

Re: MS/BCGSoft FeaturePack a one big [embarassing] hack and developer's nightmare?

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- *From:* "Fernando A. Gómez F." <[fernando.a.gomez.f@xxxxxxxxx](mailto:fernando.a.gomez.f@xxxxxxxxx)>
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Bogdan wrote:

Hi,

I've been trying to port an MFC app that I wrote few years ago to VS2008 FeaturePack. The idea was to give it a fresh look without spending a lot of time on development of custom UI controls. Since I was planning to update only menu bar, toolbars, and status bar(s) I thought I'd be done in a couple of days. What a mistake! I spend a whole week and I'm still not done. I find the pack practically undocumented. The on-line documentation is full of 'under construction' or simply limited to one-liners that in most of the cases are just copies of class/method/param names (most likely auto-generated).

One of the most frustrating things I have discovered was that after making any source changes and re-building my app I had to manually get rid of 'Workspace' key from the Registry. Otherwise FeaturePack panes would simply not appear or be displayed in unexpected ways. I can only imagine nightmares with deployment and/or updates.

The list of things that frustrated me is pretty long but the following are some examples:

1) You would assume that to create a toolbar without a gripper is as simple as making sure that CBRS\_GRIPPER style is not set when the toolbar is created. Well, this is not the case. It appears, that you need to call SetPaneStyle() and clear CBRS\_GRIPPER after the bar is created. Does this make any sense?

2) If you lock a toolbar while loading it (LoadToolBar()) the associated menu items will not show their corresponding images. Not sure what the logic is but I'll give MS/BCGSoft a benefit of a doubt because the docs state that '... locked toolbars use separate image lists...'. The docs further suggest that in order to find out what it really means you should see CMFCToolBar::LoadBitmaEx(), which in turn explains everything in one simple sentence: 'This topic is under construction'. Simply embarrassing!

.... and so on ...

In general, I think that addition of FeaturePack to VC makes it look sub-standard and unprofessional.

Lastly, it looks like not too many developers are using the pack (surprise, surprise!). I posted two questions to this group last week and had no response. I found it very unusual. I don't

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remember this happening to me in the past when I posted questions about 'classic' MFC.

Has anyone else been through a similar hell? Are there any good blogs/news groups that deal with the pack? Or, should I simply forget about it and get a commercial product. Is BCGSoft's library also that poorly documented and inconsistent with classic MFC?

Thanks,  
Bogdan

Hi there,

I've been using this library since may, I believe, and I have had no problemas. They use the ribbon and some new controls. I even ported an old VC6 app with little struggle. But then again, this app is not visually complex. I was able to add the ribbon, though.

Regarding documentation... I would think that BCGSoft had some documentation and that they would be willing to share it with the community. As you've pointed out, however, the documentation is hilarious. I expect that it will improve in time. In the end, the Feature Pack was bought and has to be fully integrated into MFC. Perhaps we'll see something until VC++10 is out.

I haven't seen blogs or articles or books. New programmers are rarely interested in C++ anymore, so the docs will be going to C# and (\*ugh\*) VB. It will take time until some of us C++ers start generating quality articles, blogs, etc. (I only have one little article about the new CMFCListCtrl. Alas, it is in Spanish).

Anyway, good luck. I hope that MS will upgrade its documentation anytime soon.

Regards.

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