

Visualization and Modeling SDK Lab – Part 4 / 6

In the previous parts of this Lab we showed you how to create a DSL by using the DSL Tools wizard (part 1), then we modified it to create our own metamodel and graphical syntax for a finite-state machine (part 2). We then improved it (part 3), first by customizing the UI, then by adding coherence rules and validation of the model.

In this part we will generate the code that corresponds to our model. In part 5, we will learn how to use our DSL.

1.1 Code generation

Because we are in Visual Studio, our models are going to be used for things other than documentation or communication (already one factor in our favor). We will actually generate the code from our state-machine. And this code will be based on a framework. The following section shows us briefly the model/code connections, as well as the Framework.

1.1.1 Generating the code for state machines

In this section we will:

- Give two approaches for code generation of state machines.
- Explain the basic examples that we will use for teaching purposes.
- Create a T4 template to generate a "simplistic" state-machine code by using the *if-then-else* type approach..

1.1.1.1 Introduction to the code to be generated

1.1.1.1.1 Two approaches

There are two approaches to code generation:

- The first approach is to generate the code by imitating the structure of the state-machines. This is a ***switch / if-then-else*** type of approach.
- The second approach is to complete a **model transformation**: we leave the *state machines*, to which you apply a design *pattern* called "*Pattern State*" that consists of linking a class to each state. The methods of these classes are then associated with the transitions. Only afterwards do we generate the code that is associated with this static model.

1.1.1.1.2 Representation of the transitions

When you want to generate code from a finite-state automaton, it is important to understand that the **transitions** will be implemented by the **methods**. In a *state machine*, you first notice states. During implementation in a language, you must first focus on the transitions. All of the transitions that have the same event signature $E(parameters)$ will be implemented by the same method that has this signature. Implicit transitions, not having a name, will be implemented by a method that can be named `Implicit()`, for example.

It is equally important to understand that during a transition, actions are carried out according to the following sequencing (if these actions exist):

- Exit actions of the state at which the transition originates.
- Action in the transition.
- Entry action in the destination state of the transition.

The code should ensure that entry, exit, and internal actions are implemented. Otherwise the semantics of the state machines would not be respected, and it is there that difficulties start and the performance of the code that is supposed to implement state-machine will deteriorate.

1.1.1.1.3 Representation of the states

The states are implemented differently according to the code generation type:

- In the *switch / if-then-else* implementation (the most intuitive), the states are implemented in the form of a listed type whose listed values are the names of states. Particular attention must be given to the states (but that is beyond the scope of the Lab).
- In implementation that uses the *state pattern*, states are implemented in the form of classes that derive from a `BaseState` class that has (virtual) methods that correspond to all of the possible events.

What changes between the *switch / if-then-else* implementation and the *pattern state* application implementation is that in the first case, the signature transitions themselves will give rise to a single method of the class, while in the second case there will be virtual methods (different transition from initial states) for classes that represent the different states.

1.1.1.1.4 A few important points

There are a number of points during code generation corresponding to the final-state automaton:

- The actions on the transitions must be completed before you run the start actions in the destination state of the transition, so that the semantics are retained. In particular, if the actions on the transition result, whether directly or not,

in the firing of another transition from the state-machine, this transition must not be handled before the first one is completed. This is what we call **"the atomicity of the transitions"**.

- The **transitions** exiting from a state "trigger" **execution "outside of this state"**. This is a mechanism that has to be understood in order to know how to read an automaton and to implement it correctly. In particular, implicit transitions are those transitions that (if the **conditions** that are keeping them are checked and are true) are systematically borrowed from a state. This may go from state to state as there are **implicit transitions** (in this case, you have instead states where you "do not wait for an event to occur", that is, **activities** in the sense of the UML). This must be taken into account during implementation.
- Time plays a part in some transitions. These are called *after* (configured by duration), or *when* (configured by date). They are called **temporal transitions**. Their implementation requires particular care.
- Harel automata also have more complex concepts, such as **sub-states**, **historic states** and **deep histories**, **internal transitions**, **deferred transitions**, **synchronization** states (*Fork & Join*), etc. Joint implementation of all of these possibilities also merits particular attention.
- But all that would go far beyond the scope of this Lab, which is to familiarize ourselves with the DSL Tools!

1.1.1.2 Realistic goals

Now that we have outlined the problem, let's start by making a few basic assumptions. In fact, the important thing in this part of the Lab is to learn about the DSL Tools, and we must not let other complications distract us. This is why we are going to restrict ourselves to:

- An *if-then-else* kind of implementation.
- We will ignore for now automatic transitions (transitions that are not triggered by events).

1.1.1.3 Code generation by using the if-then-else approach.

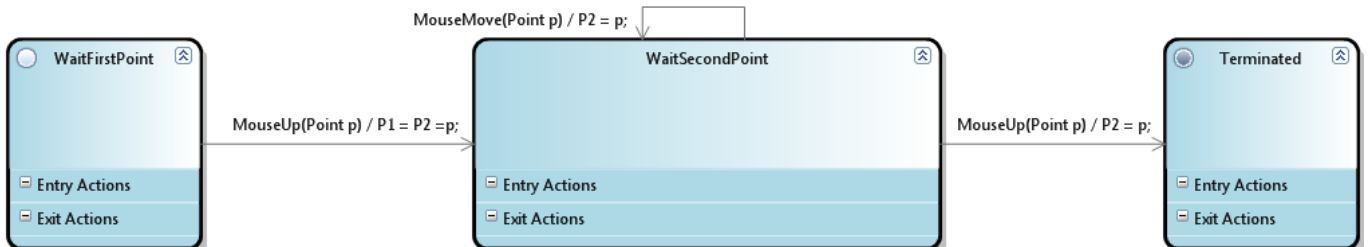
Later in this document, we are going to implement our state machines (relatively limited for now, because we are not considering for the moment that states may have sub-states) by using the **if-then-else** approach.

To fully understand code generation, let's look at a basic example.

Let's consider the interactive creation of a Line of the .NET Framework 3.5 in a WPF window.

The tool (named a LineCreator) creates a line. It has two properties to set the points of the line: P1 and P2, and is responding to Mouse events such as MouseUp(Point), PointDown(Point), MouseMove(Point).

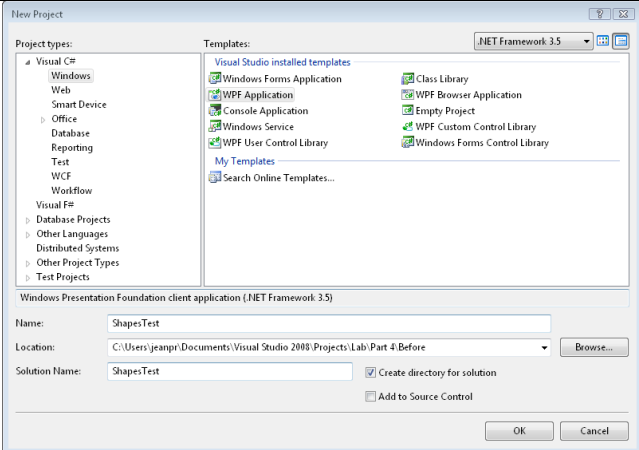
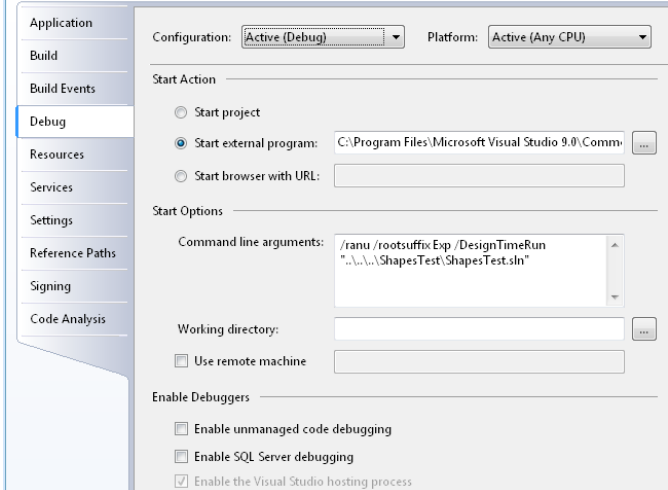
The state machine is the following:

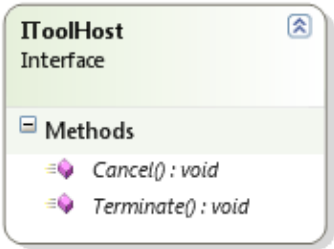


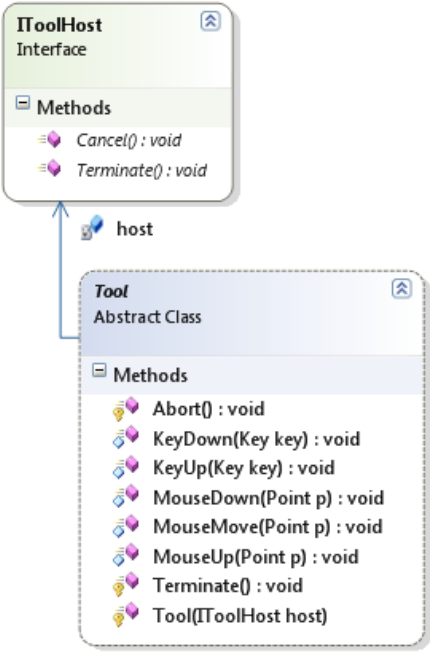
We are now going to create a test example.

