

PeterBlum.com Newsletter March 2009

There's been quite a time gap since my last newsletter. I've been working aggressively on the upcoming DES v4.1, which focuses on the new "DES Dynamic Data Module". More on that below.

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Time to Vote for Peter's Data Entry Suite

aspnetPRO Magazine is once again running their annual Reader's Choice awards. I know that you appreciate my work and need your help to earn this award. It should only take 5 minutes to go through the Reader's Choice award's ballot. Start here: <http://www.aspnetpro.com/awards/default.asp>



For your reference, here is where my products are listed.

Category	Product name
Add-in	Peter's Interactive Pages
Component Set	Peter's Data Entry Suite
Online Editor	Peter's TextBoxes
Polling Tool	Peter's Polling Package
Scheduling/Calendar Tool	Peter's Date and Time
Security Tool	Peter's Input Security
Utility	Peter's Professional Validation

Thank you!

PETER'S DATA ENTRY SUITE v4.0.4 Service Release

V4.0.4 was actually shipped last summer.

[Download the Service Release](#)

[Release Notes](#)

Since then, I have fixed bugs and made a few enhancements, while working on the DES Dynamic Data project. I will be shipping v4.0.5 when the current phase of development is done. Until then, if you have any problems, I can quickly provide a hotfix.

The hotfix file is always here:

http://www.peterblum.com/hotfixes/peterblum.des4_0_4_5000.zip

It reflects all changes made since 4.0.4 was shipped. *It does NOT include changes to DES Dynamic Data Prerelease.*

It gets updated as customers report bugs, perhaps once a week. The version number does not change though, to avoid installation problems.

Click here for prerelease notes: [Prerelease Notes](#)

If you want to get updated, do the following:

1. Make sure you are on v4.0.4. The hotfix cannot be applied against an earlier version. If you don't have v4.0.4, click here: [Download the Service Release](#). Download and run the .msi file. Then run the Web Application Updater with the "Update a web application" option.
2. Get the hotfix file and unzip it.
3. Copy the PeterBlum.DES.dll assembly into your web application's \bin folder. Make sure Visual Studio's project reference points to this file.
4. If you had a problem prior to the hotfix that remains, please email me at support@peterblum.com with a clear description of the problem, test code, screenshots, etc.

Browsers in the news

This week Microsoft released [Internet Explorer v8](#). I have tested this browser with DES 4.0.4 and found no errors. Since IE 8 modified style sheet behavior to conform to CSS 2.1, I was particularly interested in visual problems, but have not found any. If you find any problems, please pass them along. For visual problems, include a screenshot.

Since 4.0.4 was shipped, Google shipped [Chrome 1.0](#). v4.0.4 works with it and the prior beta of Chrome. Yet, I found some visual problems with the Calendar (stand-alone and popup) in Chrome and Safari (as both share the same drawing engine) where the day cells overlap the right border of the calendar. I also found a similar problem within FireFox 3. The 4.0.4 hotfix addresses these issues.

Looking ahead: Peter's Data Entry Suite v4.1

Peter's Data Entry Suite v4.1 is primarily the introduction of a new module called "DES Dynamic Data". This module has been shipping in prerelease form since 4.0.4. v4.1 will be a free upgrade for existing v4 customers.

I consider [ASP.NET Dynamic Data](#) an important technology for data entry web form developers. It allows separation of business logic from web forms (especially validation) and standardization of UI elements. DES Dynamic Data expands it in numerous ways, addressing many limitations I've found since starting development a year ago.

Learn more about this new module here: [DES Dynamic Data](#)

Since 4.0.4, I have been working on a new feature that I call **PatternTemplates**. These tools help you use the ListView and FormView controls to setup interfaces far more quickly by offering a standard template for how to layout a column in the ListView and a row in the FormView. You just specify the data field and it builds the UI for that data field.

ASP.NET Dynamic Data v4.0 has a similar concept called **EntityTemplates** that you can see in [Preview 3](#). PatternTemplates is a major improvement over EntityTemplates, introducing 8 new controls. Its DynamicListView and DynamicFormView controls, which subclass ListView and FormView, provide the ease of setup found in GridView and DetailsView, while giving the customization of their parent classes.

I have also introduced the concept of **Named Styles** to PatternTemplates. It lets the web form developer override the formatting in the PatternTemplate file. For example, the developer can specify a different style sheet class name than the one built into the PatternTemplate file. This avoids having to make a new PatternTemplate file each time formatting needs to change to fit into your web forms.

PatternTemplates are just one area where DES Dynamic Data really improves over the original. It enhances and simplifies FieldTemplates and PageTemplates. It expands what you can do within your business logic too. About the only thing it doesn't address are Data Sources. I'm leaving that to Microsoft and they appear up to the challenge with the DomainDataSource and other enhancements coming with ASP.NET Dynamic Data v4.0.

Join in the exploration of Dynamic Data! I am looking for beta testers to participate in the beta test of DES Dynamic Data. Testing is already underway. Please contact me at plblum@peterblum.com if interested.

