CHAPTER 10: CUSTOMIZATION IMPORT AND EXPORT CAPABILITIES

Training Objectives

Actively participating during this chapter helps you learn:

- How to import reports using Customization Maintenance
- How to export reports to report package files
- Troubleshooting techniques for error messages received during report validation

Introduction

Customization Maintenance provides the capability to import and exports reports from one Reports dictionary to another. Customization Maintenance uses package files to store report modifications. These packages can be then stored and accessed using Customization Maintenance.

This chapter also contains a discussion on the functionality provided by the Import button on the main window of Report Writer. It is recommended that for Microsoft Dynamics™ GP after Release 6, use the Customization Maintenance window to import and export reports.

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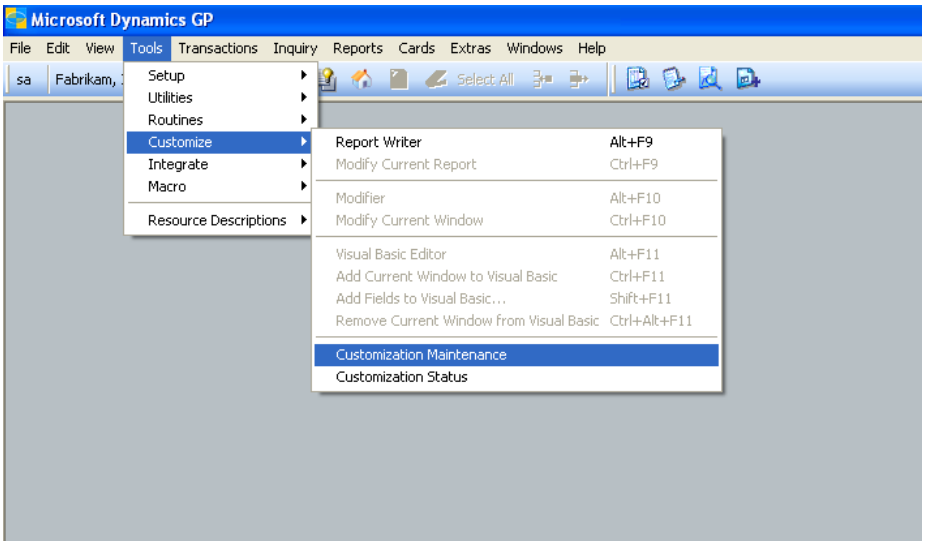
Customization Maintenance

TOOLS→CUSTOMIZE→CUSTOMIZATION MAINTENANCE

In Microsoft Dynamics GP there is a way to import and export reports using the Reports dictionary. Use the Customization Maintenance window to import and export "packages" of reports. Packages can be single reports or a group of reports. This feature has replaced the import process used in earlier versions of Microsoft Dynamics GP.



Package files are text files used to deliver these customizations. A developer can create a package file that contains their customizations, move the package file to the destination workstation, and then import the customizations into the installation.

A package file can contain the following items:

- **Modified Forms –** Forms customized with the Modifier.
- **New or Modified Reports** – Reports created or customized with the Report Writer.
- **Visual Basic for Applications Forms –** Forms that have Visual Basic for Applications code attached.
- **Visual Basic for Applications Reports** – Reports that have Visual Basic for Applications code attached.
- **Visual Basic for Applications Components** – User forms, code modules, or class modules created with the Visual Basic for Applications development environment.
- **References** – References to external components used by Visual Basic for Applications.

