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# Mississippi Management and Reporting System

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Department of Finance and Administration

MMRS MASH/Training Materials		
4101	MERLIN Analyst Training Manual	Effective Date: 10/2003
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**MERLIN Analyst Training Manual**  
**MERLIN Impromptu Overview**  
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## What is Impromptu?

Impromptu is a business-driven interactive query and report building tool available to MERLIN data inquirers. Its intuitive user interface makes it easy to:

- ◆ Select the type of information you need
- ◆ Build reports using data in Mississippi databases without learning SQL (Structured Query Language).
- ◆ Create any standard or ad hoc report



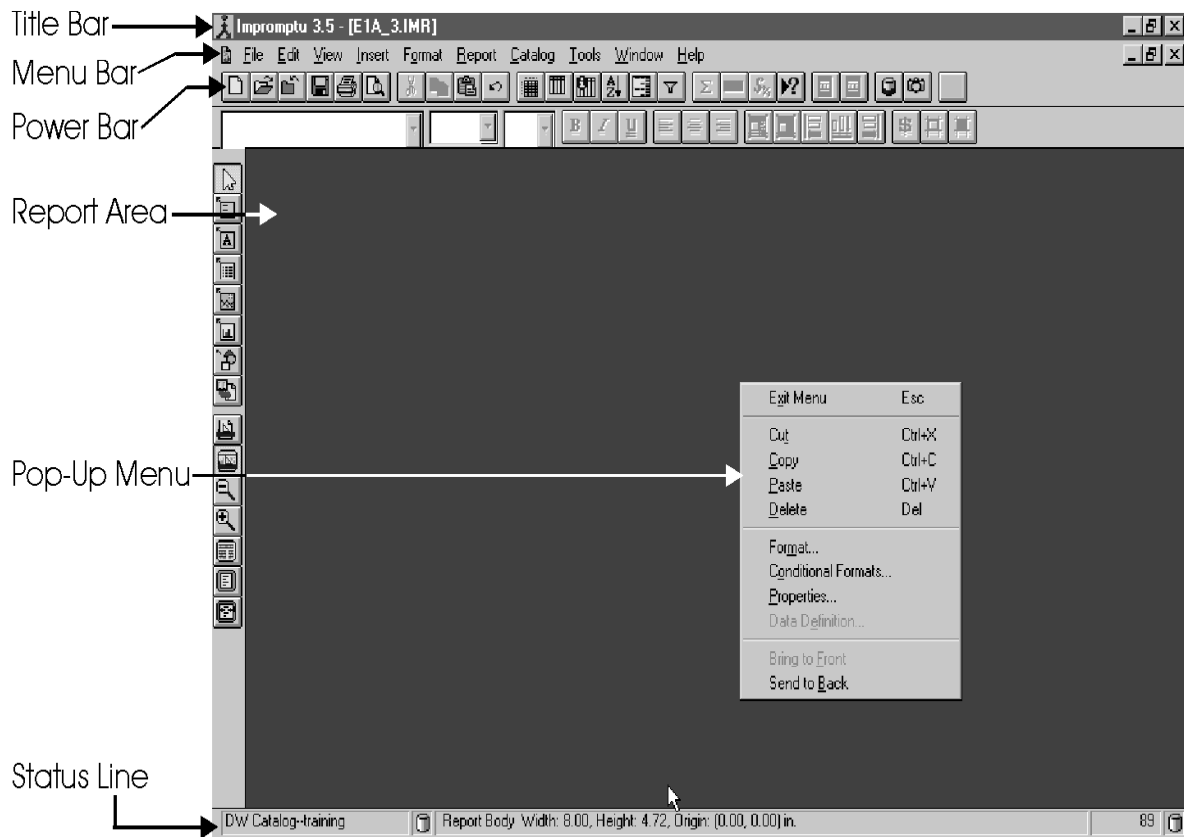
A *standard report* is a structurally complete report that contains columns of commonly- requested information. When a standard report is opened, a screen appears prompting the user to fill in variables for specific information.

An *ad hoc report* allows a user to pick the columns to appear, the groupings, the filters and the format.

## The Impromptu Interface

The Impromptu environment is what you see on your screen--the Report Area as well as the Title Bar, Menu Bar, PowerBars, Status Line and Pop-Up Menu.

