

# **VBScript Programmer's Reference, Second Edition**



# **VBScript Programmer's Reference, Second Edition**

Adrian Kingsley-Hughes  
Kathie Kingsley-Hughes  
Daniel Read



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## VBScript Programmer's Reference, Second Edition

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To my kids—you guys are great!  
—Adrian

To my parents, for their loving support and enduring patience. And to my kids, for  
being just so cool!

—Kathie



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—Adrian

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—Kathie

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—Daniel



# Contents

<b>About the Authors</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>xxv</b>
<b>Chapter 1: A Quick Introduction to Programming</b>	<b>1</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Overview</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Variables and Data Types</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Flow Control</b>	<b>8</b>
Branching	8
Looping	13
<b>Operators</b>	<b>17</b>
Operator Precedence	18
<b>Organizing and Reusing Code</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Top-Down versus Event-Driven</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Coding Guidelines</b>	<b>24</b>
Expect the Unexpected	25
Always Favor the Explicit over the Implicit	25
Modularize Your Code into Procedures, Modules, Classes, and Components	26
Use the “Hungarian” Variable Naming Convention	26
Don’t Use One Variable for More Than One Job	27
Always Lay Out Your Code Properly	27
Use Comments To Make Your Code More Clear and Readable, but Don’t Overuse Them	27
<b>Summary</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Chapter 2: What VBScript Is—and Isn’t!</b>	<b>29</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Overview</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Windows Script</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Version Information</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>VBScript Is a Subset of VB</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>VBScript Is a Scripting Language</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>VBScript Is Interpreted at Runtime</b>	<b>31</b>

## Contents

---

Runtime Compilation—Disadvantages	32
Runtime Compilation—Advantages	33
<b>Advantages of Using VBScript</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Is VBScript Right for You?</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>How VBScript Fits In with the Visual Basic Family</b>	<b>35</b>
Visual Basic	36
Visual Basic for Applications	36
VBScript	36
Is VBScript a “Real” Programming Language?	37
<b>What Can You Do with VBScript?</b>	<b>37</b>
Windows Script Host	37
Windows Script Components	38
Client-Side Web Scripting	38
Server-Side Web Scripting	38
Remote Scripting	39
HTML Applications	39
Add VBScript to Your Applications	40
<b>Tool of the Trade—Tools for VBScript</b>	<b>40</b>
Text Editor Listing	40
<b>Summary</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Data Types</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Scripting Languages as Loosely Typed</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Why Data Types Are Important</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>The Variant: VBScript’s Only Data Type</b>	<b>46</b>
Testing For and Coercing Subtypes	47
Implicit Type Coercion	55
Empty and Null	61
The Object Subtype	65
The Error Subtype	67
<b>Arrays as Complex Data Types</b>	<b>68</b>
What Is an Array?	69
Arrays Have Dimensions	69
Array Bounds and Declaring Arrays	70
Accessing Arrays with Subscripts	71
Looping through Arrays	74

---

Erasing Arrays	76
Using VarType() with Arrays	77
<b>Summary</b>	<b>77</b>

---

## **Chapter 4: Variables and Procedures** **79**

---

<b>Overview</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Option Explicit</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Naming Variables</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Procedures and Functions</b>	<b>82</b>
Procedure Syntax	83
Function Syntax	84
Calling Procedures and Functions	87
Optional Arguments	89
Exiting a Procedure or Function	89
<b>Variable Declaration and Scope</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Variable Lifetime</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Design Strategies for Scripts and Procedures</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>ByRef and ByVal</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Literals and Named Constants</b>	<b>98</b>
What is a Literal?	99
What is a Named Constant?	99
Using Named Constants in Place of Literals?	101
Built-In VBScript Constants	102
<b>Summary</b>	<b>103</b>

---

## **Chapter 5: Control of Flow** **105**

---

<b>Branching Constructs</b>	<b>105</b>
The “If” Branch	106
The “Select Case” Branch	108
<b>Loop Constructs</b>	<b>110</b>
For...Next	110
For Each...Next	115
Do Loop	117
While...Wend	124
<b>Summary</b>	<b>124</b>

