ASP.NET - SERVER CONTROLS

Controls are small building blocks of the graphical user interface, which include text boxes, buttons, check boxes, list boxes, labels, and numerous other tools. Using these tools, the users can enter data, make selections and indicate their preferences.

Controls are also used for structural jobs, like validation, data access, security, creating master pages, and data manipulation.

ASP.NET uses five types of web controls, which are:

- HTML controls
- HTML Server controls
- ASP.NET Server controls
- ASP.NET Ajax Server controls
- User controls and custom controls

ASP.NET server controls are the primary controls used in ASP.NET. These controls can be grouped into the following categories:

- **Validation controls** - These are used to validate user input and they work by running client-side script.
- **Data source controls** - These controls provides data binding to different data sources.
- **Data view controls** - These are various lists and tables, which can bind to data from data sources for displaying.
- **Personalization controls** - These are used for personalization of a page according to the user preferences, based on user information.
- **Login and security controls** - These controls provide user authentication.
- **Master pages** - These controls provide consistent layout and interface throughout the application.
- **Navigation controls** - These controls help in navigation. For example, menus, tree view etc.
- **Rich controls** - These controls implement special features. For example, AdRotator, FileUpload, and Calendar control.

The syntax for using server controls is:

```
<asp:controlType  ID ="ControlID" runat="server" Property1=value1  [Property2=value2] />
```

In addition, visual studio has the following features, to help produce in error-free coding:

- Dragging and dropping of controls in design view
- IntelliSense feature that displays and auto-completes the properties
- The properties window to set the property values directly

Properties of the Server Controls

ASP.NET server controls with a visual aspect are derived from the WebControl class and inherit all the properties, events, and methods of this class.

The WebControl class itself and some other server controls that are not visually rendered are derived from the System.Web.UI.Control class. For example, PlaceHolder control or XML control.

ASP.Net server controls inherit all properties, events, and methods of the WebControl and System.Web.UI.Control class.

The following table shows the inherited properties, common to all server controls:

Property	Description
AccessKey	Pressing this key with the Alt key moves focus to the control.
Attributes	It is the collection of arbitrary attributes *forrenderingonly* that do not correspond to properties on the control.
BackColor	Background color.
BindingContainer	The control that contains this control's data binding.
BorderColor	Border color.
BorderStyle	Border style.
BorderWidth	Border width.
CausesValidation	Indicates if it causes validation.
ChildControlCreated	It indicates whether the server control's child controls have been created.
ClientID	Control ID for HTML markup.
Context	The HttpContext object associated with the server control.
Controls	Collection of all controls contained within the control.
ControlStyle	The style of the Web server control.
CssClass	CSS class
DataItemContainer	Gets a reference to the naming container if the naming container implements IDataItemContainer.
DataKeysContainer	Gets a reference to the naming container if the naming container implements IDataKeysControl.
DesignMode	It indicates whether the control is being used on a design surface.
DisabledCssClass	Gets or sets the CSS class to apply to the rendered HTML element when the control is disabled.
Enabled	Indicates whether the control is grayed out.
EnableTheming	Indicates whether theming applies to the control.
EnableViewState	Indicates whether the view state of the control is maintained.
Events	Gets a list of event handler delegates for the control.
Font	Font.
Forecolor	Foreground color.
HasAttributes	Indicates whether the control has attributes set.
HasChildViewState	Indicates whether the current server control's child controls have any saved view-state settings.
Height	Height in pixels or %.