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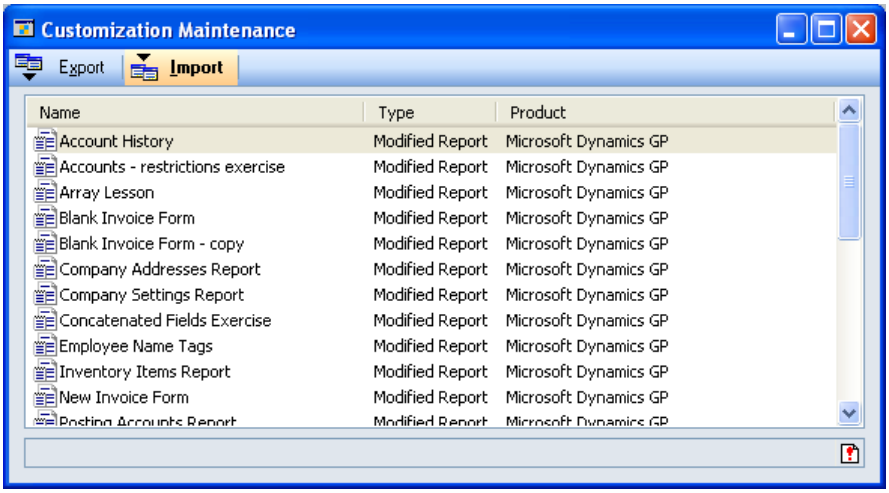
Specifically for Report Writer, the Customization Maintenance window creates package files of one or more reports to let you swiftly transfer valuable report modifications to other users. This window is used to import and export reports made or modified with Report Writer between users on a network environment.



HINT: *This feature is recommended on current versions of Microsoft Dynamics GP. If you use Release 6 or earlier, it is not available. Use the Import function within Report Writer to import reports into the current Reports dictionary.*

Package files are special files used to deliver customizations made with Report Writer. These package files can be very helpful and beneficial, as they remove the necessity of creating report modifications again for another user in an environment where each user is using their own reports dictionary file.

To create an export file using Customization Maintenance, select the reports to include and click the **Export** button. A file dialog displays, allowing you to name the export file. Be sure it has a ".package" extension. Use the CTRL key to mark more than one report to include in the package file.

When importing a previously created package file, browse to locate the package file on your hard drive or a network drive, and click the **Import** button to import the reports contained within the package file.

After the import process is complete, you can access the imported reports from the Report Writer main window. Package files can also be used as backups for modified reports. If you keep an updated package file of all modified reports, they can be exported back into your current Reports dictionary file if it becomes damaged. Reports can also be imported to a new release of Microsoft Dynamics GP and validated in Report Writer.

For information about importing customizations from Modifier, consult the online help and printable manuals on the Modifier application.

Importing Reports and Validating Reports

The section explains the process of importing reports from another Reports dictionary into the Reports dictionary you are currently using. You may want to do this to create a different Reports dictionary for each person who uses custom reports, allowing individualized reports.

Alternatively, if you already use multiple reports dictionaries in Microsoft Dynamics GP, use Report Writer's importing capability to copy a single report from one person's dictionary to another.

HINT: *This feature is recommended on versions of Microsoft Dynamics GP prior to Version 6. If you use Version 6 or later, it is recommended that Customization Maintenance be used to import/export reports.*

The process of importing a report from another Reports dictionary is similar to copying reports from the (dynamics.dic) application dictionary. The main difference is that you use another Reports dictionary, called the source dictionary, to import reports from. Copy the reports to the current dictionary being used, which is also called the destination dictionary.

The source dictionary can contain primary copies, secondary copies, and custom reports. The reports you import from that dictionary retain the properties associated with the report being copied.

For example, primary copies in the source dictionary work like primary copies in the destination dictionary. Similarly, secondary copies still work like secondary copies, and so on.

If importing a primary copy of a report, that copy replaces any existing primary copy of the same report in the destination dictionary.

HINT: *It is important that both the source dictionary and the destination dictionary be based on the same version of the dynamics dictionary and that they use the same account framework. If they are not, the reports may not be imported correctly.*

Before beginning, be sure to have at least two reports dictionaries available – a source dictionary and a destination dictionary.

Source Dictionary

Verify the location of a Reports dictionary that you can use as the source dictionary. If just beginning to use Report Writer, you may only have one Reports dictionary – the current one being used. If that is the case, use that Reports dictionary as your source dictionary and create a new, empty Reports dictionary to use as the destination dictionary.

