

PART 3



The Framework Class Library

This is the most important part of the book: learning the cross-language FCL is what makes you a .NET programmer. By all means, use Borland's VCL for .NET compatibility layer for ports—but use the FCL for new code. The FCL has many functions that aren't part of the VCL, and programs that use only the FCL are smaller than programs that include VCL for .NET. And, of course, learning the FCL is your ticket to *learn once, work anywhere* freedom.

These last eight chapters describe the main ideas that shape key libraries. Chapter 11 covers basic old-fashioned programming the .NET way, though you may be surprised to find regexs considered as fundamental as strings and streams. Chapter 12 explores .NET's collections libraries—and how they've changed from 1.1 to 2.0—in quite a bit more depth than Chapter 2. Chapter 13 compares Reflection to Delphi's RTTI. Chapter 14 covers both the CLR serialization machinery and serialization's major customers, the remoting and application domain systems. Chapter 15 mentions the deep similarities between WinForms and traditional VCL forms, and discusses the most important differences. Chapter 16 compares the GDI+ the FCL uses to the GDI that we're used to from the VCL, having a bit more fun than you'll need for the average departmental app, but nowhere near enough for consumer software or component vendors. Chapter 17 covers the excellent thread and synchronization primitives. Finally, Chapter 18 is an impressionistic tour of the .NET XML libraries, which are much too good to not know about.