



Foreword

If you are familiar with VBA and you are thinking about dipping a toe into the world of Office development with Visual Basic 2005 and Visual Studio Tools for Office (VSTO)—look no further, this is the book for you.

Kathleen and Paul take a unique approach in this book as they describe VSTO with the VBA developer in mind. Let's face it, there are a lot of new things to learn as you move from VBA to Visual Basic 2005 and VSTO. The Visual Basic language has changed more than one would like and some of the old familiar language constructs are gone. Fortunately, this book describes the major changes you will encounter as you move from VBA development to Visual Basic 2005 development. The development environment of VSTO is also quite different than the VBA development environment. Once again, this book guides you through the new features of VSTO and helps you understand how to transfer your hard-earned VBA skills to the new Visual Studio based development environment.

In the end, is it worth making the switch from VBA to VSTO? I think you'll find it is. VSTO provides a much richer environment with a lot more power to use in your Office development projects. In the end, you'll write less code and get more done. Isn't that what it's all about?

Kathleen and Paul are great guides to take you on this journey into the new world of VSTO. Kathleen was a programming writer during the development of VSTO—in other words, she had to write about VSTO as we were developing it. I've found that writing about something is one of

the best ways to validate the design of something—and sure enough, as Kathleen wrote about VSTO, she would come into my office and point out tons of things that were confusing or just plain wrong. In the end she made VSTO a much better product and she is in a unique position to understand and write about the features of VSTO.

I also have to mention the fantastic videos Kathleen put together about VSTO. If you are still wondering about trying out VSTO in your own projects, check out some of her videos and other contributions to the community she made as a contributor to the VSTO team blog:

<http://blogs.msdn.com/vsto2/>

Not only do you get Kathleen, you also get Paul's wisdom in this book. Paul was one of the early users of VSTO and he helped guide Microsoft through his participation in the early software design reviews of the VSTO product. He was so helpful, the VSTO team hired him and he continued his role as one of the “first users” of VSTO even after starting at Microsoft. If you search the forums and newsgroups, it will frequently be Paul responding to the difficult VSTO questions posted by developers.

As you might expect, both Paul and Kathleen have great blogs. Check them out here:

<http://blogs.msdn.com/kathleen/>

<http://blogs.msdn.com/pstubbs/>

As an early reviewer of this book, I loved how things were kept accessible and practical for a VBA developer. You won't find any C# in this book and that's a good thing. Visual Basic is the best language you can pick for Office development because Visual Basic grew up with Office and has features that make it much easier to use the Office object models. Also, I found some great tips and tricks in this book to make your experience with VSTO a great one—for example, Kathleen and Paul tell you how to set up your environment to make debugging much easier.

Finally, this is the first book that will give you a look at VSTO 2005 Second Edition and the wider range of Office applications you can now target, including Office 2007. I might also add that we are already working on the next generation of VSTO for Office 2007 and we are continuing to work to make VSTO simple and powerful. VSTO is here to stay and this is the book to help the VBA developer make the switch.

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