



Foreword

IN MAY OF 2003 I embarked on a smart client journey that is even more relevant and interesting today. I mean, think about it. There is a reason we switched to building Web applications in the late 90s/early 00s—and that reason was the pain of COM-based Windows application deployments and the ease of Web-based deployments. Deployment is also the single most important ingredient to the success of the smart client revolution. Because of .NET's ClickOnce, the smart client revolution is in full swing.

The most misunderstood thing about ClickOnce (and possibly the most misunderstood concept in all of .NET) is the result of the simple five-minute demo that most .NET developers have seen or done. Because of this powerful yet simple demo, most assume that ClickOnce is a simple implementation in the Visual Studio tool, when ClickOnce is actually part of the .NET Framework itself. It is true that ClickOnce is mainly driven through Visual Studio project configuration, tools, and processes—not through code. But ClickOnce is so much more than that simple demo. This is very important and is the reason that this book is so important. This also means that ClickOnce is “industrial strength” enough to allow developers to build deployment tools based on ClickOnce so that network and infrastructure folks can deploy the applications. And there is a .NET ecosystem forming that consists of third-party tools based on ClickOnce technologies.

In addition, the reason this book is so important is also the most intriguing to me. Experts are predicting another paradigm shift in how software applications are delivered and I agree with them. This paradigm shift is the



elimination of company-hosted, server-based applications and the elimination of extranet infrastructure in favor of allowing these applications to live on servers for which these companies purchase a share or processing time. It's a similar model to the one we used when I started in technology twenty-five years ago. I have some gray hair. I have been doing this a long time, which means back in my day I wrote some pretty mean JCL to allocate resources to my colleagues' COBOL applications. In those days, every compile cost money, and all application time was rented on the mainframe. Although clearly not the same, this paradigm shift is interesting because of the similarities.

Microsoft calls this software a service, and we have recently seen the popularity and success of this in a number of software vendors in addition to Microsoft with its Office-Live service. (SalesForce.com is one of them.) ClickOnce is the key technology that will facilitate this paradigm shift, and it will become popular because it is cost effective. Of course, many large companies will likely still carry the expense associated with hosting their own applications, but this type of expense will just not make sense for many small and mid-sized companies who will move to this hosted model for shrink-wrapped and custom applications. ClickOnce will pave the way for this model.

I have had the pleasure to know Brian Noyes for many years. He is a friend and a colleague. We have hiked the Malaysian rain forest together, we have ridden elephants together, and many times we have imbibed a number of malted beverages together—discussing the issues of the day, whether they be in technology or in life. I have also had the pleasure to meet his lovely wife, Robin, and his pride and joy—his son, Nathan. Brian is a fellow Microsoft Regional Director and Microsoft MVP. Brian is a fantastic author and speaker and one heck of a great software architect. There are only a few people in this world who know ClickOnce in any significant depth, and even fewer who could explain it well in a book like this. Brian is one of them. His talent and dedication to this book is a testament to his talent and character.

—*Tim Huckaby*
CEO, InterKnowledge