

Marco Cantù

**Delphi 2007
Handbook**

Piacenza, Italy, June-September 2007

to Lella, the love of my life,
and to Benedetta and Jacopo,
our love come to life.

Acknowledgments

Any book owes a lot to many people, and this one is no exception. Although I had been thinking of this for a while, it was Nick Hodges (the Delphi product manager) who finally pushed me towards Lulu for publishing, and kept asking me how things were progressing. I have discussed publishing and self-publishing with many authors over years. I've certainly had a lot of input from Bruce Eckel, and also the practical experience of Julian Bucknall with Lulu, described on his blog, provided very valuable input¹.

A lot of people in the Delphi community keep providing me ideas, insights, and feedback about what I write. My thank you reaches the entire community, including the "never happy" ones. The first people who helped me when I started with Delphi at Borland were David I (still at the company) and Zack Urlocker (currently at MySQL). I had many chats and a lot of help from present and past Delphi R&D members including Allen Bauer, Danny Thorpe, Mark Edington, Jim Tierny, Steve Threfethen, Corbin Dunn, Jesper Hogstrom and other CodeGear Developer Relations employees including Anders Ohlsson, John Kaster, Christine Ellis, and (in the past) Charlie Calvert. I'm also in touch with many product managers and product evange-

¹ For more information about Bruce Eckel's work see <http://www.mindview.net>, for more about Julian Bucknall see <http://www.boyet.com>.

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lists, including Nick Hodges, Jason Vokes, Malcolm Groves, and Pawel Glowacki.

Special thanks go to my friends and Delphi experts (well, most of them) Bob Swart, Andrea Provaglio, Norm McIntosh, Joanna Pooley, Ray Konopka, Cary Jensen, Brian Long, Holger Flick, Chris Frizelle, Michael Lant, Joanna Carter, Jim Cooper, Christian Gross, Jason Southwell, Olaf Monien, Hadi Hariri, Chad Hower, Mike Orris, Jeroen Plumiers, Fabrizio Bitti, and the entire Italian Delphi&Dintorni Team.

For the actual production of the book I've had a lot of help from my editor Peter Wood and tech reviewers Holger Flick, Fernando Madruga, Sergio Sette, Marco Breveglieri, and (for specific portions) Nando Dessena (dbExpress), Pierre le Riche (memory manager), and Sinan Karaca (InstallAware). The book you are reading would have had many more mistakes and missing details, if it wasn't for their help.

Lacking the formal approach (and money) of an established publisher I had to scout around for available people... and offer some of them limited deals. Given my non-existent graphical ability, and since I wanted to have a nice book cover, I benefited from the help of graphic designer Fabrizio Schiavi² who describes the cover idea as follows:

"I wanted something referring to nature, but also a mathematical reference connecting it to computer science. Therefore, I duplicated the birds using the Fibonacci sequence."

Many thanks go also to the people who share my workload at my training and consulting company, Wintech Italia Srl³, Paolo and Michela. Finally, I could not write this book without "stealing" precious time from my wife and family, so if you can read this you'll have to join with me in thanking Lella, Benedetta, and Jacopo.

The final thanks, as you might have seen in previous books of mine, are for all of the people (at all longitudes and latitudes), many of them unknown and unnoticed, who enjoy life and help to build a better world. Drop of water after drop of water, and you help turn deserts into gardens; love gesture after love gesture, you help bring peace to the world.

2 For more information about Fabrizio Schiavi (and his fonts) see <http://www.fsd.it>.

3 More and more up-to-date information about my training and consulting company on its web site, <http://www.wintech-italia.it>. We currently also sell CodeGear products in Italy.

Introduction

Delphi 2007 is the latest version of a very popular development environment based on the Object Pascal language. Formerly from Borland, now from its CodeGear subsidiary, Delphi has been used for twelve years around the world to build thousands of successful applications. Often regarded as a Swiss-army knife development tool for its versatility and flexibility, it is equally well suited for small shareware applications, company-wide client-server software, Internet tools, Web Service architectures, and much more. Over the last year, CodeGear has refocused on the product, launching the free Turbo Explorer version, reinvigorating the R&D team, getting a new product manager, trying to figure out the customer needs, and releasing a new version (Delphi 2007) in record time. Indeed, as one team member suggested, it is a "Delphi Renaissance".

From Mastering Delphi to this Handbook

After writing 8 Mastering Delphi books, I've come to the decision that the Delphi community needs something different. Rather than writing an all-

4 This was Steve Shaughnessy, and you can find the blog post at: <http://blogs.codegear.com/steveshaughnessy/archive/2007/03/21/33376.aspx>

encompassing book, covering both introductory and advanced material, I think it makes more sense to write a book focused on existing experienced Delphi developers.

