



IBM Rational ClearQuest Attachments Package

Version 2.0 Release Notes



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1 Support for external attachments

ClearQuest built-in support for attachments causes all attached files to be stored in the ClearQuest database. As time passes and the number of attachments stored in the database increases they begin to cause a significant overhead on the ClearQuest system in both disk space requirements and performance. This package seeks to resolve these problems by moving attachments out of the ClearQuest database to some other medium which is better designed to handle a large quantity of files.

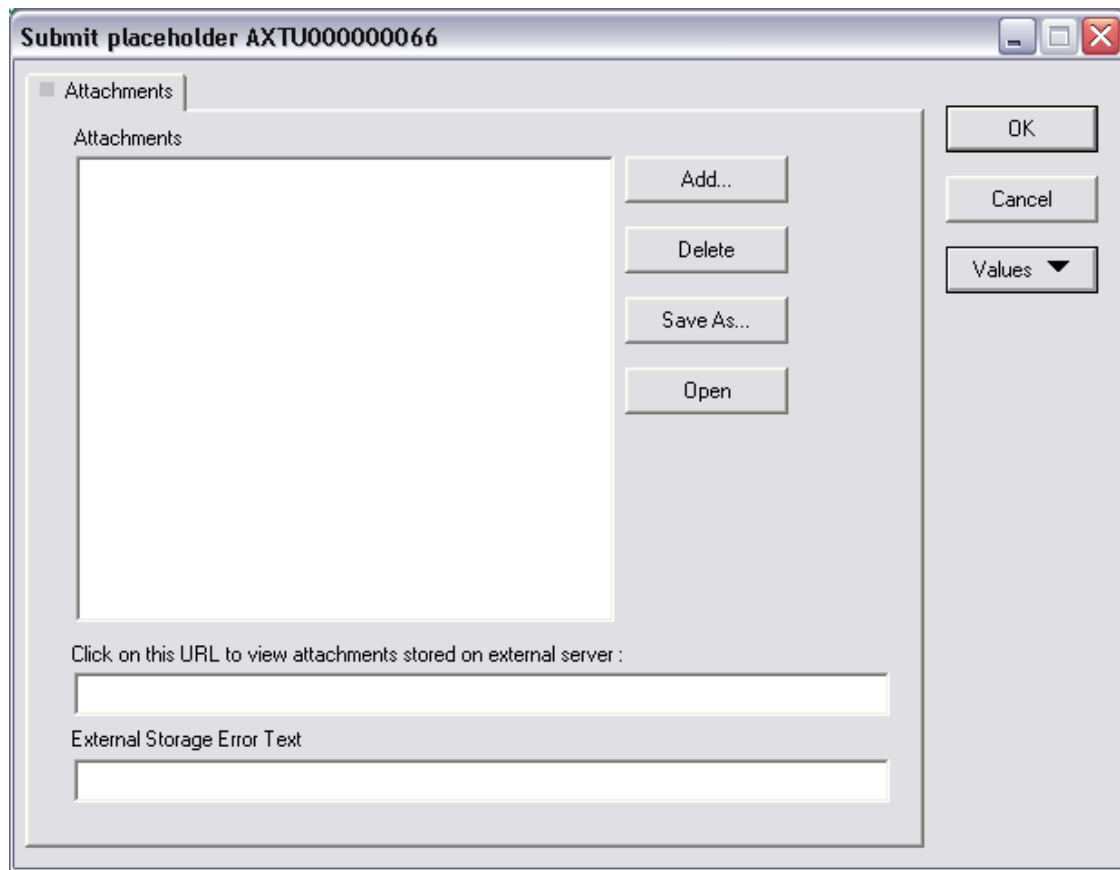
2 Modifications to the current Attachments tab

When external attachments are enabled, any attachments added to a record are moved to the external server defined in the AXPAAttachmentControl record (see below) instead of being stored in the ClearQuest database as was previously the case. There are several benefits of this approach. Some of the most significant are:

- The ability to store large objects outside the ClearQuest database (replacing them with an URL).
- Relief from the performance degradation resulting from a large number of objects attached to ClearQuest records.
- Relief from the network overhead of replicating and synchronizing many large objects in a ClearQuest MultiSite® deployment.

To support this facility, new fields have been added to the Attachments tab. The following is a sample Attachments tab showing these fields. The new fields can be seen at the bottom of the tab:

- Click on this URL to view attachments stored on external server
- External Storage Error Text



Field: “Click on this URL to view attachments stored on external server”

This field will display a network URL that directs the user to the external location of attachments related to this record. The field contains an active link so clicking the mouse on the field will launch a web browser to the location contained within the field.

Note that when external attachments are activated, any attachments stored by this mechanism are moved out of ClearQuest and placed under the control of the external storage server: ClearQuest no longer has discrete control over any elements stored on the external server, they must be managed by the tools provided by the external server.

This field is read-only.

Field: “External Storage Error Text”

This field is used by the external attachments facility to provide an error message in the event a problem occurs during the processing of the attachments.

This field is read-only.

3 Other differences when using this package

Users will no longer see attachments in ClearQuest once they are moved to the external storage server. The indication that attachments exist for a record is that the “Click on this URL...” field will contain a URL to the offsite location.