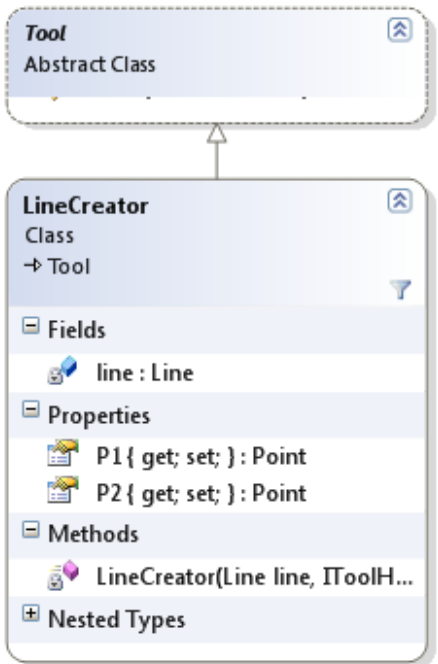
1.1.1.3.1 Creating a test solution.

1. Start the experimental instance of Visual Studio using the Start without Debugging command in the Debug menu from the LanguageSm solution).	<p>Notice that all the code and diagrams in this part are added in the experimental instance of Visual Studio – not the main instance, in which you edit your DSL definition.</p> <p>Your DSL definition can be used in the experimental instance, but not in the main instance – until you eventually install the DSL.</p> <p>You are going to generate code from a state chart that is an instance of the DSL.</p>
2. In the experimental instance of Visual Studio, use the menu command File/New/Project to create a new solution containing a new project of the type WPF Application . Name the solution and project ShapesTest .	In <i>experimental</i> instance of VS:
The new project is created, and a file named <code>MainWindow.xaml</code> is open.	

	
<p>3. Before we forget, in the main instance of Visual Studio, change the Debug settings of your <code>Dsl</code> project so that you run the <code>ShapeTest.sln</code> solution when you are debugging.</p>	<p>In main instance of VS:</p> 
<p>4. Now go back to the experimental instance of VS, where we will do most of the work in this part.</p> <p>5. In the <code>MainWindow</code> window, replace the <code>Grid</code> by a DockPanel that contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One stack panel that itself contains only one Button, "createLine", that will be used to start the creation of the line on the Click event on this button. - A Canvas named canvas. <p>6. Add event handlers to <code>MainWindow</code> on the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mouse left button down - Mouse left button up - Mouse Move - Key up - Key down <p>The XAML is presented in the right pane, along with the corresponding C# code behind.</p>	<p>MainWindow.xaml</p> <pre><Window x:Class="ShapeTest.MainWindow" xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml/presentation" xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml" Title="MainWindow" Height="300" Width="300" MouseLeftButtonDown="Canvas MouseLeftButtonDown" MouseLeftButtonUp="Canvas MouseLeftButtonUp" MouseMove="Canvas MouseMove" KeyUp="Canvas_KeyUp" KeyDown="Canvas_KeyDown"> <DockPanel> <StackPanel DockPanel.Dock="Left" Name="stackPanel1" Width="44"> <Button Name="createLine" Click="createLine Click">Line</Button> </StackPanel> <Canvas Name="canvas" /> </DockPanel> </Window></pre> <p>MainWindow.xaml.cs</p> <pre>using System; using System.Collections.Generic; using System.Linq; using System.Text; using System.Windows; using System.Windows.Controls; using System.Windows.Data; using System.Windows.Documents; using System.Windows.Input; using System.Windows.Media; using System.Windows.Media.Imaging; using System.Windows.Navigation; using System.Windows.Shapes; namespace ShapeTest { /// <summary> /// Interaction logic for MainWindow.xaml /// </summary> public partial class MainWindow : Window { public MainWindow()</pre>

	<pre> { InitializeComponent(); } private void createLine Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e) { } private void Canvas_MouseLeftButtonDown(object sender, MouseButtonEventArgs e) { } private void Canvas_MouseLeftButtonUp(object sender, MouseButtonEventArgs e) { } private void Canvas_MouseMove(object sender, MouseEventArgs e) { } private void Canvas_KeyUp(object sender, KeyEventArgs e) { } private void Canvas_KeyDown(object sender, KeyEventArgs e) { } } </pre>
<p>7. Add a new file of type Interface, which you will name IToolHost.cs, by using the shortcut menu command Add New Item in the project.</p> <p>Enter the following interface:</p> 	<pre> namespace ShapesTest { /// <summary> /// Interface to be implemented by objects wanting to host tools /// (Tools are for instance geometric shape creation tools) /// </summary> public interface IToolHost { void Cancel(); void Terminate(); } } </pre>
<p>8. Add a new file using the Class template named Tool.cs. This will be the base class for our LineCreator.</p> <p>The class Tool will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declare virtual methods that correspond to the keyboard and mouse events. - Implement a virtual <code>Terminate()</code> method that delegates to the host. - Implement an <code>Cancel()</code> method that delegates to the host. 	<pre> using System.Windows.Input; using System.Windows; namespace ShapesTest { /// <summary> /// Base class for tools /// </summary> /// <intent>Tools are for instance shape creators, or the selection, or ...</intent> public abstract class Tool { /// <summary> /// Host for the tool /// </summary> IToolHost host; /// <summary> /// Chaining constructor, to initialize the host /// </summary> /// <param name="host"></param> protected Tool(IToolHost host) { this.host = host; } /// <summary> /// Event triggered when the host sends a Mouse (Left) Button Down event /// </summary> protected internal virtual void MouseDown(Point p) { </pre>

 <pre> IToolHost Interface Methods Cancel() : void Terminate() : void Tool Abstract Class Methods Abort() : void KeyDown(Key key) : void KeyUp(Key key) : void MouseDown(Point p) : void MouseMove(Point p) : void MouseUp(Point p) : void Terminate() : void Tool(IToolHost host) </pre>	<pre> } /// <summary> /// Event triggered when the host sends a Mouse (Left) Button Up event /// </summary> protected internal virtual void MouseUp(Point p) { } /// <summary> /// Event triggered when the host sends a Mouse Move event /// </summary> protected internal virtual void MouseMove(Point p) { } /// <summary> /// Event triggered when the host sends a Key down event /// </summary> protected internal virtual void KeyDown(Key key) { } /// <summary> /// Event triggered when the host sends a Key up event /// </summary> protected internal virtual void KeyUp(Key key) { if (key == Key.Escape) Abort(); } /// <summary> /// Allows the tool to notify the host that it has terminated /// </summary> protected void Terminate() { host.Terminate(); } /// <summary> /// Allows the tool to notify the host that it asks for abortion /// </summary> protected void Abort() { host.Cancel(); } } </pre>
<p>Add a new file using the Class template, named LineCreator.cs. This will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inherit from Tool. - Have a constructor that takes a Line as argument and a IToolHost. - Set the Line in the constructor to the line member. - Have two properties, P1 and P2, that get and set the extremities of the line. - Be partial. <p>For the moment, it does not override the virtual methods of Tool. We'll do that in a few minutes.</p>	<pre> using System.Windows; using System.Windows.Shapes; namespace ShapesTest { /// <summary> /// Creator for a Line /// </summary> partial class LineCreator : Tool { /// <summary> /// Constructor /// </summary> /// <param name="line"></param> /// <param name="host"></param> public LineCreator(Line line, IToolHost host) : base(host) { this.line = line; } /// <summary> /// Line to be constructed interactively /// </summary> Line line; /// <summary> /// First point of the line </pre>