ID	Identifier for the control.
IsChildControlStateCleared	Indicates whether controls contained within this control have control state.
IsEnabled	Gets a value indicating whether the control is enabled.
IsTrackingViewState	It indicates whether the server control is saving changes to its view state.
IsViewStateEnabled	It indicates whether view state is enabled for this control.
LoadViewStateById	It indicates whether the control participates in loading its view state by ID instead of index.
Page	Page containing the control.
Parent	Parent control.
RenderingCompatibility	It specifies the ASP.NET version that the rendered HTML will be compatible with.
Site	The container that hosts the current control when rendered on a design surface.
SkinID	Gets or sets the skin to apply to the control.
Style	Gets a collection of text attributes that will be rendered as a style attribute on the outer tag of the Web server control.
TabIndex	Gets or sets the tab index of the Web server control.
TagKey	Gets the HtmlTextWriterTag value that corresponds to this Web server control.
TagName	Gets the name of the control tag.
TemplateControl	The template that contains this control.
TemplateSourceDirectory	Gets the virtual directory of the page or control containing this control.
ToolTip	Gets or sets the text displayed when the mouse pointer hovers over the web server control.
UniqueID	Unique identifier.
ViewState	Gets a dictionary of state information that saves and restores the view state of a server control across multiple requests for the same page.
ViewStateIgnoreCase	It indicates whether the StateBag object is case-insensitive.
ViewStateMode	Gets or sets the view-state mode of this control.
Visible	It indicates whether a server control is visible.
Width	Gets or sets the width of the Web server control.

Methods of the Server Controls

The following table provides the methods of the server controls:

Method	Description

AddAttributesToRender	Adds HTML attributes and styles that need to be rendered to the specified HtmlTextWriterTag.
AddedControl	Called after a child control is added to the Controls collection of the control object.
AddParsedSubObject	Notifies the server control that an element, either XML or HTML, was parsed, and adds the element to the server control's control collection.
ApplyStyleSheetSkin	Applies the style properties defined in the page style sheet to the control.
ClearCachedClientID	Infrastructure. Sets the cached ClientID value to null.
ClearChildControlState	Deletes the control-state information for the server control's child controls.
ClearChildState	Deletes the view-state and control-state information for all the server control's child controls.
ClearChildViewState	Deletes the view-state information for all the server control's child controls.
CreateChildControls	Used in creating child controls.
CreateControlCollection	Creates a new ControlCollection object to hold the child controls.
CreateControlStyle	Creates the style object that is used to implement all style related properties.
DataBind	Binds a data source to the server control and all its child controls.
DataBind*Boolean*	Binds a data source to the server control and all its child controls with an option to raise the DataBinding event.
DataBindChildren	Binds a data source to the server control's child controls.
Dispose	Enables a server control to perform final clean up before it is released from memory.
EnsureChildControls	Determines whether the server control contains child controls. If it does not, it creates child controls.
EnsureID	Creates an identifier for controls that do not have an identifier.
Equals*Object*	Determines whether the specified object is equal to the current object.
Finalize	Allows an object to attempt to free resources and perform other cleanup operations before the object is reclaimed by garbage collection.
FindControl*String*	Searches the current naming container for a server control with the specified id parameter.
FindControl*String*, *Int*32	Searches the current naming container for a server control with the specified id and an integer.
Focus	Sets input focus to a control.
GetDesignModeState	Gets design-time data for a control.
GetType	Gets the type of the current instance.
GetUniqueIDRelativeTo	Returns the prefixed portion of the UniqueID property of the specified control.

