ArtenQUERY

Retrieve Data from Oracle and SQLServer

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Table of Contents

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Introduction

ArtenQUERY is designed to be a useful, easy to use query tool for use with SQLServer and Oracle databases. There are a few of these type of programs around, including of course the ones supplied with the database clients themselves. ArtenQUERY however is designed to be easy to use, fast and with some very nice features including multiple results grids, query history and export to XML and HTML.

One nice feature is that ArtenQUERY supports very large grids, depending on the number of columns and the type of data contained, it is possible (if you really, really wanted) to load more than one million rows into the grid ! ArtenQUERY is written using the .NET Framework 2.0 and requires that the framework is installed on the host machine.

ArtenQUERY supports Xcopy Deployment, and as such installation consists of dragging and dropping !

ArtenQUERY supports multiple instances, so if the ten Results Sets are insufficient, feel free to launch another version of the program.

If you are looking for a tool that is easy to use and powerful, that you can deploy without any installation or licensing issues (ArtenQUERY is priced per company, unlimited use) then ArtenQUERY may be of use to you.

During this document, generally speaking when I refer to 'query' I am also referring to an Update, Insert or Delete operation. ArtenQUERY supports the full range of CRUD operations (Create, Read, Update and Delete) supported by the SQL standard as followed by your chosen database backend.

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Screen Description

The main screen for ArtenQUERY is shown below:
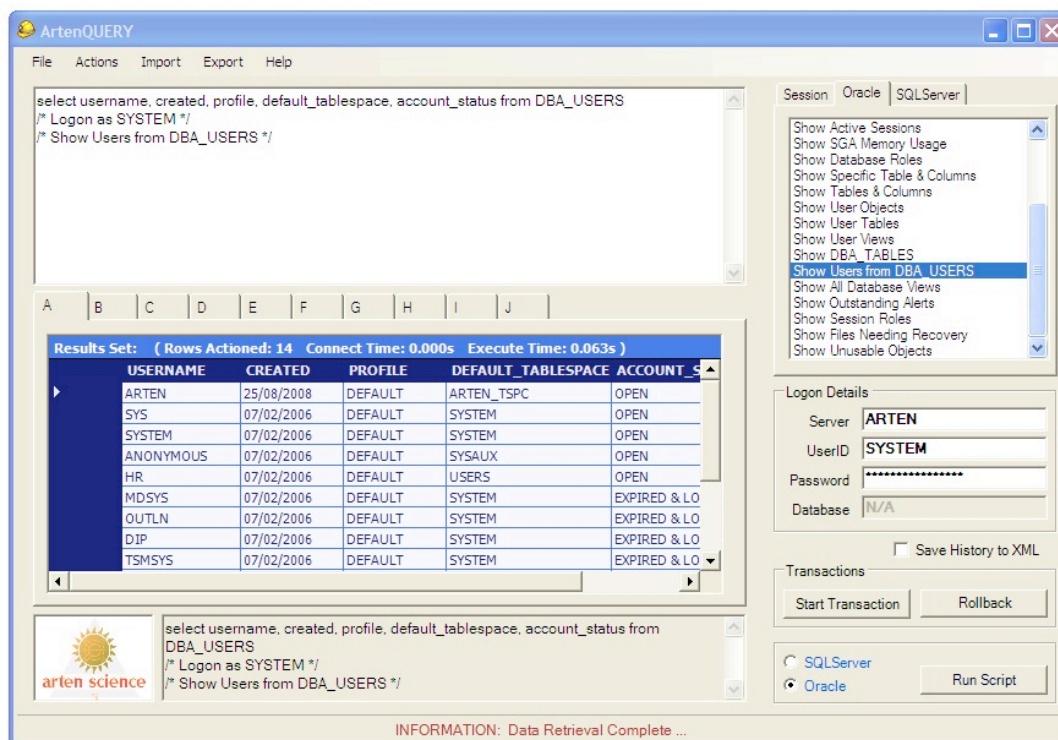
General

The Size and Position of the ArtenQUERY window can be adjusted in the usual manner. The results of these adjustments are saved to an XML file and then retrieved when the program is next loaded. This allows you to choose your favourite size and position for ArtenQUERY. The program can of course also be maximised and the objects scale appropriately as expected.

The Results Grid

The top left of the screen contains the Results Grid. This is where the results of your query are displayed. I have provided ten grids, labelled A – J. Each of these can contain a different results set.

The column widths within the grids can be changed by dragging the column markers to either the left or right. The grid data can be sorted either ascending or descending by clicking the column name. The ability to switch between different grids populated with appropriate data can be invaluable when working on the extraction of complex data, the ability to switch backwards and forwards to previously created Result Sets really helps maintain a clear picture which is often lost when working with a single Results Set.

