
NSComboBox Class Reference

User Experience: Controls



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NSComboBox Class Reference

Inherits from	NSTextField : NSControl : NSView : NSResponder : NSObject
Conforms to	NSUserInterfaceValidations (NSTextField) NSAnimatablePropertyContainer (NSView) NSCoding (NSResponder) NSObject (NSObject)
Framework	/System/Library/Frameworks/AppKit.framework
Availability	Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.
Companion guide	Combo Box Programming Topics
Declared in	NSComboBox.h
Related sample code	LSMSmartCategorizer QTAudioExtractionPanel QTKitPlayer SimpleComboBox URL CacheInfo

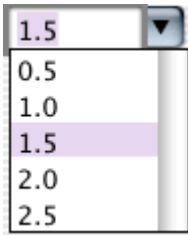
Overview

An `NSComboBox` is a kind of `NSControl` that allows you to either enter text directly (as you would with an `NSTextField`) or click the attached arrow at the right of the combo box and select from a displayed (“pop-up”) list of items.

Normally an instance of `NSComboBox` looks like this:



When you click the downward-pointing arrow at the right side of the text field, the pop-up list appears, like this:



The `NSComboBox` class uses `NSComboBoxCell` to implement its user interface.

Also see the `NSComboBoxDataSource` informal protocol, which declares the methods that an `NSComboBox` uses to access the contents of its data source object.

Tasks

Setting Display Attributes

- [hasVerticalScroller](#) (page 11)
Returns a Boolean value indicating whether the receiver will display a vertical scroller.
- [intercellSpacing](#) (page 13)
Returns the horizontal and vertical spacing between cells in the receiver's pop-up list.
- [isButtonBordered](#) (page 13)
Returns whether the combo box button is set to display a border.
- [itemHeight](#) (page 13)
Returns the height of each item in the receiver's pop-up list.
- [numberOfVisibleItems](#) (page 15)
Returns the maximum number of items visible in the pop-up list.
- [setButtonBordered:](#) (page 20)
Determines whether the button in the combo box is displayed with a border.
- [setHasVerticalScroller:](#) (page 21)
Determines whether the receiver displays a vertical scroller.
- [setIntercellSpacing:](#) (page 22)
Sets the spacing between pop-up list items.
- [setItemHeight:](#) (page 22)
Sets the height for items.
- [setNumberOfVisibleItems:](#) (page 23)
Sets the maximum number of items that are visible in the receiver's pop-up list.

Setting a Data Source

- [dataSource](#) (page 10)
Returns the object that provides the data displayed in the receiver's pop-up list.

- [setDataSource:](#) (page 21)
Sets the receiver's data source to *aSource*.
- [setUsesDataSource:](#) (page 23)
Sets whether the receiver uses an external data source to populate the receiver's pop-up list.
- [usesDataSource:](#) (page 24)
Returns a Boolean value indicating whether the receiver uses an external data source to populate its pop-up list.

Working with an Internal List

- [addItemWithObjectValues:](#) (page 8)
Adds multiple objects to the end of the receiver's internal item list.
- [addItemWithObjectValue:](#) (page 9)
Adds an object to the end of the receiver's internal item list.
- [insertItemWithObjectValue:atIndex:](#) (page 12)
Inserts an object at the specified location in the receiver's internal item list.
- [objectValues:](#) (page 16)
Returns as an array the receiver's internal item list.
- [removeAllItems:](#) (page 17)
Removes all items from the receiver's internal item list.
- [removeItemAtIndex:](#) (page 17)
Removes the object at the specified location from the receiver's internal item list.
- [removeItemWithObjectValue:](#) (page 17)
Removes all occurrences of the given object from the receiver's internal item list.
- [numberOfItems:](#) (page 15)
Returns the total number of items in the pop-up list.

Manipulating the Displayed List

- [indexOfItemWithObjectValue:](#) (page 11)
Searches the receiver's internal item list for the specified object and returns the lowest matching index.
- [itemObjectValueAtIndex:](#) (page 14)
Returns the object located at the given index within the receiver's internal item list.
- [noteNumberOfItemsChanged:](#) (page 14)
Informs the receiver that the number of items in its data source has changed.
- [reloadData:](#) (page 16)
Marks the receiver as needing redisplay, so that it will reload the data for visible pop-up items and draw the new values.
- [scrollItemAtIndexToTop:](#) (page 18)
Scrolls the receiver's pop-up list vertically so that the item at the specified index is as close to the top as possible.
- [scrollItemAtIndexToVisible:](#) (page 18)
Scrolls the receiver's pop-up list vertically so that the item at the specified index is visible.

