Property Spy
version 1.0

Introduction

Until now, there were two ways to debug your Visual Basic program; add messageboxes throughout your code, or set breakpoints and use the Debug window to check your property values. Neither way is convenient, and both required you to know where the problem area was in order to track it down.

Property Spy is modeled after Visual Basic's Properties window, so you already know how to use it. The difference is, Property Spy works in both Design-Time and Run-Time, either in the Visual Basic programming environment or with the compiled application -- even if you didn't write the program or don't have the source code.

With Property Spy, you can save the complete state of a form, including all its controls and their propeties, to a file, or send it directly to a printer. This way, Property Spy can be given to your beta testers. When a problem arises, your testers can print out a hard copy of the state the program was in when the problem arose.

Installation

Just copy all of the files into one directory, and you're ready to go. You'll also need VBRUN300.DLL (which you probably already have).

Using Property Spy

When you start Property Spy, you'll need to tell it what program to spy on. Select the **File|Select Program** menu. Your mouse will change into an Up Arrow. Click on any program written in Visual Basic, or even a form in Visual Basic's design environment. Property Spy will fill its combo box with all of the controls on that form.

From here on out, Property Spy works just like Visual Basic's Properties window. Select a control from the combo box, and the listbox will display all of the properties for that control, as well as the values.

Each time you select a control from the combo box, the listbox will update itself with a "snapshot" of the properties and values. This list is static, and will not update itself until you select the control again from the combo box. However, when you click on a property in the list, an updated value will be displayed in the textbox above the listbox.

When spying on a form in Visual Basic's Design-Time environment, be aware that the handles to the controls (as well as the form itself) will change when you Run the project (as well as vice versa). When switching from one mode to the other, re-select the form you are spying on in order to update the list.

Saving and Printing Your Results

After you've selected a program to spy on, you can save the results to the file of your choice, or send it directly to the printer. To save the information to a file, select the **File|Save Info...** menu item, and a standard File Save common dialog will allow you save the information to a file. The **File|Print Info** menu item will send the information to the printer instead. In either case, the list will be updated before being saved/printed, to ensure that the information is accurate.

Additional Features in Property Spy Pro

Property Spy Pro has all the features of Property Spy plus the added ability to change the settings on-the-fly, making it functionally similar to the Properties window in VB. This works in design-time and run-time, whether you wrote the program being spied upon or not.

Limitations

Property Spy will not recognize labels, image controls, or other "graphical" controls. This is becaus these controls do not have a Windows handle. The Pro version does not allow you to change "Picture" properties, due to the instability of modifying these from an external application. If there is a large demand for this feature, I will look into a safe way of implementing it.

Notice

Use Property Spy at your own risk. While it has been thoroughly tested, I can't guarantee its functionality on every system. You should always save your code before using Property Spy during a Design-Time Visual Basic session to ensure that, should a problem arise, your code is safe.

Purchasing Property Spy Pro

This version of Property Spy is Freeware. While it is copyrighted material, you are free to use and distribute fully intact copies. If you would like the advanced features of Property Spy Pro, please send in the enclosed purchase order along with $19.95 (+$2.00 S&H) to:

Zane Rathwick
Indigo Software
6029 Machado Way
Sacramento, CA 95822

Credit Card Orders

If you prefer, you may pay for your order by credit card. Arrangements have been made with PSL to accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover credit card orders through the following numbers:

Phone: 800 - 242-4775
FAX: 713 - 524-6398
Int'l: 713 - 524-6394

Ask for product #11807

Note: These numbers are for ordering <u>only</u> - if you have other questions or comments or would like to discuss quantity discounts or site licenses, contact the author directly (see Technical Support).

When you send in your order, you will receive a diskette with Property Spy Pro, as well as a personalized key. This version may not be re-distributed.

<u>Technical Support</u>

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