

Smart Access

Solutions for Microsoft® Access® Developers

Lost in Translation

Bogdan Zamfir



Modern programming environments offer many features that enable software applications to be developed with multi-language support. However, what many companies need is an application that can be deployed in different languages in different locations or for different employees. Bogdan Zamfir shows how to create a multi-language application.

INTERNATIONALIZING your application can mean using locale-specific number and date/time settings, among other options. Many of those options are controlled in Windows by the user's environment settings. For the user interface, string resources can be built into the compiled application (usually into the EXE) to support swapping in different sets of text. These resources are usually hard-coded into the application file at compile time. If an application needs to be deployed in different languages, different application files need to be compiled and deployed.

An elegant solution is to have a single application file with all the required "languages" built into it—with the ability to switch languages dynamically at runtime, based on some internal setting. In this article I'll describe how to support dynamic translation of an Access application.

Interface controls

My solution doesn't address numeric and date/time settings, since Windows can handle those. What I do address are the text strings in the various Access controls. This requires some understanding of those controls.

In Access applications, there are basically four types of interface elements: forms, reports, controls hosted on forms or reports, and CommandBars. Forms, reports, and the controls that can be hosted on them are Access native controls (for this article, I'll treat ActiveX controls as native controls). The hosted objects can be further subdivided into two main categories: container and non-container controls. Container controls have the ability to "host" other controls, including other container controls.

Container type controls include subforms, subreports, Tab controls, and Page controls. Subforms and subreports are actually forms and reports that are

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