# Visual Studio Celebrates 10th Year, Sets Road Map for Future

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Microsoft's Visual Studio celebrated its 10th anniversary by adding a new component, and the company sets its road map for the future with new releases code-named Orcas and Rosario.

Microsoft threw itself a party and celebrated the 10th anniversary of its Visual Studio tool set by acquiring a new component that will find its way into the next version of the product.

At the VSLive conference here, Prashant Sridharan, senior product manager for Visual Studio at Microsoft, delivered a keynote address touting the 10-year history of Microsoft's flagship tool and announced the company's acquisition of devBiz Business Solutions and its TeamPlain Web Access technology. TeamPlain is a Web interface for Microsoft's TFS (Team Foundation Server) that allows managing work items, documents, reports, and source control repositories.

"This gives us a Web front end to everything in TFS," Sridharan said. "This product is free for download for all Team Foundation Server customers. In the interim we'll ship it as a Power Tool, and we'll make it part of 'Orcas'" when that ships. "Orcas" is the code name for the next major release of Visual Studio.

"We looked at how customers were using TFS," and they were coming in through Microsoft's Excel, Project and Team Explorer, said Michael Leworthy, a product manager in the Visual Studio Team System group at Microsoft. "So when we looked at TeamPlain, we saw it as a great way

for customers to access TFS, and we made the decision to acquire that technology."

Sridharan said the 10-year anniversary of Visual Studio also marks his 10th year at the company.

"We shipped Visual Studio 97 in February 1997," he said. But that product was not even a unified IDE (integrated development environment), Sridharan said. However, Version 6.0 of the product began to build on the vision of a unified IDE.

And "Visual Studio 2002 brought that IDE story to the forefront" by integrating lots of new functionality into the product, Sridharan said. Yet, the new functionality that enabled developers to do more with the tool set also led to collaboration problems, as the scope and complexity of the applications increased.

Microsoft addressed this in Visual Studio 2005 and is doing more to address it in Visual Studio Team System and in the upcoming Orcas release, the company said.

"Orcas is all about programmer productivity, team collaboration, and the latest and greatest platform technologies like LINQ - Language Integrated Query - and AJAX - Asynchronous JavaScript and XML - ," Sridharan said.

In his keynote, Sridharan also talked about Rosario, the version of Visual Studio Team System that follows the Orcas release.

"Rosario is centered around organization and collaboration," Sridharan said. "We'll also focus on QA - quality assurance - and testing - doing for testers what we've done for developers over the years."

Also, Sridharan said throughout the rollout of both Orcas and Rosario, Microsoft will be "looking at what Team System tools we can migrate down" and put into the professional version of Visual Studio. For instance, unit testing and code coverage are migrating down to the professional product, he said.

Sridharan said the launch of Visual Studio 2005 was his favorite because he had a lot of involvement with it. But the first .Net version of the product, Visual Studio 2002, was perhaps the product's most important launch.

"Bill Gates demo-ing the product on Valentine's Day of 2002, that was a seminal moment in Microsoft's history, and a seminal moment for Visual Studio and for developers," he said.

There are more than 1 million professional developers using Visual Studio, and there have been more than 10 million downloads of Visual Studio Express. according to Sridharan. In addition, 25 percent of all Visual Studio Team System users are using Team Suite, the suite of life cycle tools that provides each member of a core software development team with the most comprehensive collection of tools for software design, development and test, he said.

Moreover, Microsoft has had more than 1 million forum posts on MSDN (Microsoft Developer Network) since the launch of Visual Studio 2005, "and we've fixed over 400 user suggestions; that's a testament to our transparency initiative paying off," Sridharan said.

Meanwhile, Microsoft has launched a new road map for its professional developer products. The Orcas release is expected by year end, according to a blog post by Scott Guthrie, a general manager in the Microsoft Developer Division.

There will be a second beta of Orcas in the middle of this year, Microsoft said. And the Orcas release of Team System will feature Visual Studio Team Suite, Team Edition for Software Architects, Team Edition for Software Developers, Team Edition for Software Testers and Team Foundation Server.

The Orcas release will also feature "code metrics to show cyclomatic complexity calculations," Leworthy said. "This tells a developer if their code is too complex and will provide suggestions on how to make it simpler," he said. In addition, with this information, developers can identify complex and error-prone code and prioritize it for testing.

In addition, the release will feature profiler support for WCF (Windows Communication Foundation) applications to enable profiling of WCF-based applications to improve application performance, Leworthy said. The product also will enable developers to customize and extend code correctness policies, Leworthy said

There are also many new features for testing, including Web test validation rule improvements, better Web test data binding and improved load test results management, and the Web Test recorder now records AJAX requests and JavaScript pop-ups.

Moreover, TFS features continuous integration and build improvements to enable members of a team to integrate their work frequently, automate builds and integrate tests to detect integration errors as quickly as possible, Leworthy said. It also features support for multithreaded builds with the new MSBuild.

Some of the major scenarios and features in the Rosario version of Visual Studio Team System will include joint prioritization and management of IT projects through integration with Microsoft Project Server; project management across multiple projects for proactively load-

balancing resources according to business priorities; full traceability to track project deliverables against business requirements and the ability to conduct rapid impact analysis of proposed changes; comprehensive metrics and dashboards for shared visibility into project status and progress against deliverables; new features to enable developers and testers to quickly identify, communicate, prioritize, diagnose and resolve bugs; and integrated test case management to create, organize and manage test cases across both the development and test teams, the company said.

In addition, Rosario will feature testing automation and guidance to help developers and testers focus on business-level testing rather than repetitive, manual tasks; quality metrics for a "go/no-go" release decision on whether an application is ready for production and has been fully tested against business requirements; rapid integration of remote, distributed, disconnected and outsourced teams into the development process; easy customization of process and guidance from Microsoft and partners to match the way customers' teams work; and improvements to multiserver administration, build and source control, Microsoft said.

"It's been a great 10 years," Sridharan said. "Developers are the best customers you can ever market to or build products for."

Asked about competition from the Eclipse open-source development platform, Sridharan said Visual Studio stacks up well feature-for-feature against Eclipse, but he said he believes the Visual Studio ecosystem is stronger and more vibrant.

"We don't just build products, we help companies build businesses," he said.