

the professional
labeling software

NiceLabel 

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NiceLabel Version 5.0 Standard Series

Release Notes

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What is New in General

Introduction of NiceLabel Standard Series

The v4 NiceLabel products formerly known with the brand name of NiceLabel software are now available as the **NiceLabel Standard Series** of products. All products are still available as in previous versions and continue to be enhanced. This reclassification of traditional products was necessary with the release of the **NiceLabel Enterprise Series** in late 2006. The **NiceLabel Standard Series** of products includes the following editions:

- NiceLabel Express
- NiceLabel Pro
- NiceLabel Suite (including the Network edition and Pocket NiceLabel)
- NiceLabel Pocket PC Designer

True Multi-lingual (Unicode) Support in All Modules

From version 5.0 forward, the NiceLabel software is Unicode compliant in all modules. Some modules that were not fully, or were partially, Unicode-compliant now benefit from the compliance (NiceForm, NiceWatch, NiceData).

Unicode support is important for multi-lingual label printing. With Unicode you can work with data values formatted not only in the language selected in your regional settings but with all languages supported by your Windows operating system.

Rewrite of Pocket NiceLabel to Windows CE.NET

Pocket NiceLabel is a completely new application. It was rewritten from scratch and built on the .NET compact framework. The new version supports a wider range of mobile devices. The new foundations allow for easier upgrades and modifications for future versions.

The benefits of the new version:

- Smaller deployment footprint than in previous versions
- Supports Microsoft Compact Framework 2.0
- Enhanced synchronization utility replaces old Synchronization Manager
- You can export label and forms to Pocket PC device using NiceLabel Pro and NiceForm applications.
- Persistent storage and activation through Pocket Engine API for mobile application developers.

Readiness for Windows Vista and Discontinued Support for Windows 9X, Me and NT 4.0

To cope with the new market demands and to better support upcoming new editions of NiceLabel software, we have dropped support for the older Windows operating systems.

We do not want to abandon users of older Windows operating systems, but because Microsoft has stopped supporting these systems and we want to give the majority of users the

maximum comfort with the stable operation of the NiceLabel software, we believe the discontinued support is a step in the right direction and it also follows the course of general IT.

This act will provide a firm foundation for new NiceLabel products and better usage of capabilities of the modern operating systems.

NiceLabel software from version 5.0 supports the following operating systems: 32-bit and 64-bit versions of Windows 2000, XP, 2003 Server and Windows Vista.

Improved Printing Control

With the new version of the NiceLabel software you benefit from better control over your printers and printing activities.

For printers that allow bidirectional communication with the NiceDriver you can review the printer status in real time. For example, you can see the statuses like "out of labels", "out of ribbon", "print head opened", etc. Not only you can review the statuses interactively, you can also set up automatic notifications and receive different types of alerts when something happens out of plan.

Note: The printer statuses are available only when the bidirectional communication is supported between the printer and the printer driver. The alerts of program errors are always available (in the Enterprise Series).

These are the new features available:

- NicePrintQueue
- Enhanced logging with detailed print job status information
- Label reprint
 - To another printer
 - Select single, batch or all labels from a previous job to reprint
- Print job status information available through programming interface (API) call

With Standard Series of products you can review the locally available printers and their spoolers. NicePrintQueue is a new NiceLabel software module used to control printers and their print jobs on the local computer. This module can be compared to the Windows Spooler but provides advanced functionality and an overview of printer status otherwise not available in the standard Windows Spooler.

