

Visual Studio "Could not copy" ... during build

Asked 6 years, 1 month ago Active 2 months ago Viewed 272k times



I keep getting this error during the build of my VS2012 C# project

317



Error 41 Could not copy "obj\Debug\WeinGartner.WeinCad.exe" to "bin\Debug\WeinGartner.WeinCad.exe".
Exceeded retry count of 10. **Failed**.



54

Error 42 Unable to copy file "obj\Debug\WeinGartner.WeinCad.exe" to "bin\Debug\WeinGartner.WeinCad.exe". **The** process cannot access the file 'bin\Debug\WeinGartner.WeinCad.exe' because it **is** being used **by** another process.

Now I've figured out that killing the process

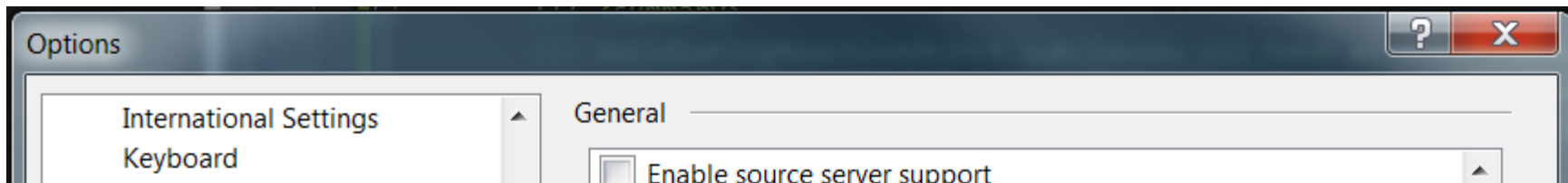
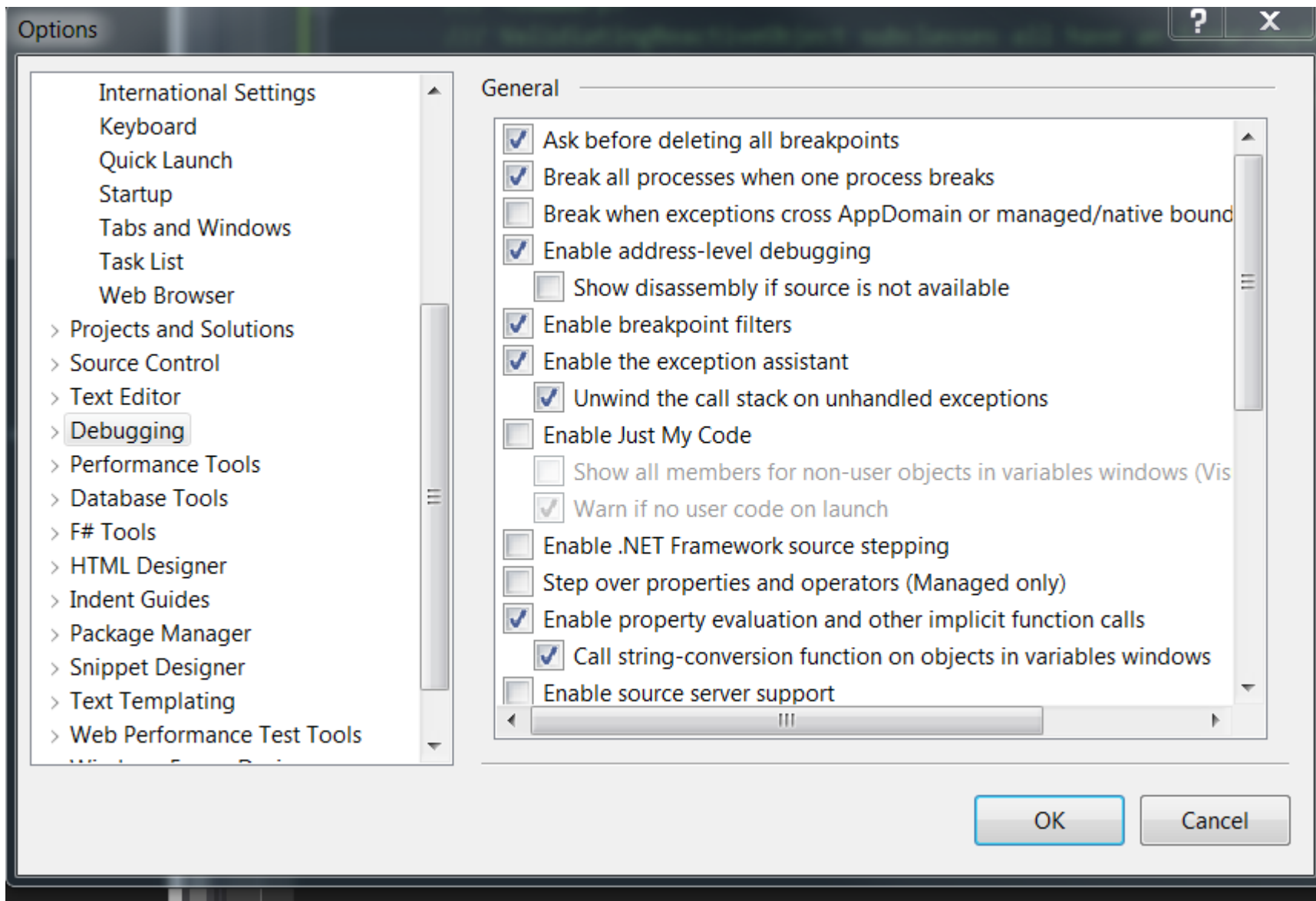
Weingartner.WeinCad.vhost.exe

