FORM DESIGNER USER GUIDE

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction 1-1

Introduction. 1-1
The layout. 1-1
The Menu bar 1-2
The Tool bar 1-2
The Tool box 1-2
The Properties Grid 1-4
The Main Window 1-4
The Status bar 1-5
The Basics 1-5
What are Actions? 1-5

Chapter 2: Creating a form 2-9

Designing forms 2-9
Example 1 2-9
DBForm.xmf 2-10
Placing the controls 2-10
Setting the control properties (no data) 2-10
Setting the control properties (with data) 2-11
Setting the Database grid's properties 2-12
Setting the Form's properties 2-12
Setting the Text box's properties 2-13
Setting the Combo box's properties 2-14
Setting the Buttons' properties 2-14
Example 2 2-17
Generic.xmf 2-17
Placing the controls 2-17
Setting the control properties (no data) 2-18
Setting the control properties (with data) 2-20
Setting the Buttons' properties 2-20
Setting the form properties 2-22
Setting the ListBox properties 2-23
Setting the ComboBox properties 2-24

Setting the Textbox properties 2-25
Setting the Preview properties 2-25
Setting the Datagrid properties 2-25

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction

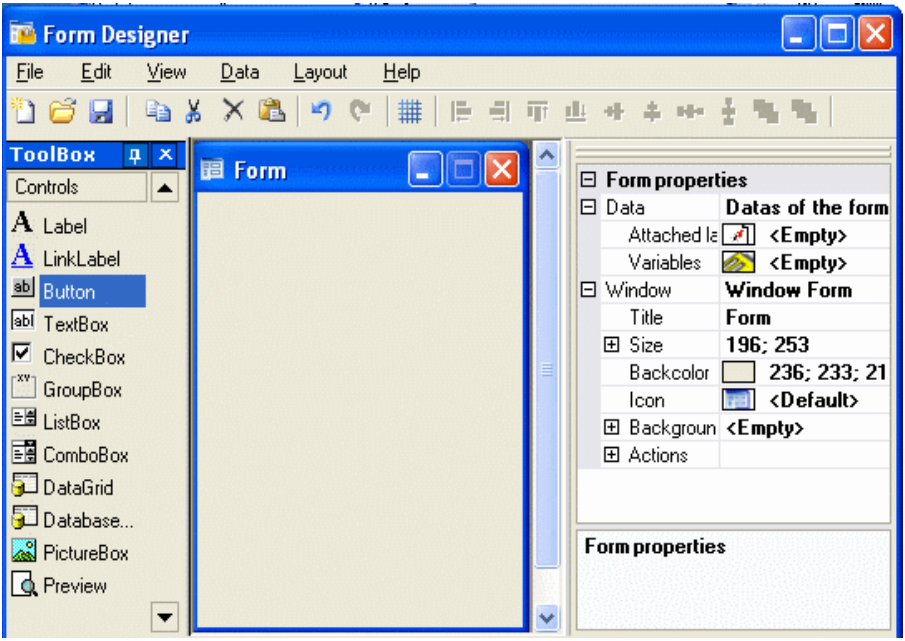
Form Designer is a visual designing tool that allows you to rapidly build front-end data entry and label printing applications.

It includes features such as:

- Label and printer type selection
- Print preview
- Page and printer settings
- Database connections
- Multiple screen/form application
- Pre-defined values and data control

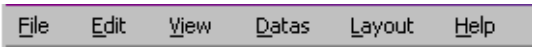
The layout

Form Designer's layout is easy to use, reducing the time necessary to familiarize yourself with the software. It includes a Menu bar, a Tool bar, a Tool box, a Properties grid, a Main window and a Status bar.



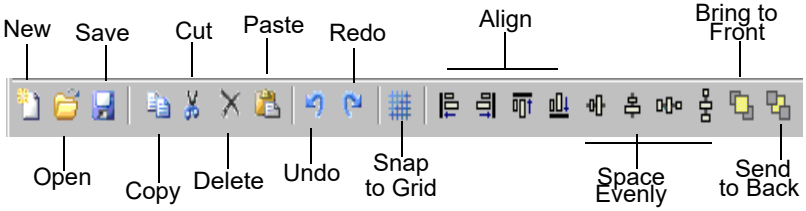
The Menu bar

The **Menu** bar contains six items: **File**, **Edit**, **View**, **Data**, **Layout**, and **Help**. When clicked, each item will expand showing a new list of items, to allow the user to perform a variety of functions. To access the menu items more quickly, press **Alt + the underlined letter** from your desired choice: **Alt+F** will open the File menu.



