

**Version Stamping.** On Windows systems, each PE (Portable Executable) file can have a resource block, and each resource block can have a Version section. The version is stored in each file four times.

**String Product Version.** This is also viewed by the Windows property page and contains anything, it is much like the File Version, but it usually only references the major version information, whereas the File Version might talk about patches and builds.

**String File Version.** This is viewed by the Windows property page and can contain anything: "John Doe's really cool application version 1 build 200"

**Numeric Product Version.** This is not viewed by the Windows property page, but Visual File Information shows it to you. There are four values here, known in the Version section as dwMajorVersionMS, dwMajorVersionLS, dwMinorVersionMS, dwMinorVersionLS (MS = Most Significant, LS = Least Significant).

**Numeric File Version.** This is not viewed by the property page but Visual File Information shows it to you. It is probably the most important field in the entire Version section. It is similar to the Product Version, but usually contains more information (build information, patches, etc.) For instance, for version 4.0 of your product the Numeric Product Version might be 4.0.0.0, whereas the Numeric File Version might be 4.1997.05.2901. The Numeric File Version is what is used by setup programs, and by CODEBASE tags in HTML. If you update your code without updating your version stamp, your new code might never make it to the user.

**Version Stamping Proposed Standard.** I suggest that you make sure your String Versions look nice and are readable, and that you pass the other information (Copyright, Trademark, etc.) pass your legal department before shipping. I also recommend that you stamp your Numeric Versions as follows: Product Version.BuildYear.BuildMonth.BuildDay\*100+Counter. So the version in the example above, 4.1997.05.2901 is version 4, built on May 29th 1997. It's the second build of the day, the first being 4.1997.05.2900.