



**From:** Steve O'Keefe <sokeefe@ca.inter.net>  
**Subject:** meeting follow-up, NXNE, remaining issues  
**Date:** January 17, 2007 3:21:32 AM EST (CA)  
**To:** Rudi Garcia <rudi@nowtoronto.com>  
**Cc:** Greg Lockhart <gregl@nowtoronto.com>  
**Return-Path:** <sokeefe@ca.inter.net>  
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**X-Sieve:** CMU Sieve 2.3  
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**Mime-Version:** 1.0 (Apple Message framework v752.2)  
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**X-Scanner:** OK. Scanned.  
**X-Scanner:** OK. Scanned.  
**X-Uniserve-Spam-Score:** 0.0 0 (/)  
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Hi Rudi & Greg,

Long email/letter, as I wanted to follow-up on a number of issues and considerations which we touched on in our meeting Monday on the listings database; and also NXNE's database now that I've had a chance to look at it. Again, my apologies for coming up so short on a testable listings entry for Rudi after the New Year, and not reaching the expectations I made on myself and presented to you. While I appreciate your comments that the pressure is something I'm putting on myself and that this has been a project attempted literally years before I arrived, I do still sense the shadow of the 'reserve to dine' issue which popped-up in mid December.

I spent some time today reviewing the original listings database and the NXNE databases, and also the NXNE web site; since I never really knew what NXNE was about (I'm not a concert/festival go-er). With the original database, I wanted to see if I could find remaining issues that will come up, and will need to be addressed, before I'm confident that I've delivered the listings database solution. With regards to NXNE, I wanted to see if I could handle a project for them at all, since the festival begins in June which really is not that far off.

For the NXNE database, Rudi again I must say its looked like a mammoth undertaking and [REDACTED] I'm sure NXNE are pleased with the results, although it seems you're now distanced from database development in general and I agree that supporting the production department while developing major databases seems an impossible combination. Likewise, reviewing the NXNE database reinforced my suggestion on Monday that NOW/NXNE needs a full-time database developer. As for migrating and upgrading the NXNE database myself, its far too a full-time job to pull off during NXNE's down months with my more 'a la carte' business. Likewise, I would have to become familiar with NXNE's annual work process in order to provide a relevant opinion on the entire database. I can still meet with NXNE's director since he seems interested in what I might be able to offer, though it may lean more consultation towards their needs and a solution.

With regards to my suggestion for a full time database staff member, you had asked for a recommendation, although the only people I know who use FileMaker are my users and Rudi. What I can recommend is expanding a search beyond the NOW classifieds and to perhaps a major newspaper or the FileMaker Solutions Alliance or similar groups since their MUST be a FileMaker consultant who is tired of the Seminar circuit and wants a full-time job. To be honest, after reviewing the NXNE database, I am surprised there is not a full-time on staff, although perhaps the last few people you have had working on this database were potential hires. I think its important that you search for someone with some experience in WebObjects, Java, MySQL/online transactions and the like as its safe to assume David will request some form of payment come in directly from the web at a future point.

As we can all see, the web is becoming much more database driven and newspaper is moving more to the web. Also, the listings database will ultimately migrate to web-based submissions and it seems the NXNE database is being set up for online transactions, so you will need to have someone on staff at all times to handle administration issues where a server bug or database corruption or a hack or some other problem must be addressed right away on-site. With FileMaker now having a web viewer and a PHP plug-in in beta, you can guess that a version soon will have new features you want to exploit - like web based submissions, which will require further development as a full-time thing. I'm very thankful for your support and kind words on my abilities and thank you for this work, though I'm pretty set in my ways after 13 years in business and can't be a full-time candidate, but I can certainly help train anyone you may hire and help out on projects from time to time, once the listings database is tested and running.

I guess the reason I'm bring this up is because this would be a great time to search for a new hire who could be trained with the listings database rollout and move forward to the NXNE database in their post-festival down months. The way my business schedule is going, and the amount of variables which raised their head as the listings database came together, makes me think you should tell David, "Be patient for at least a few months." with regards to 'reserve to dine'. I know Rudi you were leery of rollout on the dining coupon and nixed a temporary workaround, so I hope this comes as a relief rather than an annoyance. Perhaps you should simply copy David in on this email since there are a number of issues which will have to be addressed before going live:

The JDBC Syncing - I have yet to seriously discuss this with Rick, though I was provided his email yesterday and sent a preliminary email Tuesday and cc'd Rudi. I will be adding fields or perhaps a table or perhaps even a sub database depending on what Rick will need from each section. So, I really don't know how long that will take since its not yet been seriously addressed. I don't think it will be a major issue, but classify JDBC syncing as 'up in the air' at this point.