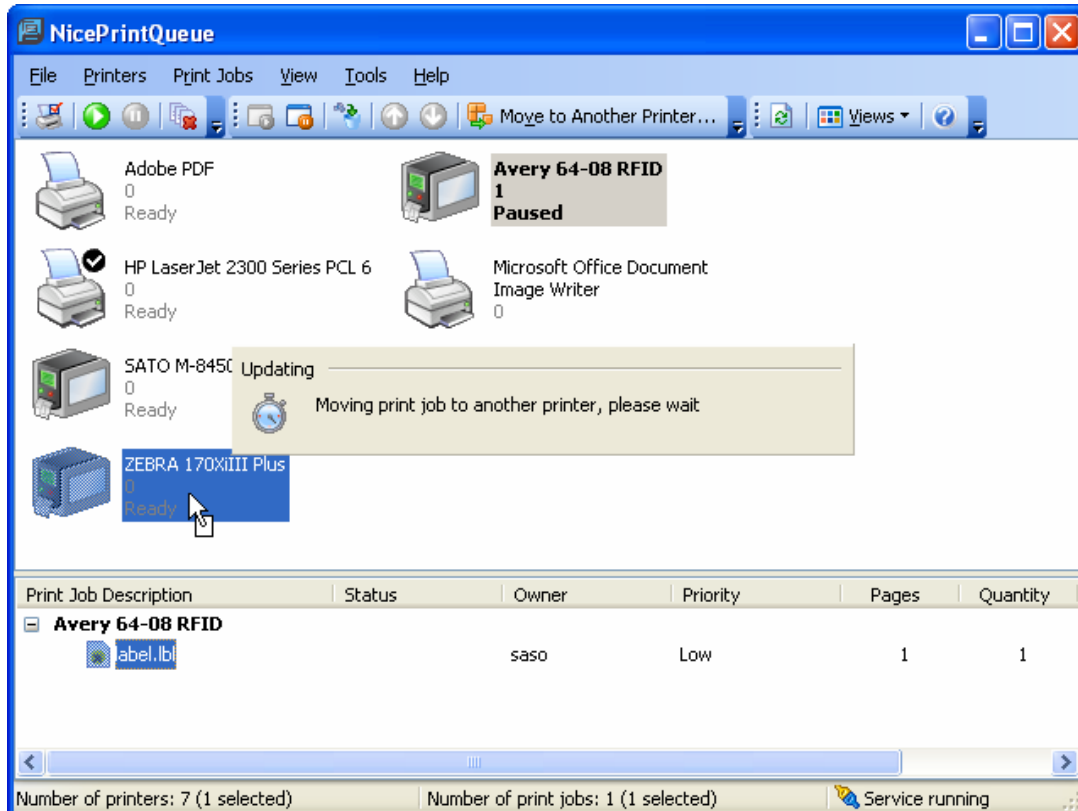


Figure 1: Use new module NicePrintQueue to control printers and move print jobs from one printer to another

Another interesting feature of the NicePrintQueue is that it allows you to move a print job from one printer spooler to another, even among thermal printers of different brands, i.e. from Avery to Zebra. You would move the job to another printer if you see that an error appeared on the printer or the printer has a large number of print jobs already queued.

You will also appreciate the new **label reprint** feature. When you enable logging of all printing activities, you can easily reprint the labels not only to the same printer used the first time; you can divert printing to any available printer, even if it is a different brand or manufacturer. NiceLabel software will create the proper print file for the selected printer with the data retrieved from the log file.

New Configuration Module

The configuration options for different NiceLabel application and modules are merged together and available in a new Configuration module. You can now set the options for all NiceLabel applications in one single place.

