Subject: Sad...
Posted by [mirek](#) on Wed, 27 May 2009 08:28:33 GMT
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http://tech.slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=09/05/26/2249208

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by [unodgs](#) on Thu, 28 May 2009 06:26:15 GMT
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luzr wrote on Wed, 27 May 2009 04:28http://tech.slashdot.org/article.pl?sid=09/05/26/2249208
It's indeed sad that no one knows TheIDE (and CodeLite as well ,I didn't know this one too - but I stopped looking after I found upp)
TheIDE is definetly worth promoting especialy modular concept of project organizing. Some time ago I was thinking about making screencast regarding GridCtrl. Same thing could be done about TheIde.
Right now I'm working on a web part of my app and I chose recess framework (www.recessframework.org). On the main page there are excelent one-minute long videos. Not too long - not boring - enough to get someone's attention. We could have something similar.

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by [mr_ped](#) on Thu, 28 May 2009 08:27:26 GMT
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Well, you have to get into slashdot news, being in comments will not cut it.

Then again the site may be slashdotted then.

And the question what news would made it so far, isn't it time for yet another stable release with some extra feature?

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by [gprentice](#) on Thu, 28 May 2009 11:36:20 GMT
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I can think of several reasons why U++ is relatively unknown.

 Documentation is incohesive. Where is the table of contents? Where are the search facilities? How do I get started? How do I set up compilers? How do I start a project? What do I have to learn? How do I use the help? How do do I use the editor? How do I use TheIDE? How do I use

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the GUI designer? Where is the overview of available libraries, widgets and general capability? What things are missing?
 U++ seems to be aimed at programmers with above average competency and experience in C++ and GUI toolkits.
 Programmers have to learn a new type of STL and obscure new concepts such as "pick behavior".
 U++ is unconventional in several ways.
 U++ is a one man band. Very few commercial operations would take a chance on U++ when big corporations like Microsoft and Embarcadero (or whoever) provide free toolkits that probably do everything U++ can do (except Linux) and are very mature.

I'm guessing most people don't get as far as finding out what U++ strengths are and aren't sold by claims of "radical reduction of code complexity" and comparisons of program sizes.

This is of course, entirely my opinion so don't be too sad as I could easily be wrong.

Graeme

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by cbpporter on Thu, 28 May 2009 12:14:21 GMT
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Quote:Documentation is incohesive. Where is the table of contents? Where are the search facilities? How do I get started? How do I set up compilers? How do I start a project? What do I have to learn? How do I use the help? How do do I use the editor? How do I use TheIDE? How do I use the GUI designer? Where is the overview of available libraries, widgets and general capability? What things are missing?
I agree that documentation is incohensive and that U++ is too unconventional. Yet if you look over every page from Manual how many of those questions remain unanswered? And the entire documentation is available to TheIDE with one key press and is searchable, maybe except the comparison pages, FAQ and other general information. I see often such questions, but they are almost as often answered in one of the documentation pages.

Could you please tell me more precisely what information you think it's lacking? Some screenshots and descriptions might be just a little bit out of date since everything evolves so fast, yet it is still easily available and generally accurate.

If you have an idea for a manual page regarding something that you think is missing and would greatly help a newcomer say it and maybe I will write it.

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by gprentice on Thu, 28 May 2009 13:10:44 GMT

I can only give a short answer right now, but...

If you want to improve the "help" in TheIDE - add a "getting started with U++ topic"; add a "using help" topic (e.g. how do I get to Widget documentation; list the names of the relevant examples/ references with each widget; provide a "list of all widgets" as on the website); re-write the "getting started with TheIDE" topic. In "packages, assemblies and nests" (written by me), change "packages are centric to U++" to "In U++, a package corresponds to a project." or something. Also add the tutorials that have been posted in the forum from time to time, and the tutorials from the website. Explain that learning about widgets is done by looking at examples.

I didn't actually say that U++ was "too" unconventional (though it might be!) - just unconventional. e.g. when you start TheIDE, you get a "select main package" dialog with no help button. For new users, this dialog is strange - what is a package? what is a main package? Why not start with the last active package?

