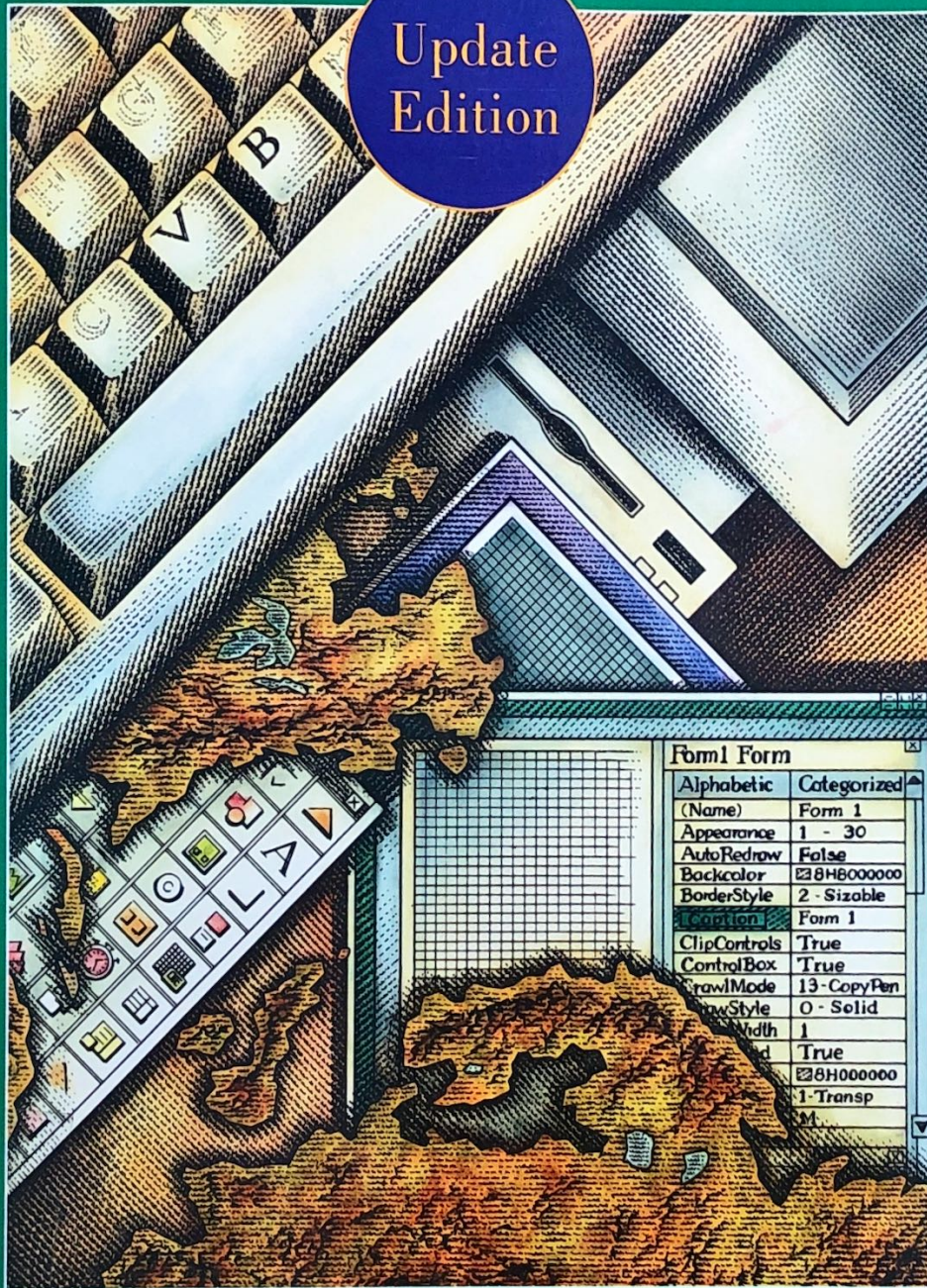


Programming in Visual Basic® 6.0

Update
Edition



Julia Case Bradley • Anita C. Millspaugh

Programming in Visual Basic

Version 6.0

Update Edition

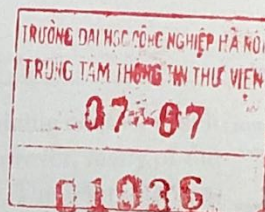
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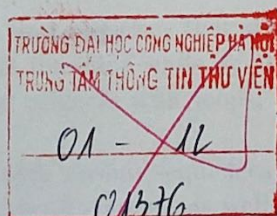
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Preface

