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Developer Tools: Build, Grab or Buy (for the real world)

Session Number SCH137

2

Who Am I?

- President - White Light Computing, Inc.
- Co-author: *What's New in Nine*
- Co-author: *Deploying Visual FoxPro Solutions*
- Co-author: *MegaFox: 1002 Things You Wanted to Know About Extending Visual FoxPro*
- Co-author: *1001 Things You Wanted to Know About Visual FoxPro* (KiloFox)
- VFP MVP and MCP
- Author of WLC HackCX & MenuDesigner
- Shedding Some Light
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3

Agenda

- Why, and some techniques to build VFP developer tools.
- Why, where, and what free VFP developer tools to grab.
- Why, where, and what VFP developer tools to consider buying.
- To inspire you to develop tools

4

Disclaimer

- Many of the tools in this presentation open, present, and manipulate VFP metadata (source code).
- Backup, backup, backup!
- This is our life line to cash flow!

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Dev Tool Categories

- VFP Source/Metadata Manipulators
- VFP IDE Enhancements
- Outside Resources

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Why Build?

- Increase productivity
- Reduces redundancy
- Supplement VFP features
- Help learn more about VFP
- Sometimes there is nothing available and you are between a rock and a hard place.

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What is Metadata?

- "Data about data"
- Example of Metadata

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Visual FoxPro Metadata Files

- Project Files
- Form and Visual Class Libraries

- Report and Labels
- Menus
- Database Container

9 ## Internals of VFP Metadata

- All DBFs all the time
- TimeStamp
- User

10 ## Sources of Documentation

- Documentation Projects (FileSpec.pjx)
- FoxPro KnowledgeBase
- Online Help and Online Documentation
- FoxPro 2.x Developer's Guide (Appendix A)

11 ## Extending the VFP IDE

- Metadata Tricks and Tips
- Documenting items in projects
- Adding developer menus
- Printing metadata source code
- Shrinking a production executable

12 ## Extending the VFP IDE

- Searching for text strings over entire projects
- Subclassing entire class libraries
- Class Browser add-ins
- Coverage Profiler add-ins
- Object Browser add-ins

13 ## Extending the VFP IDE

- Builders
- IntelliSense
- Finding undeclared variables
- Macros (also works in production apps)

14 ## Why Grab?

- There are plenty of other VFP developers who struggle the same way you are and may have written tools first.
- The time is already invested
- The bugs might already be worked out!

15 ## Tools to Consider Grabbing

- ViewEditor
- G2 SuperCls (like Ken's & Drew's but enhanced and not framework specific)
- HackForm
- Project Searcher
- Go Fish

16 ## Tools to Consider Grabbing

- WLC ProjectBuilder
- WLC Tab Order Builder
- MsgSvcUI
- FoxBox
- Menu Hack (menu designer)
- Coverage Profiler add-in
- DocVCX

17 ## Tools to Consider Grabbing

- WLC Task List Manager
- WLC Builder Metadata Editor
- Class Reporter
- DBC ShowPlan Analyzer
- WLC DBCX Comparison

18 ## Tools to Consider Grabbing

- FRX2Word
- List Structure
- GetConstants

19 ## Sources for Freebies

- Visual FoxPro (XSource)
- CompuServe MSDevApps Forum
- Universal Thread
- FoxWiki
- Virtual FoxPro User Group
- Vendor sites
- Periodicals, Books
- Individual Developer and User Group Websites

20 ## Why Buy?

- There are plenty of other VFP developers who struggle the same way you are and have written tools first
- Most likely cheaper and the time is already invested working out the bugs
- What are the real differences between "Grab" and "Buy" tools?

21 ## Tools to Consider Buying

- Stonefield Database Toolkit
- A Framework
- xCase
- West HTML Help Builder
- WLC View Editor Professional
- WLC HackCX Professional

22 ## Tools to Consider Buying

- xFRX
- Mind's Eye Report Engine Control
- FoxAudit
- DataClas
- Recover

23 ## Tools to Consider Buying

- DynaZip
- DBi Controls
- MSDN Subscription (five levels)

24 ## Something from Kindergarten

- Share ideas
- Share tools
- Share everything
- It is how we continue to build the Fox Community.

25 ## Essential Fox Web Update Page

www.essentialfox.com
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26 ## Thank you!

Please remember to fill out your evaluation.