Graeme

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by mirek on Thu, 28 May 2009 15:35:38 GMT

mr_ped wrote on Thu, 28 May 2009 04:27Well, you have to get into slashdot news, being in comments will not cut it.

Then again the site may be slashdotted then.

And the question what news would made it so far, isn't it time for yet another stable release with some extra feature?

That does not work. Tried for each major release.

Mirek

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by mirek on Thu, 28 May 2009 15:45:36 GMT

Actually, I agree with Graham. There is a lot to be done.

Well, let us say that since 2008.1, I wanted to address issues in the code first (missing software renderer, unfinished T++, ...) and then 'restart' PR.

I am not 100% finished with the code yet, but I guess we should start laying out plans...

One problem is that I have little energy left (as I have said many times ago) to maintain PR (www, articles, ...).

Mirek

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by mirek on Thu, 28 May 2009 16:02:00 GMT
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gprentice wrote on Thu, 28 May 2009 09:10
Why not start with the last active package?

Actually, it is preselected

But one thing we should concentrate on in the future is to make theide more beginner friendly.

Well, obviously, as it was always the tool for experienced U++ programmers first, it lacks in this department a lot.

That said, I would like to keep "spartan mode" for us...

Mirek

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by cbpporter on Thu, 28 May 2009 16:58:03 GMT
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Maybe we should produce a new GUI layout and have two modes: one for beginners, with a lot of dialogs reduced in complexity and the freed up space dedicated to help windows and stuff and of course the normal mode, which is basically the way things are right now.

We could try to mix U++'s package management with and GUI for the IDE similar to the one of QtCreator. Has anybody seen it? It is extremely lightweight, have a very strange and sparse GUI, yet it is so intuitive that I couldn't believe that that is a C++ GUI and not a toy. It has big tabs for everything and a biiiiig green play button that compiles and runs your application. And under the apparently dumbed down interface there are a lot of features. Not as many and in the TheIDE, but still a great start for a different kind of IDE. Here are some screenshots under MAC, which is quite fitting seeing that it is a MAC like user friendly interface: Here.
And some other resouces: Here.
Or maybe it is not user friendlily at all and I'm used to things beeing more complicated .

Or we could do what Borland did slightly before becoming CodeGear (I may have my history wrong): copy shamelessly Visual Studio. Heck, Kdevelop did that also to a lower extent. And it

worked for both parties because like it or not, Visual Studio is ubiquitous. I haven't worked in VS6 or 7 for quite a while now, but I bet I still know their GUI by heart. I played around with newer versions and they are a lot better, yet somehow familiar.

But these are extreme changes. Just potential ideas. I wouldn't like to loose what TheIDE is. I love it's package management and I plan to break it down even more one day: having the ability to select components from a package with automatic dependency resolution.

So basically the question is: can we take everything that is great about TheIDE and package it so that it is appealing and intuitive to new users of U++?

But while I would like U++ to be the number one toolkit out there (or more realistically the number two because we are never going to overthrow Qt), I'm generally quite happy in our little corner of obscurity. U++ has had a tremendous growth in features even if it has remained pretty much the same. Some usability featured are desired and also a better stability and more releases that don't break anything. But IMO this "spartan mode" has payed off and now there is great tool than nobody else is using out there. I'm using it and pretty much like it for everything that is not C (which is very little right now for me because I'm working almost exclusively in C and building with make files () and I think other people feel the same way. On the other hand pick semantics and either some immature implementations at the time being or lack of understanding from my part did cause problems for me along the way which would have not happened with a mainstream toolkit.

The big advantage of it gaining popularity would be that one could walk up to the boss and say: I want to uses Vector instead of vector. I don't think we'll ever get there because even boost is rarely accepted in some circles, even though parts of it are being added to C++ once in a while.

