



*First View*TM

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March

It's hard to believe, but this is our third year of writing *First View*!! When we started this newsletter in 2000, we never expected to get as much of a positive reaction as we have. It seems that customers are still really hungry for any new information about Clarify and Clarify-based products.

First Choice continues to be buzzing with new products, technologies, and vision. As in the past, there's more to tell about First Choice Software than we really have room for! This issue of *First View* focuses on products, partners, and directions.

One of our key directions continues to be our extremely popular *Everything For Free* lease program. Many of Clarify's biggest customers have signed up and received **every one of First Choice Software's shipping products for free**. Many more are in the pipeline for the next quarter. For more details, read about EFF below!

This issue of *First View* discusses:

[An update on the Everything For Free lease program](#)

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If you know of someone who might enjoy a copy of *First View*, please share it with them. Also, have them send an email to add-firstview@fchoice.com. Make sure they include their name, phone number, and email address. We will send them future editions of the newsletter. If you do not wish to receive future copies of *First View*, please send an email to remove-firstview@fchoice.com. Make sure your email address is either in the title or body of the email. We will remove you from our mailing list immediately.

Everything For Free Update

As most of you know, First Choice shook up the Clarify world last November with the introduction of the **Everything For Free (EFF)** offer.

Since that time, many Clarify customers, including some of the largest, have realized that having it all, including full-featured thin clients (that work with *any* Clarify version, are internationalized and localized, perform automatic data restriction, and ship with unlimited user licenses) as well as over 50 other tools was simply too good to pass up.

To date, First Choice has been contacted by over 200 Clarify customers, and has signed (or is negotiating) leases with many of them.

In January First Choice Software decided to keep a good thing going. For the current time, your company can still take advantage of the **EFF** lease offer.

You can get it all – over 50 of First Choice’s popular Clarify add-on applications – with no license fee!!

To qualify for **EFF**, you only have to do two things:

- Sign up for a maintenance agreement for the products, and
- Pay the annual maintenance fee of \$47,000

That’s it. It is that simple, and that good of an offer.

Customers have routinely paid \$20,000-\$100,000 (or more) to license First Choice applications. Currently you can receive every application that First Choice ships for very little outlay.

Virtually every application in this offer works with **ALL** Clarify versions, supported databases, and operating systems. And most of the applications, including the customer-facing thin clients, are internationalized and localized.

As with all First Choice offers there is no additional charge for development, test, pre-production, and training servers. Multiple production server discounts are available, as are site and enterprise leases.

There’s no reason not to leap on this offer today. Please visit our website at www.fchoice.com for more details, or contact us at sales@fchoice.com.

Product News

Available Now

Here are just some of the exciting new products available from First Choice.

fcQuery: Thin Client Querying

Imagine taking the power of the Clarify Case Query form and use it to query any object in Clarify that you want to query, including any of your custom objects!!

First Choice has greatly expanded the power of the *fcClient* thin clients with the addition of the *fcQuery* module. This module allows you to query any object in the Clarify system. You can save queries, parameterize them, and iconify them. All of this, with **zero** programming!

This module also allows you to share queries you create to other users. You can share queries to all users, or pick the users to share the query with. And each of those users can either accept or reject the sharing of the query!!

A simple administrator GUI allows your system administrator to decide which objects the users can query, what properties they will have, and what the output and sort columns will be for each query object.

fcQuery comes standard with any of the *fcClient* modules. For more information about *fcQuery*, please contact First Choice Software.

Thin Client for ClearCallCenter:

fcCallCenter

First Choice is pleased to announce the availability of the latest of our thin client offerings: *fcCallCenter*.

fcCallCenter is a richly-featured thin client offering for ClearCenter. It is built into the existing *fcClient* web infrastructure, including the powerful console, to make your experience as simple and natural as possible.

