1

Introduction

This *Quick Start* provides an overview of the C++Builder development environment to get you started using the product right away. It also tells you where to look for details about the tools and features available in C++Builder.

What is C++Builder?

C++Builder is an object-oriented, visual programming environment for rapid application development (RAD). Using C++Builder, you can create highly efficient 32-bit Windows applications with a minimum of manual coding. C++Builder provides all the tools you need to develop, test, debug, and deploy applications, including a large library of reusable components, a suite of design tools, application and form templates, and programming wizards. These tools simplify prototyping and shorten development time.

Where to find information

Information on C++Builder is available in a variety of forms:

- Online Help
- Printed documentation
- Inprise developer support services
- Inprise and borland.com Web sites

For information about new features in this release, refer to What's New in the online Help and to the borland.com Web site.

Online Help

The online Help system provides detailed information about user-interface features, language implementation, programming tasks, and the components in the Visual Component Library (VCL). It includes the core Help files listed in Table 1.1

Table 1.1   Online Help files

Help file	Contents	Audience
What's New (BCB5new.hlp)	Introduces new features and enhancements to C++Builder for the current release and includes links to detailed information. Includes details on upgrading from a previous release.	Developers who upgraded to this release
Using C++Builder (Bcb5.hlp)	Introduces the development environment and explains how to work with forms, projects, and packages. Discusses basic concepts of component-based object-oriented programming. Includes two step-by-step tutorials to help you learn C++Builder.	New C++Builder developers, people with questions about the IDE
Visual Component Library Reference (Bcb5vcl.hlp)	Presents a detailed reference on VCL classes, global routines, types, and variables. Entries show the unit where each class is declared; its position in the hierarchy; a list of available properties, methods, and events; and code examples.	All C++Builder developers
Standard C++ Library Reference (Bcb5scl.hlp)	Presents a detailed reference on the Standard C++ Library.	All C++Builder developers
C Runtime Library Reference (Bcbrtl.hlp)	Presents a detailed reference on the C Runtime Library.	All C++Builder developers
Programming with C++Builder (Bcb5prog.hlp)	Provides details about using the VCL components and illustrates common programming tasks such as handling exceptions, creating toolbars and drag-and-drop controls, and using graphics.	All C++Builder developers
Developing Database Applications (Bcb5dbd.hlp)	Explains design of single- and multi-tiered database applications, including database architecture, datasets, fields, tables, queries, and decision support.	Database developers
Developing Distributed Applications (Bcb5dap.hlp)	Explains how to create distributed applications. Includes information on CORBA, DCOM, MTS, HTTP, and sockets.	Developers writing client/server applications
Creating Custom Components (Bcb5cw.hlp)	Provides information on writing custom C++Builder components. Explains how to design, build, test, and install a component.	Developers writing C++Builder components
Developing COM-based Applications (Bcb5com.hlp)	Explains how to build distributed applications using COM. Topics include COM objects, MTS components, Automation servers and controllers, ActiveX controls, and type libraries. Explains how to modify generated type libraries using C++Builder's Type Library Editor.	Developers writing client/server applications

Table 1.1 Online Help files (continued)

Help file	Contents	Audience
C++Builder Language Guide (Bcb5lang.hlp)	Describes the C++ programming language including lexical elements, language structure, preprocessing directives, keywords, and C++ topics such as namespaces, polymorphism, and scope.	All C++Builder developers
Command-line tools (Bcb5tool.hlp)	Provides information about using many tools that are included with C++Builder such as the C++ compiler, the incremental linker, the resource linker, MAKE, GREP, and several conversion tools.	Developers who want to use additional tools from the command line
Object Pascal Reference (Del5op.hlp)	Provides a formal definition of the Object Pascal language and includes topics on file I/O, string manipulation, program control, data types, and language extensions.	Developers who need Object Pascal language details
Borland OpenHelp (OpenHelp.hlp)	Explains how to configure the C++Builder Help system. The OpenHelp utility lets you add or remove any Windows Help (.HLP) file.	Developers wanting to customize the C++Builder Help system

You will also find Help on additional products that are supplied with some versions of C++Builder, such as:

- Integrated Translation Environment (ITE) Help
- InterBase Express Reference Help
- Borland Database Engine (BDE) Help
- BDE Administrator Help
- Database Explorer Help
- Local SQL, SQL Builder, and SQL Monitor Help
- TeamSource Help
- CodeGuard Help
- TurboAssembler Help
- Package Collection Editor Help
- Help Author's Guide (Help Workshop)
- QuickReport Help
- TeeChart Help
- InterBase and InterBase Express Help
- CORBA Component Library Reference Help
- Help for miscellaneous components (FastNet Time, DayTime, Echo, Finger, HTTP, NNTP, POP3, Powersock, SMTP, UDP, URL Encode/Decode, UUprocessor, Stream and Msg components)

All Help files are located in the Help directory under the main C++Builder directory.

For information on customizing your Help system, see "Customizing the Help system" on page 5-9.

Printed documentation

This *Quick Start* is an introduction to C++Builder. To order additional printed documentation, refer to the Web site at shop.borland.com.

Developer support services

Inprise also offers a variety of support options to meet the needs of its diverse developer community. To find out about support offerings, refer to http://www.borland.com/devsupport/.

From the Web site, you can access many newsgroups where C++Builder developers exchange information, tips, and techniques. The site also includes a list of books about C++Builder.

Typographic conventions

This manual uses the typefaces described below to indicate special text.

Table 1.2   Typographic conventions

Typeface	Meaning
Monospace type	Monospaced type represents text as it appears on screen or in code. It also represents anything you must type.
Boldface	Boldfaced words in text or code listings represent reserved words or compiler options.
Italics	Italicized words in text represent C++Builder identifiers, such as variable or type names. Italics are also used to emphasize certain words, such as new terms.
Keycaps	This typeface indicates a key on your keyboard. For example, "Press *Esc* to exit a menu."