

Introduction

In December of 1993, I got my hands on a copy of the Windows 95 (then called Chicago) beta operating system. The first thing that popped out at me was the new look and feel of the operating system. Being the type who is always curious about programming user interfaces, I wanted to figure out how to write applications that exploit the new shell. I jumped right in looking at the new common controls. What I thought would be a technical article or two turned into a long series of technical articles on the Microsoft Developer Network Library CD. I didn't stop there though. It seemed that my list of interesting things to research kept growing and growing and all of the items that I really wanted to research covered the new shell. Then, one day I was reading one of the programming newsgroups out on that oft-touted Information SuperHighway (there I said it) and someone asked if there was a good book that covered programming for the new Windows 95 shell. The answer was that there wasn't one yet, but if one surfaced, it would snapped right up.

My fate was sealed. I decided that now was the time to get going and fill that void. Now was the time to give developers a source for programming information about the Windows 95 user interface. This book is my answer to all of those developers who want to know how to program the new UI.

Who Should Read This Book

This book was written for Windows programmers who already know C, C++, and/or use the Microsoft Foundation Classes (MFC). I am a C programmer at heart but I know well that there are many more adventurous programmers out there who have embraced C++ and MFC. As a result, wherever possible, I have provided samples both in C and in C++ using the classes built into MFC. Towards the end of the book, there are some topics that require a minimal understanding of the component object model (COM): shortcuts, file viewers, and shell extensions. I will provide a list of recommended reading in order to get you up to speed in those chapters.

The Tools You Need

The sample code demonstrated in this book runs on Microsoft's 32-bit Windows operating systems: Windows 95, Windows NT 3.51, and Win32s running on Windows 3.1. In order to run the samples, you will need to have a system running one of the above-listed versions of Windows. In order to build the samples, you will need the Windows 95 Software Development Kit. If you plan on building the MFC samples, you will need to run Visual C++ version 2.1 or later with MFC version 3.1 (or later).

What This Book Covers

This book covers methods for programming the new user interface for Windows 95. The book can be sectioned as follows: Chapters 1 through 5 cover the new common controls, Chapters 6 through 10 cover additional functionality that you can add to your application such as long filename support, drag and drop support, and use of the Registry, Chapters 11 through 14 cover the advanced topics including shortcuts, file viewers and shell extensions.