Manipulating the Selection

- [deselectItemAtIndex:](#) (page 10)
Deselects the pop-up list item at the specified index if it's selected.
- [indexOfSelectedItem](#) (page 12)
Returns the index of the last item selected from the pop-up list.
- [objectValueOfSelectedItem](#) (page 15)
Returns the object corresponding to the last item selected from the pop-up list.
- [selectItemAtIndex:](#) (page 19)
Selects the pop-up list row at the given index.
- [selectItemWithObjectValue:](#) (page 19)
Selects the first pop-up list item that corresponds to the given object.

Completing the Text Field

- [completes](#) (page 9)
Returns a Boolean value indicating whether the receiver tries to complete what the user types in the text field.
- [setCompletes:](#) (page 20)
Sets whether the receiver tries to complete what the user types in the text field.

New Methods

- [delegate](#) (page 10)
Returns the receiver's delegate.
- [setDelegate:](#) (page 21)
Sets the receiver's delegate.

Instance Methods

addItemWithObjectValues:

Adds multiple objects to the end of the receiver's internal item list.

```
- (void)addItemWithObjectValues:(NSArray *)objects
```

Parameters

objects

An array of the objects to add to the internal item list.

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Related Sample Code

LSMSmartCategorizer
QTAudioExtractionPanel
QTKitPlayer

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

addItemWithObjectValue:

Adds an object to the end of the receiver's internal item list.

- (void)addItemWithObjectValue:(id)anObject

Parameters

anObject

The object to add to the internal item list.

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Related Sample Code

QTAudioExtractionPanel
QTKitPlayer

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

completes

Returns a Boolean value indicating whether the receiver tries to complete what the user types in the text field.

- (BOOL)completes

Return Value

YES if the receiver tries to complete what the user types in the text field; otherwise NO.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [setCompletes:](#) (page 20)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

dataSource

Returns the object that provides the data displayed in the receiver's pop-up list.

```
- (id < NSComboBoxDataSource >)dataSource
```

Return Value

The data source for the combo box's pop-up list.

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns NO. See the class description and the `NSComboBoxDataSource` informal protocol specification for more information on combo box data source objects.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

`NSComboBox.h`

delegate

Returns the receiver's delegate.

```
- (id < NSComboBoxDelegate >)delegate
```

Return Value

The receiver's delegate.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.6 and later.

See Also

- [setDelegate:](#) (page 21)

Declared In

`NSComboBox.h`

deselectItemAtIndex:

Deselects the pop-up list item at the specified index if it's selected.

```
- (void)deselectItemAtIndex:(NSInteger)index
```

Parameters

index

The index of the item to deselect.

Discussion

If the selection does in fact change, this method posts an [NSComboBoxSelectionDidChangeNotification](#) (page 24) to the default notification center.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [indexOfSelectedItem](#) (page 12)
- [numberOfItems](#) (page 15)
- [selectItemAtIndex:](#) (page 19)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

hasVerticalScroller

Returns a Boolean value indicating whether the receiver will display a vertical scroller.

- (BOOL)hasVerticalScroller

Return Value

YES if the receiver will display a vertical scroller; otherwise NO.

Discussion

Note that the scroller will be displayed even if the pop-up list contains fewer items than will fit in the area specified for display.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [numberOfItems](#) (page 15)
- [numberOfVisibleItems](#) (page 15)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

indexOfItemWithObjectValue:

Searches the receiver's internal item list for the specified object and returns the lowest matching index.

- (NSInteger)indexOfItemWithObjectValue:(id)anObject

Parameters

anObject

The object for which to return the index.

Return Value

The lowest index in the internal item list whose corresponding value is equal to that of the specified object. Objects are considered equal if they have the same `id` or if `isEqual:` returns YES.

If none of the objects in the receiver's internal item list are equal to *anObject*, `indexOfItemWithObjectValue:` returns `NSNotFound`.

