

Questions to Ask a .NET UI Product Vendor

The following questions have been selected by Adaptive Strategy to help .NET professionals better understand what to look for when choosing a .NET UI product vendor. To find out how Telerik fits the standards set by this questionnaire, you will find the company's answer below each question.

Q: What's the update policy?

Remember that when you buy software, you're not just buying today's code. You should also get support and updates to keep the software current. Any components you buy should come with at least a year of updates to make sure that the investment you make in them continues to provide benefits.

A: If you choose to purchase a subscription license to the RadControls product suite and/or Telerik Reporting, you'll receive free updates to all products for a full year from the date of purchase, no questions asked.

Q: How do they handle bugs and patches?

Before you make the purchase, you need to know how the supplier handles problems that arise. Do they provide regular bug fix updates, do they fix issues when they feel like it, or do they supply an annual release?

A: Hot fixes to your Telerik products are as close as your Web browser. When we find a problem, we don't wait for you to call us; we make the fix instantly available on your Client.NET account. At any time, you can log on, view a list of all available hot fixes and the exact problems that they correct, and download and apply the fixes to your Telerik products--no matter what level support contract you have. Our support engineers work hard to fix problems, even between product releases.

Q: Do you get a discount for buying multiple components?

Most Web applications end up requiring more than one custom component. It's efficient to buy all of your custom components from a single company. This ensures that everything works together well, that installation paths and documentation are consistent, and eliminates finger-pointing if you need support. If you decide to make a commitment to a single supplier, will they give you a generous discount in return?

A: Telerik's RadControls + Reporting product suite represents an exceptional value for the developer who wants a set of .NET controls that have been designed from the ground up to work together. The suite contains 18 ASP.NET controls, 24 WinForms controls and Telerik Reporting. The RadControls for ASP.NET + WinForms + Telerik Reporting Developer Subscription and Source Code License is priced at \$1,299--saving you over 80% of the cost of purchasing the individual controls! If you need as few as three controls, this can be like getting the rest of the suite for free. In addition, we offer volume discounts of up to 40% if you purchase multiple licenses at the same time.

Q: Do the components support Web standards?

As the Internet grows and matures, new standards appear. The adoption of standards makes the various technologies have a common way to work and exchange data. It's important to make sure that any components you buy follow existing standards, not just browser and HTML standards (including CSS and JavaScript), but also broader standards like the United States Section 508 accessibility standards and the UK Disability Discrimination Act that require accessibility for disabled and visually impaired users.

A: All Telerik RadControls can provide XHTML 1.1-compliant markup, use CSS for customization, and comply with W3C Web Accessibility Level A and US Section 508 accessibility guidelines.

Q: Are the ASP.NET components cross-browser compatible?

Although Internet Explorer dominates the browser market, there are many other browsers in use. The majority of Web applications need to provide support for all popular browsers, as it is not possible to control the browser usage of visitors. As a result, the components you buy must provide strong support for the key browsers, including Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, and Opera.

A: The Telerik RadControls are designed to support Internet Explorer, Firefox, Opera, and Safari. Details about cross-browser support per product are available [here](#).

Q: What samples and documentation do they provide?

Buying software components is easy. Using them can be hard. After you've downloaded the software, what documentation and samples do you have access to that helps you see how to get the software to do what you want? Be sure to ask the vendor to show you the samples and documentation they provide, and make sure that the samples are in your favorite language (C# or Visual Basic).

A: When you purchase a product from Telerik, you're not merely getting the raw control. You also get extensive samples and documentation. Every Telerik product comes with a sample project that demonstrates its features, as well as the commented source code for that project. You also get MSDN-style help with both reference and conceptual topics.

Q: Do they provide same-day support from actual developers?

However well-intentioned the component vendor, you're likely to need help at some point with a problem that isn't handled by the documentation or online knowledge base. If and when this situation arises, what support do you get from the vendor? How quick is their normal turnaround? Is their support from experts in .NET, or from support staff following scripts who can only help with a limited subset of problems?

A: You can choose from three levels of support when working with Telerik. In fact, you don't even need to make a purchase to get our Bronze Support Package with 30 days of Web-based support and a 72-hour response time. Individual control purchases come with our Silver Support Package, giving you one year's access to the Web-based support, attention from senior support engineers, and 48-hour turnaround. For the best support, purchase a developer subscription with the Gold Support Package and enjoy a year of the following benefits: access to senior support engineers, issue escalation to the product development teams, and a 24-hour turnaround on your support requests.

Q: Is the company just one guy?

If you're buying software from a supplier, you want to know that they can provide you with the software and support you need. Although one-man-band component vendors often deliver a very personal service, they also get overrun easily when business is good; when the developer takes a holiday where does that leave you? You need to know whether the vendor is a single developer or a professional company with a team ready to support you.

A: Hardly! Telerik is proud to have 11 MCSDs, 1 MCSE, 1 MCDBA, and 1 MCAD on its team of over 70 highly qualified professionals.

Q: Are they a Microsoft Partner?

Any component vendor of value will have formed many partnerships with Microsoft, either informally or as a part of formal partnership programs. For your component vendor to provide you with the best software, they must have a close relationship

with Microsoft so that they fully understand the platform upon which their components sit. So ask them if they are a Microsoft Certified Solution Provider and whether they are a Visual Studio Integration Partner.

A: Telerik is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and a Microsoft VSIP Alliance Partner. We deal with the Microsoft teams on a deep and continuing level.

Q: Who are their customers?

When you're looking to make a buying decision, it helps to know who has made that decision before you. It's useful to know that large companies with resources, that fully investigate suppliers before making a purchase, have also chosen the supplier you're looking at, because it provides some confidence that you are making the right decision. Get a customer list from the supplier and be sure to check that there are lots of names you recognize in it.

A: We have thousands of customers, far too many to list, ranging from small non-profits to Fortune 500 firms. A random sampling includes Kodak, Dell, Citigroup, Nike, Reuters, the United Nations, the World Bank, NASA, Harvard, Microsoft, Intel, and Motorola. You're in good company when you buy from Telerik.

Q: What awards have their products won?

The supplier says their products are great. But how do you know? One way is to look for awards they have won. If their products have been awarded the top position in a product comparison, it provides more confidence that the product is solid. Get a list of awards they have won (and check the dates to make sure they're recent).

A: Our recent awards include a TechEd 2007 Awards Finalist for RadControls for WinForms, Components Award in SD Times 100, record-setting eight aspnetPRO Readers' Choice Awards and ComponentSource Bestselling Publisher & Products for 2006.

Q: Are their components secure?

In these days of always-on connectivity and security scares, every one of us is more aware than ever of the vulnerability of software that runs while connected to the Internet. You need to know that the components you buy have been designed with security in mind. Ask your vendor what they have done specifically to respond to the security issues around Web components to protect your Web site and your Web site visitors from attacks.

A: All Telerik components undergo rigorous security testing before their release. Our development team engages in proactive threat modeling during component design, and all reported security issues are promptly investigated.

Q: Can you purchase source code?

A compiled component might do exactly what you need, but source code is the ultimate insurance policy. If your .NET vendor should suddenly go out of business, or you need to make a custom change to the behavior of a component, having the source code gives you options that purchasing a compiled control do not deliver. Find out whether the vendor has a program to let you purchase or place in escrow a copy of the source code for the controls that you purchase.

A: We understand that you need source code when you make a strategic investment in one company's products. That's why our Subscription licenses include full C# and JavaScript source code access.