Sneaky Sorting Dichotomy   *Centura* Tip!

SQLWindows

16 / 32

SQLBase

R.J. David Burke—When the Sorted attribute for list boxes and combo boxes is set to Yes, Windows will automatically sort the list items using a "telephone book" sort. With this kind of sort, apostrophes (') are ignored and the sort is case insensitive. For example, add the following names to a list box or combo box with Sorted set to Yes:

O'Brien
O'Malley
Oakes
Oldman

and they'll appear in this order:

Oakes
O'Brien
Oldman
O'Malley

Now consider putting this data in a SQL database, such as SQLBase. For example, execute the following SQL statements using SQLTalk:

```
CREATE TABLE PEOPLE
(
   LAST_NAME VARCHAR(20) NOT NULL
)
/

INSERT INTO PEOPLE (LAST_NAME) VALUES (:1)
\
Oakes
O'Brien
Oldman
O'Malley
/

SELECT LAST_NAME
   FROM PEOPLE
   ORDER BY LAST_NAME ASC
/
```

and the names are returned in an ASCII sorted order based on all characters including the apostrophe:

O'Brien
O'Malley
Oakes
Oldman

This sorting behavior was also confirmed in Oracle. Just another thing to be aware of when building applications. For consistency, consider doing all of your sorting on either the server or the client, but not both.