

PostSharp 4.3

User Manual

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PART 1

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

Quick Examples

This section shows a few examples to demonstrate what PostSharp is about:

- [Standard patterns on page 9](#)
- [Thread safety patterns on page 10](#)
- [Implementation of custom patterns on page 11](#)
- [Validation of custom patterns on page 11](#)

Standard patterns

PostSharp provides implementations of some of the patterns that are the most commonly found in .NET code bases:

- [INotifyPropertyChanged: see INotifyPropertyChanged on page 107.](#)
- [Parent/child relationships: see Parent/Child Relationships on page 127.](#)
- [Undo/redo: see Undo/Redo on page 143.](#)
- [Code contracts: see Contracts on page 157.](#)
- [Logging: see Walkthrough: Adding Detailed Tracing to a Code Base on page 167.](#)

Example

The following code snippet illustrates an object model where `INotifyPropertyChanged`, undo/redo, code contracts, aggregation and code contracts are all implemented using PostSharp ready-made attributes.

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
public class CustomerViewModel
{
    [Required]
    public Customer Customer { get; set; }

    public string FullName { get { return this.Customer.FirstName + " " + this.Customer.LastName; } }
}

[NotifyPropertyChanged]
[Recordable]
public class Customer
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }

    [Child]
    public AdvisableCollection<Address> Addresses { get; set; }

    [Url]
    public string HomePage { get; set; }

    [Log]
    public void Save(DbConnection connection)
    {
        // ...
    }
}
```

Quick Examples

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
[Recordable]
public class Address
{
    [Parent]
    public Customer Parent { get; private set; }

    public string Line1 { get; set; }
}
```

Thread safety patterns

Multi-threading is a great demonstration of the limitations of conventional object-oriented programming. Thread synchronization is traditionally addressed at an absurdly low level of abstraction, resulting in excessive complexity and defects.

Yet, several design patterns exist to bring down the complexity of multi-threading. New programming languages have been designed around these patterns: for instance Erlang over the Actor pattern and functional programming over the Immutable pattern.

PostSharp gives you the benefits of threading design patterns without leaving C# or VB.

PostSharp supports the following threading models and features:

- Immutable: see [Immutable Threading Model on page 216](#).
- Freezable: see [Freezable Threading Model on page 212](#).
- Actor: see [Actor Threading Model on page 220](#).
- Reader/Writer Synchronized: see [Reader/Writer Synchronized Threading Model on page 225](#).
- Synchronized: see [Synchronized Threading Model on page 229](#).
- Thread Unsafe: see [Thread-Unsafe Threading Model on page 233](#).
- Thread Affine: see [Thread Affine Threading Model on page 236](#).
- Thread Dispatching: see [Dispatching a Method to Background on page 249](#) and [Dispatching a Method to the UI Thread on page 251](#).
- Deadlock Detection: see [Detecting Deadlocks at Runtime on page 253](#).

Example

The following code snippet shows how a data transfer object can be made freezable, recursively but easily:

```
[Freezable]
public class Customer
{
    public string Name { get; set; }

    [Child]
    public AdvisableCollection<Address> Addresses { get; set; }
}

[Freezable]
public class Address
{
    [Parent]
    public Customer Parent { get; private set; }

    public string Line1 { get; set; }
}

public class Program
{
    public static void Main()
```

```

    {
        Customer customer = ReadCustomer( "http://customers.org/11234" );

        // Prevent changes.
        ((IFreezable)customer).Freeze();

        // The following line will cause an ObjectReadOnlyException.
        customer.Addresses[0].Line1 = "Here";
    }
}

```

Implementation of custom patterns

The attributes that implement the standard and thread safety patterns are called *aspects*. This term comes from the paradigm of *aspect-oriented programming* (AOP). An *aspect* is a class that encapsulates behaviors that are injected into another class, method, field, property or event. The process of injecting an aspect into another piece of code is called *weaving*. PostSharp weaves aspects at build time; it is also named a *build-time aspect weaver*.

PostSharp Aspect Framework is a pragmatic implementation of AOP concepts. All ready-made implementations of patterns are built using PostSharp Aspect Framework. You can use the same technology to automate the implementation of your own patterns.

To learn more about developing your own aspects, see [Developing Custom Aspects on page 263](#).

Example

The following code snippet shows a simple [PrintException] aspect that writes an exception message to the console before rethrowing it:

```

[Serializable]
class PrintExceptionAttribute : OnExceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(args.Exception.Message);
    }
}

```

In the next snippet, the [PrintException] aspect is applied to a method:

```

class Customer
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }

    [PrintException]
    public void Store(string path)
    {
        File.WriteAllText( path, string.Format( "{0} {1}", this.FirstName, this.LastName ) );
    }
}

```

Validation of custom patterns

Not all patterns can be fully implemented by the compiler. Many patterns involve a lot of hand-written code. However, they are still patterns because we want to follow the same conventions and approach when solving the same problem. In this case, we have to validate the code against implementation guidelines of the pattern. This is typically achieved during code reviews, but as any algorithmic work, it can be partially automated using the right tool. This is the job of the *PostSharp Architecture Framework*.

PostSharp Architecture Framework also contains pre-built architectural constraints that help solving common design problems. For instance, the `InternalImplementAttribute` constraint prevents an interface to be implemented in an external assembly.

See [Validating Architecture on page 357](#) for more details about architecture validation.

Example

Consider a form-processing application. There may be hundreds of forms, and each form can have dozens of business rules. In order to reduce complexity, the team decides that all business rules will respect the same pattern. The team decides that each class representing a business rule must contain a public nested class named `Factory`, and that this class must have an `[Export(IBusinessRuleFactory)]` custom attribute and a default public constructor. The team wants all developers to follow the convention. Therefore, the team decide to create an architectural constraint that will validate the code against the project-specific *Business Rule Factory* pattern.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
public class BusinessRulePatternValidation : ScalarConstraint
{
    public override void ValidateCode(object target)
    {
        var targetType = (Type)target;

        if (targetType.GetNestedType("Factory") == null)
        {
            Message.Write( targetType, SeverityType.Error, "2001",
                "The {0} type does not have a nested type named 'Factory'.",
                targetType.DeclaringType, targetType.Name );
        }

        // ...
    }
}

[BusinessRulePatternValidation]
public abstract BusinessRule
{
    // ...
}
```

CHAPTER 2

Why to Use PostSharp

How many times did you find yourself:

- copying and pasting blocks of code to implement a functionality (for instance logging)?
- implementing `INotifyPropertyChanged` manually – and forget a notification?
- trying to understand the business logic behind a cluttered codebase?
- struggling to add or modify functionality in an existing software?
- debugging data races in multithreaded applications?
- wondering why it's so hard to build enterprise-grade software?

PostSharp started as an open-source project in 2004 and due to its popularity, it soon became a commercial product trusted by over 50,000 developers worldwide and over 1,000 leading corporations. More than 10% of all Fortune 500 companies including Microsoft, Intel, Bank of America, Phillips, NetApp, BP, Comcast, Volkswagen, Hitachi, Deutsche Bank, Bosch, Siemens, and Oracle rely on PostSharp to reduce their development and maintenance costs.

With over a decade experience in boilerplate reduction, PostSharp is now the #1 best-selling pattern-aware extension to C# and VB and the only commercially-supported development tool for .NET.

In this chapter

Topic	Description
Which Problems Does PostSharp Solves on page 13	This topic describes which problems PostSharp attends to address.
Benefits of Pattern-Aware Compiler Extensions on page 14	This topic defines the concept of Patter-Aware Compiler and explains its benefits.
Benefits of PostSharp vs Alternatives on page 15	This topic lists the competitive benefits of using PostSharp over alternatives.

2.1. Which Problems Does PostSharp Solves

Conventional programming languages miss a concept of pattern, therefore patterns are hand-coded and result in boilerplate code.

Boilerplate code has the following impact:

- [High development effort on page 14](#)
- [Poor quality software on page 14](#)
- [Difficulty to add/modify functionality after release 1.0 on page 14](#)
- [Slow ramp-up of new team members on page 14](#)

High development effort

- **Large codebases.** Some application features require a large amount of repetitive code (boilerplate) when implemented with existing mainstream compiler technologies.
- **Reinventing the wheel.** Solutions to problems like `INotifyPropertyChanged` are always being reinvented because there is no reusable options within conventional programming languages.

Poor quality software

- **High number of defects.** Every line of code has a possibility of defect, but code that stems from copy-paste programming is more likely than other to be buggy because subtle differences are often overlooked.
- **Multi-threading issues.** Object-oriented programming does not deliver much value when it comes to developing multi-threaded applications since it addresses issues at a low level of abstraction with locks, events or interlocked accesses that can easily result in deadlocks or random data races.
- **Lack of robustness.** Enterprise-grade features such as exception handling or caching are often deliberately omitted because of the high amount of source code they imply, unintentionally forbidden in some parts of the applications, simply left untested and unreliable.

Difficulty to add/modify functionality after release 1.0

- **Unreadable code that's difficult to maintain.** Business code is often littered with low-level non-functional requirements and is more difficult to understand and maintain, especially when the initial developer left.
- **Strong coupling.** Poor problem decomposition results in duplicate code and strong coupling making it very difficult to change the implementation of features like logging, exception handling or `INotifyPropertyChanged` because it is often scattered among thousands of files.

Slow ramp-up of new team members

- **Too much knowledge required.** When new team members come to work on a specific feature, they often must first learn about caching, threading and other highly technical issues before being able to contribute to the business value: an example of bad division of labor.
- **Long feedback loops.** Even with small development teams, common patterns like diagnostics, logging, threading, `INotifyPropertyChanged` and undo/redo can be handled differently by each developer. Architects need to make sure new team members understand and follow the internal design standards and have to spend more time on manual code reviews--delaying progress while new team members wait to get feedback from code review.

2.2. Benefits of Pattern-Aware Compiler Extensions

Pattern-aware programming extends conventional object-oriented programming with a concept of pattern, which becomes a first-class element of the programming language.

Most mainstream programming languages can be extended with a concept of pattern, avoiding the cost of rewriting applications in a new language.

Because patterns are supported by the compiler extension (100% compatible with your existing compiler), they do not need to be manually implemented as boilerplate code. Features such as `INotifyPropertyChanged`, logging, transactions are implemented in a cleaner, more concise way, making development and maintenance much easier.

There are 4 reasons to consider using a pattern-aware compiler extension:

- [Stop writing boilerplate code and deliver faster on page 15](#)

- [Build more reliable software on page 15](#)
- [Add/modify functionality more easily after first release on page 15](#)
- [Help new members contribute quicker on page 15](#)

Stop writing boilerplate code and deliver faster

- **Fewer lines of code means fewer hours of work.** Patterns are repetitive, with little or no decision left to the developer. However, repetition is exactly what computers are good at. Let the compiler do the repetitive work and save development time and costs immediately.

Build more reliable software

- **Cleaner code means fewer defects.** With a pattern-aware compiler eliminating the boilerplate, your code becomes easier to read, understand and modify, and contains fewer defects.
- **Reliability becomes much more affordable.** Because they no longer require so much manual coding, reliability features such as caching or exception handling are much easier and cheaper to implement, so you can spend your extra time building a more robust app.

Add/modify functionality more easily after first release

- **Cleaner and shorter code is easier to understand.** After the initial release, too much development time is spent reading and analyzing source code, especially if the initial developer left. With minimized boilerplate code, developers can easily focus on business logic and spend much less time trying to understanding the code.
- **Better architecture is future-proof.** Using a pattern-aware compiler, features like logging, exception handling or transactions are no longer scattered among thousands of files but they are defined in one place, making it much easier and fast to modify when necessary.

Help new members contribute quicker

- **Achieve a better division of labor.** Using a pattern-aware compiler makes the introduction of new or junior team members less onerous since they can focus on simpler, more business logic-oriented tasks rather than having to waste so much time learning complex architectural structures.
- **Implement a tighter feedback loop.** A pattern-aware compiler can validate that hand-written code respects a pattern or a model, and it can detect bugs at build time instead of during code reviews, testing, or in production.

2.3. Benefits of PostSharp vs Alternatives

PostSharp is the #1 pattern-aware extension to C#/VB. It adds a concept of pattern to the languages, resulting in a dramatic reduction of boilerplate code, lower development and maintenance costs and fewer errors. With PostSharp you can:

Here are the reasons that differentiates PostSharp from alternatives:

- [Get more productive in minutes with ready-made pattern implementations on page 16](#)
- [Automate more complex patterns and remove more boilerplate on page 16](#)
- [Build thread-safe apps--without a PhD on page 17](#)
- [Maintain your existing codebase in C# or Visual Basic on page 17](#)
- [Benefit from much better run-time performance on page 18](#)

Get more productive in minutes with ready-made pattern implementations

- **INotifyPropertyChanged Pattern.** Automates the implementation of INotifyPropertyChanged and automatically raises notifications for you. It also analyzes chains of dependencies between properties, methods and fields in your source code, and understands that property getters can access several fields and call different methods, or even depend on properties of other objects. PostSharp eliminates all the repetition and lets you go from three lines of code per property to one attribute per base class... so you will never forget to raise a property change notification again.
- **Undo/Redo Pattern.** Makes the implementation of the end-users most-wanted features easy and affordable by recording changes at model level. Provides built-in user controls or allows you to create your own. You can deliver the familiar Undo/Redo experience to your users without getting stuck writing large amounts of code.
- **Code Contracts.** Provide validation for valid URLs, email addresses, positive numbers or not-null values and many more, right out of the box. Allows you to use contract attributes without limitations at any location in your codebase and validate methods, fields, properties and parameters. This enables you to protect your code from invalid inputs with custom attributes.
- **Logging Pattern.** Adds comprehensive logging in a few clicks – without impact on your source code – and lets you remove it just as quickly. Provides parameter and return values providing added information for maintenance and support work. Supports most popular back-ends, including log4net, NLog, Enterprise Library, System Console, System Diagnostics. You can trace everything you need in minutes without cluttering your code.

Automate more complex patterns and remove more boilerplate

- **PostSharp Aspect Framework.** PostSharp is hands down the most robust and exhaustive implementation of aspect-oriented programming for .NET and was evolved into the world's best pattern compiler. It is the most powerful toolset available to implement automation for your own patterns.
- **Largest choice of possible transformations.** Includes decoration of methods, iterators and async state machines, interception of methods, events or properties, introduction of interfaces, methods, events, properties, custom attributes or resources, and more.
- **Composition of several transformations** to easily automate complex patterns.
- **Dynamic aspect/advice providers.** Addresses situations where it is not possible to add aspects declaratively (using custom attributes) to the source code with dynamic aspect/advice providers.
- **Aspect inheritance.** Apply an aspect to a base class, specify that you want it to be inherited and all derived classes will automatically have the aspect applied to them. Relieves you from implementing the aspects manually and ensures that all derived classes using this aspect's logic is correct.
- **Architecture framework.** Validates hand-written source code against your own custom pattern guidelines. It then express the rules in C# using the familiar System.Reflection API, extended with features commonly found in decompilers, such as "find usage", and more.

Build thread-safe apps--without a PhD

Starting new threads and tasks in .NET languages is simple, but ensuring that objects are thread-safe is not with mainstream programming languages. That's why PostSharp extends C# and VB with thread-safety features.

- **7 different threading models.** Threading models are design patterns that guarantee your code executes safely even when used from multiple threads. Threading models raise the level of abstraction at which multi-threading is addressed. Unlike working directly with locks and other low-level threading primitives, threading models decrease the number of lines of code, the number of defects and reduce development and maintenance costs – without having to have expertise in multi-threading. Includes:
 1. **Immutable Threading Model.** Allows you to make select objects in your codebase immutable so that they can be safely accessed by several threads concurrently, without the need for locking or other synchronization.
 2. **Freezable Threading Model.** This is the milder brother of the Immutable pattern. It is suitable when you need to prevent changes to an instance of an object most of, but not all of the time. Lets you define the point in time where immutability begins.
 3. **Synchronized Threading Model.** Makes sure the objects are accessed by a single thread at a time. Other threads will wait until the object is available so you'll avoid data races.
 4. **Reader-Writer Synchronized Threading Model.** This pattern relies on the fact that most objects are much more often read than modified. Compared to traditional locking, it maximizes read throughput and minimizes the odds of deadlocks.
 5. **Actor Threading Model.** Actors are classes that essentially run within a single thread. Other code communicates with actors using asynchronous calls. Celebrated by Erlang, Scala and F# developers, this pattern is now available to .NET thanks to PostSharp and C# 5.0.
 6. **Thread Affine Threading Model.** Limits object instance access to the thread that created the instance.
 7. **Thread Unsafe Threading Model.** Perfect pattern to make sure that objects will never be accessed concurrently by several threads. Get an exception instead of a random data corruption.
- **Model validation.** Catches most defects during build or during single-threaded test coverage.
- **Thread dispatching patterns.** Causes the execution of a method to be dispatched to the UI thread or to a background thread. Much easier than using nested anonymous methods.
- **Deadlock detection.** Causes an easy-to-diagnose exception in case of deadlock instead of allowing the application to freeze and create user's frustration.

Maintain your existing codebase in C# or Visual Basic

Despite the hype around functional programming languages, C#/VB and .NET remain an excellent platform for enterprise development. PostSharp respects your technology assets and will work incrementally with your existing code base – there is NO need for a full rewrite or redesign.

- **Design neutrality.** Unlike alternatives, PostSharp takes minimal assumptions on your code. It does not force you to adopt any specific architecture or threading model. You can add aspects to anything, not just interface/virtual methods. Plus, it is fully orthogonal from dependency injection. You don't have to dissect your application into components and interfaces in order to use PostSharp.
- **Plain C# and VB.** PostSharp provides advanced features present in F#, Scala, Nemerle, Python, Ruby or JavaScript, but your code is still 100% C# and VB, and it is still compiled by the proved Microsoft compilers.
- **Cross-platform.** PostSharp supports the .NET Framework, Windows Phone, WinRT, Xamarin and Portable Class Libraries.
- **Standard skillset.** No complex API. Reuse what you already know from C# and System.Reflection.

Benefit from much better run-time performance

Start-up latency, execution speed and memory consumption matter. Whether you're building a mobile app or a back-end server, PostSharp delivers exceptional run-time performance.

- **Build-time code generation.** Unlike proxy-based solutions, PostSharp modifies your code at build time. It also allows for much more powerful enhancements that produces dramatically faster applications.
- **No reflection.** PostSharp does not rely on reflection at run-time. The only code that is executed is what you can see with a decompiler.
- **Build-time initialization.** Many patterns make decisions based on the shape of the code which they are applied. With PostSharp, you can analyze the target code at build-time and store the decisions into serializable fields. At runtime, the aspects will be deserialized and you won't need to analyze the code at run-time using reflection.

CHAPTER 3

How Does PostSharp Work

On a conceptual level, you can think of PostSharp as an extension to the C# or VB compiler. Practically, Microsoft's compilers themselves are not extensible, but the build process can be easily extended. That's exactly what PostSharp is doing: it inserts itself in the build process and post-processes the output of the compiler.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [MSBuild Integration on page 19](#)
- [MSIL Rewriting on page 19](#)

MSBuild Integration

PostSharp integrates itself in the build process thanks to *PostSharp.targets*, which is imported into each project using PostSharp by the NuGet installation script *install.ps1*. *PostSharp.targets* adds a few steps to the build process. The principal step is the post-processing of the compiler's output by PostSharp itself.

See [Configuring Projects Using MSBuild on page 85](#) for details.

MSIL Rewriting

PostSharp post-processes the compiler output by reading and disassembling the intermediate assembly, execute the required transformations and validations, and rewriting the final assembly to disk.

Although this might sound magic or dangerous, PostSharp's MSIL technology is stable and mature, and has been used by tens of thousands of projects since 2004. Other .NET products relying on MSIL transformation or analysis include Microsoft Code Contracts, Microsoft Code Analysis, and Microsoft Code Coverage.

3.1. Key Technologies

PostSharp combines several technologies to leverage design pattern automation:

- [Metaprogramming on page 19](#)
- [Aspect-Oriented Programming on page 20](#)
- [Static Program Analysis on page 20](#)
- [Dynamic Program Analysis on page 20](#)

Metaprogramming

Metaprogramming is the writing of a program that analyzes and transforms itself or other programs. PostSharp internally represents a .NET program as a mutable .NET object model, so PostSharp can be considered a metaprogramming tool for .NET.

However, general metaprogramming (the ability to perform arbitrary modifications on a program) is a highly complex discipline. Although it may seem easy to perform simple modifications on simple programs, it is actually much more difficult to implement non-trivial transformations that work in all cases. Metaprogramming can result in a decrease in

productivity when used improperly and it is very difficult, for application developers who lack specific training in compilers and metaprogramming, to use it properly.

Since general metaprogramming is too complex and too low level, we need a higher layer of abstraction that makes it easier and safer to express program transformations. Essential qualities of this abstraction layer would include safe composition of several transformations on the same declaration and restrictions on changing the program semantics.

Aspect-Oriented Programming fulfills these qualities as a disciplined approach to metaprogramming.

Aspect-Oriented Programming

PostSharp Aspect Framework is built on the principle of *Aspect-Oriented Programming* (AOP), a well-established programming paradigm, orthogonal to (and non-competing with) object-oriented programming or functional programming, that allows to modularize the implementation of some features that would otherwise cross-cut a large number of classes and methods.

We can confidently say that PostSharp is the most advanced AOP framework for Microsoft .NET.

For details on PostSharp's implementation of AOP, see [Developing Custom Aspects on page 263](#).

Static Program Analysis

Static program analysis is the analysis of a program without executing it.

There are two families of static analysis tools:

- *Structural static analysis* tools analyze the program's declarations and instructions, but do not attempt to understand the run-time behavior of the program. Microsoft Code Analysis belongs to this category.
- *Behavioral static analysis* tools are based on iterative techniques like abstract interpretation, model checking or data-flow analysis. Behavioral static analysis is much more complex and time consuming. Microsoft Code Contracts belong to this category.

PostSharp contains tools for *structural* static analysis only. These tools consist in complete access of the `System.Reflection` model of the assembly being built, navigating through code relationships using the `ReflectionSearch` facility, and an expression tree decompiler.

The most important use case for static analysis in PostSharp is when writing aspects, in order to determine how the target program should be transformed. Any of the static analysis tools can be used to build aspects. This contrasts with other AOP implementation like AspectJ, which defines its own specific language (*pointcut* language) to select target declarations.

Aspects like `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` or threading models make advanced use of static analysis.

A secondary role for static analysis is architecture validation. This role is marketed as the *PostSharp Architecture Framework*, which defines a notion of architectural constraint. see [Validating Architecture on page 357](#) for more information.

Dynamic Program Analysis

Dynamic program analysis is the analysis of a program during its execution. Dynamic analysis is often used to detect issues early, before they cause bigger damage. A typical example of dynamic analysis is the one that occurs when an object is cast to a type: when the safety of the type conversion cannot be proved using static analysis, the type conversion must be verified at runtime, and an `InvalidCastException` is thrown when an invalid cast is detected.

PostSharp uses dynamic analysis to check the program against threading models. Since many model properties cannot be reliably verified at build time, they must be enforced at runtime. For instance, with the `Synchronized` threading model, accessing a field without owning access to the object would result in a `ThreadAccessException`. For details, see [Writing Thread-Safe Code with Threading Models on page 211](#).

Another example of use of dynamic program analysis in PostSharp is deadlock detection. For details, see [Detecting Deadlocks at Runtime on page 253](#).

In PostSharp, dynamic analysis is achieved by adding instrumentation aspects to the program.

CHAPTER 4

How to Learn PostSharp

A PostSharp implementation project is typically composed of three phases, in which three roles typically interact differently with the product. Each role requires different skills and knowledge. We have created a learning path for each of these roles. Depending on your team's organization, you may be involved in one or more roles.

Topic	Description
Architecture Role: Selecting and Creating Aspects on page 23	<p>In the first phase, the team learns about the concepts and abilities of PostSharp, and identify how it could fit into the application's design and architecture. The team selects the ready-made aspects that will be used in the application and, when no ready-made aspects can be used, it creates custom aspects or architecture rules.</p> <p>People in this role are typically called architects, technical leads or senior developers. They must acquire an extensive knowledge of PostSharp and their decisions affect the whole team's productivity.</p>
Deployment Role: Installing and Deploying PostSharp on page 25	<p>The next typical step is to deploy PostSharp into your development infrastructure and configure licensing. PostSharp works mostly out of the box for individual developers and small teams, but you may want some planning if you are responsible for a complex solution.</p>
Developer Role: Using Aspects on page 25	<p>Your team is finally ready to use PostSharp on a daily basis. At this point, typically, the team already knows which aspects will be used and when and how they will be used. As a developer who will <i>use</i> existing aspects, you don't need to invest a large amount of effort to learn PostSharp upfront. However, you will need to understand the aspects that have been selected by the team, and how to apply them to a code base.</p>

4.1. Architecture Role: Selecting and Creating Aspects

The first step in the process of adopting PostSharp is typically to understand *what* the product can do for you and *why* you should use (or not use) its features. This activity is typically part of the architecture role.

As you will see, PostSharp offers a set of pre-built aspects implementing some of the most common patterns. As an architect, you will need to understand what these aspects can do for you and how they could fit and simplify your architecture.

However, standard patterns are only the top of the iceberg. To cover your specific needs, PostSharp includes construction kits that allow you to build your own pattern automation, namely the PostSharp Aspect Framework and the PostSharp Architecture Framework. Determining the need for custom aspects or architecture validation rules is typically also a part of the architecture role.

In a typical team, only a few people must be able to create custom aspects or architecture rules. These people must have a deeper understanding of PostSharp than the developers who will only use existing aspects and rules. This is why this skill set is included in the current section.

NOTE

When writing this section, we realized that the current documentation has some serious weaknesses regarding conceptual and architectural materials. This is why we are also referring to other resources hosted on our web site.

Introduction

Understanding the principles behind PostSharp will give you a foundation to build on. All patterns and techniques used by PostSharp relate back to this foundation.

Topic	Articles
About PostSharp	Why to Use PostSharp on page 13 How Does PostSharp Work on page 19 Requirements and Compatibility on page 43
More About Design Pattern Automation	Article: Design Pattern Automation¹
More About Aspect-Oriented Programming	Aspect-Oriented Programming in Microsoft .NET² White Paper: Producing High-Quality Software with Aspect-Oriented Programming³

Selecting pre-built pattern implementations

PostSharp offers a number of different pre-built patterns. The following documentation will outline how to use each of the available patterns.

Topic	Articles
General patterns	Contracts on page 157 Parent/Child Relationships on page 127
User interface patterns	Understanding the NotifyPropertyChanged Aspect on page 120 Understanding the Recordable Aspect on page 153
Multi-threading	White Paper: Threading Models for Object-Oriented Programming⁴ Detecting Deadlocks at Runtime on page 253 Dispatching a Method to the UI Thread on page 251 Dispatching a Method to Background on page 249
Diagnostics	Logging on page 167

1. <http://www.postsharp.net/downloads/documentation/Design%20Pattern%20Automation.pdf>

2. <http://www.postsharp.net/aop.net>

3. <http://www.postsharp.net/downloads/documentation/Producing%20High-Quality%20Software%20with%20Aspect-Oriented%20Programming.pdf>

4. <http://www.postsharp.net/downloads/documentation/Threading%20Models%20for%20OOP.pdf>

Creating automation for custom patterns

PostSharp's built-in patterns won't cover all scenarios in your codebase that can benefit from AOP. Learn how to build custom patterns using the same foundational components as are used for the built-in patterns.

Topic	Articles
Aspects	Developing Custom Aspects on page 263
Architecture Validation	Validating Architecture on page 357

4.2. Deployment Role: Installing and Deploying PostSharp

This section describes how to deploy PostSharp in different situations. Read it if you are responsible to integrate process into your build process.

Topic	Articles
Deploying to the Development Environment	Installing PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 47 Installing PostSharp Into a Project on page 47 Deploying License Keys on page 67 Uninstalling PostSharp on page 58
Deploying to the Build Infrastructure	Using PostSharp on a Build Server on page 54 Restoring Packages at Build Time on page 54 Using PostSharp with Visual Studio Online on page 55
Deploying to Production or End-User Devices	Deploying PostSharp to End-User Devices on page 64
Deploying to Large or Regulated Development Environments	License Audit on page 71 Using PostSharp License Server on page 77 Upgrading Large Repositories from a Previous Version of PostSharp on page 56

4.3. Developer Role: Using Aspects

Using aspects requires much less training than creating new ones. In typical large teams, only a few developers or architects develop new aspects, while the rest of the team uses existing aspects. This section focuses on the skill set that you need to acquire if you have to be able to use PostSharp aspects but don't need to create your own.

In this session, we also assume that PostSharp has been properly deployed into your development and build environments.

NOTE

You can of course learn PostSharp as much as you want. The role of this section is to provide a short list of articles to minimize your learning curve and get you productive as quickly as possible, but this should not stop you from learning and experimenting more.

This topic contains the following sections:

- Installing and upgrading PostSharp
- Working with pre-built patterns
- Working with Patterns

Installing and upgrading PostSharp

Every process has a starting point. Learn how to add PostSharp to your project so that you can get started with improving your codebase.

Topic	Articles
Install PostSharp to your machine	Requirements and Compatibility on page 43 Installing PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 47
Add PostSharp to a project and keep it up-to-date	Installing PostSharp Into a Project on page 47 Upgrading from a Previous Version of PostSharp on page 56

Working with pre-built patterns

PostSharp offers a number of different pre-built patterns. You will need to learn those that will be used in your application.

Topic	Articles
Diagnostics	Logging on page 167
Code Contracts	Contracts on page 157
INotifyPropertyChanged	INotifyPropertyChanged on page 107
Aggregatable	Parent/Child Relationships on page 127
Disposable	Walkthrough: Automatically Disposing Children Objects on page 132
Undo and Redo	Undo/Redo on page 143
Threading Models	Writing Thread-Safe Code with Threading Models on page 211 Freezable on page 212 , Immutable on page 216 , Actor on page 220 , Reader/Writer Synchronized on page 225 , Synchronized on page 229 , Thread-Unsafe on page 233 , Thread Affine on page 236 Compatibility of Threading Models on page 243 Opting In and Out From Thread Safety on page 242
Deadlock Detection	Detecting Deadlocks at Runtime on page 253
Dispatching Threads	Dispatching a Method to the UI Thread on page 251 Dispatching a Method to Background on page 249
Architecture Validation	Restricting Interface Implementation on page 357 Controlling Component Visibility Beyond Private and Internal on page 361

Working with Patterns

The following resources are for all aspects. You can save a great amount of time in learning to master them.

Topic	Articles
Adding aspects to several declarations	Adding Aspects Declaratively Using Attributes on page 186
Resolving Errors	Working with Errors, Warnings, and Messages on page 97

CHAPTER 5

What's New in PostSharp

PostSharp has been around since the early days of .NET 2.0 in 2004. Since the first version, many features have been added to make PostSharp the most popular and by far the most powerful tool for aspect-oriented programming and design pattern automation in .NET.

This chapter contains the following sections:

- [What's New in PostSharp 4.3 on page 29](#)
- [What's New in PostSharp 4.2 on page 31](#)
- [What's New in PostSharp 4.1 on page 33](#)
- [What's New in PostSharp 4.0 on page 33](#)
- [What's New in PostSharp 3.1 on page 35](#)
- [What's New in PostSharp 3.0 on page 36](#)
- [What's New in PostSharp 2.1 on page 37](#)
- [What's New in PostSharp 2.0 on page 38](#)
- [What's New in PostSharp 1.5 on page 40](#)

5.1. What's New in PostSharp 4.3

The objective of PostSharp 4.3 is to address the most important concerns of current PostSharp customers. We focused on improving the existing features without adding brand new ones.

PostSharp 4.3 includes the following improvements:

- [Improved build-time performance on page 29](#)
- [Improved debugging experience on page 30](#)
- [More flexible deployment on page 30](#)
- [Improvements in the NotifyPropertyChanged aspect on page 30](#)
- [Simplified licensing of PostSharp Express on page 30](#)
- [Source code sharing with non-licensed teams on page 30](#)
- [Automatic computing of build-time assembly binding redirections on page 30](#)

Improved build-time performance

We understand that nobody likes to wait for the build to complete, so we've been working hard to optimize PostSharp's build performance. PostSharp 4.3 is up to 1.5 times faster than PostSharp 4.2 (the improvement is especially visible in large projects) and you don't need to change anything in your code.

But there's more. PostSharp 4.3 introduces a new feature called *solution-wide build optimizations*, which can double the build speed in large solutions. Since this feature can break custom build-time logic, it is disabled by default. For details, see [Reducing Build Time on page 100](#).

Improved debugging experience

Debugging an application enhanced with aspects is now even easier thanks to the following improvements:

- Full support for Just My Code.
- During Step Into, aspect code is now stepped over by default.
- The call stack no longer contains PostSharp implementation details by default.

To learn more about the new debugging behaviors and how to disable them, see [Debugging Run-Time Aspect Logic on page 352](#).

More flexible deployment

PostSharp 4.3 brings more freedom when it comes to deployment and installation:

- **Alternative to NuGet.** Between versions 3.0 and 4.2, the PostSharp compiler and libraries were only distributed as NuGet packages. Starting from version 4.3, we are re-introducing the old good zip file, and integrate it better with PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio. See [Installing PostSharp without NuGet on page 48](#) for details.
- **Command Line Tool.** Using PostSharp as a command-line tool is now a supported and documented scenario. For details, see [Executing PostSharp from the Command Line on page 65](#).
- **PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio no longer required.** You will now be able to build a project that uses PostSharp without having PostSharp Tools installed in Visual Studio. The tooling is still highly recommended but no longer strictly required.

Improvements in the NotifyPropertyChanged aspect

PostSharp 4.3 brings two improvements to the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect:

- Support for Caliburn.Micro and MVVM Light. See [Integrating with UI Frameworks on page 117](#).
- Option to avoid false positives. See [Suppressing False Positives on page 124](#) for details.

Simplified licensing of PostSharp Express

The limitations of PostSharp Express, the free edition of PostSharp, are now clearer and easier to understand and remember. For details, see [Limitations of PostSharp Express on page 71](#).

Source code sharing with non-licensed teams

You no longer need a PostSharp license to build code that someone else wrote and uses PostSharp. A license is only required for code that you build or edited yourself. See [Sharing Source Code With Unlicensed Teams on page 72](#) for details.

Automatic computing of build-time assembly binding redirections

It is no longer necessary to manually create an assembly binding redirection file for PostSharp. For details, see [Resolution of assembly binding redirections on page 99](#).

5.2. What's New in PostSharp 4.2

With PostSharp 4.2, we had two major objectives. The first was to dogfood our Threading Models into PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio, which pushed us to add many improvements both to the threading aspects and to the underlying aspect framework. The second focus was to expose code saving metrics, so you know how many lines of code you likely saved thanks to PostSharp. Additionally, we kept up with Microsoft and implemented support for the Elvis operator in NotifyPropertyChanging, and added experimental support for ASP.NET v5.

PostSharp 4.2 includes the following improvements:

- [Improvements to Aggregatable Pattern on page 31](#)
- [Improvements to NotifyPropertyChanging on page 31](#)
- [Improvements to Threading Models on page 32](#)
- [Improvements to the Aspect Framework on page 32](#)
- [Improved Support for Visual Basic on page 32](#)
- [Code Saving Metrics on page 32](#)
- [Module Initializers on page 32](#)
- [Support for IncrediBuild \(Experimental\) on page 33](#)
- [Support for ASP.NET v5 \(Experimental\) on page 33](#)

Improvements to Aggregatable Pattern

We added the following improvements to the Aggregatable pattern and to other patterns that depend on it:

- New advisable class `AdvisableHashSetT` in replacement of `HashSetT`.
- New methods to the `AdvisableCollectionT` class: `AddRange(IEnumerableT)`, `InsertRange(Int32, IEnumerableT)`, `RemoveRange(Int32, Int32)`.
- Support for immutable collections like `ImmutableArray` or `ImmutableDictionary`.
- Support for type adapters to allow third-party classes (at least read-only ones) to work with the Aggregatable pattern. See `TypeAdapter` for details.
- Ability to programmatically and automatically mark a field as child or reference without having to use a custom attribute in source code. See `FieldRule` for details.
- Performance improvement: memory no longer needs to be allocated at runtime after objects are constructed, resulting in lower load on garbage collection.
- New extensions methods for advisable collections. See `Extensions`.

Improvements to NotifyPropertyChanging

Improvements include to `NotifyPropertyChangingAttribute` include:

- Support for the Elvis operator (`?.`) and properties of local variables.
- Notification of the `PropertyChanging` event. See [Implementing INotifyPropertyChanging on page 113](#) for details.
- Better error messages.
- Inclusion of property dependencies in Visual Studio tooltips.
- Performance improvement: memory no longer needs to be allocated at runtime after objects are constructed, resulting in lower load on garbage collection.

Improvements to Threading Models

Improvements to threading models include:

- Performance improvement: memory no longer needs to be allocated at runtime after objects are constructed, resulting in lower load on garbage collection.
- Several performance improvements regarding the instantiation of large object graphs. See [Run-Time Performance of Threading Model on page 247](#) for details.
- New `ThreadSafetyPolicy` attribute to emit warning when a class is not assigned to any threading model or when a static field is not of a thread-safe type. See [Making a Whole Project or Solution Thread Safe on page 240](#) for details.
- Better support for async methods: for lock-based models, locks are being awaited asynchronously instead of synchronously. These new high-performance advices are not yet fully implemented and tested for general use, therefore they are unsupported (except when they are used with our ready-made patterns) and undocumented.
- Complete dogfooding in our PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio, resulting in dozen of bug fixes and usability improvements.
- In the actor model, methods with non-void return type are now allowed and their execution will be done in the actor context, but the calling thread will wait synchronously for the execution to complete. Void but non-async methods must now be annotated with `[Dispatched]` (and until the next major version) to specify if execution must be synchronous or asynchronous.

Improvements to the Aspect Framework

Improvements to the aspect framework include:

- New advice `OnAspectsInitializedAdvice` invoked after all aspects on the current objects have been initialized.
- Ability to customize the description of aspects and advices in Visual Studio tooltips. See [Customizing Aspect Description in Tooltips on page 328](#) for details.
- In the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` and related aspects, ability to yield (await) a state machine upon on entry and resume.

CAUTION NOTE

To support performance improvements in ready-made patterns, we included a new family of advices that accept context on the stack instead of the heap.

Improved Support for Visual Basic

Visual Basic is now supported and tested at the same level as C# both in PostSharp Compiler and PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio.

Code Saving Metrics

PostSharp will now estimate the number of hand-written lines of code and the number of lines of code that you likely saved using PostSharp. For details, see [Estimating Code Savings on page 329](#).

Module Initializers

You can now define methods that get executed immediately after the assembly is loaded, before any other code is executed. See [Executing Code Just After the Assembly is Loaded on page 207](#) and `ModuleInitializerAttribute` for details.

Support for IncrediBuild (Experimental)

If you use IncrediBuild, PostSharp can now be executed on a remote computer. Please contact PostSharp support for details.

Support for ASP.NET v5 (Experimental)

You can now use PostSharp in ASP.NET v5 code. The support is currently limited to the .NET Framework (CoreCLR is not supported). Support is not built-in in the normal PostSharp distribution. You need to download the *PostSharp.Dnx* project from GitHub. Please see <https://github.com/postsharp/PostSharp.Dnx> for details.

5.3. What's New in PostSharp 4.1

The focus of PostSharp 4.1 was to broaden the set of supported platforms for both PostSharp, with the addition of Xamarin and Visual Studio 2015, and improvements in the support of Windows Phone and Windows Store.

PostSharp 4.1 includes the following improvements:

- [Support for Xamarin on page 33](#)
- [Threading Pattern Library: support for Windows Phone and Windows Store on page 33](#)
- [Support for Visual Studio 2015 on page 33](#)
- [PostSharp Assistant on page 33](#)

Support for Xamarin

Xamarin has become an inseparable part of the .NET ecosystem and was the number-one feature request of the PostSharp community. PostSharp 4.1 makes it possible to build applications for iOS and Android using Xamarin.

Note that Xamarin applications must be built using Visual Studio. Xamarin Studio is not supported.

Threading Pattern Library: support for Windows Phone and Windows Store

Threading Pattern Library newly supports Windows Phone, Windows Store and Xamarin. This allows you to create thread-safe applications for both Windows and Windows Phone (both Silverlight and WinRT) in the same way as for desktop applications.

Support for Visual Studio 2015

PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio have been almost completely rewritten to take advantage of the new compiler family "Roslyn" at the heart of Visual Studio 2015. New features include integration with the light bulb (instead of the smart tag), live code diagnostics and a few refactorings.

PostSharp Assistant

PostSharp Assistant guides you when you are implementing various patterns from Pattern Libraries so that you don't miss any detail. For instance, it would point at relevant documentation articles or at pieces of code that need to be fixed.

PostSharp Assistant is supported in Visual Studio 2015.

5.4. What's New in PostSharp 4.0

The principal focus of PostSharp 4 was to redesign the Threading Pattern Library from the ground up and make it a real solution to write thread-safe code with C# and VB. Additionally, we've introduced the undo/redo feature into the Model

Pattern Library. To achieve these objectives properly, we had to implement a good old concept from UML and object-oriented modeling: aggregation and composition. We introduced significant improvements in the PostSharp Aspect Framework to support these new features.

PostSharp 4.0 includes the following improvements:

- [Aggregatable pattern on page 34](#)
- [Disposable pattern on page 34](#)
- [Immutable threading model on page 34](#)
- [Freezable threading model on page 34](#)
- [Synchronized threading model on page 34](#)
- [Redesign of reader-writer-synchronized, actor, and thread-unsafe threading models on page 34](#)
- [Recordable pattern \(undo/redo\) on page 34](#)
- [Dynamic location imports on page 35](#)
- [Aspect repository on page 35](#)
- [OnInstanceConstructed advice on page 35](#)
- [InitializeAspectInstance advice on page 35](#)
- [NotifyPropertyChanged optimization on page 35](#)

Aggregatable pattern

As it turns out, multiple patterns rely on the notion of parent-child relationships. These concepts are a part of the UML specification, where it is known as aggregation, but even modern programming languages don't implement the notions. We fixed that in PostSharp 4.0 with our `AggregatableAttribute` aspect. For details, see [Parent/Child Relationships on page 127](#).

Disposable pattern

Once we have a notion of parent-child relationship, it is easy to build an aspect that recursively disposes a whole object tree. This is our `DisposableAttribute` aspect. For details, see [Walkthrough: Automatically Disposing Children Objects on page 132](#).

Immutable threading model

The Immutable patterns made functional languages popular for its great usefulness in multi-threaded programs. Unfortunately, the concept has traditionally been difficult to object-oriented programming. PostSharp 4.0 provides a pragmatic implementation with the `ImmutableAttribute` aspect. For details, see [Immutable Threading Model on page 216](#).

Freezable threading model

Even a well-implemented Immutable pattern can be too strict for some object-oriented scenarios. In this case, the Freezable patterns may be more suitable. Based on the Aggregatable pattern, the `FreezableAttribute` aspect makes it possible to build freezable object trees. For details, see [Freezable Threading Model on page 212](#).

Synchronized threading model

A threading model library could not be complete without it, so we added the `SynchronizedAttribute` aspect. For details, see [Synchronized Threading Model on page 229](#).

Redesign of reader-writer-synchronized, actor, and thread-unsafe threading models

We took the right way in PostSharp 3.0 with threading models, but the vision was not yet fully consistent and the implementation was only partial. With PostSharp 3.2, we felt we had a better understanding of what we wanted to achieve, and completely revisited our threading models. Based on the Aggregatable pattern, and based on a consistent object model, the Threading Pattern Library is now much more powerful and consistent.

Recordable pattern (undo/redo)

The `RecordableAttribute` aspect, together with the `Recorder` class, make is possible to implement an undo/redo feature at the domain level.

Dynamic location imports

To allow to import several fields and properties into a single aspect field (which was not possible using `ImportMemberAttribute`, we added the `IAdviceProvider` interface and the `ImportLocationAdviceInstance` class.

Aspect repository

The new `IAspectRepositoryService` service exposes the list of all aspects added to the code model, both using custom attributes or `IAspectProvider`, and offer a way to execute validation logic after all aspects have been discovered.

OnInstanceConstructed advice

The `OnInstanceConstructedAdvice` custom attribute allows you to define an advice that is executed after the instance constructor exits.

InitializeAspectInstance advice

The `InitializeAspectInstanceAdvice` custom attribute allows you to define an advice that is similar to `RuntimeInitializeInstance` but passes information about the reason why the aspect is initialized (constructor, clone, deserialization).

NotifyPropertyChanged optimization

Our `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` is four times faster at runtime on average.

5.5. What's New in PostSharp 3.1

PostSharp 3.1 builds on the vision of PostSharp 3.0, but makes it more convenient to use. It also catches up with the C# compiler features, and add more flexible licensing options.

PostSharp 3.1 includes the following improvements:

- [Better support for iterator and async methods on page 35](#)
- [Improved configuration system on page 35](#)
- [Build-time performance improvement on page 36](#)
- [Resolution of file and line of error messages on page 36](#)
- [Indentation in logging on page 36](#)
- [Separate licensing of Pattern Libraries on page 36](#)

Better support for iterator and async methods

When you applied an `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` to a method that was compiled into a state machine, whether an iterator or an async method, the code generated by PostSharp would not be very useful: the aspect would just be applied to the method that implements the state machine. An `OnException` advice had no chance to get ever fired.

Starting from PostSharp 3.1, `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` understands that is being applied to a state machine, and works as you would expect.

Improved configuration system

PostSharp 3.1 makes it easier to share configuration across several projects. For instance, you can now add aspects to all projects of a solution in just a few clicks. This is not just a UI tweak. This scenario has been made possible by significant improvements in the PostSharp configuration system:

- Support for solution-level configuration files (*SolutionName.pssl*), and well-known configuration files (*postsharp.config*) additionally to project-level files (*ProjectName.pproj*). See [Working with PostSharp Configuration Files on page 89](#) for details.

- Support for conditional configuration elements
- Support for XPath in expressions (instead of only property references as previously). See [Using Expressions in Configuration Files on page 95](#) for details.

Build-time performance improvement

PostSharp can now optionally install itself in GAC and generate native images. This decreases build time of a fraction of a second for each project: a substantial gain if you have a lot of projects.

Resolution of file and line of error messages

When previous versions of PostSharp had to report an error or a warning, it would include the name of the type and/or method causing the message, but was unable to determine the file and line number. You can now double-click on an error message in Visual Studio and you'll get to the relevant location for the error message.

Indentation in logging

For better log readability, PostSharp Diagnostics Pattern Library now automatically indents log entries when entering and exiting methods.

Separate licensing of Pattern Libraries

PostSharp Pattern Libraries can now be purchased separately, so you don't have to buy the full PostSharp Ultimate if you just want to use `INotifyPropertyChanged`. The licensing system has been modified to support this scenario.

5.6. What's New in PostSharp 3.0

The focus in PostSharp 3.0 was to deliver more value to customers with less initial learning. Instead of having to learn the product before being able to build aspects, customers can now choose from a set of ready-made implementations of some of the most popular design pattern, and apply them to their application from the Visual Studio code editor, using smart tags and wizards. We also improved support for Windows Phone, Silverlight, Windows Store and Portable Class Library.

PostSharp 3.0 includes the following improvements:

- [Model Pattern Library on page 36](#)
- [Diagnostics Pattern Library on page 36](#)
- [Threading Pattern Library on page 37](#)
- [Smart tags and wizards in Visual Studio on page 37](#)
- [Better platform support through Portable Class Libraries on page 37](#)
- [Unified deployment through NuGet and Visual Studio Gallery on page 37](#)
- [Transparency to obfuscators on page 37](#)
- [Deprecation of old platforms on page 37](#)

Model Pattern Library

The `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect is a ready-made implementation of the `NotifyPropertyChanged` design pattern. The `PostSharp.Patterns.Contracts` namespace provides code contracts that can validate, at runtime, the value of a parameter, a property, or a field.

Diagnostics Pattern Library

The `LogAttribute` and `LogExceptionAttribute` aspects provide a ready-made and high-performance implementation of a tracing aspect. They are compatible with the most popular logging framework, including `log4net`, `nlog`, and `Enterprise Library`.

Threading Pattern Library

PostSharp Threading Pattern Library invites you to raise the level of abstraction in which multi-threading is being addressed. It provides three threading models: actors (`Actor`), reader-writer synchronized (`ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute`) and thread unsafe (`ThreadUnsafeAttribute`). Additionally, `BackgroundAttribute` and `DispatchedAttribute` allow you to easily dispatch a thread back and forth between a background and the UI thread.

Smart tags and wizards in Visual Studio

Smart tags allow for better discoverability of ready-made aspects and pattern implementations. When the aspect requires configuration, a wizard user interface collects the parameters and then generates the proper code.

Better platform support through Portable Class Libraries

Windows Phone, Windows Store and Silverlight are now first-class citizens. All features that are available for the .NET Framework now also work with these platforms. All platforms are supported transparently through the portable class library. To provide this feature, we had to develop the `PortableFormatter`, a portable serializer similar in function to the `BinaryFormatter`. All you have to do is to replace `[Serializable]` with `[PSerializable]`.

Unified deployment through NuGet and Visual Studio Gallery

Installation of PostSharp is now unified and built on top of Visual Studio Gallery and NuGet Package Manager.

Transparency to obfuscators

PostSharp no longer requires specific support from obfuscators, as it no longer uses strings to refer to metadata declarations.

Deprecation of old platforms

Support for Silverlight 3, .NET Compact Framework, and Mono has been deprecated.

5.7. What's New in PostSharp 2.1

The objective of release 2.1 was to fix a number of 'gray points' of the version 2.0, which added friction to the adoption path of PostSharp, or even prevented people from using the product.

PostSharp 2.1 includes the following improvements:

- [Build-time performance improvement on page 37](#)
- [Support for NuGet and improved no-setup experience on page 38](#)
- [Compatibility with obfuscators on page 38](#)
- [Extended reflection API on page 38](#)
- [Architectural validation on page 38](#)
- [Compatibility with Code Contracts on page 38](#)
- [Support for Silverlight 5.0 on page 38](#)
- [License server on page 38](#)

Build-time performance improvement

We traded our old text-based compilation engine to a brand new binary writer.

Support for NuGet and improved no-setup experience

PostSharp 2.1 can be installed directly from [NuGet](#)⁵. Local installation is no longer a requirement to use the Visual Studio Extension. However, because the setup program creates ngenned images, it still provides the faster experience.

Compatibility with obfuscators

PostSharp can now be used jointly, and without limitation of features, with some obfuscators.

Extended reflection API

The class `ReflectionSearch` allows you to programmatically navigate the structure of an assembly: find custom attributes of a given type, find children of a given type, find members of a given type, find methods referring a given type or members, or find members accessed from a given method.

Architectural validation

Architecture Validation allows you annotate your code with constraints, which define the conditions in which your API is allowed to be used. Constraints are verified at build time and their violation generates a build warning and an error. See [Validating Architecture on page 357](#) for details.

Compatibility with Code Contracts

PostSharp 2.1 can be used jointly with Microsoft Code Contracts. Aspects and contracts can be applied to the same method.

Support for Silverlight 5.0

Silverlight 5.0 is added to the list of supported platforms.

License server

The license server helps customer manage and deploy license keys. The license server is a simple ASP.NET application that can be deployed easily on any Windows machine. Its use is optional.

5.8. What's New in PostSharp 2.0

PostSharp 1.0 and 1.5 made aspect-oriented programming (AOP) popular in the .NET community. PostSharp 2.0 makes it mainstream by enhancing convenience (Visual Studio Extension), reliability (dependency enforcement), run-time performance (optimizer), and features (composite aspects, property- and event-level aspects).

PostSharp 2.0 includes the following improvements:

- [Visual Studio Extension on page 39](#)
- [Composite aspects \(advices and pointcuts\) on page 39](#)
- [Adaptive code generation on page 39](#)
- [Interception aspect for fields and properties on page 39](#)
- [Interception aspect for events on page 39](#)
- [Aspect dependencies on page 39](#)
- [Instance-scoped aspects on page 39](#)
- [Support for new platforms on page 39](#)
- [Build performance improvements on page 39](#)

5. <http://www.nuget.org/List/Packages/PostSharp>

Visual Studio Extension

As developers start being comfortable with PostSharp and add more and more aspects to their code, two questions become manifest: How can I know to which elements of code my aspect has been applied? How can I know which aspects have been applied to the element of code I am looking at? Answering these two questions is precisely what the PostSharp Extension for Visual Studio 2008 and 2010 has been designed for. It provides two new features to the IDE: an Aspect Browser tool window, and new adornments of enhanced elements of code with clickable tooltip.

Composite aspects (advices and pointcuts)

Part of the success of PostSharp 1.5 was due to its ability to introduce aspects without appealing to barbaric terms such as advices and pointcuts. So why to introduce them now? Because they make it easier to develop complex aspects. Thanks to advices and pointcuts, you can implement complex patterns such as observability awareness (INotifyPropertyChanged) with just a few lines of code. And just with PostSharp 1.5, you can still write your own aspects without knowing about advices and pointcuts.

Adaptive code generation

PostSharp 2.0 generates much smarter, faster, and smaller code than before. Let's face it: PostSharp 1.5 was quite dumb. It generated a lot of instructions that your aspects did not even need. PostSharp 2.0 analyzes your aspect to see which features are actually being used at runtime, and generates only instructions that support these features. Result: you could probably not write much faster code by hand.

Interception aspect for fields and properties

PostSharp 2.0 comes with a new kind of aspect that handles fields and properties: `LocationInterceptionAspect` (in replacement of `OnFieldAccessAspect`). The aspect is much more usable than its predecessor; for instance, it is possible to call the field or property getter from the setter.

Interception aspect for events

The new aspect kind `EventInterceptionAspect` allows an aspect to intercept all event semantics: add, remove, and fire.

Aspect dependencies

By enforcing aspect dependency rules, PostSharp ensures that aspects behave in a predictable and robust way, even when multiple aspects are applied to the same element of code. This feature is important for large and complex projects, where aspects may be written by different teams, or provided by numerous third-party vendors who don't know about each other.

Instance-scoped aspects

In PostSharp 1.5, all aspects had static scope, i.e. there was a single instance of the aspect for every element of code to which they applied. It is now possible to define aspects that have instance lifetime. For instance, if the aspect is applied to an instance field, a new instance of the aspect will be created for every instance of the type declaring the field. This is named an instance-scoped aspect.

Support for new platforms

- Microsoft .NET Framework 4.0
- Microsoft Silverlight 3.0
- Microsoft Silverlight 4.0
- Microsoft Windows Phone 7 (Applications and Games)
- Microsoft .NET Compact Framework 3.5
- Novell Mono 2.6

Build performance improvements

Just starting the CLR and loading system assemblies takes considerable time, too much for an application (such as PostSharp) that is typically started very frequently and whose running time is just a couple of seconds. To cope with this issue, PostSharp now preferably runs as a background application

5.9. What's New in PostSharp 1.5

PostSharp 1.5 was published 3 years after the start of the project, and was the first release to be really production-ready.

PostSharp 1.5 includes the following improvements:

- [Aspect inheritance on page 40](#)
- [Reading assemblies without loading them in the CLR on page 40](#)
- [Lazy loading of assemblies on page 40](#)
- [Build-time performance improvement on page 40](#)
- [Support for Mono on page 40](#)
- [Support for Silverlight 2.0 and the Compact Framework 2.0 on page 40](#)
- [Pluggable aspect serializer & partial trust on page 40](#)

Aspect inheritance

It is now possible to put an aspect on an interface and have it implicitly applied to all classes implementing that interface. The same works with classes, virtual or interface methods, and parameters of virtual or interface methods. [Read more...](#)

Reading assemblies without loading them in the CLR

In version 1.0, PostSharp required assemblies to be loaded in the CLR (i.e. in the application domain) to be able to read them. This limitation belongs to the past. When PostSharp processes a Silverlight or a Compact Framework assembly, it is never loaded by the CLR.

Lazy loading of assemblies

When PostSharp has to load a dependency assembly, it now reads only the metadata objects it really needs, resulting in a huge performance improvement and much lower memory consumption.

Build-time performance improvement

The code has been carefully profiled and optimized for maximal performance.

Support for Mono

PostSharp is now truly cross-platform. Binaries compiled on the Microsoft platform can be executed under Novell Mono. Both Windows and Linux are tested and supported. A NAnt task makes it easier to use PostSharp in these environments.

Support for Silverlight 2.0 and the Compact Framework 2.0

You can add aspects to your projects targeting Silverlight 2.0 or the Compact Framework 2.0.

Pluggable aspect serializer & partial trust

Previously, all aspects were serializers using the standard .NET binary formatter. It is now possible to choose another serializer or implement your own, and enhance assemblies that be executed with partial trust.

PART 2

Deployment and Configuration

CHAPTER 6

Deployment

PostSharp has been designed for easy deployment in typical development environments. Over the years, source control and build servers have become the norm, so we optimized PostSharp for this deployment scenario.

In this section

Topic	Description
Requirements and Compatibility on page 43	This topic describes the software requirements of PostSharp and discusses compatibility issues with other tools and libraries.
PostSharp Components on page 46	This topic list the different components of PostSharp, which may be used and installed separately.
Installing PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 47	This topic shows how to install PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio onto your machine.
Installing PostSharp Into a Project on page 47	This topic shows how add PostSharp to a project.
Installing PostSharp without NuGet on page 48	This topic explains how to add PostSharp to a project without relying on NuGet.
Using PostSharp on a Build Server on page 54	This section covers a few questions that arise when using PostSharp on a build server.
Upgrading from a Previous Version of PostSharp on page 56	This section explains how to upgrade from a previous version of PostSharp.
Uninstalling PostSharp on page 58	This section explains how to remove PostSharp from your projects and from your machine.
Deploying PostSharp to End-User Devices on page 64	This section describes what needs to be done when you deploy applications using PostSharp to your end users.
Executing PostSharp from the Command Line on page 65	This section shows how to use PostSharp as a command-line tool, instead of using the default MSBuild integration.

6.1. Requirements and Compatibility

You can use PostSharp to build applications that target a wide range of target devices. This article lists the requirements on development, build and end-user devices.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Requirements on development workstations and build servers on page 44](#)
- [Requirements on end-user devices on page 44](#)
- [Compatibility with ASP.NET on page 45](#)

- [Compatibility with Microsoft Code Analysis on page 45](#)
- [Compatibility with Microsoft Code Contracts on page 45](#)
- [Compatibility with Obfuscators on page 45](#)
- [Known Incompatibilities on page 45](#)

Requirements on development workstations and build servers

The following software components need to be installed before PostSharp can be used:

- Microsoft Visual Studio 2012 or 2013, 2015 except Express editions, but including Community Edition (Visual Studio is not required on build servers).
- .NET Framework 4.5.
- Windows Vista SP2, Windows 7 SP1, Windows 8, Windows 8.1, Windows Server 2003 SP2, Windows Server 2003 R2 SP2, Windows Server 2008 SP2, Windows Server 2008 R2 SP1, Windows Server 2012, Windows Server 2012 R2.
- NuGet Package Manager 2.2 or later.

NOTE

The latest version of NuGet Package Manager will be installed automatically by PostSharp if NuGet 2.2 is not already installed. This operation requires administrative privileges.

CAUTION NOTE

NuGet Package Manager needs to be configured manually in order to match the requirements of some corporate environments, especially in situations with a large number of Visual Studio solutions. Please contact our technical support if this is a concern for your team.

Requirements on end-user devices

The following table displays the versions of the target frameworks that are supported by the current release of PostSharp and its components.

PostSharp Component	.NET Framework	Silverlight	Windows Phone (Silverlight)	Windows Phone (WinRT)	Windows (WinRT)	Xamarin
Aspect Framework	3.5 SP1, 4.0, 4.5, 4.6	4, 5	7, 8	8.1	8, 8.1	3.8
Architecture Framework	3.5 SP1, 4.0, 4.5, 4.6	4, 5	7, 8	8.1	8, 8.1	3.8
Diagnostics Pattern Library	4.0, 4.5, 4.6	-	-	-	-	-
Model Pattern Library	4.0, 4.5, 4.6	-	8	8.1	8, 8.1	3.8
Threading Pattern Library	4.0, 4.5, 4.6	-	8	8.1	8, 8.1	3.8
Threading Pattern Library - Deadlock Detection	4.0, 4.5, 4.6	-	-	-	-	-

NOTE

PostSharp supports *Portable Class Library* projects that target frameworks shown in the table.

Compatibility with ASP.NET

There are two ways to develop web applications using Microsoft .NET:

- **ASP.NET Application projects** are very similar to other projects; they need to be built before they can be executed. Since they are built using MSBuild, you can use PostSharp as with any other kind of project.
- **ASP.NET Site projects** are very specific: there is no MSBuild project file (a site is actually a directory), and these projects must not be built. ASP.NET Site projects are not supported.

Additionally, ASP.NET "vNext", which has a different project system than MSBuild, is not supported.

Compatibility with Microsoft Code Analysis

By default, PostSharp reconfigures the build process so that Code Analysis is executed on the assemblies as they were *before* being enhanced by PostSharp. If you are using Code Analysis as an integrated part of Visual, no change of configuration is required.

You request the Code Analysis to execute on the output of PostSharp by setting the `ExecuteCodeAnalysisOnPostSharpOutput` MSBuild property to `True`. For more information, see [Configuring Projects Using MSBuild](#) on page 85.

Compatibility with Microsoft Code Contracts

PostSharp configures the build process so that Microsoft Code Contracts is executed before PostSharp. Additionally, Microsoft Code Contracts' static analyzer will be executed synchronously (instead of asynchronously without PostSharp), which will significantly impact the build performance.

Compatibility with Obfuscators

Starting from version 3, PostSharp generates assemblies that are theoretically compatible with all obfuscators.

CAUTION NOTE

PostSharp 3 generates constructs that are not emitted by Microsoft compilers (for instance `methodof`). These unusual constructs may reveal bugs in third-party tools, because they are generally tested against the output of Microsoft compilers.

Known Incompatibilities

PostSharp is not compatible with the following products or features:

Product or Feature	Reason	Workaround
Visual Studio 2010	Not Supported	Use PostSharp 3.1.
ILMerge	Bug in ILMerge	Use another product (such as SmartAssembly).
Edit-and-Continue	Not Supported	Rebuild the project after edits
Silverlight 3 or earlier	No longer under Microsoft mainstream support	Use PostSharp 2.1 or Silverlight 5
Silverlight 4	No longer under Microsoft mainstream support	Use PostSharp 3.1 or Silverlight 5
.NET Compact Framework	No support for PCL	Use PostSharp 2.1 or Windows Phone 8
.NET Framework 2.0	No longer under Microsoft mainstream support	Target .NET Framework 3.5 or use PostSharp 3.1
Windows Phone 7	No longer under Microsoft mainstream support	Target Windows Phone 8 or use PostSharp 3.1

Product or Feature	Reason	Workaround
Mono	Not Supported	Compile on Windows using MSBuild
Visual Studio Express	Microsoft's licensing policy	Use Visual Studio Community Edition
Delayed strong-name signing on cloud build servers	No way to unregister verification of strong names	Use normal (non-delayed) strong-name signing or use build servers where you have administrative access.
ASP.NET Web Sites	Not built using MSBuild	Convert the ASP.NET Web Site to an ASP.NET Web Application.

6.2. PostSharp Components

PostSharp is composed of the following components:

Component Name	Component Kind	Description
PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio	Visual Studio Extension	This is the user interface of PostSharp. It extends the Visual Studio editor, improves the debugging experience, and provides a new menu, option pages, toolbox windows, smart tags. We strongly recommend to install PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on each developer workstation.
PostSharp	NuGet Package	This is the core of PostSharp. It contains the PostSharp compiler, the MSBuild integration (the <i>PostSharp.targets</i> file is added to your projects upon installation of the PostSharp package), and the facade library <i>PostSharp.dll</i> , which exposes features to developers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>PostSharp Aspect Framework</i> allows you to automate the <i>implementation</i> of other code patterns and address code repetitions that are specific to your own applications, or simply that are not available off-the-shelf in a pattern library. For more information, see sections Developing Custom Aspects on page 263 and Adding Aspects to Code on page 185. <i>PostSharp Architecture Framework</i> allows you to automate the <i>validation</i> of design pattern implementations, to enforce design intend, or simply to verify coding guidelines. The framework allows you to create constraint classes that encapsulate the validation logic and that can be applied to code artifacts. The framework provides tools to analyze the relationships between code artifacts and have access to the AST of method bodies. For more information, see section Validating Architecture on page 357.
PostSharp Common Pattern Library	NuGet Package	This package contains definitions and aspects that are shared by other pattern libraries, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggregatable pattern: see Parent/Child Relationships on page 127 for details. Basic definitions for threading aspects.

Component Name	Component Kind	Description
PostSharp Model Pattern Library	NuGet Package	This package contains the following features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NotifyPropertyChanged aspect: see INotifyPropertyChanged on page 107 for details. • Recordable pattern for undo/redo: see Undo/Redo on page 143 for details. • Code contracts: see Contracts on page 157 for details.
PostSharp Model Pattern Library (Controls)	NuGet Package	This package contains the undo/redo buttons for WPF. See Adding Undo/Redo to the User Interface on page 145 for details.
PostSharp Threading Pattern Library	NuGet Package	This package contains all threading aspects and their infrastructure, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All threading models: see Writing Thread-Safe Code with Threading Models on page 211 for details. • Thread dispatching aspects: see Dispatching a Method to Background on page 249 and Dispatching a Method to the UI Thread on page 251 for details • Deadlock detection: see Detecting Deadlocks at Runtime on page 253 for details.
PostSharp Diagnostics Pattern Library	NuGet Package	This package contains the logging aspect. See Walkthrough: Adding Detailed Tracing to a Code Base on page 167 for details.

6.3. Installing PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio are PostSharp's user interface. Install them on a developer's computer, does not affect the projects until the PostSharp NuGet package has been added to this project. See [Installing PostSharp Into a Project](#) on page 47 for details.

To install PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

1. Download the file *PostSharp-X.X.X.exe* from <http://www.postsharp.net/download>.
2. Run the file *PostSharp-X.X.X.exe*.
3. Start Visual Studio.
4. Complete the configuration wizard. You will be asked to enter a license key or to start the trial period. The wizard may ask the permission to install NuGet Package Manager or to uninstall the user interface of PostSharp.

6.4. Installing PostSharp Into a Project

The compiler components of PostSharp are distributed as a NuGet package named simply *PostSharp*. If you want to use PostSharp in a project, you simply have to add this NuGet package to the project.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Adding PostSharp to a project](#) on page 48

- [Including files in source control on page 48](#)

Adding PostSharp to a project

To add PostSharp to a project:

1. Open the **Solution Explorer** in Visual Studio.
2. Right-click on the project.
3. Click on **Add PostSharp**.

TIP

Remember that adding PostSharp to a project just means adding the *PostSharp* NuGet package. If you want to add PostSharp to several projects in a solution, it may be easier to use NuGet to manage packages at solution level. You may need to select the **Include Prerelease** option to install a prerelease version of PostSharp.

TIP

NuGet Package Manager can be configured using a file named *nuget.config*, which can be checked into source control and can specify, among other settings, the location of the package repository (if it must be shared among several solutions, for instance) or package sources (if packages must be pre-approved). See [NuGet Configuration File](#)⁶ and [NuGet Configuration Settings](#)⁷ for more information.

Including files in source control

After you add PostSharp to a project, you need to add the following files to source control:

- *packages.config*
- **.psproj*
- **.pssln*

Optionally, you can also include the *packages* folder in source control. Note that some people advise against this practice. If you choose not to include the *packages* folder in source control, read [Restoring Packages at Build Time on page 54](#).

Once you have all of these files include in your source code repository any other developer getting that source code from the repository will have the required information to be able to build the application.

6.5. Installing PostSharp without NuGet

The most common way to add PostSharp to your project is by installing PostSharp NuGet packages. The main benefit of using NuGet Package Manager is that it provides a standard way to install and manage all dependencies for your .NET projects. NuGet, however, also comes with some disadvantages that are inherent in its design (as described by NuGet team in the post [NuGet: Broken By Design](#)⁸):

- hard-coded dependency versions inside project files;

6. <http://docs.nuget.org/docs/reference/nuget-config-file>

7. <http://docs.nuget.org/docs/reference/nuget-config-settings>

8. <http://blog.nuget.org/20141010/nuget-is-broken.html>

- more frequent merge conflicts in project files;
- unexpected and unwanted auto-upgrades of the dependencies;
- additional overhead in software configuration management;
- the lack of global package installation option.

For some development teams these NuGet disadvantages become a significant obstacle for NuGet adoption in their projects. This is especially true when strict dependency versioning policies are in place.

If using NuGet Package Manager in your project is not a viable option, then you can install PostSharp without NuGet by following the procedures described in this article. The first time you want to add PostSharp to a project without NuGet, you must first enable PostSharp installation without NuGet. Then, you can specify a folder on your hard drive where PostSharp files will be copied. The next time you will add PostSharp to a project, the same folder can be used.

This topic contains the following sections:

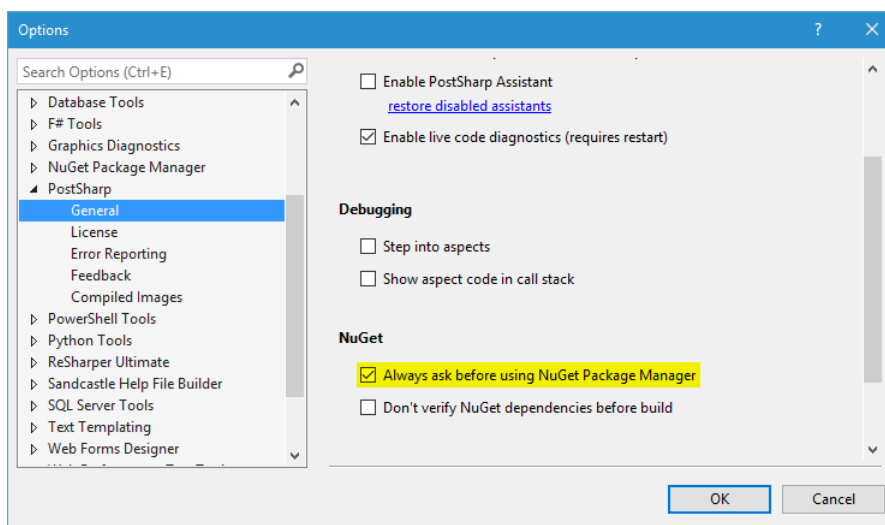
- [Adding PostSharp without NuGet into a first project in a solution on page 49](#)
- [Adding PostSharp to a second or next project in the same solution on page 51](#)
- [Sharing the same PostSharp installation folder in several solutions on page 51](#)
- [Removing PostSharp from a project without NuGet on page 52](#)
- [Updating PostSharp to a newer version on page 53](#)
- [See Also on page 0](#)

Adding PostSharp without NuGet into a first project in a solution

This is the procedure to install the PostSharp package into a new folder on your computer and reference this package from your project. If you have an existing PostSharp installation, see [Sharing the same PostSharp installation folder in several solutions on page 51](#).

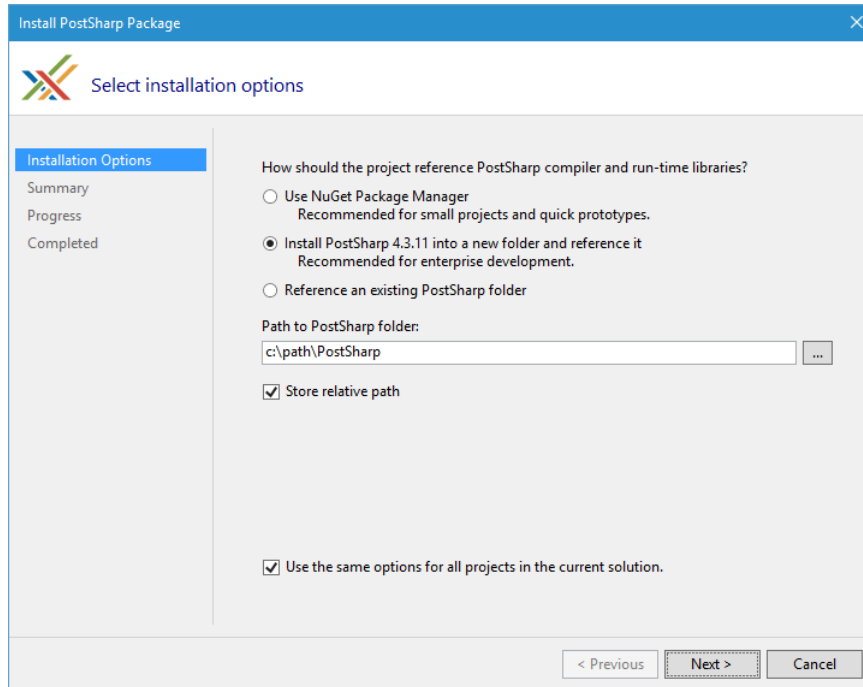
To install PostSharp into a folder without NuGet:

1. By default, PostSharp is always installed using NuGet Package Manager. To change this option, on the **Post-Sharp** menu in Visual Studio, click **Options**, then on the **General** page of the options dialog select the check box **"Always ask before using NuGet Package Manager"**.



2. Right click on your project in the solution explorer and then click **"Add PostSharp to Project"**. The PostSharp package installation wizard opens.

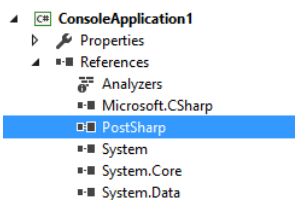
- On the first page of the wizard click "**Install PostSharp <version> into a new folder and reference it**".



- Set the "**Path to PostSharp folder**". The PostSharp package will be unpacked into this folder. The installer does not overwrite the contents of the target folder, so you need to delete the folder contents if you want to replace the existing installation.
- Change the additional installation options, if needed:
 - Store relative path** - indicates whether to store relative or absolute paths for PostSharp references and imports in your project files. By default, the relative paths are stored.
 - Use the same options for all projects in the current solution** - if enabled, the path to the PostSharp package folder is stored in the `<SolutionName>.pssln` file. Next time you add PostSharp to another project in the same solution, the package path will be reused and you won't need to type it again. Disable this option if projects in your solution need to reference different versions of PostSharp package (not recommended).
- Click **Next** and finish the wizard.

As a result of this procedure:

- the PostSharp files will be copied into the selected folder;
- the PostSharp assembly reference will be added to your project;



- the *PostSharp.targets* file import will be added to your project file.

```
<ImportProject="..\..\..\postsharp\Tools\PostSharp.targets" />
```

- your installation options will be stored in the *MySolution.pssln* file (given you have a solution file named *MySolution.sln*).

```
<PropertyName="PostSharpPackageManager"Value="Folder" />
<PropertyName="PostSharpRootPath"Value="..\lib\PostSharp" />
```

Adding PostSharp to a second or next project in the same solution

By default, PostSharp will use installation options stored in the *MySolution.pssln* file. It means that by default, all projects in the same solution will use the same PostSharp installation folder. PostSharp will not show the wizard page asking about the installation method.

If you want to specify different installation options for the next time you will add PostSharp to a project of this solution, edit the *MySolution.pssln* file and remove the two following properties: *PostSharpPackageManager* and *PostSharpRootPath*.

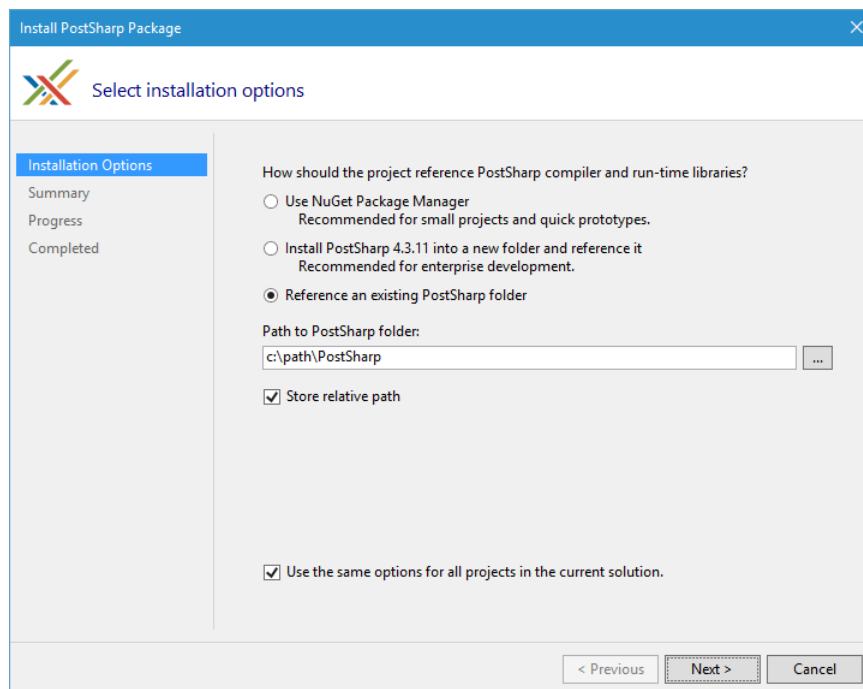
The next time you will try to install PostSharp, the wizard will now include the page asking about the installation method.

Sharing the same PostSharp installation folder in several solutions

Once PostSharp is copied to any folder of your machine, you can use it in any project or solution.

To add PostSharp to a project and reference an existing PostSharp folder:

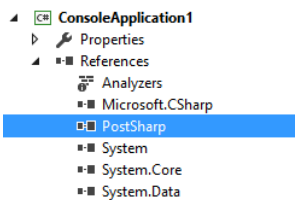
1. Right click on your project in the solution explorer and then click **"Add PostSharp to Project"**. The PostSharp package installation wizard opens.
2. On the first page of the wizard click **"Reference an existing PostSharp folder"**.



3. Set the "**Path to PostSharp folder**". The path must point to the root folder of the PostSharp package. This is a folder that contains *lib* and *tools* sub-folders.
4. Change the additional installation options, if needed:
 - **Store relative path** - indicates whether to store relative or absolute paths for PostSharp references and imports in your project files. By default, the relative paths are stored.
 - **Use the same options for all projects in the current solution** - if enabled, the path to the PostSharp package folder is stored in the `<SolutionName>.pssln` file. Next time you add PostSharp to another project in the same solution, the package path will be reused and you won't need to type it again. Disable this option if projects in your solution need to reference different versions of PostSharp package (not recommended).
5. Click **Next** and finish the wizard.

As a result of this procedure:

- the PostSharp assembly reference will be added to your project;



- the *PostSharp.targets* file import will be added to your project file.

```
<ImportProject="..\..\..\postsharp\Tools\PostSharp.targets" />
```

- your installation options will be stored in the *MySolution.pssln* file (given you have a solution file named *MySolution.sln*).

```
<PropertyName="PostSharpPackageManager"Value="Folder" />
<PropertyName="PostSharpRootPath"Value="..\lib\PostSharp" />
```

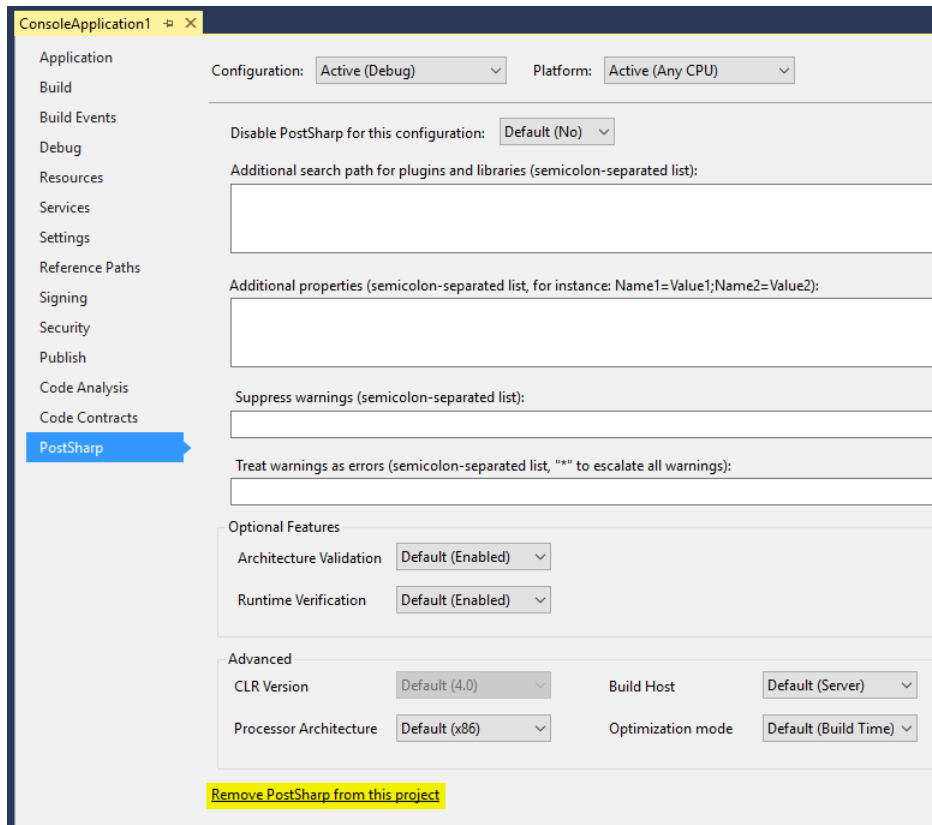
Removing PostSharp from a project without NuGet

This is the procedure to uninstall PostSharp from your project if you have previously installed PostSharp package into your project without NuGet.

To uninstall PostSharp without NuGet:

1. Open the properties window for your project in Visual Studio.

2. On the PostSharp page of the properties window click **"Remove PostSharp from this project"** and follow the wizard.



As a result of this procedure:

- the PostSharp assembly reference will be removed from your project;
- the *PostSharp.targets* file import will be removed from your project file.

Updating PostSharp to a newer version

The nice thing about the non-NuGet deployment is that updating PostSharp is so easy: you just have to extract the new zip file into the PostSharp folder. But because we're trying to look serious and complete in this documentation, here is the formal procedure:

To update PostSharp when you are not using NuGet:

1. Remove all files from the PostSharp folder.
2. Download the zip distribution from <https://www.postsharp.net/downloads> (a file named PostSharp-4.x.x.zip)
3. Extract the zip file into the PostSharp folder.

That's it!

While NuGet Package Manager represents a standard and proven way to manage your .NET project dependencies, you can still find projects where using NuGet is not possible or causes too much overhead. PostSharp supports you by providing an option to install without NuGet.

6.6. Using PostSharp on a Build Server

PostSharp has been designed for frictionless use on build servers. PostSharp build-time components are deployed as NuGet packages, and are integrated with MSBuild. No component needs to be installed or configured on the build server, and no extra build step is necessary. If you choose not to check in NuGet packages in your source control, read [Restoring Packages at Build Time](#) on page 54.

Installing a License on the Build Server

The License Agreement specifies that build servers don't need their own license. PostSharp will not attempt to enforce licensing if it detects that it runs in unattended mode. PostSharp uses several heuristics to detect whether it is running unattended. These heuristics include the use of `Environment.UserInteractive`, checking `Process.SessionId` (from Windows Vista, all processes running in session 0 are unattended), or checking the parent process.

If this check does not work for any reason, you may use the license key of any licensed user for the build server. This will not be considered a license infringement. However, it is better to report the issue to our technical support so that we can fix the detection algorithms.

It is recommended to include the license key in the source control. See [Deploying License Keys](#) on page 67 for details.

If you are using the license server, it is possible to configure it to provide license to build servers "for free", without holding a license from the pool. See the configuration options of the license server in [Installing and Servicing PostSharp License Server](#) on page 73 for details.

6.6.1. Restoring Packages at Build Time

NuGet Package Manager has the ability to restore packages from their repository during the build. This allows teams to avoid storing NuGet packages in source repository.

You can restore the PostSharp package at build time as long as the package is restored before MSBuild is invoked to build the project.

The reason is that PostSharp modifies the project file (*csproj* or *vbproj*, typically) to include the file *PostSharp.targets*. This file is required during the build, otherwise PostSharp is not inserted in the build process, and simply does not work. Because of the design of MSBuild, *PostSharp.targets* must be present when the build starts, so it cannot be restored from the package repository during the same build. The build that triggers the package restore will fail, and subsequent builds will succeed.

This behavior is acceptable on developer workstations. However, on build servers, you must ensure that the packages are restored *before* the project is built.

NuGet 2.7 and Later

To restore the PostSharp package at build time, add a preliminary step before building the Visual Studio solutions or projects. This step should execute the following command:

```
NuGet.exe restore MySolution.sln
```

In this command, where *MySolution.sln* is the solution for which packages have to be restored.

Please look at the [NuGet Command-Line Reference](#)⁹ for details.

9. <http://docs.nuget.org/docs/reference/command-line-reference>

NuGet 2.0 to 2.6

To restore the PostSharp package at build time, add a preliminary step before building the Visual Studio solutions or projects. This step should execute the following command for every *packages.config* file in your solution (typically, for every project):

```
NuGet.exe install packages.config -OutputDirectory SolutionDirectory\packages
```

In this command, where *SolutionDirectory\packages* is the directory where the NuGet packages should be installed.

Please look at the [NuGet Command-Line Reference](#)¹⁰ for details.

TIP

You can use PowerShell or MSBuild to execute the `nuget install` command to all *packages.config* files in your source repository.

6.6.2. Using PostSharp with Visual Studio Online

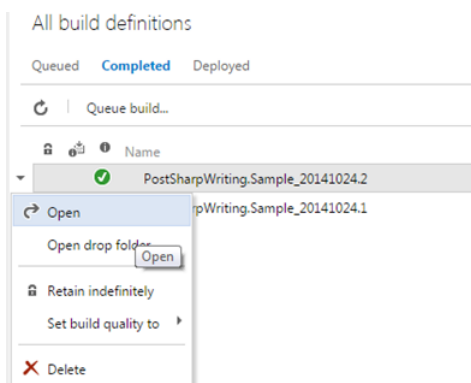
When hosting your source code on Visual Studio Online, adding PostSharp to the codebase is no different than for any other build server situation.

Visual Studio Online offers an online build server environment. Once configured the build server will retrieve your source code and compile the application for you. As part of this build process you will want any PostSharp aspects to be added in the same way that it occurs on your local development machine. To do this you will have to ensure that your codebase includes PostSharp as outlined in the [Installing PostSharp Into a Project on page 47](#) section. You will also need to configure a build definition as outlined in the [Create or edit build definition](#)¹¹ article on MSDN.

Once you are able to successfully run the build you will want to review the build logs and verify the artifacts that were created by that build. Here's how you can verify that your build included your PostSharp aspects.

Verifying Visual Studio Online Builds

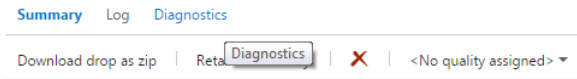
1. To review the build logs, open the successful build.



10. <http://docs.nuget.org/docs/reference/command-line-reference>

11. <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms181716.aspx>

2. Select the Diagnostics tab.



3. Ensure that the installation of PostSharp and any PostSharp patterns libraries that you used.

