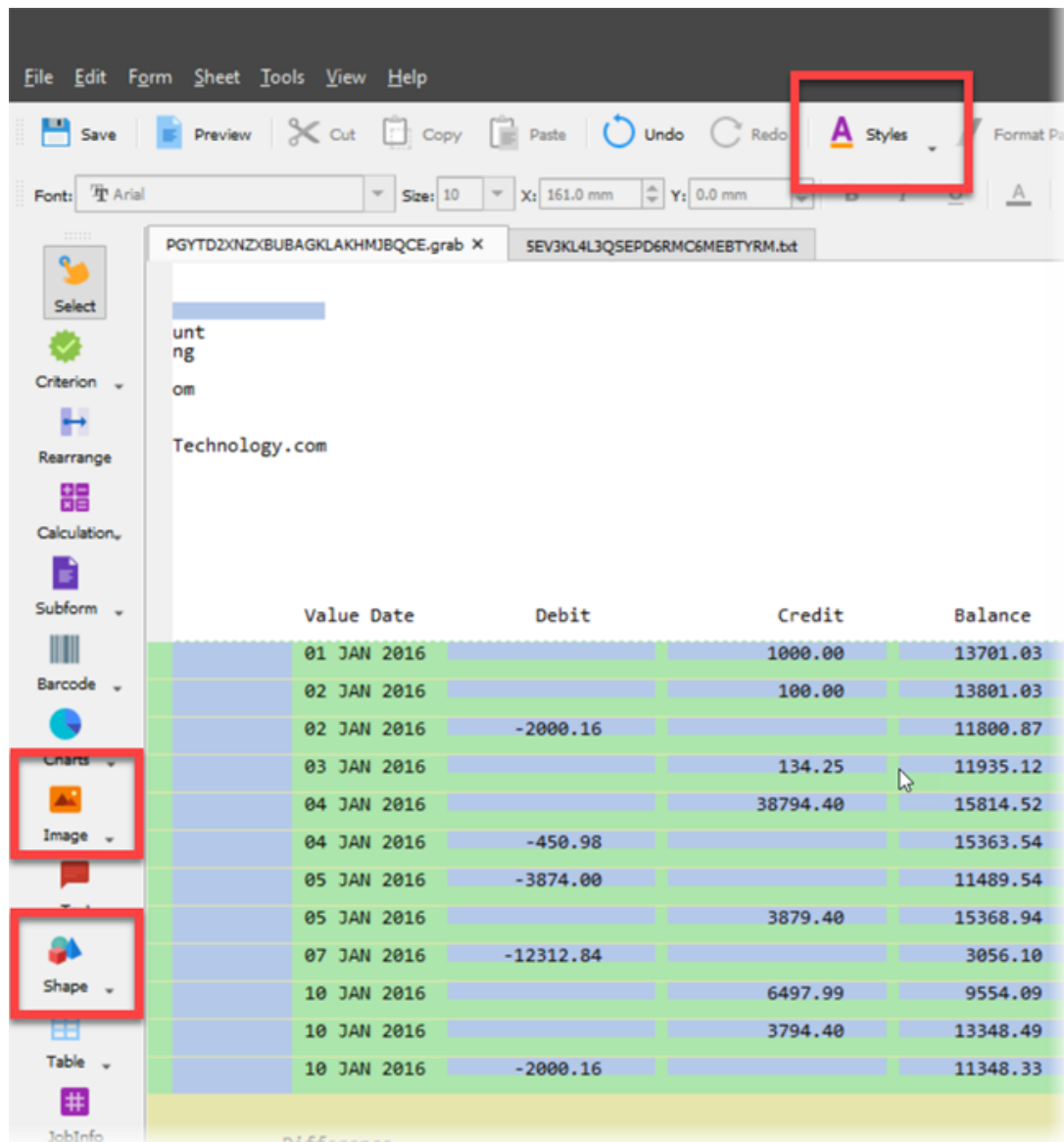## The Lasernet Shape tool and the benefits of Overlay-free forms

Alex Clemons - 2021-03-26 - Comments (0) - Lasernet General Information

With the release of Lasernet v7 came the introduction of the shape tool which allows for lines, tables, rectangles and rounded rectangles to be easily created in Lasernet forms.

Version 8 introduced new advanced styles and formatting options. These options allow for styles to be consistent throughout forms so that there can be fewer variations in fonts and therefore reducing font information stored in documents.

By using a combination of the Shape tool, Style options and the Image tool, the majority of overlays can be recreated within Lasernet. Overlay free documents have a number of benefits, some of which are listed below.

Benefits of overlay free forms

The major benefit is greatly reduced file sizes compared to documents generated with an overlay. This means that:

- documents will be generated faster as there is less data to process
- after generation, documents will pass through the rest of the Lasernet process faster as there is less data
- there is increased document throughput efficiency

If documents are being emailed or archived, they:

- take up less storage space

- be faster to transfer as there is less data to transfer
- will reduce network load

Changes to existing forms are easier and quicker, because:

- changes can be made dynamically without the need for external applications
- there are no external files so Overlay files cannot be lost

Example

The image below shows an example of two documents created in Lasernet. One has been created using an overlay and the other has been created using the built-in Lasernet form tools and style options.

With the exception of minor design amendments, the two documents are almost indistinguishable from each other. All data is displayed consistently, regardless of overlay or overlay free output.

Overlay-free vs Overlay

The major advantage here is the resulting file size. The document created using an overlay was 57kb compared to 12 kb for the overlay free version - a 77% reduction in output file size.

In practice, this would mean that if Lasernet generated and stored one million overlay-free documents, a total of 45GB of space would be saved compared to creating a document with overlays. A significant saving for such a simple change.

If you would like some assistance in redesigning your Lasernet forms to take advantage of the benefits listed above, please contact Formpipe Support to discuss how to best make them work for your requirements.