



INTREXX XTREME Enterprise Information Portal

Workshop: Foreign Data Access



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Foreign Data Access with Intrexx Xtreme

Introduction

In addition to many other functions, Intrexx Xtreme offers the possibility of accessing data sources of various origins directly, and then displaying them in the browser.

This so-called foreign data, which previously was only accessible to individual users through their corresponding applications (ERP systems, DBMS for the old support database/address management), can with a few "Clicks" – typical for Intrexx – be made available to any number of portal users. How this functions will be demonstrated in the following workshop.

Preparation

In order to reproduce the described steps on your own system, please double-check to see that the following requirements are present:

1. MS SQL Server or MSDE is installed (runs only on Windows OS)
2. Northwind Database (IMPORTANT: English version) is installed

Users utilizing a database in systems running Linux unfortunately cannot use the "Northwind" database used in the example, as it requires the use of a MS SQL Server or a MSDE to function. However, the following steps for foreign data integration also apply under Linux. As long as the database system fulfills the requirements named above, skip the following sections.

Otherwise, install either the MS SQL Server or the MSDE. Information on installation of the MS SQL Server can be found in the attached documentation. An installable version of the MSDE can be found on the Intrexx CD in the directory "msde".

For the demonstration of foreign data access, the English version of the SQL server database, "Northwind", will be used, which is available from Microsoft for free under:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=06616212-0356-46a0-8da2-eebc53a68034&DisplayLang=en>

Double-clicking on the downloaded file will unpack the "Northwind" database to the directory "C:\SQL Server 2000 Sample Databases". Go to this directory and install the database (for more information, please consult the attached instructions). After a successful installation, please start the Portal Manager from Intrexx Xtreme in order to connect a foreign data source.



Connecting Data Sources

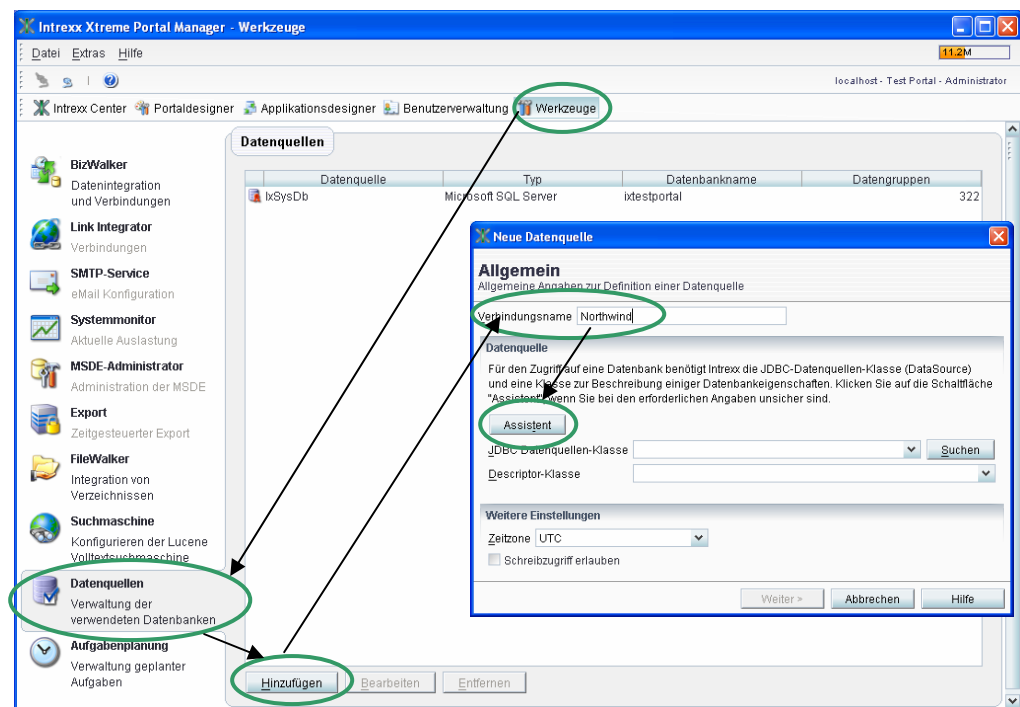
Tip:

Although all functions of the Applicationdesigner are allowed, it can occur that a function is not supported by a particular foreign data source.

