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Visual Studio: Show active file in solution explorer

posted Nov 26, 2008

One of the most annoying thing about Visual Studio default settings is the fact that the Solution Explorer doesn't track what files you are currently looking at. Alot of developers thought this was the only way, and had to bear the pain of flicking through the Solution Explorer while scratching their head to figure out 'where the hell I put this file?'.

Some have found a work around by using Visual Studio plugin like **VS File Finder** and **Resharper** (Ctrl + Shift + T / Resharper_GoToFile). While others found right clicking on the tab - open containing folder to be helpful enough.

There is actually a setting in Visual Studio that does this automatically.

Tools - Options - Projects and Solutions - Track Active Item in Solution Explorer

Just tick the box..and you're all set!

2008-11-26 07:57:00 -0500

nice! didn't know that

2008-11-26 07:58:00 -0500

Yeah, a very handy thing to know

2008-11-26 12:40:00 -0500

I thought that was the default mate?
Either way it's worhty to note that if you're working on a slow pc you gain some performance by turning it off (not that I would)

ronaldwidha 2008-11-26 21:39:00 -0500

@Xian worthy to note that if you're on a slow machine, ... you might want to get a better machine. LOL

2008-12-24 14:50:00 -0500

Thanks.. I stumbled on your post while scratching my head for last half an hour how to turn this feature on!

2009-01-05 09:56:00 -0500

Thanks a lot. I really appreciate it. Your tip helped me to get rid of one of the most annoying things in VS.

2009-04-10 01:21:00 -0400

I think alot of time are spent by devs looking for files. This tip and Resharper will increase productivity significantly for any .Net devs

2009-05-10 04:47:00 -0400

thanks a lot..

Gman   2009-07-29 16:44:55 -0400

yeah, it seemed to be default for mine but somehow switched itself off randomly, so thanks for the post, now I have switched it back on!

PSU Kardi 2010-03-11 12:18:00 -0500

Thank you so much!

Rajmca05 2010-03-20 10:28:00 -0400

Thanks a lot!!! It helped me a lot...

James 2010-04-21 10:58:00 -0400

In the event you want to only track the current file through a keyboard shortcut - the activity is "View.TrackActivityinSolutionExplorer" (assign keys here -> Tools - Options - Environment - Keyboard)

Ssrmit62 2010-07-29 07:15:00 -0400

thanks a lot.. It saved my time a lot.

Ray661 2010-08-13 07:48:00 -0400

Thanks this will save me a lot time in future!!!

Sam 2010-11-24 10:13:00 -0500

Thanks dude!

PratikChandra 2011-03-25 04:38:00 -0400

This feature is actually annoying for me most of the time...so I don't want to enable/disable the global vs settings, but just like in resharper(I guess), I'd like to track/locate JUST the current file in the solution-explorer, through a shortcut. Is there a way to do that or any alternate tweak or something??? It would really help, and ofcourse save a lot of time too!!!
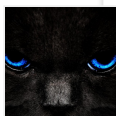
abc 2011-03-25 05:31:00 -0400

make sure this feature is disabled initially and then use the shortcut twice every-time you use it. You can assign some single-press handy shortcut like "ctrl+shift+D". It will track the current file and then immediately disable tracking, so the solution explorer will not keep jumping to the active file when you navigate through your other opened files. Hope it helps. :-)
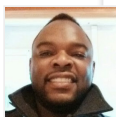
PratikChandra   2011-03-25 05:34:00 -0400

http://dvanderboom.wordpress.com/2008/03/21/visual-studio-macro-track-item-in-solution-explorer-on-demand/#comment-459

Bruno Cassol   2011-04-11 11:19:00 -0400

Thnx!

Courtney Mills   2011-07-14 16:34:00 -0400

Thanks, I was looking for this functionality.

lorinc   2011-08-05 03:43:00 -0400

Thanks for theÂ info, it's really useful!

Truls Unstad   2012-02-10 03:11:00 -0500

Thank you very much, just what I was looking for. This was driving me mad.

Rolando 2012-03-01 19:32:00 -0500

Fantastic! thanks for this info, Ive been looking for this for months

skyfire163 2012-04-02 19:29:00 -0400

Thank you!

Cody 2012-04-19 20:31:00 -0400

Holy cow. I've been searching through solution explorer for months (usually use the >of shortcut to open files, but that's not enough). You just saved me so much time.

Srinivas 2012-07-10 02:58:00 -0400

Thanks for the tip, this is really helpful to many people in our team.

Amit Stefen 2012-07-16 04:25:00 -0400

Excellent... I installed the fresh copy of VS2010 and it never included this setting by default. Thanks Ronald

Horsin'Around   2012-08-10 09:00:00 -0400

Thanks!Â I was looking for that!

Donald Herman   2012-08-14 20:50:00 -0400

thanks OP!!!

steve   2012-09-06 14:47:00 -0400

Thanks

Maxim   2012-09-10 11:14:00 -0400

Thank you!!

Phil Gardocki   2012-09-26 15:28:00 -0400

Thanks again for this ever so useful post. For reasons I can't explain about every 6 months or so, this setting goes unchecked for me and I have to find it again. Different machines, companies, versions of VS. They all lose it once in a while.

ronaldwidha   2012-09-26 23:55:00 -0400

glad that you find it useful. For me, it's this post to set up beyond compare with VS http://www.ronaldwidha.net/2008/11/26/the-best-comparison-tool-and-vs2008-integration/ - VS2008, VS2010, VS2012 across Vista, 7, 8 DP, CP, RP, RTM ... I have to do it again again and again. It's nice to have a cheat sheat like these.

Ioan Antoniu   2012-10-08 13:28:00 -0400

thanks!

charlie the cat   2012-12-03 10:30:00 -0500

puurrrrrrfect!

Ankit   2013-01-23 13:52:00 -0500

Great tip. Thank you

Ant   2014-03-07 10:51:00 -0500

Thank you soooooo much! You've just saved my sanity!

Florian   2014-06-12 05:14:00 -0400

Resharper: Shift + Alt + L

B2#5!#%@$1jfB2$1   2014-12-31 13:08:00 -0500

Awesome.

Sara   2015-01-22 01:39:00 -0500

I love you because of this guidance!!!!!!!!!!

People. Paper. Electrons

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RSS Feed

Productivity addict. Mild dose of H+. Gadgets to level up.

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