Mobile App Development

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Lesson 1 Notes

Creating Successful Apps

Lesson 1: Why make Mobile Apps?

We begin with the "What Is" of Mobile App Development and how Mobile Apps have become such an integrated component of Human Life, whether it is through professional opportunities or a combination of personal services to improve a user's quality of life. We also give an overview of the Initial Steps in your Journey and What to Expect over the Next 4 Weeks.

Why are Apps So Important

...........A Business Opportunity

...........Apps in Day to Day Life

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Starting Your Journey

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Weekly Challenge

Lesson 1: Why Make Mobile Apps?

Most People have a vague idea of what a Mobile App is. A powerful piece of technology that improves the way you do something? Some sort of wizardry that allows you to control the forces beyond nature? Yes – These are all true – but they only appear this way when we don't understand the technology at our disposal.

Mobile App Development (aka MAD), is both a Technical & Creative Profession. The art of communicating ideas and visual, interactive content, in a very technical correct way. There are lots of different ways that User's interact with their Mobile Devices, and may include various mindsets when they do. The experience of the App is of vital importance to both businesses and users as it will impact on the relationship between Business and the Customer over time. The work involved can take you through multiple roles from Research & Design to Code & Strategy. The purpose of the App can be for any reason, maybe it's for yourself, loved ones or for everyone worldwide.

Mobile = Portable, Handheld.

App = A List of Instructions that Tell the Computer what to do next.

Development = The Process involved from Idea to Distribution.

Lesson 1: Why are Apps So Important?

Apps as we all know have become an integral part of human life. The Power of Mobile has never been so accessible. In fact, most businesses will agree that have a good Mobile App can be hugely beneficial to their business as customers will be more likely to recommend their business if they have had a Good Experience on their Mobile Device.

A Business Opportunity

Most businesses report that an App would massively impact their business online. While there are multiple benefits to creating, and distributing a Mobile App, here are some of my top five benefits for a business.

1. Build & Cultivate Customer Loyalty
2. Provide Value to the Customer
3. Improve Customer Engagement
4. Create a Direct Marketing Channel
5. Future Proof your Business

Many businesses can benefit from their App driving direct engagement with the Customers but this can have subtler knock-on effects to your Business as well. Having an Advertisement App that allows users to play a Game when they're bored, allows you to create a Marketing Channel your User's will enjoy and receive the best deals first. Customers want to have the best deal at any given time and by producing a very small app that provides one specific function for Free. It will increase the value of your company to them dramatically.

Apps in Day to Day Life

From a more personal perspective, Apps are now being developed to change people's lives. Already we have seen huge advancements with Apps replacing once common household appliances like Disposable Cameras, Alarm Clocks and Calendars. Now with Developers we can create Apps for more specific functions such as Timetables, News Feeds and Entertainment.

Ways that Apps Benefit your Life Directly.

1. Improve Communication
2. Social Media Presence
3. Leisure Activities
4. Organized Life
5. Education

Mobile Devices have come a long way since the first Motorola Dynatec 8000x. While it may no longer be common for Millennials to communicate through traditional forms of communication, we find more and more uses for these portable handheld computers in our day-to-day life.

They are also unique learning tools. Thinking about how we utilize apps, we can always remember *neurolinguistic programming*. A very technical term for the way we process information, and the three basic sensory modalities that we use to learn: visual; auditory; and kinesthetic, or doing things, like muscle memory. People learn in different ways, some by reading, others by seeing and some by doing. With Mobile Devices, we can tap into each of these modalities to ensure everyone is learning to their fullest extent.

What App Should I Make?

Find out what makes your App stand out amongst the rest. Get started by setting yourself a few realistic goals and what type of App you want to create. Why would someone want to buy or download your App?

Once you have found a compelling reason, you're ready to get started on a viable app that can be successful on the App Stores themselves. If you are struggling to answer this question, feel free to redesign your App idea to fit one of the three following Viable App Types:

Standalone Apps

Usually a game or an interesting type of App. This app stands out amongst competitors because it does something interesting or fun.

