

## Starting a Batch File from MicroStation

There have been a couple of questions in the MicroStation newsgroups along the lines of "How do I start an operating system batch file without leaving MicroStation?"

One answer to the question is to use Visual Basic for Applications (VBA), which is part and parcel of MicroStation V8. VBA provides extensive functionality, which you can extend by referencing built-in Visual Basic (VB) methods, and even by calling the Win32 native application programming interface (API) directly.

VB provides a `Shell()` method, which means 'attempt to start whatever executable program I give you'. A batch file (having a `.bat` extension) is not an executable file. The way to 'execute' a batch file is to give its path to the Windows built-in command executable `cmd.exe`. The way to persuade the operating system to do something with a batch file is to put these ideas together like this...

```
Shell("cmd.exe /k batchfile.bat")
```

Unfortunately, things aren't always as simple as we would like, because `Shell()` can't itself divine the location of the executable file. The VBA project `ShellBatch.mvba` takes care of these details, and all you have to know is how to start it.

1. Copy `ShellBatch.mvba` to one of the folders in your computer's VBA search path (`MS_VBASEARCHDIRECTORIES`).  
`C:\Program Files\Bentley\Workspace\Standards\VBA` is a good choice
2. Open MicroStation's key-in window from the *Utilities* menu
3. Start your batch file with the following key-in: you must know the full path to the file:  
`vba run [ShellBatch].Module1.Main <batch file path>`  
For example:  
`vba run [ShellBatch]Module1.Main D:\temp\test.bat`