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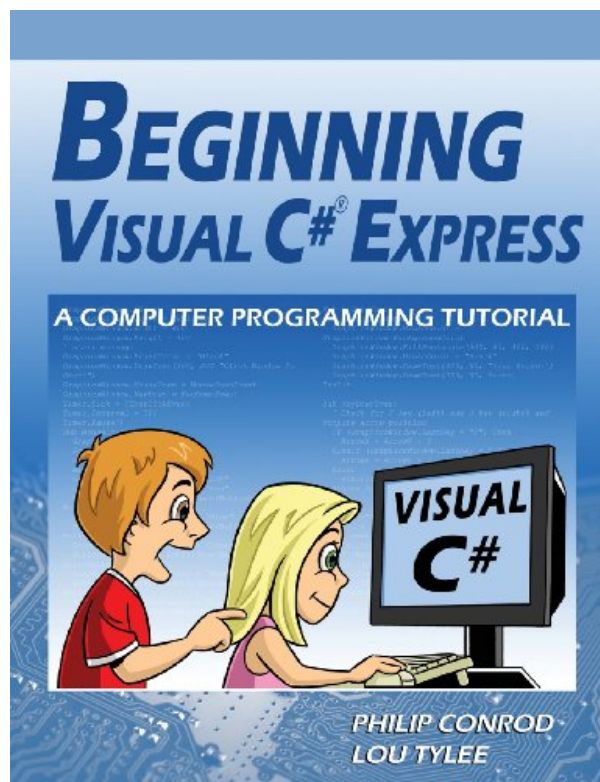

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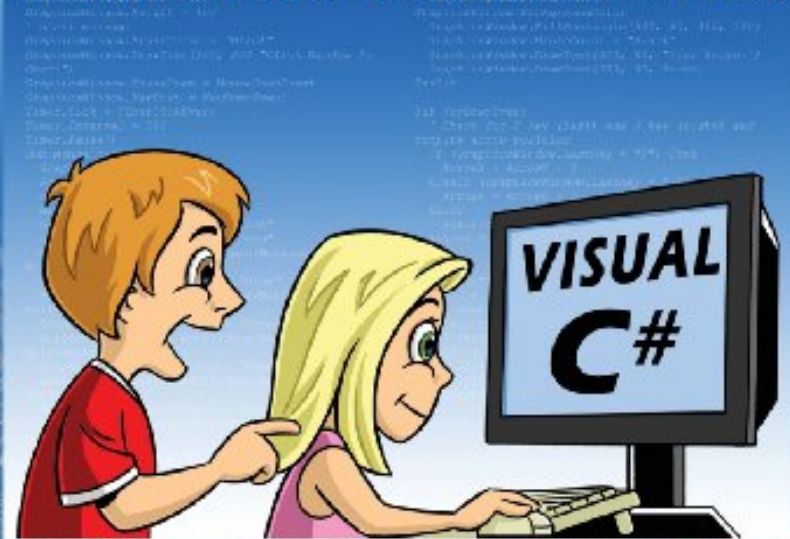**BEGINNING VISUAL C# EXPRESS: A COMPUTER PROGRAMMING TUTORIAL BY PHILIP CONROD, LOU TYLEE**

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About the Author
Philip Conrod has authored, co-authored and edited over two dozen computer programming books and tutorials over the past 30 years. Philip started programming in 1977 on a Commodore PET computer at the very young age of 13. Philip holds a Certificate in Computer Programming for Business from WarrenTech, a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Information Systems and a Master's certificate in the Essentials of Business Development from Regis University. Philip has held Information Technology leadership roles in companies like Sundstrand Aerospace, Safeco Insurance, FamilyLife, Kenworth Truck Company, and PACCAR Inc. Today, Philip serves as the Chief Information Officer for large manufacturing company based in Seattle, Washington. In his spare time, Philip still enjoys writing and publishing computer programming books for students and he serves as the President of Kidware Software. Kidware Software LLC publishes computer programming books and tutorials under the trade names of KIDware, Kidware Software, BibleByte Books and ComputerScienceForKids.com.
Lou Tylee holds BS and MS degrees in Mechanical Engineering and a PhD in Electrical Engineering. Lou has been programming computers since 1969 when he took his first Fortran course in college. He has written software to control suspensions for high speed ground vehicles, monitor nuclear power plants, lower noise levels in commercial jetliners, compute takeoff speeds for jetliners, locate and identify air and ground

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BEGINNING VISUAL C# EXPRESS is a self-study or instuctor led semester long "beginning" programming tutorial consisting of 10 Chapters explaining (in simple, easy-to-follow terms) how to build a C# Express Windows application. Students learn about project design, the C# Express toolbox, and many elements of the C# language. Numerous examples are used to demonstrate every step in the building process. The tutorial also includes several detailed computer projects for students to build and try. The projects built include a number guessing game, a card game, an allowance calculator, a drawing program, a state capitals game, and several non-violent video games.

