

Object Align, Size and Space

What is it?

Object Align, Size and Space (ObjASS) is an add-in for Visual Basic 4.0. It's a utility that makes it easy to precisely align, size or evenly space controls on a form.

Installation

To install this add-in...

1. UnZIP the files in the OBJASS32.ZIP file. If you're reading this, you've already gotten that far. For best results, put them in a temporary directory.
2. Execute SETUP.EXE. This registers the DLL in the system registry and copies the add- (OBJASS32.DLL) to the following directory:

Program Files\Common Files\OleSvr .

3. You will be asked to specify two options. If you accept the defaults, the add-in will be available the next time you start Visual Basic.

NOTE: To uninstall the add-in (i.e., remove it from your system), use the Add/Remove Programs option in Control Panel

Making the add-in available to VB

You can load or unload the add-in by choosing Visual Basic's Add-Ins / Add-In Manager command. You'll get a dialog box with a list of all add-ins that Visual Basic knows about. Just check the box labeled *Object Align, Size and Space* to load the add-in.

If Object Align, Size and Space does not appear in the list of add-ins, you'll need to edit your VB.INI file (which is in your WINDOWS directory). Add the following line to this file in the [Add-Ins32] section:

```
ObjAlign.Addin=1
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If VB.INI doesn't have a section named [Add-Ins32], you must add it. When you re-start VB, Object Align, Size and Space will appear in the list of add-ins.

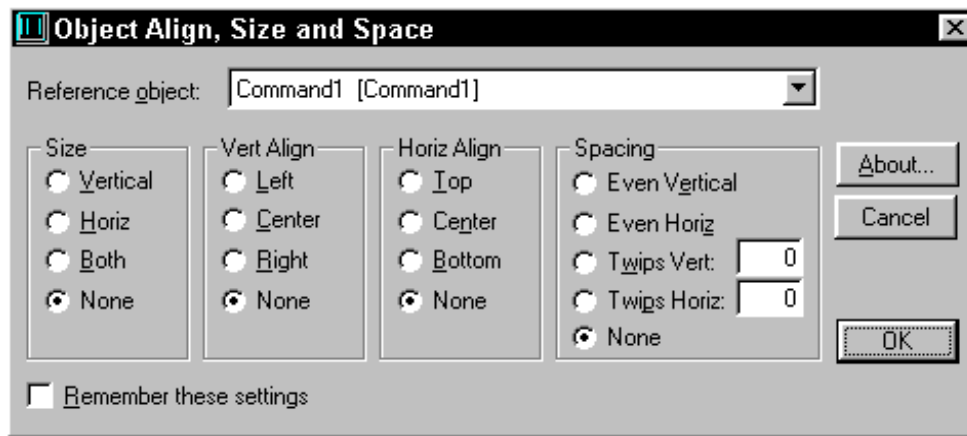
NOTE: If you accepted the default settings in the SETUP routine, this will not be necessary.

Using ObjASS

When the ObjASS add-in is loaded, you will find that Visual Basic has two new menu items on its Add-Ins menu:

Object Align, Size and Space...
Undo Last Align, Size and Space

NOTE: The second menu item will be disabled at first, since there's nothing to undo. Start by activating a form. Then, select two or more controls by "lassoing" them, or by pressing Ctrl while you select the controls. Next, choose the Add-Ins / Object Align, Size and Space command. You'll get a dialog box like the one shown below.



The Reference object drop-down contains a list of all of the selected controls. Choose the control that will be used as the basis for sizing or aligning the other selected controls. The reference object is irrelevant for spacing operations.

Next, choose the option(s). By default, each of the four sets of option buttons are set to *None*. So if you click OK without selecting any options, nothing will happen. You can select one option from each of the four sets. Click OK, and the selected controls will be resized, realigned, or spaced per your specifications.

NOTE: If you don't like the result, choose the Add-Ins / Undo Last Align, Size and Space command. The controls will be returned to their original sizes and positions.

Sizing options

These options will change the size of the selected objects to match the size of the reference object. Select Vert to change only the vertical size, Horiz to change only the horizontal size, or Both to change both the vertical and horizontal sizes.

Vert Align options

These options will change the vertical alignment of the selected objects to match that of the reference object. Select Left to align the objects to the left edge of the reference object, Center to align the objects with the center of the reference object, or Right to align the objects to the right edge of the reference object.

Horiz Align options

These options will change the horizontal alignment of the selected objects to match that of the reference object. Select Top to align the objects to the top edge of the reference object, Center to align the objects with the center of the reference object, or Bottom to align the objects to the bottom edge of the reference object.

Spacing options

These options will change the spacing of the selected objects. The Even Vertical option will space the selected objects evenly within the space defined by the top of the top-most object and the bottom of the bottom-most object. The Even Horiz option will space the selected objects evenly within the space defined by the left edge of the left-most object and the right edge of the right-most object. If you would like to specify the number of twips between each object, select the Twips Vert or Twips Horiz option and enter the number of twips in corresponding the edit box. Entering a value of 0 spaces the objects directly against each other with no space in between. The best way to learn how to use this is to add some controls to a form and then try out some

options. You'll get the hang of it in no time.

If you check the *Remember these settings* checkbox, the dialog box will retain the current settings the next time it is displayed.

Limitations

This add-in works with most controls that you place on a form. The exception are controls that do not have a Width and Height property. These include Line controls, Timer controls, and other custom controls. If you attempt to use this utility when any of these taboo controls are selected, you'll get a polite message box telling you that it can't be done.

Source code is available

I wrote this add-in primarily to learn how to use VB 4's new add-in capability (it was not an easy task!). I'm making it available as "freeware" for fellow VB programmers. In addition, the source files are available for a nominal \$12.50. If you're interested, send me e-mail with your credit card information (number and expiration date) and I'll send the ZIP'ed source files to you by e-mail. If you prefer, you can mail me a check or money order (U.S.) funds for \$12.50 and I'll send the files to you via snail mail. Make the check or M.O. payable to JWalk and Associates Inc.

Suggestions?

I already have several ideas on how to improve this add-in, but I'm always interested in getting feedback, comments, and suggestions. Contact me at the e-mail address below.

About the author

I'm basically a writer -- not a programmer. I've written hundreds of magazine articles and a dozen or so books. The books include *Excel for Windows Power Programming Techniques*, *Excel Programming For Dummies*, and *Excel for Windows 95 Bible* (all from IDG Books). I also have a popular shareware product: The Power Utility Pak for Excel. This is only the second non-trivial VB program that I have written. I hope you find it useful...

John Walkenbach
JWalk and Associates Inc.
P.O. Box 12861
La Jolla, CA 92039-2861

E-mail: 70363.3014@compuserve.com