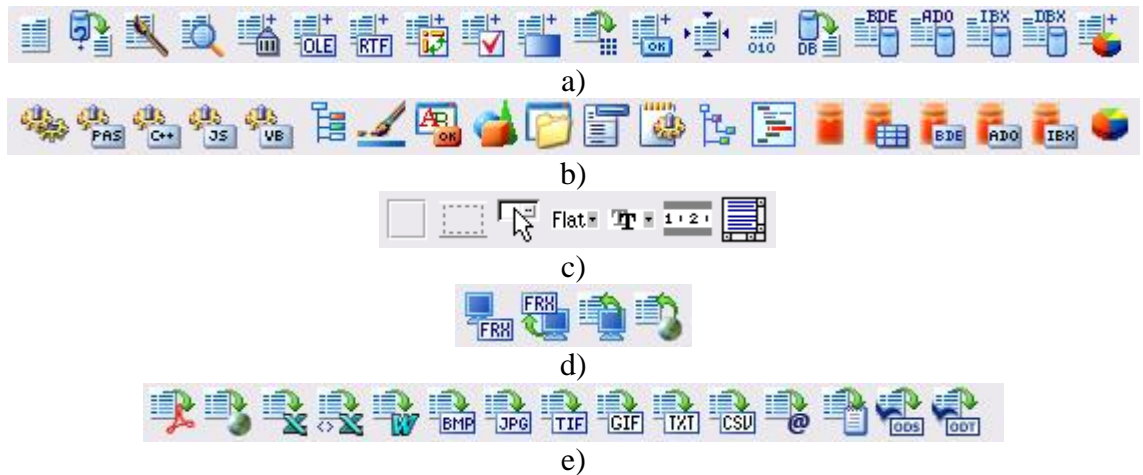


Report – Is it easy?

In this article I won't be comparing which is reporting tool is better. But I will try to explain by a simple example how to use FastReport VCL.

When developing a reporting informational system for an industry, we were faced with the need to create reports. Many advised us to try using Fast Report. Fortunately, there is a free trial version, which only limits the number of pages in the report to five. In order to work with Fast Reports, the only thing needed is to install Delphi components by using the installer. My program was developed in Delphi 7, so that's why I used Fast Report VCL.



Picture 1 – FastReport component in Delphi 7. Tabs:
 a) FastReport 4.0; b)Fast Script; c) FR4 tools; d) FastReport 4 Client/Server;
 e) FastReport 4 exports.

Since there is ADO connection and Prepared ADO table already in the application. We just need to add frxDBDataSet components, from the FR tab, for every table form so that we can use data from it into our reports. Consequently we get a connection shown in fig 2. In DataSet, you need to choose table.

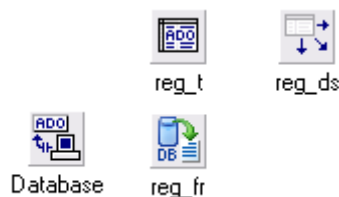


Fig. 2 – frxDBDataSet to ADO table connection

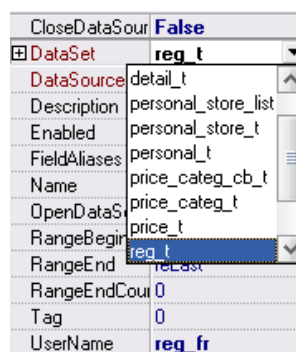


Fig 3 – frxDBDataSet object properties

In order to have the ability to export to different formats in the report, you need to add components from Fast Report Export.(fig 4)



Fig 4 – Export components

And finally, to have access to the report designer, the component frxReport from Fast Report 4.0 tab is needed.

After placing the frxDBDataset to needed report table, we run the report designer by double clicking frxReport component. At first, you may feel that you don't understand anything, but within a minute you will notice that, on the left field there are report creating tools placed, on top – toolbar for working with text, and in the center, a working field. Every object in the report has got its own properties which can be edited in the ObjectInspector, just like it can be done in Delphi.

