

NetBeans Tutorial

For Introduction to Java Programming
By Y. Daniel Liang

This tutorial applies to NetBeans 6, 7, or a higher version.

This supplement covers the following topics:

- Getting Started with NetBeans (§1)
- Creating a Project (§2)
- Creating a Class (§3)
- Compiling a Class (§4)
- Running a Java Application (§5)
- Running Book Examples (§6)
- Getting Help in NetBeans (§7)
- Forcing a Program to Terminate (§8)
- Using Packages (§9)
- Run Java Applications from the Command Line (§10)
- Debugging in NetBeans (§11)

NOTE: To use this supplement with the text, you may cover Sections 1 - 9 in this supplement after Chapter 1 in the text, cover Sections 10-11 in this supplement after Chapter 2 in the text, and cover Section 12 along with Chapter 17.

0 Introduction

This tutorial is for students who are currently taking a Java course using NetBeans with Introduction to Java Programming.

You can use the JDK command line utility to write Java programs. The JDK command line utility consists of a set of separate programs, such as compiler and interpreter, each of which is invoked from a command line. Besides the JDK command line utility, there are more than a dozen Java development tools on the market today, including NetBeans, JBuilder, and Eclipse. These tools support an *integrated development environment* (IDE) for rapidly developing Java programs. Editing, compiling, building, debugging, and online help are integrated in one graphical user interface. Using these tools effectively will greatly increase your programming productivity.

This brief tutorial will help you to become familiar with NetBeans. Specifically, you will learn how to create projects, create programs, compile, run, and debug programs.

NOTE: NetBeans can run on any platform with a Java Virtual Machine. The screen shots in the tutorial are taken from Windows using NetBeans 6.1. It works same for a higher version of NetBeans.

1 Getting Started with NetBeans

Assume that you have successfully installed NetBeans on your machine. Start NetBeans from Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, or Solaris. The NetBeans main window appears, as shown in Figure 1.

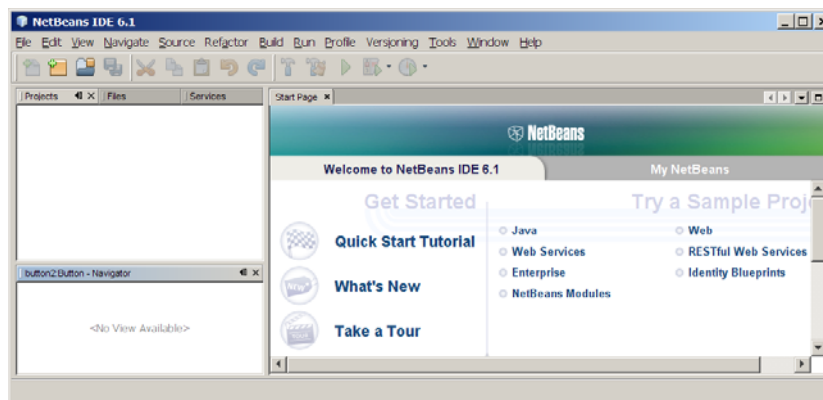


Figure 1

The NetBeans main window is the command center for the IDE.

The NetBeans main window contains menus, toolbars, project pane, files pane, runtime pane, navigator pane, and other panes.

1.1 The Main Menu

The main menu is similar to that of other Windows applications and provides most of the commands you need to use NetBeans, including those for creating, editing, compiling, running, and debugging programs. The menu items are enabled and disabled in response to the current context.

1.2 The Toolbar

The toolbar provides buttons for several frequently used commands on the menu bar. The toolbars are enabled and disabled in response to the current context. Clicking a toolbar is faster than using the menu bar. For many

commands, you also can use function keys or keyboard shortcuts. For example, you can save a file in three ways:

- Select File, Save from the menu bar.
- Click the "save" toolbar button (📁).
- Use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+S.

TIP: You can display a label known as *ToolTip* for a toolbar button by pointing the mouse to the button without clicking.

1.3 Workspaces

A workspace is a collection of windows that are pertinent to performing certain types of operations, such as editing, execution, output, or debugging. The workspace windows can be displayed from the Window menu.

2 Creating a Project

A project contains information about programs and their dependent files, and it also stores and maintains the properties of the IDE. To create and run a program, you have to first create a project.

Here are the steps to create a demo project:

1. Choose *File, New Project* to display the New Project dialog box, as shown in Figure 2.
2. Select General in the Categories section and Java Application in the Projects section and click *Next* to display the New Java Application dialog box, as shown in Figure 3.
3. Type demo in the Project Name field and c:\michael in Project Location field.
4. (Optional) You can create classes after a project is created. Optionally you may also create the first class when creating a new project. To do so, check the *Create Main Class* box and type a class name, say First, as the Main Class name.
5. Click *Finish* to create the project. The new project is displayed, as shown in Figure 4.

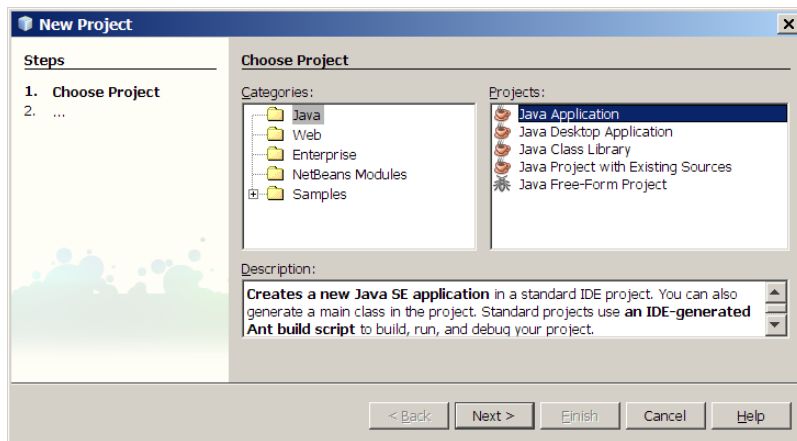


Figure 2

The New Project dialog box enables you to specify a project type.

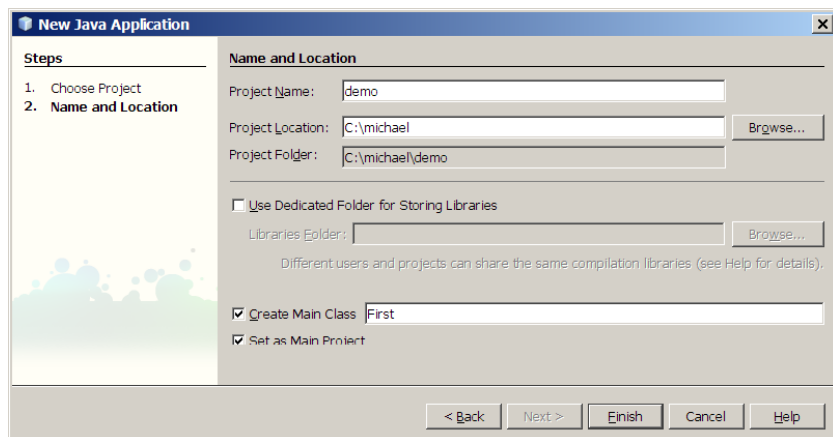


Figure 3

The New Java Application prompts you to enter a project name, location, and a main class name.

