



Creating Solutions with Attachmate Reflection and Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications

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Because the large majority of corporate data resides on host systems, organizations must make that data available to the desktop in order to retain a competitive advantage. The increased demand for host access coincides with a corresponding business trend of buying and customizing off-the-shelf applications, rather than the time-consuming and risky process of building solutions from scratch.

Microsoft® Visual Basic® for Applications is the standard scripting language for desktop applications. By incorporating this powerful programming language, Reflection® gains programmability features that make it infinitely customizable and able to integrate with other applications and data throughout an organization.

This white paper tells how Reflection with VBA provides world-class host access that lets you integrate all your corporate data sources.

Customize Reflection to Increase Productivity

Using VBA and Reflection's customization tools can help you reduce the training costs associated with using host applications. Reflection's macro recorder makes it easy to generate code that automates routine tasks. Just turn on the recorder and perform the actions. When you're finished, you can easily create custom toolbars or menu items that run the recorded macros, or use Reflection's Automation Events to automatically trigger recorded actions. For example, you can do any of the following with no programming knowledge at all:

- Create a toolbar button that allows a user to log in and navigate to a hard-to-find host screen with a single click.
- Add menu items that allow users to select different terminal configurations.
- Automatically transfer files at a particular time during the night.

Suppose you want to enhance the terminal environment by putting a Windows face on legacy applications. By adding the power of Visual Basic programming you can do that, and perform more complex customization tasks, including the following:

- Use Visual Basic forms to create intuitive, easy-

to-use dialog boxes for sending and receiving host information—your users never need to see a terminal green screen again.

- Capture host screen data and send it to the Clipboard or to other applications.
- Launch simultaneous Reflection sessions and exchange data between different hosts.

In addition to customization tools, Reflection provides extensive online help that includes samples of how to use specific commands.

Integrate Your Corporate Data

Because Reflection has the same component-driven language engine included in Microsoft Office products, importing host data into your Windows documents, spreadsheets, and databases is easier than ever.

By providing an industry-standard development environment, Reflection offers a seamless link to the objects required to integrate your host legacy data with other applications. Using Reflection and VBA you can:

- Transfer data automatically from a host application to an Excel spreadsheet.
- Create a graphical display in Visio using information from your host application.
- Copy information from a host display and publish it on a web site.
- Transmit text from a Word document to your host application.

Consume Web Services on the Desktop

Web services bring new data and functionality to host applications by connecting to remote components over HTTP. Using a combination of Reflection's built-in VBA capabilities and the Microsoft Office 2003 Web Services Toolkit, you can extend your green-screen interface with web services. For example, let's say your host system doesn't provide address validation or package tracking. Using a web service, you can include those capabilities without writing your own address validation or package tracking code.

Here's how you do it: First you install the Web Services Toolkit and locate the desired web service. Then, using the Visual Basic Editor included with all Windows-based Reflection products, you add a reference to that

web service in your VBA project. Now you can access that web service via any VBA macros you create for use with Reflection.

When users start the host session, the information provided by the web service is automatically available to them. The result is increased productivity on the desktop, thanks to a familiar programming language and standard, easy-to-implement protocols.

Leverage Existing Expertise

Reflection products include VBA, the identical environment provided in Microsoft Office products. Visual Basic is rapidly becoming the software industry's first shared, common environment for developing application-specific solutions. Anyone familiar with Visual Basic programming can immediately make full use of VBA's powerful, integrated environment in Reflection. The following VBA features are among those that programmers can take advantage of:

- Graphic forms and the Forms toolbox allow you to create custom dialog boxes using visual drag-and-drop techniques.
- A full range of enhanced debugging tools help you test and develop code.
- IntelliSense editing features help automate and assist in the creation of code.

Programming Services

For professional assistance developing automation solutions, you can turn to Attachmate. By working with you to maximize Reflection's software automation capability, Attachmate can help streamline operations, thereby saving your company money—without increasing the burden on your IT department. Attachmate's experienced technical specialists can look at ways to design and develop solutions tailored to your specific needs.

“We’re very excited that Attachmate has chosen to enable their products with VBA. We believe this technology is a perfect fit for Attachmate’s host-access products, offering their customers the tools they need to reduce management burden and costs, while providing optimal access to and integration of host data.”

— PAUL GROSS
Vice President, DeveloperTools DivisionMicrosoft

Conclusion

Microsoft VBA is included in the following Reflection products:

- Reflection for the Multi-Host Enterprise
- Reflection® for IBM®
- Reflection for HP
- Reflection for UNIX and OpenVMS

The integration of VBA into the Reflection product line is consistent with Attachmate's long-standing business philosophy of offering products that are easy for IT to deploy, customize, and support. Our support for VBA allows you to automate and customize Reflection products using your existing VBA expertise.



About Attachmate

Attachmate helps businesses extend, manage, and secure their IT investments. We offer a broad range of solutions—from terminal emulation, legacy integration, and PC lifecycle management products to innovative systems and security management tools. With our technology, more than 65,000 customers worldwide are putting their IT assets to work in new and meaningful ways. Learn more at www.attachmate.com.



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