	<pre> /// </summary> public Point P1 { set { line.X1 = value.X; line.Y1 = value.Y; } get { return new Point(line.X1, line.Y1); } } /// <summary> /// Second point of the line. /// </summary> public Point P2 { set { line.X2 = value.X; line.Y2 = value.Y; } get { return new Point(line.X2, line.Y2); } } } </pre>
<p>9. Now let's connect the events to the LineCreator. Update MainWindow.xaml.cs with the code on the right.</p> <p>For this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MainWindow will implement the IToolHost interface. - MainWindow will have a private member, <code>currentTool</code>, of type <code>Tool</code>, and a member, <code>currentShape</code>, of type <code>Shape</code>. - When the button is clicked, this will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create a Line. b. Set <code>currentShape</code> to this line. c. Set its color to Red. d. Add it to the children of the canvas. e. Create a <code>LineCreator</code> that passes the line and the <code>Window1</code> itself. f. Set this <code>LineCreator</code> as the <code>currentTool</code>. - The implementation of the <code>Abort()</code> method only removes the <code>currentShape</code> from the Children of the Canvas and call <code>Terminate()</code>. - The implementation of the <code>Terminate()</code> method only sets the <code>currentShape</code> and <code>currentTool</code> to null. - The implementation of the Mouse or Keyboard event delegates to the <code>currentTool</code> if it is not null. <p>At that point, your application should compile, but if you click the "Line" and then click the canvas, nothing happens.</p>	<pre> using System.Windows; using System.Windows.Input; using System.Windows.Media; using System.Windows.Shapes; namespace ShapesTest { /// <summary> /// Interaction logic for Window1.xaml /// </summary> public partial class MainWindow : Window, IToolHost { public MainWindow() { InitializeComponent(); } Tool currentTool; Shape currentShape; private void createLine_Click(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e) { currentShape = new Line(); currentShape.Stroke = Brushes.Red; canvas.Children.Add(currentShape); currentTool = new LineCreator(currentShape as Line, this); } private void Canvas_MouseLeftButtonDown(object sender, MouseButtonEventArgs e) { if (currentTool != null) currentTool.MouseDown(e.GetPosition(canvas)); } private void Canvas_MouseLeftButtonUp(object sender, MouseButtonEventArgs e) { if (currentTool != null) currentTool.MouseUp(e.GetPosition(canvas)); } private void Canvas_MouseMove(object sender, MouseEventArgs e) { if (currentTool != null) </pre>

```

        currentTool.MouseMove(e.GetPosition(canvas));
    }

    private void Canvas_KeyUp(object sender, KeyEventArgs e)
    {
        if (currentTool != null)
            currentTool.KeyUp(e.Key);
    }

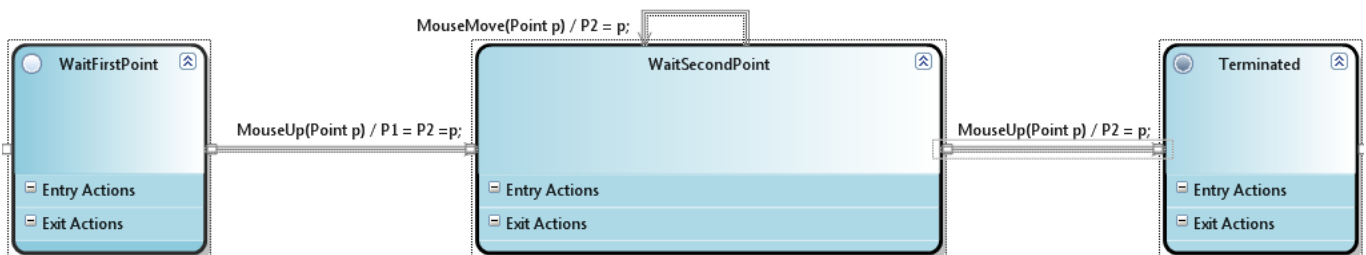
    private void Canvas_KeyDown(object sender, KeyEventArgs e)
    {
        if (currentTool != null)
            currentTool.KeyDown(e.Key);
    }

    #region IToolHost Members
    public void Cancel()
    {
        canvas.Children.Remove(currentShape);
        Terminate();
    }

    public void Terminate()
    {
        currentShape = null;
        currentTool = null;
    }
    #endregion
}

```

10. Now add an item, **LineCreator-Behavior.sm**, using the **LanguageSm** file template, and enter the following model:



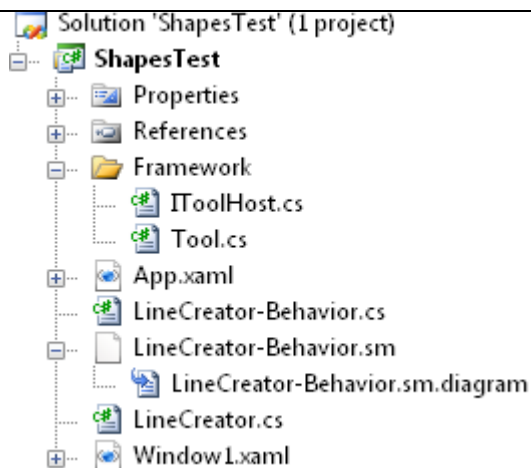
11. Now add a **LineCreator.cs** C# file in which we'll write the simplified implementation of the behavior for our LineCreator.

The code is given on the following page (with comments on what the code does). However, try to implement it yourself before you look at the proposed implementation.

The whole purpose of this fourth part of the Lab will be to generate a **LineCreator.cs** file that will have this content, generated from the **LineCreator-Behavior.sm** model and through the use of a T4 Template.

Our approach will be:

1. Create a specific example that works.
2. Pick out the parts of the example that we want to vary, depending on the DSL.
3. Convert the example to a text template, replacing the variable parts with expressions that read the state chart model.



LineCreator.cs

```

using System.Windows;

namespace ShapesTest
{
    /// <summary>
    /// Creator for a Line
    /// </summary>
    partial class LineCreator
    {
        // States of the tool
        enum States
        {
            WaitFirstPoint,
            WaitSecondPoint,
        }

        /// <summary>current state</summary>
        States state = States.WaitFirstPoint;

        protected internal override void MouseUp(Point p)
        {
            switch (state)
            {
                case States.WaitFirstPoint:
                    P1 = P2 = p;
                    state = States.WaitSecondPoint;
                    break;

                case States.WaitSecondPoint:
                    P2 = p;
                    Terminate();
                    break;
            }
        }

        protected internal override void MouseMove(Point p)
        {
            switch (state)
            {
                case States.WaitSecondPoint:
                    P2 = p;
                    break;
            }
        }
    }
}

```

Comment about what the StateMachine does (not currently in the model)

Class implementing the state machine (not currently in the model)

The different states of the state machine (except the final one).

The variable containing the current state is initialized with the name of the Initial State

Next state

SpecialCase for the final state

Implementation of 1 transition initiated by the MouseMove(Point p) event

Highlighted in green is the information that is present in the model. Highlighted in yellow is some information that is not yet in the model, but is variable – so it would be good to have it in the model.

12. Compile your project, run and test it. – Click the Line button, then click two points on the canvas.

It now creates a line! © Congratulations! You know nothing about T4, but you have created the Test!!!!

13. In Solution Explorer, change the filename of LineCreator.cs to LineCreator.tt – that is, change the file name extension to .tt

Notice that in the Properties window, the Custom Tool property of this file automatically changes to **TextTemplatingFileGenerator**.

14. At the start of the LineCreator.tt file, insert the following lines (which we have already seen in the first part of this Lab):

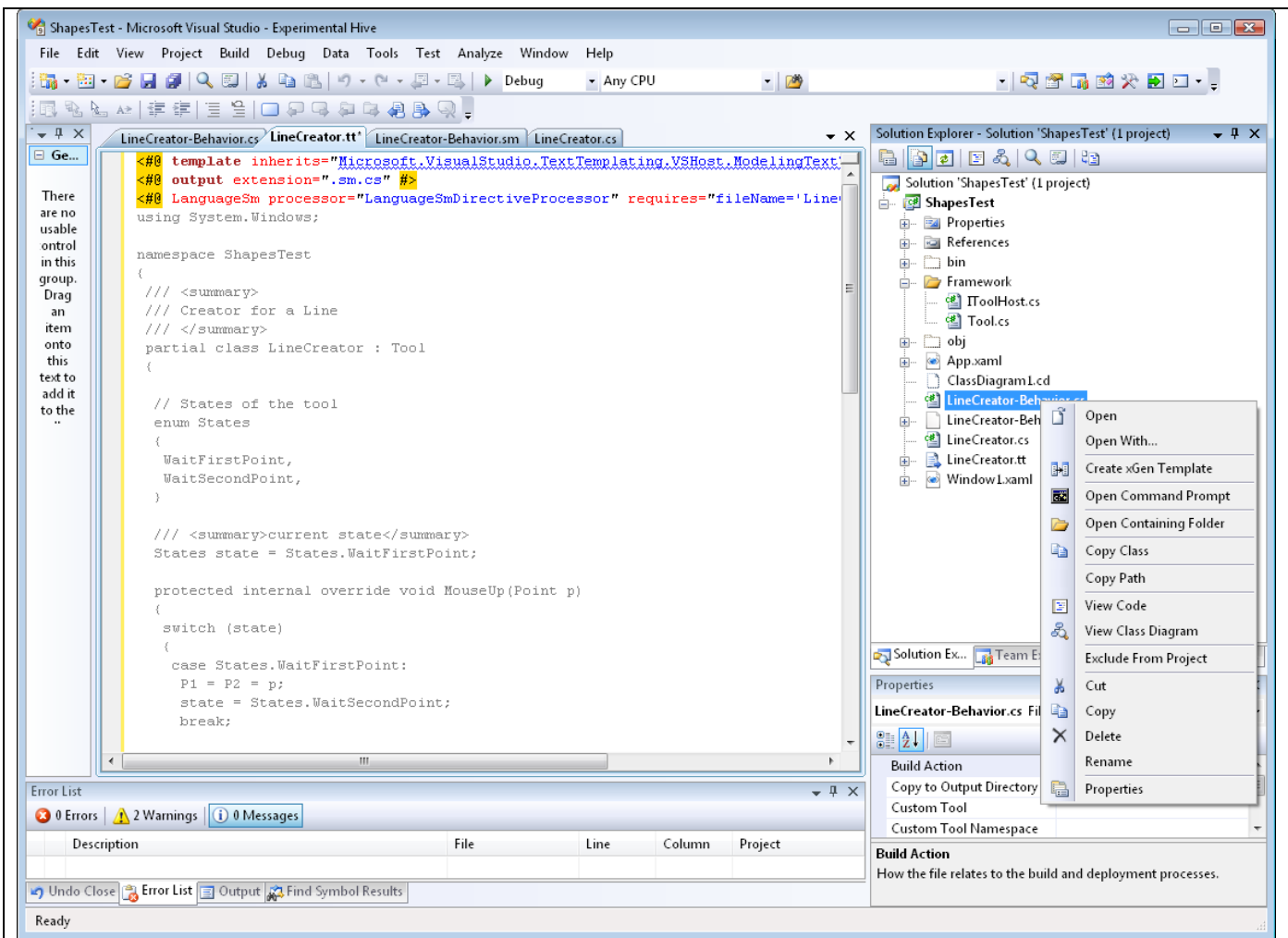
```

<#@ template inherits="Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.VSHost.ModelingTextTransformation" #>
<#@ output extension=".sm.cs" #>
<#@ LanguageSm processor="LanguageSmDirectiveProcessor" requires="fileName='LineCreator-Behavior.sm'" #>