BEGINNING VISUAL C# EXPRESS is presented using a combination of over 500 pages of color course notes and actual Visual C# Express examples. No prior programming experience is necessary, but familiarity with doing common tasks using Windows is expected. This tutorial is appropriate for beginning High School Students and Beginning Adults.

BEGINNING VISUAL C# EXPRESS requires Windows 7 or Windows 8 and Visual C# 2012 Express. The Visual C# source code and all needed multimedia files are available for download from the publisher's website (KidwareSoftware.com) after book registration.

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For teachers, parents, home and school!
By paynea54
What is Beginning Visual C# Express and how it works.

These lessons are a highly organized and well-indexed set of lessons in the Visual C# programming environment. Visual C# is a programming environment which allows the user to drag and drop buttons, text boxes, scroll bars, timers and dozens of other visual "controls" to make programs which look like "Windows" programs. They provide a graphical user interface to the user - rather than a text only interface as would be the case if you make "Console C#" projects.

The tutorials provide the benefit of completed real-world applications - fully documented projects from the teacher's point of view. That is, while full solutions are provided for the teacher's (and learner's) benefit, the projects are presented in an easy-to-follow set of lessons explaining the rational for the form layout, coding design and conventions, and specific code related to the problem. The learner may follow the tutorials at their own pace while focusing upon context relevant information. Every bit of the lesson is remembered as it contributes to the final solution to a real-life application. The finished product is the reward, but the student is fully engaged and enriched by the process. This kind of learning is often the focus of teacher training. Every computer science teacher knows what a great deal of work required for projects to work in this manner, and with these tutorials, the work is done by an author who understands the classroom experience. That is extremely rare!

Graduated Lessons for Every Project ... Lessons, examples, problems and projects. Graduated learning. Increasing and appropriate difficulty... Great results.

With these projects, there are lessons providing a comprehensive background on the programming topics to be covered. Once understood, concepts are easily applicable to a variety of applications. Then, specific examples are drawn out so that a learner can practice with the Visual C# form designer. Conventions relating to naming controls and the scope of variables are explained. Then specific coding for the example is provided so that the user can see all the parts of the project come together for the finished product.

After the example is completed, then short problems challenge the user to repeat the process on their own, and finally, Projects provide a "summative" for the unit.

By presenting lessons in this graduated manner, students are fully engaged and appropriately challenged to become independent thinkers who can come up with their own project ideas and design their own forms and do their own coding. Once the process is learned, then student engagement is unlimited! I have seen student literacy improve dramatically as they cannot get enough of what is being presented.

Indeed, lessons encourage accelerated learning - in the sense that they provide an enriched environment to learn computer science, but they also encourage accelerating learning because students cannot put the lessons away once they start! Computer Science provides this unique opportunity to challenge students, and it is a great testament to the authors that they are successful in achieving such levels of engagement with consistency.

My history with the Kidware Software products.

I have used single license or shareware versions for over a decade to keep up my own learning. By using these lessons, I am able to spend time on things which will pay off in the classroom. I do not waste valuable time ensconced in language reference libraries for programming environments and help screens which can never be fully remembered! These projects are examples of how student projects should be as final products - thus, the pathway to learning is clear and immediate in every project.

By following these lessons, I was able to come up with my own projects - An Equation Solver which allows a student to solve any equation that they are likely to encounter in high school, a dice game of Craps, a Financial Calculator covering all grade 12 Financial Math applications, and finally, the game of Mastermind - where I presently have a "Mastermind Hall of Fame" for the best solutions by students over the years. I have made several applications for hardware interfacing in Computer Technology class. I could do all of this only because of these lessons by Kidware Software!

The exciting thing is that all of the above can now be done in Visual C#, when I learned to do the programming initially using Kidware Software's "Learn Visual Basic". For me to go from one language to another is now an inevitable outcome! With these lessons, I am able to concentrate on the higher order thinking skills presented by the problem, and not be chained to a language reference in order to get things done!

If I want to have students use or expand upon projects, then I take advantage of site-license options. I have found it very straight forward to emphasize the fundamental computer science topics that form the basis of these projects when using them in the classroom. I can list some computer science topics which everyone will recognize, regardless of where they teach - topics which are covered expertly by these tutorials:

* Data Types and Ranges
* Scope of Variables
* Naming Conventions
* Decision Making
* Looping
* Language Functions - String, Date, Numerical
* Arrays, Control Arrays
* Writing Your own Methods and Classes and more... it's all integrated into the tutorials.

