

The Progress Electronic Magazine

In this issue:

Publisher's Statement:	3
Coding Article: Creating an application out of service page	5
Theory of Operation	6
Modifying the CGI script on UNIX	6
Manipulating the Lock file	6
HTML Page	7
Management Article: Creating the Management and Pricing Proposal	9
Management Proposal	10
Development Tools and Utilities.....	10
Development Environment.....	10
Personnel Requirements and Organization.....	10
Development Methodology	10
Development Phases.....	11
Reviews	11
Reporting	11
Subcontractors	11
Standards	11
Testing	12
Quality Control.....	12
Configuration Management.....	12
Maintenance	12
Schedule	12
Risk Management.....	12
Community Announcements:	13
Product Announcements:	14
Survey Software	14
Security SDK.....	14
Publishing Information:	14
Article Submission Information:	15

Did you sign up to receive this E-Zine? Send email to sauge@amduus.com to subscribe or fill out the forms at <http://www.amduus.com/online/dev/ezine/EZineHome.html> ! It's free! (Though donations are certainly welcome – whatever you feel is fair!)

Though intended for users of the software tools provided by Progress Software Corporation, this document is NOT a product of Progress Software Corporation.

Publisher's Statement:

Webspeed has a pesky message appear when the service is no longer available or what to do when the web application is taken off line for upgrade? In this issue is a technique that can be used to ease this problem.

In the last issue we put together the needs for a Request for Proposal. Here, we examine the information that should be placed in a proposal. One can include these items in an RFP so as vendors will have this information in their proposals to meet your decision needs.

I would like to alert everyone that I am looking for work. If any of you have tips about potential projects, I would appreciate hearing from you at sauge@amduus.com or scott_auge@yahoo.com. My resume is available here: <http://www.amduus.com/Resumes/ScottAuge.html>

More exciting news! I am about to release Service Express which is a pure open source work flow oriented help desk/work order dispatching system. I will be posting it to the Open Source area at Amduus Information Works, Inc. This is a real full blown Webspeed application written by someone who has created similar systems for Fortune 100 companies. I am providing maintenance for the application for \$1,000.00 per year. This means your problems will have higher priority, you will receive updates more frequently, there will be special tools available for configuring the application not included in the usual release, as well documentation. Also contributing to the fund will allow there to be money to spend on other developers who can add more stability and features to the code full time.

To your success,

Scott Auge
Founder, Amduus Information Works, Inc.
sauge@amduus.com

Have you sent in a donation to keep the E-Zine available?

This E-Zine is published by Scott Auge on his own time. If you feel that the E-Zine is helping you with your skills or is valuable to your work - please send in a donation of \$10.00. There is no appreciation like monetary appreciation!

Please send your donation to:

Scott Auge
925 South Wolfe Road Suite 26
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-8843

THANK YOU!

Analysts Express Inc.

The Reliable Source for I.T. Consulting and
Recruiting
Contact: James Arnold @ 888/889-9091

Your ad could be here!

