KODU Learning Guide

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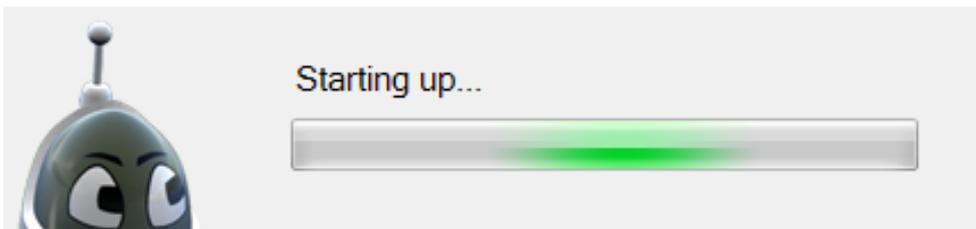
Starting up...

Contents

This guide is designed to help teachers and students get comfortable with the resources and videos available for Kodu. Included in this guide are descriptions of the videos available on the Kodu website, a quick start guide to download and install Kodu, a suggested plan for learning Kodu.

In addition there is some additional material at the end that might help answer some frequently asked questions.

Finally, this guide describes the support channels available for the Kodu Cup contest.

Suggested Videos

Go to http://fuse.microsoft.com/kodu
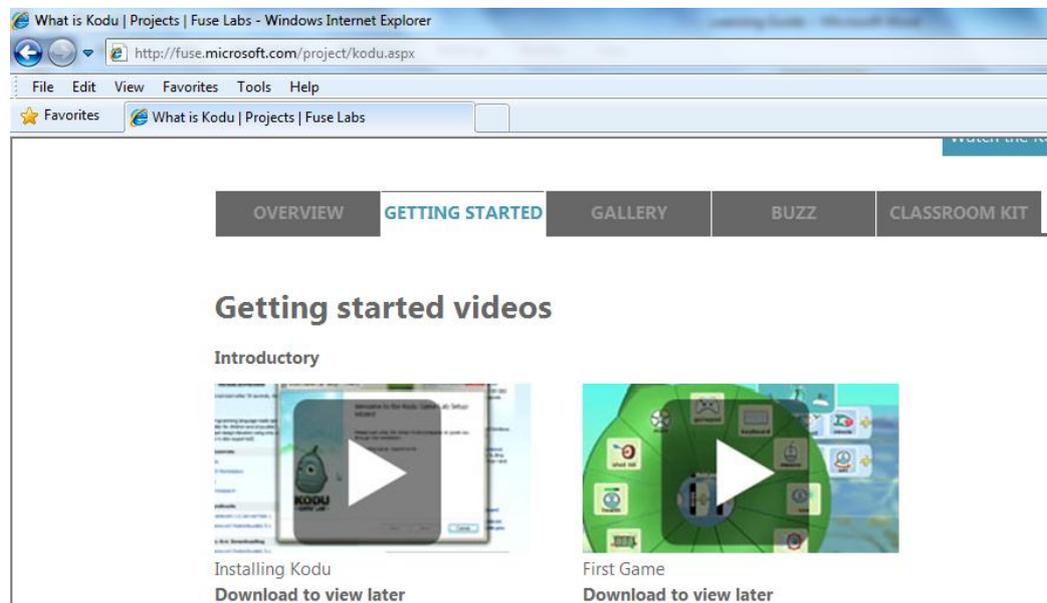
Click on the **Getting Started Tab** and check out the following videos:

Introductory	Duration
Installing Kodu Video	3 minutes/14 seconds
First Game	6 minutes/39 seconds
Terrain Tutorial	4 minutes/26 seconds
How to Edit Terrain	4 minutes/26 seconds
Timers and Scoring	7 minutes/48 seconds
Gotcha Tutorial	5 minutes

Intermediate	
How to Move the Camera	1 minute/57 seconds
What is a Creatable	9 minutes/11 seconds

Advanced	
How to Use Pages	3 minutes/54 seconds

Note: Plan to spend extra time after each video using Kodu to practice the topic discussed in the video

Getting Started - Setup

Watch the 'Installing Kodu Video' to get help installing Kodu

System Requirements

- **Supported Operating Systems:** Windows 7;Windows Vista; Windows XP
- A graphics card that supports DirectX 9.0c
- Shader Model 2.0 or higher is required
- The .NET Framework 3.5 or higher is required
- XNA Framework 3.1 Redistributable is required

All of these items are available at:

http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/details.aspx?FamilyID=57a23884-9ecd-4c8a-9561-64bfd4fa2d3d&displaylang=en

Next Steps

Beginners – read these excerpts before watching the videos:

1. Watch the video: **First Game**

   This video provides instructions for creating a simple one person shooting fish game. After the video, try recreating the game and exploring some minor variations such as:
   - Change the color of several fish
   - Add some more flying fish
   - Change the color of the Kodu

   Notice that the fish in the video are 'flying fish', therefore you don't need to add water to the terrain. When you add a regular fish to your

world (not a flying fish) you must make sure that it is located in enough water to swim or it will just wag its tail.