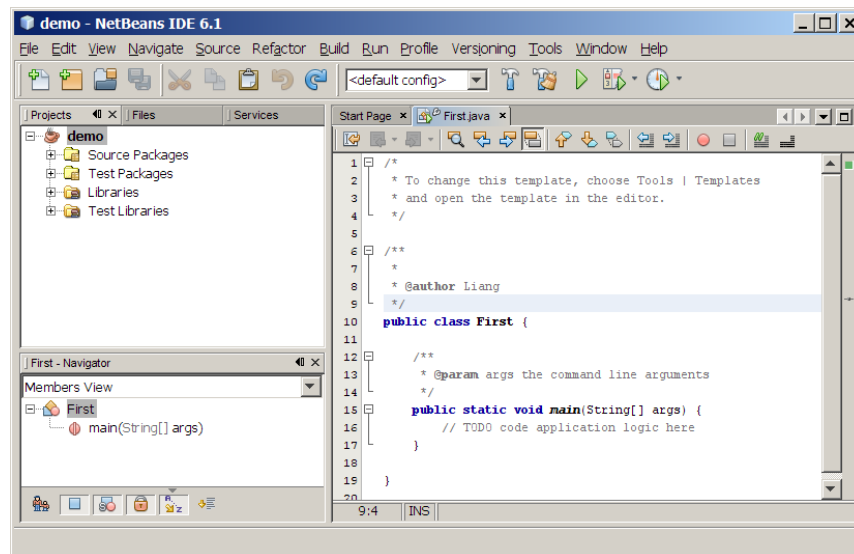


Figure 4

A new demo project is created.

3 Creating a Class

You can create any number of classes in a project. Here are the steps to create `Welcome.java` in Listing 1.1 from Chapter 1 of the text in the demo project.

1. Right-click the top demo node in the project pane to display a context menu, as shown in Figure 5. Choose *New, Java Class* to display the New Java Class dialog box, as shown in Figure 6.
2. Type Welcome in the Class Name field and select the Source Packages in the Location field. Leave the Package field blank. This will create a class in the default package. (Note that it is not recommended to use the default package, but it is fine to use the default package to match the code in the book. Using default package is appropriate for new Java students. Section 10, "Using Packages," will introduce how to create a class in a non-default package.)
3. Click *Finish* to create the `Welcome` class, as shown in Figure 7. The source code file `Welcome.java` is placed under the <default package> node, because you did not specify a package name for the class in Figure 6.
4. Modify the code in the Welcome class to match Listing 1.1, as shown in Figure 8.

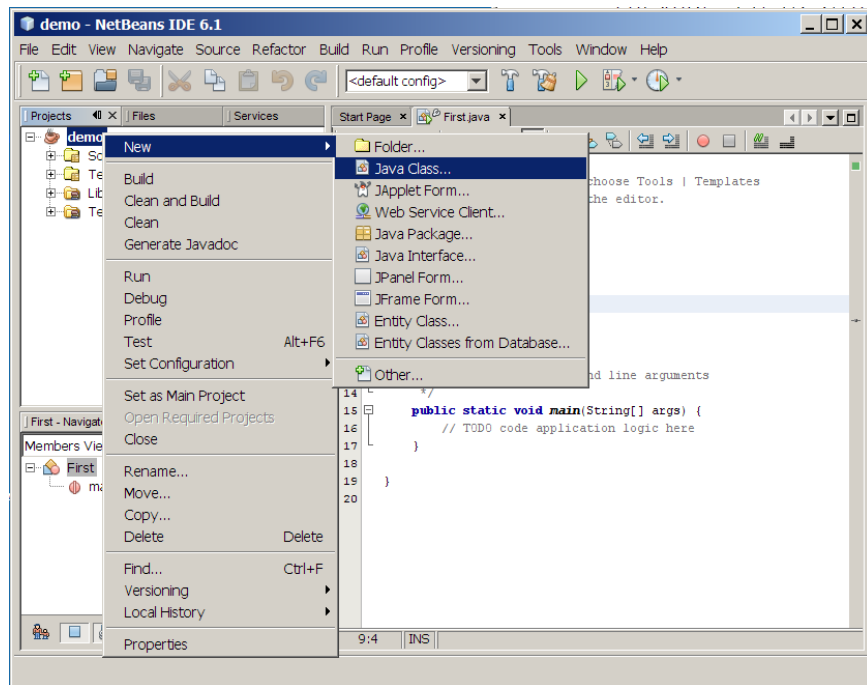


Figure 5

You can create a new class in a project.

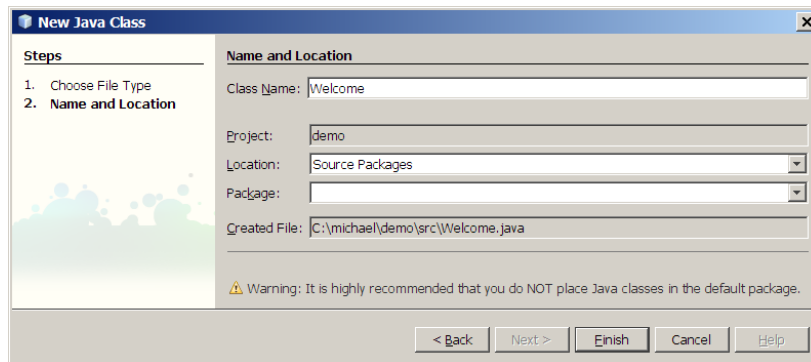


Figure 6

The New Java Class dialog box enables you to specify a class name, location, and package name to create a new class.

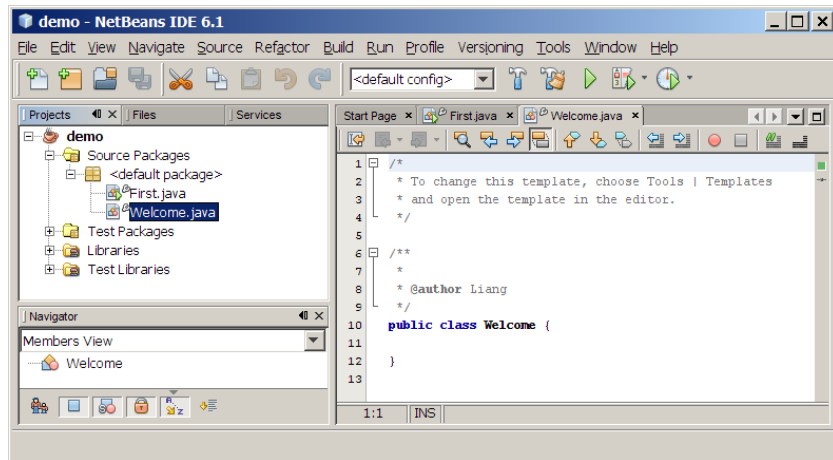


Figure 7

A new Java class is created in the project.

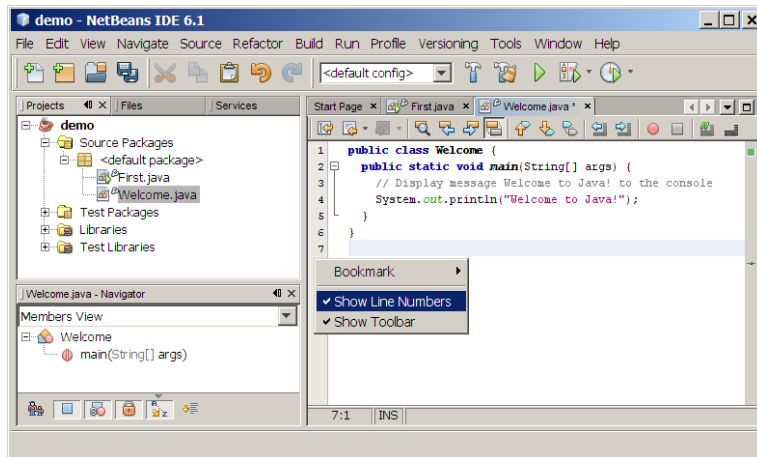


Figure 8

The source code for Welcome.java is entered.

