

Foreword

“Yes!” That was how I felt when I started reading the proofs of this book. This is the first book I have seen that explains very clearly how Visual C++ developers can use the .NET Framework *right now* to increase their productivity in writing new MFC applications and enhancing existing ones. It addresses very successfully the mechanics of how you start using .NET APIs from your MFC applications. It explains where the feature our team called IJW (*It Just Works*), really just works and where you need to coax it across some pitfalls. But this book dispenses with that in short order and then goes straight to the real meat of selecting specific API sets from the vast breadth of the .NET Framework and explaining how to use them from your MFC code.

Just reading through the table of contents and the first few chapters it becomes clear immediately that Tom Archer is writing from the ideal vantage point of both having a deep understanding of the technology and the direct hands-on experience of using it in the real world, on a real project, with real deadlines, and on a team with real people facing all the pressures and deadlines of the typical modern development project.

What you won't find in here is the umpteenth overview of the .NET Framework, or even a book just focused on explaining the .NET Framework from the viewpoint of a C++ or MFC developer. What you will find is exactly which parts of the .NET Framework you can use *now* to increase your productivity—which parts are clearly superior in the .NET Framework compared to equivalent (or in some case non existent) Win32, COM, or MFC functionality. This book simply couldn't have been written a year ago because it is so deeply steeped in real-world usage. The author's experience with all the relevant parts of the technology—C++, MFC, Win32, the CLR, and the .NET Framework—clearly shows through in every single page. And so does his talent for clear, unambiguous explanations.

Because WinFX, the new API for the Longhorn OS, is a managed API set, using the techniques in this book ideally positions you to make your MFC applications great *Longhorn* applications. Starting now to use the

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.NET Framework for specific technologies like remoting, file access, cryptography, and XML will not only jump-start your experience, but also will later make it easier to integrate the new Longhorn features into your application.

Designing the new releases of Visual C++ to help make you, the C++ developer on the Windows platform, ideally positioned to take advantage of the new platform functionality, even with a major shift like .NET and Longhorn, is what our team is all about and what I personally spend almost all my waking moments on. This book is all about how that works in the real world, with the current product. It both validates where we got it right and shows you how to make it work in the places where we haven't yet reached the ideal solution. It makes the hard value judgments in the context of your MFC applications as to which parts of the .NET API are beneficial to use now and which parts don't offer compelling advantages over the traditional ways of implementing the functionality.

I have already been using the material in this book in guiding the future evolution of Visual C++. This is a book that is going on my shelf of books that I use daily. I think it will go on yours as well.

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