## Support Formatted Text with the Rich TextBox Control

Rich Text Format, or RTF, is a widely accepted standard for storage and transmission of formatted text. RTF consists of plain ASCII text with special codes embedded to control formatting. Most word processors, including Microsoft Word, support RTF. RTF is a very sophisticated standard and can control all of the aspects of formatting that you normally work with, such as fonts, indentation, boldface, underline, bulleted lists, and tabs. With the Rich TextBox, or RTB, control you can add RTF capability to your Visual Basic programs. To use this control in a program you must add a reference to it by selecting Project|Components and then selecting Microsoft Rich Textbox Control from the list.

When placed on the form, the RTB control looks the same as a regular TextBox control - and in fact it behaves pretty much the same, too. Most of its special features must be accessed programmatically by means of the control's properties and methods. For example, the RTB control's SelBold property is used to boldface text. Set this property to True and selected (highlighted) text in the control, or text that is subsequently typed in, will be boldface. Set SelBold to false to remove boldface from text. Similar properties exist to control italics, underlining, and strikethrough.

An RTB control can display any font that is installed on the system. Of course a Text Box control can do the same thing, but a TextBox control must use the same font for all its text while an RTB control can use different fonts for different sections of text. For example, you could use this code in a form's Load event procedure to load a Combo Box with a list of all the available fonts:

```
 Private Sub Form_Load()

    Dim i As Integer
    For i = 0 To Screen.FontCount - 1
       Combo1.AddItem Screen.Fonts(i)
    Next

  End Sub
```

Then, when the user selects a font from the Combo Box this code assigns it to the RTB control:

```
    Private Sub Combo1_Click()
    RichTextBox1.SelFontName = Combo1.Text
End Sub
```

File operations are also handled by built-in methods. You use the LoadFile and SaveFile methods to directly load and save data. Or, if you prefer, your program can use the TextRTF property to access the control's data and then use Visual Basic's usual file-related statements to perform disk operations. One very useful feature is that the TextRTF property gets all of the control's text, including any RTF codes, but the Text property returns the text minus any codes.

The Rich Text Box control can be used for unformatted text as well. When used in this way the control can be though of as a replacement for the regular TextBox control without its 64 k length limit on text. In fact the contents of a RTB control are limited only by system memory.

There's quite a bit more to this powerful and flexible control, including support for printing and for embedded OLE objects, that you can look into on your own. When you need to add formatted text support to a Visual Basic application, the RTB control may be just what you need.