

IBM DB2 Alphablox



What's New

Version 8.2

IBM DB2 Alphablox



What's New

Version 8.2

Note:

Before using this information and the product it supports, read the information in "Notices" on page 9.

Second Edition (April 2005)

This edition applies to version 8, release 2, of IBM DB2 Alphablox for Linux, UNIX and Windows (product number 5724-L14) and to all subsequent releases and modifications until otherwise indicated in new editions.

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Chapter 1. What's New

IBM DB2 Alphablox for Linux, UNIX and Windows V8.2 includes several enhancements in the underlying infrastructure, supported data sources, new features in the data access and data presentation layers, additional capabilities in the self-service reporting application framework, FastForward, and support for WebSphere® Portal.

Support for several new databases and WebSphere Portal is added in Version 8.2.1. The detail is described in Chapter 2, "New in DB2 Alphablox V8.2.1," on page 3. For the other features, see Chapter 3, "New in DB2 Alphablox v8.2," on page 5.

Chapter 2. New in DB2 Alphablox V8.2.1

IBM DB2 Alphablox for Linux, UNIX and Windows Version 8.2.1 further extends its support for more databases. Starting Version 8.2.1 Fix Pack 1, DB2 Alphablox also supports a new platform-- WebSphere Portal Version 5.1.

Version 8.2.1 Fix Pack 1

IBM DB2 Alphablox for Linux, UNIX and Windows Version 8.2.1 Fix Pack 1 adds support for the following features:

- WebSphere Portal Version 5.1
- Informix[®] Dynamic Server Version 10

With the support for WebSphere Portal Version 5.1, you can now embed analytics in your portal applications by adding Blox components to your portlet JSP. The key features are:

- No page refreshes when users interact with the Blox in the portlet.
- Blox appearances can adapt to the portal theme using the provided Portal Theme Utility. This utility lets you merge style properties from a specified portal theme with those in a DB2 Alphablox theme for optimal display.
- The new Blox Portlet Tag Library makes it easy to attach a portal link or action link to any user interface Blox or Blox UI component, including FormBlox and ReportBlox. This allows you to invoke the Portlet API for portlet-to-portlet messaging when the Blox or UI component is clicked.
- Portal users do not need to sign on separately for DB2 Alphablox. No additional setup for user accounts is needed.

Two sample portlets are provided to help you get started. One demonstrates the essential code structure for adding Blox to a portlet JSP. The other is the Portal Theme Utility. It is the portlet version of the same theme merging utility available under the Administration tab on the DB2 Alphablox home page. This allows you to perform the same theme merging task right inside your portal without having to log in separately as an administrative user to DB2 Alphablox. Once installed to your portal server, both samples can run out of the box.

To learn more about portlet development with Blox, start with the chapter on Building Your First Portlet with Blox in the *Developer's Guide*. This chapter shows you how to install the sample portlet and how to create your JSP with Blox components. It covers essential concepts and techniques required for Blox to work in a portal environment. In addition, it includes important portlet development tips and pointers to other portlet development related topics in the documentation.

Version 8.2.1

IBM DB2 Alphablox for Linux, UNIX and Windows V8.2.1 extends its database and platform support with the following new features:

- Informix Dynamic Server Version 9.4 and Extended Parallel Server Version 8.5
- Red Brick[™] Warehouse Version 6.3
- DB2 OLAP Server[™] for iSeries[™] Version 8.1
- DB2 Universal Database[™] for iSeries

- Documentation installation based on language selection during product installation

See the *Installation Guide* for the complete list of supported databases and their versions.

Chapter 3. New in DB2 Alphablox v8.2

IBM DB2 Alphablox for Linux, UNIX and Windows V8.2 includes several enhancements in the underlying infrastructure, new features in the data access and data presentation layers, and additional capabilities in the self-service reporting application framework, FastForward.

Broadening the Platform

Newly Supported Platforms

Newly supported platforms include the following:

- Red Hat Enterprise Linux[®] 3 on x86
- 64-bit AIX 5L[™] (Version 5.2)
- DB2 Universal Database Version 8.2.2
- DB2[®] Information Integrator Version 8.2; Version 8.1 (Fix Pack 2)

Globalization and GB18030 Certification

DB2 Alphablox is now translated into the following languages:

- English
- French
- German
- Japanese
- Spanish
- Brazilian Portuguese
- Korean
- Simplified Chinese
- Traditional Chinese

DB2 Alphablox is also GB18030 certified, meeting China's national standard for GB13000 and additional characters support.

Support for IBM Tivoli License Manager

DB2 Alphablox now supports IBM[®] Tivoli[®] License Manager (ITLM) for ease of software licensing and utilization management and reporting.

Support for DB2 Cube Views

DB2 Alphablox Version 8.2 adds support for DB2 Cube Views[™] V8.2 and V8.1. DB2 Alphablox uses metadata definition from DB2 Cube Views to create a relational cube definition. Once the relational cube is defined to DB2 Alphablox, it can be used as a data source for all the user interface Blox, allowing your users to interact with the data the same way as they can with other multidimensional data sources.

