

The New Home of VFPX

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Recently, VFPX was moved and revamped. In this article, Doug explores the new home of VFPX.

VFPX is the community site for VFP open source projects. For many years, it was located on Microsoft's CodePlex site at <https://vfp.codeplex.com>. In March 2017, Microsoft announced that CodePlex was shutting down by the end of 2017. As a result, the VFPX administrators, Rick Schummer, Craig Boyd, Jim Nelson, and I, decided that the logical place to move VFPX to was GitHub. GitHub is the world's most popular site for open source projects.

The new home for VFPX is <https://github.com/VFPX>. As you can see in [Figure 1](#), there isn't much to see there: just a long list of projects with a few "pinned" repositories at the top. That's because VFPX is actually a GitHub "organization," one under which multiple projects reside.

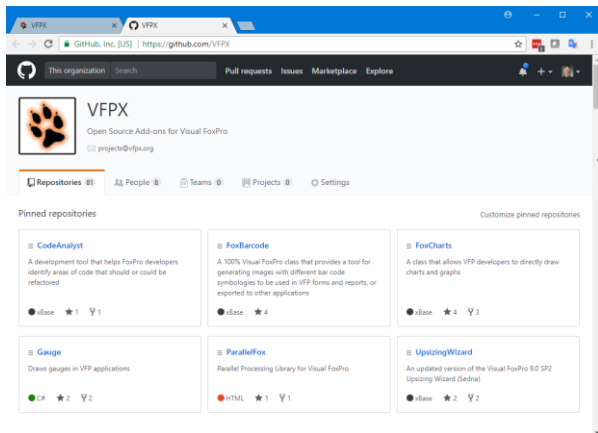


Figure 1. The new home of VFPX doesn't have much to see.

A better place to go is <https://vfp.github.io>, shown in [Figure 2](#). This is the "GitHub Pages" location for VFPX. (GitHub Pages provides a web site for GitHub projects.) Since <https://vfp.github.io> isn't a very memorable URL, you can navigate to vfp.org instead; that URL always redirects to the current location of VFPX (until the change, it used to redirect to vfp.codeplex.com). This is really the new home for VFPX.

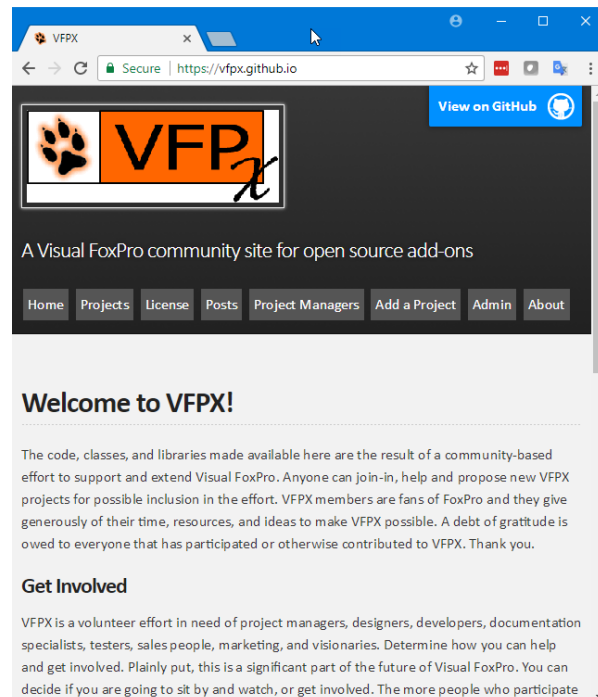


Figure 2. The GitHub Pages for VFPX is really the home page for VFPX.

The home page has some information about VFPX: what it is, how to get involved, and how to promote VFPX to other developers. The menu near the top of the page provides access to the projects list, the VFPX license, posts, information for VFPX project managers, information on how to add a project to VFPX, detailed notes for administrators, and an About page.

One page you should check regularly is Posts ([Figure 3](#)). This page has announcements and other news related to VFPX, such as new or updated projects.