**Advertise in the E-Zine for
\$10.00 per issue!**

Amduus Information Works

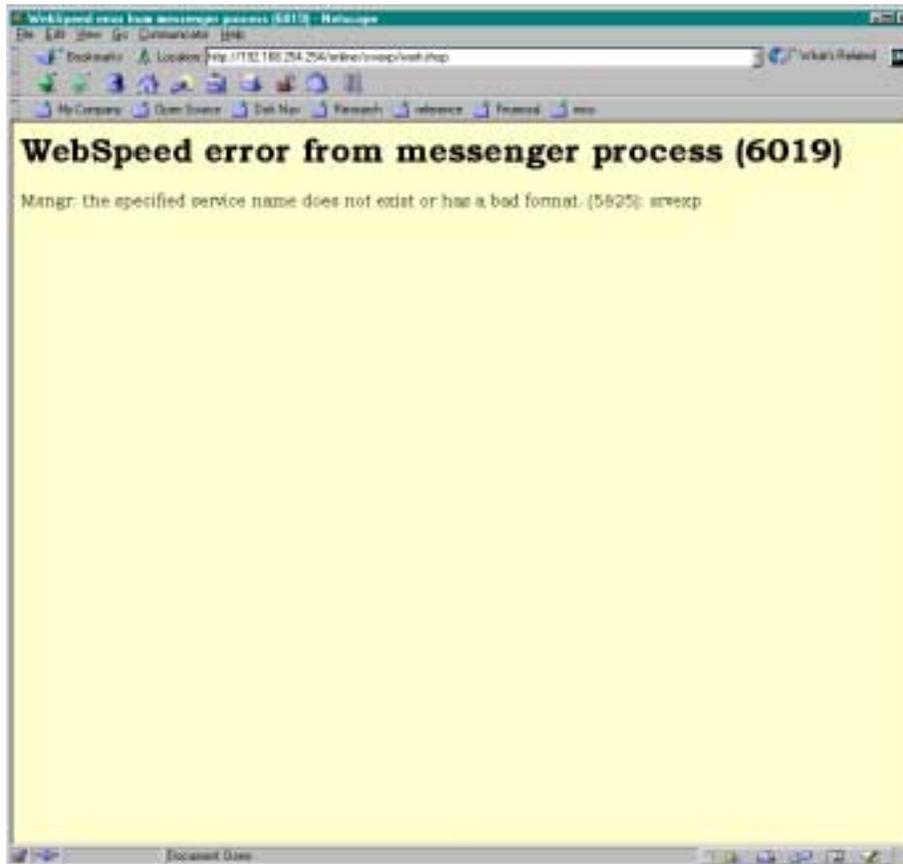
<http://www.amduus.com>
scott_auge@yahoo.com sauge@amduus.com

Creation of modules and products for re-sale
as well customized Internet/Intranet programming
for E-Business in the marketing/manufacturing/
service and law enforcement industries.

Coding Article: Creating an application out of service page

Written by Scott Auge

There will be times when one needs to take a web application offline. This could be for a database engine upgrade or recompile of a large set of files for an application. There are many reasons. Whenever the database or Webspool broker becomes unavailable, an error screen that is not customizable comes up.

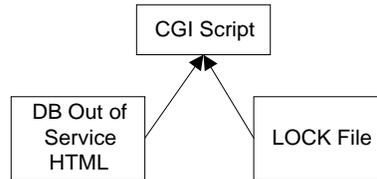


The dreaded yellow screen of death

This article examines a technique one can use to have a more controllable message appear in your Webspool application. It simply is the addition of some lines to a CGI script that Webspool uses (should you be using CGI – the NSAPI and ISAPI messengers cannot use this technique.)

Theory of Operation

In short, the CGI script is modified to find the existence of a file. If said file exists¹, the script will output an HTML page noting the application is unavailable.



Modifying the CGI script on UNIX

Below is the modification to the cgiip script that comes with Progress' Webspeed product. In bold are the new lines which check for the presence of a file that denotes the application is offline. This should be before any other executable scripting code in the file (ie, near the top, but below the explanatory comments.)

```

# Begin Modification

if [ -f ./LOCKFILE ]
then

    echo "Content-type: text/html"
    echo ""
    cat ./DBDown.html
    exit

fi

# End Modification

# Determine the correct directory where the Messenger
# is installed from either the tailored name or existing value of $DLC.
for what_dlc in "/usr/wsrt" "$DLC"
do
    [ ! -f "${what_dlc}/bin/cgiip" ] && continue
  
```

The new lines will check for the lock file and output the HTML contained in the file DBDown.html. Below is a sample DBDown.html file.

Manipulating the Lock file

¹ One may want to use the db.lk file in the database directory. This is possible only on a machine having both the db and the cgi portion of the application.