TIP

You can show line numbers in the Source Editor by choosing *View, Show Line Numbers* from the main menu.

NOTE

The source file `Welcome.java` is stored in `c:\michael\demo\src`.

4 Compiling a Class

To compile **Welcome.java**, right-click `Welcome.java` to display a context menu and choose *Compile File*, or simply press F9, as shown in Figure 9.

The compilation status is displayed in the Output pane, as shown in Figure 10. If there are no syntax errors, the *compiler* generates a file named **Welcome.class**, which is stored in `c:\michael\demo\build\classes`.

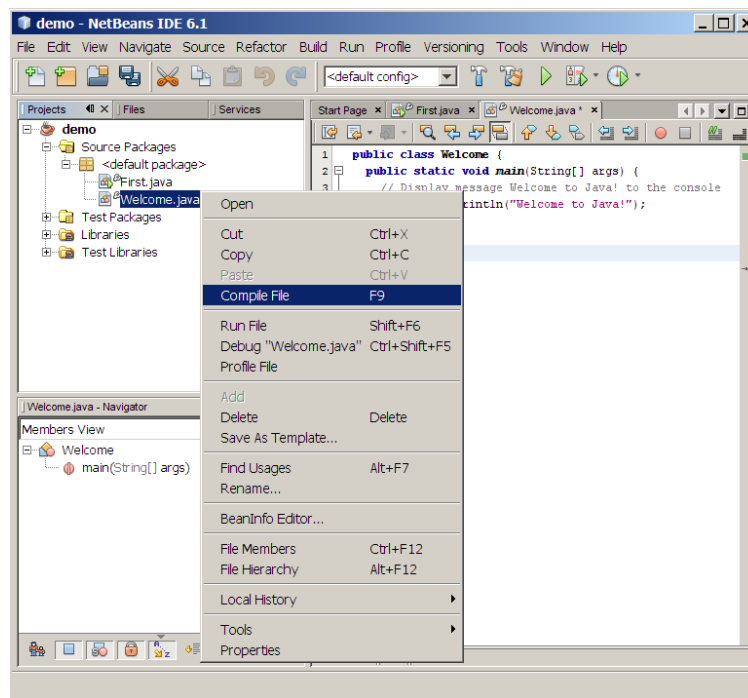


Figure 9

The *Compile File* command in the context menu compiles a source file.

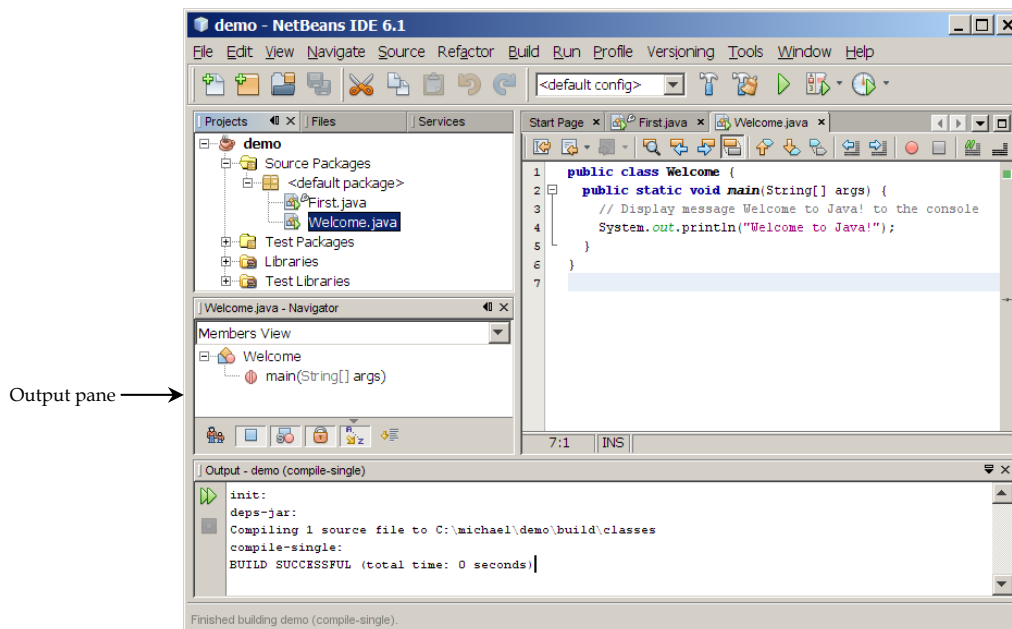





Figure 10

The compilation status is shown in the output pane.

NOTE: When you compile the file, it will be automatically saved.

NOTE: The icon for Java source code is . A Java source code may have an additional icon , which indicates that the file is not compiled. If the class has a main method, the icon is  after the class is compiled.

TIP: You can get descriptions of the node icons from NetBeans Help. Choose *Help, Help Contents* from the main window, and type Node Icons under the Search tab to display the descriptions for the icons, as shown in Figure 11.

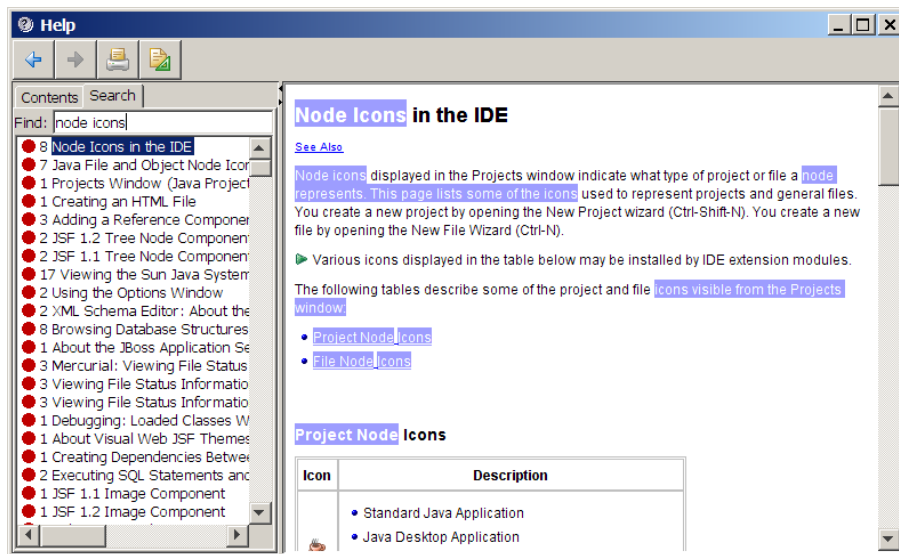


Figure 11

You can get descriptions of the node icons in the project pane from NetBeans Help.

5 Running a Java Application

To run `Welcome.java`, right-click `Welcome.java` to display a context menu and choose *Run File*, or simply press Shift + F6, as shown in Figure 12. The output is displayed in the Output pane, as shown in Figure 13.