To start working with data, we need to connect the dataset. This can be done in the dropdown Report, Data point. In the pop menu we tick the needed data (fig 5). Now on the right side of the designer, there will be our data with table field.

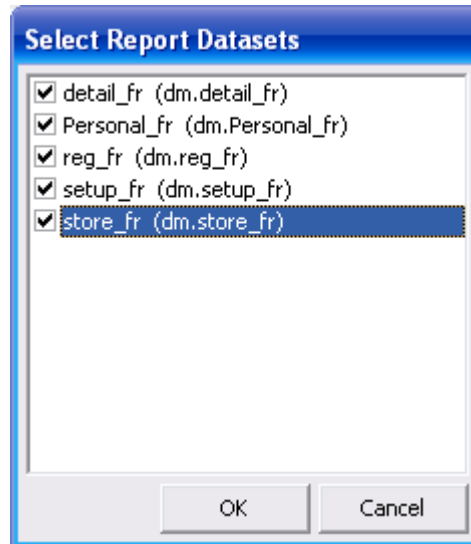


Fig 5 –Choosing Datasets for using in the report

Never just place data in the workplace. To place the data use «Bands». The top most and lowest-are the bands which will be shown on all report pages, which are called «Head» and «Foot». To show data from the base, the Data-band is used. We will add the name of the report by using the Text object from the side panel. To use the data from data base, simply move the needed table fields to right onto the MasterData band (fig 6). Also, never forget to add the DataSet for bands. This is done by double- clicking on the band. From which comes a form with accessible DataSet (fig 7).In it you need to pay attention to the Number of records parameter, this is the number of records which will be shown in the report.

