

## Re: Greying out (disabling) items in a dropdown (or list) box

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*Source:*

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/VB/microsoft.public.vb.general.discussion/2007-12/msg01982.html>

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There really just isn't any way to show you how to subclass in "a few lines".

It sounds like you don't care about actually \*visibly\* disabling the box. The code I was suggesting needs the subclass to paint the text as gray, in order to make it appear disabled. To just disable an item you don't actually need the subclass. Just detect the ItemData value that you saved for that Item, and if it's supposed to be a disabled item then in the box's Click() event, don't run your normal click code. Just use the sub to deselect or select the next item down or up that's not disabled. That will give the appearance that the item can't be selected.

The following "air code" in a form shows what I mean. Add a listbox and a button, then add this code:

```
Private Sub Command1_Click()  
List1.AddItem "one"  
List1.ItemData(0) = 0  
List1.AddItem "two"  
List1.ItemData(1) = 1  
List1.AddItem "three"  
List1.ItemData(2) = 0
```

End Sub

```
Private Sub List1_Click()  
Dim i2  
i2 = List1.ListIndex  
If i2 = -1 Then Exit Sub  
If List1.ItemData(i2) = 1 Then  
List1.ListIndex = -1  
End If  
End Sub
```

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Run the program and you'll see that you can't select item "two". But it's visually confusing since item "two" isn't actually grayed out. For that you'll need subclassing, and for \*that\* you'll need more than a few lines of code. Subclassing is a big topic if you haven't done it before.

(Sorry about the top posting – just following the established pattern here)

Thanks mayayana, very useful link. It looks like I'll have to use subclassing to be able to prevent a user from clicking on a 'disabled' list item (to be determined by a flag set in the itemData property of the list/combo box).

I am not sure how to do this though – could you give a few lines that will show how I can subclass a combo/list box control so that I disallow clicks/selection of items in the list, based on the item data.

Additionally, I have a tree view control – and I want to disable some of its branches (nodes) based on information stored in the Tag property of the node – it would be cool if I could apply the same principle (background/foreground colours as displayed in the code you provided a link to).

Anyway back to the original questions:

- 1). Could you elaborate (preferably by means of a few lines of code) how I may subclass a combo/listbox and disable specific items based on ItemData property value (flag)
- 2). Could you elaborate (preferably by means of a few lines of code) how I may do the same (i.e. subclass a TreeView control) and disable specific nodes based on the Node.Tag property value (flag)

mayayana wrote:

There's a simple sample here:

[www.jsware.net/jsware/vbcode.php3#lbox](http://www.jsware.net/jsware/vbcode.php3#lbox)

You should be able to find a number of samples around for both listbox (and probably combobox as well). Coloring text and/or background of listbox items is a common thing. The link above is a subclassed UserControl. It provides the option

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to specify text color of a listbox item and uses the optional ItemData (long) property of an item to keep track of the colors. You set color and ItemData value when adding an item. Then when the item is clicked you can respond to it based on the ItemData value. That provides a way to color some items with gray text and to know, when an item is clicked, whether whether you should treat it as "disabled" in your Click sub.

Is it possible to disable (i.e. so they cannot be selected – and are 'greyed out') – items in a dropdown box or a listbox?

I assume this should be possible using sub classing etc ... ?