<b>Chapter 6: Error Handling and Debugging</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Types of Errors</b>	<b>126</b>
Syntax Errors	126
Runtime Errors	127
Logic Errors	131
<b>Error Visibility and Context</b>	<b>132</b>
Windows Script Host Errors	132
Server-Side ASP Errors	132
Client-Side VBScript Errors in Internet Explorer	133
<b>Handling Errors</b>	<b>134</b>
The Err Object	134
Using the On Error Statements	135
Presenting and Logging Errors	139
Server-Side ASP Errors	141
<b>Generating Custom Errors</b>	<b>143</b>
Using Err.Raise	143
When Not to Use Err.Raise	144
When to Generate Custom Errors	146
<b>Debugging</b>	<b>148</b>
What is a Debugger?	149
Options for Debugging VBScript Code	150
Debugging without a Debugger	150
Debugging WSH Scripts with the Microsoft Script Debugger	154
Debugging Client-Side Web Scripts with the Microsoft Script Debugger	157
Debugging ASP with the Microsoft Script Debugger	161
Using the Microsoft Script Debugger	164
<b>Summary</b>	<b>171</b>
 <b>Chapter 7: The Scripting Runtime Objects</b>	 <b>173</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>What Are Runtime Objects?</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>The Built-In Objects: Debug, Err, and RegExp</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Creating Objects</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Properties and Methods</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>The “With” Keyword</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Objects Can Have Multiple References</b>	<b>176</b>



---

<b>Object Lifetime and Destroying Objects</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>The Dictionary Object</b>	<b>179</b>
Overview	180
Three Different Ways to Add	184
The CompareMode Property	185
The Item Property	185
The Exists Method	186
<b>The FileSystemObject Library</b>	<b>186</b>
Why FileSystemObject?	186
Using Collections	186
Understanding FileSystemObject	188
Creating a Folder	189
Copying a File	190
Copying a Folder	191
Reading a Text File	192
Writing to a Text File	195
<b>Summary</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Chapter 8: Classes in VBScript (Writing Your Own COM Objects)</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>Objects, Classes, and Components</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>The Class Statement</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Defining Properties</b>	<b>202</b>
Private Property Variables	202
Property Let	202
Property Get	203
Property Set	204
Making a Property Read-Only	206
Making a Property Write-Only	207
Public Properties without Property Procedures	207
<b>Defining Methods</b>	<b>208</b>
<b>Class Events</b>	<b>210</b>
The Class_Initialize Event	210
The Class_Terminate Event	211
<b>Class-Level Constants</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>Class-Level Arrays</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Building and Using a Sample VBScript Class</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>222</b>

## **Chapter 9: Regular Expressions** **223**

---

<b>Overview</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>Introduction to Regular Expressions</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>Regular Expressions in Action</b>	<b>223</b>
Building on Simplicity	226
<b>The RegExp Object</b>	<b>228</b>
RegExp Properties	228
Regular Expression Characters	230
RegExp Methods	237
The Matches Collection	240
The Match Object	242
<b>A Few Examples</b>	<b>244</b>
Validating Phone Number Input	244
Breaking Down URIs	245
Testing for HTML Elements	245
Matching White Space	246
Matching HTML Comment Tags	246
<b>Summary</b>	<b>247</b>

## **Chapter 10: Client-Side Web Scripting** **249**

---

<b>Overview</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>Tools Of The Trade</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>How Browser Scripting Works</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Different Scripting Languages</b>	<b>251</b>
Browser Wars—How Things Have Changed!	252
JavaScript, Jscript, and ECMAScript	252
VBScript	253
<b>Responding to Browser Events</b>	<b>254</b>
Adding an Event Handler	254
Adding an Event Handler That Passes Parameters	255
Cancelling Events	257
The Order of Things	259
Form Validation	261
Validating Numerical Input Box Values	263
Validating Radio Buttons	264
Validating Select Controls and Dates	266

---

<b>The Document Object Model</b>	<b>269</b>
The DOM in Action	270
<b>Summary</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>Chapter 11: Super-Charged Client-Side Scripting</b>	<b>277</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Overview</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>Requirements</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>Browser Security</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>Scriptlets—Ancestors of Behaviors</b>	<b>278</b>
What is a Scriptlet?	278
The Prefix “public_” Exposes Scriptlet Members	280
Packaging Code in a Scriptlet for Reuse	281
<b>Event Management</b>	<b>286</b>
Relationship to the Event Handler	286
Scriptlet Model Extensions	289
<b>Scriptlets Are Deprecated in IE5</b>	<b>292</b>
Behaviors	292
Which Technologies Implement Behaviors?	292
Applying a Behavior to an HTML Element	293
<b>HTML Components (HTCs)</b>	<b>294</b>
Extending HTML Elements Behavior	294
<b>Summary</b>	<b>304</b>
<b>Chapter 12: Windows Script Host</b>	<b>307</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Overview</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>Tools of the Trade</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>What Is WSH?</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>Types of Script Files</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Running Scripts with the Windows Script Host</b>	<b>310</b>
Command-Line Execution	310
Execution of WSH within the Windows Environment	312
<b>Using .WSH Files to Launch Scripts</b>	<b>312</b>
<b>Windows Script Host Intrinsic Objects</b>	<b>313</b>
The WScript Object	314
The WshArguments Object	322
The WshShell Object	323

