BMC Software Inc.

Visual Interactive Software Support

Authors

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Overview

This document describes a solution that would be of significant benefit to the supportability of any software which uses a GUI (graphical user interface). It would benefit both the customer in addition to internal support processes. Its goals are:

- Vastly reduce the time and resource required to resolve a support issue;
- Deflect some support issues from being created with the software vendor;
- Provide improved product help and education to the customer;
- Encourage a richer Knowledge Base;
- Cost savings for the software vendor;
- Increased customer confidence in and perception of the product.

Background

Consider the scenario: A customer using a piece of software with a GUI encounters a problem with one of the features in a menu, or an element somewhere on the screen. This might be within the context of bespoke software or any software published via the web for example. The user may experience what they believe to be a blatant defect, unexpected behavior, or they may simply wish to learn more about that specific feature. They might even wish to log a support issue from that specific point. The extent of current technology only provides a Help index and/or a very limited "What's This?" icon on mouse right-click.

Solution

A mechanism whereby the user is able to select the specific element, either by right mouse-click or otherwise. Doing so would present them with the option to:

- View published defects or RFEs for that specific element;
- View KB articles about that specific element;
- View published documentation relating to that specific element;
- Log a support issue relating to that specific element;

- Perhaps even view support issues related to that specific element.

The crux of this is driven by each unique element in the GUI having its own unique code. KB articles, defects, RFEs and even parts of documentation are then <u>associated</u> with one of more of these unique codes and are displayed back to the user in a "search results" style list. This information is obtained using standard APIs that are available on the various systems and data repositories. One of the key benefits here is that the information presented back to the user will relate to <u>all and only</u> the relevant information. Armed with this pertinent knowledge the user can then make an informed decision on their next course of action.

Furthermore, in the case where the user decides to log a support issue, this solution would record the steps by which the user arrived to where they were by a series of codes which depicts their trail. When trouble-shooting complex issues, this information can prove invaluable since there is often more than one way to arrive to a specific item.

Drawings

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