works (sometimes) but this is getting on my nerves. Any way to stop this happening at all?

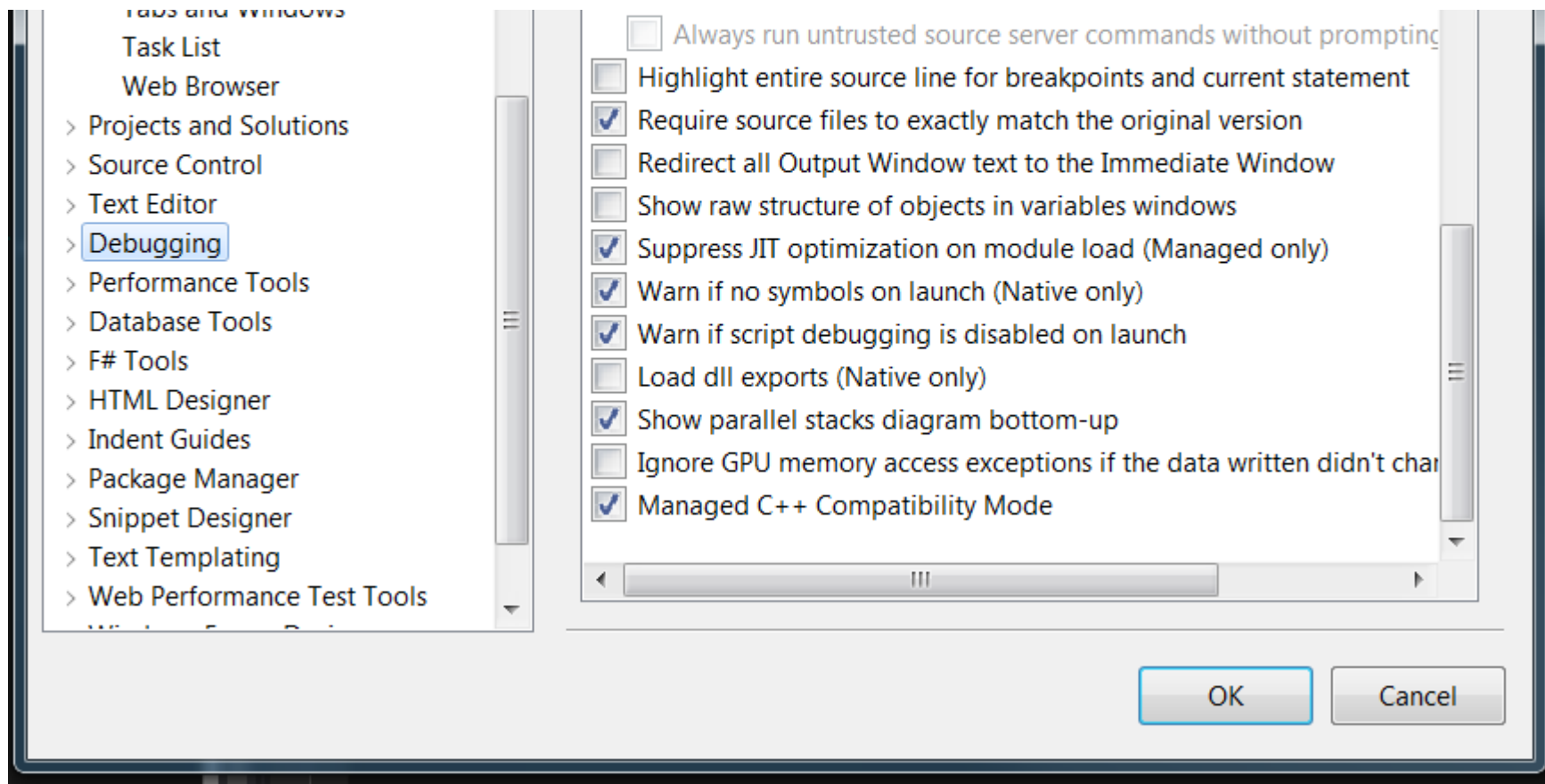
My debugger settings are

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c#

visual-studio-2012

build

process

edited Jul 1 '17 at 19:17



Ogglas

19.1k

11

119

157

asked Aug 7 '13 at 12:01



bradgonesurfing

17.4k

10

88

159

For me it was caused by manually launched .exe in the Release directory. The problem was that VS cannot copy over an executable that is still running. I'll try to fix it with properly cleaning up resources so the program does not leave hanging after window close button. – lahjaton_j Jan 8 '16 at 8:24

There is a good summary of this problem with typical steps to resolve in [this question](#) – LightCC Oct 6 '17 at 17:57

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1 2 next



I have encountered similar error messages in Visual Studio 2013.

347

Mostly, I have found that this situation has occurred when a debug process was halted because of an exception.



When clean+build has not resolved this problem for me, I have had success by doing the following:



- Closing Visual Studio
- Deleting the `bin` and `obj` folders, and
- Reopening Visual Studio.

This "bug" has existed since Visual Studio 2003.

Finally, I have also found that I can often overcome this problem by simply renaming the executable file and then deleting it.