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by Mindtraveller on Thu, 28 May 2009 18:55:37 GMT
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I always told that making wide PR is inefficient in a situation when U++ has documentation of this kind. U++ is unique in many ways, thus it needs good docs more than others.
Several months ago we had big discussion about docs, manual and PR. I wish I have time to help with manual (even started a skeleton pages). As soon as I have time I`ll try to do everything I can.

P.S. It is common that company has as many manual makers as developers. And it its right IMO.

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by mirek on Fri, 29 May 2009 09:27:37 GMT
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Mindtraveller wrote on Thu, 28 May 2009 14:55I always told that making wide PR is inefficient in a situation when U++ has documentation of this kind. U++ is unique in many ways, thus it needs good docs more than others.
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with manual (even started a skeleton pages). As soon as I have time I`ll try to do everything I can.

P.S. It is common that company has as many manual makers as developers. And it its right IMO.

Indeed.

At least T++ is now quite good, doing reference docs is quite easy, svn infrastructure for docs works and thus there are no more excuses

Mirek

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by mr_ped on Fri, 29 May 2009 10:39:53 GMT
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As the U++ represents major shift in productivity, yet it is aimed at C++ programmers, I think we have a little problem.

No matter how nice the "beginners" mode will look, still you either want to use U++ or not. In the first case there's considerable amount of study ahead of you, and probably several months or couple of years of practice to fully shift to the new U++ level of C++.

So I don't think it's just the lack of beginners "help", the U++ should be also very vocal it's not cheap to switch (but it pays off) and you shouldn't expect it to be completely easy (unless you want to compile your console .cpp app, then all you need is to understand packages/nests and where the binary ends after compilation).

Of course if you will post one day a working "beginners GUI" which will make any newcomer to feel easy (thus proving me wrong), I'll be just glad, but I'm afraid there's only slim chance for that. Although I'm sure the current status can be improved at least for those who are interested to study U++ and learn different things to common C++ + STL + boost. But I don't expect magic fix.

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by gprentice on Sat, 30 May 2009 13:33:07 GMT
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I am completely mystified by the comments about making theIDE more beginner friendly. It is less complicated than Visual studio and C++Builder. What is lacking is information on how to use it. Even where documentation exists, it is hard to find and out of date.

Also I think that "being vocal that it's not cheap to switch to U++" would be completely wrong and achieve nothing other than put people off. I doubt if the learning curve is any worse than wxWidgets, VS, Fox, C++Builder, Delphi or anything else.

There seems to be a large amount of good quality documentation already but as I already said, it's badly organized. I will post another thread about how I think the help should be organized.

Here's an example of problems I have with the help.

I picked the "button" example. I see a call to Format that looks a bit like printf - so I want to find out about Format. Here's what I did. Open help and type Format in the search box - lots of things but nothing about format. Put cursor on Format in button.cpp - try "context goto" - takes me to Format(Date) in TimeDate.cpp - click the little green box and we go to src.tpp which seems to be documentation about Format(Date) with a blue hyper-link looking "Format" which isn't a hyperlink at all. So go back to button.cpp with cursor on Format and try goto definition. Nothing happens. With cursor on Format, try "search symbol" - now click the yellow circle in the navigator bar and we finally get to the definition of Convert::Format in Convert.cpp. Right click the green square and we go to src.tpp which seems to be documentation for Format, but... it doesn't tell me what I want to know. Well, I'm sick of looking so now I give up!

Lets try searching help for "overview" - we get "Overview of U++ containers - NTL". NTL ?? - what the heck is NTL? No sign of the "overview" listed on the website under "getting started with U++". Why is some of the documentation on the website and not in the IDE help.

So lets look at the website "getting started" -> overview. It starts with "whetting your appetite" then - "Ultimate++ promises radical reduction of code complexity" and finishes with "But be careful there" followed by a lot of gibberish! I'm sure there's a lot of important information on the "overview" web page but none of it helped me get started with U++.

How about covering the important topics of using theIDE and the layout designer?

Why is the double drop down arrow thing in theIDE for build mode/method too narrow to read the text and why is it not two separate combo boxes?