The first functionality shipping for *fcCallCenter* is the powerful *Interaction* form. This new form allows you to use all of the features of base Clarify, with several key additions. These augmentations include:

- Significant improvements in finding contacts/sites

- The ability to view all three addresses for the selected site

- System, Agent, and Wait timers, with timers that count (for better tracking), and the ability to pause and restart the agent timer

- Color-coded grids for previous interactions, history, and flashes

For more information about this product, please contact us at sales@fchoice.com.

Data Restriction for *fcClient*

First Choice Software is now shipping a set of data files that allow you to use our popular **Data Restriction** technology with our *fcClient* thin client.

The Data Restriction technology allows you to partition one single Clarify database into multiple “virtual” databases. This allows different groups of users to view and use different subsets of the Clarify database. And all of this can be accomplished without *ANY* screen modifications or code changes!!

Many of Clarify’s biggest customers have used First Choice’s **Data Restriction** tools for years. Now you can join them in simply and easily keeping your data properly partitioned.

For more details about First Choice Software’s **Data Restriction** for our thin client family, please contact us at sales@fchoice.com.

New API Toolkits

First Choice Software continues to expand the family of best-selling APIs to allow you to customize and expand your Clarify implementation in new and exciting ways.

First Choice is shipping, in the next month, the **FCFL** version of the API toolkit for Logistics. This will allow you to add powerful functionality to your web pages, Visual Basic programs, Javascripts, and more, in just minutes. Over 100 useful APIs are included that allow you to: create, modify, and close part requests. Perform pick, unpick, fulfill, ship, receive, transfer, and much more.

First Choice has also added functionality around the *Interaction* object, and added it to the already-shipping **FCFL API Toolkit for Interfaces**. Using this set of APIs, you can now create and modify interactions in your thin client environment.

For more information about these products, please contact us at sales@fchoice.com.

Add color to your web pages with *fcColor*

It has been known for some time that color can greatly enhance the usability of GUI forms. And that some individuals have issues with certain colors. Thus they need the ability to override the default assigned color.

First Choice has now added a new module to the base thin client technology available in *fcClient* to allow you to have this flexibility with your web forms.

The *fcColor* module allows you to assign from 216 web-safe colors for any row (or groups of rows) in any grid in your web pages. This default color will be shown, unless a user overrides the color with a selection of their own. Users can change colors with the simple

administrative GUI which is now part of their profile form.

The first use of *fcColor* is in the new *fcCallCenter* module. On the interaction form users can assign colors to each of the three grids. For example, contact flashes are displayed in one color, which site flashes are displayed in another. Individual grid cells can also be colored. On the flashes tab, for example, the “Urgent” column can be colored red if the flash is urgent!!

Available Soon

In times when few technology companies have little new to offer, we are excited that First Choice can continue to bring you new and useful technology. Here is a summary of the new products that will be available in the next quarter from First Choice.

New API Toolkits Available

First Choice is currently working on **FCFL** versions of several of our best-selling API toolkits. In the next quarter we will be shipping additional APIs for ClearLogistics, CleaCallCenter, ClearSales, and ClearContracts.

The **FCFL**-enabled toolkits allow you to easily and quickly write web pages that can perform virtually *any* Clarify action. These web pages can be written in a matter of minutes, require just **ONE LINE** of code to call on the toolkit API, and work with *ALL* versions of Clarify.

For more information about these products, please contact us at sales@fchoice.com.

Convert Customized CB Code

Why should you have to rewrite the customizations on which you already spent significant money, just because you want to migrate from thick to thin?

The answer is: You shouldn’t have to. First Choice Software will soon be shipping the long-awaited solution thick-to-thin code conversion utility: *fcCodeConverter*.

We expected this product to ship this quarter, but several other key projects arose that required that we put the *fcCodeConverter* on the back burner. But we are working on it again, and it will be completed in late Q1, and will ship in early Q2.

The *fcCodeConverter* will allow you to easily recoup much of the significant investment you have already made in your customizations by automatically converting ClearBasic programs into a variety of web-based languages, including JavaScript, VBScript, and Visual Basic.