```

15. Save LineCreator.tt; the LineCreator.sm.cs file is automatically generated. Its content is the same as the old LineCreator.cs but it is, for the time being, hard-coded. The challenge is now going to be to derive it from the model!

16. Exclude the LineCreator.cs file from the project by using the shortcut menu command **Exclude From Context** (see the image below). This file is no longer necessary, but we will keep it as a test file.



17. Recompile and test. Notice that we get the same result as earlier. The C# in the project is still the same, but the LineCreator class, in LineCreator.sm.cs, is now generated from a text template.

1.1.1.3.2 Let's create our code generator!

Now that we have a test that works, we are going to create a code generator that supplies us with the code of LineCreator.cs from LineCreator-Behavior.sm. To do this:

- We have analyzed the LineCreator.cs code in order to understand which parts of it we want to be variable – that is, which parts should be derived from the model, such as the state names and the transitions.
- One variable aspect that is not yet in our model is the name of the state machine. We will therefore modify the metamodel to add to the StateMachine concept those properties that will be required for the code generator.
- We will add the values of these properties to our present model.
- We will modify the T4 template to generate the LineCreator.sm.cs code.
- And then we will test it!

What is missing in the model?

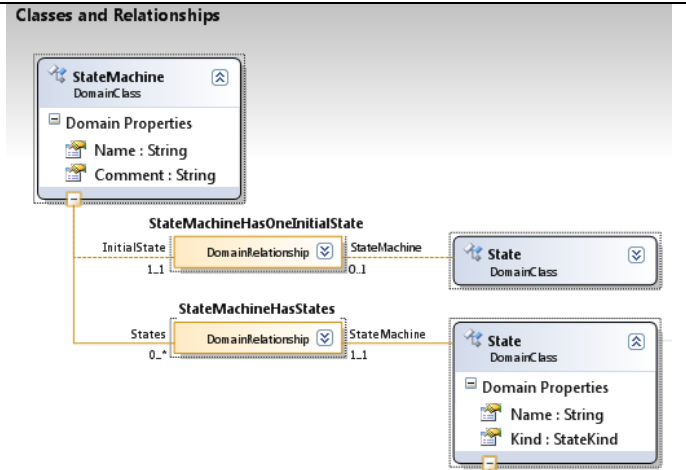
As we saw, we can generate the behavior part, provided we add to the model:

- In yellow, the name of the StateMachine (the class implementing the state machine).
- The comment.

We will add them.

1.1.2 Enhancing our metamodel

1. Close the **experimental** instance of Visual Studio, so that you can update the DSL definition.
2. Open the DslDefinition.dsl file in your **main** Visual Studio instance.
3. Add the following properties in `StateMachine`:
 - **Name** (of the `string` type with a blank default value).
 - **Comment** (of the `string` type with a blank default value).
4. Transform all the templates.
5. Build and **Start without Debugging**, to open the Visual Studio experimental instance again.



6. In the experimental instance, open `LineCreator-Behavior.sm`

Although we have modified the metamodel, the model we created previously is still readable.

7. In the model, set the following values to the `StateMachine` properties. To see these properties, you can either click a blank part of the diagram or click the root element in the State Machine Explorer:
 - `Name = LineCreator`
 - `Comment = Creator for a line`
8. Save the model.

Notice that this process of making the model and then parameterizing a template is a bottom-up approach that is nice in the sense that you control, at each step, what you do, and you start from some concrete solution and abstract it.

1.1.3 Modifying the T4 template

1.1.3.1 Configuring the T4 with the StateMachine properties

We are now still in the `ShapeTest.sln` solution. The text template `LineCreator.tt` is still directly derived from the prototype code. We will proceed by **progressively modifying our T4 template** until `LineCreator.tt` is fully generic, so that the code it generates depends on `LineCreator-Behavior.sm`. In fact, if we do not change the model `Line-Creator-Behavior.sm`, the generated code will remain unchanged – it's just that progressively more of its parts will be derived from the model instead of being fixed. Then, when we change the model, the code will change automatically.

<p>9. If you are using the Clarius T4 editor, in the references of the <code>ShapeTest</code> projects, add a reference to the Dsl assembly for your language.</p> <p>(In the Add Reference dialog box, use the Browse tab, and find the <code>bin\Debug\CompanyName.LanguageSm.Dsl.dll</code> from the Dsl project.)</p> <p>That is not required by the T4 itself, but rather by the Clarius T4 editor, in order to have IntelliSense in the template's control code, which will be very useful.</p>	
<p>10. In the <code>LineCreator.tt</code> T4 file, replace the name of the class from <code>LineCreator</code> by using: <code><# StateMachine.Name #></code>, and the comment by using: <code><# StateMachine.Comment #></code>.</p> <p>Notice how the IntelliSense helps you, if you are using the T4 editor.</p> <p>We have taken the first step towards making our code more generic. However, we have not yet dealt with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The state listed values. - The methods that correspond to the names of the transitions. <p>11. Save the T4 template. The <code>.sm.cs</code> code is generated. Compile and run to check that everything is correct up to this point.</p>	<pre><#@ template inherits="Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.VSHost.ModelingTextTransformation" #> <#@ output extension=".sm.cs" #> <#@ LanguageSm processor="LanguageSmDirectiveProcessor" requires="fileName='LineCreator-Behavior.sm'" #> using System.Windows; namespace ShapeTest { /// <summary> /// <# StateMachine.Comment #> /// </summary> partial class <# StateMachine.Name #> : Tool { // States of the tool enum States { WaitFirstPoint, WaitSecondPoint, ... } } }</pre>

1.1.3.2 Generating the state listed values.

1.1.3.2.1 First try

To generate the listed values that correspond to the states, we must iterate on the collection of states (`States` collection) of the `StateMachine`. This does not pose any particular difficulty.

The first approach is to open the C# code that is to be iterated, and display each line with 3 spaces followed by the name of the state.

<p>12. Replace the lines in the enum <code>States</code> block by control code iterating through the states, and displaying the value of each state name as we learned up to now.</p>	<pre>// States of the tool enum States { <# foreach(State state in StateMachine.States) { <# state.Name #>, } }</pre>
---	--

	<pre><# } #> }</pre>
--	----------------------------

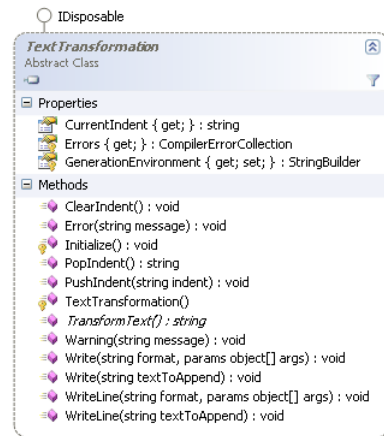
As you can see, this frequent switching between control and text mode is rather difficult to read and would be difficult to maintain.