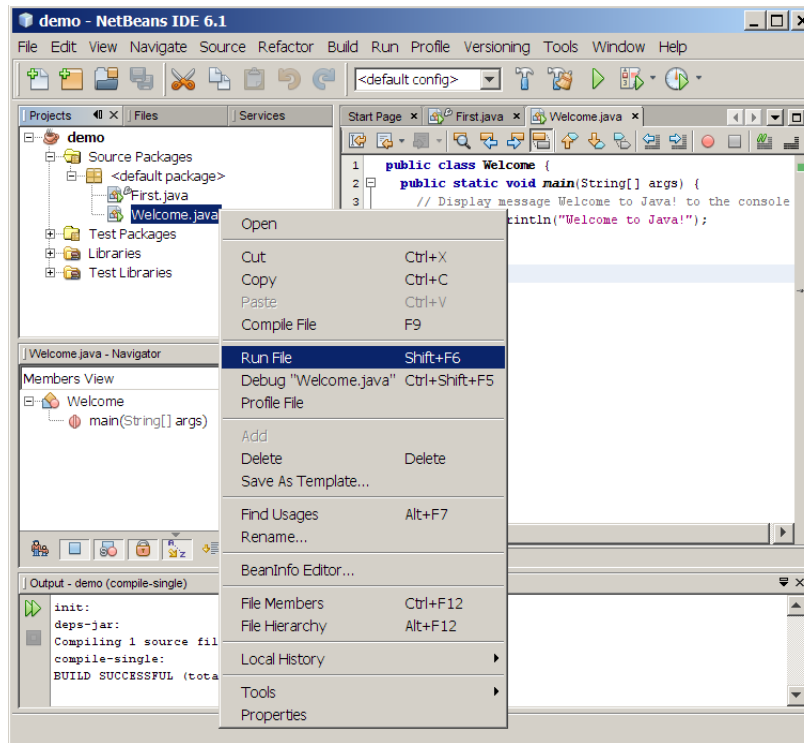


Figure 12

The Run File command in the context menu runs a Java program.

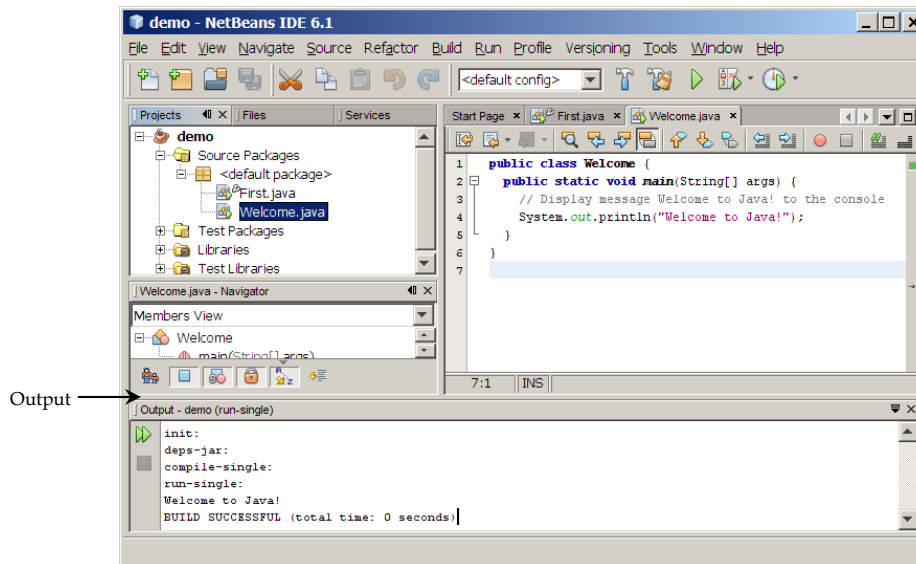


Figure 13

The execution result is shown in the Output pane.

NOTE: The *Run File* command invokes the *Compile File* command if the program is not compiled or was modified after the last compilation.

6 Running Book Examples

All the examples in the text can be downloaded from the book's Web site. To run them, copy the source code files into `c:\michael\demo\src`. You will see the Java source code files appearing under the <default package> node, as shown in Figure 14. For example, to run `ComputeLoan.java` in Chapter 2, select `ComputeLoan.java` in the project pane and press `Shift + F6`.

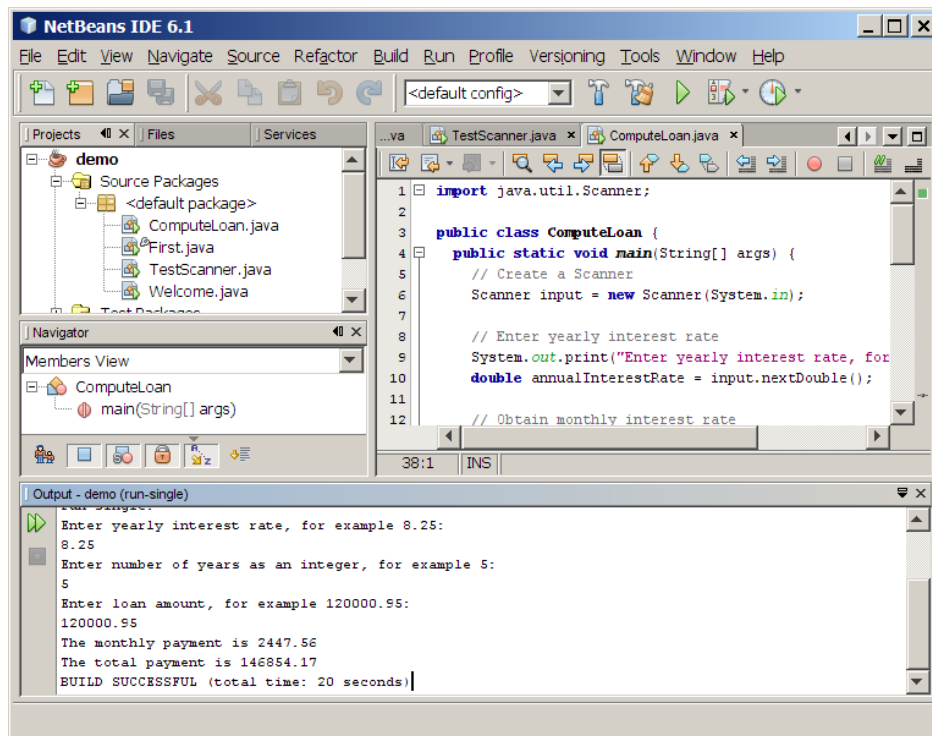


Figure 14

You can run the examples in the text from the demo project.

If the program (e.g., `ShowImage.java` in Listing 14.9 in Chapter 14) uses resources (e.g., `image`), you have to set the project working directory to the resource directories. Suppose you place the image files under `c:\michael\demo\build\classes`, here are the steps to set the working directory:

1. Right-click the demo project node to display a context menu and choose Properties, as shown in Figure 15.
2. Select Running Project in the left section of the project properties dialog box, as shown in Figure 16. Enter `C:\michael\demo\build\classes` in the Working

Directory field.

- Copy the image and audio folders to `c:\michael\demo\build\classes`. Run `ShowImage.java`.

