

PATHFINDER OPTIONS TO AID IN THE INSTALLATION OF NEW APPLICATIONS SOFTWARE RELEASES

Installing new releases of purchased application software can pose certain challenges for a programmer. Not fully understanding all the changes that the new release has made to the application could spell post-installation problems. Prior to going “live” on a new version, it is important to be aware of any differences between the old and new versions. Having visibility into these differences can indicate where the software vendor has made a change, or possibly where some in-house modification has been made to the old release, and should most likely be applied to the new. PATHFINDER can assist in the process of implementing a new application software release by helping to identify differences in the application.

In order to compare object and field usage for two software releases, Object and Field X-ref for both the old and new releases must be built. PATHFINDER allows the creation and maintenance of multiple X-ref databases. The only limitation is that only one X-ref database (Object and Field) can exist in a library. Therefore, two libraries are needed to store the X-ref database; one to hold Object and Field X-ref for the old release, and the other to hold the Object and Field X-ref for the new release. Once Object and Field X-ref has been created for both the old and new releases, PATHFINDER inquiry options will allow easy navigation between X-ref databases.

To find changes in how a particular object or field is referenced, use PATHFINDER’s interactive inquiries. When making interactive inquiries, the name of the X-ref library appears in the upper right corner of PATHFINDER’s entry panels. For example, to find changes to where or how to field OHINV in the file INVMSTR was referenced, first execute a “Field Where Used” inquiry for the field, specifying the X-ref library containing X-ref for the old release. Next, change the name of the X-ref library to the one which contains X-ref for the new release and press enter. The X-ref data for the new version is shown. By comparing the data, any changes to where or how the field is being referenced will be evident. Any of the inquiry options on the Object X-ref Menu or the Field X-ref Menu can be used in this manner.

Structural changes to the application’s files can be determined by comparing data generated from the options on the File Analysis Menu. Structural changes could include changes to the fields in a file, changes in file dependencies, key field changes, etc. The File Analysis options are not dependent on the pre-built X-ref data. These “real-time” options extract information directly from the file objects. When comparing results of the file analysis options, be sure to specify the appropriate file library names for the old and new releases of the application.

To find changes on a more global basis, remember two important facts:

1. All PATHFINDER inquiry options offer full generic support for selection criteria. The Field X-ref inquiries even offer wildcard support for the field name!
2. Any inquiry can have its results directed to an outfile for further processing.

For example, to locate global changes in the objects referenced by any of the programs in the application, the Program's Objects option can be used. The command for the option (DSPPGMOBJ) will need to be executed twice, once for the X-ref built for the old release, and again for the X-ref built for the new release. The data in the two outfiles created by this command can then be compared to find differences. A user-written program could be created to compare the data in the two outfiles and report any differences. To automate this process, PATHFINDER commands can be executed to allow the creation of the outfiles, as well as the execution of any user-written comparison program to list the changes in the new application.

Understanding all the changes that have taken place within a new release of an application will facilitate a smooth installation and minimize down time for end users. PATHFINDER options will help find these changes, thus averting unexpected problems.

For further information, please contact our Technical Services department. We can be reached by email at info.hawkinfo.com or call us Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. (MST) and Friday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., VOICE (970) 498-9000 or FAX (970) 498-9096.