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [selectItemWithObjectValue:](#) (page 19)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

indexOfSelectedItem

Returns the index of the last item selected from the pop-up list.

- (NSInteger)indexOfSelectedItem

Return Value

The index of the last item selected from the receiver's pop-up list or -1 if no item is selected.

Discussion

Note that nothing is initially selected in a newly initialized combo box.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [objectValueOfSelectedItem](#) (page 15)

Related Sample Code

ClipboardViewer

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

insertItemWithObjectValue:atIndex:

Inserts an object at the specified location in the receiver's internal item list.

- (void)insertItemWithObjectValue:(id)anObject atIndex:(NSInteger)index

Parameters

anObject

The object to add to the internal item list.

index

The index in the list at which to add the new object. The previous item at *index*—along with all following items—is shifted down one slot to make room

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [addItemWithObjectValue:](#) (page 9)

- [numberOfItems](#) (page 15)

Related Sample Code

DemoAssistant

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

intercellSpacing

Returns the horizontal and vertical spacing between cells in the receiver's pop-up list.

- (NSSize)intercellSpacing

Return Value

The space between cells in the pop-up list. The default spacing is (3.0, 2.0).

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [itemHeight](#) (page 13)
- [numberOfVisibleItems](#) (page 15)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

isButtonBordered

Returns whether the combo box button is set to display a border.

- (BOOL)isButtonBordered

Return Value

YES if the button has a border; otherwise NO.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.3 and later.

See Also

- [setButtonBordered:](#) (page 20)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

itemHeight

Returns the height of each item in the receiver's pop-up list.

- (CGFloat)itemHeight

Return Value

The height of items in the pop-up list. The default item height is 16.0.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [intercellSpacing](#) (page 13)
- [numberOfVisibleItems](#) (page 15)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

itemObjectValueAtIndex:

Returns the object located at the given index within the receiver's internal item list.

```
- (id)itemObjectValueAtIndex:(NSInteger) index
```

Parameters

index

The index of the object to retrieve. If *index* is beyond the end of the list, an `NSRangeException` is raised.

Return Value

The object located at the specified index in the internal item list.

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [objectValueOfSelectedItem](#) (page 15)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

noteNumberOfItemsChanged

Informs the receiver that the number of items in its data source has changed.

```
- (void)noteNumberOfItemsChanged
```

Discussion

This method allows the receiver to update the scrollers in its displayed pop-up list without actually reloading data into the receiver. It is particularly useful for a data source that continually receives data in the background over a period of time, in which case the `NSComboBox` can remain responsive to the user while the data is received.

See the `NSComboBoxDataSource` informal protocol specification for information on the messages an `NSComboBox` sends to its data source.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [reloadData](#) (page 16)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

numberOfItems

Returns the total number of items in the pop-up list.

- (NSInteger)numberOfItems

Return Value

The number of items in the list.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [numberOfVisibleItems](#) (page 15)

- `numberOfItemsInComboBox:` (NSComboBoxDataSource protocol)

Related Sample Code

DemoAssistant

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

numberOfVisibleItems

Returns the maximum number of items visible in the pop-up list.

- (NSInteger)numberOfVisibleItems

Return Value

The maximum number of items visible at any one time in the pop-up list.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [numberOfItems](#) (page 15)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

objectValueOfSelectedItem

Returns the object corresponding to the last item selected from the pop-up list.

- (id)objectValueOfSelectedItem

Return Value

The object in the receiver's internal item list corresponding to the last item selected from the pop-up list, or `nil` if no item is selected.

Discussion

Note that nothing is initially selected in a newly initialized combo box. This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [indexOfSelectedItem](#) (page 12)
- `comboBox:objectValueForItemAtIndex:` (NSComboBoxDataSource protocol)

Related Sample Code

QTAudioExtractionPanel

QTKitPlayer

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

objectValues

Returns as an array the receiver's internal item list.

- (NSArray *)objectValues

Return Value

The array containing the objects in the receiver's internal item list.

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Related Sample Code

DemoAssistant

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

reloadData

Marks the receiver as needing redisplay, so that it will reload the data for visible pop-up items and draw the new values.

- (void)reloadData

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [noteNumberOfItemsChanged](#) (page 14)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

removeAllItems

Removes all items from the receiver's internal item list.

