CODEJOCK GIVES YOUR APPS A PROFESSIONAL, FAMILIAR APPEARANCE

The way an application looks and feels can go a long way toward giving users an impression of professionalism. Developing a good-looking user interface, however, is no small task. Developing a GUI that looks familiar to users or similar to the interface of a product they use alongside it can be even more time-consuming. For user interface components that manage to simultaneously impress users and free up programmers to undertake core application development, many companies rely on Owosso, Mich.-based Codejock Software (www.codejock.com).

Codejock's user interface components leverage the familiar look-and-feel of many of Microsoft's applications, making them that much easier for customers to learn and use. These themes include interface components that look and feel like Office 2003, Office XP, Visio, Visual Studio .NET 2003, Visual Studio 2005, Microsoft Money and others. Developers can also create custom interfaces from these components to provide a look that's uniquely their own.

"Up until this point, our components were available for MFC and ActiveX," says Kirk Stowell, CEO of Codejock. "However, while all of our ActiveX components support C# and VB .NET, we are in the process of rewriting all of them natively for the platform. We've had quite a large MFC following, and many of our customers are making the move to .NET technologies. Our GUI components are sold individually or as bundles. The bundled products are called Xtreme ToolkitPro for Visual C++ MFC, Xtreme SuitePro for ActiveX COM and Xtreme ControlBar Library. The intent is to make all of the components available as pure C# solutions."

KIRK STOWELL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Codejock's Xtreme ToolkitPro and Xtreme SuitePro provide developers with professional, enterprise-grade components for developing user interfaces. Included are an Office-style colorization tool; menu options that include Microsoft Office-style menus, intelligent menus, animation and shadows; enhanced control-bar menus for dockable toolbars, high-color toolbars, color-picker toolbar buttons, tear-off pop-up windows, custom status bars, grid controls, ShortcutBars, Task Panels, property grids, date pickers, calendars and docking windows.

Codejock also includes application and deployment wizards to help developers get started using Xtreme ToolkitPro.

The company's Xtreme SuitePro combines seven of the company's most popular sets of components: Xtreme Calendar, Xtreme CommandBars, Xtreme Docking Pane, Xtreme Property Grid, Xtreme Report Control, Xtreme ShortcutBar and Xtreme Task Panel. Xtreme ToolkitPro combines all of the components found in Xtreme SuitePro, plus all of the features found in the Xtreme Controls package. In all, Xtreme ToolkitPro and Xtreme SuitePro offer hundreds of time-saving, professional components.

According to Stowell, the biggest differentiator between Codejock's components and competing suites from other vendors is quality. "Our products have been engineered from the ground up," he says. "We're not dependent on any open-source technology or freeware source code. We take great pride in the structure and the architecture of our products to ensure that they're stable, well-tested, production-ready components."

The newest addition to Codejock's line of components is its Xtreme Calendar, an Outlook-style calendar component that provides scheduling and appointment management. The data in the calendar can be bound to an external database, XML file or binary file. According to Stowell, it provides embeddable functionality nearly identical to that of Microsoft Outlook 2003.

While the company is busy creating new .NET components, Codejock hasn't neglected its Visual C++ products, which use the Microsoft Foundation Class (MFC) Library and include complete source code for all samples and library components. Similarly, Codejock's ActiveX components are distributed in binary format and include complete source code for all examples. When the C# products become available, they, too, will include complete sample and libarary source code.

The first two components that Codejock will be releasing as native C# products will be its ShortcutBar and Task Panel controls, which are expected to be on the market by the end of the third quarter this year. The company is planning on releasing its C# docking pane before the end of the year.

"Currently, all of our ActiveX products are fully compatible with Visual Studio .NET," Stowell reiterates. "However, right now they are provided as OCX controls that act as an external library in an application. When we finish rewriting our components in native C# code, developers will be able to link them directly into their applications rather than serving in an external component." ❖