**Project Siena
Beta3 Release Notes**

Beta3 Release Notes

The supported platform for running Siena Beta3 is Windows 8.1 (x86 or x64) Pro or Enterprise editions.

The supported platforms for running generated apps is Windows 8.1 Update 1 (x86, x64, ARM).

While Project Siena supports multiple resolutions, the recommended resolution is 1080p (1920x1080).

For more information, help, and resources visit us at <http://microsoft.com/projectsiena>.

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# How to Install

Thank you for your interest in the Siena Beta3 release. Please install the latest version from the Windows Store or navigate to the app directly using this link: <http://aka.ms/GetProjectSiena>

Go ahead and get started!

## Siena prerequisites

Prerequisites for installing Siena:

1. The current release of Siena is only supported on client SKUs (Pro and Enterprise) of Windows 8.1 RTM. An error will be reported if you try to run Siena on other unsupported SKUs.
2. To run published apps, you must have Windows 8.1 Update 1 installed. See KB2919355 for more information: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/2919355/en-us>

The complete installation instructions and overview can be found here: <http://technet.microsoft.com/library/951afcfc-a88c-419a-9cd8-66e778fb9e12>

# Online Help

You can find many help articles detailing how to use Siena available online: <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/projectsiena>

# Things to remember when using Siena

The following are a few aspects to keep in mind when you’re developing your apps using Siena.

## Long-running, resource-intensive processes

Windows 8.1 ensures that apps play well with each other. Siena is a Windows 8.1 app. Even though Siena itself is lightweight, you could wind up consuming a lot of system memory when you are working with apps that import a lot of data or assets (e.g. images or video). You won’t encounter any issues as long as you’re actively working with your app. However, if you switch to a different app, Windows 8.1 might shutdown and restart Siena to free up resources. You *will* lose all unsaved changes when this happens. So, please save frequently when you’re working with resource-intensive apps.

## Reserved column names

You cannot use the following strings as column names for your tables, irrespective of whether the data is in AMS, SharePoint, Excel or REST: “\_ID”, “ThisItem”, “true”, “false”, “in”, “\_src”, “Color”, “BorderStyle”, “Direction”, “Font”, “Style”, “ImagePosition”, “Layout”, “PenSelection”, “Shape”, “PenSmoothing”, “RemoveFlags”, “ScreenTransition”, “SortOrder”, “Align”, “OpenAjax” or “Transition”.

These strings have been reserved for system use.

For SharePoint lists, you cannot use “sp\_ID”, since this column name is internally used by SharePoint for assigning unique IDs per list row.

## Column types in Excel data

In Excel tables, unless otherwise specified, all columns are of “General” type. You can force a more specific type for a column by following these steps:

1. Browse to the first row of the table.
2. Select the entire column (including the heading) you want to specify the type for by clicking the column tab.
3. Pick a type from the drop down on the “Home” tab under the group “Number”. The default is “General”.

When importing Excel data into Siena, user-specified column types are maintained. Discrepancies might arise due to the fact that Excel does not enforce the user-specified types, whereas Siena does. For example, even if a user has set the column type to “Number”, Excel still allows string values (say “xyz”) in the cells. As a result, when such a cell is imported into Siena, it gets converted to null since the value cannot be converted to a number.

For columns whose type is “General”, we perform simple analyses on all the values in the column to infer a parent type that can then be enforced for the data:

1. If all the data in a column is of a particular type, we infer that type for the column.
2. If the data in a column is of different types, we default to a parent type. For example,
	* Parent type for date, currency and number is number.
	* Parent of number and string is string.

String is the overall parent we default to when values of incompatible types are found in a column. For example, if a column contains numbers and Booleans, we infer the parent type as string.

# Known Limitations & Restrictions in Beta

As you will see when using Siena, it can already be used for creating valuable apps end to end. There are a few known limitations and restrictions in Beta.

## Beta doesn’t support SharePoint Online

The Project Siena (Beta) release does not support SharePoint Online. Retrieving data from on premise SharePoint lists is the supported method of importing SharePoint data.

## Yammer/Enterprise Service Authentication

When using enterprise authentication for services like Yammer, you may get “An error occurred during authentication” error message. If you’ve double checked your credentials and are still seeing the issue, you may have encountered rare issue where your IT department is running mixed mode backend authentication (internet, then redirecting to intranet).

