

the professional
labeling software

NiceLabel 

www.nicelabel.com, info@nicelabel.com

NiceLabel Version 5.1 Standard Series

Release Notes

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www.nicelabel.com

support@nicelabel.com

sales@nicelabel.com



Head Office

Euro Plus d.o.o.
Ulica Lojzeta Hrovata 4c
SI-4000 Kranj, Slovenia
Tel.: +386 4 280 50 00
Fax: +386 4 233 11 48
www.europlus.si
info@europlus.si



Nice Software. Nice Partner. Nice Value.

North American Office

Niceware International, LLC
10437 Innovation Drive, Ste. 147
Milwaukee, WI 53226
Tel.: +1 414 476 6423
Fax: +1 414 476 7955
www.nicewareintl.com
info@nicewareintl.com

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What is New in General

Optimized Store/Recall Mode of Label Printing

NiceLabel and NiceDrivers software allow for a completely new mode of optimized label printing. In several environments, printing directly from the labeling software is not a possibility because label printing from NiceLabel might take too much time in spite of any optimizations you have enabled in the label design.

The label is just too complex or communication is too slow to achieve label printing in the required time frame.

The overall printing speed is defined by several stages within the 'label printing process': data acquire, data processing, preparation of the print job, communication with the printer and sending the print job, internal processing in the printer, printout speed.

If we can eliminate some of these steps, we can expect label printing to be a lot faster. The new feature in NiceLabel does just that.

NiceLabel allows you to store the label template in the printer memory. This is done directly from the Print dialog box, so there is no need for any kind of exporting and working with the command or printer files. Once the label template is saved in the printer memory, you just send the data for variable fields and print out the label. All the communication with the computer is taken down to the minimum.

The labels can be recalled from the printer at any time from all printing applications in NiceLabel software: NiceLabel Pro, NiceForm, NicePrint and NiceWatch.

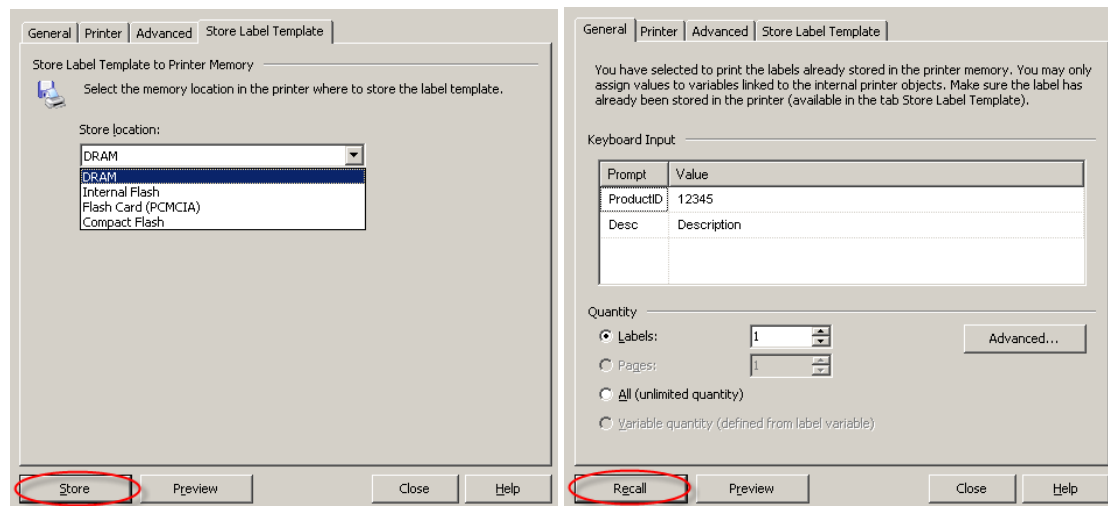


Figure 1: The Store / Recall printing mode as available in the print dialog box of NiceLabel Pro

Document Storage Server

The products in the NiceLabel Standard Series have been enhanced with the possibility to use the label templates from the web-based Document Storage. This feature is particularly useful for groups of users working on the same projects and need to share the files.

The document storage system offers the users a common repository to store the label-related documents. Groups of users working on the same labeling project can create their own file structures within the Document Storage, share the files and collaborate with the same data. No longer are they required to put the files on some commonly shared location in the file system. There is nothing wrong with using a shared location in the file system; however, the EPM is a web-based application and allows documents to be shared to a much broader public, allowing the users to connect to the document storage server from anywhere in the world.

You can use the Document Storage to store your label templates, images, and form files.

Note: The Document Server is available with the NiceLabel Enterprise Series and is available as a feature inside Enterprise Print Manager.