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Destination Dictionary

The Reports dictionary that your system normally uses when starting Microsoft Dynamics GP is the destination dictionary. To select a different destination dictionary:

1. Open the Edit Launch File window.
2. From the Microsoft Dynamics GP Setup menu, select System.
3. From the System Setup palette, select Edit Launch File.
4. Click the **Reports file** button, and select a destination dictionary.

To create a new, empty Reports dictionary to be used as the destination dictionary, without changing your launch file, exit the accounting system, and move the existing Reports dictionary to another location, or rename it. The Reports dictionary you move or rename can be used as the source dictionary, if desired. When starting Microsoft Dynamics GP and switching to Report Writer, a new Reports dictionary is created automatically.

Importing Reports Checklist

- ❑ 1. Specify the source dictionary.
- ❑ 2. Select source dictionary reports.
- ❑ 3. Import reports.
- ❑ 4. Select additional source dictionaries and reports (optional).

Specifying a Source Dictionary

From the Report Writer main window, select **Import** to open the Import Reports window. Click the Source Dictionary lookup button. Select the source dictionary from the window that appears and click **OK**.

HINT: *The location of the destination dictionary is drawn from the launch file used when you started Microsoft Dynamics GP. You cannot change that location using this window. To import reports to a different Reports dictionary, edit the launch file using the Microsoft Dynamics GP Edit Launch File window to specify the Reports dictionary you want to import to, and then restart Microsoft Dynamics GP.*

The location of the dictionary selected is displayed in the **Source Dictionary** field. The location of the destination directory is displayed in the **Destination Dictionary** field.

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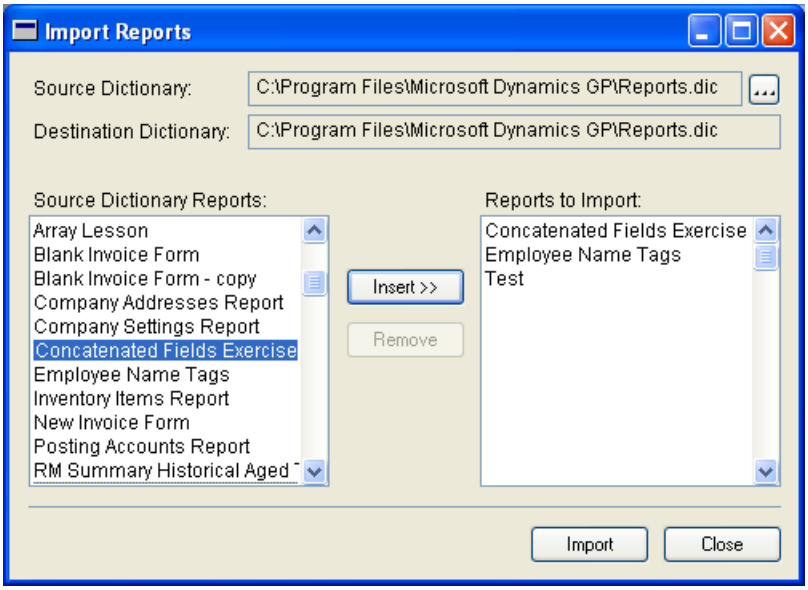
Selecting Source Dictionary Reports

All the reports contained within the specified source dictionary are listed in the Source Dictionary Reports list. Select the reports to import, and click **Insert**. The reports appear in the Reports to Import list. Reports can be selected one at a time, or use the control key (CTRL) to mark multiple reports to import in the Source Dictionary Reports column.



Importing Reports

Click **Import**; all the reports listed in the Reports to Import list are transferred to the reports dictionary specified in the **Destination Dictionary** field. When the reports have been imported, they appear in the Modified Reports list in the Report Writer window. These reports can be modified the same as existing reports – in the destination dictionary.

Once the import process is complete, it is recommended that you validate each report that was imported into the current reports dictionary file.

Selecting Additional Source Dictionaries and Reports (Optional)

Select additional source dictionaries and import additional reports, if desired. The import process can be used to import reports from multiple report dictionary files. When finished importing reports, click the **Close** button to close the Import Reports window.