```

Pull sources from Git repo ▾
  Cloning repository 'https://postsharpwriting.visualstudio.com/Def
  20 object(s) were downloaded with a total size of 0.01 MB.
  Checking out branch refs/heads/master.
  Setting the source get version of the build to LG:refs/heads/mast
  Associate the changesets that occurred since the last good build ▾
Try
  Compile, Test and Publish
  Run optional script before MSBuild ▾
  Run MSBuild ▾
  C:\lightrail\Services\Mms\BuildProvisioner\Tools\nuget.exe re
  Installing 'PostSharp 4.0.34'.
  Installing 'PostSharp.Patterns.Common 4.0.34'.
  Installing 'PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics 4.0.34'.
  Installing 'PostSharp.Patterns.Threading 4.0.34'.
  Successfully installed 'PostSharp.Patterns.Threading 4.0.34'.
  Successfully installed 'PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics 4.0.34'.
  Successfully installed 'PostSharp.Patterns.Common 4.0.34'.
  Successfully installed 'PostSharp 4.0.34'.
  C:\Program Files (x86)\MSBuild\12.0\bin\amd64\MSBuild.exe
  /p:SkipInvalidConfigurations=true /m /p:OutDir="C:\a\bin\" /
  /dl:WorkflowCentralLogger,"C:\lightrail\Services\Mms\BuildPr
  utDirectory\Items,GetTargetPath;TFSUrl=https://postsharpwriti
  b832-cc4e35a6f773.vstfs:///Build/Build/4" /p:BuildLabel="Pos
  
```

If you see entries like these in your build log you know that the build process correctly downloaded the PostSharp components.

If you do not see any entries for the downloading of the PostSharp components you will want to ensure that the packages.config file is correctly included in your source code repository and that the PostSharp dependencies are referenced in the appropriate projects.

6.7. Upgrading from a Previous Version of PostSharp

This section explains how to upgrade from a previous version of PostSharp.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Upgrading PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 57](#)
- [Upgrading solutions from PostSharp 3 or later on page 57](#)
- [Upgrading large repositories on page 57](#)
- [Upgrading solutions from PostSharp 2 on page 58](#)

TIP

Other sections of this chapter, specifically [Installing PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 47](#), [Deploying License Keys on page 67](#) and [Using PostSharp on a Build Server on page 54](#), are also useful if you need to upgrade from an earlier version of PostSharp.

Upgrading PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

After you install PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio, you will still be able to open solutions that use older versions of PostSharp.

PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio are backward compatible with older versions of PostSharp. However, several versions of the extension cannot coexist. Therefore, installing a new version of PostSharp Tools will uninstall the previous version.

To upgrade PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio, simply download it from <http://www.postsharp.net/download> and execute the installation package.

CAUTION NOTE

Upgrading PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio does not implicitly upgrade your source code.

Upgrading solutions from PostSharp 3 or later

CAUTION NOTE

Before you upgrade your project to a different major release of PostSharp, check that the new version still supports your version Visual Studio and the target framework of your application. Check the release notes for an accurate compatibility list of the specific version you are installing.

You can use several versions of PostSharp side-by-side on the same machine. However, it is recommended that you use the same version in all projects of the same solution.

To upgrade a solution from PostSharp 3 or later:

1. Open the **Solution Explorer** in Visual Studio.
2. Right-click on the solution.
3. Click on **Manage NuGet Packages for Solution**.
4. Click on **Updates**.
5. Find the *PostSharp* package and click on **Update**.
6. Select all projects, click **OK**.
7. Repeat the operation for all *PostSharp.Patterns.** packages.

Upgrading large repositories

If your source contains a large number of solutions, upgrading manually using NuGet may be too labor intensive. In this situation, it is better to use our upgrade PowerShell script.

To upgrade a large number of solutions with the PowerShell script:

1. Download the following Git repository: <https://github.com/sharpcrafters/PostSharp.Utilities>. You can download it manually from the web page or execute the following command:

```
git clone https://github.com/sharpcrafters/PostSharp.Utilities.git
```

2. Follow instructions on in *README.md*.

CAUTION NOTE

This script does not support other platforms than the .NET Framework and does not support PostSharp Pattern Libraries.

Upgrading solutions from PostSharp 2

Every project can have only references to a single version of PostSharp. This applies both to direct and indirect references. The PostSharp 3 or later compiler is not backward compatible with PostSharp 2, and PostSharp 3 will refuse to compile projects that have a reference to PostSharp 2. Therefore, you will typically use a single version of PostSharp in every solution.

You can upgrade projects from PostSharp 2 to PostSharp 3 by adding the *PostSharp* NuGet package to these projects.

To upgrade a solution from PostSharp 2:

1. Open the **Solution Explorer** in Visual Studio.
2. Right-click on the solution.
3. Click on **Manage NuGet Packages for Solution**.
4. Click on **Online**.
5. In the search box, type PostSharp. You may want to select the **Select prereleases** option (instead of the default **Stable Only**) to install a pre-release version of PostSharp.
6. Find the *PostSharp* package and click on **Install**.
7. Select all projects, click **OK**.

Although PostSharp 3 or later is mostly backward compatible with PostSharp 2 at source-code level, you may need to perform small adjustments to your source code:

- Every occurrence of the `_Assembly` interface has been replaced by the `Assembly` classes. You may have to change the signatures of some methods derived from `AssemblyLevelAspect`.
- Aspects that target Silverlight, Windows Phone or Windows Store must be annotated with the `PSerializableAttribute` custom attribute.
- PostSharp Toolkits 2.1 need to be uninstalled using NuGet. Instead, you can install PostSharp Pattern Libraries 3 from NuGet. Namespaces and some type names have been changed.

6.8. Uninstalling PostSharp

If you make the decision to remove PostSharp from your project we are sorry to see you leave.

There are two scenarios you may want to consider: removing PostSharp from individual projects or solutions, and removing PostSharp from Visual Studio.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Removing PostSharp from your projects and solutions on page 58](#)
- [Removing PostSharp from Visual Studio on page 61](#)

Removing PostSharp from your projects and solutions

Here are some steps to follow to remove PostSharp from your project.

CAUTION NOTE

As you'll see in these steps, removing the product from your project is not that difficult. However, replacing the aspects that you were using will be a much more arduous task that will require a great deal of planning.

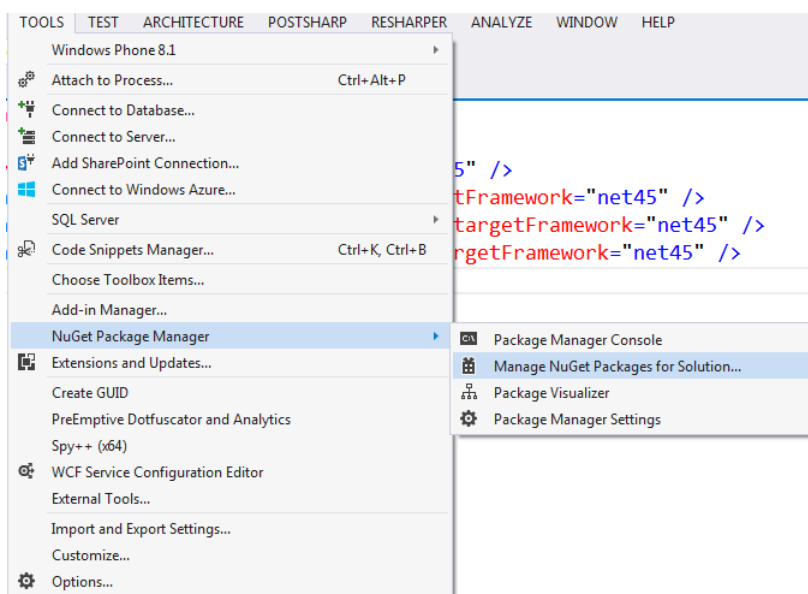
You will need to replace the aspects by hand-written source code that implement the same behaviors. Depending on how intensively you used PostSharp, your codebase could significantly increase as a result of stopping using PostSharp. Other products and frameworks that pretend to implement aspect-oriented programming actually only provide a small subset of the features you are got used to with PostSharp.

Because every project will use aspects differently, and some will have custom aspects, we are unable to give procedural advise on how to replace specific aspects.

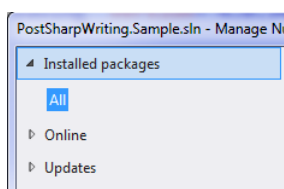
To remove PostSharp from a project, you simply have to remove all PostSharp packages from it. The following procedure demonstrates how to remove PostSharp for the whole solution.

Removing PostSharp with NuGet Packages Manager for Solution

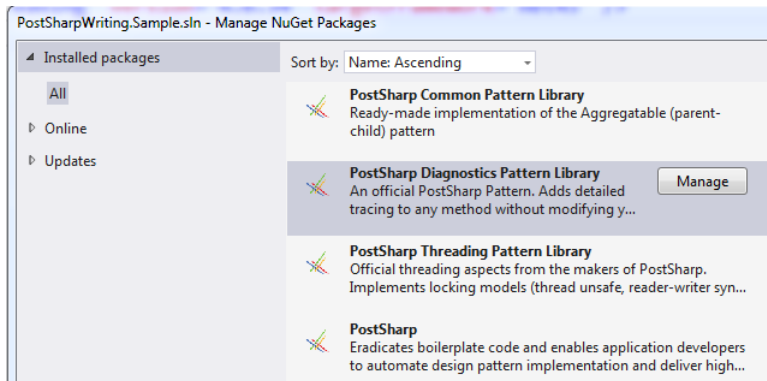
1. Open the Package Manager for Solution windows



2. Select the All tab from the left side of the window.



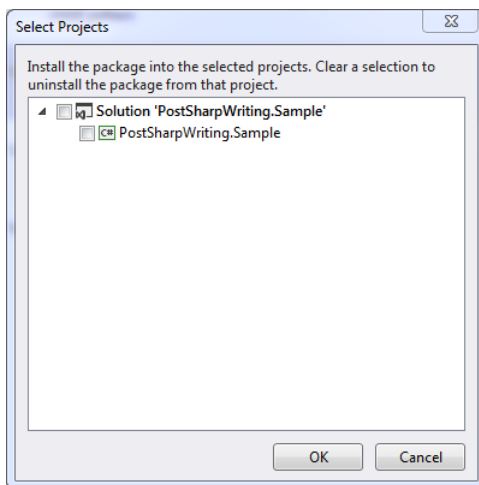
- Find the PostSharp packages in the list and select one of the PostSharp Library packages. Click the Manage button.



NOTE

Start by selecting the PostSharp Library Packages and working in reverse dependency order. This will result in the main PostSharp package being the last one that you select to remove.

- Ensure that you uncheck all of the projects listed in the window and click OK.



- Repeat steps 3 and 4 for each of the PostSharp packages that show in the Packages Manager for Solution window.
- To verify that all of the PostSharp packages have been removed from your codebase, ensure that there are no PostSharp packages listed in the Packages Manager for Solution window.

Once you have removed all of the PostSharp packages from your codebase it is most probable that your application will no longer compile. Compilation errors will be registered where PostSharp aspect attributes exist in the codebase as well as where custom aspects were written. You will need to remove these entries from your codebase to get it to compile again.

Simply deleting the offending code can accomplish this. You must remember that in the process of removing PostSharp from your codebase these errors indicate locations where you are removing functionality from the codebase as well. If the functionality that is being removed is required by the application you will need to determine how to provide that functionality in the codebase going forward. This is the most difficult part of removing PostSharp from your codebase.

Because aspects can be used in a multitude of different manners, and custom aspects can be created for any number of different uses, there is no practical way to tell you how to replace the functionality being lost.

NOTE

You now have removed PostSharp from your codebase. At this point you are able to continue on your development effort without making use of PostSharp.

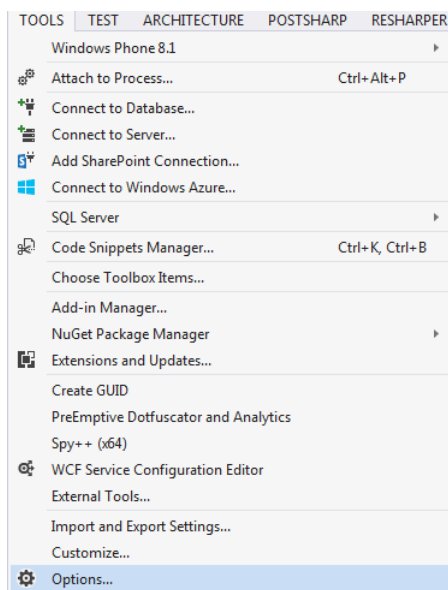
If you would like to remove PostSharp from Visual Studio, proceed with the following steps.

Removing PostSharp from Visual Studio

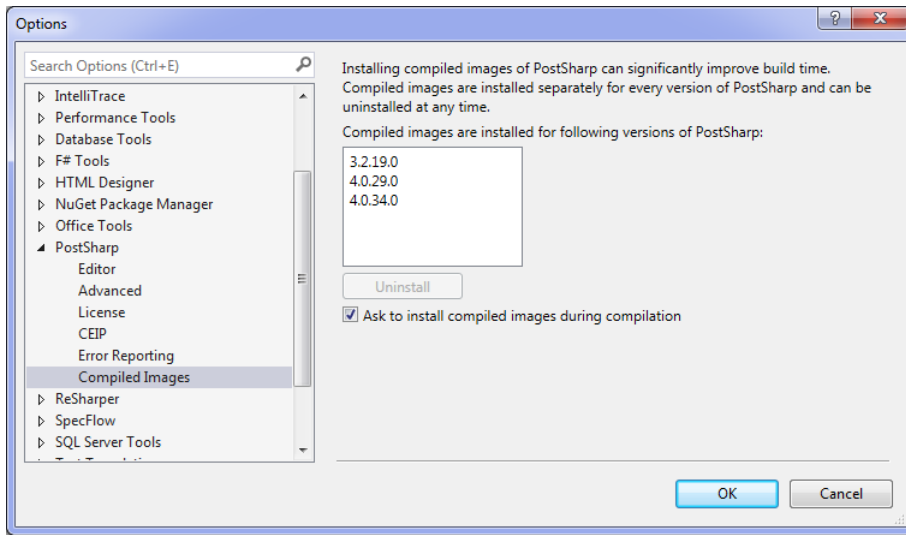
Before you uninstall PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio, we suggest you remove the compiled images.

Removing Native Compiled Images

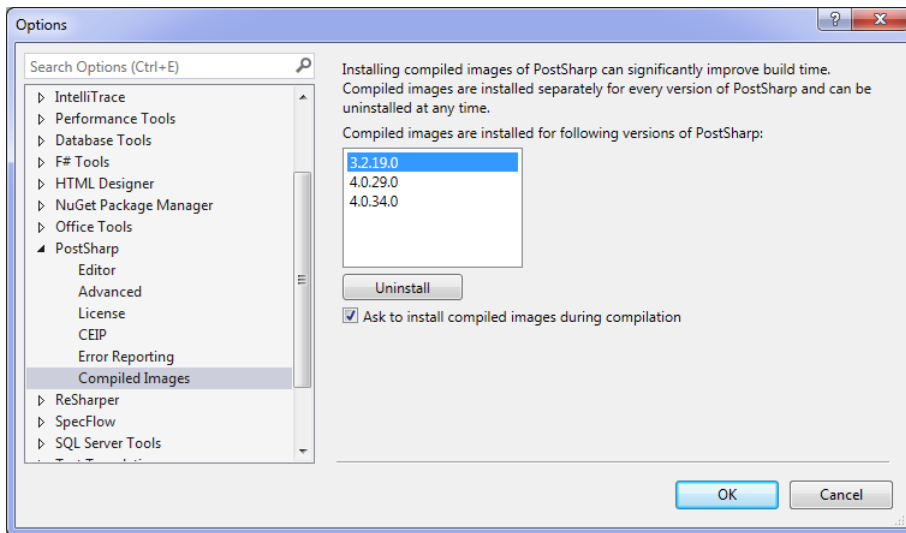
1. Open the Visual Studio Options dialog.



2. Expand the PostSharp node in the tree and select the Compiled Images node.



3. Select an entry in the listbox and click Uninstall.



4. Follow the wizard to uninstall the compiled images for the selection you made. There are no choices to be made, simply click Next and Finish until the wizard is completed.

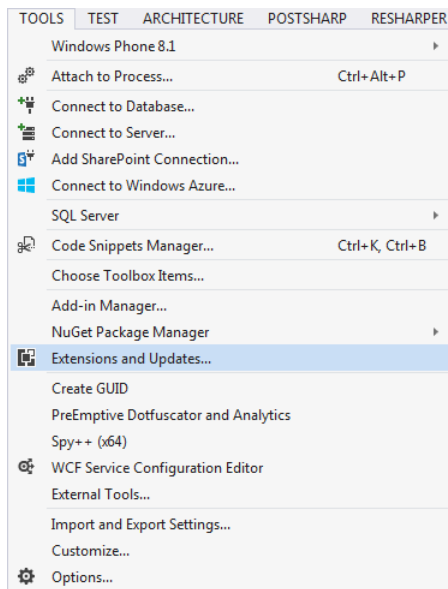
NOTE

You will need to perform the previous steps for each of the versions listed in the PostSharp Compiled Image page in the Options dialog.

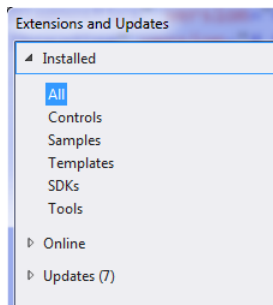
The next step is to remove PostSharp from Visual Studio.

Uninstalling the PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

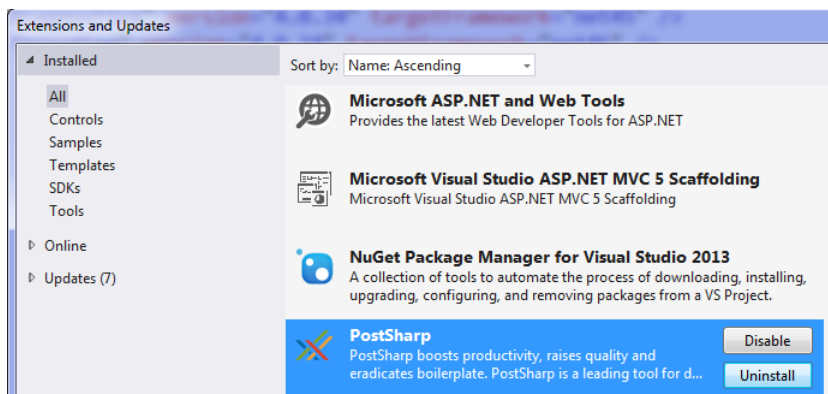
1. Open the Extensions and Updates window.



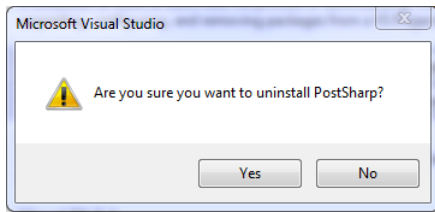
2. Select the All tab on the left of the window.



3. Find the **PostSharp** entry, select it and click the **Uninstall** button.



4. Click **Yes** to confirm that you want to uninstall the PostSharp extension.



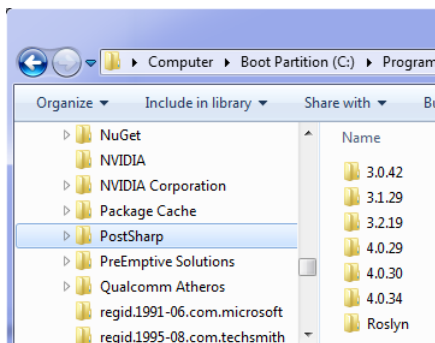
5. Repeat the two previous steps and uninstall the extension named **PostSharp Backward Compatibility Tools**.
6. Restart Visual Studio.

Finally, you can remove the temporary files created by PostSharp. These files would be recreated as necessary the next time you run PostSharp.

Other than occupying disk space, there is no impact of not removing these files.

Cleaning temporary files

1. Open Windows Explorer and navigate to `C:\ProgramData\PostSharp`.



2. Select the `C:\ProgramData\PostSharp` folder and delete it.

6.9. Deploying PostSharp to End-User Devices

Although PostSharp is principally a compiler technology, it contains run-time libraries that need to be deployed along with your application to end-user devices. These libraries are the ones included in the `lib` sub-directory of the NuGet packages for the relevant target framework.

These run-time libraries can be distributed to end-users free of charge. However, the build-time parts of PostSharp cannot be redistributed under the terms of the standard license agreement.

Besides including these run-time libraries, no other action or configuration is required.

6.10. Executing PostSharp from the Command Line

You can execute PostSharp from the command line whenever you want to instrument an existing assembly – whether or not you have the source code of that assembly.

PostSharp has been primarily designed as an extension to the C# and VB languages that automates the implementation or validation of patterns. Most patterns need to be present for the application to work. Think for instance of `INotifyPropertyChanged`. It does not make sense to have a build of your application that does not implement `INotifyPropertyChanged`. Therefore, the best way to invoke PostSharp is to use the default MSBuild integration.

However, if you think of instrumentation aspects such as logging, tracing, performance measurement, then the situation is different. It is perfectly valid to add logging to an existing assembly. In this case executing PostSharp from the command line may be your best option.

In general, you can use the command-line interface in the following situations:

- When you have access to the source code of a project and you want to add instrumentation as a separate step, instead of using the normal C#/VB project file.
- When you don't have access to the source code of the assembly you want to instrument. In this case, make sure your license allows you to modify the assembly.

Instrumenting assembly from the command line

To instrument assembly from the command line:

1. Download and extract PostSharp ZIP distribution.
 - a. Go to <https://www.postsharp.net/downloads/>.
 - b. Choose the desired version of PostSharp (only 4.3 or later).
 - c. Download the file named **PostSharp- <version>.zip** and extract it on your local machine.

2. Create a PostSharp configuration file for your project (see [Working with PostSharp Configuration Files on page 89](#)). These are the most common items to specify in the configuration file:
 - Set the Input property to the file path of the input assembly (relative to the project file location).
 - Set the Output property to the file path of the output assembly (relative to the project file location).
 - Declare the aspects that you want to apply to your assembly (see [Adding Aspects Using XML on page 202](#)).
 - Add the SearchPath element to specify where PostSharp should look for assemblies and plug-ins (in addition to PostSharp package directory and input assembly directory).

Example 1. Instrumenting assembly with the PostSharp logging aspect.

```
<Project xmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
  <Property Name="Input" Value="MyAssembly.dll" />
  <Property Name="Output" Value="MyAssembly.Instrumented.dll" />
  <Property Name="LoggingBackend" Value="Console" />
  <Multicast>
    <LogAttribute xmlns="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics;assembly:PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics" />
  </Multicast>
</Project>
```

Example 2. Instrumenting assembly with a custom aspect.

```
<Project xmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
  <Property Name="Input" Value="MyAssembly.dll" />
  <Property Name="Output" Value="MyAssembly.Instrumented.dll" />
  <SearchPath Path="C:\Path\MyAspects" />
  <Multicast>
    <ProfileAttribute xmlns="clr-namespace:MyAspects;assembly:MyAspects" />
  </Multicast>
</Project>
```

3. Invoke PostSharp. PostSharp executables are located under the *tools* folder of the extracted archive. You can choose between these two executables:
 - *postsharp-net40-x64-native.exe* – use to transform x64 assemblies.
 - *postsharp-net40-x86-native.exe* – use to transform any other assemblies.

To apply the transformation to your project, invoke the PostSharp executable and specify the path to the project configuration file as a command line argument. For example:

```
c:\PostSharp\tools\postsharp-net40-x86-native.exe postsharp.config
```

Upon completing the instrumentation of your assembly, PostSharp will output the “complete” message with the PostSharp version number and total numbers of errors and warnings, if any.

```
PostSharp 4.3 [4.3.x.0, postsharp-net40-x86-native.exe, CLR 4.0.30319.394254, Release] complete -- 0 errors, 2 wa
```

You can also specify the input assembly as a command line argument. In this case PostSharp recognizes the argument type based on the file name extension (e.g. *.config, *.pssln, *.psproj for project files, *.exe, *.dll for input assemblies). The input assembly specified on the command line overrides the corresponding Input property in the project file.

```
c:\PostSharp\tools\postsharp-net40-x86-native.exe postsharp.config MyAssembly.dll
```

By following the steps outlined in this article, you add instrumentation to an existing assembly without having to recompile it from the source code.

CHAPTER 7

Licensing

This chapter addresses some technical questions related to the licensing of PostSharp. For business questions, please refer to our [web site](#)¹².

It contains the following topics:

Chapter	Description
Deploying License Keys on page 67	This topic shows how each developer can install the license key using the UI and how this can be done centrally by adding the license key to source control.
License Audit on page 71	This topic explains that PostSharp does not validate the license key in a blocking way, but audits the use of license keys.
Limitations of PostSharp Express on page 71	This topic explains the limitations of PostSharp Express.
Sharing Source Code With Unlicensed Teams on page 72	This topic explains that you don't need to purchase a license if you need to build code that you didn't write yourself but uses PostSharp.
Using PostSharp License Server on page 77	This topic shows how users can obtain a license from a license server.
Installing and Servicing PostSharp License Server on page 73	This topic describes how system administrators can install and maintain the license server.

7.1. Deploying License Keys

This section explains how to install PostSharp license keys.

Whether you are using a free or commercial edition, PostSharp requires you to enter a license key before being able to build a project.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Registering a license key using the user interface on page 67](#)
- [Installing the license key in source control on page 70](#)

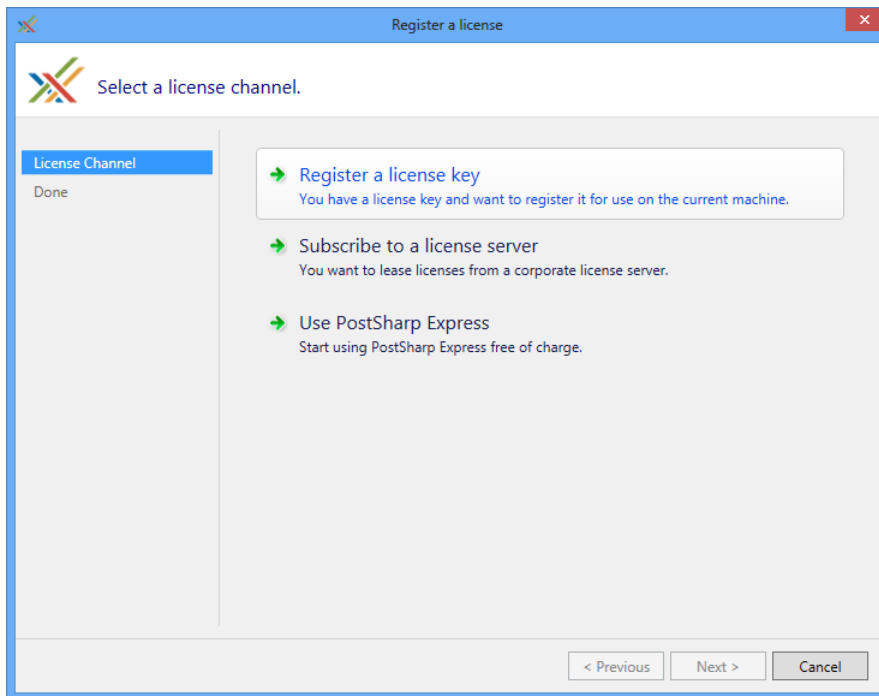
Registering a license key using the user interface

Registering a license key using the user interface is the preferred procedure for individual developers and small teams.

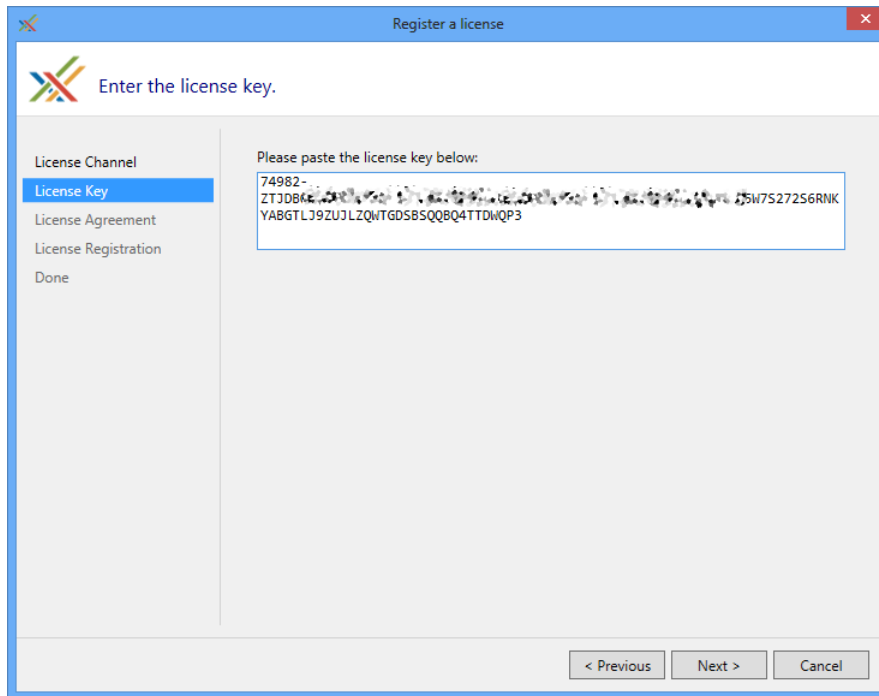
12. <https://www.postsharp.net/purchase/faq>

To register a license key using the user interface:

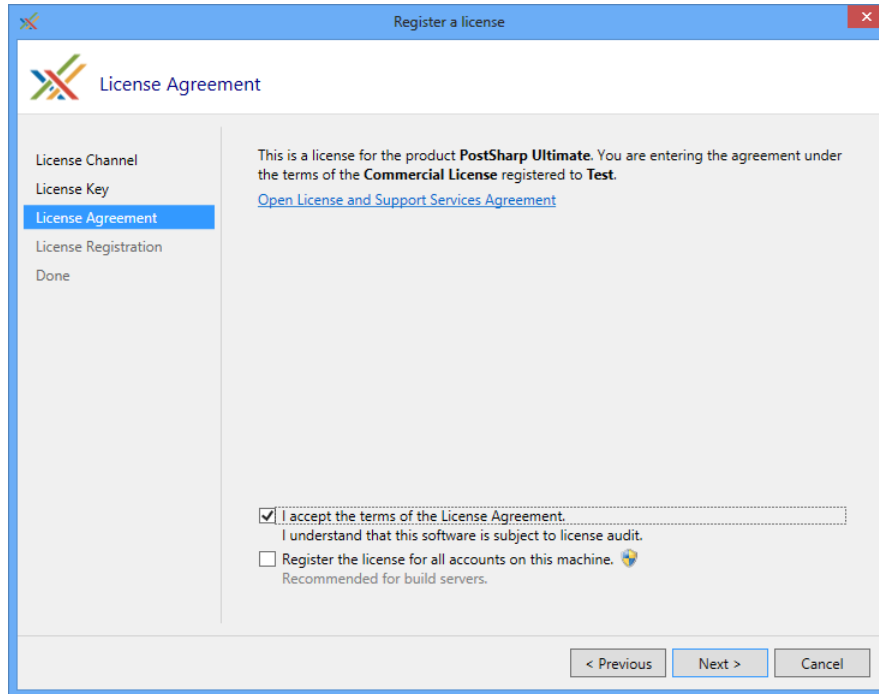
1. Open Visual Studio.
2. Click on menu **PostSharp**, then **Options**.
3. Open the **License** option page.
4. Click on the **Register a license** link.
5. Click on **Register a license**.



6. Paste the license key and click **Next**.



7. Read the license agreement and check the option **I agree**. Click on **Next**.



TIP

If you are registering the license key on a build server, also check the option **Register these settings for all accounts on this machine**.

8. Click **Next** on the notice regarding license metering.

Installing the license key in source control

It is possible to install the license key in source control, so that these settings are automatically applied during the build.

To install the license the in source control:

1. Create a file named *postsharp.config* in the root directory of your source repository, or in any parent directory of the Visual Studio project file (*.csproj or *.vbproj).
2. Add the following content to the *postsharp.config* file:

```
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
  <LicenseValue="000-AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA"/>
</Project>
```

In this code, *000-AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA* must be replaced by the license key or the URL to the license server.

See [Working with PostSharp Configuration Files](#) on page 89 for details about this configuration file.

7.2. License Audit

Although most software packages are protected with a license activation mechanism, we think that the practice is not adequate for software development tools:

- Source code is sometimes compiled several years after it has been written, and there is no guarantee that the license activation server will still be functional.
- Development teams want their tools to be included in the source control repository together with source code, and want the license key to be deployed the same way.

Instead of license activation, PostSharp relies on asynchronous, fail-safe license audit. PostSharp audits the use of license keys on each client machine and periodically reports it to our license servers. The mechanism does not require a permanent network connection, and PostSharp will not fail if the license server is not available.

The licensing client will contact our licensing servers in the following cases:

- When a license is registered on a computer with the user interface.
- Once per week, for every user and every device using PostSharp.

No personally identifiable information is transmitted during this process except the license key. In case we suspect a rough violation of the License Agreement, we reserve the right to contact the legitimate owner of this license.

TIP

If license audit is not acceptable in your company, please contact us with a request to disable license audit. Our sales teams will evaluate your request and answer with a license key containing an audit waiver. Global licenses and site licenses are not subject to license audit by default. The use of the license server does not implicitly disable license audit. For more information, see [Using PostSharp License Server on page 77](#).

7.3. Limitations of PostSharp Express

PostSharp Express contains almost all the features of PostSharp Ultimate, but the number of types to which you can apply aspects is limited to 10 per project or 50 per solution.

To know how many types are already using aspects, open the **PostSharp Metrics** tool window in Visual Studio.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Limitations of PostSharp Architecture Framework on page 71](#)
- [Enforcement of the solution-level limit on page 72](#)
- [Backward compatibility with PostSharp 4.2 on page 72](#)
- [Diagnosing licensing issues on page 72](#)

Limitations of PostSharp Architecture Framework

PostSharp Architecture Framework has no concept of aspect and no concept of aspect target, therefore the number of types is computed differently. Instead, what is limited is the number of types for which you can call APIs like `ReflectionSearch` or `ISyntaxReflectionService`.

Enforcement of the solution-level limit

The limitation of 50 types per solution is implemented not by looking at the *sln* file, but by counting the number of classes in all assemblies that are referenced by the current assembly. That is, the limit is actually 50 types in the whole assembly closure.

Backward compatibility with PostSharp 4.2

Limitations of PostSharp Express changed between PostSharp 4.2 and PostSharp 4.3. If PostSharp detects that the project has been upgraded from PostSharp 4.2 or earlier, the limitations of PostSharp Express 4.2 will be enforced in a backward-compatible way. Please refer to PostSharp 4.2 documentation for details about PostSharp Express limitations in this version.

Diagnosing licensing issues

If PostSharp is requiring a commercial license and you don't understand why, you can generate a licensing diagnostic log by building your project with the following command line:

```
msbuild /p:PostSharpTraceLicensing=True
```

If you're calling the PostSharp command-line interface instead of the MSBuild integration, add the `/TraceLicensing` argument.

The log file is created in the `%ProgramData%\PostSharp\LicensingTrace` directory. The full path to the log file is mentioned in the build output.

7.4. Sharing Source Code With Unlicensed Teams

You only need a license if you *create or modify* code using PostSharp. If you only *build* code that is using PostSharp, you don't need to purchase a license.

PostSharp can determine whether you modify the code or just build it by looking at your source control repository. If your working copy has modifications against your base commit in your source control repository, PostSharp will consider that you are creating or modifying the code yourself, and will require a valid license.

By default, checking the modifications in the source control is disabled for performance reasons. It means that by default PostSharp always requires a valid license during build. You can enable source control checking by editing the *PostSharp Configuration File* for your project or solution (see [Working with PostSharp Configuration Files on page 89](#)).

To enable source code sharing with unlicensed teams:

1. Open the file *postsharp.config* that is located in the root directory of your solution or project. If the file doesn't exist then create a new *postsharp.config* file in that location with the following content:

```
<?xmlVersion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
</Project>
```

2. Add a Property element under the Project element, set the Name attribute to `VcsCheckEnabled` and the Value attribute to `True`.

```
<?xmlVersion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
  <PropertyName="VcsCheckEnabled"Value="True"/>
</Project>
```


NOTE

The following source control systems are supported: **Git** and **TFS**. If you are not using any of these systems, PostSharp will always require a license at build time.

7.5. Installing and Servicing PostSharp License Server

This topic covers PostSharp License Server from the point of view of the system administrator and license administrator.

We designed our license server to help our customers, not to enforce our license agreements. The application is not obfuscated, it uses a clear SQL database and provides the ability to workaround issues by canceling leases or purging tables.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [System Requirements on page 73](#)
- [Installing PostSharp License Server on page 73](#)
- [Installing a license key on page 74](#)
- [Testing the license server on page 75](#)
- [Displaying license usage on page 75](#)
- [Canceling leases on page 76](#)
- [Maintenance on page 76](#)

System Requirements

PostSharp License Server is an ASP.NET 4.0 application backed by a Microsoft SQL database.

It requires:

- Windows Server 2003 or later with Internet Information Services installed.
- Microsoft SQL Server 2005 or later (any edition, including the Express edition).

If the license server can be configured with a sufficiently long lease renewal period, there is no need to deploy the application and its database in high-availability conditions. You need to plan that the amount of time between the lease renewal and the lease end is larger than the longest expected outage. Frequent backups are not critical unless usage information is required for accounting purposes in case of pay-as-you-use licenses, where the **Export Logs** feature is required.

CAUTION NOTE

Deploying the ASP.NET application to several machines is not supported because the lease algorithm uses application locking instead of database locking.

Installing PostSharp License Server

The setup procedure is simple but must be performed manually.

To install PostSharp License Server, you will need administrative access on a Windows Server machine and the permission to create a new database.

To install PostSharp License Server:

1. Download the latest version of PostSharp License Server from the PostSharp website. For version 3.1.44, the URL is <http://www.postsharp.net/downloads/postsharp-3.1/v3.1.44/SharpCraftersLicenseServer-3.1.44.zip>. You can open the download manager at <http://www.postsharp.net/downloads/> and browse to the version you are interested in.

NOTE

It is not necessary that the version of PostSharp License Server exactly matches the version of PostSharp. You do not have to upgrade PostSharp License Server as long as the license keys you want to use are compatible with the server version.

2. Using Internet Information Services (IIS) Manager, configure a new web application whose root is the folder containing the file *web.config*.
3. The application pool should be configured to use ASP.NET 4.0.
4. Configure the authentication mode of the web application: disable **Anonymous Authentication**, and enable **Windows Authentication**.
5. Create an MS SQL database (the free MS SQL Express server is supported).
6. Execute the script *CreateTables.sql* in the context of this database. The file is located in the zip archive of the license server.
7. Set up security on this database so that the user account under which the ASP.NET application pool is running (typically NETWORK SERVICE) can access the database.
8. Edit the file *web.config*:
 - a. *configuration/connectionStrings*: Correct the connection string (server name and database name) to match your settings.
 - b. *configuration/system.net/mailSettings*: Set the name of the SMTP server used to send warning emails.
 - c. *configuration/applicationSettings*: this section contains several settings that are documented inside the *web.config* file. The most important settings are the email addresses for shortage notifications and the duration of leases duration and renewal delay.
 - d. *configuration/system.web/authorization*: Set up security of the whole application to restrict the persons who are allowed to borrow a license. Optional.
 - e. *configuration/location[@path='Admin']/system.web/authorization*: Specify who has access to the administrative interface of the application. Optional.

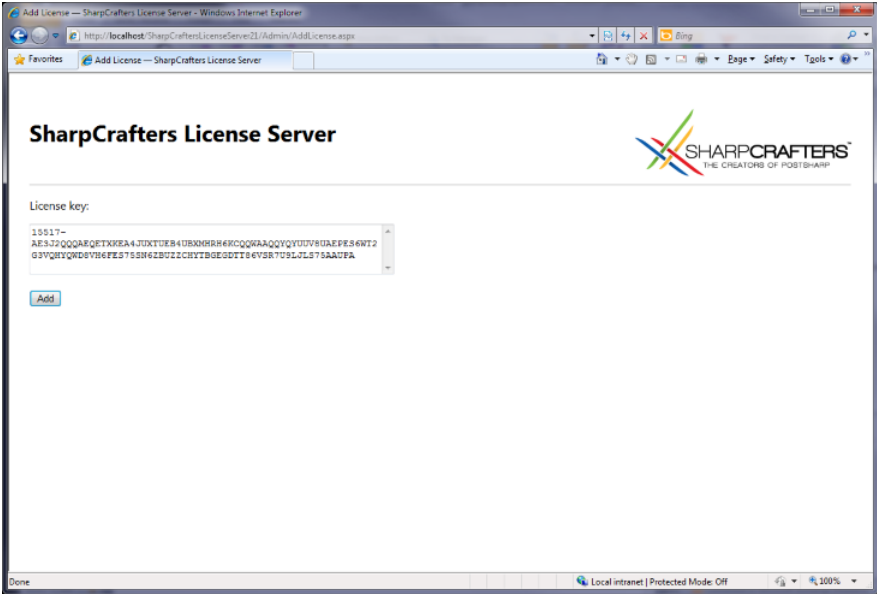
Installing a license key

Before developers can start using the license server, you need to install a license key.

To install a license key into the license server:

1. Open the home page of the license server using a web browser.
2. Click on the link **Install a new license**.

- 3. Paste the license key and click on button **Add**.



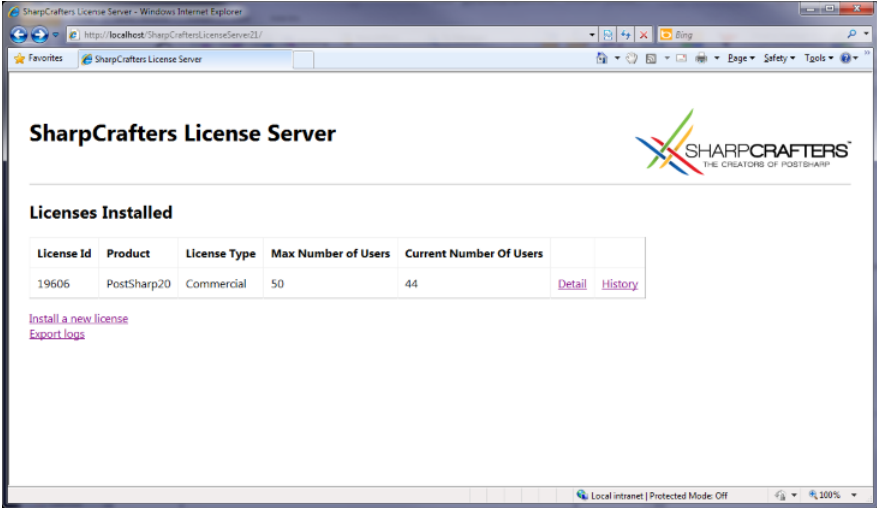
Testing the license server

If you have installed the license server at the address *http://localhost/PostSharpLicenseServer*, you can test it opening the URL *http://localhost/PostSharpLicenseServer/Lease.ashx?product=PostSharp30&user=me&machine=other* using Firefox or Chrome. If the license acquisition was successful, the browser will display the license key and the duration of the lease. You can also then see the resulting allocation on the home page *http://localhost/PostSharpLicenseServer*, and cancel the lease.

Displaying license usage

PostSharp License Server makes it easy to know how many people are currently using the product, and to display historical data.

Overview of installed license keys and current number of leases



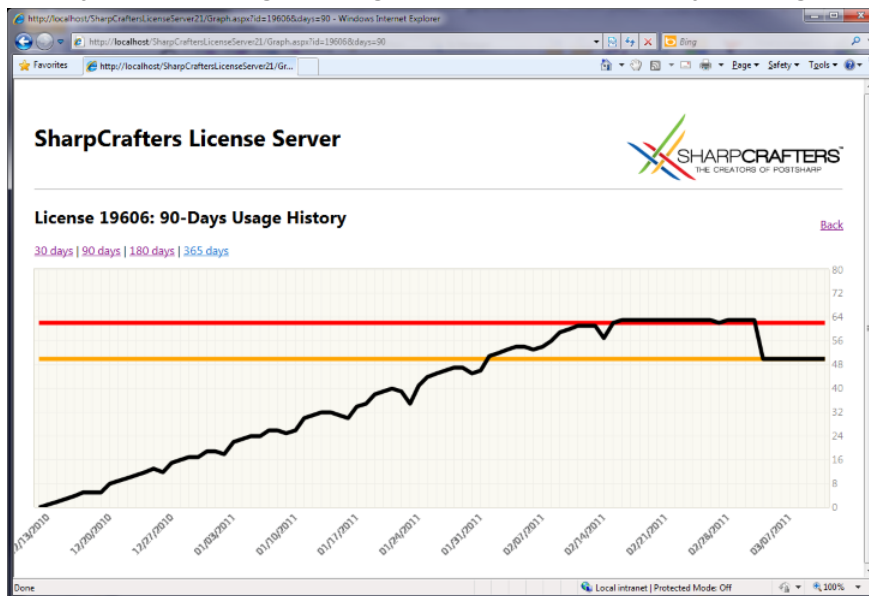
Detail of leases

SharpCrafters License Server

Current leases on license 19606

User	Authenticated User	Machine	Start Time (UTC)	End Time (UTC)	
GARY.TURNER	CONTOSO\GARY.TURNER	DESKTOP-f2a1	2011-01-27 07:00:00	2011-03-13 07:00:00	Cancel
WM.MARTINEZ	CONTOSO\WM.MARTINEZ	DESKTOP-5a2f	2011-02-21 07:00:00	2011-03-14 07:00:00	Cancel
WILLIAM.DAVIS	CONTOSO\WILLIAM.DAVIS	DESKTOP-1f18	2011-02-21 07:00:00	2011-03-14 07:00:00	Cancel
DAVID.RAHM	CONTOSO\DAVID.RAHM	DESKTOP-4b2	2011-03-03 07:00:00	2011-03-14 07:00:00	Cancel
BOBBIE.SHERMAN	CONTOSO\BOBBIE.SHERMAN	DESKTOP-73d3	2011-03-03 07:00:00	2011-03-14 07:00:00	Cancel
JEREMY.THOMPSON	CONTOSO\JEREMY.THOMPSON	DESKTOP-6465	2011-03-03 07:00:00	2011-03-14 07:00:00	Cancel
HUBERT.NUNNALLY	CONTOSO\HUBERT.NUNNALLY	DESKTOP-e995	2011-03-03 07:00:00	2011-03-14 07:00:00	Cancel

History of license usage. The figure demonstrates a 30-day, +30% grace period.



Canceling leases

You can cancel a lease from the lease list by clicking on the **Cancel** hyperlink. Note that canceling a lease on the server does not cancel the lease on the client. It is not possible to cancel leases on the client.

Maintenance

The license server is designed to keep a history of all leases. Therefore, it can grow indefinitely, depending on the number of users and lease duration. It is safe to delete all records from the Lease table at any time, unless these records are necessary for accounting purposes.

Using SQL Agent, you can schedule a job that purges old records of the Lease table:

```
DELETE FROM [dbo].[Leases] WHERE EndTime < DATEADD( day, -90, GETDATE() );
```

7.6. Using PostSharp License Server

If the license audit is not acceptable in your company for regulatory or other reasons, you can consider using the PostSharp License Server.

PostSharp License Server is a server application that customers can install into on their own premises to measure the number of concurrent users of PostSharp. The application is based on ASP.NET and Microsoft SQL Server.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Disclaimer on page 77](#)
- [Design Principles on page 77](#)
- [Subscribing to the license server on page 77](#)
- [Installing the license settings in source control on page 81](#)

If you are a system administrator or license administrator, see also [Installing and Servicing PostSharp License Server on page 73](#).

Disclaimer

Using the license server is optional. Only a few enterprise customers chose to use it. Alternative approaches are:

- To rely on the default license audit mechanism (see [License Audit on page 71](#) for details).
- To acquire enough licenses for the whole team with some reserve margin.
- To use a spreadsheet to keep track of who is using the software.
- To use other software audit products, although this approach is imperfect because PostSharp is not installed on the developer's machine as a standalone and identifiable application.

Design Principles

The license server manages leases of a license to a given user on a given machine (the "client"). Once the lease is provided to the client, it is cached on the client. Upon client request, the server will return a license key and two dates: the lease end date and the lease renewal date. The lengths of the lease and of the renewal period are configurable. The client will not contact the license server before the renewal date, so the client can go offline during the duration of the lease. Then, a new lease will be reserved for the client. If the client is not able to renew its lease from the server after the lease renewal date, the client will still be able to use PostSharp until the end of the lease. Then, the use of PostSharp will be prevented. To avoid loss of productivity due to lack of network connection or server outages, we recommend setting a large delay between the lease renewal period and the lease period.

If the number of concurrent users exceeds the licensed number, the license administrator will receive an email, and additional users will be allowed during a grace period. At the end of the grace period, only the licensed number of concurrent users will be allowed. The duration of the grace period and the number of excess users depend on the kind of license. By default, it is set to 30% of users and 30 days.

IMPORTANT NOTE

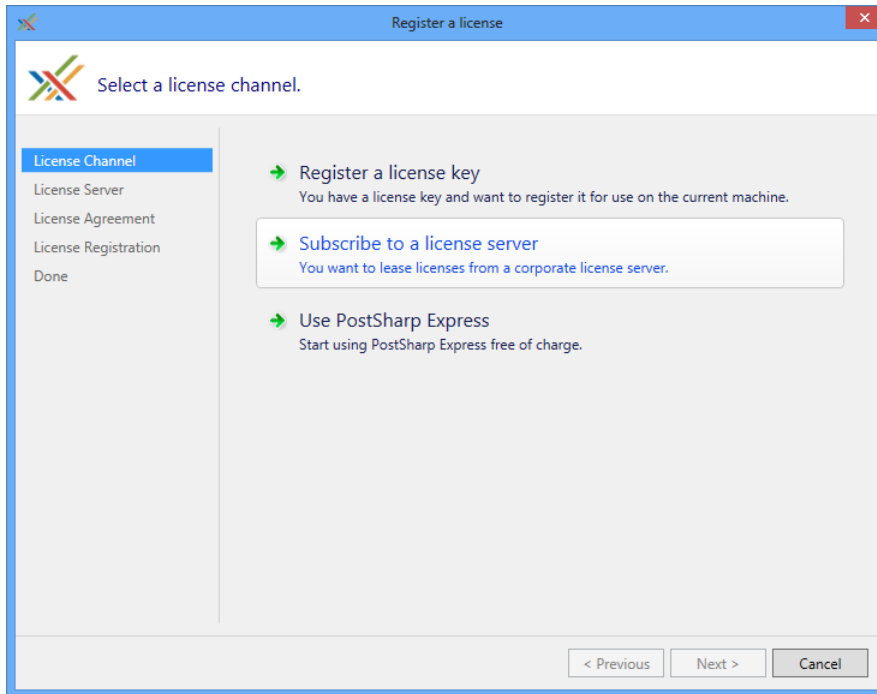
If you have subscribed to a license server, you will need periodic connections to the company network. The licensing client will automatically try to renew a lease when it comes close to expiration and if the license server is available. Lease duration and renewal settings can be configured by the administrator of the license server. A connection to the license server is not necessary while the lease is valid.

Subscribing to the license server

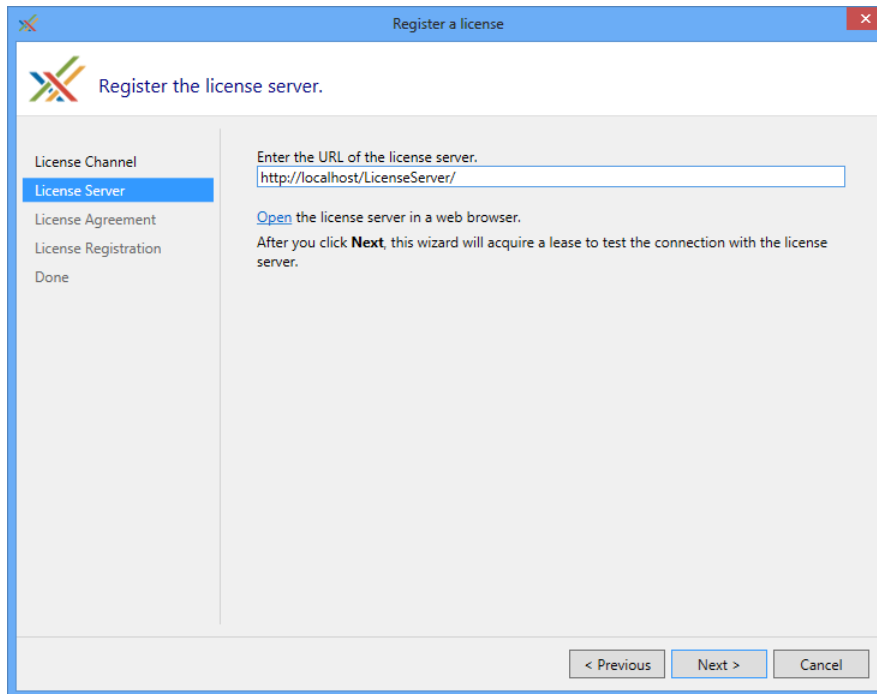
If your company use PostSharp License Server, you can register using a similar procedure as for registering a license key:

To subscribe to a license server using the user interface:

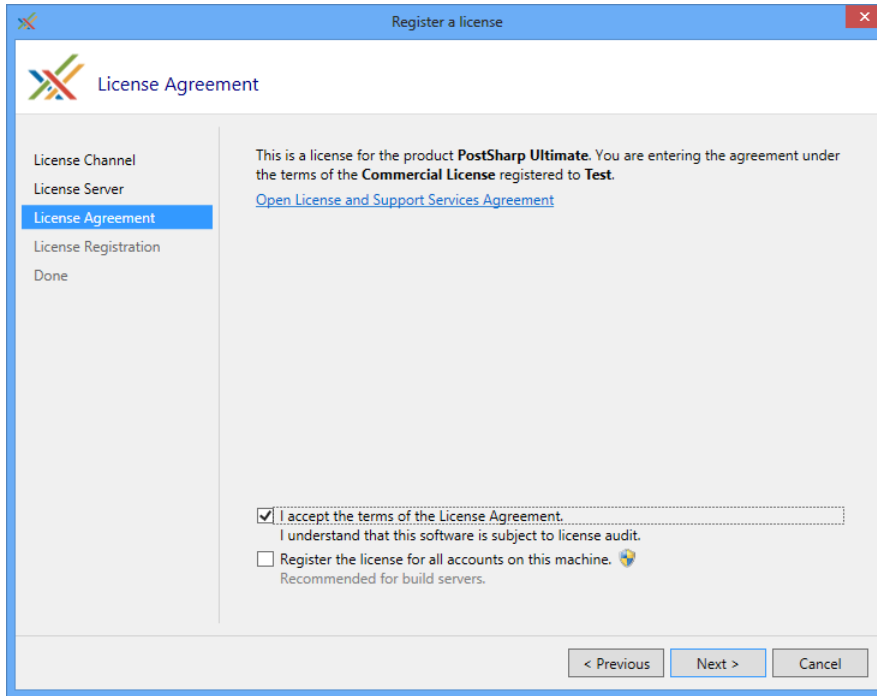
1. Open Visual Studio.
2. Click on menu **PostSharp**, then **Options**.
3. Open the **License** option page.
4. Click on the **Subscribe to a license server** link.



5. Paste the URL of the license server. You can click on the **Open** hyperlink to verify that the URL is correct and that you have access to it. Click **Next**.



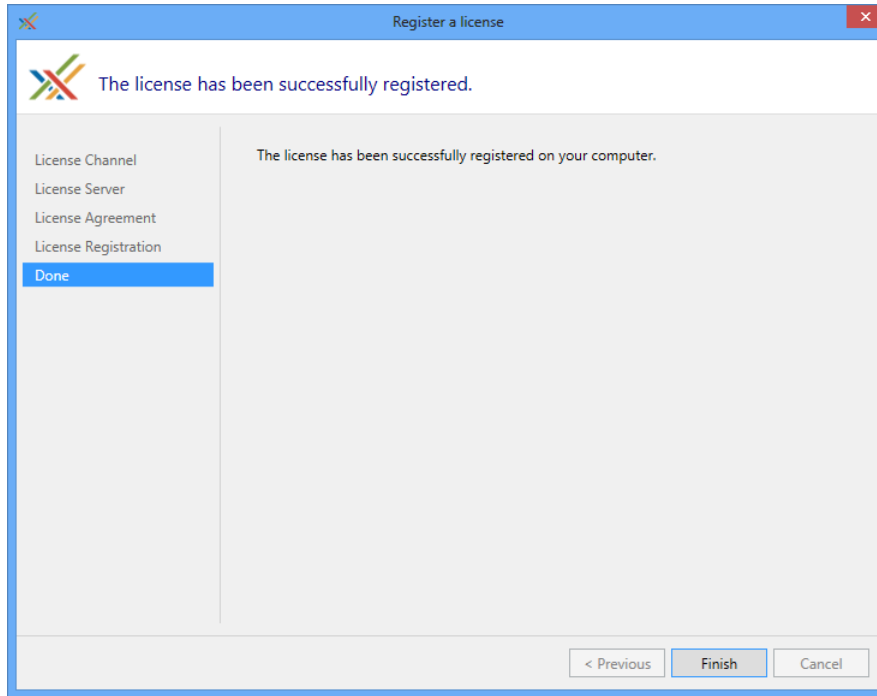
6. Read the license agreement and check the option **I accept**. Click on **Next**.



TIP

If you are registering the license server on a build server, also check the option **Register the license for all accounts on this machine**.

7. You are done.



Installing the license settings in source control

It is possible to subscribe to the license server using a file stored in source control by using the exact same mechanism as to register a license key.

To install license settings in source control:

1. Create a file named *postsharp.config* in the root directory of your source repository, or in any parent directory of the Visual Studio project file (*.csproj or *.vbproj).
2. Add the following content to the *postsharp.config* file:

```
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"xmlns:x="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configur:
  <LicenseValue="http://server/path"/>
</Project>
```

In this code, *http://server/path* must be replaced by the URL to the license server.

See [Working with PostSharp Configuration Files](#) on page 89 for details about this configuration file.

CHAPTER 8

Configuration

For most use cases, PostSharp does not require any custom configuration. PostSharp gets its default configuration from three sources:

- **MSBuild integration.** PostSharp gets most of its configuration settings directly from the parent MSBuild project.
- **NuGet integration.** Some PostSharp plug-ins delivered as NuGet packages may modify PostSharp configuration files during installation.
- **PostSharp Tools.** When adding aspects and policies from Visual Studio, PostSharp may automatically modify some configuration files.

Even if most configuration is correct by default, you may want to understand the configuration system to troubleshoot configuration and installation issues, or simply to implement more advanced configuration scenarios.

PostSharp can be configured using the Visual Studio user interface, by editing MSBuild project files, or by editing PostSharp configuration files.

8.1. Configuring Projects in Visual Studio

PostSharp accepts several configuration settings such as the version and processor architecture of the CLR that is used at build time, the search path of dependencies, and whether some features are enabled.

Although the default configuration is appropriate for most situations, you may have to fine-tune some of them to cope with particular cases.

Most common properties can be edited directly from Visual Studio using the PostSharp project property page.

This topic contains the following sections:

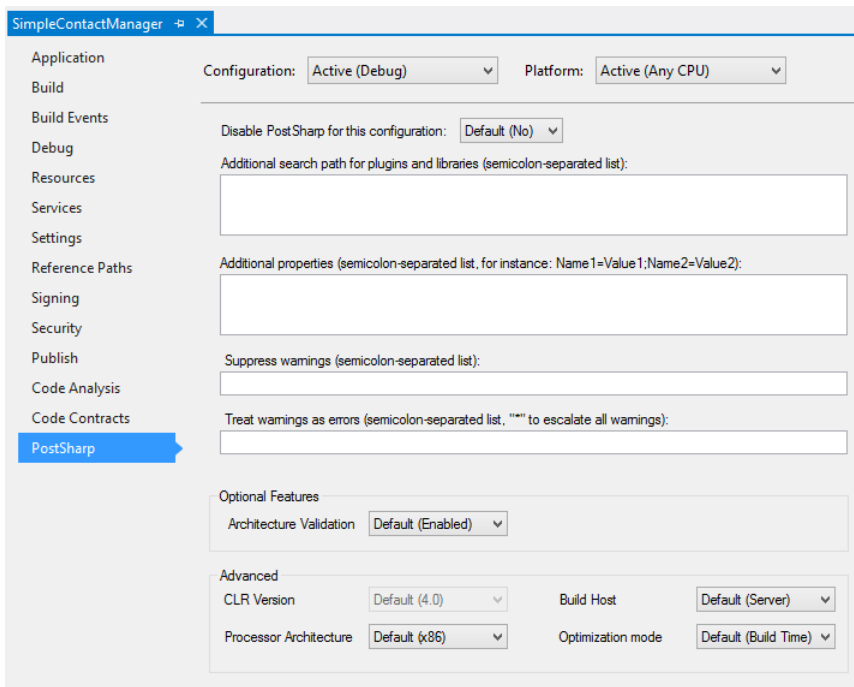
- [Opening PostSharp project properties tab on page 83](#)
- [Understanding configuration settings on page 84](#)

Opening PostSharp project properties tab

To open the PostSharp project property page in Visual Studio

1. Open the **Solution Explorer**.
2. Right-click on the project then select **Properties** at the bottom of the menu.
3. Select the **PostSharp** tab.

The PostSharp property page in the Visual Studio project properties dialog.



Understanding configuration settings

Note that all settings are dependent on the selected project configuration (for instance Debug) and platform (for instance Any CPU).

Setting	Description
Disable PostSharp	True if PostSharp should not execute in for the selected configuration and platform, otherwise False. This setting maps to the MSBuild property SkipPostSharp.
Additional search path	A semicolon-separated list of directories where plug-ins and libraries have to be searched for. This property can reference other MSBuild properties, for instance: <code>..\MyWeaver\bin\\$(Configuration)</code> . All project references are already added to the search path by default. This setting maps to the MSBuild property PostSharpSearchPath.
Additional properties	A semicolon-separated list of property definition, for instance: <code>Name1=Value1;Name2=Value2</code> . This property can reference other MSBuild properties, for instance: <code>RootNamespace=\$(RootNamespace)</code> . Several properties are defined by default; for details, see Well-Known PostSharp Properties on page 94 . This setting maps to the MSBuild property PostSharpProperties
Suppress warnings	A semicolon-separated list of warning identifiers that must be ignored, or <code>*</code> if all warnings have to be ignored. This setting maps to the MSBuild property PostSharpDisabledMessages.
Treat warnings as errors	A semicolon-separated list of warning identifiers that must be escalated into errors, or <code>*</code> if all warnings must be treated as errors. This setting maps to the MSBuild property PostSharpEscalatedMessages.
Architecture Validation	Enabled if constraints must be validated, otherwise Disabled. The default value is Enabled. For details regarding architecture validation, see Validating Architecture on page 357 .
CLR Version	The version of the CLR that hosts PostSharp. PostSharp currently only supports the CLR 4.0 so this setting is disabled. This setting maps to the MSBuild property PostSharpTargetFrameworkVersion.

Setting	Description
Processor Architecture	The processor architecture (x86 or x64) of the process hosting PostSharp. Since PostSharp needs to execute the current project during build, the processor architecture of the PostSharp process must be compatible with the target platform of the current project. The default value is x86, or x64 if the target platform of the current project is x64. This setting maps to the MSBuild property PostSharpTargetProcessor.
Build Host	The kind of process hosting PostSharp, which influences the assembly loading mechanism, compatibility and performance features. This setting maps to the MSBuild property PostSharpHost. For details, see Configuring Projects Using MSBuild on page 85 .
Optimization Mode	When set to Build Time, PostSharp will use a faster algorithm to generate the final assembly. When set to Size, PostSharp will use a slower algorithm that generates smaller assemblies. The default value is Build Time by default, or Size when the C# or VB compiler is set to generate optimal code (typically, in release builds). This settings maps to the MSBuild property PostSharpOptimizationMode.

8.2. Configuring Projects Using MSBuild

Most configuration settings of PostSharp can be set as MSBuild properties.

NOTE

The integration of PostSharp with MSBuild is implemented in files *PostSharp.tasks* and *PostSharp.targets*. These files define some properties and items that are not documented here. They are considered implementation details and may change without notice.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Setting MSBuild properties with a text editor on page 85](#)
- [Configuring several projects at a time on page 86](#)
- [Setting MSBuild properties from the command line on page 86](#)
- [List of properties on page 86](#)

Setting MSBuild properties with a text editor

To set a property that persistently applies to a specific project, but not to the whole solution, the best solution is to define it directly inside the C# or VB project file (*.csproj or *.vbproj, respectively) using a text editor.

Adding a project-level MSBuild property using Visual Studio

1. Open the **Solution Explorer**, right-click on the project name, click on **Unload project**, then right-click again on the same project and click on **Edit**.
2. Insert the following XML fragment just *before* the <Import /> elements:

```
<PropertyGroup>
  <PropertyName>PropertyValue</PropertyName>
</PropertyGroup>
```

See [Configuring Projects Using MSBuild on page 85](#) for the list of MSBuild properties used by PostSharp.

3. Save the file. If the project was open in Visual Studio, go to the Solution Explorer, right-click on the project name, then click on **Reload project**.

NOTE

For more information regarding MSBuild properties, see [MSDN Documentation](#)¹³.

Configuring several projects at a time

Instead of editing every project file, you can define shared settings in a file named *PostSharp.Custom.targets* and store in the same directory as the project file or in any parent directory of the parent file (up to 7 levels from the project directory).

Files *PostSharp.Custom.targets* are loaded from the root directory to the project directory, so that files that are closer to the project directory are loaded after and override files in parent directories.

Thanks to this mechanism, it is possible to define settings that apply to a large set of projects and control the grain of settings.

Files *PostSharp.Custom.targets* are normal MSBuild project or targets files; they should have the following content:

```
<?xmlVersion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/developer/msbuild/2003">
  <PropertyGroup>
    <PropertyName>PropertyValuel</PropertyName>
  </PropertyGroup>
</Project>
```

See [Configuring Projects Using MSBuild on page 85](#) for the list of MSBuild properties used by PostSharp.

NOTE

For more information regarding MSBuild project files, see [MSDN Documentation](#)¹⁴.

Setting MSBuild properties from the command line

When an MSBuild property does not need to be set permanently, it is convenient to set it from the command prompt by appending the flag `/p:PropertyName=PropertyValuel` to the command line of **msbuild.exe**, for instance:

```
msbuild.exe /p:PostSharpHost=Native
```

List of properties**General Properties**

The following properties are most commonly overwritten. They can also be edited in Visual Studio using the PostSharp project property page.

Property Name	Description
PostSharpSearchPath	A semicolon-separated list of directories added to the PostSharp search path. PostSharp will probe these directories when looking for an assembly or an add-in. Note that several directories are automatically added to the search path: the .NET Framework reference directory, the directories containing the dependencies of your project and the directories added to the reference path of your project (tab Reference Path in the Visual Studio project properties dialog box).

13. <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/vstudio/ms171458.aspx>

14. <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/vstudio/dd637714.aspx>

Property Name	Description
SkipPostSharp	True if PostSharp should not be executed.
PostSharpOptimizationMode	When set to OptimizeForBuildTime, PostSharp will use a faster algorithm to generate the final assembly. The other possible value is OptimizeForSize. The default value of the PostSharpOptimizationMode property is OptimizeForBuildTime by default and OptimizeForSize when the C# or VB compiler is set to generate optimal code (typically, in release builds).
PostSharpDisabledMessages	Comma-separated list of warnings and messages that should be ignored.
PostSharpEscalatedMessages	Comma-separated list of warnings that should be escalated to errors. Use * to escalate all warnings.
PostSharpLicense	License key or URL of the license server.
PostSharpProperties	Additional properties passed to the PostSharp project, in format Name1=Value1;Name2=Value2. See Well-Known PostSharp Properties on page 94 .
PostSharpConstraintVerificationEnabled	Determines whether verification of architecture constraints is enabled. The default value is True.

Hosting Properties

Because PostSharp not only reads, but also executes the assemblies it transforms, it must run under the proper version and processor architecture of the CLR. Additionally, for each version and processor architecture. The following properties allow to influence the choice of the PostSharp host process.

Property Name	Description
PostSharpTargetFrameworkVersion	Version of the CLR that hosts the PostSharp process. The only valid value is 4.0.
PostSharpTargetProcessor	Processor architecture of the PostSharp hosting process. Valid values are x86 and x64. Since PostSharp needs to execute the current project during build, the processor architecture of the PostSharp process must be compatible with the target platform of the current project. The default value is x86, or x64 if the target platform of the current project is x64.

Property Name	Description
PostSharpHost	<p>Kind of process hosting PostSharp. This setting is usually changed for troubleshooting only. The following values are supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PipeServer means that PostSharp will run as a background process invoked synchronously from MSBuild. Using the pipe server results in lower build time, since PostSharp would otherwise have to be started every time a project is built. The pipe server uses native code and the CLR Hosting API to control the way assemblies are loaded in application domains; the assembly loading algorithm is generally more accurate and predictable than with the managed host. • Native uses the same native code as the pipe server, but the process runs synchronously and terminates immediately after an assembly has been processed. For this reason, it does not have the same build-time performance as the pipe server, but it has exactly the same assembly loading algorithm and is useful for diagnostics. • Managed is a purely managed application. The assembly loading algorithm may be less reliable in some situations because PostSharp has less control over it. Note that this host is no longer being tested and officially supported.
PostSharpBuild	Build configuration of PostSharp. Valid values are Release, Diag and Debug. Only the Release build is distributed in the normal PostSharp packages.
PostSharpHostConfigurationFile	A semicolon-separated list of configuration files containing assembly binding redirections that should be taken into account by the PostSharp hosting process, such as app.config or web.config.

Diagnostic Properties

Property Name	Description
PostSharpAttachDebugger	If this property is set to True, PostSharp will break before starting execution, allowing you to attach a debugger to the PostSharp process. The default value is False. For details, see Debugging Build-Time Aspect Logic on page 355 .
PostSharpTrace	A semicolon-separated list of trace categories to be enabled. The property is effective only when PostSharp runs in diagnostic mode (see property PostSharpBuild here above). Additionally, the MSBuild verbosity should be set to detailed at least. For details, see Debugging Build-Time Aspect Logic on page 355 .
PostSharpUpdateCheckDisabled	True if the periodic update check mechanism should be disabled, False otherwise.
PostSharpExpectedMessages	A semicolon-separated list of codes of expected messages. PostSharp will return a failure code if any expected message was not emitted. This property is used in unit tests of aspects, to ensure that the application of an aspect results in the expected error message.
PostSharpIgnoreError	If this property is set to True, the PostSharp MSBuild task will succeed even if PostSharp returns an error code, allowing the build process to continue. The project or targets file can check the value of the ExitCode output property of the PostSharp MSBuild task to take action.

Property Name	Description
PostSharpFailOnUnexpectedMessage	This property should be used jointly with PostSharpExpectedMessages. If it set to True, PostSharp will fail if any unexpected message was emitted, even if this message was not an error. This property is used in unit tests of aspects, to ensure that the application of an aspect did not result in other messages than expected.

Other Properties

Property Name	Description
PostSharpProject	Location of the PostSharp project (*.psproj) to be executed by PostSharp, or the string None to specify that PostSharp should not be invoked. If this property is defined, the standard detection mechanism based on references to the <i>PostSharp.dll</i> is disabled.
PostSharpUseHardLink	Use hard links instead of file copies when creating the snapshot for Visual Studio Code Analysis (FxCop). This property is True by default.
ExecuteCodeAnalysisOnPostSharpOutput	When set to True, executes Microsoft Code Analysis on the <i>output</i> of PostSharp. By default, the analysis is done on the <i>input</i> of PostSharp, i.e. on the output of the compiler. This property has no effect when Microsoft Code Analysis is disabled for the current build.
PostSharpCopyCodeAnalysisDependenciesDisabled	When set to True, PostSharp will not copy the all dependencies of the current project output into the <i>obj\Debug\Before-PostSharp</i> directory, which contains the copy of the assembly on which Microsoft Code Analysis is executed by default. This property has no effect when Microsoft Code Analysis is disabled for the current build or when the <i>ExecuteCodeAnalysisOnPostSharpOutput</i> property has been set to True.

8.3. Working with PostSharp Configuration Files

PostSharp is designed as a modular post-compilation platform, whose functionality can be extended using plug-ins. For instance, the Diagnostics Pattern Library is implemented as a plug-in. Although writing custom plug-ins is out of scope of this documentation, you should be able, as a PostSharp user, to understand how plug-ins can be added to a project and how they can be configured.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [PostSharp configuration files on page 89](#)
- [Sharing configuration between projects on page 90](#)
- [Order of processing of configuration files on page 91](#)

PostSharp configuration files

The configuration system of PostSharp is based on configuration files.

By default, if you have a project named `MyProject.csproj`, PostSharp will try to load, from the same directory, a configuration file, named `MyProject.psproj`. Configuration file is optional. Most projects don't need it.

See [Configuration File Schema Reference on page 91](#) for details about the format of this file.

For instance, the following code is the configuration file of a project using two plug-ins:

```
<Project xmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
  <PropertyName="LoggingBackend" Value="nlog"/>
  <UsingFile="..\..\Build\bin\{$Configuration}\PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics.Weaver.dll"/>
  <UsingFile="..\..\Build\bin\{$Configuration}\PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics.Weaver.NLog.dll"/>
  <Multicast>
    <LogAttribute xmlns="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics;assembly:PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics" AttributeTarget="Multicast"/>
  </Multicast>
</Project>
```

The principal use cases for end-users are the following:

- Adding license keys. See the [License on page 91](#) configuration element for details.
- Configuring properties. See the [Property on page 91](#) configuration element for details.
- Including a plug-in. See the [Using on page 91](#) configuration element for details.
- Adding aspects or constraints without modifying source code. See [Adding Aspects Using XML on page 202](#) for details.
- Editing logging profiles. See [Configuration File Schema Reference on page 91](#) and [Walkthrough: Customizing Logging on page 171](#) for details.

Sharing configuration between projects

You will often want to share some configuration settings between several projects. A typical example is to add the license key to all projects of your source code repository.

This can be achieved by adding a well-known configuration file to your source tree, or thanks to the [Using on page 91](#) configuration element.

Well-known configuration files

PostSharp will automatically load a few well-known configuration files if they are present on the file system, in the following order:

1. Any file named `postsharp.config` located in the directory containing the MSBuild project file (`csproj` or `vbproj`, typically), or in any parent directory, up to the root. These files are loaded in ascending order, i.e. up from the root directory to the project directory.
2. Any file named `MySolution.pssln` located in the same directory as the solution file `MySolution.sln`.
3. Any file named `MyProject.psproj` located in the same directory as the project file `MyProject.csproj` or `MyProject.vbproj`.

For instance, the files may be loaded in the following order:

1. `c:\src\BlueGray\postsharp.config`
2. `c:\src\BlueGray\FrontEnd\postsharp.config`
3. `c:\src\BlueGray\FrontEnd\BlueGray.FrontEnd.Web\postsharp.config`

4. `c:\src\BlueGray\Solutions\BlueGray.pssln` assuming that the current solution file is `c:\src\BlueGray\Solutions\BlueGray.sln`.
5. `c:\src\BlueGray\FrontEnd\BlueGray.FrontEnd.Web\BlueGray.FrontEnd.Web.psproj` assuming that the current project file is `c:\src\BlueGray\Solutions\BlueGray.sln`.

Explicit configuration sharing

The second technique to share a configuration file among several projects is to use the [Using on page 91](#) configuration element to import a configuration file into another configuration file.

Order of processing of configuration files

Elements of configuration files are processed in the following order:

1. [License on page 91](#) elements are loaded.
2. [Property on page 91](#) elements are loaded. Properties are evaluated at this moment, unless they are marked for deferred evaluation.
3. [SearchPath on page 91](#) elements are loaded.
4. [Using on page 91](#) elements are loaded and referenced plug-ins and configuration files are immediately loaded.
5. [SectionType on page 91](#) elements are loaded.
6. [Service on page 91](#) elements are loaded, but they are not yet instantiated.
7. Extension elements are loaded, but they are not evaluated at this moment.
8. Finally, services and other tasks are instantiated and the project is executed.

8.3.1. Configuration File Schema Reference

The basic format of a PostSharp configuration file is as follows:

```
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"xmlns:x="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
  <!-- The following elements must appear in the proper order. -->
  <LicenseValue="[<license-key>|<url>];[<license-key>|<url>]"*/>
  <PropertyName="<string>"Value="<expression:string>"Overwrite="[true|false]"Sealed="[true|false]"Deferred="[true|false]"Condi
  <SearchPathDirectory="<expression:string>(;<expression:string>)*"ReferenceDirectory="<expression:string>"Condition="<express
  <SearchPathFile="<expression:string>(;<expression:string>)*"ReferenceDirectory="<expression:string>"Condition="<expression:b
  <UsingFile="<expression:string>"ProjectName="<expression:string>"Condition="<expression:bool>"/>
  <SectionTypeLocalName="<string>"Namespace="<string>"/>
  <ServiceTypeName="<string>"AssemblyFile="<string>"Condition="<expression:bool>"/>
  <!-- The rest of the file contains extension elements defined using <SectionType /> elements.
  PostSharp itself defines the following extension elements: -->
  <Multicast>
    <MyMulticastAspectMyAttributeName="<value>"xmlns="clr-namespace:<namespace>;assembly:<assembly>"x:Condition="<expression:b
  </Multicast>
  <LoggingProfilesxmlns="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics;assembly:PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics"x:Condition="<ex
    <LoggingProfileName="<string>"OnEntryLevel="<LogLevel>"OnSuccessLevel="<LogLevel>"OnExceptionLevel="<LogLevel>"OnEntryOpti
  </LoggingProfiles>
```

</Project>

Schema elements

The configuration file includes these elements, described in detail in subsequent sections in this topic:

[Project on page 92](#)

[License on page 92](#)

[SearchPath on page 92](#)

[Using on page 92](#)

[SectionType on page 93](#)

[Property on page 93](#)

[Service on page 93](#)

[Multicast on page 0](#)

Project

This element is the root of the configuration file.

License

This element allows to load one or more license keys.

Attribute	Type	Description
Value	string	Required. A semicolon-separated list of license keys, or an URL to the license server.

SearchPath

This element adds a file or a directory to the list of paths in which PostSharp searches for assemblies and plug-ins.

Attribute	Type	Description
File	string expression	Optional (either File or Directory is required). A semicolon-separated list of files that must be added to the path.
Directory	string expression	Optional (either File or Directory is required). A semicolon-separated list of directories that must be added to the path.
ReferenceDirectory	string expression	Optional. The directory from which relative paths in File or Directory are resolved.
Condition	boolean expression	Optional. true if the element is considered, false if it must be ignored.

Using

This element imports another configuration file into the current project.

Attribute	Type	Description
File	string expression	Required. Name of the file to be imported. Unless the name is qualified by a relative or absolute path, the file will be searched for using the search path. In this case, a file with extension <i>psplugin</i> or <i>dll</i> will be searched.
ProjectName	string	Optional. In case that a single <i>dll</i> includes several configurations, specifies which configuration should be loaded.

Attribute	Type	Description
Condition	boolean expression	Optional. true if the element is considered, false if it must be ignored.

SectionType

This element defines custom sections for the current project. Custom sections can appear under the Project element under all system-defined elements.

Attribute	Type	Description
LocalName	string	Required. The local name of the XML element representing the custom section.
Namespace	string	Required. The namespace of the XML element representing the custom section.

Property

This element defines a property for the current project.

Attribute	Type	Description
Name	string	Required. The property name.
Value	string expression	Required. The value that is assigned to the property.
Overwrite	boolean	Optional. true if the element will overwrite any previously-defined property of the same name, otherwise false. The default value is true.
Sealed	boolean	Optional. true if an attempt to overwrite this property should result in an error, otherwise false. The default value is false.
Deferred	boolean	Optional. true if the expression in the Value attribute should be dynamically evaluated every time the property value is requested, or false if the expression should be set at the time the property is defined. The default value is false.
Condition	boolean expression	Optional. true if the element is considered, false if it must be ignored.

Service

This element registers a service to the service locator for the current project.

Attribute	Type	Description
TypeName	string	Required. The full type name implementing the service. This class must have a public parameterless constructor and implement the IService interface.
AssemblyFile	string expression	Optional. The path of the assembly defining the service class. If the attribute is not provided, the type will be searched for in the assembly being currently processed by PostSharp.
Condition	boolean expression	Optional. true if the element is considered, false if it must be ignored.

Multicast

This element can be used to add aspects, policies or constraints to a project without adding the the C# project as custom attributes. Adding elements to this section is equivalent to adding them to source code at assembly level.

The Multicast section is convenient to add aspect to several projects from a single file.

For details regarding this section, see [Including CLR Objects in Configuration on page 94](#).

8.3.2. Well-Known PostSharp Properties

The following table lists the PostSharp properties that may be set from the MSBuild project. The second column specifies the name of the MSBuild property that influences the value of the PostSharp property, if any.

Property Name	MSBuild Property Name	Description
Configuration	Configuration	Build configuration (typically Debug or Release).
Platform	Platform	Target processor architecture (typically AnyCPU, x86 or x64).
MSBuildProjectFullPath	MSBuildProjectFullPath	Full path of the C# or VB project being built.
IgnoredAssemblies		Comma-separated list of assembly short names (without extension) that should be ignored by the dependency scanning algorithm. Add an assembly to this list if it is obfuscated, or contains native code, and causes PostSharp to fail.
ReferenceDirectory	MSBuildProjectDirectory	Directory with respect to which relative paths are resolved.
SearchPath	PostSharpSearchPath	Comma-separated list of directories containing reference assemblies and plug-ins.
TargetFrameworkIdentifier	TargetFrameworkIdentifier	Identifier of the target framework of the current project (i.e. the framework on which the application will run). For instance <code>.NETFramework</code> or <code>Silverlight</code> .
TargetFrameworkVersion	TargetFrameworkVersion	Version of the target framework of the current project (i.e. the framework on which the application will run). For instance <code>v4.0</code> .
TargetFrameworkProfile	TargetFrameworkProfile	Profile of the target framework of the current project (i.e. the framework on which the application will run). For instance <code>WindowsPhone</code> .

Other properties are recognized but are of little interest for end-users. For a complete list of properties, see *PostSharp.targets*.

Using custom properties

By defining your own PostSharp properties, you can pass information from the build environment to aspects, or to any code running in PostSharp. Custom PostSharp properties behave exactly as other PostSharp properties, so they can be defined and read using the same procedures.

8.3.3. Including CLR Objects in Configuration

PostSharp includes a basic facility to describe CLR objects using XML. This facility is used to implement the [Multicast on page 91](#) and [LoggingProfiles on page 91](#) sections of the configuration file, and can be used to define custom sections.

The facility is consciously limited in features. It was only design to provide the same features as custom attributes in programming languages.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Basic rules on page 95](#)
- [Formatting of attributes on page 95](#)
- [Specific rules for the Multicast section on page 95](#)

Basic rules

The basic rules apply to XML serialized objects:

- The local name of the XML element must exactly match the type name of the CLR type. An exception to this rule is that the Attribute prefix can be omitted.
- The XML namespace of the element must be in the form `clr-namespace:namespace;assembly:assembly` where *namespace* is the namespace of the CLR type and *assembly* is the name of the assembly declaring the type.
- The type must have a public parameterless constructor.
- Names of XML attributes must exactly match the name of a public field or property of the CLR type.

Formatting of attributes

Values of XML attributes, mapping to CLR fields and properties, must be formatted according to the rule relevant for each type:

Type	Formatting
Intrinsics.	An intrinsic is any of the following types: <code>bool</code> , <code>char</code> , <code>sbyte</code> , <code>byte</code> , <code>short</code> , <code>ushort</code> , <code>int</code> , <code>uint</code> , <code>long</code> , <code>ulong</code> , <code>float</code> , <code>double</code> or <code>string</code> . Conversion is done using the <code>Convert</code> class.
Arrays	A semicolon-separated list of elements.
Enumerations	A list of enumeration member names separated by characters <code> </code> or <code>+</code> . Names in the list are combined using the <code>+</code> operator.
Types	An assembly-qualified type name.
Object	Fields and properties of type <code>Object</code> are not supported.

Specific rules for the Multicast section

The following additional rules apply to the [Multicast on page 91](#) section of the configuration file:

- The class must derive from `MulticastAttribute`.
- The `AttributePriority` property may not be defined. This attribute is added automatically according to the order of the XML element in the section.

8.3.4. Using Expressions in Configuration Files

Many attributes of the configuration schema accept expressions, which are dynamically evaluated. Expressions in the PostSharp configuration system work similarly as in XSLT. Substrings enclosed by curled brackets, for instance `{ $property }`, are interpreted as XPath expressions.

For instance, the following code contains two XPath expressions:

```
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
  <PropertyName="LoggingEnabled"Value="{has-plugin('PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics')}"Deferred="true"/>
  <Multicast>
```

Configuration

```
<WhenCondition="{ $LoggingEnabled }">
  <d:Log/>
</When>
</Multicast>
</Project>
```

Please check the [MSDN documentation](#)¹⁵ for general information about XPath.

NOTE

In the context of PostSharp configuration files, XPath expressions cannot refer to XML elements or attributes, but only to variables, functions, operators and constants.

Accessing properties

PostSharp properties are mapped to XPath variables.

For instance, the expression `{ $LoggingEnabled }` evaluates to the value of the `LoggingEnabled` property.

Using operators and functions

You can use any XPath function and operators.

Additionally to [standard XPath 1.0 functions](#)¹⁶, PostSharp defines the following functions:

Function	Description
<code>has-plugin(name)</code>	Evaluates to true if the given plug-in is loaded, otherwise false.
<code>environment(variable)</code>	Returns the value of an environment variable.

Mixing expressions and literal strings

An attribute value can contain both text and expressions. This is illustrated in the following example:

```
<Project xmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
  <PropertyName="A" Value="A"/>      <!-- Evaluates to A -->
  <PropertyName="B" Value="B;{ $A }"/> <!-- Evaluates to B;A -->
  <PropertyName="C" Value="C;{ $B };{ $A }"/> <!-- Evaluates to C;B;A -->
</Project>
```

8.4. Accessing Configuration from Source Code

Even if most configuration settings are consumed by PostSharp or its add-in, it is sometimes useful to access configuration elements from user code. The `PostSharp.dll` library gives access to both configuration properties and extension configuration elements.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Accessing properties on page 97](#)
- [Accessing custom sections on page 97](#)

15. [http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms256138\(v=vs.110\).aspx](http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms256138(v=vs.110).aspx)

16. [http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms256138\(v=vs.110\).aspx](http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms256138(v=vs.110).aspx)

Accessing properties

You can read the value of any PostSharp property by including it in an XPath expression and evaluating it using the `EvaluateExpression(String)` method of `PostSharpEnvironmentCurrentProject`:

```
string value = PostSharpEnvironment.CurrentProject.EvaluateExpression("${PropertyName}")
```

For details regarding expressions, see [Using Expressions in Configuration Files on page 95](#).

Accessing custom sections

You can get a list of custom sections of a given name and namespace by calling the `GetExtensionElements(String, String)` method of `PostSharpEnvironmentCurrentProject`:

```
IEnumerable<ProjectExtensionElement> elements =  
    PostSharpEnvironment.CurrentProject.GetExtensionElements( "MyElement", "uri:MyNamespace" );
```

Extension elements must be declared using the [SectionType on page 89](#) element.

8.5. Working with Errors, Warnings, and Messages

As any compiler, PostSharp can emit messages, warnings, and errors, commonly referred to as *message*. Custom code running at build time (typically the implementation of `CompileTimeValidate` or of a custom constraint) can use PostSharp messaging facility to emit their own messages.

In this section:

- [Ignoring and Escalating Warnings on page 97](#)
- [Emitting Errors, Warnings, and Messages on page 98](#).

TIP

PostSharp 2.1 contains an experimental feature that adds file and line information to errors and warnings. The feature requires Visual Studio. It must be enabled manually in the **PostSharp** tab of Visual Studio options.

8.5.1. Ignoring and Escalating Warnings

As with conventional compilers, warnings emitted by PostSharp, as well as those emitted by custom code running at build time in PostSharp, can be ignored (in that case they will not be displayed) or escalated into errors.

Warnings can be ignored either globally, using a project-wide setting, or locally for a given element of code. Warnings can be escalated only globally.

Ignoring or escalating warnings globally

There are several ways to ignore or escalate a warning for a complete project:

- In Visual Studio, in the **PostSharp** tab of the project properties dialog. See [Configuration on page 83](#) for details.
- By defining the `PostSharpDisabledMessages` or `PostSharpEscalatedMessages` MSBuild properties. See [Configuration on page 83](#) and [Configuring Projects Using MSBuild on page 85](#) for details.

NOTE

The value * can be used to escalate all warnings into errors.

Ignoring warnings locally

Most warnings are related to a specific element of code. To disable a specific warning for a specific element of code, add the `IgnoreWarningAttribute` custom attribute to that element of code, or to any enclosing element of code (for instance, adding the attribute to a type will make it effective for all members of this type).

You can create your own custom attribute derived from `IgnoreWarningAttribute` and make it conditional to a compilation symbol by using the `ConditionalAttribute` custom attribute.

8.5.2. Emitting Errors, Warnings, and Messages

Custom code running in PostSharp at build time can use the messaging facility to emit its own messages, warnings, and errors. These messages will appear in the MSBuild output and/or in Visual Studio. User-emitted warnings can be ignored or escalated using the same mechanism as for system messages.

Emitting messages

If you just have a few messages to emit, you may simply use one of the overloads of the `Write` method of the `Message` class.

All messages must have a severity `SeverityType`, a message number (used as a reference when ignoring or escalating messages), and a message text. Additionally, and preferably, messages may have a location (`MessageLocation`).

NOTE

To benefit from the possibility to ignore messages locally, you should always use provide a relevant location with your messages. Previous API overloads, which did not require a message location, are considered obsolete.

TIP

Do not use `string.Format` to format your messages. Instead, pass message arguments to the messaging facility, which will format some argument types, for instance reflection objects, in a more readable way.

Emitting messages using a message source

If you want the text of all messages to be stored in a single location, you have to emit messages through a `MessageSource`. Typically, you would create a singleton instance of `MessageSource` for each component, and associate each instance with a message dispenser. A message dispenser is a custom-written class implementing the `IMessageDispenser` interface. The `MessageDispenser` provides a convenient abstract implementation.

NOTE

Although it is tempting to use a `ResourceManager` as the back-end of a message dispenser, comes with a non-negligible performance penalty because of the cost of instantiating the `ResourceManager`.

8.6. Resolution of assembly binding redirections

PostSharp executes your project assemblies at compile time. This is why PostSharp must follow assembly binding redirections at compile time. Although the default assembly redirection mechanism works fine in most cases, there may be situations where you will need to override it.

NOTE

To learn why PostSharp executes your project assemblies at compile time, see [Understanding Aspect Lifetime and Scope on page 304](#).

Default assembly binding redirections

In order to follow the same assembly binding redirections as your application does at runtime, PostSharp analyzes your projects and configuration files (typically *app.config* or *web.config*) and generates assembly binding redirection configuration. PostSharp stores the assembly binding redirection in a file named *PostSharpHost.config* and stored in the *obj* folder. You can review the *PostSharpHost.config* file to get an idea of what configuration PostSharp uses to resolve assemblies. For an empty ASP.NET MVC 5 application the *PostSharpHost.config* may look like this