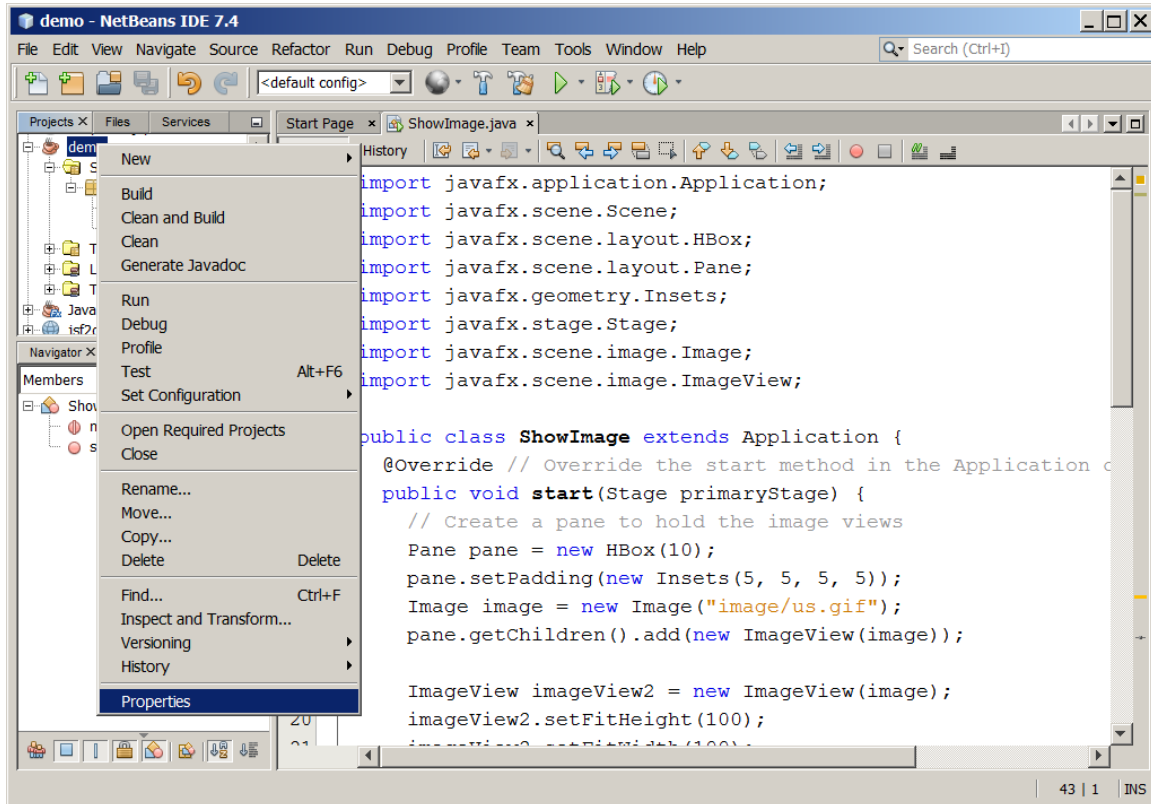


Figure 15

You can display Project Properties from the context menu of the project node.

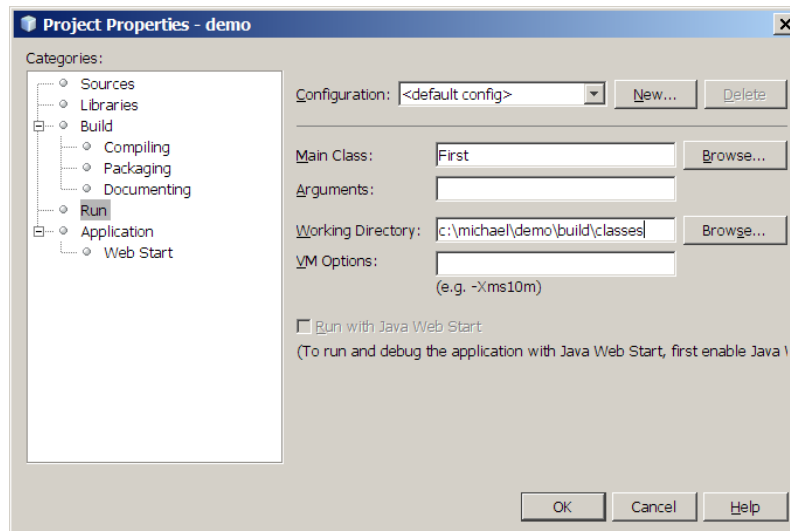


Figure 16

You can set properties for the project in the project properties dialog box.

7 NetBeans's Online Help

NetBeans provides a large number of documents online, giving you a great deal of information on a variety of topics pertaining to the use of NetBeans.

To access online help, choose *Help, Help Contents* to display NetBeans Help, as shown in Figure 17.

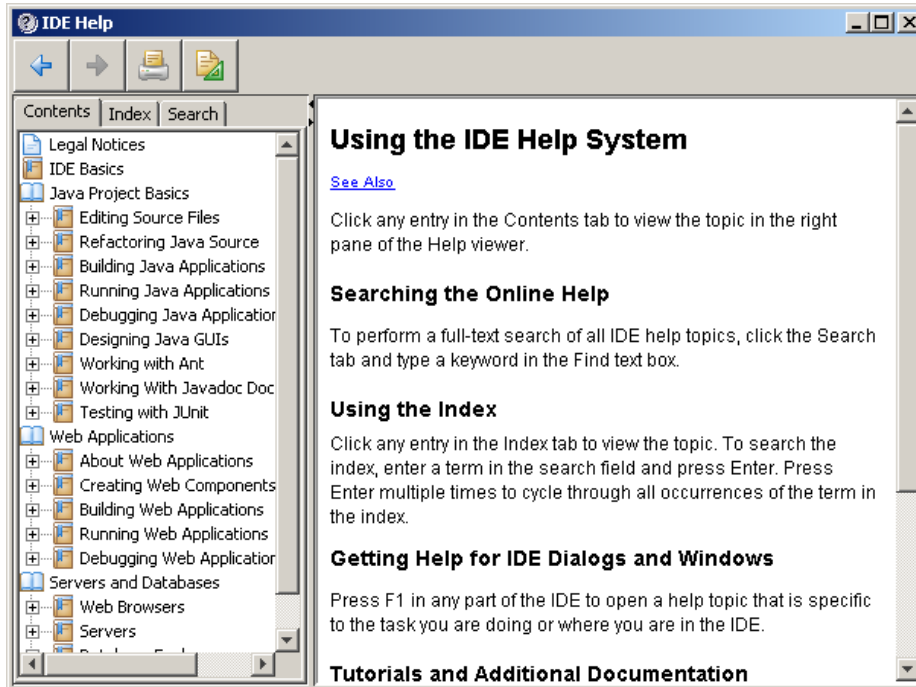


Figure 17

All help documents are displayed in NetBeans Help.

NetBeans Help behaves like a Web browser and contains the toolbar buttons, navigation window, and content window. The toolbar buttons contain four buttons: *Previous*, *Next*, *Print*, and *Print Setup*. The *Previous* and *Next* buttons let you go to the previous and next topics in the history list. The *Print* button prints the document in the content window. The *Print Setup* button enables you to set up the print layout.

The navigation window contains three tabs: **Contents**, **Index**, and **Search**. The **Contents** tab displays available documents. The table of contents of the document is displayed in a tree-like list in the navigation window. To view a given topic, select the node in the tree associated with the topic. NetBeans Help displays the document for the topic in

the content window.

The Index tab shows the index entries for the current document. The Search tab shows the combined index entries for all the available documents in NetBeans.

8 Forcing a Program to Terminate

If a program does not terminate due to a logic error, you can force it to terminate by clicking the Stop icon, as shown in Figure 18.