For foreign data access we can only offer limited support, as the system environments, the configuration of the data source, the technical database construction of the foreign data source, the underlying database drivers, and the data storage (data types) are too different from one another.

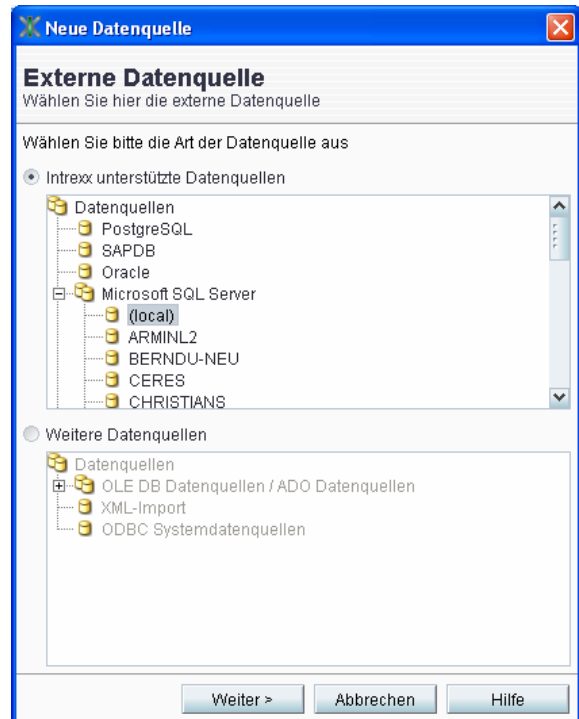
Definition of a new data source

Before you can access foreign data in Intrex, the data source to be accessed must be defined. To do this, change to the Tools screen, then to the data sources point, and click on the button "Add". After you have entered the connection name "Northwind" (the data source to be created) in the configuration dialog that opens, start the assistant.

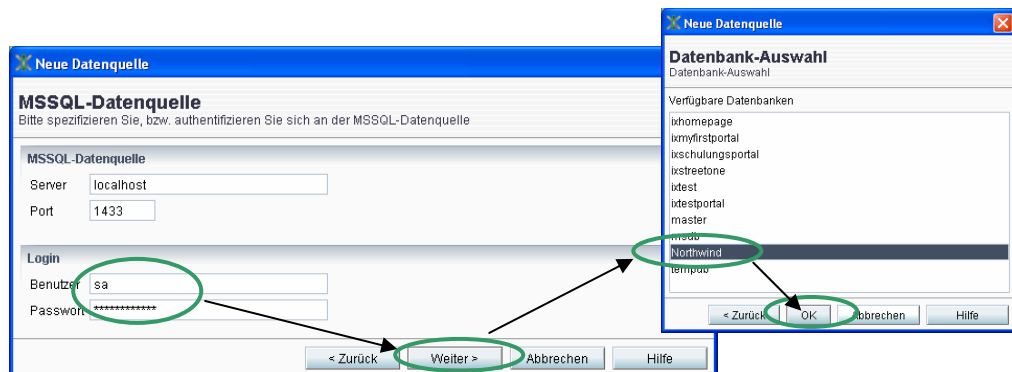


Use of the Assistant

In the assistant window that now opens, all data sources will be displayed to you, for which a JDBC driver on the computer exists. Under Intrexx Xtreme, you can already access Oracle, SQL Server, SAPDB/MaxDB, OLE DB/ADO (Excel, Access, etc.), as well as all ODBC system data sources without installing anything else. You will find the "Northwind" database under "Microsoft SQL Server". Here, all the available SQL servers on the network will be listed. Choose the computer on which your SQL server / your MSDE is running (in the example, the local computer).



Enter the username "sa" and the corresponding password in order to log on to the data source, and close the dialog by clicking "Next". Then in the following dialog window, choose the "Northwind" database.



The JDBC data source and descriptor class should be entered here.

Further Options

Under "Further Options", the options for the time zone and write access will be entered now. Intrexx Xtreme always saves date values in UTC format (definitive world time).

Furthermore, please note when using a foreign database, which time zone format is in use in each case. Since in the case of "Northwind" no times, rather, only dates are entered, the UTC format can be used.

