

netduino

Getting Started

welcome

Netduino is an open-source electronics platform using the .NET Micro Framework.

With Netduino, the world of microcontroller programming is at your fingertips. Netduino is designed to enable both personal projects and sophisticated commercial endeavors.

In this Getting Started guide, we'll set up the Netduino development environment on your computer and build your first Netduino App.

After reading this guide, please join our online community. Browse the online projects. Design your own.

With Netduino and your imagination, you can create great electronic projects.

install

To write Netduino Apps, you'll need some free tools. Download the following three installers and then install them in the specified order.

You can also find links to these in the Downloads section of our website.

1. Microsoft Visual C# Express 2010
<http://www.microsoft.com/express/downloads/>
2. Microsoft .NET Micro Framework v4.1 SDK
<http://www.netduino.com/downloads/MicroFrameworkSDK.msi>
3. Netduino SDK v4.1
http://www.netduino.com/downloads/netduinosdk_32bit.exe (for 32-bit Windows)
http://www.netduino.com/downloads/netduinosdk_64bit.exe (for 64-bit Windows)

Once these free tools are installed, you're ready to create your first Netduino App.

NOTE: The Netduino development tools require Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7. There is also an open source project designed to provide support for Mac and Linux using Mono. It is currently experimental and incomplete (as of August 2010). A link to the project can be found at the Downloads section of our website.

unbox

Before starting Visual C# Express 2010 for the first time, unpack your Netduino. Attach its sticky feet. Grab a Micro USB cable and plug the Netduino into your computer.

The Netduino drivers should have been installed automatically with the Netduino SDK. If you experience any troubles, they are also available for download from our website.

Many modern cell phones use Micro USB cables for charging. If you did not get a Micro USB cable with your Netduino, you may be able to borrow one from your cell phone.

create

Start Visual C# Express 2010. Or if you own a copy of the commercial Visual Studio 2010 tools, start Visual Studio 2010. The installer should have created a folder and shortcut for this program in your Start menu (Programs).

The Visual Studio programming environment should launch. Let's create our first project.

Click on the "New Project..." link. If no link is visible, go to the File menu and select New > Project...

The New Project window should pop up. Visual Studio displays a set of installed templates. We want to pick "Visual C# > Micro Framework" from the list on the left. Then pick "Netduino Application" from the list on the right. Name your project, and press OK.

code

Now, we'll write our Netduino App's code. For a first project, we'll blink the Netduino's programmable (blue) LED.

On the right side of the screen, the Solution Explorer shows your project files. Program.cs holds the startup code for your project. We're going to open it and write a half dozen or so lines of code. Double-click on Program.cs (or right-click and select Open).

In the main section of the window, we are now editing Program.cs. Click on the line underneath the text "// write your code here". This is where we'll write our code.

Now, type the following:

```
OutputPort led = new OutputPort(Pins.ONBOARD_LED, false);
```

This first line of code creates an `OutputPort`. An `OutputPort` lets us control the voltage level of the pins on the Netduino (or in this case the voltage to the blue LED). `Pins.ONBOARD_LED` is shorthand which tells the Netduino which “pin” of the microcontroller we want to control and the second parameter (`false`) puts the LED in an initial state of OFF (`false`).

Now, we’re going to blink the LED on and off repeatedly. A straightforward way to create an action which repeats forever is to put it inside a loop which never ends. Add the following code to your project.

```
while (true)
{
}
```

The keyword *while* tells the microcontroller to do something in a loop while a certain condition is met. This condition is placed in parenthesis. In our case, we use a condition of `true`. Since conditions are met when they are “true”, passing it “true” means that the loop will repeat forever.

Now, we’ll create the blinking LED code. Between the two sets of curly braces, insert the following four lines of code:

```
led.Write(true);    // turn on the LED
Thread.Sleep(250); // sleep for 250ms
led.Write(false);  // turn off the LED
Thread.Sleep(250); // sleep for 250ms
```

Your final program should look like this:

```
public static void Main()
{
    // write your code here
    OutputPort led = new OutputPort(Pins.ONBOARD_LED, false);

    while (true)
    {
        led.Write(true);    // turn on the LED
        Thread.Sleep(250); // sleep for 250ms
        led.Write(false);  // turn off the LED
        Thread.Sleep(250); // sleep for 250ms
    }
}
```

run

Now, we'll deploy your Netduino App to the Netduino and watch it run.

By default, Visual Studio runs projects in an emulator. This allows software developers to create and test programming logic for a new hardware product before the actual hardware is built. We won't use the emulator for our purposes, so we'll let Visual Studio know that we have physical hardware it should use instead.

Click on the Project menu and select your project's properties (generally, the last item in the Projects menu). When the project properties appear, click on the ".NET Micro Framework" category on the left side.

Now we will change our deployment target from the Emulator to the Netduino. Change the Transport from "Emulator" to "USB" and then make sure that the Device selection box shows your Netduino. If it doesn't, unplug and re-attach your Netduino.

Now, we'll run the project. When we run the project, your code is deployed to the Netduino and then automatically started. We'll just watch the program run for now, but when you start building sophisticated Netduino Apps you may want to explore the advanced features: while running Netduino Apps you can debug, set breakpoints, step through code, analyze the value of variables, etc.

To run your project, press the "Start Debugging" button in the toolbar at the top of the screen. It looks like the Play button on a music player. You can also press F5 instead.

Visual Studio will now deploy your first Netduino App to the Netduino hardware. In a few seconds, you'll see the blue LED blinking on and off every half second.

celebrate

You've now created, deployed, and run your first Netduino project. You can unplug the Netduino for your computer and demonstrate your success to others.

When you ran the program, it was written into the Netduino's microcontroller chip...so all you have to do to run the program again is plug it in via a MicroUSB cable or with a power adapter (using the power barrel jack).

You can rewrite over your Netduino App. Visual Studio will automatically stop your current Netduino App whenever deploying a new one.

next steps

The world of electronics is now yours to build. Build some projects from our website or elsewhere on the web. Come up with new ideas for the world's next great electronic gadget, Halloween costume, robot, etc. And please, participate in our online community and share your experiences with other community members.

community

Support for Netduino is available through peer support forums at <http://forums.netduino.com>

legal

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