As the world turns to graphical user interfaces, computer programming languages are changing to accommodate the shift. Visual Basic 6 is designed to allow the programmer to develop applications that run under Windows without the complexity generally associated with Windows programming. With very little effort, the programmer can design a screen that holds standard Windows elements such as command buttons, check boxes, option buttons, text boxes, and list boxes. Each of these Windows objects operates as expected, producing a "standard" Windows user interface.

Visual Basic is easy to learn, which makes it an excellent tool for understanding elementary programming concepts. In addition, it has evolved into such a powerful and popular product that skilled Visual Basic programmers are in demand in the job market.

About This Text

This textbook is intended for use in an introductory programming course, which assumes no prior knowledge of computer programming. However, many of the later chapters are appropriate for an advanced-level course. The later chapters are also appropriate for professional programmers who are learning a new language to upgrade their skills.

This text assumes that the student is familiar with the Windows operating environment.

Approach

This text incorporates the basic concepts of programming, problem solving, and programming logic, as well as the design techniques of an event-driven language.

Chapter topics are presented in a sequence that allows the programmer to learn how to deal with a visual interface while acquiring important programming skills such as creating projects with loops, decisions, and data management.

The later chapters may be used in various sequences to accommodate the needs of beginning and advanced-level courses, as well as a shorter quarter system or a semester-long course. For a shorter course, the professor may choose to skip the chapter on data files and cover only the first of the two database chapters.

New in This Edition of the Text

This updated edition of the text provides some new material and some reorganization. The biggest changes are:

- A new appendix introducing VB.NET, the next version of Visual Basic.
- The inclusion of ActiveX Data Objects (ADO) in the two database chapters: Chapters 11 and 12. The older-technology DAO controls were replaced with ADO.
- The addition of selecting and sorting Recordsets using the Find method and Filter and Sort properties in Chapter 12.
- The modification of the random file project in Chapter 10 to allow coverage without first covering Chapter 9.
- The addition of the Data Environment to Chapter 12, along with displaying related tables in a grid. SQL selection was removed from the chapter—postponed to the advanced text.
- The addition to Chapter 9 of a discussion of multitier applications.
- The addition of two case studies to each chapter.

Introduced in the Previous Edition

The features introduced in the Visual Basic 6.0 Edition have been retained. The text places an emphasis on the planning steps of project design to encourage students to develop good programming habits from the start.

The programs conform to Microsoft's newly published coding conventions, which define a three-character prefix for variable names to indicate data type.

The new formatting functions (`FormatNumeric`, `FormatCurrency`, `FormatPercent`, and `FormatDateTime`) simplify the formatting of output. And the new `Validate` event and `CausesValidation` properties simplify the validation of input data.

The advanced techniques chapter (Chapter 15) includes sections on creating an MDI project with parent and child forms, as well as creating shortcut menus.

Students and instructors will appreciate the appendix, "Tips and Shortcuts for Mastering the VB Environment." This reference brings together many helpful tips that can save a programmer significant amounts of time.

The instructor materials include suggested coding standards and masters of forms for project planning that can be reproduced and distributed to students. The solutions to all exercises are available to instructors for download on the Web.

Introduced in Visual Basic 6

The upgrade from Visual Basic version 5 to version 6 is significant, but not as great a change as the upgrade from version 4 to version 5. The major changes allow developers to use VB for Web page development and perform more robust data management.

VB version 6 introduces new formatting functions to simplify formatting output for display or print. Many new string and numeric functions are also introduced, as well as the new Validate event for input controls and the CausesValidation property for most controls.