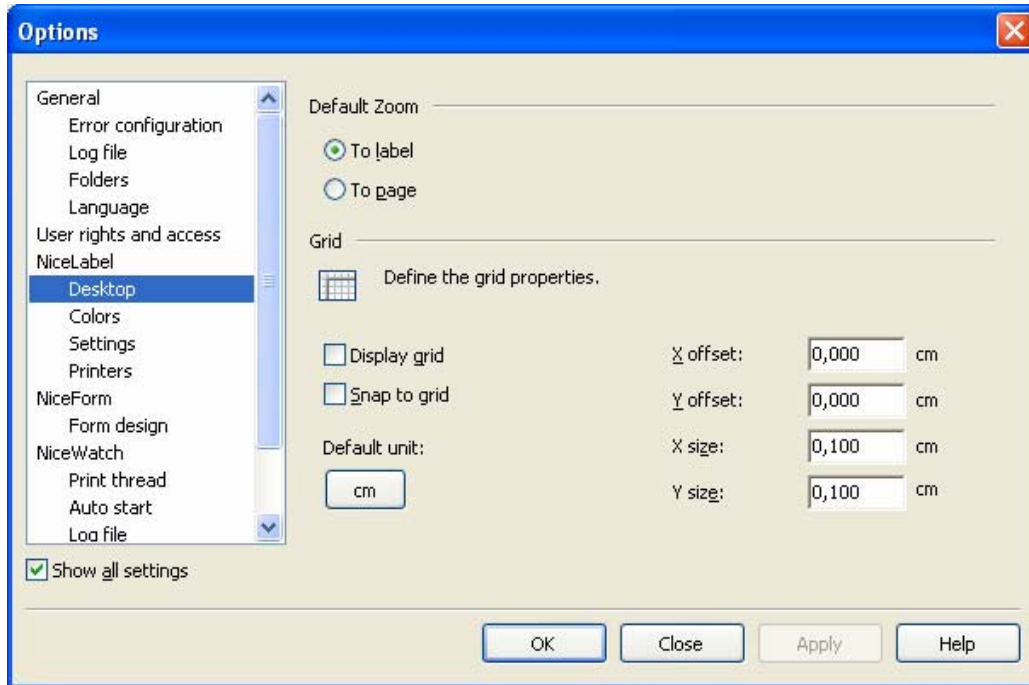


Figure 2: One configuration module to specify options for all applications

New Types of Command Files

You can use the new command file formats to define the label printing process. The command files define the instructions that the NiceLabel print engine needs to print a label job. When you execute the command file, the commands stored within are executed one by one. The usual commands are “Open Label”, “Set Variable”, “Select Printer” and “Print Labels”.

You can use the command files of several different syntax forms:

- JOB files
- CSV files
- XML files

In all cases, you work with text files where the syntax of the commands differs a little bit. The result is the same with all command files, labels print out with required data on a selected printer. NiceLabel Pro, NiceForm and NiceWatch can all work with the new command file formats.

The benefit of using one of these file formats with the NiceWatch module is that configuration of NiceWatch is simplified because a trigger filter becomes unnecessary.

```
@Label,@Printer,@Quantity,@Skip,@IdenticalCopies,NumberOfSets,@Port,Var1,Var2 ...
Label name, printer name, Quantity, Skip, IC, NS, port name, variable value, variable value,...
Label name, printer name, Quantity, Skip, IC, NS, port name, variable value, variable value,...
```

Figure 3: Sample of CSV command file

```
<nice_commands login="username" quit="true">
  <label name="label name 1" close="false">

    <session_print_job printer="printer name 1" skip=0 job_name="job name 1"
print_to_file="filename 1">
      <database name="db1">database name 1</database>
      <table name="table1">table name 1</table>

      <session quantity="10">
        <variable name="variable name 1" >variable value 1</variable>
      </session>
    </session_print_job>

    <print_job printer="printer name 2" quantity="10" skip=0 identical_copies=1 number_of_sets=1
job_name="job name 2" print_to_file="filename 1">
      <database name="db1">database name 1</database>
      <table name="table1">table name 1</table>
      <variable name="variable name 1" >variable value 5</variable>
    </print_job>
  </label>
</nice_commands>
```

Figure 4: Sample of XML command file

Error Information Handling Redesign

Error messages have been redesigned to provide more detailed information about the error status and the severity of the error. Each error message is assigned with a unique ID. You can set up default responses for some of the default error messages.

