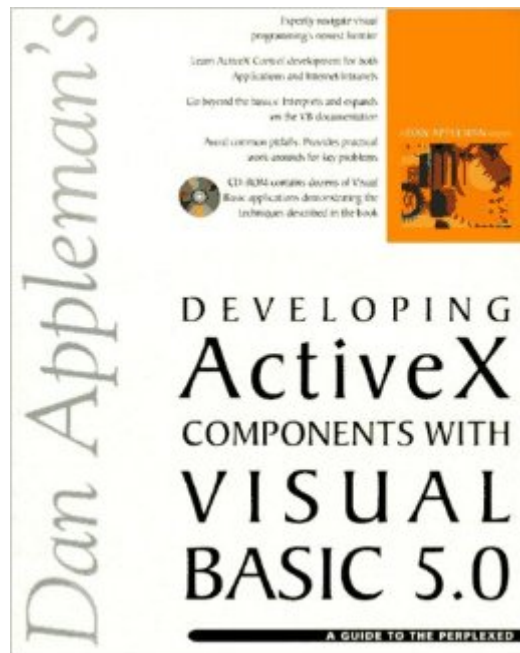


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Dan Appleman's Developing ActiveX Components With Visual Basic 5.0: A Guide To The Perplexed



Synopsis

With the release of version 5, VB programmers can finally create ActiveX controls without resorting to C++. And when the manual can't help, turn to VB master Dan Appleman, who can. In this well-designed guide, you'll find a serious review of all the key technology-from beginning OLE fundamentals to the latest in ActiveX component, ActiveX control, and ActiveX document technology. Dan Appleman's *Developing ActiveX Components with Visual Basic 5.0: A Guide to the Perplexed* teaches you everything-from designing the object model to creating and testing your new components, to straightening out versioning problems and understanding container dependencies. Simply put this book is a best-of-class addition to any dynamic VB developer's library! Building on the Visual Basic documentation without trying to replace it, this book covers methods, properties, events, databinding, multithreading, Internet/intranet, licensing, and more. Cuts to the chase, covering the most essential problems. Explores how to avoid common pitfalls. CD-ROM includes sample source code from the book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a big book, but it's definitely worth slogging through. If you're new to ActiveX, you should go through the examples in the Components Tool Guide manual to learn the mechanics of creating a control. You can do that in a few hours. But to take the step from creating dummy controls to creating controls robust enough to use, you have to know what the heck you're doing. That's where this book comes in. Is it annoying that Appleman doesn't really get down to the nitty-gritty of controls

until half-way through the book? Of course. But the first part of the book is really important. More important than the second half of the book, actually. It's in the first part where he tells you what ActiveX is really all about. Any bonehead can create an ActiveX control. But unless you follow Appleman's way of doing things, you're better off not writing an ActiveX control in the first place. That's because there's a lot of pitfalls you can encounter that will cause more lost time than any time you saved by having an ActiveX control. As an example, consider the compiling of an ActiveX component. The VB manual basically says "You know, it's kind of a good idea to have binary compatibility, but if you to break compatibility, that's ok." Appleman basically says "Don't break the compatibility unless you really know what you're doing, because you're going to really regret it". Appleman knows his stuff inside and out, and that allows him to have opinions, allows him to decide what to emphasize. The bottom line - if you're just starting out developing ActiveX controls, you're a damn fool if you don't buy this book.

Somehow Dan Appleman has managed to explain COM in a clear, concise way that doesn't require you to read it over and over again in order to understand it. After reading this you will have a thorough grounding which will enable you to develop ActiveX controls, but more importantly you will find yourself designing your applications in a more structured, efficient way.

Two books for the price of one! The first book covers the ActiveX and COM models in an easy to read informative style. VB programmers will gain an excellent understanding of COM, the stuff only experienced C++ folks usually know. And maybe more helpful to a VB programmer, you learn how COM impacts your code. The second book covers hands-on ActiveX component development. Just as dramatically as the topic changes, so does the style of presentation. Suddenly the author takes a mechanistic approach to the various elements of control creation. Whether or not the author's methods improve is hard to say -- I have yet to finish slugging through the first couple chapters of this section. I found other books better, for example, WROX's Instant Visual Basic 5. Overall, I found my first read of a book by the famed Dan Appleman very enjoyable and informative. I even hope to finish slugging through the second half some day!

In the last days I read the "Dan Appleman's Developing Activex Components With Visual Basic 5.0 : A Guide to the Perplexed". Also if it's basically oriented to ActiveX visual component development of its 700 pages about 400 are dedicated to the problems of COM, Instancing, Binding and so on seen from a Visual Basic point of view. It's greatly recommended (or, at least, its first 400 pages) to all

people that want to start developing components using Visual Basic 5, because a good knowledge of COM is required and this book has the best coverage of COM seen from a VB point of view that I've ever read. Some things I would like to see covered: Use of Implements (it's covered only in a marginal way) and how to use the Visual Modeler (explainable because, at time of writing, it wasn't available). I believe that a revision of its first 400 pages considering the latest developments of VB (accessories) and changing the remaining 300 from "ActiveX components" to "MTS Components" could give us the best book about VB and MTS one can dream of (I'm forwarding this message to the author... will see). Greetings from Italy Massimo

The author's logical, step-by-step description of how ActiveX really works, coupled with abundant sample code, makes this book a winner. Appleman resists the temptation to re-hash the Microsoft documentation, and instead offers a path to understanding ActiveX that is lucid and interesting. His writing style makes this complex technology understandable for all levels of VB programmers. The sample code offered on the accompanying CD is an education unto itself. It is very informative to see how the heavy-hitters write VB code, and Appleman doesn't disappoint. I learned to approach my own programming a little differently by going over his code.

When I realized that the first half of this book covers the history of the technology and saves the technical hands on part for hundreds of pages, I was concerned. Do I need all this background? Well you do and Appleman explains it in an easy to read format with excellent word pictures as examples. He explains how the terminology evolved, how Microsoft marketing confused everyone, then goes on and makes ActiveX development seem like child's play. You do need a solid OOPs background to make the most of the information, but assuming that, this is a book to read and keep as a permanent reference (at least until the next edition).

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