As a work around, instead of using your full email (e.g., your\_name@yourenterprise.com), you can attempt to bypass the internet-to-intranet redirection by using an invalid email, such as not\_valid\_email@yourenterprise.com.

If that doesn’t work, please contact your IT department for help adding the authenticating internet servers to your intranet sites zone. Additionally, your IT department can make further ADFS configuration changes. See this article for more information: <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/magazine/jj631606.aspx>

## Size restrictions when importing Excel data

In the current release of Siena, we have imposed the following size restrictions on the amount of data that can be imported per Excel table:

* Number of rows: 15,000
* Number of columns: 100

If you attempt to import larger tables, you will get a warning message “Excel data sources support at most 15,000 rows and 100 columns. Only the first 15,000 rows and 100 columns of data for those tables will be imported”.

## Custom gallery recommendations

### Nesting

The CustomGallery control allows users to nest or group their data. However, due to the flexibility afforded, it is also easy to unintentionally create cross joins, thereby adversely affecting performance of the system. Since Siena is a Windows 8.1 app, it will get shut down by the operating system if its usage of system resources spikes and affects other processes.

As a rule of thumb, you should filter the data that gets bound to CustomGallery instances to under 1000 records. So, if you have nested CustomGallery instances, you should also make sure that data bound to both, the outer and inner instances, are filtered, such that the product of the number of outer records and the average number of inner records is less than 1000.

### Certain visuals may cause issues, performance degradation in custom gallery

Video control bound to YouTube, Slider, and Rating controls may cause performance degradation when used in a custom gallery visual bound to many data rows. Possible mitigations can be to design the app in a way that doesn’t require a lot of controls in the custom gallery, or to cap the number of data rows used in the custom gallery using the FirstN function.

As for YouTube videos, the recommendation is to put the video control outside the gallery and bind its Media property to Gallery1!Selected!myColumnContainingTheYoutubeURL.

### Video, Audio Visuals

Video and Audio controls placed in a gallery may pause unexpectedly when scrolling. It is not recommended to play multiple Video or Audio visuals at the same time.

As with YouTube videos, the recommendation is to put the video control outside the gallery and bind its Media property to Gallery1!Selected!VideoURL.

## Install InstallApp.exe Issues

When attempting to install a published app, InstallApp.exe may experience a deployment failure if you do not have the most recent version of WinJS 2.0 installed. To update your version of WinJS install Project Siena from the store (<http://aka.ms/getprojectsiena>) or install Windows 8.1 Update 1. See KB2919355 for more information: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/2919355/en-us>

## Video, Audio, Timer: Removed DefaultPaused

In Beta3 we have removed the DefaultPaused property for Video and Audio controls. Instead, we have introduced two new properties: AutoStart and AutoPause. AutoStart will automatically begin playback, and AutoPause will automatically pause playback when navigating away from the screen. To programmatically stop and start the Video and Audio visuals, you can use the new Start property. When Start is true, the visual will play. When start is false, the visual will stop.

When opening a Beta2 document in Beta3, you may have to fix rule errors related to the updated properties.

## Publishing using local resources

In general, it might be desirable to fetch the data and assets (images, audio, video, etc.) for your app from the cloud or enterprise SharePoint instances. However, you might encounter scenarios where you would like to provide the assets[[1]](#footnote-2) locally within the app such that it does not require a connection to your enterprise network to function. To achieve this perform the following steps:

1. Copy your assets to the following locations on your systems.
	1. Image assets: C:\Users\{username}\Pictures
	2. Video assets: C:\Users\{username}\Videos
	3. Audio assets: C:\Users\{username}\Music
2. From within your app, you can now access these assets by specifying the path above.
3. You are now ready to publish with local resources:
4. Bring down the app bar by right-clicking anywhere on the canvas, or by swiping down.
5. Select File > Publish.
6. Check the “Download and include images, video, and other media from Excel and SharePoint data sources” option.
7. Click Publish.
8. In the file picker, select the location you would like to publish the package to. Select “Choose this folder” and then select “Ok”.

You can also use the Insert Pictures feature (under App Data option on the app bar), and then perform step C above.

The published app can now be installed on any device. It will have all the required assets within the app itself, and won’t require network access to display them.

Note that only the Pictures, Videos and Music folders are supported for using local resources. If you use other folders, Siena will not load the desired files.

