

Marco Cantù Essential Pascal

2nd Edition, March 2003

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APOLLO, THE GOD WORSHIPED AT DELPHI,
IN AN ITALIAN 17TH CENTURY FRESCO.

Introduction

The first few editions of *Mastering Delphi*, the best selling Delphi book I've written, provided an introduction to the Pascal language in Delphi. Due to space constraints and because many Delphi programmers look for more advanced information, in the latest edition this material was completely omitted. To overcome the absence of this information, I've started putting together this ebook, titled *Essential Pascal*.

This is a detailed book on Pascal, which for the moment will be available for free on my web site (I really don't know what will happen next, I might even find a publisher). This is a work in progress, and any feedback is welcome. The first complete version of this book, dated July '99, has been published on the Delphi 5 Companion CD.

Note to the Second Edition

After a few years (in the early 2003), the book had a complete revision, trying to refocus it even more on the core features of the Pascal language. Alongside, the book covers the language from the perspective of the Delphi for Windows programmer, but also of the Kylix and Delphi for .NET programmer. Differences among these different versions of the language will be mentioned.

This change in focus (not only Delphi with the VCL library) was another reason to change most of the examples from visual ones to console based ones – something I plan doing but that I still haven't done. Beside the theoretical advantage that the reader can focus even more on the language, ignoring event handlers, methods, component, and other more advance topics, only using a console application the code will be easily portable among the different compilers Borland has made available for Delphi in the recent years.

Another change is that I've gone from an HTML-based format to a PDF based one. With the increased bandwidth people generally have over a few years back this is really an advantage, and distribution of a single file helps a lot. By the way, the book is now being written with *OpenOffice.org*.

Copyright

The text and the source code of this book is copyrighted by Marco Cantù. Of course, you can use the programs and adapt them to your own needs, only you are not allowed to use them in books, training material, and other copyrighted formats (unless of course you use a reasonably limited amount and do mention the source). As you can freely print this ebook as training material, this doesn't sound like a real restriction to me.

Distributing the ebook is allowed only if no change is applied (beyond the distribution cost). Rather than placing a copy of it on your website, though, add a link to the main download site, www.marcocantu.com/epascal. The reason is that I expect the book to go over frequent changes and updates.

Donations

Although the book is available for free to everyone, if you benefit from reading it from a business perspective (that is, if Pascal programming is part of your job) and if you can afford it (because you live in a wealthy country) I ask you to donate a small sum to me, as I live on writing and training on programming languages and tool. Donation information is available on my web site. The currently suggested price is 5 Euros (which at the time I'm writing this is just a little over 5 US Dollars).

An alternative way of supporting me is to buy one of my books, but in that case I'll get only a limited fraction of the money you spend (which is the beauty of publishing an ebook). Coming to a seminar of mine or offering me consulting work is another interesting payback.

Notice that the money earned will allow me to pay for a professional editor, the web site itself, and (of course) the time devoted to update the book.

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Source Code

The source code of all the examples mentioned in the book is available. The code has the same copyright as the book: Feel free to use it at will but don't publish it on other documents or site. Links back to the Essential Pascal site (www.marcocantu.com/epascal) are welcomed.

If you go to the site you can download the source code in a single zip file, *EPasCode.zip* (about 30 KB in size), and check out the list of the examples in Appendix B.

Feedback

Please let me know of any errors you find, but also of topics not clear enough for a beginner. I'll be able to devote time to the project depending also on the feedback I receive. Let me know also which other topics you'd like to see here.

The preferred way of sending feedback is on my public newsgroup (see my web site for login information) in the area devoted to books. If you have troubles using the newsgroups send an email at the address to marco@marcocantu.com (putting *Essential Pascal* in the subject, and your request or comment in the text).

Acknowledgments

If I'm publishing a book on the web for free, I think this is mainly due to Bruce Eckel's experience with *Thinking in Java*. I'm a friend of Bruce and think he really did a great job with that book and few others.

As I mentioned the project to people at Borland I got a lot of positive feedback as well. And of course I must thank the company for making first the Turbo Pascal series of compilers and now the Delphi series of visual IDEs.

I'm starting to get some precious feedback. The first readers who helped improving this material quite a lot are Charles Wood and Wyatt Wong. Mark Greenhaw helped with some editing of the text. Rafael Barranco-Droege offered a lot of technical corrections and language editing. Thanks.

About the Author

Marco Cantù lives in Piacenza, Italy. After teaching the C++ language and writing C++ and Object Windows Library books and articles, in 1995 he delved into Delphi programming. He is the author of the *Mastering Delphi* book series, published by Sybex, as well as the advanced *Delphi Developers Handbook* (which is hardly available any more). Marco writes articles for many magazines, including *The Delphi Magazine*, speaks at Delphi and Borland conferences around the world, and teaches Delphi classes at basic and advanced levels.

Lately he's getting more and more involved in XML-related technologies, although mostly from the Delphi perspective. You can find more details about Marco and his work on his web site, www.marcocantu.com.

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