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**EDITORIAL OFFICES**

SYS-CON Publications, Inc.

39 E. Central Avenue, Pearl River, NY 10965

Telephone: 914 735-7300

Fax: 914 735-6547

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**FROM THE EDITOR**

By John Olson, Editor-in-Chief

# For the Sake of Quality



As I'm writing this editorial, Sybase is preparing to ship PowerBuilder 7.0. Right on schedule...actually, it was easy to hit the target because the target was six months wide. Sybase's public announcement was that PB7 would be released within the first half of 1999. Providing such a broad date range might sound funny to you but I give kudos to Sybase for not being more specific.

Over the last several years Sybase development tools have received good ratings for features, but frequent criticism for the quality of point releases. They've been criticized by many people, including me, for releasing versions of PowerBuilder before they were ready. It seemed they had a policy that meeting the publicly declared dates were more important than releasing stable products. The motto "We will sell no wine before its time" didn't apply.

The wailing and gnashing of teeth were heard by the Sybase decision makers. This time they wisely chose quality as the gauge by which they would determine the readiness of the products. Rather than being driven by an artificially selected date, they have been silently waiting for their products to be ready. With the ship date imminent they still haven't made a public announcement.

I'm only speculating, but I think they wanted to make a statement to the industry saying that not only do they create products that will meet your needs, but they are products that you can trust. This is good news for the 400,000 PowerBuilder users around the globe. However, the real test will take place in the first few weeks after PB7 ships. From my vantage point it looks like it will be a much more stable release than we've seen in the recent past.

Another positive note is that Sybase personnel seem to have a little hop in their step and more whistling is heard at the development campuses these days (probably to the tune of "Whistle While You Work"). They're very excited about the products they're about to ship.

**It Pays Off**

Software product reviewers have been a little cool toward Sybase products for the last few years because the products haven't been exciting, flashy or sexy (don't ask me how to make a software development tool sexy). However, EAServer and EAStudio have once again captured their attention and the positive reviews are starting to roll in. The reviewers are realizing that while PowerBuilder itself is still the leader in client/server development, it is becoming a valued Web development tool as well. They are also noticing that EAServer is a very, very good server. EAServer 2 was good, but EAServer 3 is something to brag about. So Sybase is starting to brag via big ads in popular magazines. People are starting to realize that EAServer 3 might just be the best application server available today.

**Name Confusion?**

Does "EAS" refer to Enterprise Application Server or Enterprise Application Studio? Unfortunately, both. Sybase usually refers to them as "EAServer" and "EAStudio" but sometimes they abbreviate them as "EAS." On the street the use of "EAS" is rampant. Just so you know:

- Enterprise Application Server is a component transaction server and an HTML page server.
- Enterprise Application Studio is a suite of development tools including PowerBuilder, PowerJ and a development version of EAServer.

**PBDJ**

In the April and May issues our focus has been entirely on PowerBuilder 7, EAStudio and EAServer. Though in future months we might focus on other topics, the majority of this magazine will continue to be about those products. Next month we're going to take a look at standards as well as technical support for Sybase products. Then, in preparation for Sybase's TechWave conference in Orlando in August, our July issue will be focused on training. Not only will we list all the training opportunities available, including regional conferences and seminars, but we'll even review some of the Web-based and computer-based training. In this month's Sybase column you can get a glimpse of what's to come because they list the new Sybase offerings intended to help bring you up to speed on the many new features, products and technologies.

Unfortunately, by the time we publish the July issue several important training events will have already passed. Just so you don't miss out on them, here are a few that are coming soon:

- Sybase Web Development Seminar is a free one-day seminar touring major North American cities in May. It will teach you how to build a full-featured Web application that supports e-commerce. I highly recommend attending. For more information go to [www.sybase.com/events](http://www.sybase.com/events).
- The 1999 Great Lakes PowerBuilder + Training Conference will be held in Columbus, Ohio, May 24-26, and will feature key speakers Steve Benfield, Larry Cermak, Dean Jones and me. For more information go to [www.cmhpbbug.com](http://www.cmhpbbug.com).
- PowerTutorPlus is a popular training conference in London, June 7-8. Popular speakers, including Bill Heys, will be there to give you hard-core technical training. For more information visit [www.pbbug.co.uk](http://www.pbbug.co.uk). ♦