## Image not showing

When adding an image, the file extension for an image must match the image format, otherwise the image resource cannot be displayed. For example, a .jpg file must be encoded in jpeg format and not, for example, .png. You may want to check out the recommendations in 3.5 if the issue appears only in a published app.

## Insert pictures only works with local images

Insert Pictures can only import pictures stored locally on your machine. It will not work if you attempt to import images from a network location.

## Beta 2/Beta3 load data

*This section has been updated on 7/18/2014.*

Data exported/saved with the Export/Import visuals and SaveData/LoadData functions can successfully be brought forward from Beta2 to Beta3 without issue.

## Timer

### Improved Functionality

In Beta3 we have simplified and improved the Timer visual. The timer now runs with a fixed minimum interval of 100ms. That is, the timer will now always increment up to Duration milliseconds in 100ms increments. To start and stop the timer you can now use the data property **Start**. When true, the timer will run. When false, the timer will stop.

### AutoStart and OnStop behaviors

With AutoStart and a short interval, you may find that OnStop behaviors are firing as soon as you navigate to the screen. This may cause issues if you have a Navigate OnStop of a timer, as the timer will fire immediately and you will be subsequently unable to edit that screen. App authors should be careful when adding Navigate events to Timer’s OnStop for this reason.

## Apps produced by Siena cannot be published to Windows store “as is”.

Windows store integration is not supported for apps published by Project Siena (Beta). Apps can’t be published to the Windows Store “as is”.

## Internet connection requirement for apps

Apps published by Project Siena may show an error message on startup if they require an Internet connection but a connection is not available. After the error message the app will terminate.

## Usage of asynchronous predicates in rules

Due to the manner in which asynchronous predicates are evaluated, Siena cannot guarantee the result of rules that have side effects.

For example, the rule:

StdevP(T, countRows(saveData([{A:1},{A,2},{A,1}], "file" + row.A)))

May produce different results depending on which order the asynchronous calls (countRows and SaveData) are made.

## Resuming apps with a custom gallery may cause a crash

Published apps that have a custom gallery may not resume properly after being suspended. Starting the app again will resolve the problem.

## Slow startup in large apps

If a .siena file contains a lot of controls (either in a single screen or spread around multiple screens), loading it may take some time. Similarly, if a Siena app contains a lot of controls (either in a single screen or spread around multiple screens) the app startup may be slow. While Beta3 is a marked improvement over previous releases, we are still working to address the issue.

## Selection not working well on Lenovo Helix

On the Lenovo ThinkPad Helix device, Project Siena may spontaneously deselect visuals when the mouse is moved to the edge of the screen. This behavior is caused by a known incompatibility with the Lenovo Auto Scroll Utility on the device.

To resolve this problem, please uninstall the Lenovo Auto Scroll Utility using the following steps:

1. Open **Programs and Features** by swiping in from the right edge of the screen, tapping **Search** (or if you're using a mouse, pointing to the upper-right corner of the screen, moving the mouse pointer down, and then clicking **Search**), entering **Programs and Features** in the search box, and then tapping or clicking **Programs and Features**.
2. Tap or click **Lenovo Auto Scroll Utility**, and then tap or click **Uninstall/Change**.   You might be asked for an admin password or to confirm your choice.
3. Restart your PC.

## Importing Excel files containing hyperlink columns

When importing an Excel file that contains columns which are hyperlinks, we will only pull in the hyperlink URL and none of the metadata surrounding the link. Therefore in any column that is tagged as a hyperlink in excel, Siena will only pull in the hyperlink URL that the hyperlink and nothing else from the column.

## Opening \*.siena files across locales

Opening \*.siena files across locales is fully supported, but some expressions may require fix-ups. This behavior is due to the fact that sub-properties for visuals (e.g. Camera!Photo!URL), get localized and therefore as \*.siena files are opened in different locales than where the file was first authored, some of the rules may need to be fixed up for full functionality.

Also note, if a locale is changed while a Siena document is open the user will have to restart Siena for these changes to take effect.

## SharePoint authentication dialog

Owing to a security feature of Windows 8, switching applications (for example, ALT+Tab) while a SharePoint authentication dialog is active may result in the Windows Process Lifetime Management (PLM) unexpectedly closing Project Siena. To avoid having Siena or your published application close unexpectedly, it’s recommended to not switch applications while the Windows authentication dialog is active.

1. You can provide your data locally by exporting a snapshot from your enterprise data store to Excel, and then using the Excel workbook as the data source for your app. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)