



# Syncfusion's Essential Studio Enterprise Edition

A comprehensive collection of cool components

Several longtime Microsoft tools vendors have offered component collections for years. However, the designers behind the Syncfusion product line are proving that having a strong solution that spans the latest Microsoft technology platforms means better choices in the marketplace.

The Essential Studio Enterprise Edition ([www.syncfusion.com](http://www.syncfusion.com)) contains dozens of unique components that work with ASP.NET and ASP.NET MVC, Windows Forms, Windows Presentation Foundation (WPF), and Silverlight. Many of the bundled components work across all of these Microsoft technology configurations. These include Syncfusion's Calculate, Chart, Diagram, Edit, Gauge, Grid, Grouping, DocIO, XlsIO, PDF, Schedule, and Essential Tools. The Essential Tools collection includes controls such

as CommandBars and Editors (AutoComplete, Button, CalendarDateTime, ColorUI, ComboBox, Container, Dialog, Editor, Font, Label, and Select Option); Layout Manager; Menus; Tabs; TreeView; and Office 2007 controls (Form, Ribbon, MiniToolBar, StatusStripEx, ScrollersFrame, ContextMenuStripEx, TrackBarEx, SuperToolTip, Super Accelerator, MessageBoxAdv), to name a few. The WPF collection is extended to include a Report Designer and Viewer; Silverlight includes a Gauge control; and both ASP .NET and WPF include a Business Intelligence client to consume and interact with reports.

Installing the suite is easy, although you should be prepared to wait as long as 45 minutes if you select a complete setup option. Syncfusion downloads literally hundreds of example

files and configurations from the web. Once this lengthy procedure is completed, developers can opt to launch into the Syncfusion toolbox utility (see Figure 1). This shell provides an excellent way for new users to quickly get acquainted with the myriad of tools, controls, and options Syncfusion has to offer. Obviously, the accompanying Microsoft technology that the components are designed to leverage must also be installed on the user's system to demonstrate and consume the Syncfusion components built for that platform.

The controls are well designed and intuitive to work with, and the documentation is on par with other high-end collections that usually cost 20 to 30 percent more for the same variety of components. The exposed attributes and methods of each object are intuitive and smartly designed such that referencing Syncfusion's comprehensive documentation is often unnecessary. Interested readers can request an evaluation edition to test-drive the