1.1.3.2.2 Improving the readability of the template

This is why we suggest instead that you use the members of a `TextTransformation` basic class from our T4 transformation. You see, when you write a T4 template, you are actually writing a class that derives (indirectly) from `Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextModeling.TextTransformation` and modifies the `TransformText()` method so that its return string is built from the content of our `.tt` file. This is the magic of T4!

Some of the more interesting members are:

- `PushIndent()`, and `PopIndent()`, indispensable when you are generating code. (You can even set the number of indentation spaces.)
- `Write()` and `WriteLine()`, to avoid having to exit from the "C# code" mode with a `#>`, to re-enter it just as neatly with a `<#`, as shown above on the line that follows `foreach`.



For this reason, we suggest you write the code as follows:

13. Replace the lines in the enum States block by control code only using the <code>WriteLine</code> method of the template.	<pre>// States of the tool enum States { <# PushIndent(" "); foreach (State state in StateMachine.States) WriteLine("{0}, ", state.Name); PopIndent(); #> }</pre>
--	--

Notice that we have to be very careful to distinguish the code being generated from `<#` the code that is generating `#>` !

1.1.3.2.3 Improving the generated code

Now, you might find that what it generates is not nice, because there is one comma at the end of the last enumeration constant, and an extra line:

14. Look at the code that is produced by the template for the enum.	<pre>// States of the tool enum States { WaitFirstPoint, WaitSecondPoint, Terminated, }</pre>
---	---

In that case, we might want to improve the code generation by first creating a list of literals (`List<string>`), and then generating them with the correct separators (a comma and a newline).

But to do that, we will use a generic `List` of type `string`. If we were writing C#, we would add one instruction at the top of the file:

```
using System.Collections.Generic
```

To do the same thing in T4, you have to use the import directive, by adding this line after the current directives:

```
<#@ Import Namespace="System.Collections.Generic" #>
```

15. After all the directives at the beginning of the template, add the Import directive for System.Collections.Generic

```
<#@ template
inherits="Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.VSHost.ModelingTextTransformation" #>
#@ output extension=".sm.cs" #>
#@ LanguageSm processor="LanguageSmDirectiveProcessor"
requires="fileName='LineCreator-Behavior.sm'" #>
#@ Import Namespace="System.Collections.Generic" #>
```

Then, we can replace the code that generates the enumeration using the proposed scheme using the (`List<string>`) .

16. Replace the code generating the enumeration using the proposed scheme. literal This lets us not generate a literal for the final state, which is not required.

```
// States of the tool
enum States
{
    <#
    // Build the list of literals
    List<string> literals = new List<string>();
    foreach (State state in StateMachine.States)
    if (state.Kind != StateKind.Final)
        literals.Add(state.Name);

    // Generate it
    PushIndent(" ");
    Write(string.Join(",\r\n", literals.ToArray()));
    PopIndent();
    #>
}
```

The result is now perfect. But our template is no longer very pure.

1.1.3.2.4 Improving both the readability of the template and the generated code.

To improve the readability and maintainability of our template, we will create the template method `GenerateStateLiterals()` at the end of the template in a section, and we will call it in the body of the `States` enumeration. To do that, our method should be between `<##` and `#>`, which specifies that it is a class feature control block.

The template now resembles the following. (Notice that we also initialized the `state` variable to the initial state's name, which does not present any difficulty.)

17. Extract the code that generates the enumeration literals into a template method.

18. Generate the initialization of the state variable.

```
// States of the tool
enum States
{
    <# GenerateStateLiterals(); #>
}

/// <summary>current state</summary>
States state = States.<## StateMachine.InitialState.Name #>;
```

With all these changes, the template **LineCreator.tt** becomes:

```
<#@ template inherits="Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.VSHost.ModelingTextTransformation" #>
#@ output extension=".sm.cs" #>
#@ LanguageSm processor="LanguageSmDirectiveProcessor"
requires="fileName='LineCreator-Behavior.sm'" #>
#@ Import Namespace="System.Collections.Generic" #>
using System.Windows;

namespace ShapesTest
{
    /// <summary>
    /// <## StateMachine.Comment #>
    /// </summary>
    partial class <## StateMachine.Name #> : Tool
    {
        // States of the tool
        enum States
        {
            <# GenerateStateLiterals(); #>
        }

        /// <summary>current state</summary>
        States state = States.<## StateMachine.InitialState.Name #>;

        protected internal override void MouseUp(Point p)
```

```

{
    switch (state)
    {
        case States.WaitFirstPoint:
            P1 = P2 = p;
            state = States.WaitSecondPoint;
            break;

        case States.WaitSecondPoint:
            P2 = p;
            Terminate();
            break;
    }
}

protected internal override void MouseMove(Point p)
{
    switch (state)
    {
        case States.WaitSecondPoint:
            P2 = p;
            break;
    }
}
}
}

<#+
void GenerateStateLiterals()
{
    // Build the list of literals
    List<string> literals = new List<string>();
    foreach (State state in StateMachine.States)
        if (state.Kind != StateKind.Final)
            literals.Add(state.Name);

    // Generate it
    PushIndent("    ");
    Write(string.Join(",\r\n", literals.ToArray()));
    PopIndent();
}
#>

```

A reminder about modes in text templates:

- The text of your template is translated into an intermediate class, which has a Generate() method. To generate the resulting file, the T4 framework calls Generate()
- Ordinary text in your template is translated into a series of write statements in your Generate() method.
- <#...#> statements are inserted into the Generate() method
- <#= expr #> expressions are translated to write(expr)
- <#+ method definitions #> are added to the intermediate class outside the Generate() method.

For more information, see [Code Generation and Text Templates](#).

1.1.3.3 Generating the methods corresponding to the transitions

We will now generate the code that corresponds to the transitions. For this, we have to get:

- All the transitions, grouped by the name of their Triggering events (because we know that all the transitions that have the same event name will produce just one method).
- Then, for an enumeration of Transitions, group them by “previous state”. (Each of the “previous state” will produce a different case in the switch statement as a function of the current state.)

Because this is a query in the model, it is definitively a job for Linq! But this means we have to add a reference to Linq.

For this reason:

<p>19. Add a <#@ Assembly Name="System.Core.dll" #> directive to allow your template code to use Linq.</p> <p>20. Add a <#@ Import Namespace="System.Linq" #> directive to use Linq.</p> <p>21. Reference System.Core in the project to get the IntelliSense in the template (if you use the T4</p>	<p>The beginning of the template should now be:</p> <pre> <#@ template inherits="Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.VSHost.ModelingTextTransformation" #> <#@ output extension=".cs" #> <#@ LanguageSm processor="LanguageSmDirectiveProcessor" requires="fileName='LineTool.sm'" #> <#@ Assembly Name="System.Core.dll" #> <#@ Import Namespace="System.Collections.Generic" #> <#@ Import Namespace="System.Linq" #> </pre>
---	--

editor).	
<p>22. Write new template methods by using Linq. Put them at the end of the template, following the GenerateStateLiterals(). You will write:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GetAllTransitions() returning IEnumerable<Transition> - GetAllTransitionsByName() returning IEnumerable<IGrouping<string, Transition>> - GetTransitionsGroupedByPredecessor() method that takes an IEnumerable<Transition> as an argument and returns a IEnumerable<IGrouping<State, Transition>>. The transitions will be ordered by condition in the descending order (so that an empty condition ends up at the end of the enumeration, which will be useful for code generation). 	<p>at the end of the template, we have new template methods:</p> <pre> <#+ void GenerateStateLiterals() { // Build the list of literals List<string> literals = new List<string>(); foreach (State state in StateMachine.States) literals.Add(state.Name); // Generate it PushIndent(" "); Write(string.Join(",\r\n", literals.ToArray())); PopIndent(); } /// <summary>Get all the transitions in the state machine</summary> IEnumerable<Transition> GetAllTransitions() { foreach (State s in StateMachine.States) foreach (Transition t in Transition.GetLinksToSuccessors(s)) yield return t; } /// <summary> /// Get all the transitions grouped by name /// </summary> IEnumerable<IGrouping<string, Transition>> GetAllTransitionsByName() { return from Transition t in GetAllTransitions() group t by t.Event; } /// <summary> /// For each transition name, get the states initiating a transition /// of this name, and the transitions of this name initied from this /// states. /// </summary> /// <returns></returns> IEnumerable<IGrouping<State, Transition>> GetTransitionsGroupedByPredecessor(IEnumerable<Transition> transitions) { return from Transition t in transitions orderby t.Condition descending group t by t.Predecessor; } #> </pre>
<p>23. Use the template methods you just created to generate the transition implementations. To do this, iterate on the result of GetAllTransitionsByName, and produce the prototype of the method from the key of the grouping. Provide some nice structuring by delegating the implementation of the body of the switch statement to a GenerateCases template method to which you pass the enumeration of methods of the given Event.</p>	<pre> /// <summary>current state</summary> States state = States.<#> StateMachine.InitialState.Name #>; <#> foreach (IGrouping<string, Transition> transitionsForName in GetAllTransitionsByName()) { #> /// <summary>Transition</summary> protected internal override void <#>transitionsForName.Key#> { switch(state) { <#> GenerateCases(transitionsForName); #> } } #> // foreach #> } </pre>