The Caption Bar at the top of each grid displays the following data:

Rows Actioned: For a select this is the rows returned, for an update this is the amount of rows updated. Connect Time: ArtenQUERY works in a disconnected manner, as soon as a query has finished executing ArtenQUERY disconnects from the database. This figure shows the length of

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time the connection to the database has taken. Execute Time: This shows the length of time the query took to execute, in seconds.

The Script Box

The script box is free format and can be typed into directly, pasted into from another application or populated by clicking an option in one of the lists from the Stored Query Area. The colour of the text and background can be changed by using the Colour Schemes option from the Preferences Menu, installed in the File Menu. In addition three sizes of text are available from the Preferences Menu, ideal for use when training or working with somebody.

Stored Query Area

To the right of the Results Grid is the Stored Query Area. This area contains several tabs, within each tabbed section a list is shown. The purpose of each tab is explained below:

Session Tab: Each command string executed against the database is stored within this list, in order, until you quit the program. Commands can be reused by selecting the appropriate one within the list, this populates the Script Box, which can then be executed again.

Oracle Tab: This tab contains some oracle scripts that are useful when working with any Oracle database. Generally these are system administration functions and an appropriate level of access to the database will be required.

SQLServer Tab: This tab contains some SQLServer scripts that are useful when working with any SQLServer database. Generally these are system administration functions and an appropriate level of access to the database will be required.

Logon Parameters Area

This is where you enter your security details to access the database. SQLServer requires a database name so this field is only available if the SQLServer database is selected. You can easily change your logon, or database, at any time as the Logon Parameters are available from the main screen. Changing your logon will not disturb in any way any of the Results Sets you have already built.

Server Details Area

In this area you select you choice of Database Server, either Oracle or SQLServer. As mentioned earlier Database Servers can be swapped between queries without affecting the Results Sets already created. Also included here is a 'Run' button, for those who prefer a button to either the Menu Option or the F5 Key used to Execute a SQL Statement.

Status Bar

Along the bottom of the screen is a Status Bar that will keep you up to date with various activity as they happen.

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Query Parameters

In the text of the query you can insert parameter placeholders. This means that you can save the query and when you run it again at a later date you will be prompted for the appropriate input.

The parameter types are:

n[Number]
d[Date]
s[String]

The first character before the [is used to tell the database how to use the input value. The text within the [ ] is used to inform the user what input is required. See the examples below:

select * from customer where cus_code = s[Enter Customer Code Required]

select * from sales where sal_date between d[Enter Start Date] and d[Enter Final Date]

select * from supplier where sup_balance >= n[Enter Balance]

