

What is Visual Studio Tools for Applications?

Every market and every customer has specialized needs, but you can't give them all the features they want. VSTA adds the ability for your customers to add those features themselves.

VSTA provides a development framework and a light-weight version of the Visual Studio IDE that you can integrate into your application. Customers can use the IDE to add their own custom features.

Microsoft Office increased sales and became entrenched in the business processes of many corporations when they added VBA, which let customers add their own features. Many other companies have licensed VBA for their own products and seen similar results.

Now the next generation of customization tools is ready. Built on Visual Studio and the .NET Framework, VSTA provides a more powerful customization toolset for ISVs, their customers, and their partners.

Because it's built on the .NET Framework, the same professional development platform businesses use for other mission-critical applications, VSTA gives your customers new levels of security and control. VSTA customizations can be seamlessly opened by Visual Studio, enabling professional developers to continue to enhance applications originally created by power users.

Extensibility with Control

You decide:

- Which components of the application are open to customization
- What view of these components is available to customization developers
- How to grant access to those components

The VSTA framework for add-in management and application domain management increases reliability and version compatibility:

- Add-ins can be isolated from the host application
- Multiple add-in versions can work with multiple versions of your host application, which extends the lifespan of your customizations

VSTA and VBA Side by Side Customizations

VBA licensees can integrate VSTA side by side with VBA.

In contrast to VBA, which gives no access to Web service technologies, VSTA enables customizations that fully leverage your company's service-oriented architecture.

VSTA provides .NET data access capabilities, where VBA is limited to COM-based data access. In addition, the VSTA runtime works in both 32-bit and 64-bit client or server environments.

Productivity of Visual Studio and Security of .NET

The Visual Studio-based IDE features IntelliSense, a new Code Editor, an extensible library of code snippets, and extensive support for XML and tools for handling XML data. You can write code in Visual Basic or C# and access the .NET Framework.

VSTA leverages the .NET Framework security model, requiring evidence of permissions before code is allowed to run.

What's New in VSTA 2.0

Dynamic Programming Model: Enables you to dynamically control the IDE view presented to the user as the state of the application changes, allowing the user to relate the application view to the IDE view easily. The end result is simpler discoverability of host object model capabilities.

ClickOnce Deployment: Simplified deployment option that your customers can use for add-ins to get auto-update and offline capabilities. You can also build streamlined installation and un-installation of VSTA enabled add-ins.

ISV Integration Enhancements: Significantly improved toolset including revised ProxyGen, simpler integration API, custom exception serialization, and better integration-time error handling and messages.

.NET Framework 3.5: Add-in activation and execution environment.

New Visual Studio 2008 Features: WPF (Windows Presentation Foundation), WCF (Windows Communication Foundation), WF (Windows Workflow Foundation) and LINQ (Language-Integrated Query) support.

Customer Case Studies

ABB Organization Profile

ABB is a global engineering company with expertise in electric power and automation technologies, employing nearly 107,000 workers. ABB Robotics is the division of ABB that supplies robots and automation.

Business Situation

The ABB Robotics division wanted to make its RobotStudio simulation and programming software easier for customers to enhance and customize.

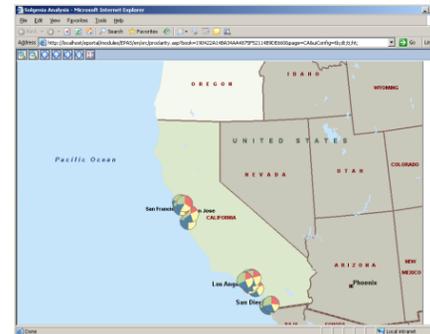
Solution

ABB Robotics integrated Microsoft® VSTA into RobotStudio 5.08, enabling customers to rapidly create innovative add-in functionality, tailoring RobotStudio to address their specific needs. ABB is thus able to offer a solution appealing to a larger robotics market, at reasonable cost.

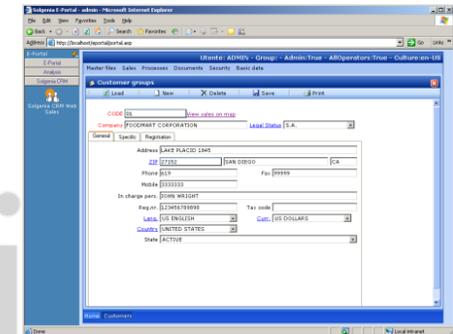
Sample Solution Screen Shots



ABB RobotStudio Application



Solgenia GeoMap Application



Organization Profile

Solgenia, based in Italy, offers a suite of end-to-end business solutions and a platform for development and customization. Founded in 1990, the company has 80 employees around the world.

Business Situation

Solgenia wanted to provide developers with maximum flexibility and fast ROI when customizing its solutions suite to meet specific business needs.

Solution

Solgenia integrated Microsoft® VSTA into its new Object Customizer, accelerating the development of custom solutions by 30 to 50 percent and simultaneously giving users more customization options.

VSTA Online Resources

VSTA Blog on MSDN

<http://blogs.msdn.com/vsta/>

VSTA Developer Center

<http://msdn.microsoft.com/vsta>

Visual Studio 2008

<http://msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio>

VSTA Licensing Information

<http://www.summsoft.com/content/pricing.aspx>