The Blaise Template Designer overview

IBUC 2010 – Pre Conference workshop
What is it?

• A custom tool to design:
  • Blaise layout templates:
    • Master page templates
    • Field pane templates
    • Other template types
      • Grouping, Dialogs, Popups, etc.
  • Styles

• A “domain specific” designer.
  • Doesn’t replace tools like Adobe Illustrator or Microsoft Expression Blend. Aimed to offer the tools for the vast majority of design needs.

• The quickest and easiest way to customize survey layout!
What is a template?

- The blueprint for (parts of) the layout of an instrument
- Consists of template elements
  - Shapes
  - Texts
  - Input controls
  - Containers
  - Placeholders
Template hierarchy

Masterpage template X

Survey title

Question placeholder

Field pane template Y

Question text placeholder

Field pane template Z

Question text placeholder

A ✗ B ✗ C ✗
Element types

- **GRID**
  - Is a container element that can hold other elements
  - Most flexible control for layout
  - All templates have a grid at the root level
  - Has columns and rows
  - Can contain more than 1 element
  - Can contain sub-grids
Element types

- **STACKPANEL**
  - Is a container element that stacks other elements
  - Can contain more than one element

Vertically

```
Element 1
Element 2
...
```

OR

Horizontally

```
Element 1  Element 2  ...
```
Element types

- **BORDER**
  - Is a container element that holds another element
  - Can contain only one element

Element x
Element types

- **PLACEHOLDER**
  - Is a container element that reserves space for elements that are dynamically inserted (at run-time).
  - You cannot add elements to a placeholder in the designer (at design-time).
What is a placeholder?

- An element that reserves space for other elements or template instances.
  - Example “Content area”:
    - Has to be placed on a master page template to determine where questions should appear.

- Example “Question text placeholder”:
  - Has to be placed on a field pane template to position the question text.
Styles?

• Styles set properties of elements
  • Colors
  • Font type, size, weight etc.
  • Margins
  • etc.

• Changing a style changes all elements that refer to it.
• Useful for consistent layout and increased productivity.
• A style element is a combination of a key, an attribute and a value.
  • Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DefaultBackground</td>
<td>BackgroundColor</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InputControlMargin</td>
<td>Margin</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applying a style

Survey title

Question placeholder

Field pane template Y

Question text placeholder

Field pane template Z

Question text placeholder

A ○ B ○ C ○
Applying a style

Style Y

Masterpage template X

Survey title

Question placeholder

Field pane template Y

Question text placeholder

Field pane template Z

Question text placeholder

A ● B ● C ●
Important notices

• Layout preferably is dynamic, not fixed
  • Element sizes are based on
    • Their content
    • Environment variables like
      • Screen resolution
      • DPI settings in OS
      • Font sizes
      • Language settings
  • Designing templates for dynamic layout makes them more flexible in the (unpredictable) run-time environment.
Important notices

• Styles and templates are related
  • An element refers to a specific style key that the style definition should contain.

• Master page templates and field pane templates are related
  • Esthetics: They probably need to “fit” together.
  • Consistency
  • Exception: “Lookless” templates (inherit their style from their parent element)