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Target Audience : Beginner

Difficulty Level : Low

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Introduction

Many people, especially the beginners amongst us may be wondering how to get around having to specify the full path of the database all the time. If the server is remote then this can be a real hassle. The designers of Firebird 1.5 have very thoughtfully done something about this for us in the form of aliases.

Alias

An alias has the oxford English dictionary definition of 'an assumed name'.

In the context of a database this means that we can give a usable and simple name to our database, only the server Firebird 1.5 needs to know where the file is and what the alias refers to, however the client need only supply the alias name to the server.

Note: Database aliasing was introduced in Firebird 1.5 as a security measure. These notes don't apply to any Firebird 1.0.x version or to any version of InterBase.



In Practice

You may have noticed that in your Firebird 1.5 root installation directory you have a file called <aliases.conf>, this can be opened in any text viewing program. E.g. notepad, or your favourite editor.

The contents of mine are as follows

```
#  
# List of known database aliases  
# -----  
#  
# Examples:  
#  
# dummy = c:\data\dummy.fdb  
#
```

mydb = D:\ms_database\database\iota1.fdb

The only difference between the file you will have and the listing above is that I have added an actual alias, also you can add as many alias lines as you like.

Looking at the last line where the definition is actually done

The left side of the equate is the name we wish to use for the alias.
After the equate symbol we provide the path to the database file.

Caveat : the database path in aliases.conf *must* be on a drive that is local to the server. Firebird 1,5 and IB will *not* connect to any kind of logical path, e.g. a share or a mapped drive, even if it does point to a location on a local drive.

Making the changes take effect

It is perfectly ok to modify the alias's file while the server is running because it is only read at start-up.

Therefor in order for the server to recognise the alias *you must stop and then restart the server.*

Check first though to make sure no-one is actually using it !.

Accessing the Database using the alias

This is the easy bit, and where you will never want to not use the old full path specifier method again as long as of course you are using Firebird 1.5 or greater.

Normally you would specify

<server>:drive:\databasepath\databasefilename (Windows server) or
<server>:/databasepath/databasefilename (Linux server)

but using an alias (for Windows or Linux servers):

hostname: aliasname

IBO Objects Specifics

- With Firebird 1.5 database aliasing active on your server, simply enter the alias name into the Path property of the connection object (IB_Connection, IB_Database or IBODatabase) where, before, you entered the whole path.
- Don't confuse the AliasName property of the Connection object. This property is there for BDE compatibility and is totally unrelated to Fb 1.5 database aliasing. In general, AliasName should be left Nil and just ignored.
- Fb 1.5 database aliasing does not change IBO's developer-friendly feature of allowing you to delete the auto-entry DatabaseName property and replace it with a friendly name of your own.

And that's it, easy-peasy lemon squeezy, as we say in England!

And finally, who are the two guys at the top ?

Hannibal Heyes and Kid Curry are two of the most wanted outlaws in the history of the West. In all the jobs that they have pulled, they have never killed anyone and this makes them very popular with everyone except the railroads and the banks. They decide to turn over a new leaf and are offered an amnesty on condition that they stay out of trouble for a year and that they don't tell anyone about it. In the meantime, they are still wanted men with the price of \$10,000 on their heads so with a view to keeping a step ahead of anyone looking to collect that bounty, they adopt the identities of Smith and Jones and use all of their ingenuity keeping out of the way of the law.

Comments, suggestions to peter@cyionics.com