XLReportGen Frequently Asked Questions

About

What is XLReportGen?

XLReportGen is a report generator for Microsoft Excel that uses Microsoft Excel as reporting tool and outputs reports in Excel spreadsheet, HTML, XML, Lotus 1-2-3 or other format.

What can I do with it?

If you know how to use Microsoft Excel and write SQL statements, you can use XLReportGen to create all kinds of reports as you need. The report generated by XLReportGen is a Microsoft Excel workbook or other format file, such as HTML.

What are the main features?

- Using Microsoft Excel as your reporting tool
- Making report template directly using Microsoft Excel
- Accessing to databases using SQL
- Creating reports without programming experience
- Connection to all databases using ODBC
- Supporting multi-databases in one report
- Generating reports with parameters
- Supporting Windows mode and command line mode
- Creating complex reports
- Creating reports with pictures
- Many reports in one Microsoft Excel workbook
- Conversion of file formats

- Generating reports automatically
- One time configuration
- Flexible deployment

Can I make the complex report using XLReportGen?

Yes. This is a main feature of XLReportGen. The complexity might come from reports formatting as well as reports content.

- The complex report formatting

You design reports like layouts, styles, formats directly using Microsoft Excel. You can take full advantage of Microsoft Excel including text formatting, number formats, text rotating, borders, colors, patterns, conditional formatting, style, drawing, pictures, and more.

- The complex report content

In one report, you can execute more than one SQL statement, and get data using different queries. Further more, you can create a temporary table, prepare data using many SQL statements including INSERT/UPDATE/DELETE/INSERT SELECT, and then make a report.

Do you have any server version which I can use on the server to generate the reports?

No. But XLReportGen can be run on your desktop or server. So you can use XLReportGen on the server to generate the reports. If you want to run it in the background on the server, you need to run it in command line mode.

What is the system requirement?

- Microsoft Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows 2003 or later.
- Microsoft Office 97/98, Office 2000, Office XP, Office 2003 or later.

Installation

How to install it?

Unzip the download file. Run setup.exe, and follow the instructions to complete installation.

If you don't have installed Microsoft Office, please install it first.

If your environment is Windows 95/98 and Office 97, and you don't have installed VB6.0 run-time files, please install it. For Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows 2003 and Office 2000 or later, you do not need to install VB6.0 run-time files because they are included in these OS and Office. To install VB6.0 run-time files, just download and run vbrun60sp5.exe.

If you don't have installed ODBC Driver for the database you want to access, please install it.

If your OS is Windows 95/98 and you don't have installed MS Data Access Components 2.0 (MDAC_TYP) or later, please install it. For Windows 2000, Windows XP and Windows 2003, you do not need to install MDAC_TYP because it is preinstalled in these OS. To install MDAC_TYP, just download and run mdac_typ.exe.

How to uninstall it?

You can uninstall XLReportGen from [Control Panel].

1. Double-click the Add/Remove Programs icon in the Windows Control Panel.

2. Do one of the following:

? For Windows 2000, Windows XP and Windows 2003 Edition:

Click XLReportGen in the Currently installed programs box, and then click the Change/Remove button.

? For Windows 98 and Windows NT 4.0:

Click XLReportGen on the Install/Uninstall tab, and then click the Add/Remove button.

3. Follow the instructions on the screen to complete uninstall.

Reporting with XLReportGen

How does it work?

To create a report with XLReportGen, you should do as follows:

1. Create a report template file using Microsoft Excel, define the layouts, styles, formatting of reports.
2. Create an XRF file with an .xrf extension using XLReportGen. The XRF file tell XLReportGen how to extract data from database, and where and how to put data.
3. Run the XRF file to generate a report file.

Where can I find some samples?

After XLReportGen is installed, some sample reports are installed too. The sample reports include a sample database, some report template files (.xls) and XRF files (.xrf). They are located in the ExcelReport directory under \Samples.

What need I do to use samples?

To use these samples, you must add a data source named “Report Sample”, and specify the database “Sample.mdb”. If you have not installed MS access ODBC driver, please install it first.

Creating a System DSN for a Microsoft Access Database

1. Click the Windows **Start** button, choose **Settings**, and then click **Control Panel**.

2. On computers running Microsoft Windows 2000 or later, double-click **Administrative Tools**, and then double-click **Data Sources (ODBC)**. The **ODBC Data Source Administrator** dialog box appears. On computers running previous versions of Microsoft Windows, double-click **32-bit ODBC** or **ODBC**.

3. Select the **System DSN** tab, and then click **Add** button.

4. Choose **Microsoft Access Driver (*.mdb)**, then click **Finish** button.

5. In the **ODBC Microsoft Access Setup** dialog box, type **Report Sample** in the **Data Source Name** box.

6. Click the **Select** button, and browse to select **Sample.mdb**.

7. Click **OK** button to close the **ODBC Microsoft Access Setup** dialog box.

8. Click **OK** button to close the **ODBC Data Source Administrator** dialog box.

How can I use these samples?