edited Feb 22 '18 at 13:12



DavidRR

10.3k

11

67

142

answered Oct 31 '13 at 15:04



Gerard

7,541

11

57

106

8 Same here, VS2013. Quitting, deleting build artefacts, restarting -> all good. – [cacau](#) Feb 18 '14 at 9:13

47 i have the same issue, but after restarting VS i get one build, and the files get locked again.. – [Sonic Soul](#) Mar 23 '14 at 19:36

51 This is not a solution, at the best a partial solution. I dont wanna restart VS every 10min. Cleaning the solution works for me, but cleaning it every 10min is also not a solution. – [Legends](#) Apr 15 '15 at 19:39

7 From my experience, VS2013 does this at least 10 times a day for me no matter what machine I am developing on. It's like the bug has gotten worse. Just sayin' – [A.R.](#) May 7 '15 at 21:16

5 bug still exist in VS 2019. – [Akash KC](#) May 14 at 14:41



In Visual Studio Premium 2013 (Update 3), I solved this with a pre-build one-liner:

105

```
(if exist "$(TargetDir)*old.pdb" del "$(TargetDir)*old.pdb") & (if exist
```

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This gracefully deletes any old PDB files (if it can), then renames anything that's left with a `.old.pdb` extension. A nice side effect is that if the old PDB is still locked, it just adds another `.old` piece to the filename, and they all get cleaned up next time you restart Visual Studio and do a build.

For example, build/debug session 1 leaves `MyProject.pdb` locked.

