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Special Issue

Windows 8

COLUMNS

Microsoft

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Expanding Your Visual Studio 2012 Toolbox

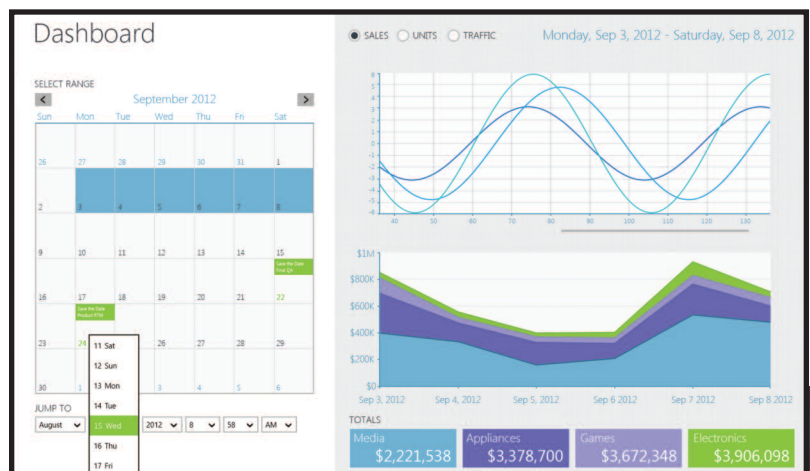## Developer Tools for WinRT XAML and JavaScript

Windows 8 opens up a whole new market for developers who want to create applications for commercial and mobile users. Opportunities to innovate, fill in gaps, and add features that make development easier and more powerful arise each time Microsoft introduces a new application platform or technology. Rather than developers having to write their own controls, like charts, calendars, and datagrids, they may access reusable ones from Microsoft Visual Studio Partners like ComponentOne. Developers have come to expect quality controls that boost productivity from ComponentOne; the company plans to meet their expectations by creating some of the first WinRT XAML and JavaScript controls for Modern UI-style applications. This article provides an overview of these latest Windows 8 development tools.
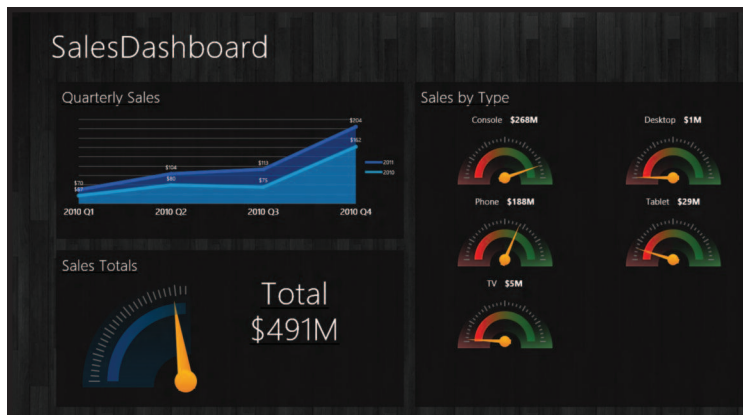
Filling the Gap

Most Windows 8 developers will need to display or gather DateTime values somewhere in their apps. The standard control libraries do not include any calendars or DateTime editors. This is where ComponentOne Studio for WinRT XAML becomes absolutely necessary, as it gives you seven globalized DateTime and calendar controls that work out of the box. This makes developers lives a lot easier by not having to reinvent the wheel, so to speak.

Making Your Apps More Powerful

The tablet nature of Windows 8 will inspire a lot of "touch-first" dashboard apps, and most agree that great dashboards need some form of data visualization. Charts and gauges can be very complex controls to write from scratch, so ComponentOne is taking advantage of their existing XAML and JavaScript libraries to bring developers full-featured and powerful controls right out of the gate. It's not typical to see such advanced controls so early in a platforms life, but the similarities between existing platforms and WinRT are so great

that it makes sense to share code and deliver similar controls. It means developers get familiar control APIs across multiple platforms, as well as a clearer migration path when the next UI platform of tomorrow arrives.

Windows 8 developers need access to charts and gauges to build powerful dashboards in record time. Using out-of-the-box controls is as easy as binding to a data set and setting a few properties to customize the appearance. The ComponentOne chart controls support many chart types like area, line, scatter, bar, pie, and financial. They have been modified for a touch environment with new gesture-based manipulation modes. Users can slide, pinch, and tap a plot for added interactivity. The gauge controls include various modern looking linear and radial designs. And like all of the other desktop and web controls, the WinRT ones also support a common theming technology that will make styling controls a quick and painless process.
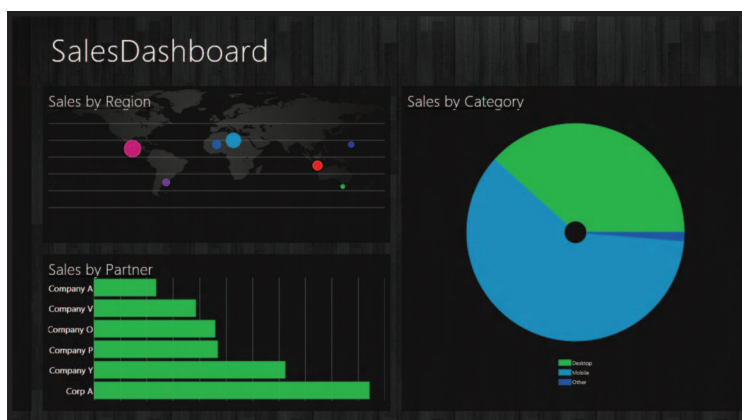
Innovating

Enabling innovative, cutting-edge experiences are key factors to being successful. ComponentOne plans to introduce several new live tile-inspired controls that make it easier to create a Modern UI style around typical business objects. There are also plans for ComponentOne to support many of their innovative controls, such as the popular PdfViewer and RichTextBox. These controls enable users to display PDF and edit HTML content entirely in XAML.

Best known for their grids on the desktop and web platforms, ComponentOne plans to bring that success to Windows 8. While standard in most platforms, ComponentOne will be re-imagining

their data grids for a Modern UI with their GridView for JavaScript developers and FlexGrid for XAML developers. Grids such as these enable powerful, tabular data display and analysis that developers won't get out of the box with the standard controls.

One of the big issues in moving from the desktop to mobile environments, like Windows Phone and Windows 8, is performance. Performance is a top consideration for ComponentOne, so many of the controls root level architecture has been revamped for a flawless, fast, and fluid experience. New paradigms for user interaction, like drag and drop, have also been re-invented for the environment.

Strategizing for the Future

The excitement level is high with Windows 8 and with this may come anxiety as every developer determines how their development path will adapt or change. Companies like ComponentOne offer developers a sense of silent confidence as they navigate this new era of development. The strategy from ComponentOne is to have code-compatible libraries from Silverlight, WPF, or Windows Phone to WinRT and from ASP.NET Web Forms or MVC to WinRT. This will position the company to be the only component vendor that developers need for all of their development efforts today and tomorrow.

To learn more about ComponentOne and to gain access to free trial downloads and samples with source code, visit http://c1.ms/winrt