

## FILE AND DIRECTORY SYNCHRONISATION

## Allway Sync

[www.allwaysync.com](http://www.allwaysync.com)

No matter what kind of IT job you have, chances are you spend a lot of time moving files and directories from one place to another – whether from your desktop to a USB key or from server to server. Often, it's important to keep those directories synchronised to ensure you aren't creating unnecessary duplicates and that you're working with the latest version of the files. Sometimes you may need to synchronise files and directories across many machines, as when deploying static XML or HTML files across a set of Web servers. Allway Sync from Usov Lab is a helpful tool for handling these kinds of tasks.

Allway Sync gives you true *n*-way synchronisation, from single direction replication of files and directories to a multidirectory, bidirectional option. Not only does the application let you keep local drives

and networked resources in sync, it also supports automatic synchronisation to removable devices, such as USB keys and rewriteable optical drives. You can have Allway Sync start automatically when the device is connected to your machine.

Other automatic start-up options for syncing include starting when file changes are detected, when you log in or log out, when Allway Sync is started, and at specified time intervals. You can even tie syncing to a scheduled task via the app's GUI.

All file modifications and deletions are tracked in the application's local database and Allway Sync provides many options for versioning modified files and deleting conflicted files, including removing items permanently, moving them to the recycle bin or moving them to a specified folder.

For each job, you can specify multiple

inclusion or exclusion filters to get the files you need and ignore the ones you don't. You can customise the actions you'd like Allway Sync to take when it encounters warnings or errors, and configure a different action for each type of warning or error. For example, you can choose to automatically retry a copy in the event of error, and you can configure not only the number of automatic retries but even the time-delay between retries to accommodate any network latency or short-term connectivity issues.

You can configure the verbosity of the application's logging feature to ensure you receive maximum information about your jobs. Application settings can be imported and exported via XML, so it's easy to keep them backed up or to transfer them to another computer. And, a fun facility for the curious, the application also provides a simple usage statistics window (accessible via the Help menu). This handy tool can make syncing your files a snap, and it's quite a bargain to boot.

**Price: Free for personal use.**

## BOOK REVIEWS

## Microsoft Solutions Framework Essentials

[www.microsoft.com/mspress](http://www.microsoft.com/mspress)

To deliver successful technology solutions, companies need effective processes and clear communications. Michael SV Turner's book, *Microsoft Solutions Framework Essentials* (Microsoft Press, 2006), gives you the fundamentals of the Microsoft Solutions Framework (MSF) version 4.0, and shows you how to use them to develop and implement tested process and communication practices.

Turner starts with excellent advice, telling you not to drop everything in your current process and organisation structure at once as you apply MSF guidelines and practices. Instead, he suggests implement-

ing a part of the MSF into your product or project development and then evaluating its success. When that evaluation is complete and successful, choose another aspect of the MSF that would suit your project and introduce it into your standard project cycle. In this way, you can both adapt the MSF to your environment as well as mitigate any unforeseen issues arising from the changes.

The book targets anyone – technical or not – involved in the delivery of technology solutions. The chapter entitled Building an MSF Team shows how both technical and non-technical people can and should

work to deliver successful solutions. It cautions, however, that this can be one of the more difficult parts of the MSF to implement since it involves changes to day-to-day responsibilities.

Central to the change of structure is the idea of forming a team of advocates in which members work as peers representing distinctive perspectives, and providing additive benefits to the overall process. (Of course, this does not eliminate the need for an authoritative decision-maker.) The MSF advocates are split into seven groups: Product Management, Program Management, Architecture, Development,

## ADD AUTOCOMPLETION TO YOUR SQL EDITOR

# SQL Prompt: IntelliSense for SQL

[www.red-gate.com/products/SQL\\_Prompt/index.htm](http://www.red-gate.com/products/SQL_Prompt/index.htm)

It's tempting to think all databases are created and structured with logical naming conventions in a normalised form, but sadly, we all know that's not the case. When playing the role of system administrator or database administrator, I find myself having to refer back to the table structure frequently when creating or running queries, and even more so when acting as a developer.

Though SQL Server Management Studio for SQL Server 2005 has made life much easier by integrating an object browser into the tree view section of the interface, I still find myself wanting that feature I have become all too used to in the Visual Studio IDE: IntelliSense. Fortunately, Red-Gate Software offers SQL Prompt, which gives you autocompletion for Microsoft SQL Server editors.

The application runs in your task bar and it detects when you start working in an editor. First, SQL Prompt will ask you for the connection information for that database so that it can reach out and cache all the object data. This speeds performance and reduces overhead, but if you are constantly modifying objects on the database instance, you will need to remember to clear the cache (which is a simple two-click action) to see your changes on the prompt list.

In addition to the Visual Studio IDEs, Enterprise Manager, Query Analyzer and SQL Server Management Studio, SQL Prompt also directly integrates with UltraEdit and EditPlus 2. On the Options tab of the Settings UI you can indicate what SQL key words you would want to trigger the candidate list (such as FROM,

JOIN, EXEC, and so on). Triggering SQL Prompt on SQL JOINS will even give you your ON statement (assuming you have reference set or the fields are named the same). Here too you can set text shortcuts for code snippet insertion. For example, the application sets "ssf" followed by the Tab key to spell out "SELECT \* FROM". You can also have SQL Prompt automatically change SQL key words to uppercase as you type. This and the code snippets are time-savers for sure.

On the Candidates tab of the settings UI, you can set whether you want SQL Prompt to use fully qualified column names, prefix with the owner/schema information, surround your names with square brackets, and even set which types of SQL functions you want to show up in the candidate list. If you use SQL, you may want to add this tool to your bag of tricks.

SQL Prompt will remain free until the release of version 3.0, which, at the time of writing, was in final beta. Pricing for version 3.0 has yet to be released.

**Price: Free.**

Test, User Experience, and Release/Operations, each with its own make-up and responsibilities. For organisations with larger groups, the book provides some advice on how to scale up the idea of advocacy groups to support larger teams and groups.

Risk is a constant in any project and you'll find a wealth of reorganisation tips that can help you and your team handle risk effectively. Minimising project risks is important, and the risk management process is broken down into six steps that can make this successful: identification, analysis and prioritisation, planning and scheduling, tracking and reporting, change control, and learning from past experience. Moreover, you must continue to evaluate risk throughout the project cycle. The points delineated in this section can really help you mitigate the possibility of failure.

Solution delivery fundamentals are covered in detail, including enactment tracks where you envision, plan, build, stabilise and deploy your solution, as well as define what each advocacy group is responsible for in each stage. You are introduced to the MSF Governance Model, a more detailed view of each of the tracks of a solution delivery life cycle: Envisioning, Planning, Building, Stabilising, Deployment, and finally Governance (that is, guiding the solution delivery).

Though you may think your role in your organisation doesn't require the tools and processes discussed in this book, reading it will nevertheless give you new insight into your current processes – whether you're in operations, development or project management. Even if your job is not related to software development, the

topics Turner covers will provide you with a starting point for improving efficiency and the communication channels within your organisation.

**Microsoft Solutions Framework Book is available on Amazon:**

[www.amazon.co.uk/](http://www.amazon.co.uk/)

**Microsoft-Solutions-Framework-Essentials-Successful/dp/0735623538**

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The opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Microsoft. All prices were confirmed at press time and are subject to change.

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**GREG STEEN** is a technology professional, entrepreneur and enthusiast. He is always on the hunt for new tools and methods to help make operations and development easier for IT professionals.