## Contents

---

The WshNamed Object	341
The WshUnnamed Object	343
The WshNetwork Object	344
The WshEnvironment Object	349
The WshSpecialFolders Object	351
The WshShortcut Object	353
The WshUrlShortcut Object	359
<b>Summary</b>	<b>361</b>

## **Chapter 13: Windows Script Components**

---

**363**

<b>Overview</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>What Are Windows Script Components?</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>What Tools Do You Need?</b>	<b>364</b>
<b>The Script Component Runtime</b>	<b>364</b>
<b>Script Component Files</b>	<b>365</b>
The Script Component Wizard	367
<b>Exposing Properties, Methods, and Events</b>	<b>374</b>
Properties	374
Methods	375
Events	377
<b>Registration Information</b>	<b>378</b>
<b>Creating the Script Component Type Libraries</b>	<b>380</b>
How to Reference Other Components	381
<b>Script Components for ASP</b>	<b>382</b>
<b>Compile-Time Error Checking</b>	<b>384</b>
<b>Using VBScript Classes in Script Components</b>	<b>385</b>
Limitations of VBScript Classes	385
Using Internal Classes	385
Including External Source Files	387
<b>Summary</b>	<b>388</b>

## **Chapter 14: Script Encoding**

---

**389**

<b>Overview</b>	<b>389</b>
<b>Limitations of Script Encoding</b>	<b>389</b>
<b>Why Encode Scripts?</b>	<b>390</b>
<b>How to Encode Script</b>	<b>390</b>
The Microsoft Script Encoder	390

---

<b>Encoded Scripts—Do's and Don'ts</b>	<b>404</b>
<b>Decoding the Script</b>	<b>405</b>
<b>Other Methods of Script Obfuscation</b>	<b>405</b>
Remove Comment Tags	405
Substitute Good Variable Names for Bad Ones	405
Add/Remove White Space	405
<b>Summary</b>	<b>406</b>
<b>Chapter 15: Remote Scripting</b>	<b>407</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Overview</b>	<b>407</b>
<b>The Influence of JScript on Remote Scripting</b>	<b>407</b>
<b>How Remote Scripting Works</b>	<b>408</b>
<b>Using VBScript for Remote Scripting</b>	<b>408</b>
Installing Remote Script on the Server	409
Enabling Remote Scripting on the Server	409
Enabling Remote Scripting on the Client Side	410
<b>Invoking a Remote Method</b>	<b>410</b>
Transforming an ASP Page into a VBScript Object	412
<b>Summary</b>	<b>414</b>
<b>Chapter 16: HTML Applications</b>	<b>415</b>
<hr/>	
<b>What is an HTML Application?</b>	<b>415</b>
<b>What Tools Do You Need?</b>	<b>416</b>
<b>How to Create a Basic HTA</b>	<b>416</b>
Sample HTML File	417
Turning an HTML File into an HTML Application	419
<b>The HTA:APPLICATION Element</b>	<b>420</b>
Do File Extensions Still Matter?	421
All HTA:APPLICATION Attributes	423
Interdependent Attributes	425
Helpful Hints	428
<b>HTAs and Security</b>	<b>428</b>
Frames without Trust	428
APPLICATION Attribute	429
<b>HTA Deployment Models</b>	<b>432</b>
Web Model	432

