

Building a Better UI With Data Aquarium Framework

Data Aquarium Framework has introduced a new feature that allows developers and designers to affect presentation of data fields in grid and form views.

Generated applications are using a default theme for a consistent and efficient presentation. There will situations when you need to customize some screens without affecting the entire application. Consider the following illustration.

New		Actions		View: Products				
Product Name	Supplier Company Name	Category Name	Quantity Per Unit	Unit Price	Units In Stock	Units On Order	Reorder Level	Discontinued
Sir Rodney's Scones	Specialty Biscuits, Ltd.	Confections	24 pkgs. x 4 pieces	\$10.00	3	40	5	No
Gustaf's Knäckebröd	PB Knäckebröd AB	Grains/Cereals	24 - 500 g pkgs.	\$21.00	104	0	25	No
Tunnbröd	PB Knäckebröd AB	Grains/Cereals	12 - 250 g pkgs.	\$9.00	61	0	25	No
Guaraná Fantástica	Refrescos Americanas LTDA	Beverages	12 - 355 ml cans	\$4.50	20	0	0	Yes
NuNuCa Nuß-Nougat-Creme	Heli Süßwaren GmbH & Co. KG	Confections	20 - 450 g glasses	\$14.00	76	0	30	No
Gumbär Gumbärchen	Heli Süßwaren GmbH & Co. KG	Confections	100 - 250 g bags	\$31.23	15	0	0	No
Schoggi Schokolade	Heli Süßwaren GmbH & Co. KG	Confections	100 - 100 g pieces	\$43.90	49	0	30	No
Rössle Sauerkraut	Plutzer Lebensmittelgroßmärkte AG	Produce	25 - 825 g cans	\$45.60	26	0	0	Yes
Thüringer Rostbratwurst	Plutzer Lebensmittelgroßmärkte AG	Meat/Poultry	50 bags x 30 sausgs.	\$123.79	0	0	0	Yes
Nord-Ost Matjeshering	Nord-Ost-Fisch Handelsgesellschaft mbH	Seafood	10 - 200 g glasses	\$25.89	10	0	15	No

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By default all columns values in the grid view are aligned horizontally to the left. You might want to have *Unit Price* column values aligned to the right and *Discontinued* flag to be centered.

Add a CSS stylesheet with default name to `~/App_Themes/MyCompany` folder and enter the following text in its body.

```
table.DataView tr.Row td.UnitPrice,
table.DataView tr.AlternatingRow td.UnitPrice
{
    text-align: right;
    padding-right: 4px;
    background-color:Yellow;
    color:red;
}
```

}

```
table.DataView tr.HeaderRow th.UnitPrice a
```

{

```
    color:Blue;
```

}

```
table.DataView tr.Row td.Discontinued, table.DataView tr.AlternatingRow
```

```
td.Discontinued
```

{

```
    text-align: center;
```

```
    background-color: #CCFFCC;
```

}

The first *CSS* rule definition will ensure that *Unit Price* column values are displayed on a yellow background, aligned to the right with a four pixel padding, and red font color.

The second rule will make a link in the header of the column *Unit Price* to be of blue color.

The third rule centers text and changes the background color of the *Discontinued* column.

This is a list of products.

New		Actions		View: Products				
Product Name	Supplier Company Name	Category Name	Quantity Per Unit	Unit Price	Units In Stock	Units On Order	Reorder Level	Discontinued
Chai	Exotic Liquids	Beverages	10 boxes x 20 bags	\$18.00	39	0	10	No
Chang	Exotic Liquids	Beverages	24 - 12 oz bottles	\$19.00	17	40	25	No
Aniseed Syrup	Exotic Liquids	Condiments	12 - 550 ml bottles	\$10.00	13	70	25	No
Chef Anton's Cajun Seasoning	New Orleans Cajun Delights	Condiments	48 - 6 oz jars	\$22.00	53	0	0	No
Chef Anton's Gumbo Mix	New Orleans Cajun Delights	Condiments	36 boxes	\$21.35	0	0	0	Yes
Grandma's Boysenberry Spread	Grandma Kelly's Homestead	Condiments	12 - 8 oz jars	\$25.00	120	0	25	No
Uncle Bob's Organic Dried Pears	Grandma Kelly's Homestead	Produce	12 - 1 lb pkgs.	\$30.00	15	0	10	No
Northwoods Cranberry Sauce	Grandma Kelly's Homestead	Condiments	12 - 12 oz jars	\$40.00	6	0	0	No
Mishi Kobe Niku	Tokyo Traders	Meat/Poultry	18 - 500 g pkgs.	\$97.00	29	0	0	Yes
Ikura	Tokyo Traders	Seafood	12 - 200 ml jars	\$31.00	31	0	0	No

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How does it work?

Presentation of the grid is rendered in a client browser by *Web.DataView* component that can be found in `~/Scripts/DataView.js`. The presentation rendering code adds a field name to the list of classes on corresponding table cells of the view. Your custom CSS stylesheet can provide rules to take advantage of these classes.

It is important to name the stylesheet in such a way that it will be the last stylesheet of your application theme.

Here is a snippet of HTML generated for the sample page if you view the page source.

```
<head>
    .....
    <link href="App_Themes/MyCompany/Aquarium.css" type="text/css"
        rel="stylesheet" />
    <link href="App_Themes/MyCompany/StyleSheet.css" type="text/css"
        rel="stylesheet" />
    .....
</head>
```

Our stylesheet with default name *StyleSheet.css* follows the standard style sheet that comes with [Data Aquarium Framework](#). This ensures that our CSS rules are going to override or extend those defined in the standard stylesheet.

Similar features are available in form views. If you need help in figuring out correct rules then please post a comment on this blog or drop us a line at <http://www.codeontime.com/contactus.aspx>.