Knowledge Base

Overview of Windows Script Host in Windows

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The information in this article applies to:

- Microsoft Windows 2000 Server
- Microsoft Windows 2000 Advanced Server
- Microsoft Windows 2000 Professional
- Microsoft Windows 2000 Datacenter Server

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SUMMARY

Windows Script Host (WSH) enables scripts to be run directly in Windows by double-clicking a script file or by typing the name of a script file at a command prompt. Like Microsoft Internet Explorer, WSH serves as a controller of ActiveX scripting engines. WSH has very low memory requirements and is ideal for both interactive and non-interactive scripting needs (such as logon scripting and administrative scripting).

MORE INFORMATION

WSH supports scripts written in Microsoft Visual Basic Scripting Edition (VBScript) or JavaScript. When you start a script, the scripting host reads and passes the specified script file contents to the registered script engine. The scripting engine uses file extensions (.vbs for VBScript; .js for JavaScript) to identify the script instead of using the SCRIPT tag (used in HTML). Because of this, the script writer does not have to be familiar with the exact programmatic ID (ProgID) of various script engines. The script host itself maintains a mapping of script extensions to ProgIDs and uses the Windows association model to start the appropriate engine for a given script.

There are two versions of WSH: a Windows-based version (Wscript.exe) that provides Windows-based properties for setting script properties, and a command prompt-based version (Cscript.exe) that provides command-line switches for setting script properties. You can run either of these versions by typing "wscript.exe" or "cscript.exe" at a command prompt.

In earlier versions of Windows, the only native scripting language supported was the MS-DOS command language. Although MS-DOS is fast and small, it has limited features compared to VBScript and JavaScript. ActiveX scripting architecture allows users to take advantage of these powerful scripting languages, while still providing support for MS-DOS command scripts.

To Run Scripts Using the Windows-Based Script Host (Wscript.exe)

1. At a command prompt type `wscript.exe`, and then press ENTER.
2. Set the script host properties you want, and then click **OK**.
3. In Windows Explorer or My Computer, double-click the script file you want to run.

NOTE: If you double-click a script file whose extension has not yet been associated with Wscript.exe, an **Open With** dialog box appears, prompting you for the program that should be used to open the file. After you choose **Windows Based Script Host (wscript.exe)**, if you select the **Always use this program to open these files** check box, Wscript.exe is registered as the default program for all files having the same extension as the one you double-clicked.

You can also set properties for an individual script by right-clicking a script file in My Computer or Windows Explorer, clicking **Properties**, and then clicking the **Script** tab.

To Set Properties for Individual Scripts

1. In Windows Explorer or My Computer, right-click the script file for which you want to specify individual properties, and then click **Properties**.
2. Click the **Script** tab, set the options you want to use for the script, and then click **OK**.

NOTE: The property settings are saved in a file with a .wsh file extension. For example, if the script file name is Chart.vbs, the settings are saved in a text file named Chart.wsh.

A .wsh file is a text file that uses a format similar to that of .ini files. A .wsh file contains a [ScriptFile] section, which identifies the script file with which the .wsh file is associated, and an [Options] section, which corresponds to the settings you selected on the **Script** tab.

A .wsh file is analogous to the .pif files used to run earlier 16-bit Windows-based and MS-DOS-based programs. It can be treated as if it were an executable or batch file. For example, if you have a script named Myscript.vbs for which you have created a .wsh file named Myscript.wsh, you can run Myscript.vbs with the options recorded in Myscript.wsh by double-clicking Myscript.wsh in Windows Explorer, or by passing Myscript.wsh as a script argument to Cscript.exe or Wscript.exe at a command prompt.

For additional information about WSH, please visit the following Microsoft Web site:

http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/default.asp?url=/library/en-us/script56/html/wsoriWindowsScriptHost.asp?frame=true

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