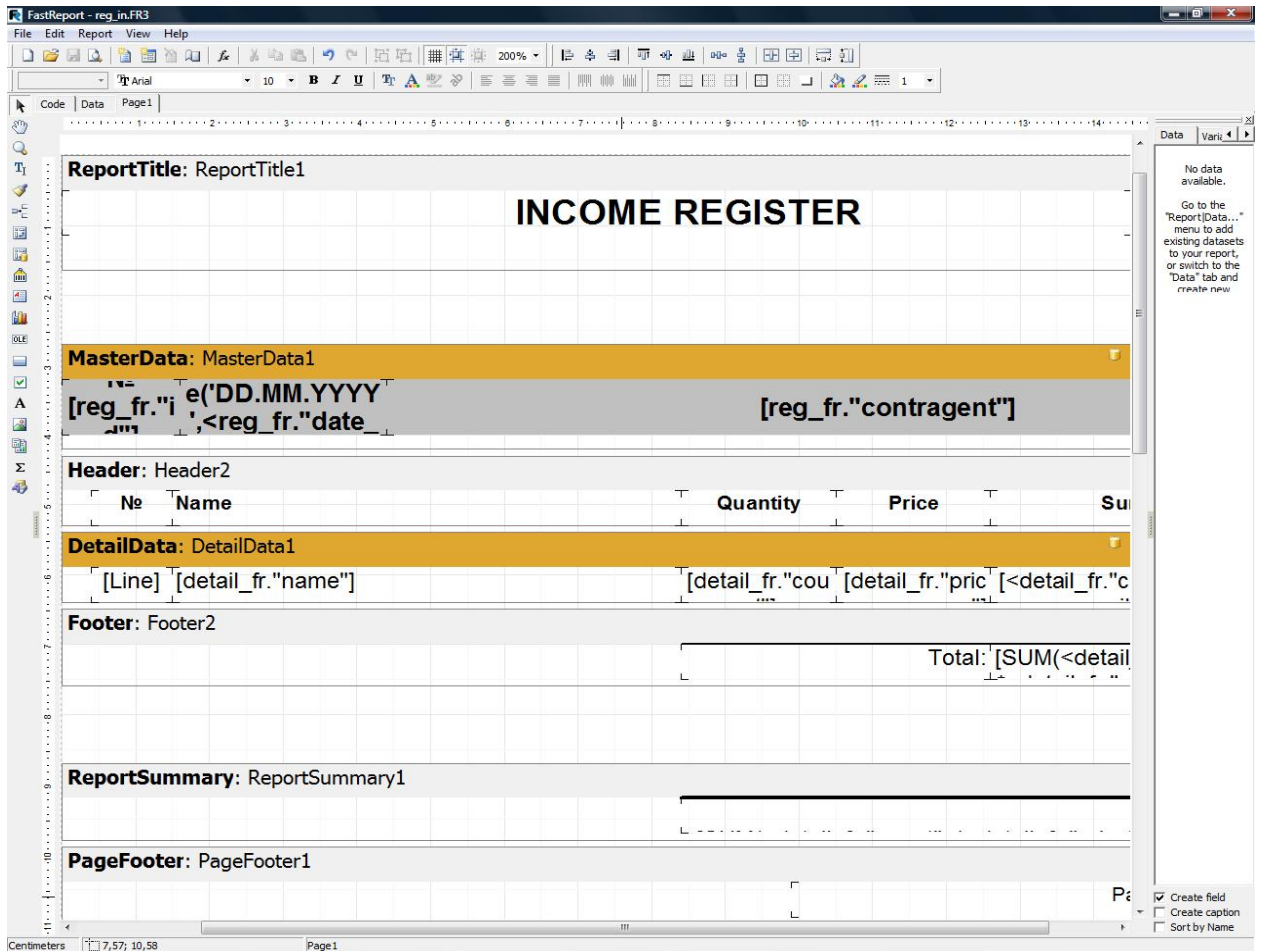



Fig 6 – Creating the report



Fig 7. – Choosing Dataset

It's possible to change the color of the text in the field by using . In my case, I had to make a connection table, that is, for the records from one table to show a corresponding identifier record from another table. For this, I was supposed to configure the ADO table properties, as shown in fig 8.

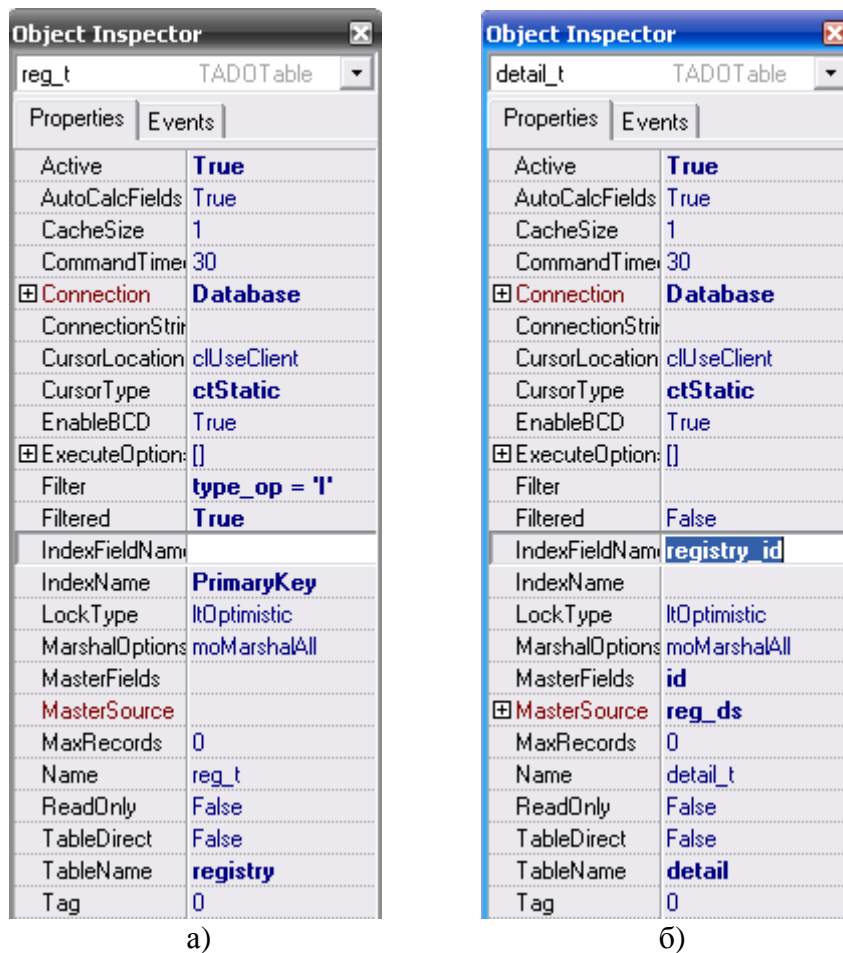



Fig 8 – ADO table properties, with connections settings on identifier: a) Main table, b) child table