The converter is a two-pass compiler, and understands all of the intricate issues involved in Clarify customizations.

For more information about the *fcCodeConverter*, please contact us at sales@fchoice.com.

Thin Client: Field Operations, *fcLogistics*

First Choice Software is continuing to expand its lineup of fast, easy-to-use thin clients for Clarify. Work began in late 2002 on the newest First Choice thin client: *fcLogistics*.

This agent-facing thin client will allow your field and warehouse personnel to perform all of the logistics tasks they need to get their job done in a simple web application that looks and feels like Clarify, but can be run from any location at any time.

The initial release of the product is expected to provide full part request functionality, as well as pick, unpick, fulfill, ship, receive, and part transfer capabilities.

For more information about the upcoming *fcLogistics*, please contact us at sales@fchoice.com.

Enhanced Email for Thin Clients

First Choice Software continues to move popular functionality from the Clarify thick client application to our exciting thin client environment.

The latest application to be ported is First Choice's *Enhanced Email Out (EEO)* application. This already-shipping product allows you to have most of the advanced features of Outlook email in your Clarify environment.

With *EEO for fcClient* you will be able to send and view email in an Outlook-like environment that includes features such as:

- To, CC, and BCC fields
- Signature files read from Outlook
- Ability to use/view contacts from Clarify or any Outlook address book
- Automatic duplicate email address removal
- Unlimited attachments. Attachments can be attached to the case, or not
- Expanded commitment functionality

This exciting new feature is currently in development, and will soon be included in the base *fcClient* release.

New Class Offering

With the growing number of customers who are using First Choice thin client technologies, we realize that it is time to offer some of the new classes we have discussed in previous issues of *First View*.

The first of these will be a highly-technical programming class for those who wish to learn the ins and outs of programming **FCFL** and the *fcClient* thin clients.

This four day class will be an intensive lab-based experience. Upon completion, students will be able to modify the existing First Choice thin client pages, as well as writing exciting new features of their own.

The class will cover the basics of object programming for Clarify with the **FCFL** language. It will then move on to writing/modifying thin client pages, including adding/removing fields, tabs, grids, and whole new forms.

The final section of the class will focus on specialty topics such as internationalization/localization, colorization, layout issues, and data restriction.

The first of these classes is scheduled for early May. For more information about this class, please contact us at sales@fchoice.com.

What Do You Think?

In each *First View*, we ask you about what products you want to see First Choice develop.

In the past, feedback from this ideas column has helped First Choice Software develop a host of new applications, including many of our now-popular thin client offerings and an upcoming enhancement to the Clarify Rule Manager.

First Choice is now rounding out our thin client offerings. We have fully-functional Clarify-based thin clients for ClearSupport, ClearQuality, ClearCallcenter, and ClearLogistics (under development).

These clients give us a base platform for satisfying most any Clarify customer. Now the key question becomes: What's next?

While writing these thin clients we have also ported a number of First Choice Software thick client tools to the thin environment. These tools include popular applications such as: Recently Opened Object Monitor, fcQuery, fcColor, and Enhanced Email Out (under development).

What we'd like to ask you in this issue is the following:

Which First Choice thick client tools would you like to see ported next to the thin environment? Which ones are absolute "musts" for your company?

Some of the products we've thought about porting are:

Flashes Anywhere

Attachments Anywhere

An updated, improved functionality like Temporary Yank

Of course, if you have a pet Clarify augmentation you would like to see added to the thin environment, we'd love to hear about that too!!

Please take a minute to contact us at ideas@fchoice.com to let us know what you think about our ideas for future projects.

New Partners

It isn't only customers who are getting excited about First Choice Software and the products we write. Several Clarify-based partners have recently signed up in the First Choice Advantage Partner program.

The most recent of these partners is Zamba Solutions. For many years Zamba has helped many of Clarify's biggest customers implement and improve their Clarify systems.