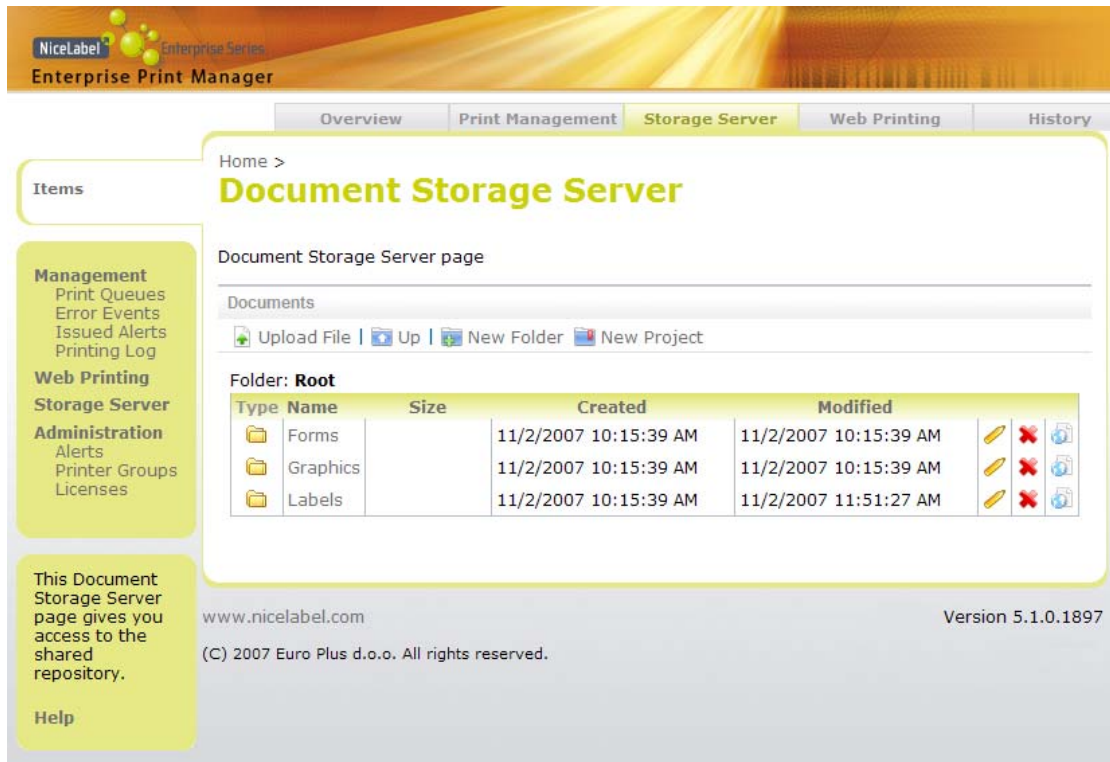


Figure 2: NiceLabel software on the workstations can get files from the Document Storage Server available in the Enterprise Print Manager

Licensing and Activation Enhancements

Deactivation of the NiceLabel Network License

Deactivation of the NiceLabel Network license is now available in the software. This feature is particularly useful whenever you have to move the NiceLabel licensing server to some other computer. Traditionally, you had to contact your NiceLabel reseller for license unlocking. Now you can do it yourself.

You can simply return the license to the NiceLabel internet activation server, install NiceLabel Suite Network on the new computer, and activate it again with the same license.

Note: License deactivation is only possible when an online internet connection is available on the workstation.

Deactivation of the Software Key and the Network Software Key Available in Uninstaller

If you own a copy of NiceLabel with a Software Key (single-user) or a Network Software Key (multi-user), you had activated NiceLabel software to unlock all its features. Whenever you uninstall the NiceLabel software, you will be reminded to deactivate the software as well. The license is returned to NiceLabel licensing server, and can be re-used on another computer.

When you do not select the deactivation option, the license remains on your computer. You can install NiceLabel again and activate it. However, in this case, the license cannot be moved to another computer.

Note: License deactivation is only possible when an online internet connection is available on the workstation.

NiceLabel will Work through Remote Desktop When Used in Desktop Session

NiceLabel software will not allow multiple users running it from the same computer using several Remote Desktop connections. On Windows 2003, multiple users can be logged in the same computer at the same time. You can still use NiceLabel software with a Remote desktop connection, but you need to connect to the main (console) session.

NiceLabel licensing is user-based. Whenever there is a need for multiple users running the software, the NiceLabel Network edition is available as a solution.

Updated ActiveX Interface to NiceLabel Print Engine

New features in the software also require modifications in the ActiveX interface. The NiceLabel software also includes the print engine that you can control over API calls. Some of the ActiveX methods are completely new (such as Store/Recall printing method, possibility for custom label export, setting darkness to multi-head thermal printers), and some are enhanced with new parameters.

For more information about the possibilities offered by the NiceLabel print engine see the NiceLabel Programming Guide on the NiceLabel website.

What is New in NiceLabel Pro

RFID Enhancements

Read the RFID Tag Contents & Store Data to Database

NiceLabel can read the pre-programmed data from the RFID Tag and store it into the database on your workstation. This is useful when you need to keep track of the RFID Tags you have printed. Usually the RFID data is formatted in the EPC format. The communication path between NiceLabel Pro and NiceDrivers has been enhanced to allow for additional RFID data to be sent back to the workstation. With this feature, you can link together the printed data and RFID unique ID number, and know on which labels you have printed certain product information.

In addition to the RFID data, you can also store the values of other label variables.

