

When will they ever learn . . .