Introduced in Visual Basic 5

Visual Basic 5:

- Runs much faster than previous versions and incorporates more features required for professional application development. VB5 is now competitive with C++ for object-oriented program development.
- Incorporates many helpful new features in the editor, making it easier for beginners as well as advanced programmers to enter and edit code. For example:
 - Drag-and-drop editing for moving and copying lines.
 - Pop-up lists of available data types when declaring variables.
 - Pop-up lists of allowable properties and methods for controls.
 - Tips showing formats and arguments for functions and statements that appear automatically as you enter program code.
- Is easier to debug than previous versions. For example:
 - Data tips, similar to tooltips, display the current contents of variables, properties, and expressions, and pop up when you point to the expression during break time.
 - You can easily set breakpoints in code by clicking in the margin of a statement.
 - During break time, you can drag the highlighted line to set the next statement to execute.
- Includes many new controls. For example:
 - Many ActiveX controls for programming on the Web.
 - A new Web Browser control that allows you to retrieve and display Web pages in an application.

Chapter Organization

Each chapter begins with identifiable objectives and a brief overview. Numerous coding examples as well as hands-on projects with guidance for the coding appear throughout. Thought-provoking feedback questions give students time to reflect on the current topic and to evaluate their understanding of the details. The end-of-chapter items include a chapter review, questions, programming exercises, and four case studies. The case studies provide a continuing-theme exercise that may be used throughout the course.

Chapter 1 walks the student through the creation of a first Visual Basic project, incorporating command buttons and labels. The programming environment is introduced along with the concepts of objects and their related properties, methods, and events. Students are taught to create a new folder and store their project inside the folder.

Chapter 2 continues coverage of controls, including text boxes, option buttons, check boxes, frames, images, lines, and shapes. It also covers some of the finer points of using the environment and working with keyboard access keys, multiple controls, and alignment. The color constants are used at this point to lead the novice programmer into Chapter 3, which introduces variables and constants. The text includes naming conventions to make the scope and data type of a variable or constant easier to determine from the coding syntax. Standards also provide for the use of `Option Explicit` to force the declaration of all variables and constants.

Chapter 4 introduces the relational and logical operators and their use with the `If` statement. Input validation and message boxes are also covered. In Chapter 5 students learn to set up custom menus and to write their own sub functions and sub procedures. Multiple forms, global variables, and standard code modules are presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 incorporates list boxes and combo boxes into the projects, providing the opportunity to discuss looping procedures and printing lists of information. The list concept leads logically into the use of variable arrays and control arrays in Chapter 8.

Chapter 9 introduces the terminology of object-oriented programming and provides a step-by-step tutorial for creating a new class, instantiating objects of the new class, creating a collection class to hold references to the objects, and displaying and modifying objects from the collection. It also introduces the concepts of multitier applications.

Chapter 10 covers both sequential and random files, but the material may be covered in sections.

Chapters 11 and 12 deal with the use of Visual Basic as a front end for database programming. The projects display and update tables created by a database application such as Microsoft Access. Chapter 12 includes using a data-bound grid, error trapping, and the Data Environment.

The drag-and-drop feature of Windows programming is introduced in Chapter 13. This chapter normally brings great enthusiasm from students as they learn to deal with the source and target objects. The examples and assignments provide a blend of practical and just-for-fun applications. This approach is also true of Chapter 14, which introduces the graphics methods and graphics controls.

Chapter 15, the final chapter, covers various topics that build a bridge from Visual Basic to other applications. These include using and creating ActiveX controls, the Windows API, DLLs, OLE, Visual Basic for Applications, and MDI and SDI applications, and creating shortcut menus.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation to the many people who have contributed to the successful completion of this text. Most especially, we thank our students at Mt. San Antonio College who helped class-test the material and who greatly influenced the manuscript.

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The Authors

We have had fun teaching and writing about Visual Basic. We hope that this feeling is evident as you read this book and that you will enjoy learning or teaching this outstanding programming language.

