

BIRT Interactive Viewer

Feature Specifications

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Abstract

This document describes the interactive viewer features for BIRT 2.0

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1. Introduction

Traditional viewing operations support interactivity at page level, i.e., page navigation, TOC, search to a report page, and hyperlink to other reports. Recent developments in rich Internet application (RIA) and the AJAX application architecture (Asynchronous JavaScript And XML) have allowed us to reconsider the report presentation model. Instead of viewing a report as a static and monolithic document, we now view it as a media that can interact with end user during the viewing time.

2. Use Cases

Use cases are organized into several categories below.

2.1 Report Navigation

Once having a report, user wants to go through the report page-by-page sequentially or pick one of valid pages randomly.

If the report content is large, user may want to jump to a particular section by using TOC, which provides a “sketch view” of report.

User may also want to pin down a particular place of the report by specifying some search criteria.

Certain report contents either within a report or across multiple reports have some correlations. Report may be designed to link those contents together by hyperlinks. User should be able to drill though these hyperlinks.

2.2 Data Extraction

In some cases, user may be interested in certain portion of data presented in the report. They may want to extract these data and store them somewhere else in a different format such as CSV, etc and later load them into other applications.

3. Report Viewing Operations

This section lists those traditional report-level viewing operations.

3.1 Page Navigation

Based on the report content’s pagination, page navigation allows user to navigate to the first or last page, previous or next page, and any designated valid page. A page navigation bar is presented as the place to trigger these navigation operations.

3.2 TOC

TOC provide user another way to navigate through the report. It is presented as a separate tree beside report. Each TOC node has 2 properties: label and drill down target. When clicking on the node, user will navigate to the beginning of the target report item. TOC node can be collapsed or expanded.

3.3 Search

User can perform text-based search across the report. Search criteria would be any arbitrary keywords. Text search is presented like browser find feature. It will trigger a search session that allows user to search the text across all report pages one by one. Selected search text in the report content will be highlighted. Search session will guide user from one match to the next.

3.4 Linkage

Linkage refers to any pre-define hyperlink in the report. Hyperlink target could be an arbitrary URL, a drill through from summary content to detail content, a drill down/up from parent content to child content, or a pre-defined bookmark. Hyperlink target could also across various reports. They are defined at report design time. User relies on browser's backward/forward facility to navigate through the link.

3.5 Data Extraction

Viewer allows user to extract certain data from report and export it to somewhere else in CSV format. User needs to first set some criteria upon the pre-defined report fields, and then triggers the feature to extract the related data and export them. In normal case, these pre-defined fields are mapped to the report data set columns.