

OfficeWriter Designer vs OfficeWriter Designer .NET

Overview

OfficeWriter Designer .NET was introduced in version 8.6.0 of OfficeWriter. It is a completely rewritten version of our Excel Designer add-in using more modern technologies than the existing OfficeWriter Designer. The OfficeWriter Designer .NET is written in .NET/C# using VSTO (Visual Studio Tools for Office). It has no dependence on COM or VBA. The new Designer .NET has better platform support (i.e. 64-bit Office) and is more robust. However, it does not yet support all of the features found in the original Designer. Additional functionality will be added to future releases of the Designer .NET.

Benefits of OfficeWriter Designer .NET

- Office 64-bit support
- No dependencies on COM/VBA
- More robust handling on modifications to queries in Visual Studio/Report Builder
- Better parameter support with the **View** functionality

Limitations of Designer .NET

- Does not update references to shared data sources when publishing to a new folder on the report server. It may be necessary to update shared data source file paths through Report Manager.
- Unable to retrieve or publish directly to/from a SharePoint report library

Details

Platform

| Feature | OfficeWriter Designer .NET | OfficeWriter Designer |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Office 2007 | Excel and Word 2007 (up through SP3) | Excel and Word 2007 SP2 or SP3 |
| Office 2010 | Excel and Word 2010 (32-bit and 64-bit) | Excel and Word 2010 (32-bit only) SP1 |
| Office 2013 | Excel and Word 2013 (32-bit and 64-bit) | Excel and Word 2013 (32-bit only) |
| System requirements | .NET 4.0 or higher Visual Studio 2010 Tools for Office runtime (VSTO) | Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) MS Query Latest Microsoft service pack Security Bulletin MS-012-060 |

SQL Server Reporting Services Version

| Feature | OfficeWriter Designer .NET | OfficeWriter Designer |
|----------------|--|---|
| SSRS 2005 | Not supported | RDLs created in VS 2005 supported. |
| SSRS 2008 (R2) | RDLs created in Visual Studio 2008/2010, Report Builder 3.0 | RDLs created in Visual Studio 2008/2010, Report Builder 3.0 |
| SSRS 2012 | RDLs created in Visual Studio 2010/2012, Report Builder 3.0 | RDLs created in Visual Studio 2010/2012, Report Builder 3.0 |
| SSRS 2016 | RDLs created in Visual Studio 2010+, Report Builder 3.0, or SQL Server 2016 Report Builder | |

Basic Designer Functionality

| Feature | OfficeWriter Designer .NET | OfficeWriter Designer |
|--|--|---|
| Open a report (server/disk) | Prevents users from opening multiple reports at once | Users can open multiple reports at once which may lead to corrupted reports. |
| Save a report (server/disk) | Defaults to XLSX. Remembers last-saved file format. | Defaults to XLS for each save. Does not remember last-saved file format. |
| View | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not require an RDL to be open in the Designer .NET to view Supports selecting multiple values and cascading parameters in addition to basic parameters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires an RDL to be open in the Designer to view a particular report Supports basic parameters |
| Import a template | Supported | Supported in Excel and Word |
| Report properties | Available in the toolbar | Can only be edited when saving to disk |
| Insert data place holders based on data sets | Supports inserting data markers (Excel) and merge fields (Word) | Supports inserting data markers (Excel), merge fields (Word) and defining repeat blocks (Word) |
| Native query builder | Available through MS Query integration | Available through MS Query integration |

Report Robustness

| Feature | OfficeWriter Designer .NET | OfficeWriter Designer |
|--|---|---|
| Modifying data sets in Visual Studio or Report Builder | Safe actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add or remove data sets Rename data sets | Safe actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add new data sets |
| Modifying fields in queries in Visual Studio or Report Builder | Safe actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add or remove fields Rename fields | Safe actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add new data sets |

SQL Server Reporting Services RDL Features

| Feature | OfficeWriter Designer .NET | OfficeWriter Designer |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Shared data sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supports RDLs that store absolute paths to shared data sources (i.e. RDLs created in Report Builder 3.0). When publishing RDLs that only contain the shared data source name (i.e. RDLs created in Visual Studio) to a new folder on the server, it may be necessary to update the reference to the shared data source through Report Manager. Unable to View reports created from shared data sources in Visual Studio. | Correctly handles shared data sources with absolute and relative paths stored in the RDL |
| Report Models | Not currently supported | Supported |
| SHAREPOINT | | |
| Open from a report library | Not currently supported | SharePoint 2007 supported |
| Save to a report library | Not currently supported | SharePoint 2007 supported |

Backwards Compatibility with OfficeWriter Designer files

| OfficeWriter Designer Feature | OfficeWriter Designer .NET Support |
|--|------------------------------------|
| RDLs with OfficeWriter Reporting Services formulas | Fully backwards compatible. |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| RDLs with Word templates from OfficeWriter Designer | Fully backwards compatible. |
| RDLs with Excel templates from OfficeWriter Designer | Fully backwards compatible. |
| RDLs created from MS Query integration in the OfficeWriter Designer | Fully backwards compatible. |