Navision Attain Database access via C/ODBC in ASP.NET Application

Navision Software was purchased by Microsoft and now it is supported by Microsoft Business Solutions together with Microsoft Great Plains, Axapta, Solomon, Microsoft Retail Management System and Microsoft CRM. Navision has extremely strong position on mid-size European and US markets, plus it has excellent manufacturing solution. Our goal is to help IT departments to support and tune Navision with in-house expertise and skills.

The topic of this article is Navision database access from ASP.NET application via C/ODBC interface. Our goal will be ASPX page accessing Navision Customers.

Let?s begin

1. In our case we will use Navision Attain 3.6 with Navision Database Server, Navision Application Server and Navision Client. These components are installed on Windows XP. You also need to install C/ODBC component form Navision Attain CD.

2. Let?s create ODBC DSN for Navision data access. Select Control Panel -> Administrative Tools -> Data Sources (ODBC). Then select System DSN tab and press Add button. We?ll use C/ODBC 32-bit data access driver. We?ll name Data Source Name Navision, Connection leave Local. As the database (Database button) select \Program Files\Navision Attain\Client\database.fdb (demo database). Then click Company button ? we?ll use CRONUS demo company. It is important for C/SIDE correct database access to setup proper options for C/ODBC connection. Press Options button and look at the options available ? we?ll need Identifiers parameter ? it defines identifiers types, which will be transferred to the client application. In order to work correct with MS SQL Server 2000 with C/ODBC source we need to use these type: ?a-z,A-Z,0-9,_?. Now DNS is done. Let?s create Linked Server.

3. Open MS SQL Server Enterprise Manager. Open server tree for the server, which you plan to use, for this server open Security folder and Lined Servers. With right click select New Linked Server in context menu. In the dialog box opened in the Provider Name select Microsoft OLE DB Provider for ODBC Drivers. Let?s name our Linked Server NAVISION. In Data Source string enter ODBC DSN name - NAVISION in our case. Linked Server is ready! Let?s select tables list and look at the data from Navision Attain database.

4. Next we need to create small stored procedure for sales data selection. Here is the text of the procedure:

```
SET ANSI_NULLS ON
SET ANSI_WARNINGS ON
GO

CREATE PROCEDURE NavisionCustomers AS

DBCC TRACEON(8765)
SELECT No_, Name, Address, City, Contact FROM OPENQUERY(NAVISION, 'SELECT * FROM Customer')

RETURN
```

Let?s clarify some points here. TRACEON(8765) directive allows us to work with the data of variable length, returned by C/ODBC driver. Without it we can not select Navision tables fields ? we will have these errors:

OLE DB error trace [Non-interface error: Unexpected data length returned for the column: ProviderName='MSDASQL', TableName='[MSDASQL]', ColumnName='Ship_to_Filter', ExpectedLength='250', ReturnedLength='1'].

Server: Msg 7347, Level 16, State 1, Line 1

OLE DB provider 'MSDASQL' returned an unexpected data length for the fixed-length column

'[MSDASQL].Ship_to_Filter'. The expected data length is 250, while the returned data length is 1.

OPENQUERY command opens linked server and gives it execution request, and returns record set selected. Directives ANSI_NULLS and ANSI_WARNINGS are required ? they provide the possibility of the execution for heterogeneous requests. To test the procedure you can give its name in MS SQL Query Analyzer ? EXEC NavisionCustomers

5. Now we need to create ASP.NET application. Let?s use free RAD environment ASP.NET WebMatrix. You can get infor and download it at http://asp.net/webmatrix . You need .NET SDK 1.1 installed, before WebMatrix installation.

6. Launch WebMatrix, select creation of the Data Pages -> Editable Data Grid in the wizard screen. Let?s keep all the defaults suggested. On the access page created we?ll change the header to Navision Attain Customers, select Verdana font and the font size desired. Next place on the page the component SqlDataSourceControl and tune it?s ? Connection String : server='(local)'; database='Alba';trusted_connection=true (change server and database name to your actual names), and SelectCommand ? as EXEC NavisionCustomers

7. For our Data Grid, which will show customers, define DataSource as SqlDataSourceControl1, and DatKeyField ? as No_

8. Next switch to code edition mode and make these changes:

- In the DataGrid_Delete method let?s correct the request for the customer deletion to the one we need
- Change DataGrid_Delete code, base on the fields we plan to use

9. Launch our application and test it. This is it!

Happy customizing, implementing and modifying! If you want us to do the job - give us a call 1-866-528-0577 or 1-630-961-5918! help@albaspectrum.com

Short note about the author

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