In the video, Stephen described how the fish move along a path, but how do I stop my characters from getting stuck together when they are travelling the same path?

When characters are moving along a path, you can add an 'avoid' action to allow them to go around each other when they are on the same path.

2. Watch the next two videos: **Terrain Tutorial** and **How to Edit Terrain**

When you first start adding terrain to the game, until you are comfortable with zooming and rotating, it is helpful to know how to regain focus.

If you moved the camera and your world is no longer in view, you can use the tab key to regain focus on your characters and refocus your camera on your world.

In the video Steve shows how to add and edit the terrain in a game. The terrain tool can be confusing at first, use the instructions in the upper left corner of the screen to choose items such as brush size, choosing material, etc. (the same is true when using a game pad instead of keyboard)

The second video in this section describes how to edit terrain and use other tools such as the stretch brush.

Finally, make sure you allocate time to practice working with the terrain tools to create your world. Start with an empty world and add terrain to make mountains, add water, add streets, whatever you need to complete the design of your game.

3. To add some excitement to the game, the next video shows how to add **Timers and Scoring**.

    Remember that scores are color coded. To make it interesting you can have points reduced for certain behaviors. It is also nice to have your character (such as the cycle in Steve's example) wander when he doesn't see any apples.

    To get a random timer you can use the following code described in the video, this code will add a random number between 1 and 10 to the 5 second timer on the left.

4. To avoid frustration, make sure to take time to watch the **Gotcha** tutorial video

At this time, play with Kodu to master the skills in these videos and then move on to the next level.

Intermediate:

5. Watch How to Move the Camera

    Remember, if you moved the camera and your world is no longer in view, you can use the tab key to regain focus on your characters and refocus your camera on your world.

6. Watch the What is a Creatable video

This video describes how to dynamically create characters in a game. After watching the video, take time to open existing games that already contain creatable objects (such as Xevon V07) to see how they are used and then try it yourself!

When viewing an existing game, if your object is glowing green, it is a creatable image, the snapshot below shows a cloud, blimp, wisp, and a saucer. The blimp and saucer are both glowing green indicating that they are 'creatables'.
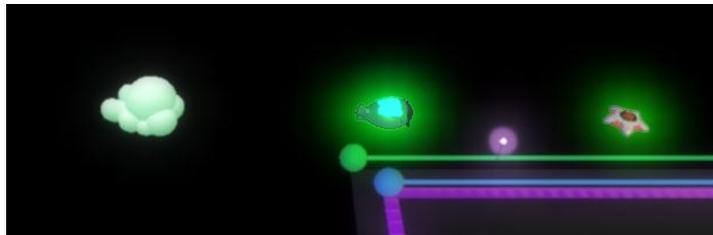
(screen shot taken from the Xevon V07)

To make an object creatable, you must change the settings option to select creatable:

Keep in mind, if the world is dark and it is hard to see the characters, there is a light object that you can add to help illuminate the game.

Advanced:

1. Watch the video How to use Pages

    Note: only the current page is active at any one time. If you want to keep most of the commands from one page, you can 'copy' them to another page. Follow these steps:

    1. Point to page 1 at the top of the tile page for this character. Press delete (which places it in your clipboard)
    2. Insert it back into page 1
    3. Switch to page 2 (press the tab key or choose the right arrow at the top of the page to take you to the next page)
    4. Insert the tiles into page 2
    5. Make the changes needed for the new actions on this page

Tips and Tricks

- Check out the screen shots in the Gallery tab to get familiar with the various screens you encounter in Kodu
- It is helpful to use a process of step-wise refinement. In other words, start simple, test for full functionality, and then continue the process of until your game is complete
- It is also a good idea to have a non-biased tester, so include the family and friends in the fun. Let them play without instructions to make sure it is intuitive and they might even find some new bugs that you can address.
- Don't be afraid to try a new idea and concept, it is very easy to modify existing games and create new ones
- Plan time after each video to practice the idea that was presented
- Take time to download and review the **Kodu Classroom Kit** tab for ways to work with your students
- Check out the **Kodu Participant Manual and Kodu Trainer Manual** for some screen shots of the various characters that can be found in the game. Below is a sample of the material in this manual:

To make games more exciting, don't forget to check out all the great emotions you can give to your Kodu!

Training Manuals

From the website, try downloading the Classroom Resource Kit which includes eight PDF files for including Kodu in the classroom.

Some additional resources are the **Kodu Participant Manual and Kodu Trainer Manual.**

Support Channels

For technical support, check out the blog at http://koducup.wordpress.com

Facebook: Microsoft Tech Student