

Chapter 6. Input and Output

Let's create a useful, or at any rate a visible, Xbasic Script. This one will ask you for a name, and then capitalize it.

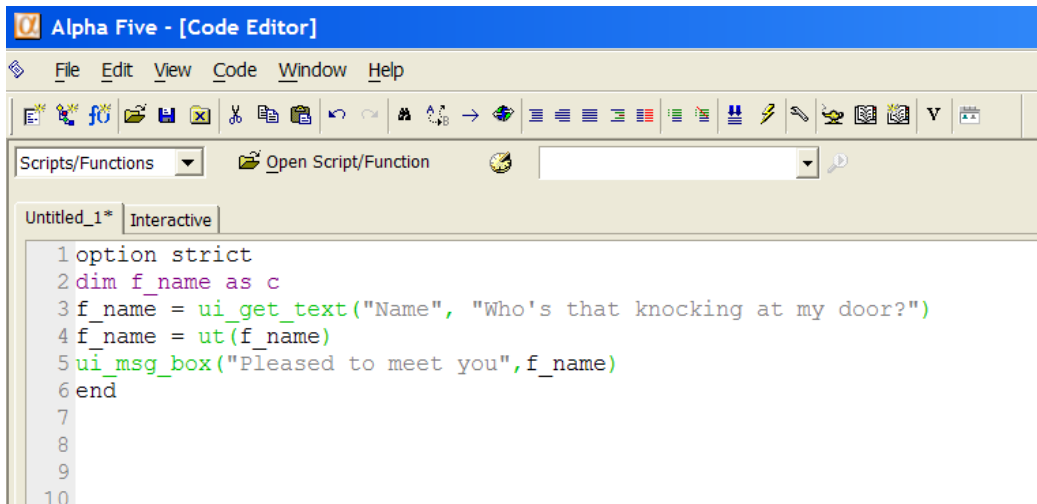
To get input and output, we will use two built-in Xbasic functions: **ui_get_text()** and **ui_msg_box()**. (The **ui** stands for User Interface, computerese for your keyboard, mouse and monitor). We will also use another Alpha Five function, **ut()**, which takes a character variable or a constant, capitalizes it and trims off trailing blanks (Uppercase Trim).

From the Alpha Five Control Panel, click on Code, then New, then Script (Using Xbasic Editor).

Type this into the script editor window:

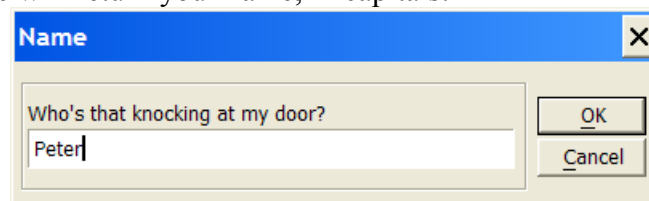
```
option strict
dim f_name as c
f_name = ui_get_text("Name", "Who's that knocking at my door?")
f_name = ut(f_name)
ui_msg_box("Pleased to meet you",f_name)
end
```

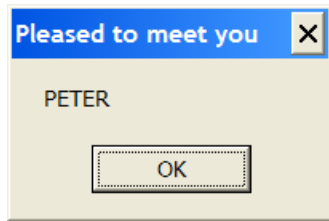
In the Code Editor window it looks like this:



Hint: If you don't see the line numbers, right-click on the whitespace in the editor window and then select Line Numbers. It's useful to have line numbers alongside your scripts!

Save this script as **GetName** and run it. Press the button. If you have typed this in correctly, you will be asked for your name, and Alpha Five will return your name, in capitals:





Comments

The hardest part of writing scripts is looking at them afterwards - sometimes years afterwards - and trying to figure out why you did what you did before! It has been estimated that 80% of the effort of writing software is the maintenance of the software after it has been completed. Most programming languages will allow a programmer to insert *comments* into the programs that are ignored by the programming language. The comments are not there for Alpha Five -- they are there for you to look at later.

Comments in Xbasic begin with an apostrophe. Anything on a line after an apostrophe is ignored by Alpha Five. Use comments liberally, but don't get silly about commenting lines that are already self-explanatory:

```
f_name = upper(f_name) ' capitalize f_name
```

That comment is not necessary, since the code is already very clear.

In this book, we will use comments less often than we should, because there is commentary in the accompanying text. In production scripts, pretend that you're writing the script to show someone else – use comments liberally. They're free.