Getting Started with Visio

Visio is an easy-to-use drawing program for Windows. Visio includes a number of predefined shapes and symbols useful for various types of technical drawings. These shapes are arranged into templates based on several types of technical drawings such as block diagrams, flowcharts, electrical engineering schematics, organizational charts, etc. A drag-and-drop technique with the mouse is used to add a predefined shape from a template to a drawing. The following example shows how to create a simple flowchart using the flowchart template.

To begin Visio, click the mouse on the Visio 2016 icon found under All Apps > V in the Start Menu. First Choose a Drawing Template. In this example you should select Basic Flowchart. You can scroll through the template to see what shapes the flowchart template includes. Each shape has its own name located directly next to its picture. This example shows how to build a flowchart of a simple inventory program, shown below. The flowchart might represent a program in any programming language such as BASIC, FORTRAN, C, etc.
Creating Shapes in a Drawing Window

To create the terminator shape, click and drag the shape from the template window to the drawing window (entitled Drawing1:Page-1) and release the mouse button. That will create one instance of the master shape in your drawing. To copy the shape already created, hold down the ctrl key and click and drag on the object in the drawing window. Make sure the shape is selected in the template window. Create 2 terminator shapes, 2 process shapes, 2 decision shapes, and 4 data shapes in this way. Arrange the shapes in the general form as shown above. To move shapes around in the drawing window: click once on the shape to select it, then click and drag the shape to the desired position. When the shape is in position, release the left mouse button.

Aligning Shapes

To align the first five shapes vertically select them all by first selecting the one that you want the rest to align with, then hold down the shift key and click on the rest of the shapes once. The first shape you selected will have bold blue borders and the others will have regular blue bars. When you have selected the items you want aligned go to the Arrange group under the Home tab and choose Auto Left to align the shapes vertically. Repeat this process for the second set of vertical items (it contains 3 shapes), and then once again for the final set of vertically aligned shapes.

Zooming In

Before you go any further you might want to zoom in on your drawing to take a closer look at your flowchart. First select an object you want to zoom in on. Then under the View menu use the Zoom command to zoom the desired amount.

Adding Text

The next step is to type in the text contained in the shape. To enter text in a shape, simply double click quickly on the shape. A box will come up and you can type in your own message. To resize text first select it, then notice the Font group at the top in the Home tab. This will allow you to change size. There is also a selection box for the types of fonts available. In this example, the default font Arial size 10 was used. When you are done entering text in a shape, click once with the mouse in an empty spot to deselect the shape. You can align text within a shape by selecting the text, then using Paragraph group under the Home tab. You can check spelling with Spelling under the Review tab.
Re-sizing Shapes

You will notice that shapes containing text might seem too large or too small. To change the size of the shape click and release it once with the mouse button. The blue handle bars will appear. When you move the mouse arrow on top of one of the blue boxes the arrow should change to a double ended arrow. This signifies that you can change the size of the shape by clicking and dragging on the mouse.

Connections

To connect the different shapes simply click on one of the shapes and then hover over the white handlebars on the shape. Four faded blue arrows will appear, click the arrow that points in the direction of the connection you want to make and drag the mouse to the next shape. A box will appear with the various shapes located in that direction. Click on the shape you wish to connect to and a blue arrow will then appear to join the two shapes.

Adding Independent Text

To add text that is not connected to any shape (such as the yes and no attached to the decision shapes) click on the text icon A in the Tools group of the Home tab. When you have selected the A, the mouse button appears as a text marker when it is over the drawing page. Simply click the mouse button once wherever you wish to type text and start typing. To get out of text mode select the pointer tool on the toolbar and click the mouse button on an empty space in your document. You can edit your typing at a later time by double clicking on the text. The text can be formatted and spell-checked with the options in the Font (Home tab) and Proofing (Review tab) groups. Blocks of text can be moved around and resized in the same way that shapes are.

More Information

For more information see the Help button in the toolbar.