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Naming Conventions in C# - underscores

Asked 8 years ago Active 5 years, 8 months ago Viewed 39k times



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I saw this at [an MVC3 Razor tutorial](#) at <http://www.asp.net>

```
public ActionResult Index() {  
    return View(_usrs._usrList);  
}
```

Isn't that usage plain wrong? I have always thought that [\[docs\]](#)

In C#, I usually see it used only when defining the underlying private member variable for a public property. Other private member variables would not have an underscore. This usage has largely gone to the wayside with the advent of automatic properties though.

Or is it a new naming convention I am seeing? Very curious about that usage in Microsoft's own tutorial.

P.S: The article is pretty good. Its just that I tend to follow naming conventions for better readability.

c#

naming-conventions

edited May 23 '17 at 12:17



Community ♦

1 ● 1

asked Mar 20 '12 at 6:08



naveen

44.6k ● 42 ● 145 ● 229

2 I use underscores always for private members, makes them easier to find. `_MyVariable` isn't destroying the readability. – [Felix K.](#) Mar 20 '12 at 7:37

Eww, a method with the name of a property. That should be GetIndex() of course. Written by a C++ programmer, probably. All pretty subjective, use your own conventions. – [Hans Passant](#) Mar 20 '12 at 11:22

3 Answers

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A good article to read on the development of C# style guidelines is here at [StyleCop](#).

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The original guidance for .NET was to never use underscores unless they were part of a private member variable, and then only as a prefix, e.g. `_customerId`. This was probably inherited from MFC where 'm_' was used as a prefix for member variables.



Current practice is not to use underscores at all. Disambiguation between private member variables and parameters with the same name should be done using 'this.'. In fact all references to private members should be prefixed with 'this.'.



The only place underscore seems to be used a lot is in unit test methods. I'm not a fan, but it may make the methods more readable, for example `Throw_If_Customer_Is_Null(){...}`.



edited Aug 2 '14 at 9:43



Mudassir Hasan

24.1k ● 15 ● 82 ● 117

answered Mar 20 '12 at 7:29



Phil

37.2k ● 6 ● 82 ● 96

34 I still can't make myself switch to using 'this.'. It just doesn't feel right :-)- [Phil](#) Mar 21 '12 at 7:10

3 Disambiguation between private member variables and parameters with the same name should be done using 'this.' - Resharper warns you if you use `this` to refer to member fields inside methods in C# classes. It suggests to remove `this` qualifier as a potential fix for such source code. I'm using Resharper 2016 Ultimate. - [RBT](#) Apr 18 '17 at 2:38 ✎

4 This is Microsoft's guidance, accurately presented, though note that this advice causes `SomeProperty`'s backing field to be `someProperty`, if you then accidentally type `get {return SomeProperty}` in the property definition you will get a `StackOverflowException` every time it's called; I'm not thrilled that this naming scheme always has me one typo away from a runtime error / crash. Also it might be worth mentioning that the [.NET framework itself](#) seems to prefer `m_` instead of their official guidance. - [jrh](#) Oct 26 '17 at 12:42 ✎

2 @RBT - that is a configurable setting - [Stephen Drew](#) Nov 7 '17 at 23:03

5 Using `this` as an indicator of privacy is a redundant eyesore. - [ChiefTwoPencils](#) Apr 10 '18 at 14:26



The guidelines are summarized here <http://blogs.msdn.com/b/brada/archive/2005/01/26/361363.aspx> and include the stipulation to

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use "this." instead of underscore. But I find that peppering my code with "this."s makes the code more wordy, cluttered and hard-to-read. Furthermore it seems to be less often followed than underscore so as a convention, "_" seems more conventional.

answered Feb 26 '13 at 20:19



user316117

6,669 ● 16 ● 59 ● 128

It looks like Microsoft didn't really ever follow their own guidelines, as weird as that sounds, seems like they used a mix of `m_privateVar` and `_privateVar` for private variables internally. – [jrh](#) Oct 26 '17 at 13:00

In the new docs: ["Internal and private fields are not covered by guidelines"](#). – [jrh](#) Jan 24 '18 at 15:34

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In ASP. NET MVC 3 underscores are used more usually. For example all your partial views you need to name with underscore like `_MyPartialView`.

It's going for easy distinguishing partial views and views in your application.

Anyway, in this example I don't prefer sing underscores, because there is no need to use them. It isn't wrong, because it's good practice to write with underline lists of your entities. But I will prefer to write without them.

So both ways are right, write in the way you feel more comfortable.

edited Mar 20 '12 at 6:16

answered Mar 20 '12 at 6:11



Chuck Norris

14.5k ● 11 ● 78 ● 116

+1: oh i see. i am more of a webforms guy. thanks. but the code is framework agnostic here right? here a list and an instance have been given underscores. – [naveen](#) Mar 20 '12 at 6:15

Yes, in this example it's really framework-agnostic. See my edit. – [Chuck Norris](#) Mar 20 '12 at 6:18

`_MyPartialView` is strictly used with `.cshtml` files to help indicate Partial Views in ASP.MVC - It is not the same as applying to variables – [Piotr Kula](#) Jul 20 '18 at 8:07