What’s New

lookserver 10
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Abstract

lookserver 10 provides new features that allow IBM i developers to:

- Deliver new and existing applications to the web and mobile devices, easily and quickly, using the skills you have today
- Enhance productivity, reach and integration of existing applications developed in RPG, COBOL and CL
- Leverage 5250 and Open Access seamlessly through the browser in the same session and job

lookserver skins

Skins provide a way to leverage well designed templates for desktop and mobile interfaces that not only help applications look great, but also work great. They can transform the user interface (UI) to work in a way that is optimal for the device and user. A design based on UI best practices can dramatically reduce the effort to get your solution to market.

Skins enable you to use pre-designed templates for desktop, tablet and phone that not only look great, but also are optimized to work the way your users will expect. This saves you effort in either learning what to do, or trying to reinvent the wheel. Built on usability best practices, your apps will be efficient and optimal for the device immediately.

Skins let you stay hands-off with web technologies like CSS and JavaScript, or alternatively you can dig in, see how it all works, and modify or roll your own.
Below is a screenshot of the skins selection screen, allowing you to easily and quickly pick from high quality skins with a visual representation.

lookserver skins are not just about color and images. CSS enables layout control and optimization for the form-factor screen size as well as touch characteristics. Skins can also have JavaScript built into them to customize the functionality further.

Some examples of how different skins can be rendered are shown below.

iPad skin showing not only a modern look but also touch optimised buttons, menus in scrolling IOS style etc.
iPhone skin with iOS look and feel, title function keys all optimised for touch as well as menus styled as an iOS contact list.

Android skin uses the same layout as the iPhone for smartphone ease of use, but follows the Android light style.

Trillium skin similar to post-modern, but with some extra styling of controls used by lookserver. Here the panel controls are restyled.
HTML5 extensions

New HTML5 extensions are now supported in lookserver 10, and surfaced in the developer version 10 IDE (newlook and soarchitect). These allow specific additions for HTML based client productivity and usability.

Custom CSS class

This would show up in the html as below:

```html
class="look-unknownentrycapable look-textbox mustenter"
```

In the IDE the property looks like this:

![Custom CSS Class](image)

While it’s important to understand you can deliver all types of clients without ever using any custom CSS, HTML or JavaScript, having granular capabilities lets you deal with one-off needs and gives you much more specific control. lookserver 10 enables the capability to add a custom class to any item in designer. It will add this class to the pre-defined classes for all control types.

There are many benefits to this, allowing for styling of individual elements and enabling elements to have custom layout and interactivity. The entire point of CSS is to give you control of all items globally, but also allow for granular control at an individual level.

A simple example would be to have all panels styled via CSS for consistency, but on the sign-on screen you may want to have a panel for the user-ID and password fields that look completely different. Adding a custom class with let you do this with ease. It should be noted that individual changes could be made easily in designer and will override the CSS as they appear in-line, but to keep the designer simple to use it does not surface every CSS property in the specification. lookserver 10 gives you complete granular control where you need it.
A custom CSS class was added as below:

```css
.mustenter
{
  border-bottom: 2px solid #ff0000;
}
```

The effect can be seen in the screenshot above. The top two fields have an added red underline assigned by the custom class.

It should be noted this is a very simple effect for demonstration purposes, but the power of this extra CSS class is virtually limitless.

Input type

The input type property lets you easily set what virtual keyboard appears on mobile devices. While this may seem insignificant and is simply appending the input field, it can make a huge difference to the usability of mobile applications.

Sample HTML code showing the input type property:

```
Telephone: <input type="tel" name="usrtel">
```

In the IDE the property looks like this:
'None' will give you the standard virtual keyboard.

'Email' will give an alphabetic keyboard with '.' and '@'.

'Number' will switch to the numeric keyboard.
Search standard keyboard.

‘Telephone’ phone style
large numeric only keypad.

‘URL’ alpha keyboard with /
‘.’ and ‘.com’ or country
equivalent.
The usability benefit here should not be underestimated. It can be frustrating to enter data on a small mobile device when the input seems to be fighting against you. Conversely when using these parameters correctly data is both quick and easy to enter.

**Placeholder text**

Placeholder text allows you to add a short phrase or hint as to what data to enter into an input field. The text is displayed in the field until the user starts to type.

The placeholder value is valid for input types of text, search, URL, telephone, email and password.

Placeholder text used to be possible via JavaScript, but was often slow and unreliable and therefore not commonly used. With its addition to HTML5 it is now much easier to use, and supported across all modern browsers.

Placeholder text is designed to help explain to the user what to put into a field or give them an example of what to enter. This helps make an application more intuitive, and can help reduce or even remove the requirement for training of an application when used effectively.

On all devices placeholder text can let the user see an explanation or sample of what to enter into the field. This is especially helpful to reduce errors of free-type text fields where the data is not validated against a table or list. For mobile, where space can be very constrained, it can help deliver usability in data intense screens e.g. the field prompt can be short with the placeholder text adding to the information as to what to enter in a field.

```html
<input type="text" name="fname" placeholder="User name">
```

In the IDE the property looks like this:
Here we see placeholder text added to a mobile screen where it can be very helpful to aid the user and in this case where space is very limited.

The screenshot opposite shows that as soon as the user enters data, the placeholder disappears.
Control names

One of the key features of HTML5 was to allow ‘data tags’ to separate tagging for styling and layout (CSS) from functionality and interactivity (JavaScript).

With the release of lookserver 10, control names can be set to allow easy access to the power of data tags.

Data tags are a key benefit for developers wishing to customize solutions by targeting an element on the screen. This will typically be done via JavaScript. The key point is that you are not limited to searching for a CSS class of an element that may occur in multiple places.

You can quickly and easily target an element based on a name you set easily in the designer, and this is not dependent on any other property. Having this negates the need for scripts to loop through controls to find the correct one, something that can adversely affect performance.

Having both inbuilt and custom CSS classes for styling and layout, along with the data tag exposed through the control name property provides a clean, industry standard way to add interactivity and fine-grain control to your application.

The HTML is shown below;
```html
<element data-control-name="MyUser" />
```

In the IDE the property looks like:
```
Name MyUser
```
to access the property at runtime.

CSS
```css
div[data-control-name="MyUser"]
```

JQuery
```javascript
$(':div[data-control-name = 'MyUser']
```

JavaScript
```javascript
<element>.dataset.controlName="MyUser";
```
lookserver already ships with jQuery running, so there is no need to add libraries. You can just add your code to skin.js.

Having this facility empowers developers to customize solutions for their specific needs where required, with simple snippets of code. It should be noted that you are not required to use these functions or learn JavaScript, this is a facility to allow people who wish to do this in a clean, simple industry standard way.

RPG Open Access sub-files

New to lookserver 10 are fully scrolling sub-files of RPG Open Access data. Where more data is loaded into the sub-file that can be displayed, the sub-file now enables mouse scrolling, rather than having a page at a time restricted to the underlying 5250 version. This provides end-users the style and feel similar to many other modern application interfaces today, with minimal development effort.

The scroll-bar is highlighted by the arrow in the screen capture below (although it’s much more obvious in use than in a screenshot):

Responsive settings for mobile use

lookserver 10 settings have been updated to support a fully responsive experience, allowing administrators to check licensing and other key functions anytime, anywhere, using any device. Often this will be a smartphone, and so the interface is optimized for quick, intuitive access from a small screen.
Below are screenshots of the general and licensing pages displayed on a smartphone:

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