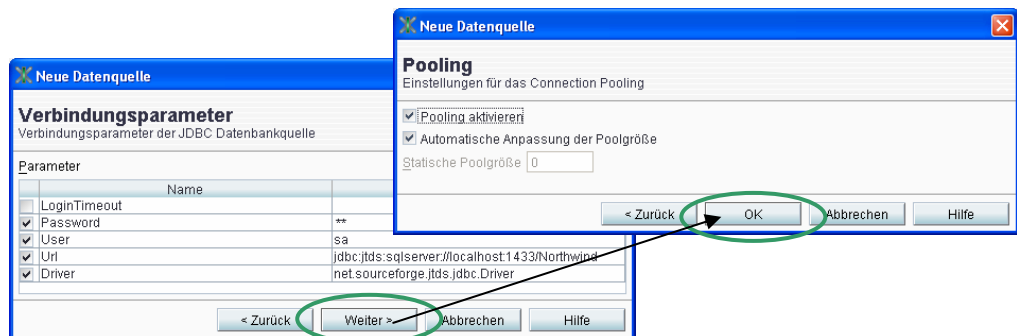
Another option that can be set here is whether an access to the foreign data source may also write to it.

Note:

United Planet takes no responsibility for data consistency resulting from enabling write access to foreign data sources. You should only enable write access if you are absolutely sure that no damages will occur.

Write access cannot be ensured for all data sources, as differences here as well between databases and drivers can be too large.

In order to guarantee the data consistency of the foreign data source, write access will be not allowed and the dialog will be closed with "Next". In the following configuration dialog, the "Connection Parameters" of the data source will be edited. The settings suggested by Intrexx will be exactly, without changes, applied. The same will be done in the following dialog with regard to "Pooling Settings".



If you, in contrast to the example, have used a data source not supported by Intrexx, you will need to configure the descriptors in a separate settings dialog. As a rule, these settings should be already correctly configured.

Tip:

In the directory "help/handbooks/foreign data access/" on the Intrexx Xtreme CD, you will find exact descriptions of the descriptor fields.

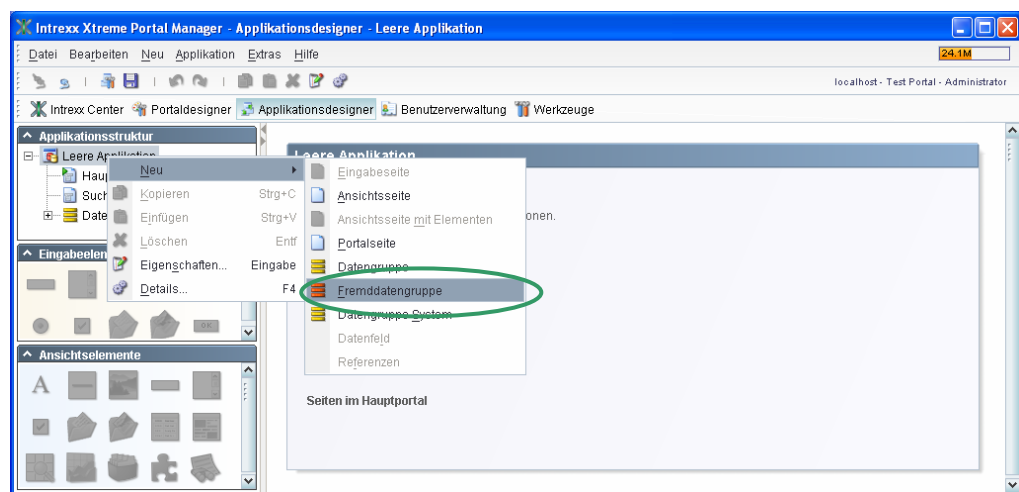
In the overview page of the existing data sources, you will now see a new data source with the name "Northwind", to which any number of already existing applications (as well as those still to be created) on the portal can access.