As many of these developers have missed the last couple of versions of Delphi, the aim of the book is to bring them up to speed covering the most important features added since Delphi 7. In most cases the material goes into some depth as it is not meant for beginners. Some of the new technologies, though, are only briefly covered as a way of introduction.

In the book there are some references to material in *Mastering Delphi 2005* (written by myself and published by Sybex, now an imprint of Wiley), there is a lot from my "Delphi 2006 Update Ebook" (freely available online at my web site), and a clear focus on what's new in Delphi 2007 for Win32, the version of Delphi that this book is focused on.⁵ This also implies that this book exclusively covers the Delphi Win32 personality as it does. I might as well come up with a specific Delphi for .NET book, but I think that one of the advantages of a smaller publication should be its focus. The focus here is Win32 development for Windows 2000, Windows XP and Windows Vista, the three platforms Delphi 2007 officially supports.

Formatting and Conventions

This book is published in Lulu's Crown Quarto Format, 7.44" x 9.68". I used the Georgia font for the text, a Verdana font for the headings, and a Lucida Console font (the same I use by default in the Delphi IDE) for the code:

```
| // this is a sample comment
```

Book conventions are very limited. Keyword and symbol names in the text are in a special font, as in "TObject is the base class". I decided to use footnotes rather than in-line notes as they should be less distractive from the text flow. At the same time, using footnotes I felt more free to add extra text and personal annotations, web site references, and more. Many tech editor comments ended up in notes.

⁵ The book actually covers Update 1 of Delphi 2007 for Win32, released in June 2007.

Examples and Source Code

As it is true for my past books, there are plenty of examples you can learn from and experiment with. The examples discussed here are freely available on line. You'll find the specific address for the code at the main page of my site devoted to the book:

| <http://www.marcocantu.com/dh2007>

The source code for this book is copyrighted freeware. The copyright prevents you from republishing the code in print media or on the Internet without the prior permission of the author.

Seminars and Consulting

I teach a two-day "**Migrating to Delphi 2007**" seminar onsite at company locations worldwide or at my company site in Italy. The class can be included in a longer training session also covering many classic and advanced Delphi topics, from data access to dynamic architectures, from advanced language topics to XML and Web development in Delphi. Refer to my web site for more details. Online seminars are currently under evaluation.

About the Author

My name is Marco Cantù. I'm the author of the best-selling Mastering Delphi book series and I'm considered a prominent figure in the Delphi community. I was one of the recipients of the "Spirit of Delphi" award in 1999, together with Dutch Delphi guru Bob Swart.

I teach and consult on Delphi, and also on XML-related and Web 2.0 technologies, as you can partially see on my AJAX-focused web site:

| <http://ajax.marcocantu.com>

My main web site, mostly covering books and Delphi programming, is at:

| <http://www.marcocantu.com>

My home-grown "Marco Tech Blog" can be found at:

| <http://blog.marcocantu.com>

I live in Piacenza⁶, an ancient town in northern Italy, with my wife Lella (an interior designer), our two kids Benedetta and Jacopo, and our dog Lillo.

Contacting the Author

To contact me you can certainly email me at marco.cantu@gmail.com. There are other options though. I run a newsgroup with an area devoted to my books. This can be reached via NNTP with the following settings⁷:

```
server: news.marcocantu.com
username: delphi
password: spirit
```

and over the web a the URL:

```
http://delphi.newswhat.com/geoxml/forumlistgroups?
area=marcocantu
```

If you looking for generic support on Delphi, and not something related with the book, consider CodeGear's own newsgroup. If you want to receive a monthly newsletter from me, with information about my work (and some Delphi news), you can sign up for my Google Group at:

```
http://groups.google.com/group/marco_cantu
```

This is an area where only I can write, not a real newsgroup, and where you can also find mirrored download files with book examples and the like.

Looking for Tech Support?

If you are looking for professional support, I offer it as well. You can have a protected newsgroup area specific to your company, where you can "privately" discuss any issue, from coding problems to architectural ones, with me and other top Delphi experts, for a very low annual fee.

Check out <http://support.marcocantu.com> for more details about this brand new offer.

⁶ To figure out where my town is and see some aerial pictures you can refer to Google Maps, at <http://maps.google.com/maps?q=piacenza,italy>.

⁷ The NNTP server uses a password shared by all users to prevent newsgroup spam.

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