Zamba has recently signed up as a Gold level First Choice partner, is working with First Choice to train the

Zamba technical staff, and is working closely with First Choice at four different Clarify customers to bring them a whole new and valuable Clarify experience with First Choice tools.

In addition to Zamba, First Choice recently began an engagement with Stahl Technologies to help a large Clarify customer get the most from their Clarify system with the new First Choice thin client technologies.

Watch this space in the next *FirstView* for an announcement of two new large partnership deals.

Employee Profile: Sara Gorlick

Sara Gorlick, as most of you know, is the Office Manager for First Choice Software. She manages all of the administrative functions of running the company, and is responsible for a large portion of our non-technical support customer interactions.

Sara attended Texas Tech University in 1995 before spending two years traveling throughout the United States. She arrived in Austin in 1997, working for a local consulting company. Within short order she was promoted to Office Manager. Prior to joining First Choice Software, Sara worked for Crossroads Systems, Inc., another local Austin business, in sales support.

We are very lucky to have Sara as part of the team, and know that customers enjoy working with her. If you haven't had a chance to meet Sara, please feel free to call her at First Choice Software, and introduce yourself.

Technical Corner

In each issue of *First View*, the Technical Corner section contains a tip, example, or technique we find useful. We will include them, along with appropriate code examples, in the hope that you will find them useful as well.

Clarify introduced, in version 8.0, a new way to display and use tabs. Many customers have seen these “tabless tabs” (a horrible name, I know – but that’s what the Clarify developer called them!!) in some newer Clarify baseline forms (such as the *My Clarify* form in ClearSales). What most customers *don’t* know, however, is that you can easily and quickly add this paradigm to either new custom forms, or to existing baseline forms.

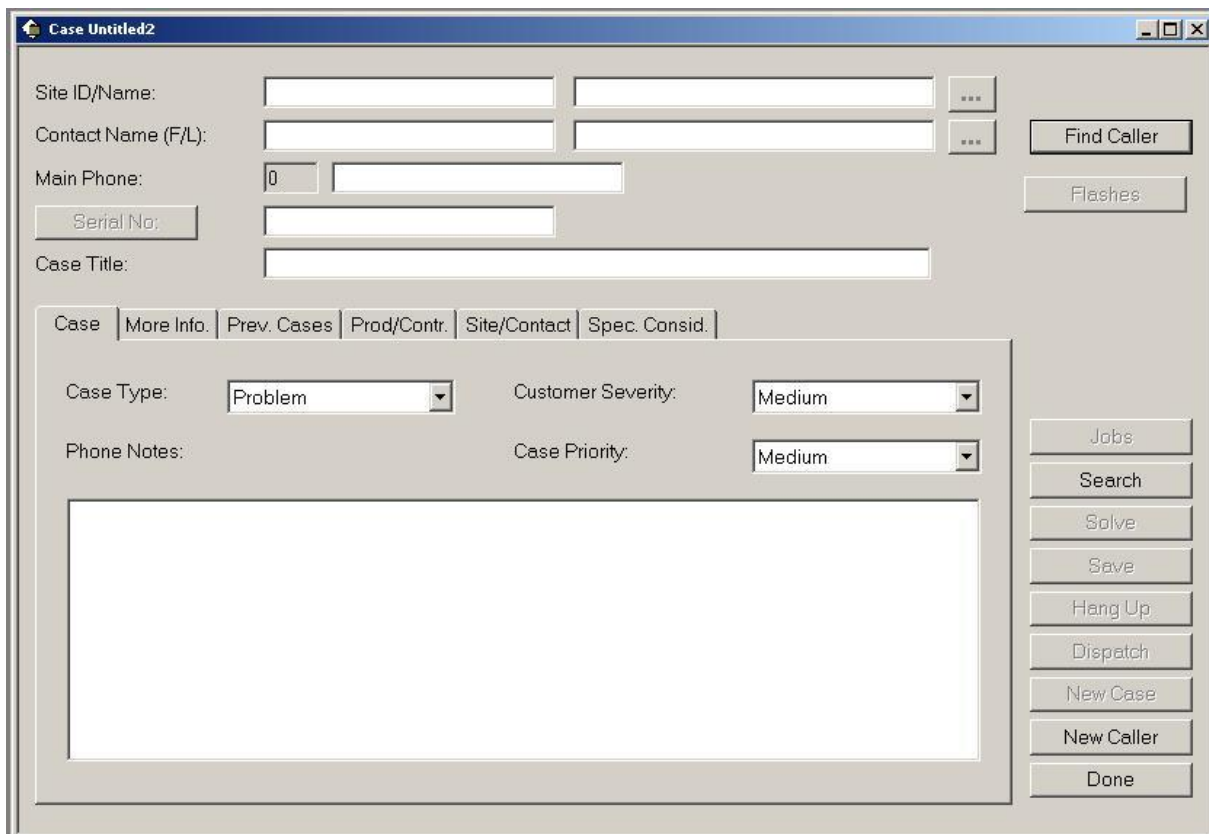
The point of this new tab paradigm is that it more closely resembles web *frames*, and the design paradigm that has become more popular on web pages. First Choice used it extensively when we wrote the **CommCenter** application for Clarify a couple of years ago. And the customer feedback on it was that it was very positive.

