
Book Review: Delphi How-To

Reviewed by Steve Troxell

If you're fortunate, you've got a Delphi guru in your office. Someone you can walk up to any time and ask, "Hey Bob, how do you do *this*?". Someone who can tell you just how to do *that*, step-by-step, and explain the principles behind why it works so you can better retain the knowledge and apply it to other problems. Someone who can do all this in just a few minutes of your time so you can knock the problem off and get back to productive work. If you're not so fortunate, or you just want to give Bob a break, you need *Delphi How-To*.

Following in the tradition of The Waite Group's *How-To* series, this book reads like a medical reference: just look up your ailment and the treatment is all laid out for you. It lists 113 specific 'How-Tos' related to Windows application development using Delphi, ranging from "How do I create a system modal form?" to "How do I create an HTML-based hypertext

viewer?". Each How-To is presented in a simple, concise layout. First, the authors describe the technique they will use in plain language, usually in one brief paragraph. This is followed by detailed step-by-step instructions telling you how to construct an example of the technique in a Delphi project (all project source code is included on the CD). Finally, the authors explain the theory behind the solution so you can understand exactly why all those different lines of code do what they do. As necessary, they also point out the limitations of each technique as presented and show you the pitfalls to watch for if you want to expand upon the method. Most How-Tos are covered in just a few pages and the great thing is that you can dive in anywhere in the book and get something out of it.

Delphi How-To is not for the raw beginner: it won't tell you how to work with the IDE or how to write

basic Pascal code. This book assumes you are already familiar with the Delphi environment and how to build Delphi applications. What you will find, however, is a book just packed full of interesting stuff you can do with Delphi. Some of my favorites include: adding hot spots in images, using a splitter bar to resize two adjacent windows like in Windows Explorer, fading text in and out over an image, creating customizable toolbars, the whole gamut of topics involving HTML documents and multimedia, and of course adding easter eggs in your about boxes. *Delphi How-To* covers a broad range of topics and you are certain to get your money's worth out of this book.

Delphi How-To by Gary Frerking, Nathan Wallace, and Wayne Nidderly is published by Waite Group Press. ISBN: 1-57169-019-0, 851pp with CD-ROM, US\$39.95.