

Extending Blaise capabilities in complex data collections

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Westat Visual Survey (WVS) was developed to support some longitudinal CAPI studies with deeply nested hierarchical data models. It uses a standard Blaise data model with an additional language field text to combine the Blaise rules engine with Blaise Component Pack API calls to navigate through the complex rostering. The paper will address some benefits and issues with that approach. As a web application, WVS was able to separate the presentation from the rules engine, and backend SQL database storage. Extending navigation outside the rules engine poses some challenges. We will discuss other lessons learned including managing the development life cycle with portions of the product in multiple platforms, maintaining compatibility with Blaise versions, and developing automated testing procedures.