Resource Management −− Preventing Crashes

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I've been searching long and hard for a document that discusses the following, but to no avail.

I'm sure we've all dealt with programs which have forms that can be continuously spawned as separate windows −− take Internet Explorer and the "Ctrl−N" shortcut for example.

At some point, your computer will fail to paint objects, forms, etc... and then ultimately lock up.

My question is with respect to this ultimate failure of repainting. What is this a function of? RAM? Graphical RAM? User resources? GDI resources? something else?

How do you measure the upper bound acceptable limit of whatever this is? Is there a value that common VB controls each use? How about device contexts?

Bottom line...I have an application with a form that I honestly didn't think had that much *stuff* on it (a couple picture boxes, a toolbar, some buttons, background DCs to increase paint time). When I load 1 or 2 forms, no problem. When I spawn 3−4 of these forms, the computer begins to go downhill with failures mentioned above. In otherwords, what factor(s) prevent me from loading 5 forms or 50 forms and how can that be measured so corrective action can be taken.

With 1GB of RAM and 128MB of video RAM, I'm concerned that I've done something terribly wrong. The code has been thoroughly checked and tested with a GDI resource tracker and it is 100% leak free. I used the GuiResTracer which shows GDI and USER objects to test for leaks, but that doesn't help me understand what 1 unit of these objects is equal to, or what the upper limit is, etc...

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