

Testing Multi-User Applications on a Single Machine

It's becoming rarer to write an application that doesn't need to run on a network - either now or in the future. However, a lot of independent developers still write their applications on a single machine. And even if you're on a network, you may need the ability to write and test a multi-user application on a single machine in order to be able to continue to work while the network is down.

In order to test multiple sessions of the same application on a single machine, you can use a multi-tasking package like Windows, OS/2 or Desqview to simulate multiple users. Here are a few tips that you can use while doing so.

Be sure to load SHARE so that files can be used by each session you load. Inside FoxPro, SET EXCLUSIVE OFF so that the tables can be shared as well. I include this line in my CONFIG.FP/FPW file so that EXCLUSIVE is off by default. It's slightly more work when you need to MODIFY STRUCTURE or change tags, since you have to explicitly USE filename EXCLUSIVE, but the extra four letters ("USE filename EXCL") to the command become second nature in short order.

Once you've got multiple sessions loaded, you'll hot-key between them, using Alt-Tab or Ctrl-Escape, say, in Windows. The problem now becomes - how do you keep which session is which? After flipping between them a few times, it's easy to get lost "Am I 'Quick Carl', or am I 'Dumb Donald' now?"

If you're in DOS, select a different color set in each application. In Windows, a slightly more elegant solution is to include a global parameter in your application, say, m.gcMethod. Use the line

```
PARAMETER m.gcMethod
```

as the first executable line in your main program, and include the line

```
modify window screen font "Foxfont",9 noclose title m.gcMethod
```

Then, when you run each instance of your program, pass an identifying "Method" as part of the program call:

```
do PROGNAME with "Quick Carl"
```

The Windows title bar changes from "Microsoft FoxPro" to "Quick Carl", providing a quick means to identify who you are pretending to be in each session.

The line

```
modify window screen font "Foxfont",9 noclose title "Microsoft FoxPro"
```

will turn the title bar back at the end of your program.

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