3.1 *Restrictions in this version*

- You cannot delete an attachment using the ClearQuest client. To delete files on the external server you must use external file management tools like an FTP client.
- The results of attaching a file with the same name as one that has already been moved are undefined. The results depend upon the security configuration of the server.
- In this release, we recommend that your Attachments FTP server only support the Creation and reading of files and directories not renaming or deleting.

4 External Attachments record types

4.1 *AXPAttachmentControl*

In order to enable the external attachments capability, a new record type is added to the schema to configure the external attachments facility.

The external attachments package supports different offsite file storage managers. This deployment currently only supports File Transfer Protocol (FTP) but future releases are expected to support other protocols and schemes. <It's not a good idea to make predictions about future releases.> This record is intended to collect the basic information needed to establish a connection to a remote file server.

To configure the external attachments capability, the administrator submits one of these records and fills in the necessary information. The record can be modified later if the configuration of the external server configuration changes. Until an AXPAttachmentControl record is submitted and configured, attachments will remain stored in the ClearQuest database.

The following shows the new form associated with this record:

Submit AXPAttachmentControl

AXPAttachmentControl

Name : AXPAttachments

☐ Disable transfer to external storage

Account ID :

Account Authentication :

Control Options :

Server Name :

Storage Location :

Max Attachment File Size :

Reference Location :

Last Updated By : Last Updated On :

Created By : Created On :

OK

Cancel

Values ▾

Note: In the current implementation, only one AXPAttachmentControl record per ClearQuest database is allowed.

4.1.1 Field Details:

Name:

The name of the AXPAttachmentControl record: currently set to “AXPAttachments”. This field is read-only.

Account ID:

The account (user ID, etc.) to be used to authenticate with the external attachment server.

Account Authentication:

Any authentication information needed (e.g., password) to access the above Account ID.

Control Options:

Any control information needed to establish a connection to the remote server.

Server Name:

The name of the remote attachments server. The form of the name will vary field depending upon the type of server. For FTP it is the fully qualified name of the server.

Storage Location:

The location on the server that the specified account ID will use to store attachments.

Max. Attachment File Size:

The maximum size of an attachment (in bytes) that can be stored in the ClearQuest database. This field is provided to protect the ClearQuest database in the event that the external server is unable to accept connections. If the external server is unavailable, the default action is to store attachments locally within ClearQuest but it may be deemed unacceptable to store extremely large attachments in the database in this way. This field provides a means to limit the size of locally stored attachments to a manageable size.

A size of 0 (zero) indicates that no attachments will be stored locally. A size of -1 (negative one) indicates that there is no limit to the size of attachments stored locally.

Attachments stored within the ClearQuest database using this mechanism will not be automatically moved to external storage. Once connection to the server is reestablished the record must be manually updated to cause data to be moved to the external server.

See also: “Disable transfer to external storage”

Reference Location:

The location on the server that unauthorized (anonymous) accounts can use to locate external attachments. This field is associated with “Storage Location” above but can be different depending upon how the external storage manages access to its data.

Disable transfer to external storage:

This check-box can be used to temporarily disable the external attachments facility. When this check-box is enabled no attempt will be made to connect to the external server and any value in the “Max. Attachment File Size” field above will be ignored.

Last Updated By:

Displays the ID of the last ClearQuest user to update the record. This field is read-only.

Last Updated On:

The date of the last update. This field is read-only.

Create By: <Not “Created By”?>

Displays the ID of the ClearQuest user who created the record. This field is read-only.

Created On:

The date the record was created. This field is read-only.

Control Options

The Control Options field provides the ability to manage external attachment configuration settings for specific external server implementations. The Control Options field is a free-format text string containing **KEY=VALUE** pairs separated by semicolons [;]. The following describes the general options available for this configuration:

TYPE: The external server type. Currently only **FTP** and **NONE** are supported. **FTP** is the default.
Setting **TYPE** to **NONE** will disable external attachment processing in much the same way as **DISABLED** below and **Disable transfer to external storage** above.

DISABLED: Can be **TRUE** or **FALSE**. Equivalent to **TYPE=NONE**. The default is **DISABLED=FALSE**.

The current deployment provides access to File Transfer Protocol (FTP) servers. When **TYPE** is **FTP** the following additional options can be provided:

PORT: The communications Internet Protocol (IP) port number that should be used to connect to the remote FTP server. The default is port number 21.

BLOCKSIZE: The block size that will be used during file transfers. The default is 4 kilobytes.

Examples:

TYPE=FTP

This is the simplest configuration. Target server type is FTP, all other options are defaulted.

TYPE=FTP;PORT=5021;BLOCKSIZE=1024

Target server type is FTP, the port used by FTP on the target server is 5021 and transfer block-size is 1024 bytes (1 kbyte).

TYPE=NONE;PORT=21

Offsite storage is disabled. This is equivalent to checking the “**Disable transfer to external storage**” above.

4.1.2 Modifying AXAttachmentsControl

The AXPAttachmentControl record can be modified at any time but care should be taken to ensure that the “Storage Location” and “Reference Location” fields are sensitive to change and are dependent upon the target server’s configuration and limitations; invalid paths will cause errors and may lead to invalid URLs being generated..

5 Upgrading from Attachments 1.0

Upgrading from Attachments 1.0 to Attachments 2.0 does not require any pre-upgrade or post-upgrade steps. The new functionality for storing attachments on an FTP server will not be enabled until the feature is configured as described above (with the AXPAttachmentsControl record). Until that configuration is done, attachment functionality will remain the same as it was with Version 1.0.

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