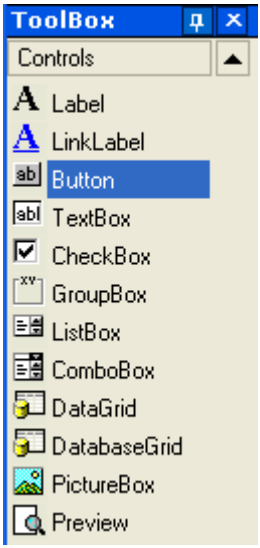
The Tool bar

The **Tool** bar is usually displayed just below the Menu bar. It is made up of icons which represent the most commonly used software functions. These icons can be clicked to quickly access these functions.



The Tool box

The Tool Box is made up of the 12 controls that can be added to a form: Label, Link label, Button, TextBox, CheckBox, GroupBox, ListBox, ComboBox, DataGrid, DatabaseGrid, PictureBox, and Preview.



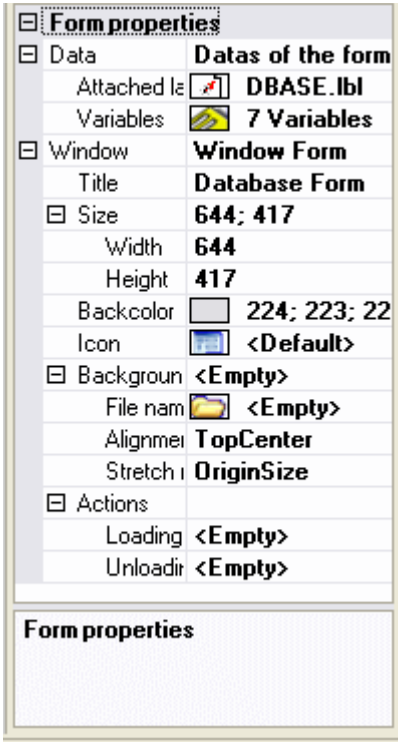
Each control serves a specific purpose. They can be linked to fixed or variable data and can be associated with actions. To insert a control into your form, simply click on the control and drag and drop it into the form.

Control	Description
Label	Non-active text used to show the name of an input field
LinkLabel	Active text used to link to a webpage or other specific location
Button	An active control used to perform set functions/actions
TextBox	Data entry field
CheckBox	A control used to activate/deactivate or select/deselect predefined features

Control	Description
GroupBox	Non-active box placed around a group of controls for visual organization
ListBox	Displays a list of data as defined in its properties
ComboBox	Displays a drop-down list of data as defined in its properties
Datagrid	Displays predefined data in a grid such as variable names, values, or customized data
DatabaseGrid	Displays the database defined in the properties along with some basic functionality such as filters and search fields.
PictureBox	A box where an image can be imported into
Preview	A box that will display a preview of the label attached to the form

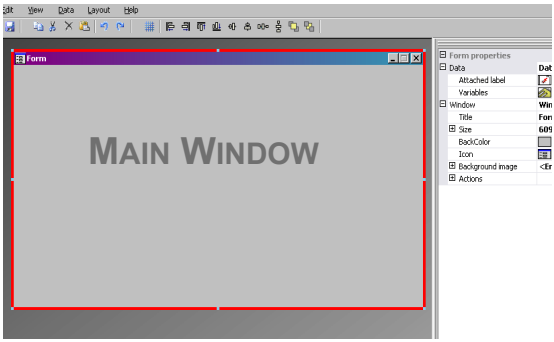
The Properties Grid

The **Properties Grid** lists all the properties for the selected control. Here you can change the characteristics of your controls such as control name, color, size, or actions. It is context sensitive, so the list of properties will change according to the control selected. Having the grid displayed replaces the usual right-click menu command.