```
<?xmlversion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<configuration>
  <runtime>
    <assemblyBindingxmlns="urn:schemas-microsoft-com:asm.v1">
      <dependentAssembly>
        <assemblyIdentityname="Microsoft.Owin.Security"publicKeyToken="31bf3856ad364e35"/>
        <bindingRedirectoldVersion="0.0.0.0-3.0.1.0"newVersion="3.0.1.0"/>
      </dependentAssembly>
      <dependentAssembly>
        <assemblyIdentityname="Microsoft.Owin.Security.OAuth"publicKeyToken="31bf3856ad364e35"/>
        <bindingRedirectoldVersion="0.0.0.0-3.0.1.0"newVersion="3.0.1.0"/>
      </dependentAssembly>
      <dependentAssembly>
        <assemblyIdentityname="Microsoft.Owin.Security.Cookies"publicKeyToken="31bf3856ad364e35"/>
        <bindingRedirectoldVersion="0.0.0.0-3.0.1.0"newVersion="3.0.1.0"/>
      </dependentAssembly>
      <dependentAssembly>
        <assemblyIdentityname="Microsoft.Owin"publicKeyToken="31bf3856ad364e35"/>
        <bindingRedirectoldVersion="0.0.0.0-3.0.1.0"newVersion="3.0.1.0"/>
      </dependentAssembly>
    </assemblyBinding>
  </runtime>
</configuration>
```

NOTE

We didn't reinvent the wheel. Under the hood, PostSharp relies on the `GenerateBindingRedirects`¹⁷ MSBuild task.

Overriding default assembly redirections

In case the default mechanism does not work, you can disable it by setting the MSBuild property `PostSharpDisableDefaultBindingRedirects` to `True` in your project file:

```
<PropertyGroup>
  <PostSharpDisableDefaultBindingRedirects>True</PostSharpDisableDefaultBindingRedirects>
</PropertyGroup>
```

17. <https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/microsoft.build.tasks.generatebindingredirects.aspx>

With this configuration PostSharp doesn't analyze assembly binding redirections.

CAUTION NOTE

Do not set `PostSharpDisableDefaultBindingRedirects` to `True` unless you really have to. It may produce difficult to predict results.

NOTE

The default algorithm is always disabled for Windows Phone Silverlight projects because it does not work.

If you disable default binding redirections, you may want to specify a file with your own assembly binding redirection configuration

```
<PropertyGroup>
  <PostSharpDisableDefaultBindingRedirects>True</PostSharpDisableDefaultBindingRedirects>
  <PostSharpHostConfigurationFile>web.config</PostSharpHostConfigurationFile>
</PropertyGroup>
```

With this configuration PostSharp uses explicit assembly binding redirection configuration from `web.config` file.

8.7. Reducing Build Time

Although we're working hard at PostSharp to provide fast builds by default, there are a few actions you can take to further improve the performance of your build.

Chapter	Description
Enabling Solution-Wide Build on page 100	This section describes how to decrease build time by enabling whole-solution build.
Using IncrediBuild and PostSharp Together on page 102	This section describes how to distribute the build to several machines using IncrediBuild.

8.7.1. Enabling Solution-Wide Build

By default, PostSharp processes each project in its own `AppDomain`. The overhead of creating a new `AppDomain` for each project is quite large: not the new `AppDomain` has to be loaded, but all assembly references need to be loaded and indexed over and over again.

This overhead can be dramatically reduced by enabling *solution-wide build*. When this option is enabled, PostSharp will reuse the `AppDomains` as much as possible. By enabling solution-wide build, you can make PostSharp 1.5 to 2 times faster.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Differences of solution-wide build on page 101](#)
- [Enabling solution-wide build on page 101](#)

Differences of solution-wide build

Before you enable solution-wide build, you should check that your custom aspects do not depend on characteristics that differ between the default (project-wide) build and the solution-wide build. These differences are the following:

- Static variables are shared between several projects instead of being local to a single project. Make sure that the build-time logic of your aspect does not store information in static fields. Replace static fields with accesses to `PostSharpEnvironment.CurrentProject.StateStore`, which provides a project-scoped state store. See `IProjectStateStore` and `IStateStore` for details.
- When you reflect dependent assemblies using `System.Reflection`, you may *randomly* get the pre-PostSharp or post-PostSharp binary assembly. Do not rely on the fact that you get any of these variants of the assembly.
- Assembly binding redirections are computed for the whole solution (or sub-solution) instead of the sole project. For a specific project, it can happen that you will get a higher version of a reference assembly in solution-wide build than in project-wide build.

CAUTION NOTE

The set of projects processed in the same AppDomain and the order of processing should be considered random.

Enabling solution-wide build

CAUTION NOTE

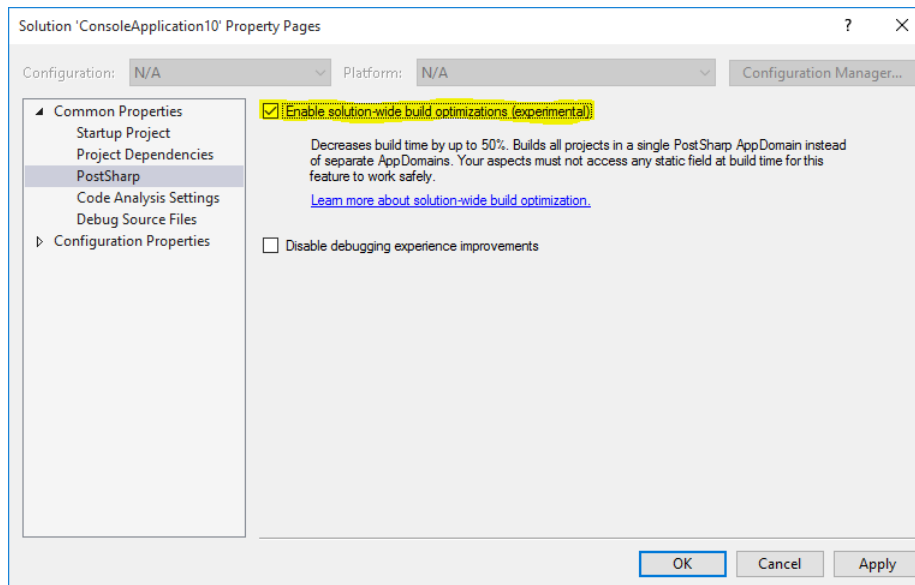
Solution-wide build is an experimental feature. If it does not work for you, please report the issue to PostSharp support and disable the feature.

To enable solution-wide build for a solution:

1. In Solution Explorer, right-click on the solution node, and select **Properties**.
2. Select the **PostSharp** tab under **Common Properties**.

3. Check the checkbox **Enable solution-wide build optimizations**.

The PostSharp property page in the Visual Studio solution properties dialog.



As a result, PostSharp will attempt to reuse AppDomains when building this solution from Visual Studio. The setting is stored in a file named *MySolution.pssln* in the same directory as *MySolution.sln*.

NOTE

Solution-wide build only works when the build is triggered by Visual Studio. Command-line builds are not affected.

TIP

PostSharp needs to create at least one AppDomain per specific version of the target framework. To optimize the AppDomain reuse and therefore build time, make sure to consolidate the target framework versions of your projects.

8.7.2. Using IncrediBuild and PostSharp Together

Despite all the efforts we put into PostSharp optimizations, building a solution with PostSharp will always take more time than without it. If your build time was already borderline without PostSharp, you may find that it becomes inacceptably slow with PostSharp.

If you are working on large solutions containing a lot of projects that can be built in parallel, you may consider to use [IncrediBuild](https://www.incredibuild.com/)¹⁸.

NOTE

IncrediBuild is a product of Xoreax. PostSharp Technologies is not affiliated to Xoreax.

18. <https://www.incredibuild.com/>

This topic contains the following sections:

- [What is IncrediBuild? on page 103](#)
- [Who benefits from IncrediBuild? on page 103](#)
- [Building a solution with IncrediBuild on page 103](#)

What is IncrediBuild?

IncrediBuild speeds large C# build time for Visual Studio – up to 10x times faster – by transforming every developer’s workstation or build server into a super computer consisting of as many idle CPUs you currently have in your entire network. Instead of working on your 4 or 8 core machine IncrediBuild transforms your workstation into a virtual 200 cores machine. IncrediBuild is already trusted by over 100,000 users at more than 2,000 leading companies.

We at PostSharp have been working with IncrediBuild to make our products compatible. That means that you can now win twice:

- Lower development time thanks to PostSharp.
- Lower waiting time thanks to IncrediBuild.

Who benefits from IncrediBuild?

You will find IncrediBuild useful for you if you’re in the following situation:

- Your total build time is over 2 minutes.
- Your solution is composed of dozens of projects with loosely coupled dependencies, so that a high level of parallelism can be reached.

Building a solution with IncrediBuild

To build a PostSharp-enabled solution with IncrediBuild:

1. Download and install [IncrediBuild](#)¹⁹.
2. Create a file (name it for instance IncrediBuild.xml) in your source folder with the following content:

```
<?xmlVersion="1.0"encoding="UTF-8"standalone="no"?>
<ProfileFormatVersion="1">
  <Tools>
    <ToolFilename="postsharp-net40-x86-native"AllowRemoteIf="/AllowRemote"DeriveCaptionFrom="firstparam"SkipIfEx:
    <ToolFilename="postsharp-net40-x64-native"AllowRemoteIf="/AllowRemote"DeriveCaptionFrom="firstparam"SkipIfEx:
  </Tools>
</Profile>
```

3. Build your solution using the following command line:

```
BuildConsole.exe MySolution.sln /Rebuild /Profile=C:\Path\To\IncrediBuild.xml
```

Make sure the path to the XML file is correct, otherwise the flag will be silently ignored.

19. <https://www.incredibuild.com/>

PART 3

Standard Patterns

CHAPTER 9

INotifyPropertyChanged

Binding objects to the UI is a large and tedious task. You must implement `INotifyPropertyChanged` on every property that needs to be bound. You need to ensure that the underlying property setter correctly raises events so that the View knows that changes have occurred. The larger your codebase, the more work there is. You can partially eliminate all of this repetitive code by pushing some of the functionality to a base class that each Model class inherits from. It still doesn't eliminate all of the repetition though.

PostSharp can completely eliminate all of that repetition for you. All you have to do is make use of the Model Pattern Library's `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect.

In this chapter

Topic	Description
Walkthrough: Automatically Implementing INotifyPropertyChanged on page 108	This section shows how to automatically implement the <code>INotifyPropertyChanged</code> interface in a class thanks to the <code>NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute</code> aspect.
Walkthrough: Working with Properties that Depend on Other Objects on page 111	This section describes how to handle dependencies that cross several objects, as when a view-model object is dependent on properties of a model object.
Implementing INotifyPropertyChanging on page 113	This section documents how to implement the <code>INotifyPropertyChanging</code> interface for components which need to be signalled <i>before</i> a property value is changed.
Integrating with UI Frameworks on page 117	This section shows examples of using the <code>NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute</code> aspect with some of the popular UI frameworks.
Handling Corner Cases on page 114	This section documents how to cope with the cases that cannot be automatically handled by the <code>NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute</code> aspect.
Understanding the NotifyPropertyChanged Aspect on page 120	This section describes the principles and concepts on which the <code>NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute</code> aspect relies.
Suppressing False Positives on page 124	This section shows how to prevent notifications when the property value does not actually change.

9.1. Walkthrough: Automatically Implementing INotifyPropertyChanged

This section shows how to make your class automatically implements the INotifyPropertyChanged interface NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute aspect.

Let's start with a simple class that has two simple properties and one composite property:

```
public class CustomerForEditing
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }

    public string FullName
    {
        get { return string.Format("{0} {1}", this.FirstName, this.LastName);}
    }
}
```

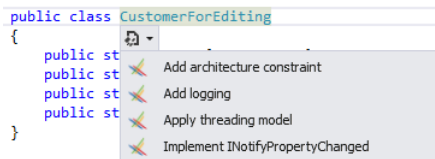
This topic contains the following sections:

- [Adding the NotifyPropertyChanged aspect with PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 108](#)
- [Adding the NotifyPropertyChanged aspect manually on page 111](#)
- [Consuming the INotifyPropertyChanged interface on page 111](#)
- [See Also on page 0](#)

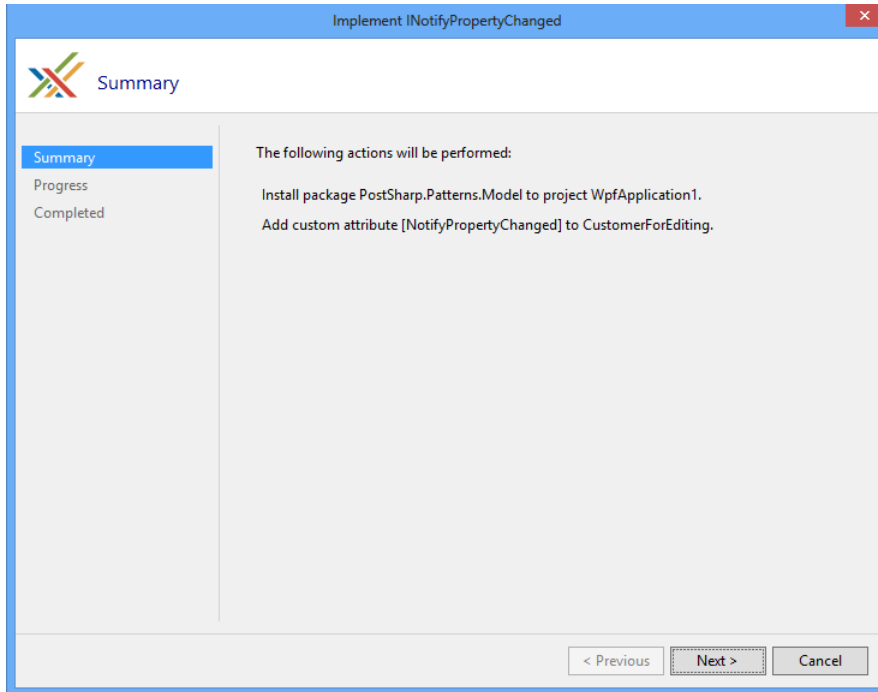
Adding the NotifyPropertyChanged aspect with PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

To add INotifyPropertyChanged aspect with PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

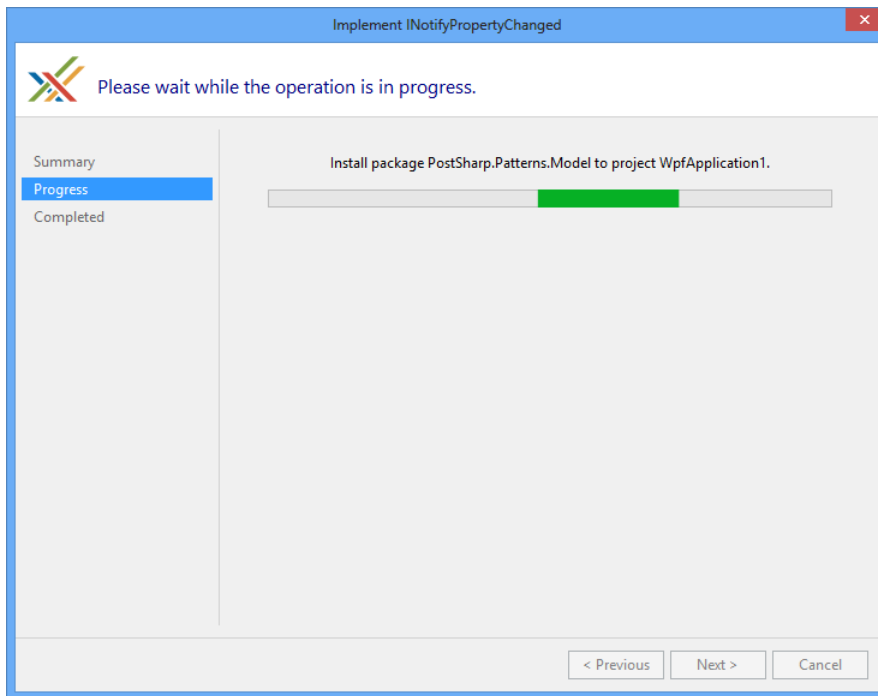
1. Put the caret on the class name and expand the Smart Tag. From the list select "Implement INotifyPropertyChanged".



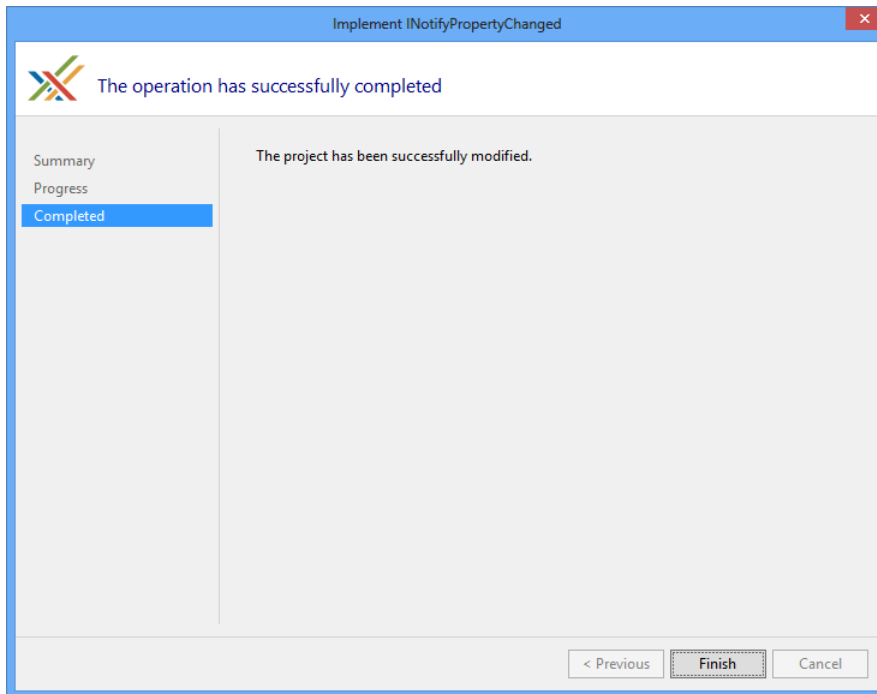
2. If you haven't previously added the Model Pattern Library to the current project, PostSharp will inform you that it will be doing this as well as adding an attribute to the target class.



3. PostSharp will download the Model Pattern Library and add the attribute.



- Once the download, installation and configuration of the Model Pattern Library and the addition of the attribute has finished you can close the wizard and look at the changes that were made to your codebase.



- You'll notice that the code you added `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` to has only been slightly modified. PostSharp has added a `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` attribute to the class. This class level attribute will add the implementation of `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` to the class as well as the plumbing code in each property that makes it work.

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
public class CustomerForEditing
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }

    public string FullName
    {
        get { return string.Format("{0} {1}", this.FirstName, this.LastName); }
    }
}
```

NOTE

This example has added `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` to one class. If you need to implement `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` to many different classes in your codebase you will want to read about using aspect multicasting. See the section [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations](#) on page 187.

By using the Model Pattern Library to add `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` to your Model classes you are able to eliminate all of the repetitive boilerplate coding tasks and code from the codebase.

Adding the NotifyPropertyChanged aspect manually

The wizard does nothing more than installing a NuGet package and adding a custom attribute. You can achieve the same manually.

To add INotifyPropertyChanged aspect manually:

1. Use NuGet Package Manager to add the *PostSharp.Patterns.Model* package to your project.
2. Import the `PostSharp.Patterns.Model` namespace into your file.
3. Add the `[NotifyPropertyChanged]` custom attribute to the class.

Consuming the INotifyPropertyChanged interface

Since the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface is implemented by PostSharp at build time after the compiler has completed, the interface will neither be visible to Intellisense or other tools like Resharper, neither to the compiler. The same is true for the `PropertyChanged` event.

In many cases, this limitation does not matter because the interface is consumed from a framework (like WPF) that is not coupled with your project. However, in some situations, you may need to access the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface.

There are two ways to access the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface from your code:

- You can cast your object to `INotifyPropertyChanged`, for instance:

```
((INotifyPropertyChanged) obj).PropertyChanged += obj_OnPropertyChanged;
```

If your tooling complains that the object does not implement the interface, you can first cast to object:

```
((INotifyPropertyChanged) (object) obj).PropertyChanged += obj_OnPropertyChanged;
```

- You can use the `PostCastSourceType, TargetType(SourceType)` method. The benefit of using this method is that the cast operation is validated by PostSharp, so the build will fail if you try to cast an object that does not implement the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface. For instance:

```
Post.Cast<Foo, INotifyPropertyChanged>(obj).PropertyChanged += obj_OnPropertyChanged;
```

9.2. Walkthrough: Working with Properties that Depend on Other Objects

It's very common for the properties of one class to be dependent on the properties of another class. For example, a view-model layer will often contain a reference to a model object, and public properties which are in turn forwarded to the underlying properties of this referenced object. In this scenario the view-model component's properties have a dependency on the referenced model's properties. Subsequently the referenced model may also have properties which depend on the properties of other objects.

PostSharp's Model Pattern Library easily handles transitive dependencies. Simply add the `NotifyPropertyChanged-Attribute` class attribute to each class in the dependency chain. This will ensure that property change notifications are propagated up and down the dependency chain. The Model Pattern Library takes care of the rest and will even handle circular dependencies.

In the following set of steps, the `CustomerModel` class is used as a dependency of a `CustomerViewModel` class containing `FirstName` and `LastName` properties both of which directly map to properties of the `CustomerModel` class, and a public read

only property called `FullName`, which is calculated based on the value of the underlying customer's `FirstName` and `LastName` properties.

1. Add the `CustomerModel` class to your project ensuring that the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` attribute is included:

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
public class CustomerModel
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }
    public string Phone { get; set; }
    public string Mobile { get; set; }
    public string Email { get; set; }
}
```

2. Setup a view-model class which contains a reference to a `CustomerModel` object, add properties to get/set the name related fields. References to properties of the `CustomersForEditing` object should be in the form of `this.field.Property` (or `this.Property.Property`), otherwise `PostSharp` won't be able to discover the dependencies from your source code.

```
class CustomerViewModel
{
    CustomerModel model;

    public CustomerViewModel(CustomerModel m)
    {
        this.model = m;
    }

    public string FirstName { get { return this.model.FirstName; } set { this.model.FirstName = value; }}
    public string LastName { get { return this.model.LastName; } set { this.model.LastName = value; }}
}
```

3. Add the `FullName` property and use the same rule as described in the previous step to reference dependent properties:

```
class CustomerViewModel
{
    CustomerModel model;

    public CustomerViewModel(CustomerModel m)
    {
        this.model = m;
    }
    public string FirstName { get { return this.model.FirstName; } set { this.model.FirstName = value; }}
    public string LastName { get { return this.model.LastName; } set { this.model.LastName = value; }}

    public string FullName { get {
        return string.Format("{0} {1}", this.model.FirstName, this.model.LastName);
    } }
}
```


4. Add the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` attribute to the class:

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
class CustomerViewModel
{
    CustomerModel model;

    public CustomerViewModel(CustomerModel m)
    {
        this.model = m;
    }

    public string FirstName { get { return this.model.FirstName; } set { this.model.FirstName = value;}}
    public string LastName { get { return this.model.LastName; } set { this.model.LastName = value; }}

    public string FullName { get {
        return string.Format("{0} {1}", this.model.FirstName, this.model.LastName);
    } }
}
```

You now have a view-model class which can be used to bridge a view (e.g. an application's user interface) with the underlying data, and calls to get/set will be propagated across the chain of dependencies.

NOTE

Read the article [Handling Corner Cases on page 114](#) to learn about referencing properties without using the `this.field.Property` form.

9.3. Implementing INotifyPropertyChanging

By convention, the `PropertyChanged` event must be raised *after* the property value has changed. However, some components need to be signalled *before* the property value will be changed. This is the role of the `INotifyPropertyChanging` interface.

Because the `INotifyPropertyChanging` interface is not portable (in Xamarin, it is even a part of a different namespace), PostSharp cannot introduce it. However, if you implement the `INotifyPropertyChanging` interface yourself in your code, PostSharp will signal the `PropertyChanging` event. To make that work, you need to create a `OnPropertyChanging` method with the right signature.

To add the `INotifyPropertyChanging` interface to a class:

1. Make your class implement `INotifyPropertyChanging` and add the `PropertyChanging` event:

```
public class Foo : INotifyPropertyChanging
{
    public event PropertyChangingEventHandler PropertyChanging;
}
```

2. Add the `OnPropertyChanging` method:

```
public class Foo : INotifyPropertyChanging
{
    public event PropertyChangingEventHandler PropertyChanging;

    protected void OnPropertyChanging( string propertyName )
    {
        if ( this.PropertyChanging != null )
        {
            this.PropertyChanging( this, new PropertyChangingEventArgs ( propertyName ) );
        }
    }
}
```

3. Add the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect to your class as described in [INotifyPropertyChanged on page 107](#).

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
public class Foo : INotifyPropertyChanging
{
    public event PropertyChangingEventHandler PropertyChanging;

    protected void OnPropertyChanging( string propertyName )
    {
        if ( this.PropertyChanging != null )
        {
            this.PropertyChanging( this, new PropertyChangingEventArgs ( propertyName ) );
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

The contract between your class and the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` is only the `OnPropertyChanging` method. As long as this method exists in the class, it will be invoked by the aspect before the value of a property changes.

9.4. Handling Corner Cases

Postsharp includes a number of attributes for customizing the Model Pattern's behaviour and for handling special dependencies.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Ignoring Changes to Properties on page 114](#)
- [Handling Virtual Calls, References, and Delegates in a Get Accessor on page 115](#)
- [Handling Local Variables on page 116](#)
- [Handling Dependencies on Pure Methods on page 116](#)

Ignoring Changes to Properties

Use the `IgnoreAutoChangeNotificationAttribute` class attribute to prevent an `OnPropertyChanged` event from being invoked when setting a property. For example, the `CustomerModel` class contains a `Country` property amongst others:

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
public class CustomerModel
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }
```

```

    public string Phone { get; set; }
    public string Mobile { get; set; }
    public string Email { get; set; }
    public string Country { get; set;}
}

```

To prevent a property notification from being invoked when the Country's value is set, simply place the `IgnoreAutoChangeNotificationAttribute` attribute above the property:

```

[NotifyPropertyChanged]
public class CustomerModel
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }
    public string Phone { get; set; }
    public string Mobile { get; set; }
    public string Email { get; set; }

    [IgnoreAutoChangeNotification]
    public string Country { get; set;}
}

```

Handling Virtual Calls, References, and Delegates in a Get Accessor

If a get accessor calls a virtual method from its class or a delegate, or references a property of another object (without using canonical form `this.field.Property`), PostSharp will generate an error because it cannot resolve such a dependency at build time. To suppress this error, you can add the `[SafeForDependencyAnalysisAttribute]` custom attribute to the property accessor (or in any method used by the property accessor). This custom attribute instructs PostSharp that the property accessor is "safe" – in other words, it contains only dependencies in the canonical form `this.field.Property`.

For example, say `CustomerModel` contains a virtual method called `ValidateCountry()` which is used by the get accessor of its `Country` property:

```

[NotifyPropertyChanged]
public class CustomerModel
{
    // Details skipped.

    protected virtual bool ValidateCountry(string s)
    {
        if (s!=null)
            return true;
        else
            return false;
    }

    public string Country
    {
        get
        {
            if(this.ValidateCountry(value))
                return value;
            else
                return null;
        }
        set;
    }
}

```

In this situation the property relies on a virtual method which PostSharp cannot resolve at build time, so the `SafeForDependencyAnalysisAttribute` attribute can be placed on the `Country` property suppress this error:

INotifyPropertyChanged

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
public class CustomerModel
{
    // Details skipped.

    public virtual bool Test(string s)
    {
        if (s!=null)
            return true;
        else
            return false;
    }

    [SafeForDependencyAnalysisAttribute]
    public string Country
    {
        get
        {
            if(this.test(value) == true)
                return value;
            else
                return null;
        }
        set;
    }
}
```

NOTE

By using `SafeForDependencyAnalysisAttribute`, you are taking the responsibility that your code only has dependencies that are given either in the canonical form of `this.field.Property` either explicitly using the `On` construct (see the next section). If you are using this custom attribute but have non-canonical dependencies, some property changes may not be detected in which case no notification will be generated.

Handling Local Variables

Properties may depend on a property of another object, and sometimes this object must be stored in a local variable. Most of the times, PostSharp is able to analyze chains of dependencies in properties that are dependent on a property of a local variable. However, when the variable is assigned in a loop or in an exception handler, the analysis cannot be executed.

If PostSharp does not understand your code, you need to use the `SafeForDependencyAnalysisAttribute` attribute and the `DependsOn` method as described above.

Handling Dependencies on Pure Methods

Often times an object will depend on a method which is solely dependent on its input parameters to produce an output (e.g. a static method). Consider the following variation to `CustomerModel` where the `ValidPhoneNumber` property logic has been moved into a static method called `GetValidPhoneNumber()` which exists in a separate helper class called `ContactHelper`:

```
public class ContactHelper
{
    [Pure]
    public static string GetValidPhoneNumber(string firstPhoneNumber, string secondPhoneNumber)
    {
        if(firstPhoneNumber != null)
            return firstPhoneNumber;
        else if (secondPhoneNumber != null)
            return secondPhoneNumber;
        else
            return null;
    }
}
```

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
public class CustomerModel
{
    public Contact PrimaryContact{get; set;}
    public Contact SecondaryContact{get; set;}

    public string ValidPhoneNumber
    {
        get {
            return ContactHelper.GetValidPhoneNumber(this.PrimaryContact.Phone, this.SecondaryContact.Phone);
        }
    }
}
```

Since `GetValidPhoneNumber()` is a standalone method of another class, it is not analyzed. Therefore the `PureAttribute` attribute needs to be applied to this method to acknowledge this dependency.

9.5. Integrating with UI Frameworks

There are frameworks that help you to create XAML applications including binding of objects in a simplified way. But usually, you still need to include some repetitive code anyway.

PostSharp can eliminate most of that repetition for you. All you have to do is make use of the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect.

In this chapter, you can find examples of using the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect with some of the popular UI frameworks.

This list of supported frameworks is not exhaustive. If the framework you are using is not listed here, it does not necessarily mean that PostSharp will not work with the framework.

In this chapter

Topic	Description
Caliburn.Micro on page 117	This section shows how to use the <code>NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute</code> aspect with the Caliburn.Micro framework.
MVVM Light on page 119	This section shows how to use the <code>NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute</code> aspect with the MVVM Light Toolkit.

9.5.1. Caliburn.Micro

Caliburn.Micro is a popular framework designed for building applications across all XAML platforms. Caliburn.Micro includes several features, and one of those is to simplify the implementation of the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface. However, Caliburn.Micro still requires you to write a lot of boilerplate code. This article shows how to use PostSharp together with Caliburn.Micro, whether because you are upgrading an existing project that already uses this framework or because you want to use the other features of Caliburn.Micro.

Without PostSharp

The example below shows a View-Model implemented according to the Caliburn.Micro specification. The class `ShellViewModel` inherits from the class `PropertyChangedBase`, which implements the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface and thus is already helping you to use the Notify Property Changed pattern.

On the other hand, there is still part of the boilerplate usually appearing within the `NotifyPropertyChanged` pattern. For each property, you must have an explicit field, and you must manually notify all dependencies and the property itself. The result is not only more code written, but also a big space for bugs because you must discover and maintain the chain of dependent properties yourself.

```
using Caliburn.Micro;
using System.Windows;

namespace CaliburnMicroWithPostSharp
{
    public class ShellViewModel : PropertyChangedBase
    {
        string name;

        public string Name
        {
            get { return this.name; }
            set
            {
                this.name = value;
                this.NotifyOfPropertyChange( () => this.Name );
                this.NotifyOfPropertyChange( () => this.CanSayHello );
            }
        }

        public bool CanSayHello => !string.IsNullOrEmpty( this.Name );

        public void SayHello()
        {
            MessageBox.Show( $"Hello {this.Name}!" );
        }
    }
}
```

With PostSharp

With `PostSharp`, you don't need to do any of that. You just indicate which classes should have the `NotifyPropertyChanged` pattern implemented using the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` attribute and `PostSharp` does the hard work for you. You can see the difference in the second example, where the previous code got refactored keeping the same functionality.

```
using System.Windows;
using PostSharp.Patterns.Model;

namespace CaliburnMicroWithPostSharp
{
    [NotifyPropertyChanged]
    public class ShellViewModel : PropertyChangedBase
    {
        public string Name { get; set; }

        public bool CanSayHello => !string.IsNullOrEmpty( this.Name );

        public void SayHello()
        {
            MessageBox.Show( $"Hello {this.Name}!" );
        }
    }
}
```

Note that it is no longer necessary to derive your class from the `PropertyChangedBase` class. Even if you suppress the inheritance from `PropertyChangedBase` class, you can still use other Caliburn.Micro features in your code such as commands. However if you do keep the inheritance from `PropertyChangedBase`, the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect will invoke the `NotifyOfPropertyChange` method of the `PropertyChangedBase` class, consistently with the coding practices of Caliburn.Micro.

9.5.2. MVVM Light

MVVM Light is a framework that helps you build XAML applications according to the Model-View-View-Model architectural pattern. MVVM Light includes several features, and one of those is to simplify the implementation of the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface. However, MVVM Light still requires you to write a lot of boilerplate code. This article shows how to use PostSharp together with MVVM Light, whether because you are upgrading an existing project that already uses this framework or because you want to use the other features of MVVM Light.

Without PostSharp

In the example below, there is a View-Model implemented according to the MVVM Light Toolkit specification. The class `MainViewModel` inherits from the class `ViewModelBase`, which implements the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface and thus is already helping you to use the `Notify Property Changed` pattern.

On the other hand, there is still part of the boilerplate usually appearing within the `NotifyPropertyChanged` pattern. For each property, you must have an explicit field, and you must manually notify all dependencies and the property itself. The result is not only more code written, but also a big space for bugs because you must discover and maintain the chain of dependent properties yourself.

```
using GalaSoft.MvvmLight;
using GalaSoft.MvvmLight.Command;
using System.Windows.Input;
using System.Windows;

namespace MvvmLightTest.ViewModel
{
    public class MainViewModel : ViewModelBase
    {
        int _exampleValue;

        public int ExampleValue
        {
            get
            {
                return _exampleValue;
            }
            set
            {
                if (_exampleValue == value)
                    return;
                _exampleValue = value;
                RaisePropertyChanged("ExampleValue");
            }
        }
    }
}
```

With PostSharp

With PostSharp, you don't need to do any of that. You just indicate which classes should have the `NotifyPropertyChanged` pattern implemented using the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` attribute and PostSharp does the hard work for you. You can see the difference in the second example, where the previous code got refactored keeping the same functionality.

INotifyPropertyChanged

```
using GalaSoft.MvvmLight.Command;
using System.Windows.Input;
using System.Windows;
using PostSharp.Patterns.Model;

namespace MvvmLightTest.ViewModel
{
    [NotifyPropertyChanged]
    public class MainViewModel : ViewModelBase
    {
        public int ExampleValue { get; set; }
    }
}
```

Note that it is no longer necessary to derive your class from the `ViewModelBase` class. Even if you suppress the inheritance from `ViewModelBase` class, you can still use other MVVM Light features in your code such as commands. However if you do keep the inheritance from `ViewModelBase`, the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect will invoke the `RaisePropertyChanged` method of the `ViewModelBase` class, consistently with the coding practices of MVVM Light.

9.6. Understanding the NotifyPropertyChanged Aspect

This section describes the principles and algorithm on which the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect is based. It helps developers and architects to understand the behavior and limitation of the aspect.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Implementation of the INotifyPropertyChanged interface on page 120](#)
- [Instrumentation of fields on page 120](#)
- [Analysis of field-property dependencies on page 121](#)
- [Limitations on page 122](#)
- [Raising notifications on page 123](#)
- [Remarks on page 124](#)

Implementation of the INotifyPropertyChanged interface

The `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect introduces the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface to the target class unless the target class already implements the interface. Additionally, the aspect also introduces the `OnPropertyChanged(String)` method. The aspect always introduces this method as protected and virtual, so it can be overridden in derived classes.

If the target class already implements the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface, the aspect requires the class to expose the `OnPropertyChanged(String)` method.

The aspect uses the `OnPropertyChanged(String)` to raise the `PropertyChanged` event. Thanks to this method, the aspect is able to raise the event even when the `INotifyPropertyChanged` is not implemented by the aspect. This mechanism also allows user code to raise notifications that are not automatically handled by the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect.

Instrumentation of fields

Although most implementations the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface rely on instrumenting the property setter, this strategy has severe limitations: it is unable to handle *composite properties*, which return a value based on several other fields or properties. Composite properties have no setter, rendering this strategy unusable.

Instead, the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect instruments all write operations to fields (for instance a Full-Name property appending `FirstName` and `LastName`). It analyzes dependencies between fields and properties and raises a change notification for any property affected by a change in this specific field.

All methods, and not just property setters, can make a change to a field and therefore cause the `PropertyChanged` event to be raised. Property setters do not have any specific status in the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` implementation.

Analysis of field-property dependencies

In order to adequately raise the `PropertyChanged` event, the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect needs to know which properties are affected by a change of a class field. The field-property dependency map is created at build time by analyzing the source code: the analyzer reads the getter of all properties and check for field references. The map is then serialized inside the assembly and used at runtime to raise relevant events when a field has changed.

Dependencies on fields of the current object

Consider the following code snippet:

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
class Invoice
{
    private decimal _amount;
    private decimal _tax;

    public decimal Amount { get { return this._amount; } set { this._amount = value; } }
    public decimal Tax { get { return this._tax; } set { this._tax = value; } }

    public void Set( decimal amount, decimal tax )
    {
        this._amount = amount;
        this._tax = tax;
    }

    public decimal Total { get { return this._amount + this._tax; } }
}
```

The result of the analysis for the code snippet above would be the map `{ _amount => (Amount, Total), _tax => (Tax, Total) }`. Whenever the `_amount` field is changed, the `PropertyChanged` event will be raised for properties `Amount` and `Total`.

Automatic properties are processed as hand-written properties; in this case, the implicit backing field is taken into account for the dependency analysis.

Recursive analysis of the call graph

Field references are not only looked for in the getter, but in any method invoked from the getter, and recursively.

Consider the following code snippet:

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
class Invoice
{
    private decimal _amount;
    private decimal _exchangeRate;

    public decimal Amount { get { return this._amount; } set { this._amount = value; } }
    public decimal ExchangeRate { get { return this._exchangeRate; } set { this._exchangeRate = value; } }

    private decimal Convert( decimal amount )
    {
        return amount * this.ExchangeRate;
    }

    public int AmountBase { get { return this.Convert( this.Amount ); } }
}
```

In the code snippet above, the analyzer starts from the getter of the `AmountBase` property, follows the call to the `Amount` property getter, then call to the `AmountBase` method and recursively follows the `ExchangeRate` property getter. Therefore, the resulting property map remains `{ _amount => (Amount, AmountBase), _exchangeRate => (ExchangeRate, AmountBase) }`.

Dependencies on properties of external objects

The `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect does not just handle dependencies between a property and a field of the same class. It also handles dependencies on properties of properties or properties of fields, and recursively. That is, it supports expressions of the form `_f.P1.P2.P3` where `_f` is a field or property and `P1`, `P2` and `P3` are properties.

Consider the following code snippet:

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
class InvoiceModel
{
    private decimal _amount;
    private decimal _tax;

    public decimal Amount { get { return this._amount; } set { this._amount = value; } }
    public decimal Tax { get { return this._tax; } set { this._tax = value; } }
}

[NotifyPropertyChanged]
class InvoiceViewModel
{
    InvoiceModel _model;

    public InvoiceModel Model { get { return this._model; } }

    public decimal Total { get { return this._model.Amount + this.Model.Tax; } }
}
```

In the example above, the `InvoiceViewModel.Total` property is dependent on properties `Amount` and `Tax` of the `_model` field. Therefore, changes in the `InvoiceModel._amount` field will trigger a change notification for the `InvoiceModel.Amount` and `InvoiceViewModel.Total` properties.

The `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect automatically subscribes to the `PropertyChanged` event of the child object, and unsubscribes whenever the value of the field in the parent object (`_model` in our example) is modified. However, the parent object does not unsubscribe upon disposal because the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` makes no assumption that the `IDisposable` interface has been implemented. Therefore, the implementation of the `INotifyPropertyChanged` of the external object must hold weak references to clients of the `PropertyChanged` event.

Recursive dependencies to external objects are handled thanks to an auxiliary interface named `INotifyChildPropertyChanged`. This interface is implemented by the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect. It is considered an implementation detail and cannot be implemented manually. Classes that do not implement the `INotifyChildPropertyChanged` interface can only participate as terminal dependencies, i.e. they can be leaves but not intermediate nodes.

Limitations

The design goal of the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect is to be able to handle the majority of use cases in real-world source code while requiring only an acceptable amount of compilation time. The dependency analysis algorithm imposes several limitations:

- Calls to virtual methods (other than through the `base` keyword), abstract methods, interface methods or delegates are not supported.
- Calls to static methods or methods of external classes are not supported unless they are decorated with the `PureAttribute` custom attribute, or unless the method is a property getter in a supported dependency chain.

- Valuations of properties method return values are not supported. Only properties of fields or properties are supported.
- Dependencies on properties of variables are not supported if the variable is assigned in a loop (`while`, `for`, ...) or in an exception handling block.

See [Handling Corner Cases on page 114](#) to learn how to cope with these limitations.

Raising notifications

Simplistic implementations of the `INotifyPropertyChanged` interface signal a change notification immediately after a property has been changed. However, this strategy may cause subtle errors in client code.

Consider the following code:

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
class Invoice
{
    public decimal Amount { get; private set; }
    public decimal Tax { get; private set; }
    public decimal Total { get; private set; }

    public void Set( decimal amount, decimal tax )
    {
        /* 1 */ this.Amount = amount;
        /* 2 */ this.Tax = tax;
        /* 3 */ this.Total = amount + tax;
    }
}
```

As a class invariant, the assumption `Total == Amount + Tax` should always be true.

However, suppose that the `PropertyChanged` event is raised immediately after the `Amount` property is set at line 1 of the `Set` method. Clearly, for a client subscribing to this event, the class invariant would be broken at this specific moment.

Therefore, it is not safe to raise change notifications immediately after a change has been achieved. It is necessary to wait until the object can be safely observed by external code, when all class invariants are valid again (i.e. when the object state is consistent). A common best practice in object-oriented programming is to ensure that class invariants are valid before the control flow goes back from the current object to the caller. Typically, it means that a private or protected method can exit with an inconsistent object state, but public and internal methods must guarantee that the object state is consistent upon exit.

The `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect relies on this best practice and raises the property change notifications just before the control flow exits the current object, that is, just before the last public or internal method in the call stack for the current object exits.

Besides avoiding to expose invalid object state, this strategy also avoids the same property to be notified for change several times during the execution of a single public method, which a potentially great positive performance impact.

To solve this problem, `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect uses the following strategy:

1. Instead of causing immediate change notifications, field changes are buffered into a thread-local storage named the *accumulator*.
2. Calls to public and methods are instrumented so the aspect can detect when the control flow exits the object. At this moment, the accumulator is flushed and all change notifications are triggered.

It is possible to flush the accumulator at any time by invoking the `NotifyPropertyChangedServicesRaiseEvents-Immediate(Object)` method.

You can suspend and resume notifications using the `NotifyPropertyChangedServicesSuspendEvents` and `NotifyPropertyChangedServicesResumeEvents` methods.

Remarks

The `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect never evaluates property getters at runtime. This decision is deliberate and aims at avoiding possible side-effects (lazy-initialization, logging, etc.). Therefore, it is possible that the algorithms emit false positives, i.e. change notifications for properties whose values did not actually change.

The algorithm heuristically detects dependency cycles. If a cycle is detected, an exception is thrown instead of allowing for an infinite update cycle.

All notifications are invoked on the thread on which the change is being made. The accumulator that buffers the changes is a thread-local storage.

9.7. Suppressing False Positives

The `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect, when applied to a class, raises the `PropertyChanged` event every time it detects a possible change of a property, even when the actual value of the property doesn't change. By default, the aspect doesn't keep track of the property values because that would require the aspect to invoke property getters arbitrarily outside of the developer's control. And when property getters have any side effects (lazy-initialization, logging, etc.), invoking them randomly is not a safe behavior.

In certain scenarios, such as rich client applications with many UI controls, redundant event notifications are not desired because they cause excessive UI updates and can degrade the application responsiveness. You can avoid these redundant event notifications by suppressing false positives in the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Example of a false positive on page 124](#)
- [How to suppress false positives on page 125](#)
- [See Also on page 0](#)

Example of a false positive

The following `Calc` class has two integer fields `a` and `b`, and a property `Sum` that returns the sum of these two numbers. The `Main` method creates an instance of the `Calc` class and changes the fields from (`a=1, b=2`) to (`a=2, b=1`). There are two `PropertyChanged` event notifications shown in the output, even though the actual `Sum` value doesn't change in the second case.

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
class Calc
{
    private int a, b;

    public int Sum
    {
        get { return this.a + this.b; }
    }

    public void Update(int a1, int b1)
    {
        this.a = a1;
        this.b = b1;
    }
}

static void Main()
{
    Calc calc = new Calc();
    ((INotifyChildPropertyChanged) calc).PropertyChanged +=
        (sender, EventArgs) =>
```

```

    {
        Console.WriteLine("Property {0} changed. New value = {1}.",
            eventArgs.PropertyName,
            sender.GetType().GetProperty(eventArgs.PropertyName).GetValue(sender));
    };

    calc.Update(1, 2);
    calc.Update(2, 1);
}

```

Output:

```

Property Sum changed. Value = 3.
Property Sum changed. Value = 3.

```

How to suppress false positives

To suppress false positive event notifications, set the `PreventFalsePositives` property to true when you apply the aspect to the target element.

```

[NotifyPropertyChanged(PreventFalsePositives = true)]
class Calc
{
    // ...
}

```

If you run the test code snippet again after this change, you can see that there's only one change notification now.

```

Property Sum changed. Value = 3.

```

CAUTION NOTE

Do not suppress false positive notifications in your class when the property getters in the class have side effects. In this case reset the `PreventFalsePositives` property to its default value of `false`.

By enabling the `PreventFalsePositives` option of the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect you can reduce the number of events raised in your application and improve your UI responsiveness.

INotifyPropertyChanged

CHAPTER 10

Parent/Child Relationships

The parent-child relationship is a foundational concept of object oriented design. There are three kinds of object relationships in the UML specification:

- *Aggregation* is the parent-child (also named whole-part) relationship. It is implemented in PostSharp by the `AggregatableAttribute` aspect described in [Walkthrough: Annotating an Object Model for Parent-Child Relationships on page 128](#).
- *Composition* is an aggregation relationship where the parent controls the lifetime their children. It is implemented in PostSharp by the `DisposableAttribute` aspect pattern, which relies on the `AggregatableAttribute` aspect. For details, see [Walkthrough: Automatically Disposing Children Objects on page 132](#).
- *Association* is a simple reference between two objects.

Despite its importance, C# and VB have no keyword to represent aggregation. All C# and VB object references correspond to an association. Therefore, most applications and frameworks tend to re-implement the aggregation relationship, resulting in boilerplate code and defects. For instance, UI frameworks such as WinForms and WPF rely on a parent-child structure.

PostSharp implements the Aggregatable pattern thanks to the `AggregatableAttribute` aspect, together with the `ChildAttribute`, `ReferenceAttribute` and `ParentAttribute` custom attributes.

The Aggregatable pattern is used by other PostSharp aspects, including all threading models (`ThreadAwareAttribute`), `DisposableAttribute` and `RecordableAttribute`. You can also use the aspect to automatically implement a parent-child relationship in your own code.

In this chapter

Section	Description
Walkthrough: Annotating an Object Model for Parent-Child Relationships on page 128	This section shows how to prepare a class so that it can participate in a parent-child relationship.
Walkthrough: Enumerating Child Objects on page 131	This section describes how to enumerate the children of an object thanks to the visitor pattern.
Walkthrough: Automatically Disposing Children Objects on page 132	This section shows how to automatically implement the <code>IDisposable</code> interface so that children objects are disposed when the parent object is disposed.
Annotating an Object Model programmatically on page 135	This section describes how to annotate aggregatable object models programmatically.
Working With Collections on page 137	This section covers advanced topics related to collections in aggregatable object models.
Using Immutable Collections on page 141	This section describes usage of immutable collections in aggregatable object models.

10.1. Walkthrough: Annotating an Object Model for Parent-Child Relationships

PostSharp provides several custom attributes that you can apply to your object model to describe the parent-child relationships in a natural and concise way. The `AggregatableAttribute` aspect is applied to the object model classes, and the properties are marked with `ChildAttribute`, `ReferenceAttribute` and `ParentAttribute` custom attributes. You can also use `AdvisableCollectionT` and `AdvisableDictionaryTKey, TValue` classes to make your collection properties aware of the `Aggregatable` pattern.

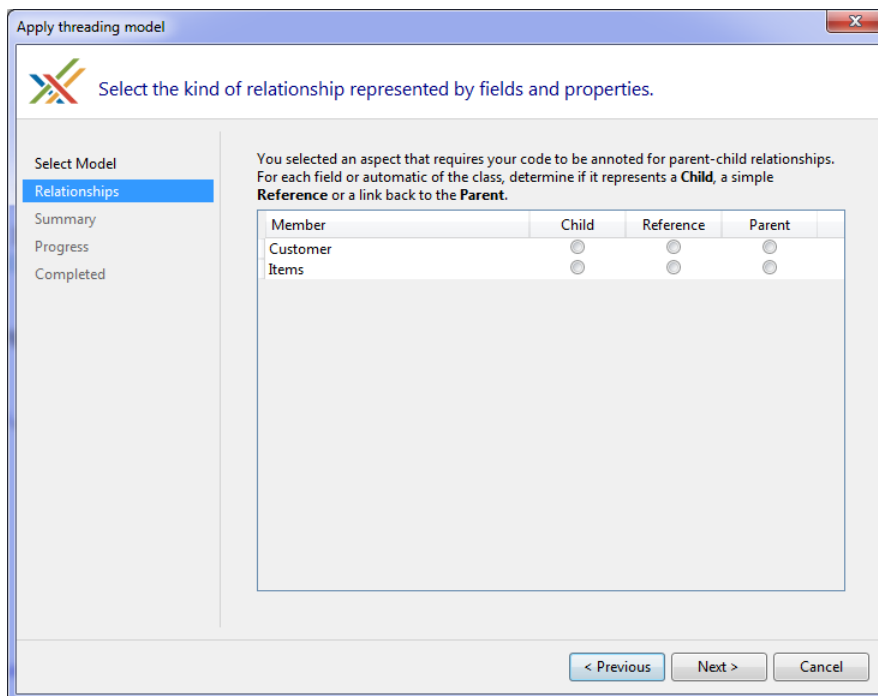
Below you can find a detailed walkthrough on how to add parent-child relationships implementation into existing object models.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Applying through PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 128](#)
- [Applying manually on page 129](#)

Applying through PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

When applying any of the threading model patterns using the wizard you may encounter the Relationships page.



This page provides you with the ability to establish the relationships between objects in an object tree. Simply select the option desired for each complex object and the wizard will add these attributes for you.

NOTE

The wizard process will not address or change collections in the object parent-child relationships. You will need to change collection types by hand.

Applying manually

To apply the `Aggregatable` to an object model:

1. Add the `AggregatableAttribute` attribute to the parent and children classes. In the following examples, an `Invoice` object owns several instances of the `InvoiceLine` class, therefore both classes must be annotated with `AggregatableAttribute`. However, the `Invoice` does not own the `Customer` to which it is associated, so the `Customer` class does not need the custom attribute.

NOTE

It is not strictly necessary to add the `AggregatableAttribute` aspect to a class whose instances will be children but not parents, unless you want to track the relationship to the parent using the `IAggregatableParent` property or the `ParentAttribute` custom attribute in this class (see below).

```
[Aggregatable]
public class Invoice
{
    public Invoice()
    {
        this.Lines = new List<InvoiceLine>();
    }

    public Customer Customer { get; set; }
    public IList<InvoiceLine> Lines { get; set; }
    public Address DeliveryAddress { get; set; }
}

[Aggregatable]
public class InvoiceLine
{
    private Product product;
    public decimal Amount { get; set; }
}

[Aggregatable]
public class Address
{
}
```

2. Annotate fields and automatic properties of all aggregatable classes with the `ChildAttribute` or `ReferenceAttribute` custom attribute. Fields or properties of a value type must not be annotated.

```
[Aggregatable]
public class Invoice
{
    public Invoice()
    {
        this.Lines = new List<InvoiceLine>();
    }

    [Reference]
    public Customer Customer { get; set; }

    [Child]
    public IList<InvoiceLine> Lines { get; private set; }

    [Child]
    public Address DeliveryAddress { get; set; }
}

[Aggregatable]
public class InvoiceLine
{
    [Reference]
    private Product product;

    public decimal Amount { get; set; }
}

[Aggregatable]
public class Address
{
}
```

3. Modify the code to use `AdvisableCollectionT` and `AdvisableDictionaryTKey, TValue` instead of standard .NET collections for children fields. This change is necessary because all objects assigned to children fields/properties must be aware of the Aggregatable pattern.

In our code example, we need to modify the constructor of the `Invoice` class and assign an `AdvisableCollectionT` to the `Lines` field instead of a `List`.

```
public Invoice()
{
    this.Lines = new AdvisableCollection<InvoiceLine>();
}
```

4. Optionally, add a field or property to link back from the child object to the parent, and add the `ParentAttribute` to this field/property. PostSharp will automatically update this field or property to make sure it refers to the parent object.

In this example, we are adding a `ParentInvoice` property to the `InvoiceLine` class to link back to the `Invoice` class.

```
[Aggregatable]
public class InvoiceLine
{
    [Reference]
    private Product product;

    public decimal Amount { get; set; }

    [Parent]
    public Invoice ParentInvoice { get; private set; }
}
```

TIP

For better encapsulation, setters of parent properties should have `private` visibility. In case of parent fields, the `private` visibility is preferred. User code should not manually set a parent field or property.

10.2. Walkthrough: Enumerating Child Objects

After you have declared the structure of your object graph on page 128, you will want to make use of it.

Both the `ChildAttribute` and `ParentAttribute` can be used to declare parent-child relationships for other patterns such as Undo/Redo (`RecordableAttribute`) or threading models (`ImmutableAttribute`, `FreezableAttribute`, ...).

You can also use the `Aggregatable` pattern from your own code. The functionalities of this pattern are exposed by the `IAggregatable` interface, which all aggregatable object automatically implement. This interface allows you to execute a `Visitor` method against all child objects of a parent.

In the following example, we see how to implement recursive validation for an object model. We will assume that the `InvoiceLine` and `AddressLine` implement an `IValidatable` interface.

To enumerate all child objects of a parent:

1. Cast the parent object to the `IAggregatable` interface.

```
var invoice = new Invoice();
IAggregatable aggregatable = (IAggregatable) invoice;
```

NOTE

The `IAggregatable` interface will be injected into the `Invoice` class *after* compilation. Tools that are not aware of PostSharp may incorrectly report that the `Invoice` class does not implement the `IAggregatable` interface. Instead of using the cast operator, you can also use the `CastSourceType, TargetType(SourceType)` method. This method is faster and safer than the cast operator because it is verified and compiled by PostSharp at build time.

NOTE

If you are attempting to access `IAggregatable` members on either `AdvisableCollectionT` or `AdvisableDictionaryTKey, TValue` you will not be able to use the cast operator or the `CastSourceType, TargetType(SourceType)` method. Instead, you will have to use the `QueryInterfaceT(Object, Boolean)` extension method.

2. Invoke the `VisitChildren(ChildVisitor, ChildVisitorOptions, Object)` method and pass a delegate to the method to be executed.

```
var invoice = new Invoice();
IAggregatable aggregatable = invoice.QueryInterface<IAggregatable>();
int errors = 0;
bool isValid = aggregatable.VisitChildren( (child, childInfo) =>
    {
        var validatable = child as IValidatable;
        if (validatable != null)
        {
            if ( !validatable.Validate() )
                errors++;
        }
        return true;
    });
```

NOTE

The visitor must return a true to continue the enumeration and false to stop the enumeration.

10.3. Walkthrough: Automatically Disposing Children Objects

When you are working with hierarchies of objects, you sometimes run into situations where you need to properly dispose of an object. Not only will you need to dispose of that object, but you likely will need to walk the object tree and recursively dispose children of that object. To do this, we typically implement the `IDisposable` pattern and manually code the steps required to shut down the desired objects, and call the `Dispose` method on other children objects. This cascading of disposals takes a lot of effort and it is prone to mistakes and omissions.

The DisposableAttribute aspect relies on the AggregatableAttribute aspect and, as a result, is able to make use of the VisitChildren(ChildVisitor, ChildVisitorOptions, Object) method to cascade disposals through child objects.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Disposing of object graphs on page 133](#)
- [Disposing of child collections on page 134](#)
- [Customizing the Dispose logic on page 135](#)

Disposing of object graphs

Adding Disposable to an object

1. On the top level object add the DisposableAttribute.

```
[Disposable]
public class HomeMadeLogger
{
    private TextWriter _textWriter;
    private Stream _stream;
    private MessageFormatter _formatter;

    public HomeMadeLogger(MessageFormatter formatter)
    {
        _formatter = formatter;
        _stream = new FileStream("our.log", FileMode.Append);
        _textWriter = new StreamWriter(_stream);
    }

    public void Debug(string message)
    {
        _textWriter.WriteLine(_formatter.Format(message));
    }
}
```

At this point the IDisposable interface will be implemented on the HomeMadeLogger class. Now any code making use of HomeMadeLogger is able to execute the HomeMadeLogger.Dispose() method.

2. To make the `LoggingContexts` collection automatically dispose when the `HomeMadeLogger` object disposes you need to ensure that the `Context` class has the `DisposableAttribute` aspect on it.

```
[Disposable]
public class Context
{
    //...
}
```

With that, the `HomeMadeLogging` class and all of the child objects in the `LoggingContexts` collection are hooked together and they will all be disposed of in an orderly fashion when an instance of the `HomeMadeLogging` object is disposed.

Customizing the Dispose logic

There will be times when you have objects that need custom disposal logic. At the same time you may want to implement a parent child relationship and make use of the `DisposableAttribute`.

To add your own logic to the Dispose method:

1. Create a method with exactly the following signature:

```
protected virtual void Dispose( bool disposing )
```

2. Include your own logic.

In the following example, we are customizing the `Dispose` pattern to expose the `IsDisposed` property:

```
[Disposable]
public class MessageFormatter : Formatter
{
    [Child]
    MessageSink sink;

    public bool IsDisposed { get; private set; }

    protected virtual void Dispose( bool disposing )
    {
        this.IsDisposed = true;
    }
}
```

Once you have done this, `PostSharp` will properly run your custom `Dispose` logic as well as running any of the parent and child implementations of the `DisposableAttribute` that exist for the object.

CAUTION NOTE

The `DisposableAttribute` aspect does not automatically dispose the object when it is garbage collected. That is, the aspect does not implement a destructor. If you need a destructor, you have to do it manually and invoke the `Dispose`.

10.4. Annotating an Object Model programmatically

There are times where you cannot or don't want to add custom attributes manually.

For instance, you cannot add any custom attribute to an auto-generated field backing a XAML element. The WPF designer generates C# code from your XAML files and stores them in *i.g.cs* files well hidden in the *obj* folder. You cannot modify these files directly.

Another scenario is when you have a large amount of fields and don't want to annotate each of them individually.

Field rules allow you to annotate a field as a child or a reference programmatically, without adding a custom attribute to each field manually.

In the following example, let's consider a class where PostSharp shows an error message *COM002: "Field/property Invoice-Line.product must be annotated with a custom attribute [Child], [Reference] or [Parent]."*

```
[Aggregatable]
public class InvoiceLine
{
    private Product product;

    public decimal Amount { get; set; }
}
```

To automatically mark all fields as references by default:

1. Create a class inherited from the `FieldRule` class.

```
public class ReferenceFieldRule : FieldRule
```

2. Override the `GetRelationshipInfo(FieldInfo)` method. PostSharp calls the `GetRelationshipInfo(FieldInfo)` method for each field that is not annotated with the `ChildAttribute`, `ReferenceAttribute` or `ParentAttribute` custom attribute. The `GetRelationshipInfo(FieldInfo)` method allows you to specify the field relationship by returning a `RelationshipInfo` instance.

```
public override RelationshipInfo? GetRelationshipInfo(FieldInfo field)
{
    return new RelationshipInfo(RelationshipKind.None, RelationshipKind.Reference);
}
```

3. Decorate your project's assembly with a `RegisterFieldRuleAttribute` custom attribute to activate your field rule.

```
[assembly: RegisterFieldRule(typeof(ReferenceFieldRule))]
```

CAUTION NOTE

You have to mark each project assembly to make your `FieldRule` active in the whole solution.

Now PostSharp considers all fields without any Parent-Child annotation as a reference and doesn't show any error for the product field.

NOTE

PostSharp has two built-in rules: one rule for auto-generated WinForms fields and one rule for auto-generated XAML fields.

```
<Windowx:Class="WpfApp.MainWindow"xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml/presentation"xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml">
  <Grid>
    <Buttonx:Name="myButton"/>
  </Grid>f
</Window>
```

In this example the WPF designer generates a `myButton` field to a `MainWindow` class. Both the `myButton` field and the `MainWindow` class inherited from `System.Windows.Controls.Control`²⁰. The built-in rule annotates the `myButton` field as a reference automatically.

10.5. Working With Collections

It would not be possible to implement the `Aggregatable` pattern without support for collection classes. However, collections of the .NET base class libraries cannot be reliably extended to support the `Aggregatable` pattern. Therefore, code that implements the `Aggregatable` pattern must rely on collection classes defined by PostSharp, namely `AdvisableCollectionT`, `AdvisableDictionaryTKey`, `TValue`, `AdvisableKeyedCollectionTKey`, `TItem` and `AdvisableHashSetT`.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Understanding the need for specific collections on page 137](#)
- [Replacing standard collections with advisable collections on page 138](#)
- [Casting advisable collections on page 138](#)
- [Controlling the status of collections in the parent-child relationship on page 139](#)
- [Enumerating children and parent surrogates on page 140](#)
- [Collections of references on page 140](#)

Understanding the need for specific collections

In the following example, an `Invoice` entity is composed of one instance of the `Invoice` class and several instances of the `InvoiceLine` class. The relationship between the `Invoice` and `InvoiceLine` classes is implemented using a collection.

```
[Aggregatable]
public class Invoice
{
    public Invoice()
    {
        this.Lines = new List<InvoiceLine>();
    }

    [Child]
    public IList<InvoiceLine> Lines { get; private set; }
}

[Aggregatable]
public class InvoiceLine
{
}
```

When we add a new element to the `Lines` collection, we also need to update the parent-child relationship between the corresponding invoice and invoice line. It is not possible to do this with the standard `ListT` class, so we need to build a specialized aggregatable collection class instead. However, we may later decide to apply another pattern to our object

20. <https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/system.windows.controls.control.aspx>

model, such as a threading model or undo/redo. This new pattern would in turn require support from the collection class. Creating new collection classes for each pattern (and potentially for each pattern combination) is clearly unmanageable.

Instead of providing a new collection class for each specific behavior we need to inject, PostSharp introduces the concept of *advisable collections*. Advisable collections are collection classes into which PostSharp can inject behavior dynamically, at runtime, according to the field to which they are assigned. Advisable collections are a way to make the collection "inherit" the pattern of the parent class

Let's modify our previous example to work correctly with the Aggregatable aspect.

```
[Aggregatable]
public class Invoice
{
    public Invoice()
    {
        this.Lines = new AdvisableCollection<InvoiceLine>();
    }

    [Child]
    public IList<InvoiceLine> Lines { get; private set; }
}

[Aggregatable]
public class InvoiceLine
{
}
```

As you can see, the only change we made is using `AdvisableCollectionT` class instead of `ListT`. The `Aggregatable` aspect applied to the `Invoice` class detects that the child property is an advisable collection and applies dynamic `Aggregatable` advice to the collection instance at runtime. This turns our collection of invoice lines into an aggregatable collection. If we apply another aspect to the `Invoice` class later, it can add new behaviors to this collection in the same way.

Replacing standard collections with advisable collections

The `PostSharp.Patterns.Collections` namespace defines advisable collection classes that are highly compatible with the collection types of the .NET base class libraries.

The following table shows how advisable collections map to standard collections.

Advisable collection	Replacement for
<code>AdvisableCollectionT</code>	<code>Array</code> , <code>ListT</code> , <code>CollectionT</code> , <code>ObservableCollectionT</code>
<code>AdvisableDictionaryTKey, TValue</code>	<code>DictionaryTKey, TValue</code>
<code>AdvisableKeyedCollectionTKey, TItem</code>	<code>KeyedCollectionTKey, TItem</code>

CAUTION NOTE

Interfaces `IReadOnlyListT` and `IReadOnlyCollectionT` are not implemented.

Casting advisable collections

Patterns such as `Aggregatable`, `Recordable` or `Threading Models` dynamically inject advices into advisable collections. These advice typically expose an interface, respectively `IAggregatable`, `IRecordable` and `IThreadAware`. Because interfaces are introduced at run-time and not at build-time, you cannot use the normal type casting constructs to access the interface members.

Instead of a normal cast, you can use the `QueryInterfaceT(Object, Boolean)` extension method to access interfaces implemented by the given instance. This method will return the proper interface implementation irrespective how the interface is implemented: directly in the source code, introduced by PostSharp aspect at build time, or added dynamically at run time.

The following code snippet gets the `IAggregatable` interface of the `Lines` collection in the example above:

```
IAggregatable aggregatable = invoice.Lines.QueryInterface<IAggregatable>();
```

By default, the `QueryInterfaceT(Object, Boolean)` method throws `InvalidCastException` if the given instance doesn't implement the queried interface. You can also safely check whether the interface is implemented by passing `false` as a method argument.

```
if ( collection.QueryInterface<IAggregatable>( false ) != null )
{
}
```

Controlling the status of collections in the parent-child relationship

Collections play a special role in implementing the parent-child relationships between classes. Collections are often instruments instead of first-class entities of the object model. When enumerating children of a class, one generally wants to avoid the collections themselves to be returned, but only items of these collections. Additionally, the `Parent` property of a child object should typically refer to the parent entity and not to the collection that contains the child.

Consider the following example:

```
[Aggregatable]
public class Invoice
{
    public Invoice()
    {
        this.Lines = new AdvisableCollection<InvoiceLine>();
    }

    [Child]
    public IList<InvoiceLine> Lines { get; private set; }
}

[Aggregatable]
public class InvoiceLine
{
    [Parent]
    public Invoice Invoice { get; private set; }
}
```

The `Invoice` class contains a collection of `InvoiceLine` instances. We want each item of the `Lines` collection to be a child of the `Invoice` instance. However, the collection itself should not be considered a child of the `Invoice`.

Additionally, we want the `InvoiceLine.Invoice` property to be set to the `Invoice`, not to the collection.

To implement this behavior, PostSharp needs to give a different status to collections than to other entities. This concept is named a *parent surrogate*, because the collection acts as a surrogate (or proxy) between the parent and its children.

Any aggregatable object can act as a parent surrogate, but only collections act as parent surrogates by default. You can override the default behavior by setting the `ChildAttributeIsParentSurrogate` property.

In the next example, the `Lines` collection will be treated as a first-class entity.

```
[Aggregatable]
public class Invoice
{
    public Invoice()
    {
        this.Lines = new AdvisableCollection<InvoiceLine>();
    }
}
```

```
    }  
  
    [Child(IsParentSurrogate = false)]  
    public IList<InvoiceLine> Lines { get; private set; }  
}  
  
[Aggregatable]  
public class InvoiceLine  
{  
    [Parent]  
    public IList<InvoiceLine> Parent { get; private set; }  
}
```

To cause a custom class to behave like a parent surrogate by default, set the `IsParentSurrogate` property of the `AggregatableAttribute` applied on your class to `true`. In this case it's not allowed to override the value in the `[Child]` attributes applied to individual properties.

```
[AggregatableAttribute(IsParentSurrogate = false)]
```

Enumerating children and parent surrogates

The default behavior of the `VisitChildren(ChildVisitor, ChildVisitorOptions, Object)` method is to skip the surrogate collection itself and invoke the `ChildVisitor` delegate on each item of the collection. In our first example, calling the `VisitChildren(ChildVisitor, ChildVisitorOptions, Object)` method on the `Invoice` instance will invoke the visitor on the items of the `Lines` collection, but not on the collection instance itself.

You can customize this behavior by providing one or more flags for the `ChildVisitorOptions` parameter of the method. The `ChildVisitorOptions.IncludeParentSurrogates` flag will cause the visitor to be additionally invoked on the instances of the surrogate collections, while the `ChildVisitorOptions.ExcludeIndirectChildren` flag will exclude the items of such collection from being visited.

Collections of references

As we showed earlier, when you annotate the collection property with the `[Child]` attribute, collection items become children of the class instance.

In certain situations, you may want to have a collection of references. The collection itself is still marked with the `[Child]` custom attribute because it would make sense from the point of view of other patterns (for instance, changes in the collection must be recorded by the `Recordable` pattern). However, the collection items themselves must not be considered children of the entity.

To implement this requirement, you can set the `ChildAttributeItemsRelationship` property to `RelationshipKind.Reference`.

In the example below, the `RelatedOrders` collection is a child and therefore its changes are being recorded by the `Recordable` aspect. However, collection items are not children of the parent entity, because related orders do not belong to the invoice.

```
[Recordable]  
public class Invoice  
{  
    public Invoice()  
    {  
        this.Lines = new AdvisableCollection<InvoiceLine>();  
        this.RelatedOrders = new AdvisableCollection<Order>();  
    }  
  
    [Child]  
    public IList<InvoiceLine> Lines { get; private set; }  
  
    [Child(ItemsRelationship = RelationshipKind.Reference)]  
    public IList<Order> RelatedOrders { get; private set; }  
}
```

```
}
```

10.6. Using Immutable Collections

In section [Working With Collections](#) on page 137, we explained the need to replace standard .NET collections by special advisable collections of the `PostSharp.Patterns.Collections` namespace. These collections come with a significant inconvenient: they have a significant performance and memory overhead. In many situations, collections can be replaced by immutable collections. *Immutable collections* are collections whose content never changes after instantiation. Adequate use of immutable collections can significantly improve application performance and simplify API design compared to mutable collections, whether standard or advisable.

Immutable collections are implemented in the `System.Collections.Immutable` namespace, contained in the `System.Collections.Immutable` NuGet package.

The `Aggregatable` pattern and threading models support immutable collections. When you assign an immutable collection to a child field of a parent object, items of the collection become children of the parent object. Immutable collections behave similarly than other types, so you still have to use the `ChildAttribute` and `ReferenceAttribute` custom attributes as usually.

CHAPTER 11

Undo/Redo

Most business application users are familiar with applications that have the ability to undo and redo changes that they have made. It's not common to see this functionality in custom built applications because it is quite difficult to do. Despite this difficulty, undo/redo is consistently mentioned on the top of users' wish list.

The `RecordableAttribute` aspect makes it much easier to add undo/redo to your application by automatically appending changes done on your object model to a `Recorder` that you can then bind to your user interface. Unlike other approaches to undo/redo, the `RecordableAttribute` aspect only requires minimal changes to your source code.

In this chapter

Section	Description
Making Your Model Recordable on page 143	The first step is to make your model classes This section shows how to add the <code>RecordableAttribute</code> aspect to the model classes to enable the undo/redo functionality.
Adding Undo/Redo to the User Interface on page 145	This section describes how to expose the undo/redo functionality to the application's users.
Customizing Undo/Redo Operation Names on page 147	This section shows how to group changes into logical operations and give them a name that is meaningful to the application's users.
Assigning Recorders Manually on page 151	This section explains how to customize the assignment of recordable objects to recorders.
Adding Callbacks on Undo and Redo on page 153	This section shows how to execute custom logic when undo/redo operations occur in a recordable object.
Understanding the Recordable Aspect on page 153	This section describes the concepts and architecture of the <code>RecordableAttribute</code> aspect.

11.1. Making Your Model Recordable

To make an object usable for undo/redo operations, you will need to add the `RecordableAttribute` aspect to the class. This aspect instruments changes to fields and records them into a `Recorder`. The aspect also instruments public methods to group field changes into logical operations.

This topic contains the following sections:

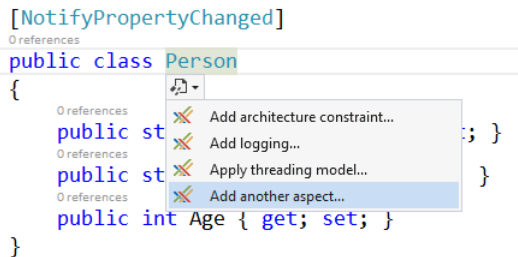
- [Making a class recordable using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 144](#)
- [Making a class recordable manually on page 145](#)
- [Working with object graphs and collections on page 145](#)

Making a class recordable using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

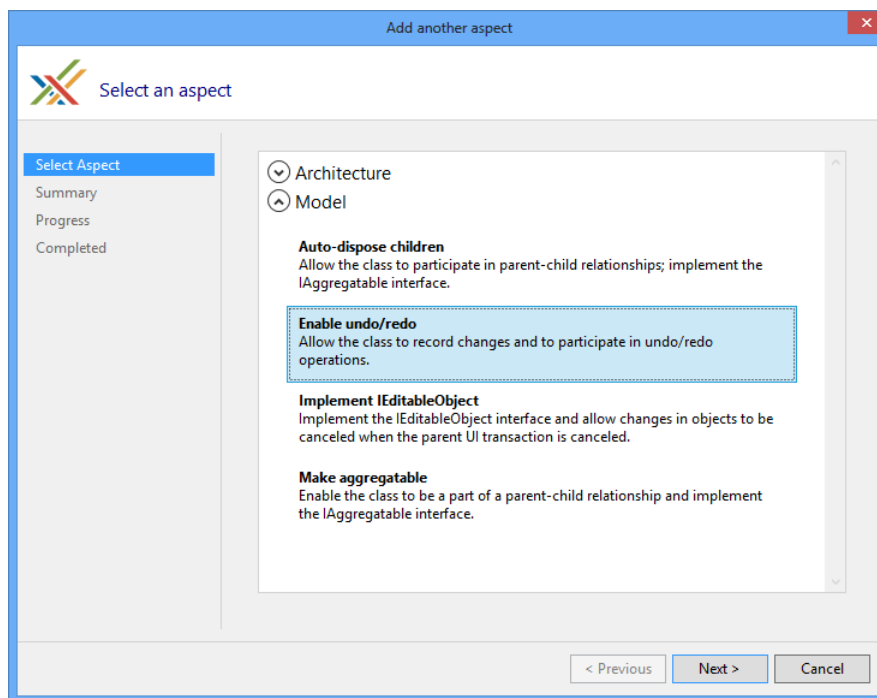
To make a class recordable using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

1. First place the caret on the name of the object that you want to make recordable. The smart tag will appear below the object name. Expand it and select "Add another aspect...".

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
0 references
public class Person
{
    0 references
    public st
    0 references
    public st
    0 references
    public int Age { get; set; }
}
```



2. In the Add Another Aspect wizard expand the Model section, select "Enable undo/redo", and click Next.



3. Once the wizard has completed the object will now be flagged as recordable.

```
[NotifyPropertyChanged]
[Recordable]
public class Person
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }
    public int Age { get; set; }
}
```

By adding the RecordableAttribute aspect to the Person class all of the properties that are primitive types will be recorded when they change.

Making a class recordable manually

To make the class recordable manually:

1. Install the *PostSharp.Patterns.Model* package using NuGet.
2. Add the `RecordableAttribute` to the class.

Working with object graphs and collections

In the example above, the `Invoice` class just had a few fields of a primitive type (`int`, `string`, ...). In real-world application, objects are not isolated entities, but are parts of larger structures named object graphs.

The `RecordableAttribute` aspect needs to understand the parent-child structure of your object graphs. It relies on the `AggregatableAttribute` aspect for this purpose.

Therefore, when adding the `RecordableAttribute` aspect to a class, you need to complete a few more steps:

- Annotate fields with the `ChildAttribute`, `ReferenceAttribute` or `ParentAttribute` custom attribute.
- Replace arrays and collections with instances of the `AdvisableCollectionT` and `AdvisableDictionaryTKey, TValue` classes.

See [Parent/Child Relationships on page 127](#) for more information.

11.2. Adding Undo/Redo to the User Interface

The Undo/Redo functionality that you added to your codebase needs to be made available to the users. Users will want to have the ability to move forwards and backwards through the operations that they too and have been recorded.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Using the ready-made WPF controls on page 145](#)
- [Clearing the initial history on page 146](#)
- [Creating custom undo/redo controls on page 147](#)

Using the ready-made WPF controls

PostSharp includes two button controls `UndoButton` and `RedoButton` that you can add to your application.

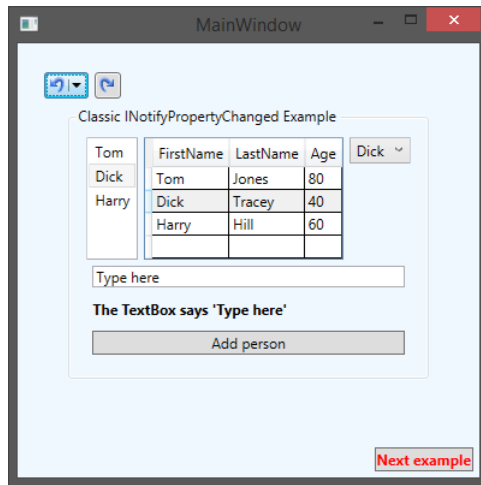
To add Undo/Redo to a WPF window:

1. Install the *PostSharp.Patterns.Model.Controls* package using NuGet.
2. Add the following namespace declaration to the root element of your XAML file:

```
xmlns:model="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Model.Controls;assembly=PostSharp.Patterns.Model.Controls"
```

3. To add Undo and Redo buttons to the user interface, include the following two lines of Xaml.

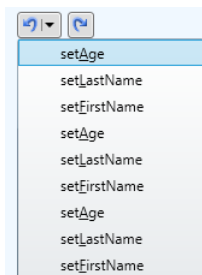
```
<model:UndoButton HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="22,24,0,0" VerticalAlignment="Top" />
<model:RedoButton HorizontalAlignment="Left" Margin="64,24,0,0" VerticalAlignment="Top"/>
```



Your users are now able to make a changes in the user interface and Undo and/or Redo those changes at any point that they want.

Clearing the initial history

If we were to open the Customer management screen you would notice that the Undo button has a number of actions listed under it.



Those actions are listing the changes that were taken when the different Person instances were loaded and their properties were set. Most users will only want to see actions that they have manually taken in the screen. As such, you will need to manually interact with the Recorder to ensure that the Undo button list is empty when the window opens.

To provide an empty list of recorded actions when the windows is initially opened, open the ViewMode1Main class and find the constructor. Add the following as the last line in the constructor:

```
RecordingServices.DefaultRecorder.Clear();
```

The Recorder class is accessed through the RecordingServicesDefaultRecorder property. This property contains the current Recorder instance that is being used by the RecordableAttribute aspect. The Recorder class has two collections, UndoOperations and RedoOperations, which contain all of the past operations that can be undone and redone. The Clear method removes all operations from both of those collections.

Now when you open the Customer management screen both the Undo and Redo buttons will show no history. This is the simplest type of Undo/Redo implementation that you can do. It will record each property change operation

separately in the Undo and Redo UI buttons which probably isn't what you, or your users, will want to see. Read [Customizing Undo/Redo Operation Names on page 147](#) to learn how to record groupings of operations that make sense to your business users.

Creating custom undo/redo controls

If the buttons provided by PostSharp don't meet your requirements, you can create your own controls for WPF, Windows Phone or WinRT.

Custom controls will typically provide a front-end to the global Recorder exposed on the `RecordingServicesDefaultRecorder` property, and we provide a view for the `UndoOperations` and `RedoOperations` collections. Controls typically use the `RecorderUndo` and `RecorderRedo` methods.

11.3. Customizing Undo/Redo Operation Names

The example of previous sections displays the list of operations appearing in the two UI buttons. That list of operations references the setters on the different individual properties in a very technical manner, for instance the operation of setting the first name is named `set_FirstName`, according to the name of the property in source code.

End users will want to see the operations described in meaningful business terms, not technical ones. This article will show you how to explicitly name the recording operations that will take place in your code.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Understanding the default operation naming mechanism on page 147](#)
- [Setting operation names declaratively on page 148](#)
- [Setting operation names dynamically on page 148](#)
- [Using the `OperationFormatter` class on page 149](#)

Understanding the default operation naming mechanism

From the end user's perspective, the undo/redo feature exposes a flat list of operations that can be undone or redone. From a system perspective, an operation is composed of changes to individual fields and collections. For instance, moving a picture on a design surface is seen as a single operation **Move** by the user, but it is composed of two changes in fields `x` and `y`.

Let's see this in a code example:

```
[Recordable]
public class Picture
{
    private double x, y;

    public double X
    {
        get { return x; }
        set { x = value; }
    }

    public double Y
    {
        get { return y; }
        set { y = value; }
    }

    public void Move( double x, double y )
    {
        this.X = x;
        this.Y = y;
    }
}
```

```

}

public static class Program
{
    public static void Main()
    {
        var picture = new Picture();

        picture.Move( 10, 10 );

        // 1 undo operation at this point: Move.

        picture.X = 20;

        // 2 undo operations at this point: set_X, Move.

        picture.Y = 20;

        // 3 undo operations at this point: set_Y, set_X, Move.
    }
}

```

By default, the `RecordableAttribute` aspect will automatically open a new operation for any public method, unless the current `Recorder` already has an open operation. Therefore, invoking the `Move` method results in a single operation, even if it modifies two fields. Note that the `Move` method invokes the setters of public properties `X` and `Y`, which are themselves public methods, but they do not open new operations since they run from within the `Move` method. However, when properties `X` and `Y` are accessed from outside of the `Picture` class, new operations are created for the `set_X` and `set_Y` methods.

Setting operation names declaratively

By default, the name of an operation is set to the name of the method. There are various ways to customize this name, and the easiest is to add a `RecordingScopeAttribute` custom attribute to the public method.

In the following example, we're declaring a different name for the `Move` method:

```

[Recordable]
public class Picture
{
    private double x, y;

    [RecordingScope("Moving the picture")]
    public void Move( double x, double y )
    {
        this.x = x;
        this.y = y;
    }
}

```

With that `RecordingScopeAttribute` added, the recorded operation will now have a name of `Moving the picture` instead of just `Move`.

Setting operation names dynamically

Setting the operation name declaratively is convenient but relatively rigid. When more flexibility is needed, you can use the `RecorderOpenScope(String, RecordingScopeOption)` method to control the creation and naming of scopes.

In the following example, we will modify the `Move` method to include the target position in the operation description.

To dynamically name an operation:

1. Add the `[RecordingScope(RecordingScopeOption.Skip)]` custom attribute to the method, so that the method does not automatically define a new operation. Exclude from the Recorder the method which contains the block of code that you wish to encapsulate in a recording.

```
[RecordingScope(RecordingScopeOption.Skip)]
public void Move( double x, double y )
```

NOTE

This step is not required if you are starting the operation from a non-recordable object.

2. Invoke the `OpenScope(String, RecordingScopeOption)` method and wrap the code you want to record in a `using` block.

```
[Recordable]
public class Picture
{
    private double x, y;

    [RecordingScope(RecordingScopeOption.Skip)]
    public void Move( double x, double y )
    {
        string scopeName = string.Format( "Moving to ({0}, {1})", x, y );

        using (RecordingScope scope = RecordingServices.DefaultRecorder.OpenScope(scopeName))
        {
            this.x = x;
            this.y = y;
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

If you do not to add this custom attribute to the method, the `RecordableAttribute` aspect will automatically create a new scope to execute the method, and your call of the `OpenScope(String, RecordingScopeOption)` method will be ignored.

Using the OperationFormatter class

Explicitly declaring the name for every operation would be a large and tedious task. It is possible to write your own naming engine and apply that set of naming rules across the entire application. To achieve this, derive your own implementation from the `OperationFormatter` class.

In the following example, we will create a custom formatter that reads the operation name from the `DisplayNameAttribute` custom attribute and display the value to which a property has been set.

To create and register a custom OperationFormatter:

1. Create a new class and inherit from the `OperationFormatter` class.

```
public class MyOperationFormatter : OperationFormatter
{
}
```

2. Create a constructor for the new formatter class.

```
public class MyOperationFormatter : OperationFormatter
{
    public MyOperationFormatter(OperationFormatter next) : base(next)
    {
    }
}
```

3. Next you need to override the `FormatOperationDescriptor(IOperationDescriptor)` method and write your custom logic for generating a custom operation name.

```
class MyOperationFormatter : OperationFormatter
{
    public MyOperationFormatter( OperationFormatter next ) : base( next )
    {
    }

    protected override string FormatOperationDescriptor( IOperationDescriptor operation )
    {
        if ( operation.OperationKind != OperationKind.Method )
            return null;

        var descriptor = (MethodExecutionOperationDescriptor) operation;

        if ( descriptor.Method.IsSpecialName && descriptor.Method.Name.StartsWith( "set_" ) )
        {
            // We have a property setter.

            var property = descriptor.Method.DeclaringType.GetProperty(
                descriptor.Method.Name.Substring( 4 ),
                BindingFlags.Instance|BindingFlags.Public|BindingFlags.NonPublic );

            var attributes =
                (DisplayNameAttribute[]) property.GetCustomAttributes(typeof(DisplayNameAttribute), false);

            if ( attributes.Length > 0 )
                return string.Format( "Set {0} to {1}", attributes[0].DisplayName, descriptor.Arguments[0] ?? "r" );
        }
        else
        {
            // We have another method.

            var attributes = (DisplayNameAttribute[])
                descriptor.Method.GetCustomAttributes(typeof(DisplayNameAttribute), false);

            if ( attributes.Length > 0 )
                return attributes[0].DisplayName;
        }

        return null;
    }
}
```

NOTE

Formatters create a chain of responsibility. If one formatter is unable to provide a name it will ask the next formatter in the chain to attempt to provide a name. To make the hand-off occur the `FormatOperationDescriptor(IOperationDescriptor)` method needs to return `null`. If it returns anything else the chain is broken and the returned value is used as a name.

4. Finally, you need to add your custom name formatter into the chain of responsibility.

```
RecordingServices.OperationFormatter = new MyOperationFormatter(RecordingServices.OperationFormatter);
```

Because the `RecordingServices` is making use of a chain of responsibility, you are able to insert as many custom name formatters as you want. You are also able to determine their order of execution based on the order that you insert them into the chain of responsibility.

11.4. Assigning Recorders Manually

By default, all recordable objects are attached to the global Recorder exposed on the `RecordingServicesDefaultRecorder` property. There is nothing you have to do to make this happen. There may be circumstances where you want to create and assign your own recorder to the undo/redo process. There are two different ways that you can accomplish this.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Overriding the default RecorderProvider on page 151](#)
- [Attaching a recorder manually on page 152](#)

Overriding the default RecorderProvider

By default, the `RecordableAttribute` aspect attaches an object to a Recorder as soon as its constructor exits. To determine which Recorder should be used, the aspect uses the `RecordingServicesRecorderProvider` service. By default, this service always serves the global instance that is also exposed on the `RecordingServicesDefaultRecorder` property.

You can override this automatic assignment to inject your own `RecorderProvider` to into the process.

To use a custom RecorderProvider:

1. Create a class inherited from the `RecorderProvider` class.

```
public class MyProvider : RecorderProvider
{
}
```

2. Implement the chaining constructor. The `RecorderProvider` that you inherited from requires a `RecorderProvider` as a constructor parameter. This constructor parameter facilitates the chain of responsibility for providers that can be run when a Recorder is requested. To keep the chain of responsibility intact your custom `RecorderProvider` will need to accept a `RecorderProvider` in its constructor and pass that to the base constructor.

```
public class MyProvider : RecorderProvider
{
    public MyProvider(RecorderProvider next) : base (next)
    {
    }
}
```

3. Override the `GetRecorderCore(Object)` method.

```
public class MyProvider : RecorderProvider
{
    public MyProvider(RecorderProvider next) : base(next)
    {
    }

    public Recorder GetRecorderImpl(object obj)
    {
        //where you will write code to create a new Recorder instance
        throw new NotImplementedException();
    }
}
```

4. Insert an instance of your custom `RecorderProvider` class into the chain of responsibility by assigning it to the `RecordingServicesRecorderProvider`.

```
RecordingServices.RecorderProvider = new MyProvider(RecordingServices.RecorderProvider);
```

NOTE

`RecorderProvider` is a chain of responsibility. As such, if a `GetRecorderCore(Object)` method returns `null` then the chain will move on to the next `RecorderProvider` and attempt to get a `Recorder` to use.

By overriding the default `RecorderProvider` you are able to assign a custom `Recorder` across the entire application.

Attaching a recorder manually

The second way that you can add a `Recorder` to objects is to manually assign them when, and where, they are needed.

To manually assign a Recorder to an object:

1. Set the `RecordableAttributeAutoRecord` property to false for that class.

```
[Recordable(AutoRecord = false)]
public class Invoice
{
}
```

NOTE

By disabling `AutoRecord` you are telling the `RecordingServices` that this object should not be included in recordings unless the recording is explicitly declared in your code.

2. Create a new instance of a `Recorder` and attach the object to it using the `Attach(Object)` method.

```
var invoice = new Invoice();

var recorder = new Recorder();
recorder.Attach(invoice);
```

You can then use the `Detach(Object)` method to remove the `Recorder` from the object in question.

NOTE

An object must always have the same Recorder as its parent has unless the parent has no Recorder assigned. Because of this, whenever a Recorder is assigned to an object, all of the child objects will have that same Recorder assigned to them. However, if you detach a child object from its parent the child object's assigned Recorder will not be detached. For more information about parent-child relationships, see [Parent/Child Relationships on page 127](#).