Be the creation and deletion of the lockfile, one can flip the page on or off. To flip the DBDown.html page on, one would create the lockfile. It does not need anything in it, so a touch command will do the trick.

```
[/appl/cgi]$ touch LOCKFILE
```

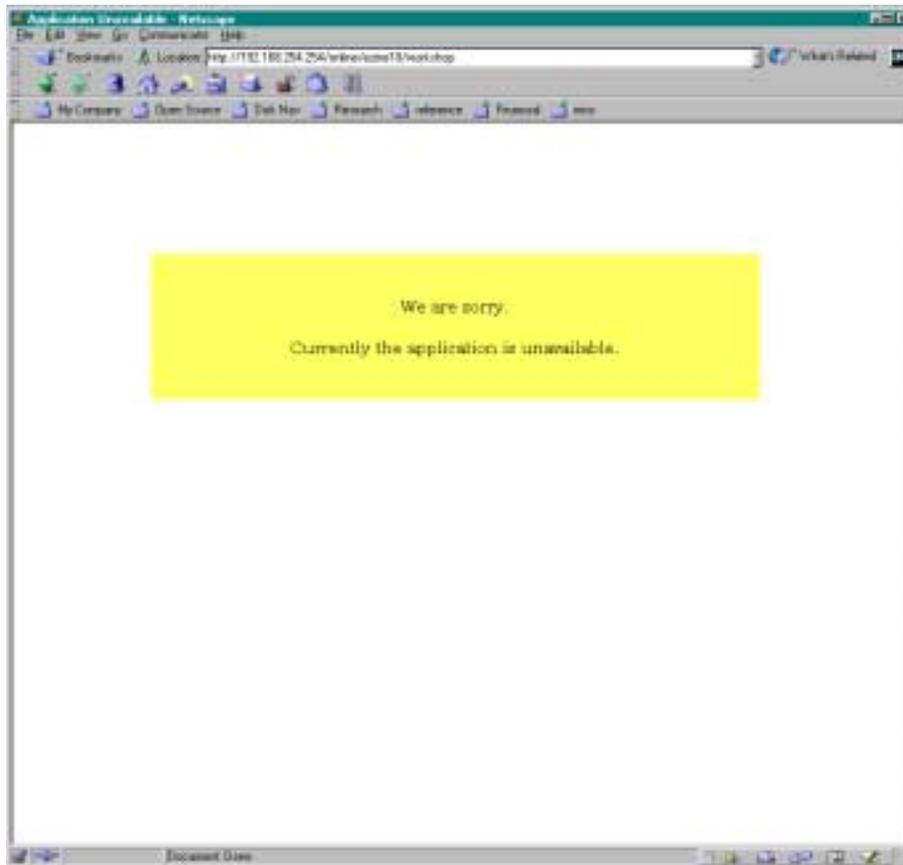
To denote the application available again, one merely removes the lock file.

```
[/appl/cgi]$ rm LOCKFILE
```

One could have a private messenger script set up that will still spout out ugly error messages for the given service for internal testing of the application before making the application available with the public script.

HTML Page

Below is a quick and dirty HTML page. It can contain any text or message you feel best explains the situation for the absence of the application. Some additional information may include why the application is unavailable, expected start and end times the application will be unavailable, and who to contact for more information.



This is the HTML source for the above page. One should NOT make this a compiled file under Webspell as the script merely spills it out to the web server which passes it along to the browser.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Application Unavailable</title>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
</head>

<body bgcolor="#FFFFFF">

<p>&nbsp;</p>
<p>&nbsp;</p>
<p>&nbsp;</p>
<table width="70%" border="0" cellspacing="0" align="center" bgcolor="#FFFF66">
  <tr>
    <td>
      <center>
        <p>&nbsp;</p>
        <p>We are sorry.</p>
```

