

# Lesson 1-10: Use automatic formatting

As you saw in *Lesson 1-9: View .aspx pages in Source and Design views*, *Design* view makes it very easy to make changes to your web pages. However, when you make changes in *Design* view the code that is created is often messy and hard to understand in *Source* view.

Fortunately, Visual Studio comes with a great automatic formatting feature that will tidy up the code for you!

- 1 Open *My Project* from your sample files folder.
- 2 Open the HTML code of *mypage.aspx*.
- 3 Make the HTML code messy.

At the moment the HTML code isn't perfect, but it's still quite easy to read. However, HTML code can often get very messy and hard to understand.

1. Add some extra spaces before your *Welcome to My Project!* text.

```
<body>
  <form id="form1" runat="server">
    <div>
      Welcome to My Project!
    </div>
    Hello world!</div>
  </form>
</body>
```

2. Remove the line break between `</form>` and `<div>`.

```
<body>
  <form id="form1" runat="server"> <div>
    Welcome to My Project!
  </form>
  Hello world!</div>
</body>
```

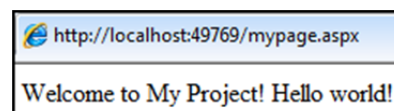
3. Remove the line breaks between the last instances of `</div>`, `</form>`, `</body>` and `</html>`.

```
<body>
  <form id="form1" runat="server"> <div>
    Welcome to My Project!
  </form></body></html>
```

Your code is now quite badly messed up! You could correct the formatting manually, but there is a much easier way.

- 4 View *mypage.aspx* in your browser.

It's interesting to note that your web browser doesn't care how badly formatted the HTML code is, it still displays the page in exactly the same way as it did before.



- 5 Close your browser and return to Visual Studio.
- 6 Automatically fix the page formatting.

## tip

### Changing automatic format settings

Generally speaking, it's a good idea to stay with Microsoft's default settings for formatting code. If you personalize it you may find that, when working in a team environment, other developers find your code confusing.

However, if you're an experienced web developer working alone, you might have a preferred way of formatting your code that is different to Microsoft's default settings.

If so, you can change the formatting behaviour of Visual Studio by clicking **Tools**→**Options**→**Text Editor**.

You can also take a short cut to the appropriate settings by right-clicking in an HTML code window and then clicking *Formatting and Validation...* from the shortcut menu.

The screenshots in this book all use Microsoft's default formatting.

## note

### Use automatic formatting frequently as you work through this book

This book won't tell you to use automatic formatting again after this point, but feel free to use it if the code you add in later lessons doesn't match what is shown in the screenshots.

The screenshots in this book will always show the code correctly formatted.

1. Open *mypage.aspx* in *Source* view (if it isn't open already).
2. Click Edit→Format Document.

You'll see that the code is rearranged and the formatting looks sensible again!

```
<body>
  <form id="form1" runat="server">
    <div>
      Welcome to My Project!
    </div>
  </form>
</body>
```

This option works in all of the document types you have opened so far. It is extremely useful when code looks messy and hard to read as it will automatically tidy everything up!

- 7 Open the code-behind file of *Register.aspx* in the *Account* folder.

You learned how to do this in: *Lesson 1-7: Manage a project with the Solution Explorer*.

The code on this page still won't make any sense to you yet, but you'll understand all of it by the end of this course.

- 8 Mess up the formatting of the C# code.

Automatic formatting works with C# too.

Add different numbers of spaces before the lines of code to make them hard to read.

```
protected void RegisterUser_CreatedUser(d
{
FormsAuthentication.SetAuthCookie(RegisterUser.U

        string continueUrl = RegisterUs
if (String.IsNullOrEmpty(continueUrl))
{
        continueUrl = "~/";
}
        Response.Redirect(continueU
}
}
```

It's now confusing enough to scare even the most experienced programmers!

- 9 Fix the C# code automatically.

Click Edit→Format Document.

The code is automatically formatted correctly, making it a lot more readable.

```
protected void RegisterUser_CreatedUser(ob
{
    FormsAuthentication.SetAuthCookie(Regi

    string continueUrl = RegisterUser.Cont
    if (String.IsNullOrEmpty(continueUrl))
    {
        continueUrl = "~/";
    }
    Response.Redirect(continueUrl);
}
```