11.5. Adding Callbacks on Undo and Redo

You may run into situations where you will want to execute some code before or after an object is being modified by an Undo or Redo operation. This capability is provided through the `IRecordableCallback` interface.

In the following example, we will show how to integrate the `RecordableAttribute` aspect with a custom implementation of `INotifyPropertyChanged` (the standard `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect is already integrated with the `RecordableAttribute` aspect so you don't need to worry).

```
[Recordable]
public class Invoice : INotifyPropertyChanged, IRecordableCallback
{
    public void OnReplaying(ReplayKind kind, ReplayContext context)
    {
    }

    public void OnReplayed(ReplayKind kind, ReplayContext context)
    {
        OnPropertyChanged("ShippingDate");
    }

    private DateTime _shippingDate;
    public DateTime ShippingDate
    {
        get { return _shippingDate; }
        set
        {
            _shippingDate = value;
            OnPropertyChanged("ShippingDate");
        }
    }

    public event PropertyChangedEventHandler PropertyChanged;

    protected virtual void OnPropertyChanged(string propertyName = null)
    {
        var handler = PropertyChanged;
        if (handler != null) handler(this, new PropertyChangedEventArgs(propertyName));
    }
}
```

For more information, see the reference documentation for the `IRecordableCallback` interface.

11.6. Understanding the Recordable Aspect

This section describes how the `RecordableAttribute` aspect is implemented. It helps developers and architects to understand the behavior and limitations of the aspect.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Overview on page 154](#)
- [Scopes and Logical Operations on page 154](#)
- [Atomic Operations on page 155](#)
- [Primitive Operations on page 155](#)
- [Restore Points on page 155](#)
- [Implementing IEditableObject on page 0](#)
- [Callback Methods on page 156](#)
- [Memory Consumption on page 156](#)

Overview

When the `RecordableAttribute` aspect is applied to a class, the aspect records changes performed on instances of this class. Changes are represented as instances of the `Operation` class. For instance the `FieldOperationT` class represents the operation of changing the value to a field. All operations implement the `Undo(ReplayContext)` and `Redo(ReplayContext)` methods. For instance, the `FieldOperationT` class stores both the new and old value so that the operation can be undone and redone.

The changes are recorded into the `Recorder` object. The `Recorder` maintains two collections of operations: `UndoOperations` and `RedoOperations`. The `RecorderUndo` method takes the last operation from the `UndoOperations` collection, invokes `OperationUndo(ReplayContext)` for this operation, and moves the operation to the `RedoOperations` collection. The `RecorderUndo` method works symmetrically.

It would not be safe, however, to allow users to undo changes in the object model back to any arbitrary point in history. Users don't want to undo primitive changes to an object model, but to undo whole operations understood from a user's perspective. This is why the `UndoOperations` and `RedoOperations` collections don't expose primitive changes on the object model but logical operations.

By default, logical operations are automatically opened when calling a public or internal method of a recordable object, and closed when the same method exits. The principal use case of scopes is to define user-friendly operation names.

There is typically a single instance of this class per application, but there could be many if needed (for instance in a multi-document application). The default single instance is accessible from the `RecordingServicesDefaultRecorder` property. By default, recordable objects are attached to the default recorder immediately after completion of the constructor. See [Assigning Recorders Manually on page 151](#) to learn how to customize this behavior.

Scopes and Logical Operations

Scopes are a mechanism to aggregate several primitive operations into logical operations that make sense for the end-user. Logical operations are represented by the `CompositeOperation` class.

In general, logical operations form a flat structure: the `UndoOperations` and `RedoOperations` collections are flat double linked lists, and each `CompositeOperation` typically contains primitive operations such as a field value change.

Scopes define boundaries of logical operations. Scopes can be opened using the `RecorderOpenScope(RecordingScopeOption)` method, which returns an object of type `RecordingScope`. This class implements the `IDisposable` interface, making it convenient to define scopes with the `using` statement.

By default, the `RecordableAttribute` aspect encloses all instance public and internal methods with an implicit scope. That is, by default, public and internal methods define boundaries of logical operations.

Unlike logical operations, scopes are generally nested. Scope nesting typically happens when a public method directly or indirectly invokes another public method. In general, only the outermost scope results in creating a logical operation. This is why, in general, logical operations form a flat structure.

Because they are visible to users, logical operations must be given a user-friendly name. PostSharp defines default names that are not user-friendly. The responsibility of generating operation names is implemented by the `Operation-`

Formatter class. You can provide your own `OperationFormatter` to generate operations names on demand, or you can set the name explicitly in source code for each operation.

Scope names can be declaratively defined using the `RecordingScopeAttribute` custom attribute, or programmatically using the `RecorderOpenScope(String, RecordingScopeOption)` method. To learn more about operation names, see [Customizing Undo/Redo Operation Names on page 147](#).

Atomic Operations

Atomic scopes are scopes whose changes are automatically rolled back when it does not complete successfully, typically when an exception occurs. The rollback is implemented using the undo mechanism. Atomic scopes are a similar concept than transactions, but multi-threading is not taken into account. Therefore, other threads may see changes that have not been "committed", because the `Recordable\` pattern does not have a notion of transaction isolation.

Atomic scopes cause composite operations to have a tree structure. However, the concept of atomic structure does not surface to the users. Therefore, from a user's perspective, the `UndoOperations` and `RedoOperations` collections still present linear lists of logical operations.

Scope defined declaratively using the `RecordingScopeAttribute` custom attribute, or programmatically using the `RecorderOpenScope(RecordingScopeOption)` method.

Primitive Operations

The following table lists the primitive operations that are automatically appended to the `Recorder` object by the `RecordableAttribute` aspect.

Class	Description
<code>FieldOperationT</code>	Represents the operation of setting a field to a different value.
<code>CollectionOperationT</code>	Represents operations on collections.
<code>DictionaryOperationTKey, TValue</code>	Represents operations on dictionaries.
<code>RecorderOperation</code>	Represents the operation of attaching or detaching an object to or from a <code>Recorder</code> .

Additionally to these system-defined operations, it is possible to implement custom operations by deriving from the `Operation` abstract class. You can then use the `RecorderAddOperation(Operation)` method to append the custom operation to the `Recorder`.

Logical operations, which are presented to the end user, are typically represented as instances of the `Composite-Operation` class.

Restore Points

Restore points act like bookmarks in the list of operations. They allow to undo or redo operations up to a specific point. You can use the `RecorderAddRestorePoint(String)` method to create a restore point. The method returns an instance of the `RestorePoint` class, which derives from the `Operation` class. Unlike other operations, you can safely remove a restore point from the history thanks to the `Remove` method.

Implementing `IEditableObject`

You can use the `EditableObjectAttribute` custom attribute to automatically implement the `IEditableObject` interface. The implementation is based on the `RecordableAttribute` aspect. It creates a `RestorePoint` when the `BeginEdit` method is invoked, removes the restore point upon `EndEdit`, and undoes changes up to the restore point when `CancelEdit` is called.

Because of this implementation strategy, it is possible that `CancelEdit` actually cancels changes done to other objects that share the same `Recorder`.

Callback Methods

The `Recorder` will invoke the `OnReplaying(ReplayKind, ReplayContext)` and `OnReplayed(ReplayKind, ReplayContext)` methods of any recordable object implementing the `IRecordableCallback` interface, whenever the object is affected by an undo or redo operation.

The order in which these methods are ordered on several objects is non-deterministic; in particular, the aggregation structure is not respected.

It is not allowed, from a callback methods:

- to perform a change that would be recorded, e.g. to set a field that has not been waived from recording with the `NotRecordedAttribute` custom attributes.
- to invoke methods `Undo`, `Redo` or `AddRestorePoint` of the `Recorder` class.

Memory Consumption

The `UndoOperations` and `RedoOperations` collections hold strong references to all objects that have changes that can be undone or redone. This means that these objects cannot be garbage-collected and will remain in memory.

You can define the maximal number of operations available for undo thanks to the `RecorderMaximumOperationsCount` property.

CHAPTER 12

Contracts

Throwing exceptions upon detecting a bad or unexpected value is good programming practice called *precondition checking*. However, writing the same checks over and over in different areas of the code base is tedious, error prone, and difficult to maintain.

PostSharp Code Contracts have the following features and benefits:

- More readable. PostSharp Code Contracts are represented as custom attributes there is less code to read and understand.
- Inherited. You can add a PostSharp Code Contract attribute to an interface method parameter and it will automatically be enforced in all implementations of this method.
- Localizable. It's easy to display the error message in the user's language, even if you didn't design for this scenario upfront.

In this chapter

Section	Description
Walkthrough: Adding Contracts to Code on page 157	This section demonstrates how to add contracts to code and how inheritance works.
Creating Custom Contracts on page 162	This section explains how to create your own contract attributes.
Localizing Contract Errors on page 163	This section describes how to customize the texts of exceptions that are thrown when a contract is violated.

12.1. Walkthrough: Adding Contracts to Code

This section describes how to add a contract to a field, property, or parameter.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Introduction on page 157](#)
- [Adding contracts using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 159](#)
- [Adding contracts manually on page 161](#)
- [Contract Inheritance on page 161](#)

Introduction

Consider the following method which checks if a valid string has been passed in:

```
public class CustomerModel
{
    public void SetFullName(string firstName, string lastName)
```

Contracts

```
{
    if(firstName == null)
        throw NullReferenceException();

    if(lastName == null)
        throw NullReferenceException();

    this.FullName = firstName + " " + lastName;
}
}
```

In this example, checks have been added to ensure that both parameters contain a valid string. A better solution is to place the logic which performs this check into its own reusable class, especially such boilerplate logic is involved, and then reuse/invoke this class whenever the check needs to be performed.

PostSharp's Contract attributes do just that by moving such checks out of code and into parameter attributes. For example, PostSharp's `RequiredAttribute` contract could be used to simplify the example as follows:

```
public class CustomerModel
{
    public void SetFullName([Required] string firstName, [Required] string lastName)
    {
        this.FullName = firstName + " " + lastName;
    }
}
```

In this example the `RequiredAttribute` attribute performs the check for null, thus eliminating the need to write the boiler plate code for the check inline with other code.

A contract can also be used in a property as shown in the following example:

```
public class CustomerModel
{
    [Required]
    public FirstName
    {
        get;
        set;
    }
}
```

Using a contract in a property ensures that the value being passed into set is validated before the logic (if any) for set is executed.

Similarly, a contract can be used directly on a field which will validate the value being assigned to the field:

```
public class CustomerModel
{
    [Required]
    private string mFirstName = "Not filled in yet";

    public void SetFirstName(string firstName)
    {
        mFirstName = firstName;
    }
}
```

In this example, `firstName` will be validated by the `Required` contract before being assigned to `mFirstName`. Placing a contract on a field provides the added benefit of validating the field regardless of where it's set from.

Note that PostSharp also includes a number of built-in contracts which range from checks for null values to testing for valid phone numbers. You can also develop your own contracts with custom logic for your own types as described below.

There are two ways to add contracts:

Adding contracts using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

PostSharp's Visual Studio integration provides a smart tag popup which can be used to select and apply a contract to a parameter, field, or property.

To add contract using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

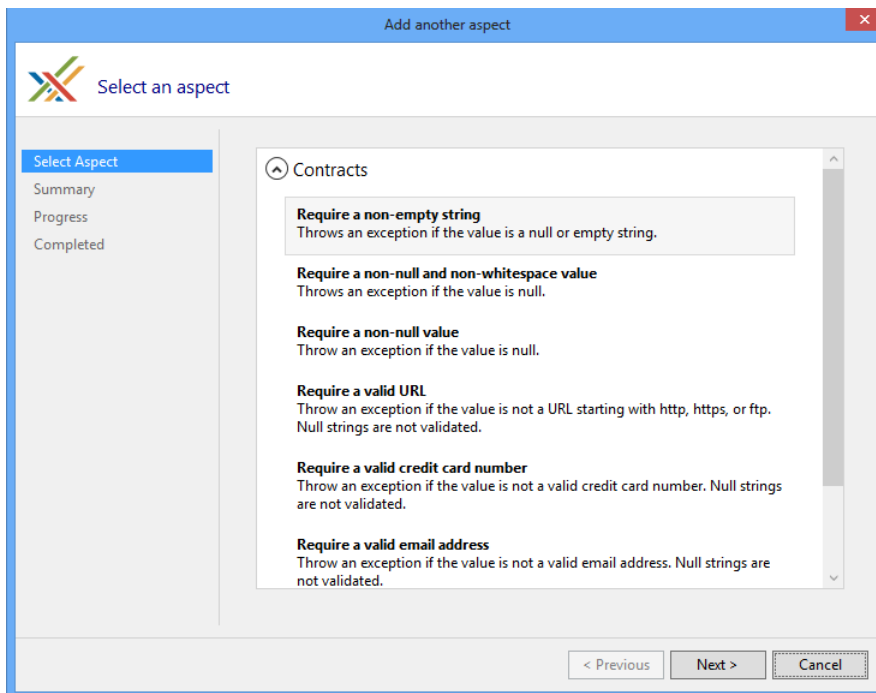
1. Click on the parameter, field, or property for which the contract is to be applied. While hovering the mouse over this item, a smart tag drop-down will appear:

```
public class CustomerModel
{
    private string mFirstName = "Not filled in yet";
    public void SetFirstName(string firstName)
    {
        mFirstName = firstName;
    }
}
```

2. Click on the smart tag drop-down to reveal the contracts available:

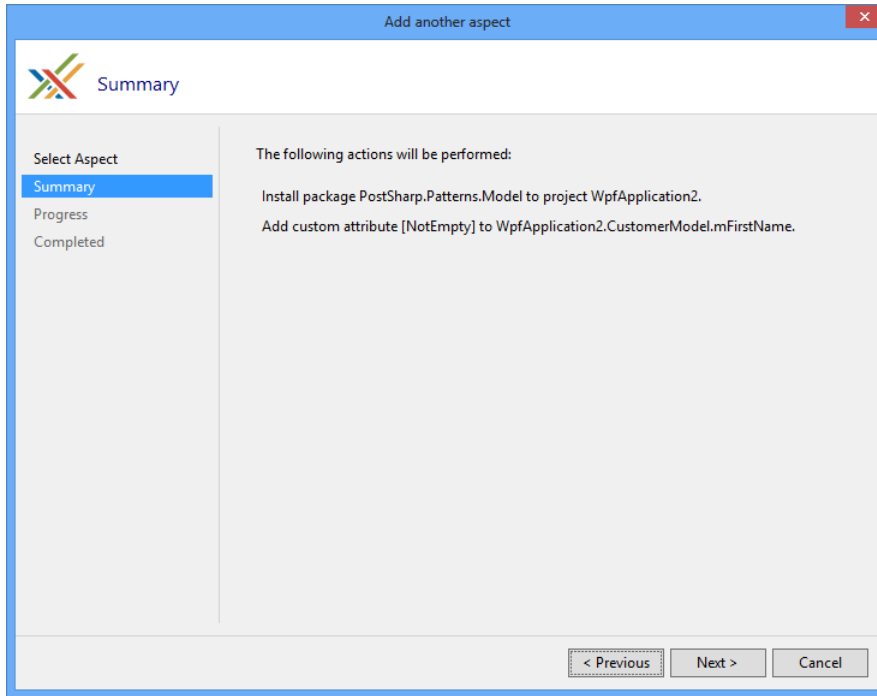
```
public class CustomerModel
{
    private string mFirstName = "Not filled in yet";
    public void SetFirstName(string firstName)
    {
        mFirstName =
    }
}
```

3. Select a contract from the list or select **Add another aspect** to display the aspect selection dialog:

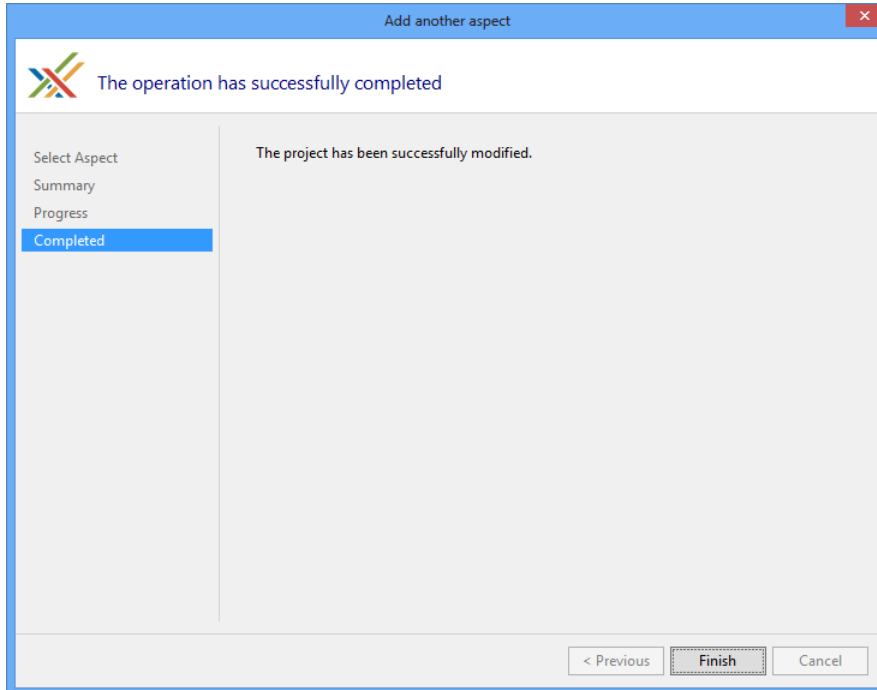


4. Select a contract and click **Next**.

5. Confirm the addition of the contract and click **Next**:



6. Click **Finish** when the dialog indicates that the operation completed:



The aspect has now been added in code:


```
public class CustomerModel
{
    [NotEmpty]
    private string mFirstName = "Not filled in yet";

    public void SetFirstName(string firstName)
    {
        mFirstName = firstName;
    }
}
```

Adding contracts manually

To add contract manually:

1. Add the PostSharp.Patterns.Model assembly to your project.
2. Add the namespace containing the code contracts you plan to use.
 - add the PostSharp.Patterns.Contracts namespace if you plan to use the ready-made patterns, and/or
 - add the namespace which includes your [custom contracts on page 162](#).

You can find a full list of available ready-made patterns in the documentation of the PostSharp.Patterns.Contracts namespace.

3. Add the attribute before the parameter name. For example:

```
public void SetFullName([Required] string firstName, [Required] string lastName)
```

Contract Inheritance

PostSharp ensures that any contracts which have been applied to an abstract, virtual, or interface method are inherited along with that method in derived classes, all without the need to re-specify the contract in the derived methods. This is shown in the following example:

```
public interface ICustomerModel
{
    void SetFullName([Required] string firstName, [Required] string lastName);
}

public class CustomerModel : ICustomerModel
{
    public void SetFullName(string firstName, string lastName)
    {
        this.FullName = firstName + " " + lastName;
    }
}
```

Here ICustomerModel.SetFullName method specifies that the firstName and lastName parameters are required using the RequiredAttribute attribute. Since the CustomerModel.SetFullName method implements this method, these attributes will also be applied to its parameters.

NOTE

If the derived class exists in a separate assembly, that assembly must be processed by PostSharp and must reference PostSharp and PostSharp Model pattern assembly.

12.2. Creating Custom Contracts

Given the benefits that contracts provide over manually checking values and throwing exceptions in code, you will likely want to implement your own contracts to perform your own custom checks and handle your own custom types.

The following steps show how to implement a contract which throws an exception if a numeric parameter is zero:

To implement a contract throwing an exception if a numeric parameter is zero:

1. Use the following namespaces: `PostSharp.Aspects` and `PostSharp.Reflection`.
2. Derive a class from `LocationContractAttribute` and override the `GetErrorMessage` method:

```
public class NonZeroAttribute : LocationContractAttribute
{
    public const string ErrorMessage = "NonZeroErrorMessage";

    public NonZeroAttribute()
        : base()
    {
    }

    protected override string GetErrorMessage()
    {
        return "Value {2} must have a non-zero value.";
    }
}
```

NOTE

The value returned by `GetErrorMessage` method can contain formatting placeholders. See the remarks section for the `LocationContractAttribute` class for more information.

3. Implement the `ILocationValidationAspect` interface in the new contract class which exposes the `ValidateValue(T, String, LocationKind)` method. Note that this interface must be implemented for each type that is to be handled by the contract. In this example, the contract will handle both `int` and `uint`, so the interface is implemented for both integer types. If additional integer types were to be handled by this class (e.g. `long`), then additional implementations of `ILocationValidationAspect` would have to be added:

```
public class NonZeroAttribute : LocationContractAttribute, ILocationValidationAspect<int>, ILocationValidationAspect
{
    public const string ErrorMessage = "NonZeroErrorMessage";

    public NonZeroAttribute()
        : base()
    {
    }

    protected override string GetErrorMessage()
    {
        return "Value {2} must have a non-zero value.";
    }

    public Exception ValidateValue(int value, string name, LocationKind locationKind)
    {
        if (value == 0)
            return this.CreateArgumentOutOfRangeException(value, name, locationKind);
        else
            return null;
    }

    public Exception ValidateValue(uint value, string name, LocationKind locationKind)
    {
        if (value == 0)
            return this.CreateArgumentOutOfRangeException(value, name, locationKind);
        else
            return null;
    }
}
```

The `ValidateValue(T, String, LocationKind)` method takes in the value to test, the name of the parameter, property or field, and the usage (i.e. whether it's a parameter, property, or field). The method must return an exception if a check fails, or null or if no exception is to be raised.

With the contract now created it can be used. For example, the following methods which calculate the modulus between two numbers, can use the contract defined above to ensure that neither of their input parameters are zero:

```
bool Mod([NonZero] int number, [NonZero] int dividend)
{
    return ((number % dividend) == 0);
}

bool Mod([NonZero] uint number, [NonZero] uint dividend)
{
    return ((number % dividend) == 0);
}
```

12.3. Localizing Contract Errors

You can customize all texts of exceptions raised by built-in contract. This allows you to localize error messages into different languages.

Contracts use the `ContractLocalizedTextProvider` class to obtain the text of an error message. This class follows a simple chain of responsibilities pattern where each provider has a reference to the next provider in the chain. When a message is queried, the provider either returns a message or passes control to the next provider in the chain.

Each message is identified by a string identifier and can refer to 4 basic arguments and additional arguments specific to a message type. For general information about message arguments please see remarks section of `LocationContractAttribute`. For identifier of a particular message and its additional arguments, please see remarks section of contract classes in `PostSharp.Patterns.Contracts`.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Localizing a built-in error message on page 164](#)
- [Localizing custom contracts on page 165](#)

Localizing a built-in error message

Following steps illustrate how to override an error message of a given contract:

To override a contract error message:

1. Declare a class that derives from `ContractLocalizedTextProvider` and implement the chain constructor.

```
public class CzechContractLocalizedTextProvider : ContractLocalizedTextProvider
{
    public CzechContractLocalizedTextProvider(ContractLocalizedTextProvider next)
        : base(next)
    {
    }
}
```

2. Implement the `GetMessage(String)` method. In the next code snippet, we show how to build a simple and efficient dictionary-based implementation.

```
public class CzechContractLocalizedTextProvider : ContractLocalizedTextProvider
{
    private readonly Dictionary<string, string> messages = new Dictionary<string, string>
    {
        {RegularExpressionErrorMessage, "Hodnota {2} neodpovídá regulárnímu výra:
    };

    public CzechContractLocalizedTextProvider(ContractLocalizedTextProvider next)
    : base(next)
    {
    }

    public override string GetMessage( string messageId )
    {
        if ( string.IsNullOrEmpty( messageId ) )
            throw new ArgumentNullException("messageId");

        string message;
        if ( this.messages.TryGetValue( messageId, out message ) )
        {
            return message;
        }
        else
        {
            // Fall back to the default provider.
            return base.GetMessage( messageId );
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

If you need to support several languages, you can make your implementation of the `GetMessage(String)` method dependent on the value of the `CultureInfo.CurrentCulture` property. You can optionally store your error messages in a managed resource and use the `ResourceManager` class to access it and manage localization issues. The design of PostSharp Code Contracts is agnostic to these decisions.

3. In the beginning of an application, create a new instance of the provider and set the current provider as it's successor.

```
public static void Main()
{
    ContractLocalizedTextProvider.Current = new CzechContractLocalizedTextProvider(ContractLocalizedTextProvider.

    // ...
}
```

Localizing custom contracts

Once you have configured a text provider, you can use it to localize error messages of custom contracts. In the following procedure, we will localize the error message of the example contract described in [Creating Custom Contracts on page 162](#).

To localize a custom contract:

1. Edit the code contract class (NonZeroAttribute in our case) and replace the implementation of the `GetErrorMessage` method by a call to the `GetMessage(String)` method. Pass a unique message identifier to this method.

```
protected override string GetErrorMessage()  
{  
    return ContractLocalizedTextProvider.Current.GetMessage("NonZeroErrorMessage");  
}
```

2. Edit your implementation of the `LocalizedTextProvider` class and include the message for your custom contract:

```
private readonly Dictionary<string, string> messages = new Dictionary<string, string>  
{  
    {RegularExpressionErrorMessage, "Hodnota {2} neodpovídá regulárnímu výrazu '{4}'."},  
    {"NonZeroErrorMessage", "Value {2} must have a non-zero value."}  
};
```

CHAPTER 13

Logging

The Diagnostics Pattern Library enables you to configure where logging should be performed and to keep your log entries in sync as you add, remove and refactor your codebase. Currently, the library provides a single aspect: `LogAttribute`.

In this chapter

Section	Description
Walkthrough: Adding Detailed Tracing to a Code Base on page 167	This article shows how to add detailed logging to your application.
Walkthrough: Tracing Parameter Values Upon Exception on page 177	This article describes how to log parameter values when a method fails with an exception.
Walkthrough: Customizing Logging on page 171	This article shows how to customize the logging settings, such as the severity level or whether parameter values should be included.
Walkthrough: Changing the Logging Back-End on page 182	This article shows how to switch to a different back-end after you have chosen a first one.

13.1. Walkthrough: Adding Detailed Tracing to a Code Base

When you're working with your codebase it's common to need to add logging either as a non-functional requirement or simply to assist during the development process. In either situation you will want to include information about the parameters passed to the method when it was called as well as the parameter values once the method call has completed. This can be a tedious and brittle process. As you work and refactor methods the order and types of parameters may change, parameters may be added and some maybe removed. Along with performing these refactorings you have to remember to update the logging messages to keep them in sync. This is something that is easy to forget and once forgotten the output of the logging is much less useful.

PostSharp offers a solution to all of these problems. The logging pattern library allows you to configure where logging should be performed and the pattern library takes over the task of keeping your log entries in sync as you add, remove and refactor your codebase. Let's take a look at how you can add trace logging for the start and completion of method calls.

NOTE

This procedure requires [PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio](#)²¹ to be installed on your machine. You can however achieve the same results by editing the code and the project manually.

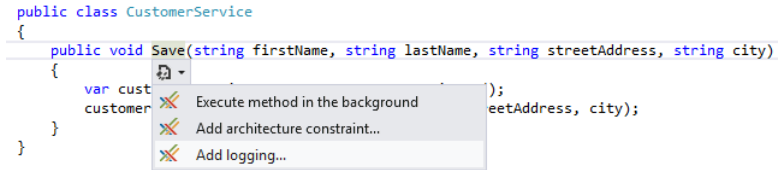
21. <https://visualstudiogallery.msdn.microsoft.com/a058d5d3-e654-43f8-a308-c3bdfdd0be4a>

To add trace logging for the start and completion of method calls:

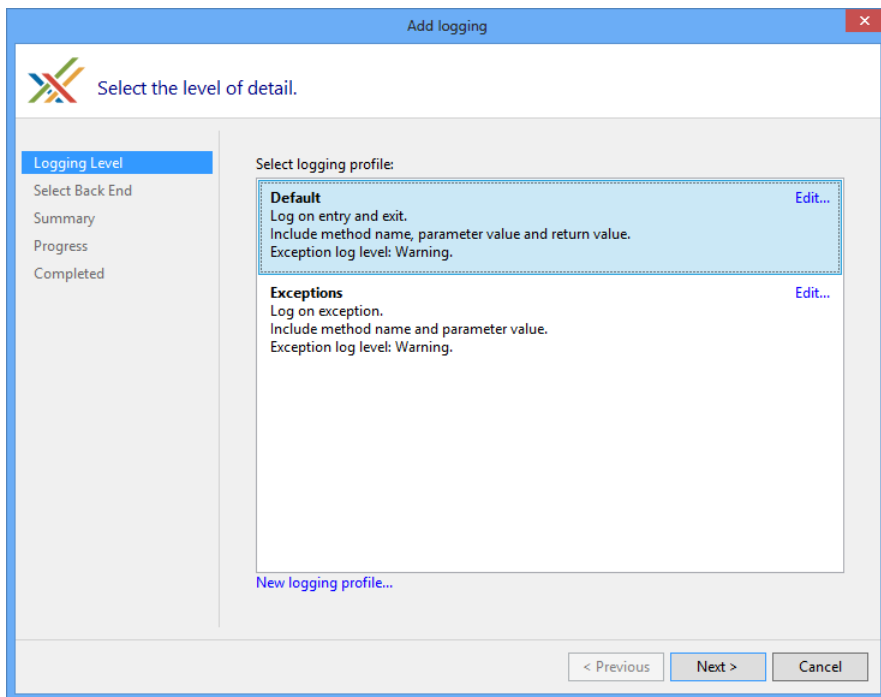
1. Let's add logging to our Save method.

```
public void Save(string firstName, string lastName, string streetAddress, string city)
{
    var customerRepository = new CustomerRepository();
    customerRepository.Save(firstName, lastName, streetAddress, city);
}
```

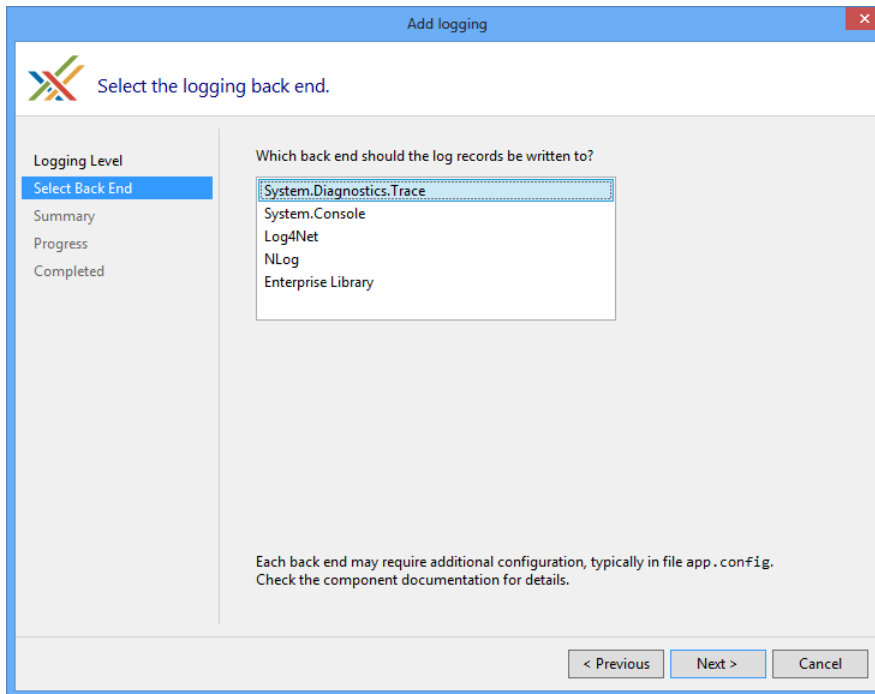
2. Put the caret on the Save method name and expand the Smart Tag. From the list select "Add logging".



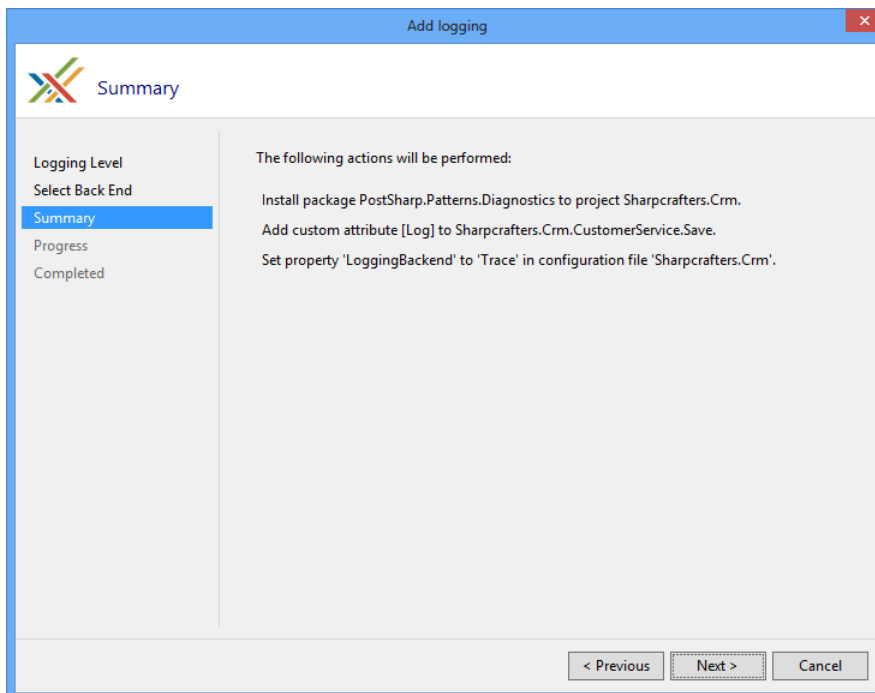
3. The first option that you need to select is the Logging Profile. For this example we will take the default provided: it logs the method enters and exits, and includes parameter values and return value. Select the "Default" profile and click **Next**.



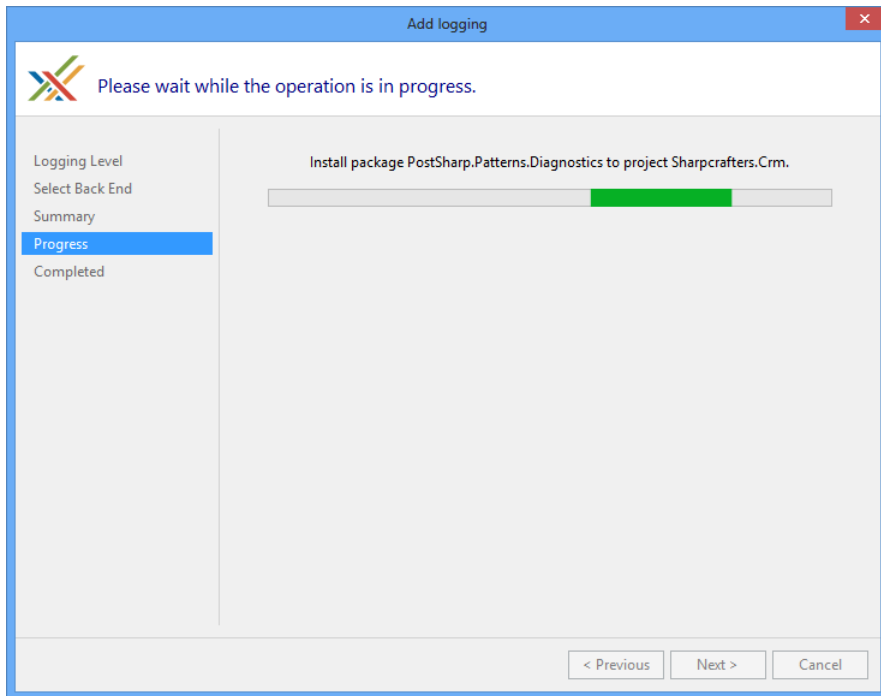
- The next page of the wizard gives you the opportunity to choose the logging back-end that you want to use. For this example select "System.Diagnostics.Trace" and click **Next**.



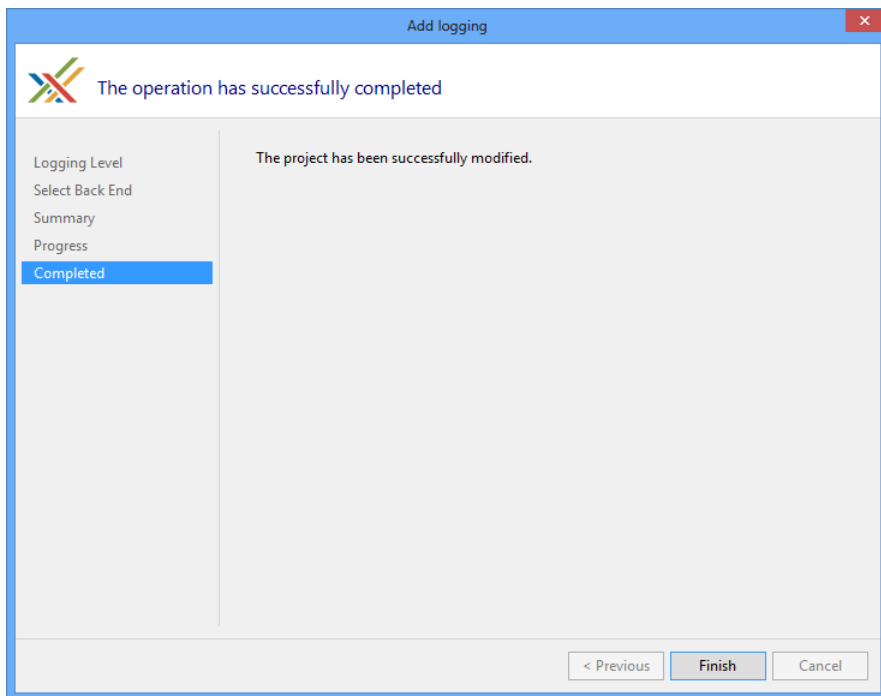
- The summary page gives you the opportunity to review the selections that you have made. If you notice that the configuration is not what you wanted you can click the **Previous** button and adjust your selections. If the configuration meets your needs click **Next**.



- The progress page shows a progress bar and summary of what actions PostSharp is taking to add the selected logging configuration to your codebase. It's at this point that PostSharp and the logging pattern library will be downloaded from NuGet and added as references to your codebase.



- Once the download, installation and configuration of PostSharp and the logging pattern library has finished you can close the wizard and look at the changes that were made to your codebase.



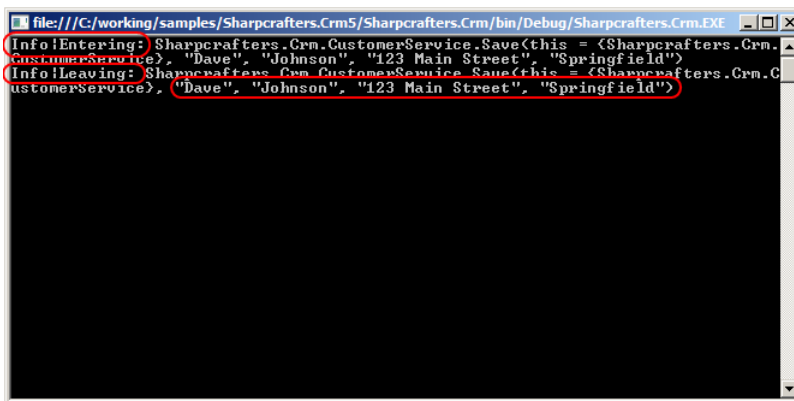
8. You'll notice that the code you added the logging to has changed slightly. PostSharp has added a `LogAttribute` attribute to the method. Since we chose the default logging profile, there is no argument to the `LogAttribute` attribute.

```
[Log]
public void Save(string firstName, string lastName, string streetAddress, string city)
{
    var customerRepository = new CustomerRepository();
    customerRepository.Save(firstName, lastName, streetAddress, city);
}
```

NOTE

This example has added a single attribute to one method. If you plan on adding this logging to many different locations in your codebase you will want to read about using the `MulticastAttribute`: [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations on page 187](#).

9. If you were to run this method the trace logging that you added would output a log message when entering the method and an entry when leaving the method. Note that the parameter values are automatically included in the log message.



Now that you have logging added to the `Save` method you are able to change the method's name as well as add and remove parameters with the confidence that your log entries will be kept in sync with each of those changes. In combination with attribute multicasting (the article [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations on page 187](#)), adding logging to your codebase and maintaining it becomes a very easy task.

13.2. Walkthrough: Customizing Logging

When adding logging to your codebase, you may need to set up logging options differently for different areas or layers in your application. For example, exceptions in the service that cleans up old data in the database can be logged with a "Warning" level, while exceptions in the customer-facing web service must be logged with the "Error" level.

PostSharp enables you to organize your logging options using *Logging Profiles*. Logging profiles are stored in the solution-wide configuration file, and each profile specifies what information you want to be included in the log output. You apply a given logging profile by providing its name as an argument for the `LogAttribute` attribute's constructor. Let's take a look at how you can create your own logging profile and use it in your code.

NOTE

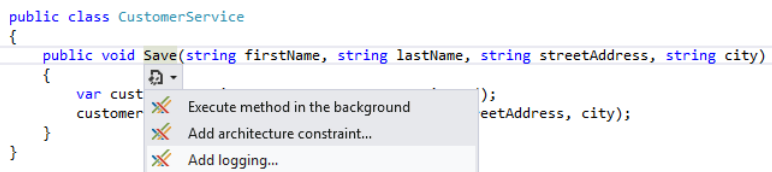
This procedure requires [PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio](https://visualstudiogallery.msdn.microsoft.com/a058d5d3-e654-43f8-a308-c3bdfdd0be4a)²² to be installed on your machine. You can however achieve the same results by editing the code and the project manually.

To create a custom logging profile:

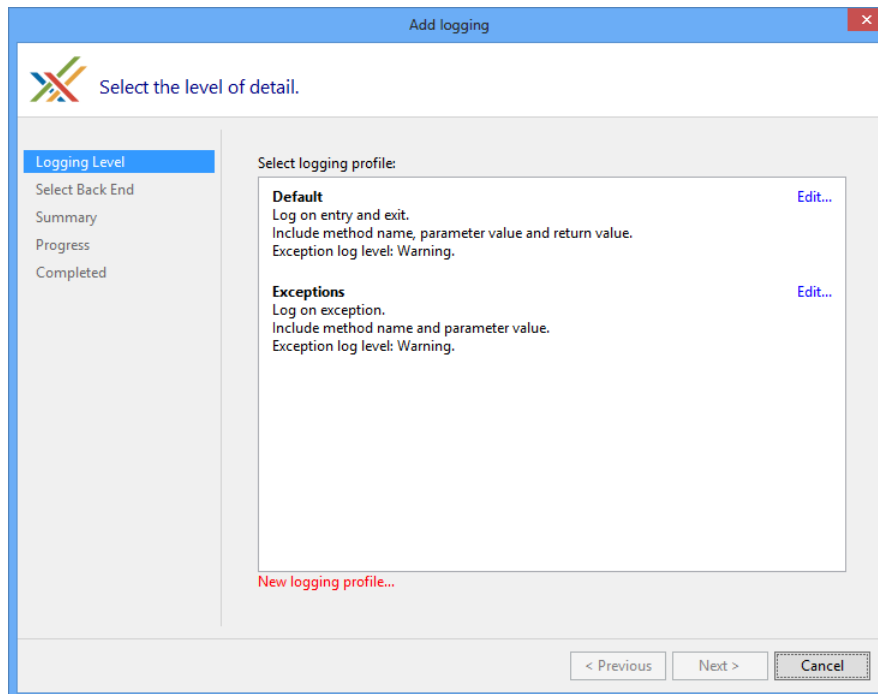
1. Let's add customized logging to our Save method.

```
public void Save(string firstName, string lastName, string streetAddress, string city)
{
    var customerRepository = new CustomerRepository();
    customerRepository.Save(firstName, lastName, streetAddress, city);
}
```

2. Put the caret on the Save method name and expand the Smart Tag. From the list select "Add logging".

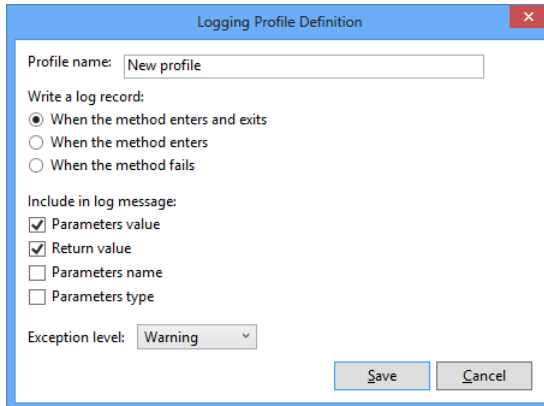


3. The first page of the wizard is the logging profile selection dialogue. In this dialogue you can select one of the predefined profiles, edit an existing profile or create a new one. For this example click on the **"New logging profile..."** link to create a new logging profile.



22. <https://visualstudiogallery.msdn.microsoft.com/a058d5d3-e654-43f8-a308-c3bdfdd0be4a>

4. Provide a name for your newly created logging profile in the opened profile customization dialogue.



Logging Profile Definition

Profile name:

Write a log record:

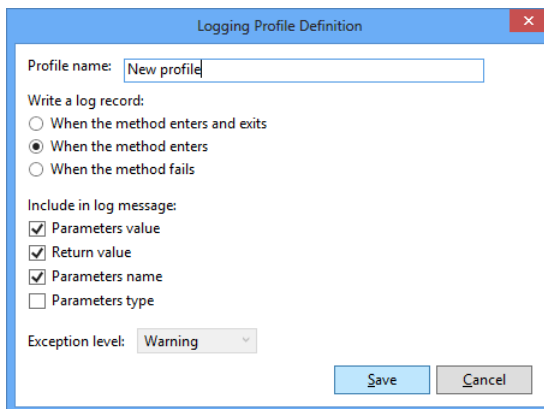
- When the method enters and exits
- When the method enters
- When the method fails

Include in log message:

- Parameters value
- Return value
- Parameters name
- Parameters type

Exception level:

5. Choose when to write a new message to the log. You can select from one of these options: when entering and exiting the method, only when entering the method, only when exception is thrown inside the method.
6. Choose what information to include in each log message. The available options are: parameter values, names, and types, and return value of the method.
7. Finally, select the logging level to use for the exception log messages.
8. When you're done with customizing your new logging profile, click **Save** button.



Logging Profile Definition

Profile name:

Write a log record:

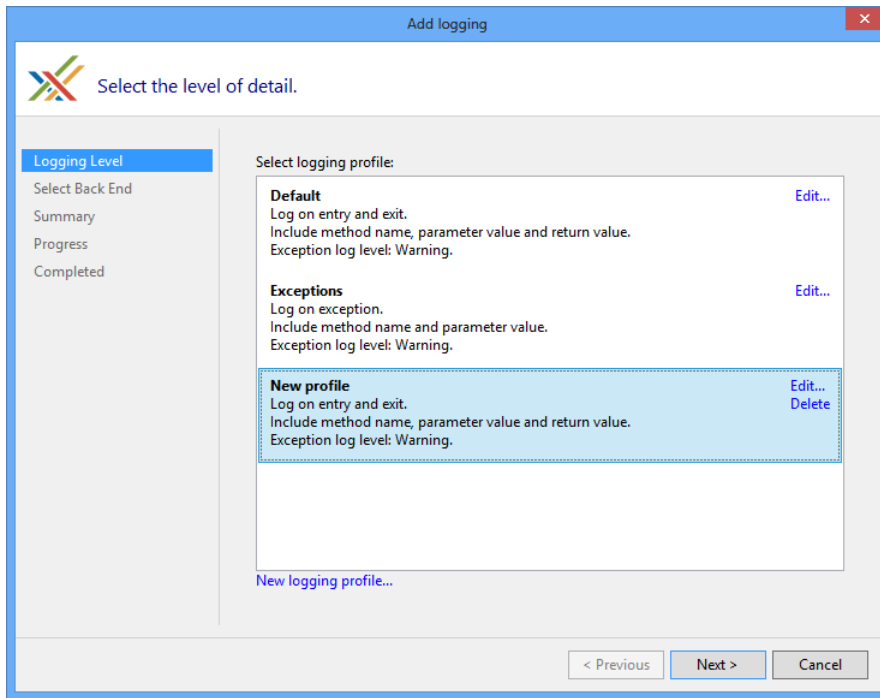
- When the method enters and exits
- When the method enters
- When the method fails

Include in log message:

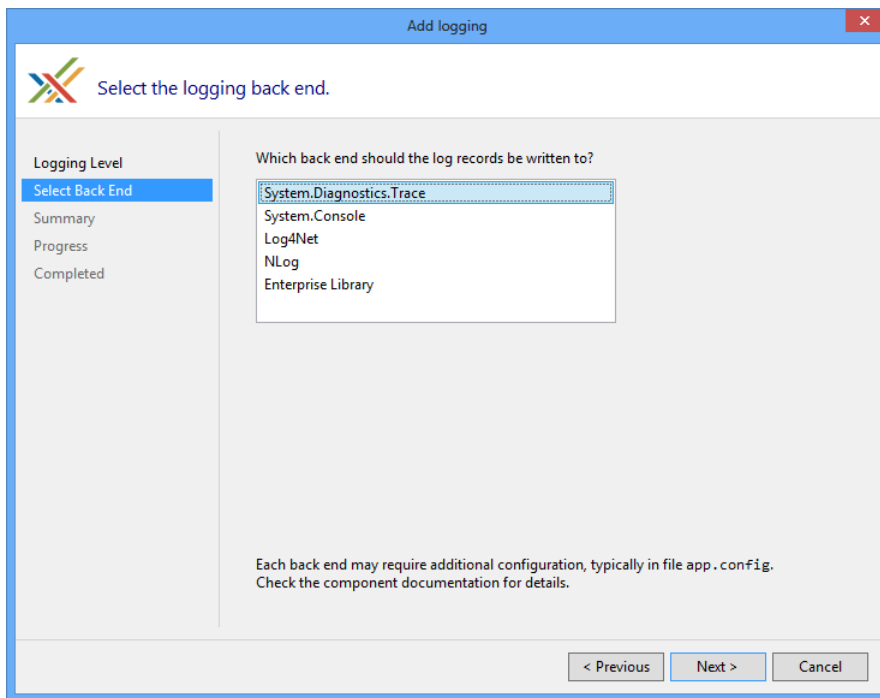
- Parameters value
- Return value
- Parameters name
- Parameters type

Exception level:

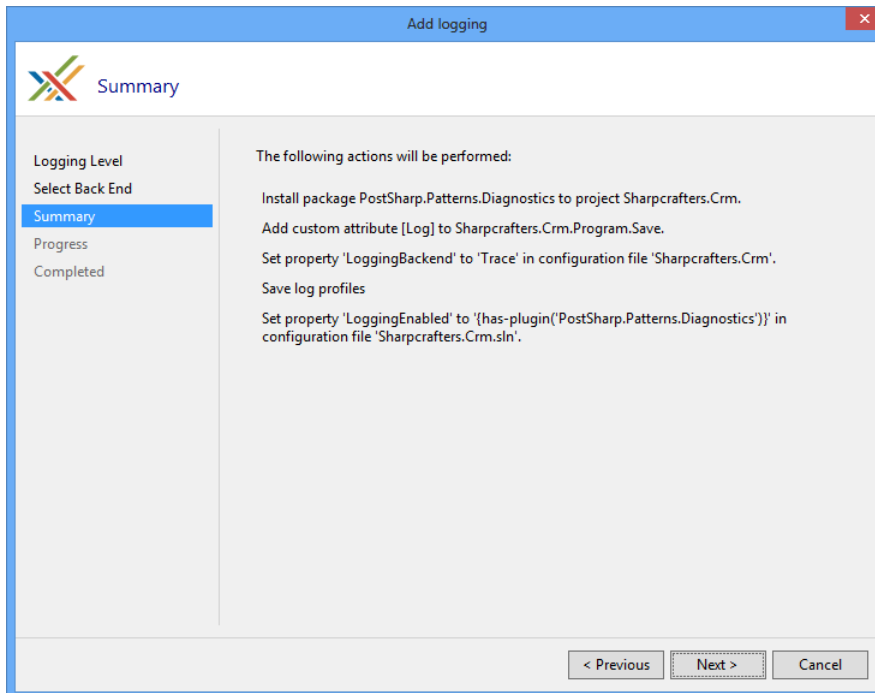
- Back in the profile selection dialogue select your profile and click **Next**.



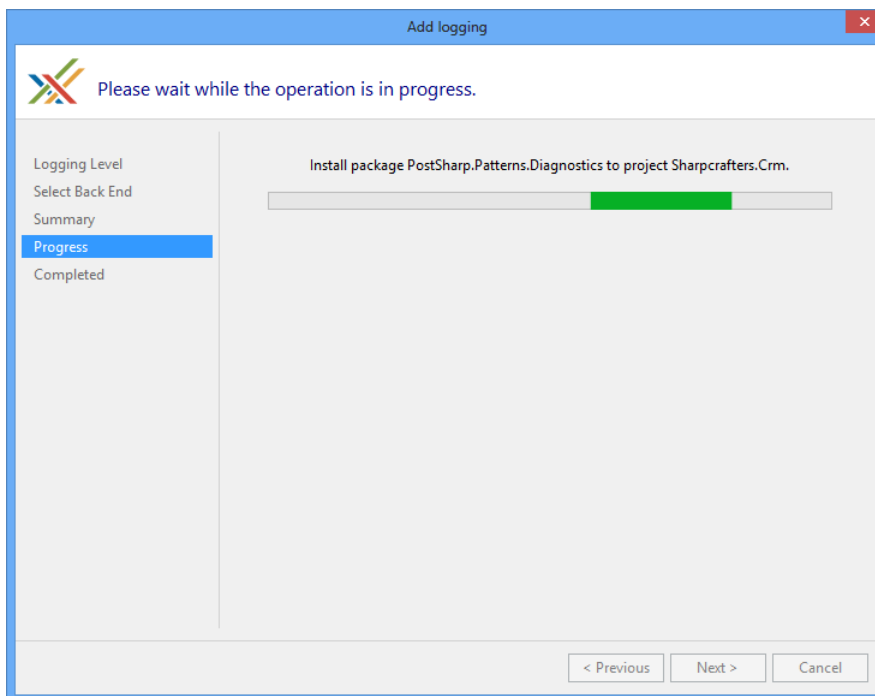
- The next page of the wizard gives you the opportunity to choose the logging back-end that you want to use. For this example select "System.Diagnostics.Trace" and click **Next**.



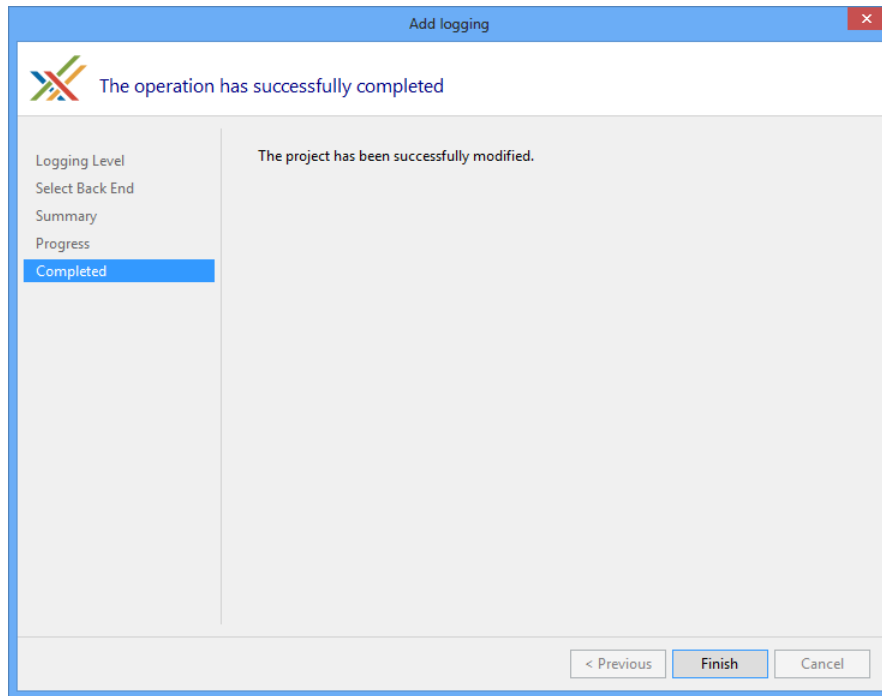
- The summary page gives you the opportunity to review the selections that you have made. If you notice that the configuration is not what you wanted you can click the **Previous** button and adjust your selections. If the configuration meets your needs click **Next**.



- The progress page shows a progress bar and summary of what actions PostSharp is taking to add the selected logging configuration to your codebase. It's at this point that PostSharp and the logging pattern library will be downloaded from NuGet and added as references to your codebase.



- Once the download, installation and configuration of PostSharp and the logging pattern library has finished you can close the wizard and look at the changes that were made to your codebase.



- First of all, the code window with **SolutionName.pssln** file will be shown. This file stores all your custom logging profiles and other solution-level information.

```
<?xmlversion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"xmlns:d="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics;
  <PropertyName="LoggingEnabled"Value="{has-plugin('PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics')}"Deferred="true"/>
  <d:LoggingProfilesp:Condition="{ $LoggingEnabled}">
    <d:LoggingProfileName="New profile"OnEntryOptions="IncludeParameterValue | IncludeReturnValue | IncludeThisArgument"/>
  </d:LoggingProfiles>
</Project>
```

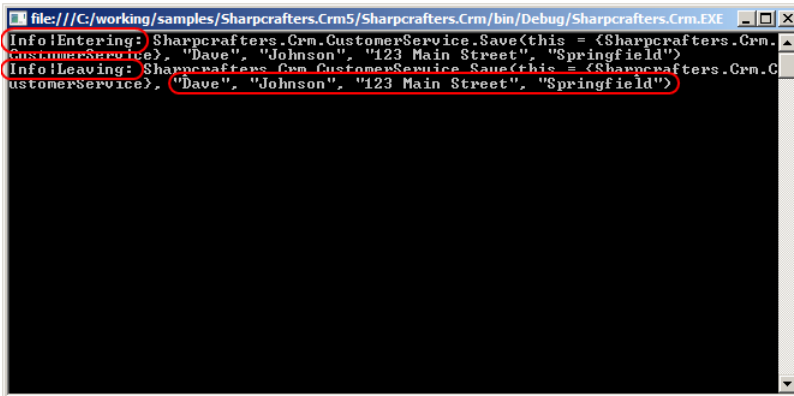
- You'll also notice that the code you added the logging to has changed slightly. PostSharp has added a `LogAttribute` attribute to the method and the attribute has the name of your logging profile specified as an argument.

```
[Log( "New profile" )]
public void Save(string firstName, string lastName, string streetAddress, string city)
{
    var customerRepository = new CustomerRepository();
    customerRepository.Save(firstName, lastName, streetAddress, city);
}
```

NOTE

This example has added a single attribute to one method. If you plan on adding this logging to many different locations in your codebase you will want to read about using the `MulticastAttribute`: [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations on page 187](#).

16. If you were to run this method the trace logging that you added would output a log message according to the options you've specified in your logging profile.



```
file:///C:/working/samples/Sharpcrafters.Crm5/Sharpcrafters.Crm/bin/Debug/Sharpcrafters.Crm.EXE
Info!Entering: Sharpcrafters.Crm.CustomerService.Save(this = {Sharpcrafters.Crm.
CustomerService}, "Dave", "Johnson", "123 Main Street", "Springfield")
Info!Leaving: Sharpcrafters.Crm.CustomerService.Save(this = {Sharpcrafters.Crm.C
ustomerService}, "Dave", "Johnson", "123 Main Street", "Springfield")
```

Now that you have logging added to the Save method you are able to change the method's name as well as add and remove parameters with the confidence that your log entries will be kept in sync with each of those changes. In combination with attribute multicasting (the article [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations on page 187](#)), adding logging to your codebase and maintaining it becomes a very easy task.

13.3. Walkthrough: Tracing Parameter Values Upon Exception

When you're working with your codebase it's common to need to add logging of exceptions either as a non-functional requirement or simply to assist during the development process. In either situation you will want to include information about the parameters that were passed to the method where the exception is being caught and logged. This can be a tedious and brittle process. As you work and refactor methods the order and types of parameters may change, parameters may be added and some maybe removed. Along with performing these refactorings you have to remember to update the exception logging messages to keep them in sync. This is something that is easy to forget and once forgotten the output of the logging is much less useful.

PostSharp offers a solution to all of these problems. The logging pattern library allows you to configure where logging should be performed and the pattern library takes over the task of keeping your log entries in sync as you add, remove and refactor your codebase. Let's take a look at how you can add trace logging of exceptions that includes the parameter values that were passed to the method that is being logged.

NOTE

This procedure requires [PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio](#)²³ to be installed on your machine. You can however achieve the same results by editing the code and the project manually.

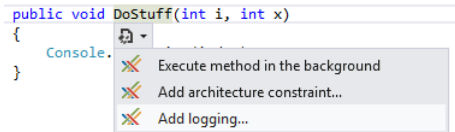
23. <https://visualstudiogallery.msdn.microsoft.com/a058d5d3-e654-43f8-a308-c3bdfdd0be4a>

To add trace logging of exceptions that includes the parameter values:

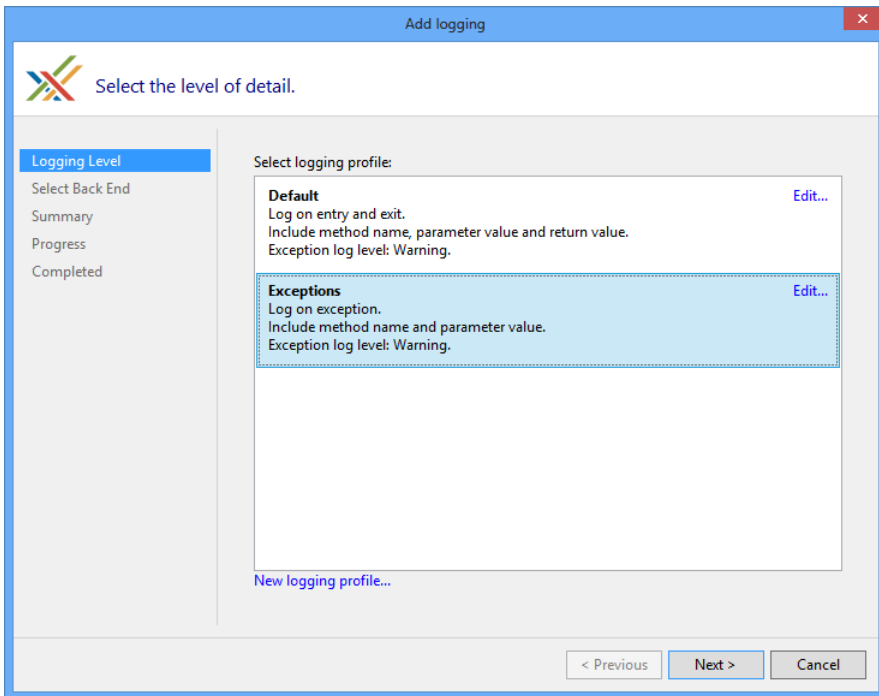
1. Let's add logging to our DoStuff method.

```
public void DoStuff(int i, int x)
{
    Console.WriteLine(i/x);
}
```

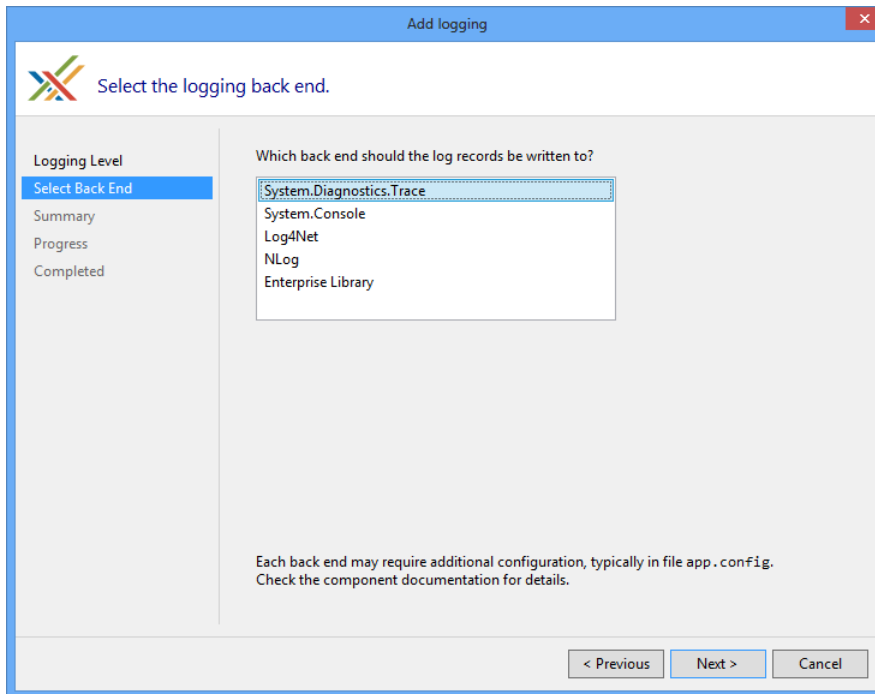
2. Put the caret on the DoStuff method name and expand the Smart Tag. From the list select "Add logging".



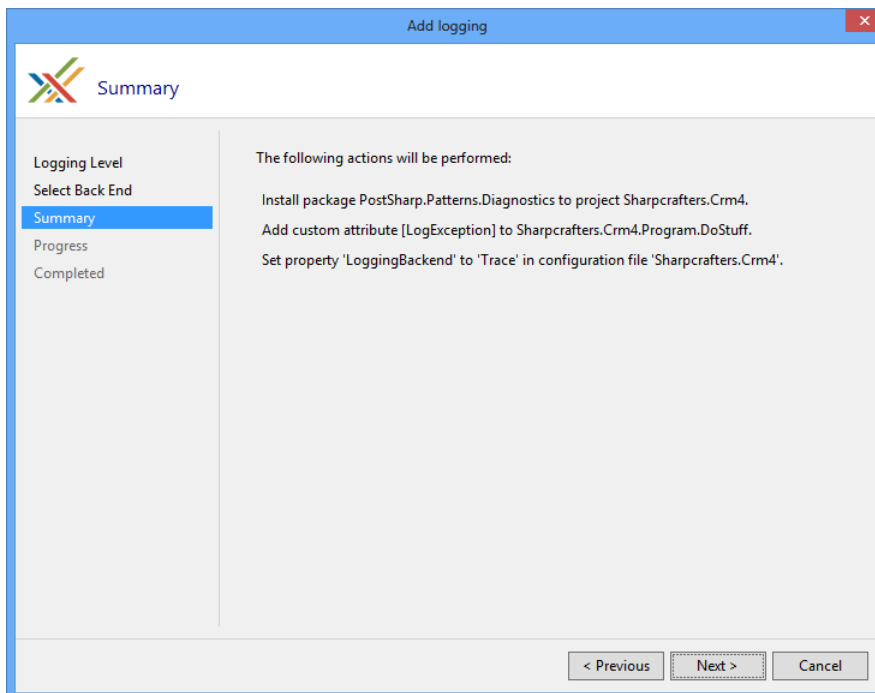
3. The first option that you need to select is the Logging Profile. Here we want to choose the "Exceptions" profile and accept its default values. Click **Next**.



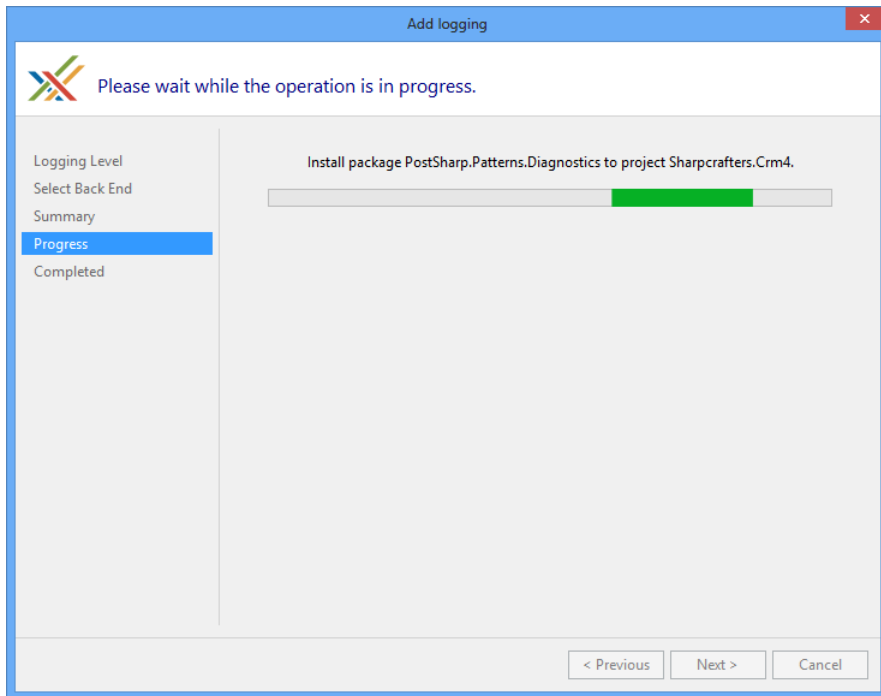
- The next page of the wizard gives you the opportunity to choose the logging back-end that you want to use. For this example select "System.Diagnostics.Trace" and click **Next**.



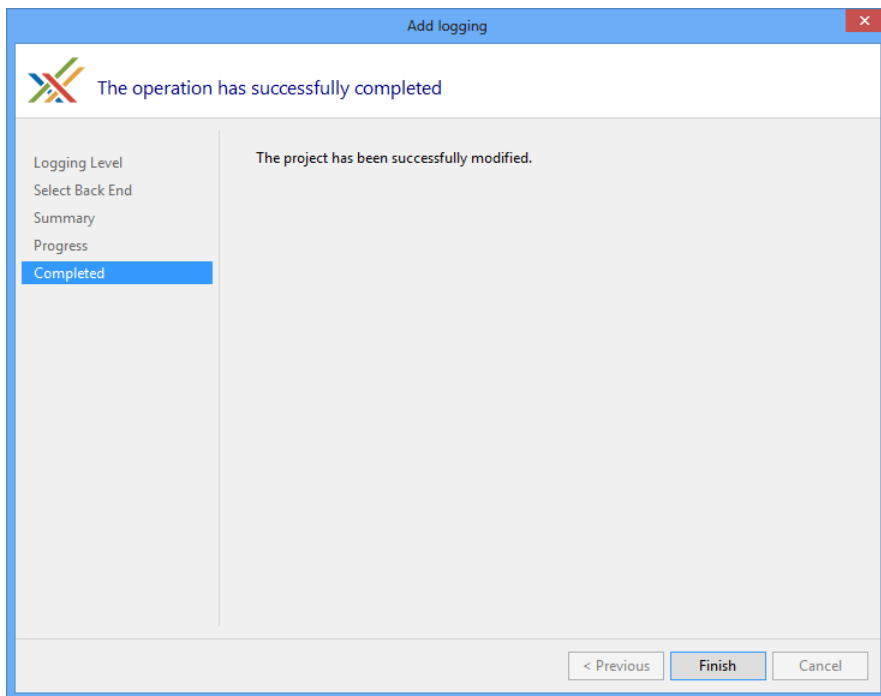
- The summary page gives you the opportunity to review the selections that you have made. If you notice that the configuration is not what you wanted you can click the **Previous** button and adjust your selections. If the configuration meets your needs click **Next**.



- The progress page shows a progress bar and summary of what actions PostSharp is taking to add the selected logging configuration to your codebase. It's at this point that PostSharp and the logging pattern library will be downloaded from Nuget and added as references to your codebase.



- Once the download, installation and configuration of PostSharp and the logging pattern library has finished you can close the wizard and look at the changes that were made to your codebase.



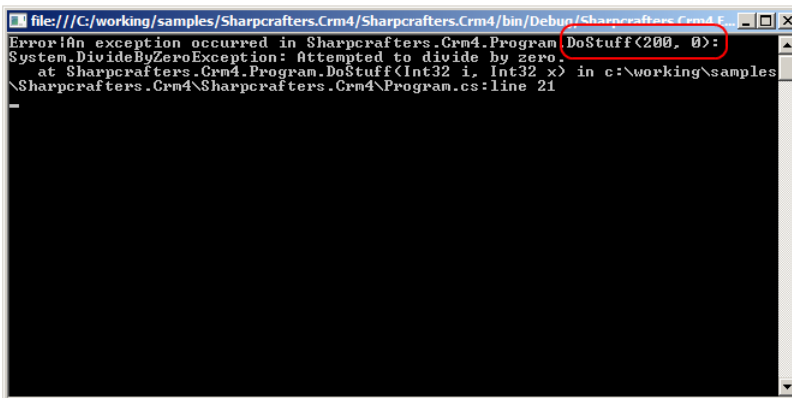
8. You'll notice that the code you added the logging to has changed slightly - PostSharp has added a `LogExceptionAttribute` attribute to the method.

```
[LogException]
public void DoStuff(int i, int x)
{
    Console.WriteLine(i/x);
}
```

NOTE

This example has added a single attribute to one method. If you plan on adding this logging to many different locations in your codebase you will want to read about using attribute multicasting. See [Adding Aspects Declaratively Using Attributes on page 186](#).

9. If you were to run this method from a console application and pass in a value of zero for the second parameter it would generate a `DivideByZeroException`. The trace logging that you added would output a log message plus the exception's stack trace to the console. Note that the parameter values are automatically included in the log message.



10. For those of you interested in what is happening behind the scenes we can decompile the method and observe what PostSharp has done to our codebase. You'll notice two significant things when you look at the decompiled code. First, PostSharp added in a `try...catch` block that wraps the entirety of the original methods contents. The second thing you'll notice is that the catch block logs the exception and re-throws it. This ensures that your code execution paths will remain unchanged after you've added the logging.

```
public static void DoStuff(int i, int x)
{
    try
    {
        Console.WriteLine(i / x);
    }
    catch (Exception arg)
    {
        <>__LoggingImplementationDetails.WriteLine("Error|An exception occurred in Sharpcrafters.Crm4.Program.DoStuff({0}, {1}):\\n{2}", i, x, arg);
        throw;
    }
}
```

Now that you have logging added to the `DoStuff` method you are able to change the method's name as well as add and remove parameters with the confidence that your log entries will be kept in sync with each of those changes. In combination with the attribute multicasting (See the section [Adding Aspects Declaratively Using Attributes on page 186](#)), adding logging to your codebase and maintaining it becomes a very easy task.

13.4. Walkthrough: Changing the Logging Back-End

This section describes how to change the logging back-end for a project or solution.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Changing the logging back-end when using NuGet on page 182](#)
- [Changing the logging back-end when not using NuGet on page 183](#)

The following table shows identifiers of the back-ends and the NuGet packages in which they are implemented. You will need this table in both scenarios.

Name	NuGet Package	Description
Console	<code>PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics</code>	Logging using <code>Console.WriteLine(String)</code>
Trace	<code>PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics</code>	Logging using Trace
Log4Net	<code>PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics.Log4Net</code>	Apache log4net ²⁴
NLog	<code>PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics.NLog</code>	NLog Project ²⁵
EnterpriseLibrary	<code>PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics.EnterpriseLibrary</code>	Logging Application Block ²⁶

Changing the logging back-end when using NuGet

When using the NuGet distribution of PostSharp, the Diagnostics Pattern Library comes as the `PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics` NuGet package, which contains common functionality and implements some of the back-ends. Other back-ends may require additional NuGet packages. The details are provided in the table above.

To change the logging back-end when using NuGet:

1. Remove the NuGet package containing the previous back-end implementation, if any.

NOTE

The `PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics` NuGet package should always remain installed as long as you use any of the logging back-ends. This package contains the common logging functionality.

2. Remove the libraries NuGet package of the previous back-end if any and if you'll not use the libraries in your project outside of PostSharp.
3. Add the NuGet package containing the new back-end implementation, if the implementation is not contained in the `PostSharp.Patterns.Diagnostics` NuGet package already.

NOTE

If any other NuGet package is required by the back-end, it will be installed automatically by the NuGet Package Manager.

24. <https://logging.apache.org/log4net/>

25. <http://nlog-project.org/>

26. [https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ff664569\(v=pandp.50\).aspx](https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ff664569(v=pandp.50).aspx)

4. Set the `LoggingBackend` property in the PostSharp project file (*MyProject.psproj*) to the name of the new logging back-end. Below is an example of PostSharp project file with the `LoggingBackend` set to "Trace".

```
<?xmlversion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"OverridesDefaultProject="false">
  <PropertyName="LoggingBackend"Value="Trace"/>
</Project>
```

Changing the logging back-end when not using NuGet

When using a non-NuGet distribution of PostSharp, all the PostSharp plug-ins are contained in the distribution.

To change the logging back-end when not using NuGet:

1. If you'll not use the back-end in your project outside of PostSharp, you can remove the assembly references and configuration from your project.
2. Add the relevant assembly references and configuration of the new backend to your project. See the documentation of the back-end. Links are provided in the table above.
3. Set the `LoggingBackend` property in the PostSharp project file (*MyProject.psproj*) to the name of the new logging back-end. Below is an example of PostSharp project file with the `LoggingBackend` set to "Trace".

```
<?xmlversion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"OverridesDefaultProject="false">
  <PropertyName="LoggingBackend"Value="Trace"/>
</Project>
```


CHAPTER 14

Adding Aspects to Code

An aspect has no effect until it is applied to some element of code. PostSharp provides multiple ways to add aspects to your code.

Applying Aspects to Multiple Elements of Code Declaratively

In many situations, you want to apply the same aspect to many elements of code. For instance, you may need to add tracing or performance monitoring to all public methods of a namespace. Since there may be hundreds of affected methods, you don't want to add a custom attribute to all of them.

Thanks to an extension of semantics of custom attributes named *"multicast custom attribute"* (`MulticastAttribute`), it is easy to apply an aspect to multiple elements of code using a single line of code.

For details, see [Adding Aspects Declaratively Using Attributes on page 186](#) and [Understanding Aspect Inheritance on page 200](#).

Applying Aspects to Multiple Elements of Code Imperatively

If declarative features of `MulticastAttribute` are not sufficient for your case, you can select elements of code imperatively. For instance, you can develop complex filters based on `System.Reflection` or read information from an XML file.

There are two ways you can implement imperative selection aspect targets:

Filtering Out Using `CompileTimeValidate`

To filter out elements of codes that have been selected by `MulticastAttribute`, you can implement the method `CompileTimeValidate(Object)` of your aspect and silently return `false` if the candidate target is not appropriate. .

For instance, the following aspect will apply only on security-critical methods.

```
using System;
using System.Reflection;
using PostSharp.Aspects;
using PostSharp.Serialization;

namespace Samples2
{
    [PSerializable]
    public sealed class TraceSecurityCriticalAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
    {
        // Select only security-critical methods.
        public override bool CompileTimeValidate(MethodBase method)
        {
            return method.IsSecurityCritical;
        }

        public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
        {
            Console.WriteLine("On Entry");
        }
    }
}
```

See [Validating Aspect Usage on page 307](#) for details.

Adding Aspect Instances Using IAspectProvider

If you have to implement more complex rules to select the target of aspects, you can create another aspect that will do nothing else than adding aspect instances to your code. This aspect must implement the interface `IAspectProvider` and will typically derive from `AssemblyLevelAspect` or `TypeLevelAspect`.

TIP

Use `ReflectionSearch` to perform complex queries over `System.Reflection`.

14.1. Adding Aspects Declaratively Using Attributes

In .NET, you normally need to write one line of code for any application of a target attribute. If a custom attribute applies to all types of a namespace, you have to manually add the custom attribute to every single type.

By contrast, multicast custom attributes allow you to apply a custom attribute on multiple declarations from a single line of code by using wildcards or regular expressions, or by filtering on some attributes. It makes it easy to apply an aspect to, say, all public static methods of a namespace, with a single line of code.

Multicast attributes can be inherited: you can put it on an interface and ask it to apply to all classes implementing this interface. Attribute inheritance also works for classes, virtual or interface methods, and parameters of virtual or interface methods.

Custom attributes supporting multicasting needs to be derived from `MulticastAttribute`. All PostSharp aspects and constraints are derived from this class.

NOTE

Multicasting of custom attribute is a feature of PostSharp. If you do not transform your assembly using PostSharp, multicast attributes will behave as plain old custom attributes.

NOTE

This documentation often refers to this as “*aspect*” multicasting and inheritance. This is not totally accurate. Although this feature has been developed to support aspects, you can use it for your own custom attributes, even if they are not aspects. To use multicasting and inheritance for custom attributes that are not aspects, simply derive the attribute class from `MulticastAttribute` instead of `Attribute`.

Attribute multicasting supports the following scenarios:

- [Adding Aspects to a Single Declaration on page 187](#)
- [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations on page 187](#)
- [Adding Aspects to Derived Classes and Methods on page 189](#)
- [Overriding and Removing Aspect Instances on page 194](#)
- [Reflecting Aspect Instances at Runtime on page 197](#)

For a conceptual overview of this feature, see:

- [Understanding Attribute Multicasting on page 198](#)

- [Understanding Aspect Inheritance on page 200](#)

14.1.1. Adding Aspects to a Single Declaration

Aspects in PostSharp are plain custom attributes. You can apply them to any element of code as usually. In the following example, the Trace aspect is applied to two methods.

```
public class CustomerService
{
    [Trace]
    public Custom GetCustomer( int customerId )
    {
        // Details skipped.
    }

    [Trace]
    public void MergeCustomers( Customer customer1, Customer customer2 );
    {
        // Details skipped.
    }
}
```

14.1.2. Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations

Once have written an aspect we have to apply it to the application code so that it will be used. There are a number of ways to do this so let's take a look at one of them: custom attribute multicasting. Other ways include XML Multicasting (see the section [Adding Aspects Using XML on page 202](#)) and dynamic aspect providers (see more in the section [Adding Aspects Programmatically using IAspectProvider on page 203](#)).

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Applying to all members of a class on page 187](#)
- [Applying an aspect to all types in a namespace on page 187](#)
- [Excluding an aspect from some members on page 188](#)
- [Filtering by class visibility on page 188](#)
- [Filtering by method modifiers on page 189](#)
- [Programmatic filtering on page 189](#)

Applying to all members of a class

When we are trying to apply a method level aspect we can place an attribute to each of the methods.

```
[OurLoggingAspect]
public class CustomerServices
```

As our codebase grows this approach becomes tedious. We need to remember to add the attribute to all of the methods on the class. If you have hundreds of classes, you may have thousands of methods you need to manually add the aspect attribute to. It's an unsustainable proposition. Thankfully, there is a way to make this easier. Instead of applying your aspect on each method you can add that attribute to the class and PostSharp will ensure that the aspect is applied to all of the methods on that class.

Applying an aspect to all types in a namespace

Even though we don't have to apply an aspect to all methods in all classes in our application, adding the aspect attribute to every class could still be an overwhelming task. If we want to apply our aspect in a broad stroke we can make use of PostSharp's `MulticastAttribute`.

The `MulticastAttribute` is a special attribute that will apply other attributes throughout your codebase. Here's how we would use it.

1. Open the `AssemblyInfo.cs`, or create a new file `GlobalAspects.cs` if you prefer to keep things separate (the name of this file does not matter).
2. Add an `[assembly:]` attribute that references the aspect you want applied.
3. Add the `AttributeTargetTypes` property to the aspect's constructor and define the namespace that you would like the aspect applied to.

```
[assembly: OurLoggingAspect(AttributeTargetTypes="OurCompany.OurApplication.Controllers.*")]
```

This one line of code is the equivalent of adding the aspect attribute to every class in the desired namespace.

NOTE

When setting the `AttributeTargetTypes` you can use wildcards (*) to indicate that all sub-namespaces should have the aspect applied to them. It is also possible to indicate the targets of the aspect using `regex`. Add `"regex:"` as a prefix to the pattern you wish to use for matching.

Excluding an aspect from some members

Multicasting an attribute can apply the aspect with a very broad brush. It is possible to use `AttributeExclude` to restrict where the aspect is attached.

```
[assembly: OurLoggingAspect(AttributeTargetTypes="OurCompany.OurApplication.Controllers.*", AttributePriority = 1)]  
[assembly: OurLoggingAspect(AttributeTargetMembers="Dispose", AttributeExclude = true, AttributePriority = 2)]
```

In the example above, the first multicast line indicates that the `OurLoggingAspect` should be attached to all methods in the `Controllers` namespace. The second multicast line indicates that the `OurLoggingAspect` should not be applied to any method named `Dispose`.

NOTE

Notice the `AttributePriority` property that is set in both of the multicast lines. Since there is no guarantee that the compiler will apply the attributes in the order you have specified in the code, it is necessary to declare an order to ensure processing is completed as desired.

In this case, the `OurLoggingAspect` will be applied to all methods in the `Controllers` namespace first. After that is completed, the second multicast of `OurLoggingAspect` is performed which then excludes the aspect from methods named `Dispose`.

See [Overriding and Removing Aspect Instances on page 194](#) for more details about excluding and overriding aspects.

Filtering by class visibility

Now that you've been able to apply our aspect to all classes in a namespace and its sub-namespaces, you may be faced with the need to restrict that broad stroke. For example, you may want to apply your aspect only to classes defined as being public.

1. Add the `AttributeTargetTypeAttributes` property to the `MulticastAttribute`'s constructor.

2. Set the `AttributeTargetTypeAttributes` value to `Public`.

```
[assembly: OurLoggingAspect(AttributeTargetTypes="OurCompany.OurApplication.Controllers.*",
    AttributeTargetTypeAttributes = MulticastAttributes.Public)]
```

By combining `AttributeTargetTypeAttributes` values you are able to create many combinations that are appropriate for your needs.

NOTE

When specifying attributes of target members or types, do not forget to provide all categories of flags, not only the category on which you want to put a restriction.

Filtering by method modifiers

Filtering at a class level may not be granular enough for your needs. Aspects can be attached at the method level and you will want to control filtering on these aspects as well. Let's look at an example of how to apply aspects only to methods marked as virtual.

1. Add the `AttributeTargetTypeAttributes` property to the `MulticastAttribute`'s constructor.
2. Set the `AttributeTargetTypeAttributes` value to `VirtualVirtual`.

```
[assembly: OurLoggingAspect(AttributeTargetTypes="OurCompany.OurApplication.Controllers.*", AttributeTargetMember
```

Using this technique you can apply a method level aspect, or stop it from being applied, based on the existence or non-existence of things like the `static`, `abstract`, and `virtual` keywords.

Programmatic filtering

There are situations where you will want to filter in a way that isn't based on class or method declarations. You may want to apply an aspect only if a class inherits from a specific class or implements a certain interface. There needs to be a way for you to accomplish this.

The easiest way is to override the `CompileTimeValidate(Object)` method of your aspect class, where you can perform your custom filtering. This is the opt-out approach. Have the `CompileTimeValidate(Object)` method return `false` without emitting any error, and the candidate target will be ignored. See the section [Validating Aspect Usage on page 307](#) for details.

The second approach is opt-in. See the section [Adding Aspects Programmatically using IAspectProvider on page 203](#) for details.

14.1.3. Adding Aspects to Derived Classes and Methods

By default, aspects apply to the class or class member which your attribute has been applied to. However, PostSharp provides the ability to specify aspect inheritance which can allow your attributes to be inherited in derived classes. This feature, named *aspect inheritance* can be specified on types, methods, and parameters, but not on properties or events.

NOTE

PostSharp Professional or higher edition is required for aspect inheritance.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Applying aspects to derived types on page 190](#)
- [Setting inheritance on a per-usage basis on page 190](#)
- [Applying aspects to overridden methods on page 191](#)
- [Applying aspects to new methods of derived types on page 193](#)

Applying aspects to derived types

One way to implement aspect inheritance is to add a `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute` custom attribute to your aspect class. Aspects that apply to types are typically derived from `TypeLevelAspect` or `InstanceLevelAspect`.

The benefit of this approach is that the aspect will be automatically applied to all derived classes, eliminating the need to manually setup attributes in the derived classes. Moreover, this logic lives in one place.

The following steps describe how to enable aspect inheritance on existing aspect, derived from `TypeLevelAspect`, which applies a `DataContractAttribute` attribute to the base and all derived classes, and a `DataMemberAttribute` attribute to all properties of the base class and those of derived classes:

How to enable aspect inheritance on existing aspect:

1. Create a `TypeLevelAspect` which implements `IAAspectProvider`.
2. Decorate `AutoDataContractAttribute` with the `MulticastAttribute`, and set the `Inheritance` to `Strict`. Note that `MulticastInheritance.Strict` and `MulticastInheritance.Multicast` have the same effect when applied to type-level aspects.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
[PSerializable]
public sealed class AutoDataContractAttribute : TypeLevelAspect, IAAspectProvider
{
    // Details skipped.
}
```

3. Decorate your base class with `AutoDataContractAttribute`. The following snippet shows a base customer class and a derived customer class:

```
[AutoDataContractAttribute]
class Document
{
    public string Title { get; set; }
    public string Author { get; set; }
    public DateTime PublishedOn { get; set; }
}

class MultiPageArticle : Document
{
    public List<ArticlePage> Pages { get; set; }
}
```

When the attribute is applied to the base class, the `DataContractAttribute` and `DataMemberAttribute` attributes will be applied at compile time to both classes. If other derived classes were added, then these would be decorated automatically as well.

