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WORKSHOP

MICROSOFT'S VISUAL STUDIO 2005: WHAT'S NEW?

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Abstract

Microsoft introduced a new version of their Visual Studio suite in November 2005. This version, called Visual Studio 2005, has many new features and enhancements. It also has a new look and feel. With the introduction of the full integrated development environment, Microsoft also announced the release of express versions of several of the components. This workshop will provide an overview of the new version of Visual Studio highlighting major changes. The focus will be on enhancements to Visual Basic.NET 2005 and ASP.NET 2.0. The workshop will also address how these changes may impact the classroom.

Keywords: Visual Studio 2005, software enhancement.

Visual Studio

Visual Studio is Microsoft's integrated development environment. Their first release of this IDE, intertwined with their much touted .NET framework, was Visual Studio 2002. Since that release, Microsoft has made 2 major upgrades, one termed Visual Studio 2003 and the latest coined Visual Studio 2005. This latest version is a major enhancement over its predecessors. The product was in beta for well over two years but was released as a general offering in November 2006. It is designed to work with the latest version of the framework, .NET framework v2.0. With the release, Microsoft is offering several renditions of the development environment. They continue to offer standard and professional editions which incorporate many different programming languages and related offerings. Then, they added a high end offering, 'Team System,' and a home-user offering, 'Express editions.' The home offerings split the different language environments into separate components, each of which may be downloaded from Microsoft for free until November 2006. Visual Studio express editions include VB.NET, C#, J#, C++ and ASP.NET 2.0 which they term the 'Visual Web Developer 2005 Express Edition.' They have also announced the release of an express version of SQL Server.

Visual Studio 2005 incorporates many new features and enhancements. It also has a new look and feel. Microsoft has streamlined the interface, moved items around and changed some of the controls. They have added additional commentary in the code behind and added color-coded support for identifying recent changes. They have enhanced debugging features including a 'code and edit' option making it easier to correct errors when building. In VB.NET smart tags were also to aid in the correction of common errors and in the development of common activities. A collection of code snippets of commonly used code segments is now also provided.

Perhaps the biggest change in VS 2005 is in the support of database connectivity. Microsoft has replaced many of the data controls, such as the datagrid, and added wizard support for database connections. They have enacted 'drag and drop' options for automatically generating code used to display, insert, update and delete from a database. These changes are dramatic and have implications for how concepts of database connectivity will be taught.

The workshop will provide an overview of each of the major changes introduced by Microsoft into Visual Studio 2005. Examples will be presented and insights and tips will be shared. Participants will also be invited to engage in a discussion on how these changes may impact Information Systems curriculum.