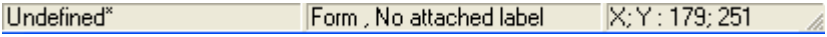
The Main Window

The **Main window**, displayed in the center, is your work area. Here, you will add controls and create the forms you will use to input data for label printing. Once the form has been created and configured, you can go to **View > Execution** to run the form and see its final result.



The Status bar

The **Status bar** gives you the x axis and y axis location of your pointer, the form name and the name and basic details of the control you have selected.



The Basics

What are Actions?

Actions are functions that are assigned to buttons and to load/unload forms. In Form Designer, 12 pre-defined Actions have been included in the **Actions** menu to save you time and to eliminate the need for programming. In some cases, where specific parameters must be configured, these, too, have been predefined in the action's configuration.

The predefined actions are:

Action	Show the document property dialog box
	Displays the **Properties** dialog box for the selected document, which shows information such as creation date and its location.

Action	Show the form dialog box
	Displays the **Form** dialog box, where the user can set the values for the form variables

Action	Show the options dialog box
	Displays an **Options** dialog box, where you can change the display language and other settings.

Action	Show the printing dialog box
	Displays the **Print** dialog box, where you print from. Here, you can also set the number of labels printed and see a preview of the print job.

Action	Show the printer selection dialog box
	Displays a dialog box showing a list of all of the possible printers to print from.

Action	Show the printer settings dialog box
	Displays the **Printer Settings** dialog box where settings can be set

Action	Show the page setup dialog box
	Displays the **Page Setup** dialog box, where the user can set label size, page size, margin, and size.

Action	Print
	Allows the user to print.
Parameters	***Label Quantity***
	Sends the printer the number of labels to be printed. If the document includes a counter, the counter increments along with the number of labels.
	Label Copy
	Lets the printer know how many identical copies of each label should be printed.
	Inter Cut
	Lets the printer know how many labels to print before each cut.
	Page Copy
	Lets the printer know how many copies of each page to print.

Action	**Select printer**
	Allows the user to print from the selected printer and override any printers that may be associated with the document.
Parameter	***Printer***
	Allows you to set a printer as the default printer to use when the button is clicked, or to use the printer selected from a list - if a printer selection variable is used and defined in the form properties.

Action	**Show Label Designer**
	Allows the user to launch the label designer for label editing.
Parameter	***Show***
	Launches and displays the label designer

Action	**Load a new form**.
	Allows the user to open a new form.
Parameters	***File name***
	Links an .xmf file to the action.
	New Window
	Opens the chosen file in a new window if set to True.

Action	**Execute a VB Script**
	Allows the user to execute a user-defined VB script that can perform actions beyond the Form Designer's capabilities. This gives the user greater flexibility.
Parameters	***File name***

	Links a .vbs file to the action.
	Synchronous
	Synchronizes the VB script with Form Designer.

CHAPTER 2

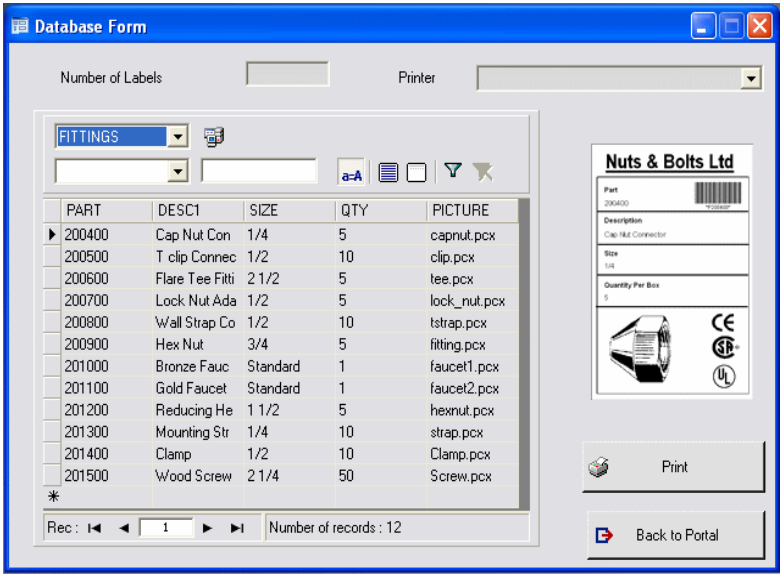
Creating a form

Designing forms

Designing forms is easy with Form Designer. All controls can be added to a form using drag and drop, then configured in the Properties grid to set color, text, action...