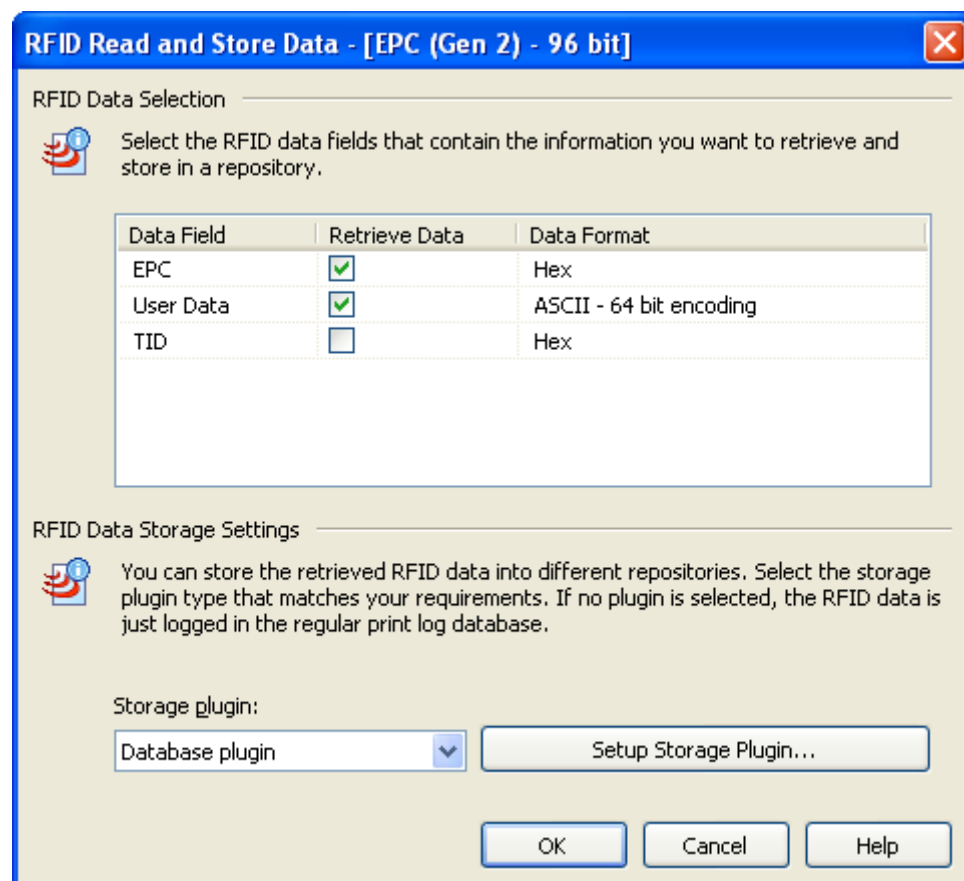


Figure 3: You can read data from a RFID tag and store it to database

Support for Custom RFID Data Storage

NiceLabel comes with the support for database and text file storage. However, there is a possibility to develop your own plug-in, if you use another type of data storage. NiceLabel can use your plug-in as a connector to access your storage and save the RFID data.

The source code sample of the Text Storage plug-in is available with the NiceLabel software so you can use the example to learn the easy process of setting up your own plug-in.

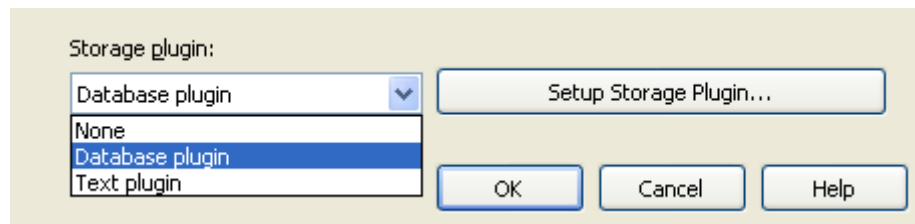


Figure 4: You can expand the list of storage plug-ins with your own plug-ins

Label Printing Optimizations

Support for Compression of Embedded Graphics

You can already store the images inside the label files (*.LBL). Embedded graphics make the label more transportable, and you do not need to worry about copying all the images with the label, as the images already reside within the label file.

When you enable compression of embedded graphics, the size of the label file will decrease dramatically, saving space on your hard drive.

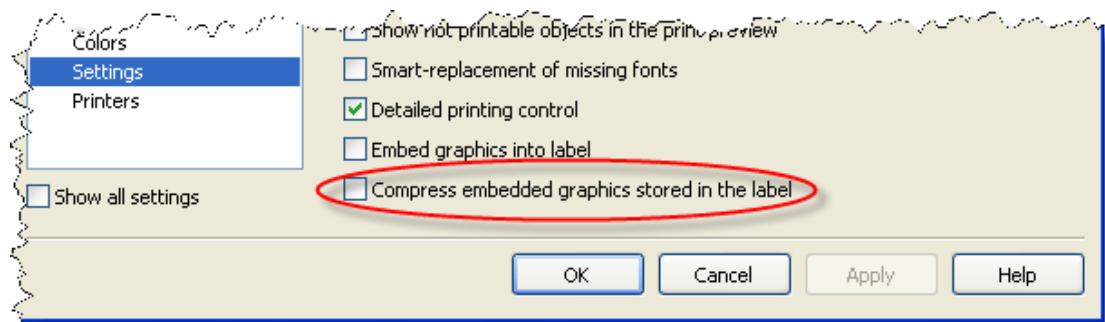


Figure 5: Compress embedded graphics to reduce the label file size

Object Enhancements

Rich Text Editor Enhancements

The Rich Text editor has the following new features:

- Decimal point font size in Rich Text Editor: Font size in Rich Text Editor can now be set to half pixel precision.
- Superscript and Subscript implemented in Rich Text Editor: It is now possible to create superscript or subscript text.

