

April, 1996

Advisor Answers

Visual FoxPro 3.0

Q: In the Form Designer, what's the fast way to change label text, without having to bring the Properties window forward. In FP/Dos, it was easy to just click where you want the text and start typing. I don't mean to complain but some forms could have dozens and dozens of individual labels and it seems very slow to have to click the object, right-click, and choose Properties before typing the text.

–Clifford Helsel (via CompuServe)

A: You're right. It would be terribly tedious if you had to do it that way. Fortunately, there is a shortcut. When you're working in the Form Designer and start typing, the Property Sheet comes forward automatically.

Not only that, but right after you've added a control, the Property Sheet is set to the most logical property to specify first for that control. So, if you start typing after you drop a label onto the form, the characters you type go into the Caption property. Command buttons and check boxes also default to the Caption. Several controls (including edit boxes, combo and list boxes) start you out looking at the ControlSource, which specifies the data item bound to the control. Others (including button groups, page frames and grids) assume the number of contained items (buttons, pages or columns) is the first thing you want to specify. The rest of the controls have other defaults, but in each case, the first property you land on is arguably the first one you'd want to set.

Once you're working in the PropSheet, you can move from one control to another by changing objects in the dropdown at the top of the window. (See Figure 1.) As long as the control you choose includes the property currently highlighted, you land on the same property for that control. For example, if you're working on the Caption of a label, and you choose a command button from the dropdown, the buttons's Caption property is selected. (If you choose a control that doesn't have the currently highlighted property, you go back to the top of the list of properties.)

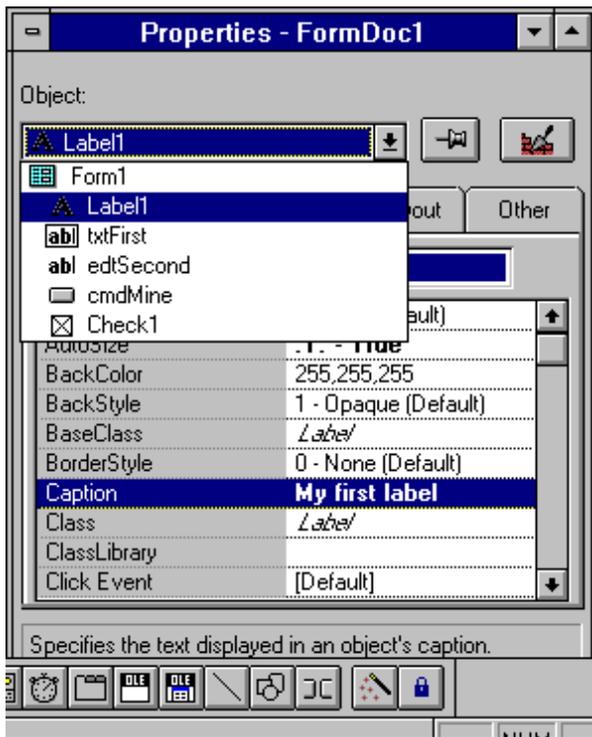


Figure 1 Object Dropdown - You can move from a property of one object to the same property of another just by choosing the new object in the dropdown.

While not every action in Visual FoxPro has a keyboard equivalent, a lot of them do. The trick is finding them.

-Tamar