```
<p>Currently the application is unavailable.</p>
<p>&nbsp;</p>
</center>
</td>
</tr>
</table>
<p>&nbsp;</p>
</body>
</html>
```

About the author: Scott Auge is the founder of Amduus Information Works, Inc. He has been programming in the Progress environment since 1994. His works have included E-Business initiatives and focuses on web applications on UNIX platforms.

sauge@amduus.com

Did you know?

Amduus Information Works, Inc. offers support/maintenance for the open source projects of Blue Diamond and Service Express?

Management Article: Creating the Management and Pricing Proposal

Written by Scott Auge sauge@amduus.com

Last month we focused on the information and outline needed for a request for proposal. This article will focus on the answers to that RPF and what information should be included. There should be four main pieces to the proposals:

- Management proposal
- Pricing Proposal
- Statement of Work
- Technical Proposal

This article will focus on the management proposal in detail. The statement of work, pricing, and technical proposals will be the subject of next month's management article.

Management Proposal

The management proposal identifies the tools, people, and processes that would be involved in creating the software product.

Development Tools and Utilities

The identification of the tools used. Items in particular to look out for:

1. Specification tools (ie, StarOffice, MS Word, Visio)
2. Project tools (ie, MS Project)
3. Code Control tools (ie, RCS/SCCS/CVS, etc)
4. Code generation tools (ie, Compilers used, Depositories)
5. Middleware tools (ie, Database engines, messaging systems)

The goal is so that both the vendor and the customer speak the same language. This can be for versions also. The jump between Word 2000 and Word 6.0 caused a problem at one of the sites I worked at. The customer would create documents in Word 2000 that could not be read by the vendor. Hence the vendor needed to upgrade to the next version – this is an expense that was a surprise.

Development Environment

One would determine if the team was located at the site of the customer or off site at the vendor's development facilities. If the development was off site at the customer's area, the vendor would note what characteristics of the computers would be needed, how many, if there is a need for phones and or fax lines, etc. Also one would need to determine if the people would be sitting together and what conditions are needed. I personally have been stuffed into a conference room with other twenty other developers and let me tell you, it was hot and loud.

Personnel Requirements and Organization

This section would identify the roles needed to smoothly create the project. Such positions as project manager, programmer, QA people, configuration people, training people, etc. would be determined here. A description of their duties, how they would be contacted and where they would reside (home office or the customers on-site location.)

Development Methodology

An explanation of the procedures used to elicit requirements, as well, how and when specifications and documentation will be written up. A discussion of the creation process for the software should be presented here also; Describing how requirements are translated into specifications which become code and how that code is tested.

Development Phases

If there are many complexities to the project, one may want to prioritize features and put them in during phases. At the end of each phase, one could have a review to determine that the customer is happy with the quality of work. Another element would be a point in time where a payment could be made. Also a determination if the expenses and cost of continuing the work on part of the vendor could be evaluated to stop a project from becoming a loss.

Reviews

At each major step or accomplishment, what kind of reviews are going to be made. And what kind of decisions can the vendor and customer make. If a vendor reviews the requirements and finds them to be technically infeasible, how is that handled. How is a requirement OK'ed for specification writing?

How is code reviewed? Is it the end product – the actual program in operation that is OK'ed or is there peer review. That it simply compiles.

Documentation such as User Manuals, Configuration Manuals, and Error Resolution Manuals would need to be reviewed.

Reporting

To keep all the participants informed on the progress of the project, different reports meant for different job positions will need to be created. One should consider the types of reports, report formats, reporting frequency, and distribution list for the reports. Knowing the reports in advance can help determine the time needed to create and read these.

Subcontractors

If any subcontractors are used and would be billing separately, they should be described here.

Standards

Standards include the forms that would be filled out for requirements, the coding style used throughout the application, as well operations processes. Standards might include the layout of documentation and training materials.

Also note that there should be a process for changing the standard. Standards change because they can be improved with more informational content. But standards can also be improved by their removal if they are becoming more of a burden than an assistance to the project.

Testing

One should identify how tests are created. Whether they are scenarios, or rote testing. One should identify when and if regression testing is used (testing all to determine if something was broken) as well as forward testing is used (test if a change performed as expected.) The format of test reports as well as instructions for running a test should be created. One might want to look at possible automatic testing that could be possible.

