

Setting up VFP 9

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Inertia is a powerful thing. I regularly hear from developers who haven't gotten around to upgrading to VFP 9, or haven't kept their VFP 9 installation up to date. Given that all the activity from Microsoft in the last 5 or 6 years has come in the form of streamed updates, it can be time-consuming as well as confusing to figure out how to get VFP 9 set up in tip-top shape. This article will provide a quick cookbook to get your copy of VFP up to date.

Preparation

Create a folder or a drive for your VFP development. I set up mine like this:

```
\dev
\dev\common
\dev\devutils
\dev\vfzips
\dev\cust_1\project_1
\dev\cust_1\project_2
\dev\cust_2\project_1
and so on.
```

The 'common' folder contains files that you use across all projects (base classes, for example) while the 'devutils' folder contains utilities you use yourself, as a developer, but don't ship with your application.

There's a difference of opinion on whether you should let VFP store all of your projects in the default projects folder in your Users folder on drive C, or if you should create a separate folder (on a separate drive.) The argument for putting your dev folder on a separate drive, preferably on a network drive, is that it's then accessible from multiple machines, and even remotely, should you need it. The one downside is that if the network connection is down, your ability to work is greatly impeded.

I keep my dev folder on a separate local drive and use an encrypted service to back it up to the cloud and automatically replicate it across multiple machines. This gives me all of the benefits - access no matter what machine I'm on or where I'm at, together with guaranteed access regardless of network availability.

You'll probably want to set up a folder for each of your projects. Let's just start out with one, called

```
\dev\TheApp
```

for the project you and I will be working on. Use whatever you like for "TheApp".

Setting up VFP for the first time

You'll be downloading a 3 files that get installed after you install VFP 9: Service Pack 2, Hotfixes, and a help file. I save these files to that \DEV\VFPZIPS folder so that if I have to reinstall VFP later, I don't have to worry about finding them on the Web again.

1. Insert the VFP CD into your drive.

The Microsoft Visual FoxPro 9.0 Setup screen will display as shown in **Figure 1**.

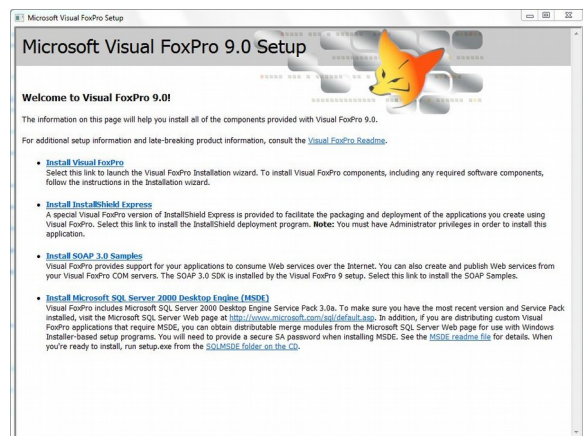


Figure 1. The first VFP 9 Setup screen.

Click the "Install Visual FoxPro" option.

2. The Setup screen displays.

A screen with three options displays next, as shown in **Figure 2**.

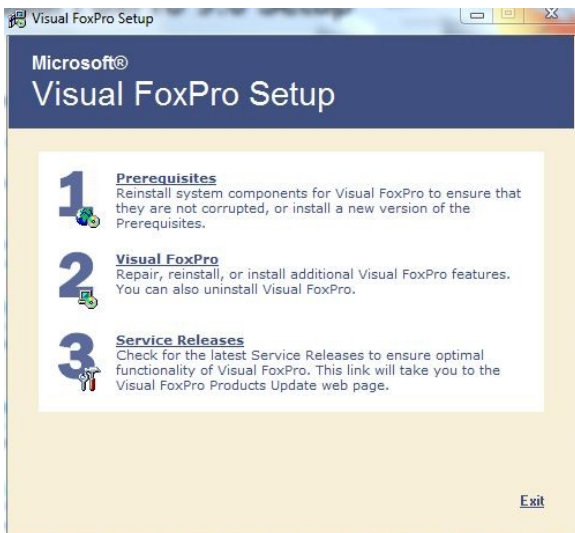


Figure 2. The main VFP setup screen.

