

# Ultimate ASP.NET Beginner's Guide

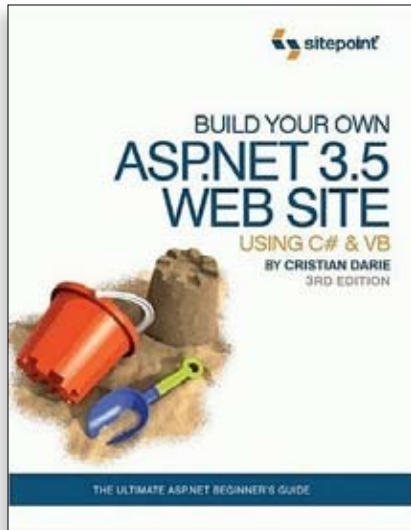
(Build Your Own ASP.NET 3.5 Web Site Using C# & VB, 3rd Edition)

Iris Yoffa,

When I first picked up this book to review, I briefly leafed through the pages and thought, "This is just what I'm looking for."

I decided to install all the recommended Microsoft software components onto my *Vista Home Premium* machine. I turned to the section titled "Installing the Required Software" and followed the instructions for installing Microsoft's free *Visual Web Developer 2008 Express Edition* and then *SQL Server Management Studio Express*. That's where my problems began.

Not with the directions in the book, but with the install corrupting files on my up-to-date system. I spent countless hours (I didn't count them, but my day was hosed!) trying the MS recommended fixes, to no avail. It seemed best to just shut down the machine and go back to my *XP Home* box and play repetitive, mindless games. That worked!



A couple of weeks later... I turned on the machine and let the updates update and reboot. I tried downloading the ASP.NET SP1 install file and fired it up (one of the many fixes I previously tried unsuccessfully). This time I progressed to the next screen and had a repair option to choose. I did, it did, and after a reboot was told that the components had been put back to their original state. I was ready to try again.

Installing WebDevExpress was successful this time by once

again choosing the repair option. BTW, you will need to create a Windows Live ID as part of the registration process and also in order to get the free license key. Otherwise, the program will die after 30 days. At this point, with a successful install of the development interface and before trying to get SQL Server installed, I thought I would begin going through the book.

So, I'm sure that you've heard enough about my issues with installing the Microsoft free-for development-use software and are ready to go on to SitePoint's *Ultimate ASP.NET Beginner's Guide*.

I initially thought that I would follow the book's steps for using VB (Visual Basic) to create my server-side code but quickly changed my mind. This book definitely falls into the making-the-complicated-simple category and C# (C sharp) did not look to be the totally confusing programming language I had looked over in the past.

The focus of this book is to aide web designers, folks using HTML and CSS to design static web pages in making the transition to server-side technologies, specifically ASP.NET. The development tool used by the authors in the screenshots and examples is Visual Web Developer 2008 Express Edition.

The intended end-product of the book's 15 chapters and two appendices is for the reader to have gained the skills to create a database-driven web presence. There is a companion web site that provides downloads of the example code used in the book, including the application project, with separate folders for the VB and C# code.

There is also an Errata page with info about typographical and code errors, as well as web standards and ASP.NET updates. SitePoint supports an excellent variety of online communities, including a .NET forum, a variety of email newsletters and welcomes direct e-mail communication from you and me.

The book begins by explaining what ASP.NET and the .NET Framework are and how to install the free Microsoft software you will use to develop web applications. I won't say any more about my experience with this step.

Code examples and instructions for writing code are given for both VB and C# with tips, notes and explanations for both technologies. The

.NET, VB and C# programming. Constructing ASP.NET web pages involves maintaining a dynamic content mindset. The page, called a web form, fills placeholders with content, typically retrieved from a database, using ASP.NET server controls, generates an HTML page filled with content and sends it to the browser that requested it.

The chapter titled "Building Web Applications" is where you begin building the book's project application for the Dorknozzle Company. There is a wealth of new technology discussed in this chapter such as files for holding application settings, startup options, using the application state, user sessions, the cache object, and cookies. The list does go on and we are only up to page 226 with another 479 pages to go.

The chapter titles continue with: "Using the Validation Controls," "Database Design and Development," "Speaking SQL," "ADO.NET," "Displaying Content Using Data Lists," "Managing Content Using GridView and DetailsView," "Advanced Data Access," "Security and User Authentication," "Working with Files and Email" and "ASP.NET AJAX."

The two appendices contain a Web Control Reference and a step-by-step for deploying ASP.NET web sites. As you can read, I have a lot of material to challenge me in the months to come. For me, slow absorption works best. Some of the material is familiar but a lot is all new to me.

The authors do an admirable job of explaining what a particular piece of code does and how it works as part of a larger segment. When I follow the steps as given I get the predicted results, always helpful in a tutorial text.

The authors compare constructing an ASP.NET web site to creating a model from Lego bricks, just as easy while just as challenging to achieve your desired results. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone interested in learning how to code dynamic web sites or applications with ASP.NET.

Database news update: I gave installing the free express editions of MS SQL Server 2005 and the Server Management Studio another try. This time the installations were problem free.

I started up the Management tool and saw the MS SQL Server Administrator Interface (I have worked with SQL Server 7). It was kind of exciting to see something familiar on my monitor that I knew how to use!

**About:** *Ultimate ASP.NET Beginner's Guide (Build Your Own ASP.NET 3.5 Web Site Using C# & VB, 3rd Edition)*

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