Setting inheritance on a per-usage basis

Specifying targets and attribute inheritance can also be done on a per-usage basis rather than hard-coding it into the custom attribute. In the following snippet, we've removed the `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute` attribute from `AutoDataContractAttribute`:

```
// [MulticastAttributeUsage(Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
[PSerializable]
```

```
public sealed class AutoDataContractAttribute : TypeLevelAspect, IAspectProvider
{
    // Details skipped.
}
```

Now the inheritance mode can be specified directly on the `AutoDataContractAttribute` instance by setting the `AttributeInheritance` property as shown here:

```
[TraceMethodAttribute(AttributeInheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
class Document
{
    // Details skipped.
}
```

Applying aspects to overridden methods

The following example shows a custom attribute which when applied to a class, writes a message to the console window whenever a method enters and exits:

```
[PSerializable]
public sealed class TraceMethodAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(string.Format("Entering {0}.{1}.", args.Method.DeclaringType.Name, args.Method.Name));
    }

    public override void OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(string.Format("Leaving {0}.{1}.", args.Method.DeclaringType.Name, args.Method.Name));
    }
}
```

Specifying inheritance is simply a matter of adding the `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute` attribute and specifying the inheritance type, or to set the `AttributeInheritance` property on the custom attribute usage.

In the snippet below, we have added the `TraceMethod` aspect to a virtual method and used the `AttributeInheritance` property to require the aspect to be automatically applied to all overriding methods:

```
class Document
{
    // Details skipped.

    // This method will be traced.
    [TraceMethodAttribute(AttributeInheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
    public virtual void RenderHtml(StringBuilder html)
    {
        html.AppendLine( this.Title );
        html.AppendLine( this.Author );
    }
}

class MultiPageArticle: Document
{
    // This method will be traced.
    public override void RenderHtml(StringBuilder html)
    {
        base.RenderHtml(html);
        foreach ( ArticlePage page in this.Pages )
        {
            page.RenderHtml( html );
        }
    }

    // This method will NOT be traced.
    public void RenderHtmlPage(StringBuilder html, int pageIndex )
```

```

    {
        html.AppendFormat ( "{0}, page {1}", this.Title, pageIndex+1 );
        html.AppendLine();
        html.AppendLine( this.Author );
    }
}

```

In this example, `TraceMethodAttribute` will output entry and exit messages for `Document.RenderHtml` method and `MultiPageArticle.RenderHtml` method as shown here:

```

Entering MultiPageArticle.RenderHtml
Entering Document.RenderHtml
Leaving Document.RenderHtml
Leaving MultiPageArticle.RenderHtml

```

NOTE

Aspect inheritance works with virtual, abstract and interface methods and their parameters.

We would get the similar result by adding the `TraceMethod` attribute to the `Document` class. Indeed, by virtue of attribute multicasting (see section [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations on page 187](#) for more details), adding a method-level attribute to a class implicitly adds it to all method of this class.

```

[TraceMethodAttribute(AttributeInheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
class Document
{
    // All property getters and setters will be traced.
    public string Title { get; set; }
    public string Author { get; set; }
    public DateTime PublishedOn { get; set; }

    // This method will be traced.
    public virtual void RenderHtml(StringBuilder html)
    {
        html.AppendLine( this.Title );
        html.AppendLine( this.Author );
    }
}

class MultiPageArticle: Document
{
    // Property getters and setters will NOT be traced.
    public List<ArticlePage> Pages { get; set; }

    // This method will be traced.
    public override void RenderHtml(StringBuilder html)
    {
        base.RenderHtml(html);
        foreach ( ArticlePage page in this.Pages )
        {
            page.RenderHtml( html );
        }
    }

    // This method will NOT be traced.
    public void RenderHtmlPage(StringBuilder html, int pageIndex )
    {
        html.AppendFormat ( "{0}, page {1}", this.Title, pageIndex+1 );
        html.AppendLine();
        html.AppendLine( this.Author );
    }
}

```



```
}
```

However, by adding the `TraceMethod` aspect to all methods of the `Document` type, we added it to property getters and setters, influencing the output:

```
Entering MultiPageArcticle.RenderHtml
Entering Document.RenderHtml
Entering Document.get_Title
Leaving Document.get_Title
Entering Document.get_Author
Leaving Document.get_Author
Leaving Document.RenderHtml
Leaving MultiPageArcticle.RenderHtml
```

Applying aspects to new methods of derived types

In the previous section the `TraceMethod` attribute used *Strict inheritance* which means that if the base class is decorated with the attribute, it will only be applied to methods which are declared in the base class and overridden in the derived class.

By changing the inheritance mode to `Multicast`, we specify that the aspect should be also be applied to new methods of the derived class, i.e. not only methods that are overridden from the base class.

In the following snippet we've changed inheritance from `Strict` to `Multicast`:

```
[TraceMethodAttribute(AttributeInheritance = MulticastInheritance.Multicast)]
class Document
{
    // All property getters and setters will be traced.
    public string Title { get; set; }
    public string Author { get; set; }
    public DateTime PublishedOn { get; set; }

    // This method will be traced.
    public virtual void RenderHtml(StringBuilder html)
    {
        html.AppendLine( this.Title );
        html.AppendLine( this.Author );
    }
}

class MultiPageArticle: Document
{
    // Property getters and setters will ALSO be traced.
    public List<ArticlePage> Pages { get; set; }

    // This method will be traced.
    public override void RenderHtml(StringBuilder html)
    {
        base.RenderHtml(html);
        foreach ( ArticlePage page in this.Pages )
        {
            page.RenderHtml( html );
        }
    }

    // This method will ALSO be traced.
    public void RenderHtmlPage(StringBuilder html, int pageIndex )
    {
        html.AppendFormat ( "{0}, page {1}", this.Title, pageIndex+1 );
        html.AppendLine();
        html.AppendLine( this.Author );
    }
}
}
```

With *Strict inheritance* in use, `TraceMethodAttribute` applied to `Document` was not applied to the `RenderHtmlPage` method and the `Pages` property. In other words, as the name suggests, *Strict inheritance* is strictly applying the attribute on base members and any derived members which are inherited. However, with *Multicast inheritance*, the aspect is also applied to the `RenderHtmlPage` method and the `Pages` property.

Strict inheritance evaluates multicasting and then inheritance, but *Multicast inheritance* evaluates inheritance and then multicasting.

14.1.4. Overriding and Removing Aspect Instances

Having multiple instances of the same aspect on the same element of code is sometimes a desired behavior. With multicasting custom attributes (`MulticastAttribute`), it is easy to end up with that situation. Indeed, many multicasting paths can lead to the same target.

However, most of the time, a different behavior is preferred. We could define a method-level aspect on the type (this aspect would apply to all methods) and override (or even exclude) the aspect on a specific method.

The multicasting engine has both the ability to apply multiple aspect instances on the same target, and the ability to replace or remove custom attributes.

Understanding the Multicasting Algorithm

Before going ahead, it is important to understand the multicasting algorithm. The algorithm relies on a notion of *order of processing* of aspect instances.

IMPORTANT NOTE

This section covers how PostSharp handles multiple instances of the **same aspect type** for the sole purpose of computing how aspect instances should be overridden or removed. See [Coping with Several Aspects on the Same Target on page 321](#) to understand how to cope with multiple instances of different aspects.

The following rules apply:

1. Aspect instances defined on a container (for instance a type) have always precedence over instances defined on an item of that container (for instance a method). Elements of code are processed in the following order: assembly, module, type, field, property, event, method, parameter.
2. When multiple aspect instances are defined on the same level, they are sorted by increasing of value of the `AttributePriority`.

The algorithm builds a list of aspect instances applied (directly and indirectly) on an element of code, sorts these instances, and processes overrides or removals as described below.

Applying Multiple Instances of the Same Aspect

The property `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute.AllowMultiple` determines whether multiple instances of the same aspect are allowed on an element of code. By default, this property is set to `true` for all aspects.

In the following example, the methods in type `MyClass` are enhanced by one, two and three instances of the `Trace` aspect (see code comments).

```
using System;
using System.Diagnostics;
using PostSharp.Aspects;
using PostSharp.Extensibility;
using PostSharp.Serialization;
```

```

using Samples3;

[assembly: Trace(AttributeTargetTypes = "Samples3.My*", Category = "A")]
[assembly: Trace(AttributeTargetTypes = "Samples3.My*",
    AttributeTargetMemberAttributes = MulticastAttributes.Public, Category = "B")]

namespace Samples3
{
    [Serializable]
    public sealed class TraceAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
    {
        public string Category { get; set; }

        public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
        {
            Trace.WriteLine("Entering " +
                args.Method.DeclaringType.FullName + "." + args.Method.Name, this.Category);
        }
    }

    public class MyClass
    {
        // This method will have 1 Trace aspect with Category set to A.
        private void Method1()
        {
        }

        // This method will have 2 Trace aspects with Category set to A, B
        public void Method2()
        {
        }

        // This method will have 3 Trace aspects with Category set to A, B, C.
        [Trace(Category = "C")]
        public void Method3()
        {
        }
    }
}

```

Overriding an Aspect Instance Manually

You can require an aspect instance to override any previous one by setting the aspect property `AttributeReplace`. This is equivalent to a deletion followed by an insertion (see below).

In the following examples, the first two methods of type `MyClass` are enhanced by aspects applied on assembly level, but these aspects are replaced by a different one on `Method3`.

```

using System;
using System.Diagnostics;
using PostSharp.Aspects;
using PostSharp.Extensibility;
using PostSharp.Serialization;
using Samples5;

[assembly: Trace(AttributeTargetTypes = "Samples5.My*", Category = "A")]
[assembly: Trace(AttributeTargetTypes = "Samples5.My*",
    AttributeTargetMemberAttributes = MulticastAttributes.Public, Category = "B")]

namespace Samples5
{
    [Serializable]
    public sealed class TraceAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
    {
        public string Category { get; set; }

        public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
        {
            Trace.WriteLine("Entering " +

```

Adding Aspects to Code

```
        args.Method.DeclaringType.FullName + "." + args.Method.Name, this.Category);
    }
}

public class MyClass
{
    // This method will have 1 Trace aspect with Category set to A.
    private void Method1()
    {
    }

    // This method will have 2 Trace aspect with Category set to A, B.
    public void Method2()
    {
    }

    // This method will have 1 Trace aspects with Category set to C.
    [Trace(Category = "C", AttributeReplace = true)]
    public void Method3()
    {
    }
}
}
```

Overriding an Aspect Instance Automatically

To cause a new aspect instance to automatically override any previous one, the aspect developer must disallow multiple instances by annotating the aspect class with the custom attribute `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute` and setting the property `AllowMultiple` to `false`.

In the following example, the methods in type `MyClass` are enhanced by a single `Trace` aspect:

```
using System;
using System.Diagnostics;
using PostSharp.Aspects;
using PostSharp.Extensibility;
using PostSharp.Serialization;
using Samples4;

[assembly: Trace(AttributeTargetTypes = "Samples4.My*", AttributePriority = 1, Category = "A")]
[assembly: Trace(AttributeTargetTypes = "Samples4.My*",
    AttributeTargetMemberAttributes = MulticastAttributes.Public, AttributePriority = 2, Category = "B")]

namespace Samples4
{
    [MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Method, AllowMultiple = false)]
    [Serializable]
    public sealed class TraceAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
    {
        public string Category { get; set; }

        public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
        {
            Trace.WriteLine("Entering " +
                args.Method.DeclaringType.FullName + "." + args.Method.Name, this.Category);
        }
    }

    public class MyClass
    {
        // This method will have 1 Trace aspect with Category set to A.
        private void Method1()
        {
        }

        // This method will have 1 Trace aspects with Category set to B.
        public void Method2()
        {
        }
    }
}
```

```

    }

    // This method will have 1 Trace aspects with Category set to C.
    [Trace(Category = "C")]
    public void Method3()
    {
    }
}
}

```

Deleting an Aspect Instance

The `MulticastAttributeAttributeExclude` property removes any previous instance of the same aspect on a target.

This is useful, for instance, when you need to exclude a target from the matching set of a wildcard expression. For instance:

```

[assembly: Configurable( AttributeTypes = "BusinessLayer.*" )]

namespace BusinessLayer
{
    [Configurable( AttributeExclude = true )]
    public static class Helpers
    {
    }
}

```

14.1.5. Reflecting Aspect Instances at Runtime

Attribute multicasting has been primarily designed as a mechanism to add aspects to a program. Most of the time, the custom attribute representing an aspect can be removed after the aspect has been applied.

By default, if you add an aspect to a program and look at the resulting program using a disassembler or `System.Reflection`, you will not find these corresponding custom attributes.

If you need your aspect (or any other multicast attribute) to be reflected by `System.Reflection` or any other tool, you have to set the `MulticastAttributeUsageAttributePersistMetaData` property to `true`.

For instance:

```

[MulticastAttributeUsage( MulticastTargets.Class, PersistMetaData = true )]
public class TagAttribute : MulticastAttribute
{
    public string Tag;
}

```

NOTE

Multicasting of attributes is not limited only to PostSharp aspects. You can multicast any custom attribute in your codebase in the same way as shown here. If a custom attribute is multicast with the `PersistMetaData` property set to `true`, when reflected on the compiled code will look as if you had manually added the custom attribute in all of the locations.

14.1.6. Understanding Attribute Multicasting

This topic contains the following sections:

- Overview of the Multicasting Algorithm
- Filtering Target Elements of Code
- Filtering Properties
- Overriding Filtering Attributes

Overview of the Multicasting Algorithm

Every multicast attribute class must be assigned a set of legitimate targets using the `MulticastAttributeUsage-Attribute` custom attribute, which is the equivalent and complement of `AttributeUsageAttribute` for multicast attributes. Multicast attributes can be applied to types, methods, fields, properties, events, or/or parameters. For instance, a caching aspect targets methods. A field validation aspect targets fields.

When a field-level multicast attribute is applied to a type, the attribute is implicitly applied to all fields of that type. When it is applied on an assembly, it is implicitly applied to all fields of that assembly.

The general rule is: when a multicast attribute is applied on a container, it is implicitly (and recursively) applied to all elements of that container.

The next table illustrates how this rule translates for different kinds of targets.

Directly applied to	Implicitly applied to
Assembly or Module	Types, methods, fields, properties, parameters, and events contained in this assembly or module.
Type	Methods, fields, properties, parameters, and events contained in this type.
Property or Event	Accessors of this property or event.
Method	This method and the parameters of this method.
Field	This field.
Parameter	This parameter.

Filtering Target Elements of Code

Note that the default behavior is maximalistic: we apply the attribute to *all* contained elements. However, PostSharp provides a way to restrict the set of elements to which the attribute is multicast: filtering.

Both the attribute developer and the user of the aspect can specify filters.

Developer-Specified Filtering

Just like normal custom attributes should be decorated with the `[AttributeUsage]` custom attribute, multicast custom attributes must be decorated by the `[MulticastAttributeUsage]` attribute (see `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute`). It specifies which are the valid targets of the multicast attributes.

For instance, the following piece of code specifies that the attribute `GuiThreadAttribute` can be applied on instance methods. Aspect users experience a build-time error when trying to use this aspect on a constructor or static method.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Method, TargetMemberAttributes = MulticastAttributes.Instance)]
[AttributeUsage(AttributeTargets.Assembly|AttributeTargets.Class|AttributeTargets.Method, AllowMultiple = true)]
[Serializable]
public class GuiThreadAttribute : MethodInterceptionAspect
{
    // Details skipped.
}
```

Note the presence of the `AttributeUsageAttribute` attribute in the sample above. It tells the C# or VB compiler that the attribute can be directly applied to assemblies, classes, constructors, or methods. But this aspect will never be eventually applied to an assembly or a class. Indeed, the `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute` attribute specifies that the sole valid targets are methods. Furthermore, the `TargetMemberAttributes` property establishes a filter that includes only instance methods.

Therefore, if the aspect is applied on a type containing an abstract method, the aspect will not be multicast to this method, neither to its constructors.

TIP

Additionally to multicast filtering, consider using programmatic validation of aspect usage. Any custom attribute can implement `IValidableAnnotation` to implement build-time validation of targets. Aspects that derive from `Aspect` already implement these interfaces: your aspect can override the method `CompileTimeValidate(Object)`.

TIP

As an aspect developer, you should enforce as many restrictions as necessary to ensure that your aspect is only used in the way you intended, and raise errors in other cases. Using an aspect in an unexpected way may result in runtime errors that are difficult to debug.

User-Specified Filtering

The attribute user can specify multicasting filters using specific properties of the `MulticastAttribute` class. To make it clear that these properties only impact the multicasting process, they have the prefix `Attribute`.

As an aspect user, it is important to understand that you can only apply aspects to elements of codes that have been allowed by the developer of the aspect.

For instance, the following element of code adds a tracing aspect to all public methods of a namespace:

```
[assembly: Trace( AttributeTargetTypes="AdventureWorks.BusinessLayer.*", AttributeTargetMemberAttributes = MulticastAttrib
```

Filtering Properties

The following table lists the filters available to users and developers of aspects:

MulticastAttribute Property	MulticastAttributeUsage-Attribute Property	Description
<code>AttributeTargetElements</code>	<code>ValidOn</code>	Restricts the kinds of targets (assemblies, classes, value types, delegates, interfaces, properties, events, properties, methods, constructors, parameters) to which the attribute can be indirectly applied.
<code>AttributeTargetAssemblies</code>		Wildcard expression or regular expression specifying to which assemblies the attribute is multicast.
	<code>AllowExternalAssemblies</code>	Determines whether the aspect can be applied to elements defined in a different assembly than the current one.

MulticastAttribute Property	MulticastAttributeUsage- Attribute Property	Description
AttributeTargetTypes		Wildcard expression or regular expression filtering by name the type to which the attribute is applied, or the declaring type of the member to which the attribute is applied.
AttributeTargetTypeAttributes	TargetTypeAttributes	Restricts the visibility of the type to which the aspect is applied, or of the type declaring the member to which the aspect is applied.
AttributeTargetMembers		Wildcard expression or regular expression filtering by name the member to which the attribute is applied.
AttributeTargetMemberAttributes	TargetMemberAttributes	Restricts the attributes (visibility, virtuality, abstraction, literality, ...) of the member to which the aspect is applied.
AttributeTargetParameters		Wildcard expression or regular expression specifying to which parameter the attribute is multicast.
AttributeTargetParameterAttributes	TargetParameterAttributes	Restricts the attributes (in/out/ref) of the parameter to which the aspect is applied.
AttributeInheritance	Inheritance	Specifies whether the aspect is propagated along the lines of inheritance of the target interface, class, method, or parameter (see Understanding Aspect Inheritance on page 200).

CAUTION NOTE

Whenever possible, do not rely on naming conventions to apply aspects (properties `AttributeTargetTypes`, `AttributeTargetMembers` and `AttributeTargetParameters`). This may work perfectly today, and break tomorrow if someone renames an element of code without being aware of the aspect.

Overriding Filtering Attributes

Suppose we have two classes A and B, B being derived from A. Both A and B can be decorated with `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute`. However, since B is derived from A, filters on B cannot be more permissive than filters on A.

In other words, the `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute` custom attribute is inherited. It can be overwritten in derived classes, but derived class cannot *enlarge* the set of possible targets. They can only *restrict* it.

Similarly (and hopefully predictably), the aspect user is subject to the same rule: she can restrict the set of possible targets supported by the aspect, but cannot enlarge it.

14.1.7. Understanding Aspect Inheritance

This topic contains the following sections:

- Lines of Inheritance
- Strict and Multicast Inheritance

Lines of Inheritance

Aspect inheritance is supported on the following elements.

Aspect Applied On	Aspect Propagated To
Interface	Any class implementing this interface or any other interface deriving this interface.
Class	Any class derived from this class.
Virtual or Abstract Methods	Any method implementing or overriding this method.
Interface Methods	Any method implementing that interface semantic.
Parameter or Return Value of an abstract, virtual or interface method	The corresponding parameter or to the return value of derived methods using the method-level rules described above.
Assembly	All assemblies referencing (directly or not) this assembly.

NOTE

Aspect inheritance is not supported on events and properties, but it is supported on event and property accessors. The reason of this limitation is that there is actually nothing like *event inheritance* or *property inheritance* in MSIL (events and properties have nearly no existence for the CLR: these are pure metadata intended for compilers). Obviously, aspect inheritance is not supported on fields.

Strict and Multicast Inheritance

To understand the difference between strict and multicast inheritance, remember the original role of `MulticastAttribute`: to propagate custom attributes along the lines of containment. So, if you apply a method-level attribute to a type, the attribute will be propagated to all the methods of this type (some methods can be filtered out using specific properties of `MulticastAttribute`, or `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute`; see [Adding Aspects Declaratively Using Attributes on page 186](#) for details).

The difference between strict and multicasting inheritance is that, with multicasting inheritance (but not with strict inheritance), even inherited attributes are propagated along the lines of containment.

Consider the following piece of code, where A and B are both method-level aspects.

```
[A(AttributeInheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
[B(AttributeInheritance = MulticastInheritance.Multicast)]
public class BaseClass
{
    // Aspect A, B.
    public virtual void Method1();
}

public class DerivedClass : BaseClass
{
    // Aspects A, B.
    public override void Method1() {}

    // Aspect B.
    public void Method2();
}
```

If you just look at `BaseClass`, there is no difference between strict and multicasting inheritance. However, if you look at `DerivedClass`, you see the difference: only aspect B is applied to `MethodB`.

The multicasting mechanism for aspect A is the following:

1. Propagation along the lines of containment from `BaseClass` to `BaseClass.Method1`.
2. Propagation along the lines of inheritance from `BaseClass.Method1` to `DerivedClass.Method`.

For aspect B, the mechanism is the following:

1. Propagation along the lines of containment from `BaseClass` to `BaseClass.Method1`.
2. Propagation along the lines of inheritance from `BaseClass.Method1` to `DerivedClass.Method1`.
3. Propagation along the lines of inheritance from `BaseClass` to `DerivedClass`.
4. Propagation along the lines of containment from `DerivedClass` to `DerivedClass.Method1` and `DerivedClass.Method2`.

In other words, the difference between strict and multicasting inheritance is that multicasting inheritance applies containment propagation rules to inherited aspects; strict inheritance does not.

Avoiding Duplicate Aspects

If you read again the multicasting mechanism for aspect B, you will notice that the aspect B is actually applied twice to `DerivedClass.Method1`: one instance comes from the inheritance propagation from `BaseClass.Method1`, the other instance comes from containment propagation from `DerivedClass`.

To avoid surprises, PostSharp implements a mechanism to avoid duplicate aspect instances. The rule: if many paths lead from the same custom attribute usage to the same target element, only one instance of this custom attribute is applied to the target element.

CAUTION NOTE

Attention: you can still have many instances of the same custom attribute on the same target element if they have *different origins* (i.e. they originate from different lines of code, typically). You can enforce uniqueness of custom attribute instances by using `AllowMultiple`. See the section [Overriding and Removing Aspect Instances on page 194](#) for details.

14.2. Adding Aspects Using XML

PostSharp not only allows aspects to be applied in code, but also through XML. This is accomplished by adding them to your project's .psproj file.

Adding aspects through XML gives the advantage of applying aspects without modifying the source code, which could be an advantage in some legacy projects.

Specifying an attribute in XML

```
namespace MyCustomAttributes
{
    // We set up multicast inheritance so the aspect is automatically added to children types.
    [MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
    [PSerializable]
    public sealed class AutoDataContractAttribute : TypeLevelAspect, IAspectProvider
    {
        // Details skipped.
    }
}
```

```
    }
}
```

Normally `AutoDataContractAttribute` would be applied to `Customer` in code as follows:

```
namespace MyNamespace
{
    [AutoDataContractAttribute]
    class Customer
    {
        public string FirstName {get; set;}
        public string LastName { get; set; }
    }
}
```

Using XML instead, we can remove the custom attribute from source code and instead specify a `Multicast` element in the PostSharp project file, a file that has the same name as your project file (`csproj` or `vbproj`), but with the `.psproj` extension:

```
<?xmlversion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration">
  <Multicastxmlns:my="clr-namespace:MyCustomAttributes;assembly:MyAssembly">
    <my:AutoDataContractAttributeAttributeTargetTypes=" MyNamespace.Customer"/>
  </Multicast>
</Project>
```

In this snippet, the `xmlns:my` attribute associates a prefix to an XML namespace, which must be mapped to the .NET namespace and assembly where custom attributes classes are defined:

```
<Multicastxmlns:my="clr-namespace:MyCustomAttributes;assembly:MyAssembly">
```

The next line then specifies the custom attribute to apply and the target attributes to apply the custom attributes to:

```
<my:AutoDataContractAttributeAttributeTargetTypes="MyNamespace.Customer"/>
```

The XML element name must be the name of a class inside the .NET namespace and assembly as defined by the XML namespace. Attributes of this XML element map to public properties or fields of this class.

Note that any property inherited from `MulticastAttribute` can be used here in order to apply the aspect to several classes at a time. See the section [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations on page 187](#) for details about these properties.

14.3. Adding Aspects Programmatically using IAspectProvider

You may have situations where you are looking to implement an aspect as part of a larger pattern. Perhaps you want to add an aspect, implement an interface and dynamically inject some logic into the target code. In those situations you will want to apply an aspect to the target code and have that aspect then add other aspects to other elements of code.

The theoretical concept can cause some mental gymnastics, so let's take a look at the implementation.

1. Create an aspect that implements that `IAspectProvider` interface.

```
public class ProviderAspect : IAspectProvider
{
    public IEnumerable<AspectInstance> ProvideAspects(object targetElement)
    {
        throw new System.NotImplementedException();
    }
}
```

2. Cast the target object parameter to the type that will be targeted by this aspect: `Assembly`, `Type`, `MethodInfo`, `ConstructorInfo` or `LocationInfo`.

```
public IEnumerable<AspectInstance> ProvideAspects(object targetElement)
{
    Type type = (Type) targetElement;
    throw new NotImplementedException();
}
```

3. In the `ProvideAspects(Object)` method returns an `AspectInstance` of the aspect type you want, for every target element of code.

```
public IEnumerable<AspectInstance> ProvideAspects(object targetElement)
{
    Type type = (Type)targetElement;
    return type.GetMethods().Select(
        m => return new AspectInstance(targetElement, new LoggingAspect()) );
}
```

This aspect will now add aspects dynamically at compile time. Use of the `IAspectProvider` interface and technique is usually reserved for situations where you are trying to implement a larger design pattern. For example, it would be used when implementing an aspect that created the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` pattern across a large number of locations in your codebase. It is overkill for many of the situations that you will encounter. Use it only for complicated pattern implementation aspects that you will create.

NOTE

To read more about `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute`, see [Handling Corner Cases on page 114](#).

NOTE

PostSharp does not automatically initialize the aspects provided by `IAspectProvider`, even if the method `CompileTimeInitialize` is defined. Any initialization, if necessary, should be done in the `ProvideAspects` method or in the constructor of provided aspects.

However, these aspects are initialized at runtime just like normal aspects using the `RunTimeInitialize` method.

Creating Graphs of Aspects

It is common that aspects provided by `IAspectProvider` (children aspects) form an object graph. For instance, children aspects may contain a reference to the parent aspect.

An interesting feature of PostSharp is that object graphs instantiated at compile-time are serialized, and can be used at run-time. In other words, if you store in a child aspect a reference to another aspect, you will be able to use this reference at runtime.

CHAPTER 15

Miscellaneous

The following aspects are not really pattern implementations but do not fit in any other chapter.

Section	Description
Executing Code Just After the Assembly is Loaded on page 207	This topic shows how to add module initializers to your code.

15.1. Executing Code Just After the Assembly is Loaded

Visual Basic has a concept of module. The module is a special class that gets initialized immediately when the assembly is loaded. This feature is implemented by the CLR, but is not exposed to the C# language. The `ModuleInitializerAttribute` attribute allows you to have module initializers in C#.

To add a module initializer to your project:

- Create a public or internal method that has no parameter and no return value. The type declaring the method cannot have generic parameters.
- Add the `ModuleInitializerAttribute` attribute to this method.

You can add several module initializers a project. Module initializers will be executed in the order you specified in the attribute constructor.

PART 4

Threading Patterns

CHAPTER 16

Writing Thread-Safe Code with Threading Models

A threading model is a design pattern that gives guarantees that your code executes safely on a multi-threaded computer. Threading models both define coding rules (for instance: all fields must be private) and add new behaviors to existing code (for instance: acquiring a lock before method execution). Coding rules are typically enforced at build time or at run time; violations result in build-time errors or run-time exceptions. Threading models may also require the use of custom attributes in source code, for instance to indicate that a method requires read access to the object.

TIP

We recommend to assign a threading model to every class whose instances can be shared between different threads.

Threading models raise the level of abstraction at which multi threading is addressed. Compared to working directly with locks and other low-level threading primitives, using threading models has the following benefits:

- Threading models are **named solutions** to a recurring problem. Threading models are specific types of design patterns, and have the same benefits. When team members discuss the multi-threaded behavior of a class, they just need to know which threading model this class uses. They don't need to know the very details of its implementation. Since the human short-term memory seems to be limited to 5-9 elements, it is important to think in terms of larger conceptual blocks whenever we can.
- Much of the code required to implement the threading model can be **automatically generated**, which decreases the number of lines of code, and therefore the number of defects. It also reduces development and maintenance costs.
- Your source code can be **automatically verified** against the selected threading model, both at build time and at run time. This makes the discovery of defect much more deterministic. Without verifications, threading defects usually show up randomly and provoke data structure corruption instead of immediate exceptions. Run-time verification would be too labor-intensive to implement without compiler support, so would be most likely omitted.

Available threading models

PostSharp Threading Library provides an implementation for the following threading models:

Threading Model	Aspect Type	Description
Thread-Unsafe Threading Model on page 233	ThreadUnsafeAttribute	These objects may never be accessed concurrently by several threads.
Thread Affine Threading Model on page 236	ThreadAffineAttribute	These objects must be accessed from a the thread that instantiated them.

Threading Model	Aspect Type	Description
Synchronized Threading Model on page 229	SynchronizedAttribute	Synchronized objects can be accessed by a single thread at a time. Other threads will wait until the object is available.
Reader/Writer Synchronized Threading Model on page 225	ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute	These objects that can be read concurrently by several threads, but write access requires exclusivity. Public methods of this object must specify which kind of access they require (read or write, typically).
Actor Threading Model on page 220	ActorAttribute	These objects communicate with their clients using an asynchronous communication pattern. All accesses to the object are queued and then processed in a single thread. However, queuing is transparent to clients, which just call standard void or methods.
Freezable Threading Model on page 212	FreezableAttribute	These objects can be set to a state where their property values can no longer be changed. Unlike immutable objects, the developer dictates the time and place in their code where changes to the object's state will no longer be accepted.
Immutable Threading Model on page 216	ImmutableAttribute	These objects cannot have their state changed after their constructor has finished executing.

Other topics

Article	Description
Making a Whole Project or Solution Thread Safe on page 240	This article describes how to get compiler warnings when you forget to assign a threading model to a type.
Opting In and Out From Thread Safety on page 242	This article shows how to disable the enforcement of the threading model for specific fields or methods.
Compatibility of Threading Models on page 243	This article lists compatibility of threading models when they are applied to objects that are in a parent-child relationship.
Enabling and Disabling Runtime Verification on page 244	This article explains when runtime verification is enabled or disabled and how to customize the default behavior.

Conceptual documentation

Please read [this technical white paper](#)²⁷ for details about the concepts and architecture of PostSharp Threading Models.

16.1. Freezable Threading Model

When you need to prevent changes to an instance of an object most of the time, but not all of the time, the Immutable pattern (implemented by the `ImmutableAttribute` aspect) will be too aggressive for you. In these situations you need a

27. <http://www.postsharp.net/links/threading-model-white-paper>

pattern that allows you to define the point in time where immutability begins. To accomplish this you can make use of the `FreezableAttribute` aspect.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Making an object freezable using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 213](#)
- [Making an object freezable manually on page 214](#)
- [Freezing an object on page 215](#)
- [Determining whether an object is in frozen state on page 215](#)
- [Freezable object trees on page 215](#)

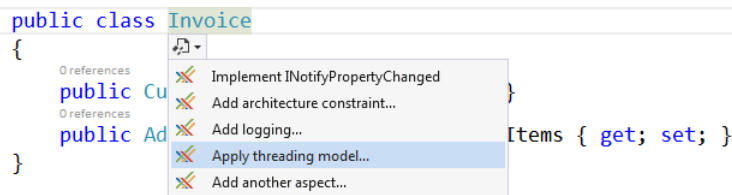
To make an object freezable all you need to do is add the `FreezableAttribute` attribute to the class in question.

Making an object freezable using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

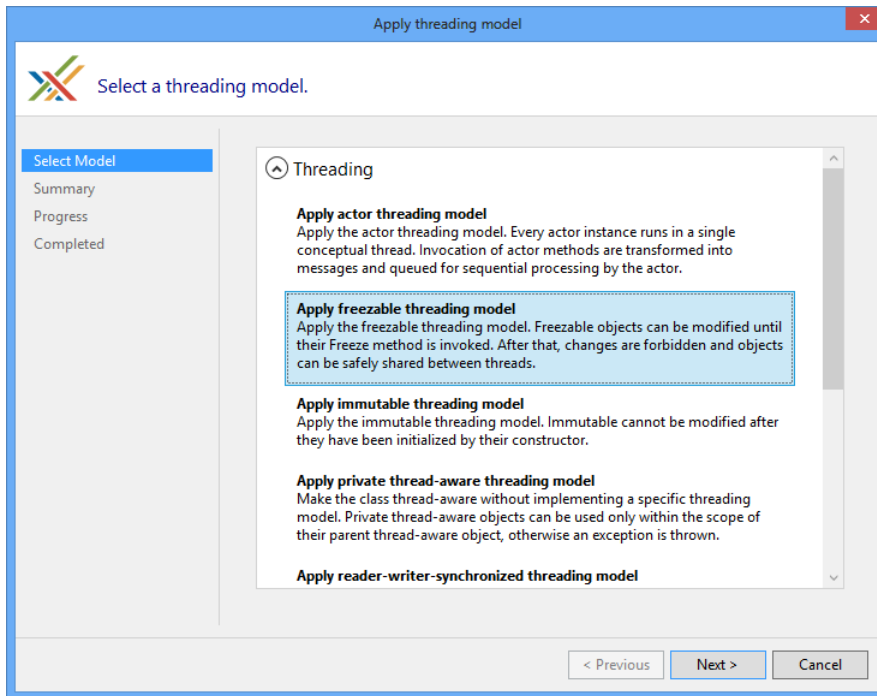
NOTE

This example shows freezing a class that only has primitive data types. Information on working with complex objects can be found the [Freezable Object Trees](#) section later in this article.

1. First place the caret on the name of the object that you want to make freezable. The smart tag will appear below the object name. Expand it and select "Apply Threading Model...".



2. In the Apply Threading Model wizard select "Apply freezable threading model" and click Next.



If you have not added a reference to the threading model assembly the Apply Threading Model wizard will download it from NuGet and add the reference.

3. Once the wizard has completed the object will now be flagged as freezable and the Customer and Item properties have had Parent-Child relationships established on them.

```
using PostSharp.Patterns.Threading;

[Freezable]
public class Invoice
{
    public long Id { get; set; }
}
```

Making an object freezable manually

NOTE

This example shows freezing a class that only has primitive data types. To see how to work with complex objects see the [Freezable Threading Model](#) on page 212 section later in this article.

1. Add the *PostSharp.Patterns.Threading* package to your project using NuGet.
2. Add the *FreezableAttribute* custom attribute to your class.

```
using PostSharp.Patterns.Threading;

[Freezable]
public class Invoice
{
    public long Id { get; set; }
}
```

Freezing an object

To freeze an object, you will first have to cast the object to the `IFreezable` interface. After that you are able to call the `Freeze` method.

```
var invoice = new Invoice();
invoice.Id = 123456;

((IFreezable)invoice).Freeze();
```

NOTE

The `IFreezable` interface will be injected into the `Invoice` class *after* compilation. Tools that are not aware of Post-Sharp may incorrectly report that the `Invoice` class does not implement the `IFreezable` interface.

Instead of using the cast operator, you can also use the `CastSourceType, TargetType(SourceType)` method. This method is faster and safer than the cast operator because it is verified and compiled by PostSharp at build time.

NOTE

If you are attempting to freeze either `AdvisableCollectionT` or `AdvisableDictionaryTKey, TValue` you will not be able to use the cast operator or the `CastSourceType, TargetType(SourceType)` method. Instead, you will have to use the `QueryInterfaceT(Object, Boolean)` extension method.

Once you've called the `Freeze` method on an object instance the code will no longer be able to change the property values on that instance. If a value change is attempted the code will throw an `ObjectReadOnlyException`.

```
var invoice = new Invoice();
invoice.Id = 123456;

((IFreezable)invoice).Freeze();

// This will throw an exception.
invoice.Id = 345678;
```

Determining whether an object is in frozen state

To determine whether an object has been frozen, cast it to `IThreadAware` and get the `readOnly` value from `IsReadOnly` via the `ConcurrencyController` property.

```
var invoice = new Invoice();
invoice.Id = 123456;

((IFreezable)invoice).Freeze();

// The 'frozen' property will be set to 'true'.
bool frozen = ((IThreadAware)invoice).ConcurrencyController.IsReadOnly;
```

Freezable object trees

The Freezable pattern relies on the Aggregatable pattern. The `AggregatableAttribute` aspect will be implicitly added to the target class. Therefore, you can not only create freezable classes, but also freezable object trees. Read the [Parent/Child Relationships on page 127](#) for more information on how to establish object trees.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Children of freezable objects must be either freezable either immutable. Therefore, children classes must be annotated with the `FreezableAttribute` or `ImmutableAttribute` custom attribute. Collection types must be derived from `AdvisableCollectionT` or `AdvisableDictionaryTKey, TValue`.

16.2. Immutable Threading Model

There are times when you want certain objects in your codebase to retain their post creation state without possibility of it ever changing. These objects are said to be immutable. Immutable objects are useful in multi-threaded applications because they can be safely accessed by several threads concurrently, without need for locking or other synchronization. PostSharp offers the `ImmutableAttribute` aspect that allows you enforce this pattern on your objects.

Changes in an object with the `ImmutableAttribute` aspect will be forbidden as soon as the object constructor exits. Any further attempt to modify the object will result in an `ObjectReadOnlyException`.

NOTE

The Immutable pattern can be too strong for some common object-oriented scenarios, for instance with serializable classes. In some cases, the `Freezable` object is a better choice. For details, see [Freezable Threading Model on page 212](#).

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Making a class immutable using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 216](#)
- [Making a class immutable manually on page 217](#)
- [Immutable object trees on page 218](#)
- [Immutable vs readonly on page 218](#)
- [Constructor execution on page 219](#)
- [Immutable collections on page 220](#)

To make an object immutable all you need to do is add the `ImmutableAttribute` attribute to the class in question.

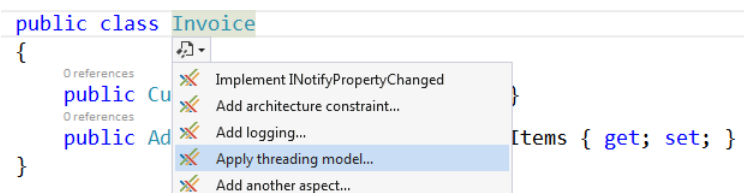
Making a class immutable using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

NOTE

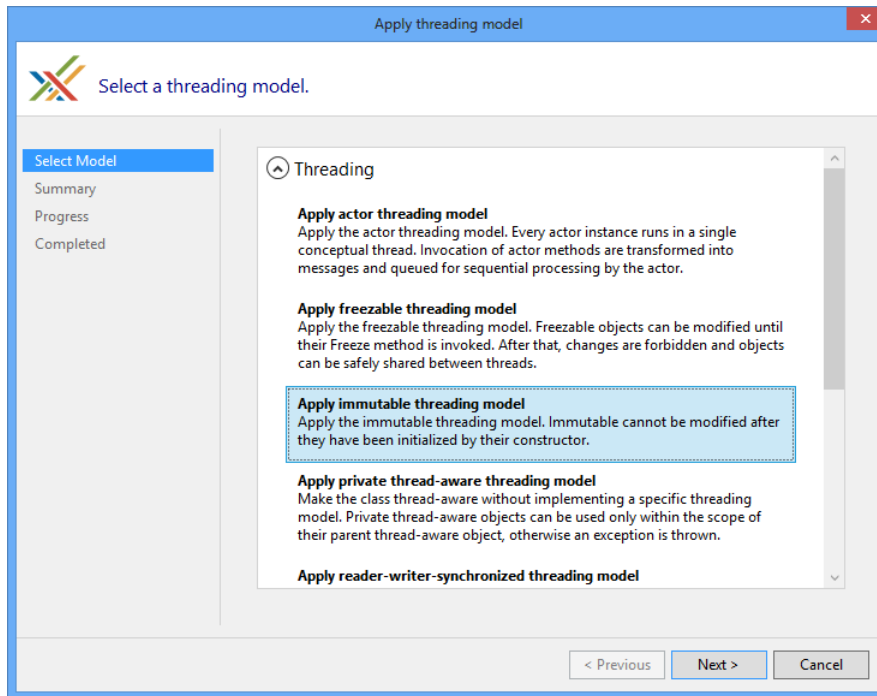
This example shows freezing a class that only has primitive data types. Information on working with complex objects can be found the [Working With Immutable Object Trees](#) section later in this article.

To add the Immutable pattern using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

1. First place the caret on the name of the class that you want to make immutable. The smart tag will appear below the object name. Expand it and select **Apply Threading Model**.



- In the **Apply Threading Model** wizard select **Apply immutable threading model** and click **Next**.



If you have not yet added the *PostSharp.Patterns.Threading* package to your project, the **Apply Threading Model** wizard will download it from NuGet and install it into your project.

- Once the wizard has completed the class will now be flagged as immutable.

```
using PostSharp.Patterns.Threading;

[Immutable]
public class Invoice
{
    public Invoice(long id)
    {
        Id = id;
    }
    public long Id { get; set; }
}
```

Now, once you've created an instance of the immutable object your code will no longer be able to change the property values on that instance. If a value change is attempted the code will throw an `ObjectReadOnlyException`.

```
var invoice = new Invoice(12345);

// This will throw an exception.
invoice.Id = 345678;
```

Making a class immutable manually

To add the `Immutable` pattern manually:

- Add the *PostSharp.Patterns.Threading* package to your project using NuGet.
- Add the `ImmutableAttribute` custom attribute to your class.

Immutable object trees

Because the Immutable pattern is an implementation of the Aggregatable pattern, all of the same behaviors of the `AggregatableAttribute` are available. As a result you can create both immutable classes and immutable object trees. For more information regarding object trees, read [Parent/Child Relationships on page 127](#).

NOTE

Children of immutable objects must be marked as immutable themselves. Adding the `ImmutableAttribute` to the child classes will accomplish this. Additionally, collection types must be derived from `AdvisableCollectionT` or `AdvisableDictionaryTKey, TValue`.

Immutable vs readonly

Many C# developers make use of the `readonly` keyword in an attempt to make their objects immutable. The `readonly` keyword doesn't guarantee immutability though. Using `readonly` only ensures that no method other than the object's constructor can alter the variable's value. It doesn't, however, prevent you from altering values on complex objects outside of the constructor.

In the following code sample the `_id` variable is a primitive type and can't be altered outside the constructor. This is enforced at compile time and an error would be displayed where the `SetIdentifier` method attempts to change the `_id` field's value.

```
public class Invoice
{
    public readonly long _id;
    public Invoice(long id)
    {
        SetIdentifier(id);
    }
    public void SetIdentifier(long id)
    {
        _id = id;
    }
}
```

If you were to mark a complex object as `readonly` the same rule holds true as it does for primitive types. You are not able to change the complex object instance outside of the constructor. In the following example, initializing the `Customer` in the constructor is valid, but reinitializing it in the `Refresh` method will cause a compilation error.

```
public class Invoice
{
    public readonly Customer _customer;
    public Invoice()
    {
        _customer = new Customer();
    }

    public void Refresh()
    {
        //will cause a compilation error
        _customer = new Customer();
    }
}
```

What you can do when a complex object is marked as `readonly` is alter the values within that complex object. In the case of the `Customer` object you cannot reinitialize the instance but you can change the properties on the already created instance. What you see in the following `Refresh` method is perfectly valid.

```

public class Invoice
{
    public readonly Customer _customer;
    public Invoice()
    {
        _customer = new Customer();
    }

    public void Refresh()
    {
        //valid but not immutable
        _customer.Name = "Jim";
        _customer.Phone = "555-123-9876";
    }
}

```

The same type of change to object state can happen with collections. You can not reinitialize a `readonly` collection, but you can freely Add, Remove, Clear and do other operations that the collection itself exposes. Additionally if the collection contains complex types you are able to change values on each instance that the collection contains.

```

public class Invoice
{
    public readonly IList<Item> _items;
    public Invoice()
    {
        _items = new List<Item>();
    }

    public void Refresh()
    {
        //will cause a compilation error
        _items = new List<Item>();

        //valid but not immutable
        _items.Add(new Item());
        _items[0].Price = 3.50;
        _items.RemoveAt(0);
    }
}

```

As you can see there is no way to use the `readonly` keyword to make complex object graphs immutable. Combining the `ImmutableAttribute`, `ChildAttribute`, `AdvisableCollectionT` and the `AdvisableDictionaryTKey, TValue` types allows you to make immutable objects that guarantee no changes to primitive or complex objects after constructor execution has completed.

Constructor execution

Objects are not frozen until the last constructor has finished executing. Because of this you can use the constructor to set up the state of the parent instance through its own constructor as well as chained, or inherited object, constructors. You're also able to make changes to child object instances through their constructors at this time.

```

[Immutable]
public class Invoice : Document
{
    public Invoice(long id) : base(id)
    {
        Items = new AdvisableCollection<Item>();
        Items.Add(new Item("widget"));
    }

    [Child]
    public AdvisableCollection<Item> Items { get; set; }
}

[Immutable]
public class Document
{

```

```
private long _id;
public Document (long id)
{
    _id = id;
}
}

[Immutable]
public class Item
{
    public Item (string name)
    {
        Name = name;
    }
    public string Name { get; set; }
}
```

In this example the constructors finish executing in the order of Document, Item and finally Invoice. It is not until after the Invoice constructor finishes executing that the object graph is made immutable.

Immutable collections

When authoring immutable object models, immutable collections are a good replacement for advisable collections. For details, see [Using Immutable Collections on page 141](#).

16.3. Actor Threading Model

Given the complexity of trying to coordinate accesses to an object from several threads, sometimes it makes more sense to avoid multi threading altogether. The Actor model avoids the need for thread safety on class instances by routing method calls from each instance to a single message queue which is processed, in order, by a single thread.

Since the processing for each instance takes place in a single thread, multi-threading is avoided altogether and the object is guaranteed to be free of data races. Calls are processed asynchronously in the order in which they were added to the message queue. Because all calls to an actor are asynchronous, it is recommended that the `async/await` feature of C# 5.0 be used.

Additionally to provide a race-free programming model, the Actor pattern has the benefit of transparently distributing the computing load to all available CPUs without additional logic. Note that PostSharp's implementation does not assign a new thread to each actor instance but uses a thread pool instead, so it is possible to have a very large number of actors with relatively low overhead.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [A single-threaded example on page 220](#)
- [Applying the Actor model using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 221](#)
- [Applying the Actor manually on page 223](#)
- [Working with complex state on page 224](#)
- [Dealing with constraints of the Actor model on page 224](#)

A single-threaded example

Consider the following example of an AverageCalculator class. The code is not thread-safe because incrementing the count has four operations (read and write) that must all be performed atomically.

```
class AverageCalculator
{
    float sum;
    int count;
```

```

public void AddSample(float n)
{
    this.count++;
    this.sum += n;
}

public float GetAverage()
{
    return this.sum / this.count;
}
}

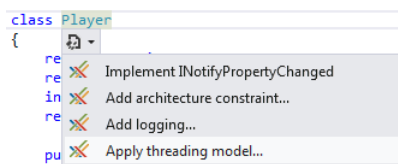
```

We could use the Synchronized or Reader-Writer Synchronized threading model to make sure that the calling thread will wait if the object is currently being accessed by another thread. Another solution in this situation is to avoid concurrency altogether using the Actor pattern and asynchronous methods.

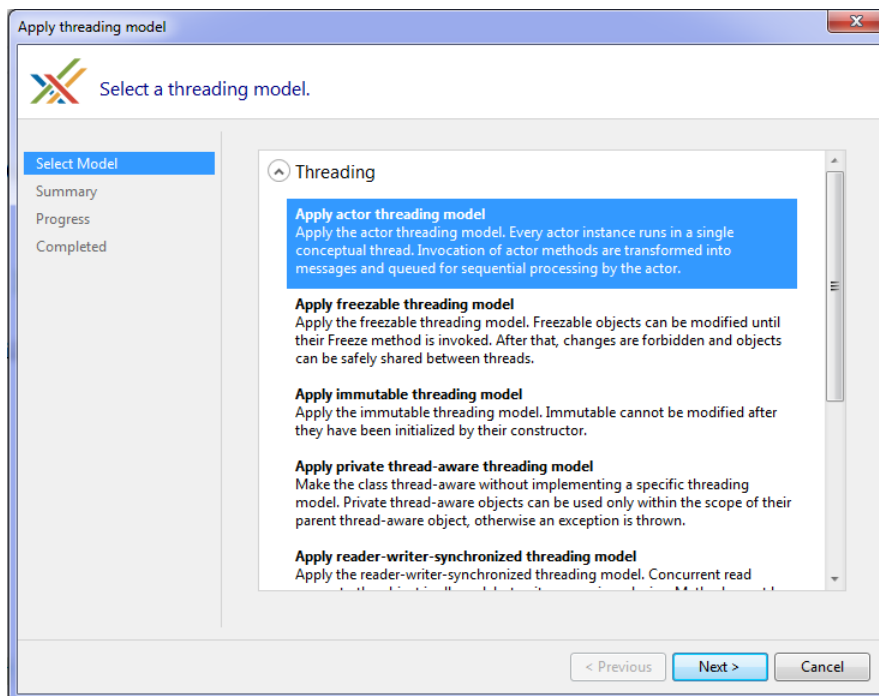
Applying the Actor model using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

To apply the Actor threading model to your class with PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

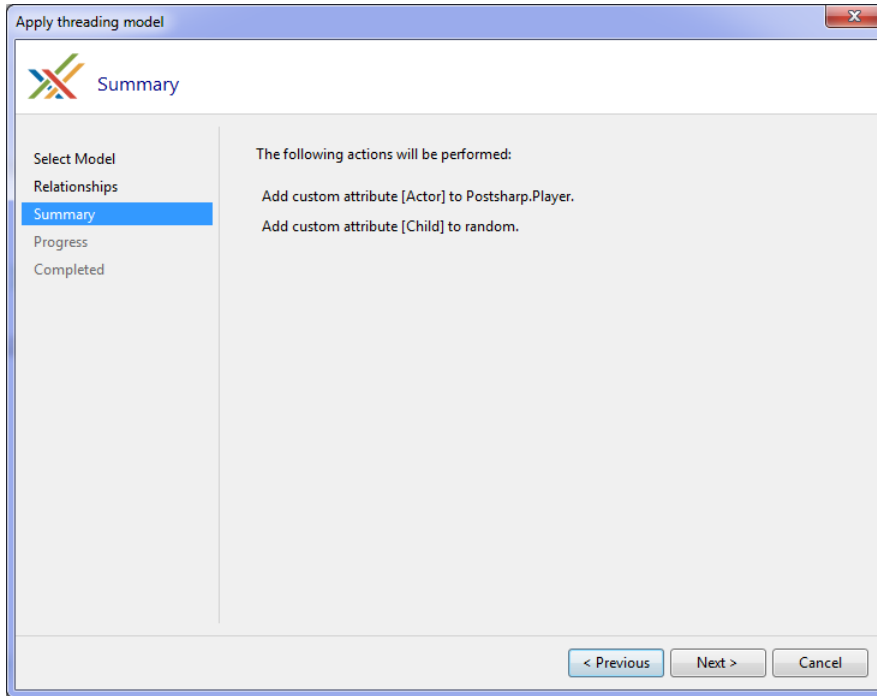
1. Place the mouse cursor over your class name and select "Apply threading model..." from the drop-down.



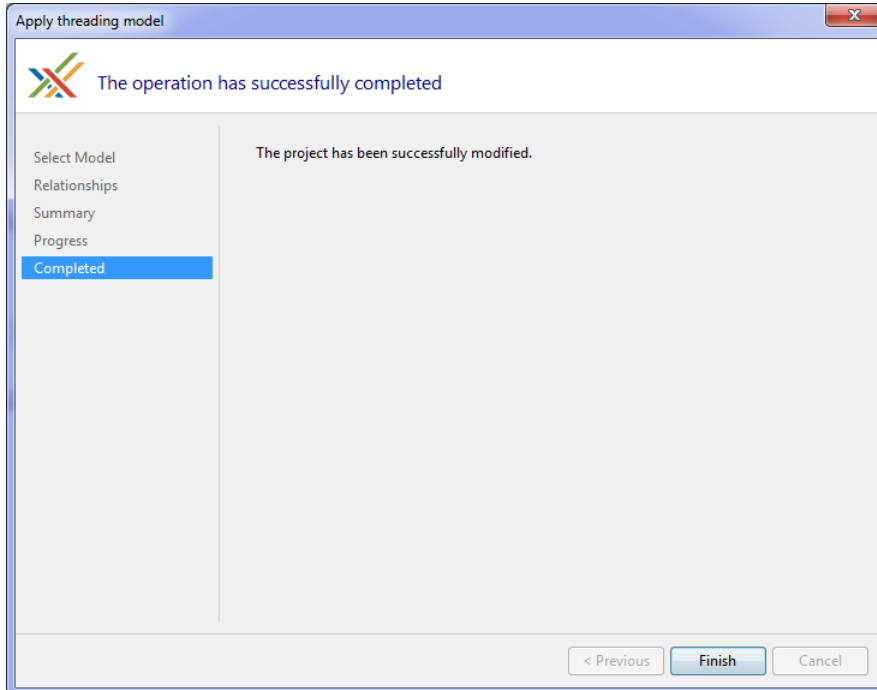
2. Select "Apply actor threading model" and click **Next**.



3. Verify the actions on the Summary screen and click **Next**.



4. Click **Finish** after the installation completes:



Your class will now have the ActorAttribute and all dependencies will have been added to the project.

5. Finally, you need to change all methods that have a return value to asynchronous methods, add ReentrantAttribute attribute to them, and modify the code that calls them.

Applying the Actor manually

To apply the Actor threading model manually:

1. Add the PostSharp.Patterns.Threading NuGet package to your project.
2. Add the ActorAttribute to the class.
3. Finally, you need to change all methods that have a return value to asynchronous methods, and modify the code that calls them.

In the reworked example below, the AverageCalculator class has had the ActorAttribute added and the GetAverage methods has been changed into asynchronous with ReentrantAttribute attribute. The AddSample method was also changed to an async method returning Task and ReentrantAttribute attribute was applied.

```
[Actor]
class AverageCalculator
{
    float sum;
    int count;

    [Reentrant]
    public async Task AddSample(float n)
    {
        this.count++;
        this.sum += n;
    }

    [Reentrant]
    public async Task<float> GetAverage()
    {
        return this.sum / this.count;
    }
}
```

You can now use the same AverageCalculator from two concurrent threads.

```
class Program
{
    static void Main(string[] args)
    {
        MainAsync().GetAwaiter().GetResult();
    }

    static async Task MainAsync()
    {
        AverageCalculator averageCalculator = new AverageCalculator();

        SampleObserver observer = new SampleObserver(averageCalculator);
        DataSources.Source1.Subscribe(observer);
        DataSources.Source2.Subscribe(observer);

        Console.ReadKey();

        float average = await averageCalculator.GetAverage();

        Console.WriteLine("Average: {0}", average);
    }
}

class SampleObserver : IObservable<float>
{
    AverageCalculator calculator;

    public void OnNext( float value )
    {
```

```
// Each of the data sources can call us from a different thread and concurrently.
// But we don't have to care since our calculator will enqueue method calls.
this.calculator.AddSample( value );
}

// Details skipped.
}
```

Behind the scenes, each invocation of `AverageCalculator.AddSample` is added to the message queue by the `ActorAttribute`, which then processes each call sequentially in the order it was added to the queue. This gives us the guarantee that an instance of the `AverageCalculator` class is never being accessed concurrently by two threads, and eliminates the need to make take multi-threading into account.

Working with complex state

PostSharp generates code that prevents the fields of an actor class to be accessed from an invalid context. For instance, trying to read an actor field from a background task would result in a `ThreadAccessException`. However, very often, state is more complex than fields of simple type like `int` or `string`. State can be composed of several objects and collections.

To prevent state corruption, it is important that PostSharp generates code that enforces the Actor model at runtime even for child objects of the actor.

To add complex state to actor classes:

1. Declare the Parent-Child relationship on the property using the `ChildAttribute` custom attribute:

```
[Actor]
class AverageCalculator
{
    float sum;
    int count;

    [Child]
    private CounterInfo counterInfo;

    // Other details skipped for brevity
}
```

2. Add the `PrivateThreadAwareAttribute` attribute to the child class.

```
[PrivateThreadAware]
public class CounterInfo
{
    public string Name { get; set; }
}
```

For more information regarding parent-child relationships in threading models, see also [Parent/Child Relationships on page 127](#).

Dealing with constraints of the Actor model

Per definition of the Actor model, all methods are executed asynchronously. Methods that have no return value (void methods) can be executed asynchronously without syntactic changes. However, methods that do have a return value need to be made asynchronous using the `async` keyword.

In some situations, the application of the `async` keyword and the corresponding dispatching of the method may be unnecessary. For instance, a method that returns immutable information is always thread-safe and does not need to be dispatched. For more information on excluding methods from dispatching, see [Opting In and Out From Thread Safety on page 242](#).

16.4. Reader/Writer Synchronized Threading Model

When a class instance is concurrently used by multiple threads, accesses must be synchronized to prevent data races, which typically result in data inconsistencies and corruption of data structures.

Consider the following example of an `Order` class which stores an amount and a discount:

```
class Order
{
    int Amount { get; private set; }
    int Discount { get; private set; }

    public int AmountAfterDiscount
    {
        get { return this.Amount - this.Discount; }
    }

    public void Set(int amount, int discount)
    {
        if (amount < discount)
            throw new InvalidOperationException();

        this.Amount = amount;
        this.Discount = discount;
    }
}
```

In this example, the `Set` method writes to the `Amount` and `Discount` members, while the `AmountAfterDiscount` property reads these members. In a single-threaded program, the `AmountAfterDiscount` property is guaranteed to be positive or zero. However, in a multi-threaded program, the `AmountAfterDiscount` property could be evaluated in the middle of the `Set` operation, and return an inconsistent result.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Problems of the lock keyword on page 225](#)
- [Reader-writer locks on page 225](#)
- [Making a class reader-writer synchronized on page 226](#)
- [Executing long-running write methods on page 228](#)
- [Working with object trees on page 229](#)

Problems of the lock keyword

The easiest way to synchronize accesses to a class in C# is to use the lock keyword. However, this practice cannot be generalized for two reasons:

- The use of exclusive locks often results in high contention and therefore low performance because many threads queue to access the same resource;
- Applications relying on exclusive locks are prone to deadlocks because of cyclic waiting dependencies.

Reader-writer locks

Reader-writer locks take advantage of the fact that most applications involve much fewer writes than reads, and that concurrent reads are always safe. Reader-writer locks ensure that no other thread is accessing the object when it is being written. Reader-writer locks are normally implemented by the .NET classes `ReaderWriterLock` or `ReaderWriterLockSlim`. The following example shows how `ReaderWriterLockSlim` would be used to control reads and writes in the `Order` class:

```
class Order
{
    private ReaderWriterLockSlim orderLock = new ReaderWriterLockSlim();
```

```
public decimal Amount { get; private set; }
public decimal Discount { get; private set; }

public decimal AmountAfterDiscount
{
    get
    {
        orderLock.EnterReadLock();
        decimal result = this.Amount - this.Discount;
        orderLock.ExitReadLock();
        return result;
    }
}

public void Set(decimal amount, decimal discount)
{
    if (amount < discount)
    {
        throw new InvalidOperationException();
    }

    orderLock.EnterWriteLock();
    this.Amount = amount;
    this.Discount = discount;
    orderLock.ExitWriteLock();
}
}
```

However, working directly with the `ReaderWriterLock` and `ReaderWriterLockSlim` classes has disadvantages:

- It is cumbersome because a lot of code is required.
- It is unreliable because it is too easy to forget to acquire the right type of lock, and these errors are not detectable by the compiler or by unit tests.

So, not only the direct use of locks results in more lines of code, but it won't reliably prevent non-deterministic data structure corruptions.

Making a class reader-writer synchronized

PostSharp Threading Pattern Library has been designed to eliminate non-deterministic data corruptions while reducing the size of thread synchronization code to the absolute minimum (but not less).

The `ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute` aspect implements the threading model (or threading pattern) based on the reader-writer lock, with the following principles:

- At any time, the object can be open for reading or closed for reading.
- Methods define their required access level using `[ReaderAttribute]` and `[WriterAttribute]` custom attributes (other access levels exist for advanced scenarios)
- An error will be emitted at build-time or runtime, but deterministically, whenever an object field is being accessed by a method that does not have the required access level on the object.

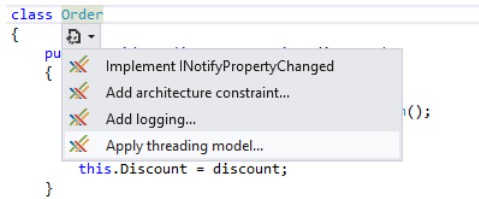
There are two ways to add the reader-writer-synchronized pattern to your class:

1. using the user interface
2. manually

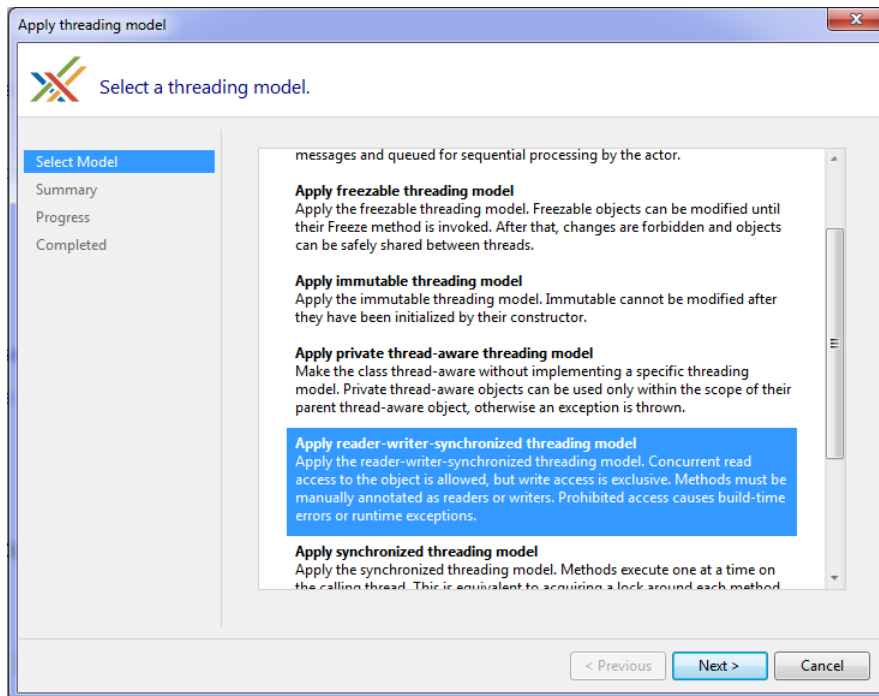
To apply the Reader-Writer Synchronized pattern using the user interface:

1. Hover the mouse over the class name. This displays the smart tag dropdown.

- Click the smart tag dropdown and click **Apply threading model:**



- Select **Apply reader-writer-synchronized threading model** and click **Next:**



- Click **Next** on the summary screen and then click on **Finished** to complete the process. The `ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute` attribute is now applied to the class.
- Once `ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute` is applied to the class, each method or property which accesses member data must then be marked as a reader or a writer. Position the caret on the name of the method or on the `get` or `set` keyword and choose "Acquire reader lock" or "Acquire writer lock" from the smart tag dropdown.

To apply `ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute` to a class manually:

- Add NuGet Package `PostSharp.Patterns.Threading`.
- Add `using PostSharp.Patterns.Threading`.
- Add the custom attribute `[ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute]` to the class.
- Add the custom attribute `[ReaderAttribute]` or `[WriterAttribute]` to the public and internal methods. Note that it is not necessary to put these attributes on property getters and setters or on events.

The following code shows the `Order` class, synchronized with the reader-writer threading pattern:

```

[ReaderWriterSynchronized]
class Order
{
    decimal Amount { get; private set; }
    decimal Discount { get; private set; }

    public decimal AmountAfterDiscount
    {
        get { return this.Amount - this.Discount; }
    }

    [Writer]
    public void Set(decimal amount, decimal discount)
    {
        if (amount < discount)
            throw new InvalidOperationException();

        this.Amount = amount;
        this.Discount = discount;
    }
}

```

`ReaderAttribute` places a lock on the instance whenever the property or method is invoked. While this lock is held, other threads can also invoke a property or method of that instance which reads, but calls to properties or methods marked with `WriterAttribute` will be blocked until all reads are complete.

Likewise, invoking properties or methods marked with `WriterAttribute` will lock the instance causing reads to block until the write has completed and the write lock has been released.

Since `ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute` requires that all properties and methods which access member data be marked with `ReaderAttribute` or `WriterAttribute`, `ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute` throws an exception when an accessor does not have one of these attributes. This ensures that unsynchronized reads and writes are caught the instant they occur.

NOTE

Property getters are intrinsically thread-safe and don't need to be marked with a `[ReaderAttribute]` custom attribute.

Executing long-running write methods

Since write methods require exclusive access to the object, they should complete as quickly as possible. However, this is not always possible. Some long-running write methods really do a lot of write operations (or rely on slow external services) which make them inappropriate for the reader-writer-synchronized model. However, many write methods are actually composed of a lot of read operations but just a few write operations at the end. In this case, it is possible to use a combination of the `UpgradeableReaderAttribute` and `WriterAttribute` attributes. The `UpgradeableReaderAttribute` attribute ensures that no other thread than the current one will be able to acquire a writer lock on the object, so it gives the guarantee that the object is not going to be modified during the method's execution. A method that holds an upgradeable reader lock can then invoke a method with the `WriterAttribute` attributes custom attribute. Note that it is important that the writer methods leave the object in a consistent state before exiting, because other threads will be allowed to read the object.

The following example builds on that in the section where the `Order` class contains a collection of `Line` objects which make up the order. In the example below, a new method called `Recalculate()` has been added to `Order` which iterates through each `Line` in the collection, tallies up the amount from each, and then stores the total in `Amount`.

Since the `Recalculate` method performs a series of reads followed by a write operation (to store the total in `Amount`), it is marked with the `UpgradeableReaderAttribute` attribute which ensures that all of the orders that it reads remain locked so that it calculates and writes out the correct total. In addition to this, the set accessor of the `Order`'s `Amount` property as been marked with `WriterAttribute`:

```

[ReaderWriterSynchronized]
class Order
{
    // Other details skipped for brevity.

    public decimal Amount
    {
        // The [Reader] attribute optional here is optional because the method is a public getter.
        get;

        // The [Writer] attribute is required because, although the method is a setter, this setter is private,
        // therefore it does not acquire write access by default.
        [Writer] private set;
    }

    [UpgradeableReader]
    public void Recalculate()
    {
        decimal total = 0;

        for (int i = 0; i < lines.Count; ++i)
        {
            total += lines[i].Amount;
        }

        this.Amount = total;
    }
}

```

Working with object trees

Because the Reader/Writer Synchronized model is an implementation of the Aggregatable pattern, all of the same behaviors of the `AggregatableAttribute` are available. For more information regarding object trees, read [Parent/Child Relationships on page 127](#).

NOTE

Once you have established your parent-child relationships you will need to apply compatible threading models to the child classes. You will want to refer to the [Compatibility of Threading Models on page 243](#) article to determine which threading model will work for the children of the Read/Writer Synchronized object.

16.5. Synchronized Threading Model

A common way to avoid data races is to enclose all public instance methods of a class with a `lock(this)` statement. This is basically what the Synchronized model does

This article describes how to use the Synchronized model and how it differs from the use of `lock(this)` statement.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Comparing with lock\(this\) on page 230](#)
- [Applying the Synchronized Model using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 230](#)
- [Applying Synchronized manually on page 232](#)
- [Working with object trees on page 233](#)

Comparing with lock(this)

Traditionally, the C# keyword `lock(this)` statement has been used to synchronize access of several threads to a single object. When an object is locked by one thread, any other object that attempts to access that object will have its execution blocked.

```
private object myLockingObject = new Object();

public void DoSomething()
{
    lock(myLockingObject)
    {
        //some code that does something in one thread at a time
    }
}
```

In this example the `myLockingObject` member variable is used as a locking object. Once a thread runs the `lock(myLockingObject)` line, all other threads that enter the `DoSomething` method will stop executing, or be blocked, until the original thread has exited the `lock(myLockingObject)` code block.

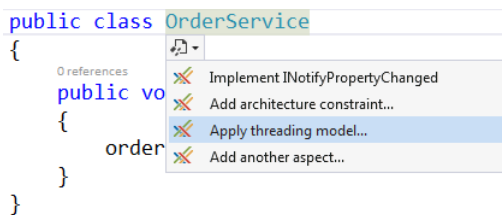
The Synchronized model is similar to using the `lock` statement around every single public method, but it has the following differences:

- It is not technically equivalent to locking the current instance (`this`). Another object is actually being locked.
- Locking is automatic for all public and internal instance methods. You cannot forget it.
- If a thread attempts to access a field without having first acquired access to the object (by invoking a public or internal method), an exception will be thrown.
- The pattern also works with entities composed of several objects organized in a tree.

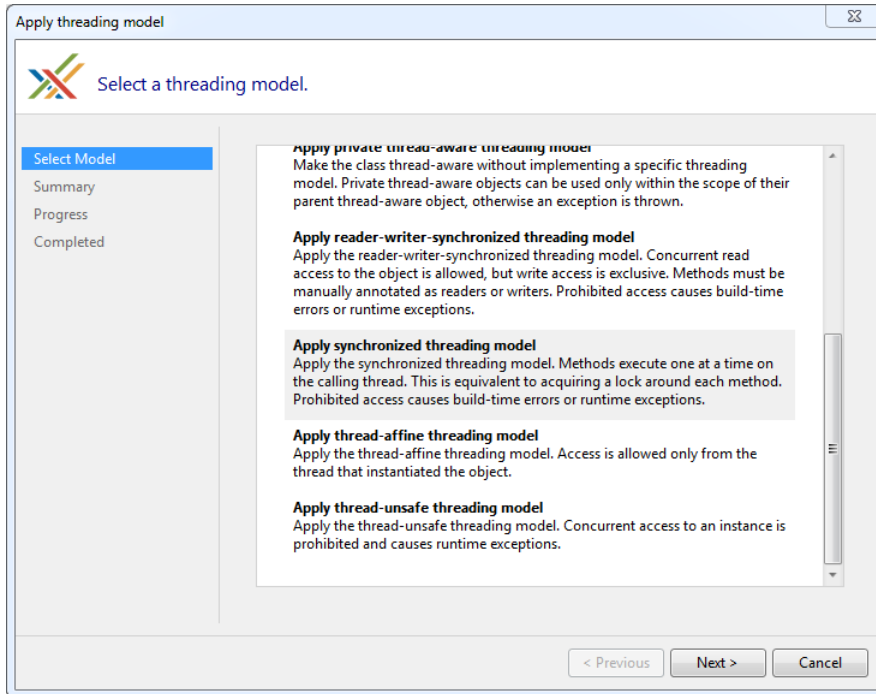
Applying the Synchronized Model using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

To apply the Synchronized threading model to your class with PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

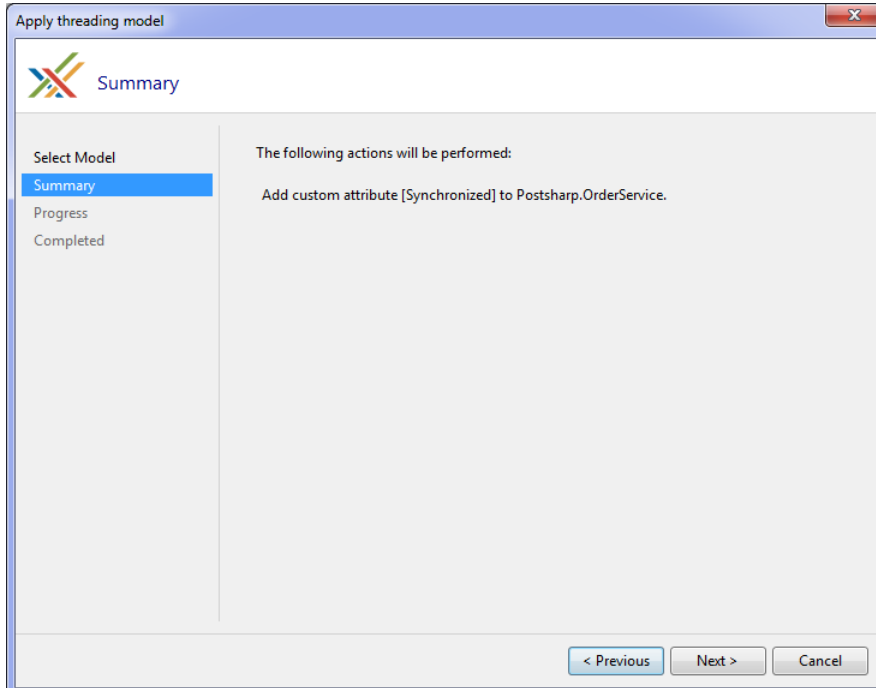
1. Place the cursor over your class name and select "Apply threading model..." from the drop down



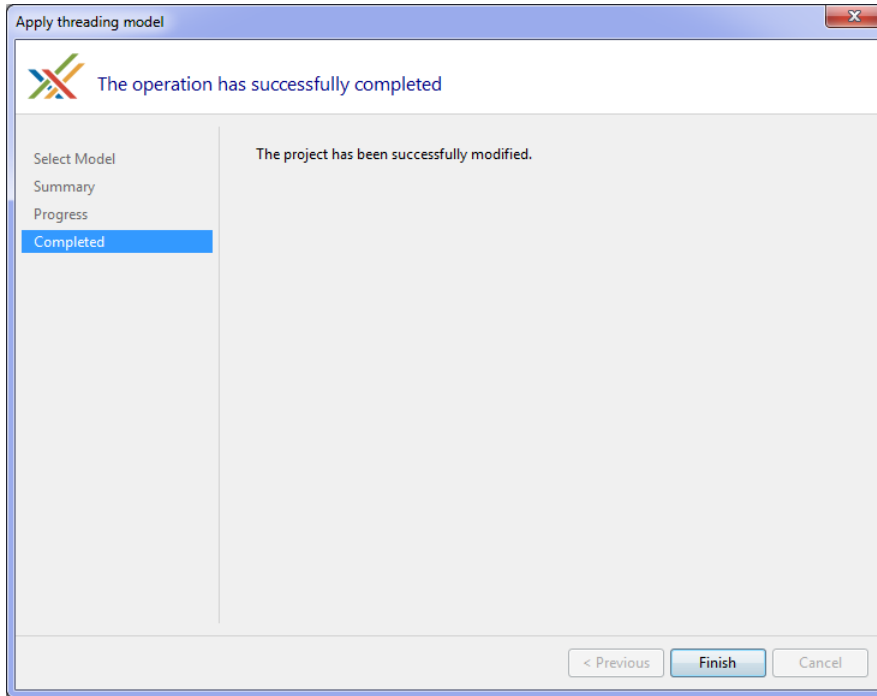
2. Select "Apply Synchronized threading model" from the Select Model tab and select "Next".



3. Confirm the actions on the Summary tab and select "Next".



4. Click **Finish** after the installation completes.



Your class will now have the `SynchronizedAttribute` and any previously missing PostSharp related references will have been added to the project.

Applying Synchronized manually

To apply the `Synchronized` threading model manually:

1. Add the `PostSharp.Patterns.Threading` NuGet package to your project.
2. Add the `SynchronizedAttribute` to the class.

In the example below the `SynchronizedAttribute` has been added to the class.

```
[Synchronized]
public class OrderService
{
    public void Process(int sequence)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("sequence {0}", sequence);
        Console.WriteLine("sleeping for 10s");

        Thread.Sleep(new TimeSpan(0,0,10));
    }
}
```

To test this we can run the following code.

```
public void Main()
{
    var orderService = new OrderService();

    var backgroundWorker = new BackgroundWorker();
    backgroundWorker.DoWork += (sender, args) => orderService.Process(1);
    backgroundWorker.RunWorkerAsync();
}
```



```
    orderService.Process(2);
}
```

The code above will attempt to execute the `Process` method on two different threads; the main thread and a background worker thread. Because these two threads are trying to access the same instance of the `OrderService` the first thread to access it will block the second. As a result, when you run the program you will first see the following.

```
sequence 2
sleeping for 10s
```

Because the `OrderService.Process` method has a `Thread.Sleep` call, the first thread accessing that method will block the second for 10 seconds. After those 10 seconds have passed the second thread will no longer be blocked and it will be able to continue its execution.

```
sequence 2
sleeping for 10s
sequence 1
sleeping for 10s
```

Working with object trees

Because the `Synchronized` model is an implementation of the `Aggregatable` pattern, all of the same behaviors of the `AggregatableAttribute` are available. For more information regarding object trees, read [Parent/Child Relationships on page 127](#).

NOTE

Once you have established your parent-child relationships you will need to apply compatible threading models to the child classes. You will want to refer to the [Compatibility of Threading Models on page 243](#) article to determine which threading model will work for the children of the `Synchronized` object.

16.6. Thread-Unsafe Threading Model

When you are dealing with multi-threaded code you will run into situations where some objects are not safe for concurrent use by several threads. Although these objects should theoretically not be accessed concurrently, it is very hard to prove that it never happens. And when it does happen, thread-unsafe data structures get corrupted, and symptoms may appear much later. These issues are typically very difficult to debug. So instead of relying on hope, it would be nice if the object threw an exception whenever it is accessed simultaneously by several threads. This is why we have the thread-unsafe threading model.

This topic contains the following sections:

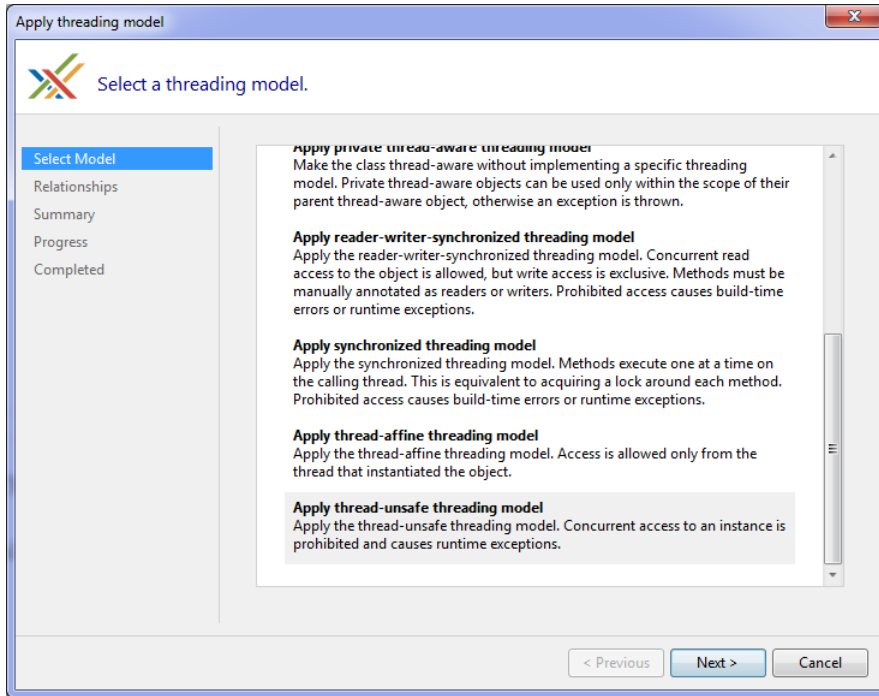
- [Marking an object as thread-unsafe on page 233](#)

Marking an object as thread-unsafe

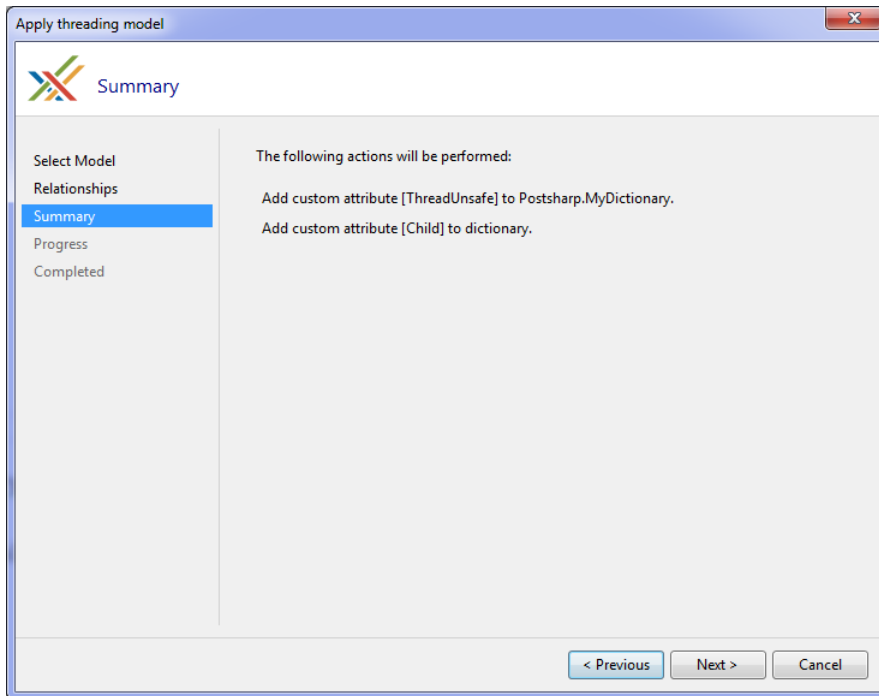
To mark an object as thread-unsafe:

1. When you don't want multiple threads to access a single instance of a given class you will want to configure `InstanceLevelAspect` thread safety. To do this, select "Apply threading model" from the smart tag on the class.

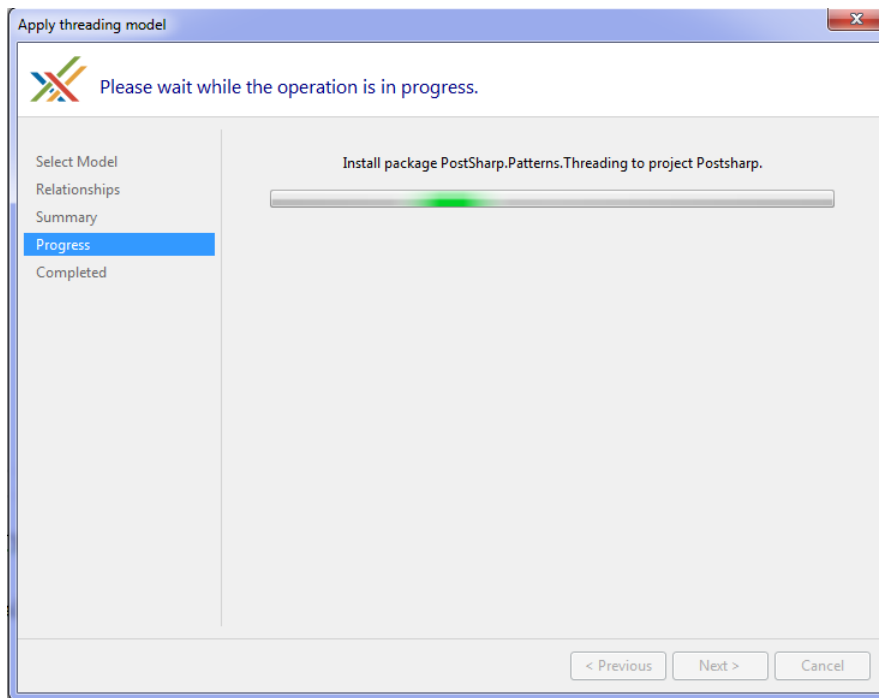
2. Choose the "Apply thread-unsafe threading model" option.



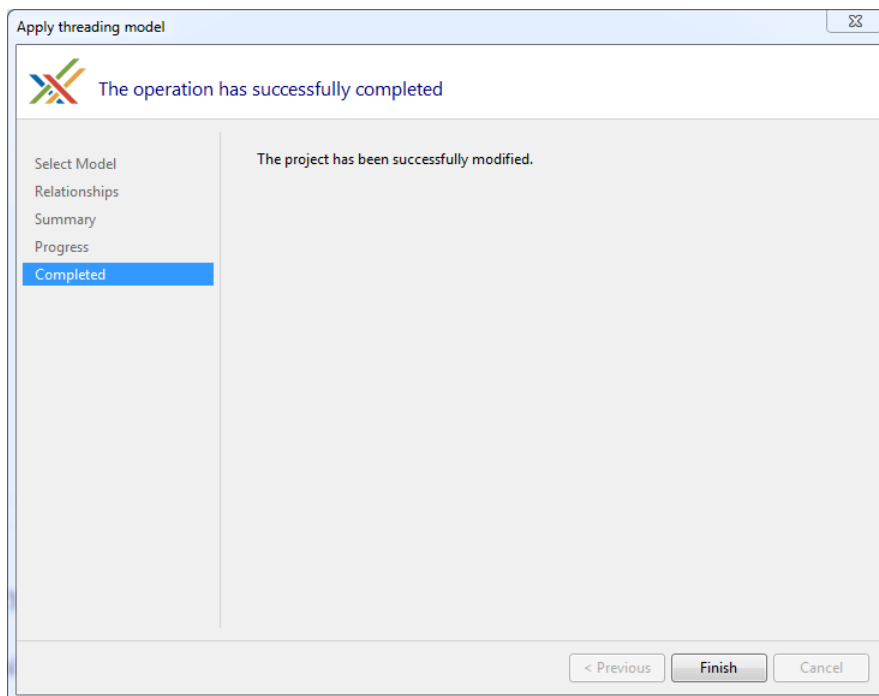
3. You will be prompted with a summary of the changes that will be made based on the configuration you selected in the wizard.



4. PostSharp will download the Threading Pattern Library and add it to your project if that hasn't been done yet.



5. Once the process has completed successfully you'll be presented with the final page of the wizard.



6. You'll notice that only one change was made to your codebase. The `[ThreadUnsafe]` attribute was added to the class you were targeting.

