Rational. Focal Point
Release 6.4

IBM

Baselining Guidelines

## How to use Baselining

The baselining functionality in IBM® Rational® Focal Point™ is a powerful way to freeze content of e.g., a requirements specification prior to formal change management. Some of the baselining activities are potentially resource-demanding, and as Focal Point is a server application, all current users share computational resources. Therefore you should read this Baselining Guidelines document thoroughly, before you start using the baselining feature in Focal Point.

Generally, creating a baseline in Focal Point should be seen as a formal step in the development process, rather than a way to store away the last hour's work. A typical usage is to be able to go back and see, for example, what a feature specification looked like before the release was started, and also what it looked like when the release was delivered.

- You should only create baselines on views with a limited number of elements, a couple of hundred elements at most. If possible, create dedicated views for baselining, containing just a few attributes (e.g. ID, title, text and version).

- You should always create baselines at a time when the server normally is used by a minimum of users. This way, a potential server overload will affect as few people as possible .

- To maintain system performance, you should display baselines with a minimum of link usage. To display links in baselines, Focal Point needs to create the element that is linked from the history values of its attributes. This operation takes some time, and if it needs to be done frequently, the server performance will suffer. For example, if you have a table containing 100 elements, with an average of 10 links per element, Focal Point needs to recreate 1000 elements to display these links. When using e.g. traceability matrices, Focal Point needs to recreate even more elements. Thus, you should avoid activating baselines with link-intensive display methods, e.g.. table views, attribute statistics, Gantt charts, relational graphs, and traceability matrices.

- Always wait until the baselining operation has finished before you take any other action in Focal Point. Baselining can be time-consuming. If the action takes unreasonably long to finish, please contact support.

## What to Avoid

- Do not use the baselining feature to save changes several times a day.

- You should, as far as possible, avoid using link attributes in views that will be baselined.

- Do not create baselines on views that contain entire modules. Even if a module is small from the beginning, it could grow quickly.

- Comparing baselines (baseline diff) is a time-consuming operation. The bigger the baseline, the more work for the server. In a worst-case scenario, all users will experience very long response times while a comparison is made.
**Note:** If you start a baseline diff, there is no way of interrupting before it has finished. Starting a new baseline diff will result in two (or more) comparisons running simultaneously, where you can only see the result of the comparison last made. This applies to all operations in Focal Point, but is especially significant for baseline comparisons.

## *Possible Consequences of Ignoring these Guidelines*

If several heavy baseline-related operations are started, the server load can result in blocking of all other calls. All users using the same server will be affected, and in worst case, they will be affected for a long time. If this occurs, it might be necessary to restart that server.

# More information

## *Contacting IBM Rational Software Support*

If the self-help resources have not provided a resolution to your problem, you can contact IBM® Rational® Software Support for assistance in resolving product issues.

**Note** If you are a heritage Telelogic customer, a single reference site for all support resources is located at http://www.ibm.com/software/rational/support/telelogic/

### Prerequisites

To submit your problem to IBM Rational Software Support, you must have an active Passport Advantage® software maintenance agreement. Passport Advantage is the IBM comprehensive software licensing and software maintenance (product upgrades and technical support) offering. You can enroll online in Passport Advantage from http://www.ibm.com/software/lotus/passportadvantage/howtoenroll.html

•To learn more about Passport Advantage, visit the Passport Advantage FAQs at http://www.ibm.com/software/lotus/passportadvantage/brochures_faqs_quickguides.html.

•For further assistance, contact your IBM representative.

To submit your problem online (from the IBM Web site) to IBM Rational Software Support, you must additionally:

•Be a registered user on the IBM Rational Software Support Web site. For details about registering, go to http://www.ibm.com/software/support/.

•Be listed as an authorized caller in the service request tool.

### Submitting problems

To submit your problem to IBM Rational Software Support:

1. Determine the business impact of your problem. When you report a problem to IBM, you are asked to supply a severity level. Therefore, you need to understand and assess the business impact of the problem that you are reporting.

Use the following table to determine the severity level:

| Severity | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | The problem has a *critical* business impact: You are unable to use the program, resulting in a critical impact on operations. This condition requires an immediate solution. |
| 2 | This problem has a *significant* business impact: The program is usable, but it is severely limited. |
| 3 | The problem has *some* business impact: The program is usable, but less significant features (not critical to operations) are unavailable. |
| 4 | The problem has *minimal* business impact: The problem causes little impact on operations or a reasonable circumvention to the problem was implemented. |

**2.** Describe your problem and gather background information, When describing a problem to IBM, be as specific as possible. Include all relevant background information so that IBM Rational Software Support specialists can help you solve the problem efficiently. To save time, know the answers to these questions:

•What software versions were you running when the problem occurred?

To determine the exact product name and version, use the option applicable to you:

•Start the IBM Installation Manager and select **File** > **View Installed Packages**. Expand a package group and select a package to see the package name and version number.

•Start your product, and click **Help** > **About** to see the offering name and version number.

•What is your operating system and version number (including any service packs or patches)?

•Do you have logs, traces, and messages that are related to the problem symptoms?

•Can you recreate the problem? If so, what steps do you perform to recreate the problem?

•Did you make any changes to the system? For example, did you make changes to the hardware, operating system, networking software, or other system components?

•Are you currently using a workaround for the problem? If so, be prepared to describe the workaround when you report the problem.

**3.** Submit your problem to IBM Rational Software Support. You can submit your problem to IBM Rational Software Support in the following ways:

•**Online:** Go to the IBM Rational Software Support Web site at https://www.ibm.com/software/rational/support/ and in the Rational support task navigator, click Open Service Request. Select the electronic problem reporting tool, and open a Problem Management Record (PMR), describing the problem accurately in your own words.

For more information about opening a service request, go to
http://www.ibm.com/software/support/help.html

You can also open an online service request using the IBM Support Assistant. For more information, go to http://www.ibm.com/software/support/isa/faq.html.

•**By phone:** For the phone number to call in your country or region, go to the IBM directory of worldwide contacts at http://www.ibm.com/planetwide/ and click the name of your country or geographic region.

**Through your IBM Representative**: If you cannot access IBM Rational Software Support online or by phone, contact your IBM Representative. If necessary, your IBM Representative can open a service request for you. You can find complete contact information for each country at http://www.ibm.com/planetwide/.

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