Unlike the first setup screen, these all need to be executed. Click and execute each option in turn.

3. Install Service Pack 2.

The third option, Service Releases, should point you to the Microsoft VFP page. If it doesn't, you can find Service Pack 2 (which includes Service Pack 1) on the Web here:

<http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=13959>

You'll get a 34 MB file named

VFP9_sp2.exe

Put this in your \DEV\VFPZIPS folder in case you need it again sometime.

Execute the file. It will install by itself, modifying the VFP9.EXE file in c:\Program Files\Microsoft Visual FoxPro 9.

4. Install the latest hotfix

On the VFP page, you'll find references to a series of three hotfixes released after Service Pack 2. It can be confusing to figure out which to install. Look for # 968409, dated April 2, 2009. You can find it here:

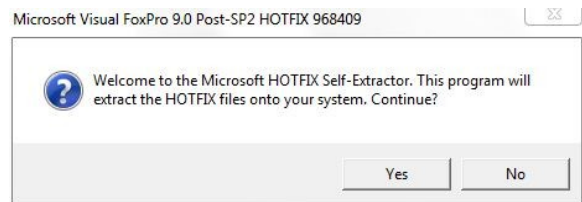
<http://archive.msdn.microsoft.com/KB968409>

This one is dated April 2, 2009. You may run across two older hotfixes (April 12, 2008 and June 3, 2008) - these are included in the April 2, 2009 hotfix.

You'll get an 11 MB file named

VFP90SP2-KB968409-ENU.EXE

Save this to your \DEV\VFPZIPS folder as well. Executing this file runs the self-extractor as shown in Figure 3.



and extracts five files into a folder:

968409_readme.txt		03-Apr-2009
19:08	2,845	
Vfp9.exe	9.0.0.7423	23-Feb-2009
21:58	5,783,552	
Vfp9r.dll	9.0.0.7423	23-Feb-2009
21:59	4,734,976	
Vfp9runtime.msm		24-Feb-2009
00:37	4,584,448	
Vfp9t.dll	9.0.0.7423	23-Feb-2009
21:59	3,907,584	

Unlike the Service Pack, which is designed to install by itself, you have to install the hotfix files manually. The general process is for you to rename existing files (for safekeeping) and then copying these files in their place. The readme file provides explicit steps on how to do so.

5. Install the updated VFP 9 help file

The help file that shipped with VFP 9 had a lot of errors and bugs in it. The VFP community fixed the file and made it publicly available. You can find it here:

<http://vfp.codeplex.com/releases/view/23319>

You'll get an 11 MB file named

dv_foxhelp_vfp9sp2_b6.zip

Save this to your \DEV\VFPZIPS folder too. Unzipping it will produce an 11 MB file named

dv_foxhelp_vfp9sp2_b6.exe

Execute the EXE and the original VFP help file in c:\Program Files\Microsoft Visual FoxPro 9" will be replaced with the new help file.

VFP is now completely up to date.

Configuring VFP 9

This step may be unnecessary for those of you who have already been using VFP 9, but for those who are upgrading from earlier versions, particularly from FoxPro 1.x/2.x, you'll want to read through this.

As with everything else FoxProToVFP, configuration has all sorts of new options.

You can configure VFP to start up in a selected folder and to include one or more other folders in its search path from within the VFP IDE.

1. Start up VFP

2. Select Tools | Options to open the Options dialog.
 3. Select the File Locations tab.
 4. Change Default Directory to `\dev\TheApp` (as I mentioned earlier.)
 5. Change Search Path to include `\dev\common`.
- You're all set up and ready for business.

Author Profile

Whil Hentzen is an independent software developer based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (as opposed to Milwaukee, Minnesota, as many people think.) His writing has killed many trees over the years, but none since 2007. He has realized he really sort of misses it. You can reach him at whil@whilhentzen.com