In addition, this new style of tabs addresses an old complaint about Clarify tabs. Namely that you can’t hide a tab (make it invisible). Many users have complained over the years that they can’t dynamically (at run time) change which tabs are visible, and which ones are not. With the new tab paradigm you can change the list of tabs available at any time.

It would be pointless in this space to argue which tab paradigm is better – there will be individuals who prefer each method. What is important is that you can add this technique to your box of tricks, and use it when and where you feel it is appropriate. This article discusses how to create these new types of tabs, and use them in your Clarify forms.

What is a tab?

Everyone is familiar with tabs in Clarify. The following is the baseline *New Case* form with the standard tabs defined.



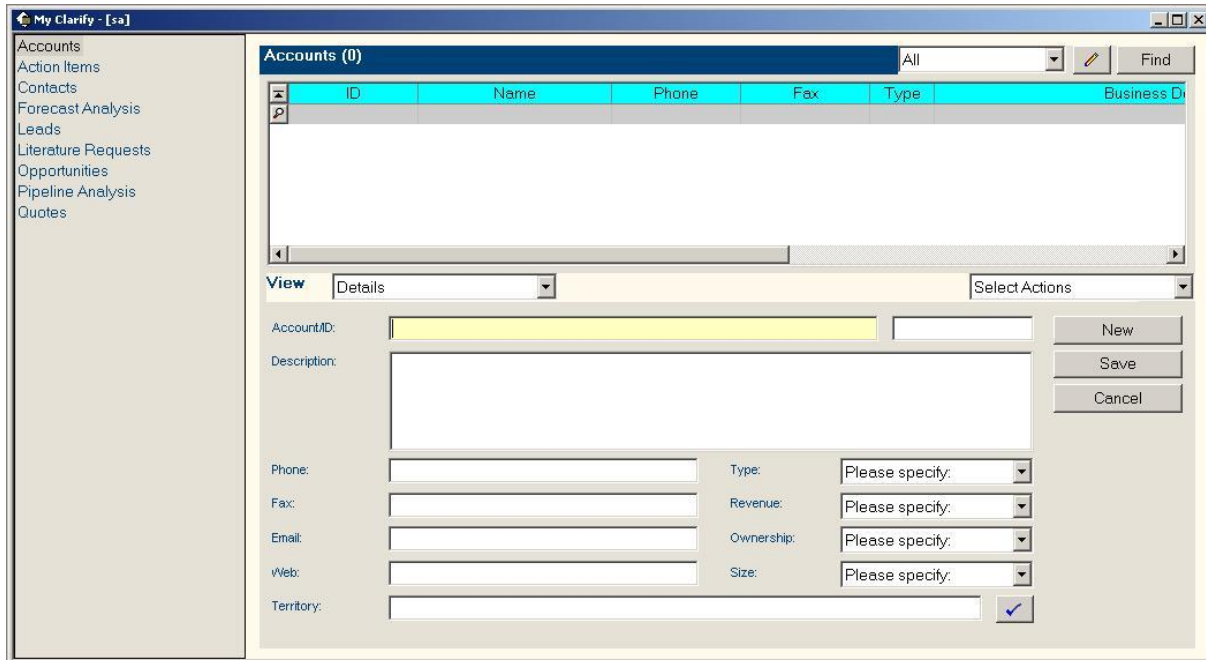
What many people *do not* realize is that the tab control that they see is really made up of two parts. The first of these is a series of overlapping dependent child forms (or *frames*). These forms are created in UI Editor, and are just normal Clarify forms. There are a few restrictions on the frames. They must be the same size (actually they don’t,