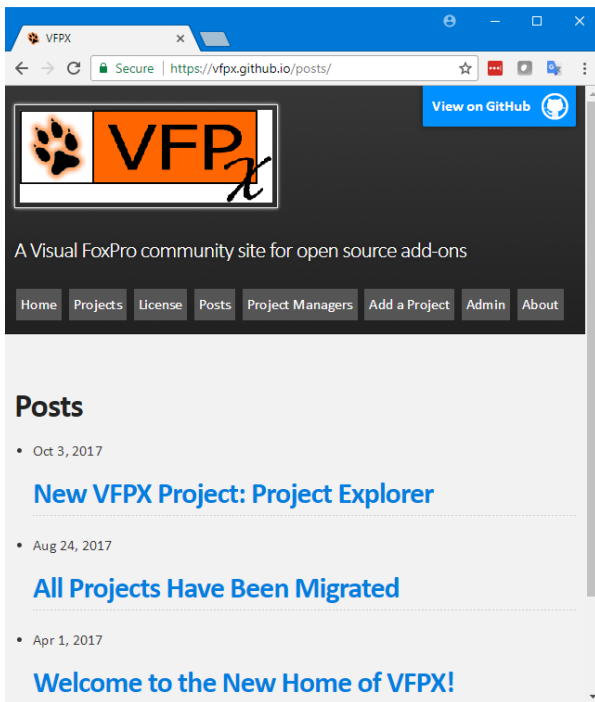


Figure 3. The Posts page has announcements and other VFPX-related news.

The most frequently used page is the Projects page (Figure 4). It has a list of the projects that make up VFPX, similar to the list on the home page of the old CodePlex site. Projects are divided into several categories, such as Production and Beta, depending on the release status of the project. Within a category, projects are listed alphabetically. The name is hyperlinked to the repository for the project; for example, clicking the link for the Control Renamer Builder project takes you to that repository, shown in Figure 5.

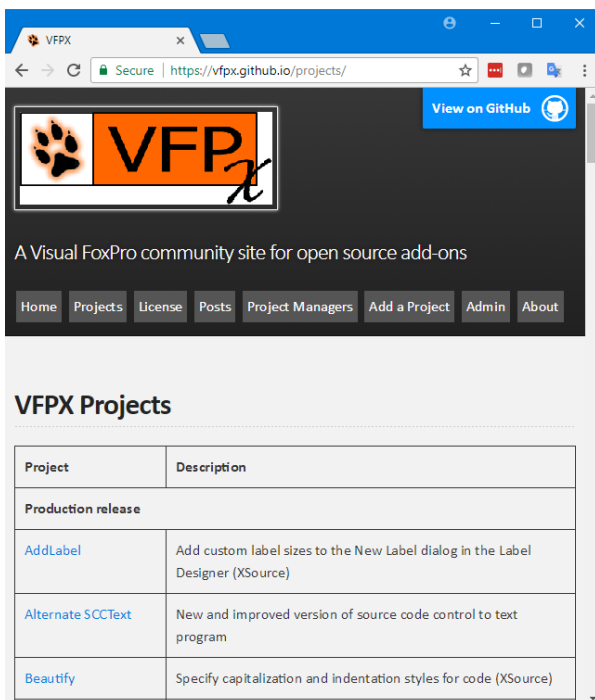


Figure 4. The Projects page lists the projects that make up VFPX.

Some project repositories are under VFPX, such as Thor, which is located at <https://github.com/VFPX/Thor>. Others are under the author's GitHub site, such as Project Explorer, which is located at <https://github.com/DougHennig/ProjectExplorer>, under my GitHub site. It's the project manager's decision where they want the project to go.