To show you how to create a form, we will reproduce two examples: the DBF.xmf form and the Generic.xmf form.

Example 1



DBForm.xmf

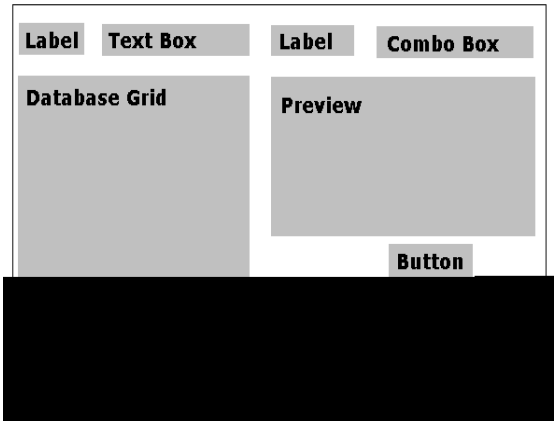
This simple form includes a Database grid where you can quickly view, change or add data in your database.

• Placing the controls

For this example, you will need to drag and drop the following controls:

- 2 Labels
- 1 TextBox
- 1 ComboBox
- 1 Database Grid
- 1 Preview
- 2 Buttons

Place the items as shown in the following diagram.



• Setting the control properties (no data)

With Form Designer, it is easy to set your control properties since the **Properties** grid is displayed on the right-hand side of your screen. If you do not see the **Properties** grid, go to **View > Properties grid**.

When you select a control in your form, the associated list of properties will be displayed in the **Properties** grid.

1 Set the **Label** properties as follows:

- Name: **lblLabelNumber**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Number your Labels:**
- Font name: **MS Sans Serif**

- Font size: **8,25**
- Font Bold: **True**

- Name: **lblPrinter**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Printer:**
- Font name: **MS Sans Serif**
- Font size: **8,25**
- Font Bold: **False**

2 Set the **Preview** properties as follows:
- Name: **prvPreview**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Preview**

3 Set the **Database Grid** properties as follows:
- Name: **dbgDatabase**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed contents**
- Contents > Value: **DataBaseGrid**

4 Set the **Text box** properties as follows:
- Name: **txbQty**

NOTE
Input mask

Input mask is a way of controlling manual input to the form. Each character entered with the keyboard should correspond to a character in the format string.

Defining the format

Format characters	Characters entered
#	Numeric (0-9)
@	Alphabetic characters (a-z, A-Z)
!	Punctuation
*	Any printable character
\	Allows the character following ' \' to be displayed

5 Set the **Combo Box** properties as follows:

- Name: **cbxPrinter**

6 Set the **Button** properties as follows:

- Name: **btnPrint**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Print**

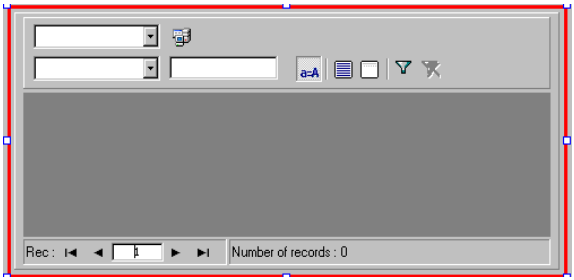
and the second button as:

- Name: **btnPortal**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed contents**
- Contents > Value: **Back to Portal**

• Setting the control properties (with data)

Some of the controls require more than just setting text properties. Buttons require actions, grids require data, and boxes require variables. The next few steps will walk you through these controls, their properties, and configurations.

Setting the Database grid's properties



A Database grid allows the user to view a pre-selected database. A selected row will display the associated label in the preview box. The user can **Add**, **Delete**, **Filter** and **Search** for information with the Database grid.