- Zoom function: Rich Text editor has a Zoom function to provide easier viewing of smaller size fonts.

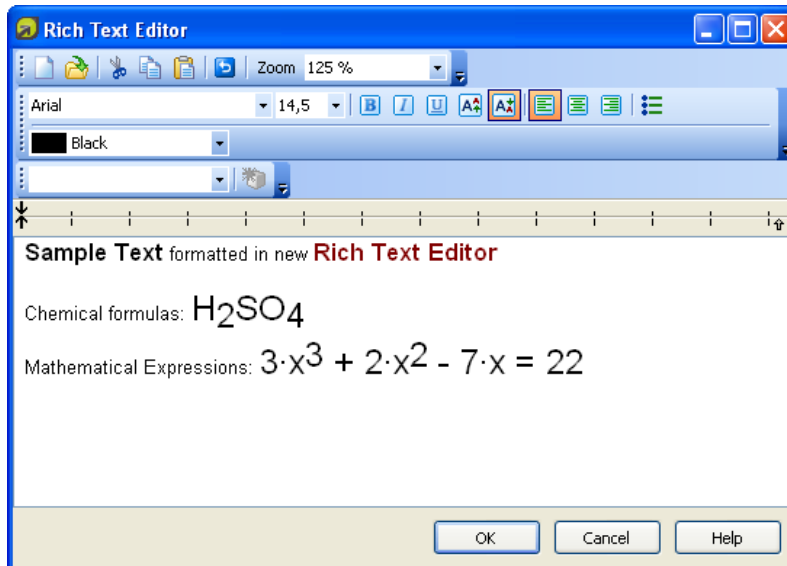


Figure 6: New design features available in Rich Text Editor

Updated Support for Maxicode Bar Code

The Maxicode bar code has been redesigned from scratch. The encoding parameters have been updated to comply with the latest Maxicode specifications.

Text Box Variable Height

The Text Box object can automatically adjust its vertical size. When you enable this option, the vertical dimension of the object will change to fit the vertical size of the object. With more content the object size enlarges, with less content the object size shrinks.

Note: This option obviously cannot be use together with the “Best fit” option.

Improved Design Possibilities

Improved WYSIWYG when Moving/Resizing Objects

Label designer is updated to show the object's contents while it is moved or resized. It makes label design much easier, because the object positioning and resizing is more efficient with a transparent view of label contents beneath.

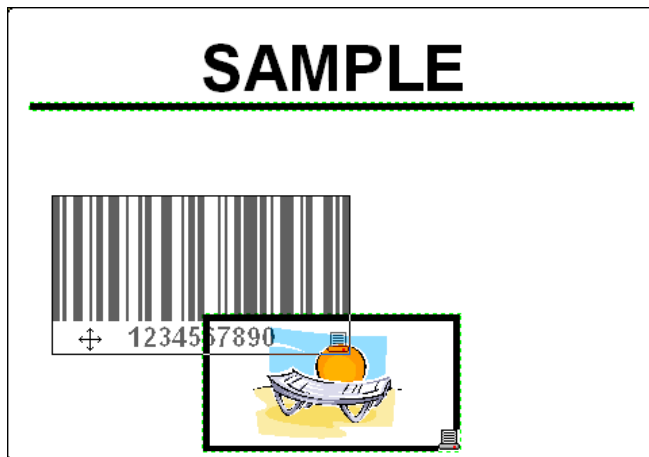


Figure 7: See the object shape when moving it on the label (bar code object is being moved here)

Enhanced Counter Rollover Possibilities

The counter rollover functionality was enhanced with more date/time settings. The counter value can reset to the initial value based on more conditions. Additionally supported conditions are: rollover at a specific day of the week and rollover at specific time of day.

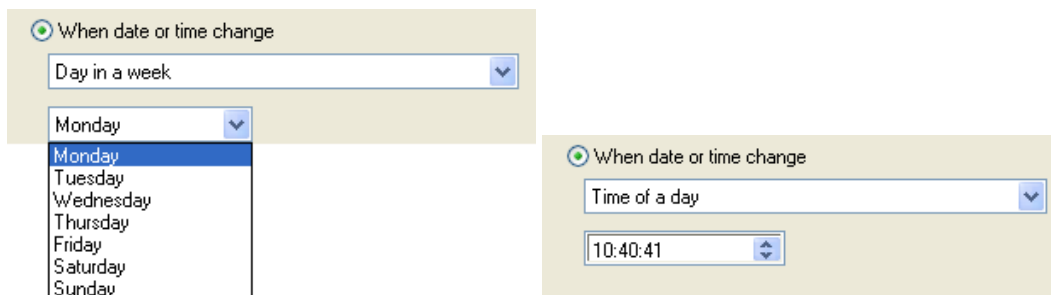


Figure 8: New counter rollover possibilities

Support for Time Variable Offset

A time offset for the system and printer clock (hours, minutes, and seconds) was implemented. For each input time value, NiceLabel can automatically add the defined offset. Similar offset functionality was already available for date variables, now it has been enhanced to include time variables as well.

When you define the offset to the printer clock variable, you can use it with internal text and barcode objects.