Regarding starting with the active package when U++ starts - I would have thought it would be easy to make this optional and disabled for new installations.

I think that improving the "help" would make U++ easier to use and more attractive to newcomers but I suspect it's still going to be hard to convince anyone that it has any advantages over say, wxWidgets, and claims of reduction of code complexity won't convince very many people. A better organized help should make it easier for people to see what U++ capabilities are and how to get started (using the creating a project from scratch topic).

Graeme
(with no H)

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by cbpporter on Sat, 30 May 2009 14:45:35 GMT
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Not the smoothest experience ever. Let me describe what I see.

So I want documentation for the Format in Button example on line 14. If I open search and type Format I get a lot of articles, including ones of interest: Convert, Formatting functions and Text Formatting are all related somehow to formatting. More precisely, Text Formatting describes the function I want.

Using "context go to" takes me to wrong format. A bug. The little blue box display correct documentation for that function. I couldn't follow your instructions about a green box or a hyperlink like Format.

"Go to definition" doesn't work. Actually Format is very complex and if you look at implementation it hides behind some macros which probably makes it harder for the code tracker to pick up it's exact position.

"Search symbol" again does not give results, but if you do a search again while your current file is from Core package, it managed to take me once to Format, but I couldn't reproduce. Area needs a lot of improvement.

Covert::Format isn't the function we are looking for. But the little box shows the right documentation for Convert::Format.

After this you are entitled to give up. But picking a more straightforward function would yield better results. You were unlucky with your choice, but using the system should not depend on luck.

Quote:Regarding starting with the active package when U++ starts - I would have thought it would be easy to make this optional and disabled for new installations.
Without selecting an active package what exactly would you like to edit when TheIDE starts?
Without a package and it's requirements there is no code to edit or compile.

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by gprentice on Sat, 30 May 2009 15:10:34 GMT
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How did you know it was line 14?

"Text formatting" - I probably should have noticed that but I'm unfamiliar with using U++.

Perhaps the little blue box you mention looks green to me - anyway, if you click it, you get taken to a word processor thing (looks like topic++ editor) with info on Format(Date). Actually I didn't really notice this was topic editor before as I was focused on trying to find Format info - anyway, it has the word "format" underlined in blue. Now I know why it doesn't work as a hyperlink - coz I'm in the editor - but I'm "new" and didn't notice I was in the editor. So how do I jump from the code to the docs for that function?

When theIde starts I would like to edit the last active project, like every other editor or IDE I have ever used does - or at least, this is what I think it should do by default because newcomers won't

know how to use the "select package" dialog.

Also, maybe theIDE could cache the stuff that assist++ generates at startup and speed up startup of theIDE.

Graeme

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by mirek on Sat, 30 May 2009 18:01:24 GMT
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gprentice wrote on Sat, 30 May 2009 11:10
When theIde starts I would like to edit the last active project, like every other editor or IDE I have ever used does - or at least, this is what I think it should do by default because newcomers won't know how to use the "select package" dialog.

I agree with the rest, but I repeat that last the project is preselected. Which IMO is much more sensible behaviour.

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by gprentice on Sun, 31 May 2009 10:01:17 GMT
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luzr wrote on Sun, 31 May 2009 06:01gprentice wrote on Sat, 30 May 2009 11:10
When theIde starts I would like to edit the last active project, like every other editor or IDE I have ever used does - or at least, this is what I think it should do by default because newcomers won't know how to use the "select package" dialog.

I agree with the rest, but I repeat that last the project is preselected. Which IMO is much more sensible behaviour.

And I repeat that it's disconcerting to newbies and I suspect is easy to make optional
 http://www.ultimatepp.org/forum/index.php?t=msg&&th= 94&goto=7376#msg_7376

Graeme

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by mirek on Sun, 31 May 2009 11:06:25 GMT
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gprentice wrote on Sun, 31 May 2009 06:01luzr wrote on Sun, 31 May 2009 06:01gprentice wrote on Sat, 30 May 2009 11:10
When theIde starts I would like to edit the last active project, like every other editor or IDE I have ever used does - or at least, this is what I think it should do by default because newcomers won't know how to use the "select package" dialog.

