



FarPoint Spread by GrapeCity: Award-winning Microsoft® Excel® Spreadsheet Software-Compatible Components for Microsoft Visual Studio® Development System

Fast Facts

Partner: GrapeCity, Inc.

Web site: <http://www.farpointspread.com>

Industry: Reporting/Business Intelligence

Partner Profile

GrapeCity, founded in Japan in 1983, is a global developer of tools, solutions, and services for Microsoft technologies.

GrapeCity is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Visual Studio Industry Partner (VSIP), and Early Technology Adoption Program (TAP) Partner.

Solution Profile

Spread is an award-winning Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software-compatible platform for .NET. Spread's object model and integration with Microsoft Visual Studio development system make it easy for developers to embed the familiar spreadsheet user experience as well as advanced analysis and presentation features into their applications.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Visual Studio 2008
- Microsoft Excel
- .NET Framework
- Microsoft BizTalk Server



Business Needs

Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software is the desktop application of choice for many data processing, analysis, and reporting tasks. Over the years, business expectations have changed from using Excel spreadsheet software as an isolated desktop tool to seeing it as a platform for importing, analyzing, sharing, and exporting information within an integrated business solution. Business users today expect to extend their familiar desktop spreadsheet experience into new systems without losing any data or affecting embedded business rules, such as formulas and calculations.

Business Challenges

To meet these expectations, developers creating today's business solutions need to enable them to share their data—and associated business rules—with a wide range of data sources, ranging from spreadsheets to enterprise databases. Furthermore, this sharing must occur without disrupting the user experience or affecting the consistency or accuracy of the underlying data.

Meeting all these needs can be a challenge. It's hard to develop reliable, robust software systems that have scalable, fast-performing, Excel spreadsheet software compatible features and also provide broader business benefits, such as advanced analysis and presentation features. In fact, most applications and components that tries to

provide some support for Excel spreadsheet software fall short of true compatibility. As a result, not only do business users have a disconnected user experience, but the underlying data can also become inconsistent and inaccurate over time.

Faced with these problems, business users are often understandably reluctant to adopt new solutions, making it difficult for companies to realize the business benefits the solutions could provide. In fact, these problems can make it difficult for organizations to justify launching new business initiatives at all.

Technical Challenges

For developers, the problem is that most software applications and components do not offer true Excel spreadsheet software integration, nor are they easy to embed and work with in the Microsoft Visual Studio development system environment.

To qualify as spreadsheet-compatible, .NET applications need to be able to export and import not only Excel spreadsheet software data, but also any embedded formulas, calculations, and graphics. And once the data has been imported into a .NET application, users must be able to interact with it using a familiar, full-featured spreadsheet interface embedded inside a Windows® Form or an ASP.NET Web page—or, in the future, inside a Microsoft Silverlight™ browser plug-in or WPF

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application. In addition, users must be able to modify, analyze report on, and export data to a variety of formats and destinations, including spreadsheets, databases, and data warehouses.

These are all complex features to develop, test, and deploy within an enterprise environment. Without off-the-shelf tools and components specifically designed to meet these needs, it is virtually impossible for developers to deliver the needed functionality and capabilities within a reasonable timeframe and budget.

Partner Solution

GrapeCity's FarPoint Spread suite of Excel spreadsheet software-compatible components for .NET leverages Microsoft technology to provide developers with powerful, proven software components that support all of the necessary capabilities. Developed using managed C#, the components include intuitive user interface designers and developer tools within the Visual Studio development system.

Spread was the first .NET spreadsheet tool to fully leverage the code-behind, event-based Visual Studio development system programming model—as well as the first to take full advantage of the Excel spreadsheet software file format. Today, it is a rich, functionally deep component suite with true Excel spreadsheet software compatibility. Offering nearly unlimited customization and extension capabilities, powerful analysis features, and extensive charting capabilities that make it easy for end users to visualize their data, Spread enables Visual Studio development system solution developers to fully meet the needs of today's enterprises.

In addition to a broad range of Excel spreadsheet software capabilities, the Spread family of products also includes Spread for Microsoft BizTalk® Server. This product makes it easy to integrate Excel spreadsheet software business documents, such as orders and invoices, into a BizTalk server-orchestrated business process pipeline.

Benefits

The benefits provided by GrapeCity's FarPoint Spread suite of spreadsheet components include the ability to:

- Leverage existing investments in Microsoft Excel across Windows operating system, Web, and BizTalk server solutions, using a single set of products.
- Rapidly develop applications that process, analyze, and present data using a familiar spreadsheet interface, thereby reducing users' learning curve and increasing adoption.
- Offer fast performance and multi-language support, enabling global customers to implement scalable, powerful Excel spreadsheet software-compatible .NET solutions.

In the future, GrapeCity is committed to delivering an even more powerful .NET programming platform with Silverlight browser plug-ins and WPF versions of the spreadsheet components, in addition to more synergy with GrapeCity's award-winning ActiveReports .NET reporting and business intelligence products.