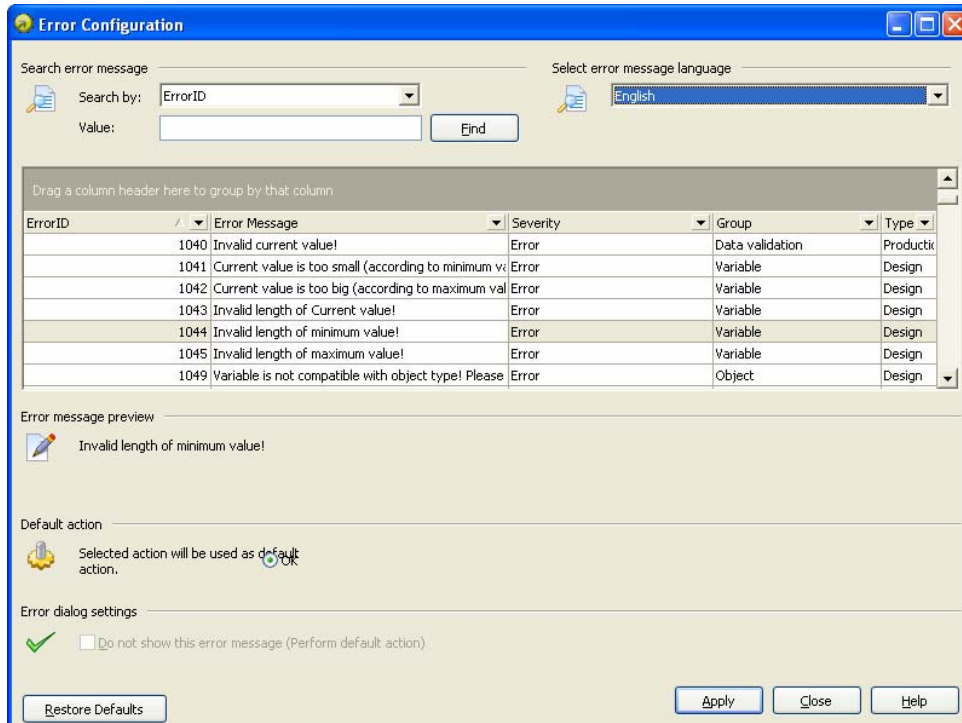


Figure 5: Error Configuration dialog box

New NiceLabel Installer

NiceLabel software uses Windows Installer technology for product installation. One of the advantages is to be able to create MSI packages for unattended NiceLabel Network client installation using the Windows Group Policy.

What is New in NiceLabel Pro

Activation Changes

New activation possibility with Enterprise Print Manager

You must activate NiceLabel software to exit the demo mode and unlock all features of the software. You can activate NiceLabel software using different activation types.

The commonly used types are hardware key (dongle) in USB and parallel port options, software keys and network software keys (for the Network edition of NiceLabel software). Now another activation type is available.

When you purchase software licenses from the NiceLabel Enterprise Editions, the NiceLabel Pro and Suite act as the label design and printing clients. The license for activation is acquired from the NiceLabel Enterprise Print Manager (EPM). You do not need to hassle with the hardware keys or client software keys; you activate the NiceLabel EPM once and the clients obtain the licenses from EPM.

Note: Activation through EPM is available in NiceLabel Enterprise Series of products.

Deactivation of Software Key License

NiceLabel will run full featured on each workstation where you have activated NiceLabel software. You can activate the software with a hardware key or software key (single user or multi-user license). If you need to move the license to another computer, you can simply disconnect the hardware key and attach it to the other computer.

With Software Key license you now can deactivate the NiceLabel software on one computer and then activate it again with the same license on the other computer.

Note: You must have Internet access on the computer where you want to deactivate the NiceLabel software or the license cannot be deactivated.

Label Reprint

When you enable the printing log file in NiceLabel Pro, the application remembers all printing actions and values of the variable data fields used on the label. The following information is stored: which user printed which label to which printer, what data was used on the label, how many labels were printed and similar data.

Because all of the data is stored in the log database, you can easily review what was printed and even more; you can reprint the print jobs from the past. If you, for some reason, need to print the same labels again, you can simply select the print job from the list, select which labels from job to print (all or selected labels) and print the labels again.