HINT: *Remember, it is recommended to use the Customization Maintenance window and package files on current releases of Microsoft Dynamics GP.*

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Validating Modified Reports

If updating from a previous version of Microsoft Dynamics GP, determine whether the reports that were created using previous versions of Report Writer are still valid using the new version of Microsoft Dynamics GP by validating the report. The solution to most invalid reference problems is relatively simple. First, determine where the field's information now exists, then replace the invalid field reference with the new field. The following procedure outlines this process.

The Validation Process

To verify that your reports contain valid references, use the **Validate** button in the Report Writer window.

The **Validate** button only checks for invalid references to table fields; it does not check the syntax of your calculated fields or find other possible errors in the report definition. To begin, switch to Report Writer and open the Report Writer window. Then complete the following steps for any report in the Modified Reports list:

1. In the Modified Reports list, highlight the report you want to check for invalid references, and then select **Validate**. The Report Writer system analyzes the report definition, and the Validation Results window appears.
2. View the results in the Validation Results window. The Validation Results window displays messages that indicate whether the report contains invalid references. Some of the most common messages are listed in the following section.
3. If no changes are needed, repeat steps 1 and 2 for the other reports in the Modified Reports list. If changes are needed, begin by determining which table now contains the field you need to add to your report, and link that table to the report. You also may need to create a table relationship before linking the table to the report.
4. After linking the table to the report, add the appropriate field to the report layout, report restriction, calculated field, or sorting definition. Refer to the list of messages for more information about which windows to use.

   Depending upon the messages that appear in the Validation Results window, add the field to the report layout, restriction definition, sorting method, or to a calculated field.
5. Close the Report Layout window, saving changes, and click **OK** in the Report Definition window. In the Report Writer window, select the report in the Modified Reports list and select **Validate**.

   Be sure the Validation Results window no longer lists any invalid references; then continue validating other reports.

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Messages and Solutions

The following are possible importing messages. Use the solution given for each message.

Message: No invalid references found.
Solution: The report contains only valid references, so you do not need to make any changes.

Message: Report XXX: Report XXX references a field that does not exist in table XXX.
Solution: A field in the layout of the specified report no longer exists in the specified table. Determine where that field's information now exists; then add that field to the report using the Report Layout window.

Message: Report XXX: Restriction XXX references a field that does not exist in table XXX.
Solution: A field in the restriction definition for the specified report no longer exists in the specified table. Determine where that field's information now exists; then rewrite the restriction expression using the Restriction Definition window.

Message: Report XXX: Expression XXX references a field that does not exist in table XXX.
Solution: A table field that is used as part of a calculated or conditional expression no longer exists in the specified table. Determine where the table field's information now exists; then rewrite the calculated or conditional expression using the Calculated Field Definition window.

Message: Report XXX: Field XXX in sort segment not in table XXX.
Solution: A field in the sorting method for the specified report no longer exists in the specified table. Determine where that field's information now exists; then rewrite the sorting method using the Sorting Definition window.

Message: Report XXX: Field XXX in header is not part of table XXX.
Solution: A field in the specified header no longer exists in the specified table. Determine where that field's information now exists; then add the field to the report using the Report Layout window. You may also want to change the field type using the Report Field Options window to verify that any references to that field in the Header Options window are correct.

Message: Report XXX: Field XXX in footer is not part of table XXX.
Solution: A field in the specified footer no longer exists in the specified table. Determine where that field's information now exists; then add the field to the report using the Report Layout window. You may also want to change the field type using the Report Field Options window to verify that any references to that field in the Footer Options window are correct.

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Conclusion

Customization Import and Export Capabilities

Some key points to remember from this chapter include:

- Customization Maintenance provides the capability to import and export reports from Reports dictionaries.
- Package files store report modifications that can be used by Customization Maintenance to import or export reports.
- The **Import** button can be used to import reports if older releases of Microsoft Dynamics GP are installed.
- The **Validate** button is used to verify that a report will print correctly after it has been imported into your current Reports dictionary.

Quick Interaction: Lessons Learned

Take a moment to write down three Key Points you have learned from this chapter:

1.

2.

3.

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