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Expanded Entry Window

Select this option from the menu and type your queries into a seperate window. Font sizes and text foreground and background colours can be adjusted to taste (or lack of!) The larger text sizes are useful if training people using a projector or large monitor.
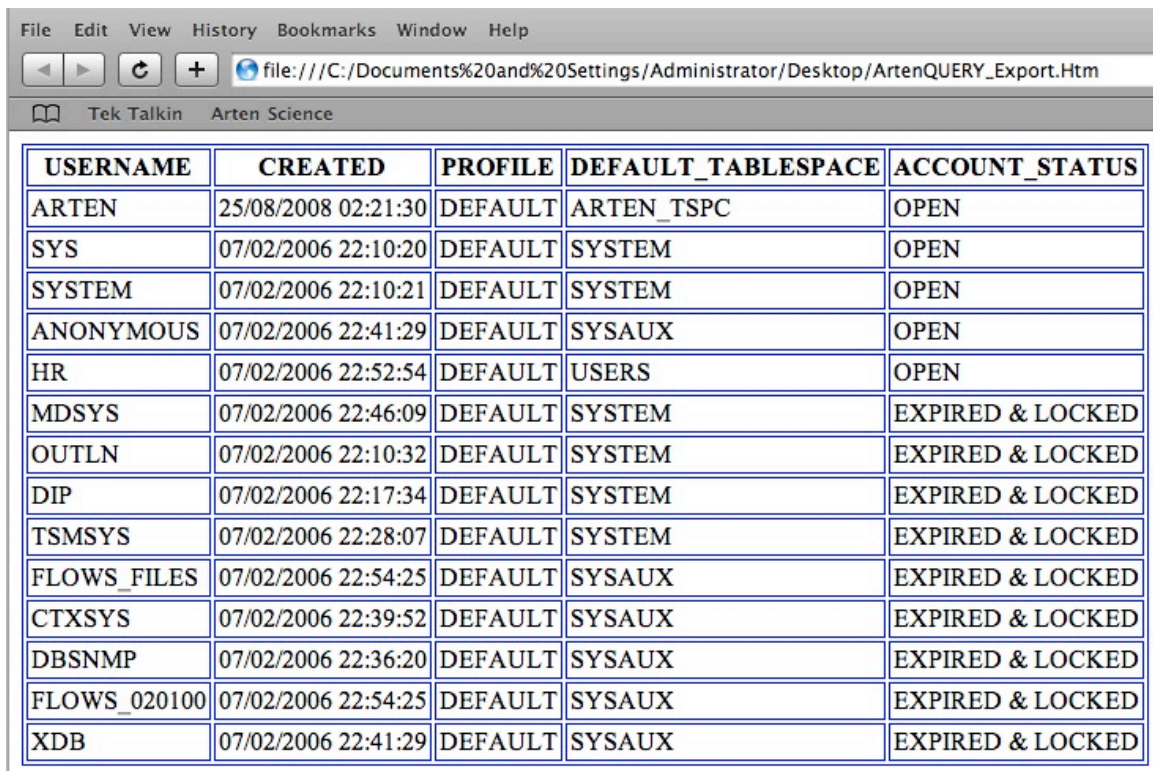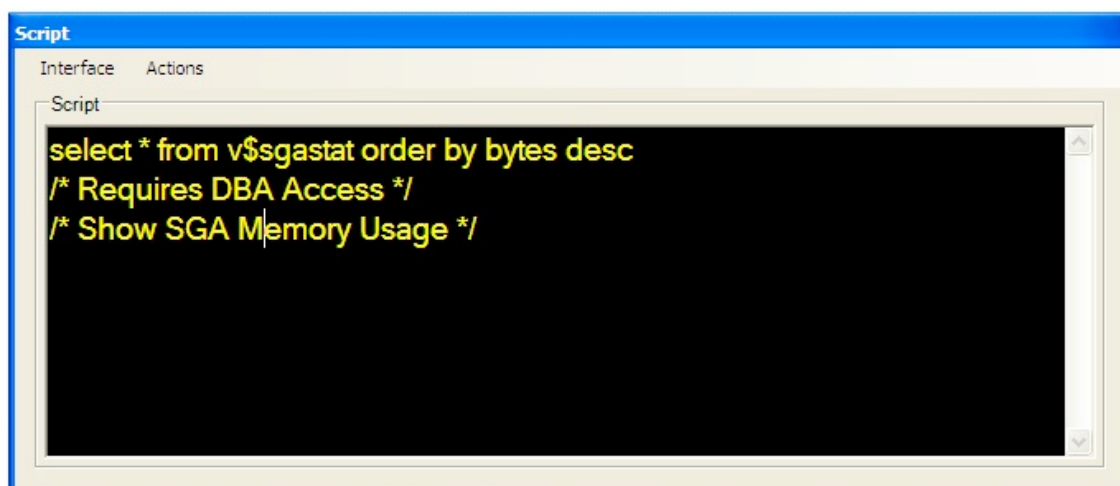
Exporting Data as HTML

My personal preferred option for working with exported data is to export using the HTML option. This is faster and easier to work with than XML in my opinion.

Once the data is exported and saved as HTML it can be loaded directly into Excel and retain its formatting. When attempting to load into Excel you will have to use the *.* option on the open dialog to find and select the html export file.

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Manipulating Exported Data with XMLSpy

When exporting a Results Grid the Default file name and location is C: \ArtenQUERYExport.XML This can of course be changed from the save dialog that appears.

Excel can be extremely slow at loading and manipulating large amounts of XML data. In this case it can be advantageous to use a dedicated XML editor such as XMLSpy. This program will load very large files, usually in just a few seconds.

If you wish to use this data in Excel you can then use the Export Options in XMLSpy from the Convert Menu which can be setup to export the data as text without the XML overhead.

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Manipulating Exported Data with Excel

When exporting a Results Grid the Default file name and location is C:\ArtenQUERYExport.XML This can of course be changed from the save dialog that appears.

When the data has been saved, load it into Excel.
The first option 'As an XML List' , is the one you want.

All the columns are formatted to the correct width, the column headings are shown and you can select various options on each column by clicking the down arrow next to the column heading. This is quite a useful way of manipulating and printing the data.

The second option 'As a read-only workbook' has limited value in my opinion, although your mileage may vary according to your requirements.

The third option 'Use the XML Source task pane' is another very useful option. This option gives you all the export columns (along with sample data if required) and allows you to drag and drop them on the sheet in any way you see fit.

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Trial Version Limitations

The words 'TRIAL VERSION' shown in the About dialog.

20 consecutive queries and you will need to restart the program to continue.

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