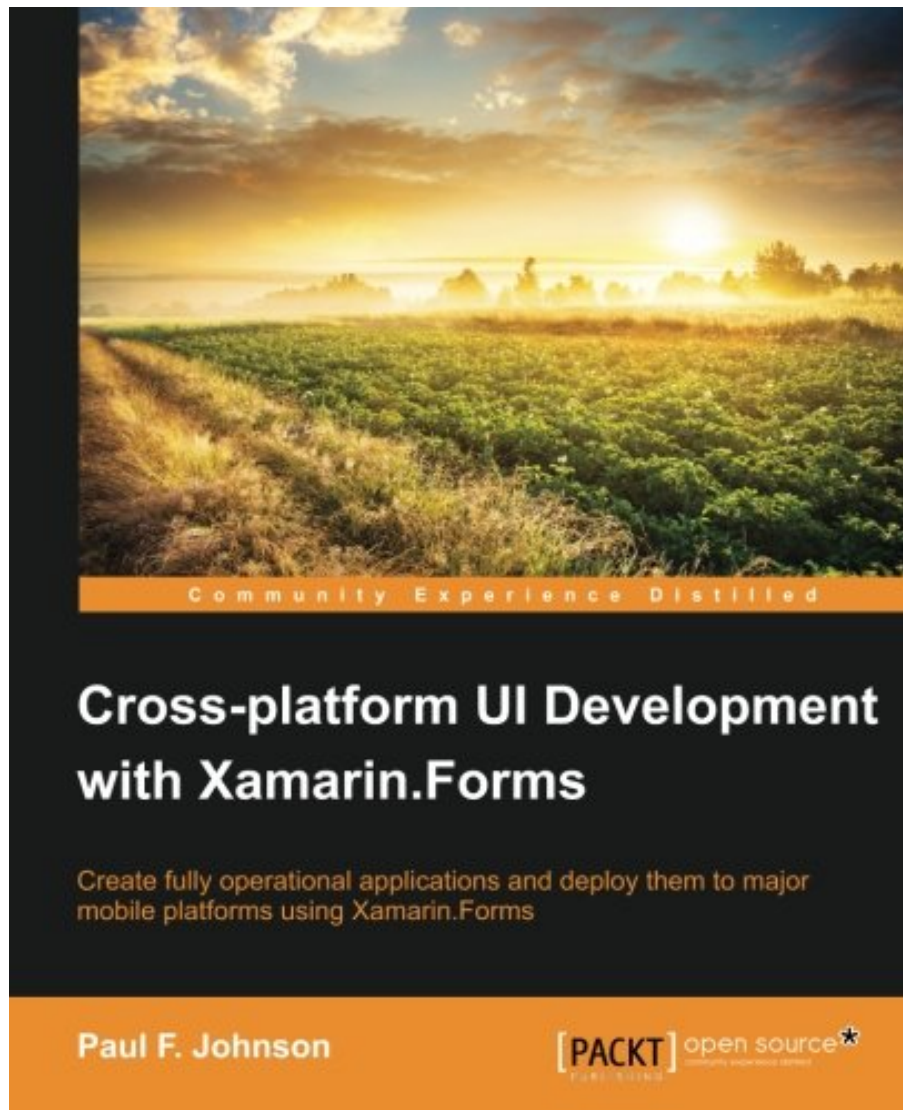


CROSS-PLATFORM UI DEVELOPMENT WITH XAMARIN.FORMS BY PAUL F. JOHNSON



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About the Author

Paul F. Johnson

Many years ago, from the fountains of Mount Olympus came forth upon the planet a man, a mystery, and an enigma. Over many years, he grew; he developed amazing biceps, an intellect to rival the greatest minds in the universe, a personality larger than a fair-sized moon, and a smile that would melt the hearts of the iciest of witches. He fought in wars, waged battles against injustice, and was generally an all-round amazing type of guy. This is not his story. You see, while he could do all of this really cool stuff, he couldn't work his mobile, and worse, he was clueless about how to make his own apps. Then stepped forth a nice chap from Liverpool, and with a bit of patience, he showed him how to do it. This is his story. What made this Scouser worthy of helping the man from Olympus? The simple answer is experience. You see, he was there at the outset of the home computer boom of the early 1980s. He developed code in BASIC, Z80, the 6502 and ARM assembler, C, C++, C#, Pascal, and FORTRAN. He has won awards for programming and is a published author with Packt Publishing. Add these together and you can see why he was a worthy teacher. That, and he makes a killer cup of coffee! Paul (for that is his name) is 44, lives with his wife, dog, cats, and son and drinks way too much coffee! You can normally find Paul on the Facebook Xamarin Developers group, where he is an admin. He is currently in the planning stage for a follow up of this book, but this time, he is concentrating on using XAML instead of pure C# to develop Xamarin.Forms applications. This will combine his lifetime love of Dr. Who with his other love that is to create fun code. He is currently in the middle of buying enough coffee to fuel him through it - Brazil is on high alert!