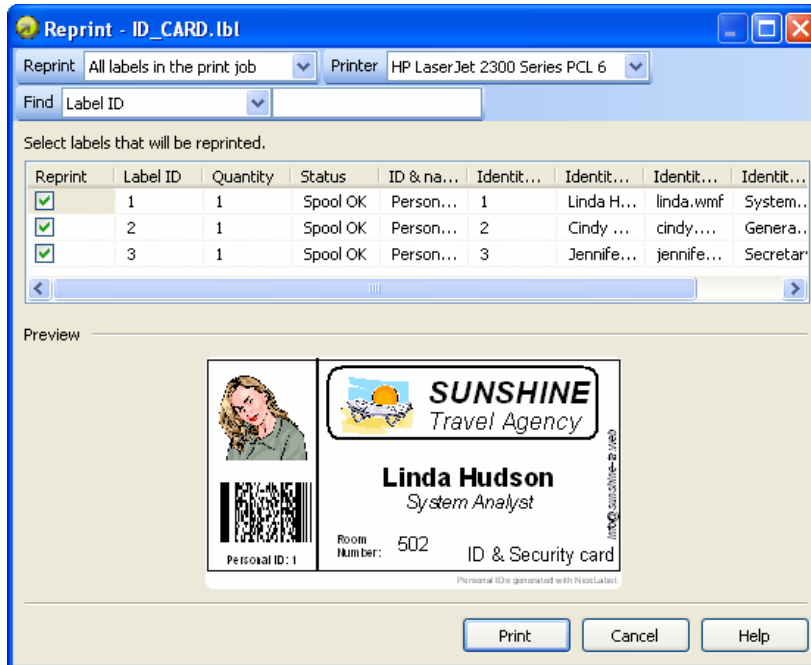


Figure 6: Easily reprint any label job printed in the past

Normally you would reprint the labels to the same printer as the first time. NiceLabel Pro software goes one step beyond and allows you to reprint the labels to an entirely different printer. You can select your target printer just before you click the Reprint button. NiceLabel will generate the labels for the selected printer and use the same data as during the first printing.

Configurable Export

NiceLabel Pro currently has the ability to be only a label designer when using the printer output for printing outside of NiceLabel. Labels can be exported in numerous ways. In most scenarios, a meta print file is generated. The meta print file contains the printer commands for the target printer, where the placeholders of the variable fields are identified with special markers. The application or printer can easily identify the markers and replace them with the actual data that must print on the label. In the past, these markets were predefined in NiceLabel and not configurable.

You can now configure these markers to suit your requirements. No longer must you adapt to the exported label, now you can adjust the syntax of the exported label to match your application.

Note: The configurable export is available in NiceLabel Suite edition.

Improved Design Possibilities

Support for Variable Label Sizing

In most label-printing scenarios you design and print the label with fixed dimensions. The label width and height do not change so you must make sure to fit all objects on the label.

However, in some cases you need the ability to design the label with a variable length. The label length changes in accordance to the size of the label objects, dynamically at print time. When you assign more data to the label objects, their size increases and occupy more space on the label. In order to fit such objects on the label, the label height must change as well.



Figure 7: Variable label sizing feature increases the label height on demand

Note: The requirement for variable label sizing is used quite often in the textile industry where labels print to endless (continuous) label material. There are no gaps between the labels. The printer cutter cuts the material after the label prints to the correct sized based on the amount of data printed on the tag.

Support for Relative Positioning of Label Objects

During the regular label design process you place objects in a certain position on the label and that is the space it will occupy when the label prints. You must be careful to anticipate the maximum variable length and design your objects accordingly so the objects do not overlap each other or exceed the label boundaries. However, in some cases you need the object to change its placement on the label.

For example: You have a multi-line text object and bar code on the label. The bar code must always print below the text object. To solve the problem, you must link the objects together to enable them to position relative to each other. The text object is a parent object and the bar code is linked to it as a child object.