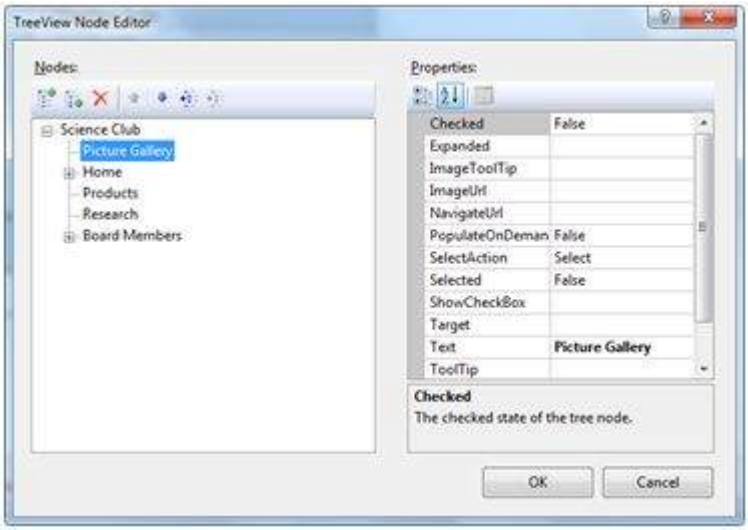
HasControls	Determines if the server control contains any child controls.
HasEvents	Indicates whether events are registered for the control or any child controls.
IsLiteralContent	Determines if the server control holds only literal content.
LoadControlState	Restores control-state information.
LoadViewState	Restores view-state information.
MapPathSecure	Retrieves the physical path that a virtual path, either absolute or relative, maps to.
MemberwiseClone	Creates a shallow copy of the current object.
MergeStyle	Copies any nonblank elements of the specified style to the web control, but does not overwrite any existing style elements of the control.
OnBubbleEvent	Determines whether the event for the server control is passed up the page's UI server control hierarchy.
OnDataBinding	Raises the data binding event.
OnInit	Raises the Init event.
OnLoad	Raises the Load event.
OnPreRender	Raises the PreRender event.
OnUnload	Raises the Unload event.
OpenFile	Gets a Stream used to read a file.
RemovedControl	Called after a child control is removed from the controls collection of the control object.
Render	Renders the control to the specified HTML writer.
RenderBeginTag	Renders the HTML opening tag of the control to the specified writer.
RenderChildren	Outputs the contents of a server control's children to a provided HtmlTextWriter object, which writes the contents to be rendered on the client.
RenderContents	Renders the contents of the control to the specified writer.
RenderControl*HtmlTextWriter*	Outputs server control content to a provided HtmlTextWriter object and stores tracing information about the control if tracing is enabled.
RenderEndTag	Renders the HTML closing tag of the control into the specified writer.
ResolveAdapter	Gets the control adapter responsible for rendering the specified control.
SaveControlState	Saves any server control state changes that have occurred since the time the page was posted back to the server.
SaveViewState	Saves any state that was modified after the TrackViewState method was invoked.
SetDesignModeState	Sets design-time data for a control.
ToString	Returns a string that represents the current object.

TrackViewState	Causes the control to track changes to its view state so that they can be stored in the object's view state property.

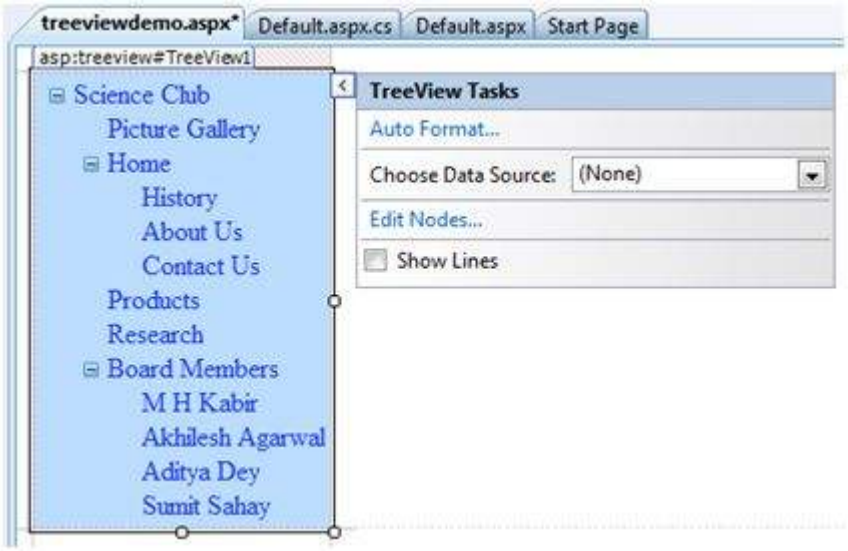
Example

Let us look at a particular server control - a tree view control. A Tree view control comes under navigation controls. Other Navigation controls are: Menu control and SiteMapPath control.

