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# Opening and Running a Visual Basic .NET Program

## In this chapter you will learn how to:

- ✓ *Start Microsoft Visual Studio .NET.*
- ✓ *Use the Visual Studio development environment.*
- ✓ *Open and run a Visual Basic program.*
- ✓ *Change a property setting.*
- ✓ *Move, resize, dock, and auto hide tool windows.*
- ✓ *Use online Help and exit Visual Studio.*

Microsoft Visual Basic .NET is an important upgrade and enhancement of the popular Visual Basic development system, a product that enjoys an installed base of more than 3 million programmers worldwide. This chapter introduces you to what's new in Visual Basic .NET and gives you the skills you will need to get up and running with the Visual Studio .NET development environment quickly and efficiently. You should read this chapter whether you are new to Visual Basic programming or you have used previous versions of the Visual Basic compiler. The most important advantage of Visual Basic .NET is that it has been designed to make you even more productive in your daily development work—especially if you need to use information in databases or create solutions for the Internet—but an important additional benefit is that once you become comfortable with the development environment in Visual Studio, you can use the same tools to write programs for Microsoft Visual C++ .NET, Microsoft Visual C# .NET, and other third-party tools and compilers.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to start Visual Basic and how to use the integrated development environment to open and run a simple program. You'll learn the

essential Visual Studio menu commands and programming procedures; you'll open and run a simple Visual Basic program named MusicTrivia; you'll change a programming setting called a property; and you'll practice moving, sizing, docking, and auto hiding tool windows. You'll also learn how to get more information by using online Help and how to exit the development environment safely.

## Upgrade Notes: What's New in Visual Basic .NET?

Upgrading from Visual Basic 6 to Visual Basic .NET involves a unique set of challenges—I'm very happy with the new features, but I also notice that more than a few familiar tools and controls have really changed. For this reason, I begin each chapter in this book with a sidebar that highlights the changes. Remember that you don't need *any* programming experience to learn Visual Basic .NET using this book. But if you have some Visual Basic 6 knowledge already, I want to give you a short executive summary. So to begin with, here is my list of Visual Basic .NET upgrade notes for this chapter:

- Visual Basic is now fully part of Visual Studio—it shares the Visual Studio development environment with Microsoft Visual C++ .NET, Microsoft Visual C# .NET, and several other programming tools. Although Visual Basic .NET and Visual C++ .NET are still different programming languages, they share the same development environment.
- As part of its new development environment, Visual Studio offers a new Get Started pane, which shows recently used projects and lets you open new or existing source files. Additional links in the Get Started pane provide you with access to Visual Studio Web sites, profile information, and contacts in the Visual Studio development community.
- The Visual Studio development environment contains several new and modified programming tools. The Project window is now called Solution Explorer, and there is a new context-sensitive help window called Dynamic Help. You'll find that the Toolbox has changed quite a bit—it's now subdivided into several functional categories, from Windows Forms to Web Forms to Data.
- Most of the programming tool windows have an auto hide feature to hide the tool as a tab when it isn't needed.