

Copying Command Button and Code Contents to the READ.FRM

To copy the Command button and code contents to the READ.FRM, complete the following steps:

1. Right-click the Command button and choose Copy.
2. Return to the Project window and double-click READ.FRM. Repeat the steps to clean up this form as explained in the "Cleaning up the Form Window" section.
3. Select READ.FRM and paste the Command button on the form.
4. Double-click the Command button and insert the same code you inserted earlier in the Command button on the COMPOSE.FRM.
5. Save this project by selecting Save Project from the File menu of Visual Basic.

Making an .EXE File

When you create a new executable (.EXE) file, you incorporate the changes that were made in Visual Basic. When you see the odd name of the executable that is generated, your first reaction will be to change it to something more readable. My advice is to leave it as is. When the Forms Designer creates an .EXE file for the form, it also creates a .CFG file. If you were to change the name of the executable created by Visual Basic, you would have to update all the references made to it in the .CFG file. Frankly, it is more trouble than it is worth at this point.

Reinstalling the Personnel Information Request Form

When changes are made to a form in Visual Basic, you must use the Forms Manager in the Microsoft Exchange Client to install the form. Remember, only the person who created the folder can make these types of changes.

To reinstall the Personnel Information Request form, follow these steps:

1. In the Microsoft Exchange Client, select the Personnel Profile Information folder.
2. From the File menu, choose Properties and then select the Forms tab.
3. Choose the Manage button and then click the Install button.
4. Double-click the pqinfo.cfg file, which is located in the pqinfo.vb directory. If you are asked to overwrite an existing executable, choose Yes.

To check and see if you have the right form, select the Personnel Profile Information folder and select the request form from the menu.

Outlook Forms Development

This section introduces you to the art of making custom Outlook applications without prior programming experience. If you're already familiar with Windows and Visual Basic or Visual Basic Script, you should have an easy time using the Outlook Forms Designer.

Outlook Forms Designer

The Outlook Forms Designer enables you to lay out all the different fields on your form, link them to Outlook objects, and designate actions on events. Without any previous programming experience, you can create applications that will make your organization more productive. Many example applications are provided for you when you load Outlook from the Microsoft Office 97 Resource CD. You can also use the pre-designed forms that are built into Outlook and modify them for your use.

The Outlook Forms Designer enables the creation of two types of forms:

- *Standalone Outlook forms*—These forms are not associated with any particular folder. They facilitate the input of information with the intent to send it to an individual or group of users. These applications include message-taking, office supply requisitions, and vacation requests.
- *Folder Outlook forms*—These forms facilitate the input of information into a public folder where permitted users can view the information in an organized way. These applications include group discussions, bulletin boards, and enterprise-wide groupware databases. Filters can be applied to move data into subfolders, and views can be applied to group or sort information.

Outlook Form Categories

Before developing a new form, you need to decide which type of message is being created. In the Outlook environment there are three basic categories of forms:

- **Message:** A Message form is used as a starting point that lets users send information to another user, distribution list, or folder.
- **Post:** A Post form is used as a starting point for building forms that enable users to post, open, and respond to information in a personal or public folder.
- **Office Document:** An Office Document form is used as a starting point for building forms that have a Word, PowerPoint, or Microsoft Excel document embedded in them.

The Message form can be used as a starting point for building forms that enable users to send information to other users, distribution lists, or other folders. Good examples of this concept are a Vacation Request form and a While You Were Away form.

The Post form is good for centralizing e-mail responses and submitting items directly to the active folder. Examples of this are Product Idea Applications and Technical User-Groups.

Office Document forms are essentially office documents wrapped in either a Message or Post form. You can create Office Document forms to send documents to other users and to post documents in a folder. Examples of the Office Document forms are Expense Reports and Purchase Requests. Both of these sample applications are included with Outlook.

Modifying Built-in Forms

Modifying a form that already exists allows you the luxury of not having to start from scratch. You can now build upon the functionality provided by a built-in form. To modify a built-in form, follow these steps:

1. Select the folder where your Application will be stored.
2. Select Choose form from the Compose menu.
3. Select the Application form that is best for the application you have in mind.
4. Select Tools from the menu of the running forms and select Design Outlook Form.

You are now in Design mode for that particular form. The tabs you see are called pages. To begin designing, simply click the tab of your choice.

There are two methods you can use to place fields on your form. First, you can select the category of the fields you want, select a field, and then drag it to the page. If you don't find a field that fulfills your requirements, you can create your own and then drag the newly formed field to your page. After you position the field on the page, you can resize it.

The second method you can use to place a field on a form involves the use of the Control toolbox. This option is located on the Form menu of the form you currently have in Design mode.

Creating a Custom Form

The Calendar, Contacts, Journal, and Tasks are built-in Forms you can modify. These built-in Forms provide a basis from which you can create your design strategy.

The following example shows you how easy it is to design a simple form. The first step is to create a folder to house the application:

1. Right-click your Inbox and choose Create Subfolder.
2. In the name box, type **Tech Solutions** and click OK.
3. Select the Tech Solutions folder you just created. At this time, you can type a description for the folder and create a shortcut on the Outlook bar.
4. Click Compose from the menu and then select Choose Template.
5. Select the Post it template.
6. From the Tools menu of the Post Template, select Design Outlook Form.
7. Click the (P.2) tab and then select Form from the menu. Choose Rename Page type **Discussions** for the Tab Page Control.

After you create the folder in which to store the application, you can add some fields to the Page Control by completing the following steps:

1. Click the Control toolBox and drag the combo box control to your Page Control, named Discussions.
2. Click the Label Control and drag that to the form, resizing it as necessary. The caption for the Label Control should be Topics of Interest.
3. Right-click the Combo Control and choose Properties.
4. Click the New button and type **txtTopics of Interest** in the name field.
5. Type **SMS, Exchange, SQL Server, IIS, and Active Server Pages** in the Possible values box (these titles should all be separated by a comma). Click OK.

Publishing the Form

When you publish a form, you make it available to everyone that has permission to the Tech Solutions folder. When a user selects the Tech Solutions Folder, he or she can then invoke a new instance of the form by selecting it from the Compose menu.

Follow these steps to publish the form:

1. Select File from the menu and choose Publish Form As. Make sure that the name of your form is displayed next to the Publish In area.
2. In the forms name area, type **Technical Discussion Form** and click OK.

Whereas the first part of this chapter gives a quick overview about how to customize forms in Outlook, the remainder of the chapter explores accessing Exchange objects through a web browser by using IIS, VBScript, and Active Server Pages.

Exporting Your Forms and Outlook Applications

In the Exchange Forms Designer, I had many more files to keep track of if I wanted to successfully move the files necessary to run my application to a standalone computer.

In Outlook, however, you can export your applications to a .pst or .fdm file, which in turn can be imported back into Outlook, running on a standalone workstation.

Form Views

You set up views in Outlook the same way as in the Exchange Development Platform. The only difference is that instead of selecting the folder, choose Properties and select the View tab to create a view. You now select View from the Outlook menu bar and select Define Views.

If your organization is using Exchange and Outlook Clients, you should select the Automatically generate Microsoft Exchange views check box. This option generates Microsoft Exchange view for the folder so that views created in Outlook can be seen by Microsoft Exchange Clients. The rest is pretty much the same. ●

Taking Exchange to the Web

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