Any further topics found in secondary school topics (recursive functions, sorting algorithms, advanced data structures such as Lists and Linked Lists, Stacks, Queues, Binary Trees, etc...) derive directly from those listed above. Nothing is forgotten. All can be integrated with the lessons provided.

Quick learning curve for teachers! How teachers can use the product:

Having projects completed ahead of time can allow the teacher to present the design aspect of the project FIRST, and then have students do all of their learning in the context of what is required in the finished product. This is a much faster learning curve than if students designed all of their own projects from scratch. Lessons concentrating on a unified outcome for all makes for much more streamlined engagement for students (and that is what they need, especially in grades 9 and 10), as they complete more projects within a short period of time and there is a context for everything that is learned.

After the process of form-design, naming controls and coding has been mastered for a given set of Visual C# controls, then it is much more likely that students can create their own problems and solutions from scratch. Students are ready to create their own summative projects for your computer science course!

Meet Different States and Provincial Curriculum Expectations and More

Different states and provinces have their own curriculum requirements for computer science. With the Kidware Software products, you have at your disposal a series of projects which will allow you to pick and choose from among those which best suit your curriculum needs. Students focus upon design stages and sound problem-solving techniques from a computer-science perspective. In doing so, they become independent problem-solvers, and will exceed the curricular requirements of secondary schools everywhere.

Computer Science topics not explicitly covered in tutorials can be added at the teacher's discretion. For example, recursive functions could be dealt with in a project which calculates factorials, permutations and combinations with a few text boxes and buttons on a form. Students learn to process information by collecting it in text boxes, and they learn to code command buttons. That is all that is required for this one example of a project-extension. The language, whether it is Visual C#, or Visual Basic, or Java, etc... is really up to the teacher!

Useable projects - out of the box !

The specific projects covered in the Beginning Visual C# tutorials are suitable for grade 9 and above:

Project 1 - Stopwatch
Project 2 - Times Tables
Project 3 - Dice Rolling
Project 4 - State Capitals
Project 5 - Memory Game
Project 6 - Units Conversion
Project 7 - Decode
Project 8 - Frown
Project 9 - Loan Calculator
Project 10 - Checkbook Balancer
Project 11 - Portfolio Manager
Project 12 - Bonus Pong Game

As you can see, there is a high degree of care taken so that projects are age-appropriate.

You can begin teaching the projects on the first day. It's easy for the teacher to have done their own learning by starting with the solution files. Then, they will see how all of the parts of the lesson fall into place. Even a novice teacher could make use of the accompanying lessons. The lessons will provide more than just the coding of the solution - they will provide the correct context for the coding decisions which were made, and provide help in the investigation of related functions. Students then experiment with projects of their own making.

How to teach students to use the materials.

Teachers can introduce the style of presentation (lesson, examples, problem, projects) to the students in such a way that they quickly grasp how to use the lessons on their own. The lessons are provided so that students may trust the order of presentation in order to have sufficient background information for every project. But the lessons are also highly indexed, so that students may pick and choose projects if limited by time.

Highly organized reference materials for student self-study!

Materials already condense what is available from MSDN (which tends to be written for adults) and in a context and age-appropriate manner, so that students remember what they learn. The time savings for teachers and students is enormous as they need not sift through pages and pages of on-line help to find what they need.

How to mark the projects.

In a classroom environment, it is possible for teachers to mark student progress by asking questions during the various design and coding stages. Teachers can make their own written quizzes easily from the reference material provided, but I have found the requirement of completing projects (mastery) sufficient for gathering information about student progress - especially in the later grades.

Lessons encourage your own programming extensions.

Once concepts are learned, it is difficult to NOT know what to do for your own projects.

Once having done my own projects in one language, such as Visual C#, I know that I could easily adapt them to other languages once I have studied the Kidware Software tutorials. I do not believe there is any other reference material out there which would cause me to make the same claim! In fact, I know there is not as I have spent over a decade looking!

Having used Kidware Software tutorials for the past decade, I have to say that I could not have achieved the level of success which is now applied in the variety of many programming environments which are currently of considerable interest to kids! I thank Kidware Software and its authors for continuing to stand for what is right in the teaching methodologies which work with kids - even today's kids where competition for their attention is now so much an issue.

Regards,

Alan Payne, B.A.H. , B.Ed.
Computer Science Teacher

T.A. Blakelock High School
Oakville, Ontario
[...]

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