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user interface

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Technologiepark 3, B-9052, Zwijnaarde, Belgium
www.biogazelle.com

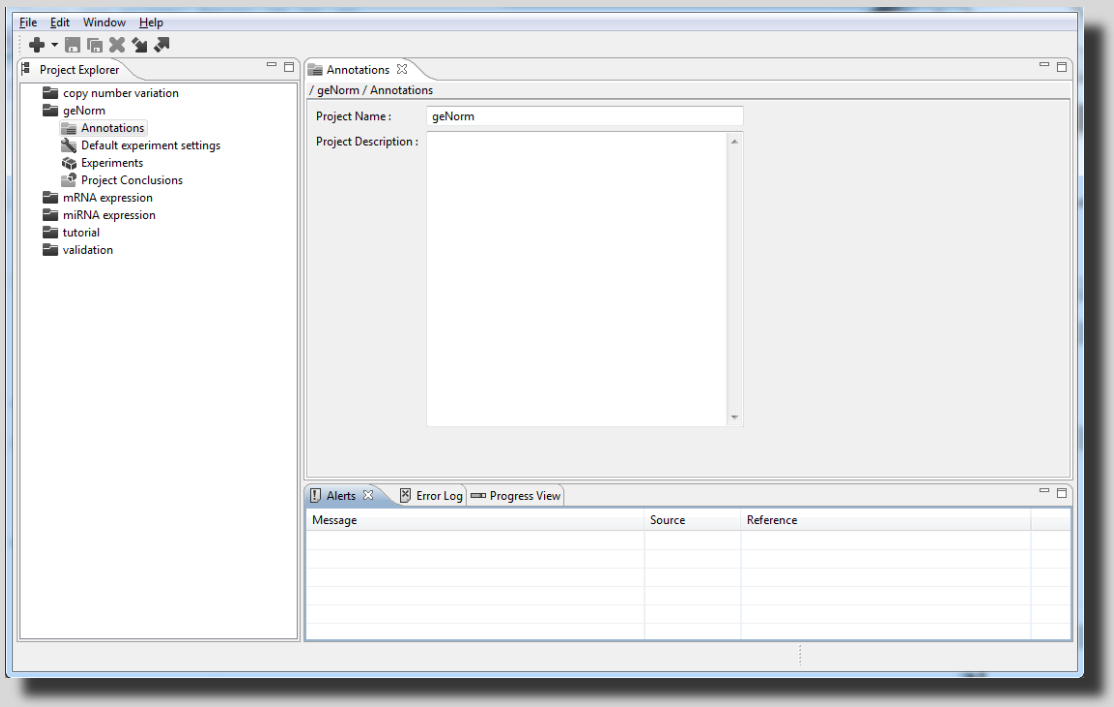
Subject

qbase^{PLUS} is a multi-window application with great flexibility in terms of screen organization. This chapter explains how to work with the qbase^{PLUS} user interface.

Summary

qbase^{PLUS} consists of three main windows: the Project Explorer (left window), the Main Window (upper right window) and the Notification Window (lower right window). The Project Explorer allows users to browse to the information they want to work on. Opened items will show up in the Main Window. Many windows can be opened next to each other. Tabbed windows can be dragged and dropped next to an open item to place several items next to each other in the Main Window. By default, qbase^{PLUS} automatically recalculates results whenever the user changes a setting or adds data. Therefore multiple open windows can be very practical to immediately evaluate the effect of such changes. A single window can be made to fill the entire Main Window by double clicking its tab. The Notification Window contains several tabs that inform users about lengthy processes, warnings and the occurrence of program errors.

Figure 1 – Three main windows in qbase^{PLUS}



Detailed information

qbase^{PLUS} is a multi-window and multi-tab application with great flexibility in terms of screen organization. The program consist of three main windows: the Project Explorer (left window), the Main Window (upper right window), and the Notification Window (lower right window) (Figure 1).

The Project Explorer

The Project Explorer is a hierarchical data organizer that allows users to navigate through the experiments, settings and results. The items in the Project Explorer tree can be opened by double-clicking, or by selecting 'open' from the context menu (this menu appears when clicking the right mouse button after placing the cursor on top of the item). This window can be minimized to get more screen space by clicking (-) in the upper right corner of the Project Explorer window, or by making use of the context menu ('Minimize') when right-clicking on the tab. The 'always on' situation can be restored by clicking ( ). An alternative way of working is to display the Project Explorer whenever it is needed, and to have it hidden otherwise. This can be achieved by clicking ( ); as soon as an item of the Main Window is selected, the Project Explorer disappears.
The width of the Project Explorer can be controlled by moving the mouse on the border between the Project Explorer and the Main Window (after which the pointing arrow becomes a horizontal arrow), followed by dragging the border.

