In Visual Studio, what's a quick way to delete all the exclude files from a project?

Asked 15 years, 8 months ago   Modified 15 years, 8 months ago

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3

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I have a LARGE project in visual studio 2008. It has an accumulation of a few years of trying things out and often excluding (not deleting) files from the project. I need a way to permanently delete any excluded file. There are thousands of files and hundreds of folders. Doing it manually in solution explorer would take too much time.

I could build a project file parser and compare with filesystem but I'm hoping for a shortcut.

Thanks

visual-studio-2008   file

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asked Apr 1, 2009 at 20:01

srmark
8,142 ● 17 ● 66 ● 74

2 Answers

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Are the excluded files under source control along with the rest? If not, just make sure everything is checked in, fetch to a new temporary location, move the old directory out of the way as a backup, and move the temporary folder to where the old one was.

If the experiments are checked into source control it's slightly harder - you'll probably need to go with the project file parser. That may well not be very hard though.

EDIT: Okay, if it's all in SVN, I suggest you write a *very* crude project parser. Give it a list of XPath expressions (or something similar) to select as "probably paths". Select everything in the project file, and copy each file selected into a fresh location (including subdirectories etc). Also copy project files and solution files. Then try to build - if it fails, you've missed something: repeat.

Keep going until it builds, then test it. So long as everything is okay, you can then blow everything else away :)

EDIT: Here's the *start* of the kind of thing I mean:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using System.Linq;
using System.Xml.Linq;

public class ProjectParser
{
    static void Main(string[] args)
    {
        XDocument doc = XDocument.Load(args[0]);
```

```
        XNamespace ns =
"http://schemas.microsoft.com/developer/msbuild/2003
        DumpMatches(doc.Descendants(ns +
"Compile")
                        .Select(x =>
x.Attribute("Include").Value));
        DumpMatches(doc.Descendants(ns +
"AssemblyOriginatorKeyFile")
                        .Select(x => x.Value));
    }

    static void DumpMatches(IEnumerable<string>
values)
    {
        foreach (string x in values)
        {
            Console.WriteLine(x);
        }
    }
}
```

(I originally tried with XPath, but the namespace stuff made it a pain.)

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I used this to get rid of some branches in bigger project (just to modify csproj). While this approach works like charm, it's still a shame I have to write console application if I want to delete more than few files using Visual Studio.
– Ondrej Svejdar Feb 13, 2014 at 9:55 ✏

@OndrejSvejdar: You could potentially consider using scriptcs to make it a bit more compact, and avoid having to compile it as a separate project... – Jon Skeet Feb 13, 2014 at 9:59
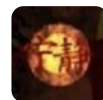
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Bring up a command prompt and try `DEL/S *.exclude` . I don't think you'd do much better writing an add-in to Visual Studio.

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answered Apr 1, 2009 at 20:07

John Saunders
162k ● 26 ● 249 ● 402