The Server Admin - When the new listings database goes live, there will be multiple database served (seven modules, venue DB, issue control and perhaps web, maybe later a contact manager, a talent database).

[REDACTED] If anyone logs into listings through FileMaker remote, however, they should have their databases selections masked down to the issue control database, since their will be a lot of selections. Though, someone like Steven Davey can log right in to '02\_food'. You may be able to do this simple task quickly through remote desktop, but I wanted to raise that issue in advance. In addition, the Server may need a copy of FileMaker Pro for syncing and archiving, though its possible this can be activated through FileMaker opening files from your file server. I've checked the FileMaker guides and as long as the Server is not a user workstation, it should be fine to load FileMaker briefly to do some tasks. I'm not aware if you have different servers for [REDACTED]

The Database Security - as the listings DB could be a source of web/based transactions and submissions, I think its best to start considering real account security for the listings database, that is, giving everyone who uses the database an account and a privilege set. If not, a solution can be simply "Dailies", "Dailies Admin", "Admin" etc. to limit views to particular scripts and layouts using real FileMaker security. Again, another reason to have a full-time developer on site to handle user accounts as the listings database evolves in the future. Using real FileMaker Security accounts will also create accurate logs which can be used as an audit trail. If not, your existing login screen can be added as a table to the main 'chooser' layout and we lock the window and hide the status area as before, with section limits and layout access being set when clicking the coloured button.

The Database Testing and rollout - the database will be loaded [REDACTED] to ensure the new database does everything he knows the existing listings database can do. Its safe to say there will be some fixes and modifications after that. Then the revised database will be served for the users for testing and training. I don't know how long it will take to train them, but I would guess they will have suggestions which will then add more tweaks. Then the revised listings database will go live. You may want to have the staff do double-entry in both listings database that week in the instance the revised database becomes buggy in a real workflow scenario. After that, it seems once it works it will hopefully be an expandable solution which will last many years. It seems to be structured properly and working so far at its core.

Finally, getting this database finished - What I'm swamped with now are the plethora variables which need to be matched and incorporated, like 16 paragraph styles, 33 character styles and 66 style format fields, 80 custom functions, dozens of attached auto-enter calculations on many fields, dozens of value lists, conditional value lists relations and that ever pesky migration so the transition is smooth and accurate. Until this value matching, then final migration, is complete I can't really go gung-ho finalizing the layouts. Its just a matter of everything being nearly integrated and the complexity of dozens of formulas, lists and values matching issues emerging at once and fitting them together with as few mis-matches as possible.

Likewise, it now seems important you will need a Quark style builder and format system to open up these hard-coded XTag codes, to transition as the magazine is redesigned, or transition to inDesign workflow. I'm pretty sure I can pull this off and you will need it in place before the listings are tested doing XTag exports, so that's one more delay. Likewise, I would like to add a simple archive admin screen which admin would select, 'archive listings with dates older than \_\_\_' and have those exported and re-imported into a master database copy. Finally, perhaps the integration of an issue planning relationship in issue control which would use relational date matching to the issue table instead of the relative (previous/current/next) date matching for your weekly issue workflow.

While this appears like loads of problems, and I'm showing up occasionally edgy from burning the candle at both ends, these are all accomplishable tasks and I'm actually finding this all very challenging. Though getting everything done at a pace with my existing work may not be fitting your needs and, as a supplier, my first interest is that your needs are met. If that means training someone who can be hired at NOW full-time to get this completed more quickly and move right on to NXNE, I'm completely fine with that.

To that point, nearly 300 hours have been expended and we're still over the hump and there is that light at the end of the tunnel. That's almost eight full-time work weeks in five months, or approx 35% of a week dedicated to this project at a billing to date of under \$20K. While that's basically the cost of having someone on staff at \$25 an hour for five months, its the time its taking me to get to the finish line now that January and March are going to be busy. I just want to give you a realistic appraisal of what's left to do and my time/availability so that you may mull it over with regards to your needs, David's needs, a new hire, and whether you would want me to train and transition out or just keep going with 'yet another delay' on the horizon since I've overshot my completion estimate, and it could now be months.

I don't need a response on all these different matters right away, its just important that I don't badly estimate a month or two to have a real solution running for your business, and then announce its going to take more time, without giving you the current and upcoming issues in advance.

Thanks again,

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