```
[ThreadUnsafe]
class AverageCalculator
{
    float sum;
    int count;

    public void AddSample(float n)
    {
        this.count++;
        this.sum += n;
    }

    public float GetAverage()
    {
        return this.sum / this.count;
    }
}
```

Now when your application executes no two threads will be able to access a single instance of the `AverageCalculator` class at the same time. If two threads attempt to do this, the second thread will receive a `ConcurrentAccessException`. Without the exception, there would be a slight chance that internal `sum` or `count` fields would have invalid values because the increment operations would not be atomic.

16.7. Thread Affine Threading Model

One of the simplest ways to consider threading is to limit object instance access to the thread that created the instance. This is how the Thread Affine threading model works.

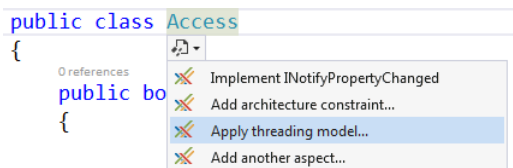
This topic contains the following sections:

- [Adding the Thread Affine model using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 236](#)
- [Adding Thread Affine manually on page 238](#)
- [Understanding runtime enforcement on page 238](#)
- [Working with object trees on page 239](#)

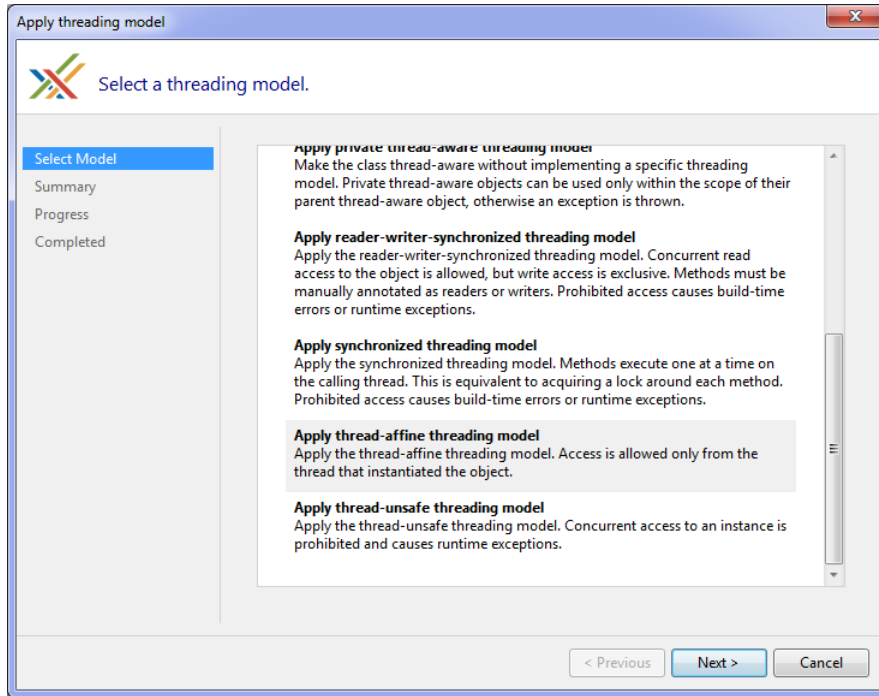
Adding the Thread Affine model using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

To apply the Thread Affine threading model to your class with PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

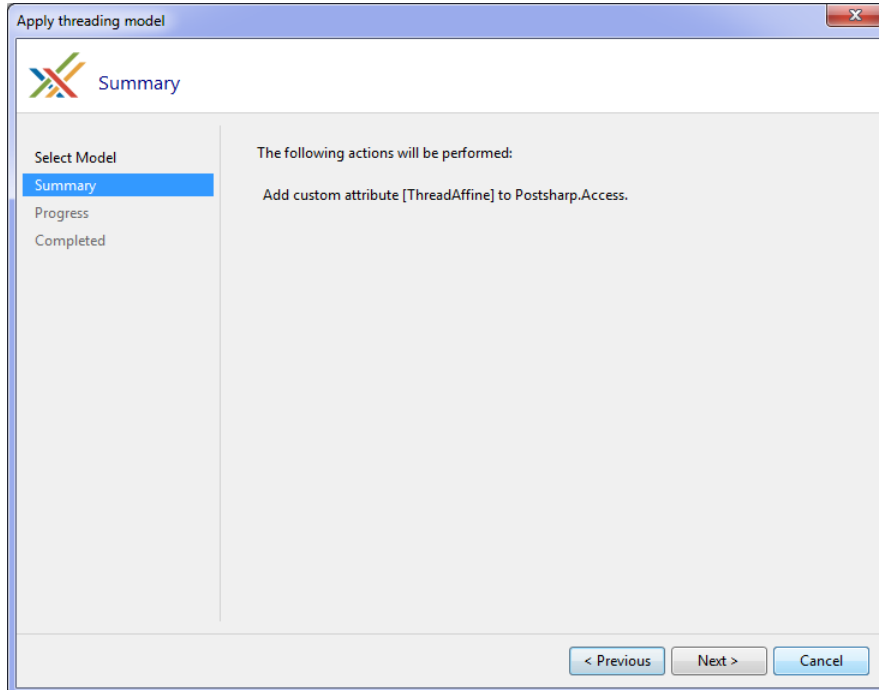
1. Place the cursor over your class name and select "Apply threading model..." from the drop down



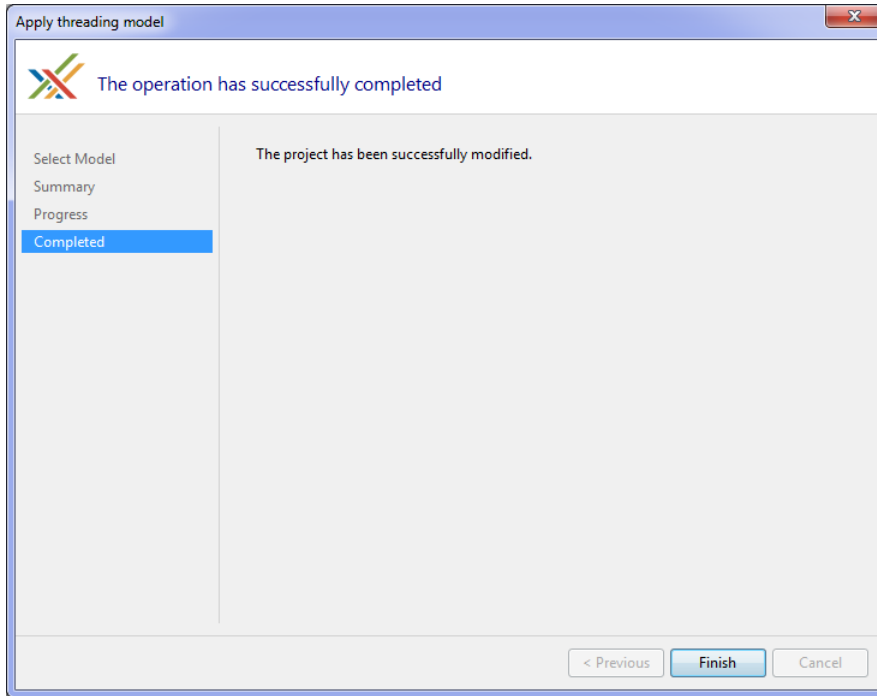
2. Select "Apply thread-affine threading model" from the Select Model tab and select "Next".



3. Confirm the actions on the Summary tab and select "Next".



4. Click **Finish** after the installation completes.



Your class will now have the `ThreadAffineAttribute` aspect and any previously missing PostSharp related references will have been added to the project.

Adding Thread Affine manually

To apply the Thread-Affine threading model manually:

1. Add the `PostSharp.Patterns.Threading` NuGet package to your project.
2. Add the `ThreadAffineAttribute` to the class.

In the example below the `ThreadAffineAttribute` has been added to the class.

```
[ThreadAffine]
public class OrderService
{
    public void Process(int sequence)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("sequence {0}", sequence);
        Console.WriteLine("sleeping for 10s");

        Thread.Sleep(new TimeSpan(0,0,10));
    }
}
```

Understanding runtime enforcement

The `ThreadAffineAttribute` does not verify your code at build-time. Instead, it injects code that enforces the model at runtime. If it detects that the object is being accessed from a different thread than the one that created it, the aspect will throw a `ThreadMismatchException` exception.

To test this the thread-affine `OrderService` class, we can run the following code:

```

public void Main()
{
    var orderService = new OrderService();

    orderService.Process(1);

    var backgroundWorker = new BackgroundWorker();
    backgroundWorker.DoWork += (sender, args) =>
    {
        try
        {
            orderService.Process(2);
        }
        catch (Exception ex)
        {
            Console.WriteLine(ex.ToString());
        }
    };
    backgroundWorker.RunWorkerAsync();
}

```

The above code will execute the `orderService.Process(1)` method and output the following to the console.

```

sequence 1
sleeping for 10s

```

That code successfully executed because the `orderService` instance was both created (via the `new` keyword) and executed on the same thread.

After the 10 second sleep period a `BackgroundWorker` thread is opened and it is set to execute the `orderService.Process(2)` method. If an exception is thrown that will be output to the console. When this piece of code executes you will see the following console output.

```

PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.ThreadMismatchException: An attempt was made to access the object from an invalid thread.
   at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.Controllers.ThreadAffineController.AcquireAccessCore(ObjectAccessLevel objectAccessLevel, ConcurrentAccessToken& concurrentAccessToken)
   at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.Controllers.ConcurrencyController.AcquireAccess(ObjectAccessLevel objectAccessLevel, ConcurrentAccessToken& concurrencyAccessToken)
   at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.ThreadAwareAttribute.OnMethodEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
   at Postsharp.OrderService.Process(Int32 sequence) in e:\working\postsharp3.1\writing\test\OrderService.cs:line 16
   at Postsharp.Program.<>c__DisplayClass1.<Synchronized>b__0(Object sender, WorkEventArgs args) in e:\working\postsharp3.1\writing\test\Program.cs:line 34

```

As you can see that a `ThreadMismatchException` exception was thrown. This happened because the `orderService` instance was created on the main thread and the `BackgroundWorker` thread attempted to execute it. Because the `OrderService` class has been marked with the `ThreadAffineAttribute` attribute only the thread that creates an instance of it can access that instance.

Working with object trees

Because the Thread-Affine model is an implementation of the `Aggregatable` pattern, all of the same behaviors of the `AggregatableAttribute` are available. For more information regarding object trees, read [Parent/Child Relationships on page 127](#).

NOTE

Once you have established your parent-child relationships you will need to apply compatible threading models to the child classes. You will want to refer to the [Compatibility of Threading Models on page 243](#) article to determine which threading model will work for the children of the Thread-Affine object.

16.8. Making a Whole Project or Solution Thread Safe

When you want to make a large application thread-safe with PostSharp threading models, it can become difficult to remember to assign a threading model to every single class. In this situation, you can add the thread-safety policy to your project or solution.

The thread-safety policy emits warnings in two situations:

- classes that are not assigned to a threading model,
- static fields that are not read-only or not of a thread-safe type.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The thread-safety policy does not make your application thread-safe by itself. What the thread-safety policy does is to remind you to use threading models in your code. It is the use of threading models that makes your application thread-safe.

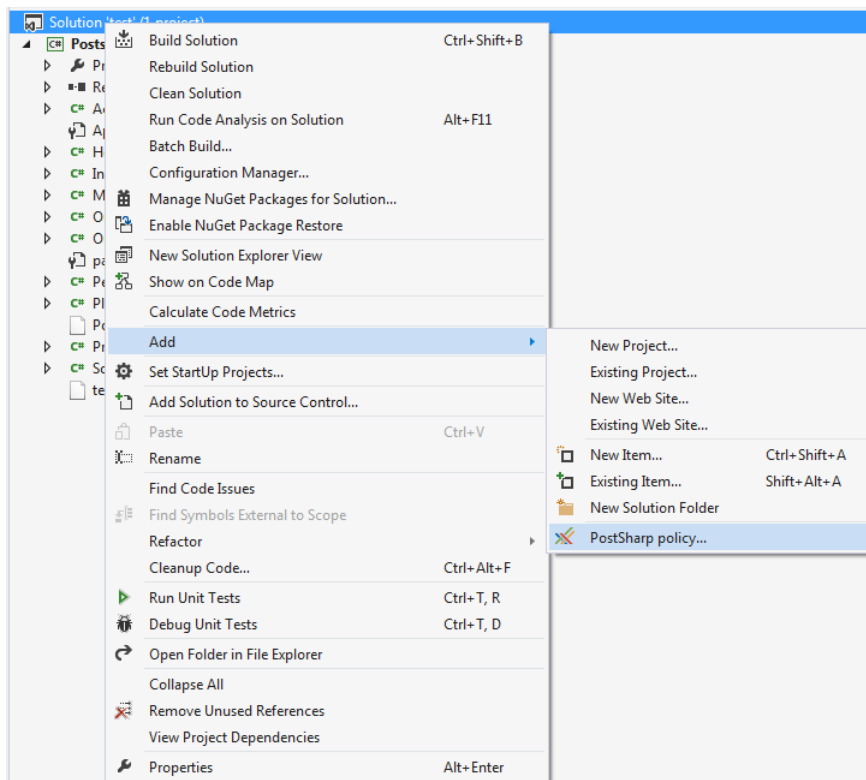
This topic contains the following sections:

- [Adding the thread-safety policy using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio.](#) on page 240
- [Adding the thread-safety policy to a project manually.](#) on page 241
- [Adding the thread-safety policy to a whole solution manually.](#) on page 241

Adding the thread-safety policy using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio.

To apply the thread-safety policy to your application with PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

1. Right click on your solution or your project in **Solution Explorer**, select **Add** followed by **PostSharp Policy...**



2. In the **Add PostSharp policy** wizard, expand **Threading** and select **Thread Safety**.
3. If you clicked on the solution, select the projects that you would like to add the policy to.
4. Review the configuration that you have selected and click **Next**.
5. Close the wizard when the process had completed by clicking **Finish**.

If you added the policy to the whole solution, the result of running this wizard is that a *pssln* file has been added to your project. The *pssln* file contains an entry that enables deadlock detection across all projects in your solution.

```
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"xmlns:t="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Threading;assembly
  <Multicast>
    <t:ThreadSafetyPolicy/>
  </Multicast>
</Project>
```

Adding the thread-safety policy to a project manually.

To add the thread-safety policy to a project manually:

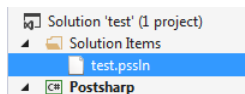
1. Add the *PostSharp.Patterns.Threading* NuGet package to the project.
2. Add the *ThreadSafetyPolicy* any C# file. We recommend you add it to a new file named *GlobalAspects.cs*.

```
using PostSharp.Patterns.Threading;
[assembly: ThreadSafetyPolicy]
```

Adding the thread-safety policy to a whole solution manually.

To manually add the thread-safety policy to a whole solution:

1. Open the solution's *pssln* file. This can be found under the Solution Items folder in Visual Studio's Solution Explorer.



If the *pssln* file doesn't exist manually add the file at the solution level. Name the file with the same name as your solution and the *pssln* file extension.

2. If you had to create the *pssln* file and add it to your solution add the following XML to it. If the *pssln* file already existed in your project proceed to the next step.

```
<?xmlversion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"xmlns:t="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Threading
</Project>
```

3. Add a multicast attribute to the Project element that will add *ThreadSafetyPolicy* to all the projects in the solution.

```
<?xmlversion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"xmlns:t="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Threading
  <Multicast>
    <t:ThreadSafetyPolicy/>
  </Multicast>
</Project>
```

4. Add the *PostSharp.Patterns.Threading* NuGet package to all projects in the solution.

Once you save the *pssln* file you will have added thread-safety policy to all projects in your solution.

16.9. Opting In and Out From Thread Safety

By default, PostSharp enforces thread safety for all instance fields and all public and internal methods of any class to which you applied a threading model.

However, there are times when you want to opt-out from this mechanism for a specific field or method. A typical reason is that access to the field is synchronized manually using a different mechanism.

This section shows how to override the default thread safety implemented by PostSharp.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Opting out from thread-safety verification for a method on page 242](#)
- [Opting out from thread-safety for a field on page 242](#)
- [Opting in for thread safety for callback methods on page 243](#)

Opting out from thread-safety verification for a method

To disable enforcement of the class-level threading model for a specific method, add the `ExplicitlySynchronizedAttribute` attribute to that method.

In the following example, this custom attribute allows us to implement the `ToString` in a class that respects the Actor model. Without the custom attribute, this would not have been possible because non-void public methods must have the `async` keyword.

```
[Actor]
class Player
{
    private readonly string name;

    [ExplicitlySynchronized]
    public override string ToString()
    {
        return this.name;
    }
}
```

When used on a method, the `ExplicitlySynchronizedAttribute` attribute has several effects:

1. Lock-based aspects such as `SynchronizedAttribute` or `ReaderWriterSynchronizedAttribute` will not attempt to acquire a lock before executing this method.
2. Accesses to fields are not verified during the whole execution of the method (for the current thread).
3. All build-time verifications are disabled for this method.

CAUTION NOTE

By using the `ExplicitlySynchronizedAttribute` custom attribute, you are significantly increasing the risk that multithreading defects in user code go undetected by PostSharp. Code using `ExplicitlySynchronizedAttribute` should be more carefully covered by reviews and tests.

Opting out from thread-safety for a field

To disable enforcement of the class-level threading model for a specific field, add the `ExplicitlySynchronizedAttribute` attribute to the field:

```
[Actor]
class MyActor
{
```

```

[ExplicitlySynchronized]
int counter;

public void FooBar()
{
    // This line would throw an exception without [ExplicitlySynchronized].
    Task.Factory.StartNew(() => Interlocked.Increment( ref this.counter ));
}
}

```

When used on a field, the `ExplicitlySynchronizedAttribute` attribute has several effects:

1. Accesses to the field are never verified
2. All build-time verifications are disabled for this method.

Opting in for thread safety for callback methods

By default, thread safety is ensured when a thread first invokes a public or internal method of an object. The underlying motivation is that public and internal methods are the primary way how a thread can enter an object. Another way is to enter an object through a delegate call to a private method. By default, PostSharp does not ensure thread safety for private methods. If you register a callback method, you need to add the `EntryPointAttribute` custom attribute on this method.

In the following code snippet, the `OnCreated` method is invoked from a background thread by the `FileSystemWatcher` class. The `InputQueueWatcher` is thread-safe thanks to the `SynchronizedAttribute` aspect.

```

[Synchronized]
class InputQueueWatcher
{
    FileSystemWatcher watcher;

    [Child]
    AdvisableCollection<string> files = new AdvisableCollection<string>();

    public InputQueueWatcher(string path)
    {
        this.watcher = new FileSystemWatcher();
        this.watcher.Path = path;
        this.watcher.NotifyFilter = NotifyFilters.LastWrite | NotifyFilters.FileName | NotifyFilters.DirectoryName;
        this.watcher.Filter = "*.xml";
        this.watcher.Created += new FileSystemEventHandler(OnCreated);
    }

    [EntryPoint]
    private void OnCreated(object source, FileSystemEventArgs e)
    {
        // Without [EntryPoint], the following line would throw ThreadAccessException.
        this.files.Add(e.FullPath);
    }

    public ICollection Files { get { return this.files; } }
}

```

16.10. Compatibility of Threading Models

Required introduction

Compatibility Matrix

Parent	Actor	Freezable	Immutable	Private	Reader-Writer Synchronized	Synchronized	Thread Affine	Thread Unsafe
Actor	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Freezable	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Immutable	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Reader-Writer Synchronized	Yes (Own)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (Shared)	No	No	No
Synchronized	Yes (Own)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (Shared)	Yes (Shared)	No	No
Thread Affine	Yes (Own)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes (Shared)
Thread Unsafe	Yes (Own)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes (Shared)
Private								

16.11. Enabling and Disabling Runtime Verification

When you apply a threading model to a class, PostSharp adds two kinds of behaviors: behaviors that are necessary to implement the semantic of the threading model (for instance acquiring a lock or dispatching a method call) and behaviors that validate that the source code is valid against the chosen threading model (for instance that no field is written if the current method does not have write access). The second set of behaviors are called *runtime verifications*. By default, runtime verifications are enabled in the Debug build and disabled in the Release build.

This section explains how to enable or disable runtime verification.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Understanding the default configuration on page 244](#)
- [Enabling or disabling runtime verification for a whole project on page 244](#)
- [Enabling and disabling runtime verification for a specific class on page 246](#)

Understanding the default configuration

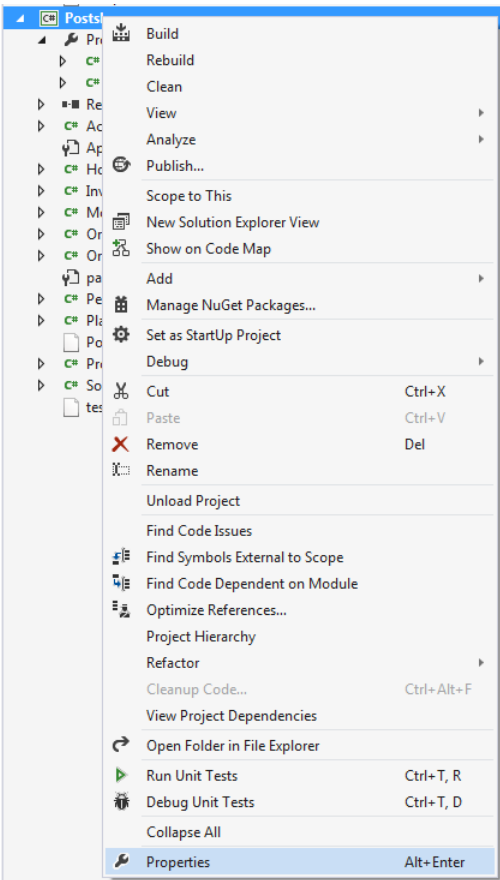
By default, runtime verification is disabled if the **Optimize Code** compiler flag is enabled. Therefore, runtime verification is enabled by default in the Debug build and disabled in the Release build.

Enabling or disabling runtime verification for a whole project

Perform the following steps to enable runtime verification by using the Project Settings dialog

Enabling Runtime Verification in Project Properties

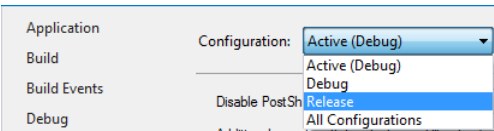
- 1. Open the project's Properties window.



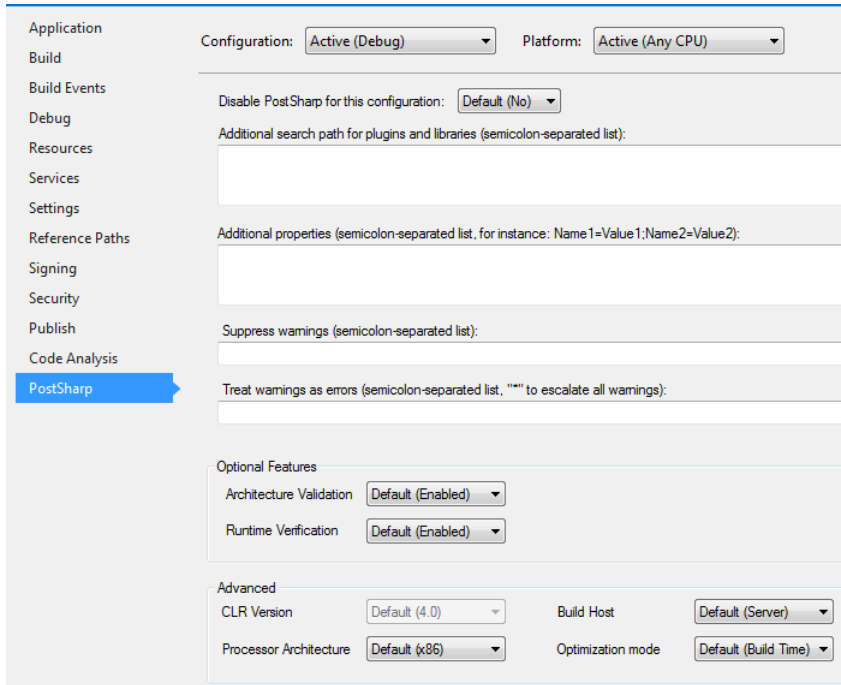
- 2. Select the build configuration that you want to enable runtime verification on.

NOTE

By default, projects have two different build configurations: Debug and Release. Each build configuration can, and by default does, have a different behavior for runtime verification.

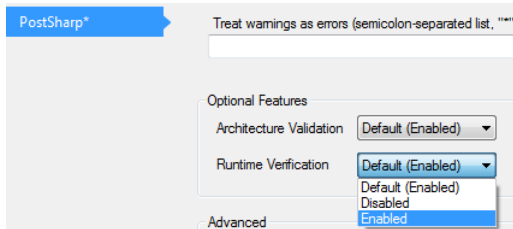


- Open the PostSharp tab.



- In the Optional Features section there is a Runtime Verification dropdown. The dropdown has three options in it; Default, Disabled, and Enabled.

The Default option will include either (Enabled) or (Disabled) after it. This value will change based on the Optimize Code compiler flag setting. If the compiler flag is disabled the dropdown option will read Default (Enabled) and if the Optimize Code flag is enabled the dropdown option will read Default (Disabled).



Enabling and disabling runtime verification for a specific class

You can override the project-level configuration of the runtime verification setting by setting the `RuntimeVerificationEnabled` property of the threading model custom attribute. This property is defined by the `ThreadAwareAttribute` class, from which all threading model attributes derive.

```
[ThreadAffine(RuntimeVerificationEnabled = true)]
```

If the property is not manually set it derives its value from the setting on the project properties page. If you want to override the default value all you need to do is set the value of the `RuntimeVerificationEnabled` to true or false.

16.12. Run-Time Performance of Threading Model

When runtime verification of threading models is disabled (see [Enabling and Disabling Runtime Verification on page 244](#)), there is almost no runtime overhead of using PostSharp threading models compared to implementing thread synchronization manually, at least after the object model has been instantiated.

However, PostSharp threading models come at a high memory cost, and there may be a significant performance overhead when instantiating large object graphs, unless care is taken.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Memory Consumption on page 247](#)
- [Instantiation of Large Object Trees on page 247](#)
- [Assigning the Concurrency Controller Manually on page 248](#)

Memory Consumption

As most complex aspects implemented with PostSharp, threading models have a high memory cost. Several object instances are needed for each instance of a thread-safe class. If memory consumption is a concern, you should not use threading models on classes that have a very high number of instances.

Instantiation of Large Object Trees

Threading models can have significant impact on the cost of creating large object trees. In some situations, the cost of instantiating the tree can become $O(n^2)$ instead of $O(n)$. The performance issue affects only the following threading models:

- Synchronized,
- Reader-Writer Synchronized and
- Thread-Unsafe.

The performance issue stems from the fact that each root node in a tree needs its own instance of its concurrency controller.

Consider the scenario when you build a tree using a depth-first approach. That means that you would first instantiate the leaves of the tree, then the parent of the leaves, then the parent of the parent, and so on until you reach the root. Depth-first tree instantiation is a common strategy when you instantiate immutable trees. Note however that the immutable model is not affected by this issue.

When you start instantiating the leaves, and until the leaf is assigned to a parent, every leaf the root of its own tree. This means that an instance of the concurrency controller may be created if needed. When you instantiate the first-level parents, a new concurrency controller is created for each first-level parent. When the leaf is assigned to its parent, the concurrency controllers of the leaves will be replaced by the concurrency controller of the immediate parent.

The same phenomenon occurs at each level of the tree. Whenever you assign a sub-tree to a parent, the concurrency controller of whole subtree is reassigned. Replacing the concurrency controller of a subtree is an $O(n)$ operation, and it should be achieved for each of the n nodes, which means that totally the concurrency controllers will be reassigned $O(n^2)$ times.

During the operation of instantiating the tree, $O(n)$ controllers may be instantiated. However, at the end of the operation, a single controller will remain in memory.

To prevent PostSharp from allocating $O(n)$ controllers and performing $O(n^2)$ reassignments, you need to manually assign newly-created objects to a concurrency controller.

Assigning the Concurrency Controller Manually

To avoid excessive creation and assignment of concurrency controllers, you can use the `WithConcurrencyController(IConcurrencyController)` method to set the default controller for newly-created objects.

The following code snippet illustrates the use of `WithConcurrencyController(IConcurrencyController)`. Thanks to this method, a single concurrency controller instance is created, and each node is assigned only once to this concurrency controller, amounting to 3 assignments for 3 nodes. Without the use of this method, 3 instances of the concurrency controller would have been created, and totally 5 assignments would be done.

```
using ( ThreadAwareServices.WithConcurrencyController( ThreadAwareServices.CreateSynchronizedController() ) )
{
    var child1 = new SynchronizedObject();
    var child2 = new SynchronizedObject();

    var parent = new SynchronizedObject();
    parent.Children.Add( child1 );
    parent.Children.Add( child2 );
}
```


CHAPTER 17

Dispatching a Method to Background

Long running processes will block the further execution of code while the system waits for them to complete. When you are building applications it's common to push long running processes to the background so that other processes can continue without waiting. Two common ways of doing this are with asynchronous processing and the `BackgroundWorker`. Both require a lot of boiler plate code to push execution to another thread.

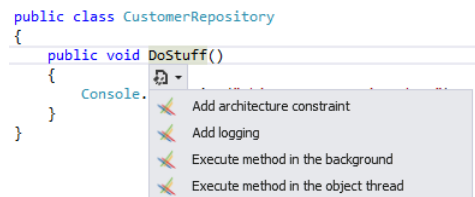
PostSharp provides you with the ability to push execution of a method to a background thread without having to worry about all of the boiler plate code.

To add `[Background]` attribute:

1. Find the method that you want to push to the background for execution.

```
public class CustomerRepository
{
    public void DoStuff()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Things are getting done");
    }
}
```

2. Select "Execute method in the background" from the Smart Tag available under the method name.



```
public class CustomerRepository
{
    public void DoStuff()
    {
        Console.
    }
}
```

3. You'll notice that only one change was made to your codebase. The `[Background]` attribute was added to the class you were targeting. Now when this method executes in your application it will occur in another thread and will allow for the calling code to continue executing.

```
public class CustomerRepository
{
    [Background]
    public void DoStuff()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Things are getting done");
    }
}
```

Those simple steps are all that is required for you to declare that a method should be executed in a background thread.

CHAPTER 18

Dispatching a Method to the UI Thread

When you are building desktop or mobile user interfaces, parts of your code may execute on background threads. However, the user interface itself can be accessed only from the UI thread. Therefore, it is often necessary to dispatch execution of code from a background thread to the foreground thread.

Traditionally, thread dispatching has been implemented using the `Invoke(Delegate)` method in WinForms or the `Dispatcher` class in XAML. However, this results in a large amount of boilerplate, making the code unreadable.

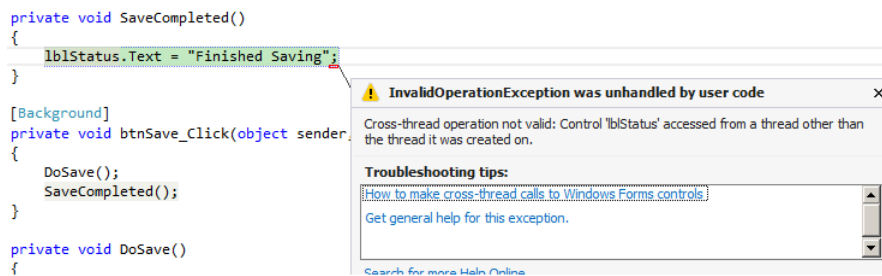
The `DispatchedAttribute` aspect addresses the issue of thread dispatching by forcing a method to execute on the thread that created the object (typically the foreground thread).

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Forcing a method to execute on the foreground thread on page 251](#)
- [Executing a method asynchronously on page 252](#)
- [Executing async methods in the foreground thread on page 252](#)

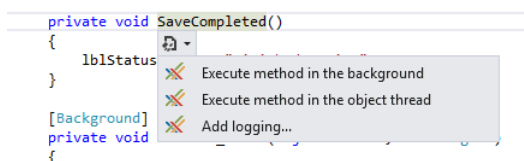
Forcing a method to execute on the foreground thread

Once you've added background processing to the button click, you will need a way to have the `SaveCompleted` method run on the UI thread. If you don't do this you will get an `InvalidOperationException` because setting the `lblStatus.Text` property is a cross threading operation.



Here's how you can fix this:

1. Your code has encapsulated the UI thread interaction in the `SaveCompleted` method. Open the smart tag on that method and choose to "execute the method in the object thread". This tells PostSharp to configure this method to execute in the thread that the class containing the method is executing in.



2. After selecting the smart tag option you will be returned to your code and you'll notice that the only change was the addition of the `[DispatchedAttribute]` attribute to the `SaveCompleted` method.

```
[Dispatched]
private void SaveCompleted()
{
    lblStatus.Text = "Finished Saving";
}
```

NOTE

Note, that `[Dispatched]` attribute can be applied only to instance methods of UI controls (WinForms or WPF), or to any class implementing the `IDispatcherObject` interface manually.

Now if you run your code you will no longer receive the `InvalidOperationException` and instead will see the label on the UI update. All of the `Save` functionality will occur in a separate thread which prevents the user interface from locking up while that is happening.

Executing a method asynchronously

By default, the `DispatchedAttribute` forces the target method to execute synchronously on the foreground thread, which means that the background thread will wait until the method execution has completed. This waiting causes some performance overhead. Additionally, synchronous execution is not always useful. If the method has no return value and no side effect of interest for the calling thread, the method could be safely executed asynchronously, which means the calling thread would not need to wait for the method execution to complete on the foreground thread, so that the calling thread would continue its execution immediately after having enqueued the call to the foreground thread.

You can enable asynchronous execution of a dispatched method by passing the true value to the parameter of the `DispatchedAttribute(Boolean)` constructor, for instance:

```
[Dispatched(true)]
private void SaveCompleted()
{
    lblStatus.Text = "Finished Saving";
}
```

Executing async methods in the foreground thread

When you use the `DispatchedAttribute` aspect on asynchronous methods (`async` keyword in C#), the method is guaranteed to execute on the foreground thread even when it is invoked from a background thread.

CHAPTER 19

Detecting Deadlocks at Runtime

A common problem that is found in multi-threaded code is that multiple threads enter a situation where they are waiting for each other to finish. This is a deadlock situation and neither thread will complete executing in this situation. Because the threads are waiting on each other, neither is capable of providing diagnostic information to aid in debugging the situation. The `DeadlockDetectionPolicy` helps provide this information.

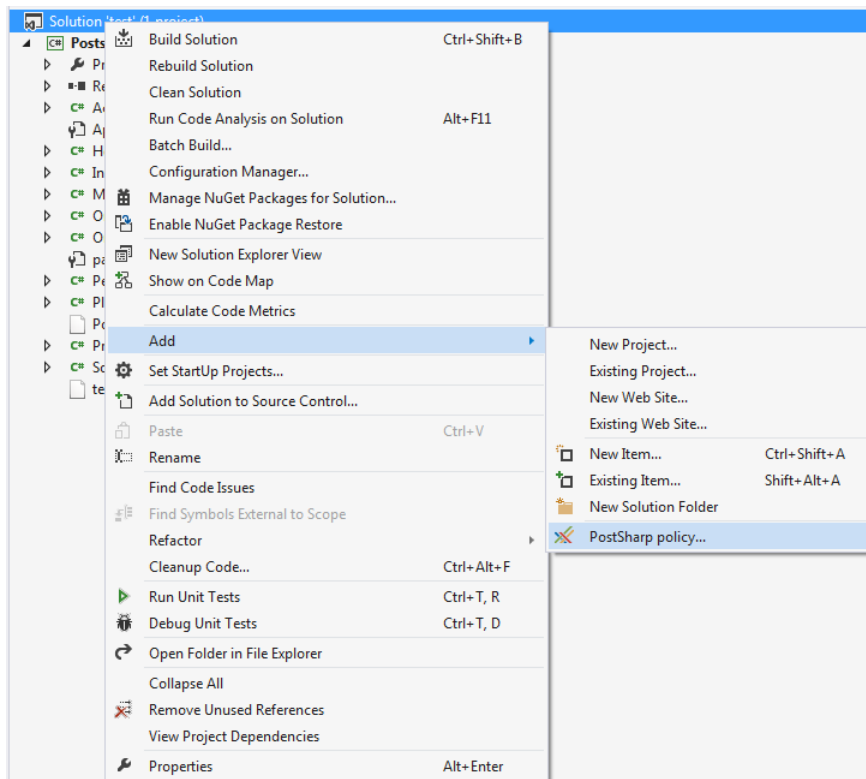
This topic contains the following sections:

- [Adding deadlock detection using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 253](#)
- [Manually adding deadlock detection to a project on page 257](#)
- [Manually adding deadlock detection to the whole solution on page 257](#)
- [Deadlock detection on page 258](#)

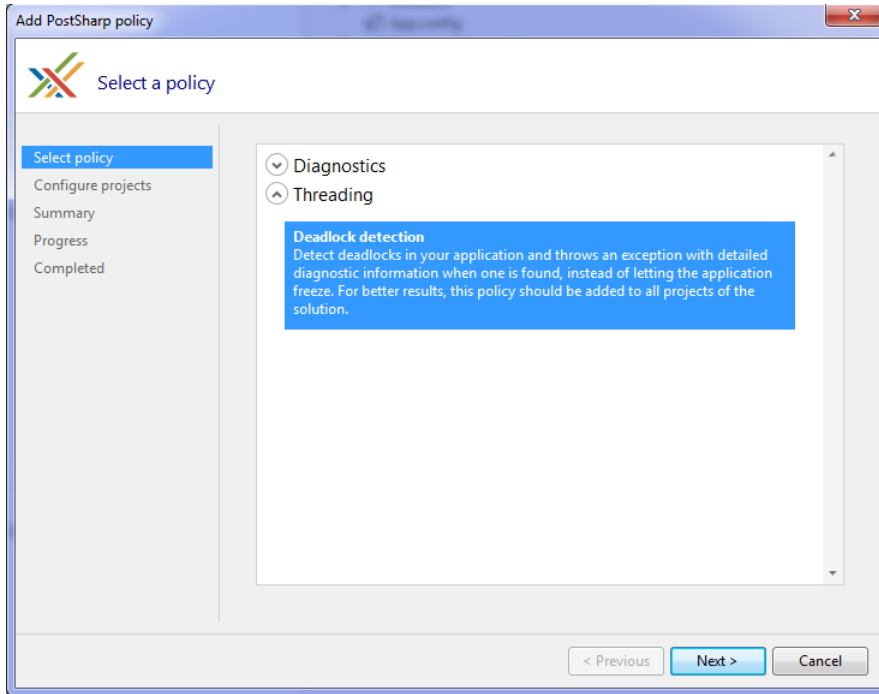
Adding deadlock detection using PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio

To apply the deadlock detection to your application with PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio:

1. Right click on your solution in Solution Explorer, select Add followed by PostSharp Policy...



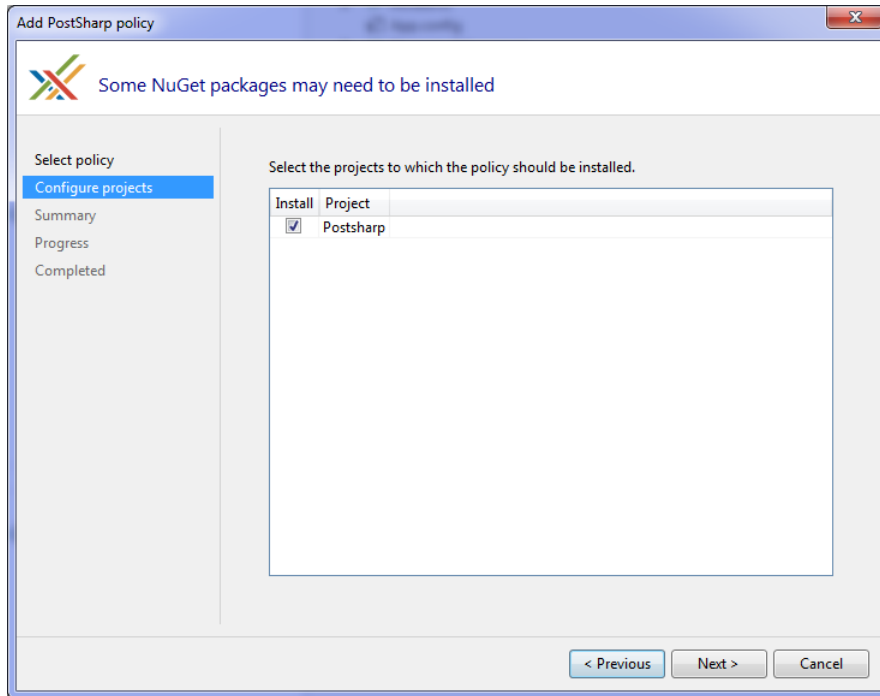
2. In the Add PostSharp policy wizard, expand Threading and select Deadlock detection.



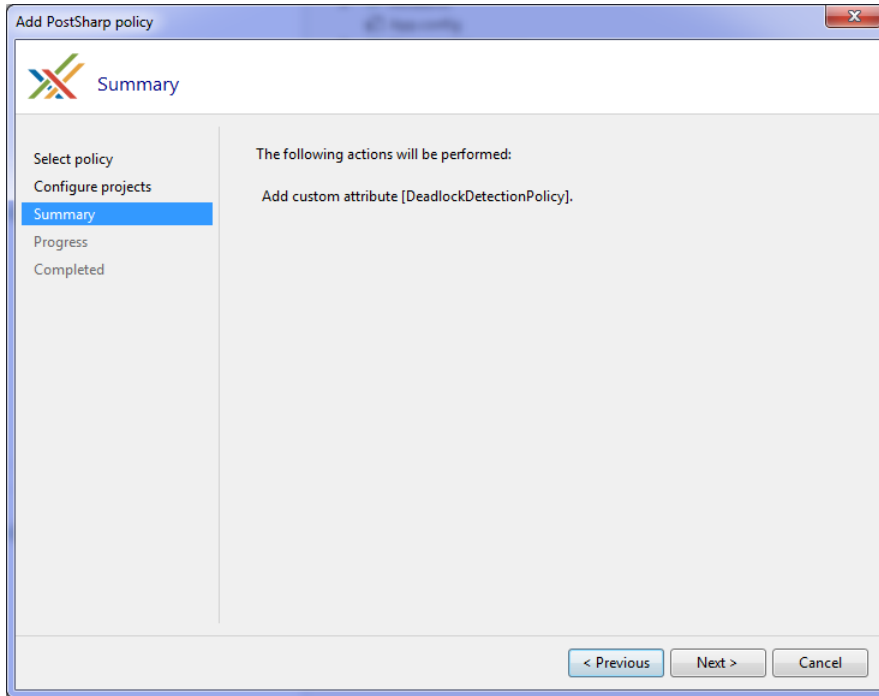
3. Select the projects that you would like to add deadlock detection to.

NOTE

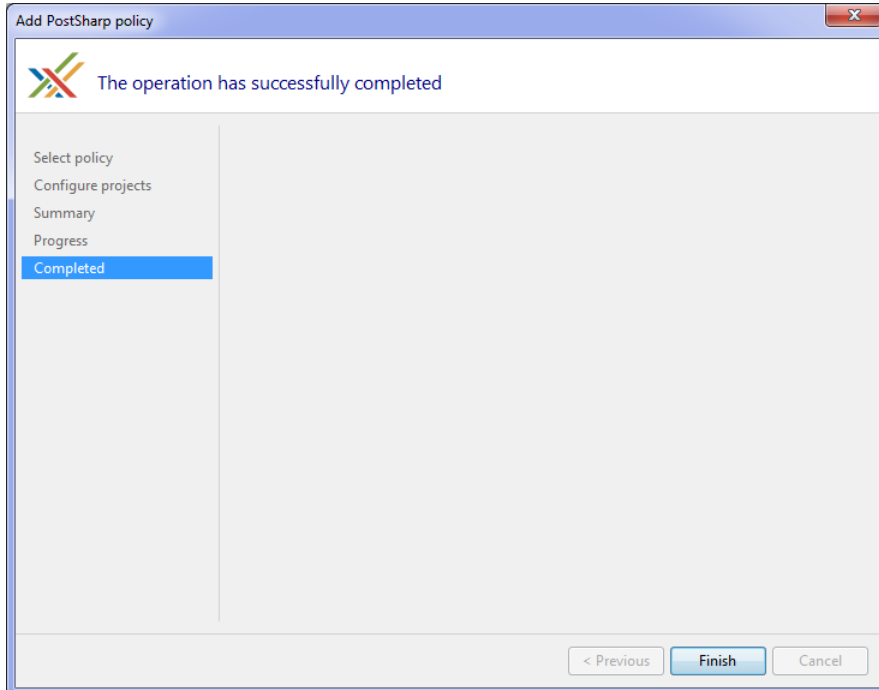
You will need to add this to every project in your application. Excluding projects could cause your application to fail.



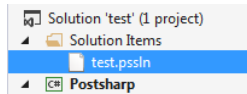
4. Review the configuration that you have selected and click Next.



5. Close the wizard when the process had completed by clicking Finish.



The result of running this wizard is that a *pssln* file has been added to your project.



The *pssl* file contains an entry that enables deadlock detection across all projects in your solution.

```
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"xmlns:t="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Threading;assembly
  <Multicast>
    <t:DeadlockDetectionPolicy/>
  </Multicast>
</Project>
```

Manually adding deadlock detection to a project

To manually add deadlock detection to a project:

1. Add the *PostSharp.Patterns.Threading* NuGet package to the project.
2. Add the *DeadlockDetectionPolicy* custom attribute to in any C# file. We recommend you add it to a new file named *GlobalAspects.cs*.

```
[assembly: DeadlockDetectionPolicy]
```

NOTE

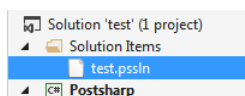
You will need to add this to every project in your application. Excluding projects could cause your application to fail.

Manually adding deadlock detection to the whole solution

Adding deadlock detection at a solution level can also be done manually. This can be done by adding an entry to the *pssl* file in the solution.

To manually add deadlock detection to a solution:

1. Open the solution's *pssl* file. This can be found under the Solution Items folder in Visual Studio's Solution Explorer.



If the *pssl* file doesn't exist manually add the file at the solution level. Name the file with the same name as your solution and the *pssl* file extension.

2. If you had to create the *pssl* file and add it to your solution add the following XML to it. If the *pssl* file already existed in your project proceed to the next step.

```
<?xmlversion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"xmlns:t="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Threading
</Project>
```

3. Add a multicast attribute to the Project element that will add `DeadlockDetectionPolicy` to all the projects in the solution.

```
<?xmlversion="1.0"encoding="utf-8"?>
<Projectxmlns="http://schemas.postsharp.org/1.0/configuration"xmlns:t="clr-namespace:PostSharp.Patterns.Threading;assembly=PostSharp.Patterns.Threading">
  <Multicast>
    <t:DeadlockDetectionPolicy/>
  </Multicast>
</Project>
```

4. Add the `PostSharp.Patterns.Threading` NuGet package to all projects in the solution.

Once you save the `pssln` file you will have added deadlock detection to all projects in your solution.

Deadlock detection

When a deadlock is detected a `DeadlockException` is thrown. The exception will include a detailed report of all the threads and locks involved in the deadlock. Here is an example of that.

```

PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockException: Deadlock detected. The following
synchronization elements form a cycle: #0={{Thread 9, Name=""}}; #1={{System.Ob
ject:Lock}}; #2={{Thread 10, Name=""}}; #3={{System.Object:Lock}}
-- start of stack trace of thread 10 (Name=""):
at System.Threading.Monitor.ReliableEnterTimeout(Object obj, Int32 timeout, B
oolean& lockTaken)
at System.Threading.Monitor.TryEnter(Object obj, Int32 millisecondsTimeout, B
oolean& lockTaken)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetectionPolicy.MonitorEnhancements.<
>C_DisplayClass3f.<EnterInternal>b__3b(Nothing _, Int32 timeout)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetectionPolicy.Helper.NoTimeoutAcqui
re[TResult,TContext](Func`1 enterWaiting, Func`3 waitAndCheckIfFinished, Action`
1 convertWaitingToAcquired, Action`1 exitWaiting, Func`2 getResult)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetectionPolicy.MonitorEnhancements.<
>C_DisplayClass3f.<EnterInternal>b__39()
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetection.DeadlockMonitor.Execute[T](
Func`1 callback)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetectionPolicy.MonitorEnhancements.E
nterInternal(Object obj, Boolean& lockTaken)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetectionPolicy.MonitorEnhancements.E
nter_Object_Bool(MethodInterceptionArgs args)
at PostSharp.ImplementationDetails_c23235bd.<.>z__Aspects.<System.Threading.Mo
nitor.Enter>b__(Object obj, Boolean& lockTaken) in :line 0
at PostSharp.MonthEndProcessing.ProcessSalaries() in e:\working\postsharp3.1w
riting\test\MonthEndProcessing.cs:line 15
at PostSharp.Program.<.>C_DisplayClass1.<Deadlock>b__0(Object sender, DoWorkE
ventArgs args) in e:\working\postsharp3.1writing\test\Program.cs:line 31
at System.ComponentModel.BackgroundWorker.OnDoWork(DoWorkEventArgs e)
at System.ComponentModel.BackgroundWorker.WorkerThreadStart(Object argument)
at System.Runtime.Remoting.Messaging.StackBuilderSink._PrivateProcessMessage(
IntPtr md, Object[] args, Object server, Object[]& outArgs)
at System.Runtime.Remoting.Messaging.StackBuilderSink.AsyncProcessMessage(IMe
ssage msg, IMessageSink replySink)
at System.Runtime.Remoting.Proxies.AgileAsyncWorkerItem.ThreadPoolCallback(O
bject o)
at System.Threading.QueueUserWorkItemCallback.WaitCallback_Context(Object sta
te)
at System.Threading.ExecutionContext.RunInternal(ExecutionContext executionCo
ntext, ContextCallback callback, Object state, Boolean preserveSyncCtx)
at System.Threading.ExecutionContext.Run(ExecutionContext executionContext, C
ontextCallback callback, Object state, Boolean preserveSyncCtx)
at System.Threading.QueueUserWorkItemCallback.System.Threading.IThreadPoolWor
kItem.ExecuteWorkItem()
at System.Threading.ThreadPoolWorkQueue.Dispatch()
at System.Threading._ThreadPoolWaitCallback.PerformWaitCallback()
-- end of stack trace of thread 10
-- start of stack trace of thread 9 (Name=""):
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetection.DeadlockMonitor.AnalyzeDead
lockCycle(IEnumerable`1 cycle, StringBuilder messageBuilder, Thread[]& threadsIn
Deadlock, StackTrace[]& stackTraces)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetection.DeadlockMonitor.ProcessDead
lock(IEnumerable`1 cycle)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetection.DeadlockMonitor.DetectDeadl
ocksInternal(Thread startThread)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetectionPolicy.Helper.NoTimeoutAcqui
re[TResult,TContext](Func`1 enterWaiting, Func`3 waitAndCheckIfFinished, Action`
1 convertWaitingToAcquired, Action`1 exitWaiting, Func`2 getResult)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetectionPolicy.MonitorEnhancements.<
>C_DisplayClass3f.<EnterInternal>b__39()
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetection.DeadlockMonitor.Execute[T](
Func`1 callback)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetectionPolicy.MonitorEnhancements.E
nterInternal(Object obj, Boolean& lockTaken)
at PostSharp.Patterns.Threading.DeadlockDetectionPolicy.MonitorEnhancements.E
nter_Object_Bool(MethodInterceptionArgs args)
at PostSharp.ImplementationDetails_c23235bd.<.>z__Aspects.<System.Threading.Mo
nitor.Enter>b__(Object obj, Boolean& lockTaken) in :line 0
at PostSharp.MonthEndProcessing.ProcessBonuses() in e:\working\postsharp3.1w
riting\test\MonthEndProcessing.cs:line 26
at PostSharp.Program.Deadlock() in e:\working\postsharp3.1writing\test\Progra
m.cs:line 34

```


PART 5

Custom Patterns

CHAPTER 20

Developing Custom Aspects

This chapter describes how to build your own aspect. It includes the following topics:

Section	Description
Developing Simple Aspects on page 263	This topic describes how to create aspects that contain a single transformation (named <i>simple aspects</i>). It describes all kinds of simple aspects.
Understanding Aspect Lifetime and Scope on page 304	This topic explains the lifetime of aspects, which are instantiated at build time, serialized, then deserialized at runtime and executed.
Initializing Aspects on page 306	This topic discusses different techniques to initialize aspects.
Validating Aspect Usage on page 307	This topic shows how to validate that an aspect has been applied to a valid target declaration.
Developing Composite Aspects on page 310	This topic describes how to create aspects that are composed of several primitive transformations, using advices and pointcuts.
Coping with Several Aspects on the Same Target on page 321	This topic explains how to express aspect dependencies to prevent issues that would otherwise happen if several aspects are added to the same declaration.
Understanding Interception Aspects on page 324	This topic explains some details about the implementation of interception aspects.
Understanding Aspect Serialization on page 326	This topic explains aspect serialization and how to customize it.
Customizing Aspect Appearance in Visual Studio on page 328	This topic shows how aspect can influence how they appear in Visual Studio tooltips and code saving metrics.
Advanced on page 331	This topic discusses some advanced questions.

20.1. Developing Simple Aspects

In PostSharp, developing an aspect is as simple as deriving a primitive aspect class and overriding some special methods named *advice*. Aspects encapsulate a transformation of an element of code (such as a method or a property), and advices are the methods that are executed at runtime.

For instance, the effect of the aspect `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` is to wrap the target method into a `try/catch/finally` construct, and the advices of this aspect are `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)`, `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)`, `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)`

By default, advices of primitive aspect types have an empty implementation, so the aspect has no effect until you override at least one advice.

To develop a simple aspect:

1. Add PostSharp to your project. See [Installing PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio on page 47](#) for details.
2. Create a new class and make it derive from one of the primitive aspect classes (see below).
3. Annotate the class with the custom attribute `PSerializableAttribute`. See [Understanding Aspect Lifetime and Scope on page 304](#) to understand why.
4. Override one of the aspect advice methods.

Aspect Classes

The following table gives a list of available primitive aspect classes. Every aspect class is described in greater detail in the class reference documentation.

Aspect Type	Targets	Description
<code>OnMethodBoundaryAspect</code>	Methods	<p>Methods enhanced with an <code>OnMethodBoundaryAspect</code> are wrapped by a <code>try/catch/finally</code> construct. This aspect provides the advices <code>OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)</code>, <code>OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)</code>, <code>OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)</code> and <code>OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)</code>; these advices are invoked directly from the transformed method, the return value, and the exception (if applicable). This aspect is useful to implement tracing or transaction handling, for instance.</p> <p>For details, see Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution on page 266.</p>
<code>OnExceptionAspect</code>	Methods	<p>Methods enhanced with an <code>OnExceptionAspect</code> are wrapped by a <code>try/catch</code> construct. This aspect provides the advice <code>OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)</code>; this advice is invoked from the <code>catch</code> block. This aspect is useful to implement exception handling policies. Contrarily to <code>OnMethodBoundaryAspect</code>, this aspect lets you define the type of caught exceptions by overriding the method <code>GetExceptionType(MethodBase)</code></p> <p>For details, see Handling Exceptions on page 271.</p>
<code>MethodInterceptionAspect</code>	Methods	<p>When a method is enhanced by a <code>MethodInterceptionAspect</code>, all calls to this method are replaced by calls to <code>OnInvoke(MethodInterceptionArgs)</code>, the only advice of this aspect type. This aspect is useful when the execution of target method can be deferred (asynchronous calls), must be dispatched on a different thread.</p> <p>For details, see Intercepting Methods on page 285.</p>

Aspect Type	Targets	Description
LocationInterceptionAspect	Fields, Properties	<p>When a field or a property is enhanced by a LocationInterceptionAspect, all calls to its accessors are replaced by calls to advices OnGetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs) and OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs). Fields are transparently replaced by properties. This aspect is useful to implement functionalities that need to get or set the location value, such as the observability design pattern (INotifyPropertyChanged).</p> <p>For details, see Intercepting Properties and Fields on page 290.</p>
EventInterceptionAspect	Events	<p>When an event is enhanced by an EventInterceptionAspect, all calls to its add and remove semantics are replaced by calls to advices OnAddHandler(EventInterceptionArgs) and OnRemoveHandler(EventInterceptionArgs). Additionally, when the event is fired, even of invoking directly the handlers that were added to the event, the advice OnInvokeHandler(EventInterceptionArgs) is called instead. This aspect is useful to add functionalities to events, such as implementing asynchronous events or materialized list of subscribers.</p> <p>For details, see Intercepting Events on page 295.</p>
CompositionAspect	Types	<p>This aspect introduces an interface into a type by composition. The interface is introduced statically; the aspect method GetPublicInterfaces(Type) should return the type of introduced interfaces. However, the object implementing the interface is created dynamically at runtime by the implementation of the method CreateImplementationObject(AdviceArgs).</p> <p>For details, see Introducing Interfaces on page 297.</p>
CustomAttributeIntroductionAspect	Any	<p>This aspect introduces a custom attribute on any element of code. A custom attribute can be represented as a CustomAttributeData or a ObjectConstruction.</p> <p>For details, see Introducing Custom Attributes on page 299.</p>
ManagedResourceIntroductionAspect	Assemblies	<p>This aspect introduces a managed resource into the current assembly.</p> <p>For details, see Introducing Managed Resources on page 303.</p>
ILocationValidationAspect	Fields, Properties, Parameters	<p>This aspect causes any new value assigned to its target to be validated. If the aspect determines the value is invalid, an exception is thrown. The aspects of the PostSharp.Patterns.Contracts namespace are built on the top of this interface aspect.</p> <p>For details, see Contracts on page 157.</p>

TIP

The implementation of aspects OnMethodBoundaryAspect and OnExceptionAspect is very efficient; they should be preferred over other aspects whenever it makes sense.

Using Aspect Interfaces

The primitive aspect classes listed above only exist for convenience. In reality, PostSharp only understands interfaces. Every of these aspect classes implements a pair of interfaces. For instance, the class `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` implements the interfaces `IOnMethodBoundaryAspect` and `IMethodLevelIApectBuildSemantics`.

The aspect classes are more convenient because they derive from `MulticastAttribute`, which extends `System.Attribute` with multicasting capability. See [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations on page 187](#) for details.

If you do not need or want the capabilities of `MulticastAttribute` (for instance because the aspect is not used as a custom attribute, see `IAspectProvider`), you can implement the aspect interface manually. An aspect class must implement an interface derived from `IAspect`, and may implement an interface derived from `IAspectBuildSemantics`. Please refer to the documentation of the aspect class to get information about the corresponding aspect interface.

Additionally to the aspect interface corresponding to an aspect class, you can define the following interfaces on aspect classes:

Aspect Interface	Description
<code>IAspectProvider</code>	This interface defines a single method <code>ProvideAspects(Object)</code> , returning a collection of <code>AspectInstance</code> . The method allows an aspect to dynamically provide other aspects to the weaver.
<code>IInstanceScopedAspect</code>	By default, aspects have static scope: there is one instance of the aspect per target class. Implementing the <code>IInstanceScopedAspect</code> makes the aspect instance-scoped: there will be one instance of this aspect per <i>instance</i> of the target class.

20.1.1. Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution

There are two ways to inject behaviors into methods. The first is the *method decorator*: it allows you to add instructions before and after method execution. The second is method *interception*: the hook gets invoked instead of the method. Decorators are faster than interceptors, but interceptors are more powerful. The current article covers decorators. For the other aspect, see [Intercepting Methods on page 285](#).

You may want to use method decorators to perform logging, monitor performance, initialize database transactions or any one of many other infrastructure related tasks. PostSharp provides you with an easy to use framework for all of these tasks in the form of the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`.

Injection points

When you are decorating methods there are different locations that you may wish to inject functionality to. You may want to perform a task prior to the method executing or just before it finishes execution. There are situations where you may want to inject functionality only when the method has successfully executed or when it has thrown an exception. All of these injection points are structured and available to you in the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`.

To create a simple aspect that writes some text whenever a method enters, succeeds, or fails:

1. Create an aspect class and inherit `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`. Annotate the class with the `[PSerializableAttribute]` custom attribute.

- To add functionality prior to the execution of the target method, override the method and code the functionality you desire.

```
[Serializable]
public class LoggingAspect : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("The {0} method has been entered.", args.Method.Name);
    }
}
```

- Inject functionality immediately after the method executes by overriding the `OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)` method.

NOTE

It's important to remember that the `OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)` method will execute every time that the target method completes its execution regardless of if the target method completed successfully or threw an exception.

```
public override void OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    Console.WriteLine("The {0} method has exited", args.Method.Name);
}
```

- To add functionality that only executes when the target method has completed successfully, you will override the `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)` method in your aspect. The `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)` method will be executed every time that the target method completes successfully. If the target method throws an exception `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)` will not execute.

```
public override void OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    Console.WriteLine("The {0} method executed successfully.", args.Method.Name);
}
```

- The final location that you can intercept requires you to override the `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` method. As the name of the overrode method suggests, this is where you can inject functionality that should execute when the target method throws an exception.

```
public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    Console.WriteLine("An exception was thrown in {0}.", args.Method.Name);
}
```

The four methods (`OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)`, `OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)`, `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)`) that you overrode are the locations that you are able to intercept method execution. Between these four location you are able to implement many different infrastructure patterns with minimal effort.

Accessing the method

As illustrated in the examples above, you can access information about the method being intercepted from the property `Method`, which gives you a reflection object `MethodBase`. This object gives you access to parameters, return type, declaring type, and other characteristics. In case of generic methods or generic types, `Method` gives you the proper generic method instance, so you can use this object to get generic parameters.

Accessing parameters

It's rare that you will intercept method execution and not interact with the parameters that were passed to the target method. For example, when you implement method interception for logging you will probably want to log the parameter values that were passed to the target method.

Each of the interception locations that were outlined earlier has access to that information. If you look at the `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` method in your aspect you will see that it has a `MethodExecutionArgs` parameter. That parameter is used for `OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)`, `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` as well. The collection `Arguments` gives access to parameter values.

Let's modify the `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` method and include the parameter values in the log message.

To include argument values to the logged text:

1. Create a foreach loop to gather each of the parameter values in the `Arguments` property of the `args` parameter.
2. In the loop concatenate the parameter values into a string.
3. Pass that string of argument values to the logging tool.

```
public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    var argValues = new StringBuilder();
    foreach (var argument in args.Arguments)
    {
        argValues.Append(argument.ToString()).Append(",");
    }

    Console.WriteLine("The {0} method was entered with the parameter values: {1}",
        args.Method.Name, argValues.ToString());
}
```

NOTE

A production implementation of this aspect would need to take re-entrance into account. See the article [Logging on page 167](#) for a ready-made logging aspect.

It's also possible to modify the parameter values inside your aspect methods. All you need to do is modify the value of the item in the `Arguments` collection. Remember that all items in the `Arguments` collection are object types so you will need to be careful with how you change values. If the value you are modifying was originally a string, you will want to ensure it stays a string type. It's especially true that when you change the parameter type in the `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` method you may cause the system to be unable to execute the target method due to a parameter type mismatch.

NOTE

The only parameter types that you can modify are those defined as either `out` or `ref`. If you need to modify input arguments, you should use [Intercepting Methods on page 285](#).

Accessing the target objects

In combination with the parameters you will probably interact with the target code instance that the aspect is attached to. The `Instance` property provides you with the instance of the object that the aspect is currently operating against. It is an object type so you will need to cast it to the correct type to be able to interact with it. If you debug your aspect

and that aspect doesn't make use of `Instance`, it will be set to null. It's also set to null if the target code is defined as static.

Accessing the return value

Like target method parameters you also have access to the return value for those target methods. It's possible to both read the return value as well as modify it. The return value can be found at `ReturnValue` in all four of the aspect methods covered earlier.

```
public override void OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    args.ReturnValue = false;
}
```

NOTE

If a target method is defined as void, the `ReturnValue` property will be set to null. `ReturnValue` is an object type so you must be careful how you modify the return value with respect to the return value type of the target code.

Changing execution flow

Returning without executing the method

When your aspect is interacting with the target code, there are situations where you will need to alter the execution flow behavior. For example, you may want to exit the execution of the target code at some point in the `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` advice. `PostSharp` offers this ability through the use of `FlowBehavior`.

```
public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    if (args.Arguments.Count > 0 &&& args.Arguments[0] == null)
    {
        args.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.Return;
    }

    Console.WriteLine("The {0} method was entered with the parameter values: {1}",
        args.Method.Name, argValues.ToString());
}
```

As you can see, all that is needed to exit the execution of the target code is setting the `FlowBehavior` property on the `MethodExecutionArgs` to `Return`.

NOTE

Using flow control to exit the target code execution will return back to the code that called the target code. As a result, you need to be considerate to the target code's return value. In the example above, the target code will always return null. This may or may not be the behavior that you want. If it isn't, you can set the `ReturnValue` on the `MethodExecutionArgs` and that value will be returned from the target code.

Managing execution flow control when dealing with exceptions there are two primary situations that you need to consider: re-throwing the exception and throwing a new exception.

Rethrowing an existing exception

To rethrow an existing exception, you will set the `FlowBehavior` property to `RethrowException`. Whatever exception that was caught in the `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` advice will be rethrown to the code that is calling the target code.

```
public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    if (args.Exception.GetType() == typeof(DivideByZeroException))
    {
        args.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.RethrowException;
    }
}
```

Throwing a new exception

To throw a new exception you will have to perform two tasks. First you will need to assign the new exception to the `Exception` property. This is the exception that will be thrown as part of the flow behavior. After that you will need to set the `FlowBehavior` property to `ThrowException`.

```
public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    if (args.Exception.GetType() == typeof(IndexOutOfRangeException))
    {
        args.Exception = new CustomArrayIndexException("This was thrown from an aspect",
                                                       args.Exception);
        args.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.ThrowException;
    }
}
```

NOTE

The remaining `FlowBehavior` enumeration value is `Continue`. In `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)`, this behavior will not rethrow the caught exception. In `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)`, `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)` the target code execution will continue with no interruption.

NOTE

The default `FlowBehavior` value for `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)`, `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)` is `Continue`. For `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` the default value is `RethrowException`.

Sharing state between advices

When you are working with multiple advices on a single aspect, you will encounter the need to share state between these advices. For example, if you have created an aspect that times the execution of a method, you will need to track the starting time at `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` and share that with `OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)` to calculate the duration of the call.

To do this we use the `MethodExecutionTag` property on the `MethodExecutionArgs` parameter in each of the advices. Because `MethodExecutionTag` is an object type, you will need to cast the value stored in it while retrieving it and before using it.

```
[Serializable]
public class ExecutionDurationAspect : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        args.MethodExecutionTag = Stopwatch.StartNew();
    }

    public override void OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        var sw = (Stopwatch)args.MethodExecutionTag;
        sw.Stop();

        System.Diagnostics.Debug.WriteLine("{0} executed in {1} seconds", args.Method.Name,
```

```

        }
    }
    sw.ElapsedMilliseconds / 1000);
}

```

NOTE

The value stored in `MethodExecutionTag` will not be shared between different instances of the aspect. If the aspect is attached to two different pieces of target code, each attachment will have its own unshared `MethodExecutionTag` for state storage.

20.1.2. Handling Exceptions

Adding exception handlers to code requires the addition of `try/catch` statements which can quickly pollute code. Exception handling implemented this way is also not reusable, requiring the same logic to be implemented over and over where ever exceptions must be dealt with. Raw exceptions also present cryptic information and can often expose too much information to the user.

PostSharp provides a solution to these problems by allowing custom exception handling logic to be encapsulated into a reusable class, which is then easily applied as an attribute to all methods and properties where exceptions are to be dealt with.

This topic contains the following sections:

- Intercepting an exception
- Specifying the type of handled exceptions
- Ignoring exceptions
- Replacing exceptions
- Displaying the method arguments on exception

Intercepting an exception

PostSharp provides the `OnExceptionAspect` class which is the base class from which exception handlers are to be derived from.

The key element of this class is the `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` method: this is the method where the exception handling logic (i.e. what would normally be in a `catch` statement) goes. A `MethodExecutionArgs` parameter is passed into this method by PostSharp; it contains information about the exception.

To create an `OnExceptionAspect` class:

1. Derive a class from `OnExceptionAspect`.
2. Apply the `PSerializableAttribute` to the class.
3. Override `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` and implement your exception handling logic in this class.

The following snippet shows an example of an exception handler which watches for exceptions of any type, and then writes a message to the console when an exception occurs:

```

[PSerializable]
public class PrintExceptionAttribute : OnExceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(args.Exception.Message);
    }
}

```

Once created, apply the derived class to all methods and/or properties for which the exception handling logic is to be used, as shown in the following example:

```
class Customer
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }

    [PrintException]
    public void StoreName(string path)
    {
        File.WriteAllText( path, string.Format( "{0} {1}", this.FirstName, this.LastName ) );
    }
}
```

Here `PrintException` will output a message when an exception occurs in trying to write text to a file.

Alternatively the attribute can be applied to the class itself as shown below, in which case the exception handler will handle exceptions for all methods and properties in the class:

```
[PrintExceptionAttribute(typeof(IOException))]
class Customer
{
    .
    .
    .
}
```

See the section [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations on page 187](#) for details about attribute multicasting.

Specifying the type of handled exceptions

The `GetExceptionType(MethodBase)` method can be used to return the type of the exception which is to be handled by this aspect. Otherwise, all exceptions will be caught and handled by this class.

NOTE

The `GetExceptionType(MethodBase)` method is evaluated at build time.

In the following snippet, we updated the `PrintExceptionAttribute` aspect and added the possibility to specify from the custom attribute constructor which type of exception should be traced.

```
[Serializable]
public class PrintExceptionAttribute : OnExceptionAspect
{
    Type type;

    public PrintExceptionAttribute() : this(typeof(Exception))
    {
    }

    public PrintExceptionAttribute (Type type)
        : base()
    {
        this.type = type;
    }

    // Method invoked at build time.
    // Should return the type of exceptions to be handled.
    public override Type GetExceptionType(MethodBase method)
    {
        return this.type;
    }
}
```



```

        public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
        {
            Console.WriteLine(args.Exception.Message);
        }
    }
}

```

Example:

```

class Customer
{
    public string FirstName { get; set; }
    public string LastName { get; set; }

    [PrintException(typeof(IOException))]
    public void StoreName(string path)
    {
        File.WriteAllText( path, string.Format( "{0} {1}", this.FirstName, this.LastName ) );
    }
}

```

NOTE

If the aspect needs to handle several types of exception, the `GetExceptionType` should return a common base type, and the `OnException` implementation should be modified to dynamically handle different types of exception.

Ignoring exceptions

The `FlowBehavior` member of `MethodExecutionArgs` in the exception handler's `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` method, can be set to ignore an exception. Note however that ignoring exceptions is generally dangerous and not recommended. In practice, it's only safe to ignore exceptions in event handlers (e.g. to display a message in a WPF form) and in thread entry points.

Exceptions can be ignored by setting the `FlowBehavior` to `Return`:

```

[Serializable]
public class PrintAndIgnoreExceptionAttribute : OnExceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(args.Exception.Message);
        args.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.Return;
    }
}

```

If a method returns a value then the `ReturnValue` member of `args` can be set to an object to return. For example, consider the following `GetDataLength` method in `Customer` which returns the number of characters read from a file:

```

class Customer
{
    [PrintException(typeof(IOException))]
    public int GetDataLength(string path)
    {
        return File.ReadAllText(path).Length;
    }
}

```

We can then modify the `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` method of `PrintAndIgnoreExceptionAttribute` to return an integer with a value of `-1`:

```
public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    Console.WriteLine(args.Exception.Message);
    args.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.Return;
    args.ReturnValue = -1;
}
```

Replacing exceptions

Many times an exception must be exposed to the user, either by allowing the original exception to be rethrown, or by throwing a new exception. This can be done by setting `FlowBehavior` as follows:

`FlowBehavior.RethrowException`: rethrows the original exception after the exception handler exits. This is the default behavior for the `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` advise.

`FlowBehavior.ThrowException`: throws a new exception once the exception handler exits. This is useful when details of the original exception should be hidden from the user or when a more meaningful exception is to be shown instead. When throwing a new exception, a new exception object must be assigned to the `Exception` member of `MethodExecutionArgs`. The following snippet shows the creation of a new `BusinessExceptionAttribute` which throws a `BusinessException` containing a description of the cause:

```
[Serializable]
public sealed class BusinessExceptionAttribute : OnExceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        .
        .
        .
        args.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.ThrowException;
        args.Exception = new BusinessException("Bad Arguments", new Exception("One or more arguments were nul
    }
}

class BusinessException : Exception
{
    public BusinessException(string message, Exception innerException) : base(message, innerException)
    {
    }
}
```

Displaying the method arguments on exception

When an exception is thrown, it can be useful to view and display the parameter values that were passed into the method where the exception occurred. These values can be retrieved by iterating through the `Arguments` property of the `args` parameter of the `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` method. In the following snippet, `OnException(MethodExecutionArgs)` has been modified to iterate through all exception values, and to concatenate them into a string. If a null value is encountered, then the code embeds the word `null` into the string. This string is then displayed as the message of the `NullReferenceException` which is rethrown:

```
public override void OnException(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    string parameterValues = "";

    foreach (object arg in args.Arguments)
    {
        if (parameterValues.Length > 0)
        {
            parameterValues += ", ";
        }

        if (arg != null)
        {
            parameterValues += arg.ToString();
        }
    }
}
```

```

        }
        else
        {
            parameterValues += "null";
        }
    }

    Console.WriteLine( "Exception {0} in {1}.{2} invoked with arguments {3}", args.Exception.GetType().Name, args.Me
}
}

```

NOTE

The `Arguments` field of `args` cannot be directly viewed in the debugger. The `Arguments` field must be referenced by another object in order to be viewable in the debugger.

20.1.3. Injecting Behaviors into Async Methods

Async methods are methods with the `async` keyword in C#. Unlike normal methods, execution of async methods can be paused and resumed. Execution is paused when the method depends on a task that is being executed asynchronously, and is resumed when the dependent task has completed. An async method provides a convenient way to do potentially long-running work without blocking the caller's thread.

Async methods return a value of the `Task` type. At build time, the compiler performs a complex transformation of the code. The original async logic is moved to a different type called here the *state machine type*, and the original method body is replaced by just a few lines of code instantiated this state machine.

By default, all aspects applied on an async method are actually applied to the method *instantiating* the state machine. However, there are times when you want to actually add an aspect to the state machine. We will see how this is possible using the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` aspect. For a more general information about using `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` in non-async methods, see [Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution on page 266](#).

There are two options when applying `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` to an async method. The first option is to apply the aspect to the method that instantiates and returns the task instance. The second option is to apply the aspect to the actual code that implements the logic inside the task. When using the second option you can also inject behaviors before and after your `await` statements.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Applying the aspect to the method instantiating the async task on page 275](#)
- [Applying the aspect to the async task itself on page 277](#)
- [Adding behaviors around the "await" statement on page 279](#)

Applying the aspect to the method instantiating the async task

You can control how the aspect is applied to the async method by setting the boolean `ApplyToStateMachine` property. Set this property to `false` to apply the aspect only to the code instantiating the async task. You can set the property in the constructor if you don't want to set it explicitly every time the aspect is used.

In the following procedure, we demonstrate how to inject behaviors into the method instantiating the async task. For this purpose, we create a simplified caching aspect that caches the result of the async method. This aspect can be applied to any async method returning `Task<object>`. For example, to the `TestCaching` method shown below:

```

public async Task<object> TestCaching()
{
    await Task.Wait(1000); // Some long-running operation.
    return await Task.FromResult( new {Name = "Test object"} );
}

```

To inject behaviors into the method instantiating the async task:

1. Create an aspect class and inherit `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`. Annotate the class with the `[Serializable-Attribute]` custom attribute.
2. Set the `ApplyToStateMachine` property to `false` in your constructor.

```
[Serializable]
public class CacheTaskResultAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public CacheTaskResultAttribute()
    {
        ApplyToStateMachine = false;
    }
}
```

NOTE

The default value of the `ApplyToStateMachine` property is `false` unless the `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` or `OnResume(MethodExecutionArgs)` advice is implemented. However, PostSharp will emit a warning whenever `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` is applied to an async method without setting the `ApplyToStateMachine` property.

3. Implement some of the advice methods of the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` class, according to your requirements. For more information about these advice methods, see [Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution on page 266](#).

For our `CacheAttribute` aspect, we need to implement two advices: `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)`.

```
[Serializable]
public class CacheTaskResultAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public CacheTaskResultAttribute()
    {
        ApplyToStateMachine = false;
    }

    public override void OnEntry( MethodExecutionArgs args )
    {
        object cachedValue = MemoryCache.Default[args.Method.Name];
        if ( cachedValue != null )
        {
            args.ReturnValue = Task.FromResult( cachedValue );
            args.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.Return;
        }
    }

    public override void OnSuccess( MethodExecutionArgs args )
    {
        var task = (Task<object>) args.ReturnValue;
        args.ReturnValue =
            task.ContinueWith(
                t =>
                {
                    MemoryCache.Default[args.Method.Name] = t.Result;
                    return t.Result;
                }
            );
    }
}
```

4. Apply your custom attribute to the target methods. Below you can see the [Cache] attribute applied to the TestCaching method.

```
[Cache]
public async Task<object> TestCaching()
{
    await Task.Wait(1000); // Some long-running operation.
    return await Task.FromResult( new {Name = "Test object"} );
}
```

NOTE

You can also set the `ApplyToStateMachine` property value when applying the attribute to a method, for instance using the syntax `[MyAspect(ApplyToStateMachine = false)]`. This can be useful if it makes sense to apply this aspect to both the state machine or the instantiation method.

Thanks to the aspect, whenever the `TestCaching` method is called, the `CacheAttribute.OnEntry` method executes first. It checks whether the result value is already stored in the cache. If the value already exists, then a new task is created from this value and immediately returned back to the caller. Otherwise, the execution continues normally and a new task instance is created to run our async method.

The `CacheAttribute.OnSuccess` method is called before the newly created async task is returned back to the caller. The aspect's method creates a new continuation task and returns it back to the caller instead of the original one. Once the original task completes, the continuation added by the aspect stores the resulting value in cache. Afterwards, the original caller proceeds with processing the task's result.

Applying the aspect to the async task itself

In many cases, we need to inject behaviors into the code of the async task itself. You can accomplish this by setting the `OnMethodBoundaryAspectApplyToStateMachine` property to `true`.

We'll see how to use this feature to create an aspect that measures the execution time of a method. In this section, we will create a simple profiling aspect and show how to apply it correctly to the async methods.

To test the profiling aspect, we will measure the execution time of the `TestProfiling` example method, shown below. The call to `Thread.Sleep` represents the work performed by the method. This is the time we want to measure. The call to `Task.Delay` represents the work performed outside the method, for example the asynchronous call to a web service or a database server.

```
public async Task TestProfiling()
{
    await Task.Delay( 1000 );
    Thread.Sleep( 1000 );
}
```

To inject behaviors into the async task itself:

1. Create an aspect class and inherit `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`. Annotate the class with the `[SerializableAttribute]` custom attribute.

```
[Serializable]
public class ProfilingAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
}
```

2. Implement some of the advice methods of the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` class, according to your requirements. For more information about these advice methods, see [Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution on page 266](#).

For our profiling aspect, we need to implement two advices: `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs)`.

```
[PSerializable]
public class ProfilingAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public override void OnEntry( MethodExecutionArgs args )
    {
        Stopwatch sw = Stopwatch.StartNew();
        args.MethodExecutionTag = sw;
    }

    public override void OnExit( MethodExecutionArgs args )
    {
        Stopwatch sw = (Stopwatch) args.MethodExecutionTag;
        sw.Stop();
        Console.WriteLine( "Method {0} executed for {1}ms.",
            args.Method.Name, sw.ElapsedMilliseconds );
    }
}
```

3. Apply your custom attribute to the target methods. Set the `ApplyToStateMachine` property to true when applying the attribute to async methods. Below you can see the `[Profiling]` attribute applied to the `TestProfiling` method.

```
[Profiling( ApplyToStateMachine = true )]
public async Task TestProfiling()
{
    await Task.Delay( 1000 );
    Thread.Sleep( 1000 );
}
```

NOTE

You can set the `ApplyToStateMachine` property in the constructor if you don't want to set it explicitly every time the aspect is used.

Whenever the `TestProfiling` method is called, it creates a new async task instance. At some later point, the task starts executing and immediately the `ProfilingAttribute.OnEntry` method is invoked. The method starts the stopwatch and stores it for the future use. Then the execution of the async task continues.

The `ProfilingAttribute.OnExit` method is called just before the async task completes. This method stops measuring the time and outputs the result to the console.

This program produces the following output:

```
Method TestProfiling executed for 2044ms.
```

As you can see, the output shows that we're not only measuring the execution time of the user code in the `TestProfiling` method, but also the time spent waiting for the external tasks to complete. The next section of this article will show how the `ProfilingAttribute` class can be improved to measure only the time spent inside the `TestProfiling` method.

Adding behaviors around the "await" statement

When applying the aspect to the async task itself, you can also inject behaviors before and after the `await` statements in that task. To achieve that, you need to override the `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnResume(MethodExecutionArgs)` methods of the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` class.

The `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` method is invoked after the async task get paused and yields the control flow to the calling thread, as the result of the `await` statement.

The `OnResume(MethodExecutionArgs)` method is invoked when the async task resumes execution at the point after the `await` statement.

NOTE

Implementing `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` or `OnResume(MethodExecutionArgs)` method also automatically sets the default value of `ApplyToStateMachine` property to true and suppresses the warning generated by PostSharp when the `ApplyToStateMachine` property is not set.

In the next steps we will add the `OnYield` and `OnResume` overrides to our `ProfilingAttribute` class. This will allow us to pause the stopwatch when the async method execution is paused, and to resume the stopwatch when the async method execution is resumed.

To inject behaviors around the "await" statement:

1. Create an aspect class and inherit `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`. Annotate the class with the `[SerializableAttribute]` custom attribute. For this example, we will reuse the `ProfilingAttribute` class from the previous section.
2. Override the `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` method to add functionality at the point where the async task is paused and yields the control flow to the calling thread.

The following code snippet uses `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` method to pause the stopwatch when the execution of the async method is paused.

```
public override void OnYield( MethodExecutionArgs args )
{
    Stopwatch sw = (Stopwatch) args.MethodExecutionTag;
    sw.Stop();
}
```

3. Override the `OnResume(MethodExecutionArgs)` method to add functionality at the point where the async task resumes its execution after the `await` statement. This method is invoked when another async task has completed and the control flow has returned to the original task right after the `await` statement.

The following code snippet uses `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` method to resume the stopwatch when the execution of the async method is resumed.

```
public override void OnResume( MethodExecutionArgs args )
{
    Stopwatch sw = (Stopwatch) args.MethodExecutionTag;
    sw.Start();
}
```

4. Apply your custom attribute to the target methods. Below you can see the [Profiling] attribute applied to the TestProfiling method.

```
[Profiling]
public async Task TestProfiling()
{
    await Task.Delay( 1000 );
    Thread.Sleep( 1000 );
}
```

During the code execution, the stopwatch will start upon entering the TestProfiling method. It will stop before the await statement and resume when the task awaiting is done. Finally, the time measuring is stopped again before exiting the TestProfiling method and the result is written to the console.

```
Method ProfilingTest executed for 1007ms.
```

20.1.4. Injecting Behaviors into Iterators

Iterator methods are methods that can return several values. In C#, values are produced using the yield return statement. Iterators return a value of type IEnumerable or IEnumerator. At build time, the compiler performs a complex transformation of the code. The original iterator logic is moved to a different type implementing the IEnumerator interface, and the original method body is replaced by just a few lines of code instantiated this class.

By default, all aspects applied on an iterator method are actually applied to the method *instantiating* the iterator class. However, there are times when you want to actually add an aspect to the iterator itself. We will see how this is possible using the OnMethodBoundaryAspect aspect. For a more general information about using OnMethodBoundaryAspect in non-async methods, see [Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution on page 266](#).

You have two options when applying OnMethodBoundaryAspect to an iterator method. The first option is to apply the aspect to the method that only creates and returns the iterator instance. The second option is to apply the aspect to the actual code that implements the logic inside the iterator. When using the second option you can also inject behaviors before and after your yield return statements and access the current yield value.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Applying the aspect to the method instantiating the iterator on page 280](#)
- [Applying the aspect to the iterator itself on page 282](#)
- [Adding behaviors around the "yield return" statement on page 283](#)

Applying the aspect to the method instantiating the iterator

You can control how the aspect is applied to the iterator by setting the boolean ApplyToStateMachine property. Set this property to false on your aspect to apply the aspect only to the code instantiating the iterator. You can set the property in the constructor if you don't want to set it explicitly every time the aspect is used.

In the following procedure, we demonstrate how to inject behaviors into the method instantiating the iterator. For this purpose, we create a simplified caching aspect that stores all the values returned by iterator as a single array in cache. This aspect can be applied to any iterator returning IEnumerable.

To inject behaviors into the method instantiating the iterator:

1. Create an aspect class and inherit OnMethodBoundaryAspect. Annotate the class with the [Serializable-Attribute] custom attribute.

2. Set the `ApplyToStateMachine` property to false in your constructor.

```
[PSerializable]
public class CacheAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public CacheResultAttribute()
    {
        ApplyToStateMachine = false;
    }
}
```

NOTE

The default value of the `ApplyToStateMachine` property is false unless the `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` or `OnResume(MethodExecutionArgs)` advice is implemented. However, PostSharp will emit a warning whenever `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` is applied to an iterator without setting the `ApplyToStateMachine` property.

3. Override some of the virtual methods of the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` class, according to your requirements. For more information about the corresponding virtual methods, see [Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution on page 266](#).

The following snippet shows the overrides of `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)` methods for the `CacheAttribute` class.

```
[PSerializable]
public class CacheAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public CacheAttribute()
    {
        ApplyToStateMachine = false;
    }

    public override void OnEntry( MethodExecutionArgs args )
    {
        object cachedValue = MemoryCache.Default[args.Method.Name];
        if ( cachedValue != null )
        {
            args.ReturnValue = cachedValue;
            args.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.Return;
        }
    }

    public override void OnSuccess( MethodExecutionArgs args )
    {
        object[] elements = ( IEnumerable ) args.ReturnValue .OfType<object>().ToArray();
        MemoryCache.Default[args.Method.Name] = elements;
        args.ReturnValue = elements;
    }
}
```

4. Apply your custom attribute to the target methods. Below you can see the [Cache] attribute applied to the TestCaching method.

```
[Cache]
public IEnumerable TestCaching()
{
    yield return 1;
    yield return 2;
    yield return 3;
}
```

NOTE

You can also set the `ApplyToStateMachine` property value when applying the attribute to a method, for instance using the syntax `[MyAspect(ApplyToStateMachine = false)]`. This can be useful if it makes sense to apply this aspect to both the state machine or the instantiation method.

Thanks to the aspect, whenever the `TestCaching` method is called, the `CacheAttribute.OnEntry` method executes first. It checks whether the result value is already stored in the cache. If the value already exists, then it is immediately returned back to the caller. Otherwise, the execution continues normally and a new iterator instance is created.

The `CacheAttribute.OnSuccess` method is called before the newly created iterator instance is returned back to the caller. The aspect's method enumerates all the iterator values using `ToArray` method and stores the resulting array in cache. The array is also returned to the caller instead of the original iterator instance.

Applying the aspect to the iterator itself

In many cases it can be useful to inject behavior into the user code of the iterator implementation itself. You can accomplish this by setting the `ApplyToStateMachine` property to true on your `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`.

For example, you may want to write a log entry each time the enumeration of the iterator begins and ends instead of logging only the creation of the iterator instance. In this section, we will create a simple logging aspect and show how to apply it correctly to iterators.

To inject behaviors into the iterator itself:

1. Create an aspect class and inherit `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`. Annotate the class with the `[PSerializable-Attribute]` custom attribute.

```
[PSerializable]
public class LogIteratorAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
}
```

2. Override some of the virtual methods of the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` class, according to your requirements. For more information about the corresponding virtual methods, see [Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution on page 266](#).

The following snippet shows the overrides of `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs)` methods for the `LogIteratorAttribute` class.

```
[Serializable]
public class LogIteratorAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("The enumeration of {0} started.", args.Method.Name);
    }

    public override void OnSuccess(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("The enumeration of {0} finished.", args.Method.Name);
    }
}
```

3. Apply your custom attribute to the target iterator methods and set the `ApplyToStateMachine` property to true. Below you can see the `[LogIterator]` attribute applied to the `TestLogging` method.

```
[LogIterator( ApplyToStateMachine = true )]
public IEnumerable<int> TestLogging()
{
    yield return 1;
    yield return 2;
    yield return 3;
}
```

NOTE

You can set the `ApplyToStateMachine` property in the constructor if you don't want to set it explicitly every time the aspect is used.

Whenever the `TestLogging` method is called, it creates a new iterator instance. Then the caller starts the enumeration of the iterator and immediately the `LogIteratorAttribute.OnEntry` method is invoked. The method writes the first log entry and the enumeration continues.

The `LogIteratorAttribute.OnSuccess` method is called after the enumeration of the iterator has completed. The method writes the second log entry and the control is given back to the caller.

The snippet below shows the enumeration of our sample iterator and the output written to the console.

```
foreach (int n in TestLogging()) Console.WriteLine(n);

The enumeration of TestLogging started.
1
2
3
The enumeration of TestLogging finished.
```

Adding behaviors around the "yield return" statement

When applying the aspect to the iterator itself, you can also inject behaviors before and after the `yield return` statements in that iterator. To achieve that, you need to override the `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnResume(MethodExecutionArgs)` methods of the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` class.

The `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` method is invoked after the iterator yields the control flow, as the result of the `yield return` statement. In this method you can also access and modify the current yield value by using the `Yield-Value` property.

The `OnResume(MethodExecutionArgs)` method is invoked when the iterator resumes execution at the point after the `yield return` statement.

NOTE

Note, that implementing `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` or `OnResume(MethodExecutionArgs)` method also automatically sets the default value of `ApplyToStateMachine` property to true and quiets the warning generated by PostSharp.

In the next steps we will create a sample aspect that counts the number of the not-null elements returned by the iterator and writes the result to the console.

To inject behaviors around the "yield return" statement:

1. Create an aspect class and inherit `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`. Annotate the class with the `[PSerializable-Attribute]` custom attribute.

```
[PSerializable]
public class NotNullCounterAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
}
```

2. Override some of the virtual methods of the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` class, according to your requirements. For more information about the corresponding virtual methods, see [Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution on page 266](#).

The following snippet shows the overrides of `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` and `OnExit(MethodExecution-Args)` methods for the `NotNullCounterAttribute` class.

```
[PSerializable]
public class NotNullCounterAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        // Initialize and store the counter for use in other method.
        args.MethodExecutionTag = 0;
    }

    public override void OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("{0} returned {1} not-null values.", args.Method.Name, args.MethodExecutionTag);
    }
}
```

3. Override the `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` method to add functionality at the point where the iterator yields the next value. This method is invoked when the execution of the iterator is paused and the caller takes over the control flow.

The following code snippet shows the `OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs)` method override for the `NotNullCounterAttribute` class.

```
public override void OnYield(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
    if (args.YieldValue != null)
    {
        args.MethodExecutionTag = ((int) args.MethodExecutionTag) + 1;
    }
}
```

4. Apply your custom attribute to the target methods. Below you can see the `[NotNullCounter]` attribute applied to the `TestLogging` method.

```
[NotNullCounter]
public IEnumerable<string> TestLogging()
{
    yield return "One";
    yield return null;
    yield return "Two";
}
```

Thanks to the aspect, we will initialize the counter when the enumeration of the `TestLogging` starts, increase the counter each time a not-null value is returned, and finally write the result when the enumeration completes.

The snippet below shows the enumeration of our sample iterator and the output written to the console.

```
foreach (string s in TestLogging()) Console.WriteLine(s ?? "<null>");

One
<null>
Two
TestLogging returned 2 not-null values.
```

20.1.5. Intercepting Methods

It is often useful to be able to intercept the invocation of a method and invoke your own hook in its place. Common use cases for this capability include dispatching the method execution to a different thread, asynchronously executing the method at a later time, and retrying the method call when exception is thrown.

PostSharp addresses these needs with the `MethodInterceptionAspect` aspect class which intercepts the invocation of a method before the method is executed. It also allows you to invoke the original method and access its arguments and return value.

The current article covers method *interception*, for another approach to injecting behaviors into methods, see [Injecting Behaviors Before and After Method Execution on page 266](#).

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Intercepting a method call on page 286](#)
- [Accessing the identity of the intercepted method on page 287](#)
- [Accessing the arguments and the return value on page 288](#)
- [Accessing the target objects on page 289](#)

Intercepting a method call

Consider the following `CustomerService` class which has methods to load and save customer entities and relies on calls to a database or a web-service.