The next time you build:

```
MyProject.pdb --> MyProject.old.pdb
```

Then, build/debug session 2 is started, and *both* `MyProject.pdb` and `MyProject.old.pdb` are still locked:

```
MyProject.old.pdb --> MyProject.old.old.pdb
```

```
MyProject.pdb --> MyProject.old.pdb
```

Finally, restarting Visual Studio and doing a fresh build will get rid of both of these, and continue the process as usual.

answered Aug 11 '14 at 20:22



Geoff

7,410 1 31 43

5 The same in VS2010, VS 2012 – [Boogier](#) Jan 16 '15 at 6:26

7 Thank you, worked perfectly for me with modifying your example to using exe files instead. I think this might be a bug in the latest VS 2015 CTP as well. – [Johny Skovdal](#) Feb 22 '15 at 20:55

Glad it helped - I still have my pre-build command set up, and it works well enough that I'd forgotten it was there! – [Geoff](#) Feb 22 '15 at 21:08

3 I hate having to do this on principal, but it works, so there's that! :) Thanks for sharing this pearl, Geoff! – [kayleeFrye_onDeck](#) Mar 20 '15 at 18:27

1 Latest (2018-03-11) Visual Studio 2017 v15.6.1: still an issue. Debugging, exception, assemblies in the target directory locked. The above solution with `*.pdb` changed to `*.dll` still applies. – [Michiel de Wolde](#) Mar 11 '18 at 9:30



It's because you have closed your application, but it's still running in background.

59



Temporary solution:

- Go to Task Manager (`Ctrl` + `Alt` + `Esc`).
- Go to Processes tab and find "YourProjectName.exe".

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Permanent solution: you have to close your application through coding. Here is the code...

```
System.Windows.Forms.Application.Exit();
```

You have to put this code in to the form's closing event in all form. Example:

```
private void frm_menu_FormClosing(object sender, FormClosingEventArgs e)
{
    System.Windows.Forms.Application.Exit();
}
```

edited May 24 '18 at 16:02



Tobi Obeck

490 4 18

answered Oct 22 '14 at 11:17



Rushi Daxini

671 6 5

This was exactly it. Visual Studio had crashed and IIS Express was still running (in my case). All I had to do was open the task bar and right-click the IIS Express icon and exit. Thank you. – [the-nick-wilson](#) Jul 25 '17 at 3:16

This worked for me; I couldn't delete the obj and bin folders as another process was using them. Thankfully Windows 10 actually said what the name of it was; once it was closed in Task Manager the problems went away – [Novastorm](#) Mar 23 '18 at 14:47

25 ▲ the .vhost.exe is a debugger process, so it appears that the process being debugged hasn't closed properly. Chances are you have a bug that's keeping it alive and are not stopping the debug process correctly - there are options to detach from the process when you click 'stop debugging' instead of actually killing the debugger so maybe you have that set.

▼ But that's the problem - the file you're trying to copy over is locked (ie still being used) by the OS so its preventing the copy. Ensure that file is free and you'll be able to copy.

answered Aug 7 '13 at 12:07



gbjaanb

46.4k 10 91 139

I've added my debugger options to the questions. I'm pretty sure it should be killing the process but maybe I don't understand some options. – [bradgonesurfing](#) Aug 7 '13 at 12:17

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I have solved it by killing IISExpress in task manager

21



answered Jan 15 '14 at 18:50



pat capozzi

1,074 1 16 15



You should disable your antivirus (especailly if it is an Avast) and try again. It helped me. The problem is that the debugger/builder creates the .exe file that is identified as a threat by Avast and therefor deleted right before it could be executed by VS.

20



answered Jun 17 '14 at 14:38



Pitrs

201 2 2

Good catch. I forever hate Avast. – [stackunderflow](#) Aug 14 '14 at 23:49

Avast was the problem for me too. Disabling the File System Shield was the answer. I tried adding my Visual Studio\Projects folder to the Exclusions but that didn't work. – [KeithB](#) Dec 9 '14 at 13:03

I have the same problem with Symantec Endpoint protection. Someone in the IT department has ratcheted up the security level pretty high :-). Thanks Pitrs. – [ssimm](#) Aug 24 '16 at 14:56

I will add, that you can create exception for the obj\Debug directory for convinient use, instead of disabling the AV or one of it's protective tools. – [A. Kali](#) Feb 15 '17 at 11:07