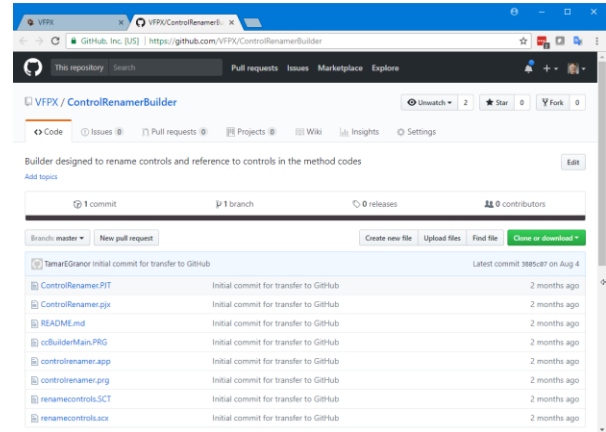


Figure 5. The GitHub repository for a project has many functions.

A project's repository has a lot of functions that may seem complex at first if you are not familiar with GitHub. Let's explore the more common things you can do.

The middle of the page lists the files and folders that make up the project along with the commit message for the most recent commit for each file. One file, named README.md, acts as the "home page" for the project. It's a Markdown file (Markdown is similar to HTML in that it renders as formatted text and images) that automatically displays at the bottom of the page, providing information about the project, such as its purpose and the name of the project manager. You can click a file to view its contents, although that's not useful for VFP binary files such as VCX files.

To install the project on your system, you have a couple of choices:

- If you have Git, a popular distributed version control system, installed on your machine, you can clone the repository. Click the *Clone or download* button on the repository page, copy the URL displayed in the popdown window, and use that as the source for the clone.
- If you'd rather just download the files, click the *Clone or download* button and click the *Download ZIP* button in the popdown window to download a ZIP file containing the repository contents. You

can unzip the file wherever you wish on your system.

Here are some other common things you'll do with a repository:

- If you want to receive an email when a project is updated, click the *Watch* button near the top of the page and choose *Watching* from the dropdown menu.
- If you like a project, you can star it by clicking the *Star* button.
- To see what changed in the most recent commit, click the commit message at the top of the files list. Note that changes to binary files aren't displayed, which is yet another good reason for project managers to use a tool like FoxBin2PRG (itself a VFPX project) to convert VFP binary files to their text equivalents and include those files in the repository.
- To see a list of all commits, click the "commits" link (which is prefixed with the number of commits). You can then click one of them to see what changed in that commit.
- To report a bug or suggest an improvement, click the *Issues* tab and click the *New issue* button. You can also review issues, even those that've been closed.
- If you fix a report or add a new feature, choose the *Pull requests* tab and click the *New pull request* button.

GitHub has a lot more features than CodePlex and there's a lot of documentation available for it; see <https://github.com> for a link to the GitHub guide.

Summary

The new GitHub home of VFPX provides more functionality than the old CodePlex site and new life for VFPX. Hopefully, this article will inspire you to get involved with VFPX, either by contributing to an existing project or even starting your own project.

The VFPX administrators would like to thank Steve Black for his help and guidance in moving VFPX to GitHub.

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Doug is co-author of "VFPX: Open Source Treasure for the VFP Developer," "Making Sense of Sedna and SP2," the "What's New in Visual FoxPro" series (the latest being "What's New in Nine"), "Visual FoxPro Best Practices For The Next Ten Years," and "The Hacker's Guide to Visual FoxPro 7.0." He was the technical editor of "The Hacker's Guide to Visual FoxPro 6.0" and "The Fundamentals." All of these books are from Hentzenwerke Publishing (<http://www.hentzenwerke.com>). He wrote over 100 articles in 10 years for FoxTalk and has written numerous articles in FoxPro Advisor, Advisor Guide to Visual FoxPro, and CoDe. He currently writes for FoxRockX (<http://www.foxrockx.com>).

Doug spoke at every Microsoft FoxPro Developers Conference (DevCon) starting in 1997 and at user groups and developer conferences all over the world. He is one of the organizers of the annual Southwest Fox conference (<http://www.swfox.net>). He is one of the administrators for the VFPX VFP community extensions Web site (<http://vfp.codeplex.com>). He was a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) from 1996 to 2011. Doug was awarded the 2006 FoxPro Community Lifetime Achievement Award (<http://tinyurl.com/ygnk73h>).