The Visual Studio 2008 Object Browser for .Net Namespaces and Assemblies

.Net namespaces and assemblies are "self-documenting" by design. The reason for this is that there is a Microsoft .Net namespace "System.Reflection", which was designed so that its classes, methods and properties can be used to examine the public members of any other .Net namespace or assembly under program control.

This concept is familiar to traditional APL programmers because the .Net Reflection namespace capabilities are analogous to the ability of APL to examine and modify existing functions and create functions under function control (e.g. using □def, □vr, □idlist, etc.).

The “Object Browser” is a Visual Studio 2008 utility which uses the .Net Reflection namespace to browse to any .Net namespace or assembly and then display the public members and other details of them in a convenient GUI. With a bit of study and experience the .Net programmer can understand how and when information in presented in the “Object Browser”.

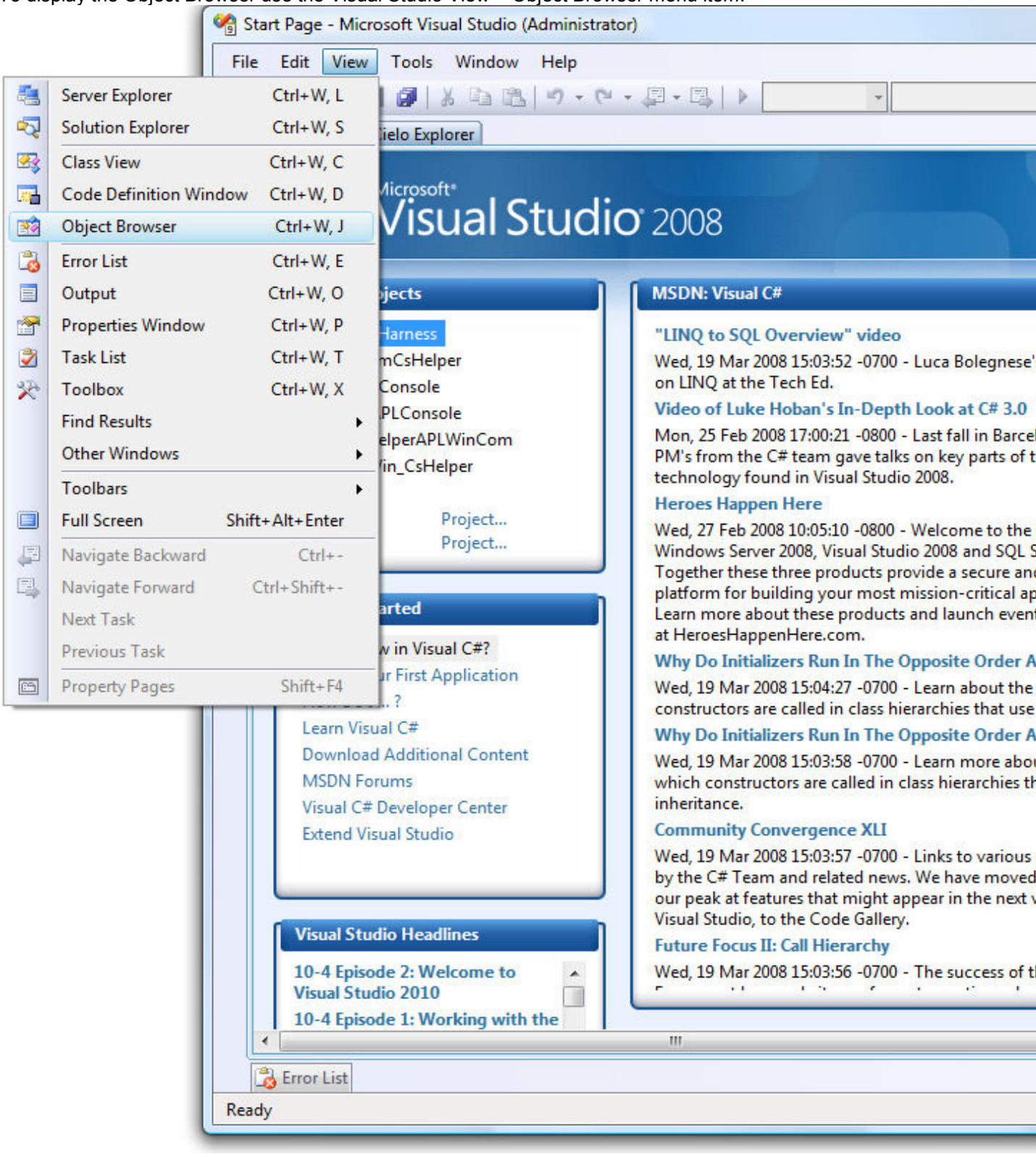
Go here to learn more about the Object Browser: http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/exy1facf.aspx.

Note that the type of information presented in the Object Browser is that which the developers of the assembly decided to make public. Private members and the assembly source code is not visible in the Object Browser.

After identifying a particular member of interest in a .Net assembly, an instance of the class containing that member can be created in a Console project or in the Cielo Explorer. Once an instance is available, Visual Studio Intellisense can be used to learn more about the member.

Finally the Internet can be used to access MSDN for the Microsoft-provided .Net namespaces and assemblies.

To display the Object Browser use the Visual Studio View > Object Browser menu item:



One can browse to a specific .Net assembly and view its members in the Object Browser: