

See VB (Version .99)

by Jim Collier

THIS PROGRAM CONTAINS NO WARRANTY, EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, OTHER THAN A PERSONAL GUARANTEE THAT THERE IS NO CODE THAT WAS WRITTEN TO PURPOSELY HARM YOU, YOUR MACHINE, OR YOUR DATA, AND A PERSONAL TESTIMONY THAT THIS PROGRAM HAS NOT CAUSED HARM TO ME, MY MACHINE, OR MY DATA IN ALMOST ONE YEAR OF ALMOST CONSTANT USE.

USE AT YOUR RISK!

See VB is a utility that works in the background while you work in Visual Basic 3.0 (it may or may not work with past or future versions, but it shouldn't hurt to try).

This is "Freeware," but NOT public domain!

I program in Visual Basic roughly 5 hours a day or more as part of my job. A big annoyance I had with VB was that code windows opened up in a fixed position, one on top of the other. In addition, if you resized each one by hand, it was very difficult to get to a code window lying behind the current one--you had to resize, close, or minimize the current window, since Microsoft didn't see fit to offer a method for cycling through or choosing active code windows. Worse still was that if you re-"opened" the code window from the project window, the project window stayed on top!

See VB eliminates all that nonsense. It automatically tiles or cascades (preferable) open code and/or form design windows. You control when the windows are re-arranged. You can do it manually, or have See VB do it whenever a code window is opened or closed. The feature I use most often is to have See VB cascade the windows whenever the focus changes, so the windows are arranged in order of use, with the focus window at the top of the cascade sequence. This lets me work very fast.

In addition, See VB uses better cascading and tiling algorithms than Windows. Try it and see for yourself.

Before you try this program, there is one thing you must take to heart: you won't like it at first! At least that's what other developers I've given this to personally have said. Especially if you use the "Auto Position When: Changing Working Focus" option, it is a bit unnerving and disorienting when the windows are always rearranging themselves.

However, the same people who said they didn't like it, after several hours of programming, said they didn't know how they got along without it for so long! I myself cannot comprehend using VB without it, and I'm not exaggerating. I've used it for almost a full year now, in a much rougher form that you have. Since I have used it so much, I

can honestly say I am evaluating it almost as if it were someone else's product, and I have no emotional ties to the level of satisfaction you may or may not receive from it.

Try it for a while with the "Auto Position When: Open/Close Working Focus" option selected. Then give "Auto Position When: Changing Working Focus" a run for at least a few hours. If you're not hooked, I'll be a monkey's uncle.

See VB is especially useful if you program in a resolution higher than 640x480, since you have more screen real-estate to work in. VGA users, don't fret, you'll see a benefit too.

See VB was written in Visual Basic 3.0, so you'll need VBRUN300.DLL, which you'll surely already have being a VB developer. You'll also need THREED.VBX, which is included in the SEEVB.ZIP file in case you don't have it.

Don't let the fact that it is a VB utility scare you. It is very fast, and relies primarily on a timer to avoid VB code continually chugging along. If you're programming in VB 3.0, you'll already have VBRUN300.DLL loaded in memory, so the incremental memory requirements are minimal. With any form of a 486 machine, you won't even notice it's running, whether you're using Visual Basic or not.

With a 486-33, I suggest a "Refresh Interval" of 0.8 seconds. For a 486-66, go for 0.75, or experiment with even lower settings. Although this is untested on a 386 machine, a setting of 1.0 would be a good place to start.

I have several enhancements slated, such as total control over parameters such as the area the windows resize in, etc. These enhancements will only come if I feel there is enough economic incentive to do so (I've distributed this version out of a desire to help others like myself). Therefore, if you like it and would be willing to pay a few dollars for an enhanced version, tell me about it! My Compuserve ID can be found in the "About" box.

One drawback you may notice with this application; the Debug window gets covered when debugging your application. This was not a significant problem for me because I used (and still use) a collection of simple Windows Recorder macros to do various things in Visual Basic (I put See VB and the Recorder file in my Startup group)--one of them brings the Debug window on top of all other windows except the current code window (the keystrokes are: Alt-W, D, F7). If this bugs you and you don't want a Recorder file loaded, tell me about it!

You can use and copy and proliferate this program as much as you like, but please, only distribute it in its original SEEVB.ZIP format! Otherwise you'll be cheating a fellow developer, and that evil deed will eventually cycle through the universe's deed loop and bite you in the butt!

Included in SEEVB.ZIP:
SEEVB.WRI

SEEVB.EXE
THREED.VBX

SEEVB.INI is generated automatically and should not be distributed.

Enjoy!