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Create a fully operating application and deploy it to major mobile platforms using Xamarin.Forms

About This Book

- Create standard user interfaces on Windows Mobile, Android, and iOS and then make those interfaces look good with ease
- Design a full-blown application in very little time with just about the entire code being shared
- Learn how to access platform-specific features and still have the same core code with this handy guide

Who This Book Is For

This book is intended for mobile software developers who are fed up with having three different code sets for the same application. If you want to put your code on all mobile platforms with minimum fuss, and just want to develop but haven't got the time to be digging too far into a particular platform, this is the book for you. Basic knowledge of C# is assumed.

What You Will Learn

- Create a responsive UI, modified to suit the target platform
- Understand the basics of designing an application, and the considerations needed for target platforms
- Construct a complete app using a single codebase
- Develop attractive user interfaces
- Bind information to the code behind to generate a reactive application
- Design an effective portable class library (PCL)
- Include a Windows Mobile application within your standard Xamarin.Forms application
- Extend your applications using the Xamarin.Forms Labs library

In Detail

Xamarin is an IDE used for the development of native iOS, Android, and Windows, and cross-platform mobile applications in C#. For the mobile developer, that means learning three different languages to create the same application. Even if you use the Xamarin toolchain, you still need to work with three different user interface construction sets. Xamarin is essentially a container in which developers can write any application in C# and use the Xamarin compiler to package and deploy on Android, iOS, or Windows platforms. To top this, Xamarin.Forms plays the role of a single codebase for mobile applications.

This book will show you, with fully-coded examples, how to use both the Xamarin toolchain and the Xamarin.Forms library to code once for the three platforms. It goes from the concept and design of a mobile messenger application to its execution. You will be introduced to Messenger?the messaging app?which includes key features such as push notifications, UI, maps, databases, and web services. Next, you will learn to plan the UI using Xamarin.Forms for cross-mobile platform development, and move on to creating custom

buttons, extending the UI, and connecting to social sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

You will also learn about the limitations of PCL libraries and how they make coding easier. This will be followed by the creation of a SQLite database and a database manager, and the SQLite database's reflection within the database manager. You will then be taken through the use of hardware features with ample coverage of iOS, Android, and Windows Mobile. Finally, the book will conclude by introducing common strategies that allow you to create applications that “just work” without having to reinvent the wheel each time.

Style and approach

A fun and informal approach to creating a mobile application using the most up-to-date cross-platform approach. Each coding chapter includes fully working code examples available for download from the Packt Publishing website.

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Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

A decent intro into Xamarin.Forms

By Amazon Customer

A pretty good book that does a good job of introducing Xamarin Forms. He even covers the limitations of using PCL's (i.e. pointing out how some IO classes are not available) - little things like that can be very confusing when you're first starting out and expecting them to be there. He also covers setting up IOS provisions, push notifications and using maps. Features such as this involve a lot of knowing-where-to-go-just-to-point-and-click-a-checkbox and identifying those paths on your own can be quite frustrating so its nice to have a guide. Also covers a bit of Azure and a quick intro on Xamarin Labs. I could've done without the brief foray into his forensics past and building the time of death app but thats just my own personal idiosyncrasies. Overall a good intro book doesn't go deep like Petzold's book but you'll definitely walk away know a few things.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Could do better...

By RDNZL

Unfortunately the problem with this book is that it doesn't know whether it is a reference guide, a cookbook or a tutorial.

The book starts off well as what I thought was a walkthrough / tutorial on how to write an example app (tutorial); in this case a messenger app. The first 8 pages of chapter one introduce us to the planning stage, feature list, cross platform considerations, design considerations, backend storage (database) etc. but then dives straight into creating api keys for push notifications, certificates, profiles for iOS, and Azure (cookbook).

Chapter two introduces Xamarin Forms (reference) but then for some unknown reason spends the next 5 pages showing how to add a Windows Phone project on a PC to an application that was already started on a Apple Mac machine (tutorial). It then goes on to describe Inversion of Control, followed by Gestures and Maps. The book continues in a similar vein for the rest of the book.

Overall there's nothing wrong with the content and Paul obviously knows his stuff; there are a few snippets of useful information. It's just that it feels like the author has gotten bored after a few pages on one subject and decided to write about something else mid-chapter.

With Dan Hermes book already available and Charles Petzold's book on Xamarin due anytime soon I'm not sure of there's a place for this book.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

is a book that simply touches the great aspects and concerns of of starting building apps with ...

By Sparagis Elias

As a Xamarin Certified Mobile Developer, I have been with Xamarin.Forms since its first stable version and I can tell for sure, that it is very difficult to fit in one book the required knowledge for starting building cross-platform applications.

The book Cross-platform UI Development with Xamarin.Forms by Paul F.Johnson, is a book that simply touches the great aspects and concerns of of starting building apps with the Xamarin.Forms. It is not a cookbook or a walkthrough (step-by-step) guide for Xamarin.Forms and it is quite certain that proper knowledge of the platform is advised in order to follow each chapter.

I really enjoyed every chapter, because it really contains practical and useful knowledge not only for constructing a better UI but also to fully understand the cross-platform constructing process.

I surely recommend it to native android or ios developers that want to find some quick answers for the Xamarin.Forms and its capabilities, before diving deeper in the platform.

See all 5 customer reviews...

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