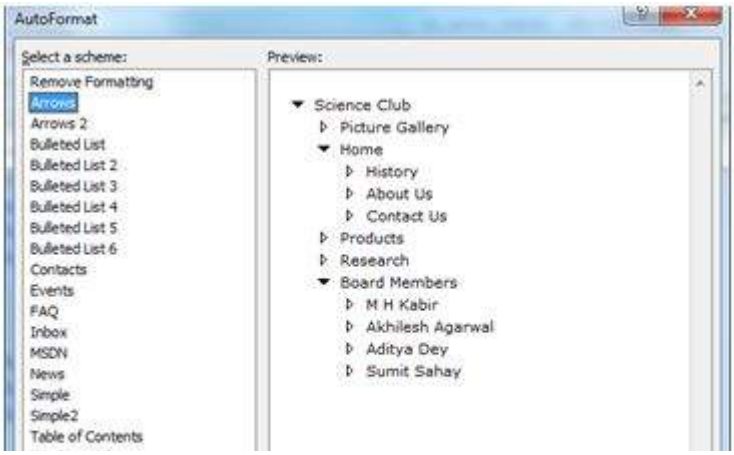
Add a tree view control on the page. Select Edit Nodes... from the tasks. Edit each of the nodes using the Tree view node editor as shown:



Once you have created the nodes, it looks like the following in design view:



The AutoFormat... task allows you to format the tree view as shown:

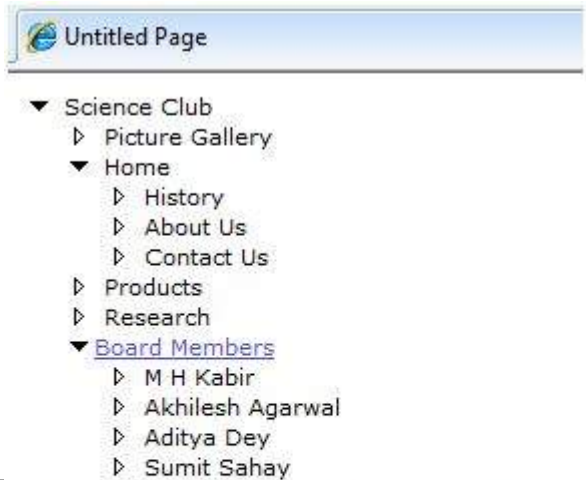


Add a label control and a text box control on the page and name them lblmessage and txtmessage respectively.

Write a few lines of code to ensure that when a particular node is selected, the label control displays the node text and the text box displays all child nodes under it, if any. The code behind the file should look like this:

```
using System;
using System.Collections;
using System.Configuration;
using System.Data;
using System.Linq;

using System.Web;
using System.Web.Security;
using System.Web.UI;
using System.Web.UI.HtmlControls;
using System.Web.UI.WebControls;
using System.Web.UI.WebControls.WebParts;

using System.Xml.Linq;

namespace eventdemo {
   public partial class treeviewdemo : System.Web.UI.Page {

      protected void Page_Load(object sender, EventArgs e) {
         txtmessage.Text = " ";
      }

      protected void TreeView1_SelectedNodeChanged(object sender, EventArgs e) {

         txtmessage.Text = " ";
         lblmessage.Text = "Selected node changed to: " + TreeView1.SelectedNode.Text;
         TreeNodeCollection childnodes = TreeView1.SelectedNode.ChildNodes;

         if(childnodes != null) {
            txtmessage.Text = " ";

            foreach (TreeNode t in childnodes) {
               txtmessage.Text += t.Value;
            }
         }
      }
   }
}
```

Execute the page to see the effects. You will be able to expand and collapse the nodes.



Selected node changed to: Board Members

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