Windows Multimedia

Some Multimedia Devices

- **Some multimedia devices:**
  - Waveform audio device (sound card)
    - converts microphone & other analog audio to digitized samples
    - can be stored as .WAV files
    - can be played back
    - Usually has a MIDI device
      - Musical Instrument Digital Interface
      - plays music from short binary messages (MIDI codes)
      - can be attached to a MIDI input device (music keyboard)
  - CD Audio through the CD-ROM drive
  - Video for Windows device (AVI video device)
    - plays movie/animation files (.AVI)
  - Video capture boards (different compression schemes)
  - Laserdisc players & video cassette recorders
  - Others (DVD)

Win32 MM Support & Documentation

- Extensive Win32 API support for multimedia devices
  - Low-level support
  - High-level support
- MSDN online documentation:
  - Platform SDK/Graphics & Multimedia Services/Multimedia Reference
  - Platform, SDK, & DDK/Platform SDK/Reference/Multimedia Command Strings
  - Visual Studio .NET Help (Index):
- VS Help on "MCI Command Strings"

Media Control Interface

- MCI (Media Control Interface)
  - High level multimedia control functions
  - Has commands common to all multimedia hardware
    - Possible since most use record/play metaphor
      - Open a device for input or output
      - If input, record; If output, play
    - When done, close

Two Forms of MCI

- Send command messages (like Windows messages) to MCI
  - (need to include bit-encoded flags and C data structures)
- Send text strings to MCI
  - Good for use from scripting languages with string functionality and simple to use
  - MCI converts them to command messages

Sending Strings to MCI

- **mciSendString() function:**

  error = mciSendString(sCmd, sRetStr, iReturn, hCallback);
  - sCmd--the mci command string (specifies command & device)
  - sRetStr--return string buffer (NULL if none used)
  - iReturn--size of return string buffer (0 if none used)
  - hCallback--Handle to Callback window (NULL if none used)
  - Returns 0 if command is successful, error code if not
    - Can be used as a parameter to mciGetErrorString()
  - Many command strings possible
- See MSDN online help
- In .NET, see help on:
  - mciSendString, mciGetErrorString
  - MCI Command Strings

Using Win32 Functions (like MCI) From .NET

- MCI is not directly accessible from .NET
- Also mciSendString() is C++, not C#
- Can still use MCI and other Win32 API functions from .Net languages
- Key is to use "Platform Invocation Services"
  - "Interop Services"
  - A generalized mechanism that allows calling functions that are imported from DLLs
  - Drawbacks:
    - Code is no longer managed code
    - And it's no longer platform independent

Win32 from .NET, continued

- Must include: System.Runtime.InteropServices;
- And then prefix any declarations of Win32 API functions to be used with:

  [DllImport ("xxx.dll")]
  - DllImport: A storage-class attribute:
    - A Microsoft-specific extension to C/C++
    - Enables importing functions, data, objects from a DLL
  - Where xxx.dll is the DLL that contains the function
    - For MCI functions that DLL is winmm.dll
- Also the declaration must include public, static, extern to be usable from a .NET application
- And then use equivalent .NET language data types for the parameters and for the type returned by the function

mciSendString() in .NET Unmanaged Code

- Its VC++ Parameter types are:
  - LPCTSTR, LPTSTR, UINT, HANDLE
- And it returns MCIERROR: a C++ DWORD
- Corresponding C# parameter types would be:
  - string, string, uint, intPtr
  - In C# DWORD is implemented as an int
- So declare mciSendString as:

```
[DllImport("winmm.dll")]
public static extern int mciSendString
(string sCmd, string sRetStr, uint iReturn, intPtr hCallback);
```

Some MCI Command String Commands:

- open – initializes a multimedia device
- play– starts playing an open device
- stop – stops playing from an open device
- record -- starts recording to a device
- seek – move to a specified position on device
- save – saves an MCI file
- close – closes a device and associated resources
- set -- establish control settings for the device
- status -- returns information in 2nd parameter
- Some device types:
  - cdaudio -- Audio CD played on system's CD-ROM
  - waveaudio -- .WAV audio files
  - AVIVideo -- .AVI video files

Some Example Command Strings

"open cdaudio"
"play cdaudio"
"close cdaudio"
"open new type waveaudio alias mysound"
"record mysound"
"stop mysound"
"save mysound mysound.wav"
"open AVIVideo!myclip.avi alias vidclip"
- the ! separates dev_name from file_name

"play vidclip"
"stop vidclip"
"set mysound time format milliseconds"
"status mysound length" – Returns duration of mysound in milliseconds
"set cdaudio time format tmsf"
- tmsf means tracks, minutes, seconds, frames (default format is msf)

"play cdaudio from 01:00:00:00 to 02:05:06:00"
- tt=track (1-99), mm=minute (0-59), ss=second (0-59), ff=frame (0-74)
- a frame is 1/75 of a second

"status cdaudio position" -- Returns position on audio CD in current-time-format
"status cdaudio length track xx" -- Returns current-time-format length of CD track xx

Examples

- MCI-PlayCD
  - "Play" Button
    - Opens and plays cdaudio device
  - "Stop" Button
    - Stops and closes cdaudio device
- mciSendString-Test
  - User can enter different command strings in a text box
- MCI-Record-Play
  - Must have a microphone attached to the computer
  - "Begin Recording" and "End Recording" buttons
    - Open, record, and save microphone input to a .WAV file
  - "Begin Playback" and "End "Playback" buttons
    - Plays back the .WAV file

Retrieving Data from MM Commands

- Some mciSendString() commands provide data
  - Returned in second, szRetStr, parameter
  - Example: "status" command
- Also mciGetErrorString(err, errStr, lengErrStr);
  - err was returned by mciSendString()
  - errStr will contain text describing the error
- Problem: a C# string cannot grow dynamically
  - Need another "dynamic" string-like data type to hold the data returned in the 2nd parameter
  - StringBuilder class (in System.Text) does the job
    - An instance of this class represents a string-like object whose value is a "mutable" sequence of characters
      - So it can be used to "receive" a return string object in a method
    - One constructor:

```
StringBuilder sb = new StringBuilder(initLength);
```

Using StringBuilder with MM in .NET

- Declare 2nd parameter as type StringBuilder
- For example:

```
[DllImport("winmm.dll")]
public static extern int mciSendString
  (string sCmd, StringBuilder sRetStr, int iLength, intPtr
    hCallback);
```

- Then use it, for example:

```
StringBuilder sb = new StringBuilder(256);
string s = "status cdaudio"
int error = mciSendString(s, sb, 256, IntPtr.Zero);
```

- Then Convert returned StringBuilder object to a string to be able to display it or use it, for example:

```
string sRet = sb.ToString();
```

- Don't forget using System.Text; at top of application