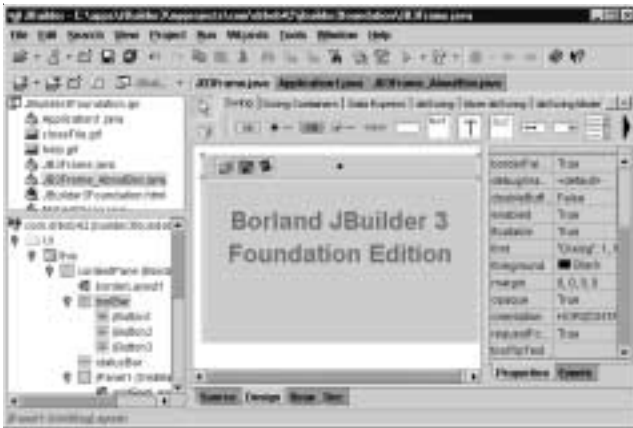


# Mr HAKI's JBuilder Jar

## Borland JBuilder 3 Foundation Edition

by Hubert Klein Ikkink



Borland released JBuilder 3 Foundation Edition at the beginning of December 1999. This is the standard Java IDE from Borland, which will be the basis of new JBuilder releases. The Foundation Edition (FE) is written completely in Java 2 and available in a Windows, Linux and Solaris version. We can download FE from Borland's web site for free(!).

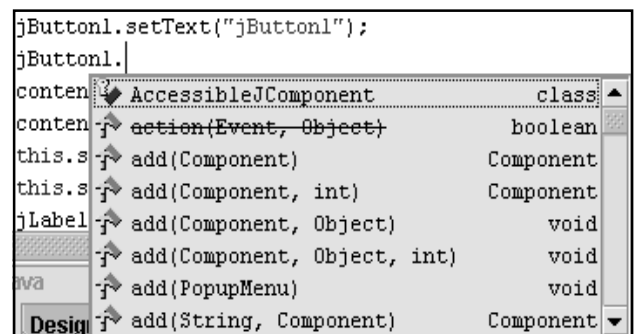
If you have ever used Borland JBuilder before, you will feel right at home with this version. The first thing we notice is the new look-and-feel of the product. Because the Java Swing classes are used we can also change the look-and-feel on the fly. The layout of the main window is still the same. At the top of the screen we see the menubar and toolbar for easy access to functions. The left of the screen contains a navigation and structure pane. The navigation pane shows, for example, the files in a project. The structure pane shows the structure of a Java source file, a visual design, HTML files, and many more. The biggest part of the screen is occupied by the main pane. Here we can work on our Java source, start the Visual Designer and look at documentation. We don't see the Component Palette all the time, as we would with previous versions of JBuilder (and Borland Delphi), but only when we have selected to start the Visual Designer. The standard Java Swing and AWT components are available on the Component Palette. The Borland developed components for accessing databases are not available in the Foundation Edition. These components will be available in the Professional and Enterprise Editions of this new JBuilder.

The Foundation Edition is - what's in a name ? - the foundation for future releases of JBuilder. This means not all the functionality of a Professional or Enterprise edition is available. The menus, wizards and components are shown, but disabled. We have to wait (and pay) for versions, which will enable these features. One of the features, which sadly enough doesn't work, is JDK switching. So for now we are stuck to JDK1.2.2 with Foundation Edition.

But that doesn't mean it is useless (far from it). For writing Java applications, applets and servlets with the standard Java APIs, Foundation Edition will be enough. Applet and application wizards are available, we can use the Visual Designer for easy user interface creation, use the debugger and of course the source editor. Since Borland JBuilder 2, we

have had code completion and FE contains the same code completion with extras. The code completion has been improved and makes it very easy to write Java code. The method and argument list function is especially useful. How many times did we have to start the help, because we didn't know the exact name of a method, or the arguments we had to use? With code completion, we simply select the method from a list, because JBuilder will show all available methods for a class in a pop-up window. Argument lists are shown as tooltips with the method declaration. Even on-the-fly syntax checking is performed. So we can see if we have forgotten a semi-colon, for example, before we compile the source.

JBuilder 3 FE also contains code templates. Delphi users will recognise this feature: we only have to type in the name of the code template and JBuilder will write the rest of the code. For example, we can type `ife` in our source code, press `Ctrl+J` and JBuilder will write a complete if-else statement with brackets and new lines. The Foundation Edition contains pre-defined templates we cannot change (Professional and Enterprise Editions will allow us to change templates).



The help system is written in Java and HTML. We can see all help topics, search for keywords or do a context sensitive search.

I have evaluated the Windows and Linux version of JBuilder 3 Foundation Edition. Both versions work and look exactly the same, so it is really platform independent. We have to install the JDK1.2.2 release candidate version for Linux (so it's not a final version) to make it work, but after the install it works fine.

Borland have succeeded in creating a cross platform Java IDE, which works the same on the Windows, Linux and Solaris platform. And it is free! The code completion features of the source editor, the Visual Designer, wizards and other features make it a great IDE. It certainly beats working with text editors and the command-line JDK tools.



*Hubert A. Klein Ikkink is a knowledge engineer for TAS Advanced Technologies in The Netherlands. He's a true Java/JBuilder expert, and co-webmaster/contributor for Mr.Haki's JBuilder Machine at <http://www.DrBob42.com/JBuilder>.*