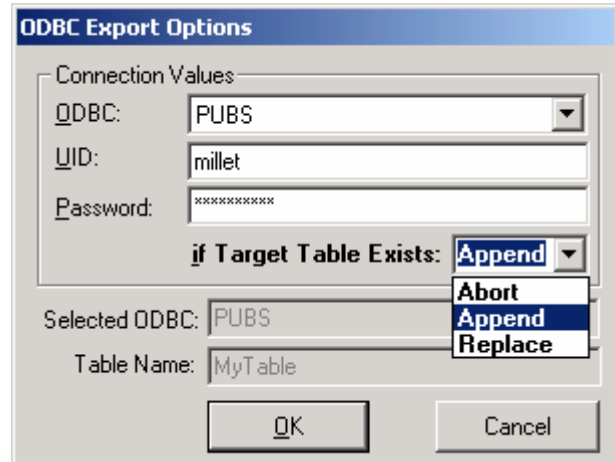# ODBC Export Functionality

Visual CUT (for Crystal 9 and above) provides ODBC Export options that are not available in Crystal alone. As shown below, the ODBC Export Options dialog allows you to select **Abort** (default Crystal action), **Append**, or **Replace** as the action when the target table already exists:

Note: the **Table Name** is controlled by the **Export File Name**. Since that option accommodates dynamic content, you can control the table name using fields/formulas in the report…

## Append Functionality

By selecting append, you can add data to an existing table. One use for this is for **recording snapshots of data over multiple periods of time**. For example, your database may show current inventory levels or current account balances but it is very difficult to generate a report that shows inventory levels or account balances at the end of each month for the last few years. By scheduling Visual CUT to run at the end of each month and append information reflecting the inventory levels or the account balances at that time, you enable easy tracking of that information over time. In Data Warehousing jargon, this is called a snapshot data warehouse.

Another use scenario is to record the fact that certain records were processed by Visual CUT and to avoid duplicate emails. For example, as orders arrived throughout the day, you can schedule Visual CUT to run every 5 minutes and email order confirmation messages to the customers. By appending to an ODBC table, you can record which orders have already been confirmed. Alternatively, you can use the **Skip_Recent** command line argument described in the section Avoiding Duplicate Processing on page: 37.

Another use scenario is to **Extract, Transform, and Load (ETL) data into a data warehouse or across data sources** without needing expensive ETL tools or consultants.

## Replace Functionality

A typical use for the Replace option is to **generate temporary tables for use by other processes or crystal reports**. For example, Crystal Reports can't aggregate other aggregate values (e.g., average group totals) and can't sort groups based on formulas that use aggregate values. However, you can create a batch file that calls Visual CUT twice: first to export a report with aggregate values to a temporary table and then to process a 2nd report that uses the temporary table as input.