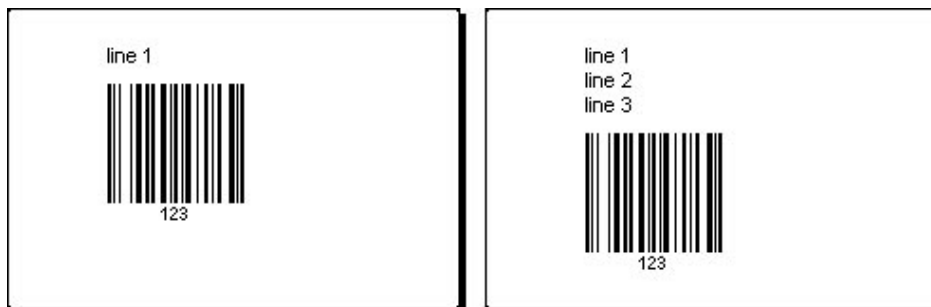


Figure 8: Variable positioning of the bar code object (linked to the bottom of the text object)

In the scheme above, the bar code changes its vertical placement. The vertical distance between the text and bar code object is always the same, no matter the number of lines in the text object.

Better Support for Handling of Missing Graphic Files

When an image that you use on the label is missing, NiceLabel will no longer silently ignore the missing image. Rather, NiceLabel will provide you with several possibilities to compensate for the missing image. You can:

- Remove the reference to the missing image.
- Ignore the error temporarily.
- Select another image to use instead of the missing one.

You can also select an option to automatically embed all images into a label template. A copy of the image is saved into the label, which makes the label more portable and reduces the hassle of missing images.

Export the Label to an Image

You can now export the label to a selected image file format. This is a useful documentation feature when you need to send the label to another person for approval and the other person does not have NiceLabel software installed. You can select from many different graphic formats.

Use Images from Databases (Support for BLOB Fields)

In most cases for variable image printing, you store the images that you use on the labels in some type of file-based storage. However, images can be stored also in other locations. One type of uncommon storage is a database.

Some database types can contain fields of the type called a Binary Large Object, or BLOB. Within these field types, you can store an entire image in a binary format. Not just the image path and filename are stored, but all of the pixel and other graphical information about the image are stored.

You can now print images stored in a BLOB field in a database on labels with NiceLabel software.

Improved best-fit option for Text Box object

Currently, you can enable the **Best Fit** option inside the Text Box object to automatically resize the text to point size.

Now, NiceLabel Pro also provides the ability to fit the text into a frame by changing the font scaling.

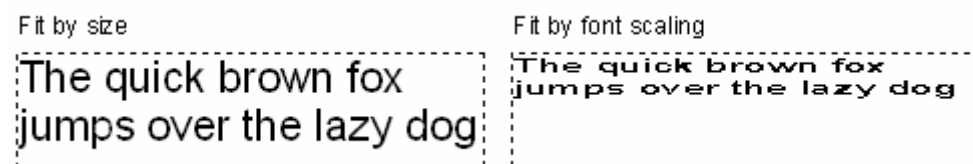


Figure 9: Advanced text box manipulation feature with Best fit option

The images above show two text box objects of the same dimensions. In both text boxes, the **Best fit** option is enabled to allow NiceLabel to adjust the font properties so the text will fit optimally into the frame.

In the first picture, the text box adjusts the font point size.

In the second picture, the text box adjusts the font scaling.

Decimal Point Font Size

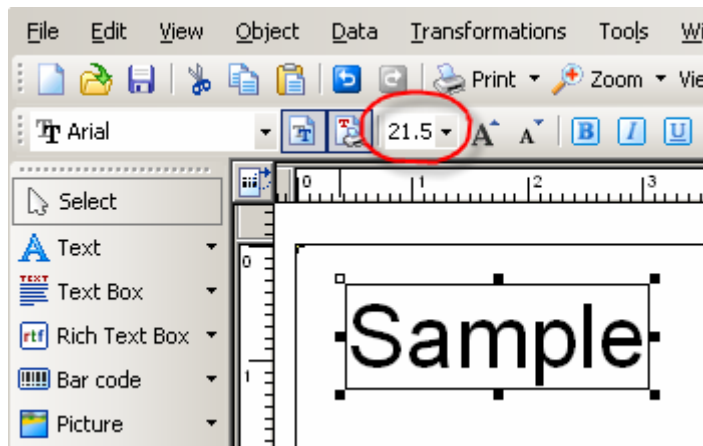


Figure 10: New feature to specify font size up to decimal point accuracy

You can now set the font size up to decimal point accuracy. You can create labels with more precisely defined sizes of text objects.

