For developing a WCF service application, there are mainly two tools – Microsoft Visual Studio and CodePlex. Microsoft Visual Studio is a complete package of development tools, necessary for developing a large number of diverse applications like ASP.NET web applications, desktop applications, mobile applications, and many more.

Microsoft Visual Studio uses the .NET framework functionality. CodePlex on the other hand is an open-source project hosting site of Microsoft that offers several free tools for WCF service application development.

Microsoft Visual Studio

There are many editions of Microsoft Visual Studio and initially it $VisualStudio2005$ was not an ardent supporter of WCF development. At present, Visual Studio 2008 is the only Microsoft IDE available for the development of WCF service applications.

Nowadays, the latest version of Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 is also a preferred tool for developing WCF service application. There is also a readymade template in Visual Studio for developing WCF service application.

Selection of such a template leads to addition of files for the following purposes:

- Service contract

- Service implementation

- Service configuration

Requisite attributes get added automatically and a simple "Hello World" service gets created by Microsoft Visual Studio without even writing any code.

CodePlex

CodePlex was launched by Microsoft in June 2006 and since then, it has been used by a large number of developers across the world to create .NET projects successfully. Some of the tools offered by CodePlex for developing WCF service applications are as follows:

- **wscf.blue** - This is a Microsoft Visual Studio add-in, and also "contract-first" development toolset that facilitates the defining of the WCF service operations, and generating a code skeleton accordingly. An important link for the same is : http://wscfblue.codeplex.com

- **WCFProxyGenerator** - This is also a Microsoft Visual Studio add-in. The tool is used to extend the client-side generation and offer additional error handling. For having more information regarding this particular development tool, visit http://wcfproxygenerator.codeplex.com

- **WCFMock** - Testing of WCF service can be a complicating task and this development tool offers a convenient solution for the unit testing of WCF services by its useful classes. For more information regarding this tool, visit http://wcfmock.codeplex.com

Another free tool for the development of WCF service applications in an easy manner is WCFStorm. Its LITE version offers many striking features for dynamically invoking and testing WCF services, editing the service binding, modifying WCF URL endpoint, etc.

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