

March, 2000

Editor's View

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Certification Update

VFP certification exams should be available now, plus where to go with your two cents.

By Tamar E. Granor, Editor

Along with many of you, I found time in December to take both beta certification exams for Visual FoxPro. As I expected, I found the Desktop Applications exam (70-156) pretty straightforward—after all, I've been working with VFP for a long time. The Distributed Applications test (70-155) was tougher. Nonetheless, I thought the exams were well constructed on the whole, but editor that I am, appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback.

It appears my experience was pretty typical. Many of you took the Desktop Applications exam, far more than the number needed for statistical validity. However, fewer than the desired number of people took the Distributed Applications exam, even though the beta period was extended for two weeks. Apparently, many of you haven't yet made the move to the brave new world of DNA (Distributed iNternet Applications), COM, DCOM, MTS, SQL Server and the other acronyms that the exam covers. Fortunately, the statistical wizards in Microsoft's Certification Group have alternative methods of figuring out which questions are valid and which should go to the circular file.

It's likely both exams will be available by the time you read this. Now, go out and show Microsoft they didn't waste their energy and money providing certification for Visual FoxPro. Information on the exams is available at <http://www.microsoft.com/mcp/exam/stat/SP70-155.htm> and <http://www.microsoft.com/mcp/exam/stat/SP70-156.htm>.

If all those acronyms are new to you, check out the May '99 Editor's View to see what DNA is about. Consider this, too – preparing for the certification exam could be just the push you need to move into the world of DNA.

Tell Microsoft what you want

I've heard from a number of readers who want to have input into future versions of Visual FoxPro. Some of you figure I have a special channel into Microsoft and your ideas have no chance of getting into the product. The first part is true: I have relationships, developed over the years, with various people on the Fox team. (In fact, a number of them used to be FoxPro developers.)

But the second part is absolutely untrue. Many of the features in VFP today are there because FoxPro developers asked for them. The more people who ask for a particular feature, the better chance it has of getting into the product. That doesn't mean

everything users ask for will be added. If a feature doesn't fit into Microsoft's broad vision for the product, or it's technically not feasible (or would require too many resources for too little return), it won't happen. (I don't get everything I ask for in the product, either.) But if it's a good idea in line with where the product is headed, do-able, and a lot of people want it, there's a good chance you'll get it.

So, how can you submit your requests? Send e-mail to FoxWish@ microsoft.com. That goes right to the Fox team.

Keep in mind the development team is working way ahead of where we are, of course. By now, for example, you can assume the specs for VFP 7.0 are pretty well set in stone. If the feature you want isn't in the next version after you ask for it, maybe it'll be in the one after that.

Also, you won't get a response, frustrating as that is. The submissions are tracked and tallied by the team and the results used in planning, but the individual submitters don't hear back.

I can tell you from personal experience, though, there's nothing quite like opening up a new version and seeing a command or clause you requested.

Still dealing with Y2K

It seems that you and I and our counterparts around the world did our jobs and rooted out the worst problems related to storing dates without their century portion before they caused serious damage. The year 2000 arrived and the world didn't come to an end, nuclear weapons didn't fire, terrorists didn't take advantage of the situation, the stock market didn't crash - life went on as usual with just a few strange occurrences here and there.

However, we are starting to hear about a few minor Y2K glitches in older versions of VFP other the ones we've previously covered. If you're using VFP 5, you can download an update that fixes the LUPDATE() function from Microsoft's Year 2000 Readiness website (<http://msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio/y2k/default.asp>). We'll cover some other problems in upcoming issues.

Feedback at Advisor.com

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