What is New in NiceLabel Suite

The NiceLabel Suite edition includes all of the new features from the NiceLabel Pro edition plus Suite-specific features.

NiceForm

Multi-lingual Support (Unicode) in NiceForm

The NiceForm module now understands Unicode-formatted data.

You can use Unicode data with all form objects, including tables. You can display and use the data from your Unicode databases. There is no need to hassle with different workarounds, just use your data directly on the form.

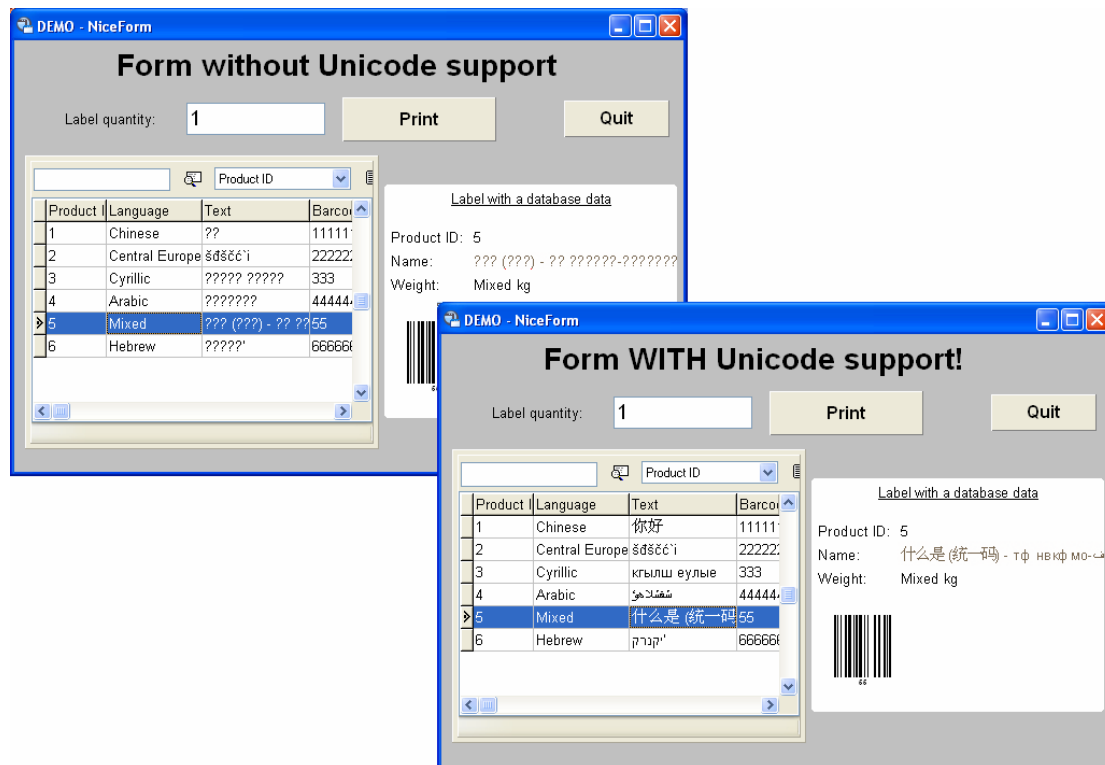


Figure 11: Use data from Unicode databases directly from NiceForm

New Object: Check Box

Check box gives you a new opportunity for a yes/no decision making feature on the form. You can easily enable/disable some option on the form or you can evaluate the user selection of the check box state in a Visual Basic script in the button action properties. You can select multiple check boxes during production to enable multiple decisions at print time.