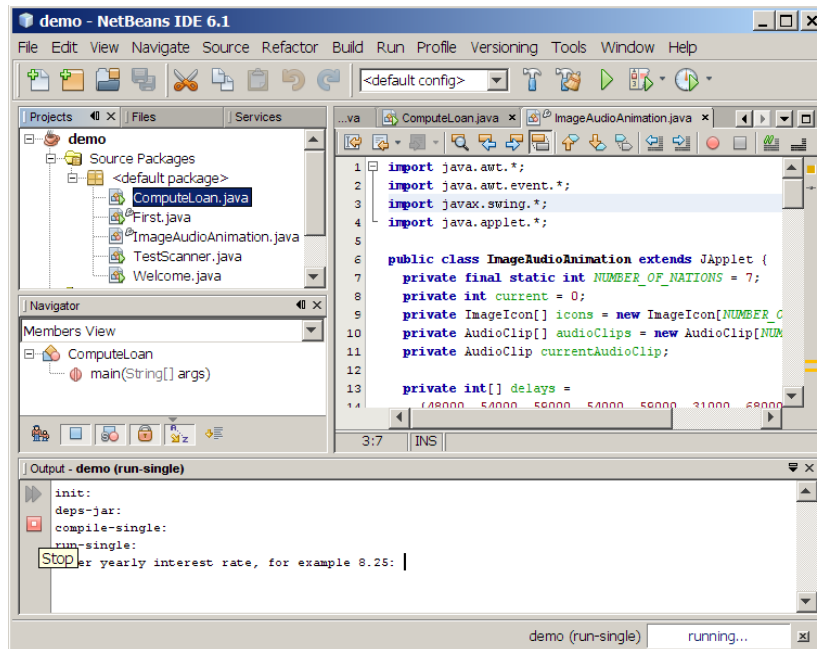


Figure 18

You can force a program to terminate from the runtime pane.

9 Using Packages (Optional)

The `Welcome` class created in Section 3, "Creating a Class," does not have the `package` statement. If you want to create classes with the `package` statement, you need to enter a package name in the New Java Class wizard. Here are the steps to create a new class `Welcome` in the package named `chapter1`:

1. In the context menu of the demo project, choose *New, Java Class* to display the New Java Class wizard, as shown in Figure 19.
2. Type `chapter1` in the Package field and click *Finish* to create the template for the `Welcome` class, as shown in Figure 20.
3. `Welcome.java` is created under package `chapter1`. The

first statement in the source code is

```
package chapter1;
```

Modify Welcome.java to match the code in Listing 1.1, as shown in Figure 21.

4. Choose *Run File* from the context menu of Welcome.java in the project pane to run the program.

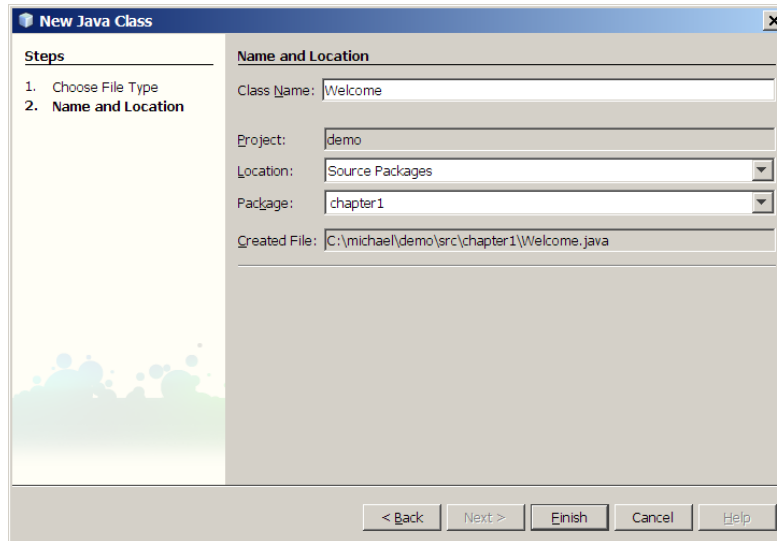


Figure 19

You can enter a package name to create a class.

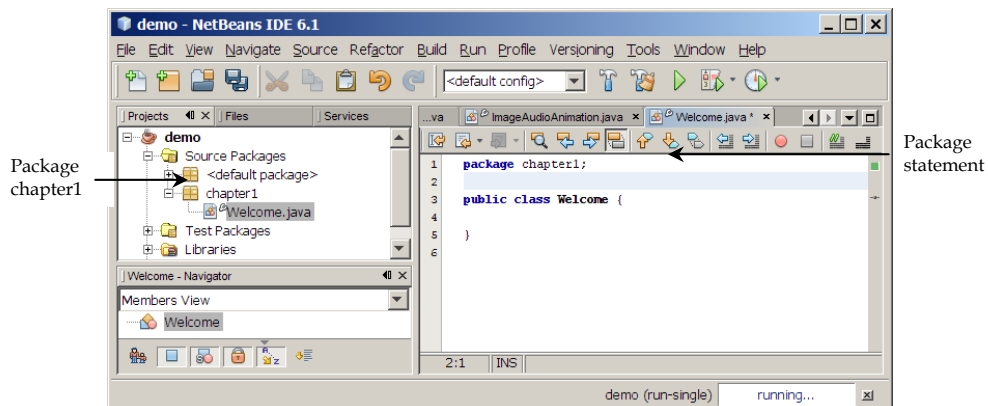


Figure 20

The new Welcome class is created under package chapter1.

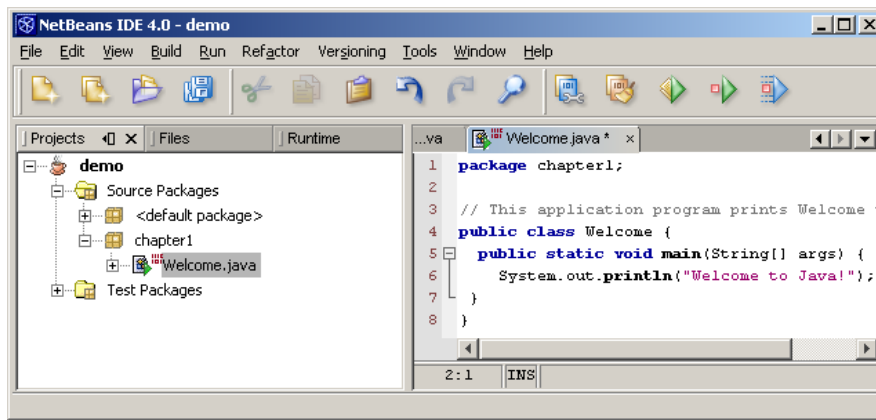


Figure 21

The modified Welcome.java is shown in the Source Editor.

NOTE: The package in Java corresponds to the directory in the file system. **chapter1** is also a directory. Welcome.java is stored in c:\michael\demo\src\chapter1 and Welcome.class is stored in c:\michael\demo\build\classes\chapter1.

10 Run Java Applications from the Command Line

So far you have run programs in the NetBeans IDE. You can also run program standalone directly from the operating system. Here are the steps in running the **Welcome** application with the default package created in Section 3 from the DOS prompt.

1. Start a DOS window by clicking the Windows Start button, Programs, MS-DOS Prompt in Windows.
2. Type the following commands to set up the proper environment variables for running Java programs in the DOS environment in Windows:


```

set path=%path%;c:\Program Files\java\jdk1.6.0\bin
set classpath=.;%classpath%

```
3. Type **cd c:\michael\demo\build\classes** to change the directory to **c:\michael\demo\build\classes**
4. Type **java Welcome** to run the program. A sample run of the output is shown in Figure 22.

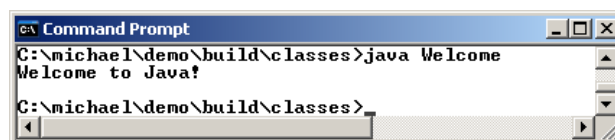
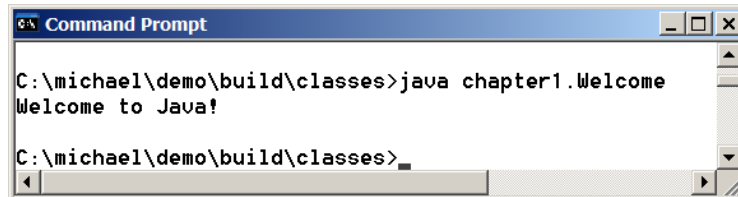


Figure 22

You can run the Java program from the DOS prompt using the `java` command.

