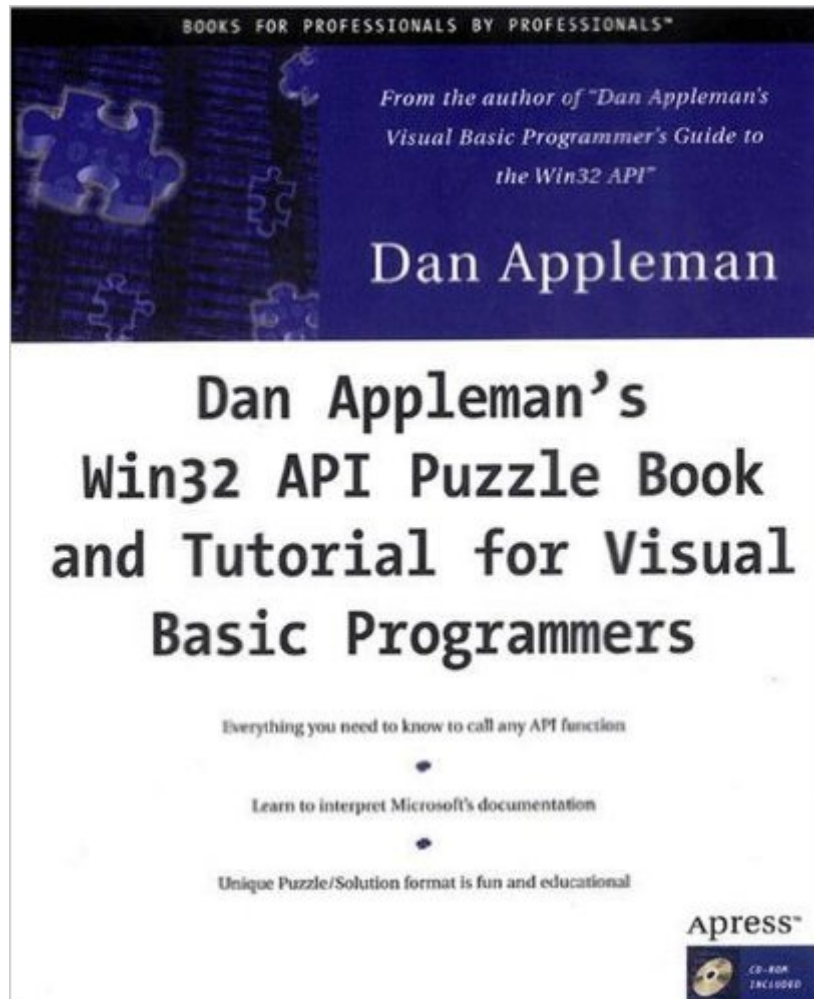


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Dan Appleman's Win32 API Puzzle Book And Tutorial For Visual Basic Programmers



Synopsis

This long-awaited complement to Appleman's previous bestseller shows programmers how to turbocharge VB by describing how to control the entire Windows API. Divided into three parts, the book begins with a series of programming puzzles of increasing complexity. Each puzzle describes a typical API function, followed by a small VB program applying the function. These programs almost work but are all missing something. Readers are challenged to solve the puzzle and fix the program -- thus learning in the process. The second part contains solutions to the puzzles, along with in-depth technical explanations, while the final part concludes with general tutorials that readers can refer to for help in solving the problems.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a VB programmer you should have at least 2 books on your shelf: Dan Appleman's Visual Basic Programmer's Guide to the Win32 API and this one. The former teaches by showing - serving as a reference book when you are trying to enhance the functionality of your VB application. The latter teaches by doing - allowing your mind to actively grasp the concepts behind API calls, structures, and pointers, instead of mindlessly hacking through APIs, tossing in variables, hoping for success. The puzzles in this book allow you to learn from your mistakes. Mr. Appleman explains his own logic as he works through the problem. For me, this is more valuable than just being told the answer as many books in this genre do. This book is vital to help train a VB programmer to become a designer, rather than a developer. It helps you understand the importance of visualizing the solution to the

problem before writing a single line of code. In sports they say that you need to visualize the goal before you actually play the game. I think the same goes for coding. This book is the ideal companion for that exercise. If you are a technical team lead, go ahead and assign these puzzles to your developers so that they can not only hone their skills, but also sharpen their minds. In addition, Mr. Appleman's writing style of light bantering and humor is a nice relief from the dry technical-journalistic writing of other Visual Basic authors....this book is not a cookbook...it can be better thought of as Ingredient Book. By understanding the fundamental ingredients towards cooking up a VB/WinAPI program, it helps you become a better chef. You need to understand what goes into a creation before you can anticipate what comes out....this book is not meant to serve as a comprehensive reference guide to the API. For that try Mr. Appleman's API book or Bock's Visual Basic 6 Win32 API Tutorial.. END

When I was researching how to access HID-class USB peripherals from VB applications, I learned from the Windows 98 docs that I needed to call a series of API functions to locate the device and learn about its capabilities. Many of the calls involved passing and returning complex structures. I could find no documentation on the calls for Visual-Basic programmers. Although I had some experience with API calls, my initial attempts at calling these functions didn't get far. Then I bought this book. First I read it straight through (though I do admit to reading each solution after the puzzle, rather than waiting til the end). Then I went back to my code with the book at hand and eventually got it all working. Plus, I understood exactly why the code had to be the way it was in order to work. This isn't a cookbook. Thinking is required. One sentence I took particular comfort in when things weren't quite working yet was, "It is ultimately possible to handle any structure, no matter what type of data it contains." (p. 363) This is an excellent and useful book that will enable you to do any API call that Windows might throw your way.

Despite what has to be just about the longest and worst title of any book I've seen, the Puzzle book packs some worthwhile content between its covers. The puzzles themselves were only of limited scope and interest, but the second half of the book - the tutorials - are worth the price of admission. Anyone who wants to go beyond the basics of the Win32 API and utilize exported DLL functions will appreciate the sections on DLL calling conventions, C++ header conversion, and passing structures/UDT's as parameters. If you don't own a copy of Dan's Visual Basic Programmer's Guide to the Win32 API, buy that book first. It's an absolute essential for your library. However, the Puzzle book makes a nice addition as well.

Another Appleman must have! Definitely 5 stars. And to be honest I think the person who complained about how few api's were covered misses the point of this book. It's like the old proverb about "teaching a man to fish rather than giving him a fish". This book helps you understand how api's work - that way you can use any of them by simply looking at the signatures.

This book is a good companion for his Win32 API book. The book is entertaining ... and it makes you think. Some of the puzzles gave me motivation to explore areas of the Windows API that I hadn't used before. Be warned, you will NEED his Win32 API book. The header files and an MSDN subscription are also very helpful.

Dan Appleman's style is hard yet solvable. Being a friend of his I read a lot of his other books. All of those are good

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