

Re: Forms and VC++

Source: <http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/VC/microsoft.public.vc.language/2006-11/msg00509.html>

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 - *Date:* Fri, 17 Nov 2006 12:36:07 -0500
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If I want to take advantage of the "forms" capability of .NET 2005 and

I want to program in C++, am I required to use the "managed" C++ ? I am

referring to the same "forms" capability as is available to C# programmers.

Just curious, but is there a reason you're choosing C++ over C#. It may be a religious issue but I would never consider it for most mainstream .NET development. You'll have a much easier time in C#.

I teach an introductory and intermediate C++ programming courses at a local college (<http://www.bcit.ca/study/courses/comp2617> <http://www.bcit.ca/study/courses/comp2618>). In the past if I wanted to give my students a taste of creating "Windows App" in C++, I was pretty well forced into giving them an introduction to MFC. I am told (I have not yet had a chance to try it myself) that this "forms" capability is easier to use than MFC. Is this true?

If so, would this CLR/C++ provide a way for me to teach C++ without restricting all my course assignments to console type apps?

In all honesty, I've never actually tried it using C++ so I can't give you any first-hand experience. I am very experienced in C++ however (20+ years in C and then C++) but also have about a year of very intense C# development under my belt now. I'm no expert yet but have already worked in many core areas of the language including forms. I started working on my own commercial app last year and chose C# because C++ has been bastardized to work in .NET while C# was developed explicitly for it. It's a much more natural fit in the .NET environment. The bottom line is that there are new non-standard keywords you have to deal with if you go the C++ route including a new way of dealing with resource management (who controls memory, etc. - .NET has garbage collection of course so your C++ apps will no longer release any .NET resources they acquire - it's really an ugly but necessary

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violation of the RAII protocol and may confuse new C++ developers). It's completely unnatural IOW and so C# is the far better choice IMO. If you're teaching a C++ course then you may have issues with this. i.e., trying to teach the C++ language while having to pollute your student's experience with a lot of non-standard Microsoft extensions (which really run contrary to the usual C++ rules). I'm willing to bet that Windows forms in C++ will still be much easier than MFC however (or the raw WinAPI of course) but it's your call. I doubt that most will actually use it in the real world (C++ form development under .NET) but the experience may still be worthwhile. That is, I figure that creating .NET forms in C++ is probably very similar to C# anyway. The IDE takes care of most of the work for you and there's a lot of similarity between the major .NET languages within the IDE. The entire experience is really unrelated to C++ however (the subject of your course) but if you want create a GUI-based Windows app using C++ (while applying bleeding-edge techniques) then it's probably your only practical choice these days (since MFC and the WinAPI are clearly on their way out as mainstream technologies). At least they can port their experience to C# if they ever go that route.