This is a work in progress.

Computers are quite happy with raw data, but people prefer it embellished. They would prefer to see August for the month than 8 or Mon, Tues, Wed for the day of the week. So, Visio has various Formats for different categories of information, Dates, Times, Duration and even strings. Do you want to bring attention to a shape by shouting it’s name? There is an UPPERCASE format.

So, does it make a difference if the month is 8 or 08?

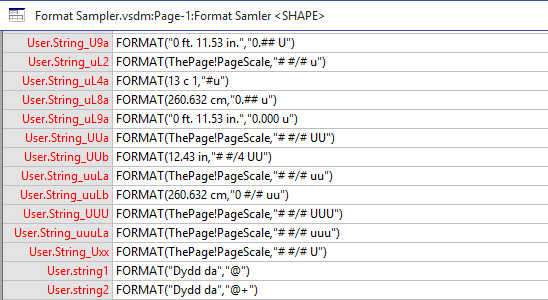
Twenty-three years ago, many people worked on the problem of converting from two digit to four digit years. Would the code we were maintaining work? It meant months of testing. Back then, virtual machines did not exist and testing meant coming in at 2am Sunday so you could bring up the mainframe with a future date to test. It was important enough that we were actually allowed to do testing on the weekends. Of course, there was not one scenario to be tested so we had to repeat the tests for other conditions, various base zero fates, leap year, leap years over a century. Does the code work for leap years and a dozen other “special” dates? One problems were found the tests had to be repeated, a very exhausting task.

We did have one individual who did minimal testing and on Jan 1, his code crashed the mainframe. He still had two digit year code and it failed when his code moved blank zero to a calculation field. The system code was written in assembler, but for some reason, it needed to run his COBOL code.   
If he had updated to four digits there would have been no problem, but 00 was taken as ‘ 0’.   
Luckily, he was only responsible for one routine.

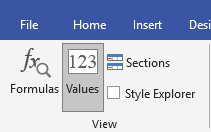
So…

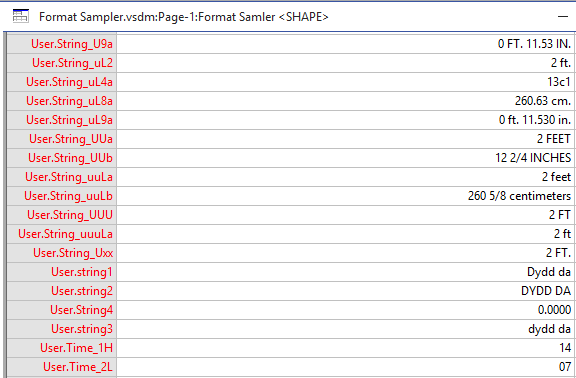
To make understanding the various Format Codes, I created a Visio shape with User Cells full of Format and other formatting techniques.

So, select the shape and do a Show Shapesheet.



At the top of the screen in the View tab, you can switch between Formulas and Values.





ggg

# Files

The package contains four files this document that describes Visio Custom Formats, an Excel file containing some of the tables, a summary of the examples, a Visio file containing a shape that shows the various Formats along with VBA code to create the shape if you want to rebuild by updating the Excel file and a Word .document with atable of the samples showing the Format code used and the result.

# Format Sampler.docx

This document that provides some background to the Format Codes

# Format Sampler.xlsx

This is a collection of spreadsheets that summarize the various sources. A spreadsheet that summarizes the various codes and a spreadsheet of examples along with columns of Excel generated VBA code that the Visio drawing used to create the Sampler shape. You can create new rows and use the generated VBA code to create a new shape.

## The Codes

A list of the various Format Codes with a description and a few other things.

## Shape Data

The table I created from using the Create Shape Data dialog.

## visFieldFormats

These appear to be the Predefined Codes mentioned in “About Format Pictures”. The link is in the Source section.

## Examples

A spreadsheet of sample formats. There is a column of Data, Format, Example and Result to show what is needed, You can copy the value from the Example cell into a User cell to see how it works and play with it.

There are three cells, VBA1, VB2 and VBA3. That contain cells that can be copied to a sample routine the VBA module so you can create your own version of the shape. Column VBA2 only contains “:”s so that you can select all three columns rather than one column at a time. (Remember not to select the title row)

# Format Sampler.vsdm

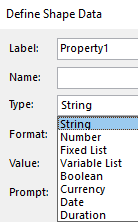
This file contains a shape that has User cells of various examples.

It is a macro enabled file and contains a VBA macro to recreate the shape. The Excel file contains columns in the Example spreadsheet that are Excel generated VBA code that can be cut and pasted into the macro.

# Source

So, where did this information come from?

The first one I came across was the one in the Define Shape Data dialog



Each Type has their own collection of Formats. I described them here, [Format Codes](https://johnvisiomvp.ca/2021/08/03/format-codes/)  I did include the table in the Excel file, the page is called Shape Data.

The official Visio webpage describing the Format codes is here.

[About Format Pictures | Microsoft Docs](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/office/client-developer/visio/about-format-pictures)

A modified version of the information is the Excel file and is called The Codes.

( There is a note on that page mentioning predefined Formats. A list of those numbers appears to be here. )

[VisFieldFormats enumeration (Visio) | Microsoft Docs](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/office/vba/api/visio.visfieldformats)

This is in the Excel file as visFieldFormats.

Visio is well known for using enumerations rather than a value you use a name, but with the Format codes it is the reverse. You use the value rather than the name.

This a work in progress and will evolve as I fix my missteps and find new examples.

# Notes

These are the anomalies I found in the documentation,

* TT and tt are not documented.
* There is still work needed on the Chinese, Japanese and Korean codes (g, e or n).
* Non of this has been tested by changing the Region codes in the Control Panel.