Pro .NET 1.1 Remoting, Reflection, and Threading

David Curran, Fabio Ferracchiati, Syed Gilani, Mike Gillespie, Sandra Gopikrishna, James Hart, Benny Mathew, Andy Olsen, Jon Pinnock, Tobin Titus, and Srinivasa Sivakumar, Apress, 2005, \$59.99, ISBN: 1590594525

The goal of this book is to help VB (Visual Basic) developers understand the powerful tools for remoting, reflection, and threading available within the .NET version of VB. These tools can help VB developers involved in rapid application development compete with other language developers and create outstanding professional applications.

Microsoft defines *remoting* as a way to “provide a rich and extensible framework for objects living in different AppDomains.” Basically, remoting allows applications to work across application domains and to take full advantage of remote resources in networked environments. *Reflection* is the tool that provides object manipulation at runtime and determines how many constructors a type has and what the parameters are. It also lets a developer dynamically create and invoke types. *Threading* is the ability of an application to process more than one instruction at a given time. The authors explain why they feel that these three topics belong in the same book, and they stress the importance of learning, understanding, and using the topics responsibly within applications.

The authors point out that VB was not originally intended to solve the complex problems of today. With the release of a .NET version, however, developers had to learn not only the object-oriented paradigm, but also the .NET libraries, CLR (common language runtime), and other language changes.

The book consists of 19 chapters, clearly divided among the three topics. Most chapters contain definitions, introductions, easy-to-understand real-life examples, and source code snippets. The authors include notes about when language error messages will be returned. If the message is incorrect, they explain what the message should have stated. To help readers better understand the advantages and limitations of the topics presented, the authors include summaries and example comparisons with other programming languages.

The book is intended for practicing VB .NET developers, but, with its clearly written and easy-to-understand

chapters, it is also suitable for advanced programming students or readers with a basic knowledge of VB .NET. The book is also suitable for self-instruction, providing a good overview and a starting point for developers wanting to add remoting, reflection, and threading to their applications.

—Melissa C. Stange

Windows and Linux Integration:

Hands-on Solutions for a Mixed Environment

Jeremy Moskowitz, Thomas Boutell, Sybex Inc., 2005, \$49.99, ISBN: 0782144284

For many computer professionals, Windows and Linux already seem integrated. We’re using Windows clients to access Linux servers, creating file shares with Samba, and even installing both operating systems on dual-boot or virtualized machines. Why do we need a book on integration?

The value of this book lies in the fact that the Windows/Linux integration experienced by almost all of us is incomplete. We settle for an integration level of 80 percent because it requires only a 20 percent effort and we never get around to investing the rest of the effort because it exceeds the perceived benefit. Here, the authors spell out the details behind “the hard stuff,” making it just as easy and worth doing as the initial steps.

Windows’ Active Directory (including domain name system) is usually perceived as the greatest bugaboo for full integration, followed by cross-system authentication, Exchange/Postfix integration (e-mail and calendar services), and full printer sharing. This book provides step-by-step recipes for solving these problems and delves further into remote computing, virtual private networks, Web interoperability, and shared applications. It spells out specific configuration steps for creating truly integrated enterprises rather than cohabiting independent platforms. This book alone could fuel a Windows/Linux integration consulting niche.

The book is 540 pages, but reads easily and seems shorter. In fact, the writing style may be too casual. I question textbooks that say things like, “Heck, my grandma likes it” (page 5). The authors maintain a useful Web site that includes example code and additional material on Windows Server 2003 R2.

—Bayard Kohlhepp

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