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Szymon Kobalczyk's Blog

Developers Notebook

posts - 49, comments - 256, trackbacks - 5

Creating Publisher Certificates For **ClickOnce**

Beta 1 allowed to sign your **ClickOnce** manifests simply by using a string name key file (.snk). Beta 2 no longer support this, and you are required to provide a publisher **certificate**. This was bit confusing for me because I had never before to deal with certificates and I had to ask Google for help.

I quickly came across the article "[Configuring **ClickOnce** Trusted Publishers](#)" by [Brian Noyes](#) published last month on MSDN . It explains in detail how **ClickOnce** uses the certificates and what needs to be done to publish your certificates to user machines so they won't be prompted each time when applications requires elevated privileges. You will also learn how to create a test **certificate** for yourself using Visual Studio 2005.

The test **certificate** that VS creates works fine but it has a short validity period (several hours) so I don't think it could be deployed on production server. As I said, I don't know much about certificates, but I was curious how to make my own private **certificate** for my projects.

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After bit more searching I found that Framework SDK contains tool for this, called [MakeCert](#). Here is the command line to make a **certificate**

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similar to one created by VS:

```
makecert -r -pe -a sha1 -n "CN=yourcompany" -b 01/01/2000 -e 01/01/2036 -eku 1.3.6.1.5.5.7.3.3 -ss My
```

News



The -b and -e option specify the time period when **certificate** is valid. The -eku option specifies the **certificate** is intended for code signing. I've also added -a sha1 option to set the same algorithm that VS uses (but I don't think it matters).

Article Categories

- [Development](#)

It's important to use the -pe option which allows to export the private key from the **certificate**. To do this use [CertMgr](#) (another tool from Framework SDK). The new **certificate** will be installed in your personal store. Select it and click on the Export button. Click Next on the first page, and on the second select to export the private key. On the next one you can select some additional options; if not sure just leave on default. After that you will be asked to type password for the file; can be left blank. On the last one specify the file name and location. Finish the wizard and you should get a .pfx file that can be used in VS or imported on user machines.

Archives

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To use this **certificate** to sign your project manifests open project properties (from Solution Explorer) and go to the Signing tab. You can either click "Select form Store..." button and select the **certificate** from your personal store or use the "Select form File..." button if you exported the **certificate** to a file.

To learn how to publish the **certificate** to user machines read the Brian's article.

Now that I have my own **certificate**, my next goal is to automate the publishing so it can be run without using Visual Studio. The ultimate goal is to make it part of the install application (for the server part). Please let me know if you have any success with that.

posted on Monday, May 30, 2005 10:50 PM

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Feedback

re: Creating Publisher Certificates For **ClickOnce**

Image Galleries

Great article!
7/15/2005 11:59 AM | Sander Oosterwijk

- [June Weekend in](#)

- [Izby](#)
- [May Weekend in Wyzne Ruzbachy](#)

re: Creating Publisher Certificates For ClickOnce

Blogs I Read

This is what I have been looking for for months. It's a wonder Microsoft can't come up with any tutorials so simple and straightforward...

11/21/2005 10:18 PM | [AustinW](#)

- [Martin Fowler](#)
[\(rss\)](#)
- [Michael Swanson](#)
[\(rss\)](#)

Top X ways to learn about ClickOnce

Sameer Bhangar the Test Lead on [ClickOnce](#) project recently internally sent out a list of the top ways...

11/21/2005 4:39 PM | [Saurabh Pant's Weblog](#)

Tools I Use

- [AnkhSVN](#)
- [CruiseControl .NET](#)
- [Lutz Roeder's Reflector](#)
- [NAnt](#)
- [NUnit](#)
- [Subversion](#)

re: Creating Publisher Certificates For ClickOnce

Outstanding! The combination of the two articles are exactly what I needed.

4/24/2006 3:26 PM | [Wonder Nuts](#)

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