- ◆ **Title Bar** - contains the name of the window and the maximize, minimize, and restore buttons
- ◆ **Menu Bar** - contains headings for pull-down menu items
- ◆ **PowerBars** - provide easy access to frequently-used commands
- ◆ **Report Area** - contains the body of the report
- ◆ **Status Line** - tells you which catalog is open and the database you are connected to
- ◆ **Pop-Up Menu** - provides quick access to commands that are related to the PowerBars



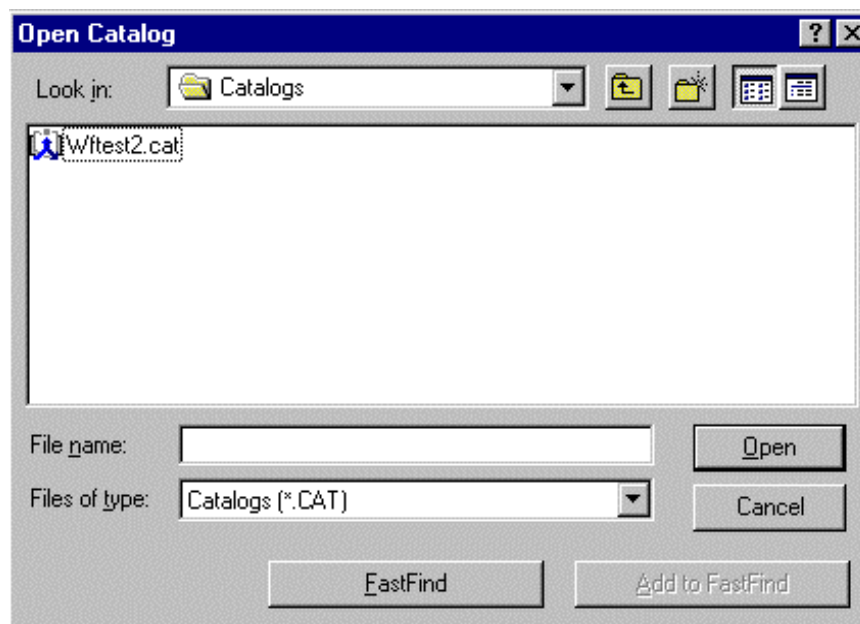
## Accessing an Impromptu Catalog

A catalog contains all the information necessary for Impromptu to access and retrieve information from the data warehouse. It contains information about what database to access, where the database is stored, and how the tables in the catalog are joined.

When the catalog was created, each table in the catalog was displayed as a folder that contained the table's columns. The contents were then modified and reorganized. The organization of the catalog now reflects your business view rather than a data view. Folders were created in the catalog with the most-used items. Folders contain columns from multiple tables and have been renamed with more intuitive names.

### To open a catalog

- ◆ When you initially start Impromptu and attempt to create a new report, you are automatically prompted to open a catalog.
- ◆ If you open an existing report, the catalog associated with that report opens.
- ◆ You can open or close a catalog with the Catalog/Open or Catalog/Close commands.



## Connecting to Impromptu

To access the database, you must select the appropriate catalog and enter login information.

- ◆ Select the appropriate catalog



The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Catalog Logon for WFTEST2.CAT". It is divided into two main sections: "Catalog" and "Database".

- Catalog Section:** Contains a "User class:" label with a dropdown menu currently set to "User", and a "Password:" label with an empty text input field.
- Database Section:** Contains a "User ID:" label with an empty text input field, a "Password:" label with an empty text input field, and a checked checkbox labeled "Connect to the database".

On the right side of the dialog, there are two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel".

- ◆ Choose *User* from the User Class drop down menu
- ◆ Tab to Database login information in the *Catalog Login* window and enter Userid and Password (not necessary if you have previously connected to the database).
- ◆ Choose *OK*.

Once you have logged in to a catalog, you will remain logged in until you close Impromptu.

# What is an Impromptu Report?

An Impromptu report is a view of the current data in the Data Warehouse that is organized and formatted in a meaningful way. The data used in reports depends on the data that can be accessed from the catalog. Once you select the necessary data you want from the warehouse, Impromptu updates the report with the most recent data every time you open it. A report can contain several types of frames such as chart frames, picture frames and text frames.

**Expenditures by \$ Report**  
**Budget Year: 2002**  
**Accounting Month: 01, 02, 03**  
**Agency Group Name: FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**  
**Amount >= 1000**

Agency Nm (SAAS)	Agency Nbr (SAAS)	Accounting Year	Accounting Month	Allotment Period	Fund Number	Appr Unit Nbr	Major Obj Code	Minor Obj Code	Fund Grp Type	Bud Funct
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	087	2002	01	1	2087	2087	A1	60010	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2087	2087	A1	60110	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2087	2087	A1	60120	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2087	2087	A1	60130	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2087	2087	A1	60140	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2087	2087	A1	60150	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2089	2089	A1	60010	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2089	2089	A1	60010	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2089	2089	A1	60010	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2089	2089	A1	60010	G	J
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	087	2002	01	1	2089	2089	A1	60010	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2089	2089	A1	60010	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2089	2089	A1	60010	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	2089	2089	A1	60010	G	J
	087	2002	01	1	3080	3080	A1	60010	S	J

## Accessing Online Help

You can find answers to questions you have about Impromptu by accessing the online Help. Help is a fast and easy way to keep your work moving along smoothly. There are various ways to access the online Help.

- ◆ Online Help is available through the Help menu or by pressing the F1 key.
- ◆ Most dialog boxes have a Help button that will display context-sensitive Help for that dialog box.
- ◆ Context-sensitive help is available for any PowerBar button.
- ◆ Status line messages display automatically in the status line of the window.