## Contents

---

Package Model	432
Hybrid Model	433
<b>What Isn't Supported with HTAs?</b>	<b>433</b>
The Window Object	433
Default Behaviors	434
<b>Summary</b>	<b>434</b>
<b>Chapter 17: Server-Side Web Scripting</b>	<b>435</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>435</b>
<b>The Anatomy of the HTTP Protocol</b>	<b>436</b>
Overview	436
The HTTP Server	436
Protocol Basics	437
<b>Introducing Active Server Pages</b>	<b>441</b>
How the Server Recognizes ASPs	441
ASP Basics	442
<b>The Active Server Pages Object Model</b>	<b>444</b>
Collections	445
The Request Object	446
The Response Object	451
The Application and Session Objects	455
The Server Object	458
TheObjectContext Object	460
<b>Using Active Server Pages Effectively</b>	<b>460</b>
Designing the Site	461
Creating the global.asa file	461
Creating Our Main Page	462
The ASP/VBScript Section	465
The HTML Section	467
<b>Summary</b>	<b>468</b>
<b>Chapter 18: Adding VBScript to Your VB Applications</b>	<b>469</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>469</b>
<b>Why Add Scripting to Your Application?</b>	<b>469</b>
<b>Macro and Scripting Concepts</b>	<b>470</b>
<b>Adding the Script Control to a VB Application</b>	<b>471</b>

<b>Script Control Reference</b>	<b>472</b>
Object Model	472
Objects and Collections	472
Constants	487
<b>Error Handling with the Script Control</b>	<b>488</b>
Common Errors	488
<b>Debugging</b>	<b>491</b>
<b>Using Encoded Scripts</b>	<b>491</b>
<b>Sample Project</b>	<b>492</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>497</b>
<b>Appendix A: VBScript Functions and Keywords</b>	<b>499</b>
<b>Appendix B: Variable Naming Convention</b>	<b>569</b>
<b>Appendix C: Coding Convention</b>	<b>571</b>
<b>Appendix D: Visual Basic Constants Supported in VBScript</b>	<b>575</b>
<b>Appendix E: VBScript Error Codes and the Err Object</b>	<b>581</b>
<b>Appendix F: The Scripting Runtime Library Object Reference</b>	<b>597</b>
<b>Appendix G: The Windows Script Host Object Model</b>	<b>609</b>
<b>Appendix H: Regular Expressions</b>	<b>619</b>
<b>Appendix I: VBScript Features not in VBA</b>	<b>623</b>
<b>Appendix J: VBA Features not in VBScript</b>	<b>625</b>
<b>Appendix K: The Variant Subtypes</b>	<b>627</b>
<b>Appendix L: ActiveX Data Objects</b>	<b>631</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>657</b>





# Introduction

Imagine having the ability to write code quickly and easily in a text editor without having to worry about complex development environments.

Imagine not having the hassles of compiling code or distributing complex set-up programs.

Imagine being able to deploy your code in a wide variety of ways.

Imagine learning one language that allows you to code for server-side Internet, client-side Internet, and desktop.

Stop imagining. VBScript gives you all this and much more.

VBScript is an absolutely superb language to be able to “speak” in. It’s quick and easy to learn, powerful, flexible, and cheap. This makes it a winning language for both experienced programmers and those starting out in their programming careers. If you are an experienced programmer you can enjoy writing code free from complex development environments and the need for compiling. On the other hand, if you are a beginner you can get started programming, needing nothing more than a little knowledge and a text editor.

Knowledge and experience in VBScript can open many technology doors too. Having a good grounding in VBScript can lead you into areas such as Internet development, network administration, server-side coding, and even other programming languages (Visual Basic being the most popular route to take because the languages are so similar in syntax). With VBScript you can also create applications that look and feel like programs written using complex programming languages, such as C++. Also worth bearing in mind is that support for scripting is now embedded into every installation of the newer Windows operating systems—a dormant power that you can tap into with VBScript know-how. By writing some simple script in a text editor you can do a variety of tasks—such as copy and move files, create folders and files, modify the Windows registry, and lots more. One easy-to-use scripting language can do it all.

We believe that VBScript is a skill that many people will find both useful and rewarding, no matter whether they are involved in the IT industry, a SOHO PC user, a student, or simply a home user. Knowing and using VBScript can save you time and, more importantly, money.

## Who This Book Is For

This book is the one-stop book for anyone who is interested in learning VBScript. How you use it depends on your previous programming/scripting knowledge and experience:

- ❑ If you are a complete beginner who has heard about VBScript and have come this far, it’s great. You’ve come to the best possible place. As a beginner you have a fascinating journey ahead of you. We suggest that you go through this book from cover to cover to get the best from it.