Thanks! I found that it was an MalwareBytes blocking my .exe file. – [NL3294](#) Mar 15 '17 at 23:22



I was able to fix this issue (VS 2010) through supplying following pre build action;

15



```
if exist "$(TargetPath).locked" del "$(TargetPath).locked"
```

```
if exist "$(TargetPath)" if not exist "$(TargetPath).locked" move "$(TargetPath)" "$(TargetPath).locked"
```

answered Jul 24 '15 at 14:01



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this works for vs2010 express as well – [arvind](#) Aug 22 '15 at 7:59

This worked for me in VS 2015 – [Christopher Townsend](#) Apr 21 '17 at 9:35

where should i add your snippet ? thanks – [luckyluke](#) Sep 16 '17 at 6:46

- 1 @luckyluke, In your project properties, there is section where you can add pre-Build script. Copy and past the above script in that designated area and rebuild the project / run your application – [Nair](#) Sep 21 '17 at 11:26

Quote:

12 A workaround is to put this in the Pre-build event command line property of the >project (In the build Events tab):

Code Snippet

```
if exist "$(TargetPath).locked" del "$(TargetPath).locked"

if exist "$(TargetPath)" if not exist "$(TargetPath).locked" move "$(TargetPath)"
 "$(TargetPath).locked"
```

edited Dec 8 '16 at 17:14



[usefulBee](#)

5,510 5 39 62

answered May 3 '16 at 9:11



[Zheng Qiang](#)

169 1 4

It seems that by change the assembly name of a project fixes the problem.

6 So instead of this

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Application*

Configuration: N/A Platform: N/A

Assembly name: Increment and Recall Root namespace: Increment_Recall

Target framework: .NET Framework 4.5.2 Application type: Windows Forms Application

Startup form: Form1 Icon: (Default Icon)

Assembly Information... View Windows Settings

☒ Enable application framework

Windows application framework properties

I change it to this

Application

Configuration: N/A Platform: N/A

Compile

Debug

References

Resources

Services

Settings

Signing

My Extensions

Security

Publish

Code Analysis

Assembly name: Increment_Recall

Root namespace: Increment_Recall

Target framework: .NET Framework 4.5.2

Application type: Windows Forms Application

Startup form: Form1

Icon: (Default Icon)

Assembly Information... View Windows Settings

☒ Enable application framework

Windows application framework properties

☒ Enable XP visual styles

☐ Make single instance application

☒ Save My.Settings on Shutdown

Authentication mode: Windows

Notice that I just changed it from Increment and Recall to Increment_Recall , I just removed the spaces. **It is now working fine to me.**

answered Oct 19 '15 at 5:06



Cary Bondoc

1,921 2 28 46

Great its solved my problem.Thanks !! – [Kiran Joshi](#) Jul 17 at 10:01

▲ Killing the process w3wp.exe (IIS) will often solve this.

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edited Oct 20 '15 at 17:10



Wahbivic

134 1 2 13

answered Aug 3 '15 at 12:38



Ogglas

19.1k 11 119 157

Exception

6 In some cases in Visual Studio when you (Build || Rebuild) on top of **running** IISExpress you faced with this Exception:

Unable to copy file "obj\Debug\YourProjectName.dll" to bin\YourProjectName.dll". the **process cannot access** the file 'bin\YourProjectName.dll' **because it is being used by another process**

Solution

1. Right click on web project that needs to build.
2. Click on properties.
3. Select Build Events Tab on the left side.
4. In Pre-build events command line paste these 2 line:

```
tasklist /fi "imagename eq iisexpress.exe" |find ":" > nul  
if errorlevel 1 taskkill /f /im "iisexpress.exe"
```

You are good 2 GO!

edited Apr 9 '16 at 17:47

answered Apr 9 '16 at 15:25



iTachi

165 1 14

I faced the same problem on VS 2012 Version 11.0.60610.01 Update 3 on Windows 8

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The simplest workaround that works and takes the least amount of time is to remove the project from the solution, build another project in the solution and then add the original back.

It's an irritant and waste of time but it's the least expensive of all the other options that I know of.