- Database > Connection: Select **Batcher** from the drop-down menu
- Database > Table: Select **Print Job** from the drop-down menu

Note

From Database > Connection, you can select from an existing list of linked databases or add a new one. The

latter will take you to the Add Database Connection wizard.
For example, select the FITTINGS.mdb database.

Setting the Form's properties

Although the form does not appear in the ToolBox, it, too, is a control to be configured. In fact, for certain controls, such as datagrids or listboxes, where data can be linked, the Form acts as the base, and requires specific parameters to be set in order for the data controls to be functional.

- Attached label: **DBase** label
- Variables: **5 variables** should have automatically filled in this field. The 5 variables are the label variables received from the label's attached database. However, two Form variables must also be added to use with the **Print** button to set the label's default printer as the one be used for printing and to define the number of labels thant should be printed.

To add these new variables:

1 Click on the down-arrow from the **Variables** field.

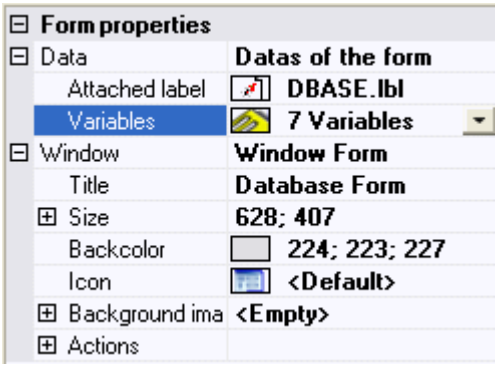
2 In the section titled Form Variables, click **Add**.

3 Enter the printer name, and click **OK**.

4 Repeat steps 2 and 3 for **Qty**.

When you return to the Form properties grid, you will notice

that you now have 7 variables.

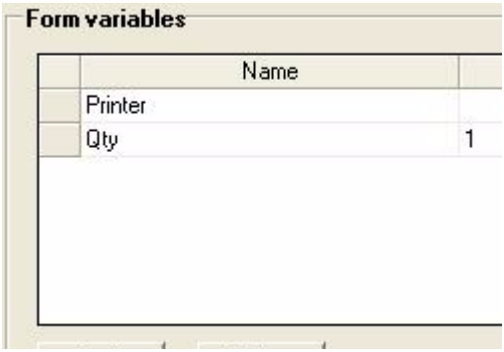


Setting the TextBox's properties

The TextBox is used to tell the printer how many label copies it must print. The number entered in the TextBox by the user defines the number of copies. If a counter is present on the label, the counter will be incremented with each label copy. To set the properties:

1 Contents > Type: **Variable contents**

2 Contents > Value: Select **Qty** from the drop-down list (this variable was created in the Form Properties)



Setting the ComboBox's properties

The ComboBox is used to select a printer from the

predefined list. To set the properties:

1Contents >Type: **Variable contents**

2 Contents > Value: select **Printer** from the drop-down list (this variable was created in the form properties)

3 Data > Type: **Printers**

4 Data > Value > Printers type: select **THT**

Setting the Buttons properties

Buttons not only require the standard text properties such as Name and Font, but they also require an action. Form Designer has included, an **Action** field that allows you to pick from a standard list of actions. These actions have been created and predefined for the ease of the user, eliminating the need for complex programming and reducing the possibility of errors.

1 Click the **Print** button (**btnPrint**).

2 Go to **Actions** and click the button. A dialog box appears.

3 Click **Add**.

4 In **Description**, click the down-arrow and choose **Select printer**. One parameter must be defined.

5 Click on **Parameters**. A new dialog box appears.

6 Set the **Type** field to **Variable**.

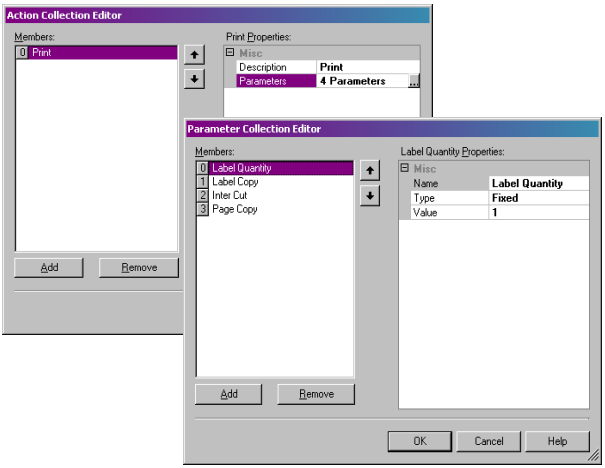
7 Set the **Value** field to **Printer**. (which you can select from a drop down list... Printer is the form variable created in the Form properties). Click **OK**.