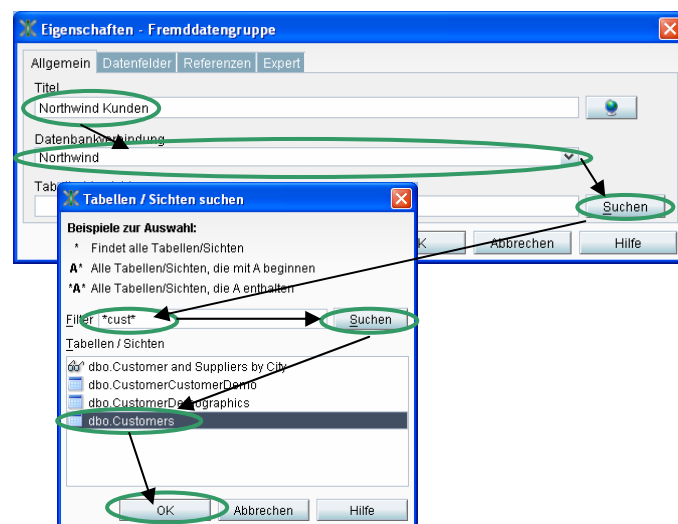
Use of Foreign Data Sources in the Applicationdesigner

Connecting foreign data groups

For a demonstration of foreign data access, go to the Applicationdesigner and create, for the sake of simplicity, a new application based on the template "Empty Application". The access to a foreign data group is, however, also possible with any other application template or application. Select the application node with the right mouse button and choose "New / Foreign Data Group" from the context menu.



In the properties dialog that opens, give the data group the title "Northwind Kunden" and choose, under database connection, the newly created "Northwind". As long as the Table / View Name is known, it can be entered under "Table/View". In our case, we will search for the table via the search function.



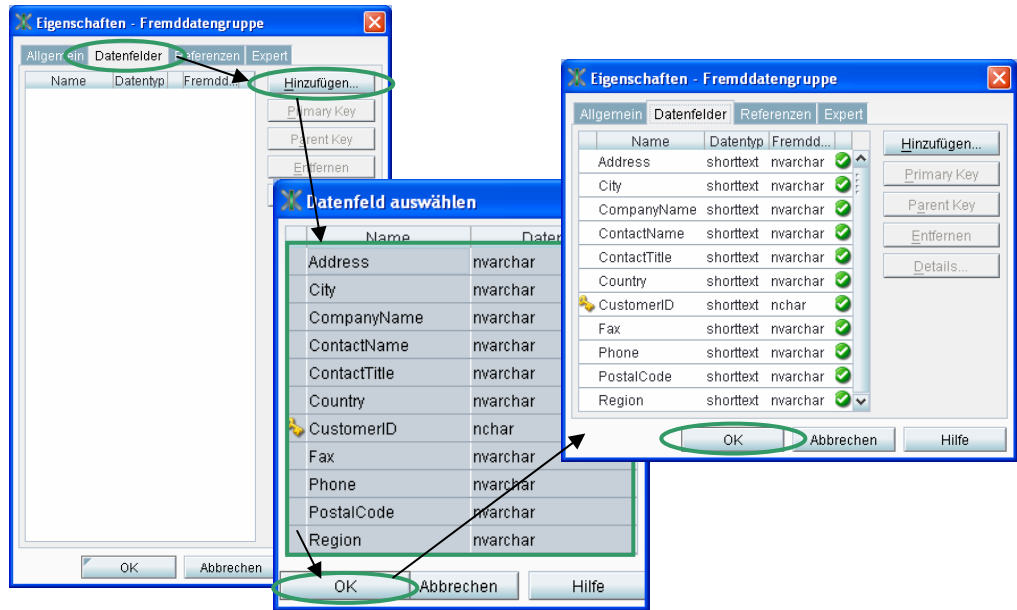
Search through the database with "`*cust*`" without the quotes. In the results field all tables of the "Northwind" database will be given, in whose names the word fragment "cust" is contained.

Select the table "`dbo.Customers`" and confirm with "OK".