```
public class CustomerService
{
    public void Save(Customer customer)
    {
        // Database or web-service call.
    }
}
```

Occasionally, the connection to the underlying store may become unreliable and the application user is presented with the error message. To improve the user experience you may want to retry the failing operation several times before displaying the error message. In the following steps we'll create a method interception class which can be applied to repository methods and will retry the invocation whenever an exception is thrown by the original method.

To create an aspect that retries a method call on exception:

1. Create an aspect class and inherit `MethodInterceptionAspect`. Annotate the class with the `[Serializable-Attribute]` custom attribute.

```
public class RetryOnExceptionAttribute : MethodInterceptionAspect
{
}
```

2. Define a property `MaxRetries` and set its default value to 3 in the constructor.

```
public int MaxRetries { get; set; }

public RetryOnExceptionAttribute()
{
    this.MaxRetries = 3;
}
```

3. Override the `OnInvoke(MethodInterceptionArgs)` method.

```
public override void OnInvoke(MethodInterceptionArgs args)
{
    base.OnInvoke(args);
}
```

4. Edit the `OnInvoke` method to catch the exception and retry the operation. Use `base.OnInvoke()` to invoke the intercepted method.

The complete aspect code is as follows:

```
[Serializable]
public class RetryOnExceptionAttribute : MethodInterceptionAspect
{
    public int MaxRetries { get; set; }

    public override void OnInvoke(MethodInterceptionArgs args)
    {
        int retriesCounter = 0;

        while ( true )
        {
            try
            {
                base.OnInvoke(args);
                return;
            }
            catch (Exception e)
            {
                retriesCounter++;
                if (retriesCounter > this.MaxRetries) throw;

                Console.WriteLine(
                    "Exception during attempt {0} of calling method {1}.{2}: {3}",
                    retriesCounter, args.Method.DeclaringType, args.Method.Name, e.Message);
            }
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

Calling `base.OnInvoke()` is equivalent to calling `args.Proceed()`.

5. Apply the `[RetryOnException]` custom attributes to all methods where the behavior is needed.

In the following snippet, this aspect is applied to the `CustomerService.Save` method:

```
public class CustomerService
{
    [RetryOnException(MaxRetries = 5)]
    public void Save(Customer customer)
    {
        // Database or web-service call.
    }
}
```

Whenever the `CustomerService.Save` method will be invoked, the `RetryOnExceptionAttribute.OnInvoke` method will be called instead. It will invoke the original method and retry if necessary.

Accessing the identity of the intercepted method

As illustrated in the example above, you can access information about the method being intercepted from the property `MethodInterceptionArgs.Method`, which gives you a reflection object `MethodBase`. This object gives you access to parameters, return type, declaring type, and other characteristics. In case of generic methods or generic types, `MethodInterceptionArgs.Method` gives you the proper generic method instance, so you can use this object to get generic parameters.

Accessing the arguments and the return value

An implementation of `MethodInterceptionAspect` can read and modify the arguments of the intercepted method thanks to the `MethodInterceptionArgsArguments` property, and the return value thanks to the `MethodInterceptionArgsReturnValue` property.

For example, consider a `UserService` class with a method that returns user permissions. The method would normally return `null` if no permissions have been assigned to this user.

```
public class UserService
{
    public Permissions GetPermissions(string username)
    {
        // Database or web-service call.
    }
}
```

If the given user has no assigned permission, instead of returning `null`, we would like the method to return the permissions assigned to the user named `DefaultUser`.

We can implement these requirements using an aspect derived from `MethodInterceptionAspect`. The aspect first invokes the original method, then it checks whether it has returned a `null` value. If the value is `null`, the method is invoked again but with the arguments replaced by the default values.

To create an aspect that uses default arguments when a method returns null:

1. Create an aspect class and inherit `MethodInterceptionAspect`. Annotate the class with the `[SerializableAttribute]` custom attribute.

```
[Serializable]
public class RetryIfNullAttribute : MethodInterceptionAspect
{
}
```

2. Add a field `defaultArguments` to the class and set this field from the constructor.

```
private object[] defaultArguments;

public RetryIfNullAttribute(params object[] defaultArguments)
{
    this.defaultArguments = defaultArguments;
}
```

3. Override the `OnInvoke(MethodInterceptionArgs)` method.

```
public override void OnInvoke(MethodInterceptionArgs args)
{
    base.OnInvoke(args);
}
```


4. Edit the `OnInvoke` method to implement the aspect logic. Check whether the `MethodInterceptionArgs.ReturnValue` property is null return value, and set the items of the `MethodInterceptionArgs.Arguments` property. Finally, invoke the intercepted method a second time by calling `base.OnInvoke()`.

The complete aspect code is as follows:

```
[Serializable]
public class RetryIfNullAttribute : MethodInterceptionAspect
{
    private object[] defaultArguments;

    public RetryIfNullAttribute(params object[] defaultArguments)
    {
        this.defaultArguments = defaultArguments;
    }

    public override void OnInvoke(MethodInterceptionArgs args)
    {
        base.OnInvoke(args);

        if (args.ReturnValue == null)
        {
            Console.WriteLine(
                "The method {0}.{1} has returned a null value." +
                " Retrying with the default arguments...",
                args.Method.DeclaringType, args.Method.Name);

            for (int i = 0; i < args.Arguments.Count && i < this.defaultArguments.Length; i++)
            {
                args.Arguments[i] = this.defaultArguments[i];
            }

            base.OnInvoke(args);
        }
    }
}
```

5. Apply this method interception aspect as an attribute to all methods where the implemented logic is needed. In the following snippet, the aspect is applied to the `UserService.GetPermissions` method:

```
public class UserService
{
    [RetryIfNull("DefaultUser")]
    public Permissions GetPermissions(string username)
    {
        // database or web-service call
    }
}
```

Thanks to the aspect, whenever the `UserService.GetPermissions` method is invoked, the `RetryIfNullAttribute.OnInvoke` method will be called instead. The `OnInvoke` method will then invoke the original `GetPermissions` method. If it returns null for the provided username, then the method will be invoked again, but this time with the value `Default-Value` for the username parameter.

Accessing the target objects

In combination with the parameters you will probably interact with the target code instance that the aspect is attached to. The `Instance` property provides you with the instance of the object that the aspect is currently operating against. It is an object type so you will need to cast it to the correct type to be able to interact with it. If you debug your aspect and that aspect doesn't make use of `Instance`, it will be set to null. It's also set to null if the target code is defined as static.

20.1.6. Intercepting Properties and Fields

In .NET, both fields and properties are "things" that can be set and get. You can intercept get and set operations using the `LocationInterceptionAspect`. It makes it possible to develop useful aspects, such as validation, filtering, change tracking, change notification, or property virtualization (where the property is backed by a registry value, for instance).

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Intercepting Get operations on page 290](#)
- [Intercepting Set operations on page 291](#)
- [Getting and setting the underlying property on page 292](#)
- [Intercepting fields on page 293](#)
- Getting the property or property being accessed

Intercepting Get operations

In this example, we will see how to create an aspect that filters the value read from a field or property.

To create an aspect that filters the value read from a field or property

1. Create an aspect that inherits from `LocationInterceptionAspect` and add the custom attribute `[PSerializableAttribute]`.
2. Override the `OnGetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` method.

```
[PSerializable]
public class StringCheckerAttribute : LocationInterceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnGetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs args)
    {
        base.OnGetValue(args);
    }
}
```

3. Calling `base.OnGetValue` actually retrieves the value from the underlying field or property, and populates the `Value` property. Add some code to check if the property currently is set to `null`. If the current value is `null`, we want to return a predefined value. To do this we can set the `Value` property. Any time this property is requested, and it is set to `null`, the value "foo" will be returned.

```
public override void OnGetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs args)
{
    base.OnGetValue(args);

    if (args.Value == null)
    {
        args.Value = "foo";
    }
}
```

4. Now that you have a complete getter interception aspect written you can attach it to the target code. Simply add an attribute to either properties or fields to have the interception attached.

```
public class Customer
{
    [StringChecker]
    private readonly string _address;

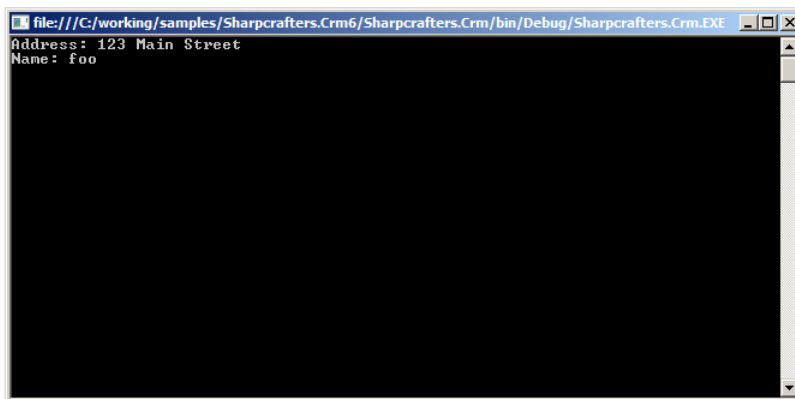
    public Customer(string address)
    {
        _address = address;
    }
    [StringChecker]
    public string Name { get; set; }
    public string Address { get { return _address; } }
}
```

NOTE

Adding aspects to target code one property or field at a time can be a tedious process. There are a number of techniques in the article [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations](#) on page 187 that explain how to add aspects en mass.

5. Now when you create an instance of a customer and immediately try to access the Name and Address values the get request will be intercepted and null values will be returned as "foo".

```
class Program
{
    static void Main(string[] args)
    {
        var customer = new Customer("123 Main Street");
        Console.WriteLine("Address: {0}", customer.Address);
        Console.WriteLine("Name: {0}", customer.Name);
        Console.ReadKey();
    }
}
```



Property and field interception is a simple and seamless task. Once you have intercepted your target you can act on the target or you can allow the original code to execute.

Intercepting Set operations

The previous section showed how to intercept a get accessor. Intercepting a set accessor is accomplished in a similar manner by implementing `OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` in the `LocationInterceptionAspect`.

The following snippet shows the addition of `OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` to the `StringCheckerAttribute` example:

```
[PSerializable]
public class StringCheckerAttribute : LocationInterceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnGetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs args)
    {
        base.OnGetValue(args);
    }

    public override void OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs args)
    {
        base.OnSetValue(args);
    }
}
```

When applied to a property with a set operator, `OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` will intercept the set operation. In the `Customer` example shown below, `OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` will be called whenever the `Name` property is set:

```
public class Customer
{
    .
    .
    .
    [StringChecker]
    public string Name { get; set; }
}
```

The `SetNewValue(Object)` method of `LocationInterceptionArgs` can be used instead of `base.OnSetValue()` to pass a different value in for the property. For example, `OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` could be used to check for a null string, and then change the string to a non-null value:

```
[PSerializable]
public class StringCheckerAttribute : LocationInterceptionAspect
{
    .
    .
    .
    public override void OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs args)
    {
        if (args.Value == null)
        {
            args.Value = "Empty String";
        }

        args.ProceedSetValue();
    }
}
```

Getting and setting the underlying property

PostSharp provides a mechanism to check a property's underlying value via the `LocationInterceptionArgsGetCurrentValue` method. This can be useful to check the current property value when a setter is called and then take some appropriate action.

For example, the following snippet shows a modified `OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` method which gets the current underlying property value and compares the (new) value passed into the setter against the current value. If current and new value don't match then some message is written:

```

public override void OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs args)
{
    //get the current underlying value
    string existingValue = (string)args.GetCurrentValue();

    if (((existingValue==null) && (args.Value != null)) || (!existingValue.Equals(args.Value)))
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Value changed.");
        args.ProceedSetValue();
    }
}

```

NOTE

`GetCurrentValue` will call the underlying property getter without going through `OnGetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)`. If several aspects are applied to the property (and/or to the property setter), `GetCurrentValue` will go through the next aspect in the chain of invocation.

`PostSharp` also provides a mechanism to set the underlying property in a getter via the `SetNewValue(Object)` method of `LocationInterceptionArgs`. This could be used for example, to ensure that a default value is assigned to the underlying property if there is currently no value. The following snippet shows a modified `OnGetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` method which gets the current underlying value, and sets a default value if the current value is null:

```

public override void OnGetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs args)
{
    object o = args.GetCurrentValue();
    if (o == null)
    {
        args.SetNewValue("value not set");
    }

    base.OnGetValue(args);
}

```

Intercepting fields

One benefit to implementing a `LocationInterceptionAspect` is that it can be applied directly to fields, allowing for reads and writes to those fields to be intercepted, just like with properties.

Applying a `LocationInterceptionAspect` implementation to a field is simply a matter of setting it as an attribute on a field, just as it was done with a property:

```

public class Customer
{
    .
    .
    .
    [StringChecker]
    public string name;
}

```

With the attribute applied to the name field, all attempts to get and set that field will be intercepted by `StringChecker` in its `OnGetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` and `OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` methods.

Note that when a `LocationInterceptionAspect` is added to a field, the field is replaced by a property of the same field and visibility. The field itself is renamed and made private.

Getting the property or property being accessed

Information about the property or field being intercepted can be obtained through the `LocationInterceptionArgs` via its `Location` property. The type of this property, `LocationInfo`, can represent a `FieldInfo`, a `PropertyInfo`, or a `ParameterInfo` (although `LocationInterceptionAspect` cannot be added to parameters).

One use for this is to reflect the property name whenever a property is changed. In the following example, we have an `Entity` class that implements `INotifyPropertyChanged` and a public `OnPropertyChanged` method which allows notifications to be made whenever a property is changed. The `Customer` class has been modified to derive from `Entity`.

```
class Entity : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    public event PropertyChangedEventHandler PropertyChanged;

    public void OnPropertyChanged(string propertyName)
    {
        if (PropertyChanged != null)
            PropertyChanged(this, new PropertyChangedEventArgs(propertyName));
    }
}

class Customer : Entity
{
    public string Name { get; set; }
}
```

With the ability to invoke an `OnPropertyChanged` event, we can create a `LocationInterceptionAspect` which invokes this event when setting a value and pass in the property name from the underlying `PropertyInfo` object:

```
[PSerializable]
public class NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute : LocationInterceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs args)
    {
        if ( args.Value != args.GetCurrentValue() )
        {
            args.Value = args.Value;
            args.ProceedSetValue();
            ((Entity)args.Instance).OnPropertyChanged(args.Location.Name);
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

This example is a simplistic implementation of the `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` aspect. For a production-ready implementation, see the section [INotifyPropertyChanged](#) on page 107.

This aspect can then be applied to the `Customer` class:

```
[NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute]
class Customer : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    public string Name { get; set; }
}
```

Now when the `Name` property is changed, `NotifyPropertyChangedAttribute` will invoke the `Entity.OnPropertyChanged` method passing in the property name retrieved from its underlying property.

20.1.7. Intercepting Events

You interact with events in three primary ways: subscribing, unsubscribing and raising them. Like methods and properties, you may find yourself needing to intercept these three interactions. How do you execute code every time that an event is subscribed to? Or raised? Or unsubscribed? PostSharp provides you with a simple mechanism to accomplish this easily.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Intercepting Add and Remove on page 295](#)
- [Intercepting Raise on page 296](#)
- [Accessing the current context on page 296](#)
- [Example: Removing offending event subscribers on page 296](#)

Intercepting Add and Remove

Throughout the life of an event it is possible to have many different event handlers subscribe and unsubscribe. You may want to log each of these actions.

1. Create an aspect that inherits from `EventInterceptionAspect`. Add the `[PSerializableAttribute]` custom attribute.
2. Override the `OnAddHandler(EventInterceptionArgs)` method and add your logging code to the method body.
3. Add the `base.OnAddHandler` call to the body of the `OnAddHandler(EventInterceptionArgs)` method. If this is omitted, the original call to add a handler will not be executed. Unless you want to stop the addition of the handler, you will need to add this line of code.

```
[PSerializable]
public class CustomEventHandling : EventInterceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnAddHandler(EventInterceptionArgs args)
    {
        base.OnAddHandler(args);
        Console.WriteLine("A handler was added");
    }
}
```

4. To log the removal of an event handler, override the `OnRemoveHandler(EventInterceptionArgs)` method.
5. Add the logging you require to the method body.
6. Add the `base.OnRemoveHandler` call to the body of the `OnRemoveHandler(EventInterceptionArgs)` method. Like you saw when overriding the `OnAddHandler(EventInterceptionArgs)` method, if you omit this call, the original call to remove the handler will not occur.

```
public override void OnRemoveHandler(EventInterceptionArgs args)
{
    base.OnRemoveHandler(args);
    Console.WriteLine("A handler was removed");
}
```

Once you have defined the interception points in the aspect, you will need to attach the aspect to the target code. The simplest way to do this is to add the attribute to the event handler definition.

```
public class Example
{
    [CustomEventHandling]
    public EventHandler<EventArgs> SomeEvent;

    public void DoSomething()
    {
        if (SomeEvent != null)
```

```
    {  
        SomeEvent.Invoke(this, EventArgs.Empty);  
    }  
}
```

Intercepting Raise

When you are intercepting events, you may also have situations where you want to execute additional code when the event is raised. Raising of an event can occur in many places and you will want to centralize this code to avoid repetition.

1. Override the `OnInvokeHandler(EventInterceptionArgs)` method in your aspect class and add the logging you require to the method body.
2. Add a call to `base.OnInvokeHandler` to ensure that the original invocation occurs.

```
public override void OnInvokeHandler(EventInterceptionArgs args)  
{  
    base.OnInvokeHandler(args);  
    Console.WriteLine("A handler was invoked");  
}
```

By adding the attribute to the target event handler earlier in this process you have enabled intercepting of each raised event.

Accessing the current context

At any time, the `Handler` property is set to the delegate being added, removed, or invoked. You can read and write this property. If you write it, the delegate you assign must be compatible with the type of the event. The `Event` property gets you the `EventInfo` of the event being accessed.

Within `OnInvokeHandler(EventInterceptionArgs)`, the property `Arguments` gives access to the arguments with which the delegate was invoked.

These concepts will be illustrated in the following example.

Example: Removing offending event subscribers

When events are subscribed to, the component that raises the event has no way to ensure that the subscriber will behave properly when that event is raised. It's possible that the subscribing code will throw an exception when the event is raised and when that happens you may want to unsubscribe the handler to ensure that it doesn't continue to throw the exception. The `EventInterceptionAspect` can help you to accomplish this easily.

1. Override the `OnInvokeHandler(EventInterceptionArgs)` method in your aspect.
2. In the method body add a `try...catch` block.

3. In the try block add a call to `base.OnInvokeHandler` and in the catch block add a call to `RemoveHandler(Delegate)`

```
[PSerializable]
public class CustomEventHandling : EventInterceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnInvokeHandler(EventInterceptionArgs args)
    {
        try
        {
            base.OnInvokeHandler(args);
        }
        catch (Exception e)
        {
            Console.WriteLine("Handler '{0}' invoked with arguments {1} failed with exception {2}.",
                args.Handler.Method,
                string.Join(", ", args.Arguments.Select(a => a == null ? "null" : a.ToString())),
                e.GetType().Name);

            args.RemoveHandler(args.Handler);
            throw;
        }
    }
}
```

Now, any time an exception is thrown during event execution, the offending event handler will be unsubscribed from the event.

20.1.8. Introducing Interfaces

When you create a `CompositionAspect` you are able to dynamically add interfaces to the target code at compile time and make use of that interface type at run time.

1. The first thing that you need to do is create an aspect that inherits from `CompositionAspect` and implements its members.

```
[PSerializable]
public class GeneralCompose : CompositionAspect
{
    public override object CreateImplementationObject(AdviceArgs args)
    {
        throw new System.NotImplementedException();
    }
}
```

2. Next, you need some way to tell the aspect what interface and concrete type you want to implement on the target code. To do that, create a constructor for your aspect that accepts two parameters; one for the interface type and one for the concrete implementation type. Assign those two constructor parameters to field level variables so we can make use of them in the aspect.

```
[PSerializable]
public class GeneralCompose : CompositionAspect
{
    private readonly Type _interfaceType;
    private readonly Type _implementationType;

    public GeneralCompose(Type interfaceType, Type implementationType)
    {
        _interfaceType = interfaceType;
        _implementationType = implementationType;
    }
}
```

3. There are two methods that you need to implement to complete this aspect. The first is an override of the `GetPublicInterfaces(Type)` method. This method has a target type parameter which allows you to filter the application of the interface if you choose to. For this example, simply return an array that contains the interface type that was provided via the aspect's constructor.

```
protected override Type[] GetPublicInterfaces(Type targetType)
{
    return new[] { _interfaceType };
}
```

NOTE

The interfaces that are returned from the `GetPublicInterfaces(Type)` method will be applied to the target code during compilation.

4. The second method that you need to override is `CreateImplementationObject(AdviceArgs)`. For this example you will return an instance of the concrete implementation that was provided in the aspect's constructor. The `CreateImplementationObject(AdviceArgs)` method doesn't return the type of the concrete implementation. It returns an instance of that type instead. To create the instance use the `CreateInstance(Type, Activator-SecurityToken)` method.

```
public override object CreateImplementationObject(AdviceArgs args)
{
    return Activator.CreateInstance(_implementationType);
}
```

NOTE

The `CreateImplementationObject(AdviceArgs)` method is invoked at the application's runtime.

5. Now that you have created a complete `CompositionAspect`, it will need to be applied to the target code. Add the aspect to the target code as an attribute. Provide the attribute with the interface and concrete types that you wish to implement.

```
[GeneralCompose(typeof(ICollection), typeof(LinkedList))]
public class Fruit
{
}
```

6. After compiling your application you will find that the target code now implements the assigned interfaces and exposes itself as a new instance of the concrete type you declared. The next question that needs addressing is how you will interact with the target code using that interface type.

To access the dynamically applied interface you must make use of a special PostSharp feature. The `CastSourceType`, `TargetType(SourceType)` method will allow you to safely cast the target code to the interface type that you dynamically applied. Once that call has been done, you are able to make use of the instance through the interface constructs.

```
[GeneralCompose(typeof(ICollection), typeof(ArrayList))]
public class Fruit
{
    public Fruit()
    {
        ICollection list = Post.Cast<Fruit,ICollection>(this);
        list.Add("apple");
        list.Add("orange");
        list.Add("banana");
    }
}
```

20.1.9. Introducing Custom Attributes

Applying custom attributes to class members in C# is a powerful way to add metadata about those members at compile time.

PostSharp provides the ability to create a custom attribute class which when applied to another class, can iterate through those class members and automatically decorate them with custom attributes. This can be useful for example, to automatically apply custom attributes or groups of custom attributes when new class members are added, without having to remember to do it manually each time.

This topic contains the following sections:

- Introducing new custom attributes
- Copying existing custom attributes

Introducing new custom attributes

In the following example, we'll create an attribute decorator class which applies .NET's `DataContractAttribute` to a class and `DataMemberAttribute` to members of a class at build time.

1. Start by creating a class called `AutoDataContractAttribute` which derives from `TypeLevelAspect`. `TypeLevelAspect` transforms the class into an attribute which can be applied to other classes. Also implement `IAspectProvider` which exposes the `ProvideAspects(Object)` method for iterating on class members. `ProvideAspects(Object)` will be called for each member in the target class and will contain the code for applying the attributes:

```
public sealed class AutoDataContractAttribute : TypeLevelAspect, IAspectProvider
{
    public IEnumerable<AspectInstance> ProvideAspects(object targetElement)
    {
    }
}
```

2. Implement the `ProvideAspects(Object)` method to cast the `targetElement` parameter to a `Type` object. Note that this method will be called at build time. Since `ProvideAspects(Object)` will be called for the class itself and for each member of the target class, the `Type` object can be used for inspecting each member and making decisions about when and how to apply custom attributes. In the following snippet, the implementation returns a new `AspectInstance` for the `Type` containing a new `DataContractAttribute` and then iterates through each property of the `Type` returning a new `AspectInstance` with the `DataMemberAttribute` for each. Note that both the `DataContractAttribute` and `DataMemberAttribute` are both wrapped in `CustomAttributeIntroductionAspect` objects:

```
public sealed class AutoDataContractAttribute : TypeLevelAspect, IAspectProvider
{
    // This method is called at build time and should just provide other aspects.
    public IEnumerable<AspectInstance> ProvideAspects(object targetElement)
    {
        Type targetType = (Type) targetElement;

        CustomAttributeIntroductionAspect introduceDataContractAspect =
            new CustomAttributeIntroductionAspect(
                new ObjectConstruction(typeof (DataContractAttribute).GetConstructor(Type.EmptyTypes)));
        CustomAttributeIntroductionAspect introduceDataMemberAspect =
            new CustomAttributeIntroductionAspect(
                new ObjectConstruction(typeof (DataMemberAttribute).GetConstructor(Type.EmptyTypes)));

        // Add the DataContract attribute to the type.
        yield return new AspectInstance(targetType, introduceDataContractAspect);

        // Add a DataMember attribute to every relevant property.
        foreach (PropertyInfo property in
            targetType.GetProperties(BindingFlags.Public | BindingFlags.DeclaredOnly | BindingFlags.Instance))
        {
            if (property.CanWrite)
                yield return new AspectInstance(property, introduceDataMemberAspect);
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

Since the `ProvideAspects(Object)` method returns an `IEnumerable`, the `yield` keyword should be used to return aspects for PostSharp to apply.

3. Apply the `AutoDataContractAttribute` class. In the following example we apply it to a `Product` class where it will decorate `Product` with `DataContractAttribute` and each member with `DataMemberAttribute`:

```
[AutoDataContractAttribute]
public class Product
{
    public int ID { get; set; }

    public string Name { get; set; }

    public int RevisionNumber { get; set; }
}
```

Copying existing custom attributes

Another way to introduce attributes to class members is to copy them from another class. This is useful for example, when distinct classes have members with the same names and are of the same types. In this case, attributes can be defined in one class and then that class can be used to decorate other similar classes with same attributes.

In the following snippet, Product's ID and Name properties have both been modified to contain an additional attribute from the System.ComponentModel.DataAnnotations namespace – Editable, Display, and Required respectively. Below Product is another class called ProductViewModel containing the same properties to which we want to copy the attributes to:

```
class Product
{
    [EditableAttribute(false)]
    [Required]
    public int Id { get; set; }

    [Display(Name = "The product's name")]
    [Required]
    public string Name { get; set; }
    public int RevisionNumber { get; set; }
}

class ProductViewModel
{
    public int Id { get; set; }
    public string Name { get; set; }
    public int RevisionNumber { get; set; }
}
```

To copy the attributes from the properties of Product to the corresponding properties of ProductViewModel, create an attribute class which can be applied to ProductViewModel to perform this copy process:

1. Create a TypeLevelAspect which implements IAspectProvider. In the snippet below our class is called CopyCustomAttributesFrom:

```
class CopyCustomAttributesFrom : TypeLevelAspect, IAspectProvider
{
}
```

2. Create a constructor to take in the class type from which the property attributes are to be copied from. This class type will be used in the next step to enumerate its properties:

```
class CopyCustomAttributesFrom : TypeLevelAspect, IAspectProvider
{
    private Type sourceType;

    public CopyCustomAttributesFrom(Type srcType)
    {
        sourceType = srcType;
    }
}
```

3. Implement ProvideAspects(Object):

```
class CopyCustomAttributesFrom : TypeLevelAspect, IAspectProvider
{
    // Details skipped.

    public IEnumerable<AspectInstance> ProvideAspects(object targetElement)
    {
        Type targetClassType = (Type)targetElement;

        //loop thru each property in target
        foreach (PropertyInfo targetPropertyInfo in targetClassType.GetProperties())
        {
            PropertyInfo sourcePropertyInfo = sourceType.GetProperty(targetPropertyInfo.Name);

            //loop thru all custom attributes for the source property and copy to the target property
            foreach (CustomAttributeData customAttributeData in sourcePropertyInfo.GetCustomAttributes())
            {
                //filter out attributes that aren't DataAnnotations
                if (customAttributeData.AttributeType.Namespace.Equals("System.ComponentModel.DataAnnotations"))
                {
                    CustomAttributeIntroductionAspect customAttributeIntroductionAspect =
                        new CustomAttributeIntroductionAspect(new ObjectConstruction(customAttributeData));

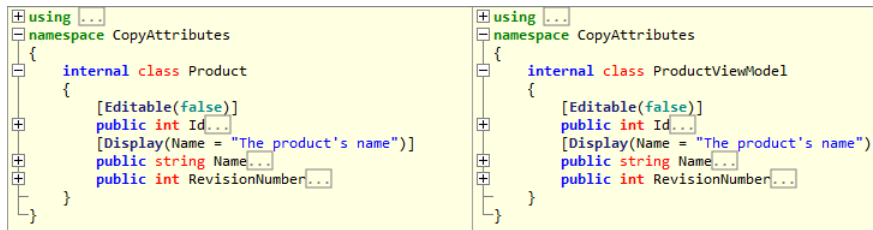
                    yield return new AspectInstance(targetPropertyInfo, customAttributeIntroductionAspect);
                }
            }
        }
    }
}
```

The ProvideAspects(Object) method iterates through each property of the target class and then gets the corresponding property from the source class. It then iterates through all custom attributes defined for the source property, copying each to the corresponding property of the target class. ProvideAspects(Object) also filters out attributes which aren't from the System.ComponentModel.DataAnnotations namespace to demonstrate how you may want to ignore some attributes during the copy process.

- Decorate the ProductViewModel class with the CopyCustomAttributesFrom attribute, specifying Product as the source type in the constructor. During compilation, CopyCustomAttributesFrom's ProvideAspects(Object) method will then perform the copy process from Product to ProductViewModel:

```
[CopyCustomAttributesFrom(typeof(Product))]
class ProductViewModel
{
    // Details skipped.
}
```

The following screenshot shows the Product and ProductViewModel classes reflected from an assembly. Here we can see that the Editable and Display attributes were copied from Product to ProductViewModel using CopyCustomAttributesAttribute at build time:



NOTE

It is not possible to delete or replace an existing custom attribute.

20.1.10. Introducing Managed Resources

Embedding resources in .NET allows for data to be packaged together with your code in an assembly. Resources are normally specified at design time and then embedded by the compiler during build time.

PostSharp's `AssemblyLevelAspect` adds additional flexibility by allowing you to programmatically add resources at compile time. In doing so you can add logic and therefore flexibility in determining which resources get embedded and how. For example, you could use this feature to encrypt a resource just before embedding it into your assembly.

Introducing resources

In the following example, we'll create an assembly decorator which retrieves the current date and time during compilation, and then stores that information in the current assembly as a resource. The example will then show that that information can be retrieved from the assembly at runtime.

1. Start by creating a class called `AddBuildInfoAspect` which derives from `AssemblyLevelAspect`. Also implement `IAAspectProvider` which exposes the `ProvideAspects(Object)` method. The `ProvideAspects(Object)` method will be called once by PostSharp, providing access to assembly information and allowing for a resource to be programmatically added to the assembly:

```
public sealed class AddBuildInfoAspect : AssemblyLevelAspect, IAAspectProvider
{
    public IEnumerable<AspectInstance> ProvideAspects(object targetElement)
    {
    }
}
```

2. Implement the `ProvideAspects(Object)` method:

```
public sealed class AddBuildInfoAspect : AssemblyLevelAspect, IAAspectProvider
{
    public IEnumerable<AspectInstance> ProvideAspects(object targetElement)
    {
        Assembly assembly = (Assembly)targetElement;

        byte[] userNameData = Encoding.ASCII.GetBytes(
            assembly.FullName + " was compiled by: " + Environment.UserName);
        ManagedResourceIntroductionAspect mria2 = new ManagedResourceIntroductionAspect("BuildUser", userNameData);

        yield return new AspectInstance(assembly, mria2);
    }
}
```

In this example the `targetElement` object passed in is cast to an `Assembly` object from which the assembly named is retrieved. The code then gets the current date and time, concatenates it with the assembly name, and then converts this string to a byte array. The byte array is then stored along with a name for the data in PostSharp's `ManagedResourceIntroductionAspect` object, and returned via an `AspectInstance`. PostSharp then embeds the resource into the current assembly.

3. Open your project's `AssemblyInfo.cs` file and add a line to include the `AddBuildInfoAspect` class:

```
[assembly:AddBuildInfoAspect]
```

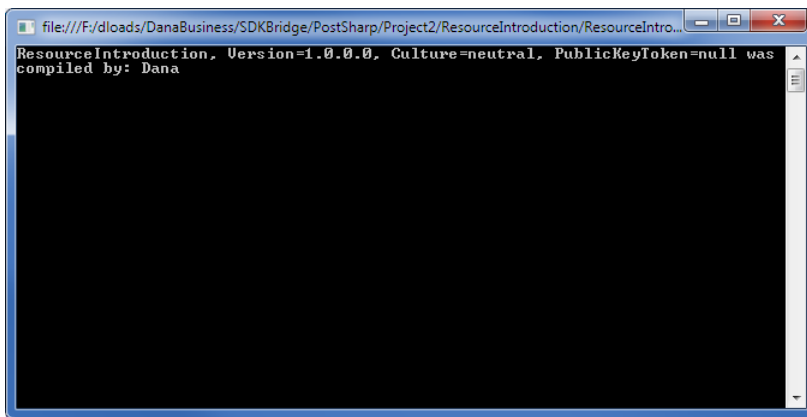
With this code in place the assembly will now embed the date and time as a resource into itself during compilation.

The following code demonstrates how to retrieve the data at runtime:

```
class Program
{
    static void Main(string[] args)
    {
        Assembly a = Assembly.GetExecutingAssembly();
        Stream stream = a.GetManifestResourceStream("BuildUser");

        byte[] bytesRead = new byte[stream.Length];
        stream.Read(bytesRead, 0, (int)stream.Length);
        string value = Encoding.ASCII.GetString(bytesRead);
        Console.WriteLine(value);
    }
}
```

This will display the following line in the console window:



20.2. Understanding Aspect Lifetime and Scope

An original feature of PostSharp is that aspects are instantiated at compile time. Most other frameworks instantiate aspects at run time.

Persistence of aspects between compile time and run time is achieved by serializing aspect instances into a binary resource stored in the transformed assembly. Therefore, you should carefully mark all aspect classes with the `PSerializableAttribute` custom attribute, and distinguish between serialized fields (typically initialized at compile-time and used at run-time) and non-serialized fields (typically used at run-time only or at compile-time only).

This topic contains the following sections:

- Scope of Aspects
- Steps in the Lifetime of an Aspect Instance

Scope of Aspects

PostSharp offers two kinds of aspect scopes: static (per-class) and per-instance.

Statically Scoped Aspects

With statically-scoped aspects, PostSharp creates one aspect instance for each element of code to which the aspect applies. The aspect instance is stored in a static field and is shared among all instances of the target class.

In generic types, the aspect instance has not exactly the same scope as static fields. Consider the following piece of code:

```
public class GenericClass<T>
{
    static T f;

    [Trace]
    public void SetField(T value) { f = value; }
}

public class Program
{
    public static void Main()
    {
        GenericClass<int>.SetField(1);
        GenericClass<long>.SetField(2);
    }
}
```

In this program, there are two instances of the static field `f` (one for `GenericClass<int>`, the second for `GenericClass<long>`) but only a single instance of the aspect `Trace`.

Instance-Scoped Aspects

Instance-scoped aspects have the same scope (instance or static) as the element of code to which they are applied. If an instance-scoped aspect is applied to a static member, it will have static scope. However, if it is applied to an instance member or to a class, it will have the same lifetime as the class instance: an aspect instance will be created whenever the class is instantiated, and the aspect instance will be garbage-collectable at the same time as the class instance.

Instance-scoped aspects are implemented according to the “*prototype pattern*”: the aspect instance created at compile time serves as a prototype, and is cloned at run-time whenever the target class is instantiated.

Instance-scoped aspects must implement the interface `IInstanceScopedAspect`. Any aspect may be made instance-scoped. The following code is a typical implementation of the interface `IInstanceScopedAspect`:

```
object IInstanceScopedAspect.CreateInstance( AdviceArgs adviceArgs )
{
    return this.MemberwiseClone();
}

object IInstanceScopedAspect.RuntimeInitializeInstance()
{
}
```

Steps in the Lifetime of an Aspect Instance

The following table summarizes the different steps of the aspect instance lifetime:

Phase	Step	Description
Compile-Time	Instantiation	<p>PostSharp creates a new instance of the aspect for every target to which it applies. If the aspect has been applied using a multicast custom attribute (<code>MulticastAttribute</code>), there will be one aspect instance for each matching element of code.</p> <p>When the aspect is given as a custom attribute or a multicast custom attribute, each custom attribute instance is instantiated using the same mechanism as the Common Language Runtime (CLR) does: PostSharp calls the appropriate constructor and sets the properties and/or fields with the appropriate values. For instance, when you use the construction <code>[Trace(Category="FileManager")]</code>, PostSharp calls the default constructor and the <code>Category</code> property setter.</p>

Phase	Step	Description
	Validation	PostSharp validates the aspect by calling the <code>CompileTimeValidate</code> aspect method. See Validating Aspect Usage on page 307 for details.
	Compile-Time Initialization	PostSharp invokes the <code>CompileTimeInitialize</code> aspect method. This method may, but must not, be overridden by concrete aspect classes in order to perform some expensive computations that do not depend on runtime conditions. The name of the element to which the custom attribute instance is applied is always passed to this method.
	Serialization	After the aspect instances have all been created and initialized, PostSharp serializes them into a binary stream. This stream is stored inside the new assembly as a managed resource.
Run-Time	Deserialization	Before the first aspect must be executed, the aspect framework deserializes the binary stream that has been stored in a managed resource during post-compilation. At this point, there is still one aspect instance per target class.
	Per-Class Runtime Initialization	Once all custom attribute instances are deserialized, we call for each of them the <code>RuntimeInitialize</code> method. But this time we pass as an argument the real <code>System.Reflection</code> object to which it is applied.
	Per-Instance Runtime Initialization	This step applies only to instance-scoped aspects when they have been applied to an instance member. When a class is instantiated, the aspect framework creates an aspect instance by invoking the method <code>CreateInstance(AdviceArgs)</code> of the prototype aspect instance. After the new aspect instance has been set up, the aspect framework invokes the <code>RuntimeInitializeInstance</code> .
	Advice Execution	Finally, advices (methods such as <code>OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)</code>) are executed.

20.3. Initializing Aspects

As explained in the section [Understanding Aspect Lifetime and Scope on page 304](#), a different aspect instance is associated with every element of code it is applied to. Aspect instances are created at compile time, serialized into the assembly as a managed resource, and deserialized at runtime. If the aspect is instance-scoped, instances are duplicated from the prototype and initialized.

Therefore, you can override one of the following three methods to handle aspect initializations:

1. The method `CompileTimeInitialize` is invoked at compile time, and should initialize only serializable fields of the aspect, so that the value of these fields will be available at run time. The argument of this method is the `System.Reflection` object representing the element of code to which this aspect instance has been applied. Therefore, this method can already perform expensive computations that depend only on metadata.
2. The method `RuntimeInitialize` is invoked at run time. Note that the aspect constructor itself is not invoked at run time. Therefore, overriding `RuntimeInitialize` is the only way to perform initialization tasks at run time. If the aspect is instance-scoped, this method is executed on the prototype instance.
3. The methods `IInstanceScopedAspectCreateInstance(AdviceArgs)` and `IInstanceScopedAspectRuntimeInitializeInstance` is invoked only for instance-scoped aspects. They initialize the aspect instance itself, as `RuntimeInitialize` was invoked on the prototype.

TIP

Initializing an aspect at compile time is useful when you need to compute a difficult result that depends only on metadata -- that is, it does not depend on any runtime information. An example is to build the strings that need to be printed by a tracing aspect. It is rather expensive to build strings that contain the full type name, the method name, and eventually placeholders for generic parameters and parameters. However, all required pieces of information are available at compile time. So compile time is the best moment to compute these strings.

20.4. Validating Aspect Usage

Some aspects make sense only on a specific subset of targets. For instance, an aspect may require to be applied on non-static methods only. Another aspect may not be compatible with methods that have ref or out parameters. If these constraints are not respected, these aspects will fail at runtime. However, defects detected by the compiler are always cheaper to fix than ones detected later. So, as the developer of an aspect, you should ensure that the build will fail if your aspect is being used on an invalid target.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Using \[MulticastAttributeUsage\] on page 307](#)
- [Implementing CompileTimeValidate on page 307](#)
- [Using Message Sources on page 308](#)
- [Validating Attributes That Are Not Aspects on page 309](#)

Using [MulticastAttributeUsage]

The first level of protection is to configure multicasting properly with [MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute], as described in the article [Adding Aspects Declaratively Using Attributes on page 186](#). However, this approach can only filter based on characteristics that are supported by the multicasting component.

Implementing CompileTimeValidate

The best way to validate aspect usage is to override the `CompileTimeValidate(Object)` method of your aspect class.

In this example, we will show how an aspect `RequirePermissionAttribute` can require to be applied only to methods of types that implement the `ISecurable` interface.

1. Inherit from one of the pre-built aspects. In this case `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`.

```
public class RequirePermissionAttribute: OnMethodBoundaryAspect
```

2. Override the `CompileTimeValidate(Object)` method.

```
    public override bool CompileTimeValidate(MethodBase target)
    {
```

3. Perform a check to see if the target class implements the interface in question.

```
        Type targetType = target.DeclaringType;
        if (!typeof(ISecurable).IsAssignableFrom(targetType))
        {
        }
    }
```

4. If the target does not implement the interface you must signal the compilation process that this target should not have the aspect applied to it. There are two ways to do this. The first option is to throw an `InvalidAnnotationException`.

```
if (!typeof(ISecurable).IsAssignableFrom(targetType))
{
    throw new InvalidAnnotationException("The target type does not implement ISecurable.");
}
```

5. The second option is to emit an error message to the compilation process.

```
if (!typeof(ISecurable).IsAssignableFrom(targetType))
{
    Message.Write(SeverityType.Error, "Custom01",
        "The target type does not implement ISecurable.", target);
    return false;
}
```

NOTE

You may have noticed that `CompileTimeValidate(Object)` returns a boolean value. If you only return `false` from this method the compilation process will silently ignore it. You must either throw the `InvalidAnnotationException` or emit an error message to not silently ignore the `false` return value.

Making use of the `CompileTimeValidate(Object)` method is a great way to encode custom rules for applying aspects to target code. While it could be used to duplicate the functionality of the `AttributeTargetTypeAttributes` or `AttributeTargetMemberAttributes`, its real power is to go beyond those filtering techniques. By using `CompileTimeValidate(Object)` you are able to filter aspect application in any manner that you can interrogate your codebase using reflection.

Using Message Sources

If you plan to raise many messages, you may prefer to define your own `MessageSource`. A `MessageSource` is backed by a managed resource mapping error codes to error messages.

In order to create your own `MessageSource`, you should:

1. Create an implementation of the `IMessageDispenser`. Typically, implement the `GetMessage(String)` method using a large switch statement. To each message will correspond a string

2. Create a static instance of the MessageSource class for your message source.

For instance, the following code defines a message source based on a message dispenser:

```
internal class ArchitectureMessageSource : MessageSource
{
    public static readonly ArchitectureMessageSource Instance = new ArchitectureMessageSource();

    private ArchitectureMessageSource() : base( "PostSharp.Architecture", new Dispenser() )
    {
    }

    private class Dispenser : MessageDispenser
    {
        public Dispenser() : base( "CUS" )
        {
        }

        protected override string GetMessage( int number )
        {
            switch ( number )
            {
                case 1:
                    return "Interface {0} cannot be implemented by {1} because of the [InternalImplement] constraint";

                case 2:
                    return "{0} {1} cannot be referenced from {2} {3} because of the [ComponentInternal] constraint";

                case 3:
                    return "Cannot use [ComponentInternal] on {0} {1} because the {0} is not internal.";

                case 4:
                    return "Cannot use [Internal] on {0} {1} because the {0} is not public.";

                default:
                    return null;
            }
        }
    }
}
```

3. Then you can use a convenient set of methods on your MessageSource object:

```
MyMessageSource.Instance.Write( classType, SeverityType.Error, "CUS001", new object[] { interfaceType, classType
```

NOTE

You can also emit information and warning messages.

TIP

Use ReflectionSearch to perform complex queries over System.Reflection.

Validating Attributes That Are Not Aspects

You can validate any attribute derived from Attribute by implementing the interface IValidableAnnotation.

20.5. Developing Composite Aspects

PostSharp offers two approaches to aspect-oriented development. The first, as explained in section [Developing Simple Aspects on page 263](#), is very similar to object-oriented programming. It requires the aspect developer to override virtual methods or implement interfaces. This approach is very efficient for simple problems.

One way to grow in complexity with the first approach is to use the interface `IAAspectProvider` (see [Adding Aspects Dynamically on page 321](#)). However, even this technique has its limitations.

This chapter documents the second approach, closer to the classic paradigm of aspect-oriented programming introduced by AspectJ. This approach allows developers to implement more complex design patterns using aspects. We call aspects developed with this approach “*composite aspects*”, because they are freely composed of different elements named “*advices*” and “*pointcuts*”.

An *advice* is anything that adds a behavior or a structural element to an element of code. For instance, introducing a method into a class, intercepting a property setter, or catching exceptions, are advices.

A *pointcut* is a function returning a set of elements of code to which advices apply. For instance, a function returning the set of properties annotated with the custom attribute `DataMember` is a pointcut.

Classes supporting advices and pointcuts are available in the namespace `PostSharp.Aspects.Advices`.

A composite aspect generally derives from a class that does not define its own advices: `AssemblyLevelAspect`, `TypeLevelAspect`, `InstanceLevelAspect`, `MethodLevelAspect`, `LocationLevelAspect` or `EventLevelAspect`. As such, these aspects have no functionality. You can add functionalities by adding advices to the aspect.

Advices are covered in the following sections:

Section	Description
Adding Behaviors to Existing Members on page 310	Advices with equivalent functionality as <code>OnMethodBoundaryAspect</code> , <code>MethodInterceptionAspect</code> , <code>LocationInterceptionAspect</code> , and <code>EventInterceptionAspect</code> .
Introducing Interfaces, Methods, Properties and Events on page 314	Make the aspect introduce an interface into the target class. The interface is implemented by the aspect itself.
Accessing Members of the Target Class on page 319	Make the aspect introduce a new method, property or event into the target class. The new member is implemented by the aspect itself. Conversely, the aspect can import a member of the target so that it can invoke it through a delegate.

20.5.1. Adding Behaviors to Existing Members

In order to add new behaviors to (i.e. modify) existing members (methods, fields, properties, or events), two questions must be addressed:

- **What** transformation should be performed? The answer lays in the *advice*. This advice is a method of your advice, annotated with a custom attribute determining in which situation the method should be invoked. You can freely choose the name of the method, but its signature must match the one expected by the advice type.
- **Where** should it be performed, i.e. on which elements on code? The answer lays in the *pointcut*, another custom attribute expected on the method providing the transformation.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [How to Add a Behavior to an Existing Member](#)
- [Advice Kinds on page 311](#)

- [Pointcuts Kinds on page 312](#)
- [Grouping Advices on page 313](#)

How to Add a Behavior to an Existing Member

1. Start with an empty aspect class deriving `AssemblyLevelAspect`, `TypeLevelAspect`, `InstanceLevelAspect`, `MethodLevelAspect`, `LocationLevelAspect` or `EventLevelAspect`. Mark it as serializable.
2. Choose an advice type in the list below. For instance: `OnMethodEntryAdvice`.
3. Create a method. The signature of this method should match exactly the signature matched by this advice type.
4. Annotate this method with a custom attribute of the advice type you chose. For instance: `[OnMethodEntryAdvice]`.
5. Choose a pointcut type in the list below. For instance: `SelfPointcut`. Annotate the advice method with that custom attribute. For instance: `[SelfPointcut]`.

Example

The following code shows a simple tracing aspect implemented with an advice and a pointcut. This aspect is exactly equivalent to a class derived from `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` where only the method `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)` has been overwritten. The example is a method-level aspect and `SelfPointcut` means that the advice applies to the same target as the method itself.

```
using System;
using PostSharp.Aspects;
using PostSharp.Aspects.Advices;
using PostSharp.Serialization;

namespace Samples6
{
    [PSerializable]
    public sealed class TraceAttribute : MethodLevelAspect
    {
        [OnMethodEntryAdvice, SelfPointcut]
        public void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
        {
            Console.WriteLine("Entering {0}.{1}", args.Method.DeclaringType.Name, args.Method.Name);
        }
    }
}
```

Advice Kinds

The following table lists all types of advices that can transform existing members. Note that all these advices are available as a part of a simple aspect (for instance `OnMethodEntryAdvice` corresponds to `OnMethodBoundaryAspectOnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)`). For a complete documentation of the advice, see the documentation of the corresponding simple aspect.

Advice Type	Targets	Description
<code>OnMethodEntryAdvice</code> <code>OnMethodSuccessAdvice</code> <code>OnMethodExceptionAdvice</code> <code>OnMethodExitAdvice</code>	Methods	These advices are equivalent to the advices of the aspect <code>OnMethodBoundaryAspect</code> . The target method to be wrapped by a try/catch/finally construct.
<code>OnMethodInvokeAdvice</code>	Methods	This advice is equivalent to the aspect <code>MethodInterceptionAspect</code> . Calls to the target methods are replaced to calls to the advice.

Advice Type	Targets	Description
OnLocationGetValueAdvice OnLocationSetValueAdvice	Fields, Properties	These advices are equivalent to the advices of the aspect <code>LocationInterceptionAspect</code> . Fields are changed into properties, and calls to the accessors are replaced to calls to the proper advice.
LocationValidationAdvice	Fields, Properties, Parameters	This advice is equivalent to the <code>ValidateValue(T, String, LocationKind)</code> <code>LocationInterceptionAspect</code> method of the <code>ILocationValidationAspectT</code> aspect interface. It validates values assigned to their targets and throws an exception in case of error.
OnEventAddHandlerAdvice OnEventRemoveHandlerAdvice OnEventInvokeHandlerAdvice	Events	These advices are equivalent to the advices of the aspect <code>EventInterceptionAspect</code> . Calls to add and remove semantics are replaced by calls to advices. When the event is fired, the <code>OnEventInvokeHandler</code> is invoked for each handler, instead of the handler itself.

Pointcuts Kinds

Pointcuts determine *where* the transformation provided by the advice should be applied.

From a logical point of view, pointcuts are functions that return a set of code elements. A pointcut can only select elements of code that are inside the target of the aspect itself. For instance, if an aspect has been applied to a class A, the pointcut can select the class A itself, members of A, but different classes or members of different classes.

Multicast Pointcut

The pointcut type `MulticastPointcut` allows to express a pointcut in a purely declarative way, using a single custom attribute. It works in a very similar way as `MulticastAttribute` (see [Adding Aspects Declaratively Using Attributes on page 186](#)) the kind of code elements being selected, their name and attributes can be filtered using properties of this custom attribute.

For instance, the following code applies the `OnPropertySet` advice to all non-abstract properties of the class to which the aspect has been applied.

```
[OnLocationSetValueAdvice,
MulticastPointcut( Targets = MulticastTargets.Property,
                  Attributes = MulticastAttributes.Instance | MulticastAttributes.NonAbstract)]
public void OnPropertySet( LocationInterceptionArgs args )
{
    // Details skipped.
}
```

Method Pointcut

The pointcut type `MethodPointcut` allows to express a pointcut imperatively, using a C# or VB method. The argument of the custom attribute should contain the name of the method implementing the pointcut.

The only parameter of this method should be type-compatible with the kind of elements of code to which the *aspect* applies. The return value of the pointcut method should be a collection (`IEnumerable<T>`) of objects that are type-compatible with the kind of elements of code to which the *advice* applies.

For instance, the following code applies the `OnPropertySet` advice to all writable properties that are not annotated with the `IgnorePropertyChanged` custom attribute.

```
private IEnumerable<PropertyInfo> SelectProperties( Type type )
{
    const BindingFlags bindingFlags = BindingFlags.Instance |
        BindingFlags.DeclaredOnly | BindingFlags.Public;
```



```

        return from property
            in type.GetProperties( bindingFlags )
            where property.CanWrite && !property.IsDefined(typeof(IgnorePropertyChanged))
            select property;
    }

    [OnLocationSetValueAdvice, MethodPointcut( "SelectProperties" )]
    public void OnPropertySet( LocationInterceptionArgs args )
    {
        // Details skipped.
    }

```

As you can see in this example, pointcut methods can use the power of LINQ to query `System.Reflection`.

Self Pointcut

The pointcut type `SelfPointcut` simply selects the target of the aspect.

Grouping Advices

The table of above shows advice types grouped in families. Advices of different type but of the same family can be grouped into a single logical *filter*, so they are considered as single transformation.

Why Grouping Advices

Consider for instance three advices of the family `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`: `OnMethodEntryAdvice`, `OnMethodSuccessAdvice` and `OnMethodExceptionAdvice`. The way how they are ordered is important, as it results in different generation of `try/catch/finally` block.

The following table compares advice ordering strategies. In the left column, advices are executed in the order: `OnEntry`, `OnExit`, `OnException`. In the right column, advices are grouped together.

<pre> void Method() { try { OnEntry(); try { // Original method body. } finally { OnExit(); } } catch { OnException(); throw; } } </pre>	<pre> void Method() { OnEntry(); try { // Original method body. } catch { OnException(); throw; } finally { OnExit(); } } </pre>
---	---

The code in the left column may make sense in some situations, but it is not consistent with the code generated by `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`. Note that the advices may have been ordered differently: the order `OnEntry`, `OnException`, `OnExit` would have generated the same code as in the right column. However, you would have had to use custom attributes to specify order relationships between advices (see [Ordering Advices on page 324](#)). Grouping advices is a much easier way to ensure consistency.

Additionally, when advices of the `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` family are grouped together, it will be possible to share information among them using `MethodExecutionTag`.

The reasons to group advices of the family `LocationInterceptionAspect` and `EventInterceptionAspect` are similar: advices grouped together behave consistently as a single filter (see [Understanding Interception Aspects on page 324](#)).

How to Group Advices

To group several advices into a single filter:

1. Choose a *master advice*. The choice of the master advice is arbitrary. All other advices of the group are called *slave advices*.
2. Annotate the master advice method with one advice custom attribute (see [Available Advices on page 311](#) and one pointcut custom attribute (see [Available Pointcuts on page 312](#)), as usually.
3. Annotate all slave advices with one advice custom attribute. Set the property `Master` of the custom attribute to the name of the master advice method.
4. Do not specify any pointcut on slave advice methods.

The following code shows how two advices of type `OnMethodEntryAdvice` and `OnMethodExitAdvice` can be grouped into a single filter:

```
[OnMethodEntryAdvice, MulticastPointcut]
public void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
}

[OnMethodExitAdvice(Master="OnEntry")]
public void OnExit(MethodExecutionArgs args)
{
}
```

20.5.2. Introducing Interfaces, Methods, Properties and Events

Some design patterns require you to add properties, methods or interfaces to your target code. If many components in your codebase need to represent the same construct, repetitively adding those constructs flies in the face of the DRY (Don't Repeat Yourself) principle. So how can you add code constructs to your target code without it becoming repetitive?

PostSharp offers a number of ways for you to add different code constructs to your codebase in a controlled and consistent manner. Let's take a look at those techniques.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Introducing interfaces on page 314](#)
- [Introducing methods on page 316](#)
- [Introducing properties on page 317](#)
- [Controlling the visibility of introduced members on page 318](#)
- [Overriding members or interfaces on page 318](#)

Introducing interfaces

One of the common situations that you will encounter is the need to implement a specific interface on a large number of classes. This may be `INotifyPropertyChanged`, `IDisposable`, `IEquatableT` or some custom interface that you have created. If the implementation of the interface is consistent across all of the targets then there is no reason that we shouldn't centralize its implementation. So how do we go about adding that interface to a class at compile time?

1. Let's add the `IIdentifiable` interface to the target code.

```
public interface IIdentifiable
{
    Guid Id { get; }
}
```

2. Create an aspect that inherits from `InstanceLevelAspect` and add the custom attribute `[PSerializableAttribute]`.
3. The key to adding an interface to target code is that you must implement that interface on your aspect. Let's implement the `IIdentifiable` interface on our aspect. It's this implementation of the interface that will be added to the target code, so anything that you include in method or property bodies will be added to the target code as you have declared it in the aspect.

```
[PSerializable]
public class IdentifiableAspect : InstanceLevelAspect, IIdentifiable
{
    public Guid Id { get; private set; }
}
```

4. Add the `IntroduceInterfaceAttribute` attribute to the aspect and include the interface type that you want to add to the target code.

```
[IntroduceInterface(typeof(IIdentifiable))]
[PSerializable]
public class IdentifiableAspect : InstanceLevelAspect, IIdentifiable
{
    public Guid Id { get; private set; }
}
```

5. Finally you need to declare where this aspect should be applied to the codebase. In this example let's add it, as an attribute, to a class.

```
[IdentifiableAspect]
public class Customer
{
    public string Name { get; set; }
    public string Address { get; set; }
}
```

6. After compilation you can decompile the target code and see that the interface has been added to it.

```
public class Customer : IIdentifiable
{
    [System.Diagnostics.DebuggerNonUserCode, System.Runtime.CompilerServices.CompilerGenerated]
    internal sealed class <z__Aspects...
    [System.NonSerialized]
    private IdentifiableAspect <z__aspect0;
    public string Name...
    public string Address...
    public Customer(...
    [System.Runtime.CompilerServices.CompilerGenerated]
    System.Guid IIdentifiable.get_Id()
    {
        return ((IIdentifiable)this.<z__aspect0).Id;
    }
    [System.Runtime.CompilerServices.CompilerGenerated]
    protected virtual void InitializeAspects(...
}
```

As you can see in the decompiled code, interfaces are implemented explicitly on the target code. It is also possible to introduce public members to target code. This is covered below.

NOTE

Interfaces and members introduced by PostSharp are not visible at compile time. To access the dynamically applied interface you must make use of a special PostSharp feature; the `CastSourceType`, `TargetType(SourceType)` pseudo-operator. The `CastSourceType`, `TargetType(SourceType)` method will allow you to safely cast the target code to the interface type that was dynamically applied. Once that call has been done, you are able to make use of the instance through the interface constructs.

There is no way to access a dynamically-inserted method, property or event, other than through reflection or the `dynamic` keyword.

NOTE

When you start adding code constructs to your target code, you need to determine how to initialize them correctly. Because these code constructs are not available for you to work with at compile time you need to figure out how to deal with them some other way. To see more about initializing code constructs that you introduce via aspects, please see the section [Initializing Aspects on page 306](#).

Introducing methods

The introduction of methods to your target code is very similar to introducing interfaces. The biggest difference is that you will be introducing code at a much more granular level.

1. Create an aspect that inherits from `InstanceLevelAspect` and add the custom attribute `[PSerializableAttribute]`.
2. Add to the aspect the method you want to introduce to the target code.

```
[PSerializable]
public class OurCustomAspect : InstanceLevelAspect
{
    public void TheMethodYouWantToUse(string aValue)
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Inside a method that was introduced {0}", aValue);
    }
}
```

NOTE

The method that you declare must be marked as `public`. If it is not you will see an error at compile time.

3. Decorate the method with the `IntroduceMemberAttribute` attribute.

```
[IntroduceMember]
public void TheMethodYouWantToUse(string aValue)
{
    Console.WriteLine("Inside a method that was introduced {0}", aValue);
}
```

4. Finally, declare where you want this aspect to be applied in the codebase.

```
[OurCustomAspect]
public class Customer
{
    public string Name { get; set; }
}
```

5. After compilation you can decompile the target code and see that the method has been added.

```
public class Customer
{
    [DebuggerNonUserCode, CompilerGenerated]
    internal sealed class <z__Aspects...
    [NonSerialized]
    private OurCustomAspect <z__aspect0;
    public string Name...
    public Customer(...
    public void TheMethodYouWantToUse(string aValue)
    {
        this.<z__aspect0.TheMethodYouWantToUse(aValue);
    }
    [CompilerGenerated]
    protected virtual void InitializeAspects(...
}
```

Introducing properties

The introduction of properties is almost exactly the same as the introduction of methods. Like introducing a method you will use the `IntroduceMemberAttribute` attribute. Let's take a look at the details.

1. Create an aspect that inherits from `InstanceLevelAspect` and add the custom attribute `[SerializableAttribute]`.
2. Add the property you want to introduce to the aspect.

```
[Serializable]
public class OurCustomAspect : InstanceLevelAspect
{
    public string Name { get; set; }
}
```

NOTE

The property that you declare must be marked as public. If it is not you will see a compiler error.

3. Decorate the property with the `IntroduceMemberAttribute` attribute.

```
[IntroduceMember]
public string Name { get; set; }
```

4. Add the aspect attribute to the target code where the aspect should be applied.

```
[OurCustomAspect]
public class Customer
{
}
```

- After you have compiled the codebase you can decompile the target code and see that the property has been added.

```
public class Customer
{
    [DebuggerNonUserCode, CompilerGenerated]
    internal sealed class <z__Aspects...
    [NonSerialized]
    private OurCustomAspect <z__aspect1;
    public string Name
    {
        get
        {
            return this.<z__aspect1.Name;
        }
        set
        {
            this.<z__aspect1.Name = value;
        }
    }
    public Customer()...
    [CompilerGenerated]
    protected virtual void InitializeAspects()...
}
```

As noted for both the introduction of methods and properties, the code being introduced must be declared as public. This is needed to ensure that PostSharp can function. If you look closely at the decompiled targets you will see that the introduced members are actually calling the methods/properties that were declared on the aspect. If the method/property on the aspect is not public, the target code will not be able to call it as it should.

NOTE

It is possible to introduce properties to target code, but it is not possible to introduce fields to your target code. The reason is that all members are introduced by delegation: the actual implementation of the member always resides in the aspect.

Controlling the visibility of introduced members

You may not want the introduced member to have public visibility once it has been introduced to the target code. PostSharp allows you to control the visibility of the introduced member through the use of the `Visibility` property on the aspect. To declare that a member should be introduced with private visibility, all you have to do is declare it as such.

```
[IntroduceMember(Visibility = Visibility.Private)]
public string Name { get; set; }
```

You have the ability to introduce members with a number of different visibilities including public, private, assembly (internal in C#) and others. You also have the ability to mark an introduction so that it will be declared as virtual if you set the `IsVirtual` property to true.

```
[IntroduceMember(Visibility = Visibility.Private, IsVirtual = true)]
public string Name { get; set; }
```

Overriding members or interfaces

One thing you need to be aware of is the situation where you are introducing a member that may already exist in the scope of the target code. Perhaps the method you are trying to introduce is available on the target code through inheritance. It's possible that the method is explicitly declared on the target code as well. The introduction of a member via an aspect needs to take these situations into account. PostSharp allows you to take these situations into account through the use of the `OverrideAction` property.

The `OverrideAction` property allows you to declare a rule for how the introduction of a member or interface should behave if the member or interface is already implemented on the target code. This property allows you to declare rules such as `Fail` (any conflict situation will throw a compile time error), `Ignore` (continue on without trying to introduce the

member/interface), `OverrideOrFail` or `OverrideOrIgnore`. It's important to understand how you want to apply your introduced members/interfaces in situations where that member/interface may already exist.

```
[IntroduceMember(OverrideAction = MemberOverrideAction.Fail)]
public string Name { get; set; }
```

20.5.3. Accessing Members of the Target Class

PostSharp makes it possible to import a delegate of a target class method, property or event into the aspect class, so that the aspect can invoke this member.

These mechanisms allow developers to encapsulate more design patterns using aspects.

This topic contains the following sections:

- Importing Members of the Target Class
- Interactions Between Several Member Introductions and Imports

Importing Members of the Target Class

Importing a member into an aspect allows this aspect to invoke the member. An aspect can import methods, properties, or fields.

To import a member of the target type into the aspect class:

1. Define a field into the aspect class, of the following type:

Member Kind	Field Type
Method	A typed <code>Delegate</code> , typically one of the variants of <code>Action</code> or <code>Func<T,Result></code> . The delegate signature should exactly match the signature of the imported method.
Property	<code>PropertyTValue</code> , where the generic argument is the type of the property.
Collection Indexer	<code>PropertyTValue</code> , <code>TIndex</code> , where the first generic argument is the type of the property value and the second is the type of the index parameter. Indexers with more than one parameter are not supported.
Event	<code>EventTDelegate</code> , where the generic argument is the type of the event delegate (for instance <code>EventHandler</code>).

2. Make this field public. The field cannot be static.
3. Add the custom attribute `ImportMemberAttribute` to the field. As the constructor argument, pass the name of the member to be imported.

At runtime, the field is set to a delegate of the imported member. Properties and events are imported as set of delegates (`PropertyTValueGet`, `PropertyTValueSet`; `EventTDelegateAdd`, `EventTDelegateRemove`). These delegates can be invoked by the aspect as any delegate.

The property `ImportMemberAttributeIsRequired` determines what happens if the member could not be found in the target class or in its parent. By default, the field will simply have the `null` value if it could not be bound to a member. If the property `IsRequired` is set to `true`, a compile-time error will be emitted.

Interactions Between Several Member Introductions and Imports

Although member introduction and import may seem simple advices at first sight, things become more complex when the several advices try to introduce or import the same member. PostSharp handles these situations in a robust and predictable way. For this purpose, it is primordial to process classes, aspects and advices in a consistent order.

PostSharp enforces the following order:

1. Base classes are processed first, derived classes after. Therefore, when a class is being processed, all parent classes have already been fully processed.
2. Aspects targeting the same class are sorted (see [Coping with Several Aspects on the Same Target on page 321](#)) and executed.
3. Advices of the same aspect are sorted and executed in the following order:
 - a. Member imports which have the property `ImportMemberAttributeOrder` set to `BeforeIntroductions`.
 - b. Member introductions.
 - c. Members imports which have the property `ImportMemberAttributeOrder` set to `AfterIntroductions` (this is the default value).

Based on this well-defined order, the advices behave as follow:

Advice	Precondition	Behavior
ImportMemberAttribute	No member, or private member defined in a parent class.	Error if <code>ImportMemberAttributeIsRequired</code> is true, ignored otherwise (by default).
	Non-virtual member defined.	Member imported.
	Virtual member defined.	If <code>ImportMemberAttributeOrder</code> is <code>BeforeIntroductions</code> , the overridden member is imported. This similar to calling a method with the base prefix in C#. Otherwise (and by default), the member is dynamically resolved using the virtual table of the target object.
IntroduceMemberAttribute	No member, or private member defined in a parent class.	Member introduced.
	Non-virtual member defined in a parent class	Ignored if the property <code>IntroduceMemberAttributeOverrideAction</code> is <code>Ignore</code> or <code>OverrideOrIgnore</code> , otherwise fail (by default).
	Virtual member defined in a parent class	Introduce a new override method if the property <code>IntroduceMemberAttributeOverrideAction</code> is <code>OverrideOrFail</code> or <code>OverrideOrIgnore</code> , ignore if the property is <code>Ignore</code> , otherwise fail (by default).

Advice	Precondition	Behavior
	Member defined in the target class (virtual or not)	<p>Fail by default or if the property <code>IntroduceMemberAttributeOverrideAction</code> is <code>Fail</code>.</p> <p>Otherwise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move the previous method body to a new method so that the previous implementation can be imported by advices <code>ImportMemberAttribute</code> with the property <code>Order</code> set to <code>BeforeIntroductions</code>. 2. Override the method with the imported method.

20.5.4. Adding Aspects Dynamically

Additionally to providing advices, an aspect can provide other aspects dynamically using `IAspectProvider`. This allows aspect developers to address situations where it is not possible to add aspects declaratively (using custom attributes) to the source code; aspects can be provided on the basis of a complex analysis of the target assembly using `System.Reflection`, or by reading an XML file, for instance.

For details about `IAspectProvider`, see [Adding Aspects Programmatically using `IAspectProvider` on page 203](#).

20.6. Coping with Several Aspects on the Same Target

As the team learns aspect-oriented programming and starts adding more aspect to projects, chances raise that several aspects are added to the same element of code. This could be a major source of troubles if PostSharp did not provide a robust framework to detect and prevent conflicts between aspects:

- Most aspects need to **be ordered**. For instance, an authorization aspect must be executed *before* a caching aspect.
- Even if some aspects don't care to be ordered, it's good to have them applied in **predictable order**. Otherwise, some code that works today may be broken tomorrow -- just because aspects were applied in a different order.
- Some aspects **conflict**; they cannot be together on the same aspect, or not in a given order. For instance, it does not make sense to persist an object using two different aspects: one would persist to the database, the other to the registry.
- Some aspects **require** other aspects to be applied. For instance, an aspect changing the mouse pointer to an hourglass requires the method to execute asynchronously, otherwise the pointer shape will never be updated.

PostSharp addresses these issues by making it possible to add dependencies between aspects. The aspect dependency framework is implemented in the namespace `PostSharp.Aspects.Dependencies`.

NOTE

The aspect dependency framework is not related to the notion of dependency injection.

Aspect Dependency Custom Attributes

You can express dependencies of an aspect by annotating the aspect class with custom attributes derived from the type `AspectDependencyAttribute`. Several derived types are available; every type matches other aspects according to different criteria.

Attribute Type	Description
<code>AspectTypeDependencyAttribute</code>	This custom attribute expresses a dependency with a well-known aspect class.
<code>AspectRoleDependencyAttribute</code>	This custom attribute expresses a dependency with any aspect classes enrolled in a given role. Its dual is <code>ProvideAspectRoleAttribute</code> : this custom attribute enrolls an aspect class into a role. A role is simply a string. Whenever possible, consider using one of the roles defined in the class <code>StandardRoles</code> .
<code>AspectEffectDependencyAttribute</code>	This custom attribute expresses a dependency with any aspect that has a specific effect on the source code or the control flow. Effects are represented as a string, whose valid values are listed in the type <code>StandardEffects</code> . Effects are provisioned by the aspect weaver on the basis of a rough analysis of what the aspect may do; aspect developers cannot assign new effects to aspects. However, they can waive effects by using the custom attribute <code>WaiveAspectEffectAttribute</code> . For instance, an aspect developer can specify that a trace attribute has no effect at all; this aspect will commute with any other aspect (see below).

Every of these custom attributes have similar structure and members. The first parameter of their constructor, of type `AspectDependencyAction`, determines the kind of dependency relationship added between the current aspect and the aspects matched by the custom attribute.

PostSharp supports the following kinds of relationships:

Action	Description
Order	The dependency expresses an order relationship. The second constructor of the custom attribute, of type <code>AspectDependencyPosition</code> (with values <code>Before</code> or <code>After</code>), must be specified. The custom attributes determine the position of the current aspect with respect to matched aspects.
Require	The dependency expresses a requirement. PostSharp will issue a compile-time error if the requirement is not satisfied for any target of the current aspect. The second constructor of the custom attribute, of type <code>AspectDependencyPosition</code> , is optional. If specified, an aspect matching the dependency should be present before or after the current aspect.
Conflict	The dependency expresses a conflict. PostSharp will issue a compile-time error if any aspect matching the dependency rule is present on any target of the current aspect. The second constructor of the custom attribute, of type <code>AspectDependencyPosition</code> , is optional. If specified, an error is issued only if a matching aspect is present before or after the current aspect.
Commute	The dependency specifies that the current aspect is commutable with any matching aspect. When aspects are commutable, PostSharp does not issue any warning if they are not strongly ordered.

Custom attribute types and values of the enumeration `AspectDependencyAction` are orthogonal; they can be freely combined.

Examples

Using role-based dependencies

The following code shows how three aspects can be ordered without having explicit knowledge of each other. Each aspect provides a different role, and defines dependencies with respect to other roles.

```
[ProvideAspectRole( StandardRoles.Threading )]
[AspectRoleDependency(AspectDependencyAction.Order, AspectDependencyPosition.Before, "UI")]
public sealed class AsyncAttribute : MethodInterceptionAspect
{
    // Details skipped
}

[ProvideAspectRole( StandardRoles.ExceptionHandling )]
[AspectRoleDependency( AspectDependencyAction.Order, AspectDependencyPosition.After, StandardRoles.Threading )]
[AspectRoleDependency(AspectDependencyAction.Order, AspectDependencyPosition.After, "UI")]
public sealed class ExceptionDialogAttribute : OnExceptionAspect
{
    // Details skipped
}

[ProvideAspectRole("UI")]
public sealed class StatusTextAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    // Details skipped
}
```

Using effect-based dependencies

The following code shows how to protect an authorization aspect to be executed after an aspect which may change the control flow and skipping the execution of the method, such as a caching aspect. Then, it shows how the `AspectAsyncAttribute` can opt out from this effect, because the aspect developer knows that does aspect does not skip the execution of the method, but only defers it.

```
[AspectEffectDependency( AspectDependencyAction.Conflict, AspectDependencyPosition.Before,
    StandardEffects.ChangeControlFlow )]
public sealed class AuthorizationAttribute : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    // Details skipped.
}

[WaiveAspectEffect(StandardEffects.ChangeControlFlow)]
public sealed class AsyncAttribute : MethodInterceptionAspect
{
    // Details skipped
}
```

Deferring Ordering to Aspect Users

By adding dependencies to the aspect class, the aspect developer specifies the order of execution of aspects in a fully static way. The same order is used for every element of code to which aspects apply. While this behavior is most of time desirable, there may be situations where we want to defer ordering to users of our aspects.

Aspect users can influence the order of execution of an aspect by setting the aspect property `AspectPriority`, typically when using the aspect custom attribute (the same property is available in the configuration object as `Aspect-ConfigurationAspectPriority`, see [Configuring Aspects on page 332](#)).

Setting the `AspectPriority` results to an aspect in adding an ordering dependency between this aspect and all other aspects where the same property has been set. Therefore, aspect priorities complement, and do not replace, other ordering dependencies. The aspect developer may specify vital aspect dependencies (that is, under-specify aspect ordering), and let it to the aspect user to complete the ordering with priorities.

CAUTION NOTE

Do not confuse the property `AspectPriority` with `AttributePriority`. The latter determines an order in which several custom attributes of the same type are processed by the `MulticastAttribute` engine. The first determines in which order the aspects are executed at run time.

Adding Dependencies to Third-Party Aspects

If you are using aspects provided by several third-party vendors who don't know about each other, you may need to solve conflicts on your own.

You can do that by adding any custom attribute derived from `AspectDependencyAttribute` at assembly level, and use the property `TargetType` to specify to which aspect class the dependency applies.

Here is an example:

```
[assembly: AspectTypeDependency( AspectDependencyAction.Order, AspectDependencyPosition.Before,
                                typeof(Vendor1.TraceAspect), TargetType = typeof(Vendor2.ExceptionHandlingAspect) ) ]
```

20.6.1. Ordering Advices

The section [Coping with Several Aspects on the Same Target on page 321](#) talks in terms of *aspect dependencies* and *aspect ordering*. Most of what has been said there is also valid to advices. When we talk of the order of execution of aspects, we actually mean the execution of advices ("aspects" themselves, *"stricto sensu"*, are never executed).

Dependencies defined at aspect level implicitly apply to all advices. When developing a composite aspect (see [Developing Composite Aspects on page 310](#)), it is possible to add dependencies directly to advice methods by annotating them with custom attributes of the namespace `PostSharp.Aspects.Dependencies`.

Note that all advices provided by an aspect are ordered in a single block. Suppose that a method is the target of advices `Aspect1.MethodA`, `Aspect1.MethodB` and `Aspect2.MethodC`. The next table shows valid and invalid orders:

Valid Orders	Invalid Orders
Aspect1.MethodA, Aspect1.MethodB, Aspect2.MethodC	Aspect1.MethodA, Aspect2.MethodC, Aspect1.MethodB
Aspect1.MethodB, Aspect1.MethodA, Aspect2.MethodC	Aspect1.MethodB, Aspect2.MethodC, Aspect1.MethodA
Aspect2.MethodC, Aspect1.MethodA, Aspect1.MethodB	
Aspect2.MethodC, Aspect1.MethodB, Aspect1.MethodA	

Ordering Advices of the Same Aspect

Advices of the same aspect can be used using any custom attribute derived from `AspectDependencyAttribute`.

Because advices of the same aspect instance are necessarily ordered in block, it is appropriate to specify dependencies between aspect classes extensively, and specify ordering of advices only in the scope of the current aspect instance. The most appropriate dependency custom attribute for this purpose is `AdviceDependencyAttribute`, which accepts the name of the advice method as a parameter.

20.7. Understanding Interception Aspects

Aspect types `MethodInterceptionAspect`, `LocationInterceptionAspect` and `EventInterceptionAspect` are all based on the same principle: the aspect is invoked *instead of* the enhanced semantic. The aspect gets access to the intercepted semantic through methods prefixed by `Proceed`, or by other methods.

Things become more complex when several interception aspects are applied to the same element of code. Consider a method enhanced by three aspects A, B and C. When aspect A calls the method `Proceed`, it will actually invoke the method

OnInvoke(MethodInterceptionArgs) of aspect B. Similarly, aspect B will invoke aspect C, and aspect C will eventually invoke the original method.

Chains of Invocation

Interception aspects form a *chain on invocation* where every aspect instance is a node in the chain, and the intercepted member is the last node.

An interception aspect can only invoke the next node in the chain. There is no way an aspect can invoke another node, or can access directly the intercepted member. This design ensures that aspects behave in a robust and consistent way in all situations.

Aspect types `LocationInterceptionAspect` and `EventInterceptionAspect` have several semantics (Get and Set for `LocationInterceptionAspect`; Add, Remove and Invoke for `EventInterceptionAspect`). All advices of the same aspect instance (one advice per semantic) logically belong to the same node in the chain of invocation. Therefore, when the implementation of the advice `LocationInterceptionAspectOnSetValue(LocationInterceptionArgs)` invokes the method `LocationInterceptionArgsGetCurrentValue`, it actually invokes the Get semantic of the next node in the chain. If the aspect had used `PropertyInfoGetValue(Object)` to get the value (as was usual in PostSharp 1.0), it would have invoked the *first* node in the chain!

Aspects as Filters: a Disciplined Approach to Aspect-Oriented Programming

In its early days, aspect-oriented programming (AOP) has been perceived as a dangerous technology. Aspects allowed to do anything with a program. Although AOP has been designed to improve the readability and maintainability of source code, it could actually have the opposite effect.

As goes the saying, with a sharp tool, one must pay greater attention.

PostSharp was designed to respect one of the most fundamental principles of software engineering: encapsulation. *Encapsulation* means the condition of being enclosed, as in a capsule. In object-oriented programming, the primary capsule is the class itself. Outside code communicates with the capsule through well-defined ports: public members. Outside code cannot modify what's inside the capsule. A well-designed capsule should check the validity of messages it receives or it sends - something called precondition and postcondition checking. The second level of encapsulation is the method: even inside a class, code should be designed so that the implementation of a method does not need to care about the implementation of another method.

Of course, it is possible to ignore the rules of encapsulation. But it would most probably result in poorly readable and maintainable code.

PostSharp actually allows you to break the first capsule: you can add advices to private members of a class. But it stops there: you cannot break the capsule of a method. Instead, you can enclose a method into a new capsule analog to a *filter*: the advice. When a method is enhanced by an advice, outside code seeking access to this method must go through its advice.

When a method is enhanced by several advices, every advice constitutes a filter that encloses not only the method, but all advices with lower priority.

Methods have a single semantic: Invoke. Properties, fields and events have many multiple semantics. These members can be considered as a single capsule, and their semantics as different ports in the capsule.

NOTE

Things can become more complex. Consider a property with a getter and a setter. The property is enhanced by an aspect of type `LocationInterceptionAspect`. The property setter is enhanced by a `MethodInterceptionAspect` with lower priority. From a logical point of view, the property is considered as a single capsule with two ports. The capsule is enclosed by two filters, one for each aspect. The aspect `LocationInterceptionAspect` filters both ports. However, `MethodInterceptionAspect` only filters the Set port. If the `LocationInterceptionAspect` invokes the Get semantic, it will be directed to the property getter, because there is no filter between the advice and the semantic. However, when the same aspect invokes the Set semantic, it will be directed to `LocationInterceptionAspect` as this filters lays in the way.

NOTE

The Invoke semantic of `EventInterceptionAspect` is executed in invert order. Indeed, the message originates inside the capsule is emitted outside. For all other semantics, the message always comes from outside and is directed to the capsule.

Aspect Bindings

When an advice is invoked, it receives an interface to the next node in the chain of invocation: an aspect binding. Every aspect type has its corresponding binding interface, exposed on a property of the advice argument object.

Aspect Type	Binding Interface	Exposed On
<code>MethodInterceptionAspect</code>	<code>IMethodBinding</code>	<code>MethodInterceptionArgsBinding</code>
<code>LocationInterceptionAspect</code>	<code>ILocationBinding</code>	<code>LocationInterceptionArgsBinding</code>
<code>EventInterceptionAspect</code>	<code>IEventBinding</code>	<code>EventInterceptionArgsBinding</code>

Binding objects are singletons. They are fully thread-safe and reentrant. They can be invoked in any situation. This contrasts with advice arguments, which may be shared among different advices and should not be used once the advice gave over control to the next node in the chain invocation.

NOTE

As objects of type `Arguments` may be shared among different advices, some of which may modify the arguments, it may be safe to clone the object before the advice gives over control.

NOTE

For run-time performance reasons, `PostSharp` does not access binding classes through their interface, but directly invokes their implementation. Implementation classes of binding interfaces are considered an implementation detail and should not be referred to from user code.

20.8. Understanding Aspect Serialization

As explained in section [Understanding Aspect Lifetime and Scope](#) on page 304, aspect are first instantiated at build time by the weaver, are then initialized by the `CompileTimeInitialize` method, and serialized and stored in the assembly as a managed resource. Aspects are then deserialized at runtime, before being executed.

Because of the aspect life cycle, aspect classes must be made serializable as described in this section.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Default serialization strategy on page 327](#)
- [Fallback serialization strategy on page 327](#)
- [Aspects without serialization on page 327](#)

Default serialization strategy

Typically, aspects can be made serializable by adding a custom attribute to the class, which causes all fields of the class to be serialized. Fields that do not need to be serialized must be annotated with an opt-out custom attribute. PostSharp chooses the serialization strategy according to these custom attributes. The serialization strategy is implemented in classes derived from the abstract `AspectSerializer` class. The default serialization strategy is implemented in the `PortableAspectSerializer` class, that is backed by `PortableFormatter`.

This is how you can apply default serialization strategy to your aspect:

- To make the class serializable, annotate the class with the `[SerializableAttribute]` custom attribute.
- To exclude the field from the serialization, annotate the field with the `[NonSerializedAttribute]` custom attribute.

Fallback serialization strategy

In some cases the default serialization strategy implemented by the `PortableAspectSerializer` class may not be appropriate for your aspects. For example, the data structures used in your classes may not be supported by the `PortableFormatter` implementation or you may need your code to be backward compatible with PostSharp 4.2 and earlier. In versions 4.2 and earlier the default serialization strategy was implemented in the `BinaryAspectSerializer` class, that was backed by `BinaryFormatter`. You can still use `BinaryAspectSerializer` as a fallback serialization strategy in PostSharp 4.3 and later.

To apply fallback serialization strategy to your aspects, use `[SerializableAttribute]` custom attribute instead of `[SerializableAttribute]`, and use `[NonSerializedAttribute]` custom attribute instead of `[NonSerializedAttribute]`.

NOTE

The `BinaryAspectSerializer` class is supported only in projects that target the .NET Framework with full trust.

Aspects without serialization

In some situations, serializing and deserializing the aspect may be a suboptimal solution. In case aspect field values are a pure function of constructor arguments and properties, it may be more efficient to emit code that instantiates these aspects at runtime instead of serializing-deserializing them. This is the case, typically, if the aspect does not implement the `CompileTimeInitialize` method.

In this situation, it is better to use a different serializer: `MsilAspectSerializer`.

NOTE

`MsilAspectSerializer` is actually **not** a serializer. When you use this implementation instead of a real serializer, the aspect is **not** serialized, but the weaver generates MSIL instructions to build the aspect instance at runtime, by calling the aspect class constructor and by setting its fields and properties.

You can specify which serializer should be used for a specific aspect class by setting the property `AspectConfigurationSerializerType` of the configuration of this aspect class or instance.

See section [Configuring Aspects on page 332](#) for details.

The following code shows how to choose the serializer type for an `OnMethodBoundaryAspect`:

```
[OnMethodBoundaryAspectConfiguration(SerializerType=typeof(MsilAspectSerializer))]
public sealed MyAspect : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
```

20.9. Customizing Aspect Appearance in Visual Studio

This chapter explains how to configure how your custom aspects appear in PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio. It contains the following topics:

Section	Description
Customizing Aspect Description in Tooltips on page 328	This topic describes how to change the description of custom aspects in PostSharp-generated tooltips in Visual Studio.
Estimating Code Savings on page 329	This topic explains how give hints so that PostSharp can better estimate how many lines of code are saved thanks to your aspect.

20.9.1. Customizing Aspect Description in Tooltips

When you position the mouse cursor over a declaration that has been enhanced by an aspect, PostSharp Tools adds a description of the aspect to the Intellisense tooltip. The description that PostSharp generates by default is sometimes little helpful. To make the Intellisense description of your aspect more understandable for its users, you should override the default description.

Simple Aspects

Simple aspects are aspects built by deriving from a base class such as `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` and overriding virtual methods of the base class, such as `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)`. They are described in the section [Developing Simple Aspects on page 263](#).

To set the description of a simple aspect, add the `AspectDescriptionAttribute` custom attribute to the aspect class.

This is illustrated in the following code snippet.

```
[PSerializable]
[AspectDescription("Applies the exception handling policy")]
public sealed class ExceptionHandlerAttribute : OnExceptionAspect
{
    public override void OnException( MethodExecutionArgs eventArgs )
    {
        if ( !ExceptionHandler.OnException( eventArgs.Exception ) )
        {
            eventArgs.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.Continue;
        }
    }
}
```


Composite Aspects

Composite aspects are aspects where advices are not overridden from the base class, but are added using advice and pointcut custom attributes such as `OnMethodEntryAdvice` and `MethodPointcut`. Composite aspects are described in section [Developing Composite Aspects on page 310](#). Unlike simple aspects, composite aspects can have several advices,

With composite aspects, you should add a description to every advice. You can do that by setting the `Description` property of the advice custom attribute.

The following code snippet illustrates how to set the description of the advice. This description will appear in the Intellisense tooltip of each property affected by this advice.

```
[OnLocationSetValueAdvice( Description="Persists the property to disk." ),
MulticastPointcut( Targets = MulticastTargets.Property,
                   Attributes = MulticastAttributes.Instance | MulticastAttributes.NonAbstract)]
public void OnPropertySet( LocationInterceptionArgs args )
{
    // Details skipped.
}
```

20.9.2. Estimating Code Savings

During build, PostSharp attempts to estimate how many lines of hand-written code were avoided thanks to aspects. By default, PostSharp considers that 2 lines of code are saved every time an advice is applied to a target. This is of course a very rough estimate. You can add information to your aspects and advices to make the estimate more accurate.

TIP

When adding code saving estimate, ask yourself the following question: how much code would an intelligent developer have written if she has to implement the same feature without PostSharp, using the best possible strategy? Do not assume that the strategy you took to implement the feature with an aspect would be the same as the strategy for hand-written code.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Simple aspects on page 329](#)
- [Composite aspects on page 330](#)
- [Adding code saving hints programmatically on page 330](#)

Simple aspects

Simple aspects are aspects built by deriving from a base class such as `OnMethodBoundaryAspect` and overriding virtual methods of the base class, such as `OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs)`. They are described in the section [Developing Simple Aspects on page 263](#).

By default, PostSharp estimates that 2 lines of hand-written code are avoided for each advice method that you override, every time the aspect is applied to a target.

To override the default value, add the `LinesOfCodeAvoidedAttribute` custom attribute to the aspect class. The argument of the custom attribute constructor must be set to the number of lines of hand-written code avoided every time the aspect is applied to a target.

The following code snippet shows how to specify that 4 lines of code are avoided every time the aspect is applied. If the aspect is applied to 100 methods, PostSharp will estimate that 400 lines of hand-written code have been avoided.

```
[PSerializable]
[LinesOfCodeAvoided(4)]
public sealed class ExceptionHandlerAttribute : OnExceptionAspect
```

```

{
    public override void OnException( MethodExecutionArgs eventArgs )
    {
        if ( !ExceptionHandler.OnException( eventArgs.Exception ) )
        {
            eventArgs.FlowBehavior = FlowBehavior.Continue;
        }
    }
}

```

Composite aspects

Composite aspects are aspects where advices are not overridden from the base class, but are added using advice and pointcut custom attributes such as `OnMethodEntryAdvice` and `MethodPointcut`. Composite aspects are described in section [Developing Composite Aspects on page 310](#). Unlike simple aspects, composite aspects can have several advices,

By default, PostSharp estimates that 2 lines of hand-written code are avoided for each advice, every time the advice is applied to a target. Some advices may have different default values. For instance, the `IntroduceInterfaceAttribute` advice shall count 2 lines of code per introduced interface method.

You can still use the aspect-level `LinesOfCodeAvoidedAttribute` custom attribute. It will increment the estimated number of avoided lines of code every time the *aspect* is applied to a target. However, to provide more relevant estimates, you need to provide code saving information at *advice* level.

To specify how many lines of hand-written code are avoided every time an advice is applied to a target, specify the `Advice` property of the advice custom attribute.