NOTE: To run `Welcome` in the `chapter1` package created in Section 11, type **java chapter1>Welcome** from the `c:\michael\demo\build\classes` directory, as shown in Figure 23.



```
Command Prompt
C:\michael\demo\build\classes>java chapter1>Welcome
Welcome to Java!
C:\michael\demo\build\classes>
```

Figure 23

If a class has the package statement, you have to specify its full path, including the package name.

11 Debugging in NetBeans

The debugger utility is integrated in NetBeans. You can pinpoint bugs in your program with the help of the NetBeans debugger without leaving the IDE. The NetBeans debugger enables you to set breakpoints and execute programs line by line. As your program executes, you can watch the values stored in variables, observe which methods are being called, and know what events have occurred in the program.

The debugger is an indispensable, powerful tool that boosts your programming productivity. It is also a valuable tool for learning Java. It helps you understand how a program is executed.

11.1 Setting Breakpoints

You can execute a program line by line to trace it, but this is time-consuming if you are debugging a large program. Often, you know that some parts of the program work fine. It makes no sense to trace these parts when you only need to trace the lines of code that are likely to have bugs. In cases of this kind, you can use breakpoints.

A *breakpoint* is a stop sign placed on a line of source code that tells the debugger to pause when this line is encountered. The debugger executes every line until it encounters a breakpoint. You can then trace the part of the program at the breakpoint, quickly moving over the sections that work correctly and concentrating on those causing

problems.

There are several ways to set a breakpoint. One quick way is to click the cutter of the line on which you want to put a breakpoint. You will see the line highlighted. You also can set breakpoints by choosing *Run, New Breakpoint*. To remove a breakpoint, simply click the cutter of the line.

When debugging a program, you can set as many breakpoints as you want, and can remove breakpoints at any time during debugging. The project retains the breakpoints when you exit the project. They are restored when you reopen it.

11.2 Starting the Debugger

Let us use Listing 2.7, *ShowCurrentTime.java*, to demonstrate debugging. Create a new class named *ShowCurrentTime* in the default package in the demo project, as shown in Figure 24.

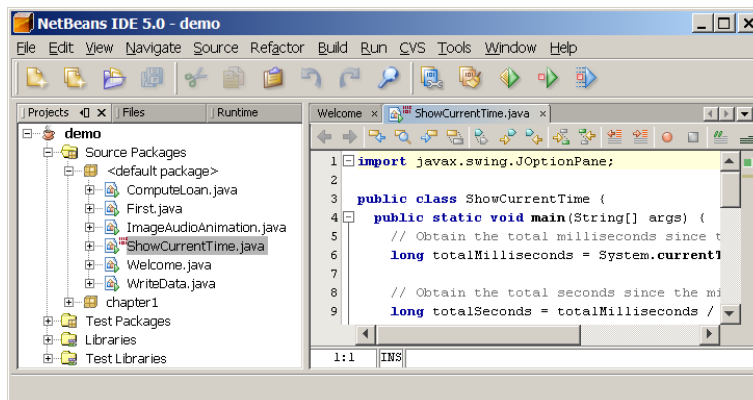


Figure 24

ShowCurrentTime.java is created in the project.

There are several ways to start the debugger. A simple way is as follows:

1. Activate *ShowCurrentTime.java* in the editor pane.
2. Set a breakpoint at where you want your program to pause, say Line 6. A breakpoint can be set by clicking the cutter of the line, as shown in Figure 25. You can remove it by clicking on the cutter of line again.
3. In the context menu of *ShowCurrentTime.java* in the project pane, choose *Debug File*. If the program compiles properly, an output pane and debug pane will be displayed, as shown in Figure 26. If the debug

pane is not shown, choose *Window, Debugging, Local Variables* to display it.

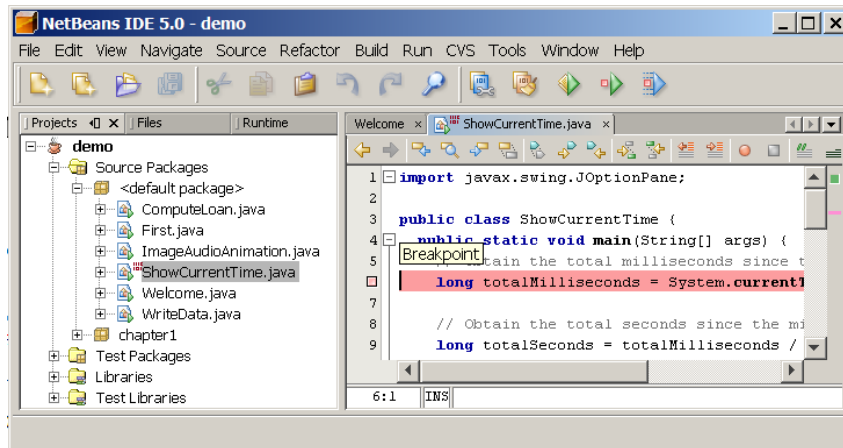


Figure 25

Clicking the line number sets/removes a breakpoint at the line in the source code.

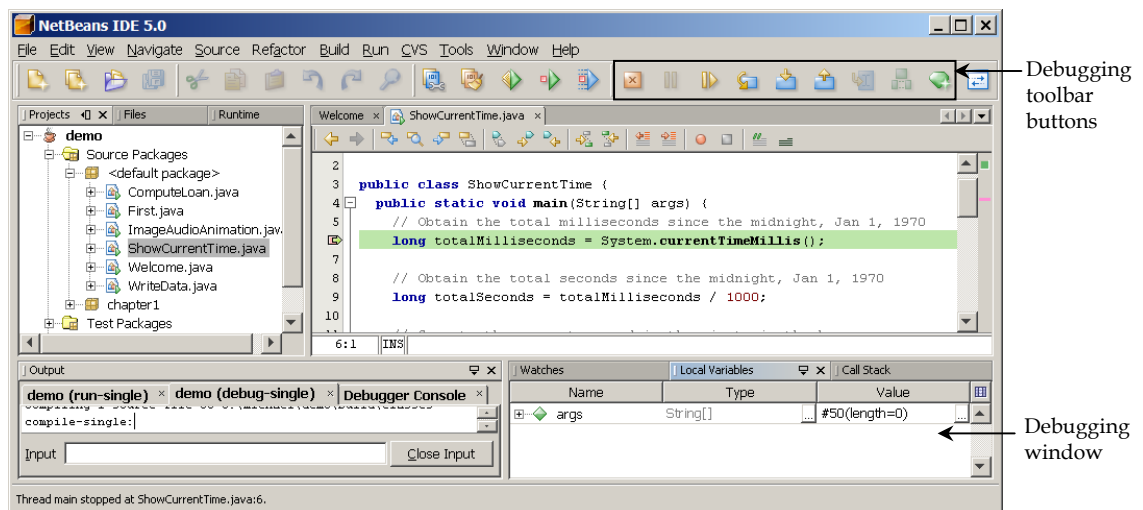


Figure 26

The debugger starts to run ShowCurrentTime.java.

11.3 Controlling Program Execution

The program pauses at the breakpoint. The paused line is highlighted in green. This line is also called the *current execution point*, which points to next statement to be executed by the debugger.

When the program pauses, you can issue debugging commands to control the execution of the program. You also can inspect

or modify the values of variables in the program.