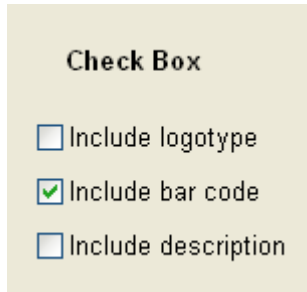


Figure 12: New check box object

New Object: Radio Group

Radio group provides the ability to select from different choices. The functionality of the radio group is similar to a check box or list box, offering an object with a different look. You can only select one radio button in the radio group at print time.



Figure 13: New radio group object

Updated connection to the databases

There is now support for custom SQL statements inside of NiceForm. If needed, you can make custom SQL commands to extract data from your database tables and use the data on the form. This feature is useful when you want to display just the records that match some criteria outside of GUI configurations that can be made in NiceForm.

Variable Placement of the Running Forms

You can define where on the desktop the running form will be placed. It can be centered on your screen, your desktop (in case of multi-monitor set-up) or on the specific position on screen.

New Action to Change the Focus on Form Objects

This new action allows you to move the focus to any object on the form after selecting the button. The object that is currently selected and is ready for data input from the user has the focus. The focus can be changed with the tab order (defined during the form design), or with the new action.

Rotation for Preview object

By default, the preview on the form shows the label in the orientation that was used during the label design. If you want to display the preview in some other orientation, you can easily set the new orientation in the preview object.

Integrated Pocket NiceLabel Synchronization

The stand-alone application, Synchronization Manager, is no longer shipped with NiceLabel Suite edition. Instead, you can synchronize your labels and forms directly within NiceForm. There is a new Export Wizard that guides you through the necessary export steps.

NiceWatch

Multi-lingual Support (Unicode) in NiceWatch

The NiceWatch middleware module understands Unicode-formatted data in all filters.

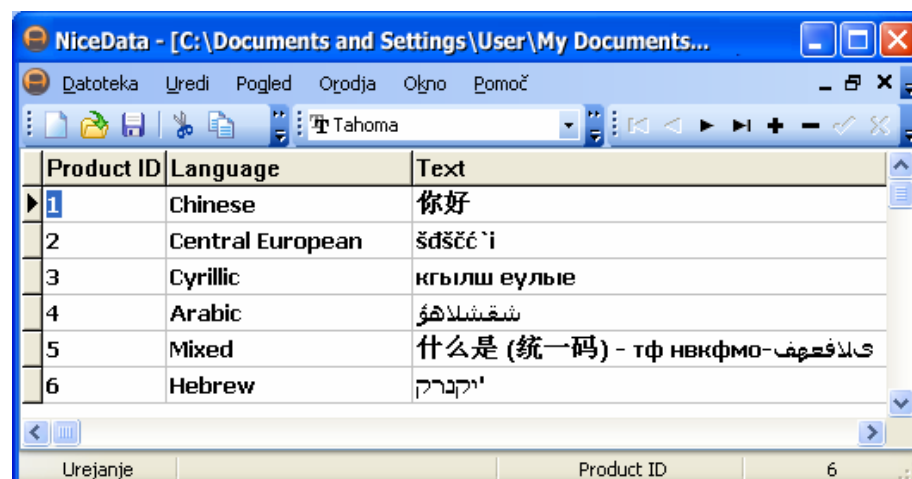
Previous releases of NiceWatch provided support for Unicode in all filters except **Document field analysis**. New release supports Unicode in the Document field analysis filter as well.

Support for Storing and Retrieving Filter Configuration

Each of the filters in NiceWatch has an option to save (and later load) the filter configuration to a file. You can use this option to exchange the filter configuration between different triggers in the same NiceWatch or to use the filter configuration on some other computer where a different NiceWatch instance is running.

NiceData

NiceData, the database manager module, supports the multi-lingual Unicode standard. If you use Unicode databases (like MS SQL or MS Access) you can open their tables in NiceData and work with Unicode formatted data.



Product ID	Language	Text
1	Chinese	你好
2	Central European	šďščč`i
3	Cyrillic	кгылш еулые
4	Arabic	شغشلاهو
5	Mixed	什么是(统一码) - тф нвкфмо-كلا فعمف
6	Hebrew	יקנרק

Figure 14: Work with Unicode databases in NiceData