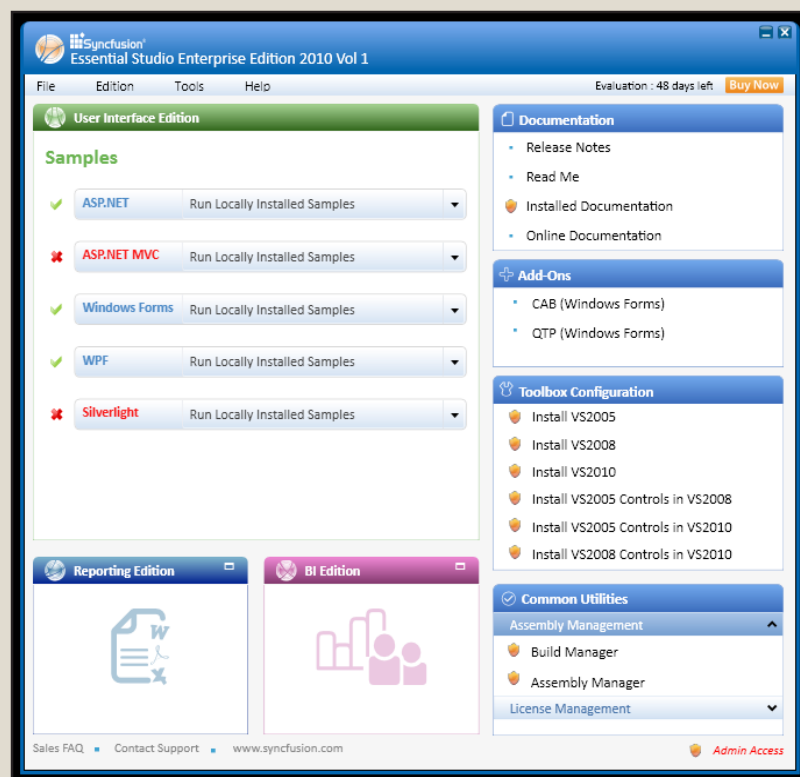


Figure 1: Syncfusion's attractive and functional configuration interface

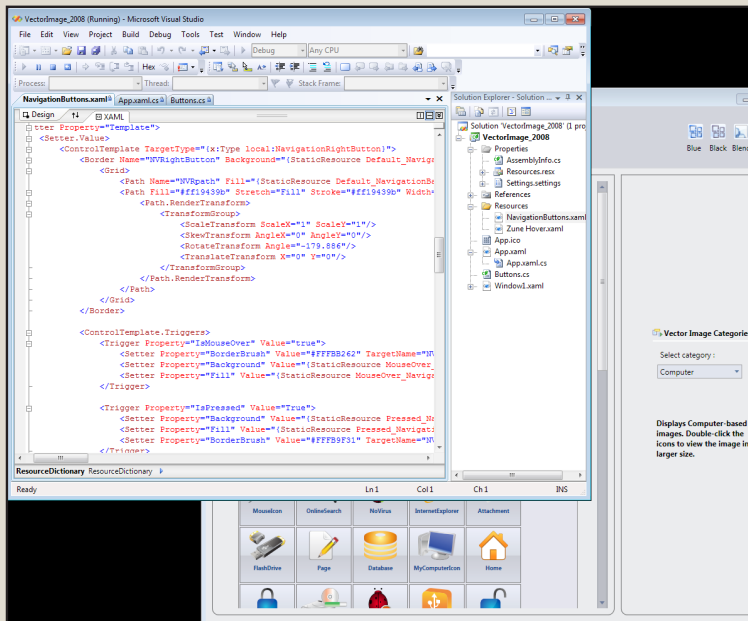


Figure 2: Syncfusion demonstration projects

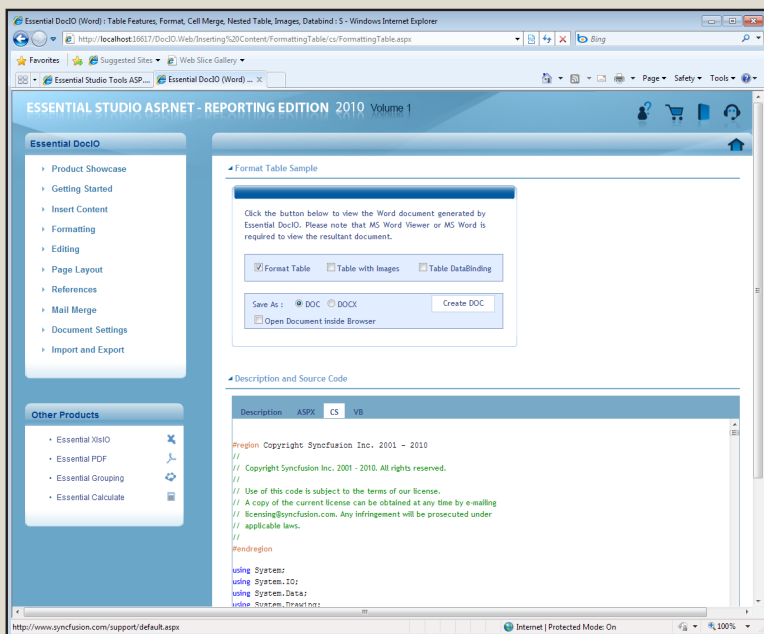


Figure 3: Syncfusion reporting examples


product for 30 days at no charge as well as have full access anytime to the documentation online at [help.syncfusion.com](http://help.syncfusion.com). Each demo is also very cleanly written and goes a long way toward understanding how to use the controls. The wide variety of examples show innovative ways in which the components can be leveraged and combined to add significant polish and professional elegance to your applications (see Figure 2). I also found a handful to be educational, especially in the land of Silverlight, where

development and new versions of that web-presentation technology move at a fast clip.

The package contains implementations of controls for a wide variety of uses. The WPF and Silverlight controls work beautifully and make developing in these relatively recent UI frameworks far easier than writing pages of XAML code. The Business Intelligence components also make reporting a snap. Having lived through the days of Crystal Reports in pre-.NET Visual Basic days, it's a joy to see how far the technology has progressed and how easy it is for beginning and intermediate .NET developers to create sophisticated reports in the latest Office-compatible document formats (see Figure 3).

Syncfusion updates its products quarterly. At press time, the company was due to release the 2010 Volume 2 edition, which includes important compatibility updates with Office 2010 and Visual Studio 2010 as well as evolutionary tweaks to the components. (Look for a follow-on review of Volume 2 soon on [DevProconnections.com](http://DevProconnections.com).)

Syncfusion's Essential Studio Enterprise Edition is a compelling bundle of components that span the catalog of today's Microsoft application frameworks. Although I tried to find portions of the product to criticize, or some area of instability or kludge implementation, I couldn't. This is a stunning package that's especially well suited for enterprise Windows developers. The cost and licensing terms are fair, and Syncfusion even offers a full-source version for companies that prefer full disclosure or a high degree of customization in their products (\$1,295 for binary; \$1,995 for source). Whether your next project is a traditional Windows program, an ASP.NET MVC project, or a slick Silverlight presentation, the consistent object model coupled with a standard expected behavior across the

various presentation approaches make Syncfusion-powered applications a smart investment. I look forward to watching this product compete in the Windows component-collection market. 

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