

INTRODUCTION

Who Should Read This Book?

Not long ago, I wrote a book on Expression Web called *Special Edition Using Microsoft Expression Web*. Expression Web is a great product that builds on the success of Microsoft FrontPage, and although many web designers (including myself) were excited about Expression Web, many were also disappointed to see the removal of FrontPage web components.

Because Expression Web added support for ASP.NET development, many Expression Web users who were migrating from FrontPage saw ASP.NET as a natural transition from the FrontPage components that they had grown so used to. Unfortunately, they quickly found themselves overwhelmed with ASP.NET. Let's face it: Most FrontPage users migrating to Expression Web are not programmers and don't want to become programmers. Instead, they want to take advantage of the technologies exposed in Expression Web without having to spend months learning how to write code.

If you can relate to the previous two paragraphs, this book is for you! This book is designed to walk you through creating an ASP.NET web application from beginning to end, using Microsoft Visual Web Developer Express Edition, (referred to as simply Visual Web Developer from here on out.) Visual Web Developer has many of the designer features and CSS features that you'll find in Expression Web, but it's much better suited to designing ASP.NET applications.

Here are some of the ASP.NET features this book covers:

- Creating ASP.NET websites
- Creating ASP.NET Web forms and user controls
- Accessing databases with ASP.NET
- Editing database data with ASP.NET
- Using ASP.NET membership to password protect parts of a website
- Sending email with ASP.NET

- Using ASP.NET Ajax 1.0
- Much more...

I'll show you how to implement all these features while writing the least amount of code possible, but when code is necessary, I'll provide samples in both Visual Basic and C#.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into multiple sections so that you can quickly find the information you need. Here is the rundown on all the sections:

- Part I, "Understanding ASP.NET Architecture"—I cover the basics of ASP.NET. You'll learn about ASP.NET code models, compilation models, how ASP.NET page events work, how ASP.NET is configured, and the basics of ASP.NET security.
- Part II, "Creating ASP.NET Applications and Web Forms"—In this section, I cover creating ASP.NET websites and ASP.NET Web forms.
- Part III, "Master Pages and User Controls"—I cover creating Web forms with master pages, a new feature introduced in ASP.NET 2.0. I also cover creating and using reusable ASP.NET components called user controls.
- Part IV, "ASP.NET Membership"—In this section I cover the security features of ASP.NET more closely. You'll create users and roles (ASP.NET groups) and configure their access to the website. You'll also create a login page and other pages to allow users to manage user accounts.
- Part V, "ASP.NET Forms and Validation"—In this section you'll learn how to create custom forms in ASP.NET and how to use the ASP.NET validation controls to configure form validation.
- Part VI, "Styling Web Forms in Visual Web Developer"—In this section you'll learn how to use the powerful CSS toolset that Expression Web brings to Visual Web Developer. I also cover ASP.NET skins and themes.
- Part VII, "Data Access with ASP.NET"—In this section I cover the ASP.NET data controls and how to display, add, edit, and delete data from a database.
- Part VIII, "Sending Email with ASP.NET"—In this section I cover ASP.NET Ajax and web services.
- Part IX, "Debugging and Troubleshooting ASP.NET"—Realizing that things will go terribly wrong when you least expect it, this section covers debugging and troubleshooting ASP.NET applications.
- Part X, "Deploying ASP.NET Applications"—In this section, I cover deploying your ASP.NET application to another web server.

I've also included one appendix that covers all the various options and settings available in Visual Web Developer.

Special Elements

Throughout the book, you'll find some special elements that are designed to make it easy to locate important information or special tips that help you get the most out of Visual Web Developer.

When a special term is used for the first time, it is printed in *italic* and is defined close by. If instructions require you to enter text or values into a dialog, the data you are to enter appears like **this**.

Cross References

This book is designed to be read in order, but you may still find yourself wanting to read up on a specific topic in advance or go back and review a topic covered in a previous chapter. For that reason, I've made sure to cross-reference information where possible.

Notes, Tips, Cautions, and Sidebars

You'll find numerous bits of information in these special elements.

NOTE

Notes include additional technical information or URLs that you can use to access important information.

TIP

Tips provide information to make a feature easier to use or information you might not have considered.

CAUTION

Caution elements are designed to warn you about common pitfalls before you suffer from them.

Read Sidebars for the Big Picture

You won't find sidebars in every chapter. They're designed to give you more insight into a particular topic. If you're the kind of person who wants to know all the details, you'll find sidebars to be extremely valuable.

I've worked hard to make this book the definitive resource on ASP.NET for Expression Web users who don't want to become ASP.NET programmers. I hope this book will excite you about designing ASP.NET applications and adding a whole new realm of possibilities to your web design toolset.

—Jim