<p>24. Implement the <code>GenerateCases</code> method by iterating through the transitions, grouped by predecessor state. Each predecessor state will be generated by a case statement from the state name. Delegate the implementation of the Body of the case to a <code>GenerateCaseBody</code> method to which you pass as an argument the transitions (of a given name), having this state as a predecessor.</p> <p>The text template formatting is highlighted in green to remind you that this is a template method. What you really do is add this method to the existing block.</p>	<pre> <#+ /// <summary> /// Generates the body of the switch statement of the methods /// implementing the Transitions /// </summary> void GenerateCases(IEnumerable<Transition> transitions) { foreach (IGrouping<State, Transition> transitionsFromState in GetTransitionsGroupedByPredecessor(transitions)) { #> case States.<#= transitionsFromState.Key.Name #>: <#+ GenerateCaseBody(transitionsFromState); #> break; } } #> </pre>
<p>25. Implement the <code>GenerateCaseBody</code> method by iterating through the transitions (which you know are sorted by Condition).</p> <p>This method is not complex but because it tries to create compileable code it will produce if statements for the conditions, blocks when necessary, write the exit actions of the predecessor, write the action on the transition, if any, write the state change if the successor is not a final state (and write <code>Terminate()</code>; otherwise), write the entry actions of the successor.</p>	<pre> /// <summary> /// Generate the body of the Case /// </summary> /// <param name="transitions"></param> void GenerateCaseBody(IEnumerable<Transition> transitions) { PushIndent(" "); // Did we already meet a condition? bool already = false; // Iterate thru all the transitions (which, we know, have the same // name, and are ordered by Condition in the descending order: // the empty condition should be last foreach(Transition t in transitions) { // If we already met a condition, then, we should add a else // before a if statement if (already) Write("else "); // Empty conditions just produce the else. Non empty produce an // if statement if (!string.IsNullOrEmpty(t.Condition)) { WriteLine("if (" + t.Condition + ")"); already = true; } else if (already) WriteLine(""); // Beginning of block if (already) { WriteLine("{"); PushIndent(" "); } // Exit actions of the predecessor state foreach (CompanyName.LanguageSm.Action previous in t.Predecessor.ExitActions) WriteLine(previous.Code); // Action on the transition if (!string.IsNullOrEmpty(t.Action)) WriteLine(t.Action); // Transition state (or Terminate() for final state) if (t.Successor.Kind == StateKind.Final) WriteLine("Terminate()"); else if (t.Predecessor != t.Successor) WriteLine("state = States." + t.Successor.Name + ""); // Entry actions of the successor state } } </pre>


```

foreach (CompanyName.LanguageSm.Action next
        in t.Successor.EntryActions)
    WriteLine(next.Code);

// Close the block
if (already)
{
    PopIndent();
    WriteLine("}");
}

}
PopIndent();
}

```

The final template resembles this:

```

<#@ template inherits="Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.VSHost.ModelingTextTransformation" #>
<#@ output extension=".sm.cs" #>
<#@ LanguageSm processor="LanguageSmDirectiveProcessor" requires="fileName='LineCreator-Behavior.sm'" #>
<#@ Assembly Name="System.Core.dll" #>
<#@ Import Namespace="System.Collections.Generic" #>
<#@ Import Namespace="System.Linq" #>
using System.Windows;
using System.Windows.Input;

namespace ShapesTest
{
    /// <summary>
    /// <#= StateMachine.Comment #>
    /// </summary>
    partial class <#= StateMachine.Name #> : Tool
    {
        // States of the tool
        enum States
        {
            <# GenerateStateLiterals(); #>
        }

        /// <summary>current state</summary>
        States state = States.<#= StateMachine.InitialState.Name #>;

        <#
        foreach (IGrouping<string, Transition> transitionsForName in GetAllTransitionsByName())
        {
            #>
            /// <summary>Transition</summary>
            protected internal override void <#-transitionsForName.Key#>
            {
                switch(state)
                {
                    <# GenerateCases(transitionsForName); #>
                }
            }
            <#
        } // foreach
        #>
    }

    <#+
    void GenerateStateLiterals()
    {
        // Build the list of literals
        List<string> literals = new List<string>();
        foreach (State state in StateMachine.States)
            if (state.Kind != StateKind.Final)
                literals.Add(state.Name);

        // Generate it
        PushIndent("    ");
        Write(string.Join(",\r\n", literals.ToArray()));
        PopIndent();
    }
    <#-
    </#>
}

```

```

}

/// <summary>Get all the transitions in the state machine</summary>
IEnumerable<Transition> GetAllTransitions()
{
    foreach (State s in StateMachine.States)
        foreach (Transition t in Transition.GetLinksToSuccessors(s))
            yield return t;
}

/// <summary>
/// Get all the transitions grouped by name
/// </summary>
IEnumerable<IGrouping<string, Transition>> GetAllTransitionsByName()
{
    return from Transition t in GetAllTransitions() group t by t.Event;
}

/// <summary>
/// For each transition name, get the states initiating a transition of this name, and the transitions
/// of this name initied from this states.
/// </summary>
/// <returns></returns>
IEnumerable<IGrouping<State, Transition>> GetTransitionsGroupedByPredecessor(IEnumerable<Transition>
transitions)
{
    return from Transition t in transitions orderby t.Condition descending group t by t.Predecessor;
}

/// <summary>
/// Generates the body of the switch statement of the methods implementing the Transitions
/// </summary>
/// <param name="transitionsByPredecessorState"></param>
void GenerateCases(IEnumerable<Transition> transitions)
{
    foreach (IGrouping<State, Transition> transitionsFromState in
GetTransitionsGroupedByPredecessor(transitions))
    {
        #>
        case States.<#- transitionsFromState.Key.Name #>:
        <#+
            GenerateCaseBody(transitionsFromState);
        #>
        break;
        <#+
    }
}

/// <summary>
/// Generate the body of the Case
/// </summary>
/// <param name="transitions"></param>
void GenerateCaseBody(IEnumerable<Transition> transitions)
{
    PushIndent("    ");

    // Did we already meet a condition?
    bool already = false;

    // Iterate thru all the transitions (which, we know, have the same name, and are ordered by
    // Condition in the descending order: the empty condition should be last
    foreach(Transition t in transitions)
    {
        // If we already met a condition, then, we should add a else before a if statement
        if (already)
            Write("else ");

        // Empty conditions just produce the else. Non empty produce an if statement
        if (!string.IsNullOrEmpty(t.Condition))
        {
            WriteLine("if (" + t.Condition + ")");
            already = true;
        }
        else if (already)
            WriteLine("");

        // Beginning of block
        if (already)
        {
            WriteLine("{");

```

```

    PushIndent(" ");
}

// Exit actions of the predecessor state
foreach (CompanyName.LanguageSm.Action previous in t.Predecessor.ExitActions)
    WriteLine(previous.Code);

// Action on the transition
if (!string.IsNullOrEmpty(t.Action))
    WriteLine(t.Action);

// Transition state (or Terminate() for final state)
if (t.Successor.Kind == StateKind.Final)
    WriteLine("Terminate();");
else if (t.Predecessor != t.Successor)
    WriteLine("state = States." + t.Successor.Name+";");

// Entry actions of the successor state
foreach (CompanyName.LanguageSm.Action next in t.Successor.EntryActions)
    WriteLine(next.Code);

// Close the block
if (already)
{
    PopIndent();
    WriteLine("}");
}

}
PopIndent();
}
}
#>

```

26. Save your T4 template. When you save a text template, the code is generated.

27. Run the executable. Everything should be working perfectly well. Congratulations! You learned how to create a T4 template.

