



Tivoli Common Reporting Development and Style Guide

The purpose of the Tivoli Common Reporting *Development and Style Guide* is to provide information on how to create reports that meet the Tivoli® Common Reporting (TCR) guidelines and integrate well into the Tivoli Common Reporting software. (Nov 2007)

From a forthcoming article to be published on www.ibm.com/developerWorks



IBM Tivoli is delivering the **Tivoli Common Reporting** software, aiming to provide customers with a reporting solution that is shared across the Tivoli portfolio and can be used by Tivoli, business partners, and customers as a base for increasing the value of solutions built around Tivoli products.

TCR provides a software component, report definition guidelines, and report templates that can be used by Tivoli products, business partners, and customers. These guidelines enable consistency in report styles and report generation, providing a common look and feel; they also help you create reports quickly and easily. Using product-supplied reports as the starting point, you can easily create customized extensions that fit into the overall reporting system and meet your specific needs.

This article is a quick overview of the steps necessary to develop reports that smoothly integrate into Tivoli Common Reporting.¹

Required Tools to Create Reports

The *Style Guide* reviews the set of tools required for creating or customizing reports, as well as information about technical references (books and Web sites). It also documents along the required prerequisite software, including Java and Eclipse versions.

An important subject discussed in the *Style Guide* is the use of data sources to create your reports:

*BIRT reports can be generated for a wide variety of data sources, including log files, CSV files, and XML files. The most common data source is a relational database, accessed using a Java ODBC (JDBC) driver. BIRT supports JDBC 3.0. In order to design a production report, you must have the proper database driver already installed.*²

A vital source of Tivoli Reporting information is the site where this article is published, the TCR Web site on IBM developerWorks (<http://www.ibm.com/developerworks>). This site will be used to communicate additional style guidelines, reporting templates, and “hints and tips” articles you can use when creating new reports.



Tivoli Reporting Style Guidelines

The *Development and Style Guide* provides a set of reporting guidelines for basic visual aspects of reports, including font sizes and styles, colors, and spacing:

*The reason to define these styles is to create a similar look and feel for all of the reports that use these style guidelines. This enables the layout of different reports (including product-specific reports, business partner reports, and customer-defined reports) to have a consistent look. Consistency makes reviewing and understanding the information within the reports easier for users, especially for new or infrequently used reports.*³

Company Branding | Tivoli, IBM

Report titles | Report Title, Secondary Report Title

Parameters |

Parameter 1	R2D2,C3P0, Hann	Parameter 1	R2D2, C3P0, Hann
Long Parameter 2	2003-12-10	Long Parameter 2	2003-12-10
Longer Parameter 3	2000-07-29	Longer Parameter 3	2000-07-29
Parameter 4	Pipes and elbows	Parameter 4	Pipes and elbows
Parameter 5	Old work box	Parameter 5	Old work box

Information Section | Sub-Title Text Sentence Style

Legend text

Status	Header	Header	Header
Critical	Lucy	100	Emprie strikes back
Warning	Ben	200	Revenge of a jedi
Normal	Katie	4	I, Robot
Unknown	BJ	6	Hunt for red october

Sub-Title Text Section 2

Status	Header	Header	Header
Critical	Ben	100	Daughty
Warning	Owen	200	Pink
Normal	Lucy	4	Weird Al Yankovic
Unknown	Lynette	6	Big Bad Voodoo Daddy

Description | Description text goes here. This is stuff to fill out for those who want to see stuff. Man, it is getting late and I'm writing about stuff again. Maybe this is the stuff that goes between stuff or in stuff. Who knows where this stuff is coming from to fill up this area.

Footer | 2007-03-27 23:02 EST, Page 1 of NN

Figure 1

As shown in **Figure 1**, the *Style Guide* details some of the basic reporting elements and their placement; these elements include headers and footers, titles, descriptions, and parameters used to generate reports. In the main section of any report, the information section, the guide provides guidelines on chart types, colors, tables, and forms that are commonly used in reporting. These guidelines are illustrated with sample report layouts.