Julia Case Bradley
Anita C. Millspaugh

Contents

I			
Introduction to Visual Basic	1		
Writing Windows Applications with Visual Basic	2		
<i>The Windows Graphical User Interface</i>	2		
Programming Languages—Procedural, Object Oriented, and Event Driven	3		
<i>The Object Model</i>	3		
<i>Versions of Visual Basic</i>	4		
Writing Visual Basic Projects	4		
<i>The Three-Step Process</i>	4		
<i>Visual Basic Projects</i>	5		
The Visual Basic Environment	6		
<i>The Form Window</i>	6		
<i>The Project Explorer Window</i>	6		
<i>The Properties Window</i>	7		
<i>The Form Layout Window</i>	7		
<i>The Toolbox</i>	7		
<i>The Main Visual Basic Window</i>	7		
<i>The Toolbar</i>	7		
<i>The Form Location and Size Information</i>	8		
<i>Help</i>	8		
<i>Design Time, Run Time, and Break Time</i>	8		
Writing Your First Visual Basic Project	8		
<i>Set Up Your Visual Basic Workspace</i>	9		
<i>Plan the Project</i>	13		
<i>Define the User Interface</i>	13		
<i>Set Properties</i>	17		
<i>Write Code</i>	22		
<i>Visual Basic Code Statements</i>	22		
<i>Code the Event Procedures for Hello World</i>	24		
<i>Run the Project</i>	26		
<i>Save the Project</i>	28		
<i>Open the Project</i>	30		
		<i>Modify the Project</i>	30
		<i>Print the Project Documentation</i>	35
		Sample Printout	36
		<i>The Form Image</i>	36
		<i>The Code</i>	37
		<i>The Form as Text</i>	38
		Finding and Fixing Errors	39
		<i>Compile Errors</i>	39
		<i>Run-Time Errors</i>	40
		<i>Logic Errors</i>	40
		<i>Project Debugging</i>	41
		<i>Naming Rules and Conventions for Objects</i>	41
		Visual Basic Help	42
		<i>The MSDN Viewer</i>	43
		<i>Context-Sensitive Help</i>	44
	2		
	More Controls	51	
	Introducing More Controls	52	
	<i>Text Boxes</i>	53	
	<i>Frames</i>	53	
	<i>Check Boxes</i>	53	
	<i>Option Buttons</i>	54	
	<i>Images</i>	54	
	<i>Setting a Border and Style</i>	56	
	<i>The Shape Control</i>	56	
	<i>The Line Control</i>	57	
	Working with Multiple Controls	57	
	<i>Selecting Multiple Controls</i>	57	
	<i>Deselecting a Group of Controls</i>	58	
	<i>Moving Controls as a Group</i>	58	
	<i>Setting Properties for Multiple Controls</i>	59	
	<i>Aligning Controls</i>	59	
	Designing Your Applications for User Convenience	61	
	<i>Designing the User Interface</i>	61	
	<i>Defining Keyboard Access Keys</i>	62	

Setting the Default and Cancel Properties of Command Buttons	63	Counting	111
Setting the Tab Order for Controls	63	Calculating an Average	112
Setting the Form's Location on the Screen	64	Programming Hints	118
Creating ToolTips	65		
Coding for the Controls	66	4	
Clearing Text Boxes and Labels	66	Decisions and Conditions	127
Resetting the Focus	66	If Statements	128
Setting the Value Property of Option Buttons and Check Boxes	66	Flowcharting If Statements	130
Changing the Font Properties of Controls	67	Conditions	130
Changing the Color of Text	68	Comparing Numeric Variables and Constants	131
Changing Multiple Properties of a Control	68	Comparing Strings	132
Concatenating Text	69	Testing for True or False	135
Continuing Long Program Lines	69	Comparing the Text Property of Text Boxes	135
Using the Default Property of a Control	70	Comparing Uppercase and Lowercase Characters	136
Programming Hints	77	Compound Conditions	136
		Nested If Statements	137
		Using If Statements with Option Buttons and Check Boxes	140
3		A "Simple Sample"	141
Variables, Constants, and Calculations	87	Checking the Value of an Option Button Group	142
Data—Variables and Constants	88	Checking the Values of Multiple Check Boxes	142
Data Types	89	Displaying Messages in Message Boxes	143
Naming Rules	90	Selecting the MsgBox Icon	144
Naming Conventions	90	Displaying a Message String	144
Constants—Named and Intrinsic	92	Input Validation	145
Declaring Variables	94	Checking for Numeric Values	145
Scope of Variables	96	Checking for a Range of Values	146
Calculations	99	Checking for a Required Field	146
Val Function	99	Performing Multiple Validations	147
Arithmetic Operations	100	Calling Event Procedures	147
Order of Operations	101	Debugging Visual Basic Projects	156
Using Calculations in Code	102	Pausing Execution with the Break Button	156
Formatting Data	102	Forcing a Break	156
A Calculation Programming Example	106	Using the Immediate Window	157
Planning the Project	106	Checking the Current Values of Expressions	158
The Project Coding Solution	110	Stepping through Code	158
Counting and Accumulating Sums	111	Debugging Step-by-Step Tutorial	159
Summing Numbers	111	Test the Project	159