Relational Cubing Enhancements

DB2 Alphablox Version 8.2 offers the following enhancements in the Relational Cubing Engine:

- **Support for many additional types of schemas.** Dimensional hierarchies can now be defined by a set of tables joined by any JOIN expression.
- **Support for additional MDX functions.** Newly supported functions include:
 - Member navigation functions such as Ancestor() , Ancestors() , Cousin() , FirstChild() , FirstSibling() , LastChild() , LastSibling() , NextMember and PrevMember
 - Subset functions such as Except() , Head() , Tail() , and Intersect()
 - Time series functions such as PeriodsToDate() and ParallelPeriod()
- **Support for member attributes.** Member attributes can now be used in the MDX query.
- **Performance improvements.** The cubing engine behind DB2 Alphablox Cube Server now uses fewer SQL queries, resulting in faster overall response time.

For details, see the *DB2 Alphablox Cube Server Administrator's Guide*.

Continued Innovations in DHTML Client

Full Drag-and-drop Support

Prior to version 8 release 2, DB2 Alphablox supports drag-and-drop in the data layout panel with a tree menu interface. DB2 Alphablox Version 8.2 adds full support for drag-and-drop in the DHTML client, allowing users to drag and drop dimensions within and among GridBlox, PageBlox, and DataLayoutBlox. A red bar indicator appears when a dimension is dragged to a location where it can be dropped. This drag-and-drop capability is also fully supported in the underlying UI model for customized applications.

Histogram Chart

DB2 Alphablox Version 8.2 now supports histogram charts. Histogram charts provide visualization of data distributions by displaying counts of groups of values, or bins. Ranges of the values and the number of bins in the chart are automatically set. Application developers can specify these settings using the Alphablox Tag Libraries or the Java™ API. End users can override the settings through the user interface.

Traffic Lighting Enhancement

The traffic lighting feature now supports text-based traffic lights. It offers text searching capability with the following search conditions:

- **“Values Contains”** condition. This allows for substring matches.
- **“Values Like”** condition. This allows for exact match, or pattern matches with wild cards (* for 0 or more characters and ? for one character)

In addition, end users and application developers can specify whether to highlight the entire row or column rather than just the data cell if the condition is met.

80/20 Analysis

Application developers can now easily add 80/20 analysis support using the Blox UI Tag Library. 80/20 analysis allows users to identify the small subset of biggest contributors to the overall values. When developers add the associated Blox UI tag to a GridBlox or PresentBlox, the 80/20 analysis option becomes available via the Blox's right-click menu. Selection of this option adds a Percent of Total and

Accumulated Percent of Total columns to the grid, listing the top contributors that make up 80% of the overall values and grouping the remaining as one item.

Page Filter Enhancements

DB2 Alphablox Version 8.2 includes several page filter enhancements that make GridBlox, PageBlox, and Member Filter work seamlessly together. Member selections made in the Member Filter and in PageBlox are synchronized, and PageBlox now retains the member settings from rows and columns in the GridBlox. When a dimension is moved between GridBlox and PageBlox, the member settings of the dimension is retained, maintaining the data view the user had before the pivot.

New Grid Selection Model

A new grid selection model in DB2 Alphablox Version 8.2 allows for finer programmatic control of cell, row, and column selections. By default, clicking a data cell selects a single cell, and clicking a header cell selects the entire row or column. The new grid selection model provides application developers the ability to change the default behavior to row-based or column-based selection.

A New DateChooser UI Component

The user interface components underlying the DHTML client have an added new member, the DateChooser. DateChooser extends the Edit component by adding a calendar icon next to the text field. Clicking the calendar icon launches a calendar widget for selecting a date to populate the edit field. An example of DateChooser is available in Blox Sampler.

Rendering Performance Improvement

DB2 Alphablox Version 8.2 continues the DHTML client performance enhancement with even more compact DHTML than before. This further reduces server and network utilization and results in faster response time, including initial load time, scrolling performance, and data navigation operation response time.

Other Enhancements

FastForward Enhancements

Alphablox FastForward is a sample application framework designed for quickly developing, deploying, and sharing custom analytic views throughout business organizations. This self-service reporting application framework empowers end users to create their own application views. Two enhancements are made to FastForward in this release:

- Support for DB2 Alphablox Cubes
- Support for Relational Reporting Blox

These enhancements enable application developers to fully utilize all available data sources defined to DB2 Alphablox using the FastForward application framework.

A New ResultSetBlox

DB2 Alphablox Version 8.2 provides a new ResultSetBlox for pushing a custom data result set into an associated DataBlox. By attaching a ResultSetBlox to a DataBlox, application developers can extend the normal functions associated with a JDBC data source, intercept queries in the DataBlox, and return arbitrary result sets to the DataBlox.

Level APIs for MetaData

A Level object is now available for accessing level information of a given dimension. From a dimension, you can identify its level and subsequently obtain information on the level such as its unique name and display name, or access all members on the level.

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