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And I repeat that it's disconcerting to newbies and I suspect is easy to make optional
http://www.ultimatepp.org/forum/index.php?t=msg&&th= 94&goto=7376#msg_7376

Graeme

Well, I guess first thing newbie should do is to try examples.

First run he will be presented with all examples. Next run he will be stuck with the example he selected in previous run. What is more confusing?

It is definitely easy to do this optional, the question is what would be the default..

Mirek

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by gprentice on Sun, 31 May 2009 12:39:26 GMT
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luzr wrote on Sun, 31 May 2009 23:06
Well, I guess first thing newbie should do is to try examples.

First run he will be presented with all examples. Next run he will be stuck with the example he selected in previous run. What is more confusing?

It is definitely easy to do this optional, the question is what would be the default..

You're assuming that the newbie exits theIDE between examples. More likely he will want to try several examples without exiting so has to learn the "select main package thing". This gives me an idea. U++ help needs a quick start topic - how to select an example/package/project and run

it, then how to create a project from scratch.

Brand new installation would default to going straight to theIDE, for newbies.

However, maybe an alternative is for new installations to be presented with an additional startup dialog that explains what the "select main package" dialog is - or even put the explanation directly into the select main package dialog with a hide button.

e.g. "The select main package dialog allows you to select the active package (project). If you are a new user, just click OK."

- is a bit more friendly than expecting newbies to guess at what the dialog does, since "package" is non-intuitive.

Graeme

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by cbpporter on Sun, 31 May 2009 13:22:09 GMT
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And how do you think a new user will select several examples without using the select package dialog? And if you enter TheIDE without selecting a package, it will be completely useless.

It's not like you can just open a .cpp file and compile it. TheIDE is designed to only handle packages. And if by some configuration options it can handle traditional building scheme, I propose we remove it.

We could add a hideable help panel to the select package dialog.

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by gprentice on Sun, 31 May 2009 13:40:43 GMT
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cbpporter wrote on Mon, 01 June 2009 01:22And how do you think a new user will select several examples without using the select package dialog? And if you enter TheIDE without selecting a package, it will be completely useless.

It's not like you can just open a .cpp file and compile it. TheIDE is designed to only handle packages. And if by some configuration options it can handle traditional building scheme, I propose we remove it.

We could add a hideable help panel to the select package dialog.

I feel like I'm hitting my head against a brick wall.

I'm well aware that theIDE has to always have a package selected. I'm also well aware that the select main package dialog is used to open a package - I even wrote the help about it (packages, assemblies and nests).

As I already said, if the select main package dialog is optional at startup, the last active package would be selected, or for brand new installations, a "hello world" example package. Newbies would have to head immediately for the "help" and hopefully find a "quick start" topic rather than being presented with a heterogeneous disorganized collection of help topics and not knowing where to start.

Graeme

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by uncodelite on Sun, 31 May 2009 15:04:42 GMT
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I think when I first use TheIDE, the most concern is how to create a new project, how to add an exist cpp file to the project, and how to set the extra include path, libraries path, etc.

On the first time user use TheIDE, I think open "Getting started with TheIDE" or " http://www.ultimatepp.org/srcdoc$CtrlLib$Tutorial$en-us.html" maybe helpful.

Subject: Re: Sad...
Posted by gprentice on Mon, 01 Jun 2009 00:27:48 GMT
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uncodelite wrote on Mon, 01 June 2009 03:04I think when I first use TheIDE, the most concern is how to create a new project, how to add an exist cpp file to the project, and how to set the extra include path, libraries path, etc.

On the first time user use TheIDE, I think open "Getting started with TheIDE" or " http://www.ultimatepp.org/srcdoc$CtrlLib$Tutorial$en-us.html" maybe helpful.

That's a good idea - maybe a new "quick start" topic. It would keep opening at startup until the user explicitly closed it. The select main package dialog still needs a hide-able help window though.

Graeme