Support for MS Office 2007 File Formats

NiceLabel supports new MS Office 2007 file formats. You can open MS Excel 2007 or MS Access 2007 files from the NiceLabel software. The new OLE DB driver (database driver) from Microsoft is required though (Microsoft Office 12.0 Access Database Engine OLE DB Provider).

Note: If you do not have MS Office 2007 installed, you can download and install just the OLE DB driver separately (see Microsoft's web site).

Bar Code Update: Custom Ratios and Space Correction

The new version of the NiceLabel software significantly updates the range of available bar code ratio combinations. Previously three ratios were supported (1:2, 1:3 and 2:5) and as a result, a limited range of barcode sizes was supported. Now the only limitation in the ratios is the requirement, that the product of the ratio and narrow bar width (as available in the barcode dialog) is a whole number. That expands the number of possible bar code sizes.

A space correction was also implemented, allowing you to increase the width of the white space (white bars). The feature was designed for Inkjet printers where the ink can spill over and you need extra space for the reader to decode the barcode properly.

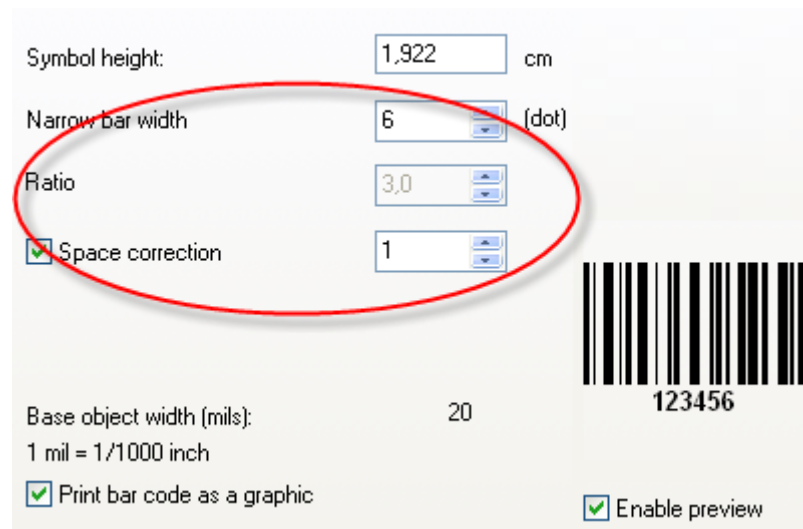


Figure 9: More possibilities for defining the bar code size

Updated GS1-128 Standard: New Application Identifiers (242) and (7003)

New Application Identifiers (242) and (7003) were added to GS1-128 (formerly EAN.UCC-128) bar code structure.

Useful Smaller Enhancements

Multiple Label Selection is Available in the File Open Dialog Box

You can select multiple labels in the File Open dialog box. All selected labels are opened at the same time and cascaded in the working window.

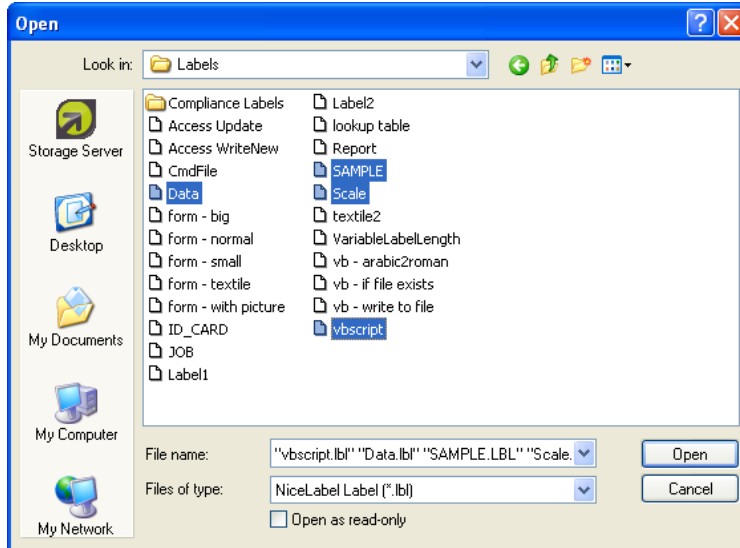


Figure 10: Open more label templates at the same time

Command-Line Parameter for Language Selection

There is a new command line parameter to temporarily start NiceLabel software in another language, different from the default language set in the preferences. The switch LANG defines the desired language to start the application in.

/LANG=<language>, where <language> stands for three-letter language abbreviation

Support for header/main/tail label switching using Tab control

For switching between label kinds and label sides, a new tab control is available in the label design window for quick switching between different label designs.