Corporate Apps

Usually a banking App or an app that improves communication between a business and potential customers. It provides an improved means of engaging with a business.

Facilitator Apps

Usually an App that has an end-user in mind. These apps are more commonly found to help people or improve a service that benefits and impacts the user's life.

Starting Your Journey

To understand exactly what kind of journey lies ahead of us all, we need to understand the Mobile App Development Process from the Developer's point of view. Once we start to think of our Apps as Problem Solvers we can start to think like Developers and create our very own problem-solving apps. For me personally, I enjoy developing for the following reasons:

1. It is rewarding both Technically & Creatively
2. You're always learning more about Mobile Technology
3. Learn about Cutting Edge Technology before anyone else.
4. Work anywhere in the world. All you need is your Laptop!
5. Bragging Rights – Being able to boast about how awesome you are!
6. Becoming more in-demand & valuable as your skills develop

The MAD Process

All Development involves creating a solution to an existing problem. By breaking these problems down into smaller, more manageable tasks, it helps developers to stay focused on the priority and the solution to the overall problem. You can range a problem from something of national or scientific importance, through to something quite trivial as relieving boredom!

In broad terms, the steps involved are:

1. Identify the Problem
2. Design a Solution
3. Write the Program
4. Check the Solution

Try writing a List of Instructions for something you do every day!

Native App Development

Native App Development is by far the most common type of App Development for a number of reasons. Mainly, Native Apps provide a better User Experience than any alternative. These types of Apps are written in the Programming Language Native to the Operating System of the specific Mobile Device. Hybrid Apps conversely only offer a limited amount of performance and functionality as well as basic Interface controls.

Apple Vs Google – Where should you Start?

First off, to develop for iOS you'll need to have a background in Objective C and with Apple's introduction to Swift, there isn't a lot of documentation provided for developing in this brand-new language. Considering next, that there is a very strict Reviewal Process for new Apps when being published, it makes development on iOS quite costly with little reward. In the beginning, information is key for Developers. The more Data you can gather on your Users, the better support and updates you can provide. With such a high risk of not being able to even access these Users, it makes more sense to start with Android App Development.

Android Apps are natively written in the Java programming language. Java is a programming language that has been around for decades, with plenty of helpful documentation available online at any time. It's no wonder that over 3 billion devices are running Java worldwide! The Android Marketplace also has access to the biggest Market of Mobile Users in the World. So, it's a good place to start when looking to reach a wide audience in the beginning.

Junior Development Roles

When starting out as a Mobile App Developer, it's a good idea to get involved as often as you can with smaller projects that force you to learn more about the tools you'll be expected to know. Anything from Website Development to Professional App Development can help you to build up your reputation right from the very beginning.

Junior Development Roles tend to start around the $30,000 a year Mark however, what you can charge for developing an App can vary wildly in the industry. This is because there is no governing board that suggests you need a specific qualification in Mobile App Development. This in turn leads to "Cowboy Developers" who charge insane amounts of money to develop the simplest of applications.

Charging by the Hour – When starting out it's a Good Idea to track how long it takes you to learn how to do something. What might take you a full week to build in the beginning may only take mere hours to build later in your career. By keeping track of the hours, you put in. You'll be able to estimate roughly how long it will take you to build an App following a similar process.

Estimating the Value – Depending on the business of your Client, you can determine the Value this App will impact their Business overall, including maintenance and updates over time. When working with small businesses you should consider them as a client who will return for more business in the near future or indeed spread the word to other small businesses nearby. This also includes asking business owners what budget they have in mind to get accurate figures early-on.

Week 1 Challenge

The First Weekly Challenge is designed to engage our students in an open discussion on the importance of clearly thinking about your App Idea. Using the #ShawMADIdea you will be able to find other students who are using the same # on your course. Simply log on to Facebook and Post your #ShawMADIdea with your explanation to the Challenge. Then you can search for other Students by entering the #ShawMADIdea in the Searchbar at the top of the Page.

The first Weekly Challenge is the following:

Why would someone want to download and use YOUR App?

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