Visible that, in the second table MasterSource – reg_ds is chosen, this is a dataset table a). Field with MasterFields – id identifier is chosen. Now return to the designer and add a new DetailData band. Data from child band is added into it.

Apart from that, there are also useful bands like Header and Footer. In it you can place table header, table footer, total sum, and signature. To form cells, highlight and in general any line limit by using the elements .

The final results of working with reports are shown in fig 9.

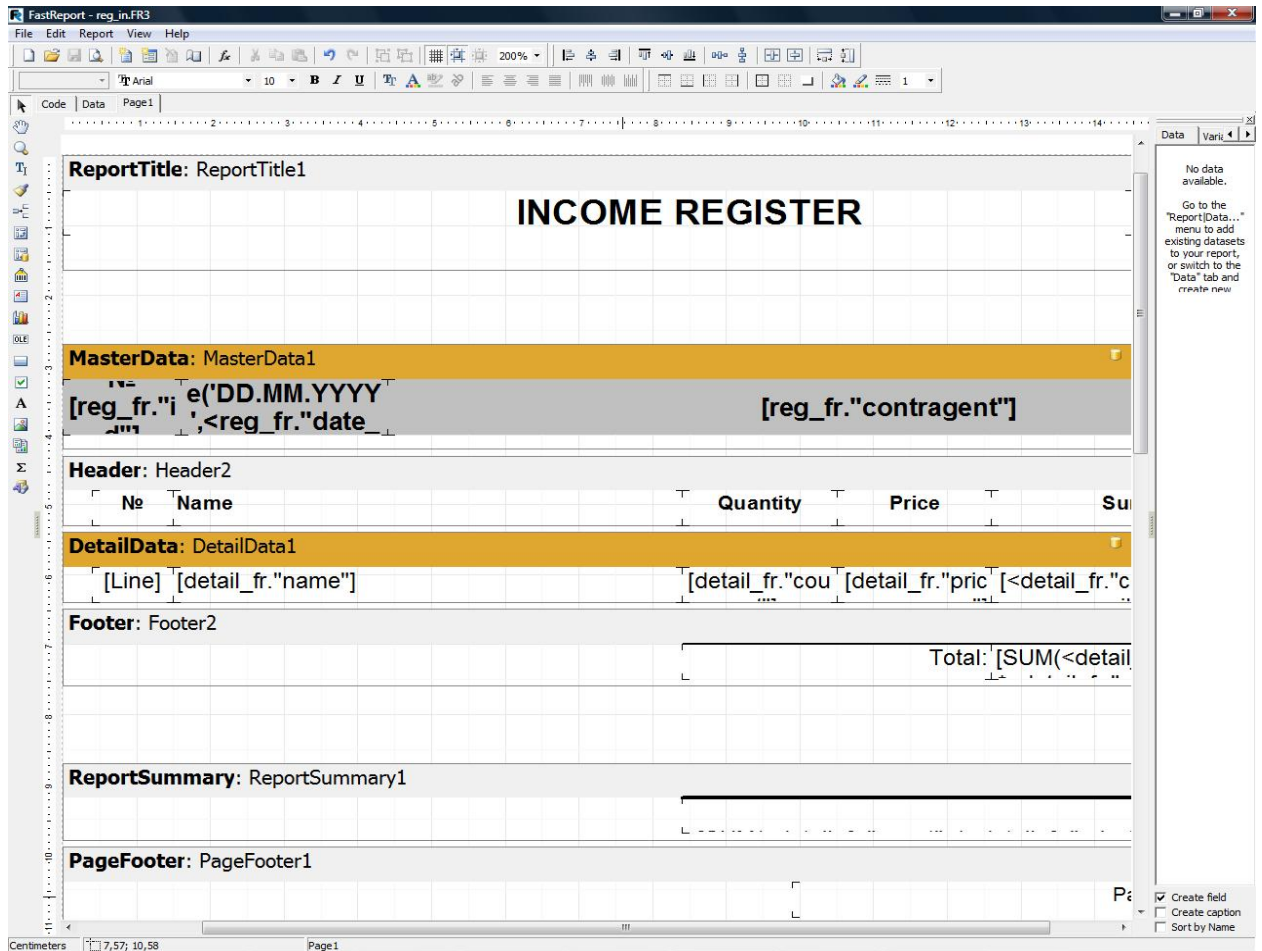



Fig 9 – Prepared report

To see how the report looks you can do it by using preview . In the preview window, you will find export and print options. (fig 10).

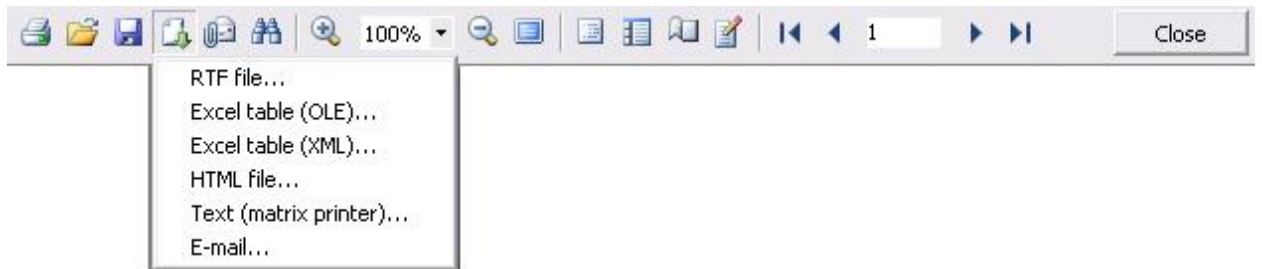


Fig 10 – Tools panel in report preview

INNER OPERATIONS

№ 49		30.08.2007			"City Express" Shop		
№	Name	Count	Price	Sum			
1	Mountain Bike TREK 45000	3	14 000,00	42 000,00			
2	Football	5	300,00	1 500,00			
				Total:	43 500,00		

№ 51		28.04.2008			"Red Hammer" factory		
№	Name	Count	Price	Sum			
1	Sneakers Nike	1	2 640,00	2 640,00			
				Total:	2 640,00		

№ 56		26.09.2009			"City Express" Shop		
№	Name	Count	Price	Sum			
1	Sneakers Reebok	1	2 354,00	2 354,00			
2	Mountain Bike TREK 45000	1	14 000,00	14 000,00			
				Total:	16 354,00		
				Total:	62 494,00		

Fig. 11 – A preview of a prepared report

Creating a simple report is not a hard task, but in order to run the report, I had to read the documentation. To load the report, use the function:

```
frxReport1.LoadFromFile('c:\1.fr3');
```

But to run – the function:

```
frxReport1.ShowReport;
```

But it's better to see the report in preview, then you will have an opportunity to export the report to any format or print, for this, you need the construction:

```
if frxReport1.PrepareReport then
```

```
frxReport1.ShowPreparedReport;
```

Hence, for the button, I had the following code:

```
dm.frxReport1.LoadFromFile(curdir + 'personal.fr3');
```

```
if dm.frxReport1.PrepareReport then
```

```
dm.frxReport1.ShowPreparedReport;
```

where curdir := ExtractFilePath(Application.ExeName) + '\';

Conclusion

Need to point out that in the report generator, there is a means to work with ADO, like in Delphi. That is, if you wish, you can organize the application based fully on.

To finalize, never leave out that Fast Report is very easy in development and has got a designer which is easy to understand. After studying the documentation carefully, it becomes clear that the strengths of Fast Report, if not unlimited, then they are very, very wide.