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## Developer

**November 7, 2005**  
**Microsoft Readies Visual Studio 2005**  
 By [Jim Wagner](#)

Microsoft ([Quote](#), [Chart](#)) may be the lead cheerleader for its new IDE ([define](#)) for Visual Studio 2005, but it wants to enlist more developers in the cause.

Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO, and other Redmond executives are set to ramp up that rally for Visual Studio 2005, SQL Server 2005 and BizTalk 2006 at a launch event at today in San Francisco.

Visual Studio 2005 was [released to manufacturing](#) (RTM) Oct. 27.

The latest Visual Studio release reflects how far the tools have come since Microsoft's launch of its .NET platform five years ago, followed by its [push](#) to build applications for Web services ([define](#)). At the time, Web services was a relatively unknown term in the business world.

The initial version of .NET was a [mixed bag](#). Bill Gates, Microsoft chairman and chief software

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architect, gave it [a lukewarm "C"](#) [grade](#) during beta tests in 2002.

Some of the uncertainty that trailed the release of Visual Studio a few years back has been banished for this release. Visual Studio 2005 is integrated and enhanced with [.NET Framework version 2](#).

"They've extended pretty much everything in their system: in the runtime, in the [common language runtime (CLR ([define](#)))], the new ASP.NET," said Ran Gishri, vice president of product marketing at application resolution developer Identify Software. "If you're looking from a developer's perspective I don't think there's any doubt that you want to go with Visual Studio 2005. We're seeing that with our customers; everyone is in the process of migrating or has plans to migrate."

Microsoft's bid to build excitement about today's release may benefit from its support of [64-bit computing](#).

While 64-bit computing hardware has been around for years, software support for the technology has not kept pace.

That's changing. Chip makers Intel and AMD [are racing](#) to release more dual-core 64-bit systems on the hardware side while application development teams are building momentum with applications for 64-bit memory systems. Microsoft's support of 64-bit computing with SQL Server 2005 and Visual Studio 2005 gives it more heft to argue that its products are up to major enterprise database tasks where IBM's DB2 and Oracle's products dominate.

Rob Caron, a programming writer for Microsoft, recently wrote in his [blog](#) that Visual Studio 2005 is itself a 32-bit application, but that the IDE in the release allows developers to specify if they want to compile their program as a 32-bit application or 64-bit application.

When compiled as a 64-bit application, the developer can opt to have it run as a native application on a 64-bit operating system or under Windows on Windows 64 (WOW64), a 32-bit computing emulator ([define](#)) for 64-bit operating systems.

Visual Studio 2005 also arrives in an integrated package with [SQL Server 2005](#).

Developers will now be able to use VB, Visual C++ and Visual C# to build procedural objects for SQL Server 2005. Officials said the ability to write code for the database will result in greater security for these objects as well as gains in performance and stability.

Another new feature to the Visual Studio fold is Visual Studio Team System (VSTS), a roles-based application suite for collaborative development in the enterprise. Similar to Borland's ([Quote](#), [Chart](#)) [Core product line](#), VSTS is designed with the hope to take the platform into the application lifecycle management (ALM) arena.

Visual Studio 2005 comes in four editions. At the top end, there's VSTS, followed by Professional Edition for small-team projects at a company or department. Express and

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Standard Editions are targeted at the hobbyists and novice developers and Team System, the enterprise offering, is focused on remote collaboration.

Microsoft released the [pricing information](#) on its editions earlier this year.

A fifth edition, Tools for Microsoft Office, allows developers to write add-ons to Word and Excel. A matrix of the five products and its supported features can be found [here](#).

Microsoft's programmers burned the midnight oil in their quest to make the programming languages supported by Visual Studio easier, notably Visual Basic (VB). Microsoft ruffled the feathers of many VB developers in the transition from VB 6 to VB.NET, which made coding more time-consuming, and many still cling to VB 6.

The something-for-everyone feel to Visual Studio 2005 is something Carl Zetie, an analyst at research vendor Forrester Research, has noticed with the developers he's talked to about Visual Studio 2005. He expects to see more developers and IT shops move to new platform rather than take a wait-and-see approach. However, that expected success doesn't mean there won't be any challenges, especially with its top-end Visual Studio edition.

"The biggest challenge for Microsoft is that the traditional audience for Visual Studio is people who worry about development, not people who worry about the lifecycle," Zetie said. "The biggest challenge is going to be educating those people to what the benefits of Visual Studio are, especially those Team System parts in Visual Studio."



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