8 Back in the original **Actions** window, click **Add**.

9 Under **Various > Description**, click the down-arrow and choose **Print**. Four parameters must be defined.

- **Label Quantity**: Set **Type** to **Variable** and **Value** to

Qty (this variable can be selected from a drop-down list. It is the variable created in the form properties).
- **Label Copy**: Keep default settings.
- **Inter Cut**: Keep default settings.
- **Page Copy**: Keep default settings.



10 Click **OK**.

The **Print** button has been configured to print the number of labels as defined by the user in **txbQty**. The label's counter will be incremented accordingly (if applicable).

11 Click the **Back to Portal** button (**btnPortal**).

12 Click the button. A new dialog box appears.

13 Go to **Various > Description** and select **Load new form** from the drop-down menu. 2 parameters must be defined:

- **File Name**: Set **Type** to **Fixed** and **Value** to **MainMenu.xmf**
- **New Window**: Set **Type** to **Fixed** and leave **Value** empty

The **Back to Portal** button has been configured to open the MainMenu.xmf form, where the user can select a printer and access the page setup, the printer settings, and printer management.

Example 2

Generic.xmf

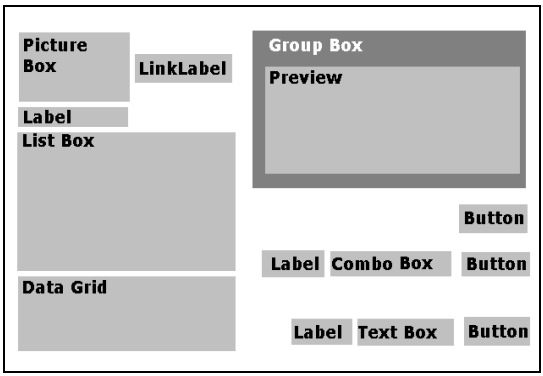
This form allows you to see some of the more advanced features of Form Designer. It lets you choose a label from a list, view its data variables, preview your label, choose how many label copies you would like to print as well as configure and select the printer to be used.

• Placing the controls

For this example, you will need to drag and drop the following controls:

- 3 Labels
- 1 Link label
- 1 Picture box
- 3 Buttons
- 1 TextBox
- 1 ListBox
- 1 ComboBox
- 1 GroupBox
- 1 Preview
- 1 Datagrid

Place the items as shown in the following diagram:



• Setting the control properties (no data)

When you select a control in your form, the associated list of properties will be displayed in the Properties Grid.

1 Set the label properties as follows:

- Name: **lblSelect**

- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Select your label:**
- Font Name: **MS Sans Serif**
- Font Size: **8,25**
- Font Bold: **True**

- Name: **lblPrinter**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Variables**
- Contents > Value: **Printer:**
- Font Name: **MS Sans Serif**
- Font Size: **8,25**
- Font Bold: **True**

- Name: **lblQty**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Label Quantity:**
- Font Name: **MS Sans Serif**
- Font Size: **8,25**
- Font Bold: **True**

2 Set the Picture Box properties as follows:

- Name: **picRandD**
- Image File Name: **Teklynx.jpg** (clicking on the down-arrow will open a dialog box: Select **Fixed** and locate the image in the **Icons** folder of you software's directory)
- Alignment: **TopCenter**
- Stretch Mode: **OriginSize**

3 Set the LinkLabel properties as follows:

- Name: **llblyourwebsite**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **yourwebsite.com**
- Font Name: **MS Sans Serif**
- Font Size: **8,25**
- Font Bold: **False**
- Navigate URL: **http://www.yourwebsite.com**