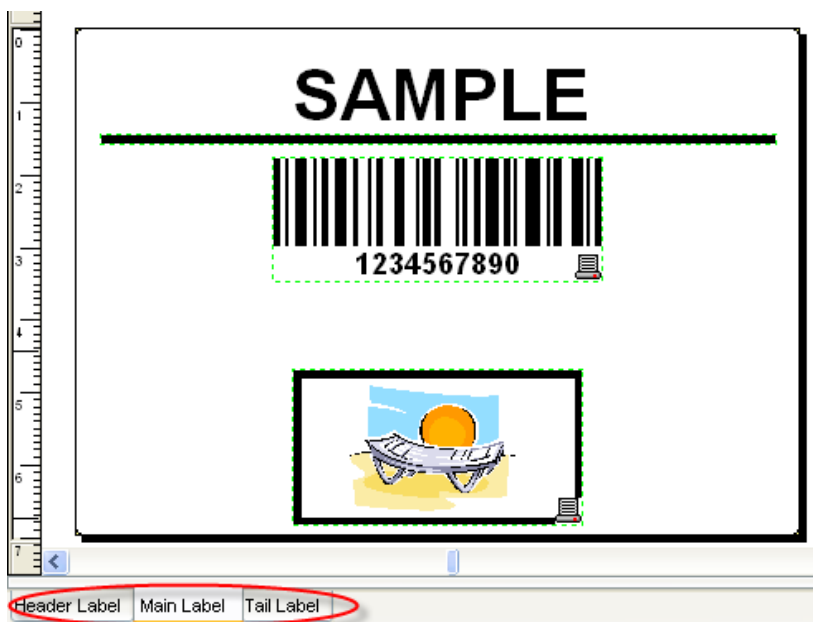


Figure 11: Simply switch between front side/back side or header/main/tail labels

Stock File Update

The NiceLabel software ships with a collection of different label stocks that define the label dimensions. The information about labels from the manufacturer IDENTCO was added.

What is New in NiceLabel Suite

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

NiceForm

Reprint Functionality in NiceForm

Reprint functionality was already a feature available in NiceLabel Pro. The new version of NiceLabel software introduces the reprint functionality in the NiceForm application as well. All labels which the user has already printed can be printed again, on the same printer or on another printer. You can reprint the whole print job, or just a part of the print job.

A new action is available in NiceForm that will display the information about all previously printed labels and add the possibility to select one or more already printed label jobs and issue the reprint command. The same familiar log file viewer is available in NiceLabel Pro.

New Object: Variable Prompt Control

The new object allows for fast generation of printing forms, where more labels are printed from the same form. The object will display a list of all prompted variables from the label, and allow the user to enter the values. One Variable Prompt Control can dynamically adjust to a changeable number of variables.

This object is a great shortcut for forms, which are used to print labels with various numbers of variables. No longer is it necessary for you to link each prompted variable to a separate edit field object.

Prompt	Value	Formatted value
Article	4	4
From	Hyper fruit	Hyper fruit
Structure1	70% silk	70% silk
Structure2	30% artificial	30% artificial
Structure3		
Width	1	1 %
Length	1	1 %
Care	aKA1	aKA1
Barcode	123231231231	123231231231

Figure 12: The Variable Prompt Control automatically lists the variables from the opened label

New Action: Refresh Database

The new Refresh Database action refreshes all form objects that have a link to any database. The external changes to the database are reflected on the form objects. When using this action, you can be sure that you see the latest values from the database.

Embedding Graphics into the Form File

You can embed images into the form files (*.XFF). This action makes the form more transportable. Wherever you copy the form, the images are automatically included with the form file. You can embed all images that you use on the form, not only images directly, but also background images and pictures on buttons.

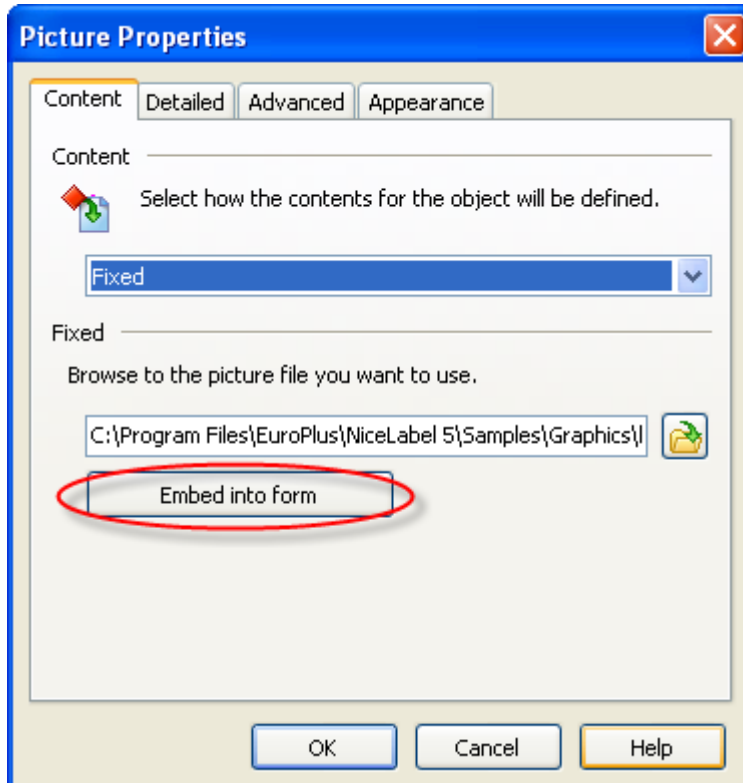


Figure 13: You can embed all images into the form file to make it more portable

Support for Variables in SQL Sentences

You can use variables in SQL sentences as parameters, so your SQL queries can be updated on-the-fly as soon as the parameters are changed by some form control. Variables used as parameters must have a default value that corresponds to SQL (variable used as parameter in place of a date field must have a default value corresponding to a date).

