

# Re: Dragging data to Excel using DoDragDrop

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*Source:*

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/DotNet/microsoft.public.dotnet.languages.csharp/2007-10/msg00282.html>

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- *From:* "Adrian Gallero" <[adrian@\[nospam\]tmssoftware.com](mailto:adrian@[nospam]tmssoftware.com)>
  - *Date:* Tue, 02 Oct 2007 11:38:00 -0700
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Hi Peter,

Yes, I'd agree. It does seem possible. IMHO, it's unfortunate that Adrian didn't see fit to provide any suggestion as to how you might do it yourself, instead choosing simply to market his own product.

I feel I need to clarify my position here. I am not trying to hide anything. Even when I know I might not convince you, let me say I am not even trying to market anything, I don't think newsgroups are a good place to do marketing, and in fact, the effect is normally the opposite.

The situation is simpler, I just saw the post, and said, well, he could do this with our product, and it might help him to know it. I can let him know this is possible.

I doubted a lot before posting, because I know mentioning your own product has an adverse effect on many people, (and I am not going to post under a fake account) but I thought this could honestly help. After all, if this was not the correct solution for him, he could just dismiss the message. Now really after reading both Bruce's and your answer, I think I maybe should have keep myself shut.

The reason I did not post a "suggestion on how to do it yourself" is just because I don't know one. But I do know how to do it using our library, and that is what I said.

The solution I mentioned is simple on the conceptual part, and I am glad to answer any question I can answer about it. It just puts a "biff8" object into the clipboard, or drags a biff8 object into Excel. Just in case, Biff8 is the native file format in Excel. And the code to do that is on the demo I mentioned, all source for the demo is included in the file you can freely download from the page. So I don't know what else I could have said.

What Bruce was doing was trying to put a text, link whatever object on the clipboard, but Excel was not getting this as a link. If you put a

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biff8 object into the clipboard (or drag one), Excel will understand links (and formulas, cell colors, merged cells, etc).

I do not know any other way to put links inside Excel, even when it might exist.

Now, to create this biff8 object to put into the clipboard, I use our library. You could do it yourself, but programming a complete biff8 generator and this is a \*lot\* of work.

So if you ask me "is it possible", of course it is. Excel does it. (you can drag and drop a cell with a link from a worksheet to another). And you can do it the same, if you do the same Excel does. Now, doing "what Excel does" means creating a biff8 object and putting it into the clipboard, and for that the only solution I know is our library.

However, simply knowing that it can be done is at least part of the battle. Also, he does provide important clues. In particular, from his description it sounds as though his code uses the native Excel data formats. So, if you can use a native Excel data format from your own code, you could probably package the link in a way that would preserve the link formatting when dropped into Excel.

I am giving more than clues. As mentioned before, the full source for the app is on the page, if you care about it.

Now, whether this is a justifiable effort on your part depends on how closely tied to Excel you want to be. This would definitely be an Excel-specific thing, and might not be worth doing if your application is to support drag-and-drop to a wider variety of programs. But if you're writing something that is specifically to be used with Excel, it might be worth the effort.

You can copy more than one format to the clipboard. for example, text for apps that do not understand biff8, and biff8 for Excel.

If you do find it worth the effort, the first thing I'd do is try to find some sort of Office clipboard format documentation. Microsoft's been told by the EU and other people to make their formats "more open" so maybe there's some documentation on it. I'd start with the Office web site, looking for some links to some kind of file/clipboard format SDK or documentation. If that didn't pan out, I'd try to reverse-engineer the format.

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The clipboard format is basically the same as the file format. But you need to create an xls object for this to work.

To do broad support for Excel data formats might be impractical, but for the specific scenario it might not be too hard. Just do a drag-and-drop from Excel into your own application, dragging a cell that has a formatted link like what you want to create, and look at the data format that comes in. Then it should be a matter of replicating that format.

Not to be negative here, but I don't think that might work. The biff8 format is quite complex, and it has offsets everywhere that need to be updated. (and the whole object is inside an OLE container, that has its own fat table and offsets to the data).

I doubt that Office is encrypting the clipboard data. Best-case scenario would be that it's formatted as some sort of XML or other string data, but even if it's a binary format I would guess you could figure out what the "magic" bytes are and what the variable portion describing the actual link are. You may need to try a variety of different links, to pick up on where the string is stored, whether there's any sort of character index or count, etc. But it could probably be done. :)

Good luck!

Pete

Or you could just use our library :) I just wanted to say it again, I mentioned a valid option, that is valid for a lot of people (and we are luckily selling very well). The fact that it is not a solution in your case (or bruce) does not mean I am not trying to actually help, instead of just trying to market my products.

Hope my position is clear now.

Best regards and best of luck with whatever solution you choose,  
Adrian.

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