4 Set the GroupBox properties as follows:

- Name: **gbxPreview**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Preview**

5 Set the Button properties as follows:

- Name: **btnSetting**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Settings**
- Image File Name: **pagesetup.bmp**

- Name: **btnPrint**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Print**

- Name: **btnPortal**
- Contents > Type: **Fixed Contents**
- Contents > Value: **Back to Portal**

6 Set the Preview properties as follows:

- Name: **prvLabel**

7 Set the ListBox properties as follows:

- Name: **lbxLabels**

8 Set the TextBox properties as follows:

- Name: **tbxQty**

9 Set the ComboBox properties as follows:

- Name: **cbxPrinters**

10 Set the DatagridBox properties as follows:

- Name: **dgdVariables**

• Setting the control properties (with data)

Setting the Buttons properties

1 Click the **Settings** button (**btnSettings**).

2 Go to **Actions** and click the button.

A dialog box opens.

3 Click **Add**.

4 Under **Various > Description**, click on the down-arrow and select **Show the printer selection dialog box**.

5 Click **OK**.

The **Settings** button has been configured to open a dialog box where the user can select a printer to print to that may be different from those available in the dropdown ComboBox (to configure, see *Setting the ComboBox properties*)

1 Click the **Print** button (**btnPrint)**.

2 Go to **Actions** and click the button.

A dialog box opens.

3 Click **Add**.

4 Under **Various > Description**, click the down-arrow and select **Print**. Four parameters must be defined.

5 Under **Various > Parameters**, click on the button.

- **Label Quantity**: Keep default settings.
- **Label Copy**: Keep default settings.
- **Inter Cut**: Keep default settings.
- **Page Copy**: Keep default settings.

6 Click **OK**.

The **Print** button has been configured to print the selected label. The parameters ensure that the there is only one page copy of the print job and that the number of label copies corresponds to the number defined by the user.

1 Click the **Settings** button (**btnSettings**).

2 Go to **Actions** and click the button.

A dialog box opens.

3 Click **Add**.

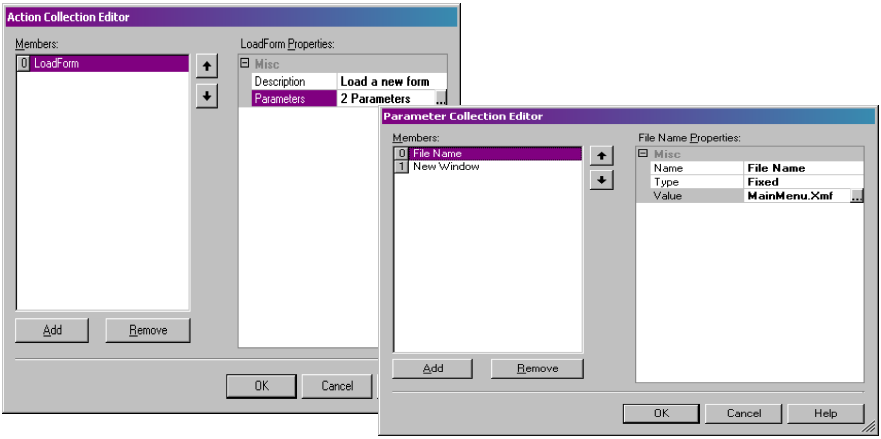
4 Under **Various > Description**, click the down-arrow and

select **Load a new form**.

5 Under **Various > Parameters**, click the button.

6 Under **Various**, enter as follows:

- Name: **File Name**
- Type: **Fixed**
- Value: **MainMenu.xmf**



7 Repeat steps 6: Name it **New Window** and set its value to **True**.

8 Click **OK**.

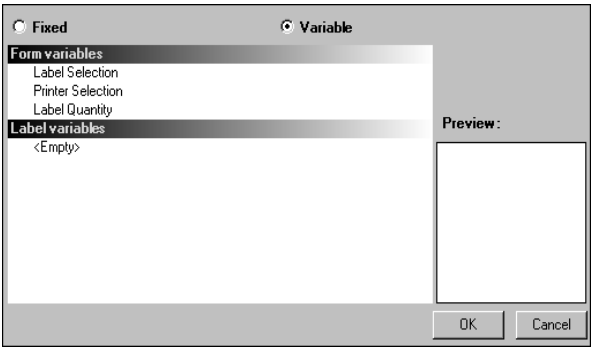
The **Back to Portal** button has been configured to open the MainMenu.xmf file which allows the user to select a printer, change its settings, manage printers, modify the page setup, and navigate to other forms.

