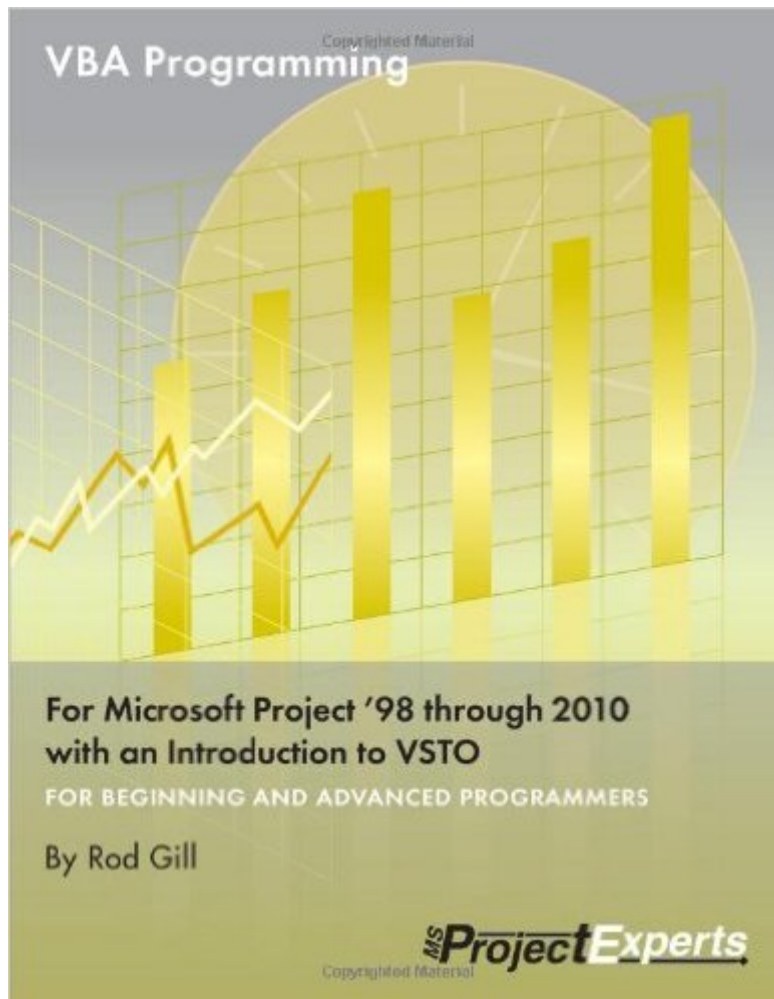


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VBA Programming For Microsoft Project '98 Through 2010 With An Introduction To VSTO



Synopsis

Award winning technologist and Project MVP Rod Gill puts his many years of field experience into your hands through a structured learning approach including hands-on exercises and many useful macros. This book is essential for people who want to increase their Microsoft Project productivity using Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) and who want to begin using Visual Studio Tools for Office. This book applies to all version of Microsoft Project from 98 through 2010. Only book devoted Project VBA Jump-start your development with 30 useful sample code downloads Ideal for beginners and advanced programmers Advanced topics include working with Project Server data Loaded with notes, warnings, tips and tricks Excellent reference and training manual

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Customer Reviews

This review is going to be somewhat unfair, since it assumes that you've read the rave reviews elsewhere on this site and already know the book's strengths. If you're new to MS Project programming you'll want the book, but you might want to buy it knowing about the following (perceived) weaknesses.1. The author addresses the use of Visual Basic For Applications in Microsoft Project. This forces him to divide his attention between how to program with VBA and how to use VBA to add features to Project. This problem of divided attention is common to all VBA texts, be it VBA for Excel, for Access, for Word, for Outlook or for PowerPoint. In other books the authors write rather substantial introductions to VBA. In Guy Hart-Davis's magisterial Word 2000 Developer's Handbook (Handbook) the first 500 pages is devoted to a dense and extremely useful

