Visual Basic – Messages and data input/output

Introduction

One way for a user to communicate with a procedure is via a dialogue box. The easiest way to do this in VB is to use one of the pre-defined ones. VB has two kinds, a Message box and an Input box.

Message box

The **MsgBox** function displays a message, waits for the user to click a button and returns a value indicating which button has been chosen. The simplest MsgBox contains only a message string and an OK button. The general syntax is MsqBox(prompt [,buttons] [,title]), where the quantities within [] are optional arguments, with prompt: string expression displayed in the message (max length 1024 characters) buttons: numerical expression that is sum of values specifying the type of buttons to display, title: string expression displayed in the title bar. Some of the button values are given below. (For a full list see the Help file). Value Constant Display 0 vbOKOnlv OK button only vbOKCancel OK and Cancel buttons 1 3 vbYesNoCancel Yes. No and Cancel buttons 4 vbYesNo Yes and No buttons 32 vbOuestion Ouerv icon vbExclamation 48 Warning message icon 0 vbDefaultButton1 First button is default 256 vbDefaultButton2 Second button is default 512 vbDefaultButton3 Third button is default

The value returned by the **MsgBox** function depends on the button pressed. Some values are listed below.

Button selected	Value	Constant
OK	1	vbOK
Cancel	2	vbCancel
Yes	6	vbYes
No	7	vbNo

The **MsgBox** function can be used as a simple debug tool. To display the contents of variable variDisplay then use

MsgBox "Contents of variDisplay " & variDisplay which creates a message made from concatenating the text Contents of variDisplay with the data in the variable variDisplay. The example below displays a message box with two buttons, Yes and No, with No as the default response. The value returned by the **MsgBox** function depends on the button pressed by the user.

```
msg = "Do you want to continue?"
boxButtons = vbYesNo + vbDefaultButton2
msgTitle = "Processing mode"
response = MsgBox(msg, boxButtons, msgTitle)
If response = vbYes Then
    msg = "clicked YES"
Else
    msg = "Clicked No or pressed ENTER"
End If
MsgBox msg
```

Data input and output

A procedure often needs some data on which it applies its actions. A **Function** procedure will usually get its input data from its arguments and returns a value in its name. A **Sub** procedure could get its input from arguments but it doesn't return a value, yet it needs to return data somehow. One method is for the data to be taken from, or put into cells of a spreadsheet. For example

Activeworkbook.Sheets(1).Range("A1").Value = 10 puts the value 10 into cell A1 of the current worksheet. Likewise the statement xVal = ActiveSheet.Range("B2").Value assigns to the variable xVal in the code the contents of cell B2.

The previous technique presupposes that the values of the data are know in advance and have been entered into the spreadsheet BEFORE the procedure is run. The **InputBox** function creates and displays a simple dialogue box that contains a prompt, an edit box, and OK and Cancel buttons. You use this box to allow the user to input data at run-time. The format of the **InputBox** function is

InputBox(Prompt	, [,title] [,default] [,xpos] [,ypos])
with	
prompt :=	a string expression displayed in the box,
Optional arguments	
title:=	a string expression displayed in the dialogue box's title bar. If
	omitted nothing is displayed.
default:=	default response if no input provided
xpos, ypos	specify the horizontal and vertical position of the box. If omitted
	the box is centred horizontally and about one-third of the way
	down the screen.

```
A simple example is
radius = InputBox("Enter radius of circle", "Circle ______
radius")
```

which will display a dialogue box with a title "Circle radius" and a message "Enter radius of circle" and wait for the user to enter a value.

The **InputBox** Method (of the Application object) works like the **InputBox** function but the method also allows you specify the data type. This enable you to enter a range, e.g. A1:A10. If data entered is of the wrong type Excel displays an error message. The format to use is

Application.InputBox(prompt,title,default,left,top,type) The arguments, **prompt, title** and **default** are as for the **InputBox** function. The arguments, **left, top**, and **type** are optional, (**left** and **top** specify the horizontal and vertical postion from the top left of the screen in point units (=1/72.27 inch)), **type** specifies the data type. If type is omitted the method returns text). **Type** has the following values,

Value	Description
0	a formula
1	a number
2	text (string)
4	logical
8	cell reference (a range)
16	error value
64	an array of values
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Note, type = 1 + 2 accepts text or number.

The code below asks the user to specify a range to search and a search value. The search range must be a valid range, e.g. sheet!A1:A10, and the search value is a number. Sub CountEntries()

```
Dim allCount As Integer, rangeToSearch As Object
     Dim searchValue, c
     cellCount = 0
     Set rangeToSearch = Application.InputBox( _
               Prompt: = "Enter range to search", _
               Type: = 8)
     ' type 8 means entry must be a range object
     searchValue = Application.InputBox(
                    Prompt: = "Search for value", _
                    Type: = 1)
     ' type 1 means a number
     If searchValue = False Then Exit Sub
      ' user clicked Cancel
     For Each c In rangeToSearch
          If c.Value = searchValue Then
               cellCount = cellCount + 1
          End If
     Next c
     MsgBox "Number of occurrences of " & searchValue _
                    & " is " & cellCount
End Sub
```