The following code snippet shows how to specify that 1 line of code is avoided every time the advice is applied. Suppose that the aspect is applied to 100 classes and each class has in average 5 instance non-abstract properties. In this situation, PostSharp will estimate that 500 lines of hand-written code have been avoided.

```

[OnLocationSetValueAdvice( LinesOfCodeAvoided = 1 ),
MulticastPointcut( Targets = MulticastTargets.Property,
                  Attributes = MulticastAttributes.Instance | MulticastAttributes.NonAbstract)]
public void OnPropertySet( LocationInterceptionArgs args )
{
    // Details skipped.
}

```

Adding code saving hints programmatically

In the previous sections, we described how to add code saving hints declaratively using custom attributes. Sometimes declarative estimations are not accurate enough. To learn how to add programatic hints, see [Pushing Information to PostSharp Tools Programmatically on page 330](#).

20.9.3. Pushing Information to PostSharp Tools Programmatically

The `IWeavingSymbolsService` service allows you to push information from your aspect, at build time, to PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio.

This service can be used in the following scenarios:

- Adding some text to the Intellisense tooltip of a declaration.
- Adding some code saving information.
- Add some annotation that means that PostSharp Tools should consider that a declaration has been decorated with a custom attribute. This annotation is then taken into account by the analytic engine that powers the real-time quick actions and diagnostics of PostSharp Tools. For instance, the `FieldRule` facility uses this feature.

To get an instance of this service, use the `GetServiceT(Boolean)` method from `PostSharpEnvironment.CurrentProject.GetService`.

20.10. Advanced

20.10.1. Coping with Custom Object Serializers

Some aspects need to be initialized when a new instance of the class to which they are applied is created. For instance, instance-scoped aspect must be cloned from the prototype; members imported into the through `ImportMemberAttribute` must be bound to aspect fields.

PostSharp enhances every constructor of every enhanced class so that aspects are properly initialized.

However, it is possible to create new instances of classes by *bypassing* the constructor. This happens, for instance, when classes are deserialized by the `BinaryFormatter` or the `DataContractSerializer`. These formatters use the method `FormatterServices.GetUninitializedObject(Type)` to create new instances, but this method bypasses all constructors.

PostSharp implements a workaround for the deserializers `BinaryFormatter` and `DataContractSerializer`: it creates or modifies a method annotated by the custom attribute `OnDeserializingAttribute`, so that aspects are initialized properly.

However, if you are using a custom deserializer, or for any reason create instances using the method the method `FormatterServices.GetUninitializedObject(Type)`, you will have to initialize aspects manually.

Initializing Aspects Manually

There are two possible ways to initialize an aspect from user code.

By Defining a Method `InitializeAspects`

You can define in your classes (typically in one of the root classes of your class hierarchy) a method with the following name and signature:

```
protected virtual void InitializeAspects();
```

When PostSharp discovers this method, it will insert its own initialization logic at the beginning of the `InitializeAspects` method. The original logic is not deleted. This method can safely have an empty implementation.

The following constraints apply:

- The method should be `virtual` unless the class is sealed.
- The method should be `protected` or `public`, unless the class is `internal`.

For instance, the following class would enable aspects (applied on this class or on derived classes) to be initialized after deserialization (note that PostSharp automatically generates this code for `BinaryFormatter` and `DataContractSerializer`; you only need to do it manually for a custom serializer).

```
[DataContract]
public abstract class BaseClass
{
    protected virtual void InitializeAspects()
    {
    }
}

[OnDeserializing]
```

```
private void OnDeserializingInitializeAspects()
{
    this.InitializeAspects();
}
}
```

By Invoking `AspectUtilities.InitializeCurrentAspects`

Instead of providing an empty method `InitializeAspects`, it is possible to invoke the method `AspectUtilities.InitializeCurrentAspects`. A call to this method will be translated into a call to `InitializeAspects`. It has to be invoked from a non-static method of an enhanced class.

If the class from which `InitializeCurrentAspects` is invoked has not been enhanced by an aspect requiring initialization, the call to this method is simply ignored.

NOTE

Using this approach may be brittle in some situations: calls to `InitializeCurrentAspects` will have no effect if aspects are applied to derived classes, but not to the calling class. In this scenario, it is preferable to define the method `InitializeAspects`.

20.10.2. Configuring Aspects

Configuration settings of aspects determine how they should be processed by their weaver. Configuration settings are always evaluated at build time. Most aspects have one or many of them. For instance, the aspect type `OnExceptionAspect` has a configuration setting determining the type of exceptions handled with this aspect.

There are two ways to configure an aspect: declarative and imperative.

Declarative Configuration

You can configure an aspect declaratively by applying the appropriate custom attribute on the aspect class. Aspect configuration attributes are in the namespace `PostSharp.Aspects.Configuration`. Every aspect type has its corresponding type of configuration attribute. The name of the custom attribute starts with the name of the aspect and has the suffix `ConfigurationAttribute`. For instance, the configuration attribute of the aspect class `OnExceptionAspect` is `OnExceptionAspectConfigurationAttribute`.

Declarative configuration has always precedence over imperative configuration: if some property of the configuration custom attribute is set on the aspect class, or on any parent, the corresponding imperative semantic will not be evaluated.

Once a configuration property has been set in a parent class, it cannot be overwritten in a child class.

Note that these restrictions are enforced at the level of properties. If a property of a configuration custom attribute is not set in a parent class, it can still be overwritten in a child class or by an imperative semantic.

Imperative Configuration

A second way to configure an aspect class is to override its configuration methods or set its configuration property.

NOTE

Imperative configuration is only available when you target the full .NET Framework. It is not available for Silverlight or the Compact Framework.

Benefits of Imperative Configuration

The advantage of imperative configuration is that it can be arbitrarily complex (since the code of the configuration method is executed inside the weaver). Specifically, it allows the configuration to be dependent on how the aspect is actually used, for instance the configuration can depend on the value of a property of the aspect custom attribute.

Implementation Note

Under the hood, aspects implement the method `IApectBuildSemanticsGetAspectConfiguration(Object)`. This method should return a configuration object, derived from the class `AspectConfiguration`. Every aspect class has its own aspect configuration class. For instance, the configuration attribute of the aspect class `OnExceptionAspect` is `OnExceptionAspectConfiguration`. The aspect type `OnExceptionAspect` implements `IApectBuildSemanticsGetAspectConfiguration(Object)` by creating an instance of `OnExceptionAspectConfiguration`, then it invokes the method `OnExceptionAspectGetExceptionType(MethodBase)` and copies the return value of this method to the property `OnExceptionAspectConfigurationExceptionType`. Therefore, there are two ways to configure an aspect: either by overriding configuration methods and setting configuration properties (these methods and properties are provided by the framework for convenience only), or by implementing the method `IApectBuildSemanticsGetAspectConfiguration(Object)`. If your aspect does not derive from the aspect class `OnExceptionAspect`, but directly implements the aspect interface `IOnExceptionAspect`, you can use only the later method.

CHAPTER 21

Testing and Debugging Aspects

Aspects should be tested as any piece of code. However, testing techniques for aspects differ from testing techniques for normal class libraries because of a number of reasons:

- Aspects instantiation is not user-controlled.
- Aspects partially execute at build time.
- Aspects can emit build errors. Logic that emits build errors should be tested too.

These characteristics are no obstacle to proper testing of aspects.

This chapter contains the following sections:

- [Writing Simple Tests on page 335](#) explains how to test the behavior of an aspect.
- [Testing that an Aspect has been Applied on page 337](#) shows how to test that an aspect has been applied to the expected set of code artifacts.
- [Consuming Dependencies from the Aspect on page 338](#) describes several ways for aspects to consume dependencies from dependency-injection containers and service locators.
- [Debugging Run-Time Aspect Logic on page 352](#) explains how to debug run-time logic.
- [Debugging Build-Time Aspect Logic on page 355](#) explains how to debug build-time logic.

21.1. Writing Simple Tests

When designing a test strategy for aspects, it is fundamental to understand that aspects cannot be used in isolation. They are always used in the context of the code artefact to which it has been applied. Therefore, when writing an aspect, two kinds of test artifacts must be written:

- *Test target code* to which the aspect will be applied.
- *Test invocation code* that invokes the target code and verifies that the combination of the aspect and the target code exhibits the intended behavior.

Achieving large test coverage

As with other code, you have to test the aspect with input context that varies enough to produce a large code coverage.

In the case of aspects, the input context is composed of the following items:

- *Arguments of the aspect itself*, i.e. constructor arguments and property values. If the aspect behavior depends of aspect arguments, high code coverage of the aspect requires varying aspect arguments.

- *Target code* can be considered as conceptually being a part of the input arguments of the aspect. For instance, if an aspect contains logic that depends on the method being static or non-static, you should test the aspect against both static and non-static methods.
- *Arguments of the target code* can affect the run-time behavior of the aspect. For instance, a buggy aspects may incorrectly handle null arguments.

Example: testing a caching aspect

The following example demonstrates how to test a caching aspect. High code coverage is achieved by varying the target code and testing with null and non-null parameters.

```
using System;
using Microsoft.VisualStudio.TestTools.UnitTesting;

namespace Samples
{
    [TestClass]
    public class TestCacheAspect
    {
        private static int invocations;

        // Instance method without parameters

        [TestMethod]
        public void TestInstanceMethodWithoutParameter()
        {
            int call1 = this.InstanceMethodWithoutParameter();
            int call2 = this.InstanceMethodWithoutParameter();

            Assert.AreEqual(call1, call2);
        }

        [Cache]
        private int InstanceMethodWithoutParameter()
        {
            return invocations++;
        }

        // Static method without parameters

        [TestMethod]
        public void TestStaticMethodWithoutParameter()
        {
            int call1 = StaticMethodWithoutParameter();
            int call2 = StaticMethodWithoutParameter();

            Assert.AreEqual(call1, call2);
        }

        [Cache]
        private static int StaticMethodWithoutParameter()
        {
            return invocations++;
        }

        // Instance method with parameters

        [TestMethod]
        public void TestInstanceMethodWithParameter()
        {
            int call1a = this.InstanceMethodWithParameter("foo");
            int call2a = this.InstanceMethodWithParameter(null);
            int call1b = this.InstanceMethodWithParameter("foo");
            int call2b = this.InstanceMethodWithParameter(null);

            Assert.AreEqual(call1a, call1b);
            Assert.AreEqual(call2a, call2b);
            Assert.AreNotEqual(call1a, call2a);
        }
    }
}
```



```

    }

    [Cache]
    private int InstanceMethodWithParameter(string param)
    {
        return invocations++;
    }
}

```

21.2. Testing that an Aspect has been Applied

In the previous section, we have seen how to test the aspect behavior itself. Now, let's see how we can test that the aspect has been applied to the expected set of targets. This can also be called *testing the pointcut*.

Why to test that the aspect has been properly applied?

You may need to test whether an aspect has been applied to specific targets for one of the following reasons:

- The aspect is applied using non-trivial regular expressions with `MulticastAttribute`.
- The aspect is silently filtered out using `CompileTimeValidate(MethodBase)`.
- The aspect is applied using an `IAAspectProvider`.

Testing that the aspect behavior is exhibited

The most obvious way to test that the aspect has been applied on to an element of code is to execute that code and ensure that the code actually exhibits the aspect behavior. This approach does not differ from the one described in section [Writing Simple Tests on page 335](#).

Testing that the aspect custom attribute is present

You can check that an aspect has been applied to a target by reflecting the custom attributes present on this element of code.

However, custom attributes representing aspects are stripped by default. If you want PostSharp to emit custom attributes, follow instructions of section [Reflecting Aspect Instances at Runtime on page 197](#).

NOTE

Aspects added by `IAAspectProvider` are not represented by custom attributes, so their presence cannot be tested by this approach.

Parsing the PostSharp symbol file

PostSharp generates a symbol file named `bin\Debug\MyAssembly.pssym`, where `MyAssembly` is the name of the assembly. In theory, you could use this file to determine which elements of code have been modified by aspects in your project.

CAUTION NOTE

The PostSharp symbol file format is undocumented and unsupported. It means that PostSharp support team cannot answer questions related to this file format.

21.3. Consuming Dependencies from the Aspect

Aspects, as other components, may have dependencies to other application services. Aspects may be bound to the abstract interface to this service, and may need to resolve the dependency at runtime.

However, two reasons prevent us from the following approaches that are usual with dependency injection containers:

- Aspects are instantiated at build time, and dependency-injection containers only exist at run-time.
- Aspects typically have a static scope. Unless they implement the `IInstanceScopedAspect`, aspect instances are stored in static fields, even when applied to instance members.

These characteristics are not an obstacle to using service containers, but different patterns must be followed.

This section presents several ways to consume dependencies from an aspect:

- [Using a Global Composition Container on page 338](#)
- [Using a Global Service Locator on page 341](#)
- [Using Dynamic Dependency Resolution on page 343](#)
- [Using Contextual Dependency Resolution on page 346](#)
- [Importing Dependencies from the Target Object on page 348](#)

21.3.1. Using a Global Composition Container

Although the aspect cannot be instantiated by the dependency injection container, it is possible to initialize the aspect from an *ambient container* at runtime. An ambient container is one that is exposed as a static member and that is global to the whole application.

Dependency injection containers typically offer methods to initialize objects that have been instantiated externally. For instance, the Managed Extensibility Framework offers the `SatisfyImportsOnce(ComposablePart)` method.

The dependency injection method can be invoked from the `RuntimeInitialize(MethodBase)` method.

NOTE

User code has no control over the time when and the thread on which an aspect is initialized. Therefore, using `Thread-StaticAttribute` to make the container local to the current thread is not a reliable approach.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The service container must be initialized before the execution of any class that is enhanced by the aspect. It means that it is not possible to use the aspect on test classes themselves. To relax this constraint, it is possible to initialize the dependency lazily, when the first advice is hit.

Example: testable logging aspect with a global MEF service container

The following code snippet shows a logging aspect and how it could be used in production code:

```
using System;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Hosting;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Primitives;
```

```

using System.Reflection;
using PostSharp.Aspects;
using PostSharp.Extensibility;
using PostSharp.Serialization;

namespace DependencyResolution.GlobalServiceContainer
{
    public interface ILogger
    {
        void Log(string message);
    }

    public static class AspectServiceInjector
    {
        private static CompositionContainer container;

        public static void Initialize(ComposablePartCatalog catalog)
        {
            container = new CompositionContainer(catalog);
        }

        public static void BuildObject(object o)
        {
            if (container == null)
                throw new InvalidOperationException();

            container.SatisfyImportsOnce(o);
        }
    }

    [PSerializable]
    public class LogAspect : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
    {
        [Import] private ILogger logger;

        public override void RuntimeInitialize(MethodBase method)
        {
            AspectServiceInjector.BuildObject(this);
        }

        public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
        {
            logger.Log("OnEntry");
        }
    }

    internal class Program
    {
        private static void Main(string[] args)
        {
            AspectServiceInjector.Initialize(new TypeCatalog(typeof (ConsoleLogger)));

            // The static constructor of LogAspect is called before the static constructor of the type
            // containing target methods. This is why we cannot use the aspect in the Program class.
            Foo.LoggedMethod();
        }
    }

    internal class Foo
    {
        [LogAspect]
        public static void LoggedMethod()
        {
            Console.WriteLine("Hello, world.");
        }
    }

    [Export(typeof (ILogger))]
    internal class ConsoleLogger : ILogger
    {
        public void Log(string message)
    }
}

```

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```
    {  
        Console.WriteLine(message);  
    }  
}
```

The following code snippet shows how the logging aspect can be tested:

```
using System;  
using System.ComponentModel.Composition;  
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Hosting;  
using System.Text;  
using Microsoft.VisualStudio.TestTools.UnitTesting;  
  
namespace DependencyResolution.GlobalServiceContainer.Test  
{  
    [TestClass]  
    public class TestLogAspect  
    {  
        static TestLogAspect()  
        {  
            AspectServiceInjector.Initialize(new TypeCatalog(typeof (TestLogger)));  
        }  
  
        [TestMethod]  
        public void TestMethod()  
        {  
            TestLogger.Clear();  
            new TargetClass().TargetMethod();  
            Assert.AreEqual("OnEntry" + Environment.NewLine, TestLogger.GetLog());  
        }  
  
        private class TargetClass  
        {  
            [LogAspect]  
            public void TargetMethod()  
            {  
            }  
        }  
    }  
  
    [Export(typeof (ILogger))]  
    internal class TestLogger : ILogger  
    {  
        public static readonly StringBuilder stringBuilder = new StringBuilder();  
  
        public void Log(string message)  
        {  
            stringBuilder.AppendLine(message);  
        }  
  
        public static string GetLog()  
        {  
            return stringBuilder.ToString();  
        }  
  
        public static void Clear()  
        {  
            stringBuilder.Clear();  
        }  
    }  
}
```

21.3.2. Using a Global Service Locator

If all aspect instances are using the same global dependency injection container, it is likely that dependencies of all instances will resolve to the same service implementation. Therefore, storing dependencies in an instance field may be a waste of memory, especially for aspects that are applied to a very high number of code elements.

Alternatively, dependencies can be stored in static fields and initialized in the aspect static constructor.

TIP

Use the `PostSharp.Environment.IsPostSharpRunning` property to make sure that this part of the static constructor is executed at runtime only, when PostSharp is *not* running.

In this case, dependency injection method such as `SatisfyImportsOnce(ComposablePart)` cannot be used. Instead, the container must be used as a service locator. For instance, MEF exposes the method `ExportProvider.GetExport`.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The service locator must be initialized before the execution of any class that is enhanced by the aspect. It means that it is not possible to use the aspect on the entry-point class (Program or App, typically). To relax this constraint, it is possible to initialize the dependency on demand, for instance using the LazyT construct.

Example: testable aspect with a global MEF service locator

The following code snippet shows a logging aspect and how it could be used in production code:

```
using System;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Hosting;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Primitives;
using PostSharp.Aspects;
using PostSharp.Extensibility;
using PostSharp.Serialization;

namespace DependencyResolution.GlobalServiceLocator
{
    public interface ILogger
    {
        void Log(string message);
    }

    public static class AspectServiceLocator
    {
        private static CompositionContainer container;

        public static void Initialize(ComposablePartCatalog catalog)
        {
            container = new CompositionContainer(catalog);
        }

        public static Lazy<T> GetService<T>() where T : class
        {
            return new Lazy<T>(GetServiceImpl<T>);
        }

        private static T GetServiceImpl<T>()
        {
            if (container == null)
                throw new InvalidOperationException();
        }
    }
}
```

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```
        return container.GetExport<T>().Value;
    }
}

[Serializable]
public class LogAspect : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    private static readonly Lazy<ILogger> logger;

    static LogAspect()
    {
        if (!PostSharpEnvironment.IsPostSharpRunning)
        {
            logger = AspectServiceLocator.GetService<ILogger>();
        }
    }

    public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        logger.Value.Log("OnEntry");
    }
}

internal class Program
{
    private static void Main(string[] args)
    {
        AspectServiceLocator.Initialize(new TypeCatalog(typeof (ConsoleLogger)));

        LoggedMethod();
    }

    [LogAspect]
    public static void LoggedMethod()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Hello, world.");
    }
}

[Export(typeof (ILogger))]
internal class ConsoleLogger : ILogger
{
    public void Log(string message)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(message);
    }
}
}
```

The following code snippet shows how the logging aspect can be tested:

```
using System;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Hosting;
using System.Text;
using Microsoft.VisualStudio.TestTools.UnitTesting;

namespace DependencyResolution.GlobalServiceLocator.Test
{
    [TestClass]
    public class TestLogAspect
    {
        static TestLogAspect()
        {
            AspectServiceLocator.Initialize(new TypeCatalog(typeof (TestLogger)));
        }

        [TestMethod]
        public void TestMethod()
        {
        }
    }
}
```

```

    {
        TestLogger.Clear();
        TargetMethod();
        Assert.AreEqual("OnEntry" + Environment.NewLine, TestLogger.GetLog());
    }

    [LogAspect]
    private void TargetMethod()
    {
    }
}

[Export(typeof (ILogger))]
internal class TestLogger : ILogger
{
    public static readonly StringBuilder stringBuilder = new StringBuilder();

    public void Log(string message)
    {
        stringBuilder.AppendLine(message);
    }

    public static string GetLog()
    {
        return stringBuilder.ToString();
    }

    public static void Clear()
    {
        stringBuilder.Clear();
    }
}
}

```

21.3.3. Using Dynamic Dependency Resolution

Both previous approaches have a static dependency resolution strategy: it cannot be changed over time. Therefore, these strategies could be unsuitable in cases where several tests need different configurations of the dependency container.

A possible solution is to resolve dependencies dynamically each time they are needed, and not only at aspect initialization. Although this solution is ideal for the sake of testing, it may be too inefficient for production. Therefore, the solution would still need to provide dependency caching for production mode. Caching would neutralize the dynamic characteristics of dependency resolution.

This solution would be based on the following elements:

1. The service locator can be initialized in two modes: production (the resolution strategy is immutable) and testing (the resolution strategy can be modified).
2. The service locator returns a delegate ($\text{Func}\langle T \rangle$, where T is the dependency type), instead of the dependency itself (T or $\text{Lazy}\langle T \rangle$).
3. The aspect calls the service locator during aspect initialization and stores the delegate.
4. The aspect calls the delegate at runtime.

Example: testable logging aspect with a global MEF service container with dynamic resolution

The following code snippet shows a logging aspect and how it could be used in production code:

```

using System;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Hosting;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Primitives;
using PostSharp.Aspects;

```

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```
using PostSharp.Extensibility;
using PostSharp.Serialization;

namespace DependencyResolution.Dynamic
{
    public interface ILogger
    {
        void Log(string message);
    }

    public static class AspectServiceLocator
    {
        private static CompositionContainer container;
        private static bool isCacheable;

        public static void Initialize(ComposablePartCatalog catalog, bool isCacheable)
        {
            if (AspectServiceLocator.isCacheable && container != null)
                throw new InvalidOperationException();

            container = new CompositionContainer(catalog);
            AspectServiceLocator.isCacheable = isCacheable;
        }

        public static Func<T> GetService<T>() where T : class
        {
            if (isCacheable)
            {
                return () => new Lazy<T>(GetServiceImpl<T>).Value;
            }
            else
            {
                return GetServiceImpl<T>;
            }
        }

        private static T GetServiceImpl<T>()
        {
            if (container == null)
                throw new InvalidOperationException();

            return container.GetExport<T>().Value;
        }
    }

    [PSerializable]
    public class LogAspect : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
    {
        private static readonly Func<ILogger> logger;

        static LogAspect()
        {
            if (!PostSharpEnvironment.IsPostSharpRunning)
            {
                logger = AspectServiceLocator.GetService<ILogger>();
            }
        }

        public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
        {
            logger().Log("OnEntry");
        }
    }

    internal class Program
    {
        private static void Main(string[] args)
        {
            AspectServiceLocator.Initialize(new TypeCatalog(typeof (ConsoleLogger)), true);

            LoggedMethod();
        }
    }
}
```



```

    }

    [LogAspect]
    public static void LoggedMethod()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Hello, world.");
    }
}

[Export(typeof (ILogger))]
internal class ConsoleLogger : ILogger
{
    public void Log(string message)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(message);
    }
}
}

```

The following code snippet shows how the logging aspect can be tested:

```

using System;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Hosting;
using System.Text;
using Microsoft.VisualStudio.TestTools.UnitTesting;

namespace DependencyResolution.Dynamic.Test
{
    [TestClass]
    public class TestLogAspect
    {
        [TestMethod]
        public void TestMethod()
        {
            // The ServiceLocator can be initialized for each test.
            AspectServiceLocator.Initialize(new TypeCatalog(typeof (TestLogger)), false);

            TestLogger.Clear();
            TargetMethod();
            Assert.AreEqual("OnEntry" + Environment.NewLine, TestLogger.GetLog());
        }

        [LogAspect]
        private void TargetMethod()
        {
        }
    }

    [Export(typeof (ILogger))]
    internal class TestLogger : ILogger
    {
        public static readonly StringBuilder stringBuilder = new StringBuilder();

        public void Log(string message)
        {
            stringBuilder.AppendLine(message);
        }

        public static string GetLog()
        {
            return stringBuilder.ToString();
        }

        public static void Clear()
        {
            stringBuilder.Clear();
        }
    }
}

```

```

    }
}

```

21.3.4. Using Contextual Dependency Resolution

The dependency resolution strategy does not necessarily need to resolve to the same service implementation for all occurrences of the dependency. It is possible to design a strategy that depends on the context. For instance, the service locator could accept the aspect type and the target element of code as parameters. Test code could configure the service locator to resolve dependencies to specific implementations for a given context.

Evaluating context-sensitive rules maybe CPU-intensive, but it needs to be done only during testing. In production mode, dependency resolution can be delegated to a global service catalog.

Example: testable logging aspect with contextual dependency resolution

The following code snippet shows a logging aspect and how it could be used in production code:

```

using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Hosting;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Primitives;
using System.Reflection;
using PostSharp.Aspects;
using PostSharp.Extensibility;
using PostSharp.Serialization;

namespace DependencyResolution.Contextual
{
    public interface ILogger
    {
        void Log(string message);
    }

    public static class AspectServiceLocator
    {
        private static CompositionContainer container;
        private static HashSet<object> rules = new HashSet<object>();

        public static void Initialize(ComposablePartCatalog catalog)
        {
            container = new CompositionContainer(catalog);
        }

        public static Lazy<T> GetService<T>(Type aspectType, MemberInfo targetElement) where T : class
        {
            return new Lazy<T>(() => GetServiceImpl<T>(aspectType, targetElement));
        }

        private static T GetServiceImpl<T>(Type aspectType, MemberInfo targetElement) where T : class
        {
            // The rule implementation is naive but this is for testing purpose only.
            foreach (object rule in rules)
            {
                DependencyRule<T> typedRule = rule as DependencyRule<T>;
                if (typedRule == null) continue;

                T service = typedRule.Rule(aspectType, targetElement);
                if (service != null) return service;
            }

            if (container == null)
                throw new InvalidOperationException();

            // Fallback to the container, which should be the default and production behavior.
            return container.GetExport<T>().Value;
        }
    }
}

```

```

    }

    public static IDisposable AddRule<T>(Func<Type, MemberInfo, T> rule)
    {
        DependencyRule<T> dependencyRule = new DependencyRule<T>(rule);
        rules.Add(dependencyRule);
        return dependencyRule;
    }

    private class DependencyRule<T> : IDisposable
    {
        public DependencyRule(Func<Type, MemberInfo, T> rule)
        {
            this.Rule = rule;
        }

        public Func<Type, MemberInfo, T> Rule { get; private set; }

        public void Dispose()
        {
            rules.Remove(this);
        }
    }
}

[PSerializable]
public class LogAspect : OnMethodBoundaryAspect
{
    private Lazy<ILogger> logger;

    public override void RuntimeInitialize(MethodBase method)
    {
        logger = AspectServiceLocator.GetService<ILogger>(this.GetType(), method);
    }

    public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
    {
        logger.Value.Log("OnEntry");
    }
}

internal class Program
{
    private static void Main(string[] args)
    {
        AspectServiceLocator.Initialize(new TypeCatalog(typeof (ConsoleLogger)));

        LoggedMethod();
    }

    [LogAspect]
    public static void LoggedMethod()
    {
        Console.WriteLine("Hello, world.");
    }
}

[Export(typeof (ILogger))]
internal class ConsoleLogger : ILogger
{
    public void Log(string message)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(message);
    }
}
}

```

The following code snippet shows how the logging aspect can be tested:

```

using System;
using System.Text;
using Microsoft.VisualStudio.TestTools.UnitTesting;

namespace DependencyResolution.Contextual.Test
{
    [TestClass]
    public class TestLogAspect
    {
        [TestMethod]
        public void TestMethod()
        {
            // The ServiceLocator can be initialized for each test.
            using (
                AspectServiceLocator.AddRule<ILogger>(
                    (type, member) =>
                        type == typeof (LogAspect) && member.Name == "TargetMethod" ? new TestLogger() : null
                )
            {
                TestLogger.Clear();
                TargetMethod();
                Assert.AreEqual("OnEntry" + Environment.NewLine, TestLogger.GetLog());
            }
        }

        [LogAspect]
        public void TargetMethod()
        {
        }
    }

    internal class TestLogger : ILogger
    {
        public static readonly StringBuilder stringBuilder = new StringBuilder();

        public void Log(string message)
        {
            stringBuilder.AppendLine(message);
        }

        public static string GetLog()
        {
            return stringBuilder.ToString();
        }

        public static void Clear()
        {
            stringBuilder.Clear();
        }
    }
}

```

21.3.5. Importing Dependencies from the Target Object

The principal reason why aspects are believed to be difficult to test is that they are statically scoped by default, i.e. aspect objects are stored in static fields. However, any aspect can be made instance-scoped if it implements the `IInstance-ScopedAspect` interface. See [Understanding Aspect Lifetime and Scope on page 304](#) for more information about aspect scopes.

Instance-scoped aspects can consume dependencies from the objects to which they are applied. They can also add dependencies to the target objects.

For instance, an aspect can consume a service `ILogger` using the following procedure:

To consume a service from an instance-scoped aspect:

1. Add a public property of name `Logger` and type `ILogger` to the aspect and add the `IntroduceMemberAttribute` custom attribute. This will cause the aspect to add a property to the target class. Use the parameter `MemberOverrideAction.Ignore` to ignore the property if it already exists in the target type or if it has been added by another aspect.
2. Add two custom attributes `ImportAttribute` and `CopyCustomAttributesAttribute` to the `Logger` property. This will cause the aspect to add the `[Import]` custom attribute to the `Logger` property added to the target class.
3. Add a public field of name `LoggerProperty` and type `Property<ILogger>` to the aspect class and add the `ImportMemberAttribute` custom attribute to this field, with "Logger" as parameter. This will allow the aspect to read the `Logger` property even if it has been defined from outside the aspect.
4. The aspect can now consume the dependency by calling `this.LoggerProperty.Get()`.

The procedure is illustrated in the next example.

Example: testable logging aspect that consumes the dependency from the target object

The following code snippet shows a logging aspect and how it could be used in production code:

```
using System;
using System.Collections.Generic;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Hosting;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Primitives;
using System.ComponentModel.Design;
using System.Reflection;
using PostSharp.Aspects;
using PostSharp.Aspects.Advices;
using PostSharp.Extensibility;
using PostSharp.Reflection;
using PostSharp.Serialization;

namespace DependencyResolution.InstanceScoped
{
    public interface ILogger
    {
        void Log(string message);
    }

    [PSerializable]
    public class LogAspect : OnMethodBoundaryAspect, IInstanceScopedAspect
    {
        [IntroduceMember(Visibility = Visibility.Family, OverrideAction = MemberOverrideAction.Ignore)]
        [CopyCustomAttributes(typeof (ImportAttribute))]
        [Import(typeof(ILogger))]
        public ILogger Logger { get; set; }

        [ImportMember("Logger", IsRequired = true)]
        public Property<ILogger> LoggerProperty;

        public override void OnEntry(MethodExecutionArgs args)
        {
            this.LoggerProperty.Get().Log("OnEntry");
        }

        object IInstanceScopedAspect.CreateInstance(AdviceArgs adviceArgs)
        {
            return this.MemberwiseClone();
        }

        void IInstanceScopedAspect.RuntimeInitializeInstance()
        {
        }
    }
}
```

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```
    }

    [Export(typeof (MyServiceImpl))]
    internal class MyServiceImpl
    {
        [LogAspect]
        public void LoggedMethod()
        {
            Console.WriteLine("Hello, world.");
        }
    }
}

internal class Program
{
    private static void Main(string[] args)
    {
        AssemblyCatalog catalog = new AssemblyCatalog(typeof (Program).Assembly);
        CompositionContainer container = new CompositionContainer(catalog);
        MyServiceImpl service = container.GetExport<MyServiceImpl>().Value;
        service.LoggedMethod();
    }
}

[Export(typeof (ILogger))]
internal class ConsoleLogger : ILogger
{
    public void Log(string message)
    {
        Console.WriteLine(message);
    }
}
}
```

The following code snippet shows how the logging aspect can be tested:

```
using System;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition;
using System.ComponentModel.Composition.Hosting;
using System.Text;
using Microsoft.VisualStudio.TestTools.UnitTesting;

namespace DependencyResolution.InstanceScoped.Test
{
    [TestClass]
    public class TestLogAspect
    {
        [TestMethod]
        public void TestMethod()
        {
            TypeCatalog catalog = new TypeCatalog(typeof (TestLogger), typeof (TestImpl));
            CompositionContainer container = new CompositionContainer(catalog);
            TestImpl service = container.GetExport<TestImpl>().Value;
            TestLogger.Clear();
            service.TargetMethod();
            Assert.AreEqual("OnEntry" + Environment.NewLine, TestLogger.GetLog());
        }
    }

    [Export(typeof (TestImpl))]
    private class TestImpl
    {
        [LogAspect]
        public void TargetMethod()
        {
        }
    }
}

[Export(typeof (ILogger))]
internal class TestLogger : ILogger
```

```

{
    public static readonly StringBuilder stringBuilder = new StringBuilder();

    public void Log(string message)
    {
        stringBuilder.AppendLine(message);
    }

    public static string GetLog()
    {
        return stringBuilder.ToString();
    }

    public static void Clear()
    {
        stringBuilder.Clear();
    }
}
}

```

21.4. Testing Build-Time Logic

Testing build-time logic of aspects has specific challenges:

- Aspects can emit errors and warnings, which cannot be tested using a run-time testing framework. We need a mechanism to test error messages themselves.
- When a project contains a large number of test cases (which are all compiled at the same time), it is difficult to isolate one specific case when the debugger is attached to the build process (see [Debugging Build-Time Aspect Logic on page 355](#)). We need a mechanism to run the build process on a single test case.

Therefore, we built a test framework specifically for the purpose of testing aspects.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Creating an aspect unit test project on page 351](#)
- [Executing a single test on page 352](#)
- [Executing all tests from a directory on page 352](#)
- [Executing all tests in the project directory on page 352](#)
- [Test that messages are emitted on page 352](#)
- [Allow unsafe code on page 352](#)
- [Creating a reference assembly on page 352](#)

Creating an aspect unit test project

To create an aspect unit test project:

1. Create a console project and add all required references to it.
2. Add PostSharp to this project
3. Edit the project file using a text editor. The project file must import *PostSharp.BuildTests.targets* before *Microsoft.CSharp.targets* ([download²⁸](#)). File *PostSharp.targets* also needs to be included (which is the case if the PostSharp NuGet package is added to the project).
4. Implement each test case as a standalone file having its own Program class and Main method. To avoid naming conflicts, every file should have a distinct namespace.

28. <http://www.postsharp.net/downloads/samples/3.0/PostSharp.BuildTests.targets>

A test is considered successful in the following situations:

- the test compiles using the C# or VB compiler, and
- the test compiles using PostSharp without any unexpected message (see below), and
- the output exe is valid according **PEVERIFY**, and
- the output exe executes successfully and returns the exit code 0,

This default behavior can be altered by test directives, as described below.

Executing a single test

Execute the following line from the command prompt:

```
msbuild /t:TestOne /p:Source=MyFile.cs
```

Executing all tests from a directory

Execute the following line from the command prompt:

```
msbuild /t:Test /p:SourceDir=MyDirectory
```

Executing all tests in the project directory

Execute the following line from the command prompt:

```
msbuild /t:Test
```

Test that messages are emitted

If the test is expected to emit a message (error, warning, information), insert the text `@ExpectedMessage(PS0001)` in the test file as a comment line.

If this directive is present, the test will be valid if and only if all expected messages, and no other, have been emitted.

Allow unsafe code

To enable unsafe code and disable verification by **PEVERIFY**, insert the text `@Unsafe` in the test file as a comment line.

Creating a reference assembly

In case that a test requires a dependency assembly (typically, for tests that require two assemblies, for instance testing aspect inheritance that cross assembly boundaries), you can create a second file named `MyTest.Dependency.cs`, if the first file is named `MyTest.cs`. This will create an assembly `MyTest.Dependency.dll`, and main test will have a reference to this assembly.

21.5. Debugging Run-Time Aspect Logic

Enhancing your code with aspects gives you a new dimension to your debugging experience. With PostSharp, patterns are implemented in classes that are separate from the business logic. Most of the time, you will want to debug just the business logic. But sometimes, you will want to debug the aspects: aspect code will now be skipped by default during step-into sessions and in the call stack window.

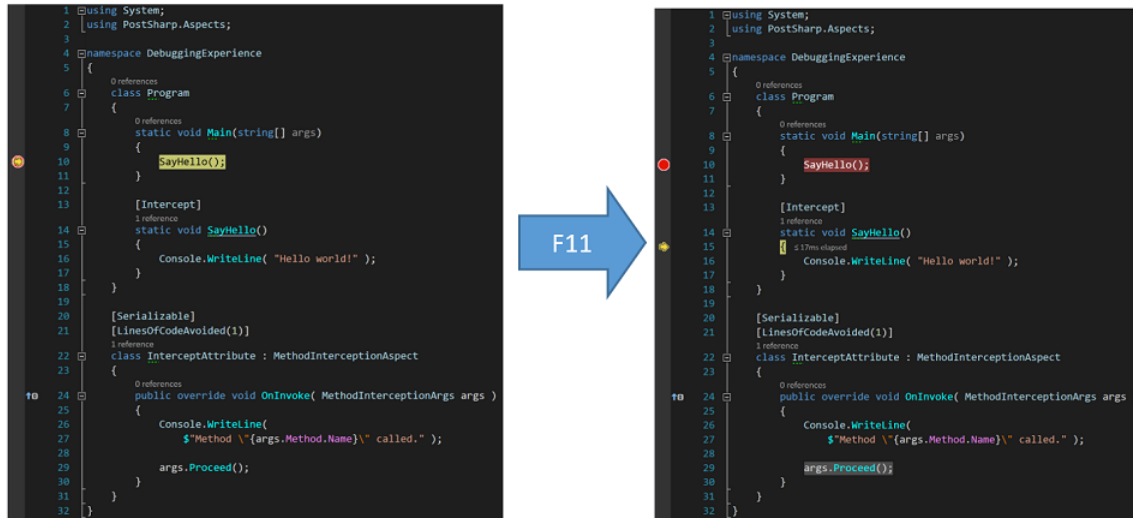
This topic contains the following sections:

- [Stepping into aspect code on page 353](#)

- [Showing aspects code in the call stack window on page 353](#)
- [Disabling debugger enhancements on page 354](#)

Stepping into aspect code

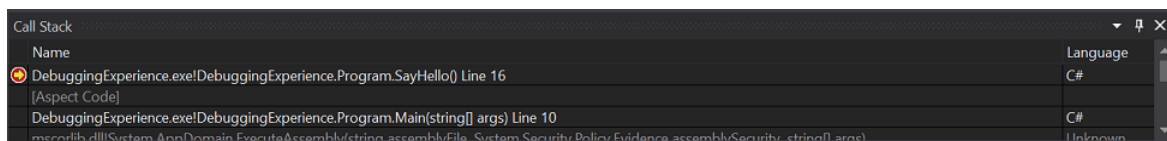
Suppose you have a SayHello method intercepted by an Intercept aspect. You are about to step into the SayHello method. By default, the debugger steps over the code of the Intercept aspect and then breaks in the beginning of the SayHello method. When Step Into Aspects is enabled, the debugger will step into the Intercept aspect.



The Step Into Aspects feature is disabled by default. To turn it on, go to the menu **PostSharp / Options**, then to the **General** tab and the **Debugging** section, and check the **Step Into Aspects** checkbox. Now you can step into aspects using the **Step Into (F11)** command of the debugger.

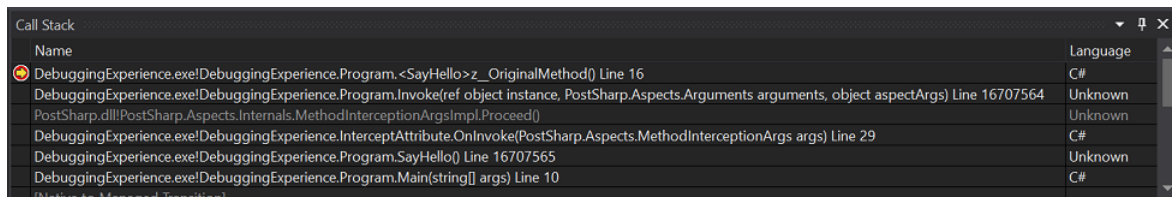
Showing aspects code in the call stack window

By default, all the calls to the methods of the Intercept aspect are hidden behind one stack frame named [Aspect Code]. Suppose you have the SayHello method intercepted by the Intercept aspect like in the example above. You are inside the SayHello method. In the call stack, all the methods introduced by PostSharp are hidden.



Sometimes you may need to see the real call stack that includes all intermediate method calls generated by PostSharp. This is the purpose of the **Show Aspects Code in Call Stack** feature.

To turn it on, go to the menu **PostSharp / Options**, then to the **General** tab and the **Debugging** section, and check the **Show Aspects Code in Call Stack** checkbox. Now, the call stack includes all the methods introduced by PostSharp.

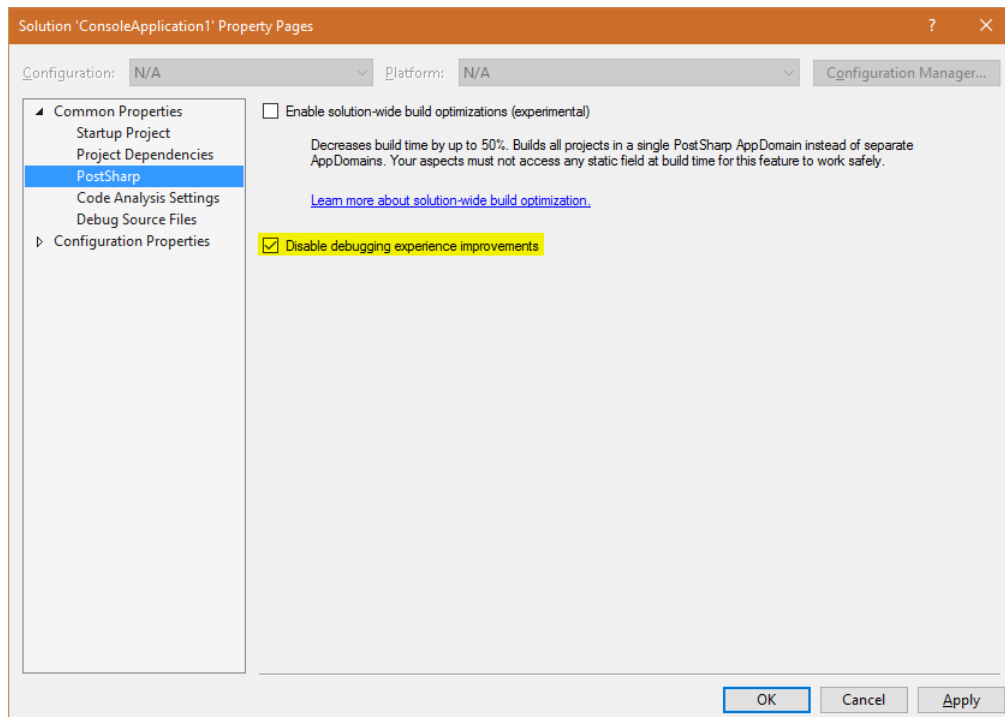


Disabling debugger enhancements

PostSharp improves your debugging experience by installing extensions for the Visual Studio Debugger and by enhancing PDB files during the build. In some use cases you may want to disable these PostSharp debugger extensions and revert back to the default debugging behavior in Visual Studio (e.g. building for a new or unsupported target framework, debugging code on unsupported devices, working around bugs, etc.).

To disable PostSharp debugger extensions:

1. Right-click on your solution in the **Solution Explorer** and then click **Properties**
2. On the **PostSharp** page of the displayed solution property pages dialog select the check box **Disable debugging experience improvements**.



3. Confirm the change by clicking **OK** and then rebuild your solution.

NOTE

Debugging extensions are automatically disabled when you build your project using MSBuild from outside Visual Studio.

CAUTION NOTE

If you build a solution with debugging extensions enabled, you must debug the solution with an instance of Visual Studio where debugging extensions are enabled, otherwise your debugging experience will be frustrating.

21.6. Debugging Build-Time Aspect Logic

It may seem unusual to debug compile-time logic, but like any process, it is perfectly legal and even simple to debug the build process!

Basically, what you will do is to attach a debugger to the PostSharp process. If you use the standard MSBuild targets for PostSharp, define the constant `PostSharpAttachDebugger=True`.

The trick is easier to explain when you have compile-time logic (your aspect, for instance) and the transformed assembly in different Visual Studio projects.

Suppose you have your aspects logic `MyAspects.csproj` and unit tests (i.e. the code to be transformed) in `MyAspects.Test.csproj`. The easiest way to debug `MyAspects.csproj` is the following:

To debug the build-time logic of an aspect:

1. Open Visual Studio and load the solution containing `MyAspects.csproj`.
2. Open the Visual Studio Command Prompt and go to the directory containing `MyAspects.Test.csproj`.
3. Build `MyAspects.csproj` using Visual Studio as usually .
4. From the command prompt, type:

```
msbuild MyAspects.Test.csproj /T:Rebuild /P:PostSharpAttachDebugger=True
```
5. The build process will hit a break point. When it happens, attach the instance of `MyAspects.csproj` Visual Studio.

NOTE

Because of a bug in Visual Studio, you need to use the **mixed debugging engine**. To do that, check the option **Manually choose the debugging engines** in the Visual Studio Just-In-Time Debugger and select both the managed and the native engines.

6. Set up break points in your code and continue the program execution.

CHAPTER 22

Validating Architecture

Besides aspect-oriented programming, you can use PostSharp to validate your source code against architecture and design rules named *constraints*. Constraints are piece of codes that validate the code against specific rules at build time.

PostSharp provides ready-made constraints for the following scenarios:

- [Restricting Interface Implementation on page 357](#)
- [Controlling Component Visibility Beyond Private and Internal on page 361](#)

Additionally, you can develop custom constraints to enforce your own design rules. For details, see [Developing Custom Architectural Constraints on page 369](#).

22.1. Restricting Interface Implementation

Under some circumstances you may want to restrict users of an API to implement an interface. You may want to allow them to consume the interface but not to implement it in their own classes, so that, later, you can add new members to this interface without breaking the user's code. If retaining the interface as a public artifact is required, the programming language does not give you any option to enforce the desired restriction. Enter the `InternalImplementAttribute` from PostSharp.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Adding the constraint to the interface on page 357](#)
- [Emitting an error instead of a warning on page 360](#)
- [Ignoring warnings on page 360](#)

Adding the constraint to the interface

To restrict implementation of publicly declared interfaces you simply need to add `[InternalImplementAttribute]` to that interface.

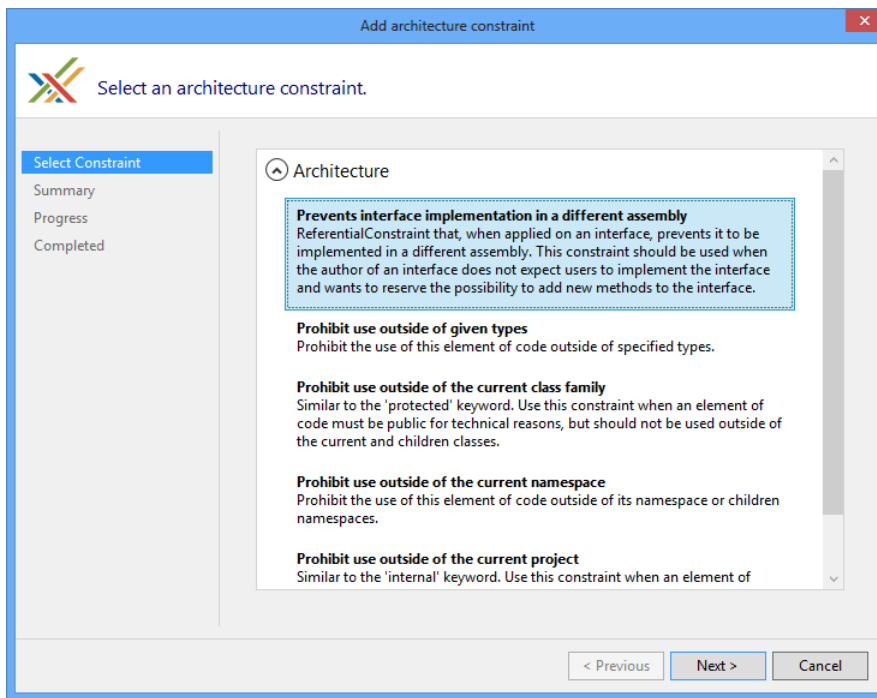
NOTE

This procedure requires [PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio](https://visualstudiogallery.msdn.microsoft.com/a058d5d3-e654-43f8-a308-c3bdfdd0be4a)²⁹ to be installed on your machine. You can however achieve the same results by editing the code and the project manually.

1. Place the caret over the interface that you want to add the attribute select the "Add architectural constraint...".

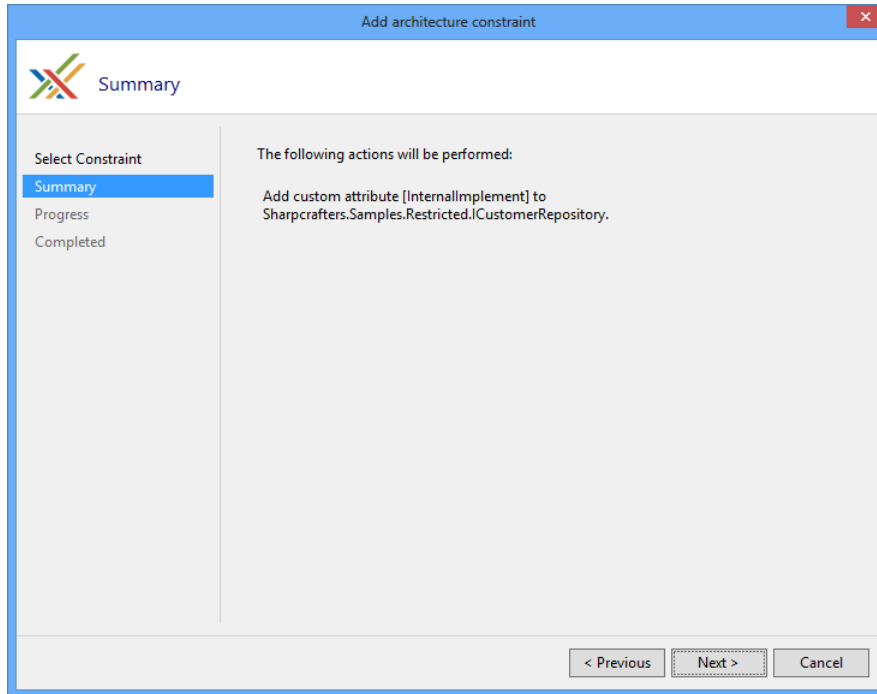
```
namespace Sharpcrafters.Samples.Restricted
{
    public interface ICustomerRepository
    {
        IEnumerable<C
    }
}
```

2. Select "Prevent interface implementation in a different assembly" and select **Next**.

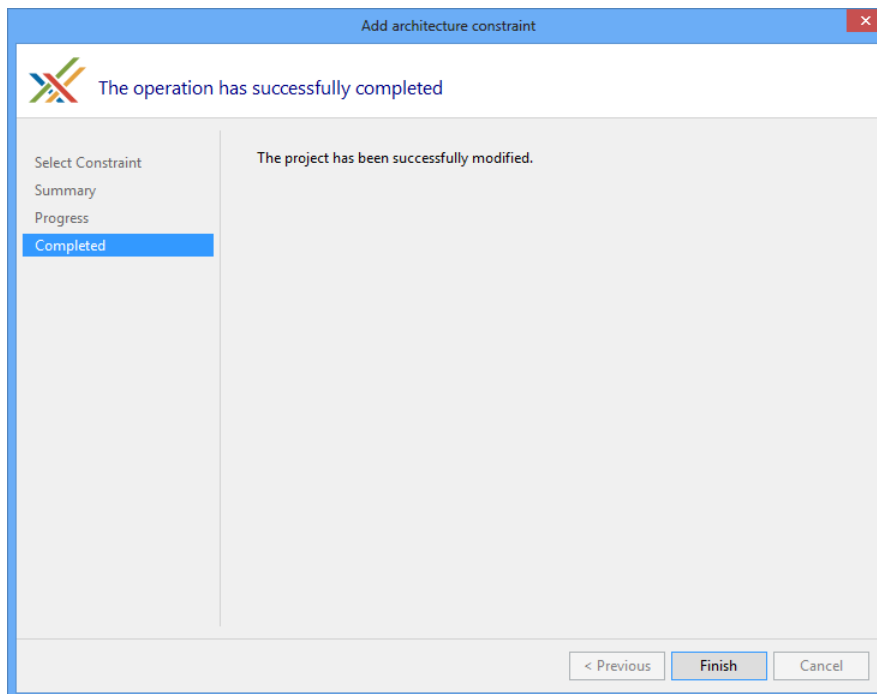


29. <https://visualstudiogallery.msdn.microsoft.com/a058d5d3-e654-43f8-a308-c3bdfdd0be4a>

3. Verify that you will be adding the `InternalImplementAttribute` attribute to the correct piece of code.



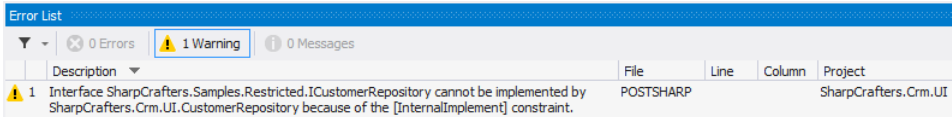
4. Once the download, installation and configuration of PostSharp has finished you can close the wizard and look at the changes that were made to your codebase.



- You'll notice that the only thing that has changed in the code is the addition of the `[InternalImplementAttribute]` attribute.

```
[InternalImplement]
public interface ICustomerRepository
{
    IEnumerable<Customer> FetchAll();
}
```

Once that is done, implementing the interface that was decorated with the `InternalImplementAttribute` from another assembly will create a compile time warning.



NOTE

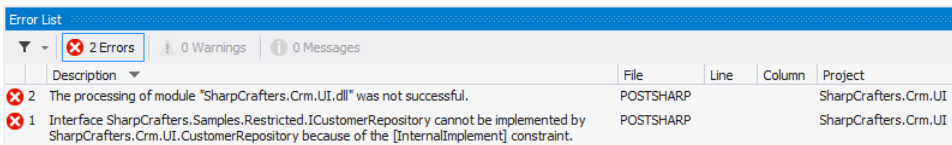
To perform this architectural validation the project that is trying to implement the interface will need to be processed by PostSharp.

Emitting an error instead of a warning

If a warning isn't strong enough for your environment you can change the output to a compile time error by setting the `InternalImplementAttribute` to have a `Severity` type of `Error`.

```
[InternalImplement(Severity = SeverityType.Error)]
public interface ICustomerRepository
{
    IEnumerable<Customer> FetchAll();
}
```

Now any reference to the decorated interface from another assembly will generate an error and fail the compilation of your project.



Ignoring warnings

If you are trying to implement a constrained interface in a separate assembly and you want to override the warning being generated there is a solution available for you. The `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute can be applied to stop warnings from being generated.

NOTE

The `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute will only suppress warnings. If you have escalated the warnings to be errors, those errors will still be generated even if the `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute is present.

To suppress warnings all that you need to do is add the `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute to the offending piece of code. In this example we would suppress the warning being generated by adding the attribute to the class that is

implementing the constrained interface. Once we have done that, the warning generated for that specific implementation would be suppressed. All other locations that are implementing this interface will continue to generate their warnings.

NOTE

You may wonder where the identifier AR0101 comes from. `IgnoreWarningAttribute` actually works with any PostSharp warning and not just this one. Any build error, whether from MSBuild, C# or PostSharp, has an identifier. To see error identifiers in Visual Studio, open the View menu and click on the Output item, select "Show output from: Build". You will see warnings including their identifiers.

```
[IgnoreWarning("AR0101")]
public class PreferredCustomerRepository : ICustomerRepository
{
    public IEnumerable<Customer> FetchAll()
    {
        return null;
    }
}
```

22.2. Controlling Component Visibility Beyond Private and Internal

When you are working on applications it's common to run across situations where you want to restrict access to a component you have written. Usually you control this access using the `private` and/or `internal` keywords when defining the component. A class marked as `internal` can be accessed by any other class in the same assembly, but that may not be the level of restriction needed within the codebase. Access to a `private` class is restricted to those components that are inside the same class or struct that contains the `private` class, which prevents any other classes from accessing it. In one situation we are restricting access to the component to only the class or struct that contains it. In the other situation we are allowing access to the component from any other component that is in the same assembly. What if needed something in between?

PostSharp offers the ability to define component access rules that exist between the scope of the `internal` and `private` keywords. This gives us the opportunity to restrict access to a component only from other components in the same namespace. We can also restrict access to a select few other components.

As an example let's look at a data access related class. As a precaution against developer's circumventing our data access structure we want to limit access to this repository class.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Restricting access to specific namespaces on page 361](#)
- [Restricting access to specific types on page 365](#)
- [Controlling component visibility outside of the containing assembly on page 365](#)
- [Emitting errors instead of warnings on page 368](#)
- [Ignoring warnings on page 369](#)

Restricting access to specific namespaces

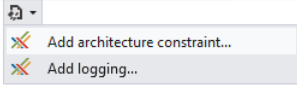
NOTE

This procedure requires [PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio](#)³⁰ to be installed on your machine. You can however achieve the same results by editing the code and the project manually.

To limit access of a class only to other classes within the validation namespace:

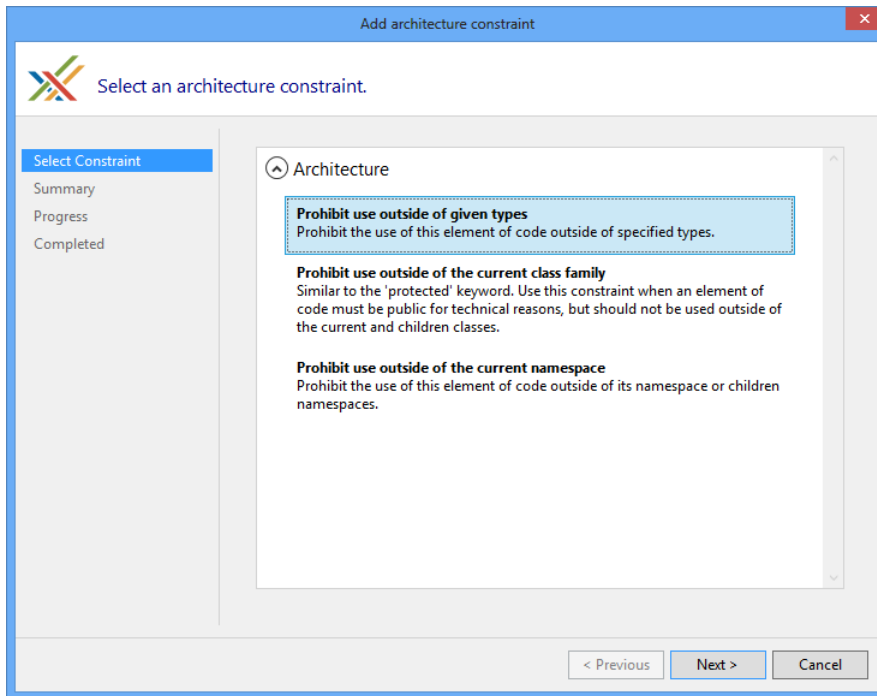
1. Put the caret on the internal class that should have restricted access. Select "Add architectural constraint..." from the smart tag options.

```
internal IEnumerable<Invoice> FetchAllForCustomer(Guid id)
{
    //dostuff
    return null;
}
```



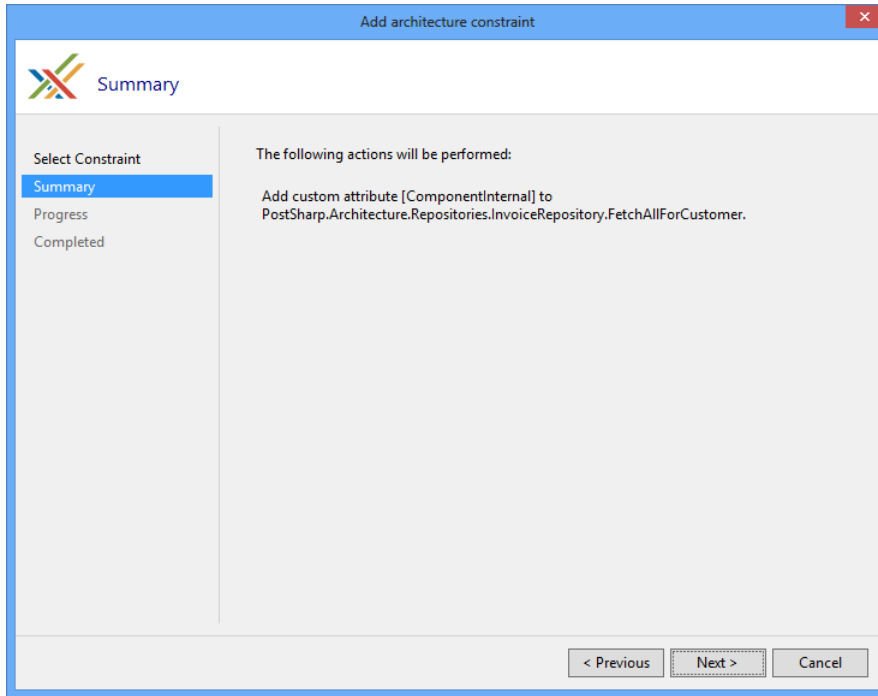
The image shows a smart tag menu appearing over the `FetchAllForCustomer` method in the code. The menu contains three options: "Add architecture constraint..." (highlighted), "Add logging...", and "Add logging...".

2. Select "Prohibit use outside of given types" from the list of options.

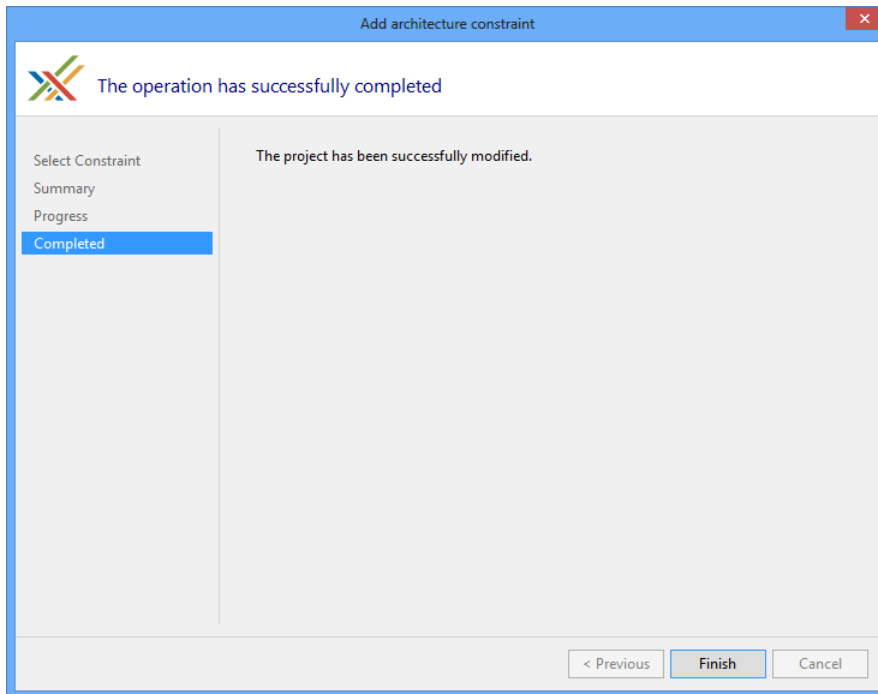


30. <https://visualstudiogallery.msdn.microsoft.com/a058d5d3-e654-43f8-a308-c3bdfdd0be4a>

3. Verify that you will be adding the `ComponentInternalAttribute` attribute to the correct piece of code.



4. Once the download, installation and configuration of PostSharp has finished you can close the wizard and look at the changes that were made to your codebase.



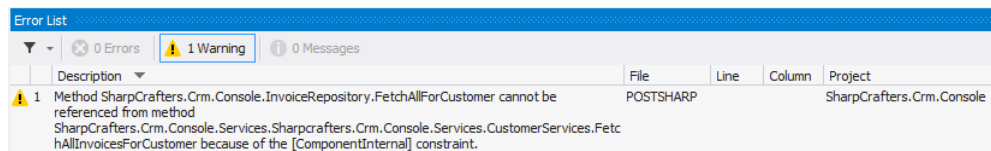
5. You'll notice that the only thing that has changed in the code is the addition of the `[ComponentInternalAttribute]` attribute.

```
namespace Sharpcrafters.Crm.Console.Repositories
{
    public class InvoiceRepository
    {
        [ComponentInternal]
        internal IEnumerable<Invoice> FetchAllForCustomer(Guid id)
        {
            //dostuff
            return null;
        }
    }
}
```

6. The `[ComponentInternalAttribute]` attribute is templated to accept a string for the namespace that should be able to access this method. There are two options that you could use. The first is to pass the attribute an array of `typeof(...)` values that represents the types that can access this method. The second option is to pass in an array of strings that contain the namespaces of the code that should be able to access this method. For our example, replace the `typeof(TODO)` with a string for the validation namespace.
7. If you try to access this component from a namespace that hasn't been granted access you will see a compile time warning in the Output window.

```
namespace Sharpcrafters.Crm.Console.Services
{
    public class InvoiceServices
    {
        public IEnumerable<InvoiceForList> FetchAllInvoicesForCustomer(Guid id)
        {
            var invoiceRepository = new InvoiceRepository();

            var allInvoices = invoiceRepository.FetchAllForCustomer(id);
            return
                allInvoices.Where(x => !x.PaidInFull).Select(
                    x => new InvoiceForList
                    {
                        PurchaseDate = x.PurchaseDate,
                        ShipDate = x.ShipDate,
                        TotalAmount = x.Total
                    });
        }
    }
}
```



NOTE

If you are trying to access the component from a namespace that is in a different project you will need Post-Sharp to process that project for the validation to occur.

Restricting access to specific types

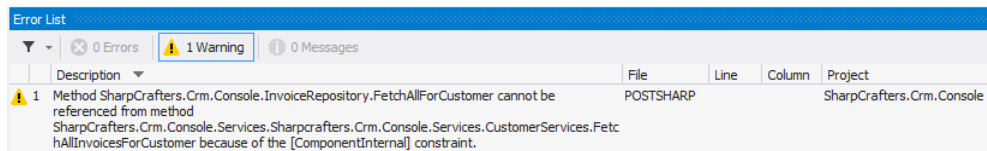
Under some circumstances namespace level restrictions may not be tight enough for your needs. In that situation you have the ability to apply this constraint at a type level.

1. To restrict access at a component type level you need to explicitly define which component types will have access. This is done by passing types into the constructor of the `ComponentInternalAttribute` attribute's constructor. The construct accepts an array of `Type` which allows you to define many different component types that should be granted access.

```
public class InvoiceRepository
{
    [ComponentInternal(typeof(SharpCrafters.Crm.Console.Services.InvoiceServices))]
    internal IEnumerable<Invoice> FetchAllForCustomer(Guid id)
    {
        //dostuff
        return null;
    }
}
```

2. Now if you try to access this component from a type that hasn't been granted access you will see a compile time warning in the Output window.

```
public class CustomerServices
{
    public IEnumerable<Customer> FetchAll()
    {
        var invoiceRepository = new InvoiceRepository();
        var allInvoices = invoiceRepository.FetchAllForCustomer(Guid.NewGuid());
    }
}
```



Controlling component visibility outside of the containing assembly

Because of framework limitations or automated testing requirements you sometimes need to declare components as public so that you can perform the desired tasks or testing. For some of those components you probably don't want external applications accessing them. For instance, WPF controls need a default constructor for use in the designer, but sometimes you want another constructor to be used at runtime, so you want to prevent the default constructor to be used from code.

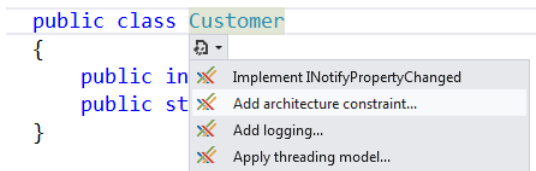
PostSharp offers you the ability to decorate a publically declared component in such a way that it is not accessible by applications that reference its assembly. All you need to do is apply the `InternalAttribute` attribute.

1. Let's mark the `Customer` class so that it can only be accessed from the assembly it resides in.

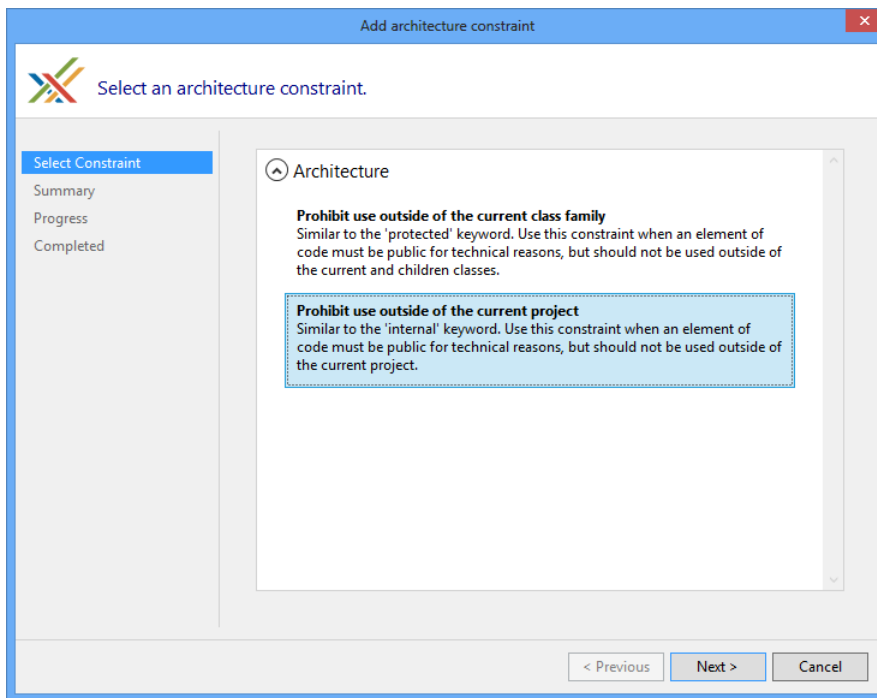
```
namespace SharpCrafters.Crm.Core
{
    public class Customer
    {
        public int Id { get; set; }
        public string Name { get; set; }
    }
}
```

2. Place the caret on the publically declared component that you want to restrict external access to and expand the smart tag. Select "Add architectural constraint" This procedure requires [PostSharp Tools for Visual Studio](https://visualstudiogallery.msdn.microsoft.com/a058d5d3-e654-43f8-a308-c3bdfdd0be4a)³¹ to be installed on your machine. You can however achieve the same results by editing the code and the project manually..

```
public class Customer
{
    public in
    public st
}
```

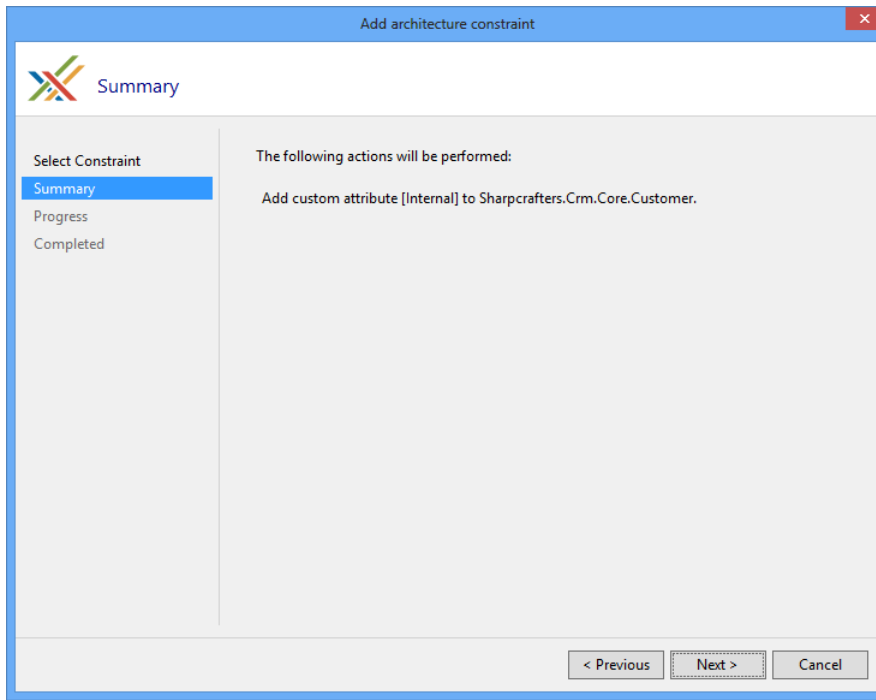


3. When prompted to select a constraint, choose to "Prohibit use outside of the project".

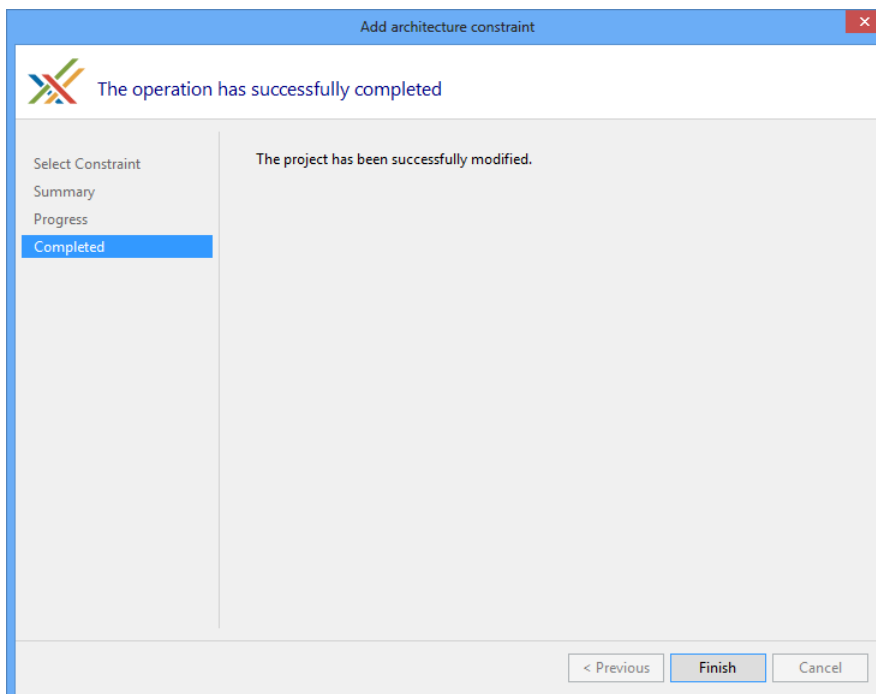


31. <https://visualstudiogallery.msdn.microsoft.com/a058d5d3-e654-43f8-a308-c3bdfdd0be4a>

- The summary page gives you the opportunity to review the selections that you have made. If you notice that the configuration is not what you wanted you can click the **Previous** button and adjust your selections. If the configuration meets your needs click **Next**. In this demo you will see that the [InternalAttribute] attribute is being added to the Customer class.



- Once the download, installation and configuration of PostSharp has finished you can close the wizard and look at the changes that were made to your codebase.



- You'll notice that the only thing that has changed in the code is the addition of the `[InternalAttribute]` attribute.

```
namespace Sharpcrafters.Crm.Core
{
    [Internal]
    public class Customer
    {
        public int Id { get; set; }
        public string Name { get; set; }
    }
}
```

- When you attempt to make use of that public component in a different assembly a compile time warning will appear in the Output window.

```
namespace Sharpcrafters.Crm.Console.Repositories
{
    public class CustomerRepository:ICustomerRepository
    {
        public IEnumerable<Customer> FetchAll()
        {
            return new List<Customer>{new Customer{Id=1,Name="Joe Johnson"}};
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

The assembly that is attempting to use the public component will need to reference PostSharp for this validation to occur.

Emitting errors instead of warnings

By default any situation that breaks the access rules defined by the application of the `ComponentInternalAttribute` or `InternalAttribute` attribute will generate a compile time warning. It's possible to escalate this warning to the error level.

- Changing the output warning to an error requires you to set the Severity level.

```
[ComponentInternal(typeof (InvoiceServices), Severity = SeverityType.Error)]
public IEnumerable<Invoice> FetchAllForCustomer(Guid id)
{
    //dostuff
    return null;
}
```

- Now when you try to access the component when access hasn't been granted the Output window will display an error message.

	Description	File	Line	Column	Project
2	The processing of module "SharpCrafters.Crm.Console.dll" was not successful.	POSTSHARP			SharpCrafters.Crm.Console
1	Method SharpCrafters.Crm.Console.InvoiceRepository.FetchAllForCustomer cannot be referenced from method SharpCrafters.Crm.Console.Services.Sharpcrafters.Crm.Console.Services.CustomerServices.FetchAllInvoicesForCustomer because of the [ComponentInternal] constraint.	POSTSHARP			SharpCrafters.Crm.Console

Ignoring warnings

There may be specific situations where you want to suppress the warning message that is being generated at compile time. In those cases you can apply the `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute to the locations where you want to allow access to the component.

NOTE

The `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute will only suppress warnings. If you have escalated the warnings to be errors, those errors will still be generated even if the `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute is present.

If you wanted to allow access to the constrained component in a specific method you could add the `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute to that method.

```
public class CustomerServices
{
    [IgnoreWarning("AR0102")]
    public IEnumerable<Customer> FetchAll()
    {
        var invoiceRepository = new InvoiceRepository();
        var allInvoices = invoiceRepository.FetchAllForCustomer(Guid.NewGuid());
    }
}
```

NOTE

AR0102 is the identifier of the warning emitted by `ComponentInternalAttribute`. To ignore warnings emitted by `Internal`, use the identifier AR0104.

You may wonder where these identifiers come from. `IgnoreWarningAttribute` actually works with any PostSharp warning and not just this one. Any build error, whether from MSBuild, C# or PostSharp, has an identifier. To see error identifiers in Visual Studio, open the View menu and click on the Output item, select "Show output from: Build". You will see warnings including their identifiers.

If you wanted to allow access in an entire class you could add the `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute at the class level. Any access to the constrained component within the class would have its warning suppressed.

```
[IgnoreWarning("AR0102")]
public class CustomerServices
{
    public IEnumerable<Customer> FetchAll()
    {
        var invoiceRepository = new InvoiceRepository();
        var allInvoices = invoiceRepository.FetchAllForCustomer(Guid.NewGuid());
    }
}
```

22.3. Developing Custom Architectural Constraints

When you are creating your applications it is common to adopt custom design patterns that must be respected across all modules. Custom design patterns have the same benefits as standard ones, but they are specific to your application. For instance, the team could decide that every class derived from `BusinessRule` must have a nested class named `Factory`, derived from `BusinessRulesFactory`, with a public default constructor.

Even performing line-by-line code reviews can miss violations of the pattern. Is there a better way to ensure that this doesn't happen? PostSharp offers the ability create custom architectural constraints. The constraints that you write are able to verify anything that you can query using reflection.

There are two kinds of constraints: *scalar constraints* and *referential constraints*.

This topic contains the following sections:

- [Creating a scalar constraint on page 370](#)
- [Creating a referential constraint on page 372](#)
- [Validating the constraint itself on page 374](#)
- [Ignoring warnings on page 375](#)

Creating a scalar constraint

Scalar constraints typically validate an element of code, while referential constraints validate how an element of code is being used.

Let's start with a scalar constraint and create a constraint that verifies the first condition our `BusinessRule` design pattern: that any class derived from `BusinessRule` must have a nested class named `Factory`. We can model this condition as a scalar constraint that applies to any class derived from `BusinessRule`. Therefore, we will create a type-level scalar constraint, apply it to the `BusinessRule` class, and use attribute inheritance to have the constraint automatically applied to all derived classes.

1. Create a class that inherits from the `ScalarConstraint` class in PostSharp.

```
using System;
public class BusinessRulePatternValidation : ScalarConstraint
{
}
```

2. Designate what code construct type this validation aspect should work for by adding the `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute` attribute. In this case we want the validation to occur on types only, and we want to enable inheritance.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
public class BusinessRulePatternValidation : ScalarConstraint
{
}
```

3. Override the `ValidateCode(Object)` method.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
public class BusinessRulePatternValidation : ScalarConstraint
{
    public override void ValidateCode(object target)
    {
    }
}
```

4. Create a rule that checks that there's a nested type called `Factory`. You'll note that the `target` parameter for the `ValidateCode(Object)` method is an object type. Depending on which target type you declare in the `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute` attribute, the value passed through this parameter will change. For `MulticastTargets.Type` the type passed is `Type`. To make use of the target for validation you must cast to that type first.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
public class BusinessRulePatternValidation : ScalarConstraint
{
    public override void ValidateCode(object target)
    {
        var targetType = (Type) target;

        if ( targetType.GetNestedType("Factory") == null )
        {
            // Error
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

Valid types for the `target` parameter of the `ValidateCode(Object)` method include `Assembly`, `Type`, `MethodInfo`, `ConstructorInfo`, `PropertyInfo`, `EventInfo`, `FieldInfo`, and `ParameterInfo`.

5. Write a warning that the rule being broken to the Output window in Visual Studio.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
public class BusinessRulePatternValidation : ScalarConstraint
{
    public override void ValidateCode(object target)
    {
        var targetType = (Type)target;

        if (targetType.GetNestedType("Factory") == null)
        {
            Message.Write(
                targetType, SeverityType.Warning,
                "2001",
                "The {0} type does not have a nested type named 'Factory'.",
                targetType.DeclaringType,
                targetType.Name);
        }
    }
}
```

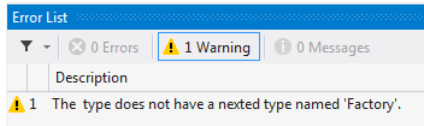
6. Attach the rule to the code that needs to be protected. For this example we want to add this rule to the `BusinessRule` class.

```
[BusinessRulePatternValidation]
public class BusinessRule
{
    // No Factory class here.
}
```

NOTE

This example shows applying the constraint to only one class. If you want to apply a constraint to large portions of your codebase, read the section on [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations](#) on page 187.

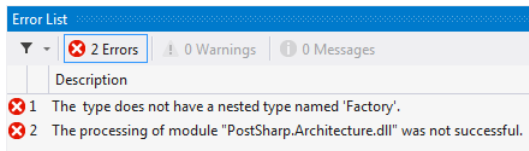
- Now if you compile the project you will see an error in the Output window of Visual Studio when you run a build.



- In some circumstances you may determine that a warning isn't aggressive enough. We can alter the rule that you have created so that it outputs a compile time error instead. All that you need to do is change the SeverityType in the Message.Write to Error.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
public class BusinessRulePatternValidation : ScalarConstraint
{
    public override void ValidateCode(object target)
    {
        var targetType = (Type)target;

        if (targetType.GetNestedType("Factory") == null)
        {
            Message.Write(
                targetType, SeverityType.Error,
                "2001",
                "The {0} type does not have a nested type named 'Factory'.",
                targetType.DeclaringType,
                targetType.Name);
        }
    }
}
```



Using this technique it is possible to create rules or restrictions based on a number of different criteria and implement validation for several design patterns.

When you are working on projects you need to ensure that they adhere to the ideals and principles that our project teams hold dear. As with any process in software development, manual verification is guaranteed to fail at some point in time. As you do in other areas of the development process, you should look to automate the verification and enforcement of our ideals. The ability to create custom architectural constraints provides both the flexibility and verification that you need to achieve this goal.

Creating a referential constraint

Now let's create a referential constraint that verifies the second condition our BusinessRule design pattern: that the BusinessRule class can only be used in the Controllers namespace. You can model this condition as a referential constraint and apply the constraint to any class in your codebase. If you apply this constraint to the entirety of your codebase you will ensure that the BusinessRule design pattern is only referenced in the Controllers namespace.

- Create a class that inherits from the ReferentialConstraint class in PostSharp.

```
public class BusinessRuleUseValidation : ReferentialConstraint
{
}
```

2. Declare that this aspect should work only on types by adding the `MulticastAttributeUsageAttribute` attribute to the class.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
public class BusinessRuleUseValidation : ReferentialConstraint
{
}
```

3. Override the `ValidateCode(Object, Assembly)` method.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
BusinessRuleUseValidation : ReferentialConstraint
{
    public override void ValidateCode(object target, Assembly assembly)
    {
    }
}
```

4. Create the rule that checks for the use of the `BusinessRule` type in the target code.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
public class BusinessRulePatternValidation : ScalarConstraint
{
    public override void ValidateCode(object target, Assembly assembly)
    {
        var targetType = (Type) target;
        var usages = ReflectionSearch
            .GetMethodsUsingDeclaration(typeof (BusinessRule));

        if (usages !=null)
        {
            // Warning
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

The rule here makes use of the `ReflectionSearch` helper class that is provided by the PostSharp framework. This class, along with others, is an extension to the built in reflection functionality of .NET and can be used outside of aspects as well.

5. Write a warning message to be included in the Output window of Visual Studio.

```
[MulticastAttributeUsage(MulticastTargets.Class, Inheritance = MulticastInheritance.Strict)]
public class BusinessRulePatternValidation : ScalarConstraint
{
    public override void ValidateCode(object target, Assembly assembly)
    {
        var targetType = (Type) target;
        var usages = ReflectionSearch
            .GetMethodsUsingDeclaration(typeof (BusinessRule));

        if (usages !=null)
        {
            Message.Write(
                targetType, SeverityType.Warning,
                "2002",
                "The {0} type contains a reference to 'BusinessRule'" +
                "which should only be referenced from Controllers.",
                targetType.Name);
        }
    }
}
```

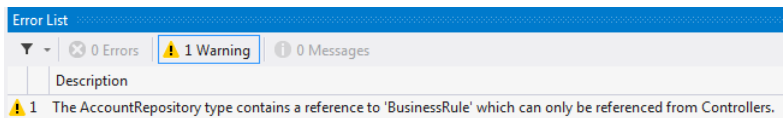
- Attach the referential constraint that you created to any code that needs to be checked. In this example, add an attribute to the `AccountRepository` class.

```
namespace PostSharp.Architecture.Repositories
{
    [BusinessRuleUseValidation]
    public class AccountRepository
    {
        public void AddAccount(string name)
        {
            var businessRule = new BusinessRule();
            businessRule.DoStuff();
        }
    }
}
```

NOTE

This example shows applying the constraint to only one class. If you want to apply this constraint to a larger portion of your codebase, read the section on [Adding Aspects to Multiple Declarations](#) on page 187.

- Now when you compile the project you will see a warning in the Output window in Visual Studio.



NOTE

If using a warning isn't aggressive enough you can change the `SeverityType` to `Error`. Now when the rule is broken an error will appear in the Output window of Visual Studio and the build will not be successful.

CAUTION NOTE

PostSharp constraints operate at the lowest level. For instance, checking relationships of a type with the rest of the code does not implicitly check the relationships of the methods of this type. Also, checking relationships of namespaces is not possible.

Custom attribute multicasting can be used to apply a constraint to a large number of types, for instance all types of a namespace. But this would result in one constraint instance for every type, method and field on this namespace. Although this has no impact on run time, it could severely affect build time. For this reason, the current version of PostSharp Constraints is not suitable to check isolation (layering) of namespaces at large scale.

Referential constraints provide you with the ability to declare architectural design patterns right in your code. By documenting these patterns right in the codebase you are able to provide easy access for the development team as well as continual verification that your desired design patterns are being adhered to.

Validating the constraint itself

Now that you have created scalar and referential constraints you can be assured that certain architectural rules are being consistently implemented in your codebase. There is one thing that is missing though.

With what you have done thus far, it is possible to attach your architectural constraints to any code element in your projects. This may not be appropriate. For example, the scalar constraint that you created to perform the `BusinessRulePatternValidation` may be a valid constraint only on classes that exist in the `Models` namespace.

Let's look at how we can ensure that this constraint is only enforced on classes that exist in the `Models` namespace.

1. Open the `BusinessRulePatternValidation` class that you created earlier.
2. Override the `ValidateConstraint(Object)` method.
3. Write the validation logic to ensure that this constraint is only applied to classes in the `Models` namespace.

NOTE

When the `ValidateConstraint(Object)` method returns `true`, it tells PostSharp that the constraint should be applied to that target code element. When the `ValidateConstraint(Object)` method returns `false` PostSharp will not apply the constraint to the target code element.

Now, when the `BusinessRulePatternValidation` attribute is applied to a class that is not in the `Models` namespace of your project, there will be no warning or error added to the Visual Studio Output window.

When the attribute is applied to a class in the `Models` namespace and that class doesn't pass the constraint's rules you will continue to see the warning or error indicating this architectural failure.

Ignoring warnings

There will be situations where a constraint is generating a warning that is of no concern. In these exceptional circumstances it is best if you remove the warning from the Visual Studio Output window.

To ignore these unnecessary warnings, find the target code that is responsible for generating the warning. Add the `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute to the target code entering the `MessageId` of the warning that you want to suppress.

The `MessageId` can be found in your constraint where you issue the `Message.Write` command. The `Reason` value performs no function during the suppression of the warning. It exists so that you can provide clear communication as to why the warning is being ignored.

NOTE

The `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute will only suppress the issuance of `Message.Write` statements that are assigned a `SeverityType` of `Warning`. If the `SeverityType` is set to `Error` the `IgnoreWarningAttribute` attribute will have no suppression effect on that statement.