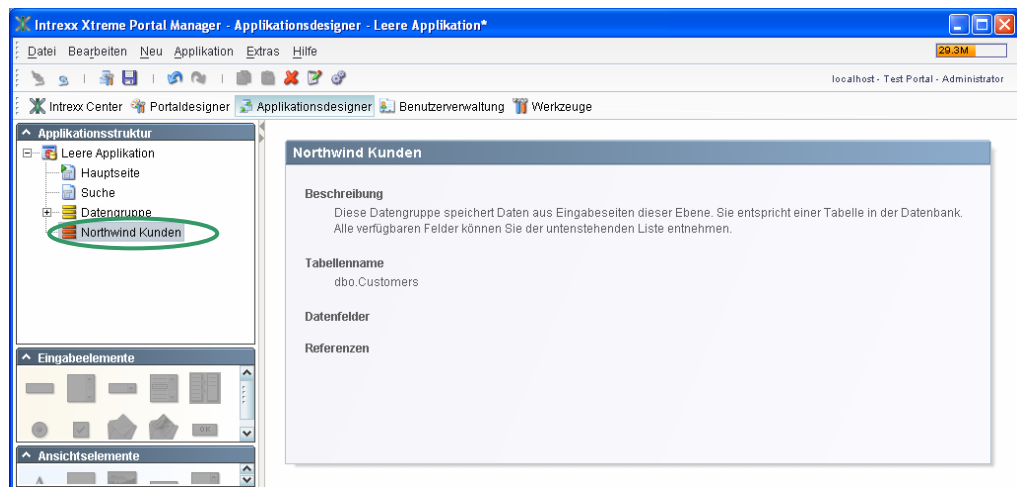
Go to the "Data Fields" tab, and click "Add" to choose a data field from the dialog field "Choose Data Field". The Primary Key (unique key) of the table is already recognized by Intrexx Xtreme and marked with a key symbol. With "OK", you will confirm the corresponding selection.

Tip:

If you only select a partial number of the data fields here, remember to include the Primary Key in this selection.



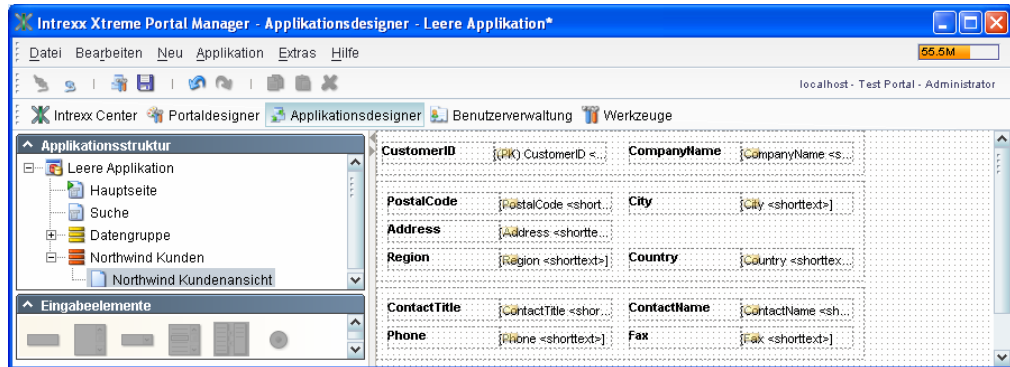
In the dialog window "Foreign Data Group Properties" that opens here, the data field allocations will be defined. Normally, Intrexx Xtreme will automatically provide the corresponding allocation, so you will only need to confirm with "OK". The foreign data group should now be entered.



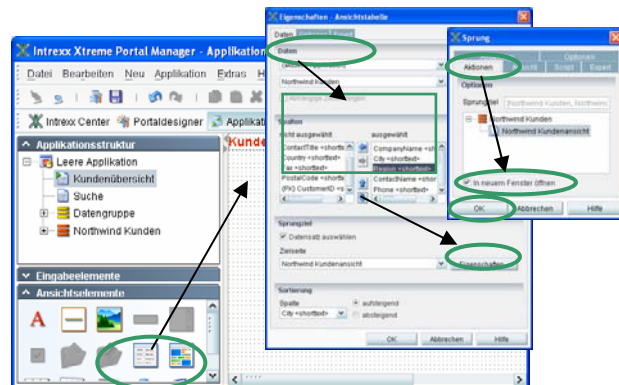
Data groups based on foreign data sources will always be displayed with a red data group symbol.

Creation of Application Pages

Now enter under the foreign data group “Northwind Customers” a new view page with any number of data fields. To do this, click with the right mouse button on the foreign data group, choose “New / View Page with Elements”, and give the new view page the name “Northwind Customer View”. Place the elements, corresponding to their desired locations, on the view page.



Rename the main page of your application to “Customers Overview” and enter a view table on it. In the dialog window that then opens, choose “Northwind Customers” as well as the columns CompanyName, City, Region, ContactName and Phone as data sources. In the target page properties, choose in the “Actions” tab the option “Open in new window”.



Finally, rename your application “Northwind Customers” and distribute user rights according to your preferences. After publishing the application, you can display your customers, as well as their corresponding information details, in the browser.