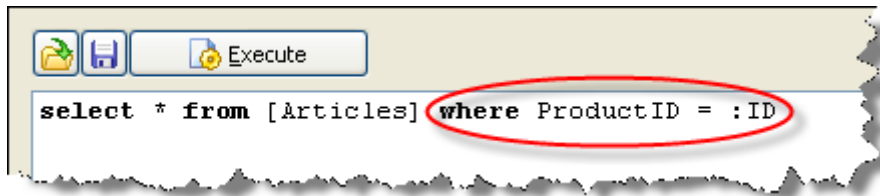


Figure 14: You can construct variable SQL conditions

Copy/Paste Support in Action Editor

If you need to use many repetitive actions in the button, you will benefit from the Copy/Paste feature in the action editor. Any action you may have defined can be simply copied as an

action to the same button, as an action to another button, or even to the action editor for triggers in NiceWatch. The exchange of actions cannot be any simpler.

New Action: For Loop

The new action For Loop allows you to execute (loop) an action or group of actions several times. This is a great new shortcut for the situations when you must execute some action(s) the user-definable number of times, not just once.

The start and stop values for your loop are adjustable.

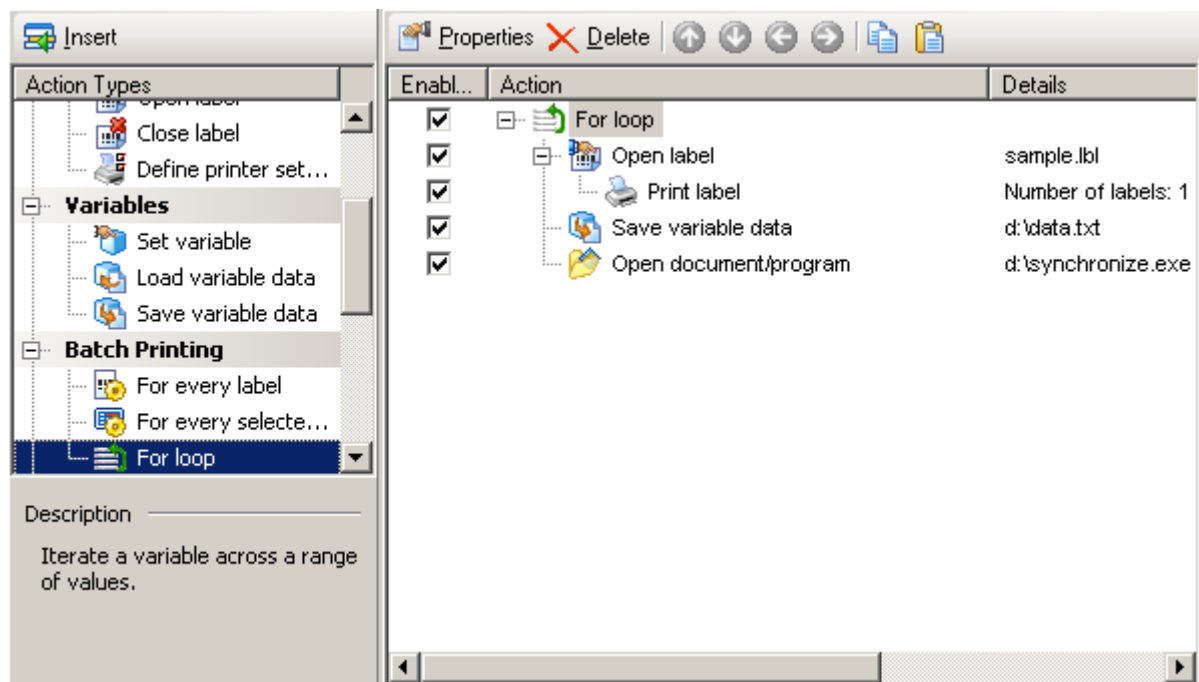


Figure 15: The sample definition of the action 'For loop'

New Action: Browse for File

You can use the new action 'Browse for File' whenever you want allow the printing operator to access some file on the disk. The file mask for the 'browse for file' action is customizable, so the users can only see the files you want them to see. The selected filename is remembered, and you can use it in other actions (Open Label, Load/Save Variable Data, Open another form, Open document/program etc.) The possibilities are countless.

Incremental Search Can be disabled

Whenever you searched for some values in the database table, NiceForm continuously performed the search for character strings as you were entering them. For larger databases, these intermediate searches could slow down the search functionality. With the new version of NiceForm, you can disable the incremental search. The search is done only when the user presses the <Enter> key or clicks the search button.

Enhancements for List Box, Combo Box and Radio Group

You can define a default item for the following objects: Combo Box, List Box and Radio Group. In the previous versions of NiceForm, the first value in the list was also the default value.

The list box, combo box, and radio group now have new sort options. You can enable sorting, define the sort as case sensitive, and automatically remove duplicated values from the list.

Use Enter Key for Advancing to the Next Object in Tab Order

By default, NiceForm advances the focus to the next object, when the user presses the Tab key. Now you can also use Enter key to advance the focus to the next object.

