

## What is a Connection String?

In Visual Studio, Connection Strings help us to link our program with an outside database. Without them, you wouldn't be able to establish a connection to a database. A Connection String holds the vital information that VB.NET needs to open and draw information from a database file—such as a path and file name. Simply put, a Connection String tells Visual Studio *where* to find our database.

If you've ever had experience with Access databases—or databases of any other type, for that matter—you're likely aware that they're sometimes password protected. So how does VB.NET access data within a database that's password protected? Well, here's where another function of the Connection String comes into play. Connection Strings can fill in the user name and password fields by sending information to and from the database and the Visual Basic program. These Connection Strings are then passed to Connection Objects—such as a variable declared as a `New OleDb.OleDbConnection`.

By using the Data Source Connection Wizard in VB.NET (Under the Data Menu, select "Add New DataSource"), you can build your own connection string.

For some experience using connection strings, see the **Connection Example** document.