Testing more

Let's see if our generator works on more than a sample: we will try to modify slightly the model to enable creation of a line through its center and a point when the user presses the "c" key

28. Add a Center property to LineCreator.cs, as well as a SymetricTo(Point) method, to the LineCreator.cs file (the handcoded partial of LineGenerator, not the generated one).

```

/// <summary>
/// Center for the line
/// </summary>
public Point Center {set;get;}

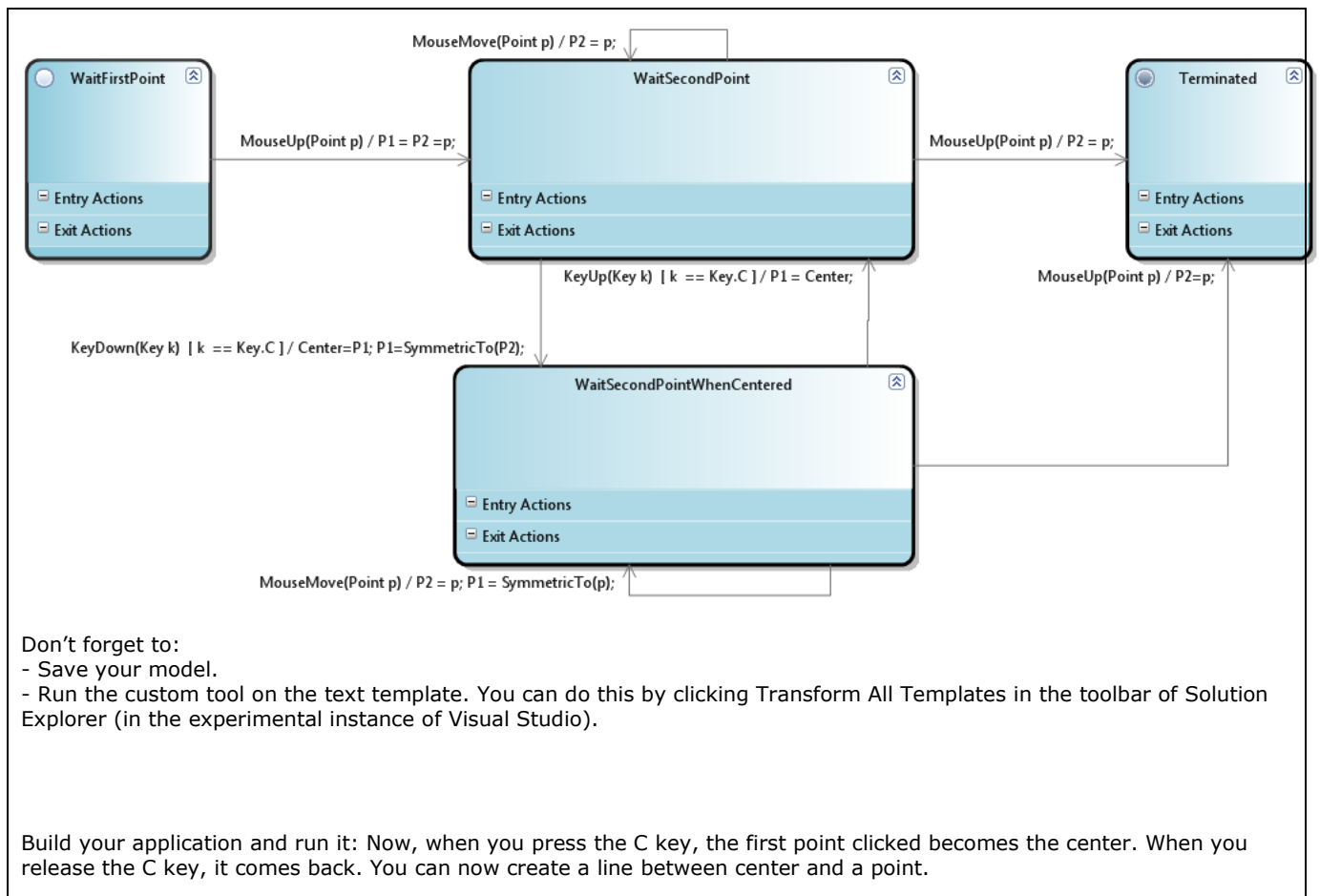
/// <summary>
/// Compute the symmetric point of a given point /// with respect
to the centre
/// </summary>
/// <param name="p"></param>
/// <returns></returns>
public Point SymmetricTo(Point p)
{
    Vector v = p - Center;
    return Center - v;
}

```

29. Modify LineCreator-Behavior.sm to:

- Set the Center to P1 and P1 to the symmetric point of P2 with respect to the Center when the user presses the "c" key.
- Set P1 to the Center when the user releases the "c" key.
- And to set P1 as the Symmetric of P2 when the user moves the mouse whereas the "c" key is pressed.

The model can be like this:



Warning about Reliability

We began with an example and created a .tt file based on that example, which is then regenerated. And the transformation of our .sm model into source code is correct, in this example at least.

We have to consider, however, how to deal with all of the cases. Particularly:

- Which entry actions in the initial state should be generated (if any).
- Whether to deal with the automatic transitions:
 - o The name of the method should be AutomaticTransition() and not blank.
 - o When you have entered in a state for which there are outgoing automatic transitions (without event names), a call should be made to AutomaticTransition() after the transition implementation.
- In addition, it would be necessary to check that the state machine properties are fully satisfied (for instance, that the StateMachine Name is not blank, using the validation methods) and it would not be necessary to generate the source file if the model were not fully valid.

We leave all this as an exercise.

Summary

Our template lets us generate pretty good state machines without being perfectly generic, but the goal here was to learn the following rather than getting a perfect generator for state machines:

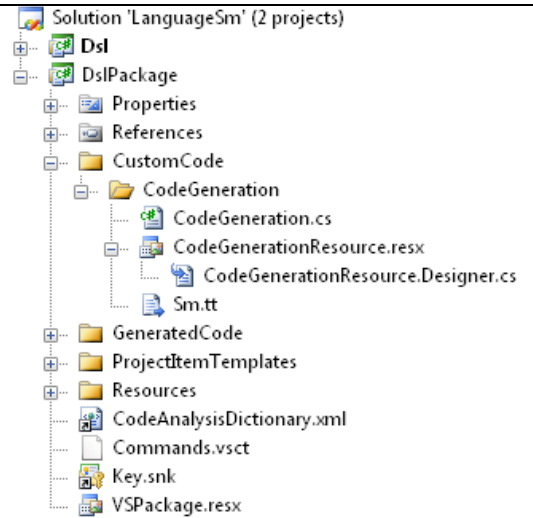
- T4
- Best practices in structuring templates
- The process of getting from boilerplate code to a template

1.1.4 Converting our T4 template to a Custom Tool for .sm files

We have now created a DSL that lets us enter the models that can be generated by a T4 template. However, we want to be able to provide our users with an improved user experience: create a new .sm type file (they can already), and have a **Custom Tool** automatically added to the properties of this file in the project and have it generate the state machine code once it is validated (just like what happens with .resx resource files, settings, etc.).

So we are now going to convert our T4 template into a custom tool.

30. First, close the experimental instance of Visual Studio, and return to the DSL definition in the main instance.
31. In the **DslPackage** project of the **LanguageSm** solution, create a **CustomCode** directory, and a **CodeGeneration** sub-directory.
32. Right-click in this new directory and request **Add -> Existing Item**. A dialog box opens. Navigate to the **ShapesTest** directory; in the file filters, ask to view all the files (*.*), and select our (**LineCreator.tt**) T4 template. This way we can be sure to have it in our sources! A copy of **LineCreator.tt** appears in the project.
33. Rename the copy **Sm.t4**. The new file extension means that the build system will not attempt to apply text transformation to it.
34. In the **Sm.t4** file properties in the properties window,
 - o Set the **BuildAction** to **Embedded Resource**.
 - o Make sure that the **CustomTool** property is **blank** (for a .tt file, it is automatically set to **TextTemplatingFileGenerator**)
35. Create a **CodeGenerationResource.resx** file in the **CodeGeneration** directory.
36. Open this resources file and drag **Sm.t4** from **Solution Explorer** into the resources file.



37. In the **CustomCode\CodeGeneration** directory of the **DslPackage** project, add a **CodeGenerator.cs** file.

38. Shorten the namespace and add a partial implementation of the **LanguageSmPackage** class.

```
using Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.VSHost;

namespace CompanyName.LanguageSm
{
    public class CodeGenerator : TemplatedCodeGenerator
    {
    }
}
```

39. Have our **CodeGenerator** class inherit the **TemplatedCodeGenerator** class that is located in the namespace **Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.VSHost**.

40. On the **Tools** menu of Visual Studio, click on the **Create GUID** command. Choose the no. 4 format (**registry format**), and **paste** it in a **System.Runtime.InteropServices.Guid** attribute that precedes the definition of the **CodeGenerator** class, being sure to remove the {braces} from the copied character string.

41. Alter the **GenerateCode** method.

```
[System.Runtime.InteropServices.Guid("9799A402-F0A3-48ee-B103-2223E74553A4")]
class CodeGenerator : TemplatedCodeGenerator
{
    protected override byte[] GenerateCode(string inputFileName, string inputContent)
    {
    }
}
```

42. The content of the **GenerateCode** method will:
 - Take the content of the T4 template file that we provided in the resource file.
 - Replace the file name (**LineCreator-Behavior.sm**) by using the file path to which the template applies.
 - Assign the basic class **TemplatedCodeGenerator** to ensure the template transformation.
 - Return the code that is generated (after some unavoidable code manipulation).

