

Lesson 1-16: Get help

Although this book will teach you all of the skills you need to work with ASP.NET, it won't cover every single control and possible line of code.

Microsoft provides a huge library of help and reference files for ASP.NET called MSDN. This provides comprehensive documentation for every part of the .NET framework (see sidebar).

note

The .NET framework

The .NET framework is a huge library of controls, functions and utilities that is the foundation of ASP.NET.

The .NET framework includes all of the controls you've worked with so far and most of the C# you will be working with later on.

1 Open Visual Studio.

2 Click Help→View Help.

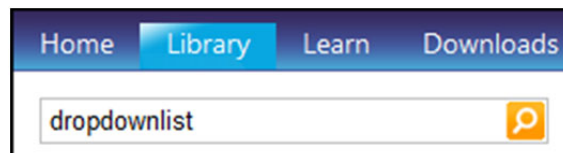
A dialog may appear asking if you want to allow Visual Studio to display help files from the Internet.

If the dialog appears, click *Yes*.

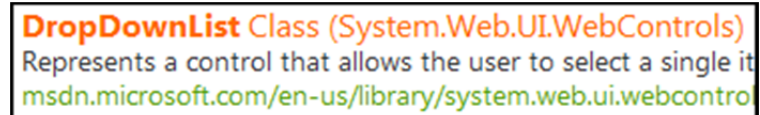
A web browser window will open displaying Microsoft's homepage for Visual Studio 2010.

3 Search MSDN for the DropDownList control.

Enter **dropdownlist** into the search box in the top-left corner and click the magnifying glass icon to search.



4 Click on the first search result that appears.



Everything you could ever want to know about the DropDownList control is displayed.

A lot of the help file won't make much sense to you at the moment. You'll probably recognize the list of properties and their descriptions and will be able to understand some of the example code.

5 Check the .NET version of the help file.

At the time of writing there have been 5 versions of the .NET framework and Microsoft has help files for each one.

To make sure you're looking at the correct help file, check the text at the top of the screen just underneath the title. It should say *.NET Framework 4*. If it doesn't, simply click on the *Other Versions* drop-down and select *.NET Framework 4*.



6 Ask for help in the MSDN forums.

As well as the reference documentation available from MSDN, Microsoft has an online forum available where you can discuss Visual Studio and ASP.NET.

To access the forums, close the web browser and click: Help→MSDN Forums (from the Visual Studio menu). The web page will then appear in a tab inside Visual Studio.

If you click the *Ask a Question* button, you will be prompted to register an MSDN Profile and will then be able to ask your question.



7 Search the Internet for help.

Besides Microsoft's documentation and forums, the Internet is full of other development communities and tutorials.

Sometimes the best way to find the answer to a specific problem is to use your favorite search engine.

If you search for **ASP.NET dropdownlist** using a search engine, you will probably see the MSDN page you looked at earlier appear at the top of the results, along with many other results from different places around the web.

8 Close Visual Studio.