- (void)removeAllItems

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [objectValues](#) (page 16)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

removeItemAtIndex:

Removes the object at the specified location from the receiver's internal item list.

- (void)removeItemAtIndex:(NSInteger)*index*

Parameters

index

The index of the object to remove. All items beyond *index* are moved up one slot to fill the gap.

Discussion

The removed object receives a `release` message. This method raises an `NSRangeException` if *index* is beyond the end of the list and logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Related Sample Code

DemoAssistant

QTAudioExtractionPanel

QTKitPlayer

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

removeItemWithObjectValue:

Removes all occurrences of the given object from the receiver's internal item list.

- (void)removeItemWithObjectValue:(id)anObject

Parameters

anObject

The object to remove from the internal item list. Objects are considered equal if they have the same `id` or `isEqual:` returns YES.

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [indexOfItemWithObjectValue:](#) (page 11)

Related Sample Code

QTAudioExtractionPanel

QTKitPlayer

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

scrollItemAtIndexToTop:

Scrolls the receiver's pop-up list vertically so that the item at the specified index is as close to the top as possible.

- (void)scrollItemAtIndexToTop:(NSInteger)index

Parameters

index

The index of the item to scroll to the top.

Discussion

The pop-up list need not be displayed at the time this method is invoked.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

scrollItemAtIndexToVisible:

Scrolls the receiver's pop-up list vertically so that the item at the specified index is visible.

- (void)scrollItemAtIndexToVisible:(NSInteger)index

Parameters

index

The index of the item to make visible.

Discussion

The pop-up list need not be displayed at the time this method is invoked.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

selectItemAtIndex:

Selects the pop-up list row at the given index.

```
- (void)selectItemAtIndex:(NSInteger) index
```

Parameters

index

The index of the item to select in the pop-up list.

Discussion

Posts an [NSComboBoxSelectionDidChangeNotification](#) (page 24) to the default notification center if the selection does in fact change. Note that this method does not alter the contents of the combo box's text field—see [Setting the Combo Box's Value](#) for more information.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

```
- setObjectValue: (NSControl)
```

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

selectItemWithObjectValue:

Selects the first pop-up list item that corresponds to the given object.

```
- (void)selectItemWithObjectValue:(id) anObject
```

Parameters

anObject

The object to select in the pop-up list. Objects are considered equal if they have the same `id` or if `isEqual:` returns YES.

Discussion

This method logs a warning if [usesDataSource](#) (page 24) returns YES. Posts an [NSComboBoxSelectionDidChangeNotification](#) (page 24) to the default notification center if the selection does in fact change. Note that this method doesn't alter the contents of the combo box's text field—see [Setting the Combo Box's Value](#) for more information.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [setObjectValue:\(NSControl\)](#)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

setButtonBordered:

Determines whether the button in the combo box is displayed with a border.

- (void)setButtonBordered:(BOOL)*flag*

Parameters

flag

YES to display a border; NO to display the button without a border. For example, it is often useful when using a combo box in an NSTableView to display the button without the border.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.3 and later.

See Also

- [isButtonBordered](#) (page 13)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

setCompletes:

Sets whether the receiver tries to complete what the user types in the text field.

- (void)setCompletes:(BOOL)*completes*

Parameters

completes

YES to indicate that the receiver should try to complete text entered by the user. If *completes* is YES, every time the user adds characters to the end of the text field, the combo box calls the NSComboBoxCell method `completedString:`.

Discussion

If `completedString:` returns a string that's longer than the existing string, the combo box replaces the existing string with the returned string and selects the additional characters. If the user is deleting characters or adds characters somewhere besides the end of the string, the combo box does not try to complete it.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [completes](#) (page 9)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

setDataSource:

Sets the receiver's data source to *aSource*.

```
- (void)setDataSource:(id < NSComboBoxDataSource >)aSource
```

Parameters

aSource

The new data source for the receiver. The data source should implement the appropriate methods of the `NSComboBoxDataSource` informal protocol.

