

Creating a setup in Visual Studio

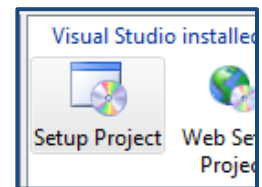
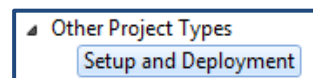
Every program needs a setup. There are many ways to create a setup file for our application, but in this tutorial i will show you 2 ways: Inno Setup and Visual Studio Setup Project.

In comparison with the VS Setup Project, Inno Setup is free, unfortunately it doesn't have some important function such as assigning file types (Example: .pdf to be opened with Adobe Reader), and commands when double-clicking out own file format. Also, it is a little hard to use because the entire setup project is based on a script (luckily there is a wizard that can help you with some basic steps), still it is a free method to create a setup for your application.

Visual Studio Setup Project, on the other hand, is very easy to use and learn, the project type doesn't actually cost anything, but you need Visual Studio Professional for it.

Creating the setup project

In your application solution, right-click and select „New Project”. In the „Add Project” window, go to „Other Project Types” in „Setup and Deployment”. From there, click on the „Setup Project” icon.

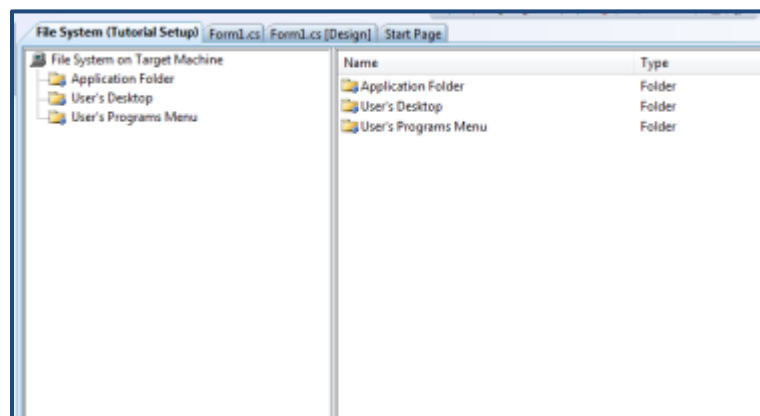


Making the setup

Great, now we have a setup project. Now, let's configure it.

File system

When you just created the setup project, this window will appear:



What you have to do here, is to specify what do you want the installer to put in the computer running the setup. The „Application Folder” is the folder where the application is installed. Double-click on it in the left panel. The right panel will be empty, since we did not configured anything to be added there.

Now, let's add the project output (your application and all its references) to our setup. In the solution window, right-click on the setup project, go to „Add>>Project Output“. A new window will open. You will select from there what you want to add from your application, except the executable. Select the primary output and press “Enter”.

As you can see, in the application folder the output (along with its references will be added automatically).

To create a shortcut on the user's desktop, go to “User's Desktop” and right-click “Create New Shortcut”. Select the file you want to create a shortcut to and click “OK”.

That shortcut will not have an icon though, so you must go to its properties, add an icon to the application folder and select it as an icon for the shortcut.

File Types

In case your application has files of their own format, you must create an icon for them, and use a command to open your application when they are double-clicked. In this case, what you want to do is to right-click on the setup project, go to “View>>File Types”. In the new tab, right-click and select “Add File Type”. You can change its properties (such as the icon and what to do when you click on it).

User Interface

In case you have a license to your application, you might want to add it to the installation. If you do, right-click on the project setup and select “User Interface”.

In the new tab, right-click the “Start” forms group, and select “Add Dialog”. Then select what kind of dialog do you want to add, and modify its properties from the properties window.

Building

Good, now you have the setup ready. Right-click the setup project and select build. After that, right-click it again and select “Install”. You can find your setup file (That is “.msi” by the way) in the project file in the debug folder.

Copyright

This tutorial has been made by Davide Vitelaru.

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Also, visit my website for more interesting resources, class libraries and all sorts of tutorials.

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