discussion of VBA, with 60 pages on custom dialog boxes (forms), 30 pages on controlling program loops and 50 pages on the use of variables, constants and arrays. Only after that introduction does Guy bring in Word-specific programming. In contrast, VBA Programming For Microsoft Office Project (VPFMOP) offers much less detail. There are only three pages that address forms. It is highly unlikely that a beginner is going to be able to do much with that introduction. (Although Listbox controls are used in the code, you won't learn why the frustrating ColumnHeads property is not useful in MS Project). Similarly, there is only six pages on conditional and looped statements. The discussion is clear, but it doesn't get very far into the nitty-gritty. You probably want to understand VBA fairly well before starting this book.² The other half of this equation is getting Project to do the things you want it to do. Beyond "If" statements and "Do" loops, you want to manage Tasks, Resources, Calendars, Assignments, and a host of other, Project-specific features. Project allows you to do this by exposing tools called objects. There are objects for each feature mentioned above and many more (more than 80 are listed on Microsoft's site). Getting a grasp on how the various Project objects interact is a major challenge. In books for other products this covers many hundreds of pages. Again, in contrast, the discussion in VPFMOP on Project objects is very thin. The index points to just five objects, each presented in just a few pages. The author repeatedly encourages the reader to use the macro-recorder to look into details, but I had hoped that the book would be much deeper. For example, a common operation is that of assigning resources to a task. How do you do that? As far as I can tell, the book is silent.³ Others at have expressed strong support for the style of presentation in VPFMOP, but not everyone is going to be happy with it. Much of the book revolves around programming a new feature called "Project Control Center" (PCC). In a typical presentation, the author briefly discusses some aspect of MS Project, the necessary programming is outlined, and then the new code is added to the PCC. This is an excellent technique for dealing with students in a classroom, but frustrating for programmers who need guidance on a particular technical issue. It can be hard to dig specific technical details about Project out of the application details for the PCC. In short, it's hard to browse this text.⁴ A very large fraction of this book revolves around using VBA to control programs other than Project. Surely this is an overly ambitious aim for a book that doesn't have more than a page or two to spare for discussing VBA forms. In fairness, I suspect that Rod is telling us that the overwhelming majority of programming tasks for Project involve creating reports, where the ability to manage Excel or Access is important. But there are libraries of Excel and Access books out there, many of which do a better job of explaining programming in their province. In trying to be all-things-VBA, VPFMOP loses focus on clarifying the many relationships that are painfully under-documented within Project.⁵ Minor

complaints! The format of this book is a bit peculiar. It looks like a website that was adapted to print format (there are the usual HTML heading levels, block quotes containing code, bullet points and quite large print). VPFMOP appears to be printed on 8.5 X 11 inch paper, as if it came off of an inkjet printer. There is a striking amount of whitespace. You're not getting a lot of text in this 450 page book. Finally, the index is pretty marginal. For example, calendars are an important aspect of Project, and although there is no discussion of the Calendar object (that I could find) this object is used in code (pg. 324). It would be useful if use of individual Project objects in code had been indexed. Once again, this is the only book out there for programming MS Project. If you intend to program then certainly buy this book. My guess is that people who do not have a VBA background will find themselves periodically frustrated. (Those folks might want to try to find a copy of *VBA Developer's Handbook, 2nd Edition* to have as a backup). Just be aware that the text you're getting is more like a classroom study-guide than a reference book. As with study-guides, you'll probably read it once and then rarely pick it up again. That said, the hardest part is to get going. That's where VPFMOP is a treasure.

Using Microsoft Project just out of the box has a number of limitations. You are restricted to the features that Microsoft decided to include, and you have to accept the way that they designed them. Sometimes this is just an irritation, other times it is a major roadblock. But, inside of Project is the ability to use VBA (Visual Basic for Applications) which allows you to do anything that is possible in the application and extend it to add additional functionality. Unfortunately, Project VBA has been poorly documented and promoted until now. Rod's book is a great introduction to this topic and can get you started on the path to making Project obey your will instead of the other way around. Even if you only use VBA to automate a few repetitive chores or perform some special formatting it is well worth the cost of this book. In my opinion, Rod's approach (a mix of critical information and tutorial) is an excellent way for people to find their way. The existing documentation on Project VBA can be difficult to work through, so Rod's examples and explanations along with recommended practices are essential to make sense of it in a hurry. This is the first book I know which is completely devoted to Project VBA. Most of the project "bibles" only cover it in a cursory fashion with a chapter or so. It deserves more than that, and Rod Gill has finally delivered a book which does the topic justice.

Where was a book like this when I started writing VBA macros for Microsoft Project! It would have saved me many hours of frustrating trial and error and searches through the Project VBA help file. The author has pulled together information from Project's VBA help file, Project newsgroup

postings and years of experience with Visual Basic and Project itself to provide a much needed guide specifically directed toward Project's version of VBA. The information provided is as good for someone who is new to Project VBA as it is for someone who already has good Project VBA experience. This book is not limited to Project VBA however. It also is a good resource for those who simply want to customize Project fields using formulas, value lists and graphical indicators. Many books on programming use a "hello world" approach to the examples they present. This book is filled with good practical examples that are immediately useful to the Project user. If you are a Microsoft Project user and you want to expand the functionality of the application with VBA, I highly recommend this book. John

The title says it all, really. We all know this book is years overdue - there was no book on the subject at all - but the waiting was worth it. It is crystal clear in its explanations and in the examples, but most of all it touches highly important subjects you wouldn't expect: Project 2007, but also links to Access, to the Server DB, and OLEDB. To me personally this book will serve in two ways:- It will help me teach Project VBA (I have declined such requests for lack of a good student book)- It will allow me to develop in areas I have been avoiding (Data Bases and OLEDB) Thank you Rod, and congratulations.

Didn't learn much new stuff. Most is out on the Web but it is nice to have it in one place. I like the book format, good for older coders like me who's eyes aren't like they used to be. The index is limited/sparse. Wish it had an appendix with the full MSP Object Model and other MSP specific references. Great start, just want more...

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