Hope this helps...

answered Sep 26 '13 at 0:02



Ashwin J

41 1

All you have to do is Rebuild All and everything's fine for another 10 tries. Not much of an inconvenience. – [Scott Shaw-Smith](#) Jun 24 '15 at 15:36

@Scott Shaw-Smith Doesn't work for me. And based on some of the other comments I've seen, it doesn't work for others either. In my case uninstalling Avast fixed it. – [user316117](#) Aug 5 '15 at 15:02



I think I solved it removing the check mark to `Break all processes when one process breaks` in Debug options (op's first screenshot->second option).

4

It's been building/running well for a while since I unchecked it.



I'm using MySql NET Connector and DevExpress controls in my project. May be one of them was not disposing connections, bindings, etc. well because of this flag being activated.

EDITED: definitely it works! No more 'Unable to copy file' and no more Form designer errors.

edited Jun 23 '15 at 16:28

answered Jun 23 '15 at 15:31



Ivan Ferrer Villa

1,762 1 21 18

1 None of the other solutions worked for me. This is the only one. I'm using Visual Studio 2017 13.2 – [xleon](#) May 16 '17 at 16:26



Add in pre-build event of your master project `taskkill /f /fi "pid gt 0" /im "YourProcess.vshost.exe"`

1

answered Nov 12 '15 at 16:17

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Do not really like to solve the problem this way, but this worked! – [Petter T](#) Jan 11 '16 at 11:35

I've found this the simplest working solution for the problem. – [dscharge](#) Jun 15 '16 at 11:22

Follow the below steps

4

1. Open Task Manager (Ctrl + Alt + Delete)
2. Under **Performance** tab select select <ProjectNameOfYours.exe>.
3. Click on End Process.
4. Now Build solution.

Above steps resolved error permanently :)

answered Jan 30 '18 at 3:50



[Akshay Bagi](#)

106 7

3

My 10 cents contribution.

I still have this problem occasionally on VS 2015 Update 2.

I found that switching compilation target solves the problem.

Try this: if you are in DEBUG switch to RELEASE and build, then back to DEBUG. The problem is gone.

Stefano

answered Mar 1 '16 at 7:04



[Stefano.net](#)

738 1 7 25

Yeah! That's it. This is a simple solution to this annoying problem! Totally worked for me. Easy and quick! Thanks alot. – [Meister Schnitzel](#) Jan 24 '17 at 6:35

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2



I cannot give a solution to prevent this from happening but you can at least RENAME the locked file (windows explorer, or classic command window) and then compile/build. No need to reboot or restart VS201x. With some experience you can add a pre-build script to delete old files or rename then out-of-the-way in case there's a lock.

answered Apr 10 '14 at 15:34



hopperpl

126 1 6



2



See [this other answer](#). Basically, you could have MSBuild.exe processes running in the background consuming resource files. If you have any pre or post build tasks that cause an MSBuild to be kicked off via command line, try adding the "/nr:false" flag to this command. But again, see the previous answer for more specific details.

edited May 23 '17 at 12:18



Community ♦

1 1

answered May 20 '14 at 19:59



Josh Pavoncello

21 1

Snap, i have the same problem in VS2015 update 2 - MSBuild.exe process needs to be killed in TaskManager before I can re-build. – [Nick Wright](#) Jun 2 '16 at 9:09

The article link in Josh's answer above suggests using a system environment variable to disable node reuse within Visual Studio and the MSBuild process (MSBUILDDISABLENODEREUSE=1) - this worked for me. – [Nick Wright](#) Jun 2 '16 at 9:30



2



@Geoff's (<https://stackoverflow.com/a/25251766/3739540>) answer is good, but it throws error code 1 on recompile.