Setting the Form properties

For the purpose of this example, you will notice that there is a listbox which displays a list of labels. Therefore, it can be said that there is a Label Selection variable since there is no fixed, attached label.

There are also two other variables required in this form: the **Printer Selection Variable** which is selected from the drop-down list, and the **Label Quantity Variable**, which the user

defines as the number of label copies to be printed.



To set the Form variables:

1 Click the down-arrow in the **Variables** field of the form's property grid.

A dialog box appears.

2 Under **Form Variables**, click **Add**.

3 Enter **Label Selection**.

4 Repeat steps 2 and 3 for **Printer Selection** and **Label Quantity**.

These variables will be required when configuring the ListBox, the TextBox, and the ComboBox.

As mentioned earlier, there is no fixed attached label. However, a label must be attached, anyway. To attach a label:

1 Click on the down-arrow in the **Attached label** field of the form's properties grid.

A dialog box appears.

2 Select **Variable** since we do not want to attached a specific label.

The display changes to show the list of Form variables that

have just been defined.

3 Select the **Label Selection** variable and click **OK**.

Setting the ListBox properties

The ListBox is used to display a list of all of labels that can be selected for printing. To configure, you must select the location where the list of labels is coming from, and define the contents as variable, since they will change along with your selection. To do so:

1 In the **Properties** grid, click **Contents > Type** and define the type as **Variable**.

2 Click **Contents > Value** and define the value as **Label Selection**.

3 Click **Data > Type** and select a directory. The information in the ListBox will come from a specific directory.

4 Click the down-arrow in **Data > Value > Folder**.

A dialog box appears.

5 Select **Fixed** and locate the Label folder in your computer's directory.

6 Click **OK**.

Setting the ComboBox properties

The ComboBox is used to select a printer from the predefined list. To set the properties:

1 Click **Contents > Type** and define it as **Variable**.

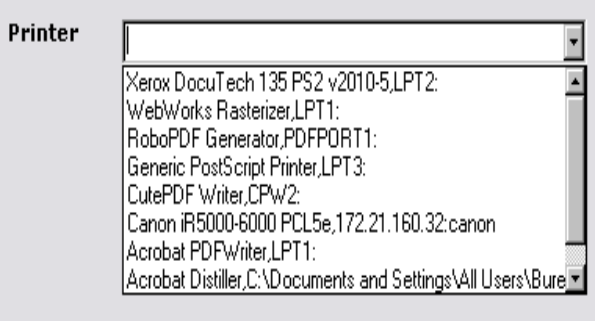
2 Click **Contents > Value** and define it as **Printer Selection**.

3 Click **Data > Type** and select **Printers**.

4 Click **Data > Value > Printer type** and select **Windows**.

This will display the list of Windows printers configured on

the workstation or network.



Setting the TextBox properties

This TextBox is used to tell the printer how many label copies should print. The number entered in the TextBox by the user defines the number of copies. If a counter is present on the label, the counter will be incremented with each label copy. To set the properties:

1 Click **Contents > Type** and set it to **Variable contents**.

2 Click **Contents > Value** and select **Label Quantity**.

Setting the Preview properties

Click **Contents > Type** and set it to **Variable contents**.

This is all the configuration needed to preview the label chosen in the listbox.

Setting the Datagrid properties

The Datagrid displays the data from the selected label along with its variable names. To set its properties:

1 Click **Contents > Type** and set to **Fixed contents**.

2 Click **Data** and set it to **Table**.

3 Click **Data > Type** and set to **Label variables**.

4 Click **Data > Table > Title** and set it to **Please enter data**.

Once finished this procedure, go to **View > Execution** or press **F4** to execute your form and test that everything works properly.

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