Quality Control

Quality control is more oriented towards the applications functionality to the customers desired goals. For example, a feature might test exactly as it was to be coded, however, the feature is lacking in some kind of data or processing needed by the customer. Quality control is interested in client satisfaction. Where something might test as functional, quality control might find it's ease of use, or efficiency in the context of a business process inadequate or acceptable.

Configuration Management

Sometimes this can be a sticky subject as existing applications live on the same machine. There can be administration privilege problems (at one place, I was expected to identify and fix problems – as well configure software – pretty hard when one has no root access on a UNIX computer.) Where the software runs in production, testing, and development should be laid out and the costs associated with that. How software changes and data changes are propagated between the different environments should be discussed.

Maintenance

Once the application is installed, undoubtedly the business environment that it was created under will have changed. Maintenance keeps an application current to the needs of the business in terms of the environment that it operates under. Maintenance could also include not only enhancements and previously described, but software defect fixes. Maintenance would be performed by either the vendor or the customer or by both and how that circumstance would operate.

Schedule

A schedule can be developed that identifies different mile stones and phases in the project. One should also have a daily schedule to show how meetings, reading documentation, writing code, and creating and consuming reports also fill the day of the people involved.

Risk Management

Every project has risks, and some of these risks include:

1. Schedule Over-runs
-

2. Cost Over-runs
3. Use of inadequate tools
4. Poor Quality
5. Possible Litigation
6. Requirements Volatility
7. Third Party Problems
8. Project Acceptance Problems
9. Staff Motivation Problems
10. Procedural Problems

Identifying these risks before hand can help soft-politics manage these problems when they occur.

Portions of this article based on:

E.M. Bennatan, "On Time, Within Budget – Software Project Management Practices and Techniques" ISBN 0-89435-408-6

About the author: Scott Auge is the founder of Amduus Information Works, Inc. He has been programming in the Progress environment since 1994. His works have included E-Business initiatives and focuses on web applications on UNIX platforms.
sauge@amduus.com

Community Announcements:

A place to announce Progress User Groups, Open Source Exchanges, etc. No charge!

Wonder where to find those Progress marketing articles?

<http://www.progress.com/analyst/>
<http://www.progress.com/profiles/index.htm>
<http://www.progress.com/success/index.htm>

Progress in the news sighting!

A major international car-rental company has switched from Oracle Corp. to Progress Software Corp. for its centralized reservation and back-office systems, saying Progress is handling the project more quickly and at lower cost than a contractor working with Oracle architecture.

http://computerworld.com/nlt/0%2C3590%2CNAV47_STO65971_NLTAM%2C00.html

Product Announcements:

Survey Software

Amduus Information Works, Inc. is creating survey software. This software can be used on a web site to query a population of people about their views and needs. The population could be internal to a company or external to yield a better understanding of the marketplace. Documentation for the application will be available at <http://www.amduus.com> for free download.

The software ships with source code for better adaptability to your company's application landscape and needs. The software was developed and designed on Linux with Progress Version 9 and Webspeed 3.1. The software can operate on AIX, Linux, Solaris, HP-UX and UNIXWare. The software will also run on Blue Diamond available for free from Amduus Information Works, Inc.

Customers and resellers are welcome to contact Scott Auge at sauge@amduus.com for more information. Street price is \$1,000 per machine without Progress licenses.

The software can be rented out at \$100.00 per survey per week of taking results.

Security SDK

The SDK works on E4GL source applications on Webspeed, Blue Diamond, or other Webspeed alternatives that use E4GL coding. Just one more thing brewing up at Amduus Information Works!

Publishing Information:

Scott Auge publishes this document. I can be reached at scott_auge@yahoo.com.

Currently there are nearly 600 subscribers and companies that receive this mailing! This mailing is not sent unsolicited, so it is not SPAM.

Amduus Information Works, Inc. assists in the publication of this document:

Amduus Information Works, Inc.
925 South Wolfe Road #26
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-8843
408-730-4588
<http://www.amduus.com>

Article Submission Information:

Please submit your article in Microsoft Word format or as text. Please include a little bit about yourself for the About the Author paragraph.

Looking for technical articles, *marketing Progress* articles, articles about books relevant to programming/software industry, white papers, etc.

I am looking for work, if you have any knowledge of potential work, I would appreciate hearing from you!

<http://www.amduus.com/Resumes/ScottAuge.html>

Thanks!