

Introduction

Do you use a Microsoft Windows operating system? Then you are surely interested in the question, what you can do with the Windows Scripting Host. WSH is part of Microsoft Windows since Microsoft Windows 98. Also Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0 can be updated with the Windows Scripting Host (download the free tools from msdn.microsoft.com/scripting). The Windows Scripting Host (also named Windows Script Host or in short WSH) offers you new features for your operating system. Finally Microsoft provides us with a programming environment for the operating system, which replaces the old Batch files and the numerous extensions coming from third party vendors.

Why I wrote this book?

I feel that the WSH could be one of the most interesting things for many Windows users since Microsoft has introduced the batch files and QBasic in early MS-DOS version. (Oh yes, I just hear the professionals rumoring: What shall we do with a toy like QBasic, we have to use the real world tools like VC. But I have seen in the past the success of Visual Basic, which was quoted in its first days as a private hobby of a Microsoft CEO. So I'm optimistic, that WSH becomes one of the most popular programming tools for Windows users within the next years.) Unfortunately there is however a gigantic hurdle to take: Windows contains none (or poor) documentation about this theme. The WSH Programmers Reference published in the Internet (msdn.microsoft.com/scripting) delivers of course information about WSH objects, but the examples weren't too helpful in my flavor.

I was trapped by this facts a few months ago, as I begun to jump into the adventure of WSH script programming. The documentation I found in the Internet was not clear enough for me to write advanced scripts. Although I have programmed already with VB/VBA and JavaScript in HTML documents, I was not able to use the WSH within a few hours. So I begun to read many sources to get the know how to use the WSH as an all-purpose tool for Windows.

This book is the result of all my investigations. Visiting the WSH news groups showed me that many others struggles with the same problems. So I decided to share my experience, I have gained sitting many nights in front of my screen and studying the debugger output, with others. The goal of this book is to provide as much information as possible to the WSH scripters community.

Therefore the book can be your guide to WSH programming, a programmer's reference to get additional information about WSH objects, methods and properties, and at least a treasury box for tricks and code samples.

How to use this book?

This book describes the use of the Windows Scripting Host from different views. Beginners find in the first chapter a few insights what WSH is and what we can do with scripts. A short introduction into VBScript and JScript may be found in the appendix. An introduction into the concepts of object-oriented programming may be found in chapters 3.

I know however also the problems of the professionals. Thus I have dedicated chapters 2 specifically the theme of developing and debugging WSH scripts. The Windows Scripting Host offers no developing environment and supports only a rudimentary error handling. With some tricks and the development tools mentioned here, however script development becomes quick and comfortable.

The remaining chapters introduce step by step the Windows Script Host features and the techniques to work with objects, properties and methods. We start with simple programs prepared in VBScript and JScript. From chapter to chapter the topics becomes then more complex. In so far as you have worked already with JavaScript, Visual Basic or VBScript, this however is no problem. The required information about objects, properties and methods are discussed within the concerned paragraphs. For especially hasty contemporaries I have added chapters 12 with a collection of »How to...« questions and answers.

The appendix contains a short reference about the WSH objects, a reference about the WSH-Extensions developed within the book, the VBScript/JScript introduction and references to web sites. So you can use this book as a beginner's guide, as a reference to the WSH and as a tools and tricks collection to get the most out of WSH script programming. To simplify the orientation within the book, I have marked several paragraphs as *Note*, *Important* or *Tip*.

Note	Such paragraphs contain additional information about the topic discussed on this page.
Tip	Sometimes it is helpful to know additional techniques or to get additional tools. I have highlighted these paragraphs with the word <i>Tip</i> .
Important	Sometimes it is risky to try an operation, or there are bugs, or you need a special environment to run the sample. Places where you can get further information about that are indicated as <i>Important</i> .

File names and other topics are formatted in italics to highlight them against the other text. I assume you haven't the time to read the book from the first page to the last page. Dividing the book into several independent chapters allow you to jump into the details, depending on your knowledge. Each chapter group similar topics, and also the grade of difficulty within a chapter should be at one level. Using the table of content and the index should allow you to browse the book and access the requested topics easily.

A few other remarks

The examples are divided into chapters, and the samples files are located in subfolders of the folder *\Samples*. Each chapter describing a sample file contains also a note about the location of this file within the sample files. In most cases double-clicking the file's icon is sufficient to launch a sample. But keep in mind that some samples require a special environment, and sometimes the sample change something within your Windows. Therefore you should carefully read the explanations given in the book how to use a sample.

The examples of this book were developed under Windows 98 and I have tested them under Windows NT. But keep in mind that nobody is perfect, so the sample code still could contains bugs. Some examples are written especially for Windows 98, others are written for Windows NT (for example scripts accessing the ActiveX Directory Services Interface). Information about these

restrictions is given within the book. Also there are several versions of the script engines out there. Most of the samples work under WSH 1.0 and the language engines version 3.1x. But some examples requires language engines version 5.0. So, if a sample won't work, check whether the requirements are fulfilled.

IMPORTANT: All samples discussed within the book comes on the basis »AS-IS«. If an example should not run at you machine, check whether the requirements are fulfilled (for instance: are the required files and ActiveX controls installed and registered). Test your application again and again. Please understand that the author can't give support to run the scripts and correct your programs. So you use the samples at your own risk. In no event shall the author be liable for the consequences (damages, losses or whatever else) resulting from the use of the information given in the book or from the use of the samples. For feedback and references to errors I am however grateful. However please understand, that I can't answer each problem, nor I can send over the amended version of a script. If I get a solution, I will publish the samples on the web on the WSH Bazaar.