<i>Break and Step Program Execution</i>	160	<i>Adding and Removing Forms</i>	215
<i>View the Contents of Properties, Variables, and Conditions</i>	161	<i>The Hide and Show Methods</i>	216
<i>Continue Project Execution</i>	162	<i>The Load and Unload Statements</i>	218
<i>Test the White Total</i>	163	<i>The Me Keyword</i>	218
<i>Correct the Red Total Error</i>	163	<i>Referring to Objects on a Different Form</i>	219
<i>Correct the White Total Error</i>	164	Standard Code Modules	219
<i>Force a Run-Time Error</i>	165	Variables and Constants in Multiple-Form Projects	220
		<i>Global Variables and Constants</i>	221
		<i>Static Variables</i>	221
		<i>Guidelines for Declaring Variables and Constants</i>	222
		An About Box	223
		A Splash Screen	225
		Using Sub Main for Startup	226
		<i>Coding the Standard Code Module</i>	226
		<i>Coding the Splash Screen Event Procedure</i>	227
		<i>Setting the Startup Form or Procedure</i>	227
		Programming Hints	244
		<i>Working with Maximized Forms</i>	244
5		7	
Menus, Sub Procedures, and Sub Functions	173	Lists, Loops, and Printing	251
Menus	174	List Boxes and Combo Boxes	252
<i>Defining Menus</i>	174	<i>Filling the List</i>	253
<i>Creating a Menu—Step-by-Step</i>	176	<i>Clearing the List</i>	255
<i>Coding for Menu Commands</i>	179	<i>The ListIndex Property</i>	255
<i>Modifying a Menu</i>	179	<i>The ListCount Property</i>	256
<i>Toggling Check Marks On and Off</i>	181	<i>The List Property</i>	256
<i>Standards for Windows Menus</i>	181	<i>Removing an Item from a List</i>	257
Common Dialog Boxes	181	<i>List Box and Combo Box Events</i>	257
<i>Using a Common Dialog Box</i>	183	Do/Loops	258
<i>Using the Information from the Dialog Box</i>	184	<i>The Boolean Data Type Revisited</i>	261
<i>Setting Current Values</i>	186	<i>Using a Do/Loop with a List Box</i>	261
Writing General Procedures	187	For/Next Loops	262
<i>Creating a New Sub Procedure</i>	187	<i>Negative Increment or Counting Backward</i>	264
<i>Passing Variables to Procedures</i>	188	<i>Conditions Satisfied before Entry</i>	265
<i>Passing Arguments ByVal or ByRef</i>	189		
<i>Function Procedures versus Sub Procedures</i>	190		
<i>Writing Function Procedures</i>	190		
<i>Writing a Function with Multiple Arguments</i>	192		
<i>Calling a Function with Multiple Arguments</i>	192		
<i>Reusing Procedures</i>	192		
<i>Breaking Calculations into Smaller Units</i>	194		
Programming Hints	205		
<i>Creating Executable Files</i>	205		
6			
Multiple Forms	213		
Multiple Forms	214		
<i>Creating New Forms</i>	214		

