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MetaPro Systems Inc. is a software consulting firm that offers the following services:

- Custom business software running under Windows
- Windows installations, troubleshooting and tuning
- Software tutoring, mentoring and coaching
- Web site development
- Web site hosting

For more information about our services, visit our web site www.metaprosystems.com or call (781)860-7345.

MetaLetter

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Visual Studio.Net

Microsoft is planning to release Visual Studio .Net sometime in early 2002. The Beta 2 version, which is fairly stable, is available to everyone for a nominal fee. This is the first product to be developed for Microsoft's new Net Framework. This article will cover interesting features of Visual Studio .Net and Visual Basic .Net, which is part of it.

Visual Studio .Net is the next version in the Visual Studio family and is the direct successor to Visual Studio 6.0. The new version differs from the prior version in significant

ways.

First, there is a common Interactive Development Environment (IDE). This means that regardless of the language you are developing in, the visual portion of the systems are the same, the way forms are created, the way debugging is done, etc. This also means that code written in different languages can coexist in the same project. The languages that are available have changed. Visual FoxPro has been dropped and is now offered as a separate product. A new language C#

(Continued on page 3)

In This Issue

Visual Studio.Net — Microsoft's Visual Studio.Net covered. Software developers, software managers, and managers who might hire a consulting firm to develop custom software will get the most out of this article.

Protecting Your Data — This article will be of interest to anyone who owns or uses a computer.

MetaPro Systems Announces Web Services— We help put your company on the Web.

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Protecting Your Data

What would it be like if you came into work one day and all your data was wiped out? Could your business survive? If so, how long would it take you to recover? Do you have a backup strategy? If not, you should.

There are two approaches to data backup: full and partial. For most computers a tape drive is needed to do a full backup. Tape drives can be internal or external. As internal tape drive is installed inside your computer in one of the open bays. An external tape drive sits outside your computer and is connected to the computer via a cable. The internal has the advantages of being permanent and taking up less room. There is no wire to become disconnected. The internal drive is slightly less expensive. The main advantages of an external drive are that it is portable and that you do not need to open your computer to install it.

If you go this route try to get a tape drive that has capacity that is as large as the size of your hard

drives. If not, you will need more than one tape to do a full backup of your entire system. You generally do a full backup on a periodic basis, for example weekly. You do a differential on a more frequent basis usually daily. The differential contains all the files newly created or modified since the last full backup. With these two tapes you can fully rebuild your hard drive if a disaster, such as a hard drive crash, occurs. You can also recover individual files that are accidentally deleted. The full backup solution is best for people who have many applications or whose computer is critical for their business.

If you have only a few applications and your computer is peripheral to your business a partial backup solution may be adequate. You do not need a tape drive but you need some other high capacity storage device such as a Zip, Jaz drive or a CD burner. You only backup up your data files, not program files. For example, let's say you only use

(Continued on page 4)

Studio.Net (Continued)

(Continued from page 1)

(pronounced C sharp) has been added. C# is similar to C++, but more user friendly. Java users will recognize many of its features. C++ and Visual Basic are the languages that remain. While C++ is very similar to the 6.0 version, Visual Basic has changed dramatically.

Another major change is the use of an intermediate language. Any language code is first translated into an intermediate language that is like an assembler language. This language is then translated into machine code. This and the common IDE means it is very easy to add new languages. Many are already available as add-ins, including such diverse choices as COBOL, Perl and Java.

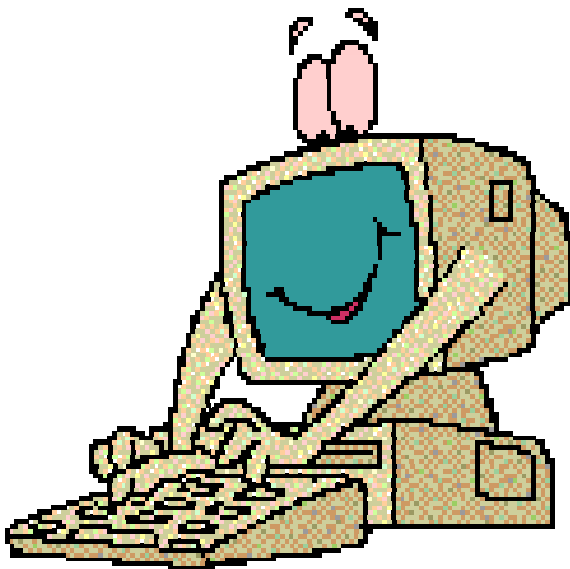
Currently VS.Net only deploys on Windows because of the intermediate language setup. That may change some day. It is possible to write to compiler to read the intermediate language and create machine code for another operating systems such as UNIX or Mac OS. If Microsoft does not do this, some third party

will.

The Visual Basic language used in VS.Net has changed in some major ways. It is now completely object oriented. Full inheritance that has long been desired by the VB community is now part of the language, but it is not upwardly compatible with VB 6.0. While there is a conversion utility that does a pretty good job, it is not perfect. VB6.0 programmer will find the learning curve steeper than prior upgrades. Although the VB programmer will find the new language awkward to use at first, the many new features will make the change worthwhile.

For more of VS.Net and the Net framework, see the Microsoft web site (www.microsoft.com) or the many books and articles on the subject.

VB.Net Programming with the Public Beta by Hollis & Lhotka was used in part to prepare this article.



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Protecting Your Data (Continued)

(Continued from page 2)

Word, Quicken and Mail. You would likely only back up your Word files, Quicken data file and your mail file. In the case where you lost your entire disk drive you would have to reinstall your applications from your original disks and then restore the data files.

This advice is of a general nature, every case is unique. If you are not sure what to do, please talk to a consultant or someone you trust. We can help you deal with these issues. Please feel free to contact us at 781.860.7345.



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