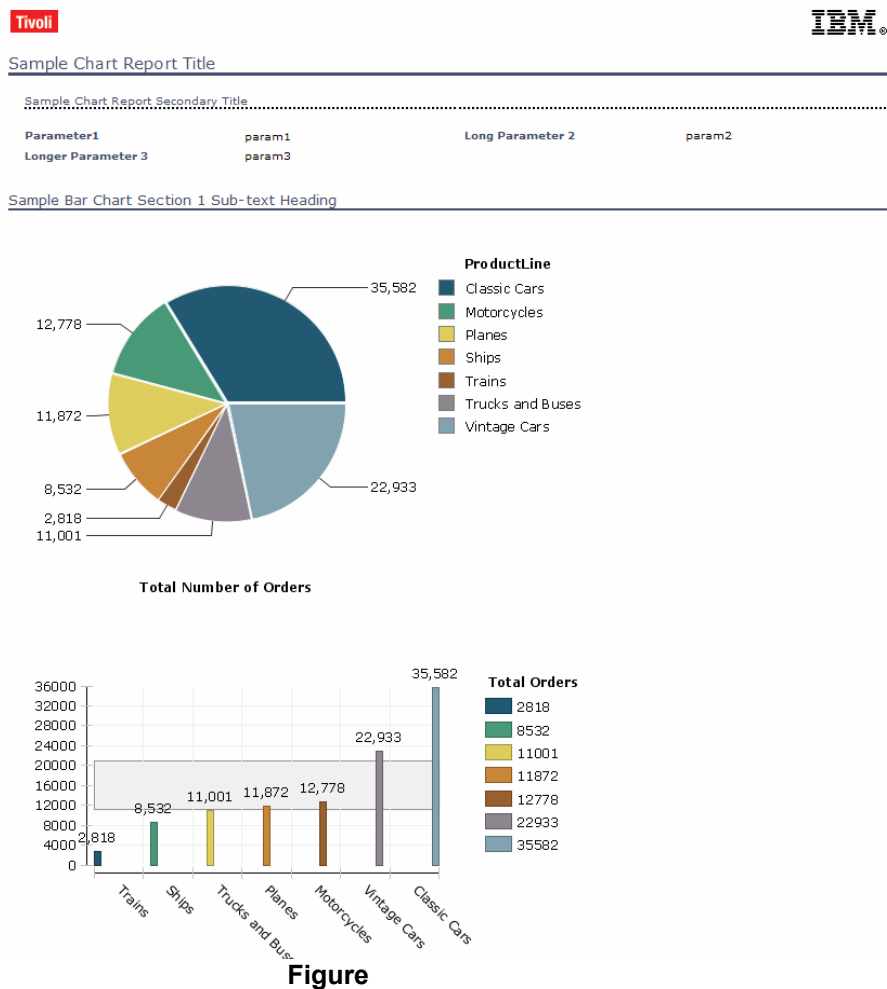
Creating Reports using the *Development and Style Guide*

The *Style Guide* details how to use the Tivoli Common Reporting style package to build reports and report packages that can then be imported into Tivoli Common Reporting.

The style package contains reporting libraries, templates and samples that have been designed to follow the style guidelines. The style guide explains how to import the style package into the BIRT report designer.

The TCR library includes report parameters, report items, and themes using all of the recommended formatting styles. Each of these reporting elements (parameters, items, and themes) is detailed extensively in the *Style Guide*.

The style package also includes a set of TCR report templates you can use to produce some of the most common types of reports, such as table reports, grouped table reports and chart reports. An example of a report built using one of the templates is shown in **Figure 2**.





Reporting Best Practices

The Best Practices section of the *Style Guide* provides recommendations that can help you avoid problems and make your reports more usable. These recommendations include the following:

- How to organize your projects and libraries to avoid naming collisions or conflicts with resources such as images.
- How to globalize your reports. This includes setting up globalization within the BIRT report designer, as well as how to globalize HTML text strings, report titles and descriptions, and report element names.
- Guidelines for report data sources, JNDI naming conventions, and data sets. These guidelines can help to simplify changes that might be needed later.
- How to use timestamps most effectively within charts and tables.
- Best practices for using charts.

These guidelines were developed in collaboration with Tivoli visual designers and should be helpful in creating or customizing reports for Tivoli Common Reporting.



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[1,2,3, Figure 1 & 2] *The IBM Tivoli Common Reporting Style Guide*, publication information.