<i>Altering the Values of the Loop Control Variables</i>	265	<i>Adding Items with ItemData to a List</i>	312
<i>Endless Loops</i>	265	Multidimensional Arrays	313
<i>Exiting For/Next Loops</i>	266	<i>Initializing Two-Dimensional Arrays</i>	314
Using the MsgBox Function	267	<i>Nested For/Next Example</i>	314
<i>Function Return Values</i>	268	<i>Printing a Two-Dimensional Table</i>	314
<i>Specifying the Buttons and/or Icons to Display</i>	268	<i>Summing a Two-Dimensional Table</i>	315
<i>MsgBox Example</i>	269	<i>Lookup Operation for Two-Dimensional Tables</i>	316
Using String Functions	269	Programming Hints	324
<i>Examples Using Left, Right, and Mid Functions</i>	270	<i>The Array Function</i>	324
<i>The Len Function</i>	270		
<i>Selecting Entries in a List Box</i>	271		
Sending Information to the Printer	271		
<i>Printing to the Printer</i>	272		
<i>Formatting Lines</i>	272		
<i>Selecting the Font</i>	276		
<i>Terminating the Page or the Job</i>	276		
<i>Printing the Contents of a List Box</i>	276		
<i>Printing the Selected Item from a List</i>	277		
<i>Aligning Decimal Columns</i>	277		
8		9	
Arrays	293	OOP—Creating Object-Oriented Programs	333
Control Arrays	294	Visual Basic and Object-Oriented Programming	334
The Case Structure	295	<i>Objects</i>	334
<i>Testing Option Buttons with the Case Structure</i>	297	<i>Object-Oriented Terminology</i>	335
Single-Dimension Arrays	299	<i>Reusable Objects</i>	336
<i>Subscripts</i>	300	Classes	337
<i>More on Subscripts</i>	301	<i>Assigning Property Values</i>	337
For Each/Next Statements	301	Creating a New Class—Step-by-Step	339
<i>Initializing an Array Using For Each</i>	302	<i>Define a New Class Module</i>	339
User-Defined Data Types	303	<i>Define the Class Properties</i>	340
<i>Accessing Information with User-Defined Data Types</i>	304	<i>Add Property Procedures</i>	340
Using Array Elements for Accumulators	305	<i>Code a Method</i>	343
Table Lookup	306	<i>Add General Remarks</i>	343
<i>Coding a Table Lookup</i>	309	<i>Save the Class Module</i>	343
Using List Boxes with Arrays	309	Creating a New Object	
<i>The ItemData Property</i>	310	Using a Class	344
<i>Using Nonsequential ItemData Values</i>	311	<i>Define and Use a New Object</i>	344
		<i>Save the Form and the Project</i>	346
		<i>Run the Project</i>	347
		Choosing When to Create New Objects	347
		<i>Using the Set Statement</i>	348
		<i>Early Binding versus Late Binding</i>	349
		The Initialize and Terminate Events	349
		Terminating Projects	350
		Collections	351
		<i>Creating a Collection</i>	351

<i>Creating a Unique Key in the CProduct Class</i>	352
<i>Creating the CProducts Class</i>	352
<i>Adding Objects to a Collection</i>	353
<i>Removing a Member from a Collection</i>	354
<i>Accessing a Member of a Collection</i>	355
<i>Returning the Count Property</i>	355
<i>Setting a Default Property</i>	355
<i>Using For Each/Next</i>	356
Using a Collection in a Form—Step-by-Step	358
<i>Modifying the User Interface</i>	358
<i>Declaring the Collection Object</i>	359
<i>Coding the Add Procedure</i>	359
<i>Coding the Display Procedure</i>	359
<i>Coding the Clear Procedure</i>	360
<i>Running the Project</i>	360
Using the Object Browser	360
<i>Examining VB Objects</i>	361
<i>Examining Your Own Classes</i>	362
Using a List Box to Store the Keys	362
<i>Using the List Box to Display an Object</i>	364
<i>Using the List Box to Remove an Object</i>	364
Avoiding Global Variables	364
<i>Adding Properties to Forms</i>	365
Programming Hints	380
<i>Multitier Applications</i>	380

10

Data Files 387

Data Files	388
<i>Data Files and Project Files</i>	388
<i>Data File Terminology</i>	388
<i>File Organizations</i>	389
<i>Opening and Closing Data Files</i>	389
<i>The FreeFile Function</i>	391
<i>Viewing the Data in a File</i>	391
Sequential File Organization	391
<i>Writing Data to a Sequential Disk File</i>	392
<i>Creating a Sequential Data File</i>	392
<i>Reading the Data in a Sequential File</i>	393
<i>Finding the End of a Data File</i>	394
<i>Locating a File</i>	394
Trapping Program Errors	395
<i>The On Error Statement</i>	395

