



Reading values from an INI file

Files with the extension `.ini` are the legacy of the old Windows versions (16 bit). In the past, they were extensively used—and still are to some extent—ubiquitously to store the settings for applications. Nowadays, it is common practice to store settings in the registry. Though textual, such files have a very well-defined structure; there are sections and key-value pairs. A section starts with a label enclosed in square brackets: `[section-name]` and a key-value is implemented as `<variable name>=<value>`. Such a structure could be useful, for instance, if we wanted to keep the settings organized by environments or by user profiles within an `.ini` file.

Note

In this recipe, you will also see an example of how to use the `Extern` reserved object to define references to methods in external DLLs, such as those of the Win32API. These methods can then be loaded and executed during runtime. A more elaborate description is available in the *Drawing a rectangle on the screen with Win32 API methods (Extern)* recipe of Chapter 8, *Utility and Reserved Objects*.

Getting ready

To complete this recipe, we need to use the global `Extern` object, which is the UFT with access to the methods of an external library (DLL). We will define a variable and use the global `Extern` object (this is done to avoid persistence, as `Extern` is a reserved object not released from memory until UFT closes):

```
Dim oExtern  
set oExtern = Extern
```

Then, we will declare the method or methods we wish to call from the relevant Win32API. In this case, the method is `GetPrivateProfileString`, which retrieves the value of a given key within a specific section:

```
oExtern.Declare micInteger,"GetPrivateProfileString", "kernel32.dll","GetPrivateProfileString", micString, micString, micString, micString+micByRef, micInteger
```

How to do it...

After defining the connection to the DLL with its returned value and arguments, we can retrieve the value of any key within a given section. In the following example, the `ConfigFileVersion` key specified in the file `wrls.ini` is located in the `UFT/bin` folder. In the end, the `Extern` object reference is destroyed at the end of the run:

```
call oExtern.GetPrivateProfileString("ProgramInformation", "ConfigFileVersion", "", 255, 0)  
print RetVal  
  
set oExtern = nothing
```

The output to the console in this case was the string `1.05`.

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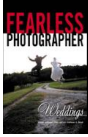
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