When NetBeans is in the debugging mode, the toolbar buttons for debugging are displayed, as shown in Figure 26. The toolbar button commands also appear in the Run menu (see Figure 27). Here are the commands for controlling program execution:

- **Start** begins to debug the current program.
- **Finish** ends the current debugging session.
- **Attach** opens a dialog box in which you can connect the debugger to an application on another virtual machine. This is useful for remote debugging in distributed systems.
- **Pause** temporarily stops execution of a program.
- **Run to Cursor** runs the program, starting from the current execution point, and pauses and places the execution point either on the line of code containing the cursor or at a breakpoint.
- **Step Over** executes a single statement. If the statement contains a call to a method, the entire method is executed without stepping through it.
- **Step Into** executes a single statement or steps into a method.
- **Step Out** executes all the statements in the current method and returns to its caller.
- **Continue** resumes the execution of a paused program.

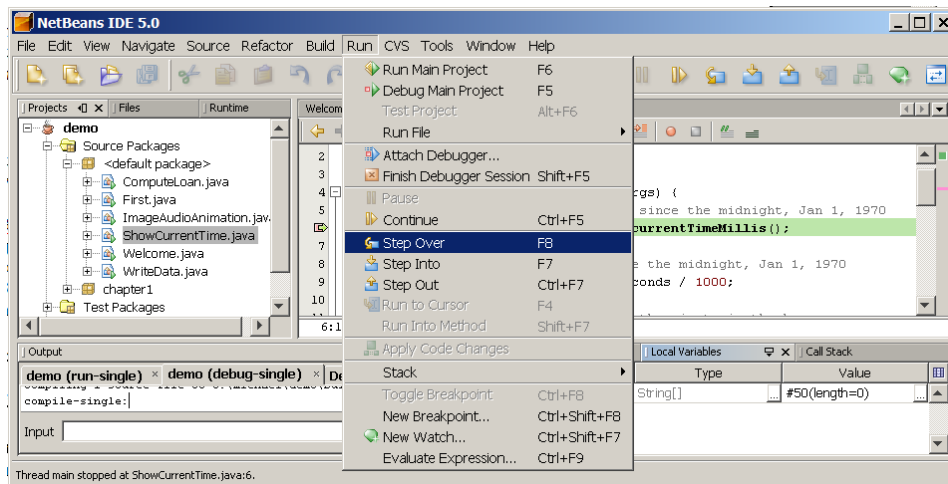


Figure 27

The debugging commands appear under the Run menu.

11.4 The Debugger Window

The Debugger window has tabbed panes for Local Variables, Watches, and Call Stack, as shown in Figure 26. Other tabbed panes such as Breakpoints, Sessions, and Threads can be added by choosing Window, Debugging from the main menu. These panes can be selected or deselected. The *Sessions* pane lists the current debug sessions. The *Breakpoints* pane lists all the breakpoints you have set. The *Threads* pane lists threads and thread groups in the current debugging process. The *Call Stack* pane lists the method calls that the process has made since it began running. The *Watches* pane lists the variables and expressions that are under continuous watch. The *Local Variables* pane shows all the variables before the current execution point in a local method. The *Classes* pane lists all the classes that have been loaded by the process being debugged.

11.5 Examining and Modifying Data Values

Among the most powerful features of an integrated debugger is its capability to reveal current data values and enable programmers to modify values during debugging. You can examine the values of variables, array items, and objects, or the values of the parameters passed in a method call. You also can modify a variable value if you want to try a new value to continue debugging without restarting the program.

The Local Variables pane lists all variables accessible at the current execution point. The Watches pane lists the selected variables.

12.5.1 The Add Watch Command

NetBeans provides the Add Watch command to enable you to add variables to the Watches pane in the Debugger window. To add the variable totalMilliseconds to the Watch view, perform the following steps:

1. Suppose the execution point is currently at the first line in the main method. Highlight totalMilliseconds in the Source Editor and right-click the mouse to reveal a context menu.
2. Choose *New Watch* in the context menu to bring up a dialog box, as shown in Figure 28. Click *OK* to add totalMilliseconds to the Watch list.
3. Choose the Watches tab in the Debugger window. The

variable along with its content is shown in Figure 29.

4. Choose *Debug, Step Over* to observe the changing value of totalMilliseconds in the Watches pane.

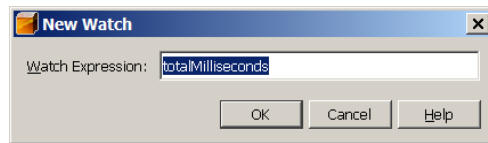


Figure 28

The *New Watch* dialog box enables you to add a variable or an expression to the *Watch* view.

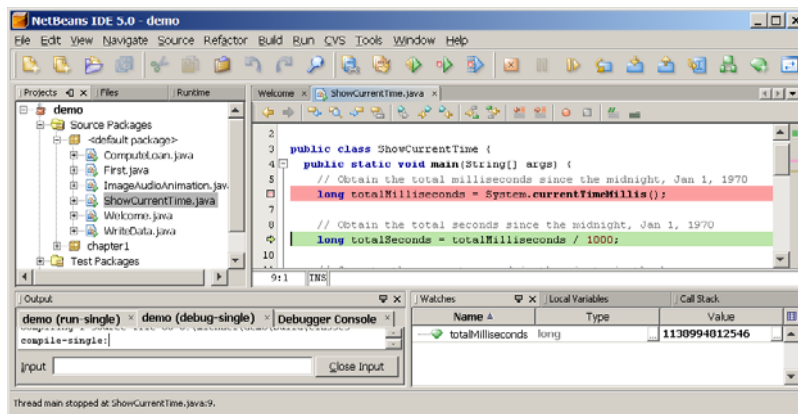


Figure 29

The variable totalMilliseconds was added to the *Watches* tab.

NOTE:

You can also add expressions such as $i > 0$ to the *Watches* tab from the *Add New Watch* dialog box.

11.5.2 Modifying Variables

You can modify variables from the *Watches* pane or the *Variables* pane. For instance, to change the value for totalMilliseconds, enter a new value, say 1000, in the value field for the variable and press the Enter key (See Figure 30).

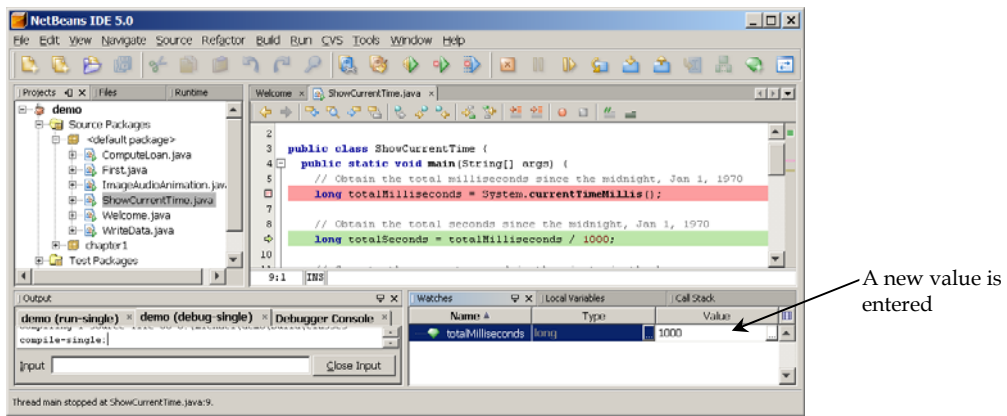


Figure 30

The value for variable totalMilliseconds is changed to 1000.