- ❑ If you already have IT and programming experience and want to learn VBScript (perhaps for Active Server Pages (ASP) or Windows Scripting Host (WSH)) then you too have come to the right place. Your background in programming will mean that you will already be familiar with most of the terms and techniques we will be covering here. For you, the task of learning another language is made simpler by this. If you know what you plan of using VBScript for (say ASP or WSH), then you can read with this in mind and skip certain chapters for speed.
- ❑ Network administrators are likely to find this book not only useful, but also an enormous timesaver because they can use VBScript to write powerful logon scripts or automate boring, repetitive, time-consuming, and error-prone tasks using WSH.
- ❑ You're already using VBScript and just want to fill some of the blanks or bought this new edition just to keep right up to date. You will no doubt find new information and you might want to read certain chapters more than others.

## What This Book Covers

As you'd expect, a book on VBScript covers VBScript. To be precise, this book covers VBScript right up to the latest version (version 5.6). However, VBScript is a tool that can be used in a variety of different ways and by a variety of different applications. Therefore, along with covering VBScript in detail, this book also covers technologies that are linked to and associated with VBScript. These include technologies such as server-side technologies like Active Server Pages (ASP), client-side Dynamic HTML (DHTML), and Windows Script Host (WSH). Likewise, if you come from a Visual Basic background then most of what we will cover in the first third of the book (variables, data types, procedures, flow control, and so on) will be familiar to you. We'll also show you how to get deep into the Windows operating system and make changes with just a few lines of code.

## How This Book Is Structured

Take a quick look at the table of contents of this edition and you will see that it is broken up into three broad sections:

- ❑ First, the book begins with chapters that are core VBScript—basically how VBScript works as a language.
- ❑ Second, the book looks at how to make use of VBScript within other technologies (such as WSH or ASP). These chapters look at more advanced examples of VBScript code in action.
- ❑ Finally, the book has a detailed and comprehensive reference section in the form of a series of appendices. This reference section can be used either as a standalone reference section or to give you greater insight into how the VBScript from earlier chapters works.

How you decide to progress through the book really depends on your current skill level with regards to VBScript or other programming languages and what you want to do. If you want to use VBScript client-side on the Web then you can; if you want, skip any or all chapters relating to server-side VBScript. On the other hand you might be a server-side developer and not be currently interested in client-side VBScript. Again, that's just fine. It's your book—use it the way that is best for you.

If you're not sure as to the best way to approach this book, we suggest that you read it from beginning to end, so that you benefit fully. Don't worry too much about actually remembering everything you

read—that's not the point. The book is a reference, which means you can refer back to it again and again. Make notes in the book as you go along, as this will help you remember better and also help you to find key parts you've read before.

## What You Need to Use This Book

VBScript is possibly a low-cost solution to many of your scripting/programming needs. The good news is that if you (and your end users) use a Microsoft Windows operating system, you already have everything you need to be able to make full use of this book (or you can go online to download it).

All the code writing that you will be doing can be done using the Windows Notepad application that you already have installed. We will make a few suggestions as to other tools you can use that may make life easier for you, but a text editor is all you really need.

The Microsoft Scripting Web site contains documentation relating to VBScript that is available for download. You may like to download these too to augment your reading here.

If you are not using Windows XP you might want to download the latest VBScript engine—point your browser at <http://www.microsoft.com/scripting>.

## Conventions

To help you get the most from the text and keep track of what's happening, we've used a number of conventions throughout the book.

**Boxes like this one hold important, not-to-be forgotten information that is directly relevant to the surrounding text.**

*Tips, hints, tricks, and asides to the current discussion are offset and placed in italics like this.*

As for styles in the text:

- ☐ We *highlight* important words when we introduce them
- ☐ We show keyboard strokes like this: Ctrl+A
- ☐ We show file names, URLs, and code within the text like so: `persistence.properties`
- ☐ We present code in two different ways:

`In code examples we highlight new and important code with a gray background.`

The gray highlighting is not used for code that's less important in the present context, or has been shown before.

## Source Code

As you work through the examples in this book, you may choose either to type in all the code manually or to use the source code files that accompany the book. All of the source code used in this book is available for download at <http://www.wrox.com>. Once at the site, simply locate the book's title (either by using the Search box or by using one of the title lists) and click the Download Code link on the book's detail page to obtain all the source code for the book.

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## Errata

We make every effort to ensure that there are no errors in the text or in the code. However, no one is perfect, and mistakes do occur. If you find an error in one of our books, like a spelling mistake or faulty piece of code, we would be very grateful for your feedback. By sending in errata you may save another reader hours of frustration and at the same time you will be helping us provide even higher quality information.

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