but the Clarify style guide strongly suggests that they should be), and they must contain the same contextual objects as the parent form, and in the same order. Other than that, they are simply Clarify forms.

The other part of the “tab” is the tab strip. This is the top of the tab forms where you can see the available tabs, and click on the one you want to see. The tab strip, in Clarify, is actually made up of individual tab controls that you assign in UI Editor. Each tab control essentially has a label (the text displayed on the tab strip), and the tab number, which is the form to display if that tab button is clicked.

When you “click” on a tab two things happen. The first is that the proper tab name is brought to the front on the tab strip. The other is the proper frame (child form) is fronted so you can see it. Tabs look like one unified control, but they really aren’t.

The next picture is the *My Clarify* form with the “tabless tabs.” What has happened is that the tab strip has been replaced in this control with a Clarify *Treeview* control. This control, on the left, is simply a list of the tabs, much like you would have in the tab strip.



In this paradigm you still have tab controls, but you will set certain values in them so that tells Clarify not to display the tab strip. The Treeview control is actually unrelated to the tabs. You could use other controls instead, but the Treeview is best for this purpose. Clicking on an item in the Treeview control is just a normal control action in Clarify. As you will see below, you still need to write a (very small) bit of code to then press the proper tab button to front the proper frame.

Since there is no tab strip displayed in this paradigm you can make your tabs even taller than they were before, which is often useful.

How does it work?

It is actually very simple to make this style of tab work for you. The following list describes what you need to do to create a “tabless tab” in Clarify.

Create the parent form on which you will place the tab. This is the same as it would be with normal tabs. You must write ClearBasic code to open this form (typically from a menu item or a button click on another form).

Now create one or more *child forms* for the tabs of this form. Make sure that you create them as child forms (so that they have the same contextual objects as the parent), and that they are the same size as each other. Again, this is no different than you would do with traditional tabs.

Add tab controls to the parent form. One tab should be added for each child form. This is where the standard tab and tabless tabs start to differ. You should set the following properties for this first tab:

The size of the tab should be set to the size of the child frames (plus 5 for both height and width),

The location of the tab should be set to where you wish to see the child frames displayed on the parent form, The *Tab Form ID* must be set (as with all tabs) to the form number of the frame to be displayed when this tab is “clicked”,

The *Caption* property can be set for your use (but is not displayed),

The *Child* property must be set to “Yes”. This is what tells UI Editor that this is a “tabless” tab. The other properties for this tab should be automatically set at this point. But they are listed below in case you need to reset them,

The *Default* property is set to “No”,

The *Dependent* property is set to “Yes”,

The *Enabled* property is set to “Yes”,

The *Is Grouped* property is set to “Yes”,

The *Show Border* property is set to “Yes” (but could be changed),

The *Show Title* property is set to “No”

The rest of the tab controls should be added to the parent form. Each one should set the following properties:

The *Default* property is set to “No”,

The *Dependent* property is set to “Yes”,

The *Enabled* property is set to “Yes”,

The *Tab Form ID* property must be set (as with all tabs) to the form number of the frame to be displayed when this tab is “clicked”,

The *Caption* property can be set for your use (but is not displayed),

Note: Except for the first tab (which has special properties set in it), the order of the tabs does not matter, as the tab strip is not displayed!!