The Err Object	397
<i>The Err.Number Property</i>	397
<i>Raising Error Conditions</i>	398
<i>Coding Error-Handling Routines</i>	398
<i>The Resume Statement</i>	399
<i>Handling Errors</i>	400
<i>The Exit Function and Exit Sub Statements</i>	401
<i>Saving Changes to a File</i>	403
<i>Sequential File Programming Example</i>	404
Random Data Files	408
<i>Fixed-Length Strings</i>	409
<i>Defining a Record for a Random File</i>	409
<i>Opening a Random File</i>	409
<i>Reading and Writing a Random File</i>	410
<i>Accessing Fields in a Random Record</i>	411
<i>Finding the End of a Random File</i>	412
<i>The Seek Function</i>	412
Using a List Box to Store a Key Field	413
<i>Trimming Extra Blanks from Strings</i>	414
<i>Retrieving a Record from the File</i>	414
<i>Displaying the Selected Record</i>	415
Updating a Random File	415
<i>Locking the Contents of Controls</i>	417
<i>Adding Records</i>	417
<i>Deleting a Record</i>	418
<i>Editing Records</i>	419
<i>The Read and Write Procedures</i>	420
Programming Hints	434
<i>The InputBox Function</i>	434
<i>Using the InputBox to Randomly Retrieve a Record</i>	435

11

Accessing Database Files 441

Visual Basic and Database Files	442
<i>Database Formats Supported by Visual Basic</i>	442
<i>Database Terminology</i>	442
<i>Creating Database Files for Use by Visual Basic</i>	443

Using the ADO Data Control	444	<i>Putting It Together</i>	492
<i>The Data Control and Data-Bound Controls</i>	446	Validation and Error Trapping	493
Viewing a Database File—Step-by-Step	453	<i>Locking Text Boxes</i>	493
<i>Design and Create the Form</i>	453	<i>Validating Data in the Validate Event</i>	494
<i>Set the Properties for the Data Control</i>	455	<i>Trap Errors with On Error</i>	495
<i>Set the Properties for the Data-Bound Controls</i>	457	<i>Programming Example Showing Validation Techniques</i>	498
<i>Write the Code</i>	458	Searching for Records	503
<i>Run the Project</i>	459	<i>The Find Method</i>	503
Navigating the Database in Code	460	<i>No Record Found</i>	504
<i>The Recordset Object</i>	460	<i>Bookmarks</i>	505
<i>Using the MoveNext, MovePrevious, MoveFirst, and MoveLast Methods</i>	460	<i>The Filter Property</i>	505
<i>Checking for BOF and EOF</i>	460	Sorting a Recordset	506
Using List Boxes and Combo Boxes as Data-Bound Controls	461	Working with Database Fields	507
<i>Setting up a Lookup Table for a Field</i>	461	<i>Referring to Database Fields</i>	508
Adding a Lookup Table and Navigation—Step-by-Step	462	<i>Loading Database Fields into a List Box</i>	508
<i>Modify the User Interface</i>	462	<i>An Example with Find, Filter, and Sort</i>	508
<i>Change the Properties</i>	463	The Data Environment Designer	512
<i>Write the Code</i>	464	<i>Connection and Command Objects</i>	513
<i>Testing the Navigation and Lookup Tables</i>	466	<i>Adding a Data Environment Designer</i>	513
Updating a Database File	466	<i>Creating Connections</i>	514
<i>Adding Records</i>	466	<i>Adding Commands</i>	514
<i>Deleting Records</i>	467	<i>Creating a Data Environment—Step-by-Step</i>	515
Preventing Errors	468	<i>Navigating Recordsets for Data Environment Objects</i>	517
<i>Protecting an Add Operation</i>	468	<i>One-to-Many Relationships</i>	518
Programming Hints	478	<i>Relation Hierarchies</i>	519
		<i>Creating a Relation Hierarchy—Step-by-Step</i>	519
		<i>Build the Relation Hierarchy</i>	520

