



## Foreword

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A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, I began work on an identity-aware application that would involve programming against Active Directory. At that time, the .NET Framework was at version 1.1, and `System.DirectoryServices` clearly was where I wanted to invest my energy. I was shocked that a book search revealed virtually no hits on this topic. There were a few older books on ADSI programming, many of which were targeted at system administrators who use ADSI scripts to automate much of their day-to-day chores. But there was nothing for me, a .NET developer who simply wanted to write an identity-aware application.

Knowing the tremendous value of having a great technical book by my side, I tried something crazy. I posted an entry on my blog<sup>1</sup> suggesting that if any subject matter experts were interested in putting such a book together, I'd be happy to help by reviewing their work and introducing them to the editors at Addison-Wesley. Apparently, that post rekindled a latent interest in the minds of a bunch of Microsoft MVPs, who just needed a little push to get going. Joe Kaplan and Ryan Dunn threw themselves on the grenade and now here I sit, writing this foreword!

In the meantime, I have been fortunate to be able to review much of this book, and I've learned a great deal about programming `System.DirectoryServices` by reading the draft chapters. Chapter 3 was invaluable when I was building the identity-aware application I mentioned earlier, and overall the book provided a number of insights that I share with students when

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1. <http://pluralsight.com/blogs/keith/archive/2004/10/15/2831.aspx>





xxii ■ Foreword

I teach my security course at Pluralsight. If you are currently doing (or even considering) any work with `System.DirectoryServices`, simply take this book to the checkout counter now, and continue reading this foreword at home. You'll be glad you did.

Directories surround us, but many enterprise programmers aren't aware of the wealth of information on their own domain controllers. For example, it would be wise to avoid building your own "Users" table in SQL Server if you can simply leverage user data in Active Directory. It would be utter folly to create a password database and roll your own authentication protocol on an intranet where you could simply leverage Kerberos. One neat technique I learned from this book was how to use "SID binding" to look up a user's record in Active Directory once you've authenticated that user. These are the sorts of practical techniques used every day by directory programming experts, but you'd be hard-pressed to find them by simply reading the documentation.

I've seen a lot of books written by professional technical writers. For some of them, you can tell that the only leg up the author has over your own experience is that he read the documentation a few weeks before you did. This is not one of those books. Joe and Ryan together have answered literally thousands of questions in public forums such as the ADSI USENET newsgroup at [microsoft.public.adsi.general](http://microsoft.public.adsi.general). They know the pain points that you'll encounter when you program against Active Directory, and this book overflows with practical wisdom as a result.

Thanks for the great work, guys!

—Keith Brown  
Pluralsight  
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