1. Run XLReportGen.

2. Open a XRF file. Click **Open** on the **File** menu.

3. Run the XRF file to generate a report. Click **Run** on the **Report** menu.

4. Open, view and check the report. Click **Open Report File** on the **File** menu.

5. Open, check the log file. Click **Open Log File** on the **File** menu.

The sample reports can be changed to adapt to your own needs.

When I use samples, I receive a "Selected Collating Sequence Not Supported" error message.

This is a problem of multilanguage. You are trying to open a database or an object in a database that was created in another language edition of Microsoft Access. You can try as follow:

1. Open the database "sample.mdb" using Microsoft Access.

2. On the **Tools** menu, click **Options**, and then click the **General** tab.

3. Make sure that the **New Database Sort Order** is set to General and then click **OK**.

If you do not resolve the problem, please install or enable multilanguage support for your operating system. For more information, please refer to

http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=KB;en-us;q202150

http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?kbid=184988

You can create a new database on your computer, export data from “sample.mdb”, and import into your database.

What is a report file?

The report file is a Microsoft Excel workbook generated by XLReportGen.

What is a report template file?

To make a report using XLReportGen, you should create a report template file first. This report template is a Microsoft Excel workbook that defines the layouts, formats and styles of the report. In the report template, you can input static content such as titles, descriptions, comments, a cover, a company logo, and set the format for the static content and data got from data sources.

What is an XRF file?

To generate a report with XLReportGen, you must create an XRF file with an .xrf extension. The XRF file contains information such as the name of the report template file, the name of the report file, log file name, data sources, parameters and functions. The XRF file tells XLReportGen how to get data from data sources and how to put data into a report.

What is a function?

A function includes a SQL statement and some arguments. A function can be

used to execute a SQL statement, and tell XLReportGen whether or how to add data into a report.

How can I test a SQL statement?

You can test SQL statements using Microsoft Query that is a component of Microsoft Office. You can find it under the installation directory of Microsoft Office.

“C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\OFFICE11\MSQRY32.EXE”

When I execute a SQL statement, I receive an "ODBC driver does not support the requested properties." error message.

It probably is a wrong SQL statement. Such as a missing column, or syntax error.

How can I sort data?

Use SQL to sort your data. In a SELECT statement, you can use the ORDER BY clause to have your results displayed in a sorted order.

How can I have total?

There are two ways.

1. You can add total using math functions of Microsoft Excel, such as SUM.

(1) In the fixed table report, you write a SUM function in the total field in the report template file. The range of SUM function should contain cells for detail records.

(2) In the variable table report, except for the range for the detail records, the range of SUM function must contain at least one row/column that is not included in the range for the detail records. For example, the rows 2:3 is the range for the detail record, you should add blank row 4, and the function is

written as SUM(H2:H4). If you do not want to show the blank row in the report, you can hide the row. You must use relative references. Microsoft Excel will change the function automatically as XLReportGen adds some rows in the report.

2. You can use aggregate function in SQL statement.

(1) In the fixed table report, you can add total directly using a separate SQL.

(2) In the variable table report, you must add total first using a Fixed Table report function before you use the Variable Table report function. Because the cell address of the total field will change after you use Variable Table report function.

How can I group data?

To group data in a report, you can use GROUP VARIABLE TABLE REPORT function. For more detail information, refer to XLReportGen Help and the samples customer_profile.xrf, invoice.xrf, product_catalog.xrf and sales_detail.xrf within XLReportGen.

How can I make sub reports within the main report?

A subreport is a report within a report. A subreport would typically be used to perform one-to-many lookups such as Customer / Order / OrderDetails.

To make sub reports within the main report,

1. Write a JOIN SQL statement to acccess data from two or more tables. For example, you can join Customers, Orders and OrderDetails tables.

2. Use GROUP VARIABLE TABLE REPORT function.

For more detail information, refer to the samples invoice.xrf, product_catalog.xrf and sales_detail.xrf within XLReportGen.

How can I have sub-totals for each group?

1. You can add sub-totals using math functions of Microsoft Excel, such as SUM.

(1) The range of SUM function should contain cells for detail records in the report template file.

(2) The range of SUM function must contain at least one row/column that is not included in the range for the detail records. For example, the row 13 is for detail record, you should add blank row 14, and the function is written as SUM(H13:H14). If you do not want to show the blank row in the report, you can hide the row.

(3) You should use relative references. For example, SUM(H13:H14). Microsoft Excel will change the function automatically as XLReportGen adds some rows in the report.

2. If you want to have total and sub-totals,

(1) You can add total using SUMIF function. The range of SUMIF function must contain one row/column that is not included in the range of the group. For example, the range of the group is rows 1:15, you should add blank row 16, and write the function as SUMIF(G:G,"Subtotal:",H1:H16). You can hide the blank row.

(2) You can add total using aggregate function in SQL statement. You must add total first using a Fixed Table report function before you use the Variable Table report function. Because the cell address of the total field will change after you use Variable Table report function.

