

Random Plug-in

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This manual describes the use of the *Random* Plug-in for thinkDB™ 2.0. For more information on thinkDB 2.0 and other thinkDB Plug-ins, please visit <http://www.thinkingbytes.com>. For information on additional thinkDB Plug-ins created by PDA Bytes, please visit <http://www.pdabytes.com>.

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1. thinkDB Plug-in Overview

A thinkDB Plug-in is simply an add-on program that fills a specific purpose in thinkDB. As such, they extend the functionality of thinkDB. For example, there is currently (as of thinkDB 2.0) no means to concatenate 2 Text fields together. If you have a tinyByte™ with a FirstName Text field and a LastName Text field, there is no facility for joining them together (concatenation) and having them appear as one field of "FirstName LastName" (or "LastName, FirstName"). A Plug-in can fill this void.

2. *Random* Overview

The purpose of the *Random* Plug-in is to generate a random number between a "constant" minimum and a "constant" maximum. The greatest range of random numbers that this plug-in can generate is 1 - 32767. Attempting a number outside of this range will not work. Finally, be aware that this plug-in uses the Palm OS built-in SysRandom function which is a pseudo-random algorithm and as such is not suitable for any type of application that requires very random numbers (such as strong cryptography). It is suitable for such things as "dice rolling", "card drawing", etc.

3. Installation

There are a couple of ways to install a thinkDB Plug-in (or any Palm OS application):

- a. Double-click the .prc file to be installed.
- b. Select Install from within Palm Desktop and choose the .prc file.

In both cases, the Palm™ Install Tool will then present a dialog to continue installation. After doing a HotSync®, the Plug-in will be installed into thinkDB and is ready for use. To verify that it was installed correctly, launch thinkDB on your handheld, choose Tools/Plug-in Manager from the thinkDB application menu. Tap the arrow beside "Plug-In:" and you should see the Plug-in listed. If not, repeat install instructions. If you do see it listed, it has been installed.

In addition to installing the actual Plug-in, it is important to install the special "Upgrade.prc" file. This is a special Plug-in that will be used when upgrading to different versions of thinkDB Plug-ins. If you have already installed this file once, it is not necessary to install it again.

4. Un-installing

To remove a Plug-in from thinkDB, first remove the Plug-in from all fields in all your tinyBytes. If you do not, you will encounter problems and could potentially corrupt data. Once you have removed all references of it from your tinyBytes, choose Tools/Plug-in Manager from the thinkDB application menu. Tap the arrow beside "Plug-In:", tap on the Plug-in you wish to remove, then tap the "Delete..." button.

5. Usage Overview

Before configuring any Plug-in, you must first create the fields that the Plug-in requires for both input and output. The input for this Plug-in is two integer fields. The output is a single integer field and a checkbox field. (Descriptions of these input and output fields follow.) After creating these fields, continue with the instructions for configuring the Plug-in to utilize these fields.

a. Upgrading from a previous version:

If you are upgrading from a previous version, the following is some special information to help you avoid problems. Before attempting to configure the Plug-in fields (step b. below), it is necessary to "un-configure" the Plug-in. To do this, please do the following steps:

1. From the Field Editor, select the small box to the right of the field you have previously selected as the Plug-in field.
2. From the Plug-in list, select *Upgrade* and press the OK button.
3. Select the small box to the right of the field you have selected as the Plug-in field.
4. Proceed with step b. 2. below

b. Configuring Plug-in fields:

1. From the Field Editor, select Field Type thinkDB Plug-in from the Field Type list. Selecting the small box to the right will open the Field Properties dialog.
2. From the Plug-in list, select *Random*. Three fields will appear, "Minimum", "Maximum" and "Results in:".
3. For the minimum and maximum values, you may either choose integer fields which contain the desired range of values or you may enter a constant value for each.
4. Selecting the small box to the right of "Results In" will allow you to choose the field for storing the random value, as well as the checkbox field that will be your indication if the *Random* Plug-in has successfully run.

c. Running the Plug-in:

There are 2 methods for having any Plug-in perform its duties:

1. Place the "plugged-in" field onto a form and tap it.
2. "Apply" the Plug-in from the "Filtered Operations" screen (which is one of the menu options that appears by tapping on the "tool" icon).

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