This method logs a warning if *aSource* doesn't respond to either `numberOfItemsInComboBox:` or `comboBox:objectValueForItemAtIndex:.`

Discussion

This method doesn't automatically set `usesDataSource` (page 24) to `NO` and in fact logs a warning if `usesDataSource` (page 24) returns `NO`.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [setUsesDataSource:](#) (page 23)

Declared In

`NSComboBox.h`

setDelegate:

Sets the receiver's delegate.

```
- (void)setDelegate:(id < NSComboBoxDelegate >)anObject
```

Parameters

anObject

The delegate for the receiver. The delegate must conform to the `NSComboBoxDelegate` Protocol protocol.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.6 and later.

See Also

- [delegate](#) (page 10)

Declared In

`NSComboBox.h`

setHasVerticalScroller:

Determines whether the receiver displays a vertical scroller.

```
- (void)setHasVerticalScroller:(BOOL)flag
```

Parameters*flag*

YES to display a vertical scroller; NO otherwise. By default, *flag* is YES.

Discussion

If *flag* is NO and the combo box has more list items (either in its internal item list or from its data source) than are allowed by [numberOfVisibleItems](#) (page 15), only a subset are displayed. The NSComboBox class' `scroll...` methods can be used to position this subset within the pop-up list.

Note that if *flag* is YES, a scroller will be displayed even if the combo box has fewer list items than are allowed by [numberOfVisibleItems](#) (page 15).

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [numberOfItems](#) (page 15)
- [scrollItemAtIndexToTop:](#) (page 18)
- [scrollItemAtIndexToVisible:](#) (page 18)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

setIntercellSpacing:

Sets the spacing between pop-up list items.

```
- (void)setIntercellSpacing:(NSSize)aSize
```

Parameters*aSize*

The new width and height between pop-up list items. The default intercell spacing is (3.0, 2.0).

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [setItemHeight:](#) (page 22)
- [setNumberOfVisibleItems:](#) (page 23)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

setItemHeight:

Sets the height for items.

```
- (void)setItemHeight:(CGFloat)itemHeight
```

Parameters*itemHeight*

The new height for items in the pop-up list.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [setInterCellSpacing:](#) (page 22)
- [setNumberOfVisibleItems:](#) (page 23)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

setNumberOfVisibleItems:

Sets the maximum number of items that are visible in the receiver's pop-up list.

```
- (void)setNumberOfVisibleItems:(NSInteger)visibleItems
```

Parameters

visibleItems

The maximum number of items that are visible at one time in the pop-up list.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [numberOfItems](#) (page 15)
- [setItemHeight:](#) (page 22)
- [setInterCellSpacing:](#) (page 22)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

setUsesDataSource:

Sets whether the receiver uses an external data source to populate the receiver's pop-up list.

```
- (void)setUsesDataSource:(BOOL)flag
```

Parameters

flag

YES if the receiver uses an external data source (specified by [setDataSource:](#) (page 21)); otherwise NO.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

usesDataSource

Returns a Boolean value indicating whether the receiver uses an external data source to populate its pop-up list.

- (BOOL)usesDataSource

Return Value

YES if the receiver uses an external data source to populate the receiver's pop-up list, NO if it uses an internal item list.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

- [dataSource](#) (page 10)

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

Notifications

NSComboBoxSelectionDidChangeNotification

Posted after the pop-up list selection of the NSComboBox changes.

The notification object is the NSComboBox whose selection changed. This notification does not contain a *userInfo* dictionary.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

NSComboBoxSelectionIsChangingNotification

Posted whenever the pop-up list selection of the NSComboBox is changing.

The notification object is the NSComboBox whose selection is changing. This notification does not contain a *userInfo* dictionary.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

NSComboBox.h

NSComboBoxWillDismissNotification

Posted whenever the pop-up list of the NSComboBox is about to be dismissed.

The notification object is the `NSComboBox` whose pop-up list will be dismissed. This notification does not contain a `userInfo` dictionary.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

`NSComboBox.h`

NSComboBoxWillPopUpNotification

Posted whenever the pop-up list of the `NSComboBox` is going to be displayed.

The notification object is the `NSComboBox` whose pop-up window will be displayed. This notification does not contain a `userInfo` dictionary.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

`NSComboBox.h`

Document Revision History

This table describes the changes to *NSComboBox Class Reference*.

Date	Notes
2009-04-15	Updated for Mac OS X v10.6. Delegate methods moved to NSComboBoxDelegate Protocol Reference.
2006-05-23	First publication of this content as a separate document.
	First publication of this content as a separate document.

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