

Re: Difference between a Command Button and a Label

Source: <http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Access/microsoft.public.access.forms/2006-02/msg00864.html>

- *From:* "BruceM" <bamoob@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 13 Feb 2006 14:05:15 -0500
-

Tom, thanks for your courteous reply to what I see now was a confrontational tone in my remarks. I really must apologize for that. I did intend to point out that I was familiar with using a label as a command button, as were the people from whom I borrowed the idea, so I will admit I was puzzled by what I took to be a request for acknowledgement. On another point, I have read your many informed replies to questions in this forum, and I could have assumed that you are familiar with Lebars' site. Also, I have to say that I honestly thought I was replying to somebody whose name I did not recognize, perhaps because I looked too hastily at the list of messages in my newsreader, and clicked the reply button without looking more closely at the message. No matter who posted, though, a courteous reply would have been more appropriate. I am familiar with your postings in this forum, and would certainly not have suggested that you do some research, because I know that you are well aware of how to search newsgroups.

As for practical matters, I hadn't thought about the zero-width text box.

It is quite curious, and rather frustrating, that Microsoft does not allow for colored command buttons. As you point out, there is certainly interest in having that functionality. It is one of many points about which they could probably do something if they cared to take notice, but the way in which thinking is stirred at Microsoft is to me an inscrutable mystery. I do not agree with the thinking that says since gray is the default it's good enough, but we all make choices. I'm sure some of mine are questionable to somebody with other priorities.

Thanks again for the kind tone of your reply.

"Tom Ellison" <tellison@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
<news:%23%23GoiZMMGHA.2064@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>

Dear Bruce:

Thanks for your excellent comments.

You cannot place the focus on a label. Hence, you also cannot tab through it. You can, however, tab though a text box with a zero width (hence it is invisible without being `Visible = False`). The events of that text box

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can function just as the events of a command button would, making the action appear as though the label "has the focus" and can be "clicked" with Enter. If such functionality is essential, it's not hard to implement this. Or, you could just use a text box and inhibit any typing in it, instead of using a label. I chose the label because of simplicity.

I, too, am slightly color blind, blue-green. I tend to avoid those combinations as they may be difficult to distinguish. I've never heard of yellow-pink color blindness (which are the first colors I tend to use) but it's still a good point you make. Most of my colored labels are gray and yellow, and occasionally pink as well.

The point of a tip isn't to assert "here is something new" but to inform those unfamiliar with a possibility. That's what I'd like to convey with my brief article. Some of my friends will see this here, and may choose to post it on their web sites. It's a good thing to open it up for comment, and get other good ideas. Some of the responses here show that making colors available on a command button would be helpful. That may even stir some thinking at Microsoft.

Mr. Leban's work is, as usual, outstanding. The point is not that there are not alternatives. The first point is to expose the functionality of putting color options on something you can click on. Which one of many options is used to do this is not the main thrust of my suggestions. I believe my article should also make reference to such alternatives. It is certainly not the point that using a label is the only way to do this, but that there is utility in doing something like this.

Thanks,
Tom Ellison

"BruceM" <bamoob@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:ejdbRuJMGHA.3556@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

The idea of using a label as a command button has been around for quite some time. A Google groups search should find quite a few entries on this very topic. Some go into additional detail about using the Mouse Down and Mouse Up events to simulate the look of a command button when it is clicked. Some of the postings will be mine, but I do not claim (nor have I even for one instant considered claiming) any sort of authorship, nor did the person or people from whom I borrowed the idea. You would do well, before claiming authorship or any sort of intellectual property consideration, to conduct some research.

While it is true that a label will give you some formatting options not available with command buttons, there are also limitations. For one thing, a label can't be in your tab order, and label events can only be triggered by the mouse. A label does not have a Got Focus, Lost Focus, Enter, or Exit event (and maybe others, but these are the ones I can recall offhand). These may not matter, but there are certainly

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significant differences between the two types of control.

A Google search will reveal a number of places where you can download free command button graphics that can be placed as pictures on command buttons. I also use standard graphics for custom navigation buttons, etc.

I will just observe that my opinion about whether or not to use colors, graphics, etc. is not necessarily the last word. Sometimes there needs to be something other than gray. I would also like to comment, as a person with color deficiency in my vision (aka color blindness) that some color combinations are particularly troublesome, such as medium red or green lettering on a textured gray background, or some combinations of green and red together.

A graphic on a command button will leave the (gray) edges of the button as a border. If you are troubled by that, and if you are satisfied with a label's limitations as a command button, that is certainly an option. For full command button functionality along with color options, one choice may be found on Lebans site:

<http://www.lebans.com/cmdbutton.htm>

"Tom Ellison" <tellison@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:%23D7SYBJMGHA.2012@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Dear Keith:

This is a tip. You are certainly permitted to take it or not.

I understand your concern about consistency of color coding. This can be overcome by allowing the users to select colors that correspond with their preferences, and saving them in a table. The users could then standardize colors as they wish, especially if they have become accustomed to a given scheme. That's actually a nice enhancement possibility I hadn't considered before. If you like, I'll credit you in a later version of this article for inspiring that. May I quote your question:

"what happens if the users get used to one developer's colour coding and then are faced with a different set from another?"

I would think the answer is to build an array and store in that the selected colors for a few different label button types. If this is done when the application opens, it would take no time to assign them as each

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form opens and functions, resulting in those color changes.

I am not asking for a patent on an idea here, but on a modest level of authors rights as a courtesy. The only consideration I ask is with respect to duplicating what I have written, that I be given the privilege of modifying it or withdrawing it, and that I be named in credit for writing it (not owning it). I do not think those who might want it on a web site would have any problem with that. Several have done so with other articles, and always gladly credit me by name.

Tom Ellison

"Keith Wilby" <here@xxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:43f06600\$1_1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

"Tom Ellison" <tellison@xxxxxxxx>
wrote in message
news:eaptFLIMGHA.3276@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I have found that, to attract a user's attention, coloring a label is quite superior to having a command button's nicer shape. For example, in the header of forms, I place command buttons colored yellow. My users know these buttons expose combo boxes used to filter the form, and they change to pale green when a filter is active. Click them again and the filter is removed, the combo box is made invisible, and it is yellow again. This becomes quickly intuitive to my users. Usually after being shown only once how to use one they know how to

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use additional ones without asking.

I recommend you carefully consider having a standard set of colors for labels, and use them instead of command buttons.

The buttons in my apps are the default grey and I see no reason to change them. They all have legends to identify their purpose to the end user. I once flirted with different colours but IMO you end up with a gaudy mess. Colour is also not much use if any of your users have any degree of colour blindness. And what happens if the users get used to one developer's colour coding and then are faced with a different set from another?

Tom Ellison

If anyone would care to post this to a web site, you have my permission, providing you notify me here or by email and give me the URL of the web site and an email address where I can request changes to this message. You must attribute this to me, please, and give me access to repair or enhance it. You may, of course, remove it from your site without notice, though I'd prefer to know why, if you please.

Why do you think that you have some sort of

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copyright over the use of
colour coding? I'm not trying to be hostile,
just wondered.

Keith.