12

Data Handling—Grids, Validation, Selection, and Sorting **485**

Displaying Data in Grids	486
<i>A Grid Control—Step-by-Step</i>	486
<i>Displaying the Record Number and Record Count</i>	491
<i>The MoveComplete Event</i>	492

13

Drag-and-Drop **531**

Drag-and-Drop Terminology	532
<i>The Source and the Target</i>	532
<i>Source Object Properties</i>	532
<i>DragOver and DragDrop Events</i>	532
A Step-by-Step Example	533
<i>Create the User Interface</i>	533
<i>Set the Properties</i>	534
<i>Write the Code</i>	534

<i>Run the Project</i>	536
<i>Add Command Buttons</i>	537
<i>Run the Completed Project</i>	538

Dragging and Dropping

Multiple Objects 539

<i>Passing the Source Argument</i>	539
<i>Changing the Icon of the Target Image</i>	540
<i>Setting the DragIcon</i>	
<i>Property of Source Controls</i>	540
<i>Blanking Out an Image</i>	541

The Toybox Program 542

<i>The Procedures</i>	542
<i>The Project Coding Solution</i>	543

Programming Hints 551

<i>Manual Drag-and-Drop</i>	551
-----------------------------	-----

14

Graphics 555

The Graphics Environment 556

<i>The Coordinate System</i>	556
<i>Picturebox Controls</i>	557

Colors 557

<i>The RGB Function</i>	557
<i>The Visual Basic Intrinsic Color Constants</i>	558
<i>The QBColor Function</i>	558

The Graphics Methods 559

<i>The Cls Method</i>	560
<i>The PSet Method</i>	560
<i>The Line Method</i>	562
<i>The Circle Method</i>	563
<i>The Step Keyword</i>	566

Layering 567

More Properties for Your

Graphics Controls 568

<i>Controlling Pictures at Design Time</i>	568
<i>Controlling Pictures at Run Time</i>	569
<i>Moving a Picture</i>	569

Simple Animation 570

The Timer Control 571

More Graphics Techniques 574

<i>Custom Coordinate Systems</i>	574
<i>PaintPicture Method</i>	574

The Scroll Bar Controls 575

<i>Scroll Bar Events</i>	577
--------------------------	-----

<i>A Fun Programming Example</i>	577
<i>The Project Coding Solution</i>	579

15

Advanced Topics in Visual Basic 583

ActiveX 584

<i>Using ActiveX Controls</i>	584
<i>The Tabbed Dialog Control</i>	585
<i>Browsing the Web from a Visual Basic Project</i>	589
<i>Creating Your Own ActiveX Controls</i>	590

Dynamic Link Libraries 593

<i>The Declare Statement</i>	594
<i>Passing Arguments</i>	
<i>ByVal and ByRef</i>	595
<i>Calling a DLL Procedure</i>	596
<i>Finding the Reference</i>	
<i>Information for DLLs</i>	596
<i>Accessing System Information with a DLL</i>	597
<i>Placing Tabs for Columns in a List Box</i>	598

Object Linking and

Embedding 600

<i>Object Linking</i>	600
<i>Object Embedding</i>	600
<i>Creating OLE Objects at Run Time</i>	602

Visual Basic for Applications 603

<i>Recording an Excel Macro</i>	604
<i>A Sample Excel Visual Basic Application</i>	605
<i>Help with Visual Basic in Excel</i>	608

Multiple Document

Interface (MDI) 608

<i>Creating an MDI Project</i>	609
<i>Adding Menus to an MDI Project</i>	609
<i>Creating a Window Menu</i>	609

Defining Shortcut Menus 612

<i>Defining the Menu</i>	612
<i>Coding for the Menu</i>	613

The Report Designer 613

<i>Begin the Project</i>	614
<i>Set Up the Data Source</i>	614
<i>Design the Report</i>	617
<i>Print the Report from a Form</i>	621

Appendix A

Answers to
Feedback
Questions 627

Appendix B

Functions for
Working with Dates,
Financial Calculations,
Mathematics, and
String Operations 639

Appendix C

Tips and Shortcuts
for Mastering the
VB Environment 649

Appendix D

A Preview of
Microsoft's
VB.NET 659

Glossary 673

Index 679