3. You can add sub-totals using aggregate function in SQL statement too.

(1) Use aggregate function and GROUP BY clause, get summary data for each group, and insert results into a temporary table.

(2) If you have different kinds of summaries, repeat the step 1, and insert results into another temporary table.

(3) Use group report function, and join the detail data and the summary data

using JOIN. The summary fields must be included in the group list.
For more detail information, please refer to the samples invoice.xrf and sales_detail.xrf within XLReportGen.

How can I create charts?

To create a chart in a report, you should create the chart in the template file. You can create a chart on its own sheet or as an embedded object on a worksheet.

1. First enter the sample data for the chart in the template file.
2. Then select that data and use the Chart Wizard to step through the process of choosing the chart type and the various chart options.
3. Customize your chart.
4. Delete the sample data.
5. Write functions in an XRF file to input the data.

For more detail information, please refer to the sample monthly_sales.xrf within XLReportGen.

How to use parameters?

In SQL statements, you can use parameters.

1. To use a parameter, you must declare it first. A parameter has a name, a title and a default value. To define a parameter, click **Configuration** on the **Report** menu, and click the **Parameter** tab
2. In SQL statements, use the parameter name.

XLReportGen will replace the parameter name with the actual value before it submits the SQL statements to data sources.

Example

Define a parameter as follows:

Name: $CustomerName

Title: Customer Name

You can use the parameter name "$CustomerName" in SQL statements. The parameter name in SQL statements should be delimited by quotation mark. For example:

```
SELECT CompanyName
,CityName
,CountryName
,ContactName
FROM Customers, Cities, Countries
WHERE Customers.CityCode = Cities.CityCode
AND Customers.CountryCode = Cities.CountryCode
AND Customers.CountryCode = Countries.CountryCode
AND CompanyName LIKE '$CustomerName%'
```

I need to change paths for both exported report and template location. Is there any way?

You can use parameters in the path and name of the report file, template file and log file. For example, you define a parameter $CustomerID, you can name the report file as follows:

report\report_$CustomerID.xls

report\$CustomerID\report.xls

Can I place the data into columns rather than rows?

Of course, just write FILLORDER=col in REPORT function. For example, there are 1 field and 10 records, you can show them as 1 row and 10 columns on report.

Does XLReportGen support text BLOB?

Yes, XLReportGen 2.2 or later support text BLOB.

How to create Microsoft Excel reports with pictures?

You can insert pictures into your report from using many popular graphics files XLReportGen.

1. Store the path and name of the graphics files in the database.
2. Identify the image fileds in the report function.
3. To specify the positioning option and size, you can write a formatting expression into the cell in the report template file.

XLReportGen will read the graphics files, insert them into the report, and position and size the pictures. For more detail information, refer to the samples employee_profile.xrf and product_catalog.xrf within XLReportGen.

Do I need to execute more than 1 SQL statement in one report processing?

In most of reports, you just need to execute one SQL statement. But sometimes, you want to execute more than one SQL statement in one report processing.

- The data are located in different tables or databases, and you get data using different queries.
- There are many reports in one report file.
- You want to create a temporary table, prepare data using many SQL statements including INSERT/UPDATE/DELETE/INSERT SELECT, and then make a report.

How many SQL statements can I execute in one report processing?

It is dependent on the license of XLReportGen you have purchased. For detailed information, see Licenses.

I write Auto_Open macro in the template file, but it is not run when I generate report. Why?

There is an option to control this. If you want to run Auto_Open macro automatically, you must enable the option first. To enable the option,

1. On the **Tools** menu, click **Option**. The **Options** dialog box appears.
2. Click **Excel** tab, select **Enable Auto_Open macro**.
3. Press **OK** button.

I have a number of addins. But they are not available when the final report file is open. Why?

There is an option to control this. If you want to use addins during report generating, you must enable the option first. To enable the option,

1. On the **Tools** menu, click **Option**. The **Options** dialog box appears.
2. Click **Excel** tab, select **Enable addins when Excel starts up**.
3. Press **OK** button.

I want to programmatically change some of the functions in the xrf file. How?

The XRF file is a text file. You can write a program to make an XRF file using C, perl or DOS shell, and then run XLReportGen to generate report. These steps can be written into a batch file.

I do not want to save password in the XRF file. Can I use XLReportGen?

Yes. If you do not save a password in the XRF file, a login dialog box will appear when you run the XRF file in XLReportGen. You can input password interactively to log on to the data source. If you want to run XLReportGen in command line mode, you can input usernames and passwords in command

line.

I hope the report can not be modified. How can I do?

You can protect the generated report so that it can not be modified. To protect the report, select the **Protect Report** check box in the **Configuration** dialog box.

Support

How much will I pay for the technical support? Is it free?

Yes, it's completely free for all.

I have more questions - who should I write to?

Please send your additional questions to support@ljzsoft.com.