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**HISTORY OF VISUAL BASIC TILL DATE**

The History of Visual Basic dates back to 1991 when the first visual basic was introduced. The core of Visual Basic was built on the older BASIC language, which was a popular programming language throughout the 1980s.

Alan Cooper had developed a drag-and-drop interface in the late-1980s, Microsoft approached him and asked his company, Tripod, to develop the concept into a form building application. Tripod developed the project for Microsoft. It was called Ruby and it did not include a programming language at all. Microsoft decided to bundle it with the BASIC programming language, creating Visual Basic. Ruby also provided the ability to load dynamic link libraries containing additional controls (then called 'gizmos'), which later became the VBX interface.

**Brief History of Visual Basic**

The first visual Basic for Windows was released in May 1991 at a trade show in Atlanta, Georgia.

The second Visual Basic was released in November 1992. The programming environment was easier to use, and its speed was improved. Notably, forms became core objects, thus laying the foundational concepts of class modules as were later offered in VB4.

The third visual Basic was released in 1993 and came in Standard and Professional versions. VB3 included version 1.1 of the Microsoft Jet Database Engine that could read and write Jet (or Access) 1.x databases.

The fourth Visual Basic was released in August 1995. It was the first version that could create 32-bit as well as 16-bit Windows programs. It also introduced the ability to write non-GUI classes in Visual Basic. While previous versions of Visual Basic had used VBX controls, Visual Basic now used OLE controls (with files names ending in .ocx) instead. These were later to be named ActiveX controls.

With version 5.0 release in February 1997, Microsoft released Visual Basic exclusively for 32-bit versions of Windows. Programmers who preferred to write 16-bit programs were able to import programs written in Visual Basic 4.0 to Visual Basic 5.0, and Visual Basic 5.0 programs could easily be converted with Visual Basic 4.0. Visual Basic 5.0 also introduced the ability to create custom user controls, as well as the ability to compile to native Windows executable code, speeding up calculation-intensive code execution. A free, downloadable Control Creation Edition was also released for creation of ActiveX controls.

Visual Basic 6.0 released in mid 1998 improved in a number of areas including the ability to create web-based applications. VB6 has been the most successful version in the history of Visual Basic, it has entered Microsoft's 'non-supported phase' as of March 2008. Although the development environment is no longer supported, the runtime is supported on Windows Vista, Windows Server 2008 and Windows 7.

Mainstream Support for Microsoft VB 6.0 ended on March 31, 2005. Extended support ended in March 2008. In response, the Visual Basic user community expressed its grave concern and lobbied users to sign a petition to keep the product alive. Microsoft has so far refused to change their position on the matter.

Visual Basic .NET is Microsoft's designated successor to VB 6.0, and is part of Microsoft's .NET platform. It compiles and runs using the .NET Framework and is not backwards compatible with VB 6.0. An automated conversion tool exists, but for most projects automated conversion is impossible. Visual Basic.NET is designed to create .NET applications, Windows or Web applications, and Web Services.

Visual Basic .NET 2003 was released in April 2003. Microsoft re-engineered Visual Basic from the ground up, including full object-based programming facilities and complete integration with the .NET Framework Common Language Runtime (CLR). This release became the first version in the history of visual basic to provide programming tools for Pocket PCs and other mobile devices, it also had better XML features and support for Windows Server 2003.

In 2005, Microsoft released Visual Studio 2005, which included Visual Basic 8.0 and the .NET Framework 2.0. Visual Basic 2005 is the name used to refer to this update as Microsoft decided to drop the .NET portion of the title. The new features included Design-time expression evaluation, My pseudo- namespace, dynamically generated classes and Data Source binding for easier database client/server development. These enhancements were mainly intended to reinforce VB's focus as a rapid application development platform and further differentiate it from C#.

In 2005, Microsoft also launched the Visual Basic 2005 Express as part of the Visual Studio Express product range, The Express editions are free development tools having a streamlined version of the user interface, and lack more advanced features of the standard versions. Microsoft created these for students, hobbyists and novices. This was a milestone event in the history of visual basic as it was the first time VB became available free of cost.

In 2008, Microsoft launched Visual Studio 2008 including VB 9.0 and the .NET Framework 3.5. Visual Basic 2008 as it is known, includes features like Anonymous types, support for LINQ, Lambda expressions and XML literals. In 2008, Microsoft also released the free Visual Basic 2008 Express as an updated version of Visual Basic 2005 Express.

At the time of writing this article Microsoft is testing the beta 2 version of their upcoming release Visual Basic 2010 (VB 10.0) which is part of the Visual Studio 2010 with .NET Framework 4.0. This version includes many Compiler and Language improvements like Auto-Implemented Properties, Collection Initializers and Implicit Line Continuation. The Integrated Development Environment included new features like Highlighting References and IntelliSense Suggestion Mode.

Thought-out the History of Visual Basic the focus has always been on rapid application development and that's what makes Visual Basic such a widely used programming environment.