

THE EXPERT'S VOICE® IN SHAREPOINT

Pro SharePoint Solution Development

Combining .NET, SharePoint, and Office 2007

*Solving customer challenges by developing
with the Microsoft Office platform*

Ed Hild
with Susie Adams

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Pro SharePoint Solution Development

Combining .NET, SharePoint,
and Office 2007



Ed Hild with Susie Adams

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*I dedicate this work to my family. To my wife, who supports my many dreams.
To my son, who lost a lot of time with me for this book. And to my parents,
who raised me with the work ethic necessary to see this through.*

—Ed Hild

To my nieces and nephews: Alli, Zach, Connor, Matt, and Payton (Paytie-Moe).

—Susie Adams

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Introduction

When we first proposed this book, we set a goal of writing a different kind of SharePoint book. We did not want a reference that repeated the software development kit, nor did we want a how-to book that explained how to configure the out-of-the-box functionality. Instead, we envisioned a book that helped developers apply the Microsoft Office platform to customer problems. Since Susie and I work at the Microsoft Technology Center in Virginia, we have a unique opportunity to work with a wide variety of customers, in both the commercial and public sectors, who are trying to realize a benefit from incorporating Office technologies into their enterprises. Many of these customers are not just seeking installation or configuration advice. The focus is on how the Microsoft Office platform will make their workers more efficient, their processes more repeatable, and their businesses more profitable. For these customers, the technology must be applied to their specific challenges.

With the release of Office 2007, Microsoft provides the developer with a complete platform (both client and server) for generating documents, automating processes, enhancing collaboration, and integrating line-of-business data. This platform not only includes the latest releases of SharePoint products and technologies, but also a new set of desktop applications. More importantly, these applications are more extendable by .NET developers than in any previous release. This book will walk through solutions to common customer challenges. It will utilize both the client and server technologies of the Office 2007 platform, including Microsoft Office 2007, Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007, and Microsoft Visual Studio 2005 Tools for Office SE.

Since we too are developers, we recognize that often you buy a book just for that one code sample or chapter you need to complete a project. Unfortunately, many books don't support that approach and have a huge example that builds throughout the book. As much as possible, we have designed our solutions to be self-contained within their own chapters. We anticipate that you will see something that you can immediately relate to or something that has a high priority for you. Go ahead and skip to that chapter and read that solution. Make sure you come back, though; the other chapters are just as interesting!

After the first few chapters, which introduce the technologies and outline the book, the remaining chapters each present a real-world customer problem and its solution. In every chapter we will introduce the problem, give you examples of customers who typically have this problem, provide you with an overview of the solution, and a complete walk-through. Accompanying this text is a download of completed solutions on the Apress web site (in the Source Code/Download section of <http://apress.com>). In each chapter we will also highlight some of the key concepts that you will likely use again and list extension points for enhancing the solution. Finally, each chapter contains a set of links for further reading on the topics included in the solution.

So what are we going to build? The solutions combine the familiar interface of the desktop applications with the server capabilities of SharePoint. The solutions include items such as custom web parts, Office add-ins, SharePoint features, forms, workflow, the Business Data

Catalog, Outlook form regions, Excel Services, and the Open XML file format. But that is not a complete list. In most cases, a solution is not just any one of these items, but a combination that meets the customer's needs.

Who This Book Is For

This book is for developers looking to apply the Microsoft Office platform (both client and server) to their own solutions. We did not set out to write a reference book; instead we focused on how the features and services of Office and SharePoint can be leveraged. Therefore, we assume the reader is already familiar with .NET code. Ideally the reader has also been exposed to some sort of development with Microsoft Office and at least used a SharePoint team site. We do provide a few background chapters for developers new to these areas or unfamiliar with the enhancements of the latest releases. If you are a developer who has always wanted to build solutions that dynamically build Office documents, automate processes, enhance collaboration, and integrate line-of-business data, then this book is for you. If you want to learn how to construct solutions that combine items like custom web parts, Office add-ins, SharePoint features, forms, workflow, the Business Data Catalog, Outlook form regions, Excel Services, and the Open XML file format, then this book is for you. If you ever wanted a book that focused on solutions and treated Microsoft Office 2007, Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007, and Visual Studio 2005 Tools for Office SE equally, then this book is for you.

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