Beginning Silverlight 2

From Novice to Professional

Robert Lair

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Beginning Silverlight 2: From Novice to Professional

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ISBN-13 (pbk): 978-1-59059-952-5

ISBN-10 (pbk): 1-59059-952-7

ISBN-13 (electronic): 978-1-4302-0570-8

ISBN-10 (electronic): 1-4302-0570-9

Printed and bound in the United States of America 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Distributed to the book trade worldwide by Springer-Verlag New York, Inc., 233 Spring Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10013. Phone 1-800-SPRINGER, fax 201-348-4505, e-mail orders-ny@springer-sbm.com, or visit http://www.springeronline.com.

For information on translations, please contact Apress directly at 2855 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 600, Berkeley, CA 94705. Phone 510-549-5930, fax 510-549-5939, e-mail info@apress.com, or visit http://www.apress.com.

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This book is dedicated to my mother, Linda, who passed after a long fight with cancer on January 6, 2008. Your courageous battle was and will always be an encouragement to me and all who knew you. I love you and miss you. I also would like to dedicate this book to my dad, Ken, who lost the gift most precious to him. Your strength has been an inspiration to me. I love you, Dad.

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About the Author

ROBERT LAIR has been working with .NET technologies since before its alpha release, and built the original IBuySpy Store and Portal applications that were used by Microsoft to introduce ASP.NET to the development community. He is the author of *Pure ASP.NET* (Sams, 2002), a reference for web development in the .NET Framework, and portions of *ASP.NET for Developers*, as well as numerous magazine articles on the topic of .NET. Robert has also been a speaker at a number of .NET technical conferences. Technologies in which Robert specializes include Silverlight, CRM–Live service integration, mainframe modernization to .NET, ASP.NET custom application development, and SharePoint development and integration.

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Acknowledgments

There are a number of people to whom I would like to express my appreciation—people who have helped me in many ways. This book proved to be a much greater challenge than I had anticipated, as throughout the course of writing, a number of life events crept in, including the death of my mom. Without these people, this book would never have been possible.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my loving and inspiring wife, Debi. While I spent hours in my office writing, she picked up the slack around the house, and through it all provided me with love, support, and a lighthouse that I could always turn to and refocus on. I cannot thank her enough for the sacrifices she has endured, and for always being there. I would also like to thank my son, Max, who gave up a great deal of time with his dad. I hope this book is proof that you can accomplish anything if you put your mind to it and have the perseverance to see it through. I look forward to once again giving you the time you both deserve and to being a family again.

I would like to thank the many people at Apress who made this book happen. I would especially like to thank Tracy Brown Collins, Ewan Buckingham, Marilyn Smith, Elizabeth Berry, Dominic Shakeshaft, and Stefan Turalski. Without all of your hard work, this book would never have happened. Thank you all.

Through life's many challenges, everyone needs someone to whom they can turn. I would like to thank a great friend of mine, Paul Strozier, for all of his support and encouragement, and especially for his friendship. True friends are priceless. Thank you, Paul, for everything.

And finally, I would like to shout out from Gooblicious to Warclock, Essy, and the members of Slighted and Distant Beliefs, who provided me with friendship and an escape when I needed one.

Introduction

Welcome to *Beginning Silverlight 2: From Novice to Professional*. This book will provide you with an introduction to Silverlight: what it is, what it means to you as a developer, and how to begin developing Silverlight-enabled applications. You'll not only read about the features of the Silverlight development environment, but also work through many hands-on examples that demonstrate exactly how to use those features to create rich Internet applications (RIAs).

Who Should Read This Book

This book is written for application developers who want to get started with Silverlight 2. It assumes that you have some experience developing applications using technologies related to Microsoft's ASP.NET, and have worked with Microsoft Visual Studio. You should be familiar with the JavaScript, C#, and XML languages.

How This Book Is Organized

Each chapter focuses on a particular area of Silverlight and contains one or more "Try It Out" exercises that allow you to apply what you have learned. Here is a summary of what each chapter includes:

- Chapter 1, "Welcome to Silverlight 2," gives you an introduction to RIAs and Silverlight. You will also learn about the tools used in developing Silverlight-enabled applications.
- Chapter 2, "Introduction to Visual Studio 2008," introduces Visual Studio 2008 and the important new features offered in this version. In this chapter, you will build your first Silverlight application.
- Chapter 3, "Layout Management in Silverlight," discusses Silverlight's flexible layout management system, which lets you specify how controls will appear in your applications. It describes Silverlight 2's layout management controls in depth.
- Chapter 4, "Silverlight Form Controls," introduces the common form controls that are provided with Silverlight 2. You will continue to work with these controls throughout the book.
- Chapter 5, "Data Binding and Silverlight List Controls," looks at the Silverlight 2 controls that display lists of data and how to bind data to these controls. You'll see that these controls are flexible and can show data in unique ways.

- Chapter 6, "Data Access and Networking," describes how data access in Silverlight applications works compared with data access in traditional applications. It then explores mechanisms for accessing data in Silverlight applications, focusing on the use of web services.
- Chapter 7, "Local Storage in Silverlight," covers localized storage in Silverlight 2, which is handled by its *isolated storage* feature. You'll learn how to store user-specific data for your application and have that data persist over browser instances.
- Chapter 8, "Introduction to Expression Blend," gets you started with Microsoft Expression Blend, which lets you edit XAML documents visually.
- Chapter 9, "Styling in Silverlight," describes how you can control the styles of your Silverlight application's user interface elements. You'll learn about defining style properties inline using both Visual Studio and Expression Blend, as well as how to use Silverlight styles.
- Chapter 10, "Transformations and Animation," covers creating animations in Silverlight 2. You'll see how Expression Blend 2 helps you create complex animations and transformations.
- Chapter 11, "Custom Controls," explains the basics of creating custom controls in Silverlight 2. First, it covers when it might be appropriate to write custom controls in Silverlight 2, and then it describes how to build a custom control that has several different states.

By the time you finish this book, you will have a firm foundation in Silverlight 2, and will be able to create your own Silverlight-enabled applications.