

What will GetLastError() return after a failed InitOnceExecuteOnce?

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20170608-00

June 8, 2017



Raymond Chen

The documentation for `InitOnceExecuteOnce` says

If the function fails, the return value is zero. To get extended error information, call **GetLastError**.

On the other hand, the documentation for the `InitOnceCallback` says

If the function returns **FALSE**, the block is not marked as initialized and the call to **InitOnceExecuteOnce** fails. To communicate additional error information, call **SetLastError**. before returning **FALSE**.

The second paragraph implies that the `InitOnceExecuteOnce` function does not itself call `GetLastError`, because if it did, then that would wipe out the value set by the callback. Is that really the case?

Yes, that's really the case. The remark in the first paragraph about calling `GetLastError` presupposes that your callback uses `GetLastError` to report why it wasn't able to initialize.

I agree, however, that the documentation is misleading here.

But if your callback wants to return status information more complex than a single "success/failed", you are probably better served by the [synchronous two-phase initialization pattern](#), which makes it a lot easier to return more complex information. You can even use it to [throw a C++ exception](#).

[Raymond Chen](#)

Follow