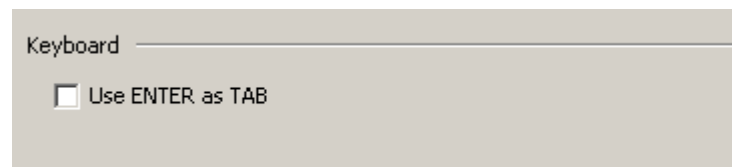


Figure 16: You can use the Enter key (instead of Tab key) for advancing to the next object on the form

Support for Windows Vista Restart Manager

Both the design and run mode support the new Windows Vista Restart Manager. If Windows require the application to restart, the currently open form is remembered. When the application is restarted, it is opened in exactly the same state (with the last open form).

NiceWatch

Database Trigger

This new feature allows you to trigger label printing based on the change of the records in the monitored database. There is a variety of choices, when exactly the labels should print with the database data.

You can select from:

- Print new records in a database (based on a unique incremental value)
- Print new records and delete them afterwards
- Print new records and update them afterwards (you can update some field to mark the record as printed, or you can even execute your own SQL sentence upon the database)

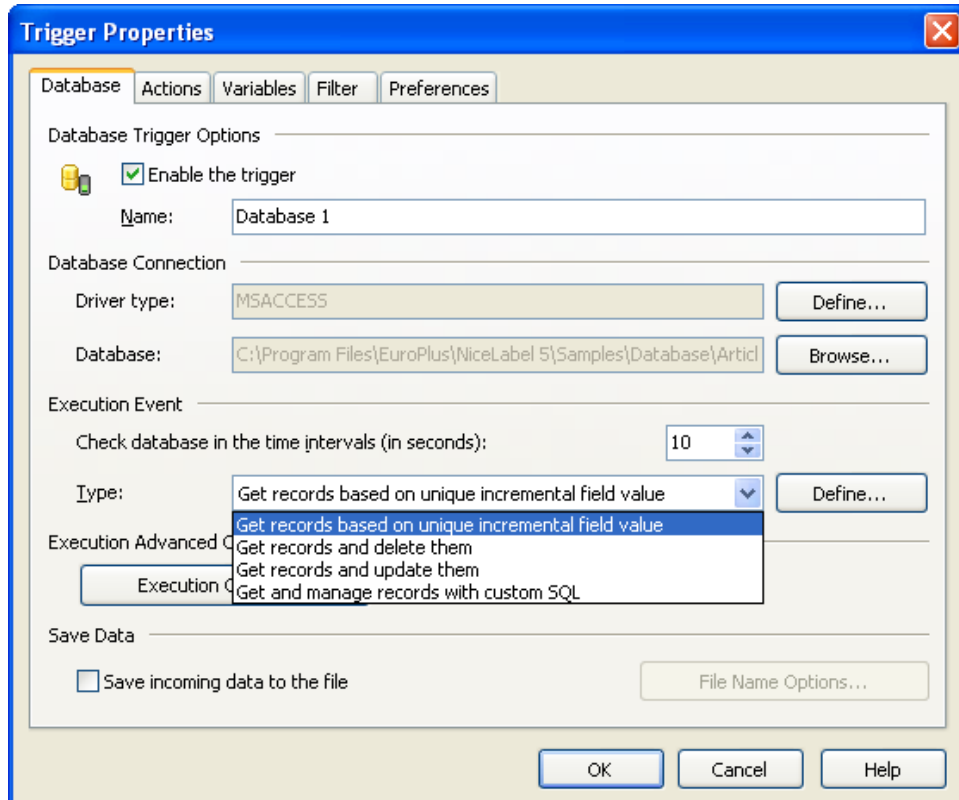


Figure 17: Automatically print labels based on the new records in the monitored database

Copy/Paste Support in Action Editor

If you need to use many repetitive actions in the trigger, you will benefit from the Copy/Paste feature in the action editor. Any action you have defined can be simply copied as an action to the same trigger, as an action to another trigger, or even to the action editor for triggers in NiceForm. The exchange of actions could not be any simpler.

Update to NiceWatch Startup Error Handling

When communication between the NiceWatch manager and the server was not possible, you did not receive all error messages that might have helped you to resolve the problem. The clues for successful resolution were not displayed.

The error handling and communication path between the manager and the server was greatly enhanced in the new version. The manager will display a list of errors, and suggest the possible solutions, or at least give clues as to where to look for a workaround.

New Features for the Right Click Menu in Log Pane

When you right-click into the log pane, a list of available options will display in the context menu. The options give useful shortcuts in case there are any NiceWatch problems that you want to investigate further or share with someone else (another NiceWatch expert, NiceLabel technical support, etc.)

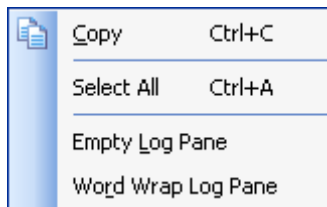


Figure 18: New options for the context menu in Log Pane

NicePrintQueue

Friendlier Way of Moving the Print Jobs

When you want to move a print job to another printer, the cursor changes from the 'arrow' to 'label icon'. However, the cursor changed just when you were immediately on top of the printer icon. Now the cursor changes as soon you start moving the print job to another printer. When you try to move the job to an unsupported printer (you are not using NiceDriver), you will see the 'forbidden' cursor.

Better Error Handling for Moving the Print Jobs

NicePrintQueue will display detailed error messages for every print job that failed to be moved to another print queue. In previous version, only a general error message was displayed without any detailed information.