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Introduction to nVision

PeopleSoft nVision
♦ Welcome to the PeopleSoft nVision for General Ledger training course. We have designed this course to guide you through PeopleSoft nVision, a powerful and flexible spreadsheet based financial reporting tool that you can use within the PeopleSoft applications. Along with nVision basics, this course introduces several advanced topics such as Report Labels, nPlosion, Scope, Summary Trees and DrillDown.

♦ PS/nVision is an end user reporting tool that is both a Windows and web-based application. PeopleSoft 8.x delivered the ability to run and view PS/nVision reports via the web, while maintaining the Windows based designer.

♦ Operating inside of Microsoft Excel, PS/nVision uses information retrieved by PeopleSoft Query as the data source for its reports and uses the intersections in the Excel spreadsheet as a base when creating reports. PS/nVision combines the mathematical and formatting features of Excel with advanced reporting features such as scope, variables, and labels.

♦ As a reporting tool, PS/nVision is multifaceted. Because this reporting tool is so complex, it is highly recommended that you be familiar with PeopleSoft, Excel, Trees, and PeopleSoft Query.
nVision Basics

Objectives

- By the end of this chapter, you will be familiar with the basics of PeopleSoft nVision. We will review the basic components of PeopleSoft nVision, including:
  - Defining TimeSpans to specify what period(s) you want to report on
  - Defining a layout
  - Defining a report request.
  - Running an nVision report
Time Spans

- TimeSpans are used in PeopleSoft General Ledger to provide you with a method to easily select and retrieve ledger balances for use in allocations, inquiries and PeopleSoft nVision reporting. The TimeSpan controls the number of periods for which data is extracted from the ledger table and summarized. Many TimeSpans are expressed relative to the current period, so that they automatically adapt the content of a report to the As of Date specified when the report is executed. Others are defined for specific periods.

- Examples of TimeSpans that you may use are PER, to retrieve only activity for the period selected, or YTD, to include year-to-date amounts for the items selected. You could also use a TimeSpan named BAL to retrieve life-to-date amounts for balance sheet accounts.

- The calendar on above page is used to validate Absolute periods and years that you enter for a TimeSpan. These periods and years must exist on the calendar that you specify on this panel. Balance Forward amounts and Adjustments are each stored in special calendar periods, therefore, they must be specifically retrieved in TimeSpans. Balance Forward amounts are stored in Period 0 while Adjustments are stored in Period 998.
When you open nVision, Microsoft Excel opens as well and you are presented with the NVSUSER macro sheet. This worksheet is designed to be customized for each nVision user.

Note the additional drop-down menu options specific to nVision:
- nVision: Options and Tasks specific to Layouts, Report Requests, Scopes
- Drill: Drill Options specific to the Report intersection of column and row
There are three key components to the nVision report definition process which we will cover in detail in this chapter. They are:

- **Layout**
- **Scope**
- **Report Request**

The relationship between these components is illustrated above.

**Pre-requisite:** Nvision must be set properly on the client in order for Nvision reports to work on the workstation. Microsoft Excel must be installed on the client as well. A chart of accounts, and the current tree structure of all account rollups and entities are mandatory.
All nVision layouts are classified as either matrix or tabular layouts. The major difference between these layout types is how they specify the data to retrieve.

- Matrix layouts have data selection criteria associated with each column and each row in the spreadsheet, creating a criteria matrix. The data retrieved for an individual cell is determined by combining the criteria for its column and its row.
- Tabular layouts use a standard query to retrieve data. The columns in the report correspond to the fields selected by the query; the rows display the query result set.

In general, matrix layouts are more appropriate for summarized reporting while tabular layouts lend themselves to detailed reporting. For example, if you want to create a high-level income statement showing total revenues, total expenses and net income, you would create a matrix layout. On the other hand, if you want to see a listing of all the journals from your Payroll system, you could create a tabular layout to do this.

In this class we will focus on summarized reporting using matrix layouts. However, tabular layouts will be covered briefly in a later chapter.

The layout is a kind of template for defining how a report will look and what type of information will go into the different cells of the spreadsheet. A layout can be used by several reports. It does not contain financial data from the database. You specify the links, or criteria, that will map the desired data directly into your report from the database at run time.
nVision Basics – Creating a Matrix Layout

Creating a Matrix Layout – Types of Information

There are four common types of information you may want to include in your layout:

- **Text and Excel Formulas**: As with any spreadsheet, you may type text in any cell. Text is typically used for report headings, titles, labels, etc. You may also use any Excel formula to perform calculations on your spreadsheet data. Formulas can be used to foot or cross-foot columns or rows, compute variances, calculate ratios, and so forth. Refer to the Microsoft Excel Users Guide for complete information on available formulas.

- **Report Labels**: nVision also has a Report Labels feature that enables you to automatically place labels in a cell, based on fields in your database (such as an account description (DESCR) field). This is covered later in the course.

- **nVision Variables**: nVision variables are generally inserted into a report layout as part of heading information. Because the value of these variables is determined at run time they are best used for information which might change from report run to report run. Examples include reporting date, the Operator ID of the person running the report, the name of a period, the name of a business unit requesting the report, and so forth.

- **Establishing Criteria**: Through criteria you specify the data you wish to extract from your PeopleSoft database and where to place it on the report. The criteria is entered in rows and columns; each intersection of row and column criteria defines a data element to be retrieved. An intersection typically contains the following elements of criteria:
  - The Ledger you wish to access or the name of the PeopleSoft Query which describes the table and fields you wish to access.
  - The TimeSpan you wish to include (optional with queries).
  - The Field value(s) you wish to appear on the report (optional with queries).
Creating a Matrix Layout - Checklist

- This is the blank sheet that you will see. The blank sheet has 2 things that you should notice. First column “A” is hidden. Second, Row “1” is hidden. This is where nVision places it’s people code. Do not place any text in these columns and rows.

- Begin by determining what are nVision Criteria and Excel text and formulas. Have a rough diagram of what you want the final report to look like: column and row headings, excel formulas, etc. You can have nVision retrieve column or row headings for you, or you can type in the text you want.

- You can add the formulas after you add the nVision criteria.

Checklist for Creating Reports

- The following checklist will be helpful if you have trouble getting started or loose track of the sequence of steps required to define an nVision report.
- Outline report specs on paper showing desired rows, columns, and headings.
- Clone an existing layout, if possible, instead of starting from scratch.
- If you desire multiple report instances, define a scope.
- Determine the naming convention for your layout, scope, request and instances.
- Determine at which levels (worksheet, column, row, or cell) you should specify the Ledger(s), TimeSpan(s), and Field(s) you want to use as your criteria.
- Identify existing Trees that may support your field criteria and use them instead of specifying detail values. Can you use nPlosion?
- Enter your text, formulas, variables, and criteria.
- Define your report request.
- Run your report.