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Advisor Answers

Multi-line captions and tooltips

VFP 8/7/6

Q: How can I make a command button contain two or more text lines? How can I make the tooltip text be displayed on many lines? Is there a separator character?

-Laurentiu Macsim (via Advisor.COM)

A: Let's look at buttons first. As you know, the Caption property of a command button contains the text displayed on the button. Ordinarily, whatever you put in Caption is displayed in a single line and cut off if it's too long for the button.

However, buttons have the WordWrap property. When it's set to .T., long captions wrap to multiple lines. It's your responsibility to make sure the button is tall enough to contain all those lines.

Unfortunately, there's no way to specify exactly where the line break occurs for a button's caption. If there are spaces (word breaks) in the caption, VFP uses them as line breaks. You can adjust the width of the button to force a break to occur, but you can't simply specify that the caption should wrap at a particular point.

The news is better for tooltips, if you're using VFP 8. Prior to that version, tooltips were limited to 127 characters and always appeared in a single line. VFP 8 raises the maximum length of a tooltip to 4095 and automatically wraps long tips.

Rather than appearing in a single line, long tips wrap to multiple lines. There doesn't appear to be a way to determine the width of the rectangle used for the tip; the number of characters per line is based on that width and on the font and font size in use. Figures 1 and 2 show the same form running in VFP 7 and VFP 8; note the difference in the tooltip.

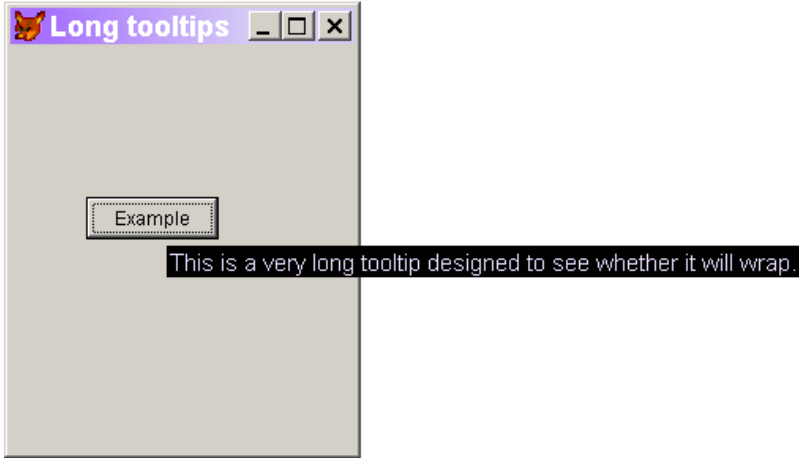


Figure 1. No wrapping in tooltips. In VFP 7 and earlier versions, tooltips are limited to a single line.

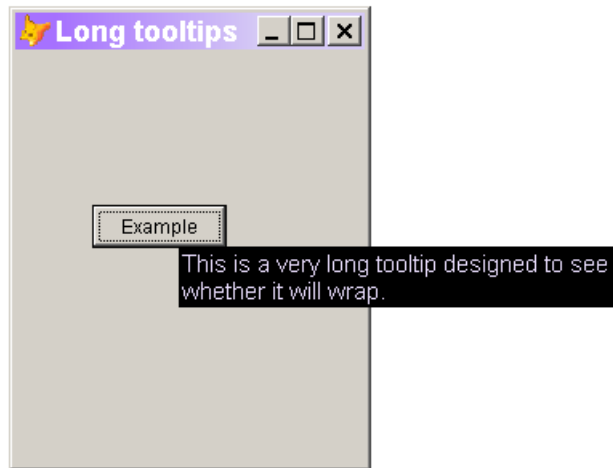


Figure 2. Wrapped tooltip. In VFP 8, tooltips automatically wrap.

However, in VFP 8 you can force a line break in a tooltip by including CHR(13) in the tip. For example:

```
This.ToolTipText = "Here's line 1." + CHR(13) + ;  
                  "Here's line 2."
```

Figure 3 shows a checkbox with this tooltip.

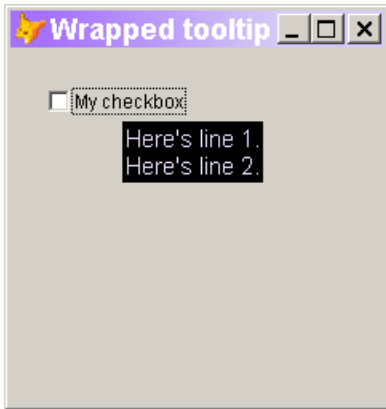


Figure 3. Forcing tips to wrap. You can force a tooltip to wrap by including CHR(13).

Even with the new abilities, keep in mind the "tip" portion of the name "tooltip." Tooltips are intended to provide a quick reminder of the function of a particular control. They shouldn't substitute for good documentation or good design. Consider using both tooltips and messages on the status bar (StatusBarText property) to provide a shorter and a longer description of a control.

-Tamar