You should now add a *Treeview* control to the parent form. Set the following properties:

It is **highly** recommended that you set the *Hot Tracking* property to “Yes” so that you can see the item that you are about to select in the control,

Set the *Name* of the Treeview control,

Make sure that the *Style* property is set to *twwTextOnly*,

Set the *Font* property to a font that you like,

You must also add some code to the parent form to add the “tabs” as items to the Treeview control. This is commonly performed in the form’s *Form_Load* method. The following is an example of how to do this:

```
Dim tab_1 As Long
Dim tab_2 As Long
Dim tab_3 As Long

Public Sub load_initial_tabs()
    tab_1 = TV_TEST.Add( , , , "First Tab")
    tab_2 = TV_TEST.Add( , , , "Second Tab")
    tab_3 = TV_TEST.Add( , , , "Third Tab")
End Sub
```

The routine simply adds three items to the top level of the Treeview control. For the purposes of tabs, we won’t do anything fancy with child nodes. The tabs are all at the same level. It is interesting to note, however, that this paradigm *does* allow you to be fancy, with tabs being contained within “groups” in a hierarchical structure. This is left as an exercise for advanced readers.

The variables that are declared (as module variables) are used to store the *Node Ids* for each node in the Treeview control. You could use an array, if you wished, for this purpose as well.

You can now add a bit of code to the parent form that will cause it to “front” the proper tab whenever an item is clicked in the Treeview control. For example, the following code does the trick in our example:

```
Public Sub TV_TEST_NodeClick(the_node As Long)
    Select Case the_node
        Case tab_1
            TAB_D_1007.Value = True
        Case tab_2
```



```

        TAB_D_1008.Value = True
    Case tab_3
        TAB_D_1009.Value = True
    End Select
End Sub

```

In this example when you click on a line in the Treeview control the appropriate child form (tab) is fronted for you.

Finally, you can, depending on the workflow within your form, use the `Remove` and `Add` methods of the Treeview control to “hide” or “make visible” the tabs that you want users to be able to select. You can also use the `tab_xxxx.Value = True` statement to make a tab “fronted” any time you want. You don’t have to do this via the Treeview control in all cases. For example, the following code “hides” one of the tabs:

```

Public Sub BTN_HIDE_Click()
    TV_TEST.Clear
    tab_1 = TV_TEST.Add( , , , "First Tab")
    tab_2 = NO_TAB ' -999
    tab_3 = TV_TEST.Add( , , , "Third Tab")
End Sub

```

The code above uses a method to *Clear* the previous contents of the Treeview control, and to add the two (not three) tabs in the new version. We could have used the *Remove* method just as easily. Also note that we must also clear out the value of the variable holding the 2nd tab’s *NodeValue*. If we did not, it is possible that the *Select* statement in the code fragment above might still trigger for the 2nd tab, when we actually selected the 3rd tab.

Note: The example given here does not display any of the tabs initially. If you wish to do this, you can simply perform a “`TAB_D_XXXX.Value = True`” statement in your `Form_Load` method.

Note: The Clarify UI Editor documentation does describe this process in some detail. The section on tabs talks about *hiding* the tab strip. This is useful. There is a later section in the document that talks about *Multipane* controls. It is important to understand that this is a Clarify-preferred *style* for form layout, and it does use *tabless* tabs. However, *tabless* tabs can be used on any Clarify form, and it is not necessary to use the entire *Multipane* design strategy to use the *tabless* tabs.

Hopefully this information is useful to you. If you have questions about it, please feel free to post them in the *fcConnect* user forum located at: www.fchoice.com/fcconnect.

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