So the complete code is as follows:

CodeGenerator.cs

```
using System;
using System.IO;
using Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.VSHost;
using CompanyName.LanguageSm.CustomCode.CodeGeneration; //for CodeGenerationResource

namespace CompanyName.LanguageSm
{
    [global::System.Runtime.InteropServices.Guid("9799A402-F0A3-48ee-B103-2223E74553A4")]
    public class CodeGenerator : TemplatedCodeGenerator
    {
    }
}
```

```
protected override byte[] GenerateCode(string inputFileName, string inputFileContent)
{
    // Replace the supplied file contents with the template we want to run
    inputFileContent = ASCIIEncoding.UTF8.GetString(CodeGenerationResource.Sm);

    // Substitute the name of the current model file into the template.
    FileInfo fi = new FileInfo(inputFileName);
    inputFileContent = inputFileContent.Replace("LineCreate-Behavior.sm", fi.Name);
    inputFileContent = inputFileContent.Replace("namespace ShapesTest",
                                                "namespace " + FileNamespace);

    // Now just delegate the rest of the work to the base class
    byte[] data;
    data = base.GenerateCode(inputFileName, inputFileContent);
    byte[] ascii = new byte[data.Length - 3];
    Array.Copy(data, 3, ascii, 0, data.Length - 3);
    return ascii;
}
}
```

43. In the DslPackage project, add a new file named "CodeGenerator.pkgdef", and ensure the following properties:
- Set **Build Action** to **Content**,
 - Set **Copy to Output directory** to **Copy if newer**
 - Set **Include in VSIX** to **true**

The content of the file should be the following. Notice that you must change CLSID guid to the GUID that you generated:

```
[$RootKey\Generators]
[$RootKey\Generators\{FAE04EC1-301F-11d3-BF4B-00C04F79EFBC}]
[$RootKey\Generators\{FAE04EC1-301F-11d3-BF4B-00C04F79EFBC}\SmFileCodeGenerator]
@="Custom tool that generates C# files for state machines described in .sm files"
"CLSID"="{9799A402-F0A3-48ee-B103-2223E74553A4}"
"GeneratesDesignTimeSource"="dword:00000001
[$RootKey\CLSID]
[$RootKey\CLSID\{9799A402-F0A3-48ee-B103-2223E74553A4}]
@=" Custom tool that generates C# files for state machines described in .sm files "
"Class"=" CompanyName.LanguageSm.CodeGenerator"
"InprocServer32"="$WinDir$\SYSTEM32\MSCOREE.DLL"
"ThreadingModel"="Both"
"CodeBase"="$PackageFolder$\ CompanyName.LanguageSm.DslPackage.dll"
[$RootKey\Generators\{FAE04EC1-301F-11d3-BF4B-00C04F79EFBC}\.sm]
@=" SmFileCodeGenerator "
```

This content declares that:

- In C# projects (FAE04EC1-301F-11d3-BF4B-00C04F79EFBC) there is a custom tool named SmFileCodeGenerator
- This custom tool has a GUID 9799A402-F0A3-48ee-B103-2223E74553A4 and a help string "Custom tool that generates C# files for state machines described in .sm files"
- It will be called each time a .sm file is saved.
- It is associated with a class named CompanyName.LanguageSm.CodeGenerator
 - o Which is a .Net class
 - o Located in the DslPackage assembly
- This custom tool named "SmFileCodeGenerator", will be added automatically in the "Custom Tool" property of the .sm file in the solution explorer, each time we add a new .sm file in a Visual Studio C# projects.

⇒ Note that the project will have 2 pkgdef files (the one generated by the registration attributes of the DSL tools, and this new one. This is fine: they are merged for the pkgdef file that will be used in the VSIX file

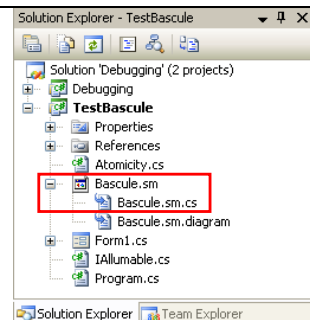
44. Add a Reference to DslPackage:
Microsoft.VisualStudio.TextTemplating.Interfaces.10.0
45. Run your DSL with **Debug -> Run without debugging**.

46. In Solution Explorer in the test version of Visual Studio, select the LineCreator-Behavior.sm file, and, in the properties window, set the **Custom Tool** property to SmFileCodeGenerator.

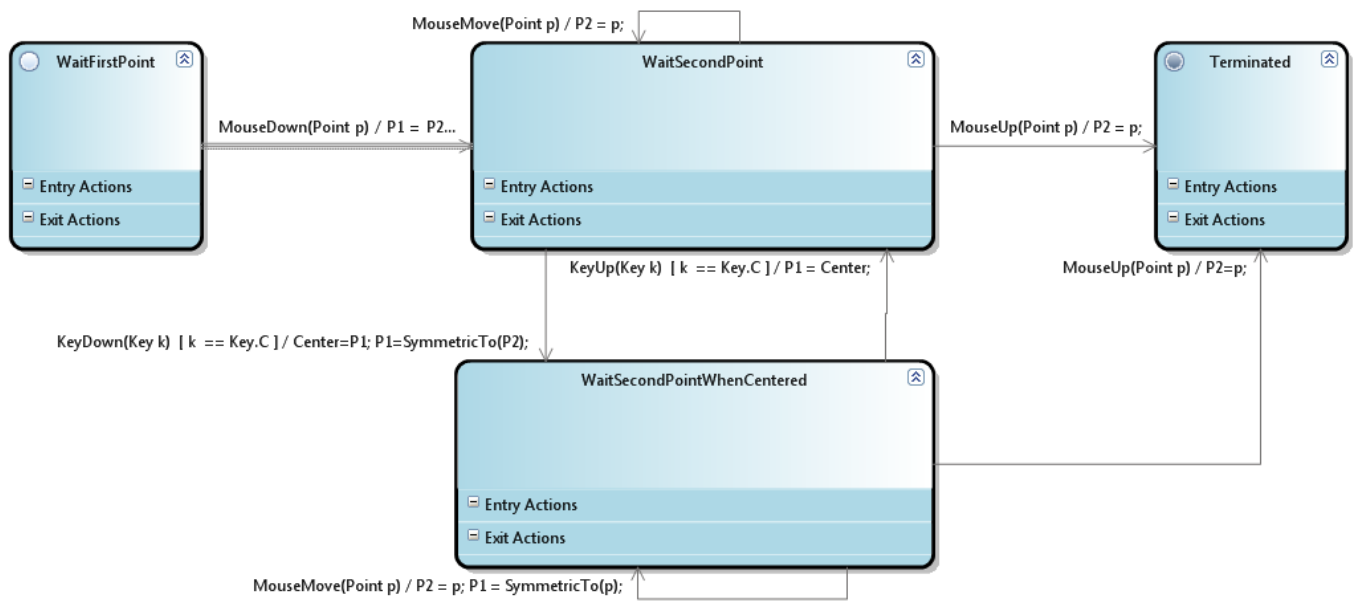
The code that is associated with LineCreator-Behavior.sm is generated in LineCreator-Behavior.sm.cs.

Remove (or exclude from project) the LineCreator.tt template. We do not need it any longer.

47. Test your program. It still works!



48. Now, change the behavior to create a line by using Click-Drag-Release, rather than Click-Click. (Change the event on the first transition from `MouseUp(Point p)` to `MouseDown(Point p)`.)



49. Save your model, compile, and run. It works. You do not have to transform templates any longer.

A little trick

Making the T4 template a `Designer` project resource is a good thing if you want to deliver a turn-key solution. On the other hand, in the development phase it is a disadvantage because the template modifications require you to recompile the DSL and re-run it.

To be more responsive and to be able to modify the T4 template in the debugging project, I use the following trick: I create an `EXPERIMENT` constant for conditional compilation. When `EXPERIMENT` is defined, we read the template from the file, and not from the resource.

```
// Replace the supplied file contents with the template we want to run
#if EXPERIMENT
    string inputFile = @"C:\complete path to the project\DslPackage\CustomCode\Code Generator\Sm.t4";

    // e.g. load the template from a resource file
    StreamReader r = new StreamReader(inputFile, System.Text.ASCIIEncoding.UTF8);
    inputFileContent = r.ReadToEnd();
    r.Close();
#else
    inputFileContent = ASCIIEncoding.UTF8.GetString(CodeGenerationResource.Sm);
#endif
```

So, in our test or debugging project, just add an existing item that has a link: **Add Existing Item**, select the T4 file (to do this, ask to view all the files), then click the combo box next to the **Add** button and choose **Add as Link**. Now you have a copy of the T4 template in your project, and you can modify it and immediately see the effect of the modification on the code that is generated in your solution.

When you are happy with your modifications, delete the definition of the `EXPERIMENT` constant. Don't forget to do this before you deliver your DSL (because the resource file will not be available for your clients).

1.1.5 Code generation conclusion.

We have learned to write a T4 code generator, and also to do this by using a CustomTool. We still have a little work to do to improve the user experience:

- Assign default values and validation to the StateMachine properties.
- Improve the model validation.

At this point, you have everything you need to do it.

However, you still need to learn how to **deploy your DSL**. This will be the subject of the next section.