The Main Window

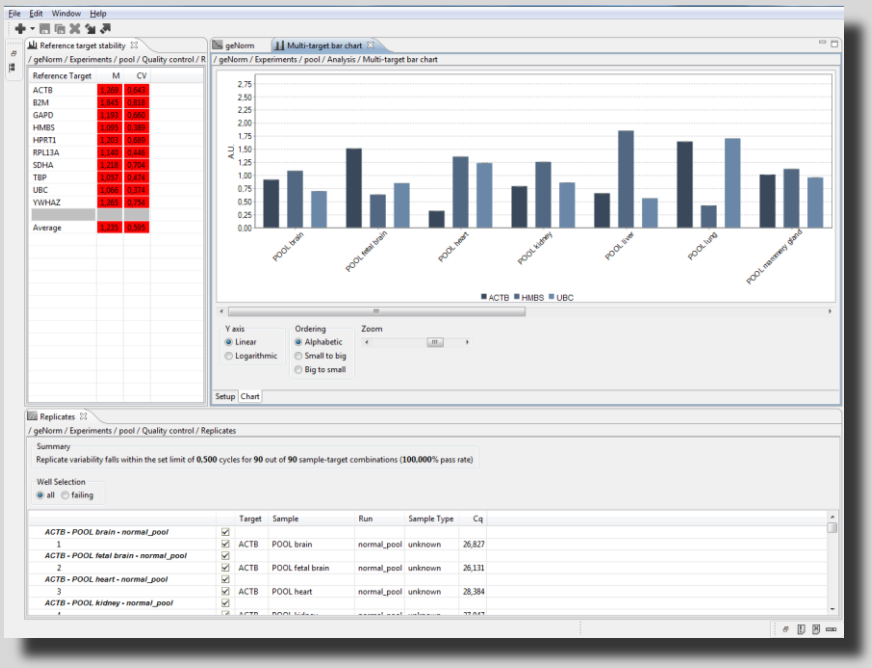
When an item is opened from the Project Explorer, it will show up in the Main Window. Double-clicking a tab will maximize this window, and the situation can be restored by double-clicking the tab again. As an alternative, ( ) and ( ) can be used, respectively.

Tabs can be dragged and dropped from one window to another window. Tabbed windows can also be placed next to (or under) each other, by click-dragging the tab until the 'multiple tabs' icon turns into a solid black arrow (Figure 2).

By default, qbase^{PLUS} recalculates everything immediately (intermediate and final results, quality controls, and specific analyses) as soon as something changes in the data or settings. Therefore multiple open windows may prove to be quite practical for evaluation of the effect of changed settings.
For large datasets (>10,000 wells), it is recommended to disable automatic recalculations in order not to lose time upon recalculation of every minor change. The option to prevent automatic recalculations is accessible in the Preferences window. Without automatic calculations, a recalculate button will appear in the qbase^{PLUS} toolbar ( ), which needs to be clicked to execute the calculations.

Items can be closed by clicking on the close tab symbol (x), which appears when moving the mouse cursor on top of a tab, or by making use of the right-click context menu. The context menu also contains other features like "Close All", "Close Others" and "New Editor". The latter can be used to duplicate items in the Main Window. Just like the Project Explorer, the Main Window can be minimized to get more screen space.

Figure 2 – Combining multiple windows (3 windows are open in the Main Window)



The Notification Window

The Notification Window informs about the progress of calculation intensive steps and the occurrence of program warnings and errors. Several items (Alerts, Progress View, Error Log) can be added to this window (in the main menu bar, go to: Windows > Show View).

The Alert window gives clues on potential problems in the experiment design or data-analysis, e.g. no reference targets are appointed, targets are spread across runs (necessitating inter-run calibration), technical PCR replicates are spread across runs (not allowed in qbase^{PLUS}), etc. By inspecting the Alert window, many problems can be quickly resolved.

In the Error Log window, a small menu is accessible (top right) in which the user can set the information that has to appear in the Log list ( )(Figure 3). Log files can also be exported ( ). A new window will appear in which the file name and destination folder can be indicated. In case of problems, these error logs can help Biogazelle to track the cause.

Figure 3 – Exporting error log