

Microspeak: Tick-tock

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20160720-00

July 20, 2016



Raymond Chen

As you might imagine, there's a lot of stuff that needs to happen on the opening day of //build. For //build 2016, my job was to publish the new samples to [the Github repo](#). And //build 2016 was when I was introduced to the term *tick-tock*:

Please review your items in the *tick tock* from a timing perspective and send me any corrections. Visual Studio is pivoting on the conclusion of the keynote, and our plan is to update the SDK as soon as Update 2 goes out.

The attached document was a spreadsheet that listed the chronology of events, along with other information like the task number in the task database (not shown here). Something like this:

Order	Go Live	Event	Owner
1	9:00am	Keynote begins	
2	9:00am	Publish Bunion home page	Alice
3	9:00am	Publish Bunion SDK for download	Bob
4	9:30am	Halitosis Update 2 released	
5	9:30am	Update Halitosis home page	Alice
6	9:30am	Update Halitosis download page	Bob
7	9:40am	Update Halitosis redirects	Charles, David
...			
14	10:40am	Eat the donuts before they go stale (not available on Skype)	Bob
15	11:00am	Keynote ends	
16	11:00am	Publish Windows developer blog post	Ellen

17	12:00pm	Visual Studio Update 2	
18	12:00pm	Publish Windows SDK for download	Bob
19	12:00pm	Publish Windows SDK redirects	Charles
20	12:00pm	Publish Github samples	Raymond
...			

I think it was nice of Bob to remind people to eat the donuts. I was not in the room, so I lost out on the donuts.

The items in red are external events we have no control over, but they act as signals for us to proceed with the next steps. Therefore, everybody had to keep an eye on their prerequisites to make sure the steps occurred in the right order. (I'm guessing the term *tick-tock* evokes the idea that when the prerequisite action ticks, the dependent action tocks.)

Anyway, it wasn't as crazy as [this](#).

Another *tick tock* document I found covered a Windows launch event, starting three days before launch and continuing through two days after launch.

I had difficulty finding good citations for *tick tock*, mostly because the phrase is too common to be searchable. One document I found was kind enough to provide sort of a definition via context:

Attached is the Contoso Launch tick-tock document which includes the timing, execution instructions, coverage, and links to detailed guidance.

The timeline was not down to the minute like the one I had. It covered a campaign that took a month to play out.

Anyway, from what I can gather, the term *tick tock* is used to refer to the schedule of events surrounding a product announcement.

[Raymond Chen](#)

Follow