Here is what worked for me (2>nul 1>nul on the end + exit 0):

```
(if exist "$(TargetDir)*old.pdb" del "$(TargetDir)*old.pdb") & (if exist
"$(TargetDir)*.pdb" ren "$(TargetDir)*.pdb" *.old.pdb) 2>nul 1>nul
(if exist "$(TargetDir)*old.dll" del "$(TargetDir)*old.dll") & (if exist
"$(TargetDir)*.dll" ren "$(TargetDir)*.dll" *.old.dll) 2>nul 1>nul
exit 0
```

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If you are **debugging T4 templates**, then this happens all the time. My solution (before MS fixes this) would be just to kill this process:

2

Task Manager --> User --> T4VSHostProcess.exe

This process only comes up when you debug a T4 template, not when you run one.

answered Feb 19 '16 at 9:52



Pompair

3,560 9 53 63

2

1. Open project properties [menu > project > properties]
2. Choose "debug" tab
3. Uncheck "Enable the visual studio hosting process"
4. Start debugging [F5]
5. You will receive security warning , just "ok". Lets application running
6. Stop debugging.
7. Check option "Enable the visual studio hosting process" , under debug tab,
8. Now , try to start debugging , you will not see error again

[Work for me]

answered May 7 '16 at 23:10

community wiki
Novpiar Effendi

Why was this at -2? It has worked for me as well. It makes zero sense but hey, if it works, it works. – Wakka02 Dec 2 '16 at 8:03

Yes.. this worked for me in vs2010!! – Abdul Rehman Sayed Feb 15 '17 at 10:12

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vs17 does not have the hosting process option – [John Demetriou](#) Mar 9 '18 at 12:02



If none of the answers works, try this simple check. Find for any MSbuild.exe running and holding your project EXE. Kill MSBuild.exe and you should be good to go.

2



answered Apr 23 '18 at 13:01



[Gentleman](#)

73 7



I finally how fix it. Why we can't continue debug after the first debug because the first debug exe still running. So that, after first debug, you need to go to Task Manager -> Process Tab -> [your project name exe] end the exe process.

1



it works for me :)

answered Jun 6 '14 at 9:55



[chevfhghfghfgh](#)

119 1 6



This question was the first result when looking for the following error:

1

Could not copy the file "... " because it was not found.



when building in Visual Studio 2013 (Update 3).

Solution: Uninstalling the "Productivity Power Tools" in Visual Studio 2013.

<https://connect.microsoft.com/VisualStudio/feedback/details/533411>

answered Aug 7 '14 at 13:50



[despuestambien](#)

797 6 26

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find this power tools application. Where would this hide? – [Taersious](#) Jun 17 at 15:58



1



In my case it was Resharper Unit Tests runner(plus NUnit tests, never had such problem with MsTests). After killing the process, was able to rebuild process, without restarting OS or VS2013

answered Jan 15 '15 at 14:16

[Uriil](#)

7,928 6 31 53

Yep, look for `JetBrains.Resharper.TaskRunner.*` – [Dunc](#) Jun 21 '16 at 14:32



1



I didn't realize I still had my debugger attached and was trying to build in the same Visual Studio instance. Once I stopped the debugger I was able to build.

answered Feb 13 '15 at 0:50

[Valamas](#)

14.6k 22 91 165



1



Killing the **vstest.executionengine.exe** process(es) resolves this issue 90% of the time for me. If that doesn't work, then also killing **QTAgent32.exe** and then deleting the /bin and /obj folders for the project in question works.

This is the most irritating part of my work day. :)

answered Jun 9 '15 at 20:30

[dgundersen](#)

431 3 14

does not work here – [Pompair](#) Feb 19 '16 at 9:48

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1 antivirus exclusion list. And right after that baam... it works.



answered Jul 1 '15 at 1:29



Alex

616 1 8 16



Make sure u close all instances **wcfSvcHost** and try again. It worked for me!

1



answered Jul 16 '15 at 2:52



Ocelot

875 3 17 46



I have noticed some answers that solved my problem, BUT, just in case anyone is having the same problem I was.

1

IF YOU ARE RUNNING A CONSOLE APP: BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE.



Make sure you have closed out any console windows that may have been opened from a previous build. For instance I was just testing some code in a console application, I didn't realize that the console window from one of the previous times I ran my program was open. During that session I was debugging, the window got pushed to the back and I couldn't see it. Just saying, this could be your problem, so check to make sure that is not the problem.

answered Aug 8 '15 at 8:31



Eric Bishard

3,142 4 38 64

1

2

next

protected by [Community](#) ♦ Jan 23 '15 at 7:26

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