Customizing Visual Studio [closed]

Asked 16 years, 3 months ago   Modified 12 years, 4 months ago

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16

I have been working with Visual Studio (WinForm and ASP.NET applications using mostly C#) for several months now. For the most part my IDE is set up fairly standard but I have been wondering what are some suggestions in terms of plugins/settings that you find to be the most useful?

Update: Thanks for all the great suggestions. It looks like a general consensus that I should look into 'Resharper' along with some eye-candy with themes and custom fonts.

Themes

- [Consolas Font Pack for Visual Studio 2005/2008](#)

- [Scott Hanselman's Visual Studio Themes Gallery](#)

- [Visual Studio Theme Generator](#)

Free Tools

- [PowerCommands for Visual Studio 2008](#)

- [GhostDoc](#)

- [HyperAddin](#)

- [RockScroll](#)

- [CodeRush XPress](#)

- [.NET Reflector](#) - (Not a plugin but still useful)
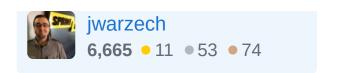
Paid Tools

- [Resharper](#) - Free (Open Source), $49 (Academic), $199 (Personal), $349 (Commercial)

- [CodeRush with Refactor!™ Pro](#) - $249

`c#` `asp.net` `winforms` `visual-studio`

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edited Jul 27, 2012 at 7:52

ThinkingStiff
65.3k ● 30 ● 147 ● 241

asked Sep 3, 2008 at 15:15

12 Answers

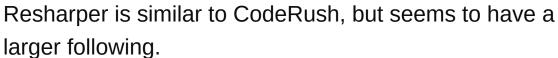Sorted by: Highest score (default) ▲▼

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Resharper is definitely a great tool. It has a moderate learning curve but is easy to pick up for some simple things and add mastery later. It is a good price for students and kinda expensive for the rest of us. Resharper is similar to CodeRush, but seems to have a larger following.

PowerCommands is a great set of add-ons that comes free from Microsoft. Things like "Open in Windows Explorer", "Command Prompt Here", and Copy/Paste references.

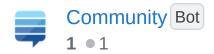A discussion regarding **add-ins** is floating around here somewhere.

For straight-up customization, **changing colors** is fun, easy, and gives you a big bang for your buck. I prefer a slightly personalized version of Rob Conery's TextMate theme for Visual Studio. Once you get colors you like, you can just export the settings and carry them with you wherever you go.

Related to colors and themes, the **Consolas** font pack is pretty nifty and easy on the eye.

And like John recommends, a **mastery of keyboard shortcuts** will pay big dividends.

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Community Bot
1 ●1

answered Sep 3, 2008 at 17:24

Brad Tutterow
7,487 ●3 ●34 ●33

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2

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Make sure you install a custom color theme. These URLs are a good place to start looking for one:

http://www.codinghorror.com/blog/archives/000682.html
http://www.hanselman.com/blog/VisualStudioProgrammer ThemesGallery.aspx

I myself love Oren Ellenbogen's Dark Scheme. Really pleasant to the eyes. Also, make sure to replace the default font with Consolas or Inconsolata (one is Microsoft's, the other is free). They are both awesome.

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answered Sep 3, 2008 at 18:20

Vicent Marti
7,295 ●6 ●32 ●34

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Resharper

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answered Sep 3, 2008 at 15:19

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Master the built-in keyboard shortcuts ([links to C# and VB keybinding cheatsheets can be found here](#))

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answered Sep 3, 2008 at 15:31

I agree with the customizing of the theme - it makes the environment a whole lot easier to deal with.

You can choose some of the ones [from the gallery at Hanselman's site](#), or create one [with this online generator](#).

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answered Sep 3, 2008 at 15:59

1. [GhostDoc](#) and [HyperAddin](#) provide automatic generation and formatting of XML comments.

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2. [RockScroll](#) is really great for browsing legacy classes or just getting a visual feel for your own code.

3. Install [TestDriven.NET](#) to get [Reflector](#) in your Tools menu (or you could follow these [instructions](#)).

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answered Sep 3, 2008 at 18:14

[Anthony Mastrean](#)
22.4k ● 22 ● 115 ● 190

I have Resharper and SQL Prompt, both are excellent.

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answered Sep 3, 2008 at 15:17

[Simon Keep](#)
10k ● 10 ● 64 ● 79

You could try Resharper from JetBraing (http://www.jetbrains.com/resharper/), the ultimate when it comes to code refactoring. I also use GhostDoc (http://www.roland-weigelt.de/ghostdoc/) for helping me with documentation.

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answered Sep 3, 2008 at 15:20

[kjv](#)
11.3k ● 35 ● 102 ● 141

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I second the vote for Resharper. It really substantially improves the quality of your code. CodeRush is also good, and more visual, either one of them is worth the money (if you can convince your employer to buy them for you :)). You would probably not want to use both at the same time, though, since there is a lot of functional overlap.

There's a cool free add-in that Scott Hanselman links to called "rockscroll", that replaces the scroll bar with a visual view of your code, I find it really helpful.

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answered Sep 3, 2008 at 15:23

Guy Starbuck
21.8k ●7 ●54 ●64

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Personally I like having the ide pleasing to the eye. I think I found a link on Hanselman's blog but I switched to Consolas font slightly bigger than normal with a darker theme. Makes all the difference.

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answered Sep 3, 2008 at 15:45

Web
1,745 ●2 ●23 ●36

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Customize The Context Menu's

I personally customize the context menu's to remove the ones I don't want and minimize my scroll time. It can also

speed up the time taken for the menu's to appear.

To do this go to Tools/Customize and Check the "Context Menus" item. The menu's appear on the top of the main design area. To modify them select the context menu you want and drag and drop items around.

I usually remove items like "Get Version" in Team Foundation Server as I rarely if ever use it and I can use it from Team Explorer if I need to.

[Customize the Menu's http://tim.yen.googlepages.com/CustomizeMenus.png/CustomizeMenus-full;init:.png](http://tim.yen.googlepages.com/CustomizeMenus.png/CustomizeMenus-full;init:.png)

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answered Oct 5, 2008 at 9:05

community wiki
user18443

I can't coding without Resharper and GhostDoc, both are very good, i love that.

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answered Jul 5, 2010 at 3:17

imzrh
293 ● 3 ● 4