

Useful Shell Programming Information

Sources:

Most all of this information was culled from **Visual C++ Windows Shell Programming** by Dino Esposito, published by Wrox Press, 1998 and the October 1998 edition of the MSDN Library CD. I **strongly** recommend that you get both of these sources if you will be doing any serious shell programming. The ISBN for the shell programming book is 1-861001-8-43. While it specifically states Visual C++ in the title, it really is useful for any developer regardless of the development tool used (although it helps a lot if you can read C++ code).

Shell Versions:

The shell namespace API functions are contained in the SHELL32.DLL file. Windows95 and NT 4.0 shipped with v4.00 of this file. However, it has been upgraded by Microsoft and distributed via Internet Explorer 4 and its Active Desktop component, and Windows98.

Operating System	Internet Explorer	Active Desktop	SHELL32.DLL Version
95, NT 4	None	None	4.00
95, NT 4	IE 4.0	None	4.00
95, NT 4	IE 4.0x	Not Installed	4.00
95, NT 4	IE 4.0	Installed	4.71
95, NT 4	IE 4.01	Installed	4.72
95, NT 4	IE 4 SP1	Installed	4.72
98	Built-in	Built-in	4.72
NT 5	Built-in	Built-in	????

The changes from v4.00 to v4.71 seem to be the only ones that concern the programming interfaces. v4.71 added the following API functions:

- SHGetSettings()
- SHGetSpecialFolderPath()
- SHInvokePrinterCommand()
- SHEmptyRecycleBin()
- SHGetFreeDiskSpace()
- SHQueryRecycleBin()
- SHGetNewLinkInfo()

It also added several new COM interfaces:

- IURLSearchHook
- IQueryInfo
- IPersistFolder2
- IContextMenu3
- IInputObject
- ITaskbarList
- IDeskBand

You should be very careful not to use any of these on systems that have only v4.00 of SHELL32.DLL. It will only result in disaster.

Microsoft Documentation:

I have had horrible luck finding the "official" documentation of much of the shell API online. The MSDN Online web site (<http://premium.microsoft.com/msdn/library/default.htm>) used to have it available, but now all you get are endless "this link

moved here” messages that never end up taking you to the documentation. The best I can tell you is to get an MSDN Library CD and use that. I have an older January 1998 edition, and it covers only the v4.00 SHELL32.DLL stuff in “SDK Documentation\Platform SDK\User Interface Services\Shell and Common Controls”. I’ve got an October 1998 edition, and that seems to cover all the new stuff. I’ve not yet been able to find a version of the Win32.hlp SDK help file that covers anything more than the v4.00 stuff.