Outlook Automation

Ted Roche

Ted Roche & Associates, LLC
http://www.tedroche.com

Essential Fox 2003

About the speaker

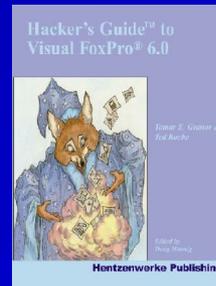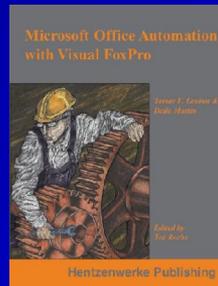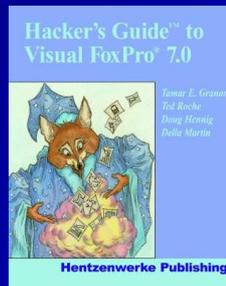- Developer, consultant, mentor, trainer, writer – TR&A LLC
- Most Valuable Professional x 8
- MCSD – VS6, MCSE – NT 4.0
- Author, Essential SourceSafe
- Co-Author, Hacker's Guide™ series
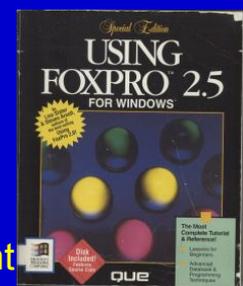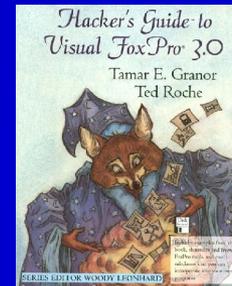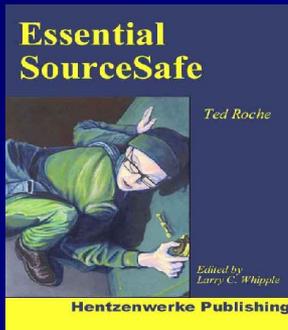
Automating Outlook with VFP

- How many Outlook versions are there?

- Outlook Automation four ways:
  - VFP drives Outlook
  - Outlook drives VFP
  - Drag and drop
  - Outlook events bound to VFP

- Practical Examples

Outlook Version-itis

- Outlook Express is not Outlook
- Outlook Corporate / Workgroup (C/W) different from Internet version (Help/About)
  - MAPI designed for C/W only!
- Outlook 97, 2000, XP (8,9,10) different
- Security Patches introduce new challenges

Security Patches

Security Patches

Security Patches

- Some settings can be modified in Exchange environments ONLY!
- Two 3rd party workarounds:
- Outlook Redemption $199 Extended MAPI
  - Many more capabilities, too!
- ClickYes $free

Models of Automation

- VFP Drives Outlook
- Outlook Drives VFP
- Event-Binding
- Drag-and-drop

Basics of Automation

- Outlook and VFP are objects
- Alter properties, invoke methods
- Study with Object Browser
- Register in IntelliSense
- RTFM – Help and MSKB ~98%, Google answers the last 2%

VFP Driving Outlook

- Programmer's in charge (Inmates)
- Can be performed in background
- "Classic" automation

Pros: We know what we're doing

Cons: We don't know what *they* are doing!

Outlook Driving VFP

- Outlook VBA Project or VBScript Form code calls VFP COM Server *or* VFP ODBC/OLEDB

Pros: Driven by user via Outlook

Cons: Dependent on Outlook VB*x* error-handling. Outlook form must be installed.

Event-Binding

- VFP methods fire as Outlook events occur

Pros: No need to poll or sleep

Cons: Tightly-bound and synchronous

Outlook → VFP Drag and Drop

- Ignore the drag contents, text
- Use the ActiveExplorer property of Outlook
- Explorers are the major interfaces
- (Inspectors are the little dialogs, like email)
- Outlook.ActiveExplorer.Selection has a collection of all of the selected object that were just dragged

Practical Examples

1. Send an email by driving Outlook from VFP
2. Extract email contacts from email
3. Log an email by driving VFP from Outlook
4. Fire VFP Code when Outlook gets an incoming email

Summary

- Different versions can determine appropriate solutions or limitations
- Different models of automation
  - VFP driving Outlook
  - Outlook driving VFP
  - Event-binding
  - Drag and drop
- Code solutions to fit the problem's needs

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