

XAML in Xamarin.Forms

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Objectives

- 1. Examine XAML syntax
- Add Behavior to XAML-based pages
- 3. Explore XAML capabilities





Examine XAML syntax



Tasks

- ❖ Why use XAML?
- ❖ Microsoft XAML vs. Xamarin.Forms
- Using XAML with Xamarin.Forms





Motivation

- Creating UI in code has some disadvantages
 - Significant portion of codebehind is UI setup and layout
 - Mixing UI and behavior in one file makes design and behavior harder to understand / evolve
 - Prohibits use of a UI designer because a developer is needed for any UI change

```
MainPage > MainPage()
                  return button:
109
110
111 -
              Button CreateNumberButton(string str, int row, int col)
112
                  Button button = new Button() {
113
114
                      Text = str.
                      BackgroundColor = Color.White,
115
                      TextColor = Color.Black,
116
117
                      Font = Font.SystemFontOfSize(36).
118
                      BorderRadius = 0.
119
120
                  Grid.SetRow(button, row);
121
                  Grid.SetColumn(button, col);
122
                  button.Clicked += OnSelectNumber;
123
                  return button;
124
125
126 -
              void OnSelectNumber(object sender, EventArgs e)
127
128
                  Button button = (Button)sender;
                  string pressed = button.Text;
129
130
                  if (this.resultText.Text == "0" || currentState < 0) {
131 -
                      this.resultText.Text = "";
132
                      if (currentState < 0)
133
134
                          currentState *= -1;
135
136
137
                  this.resultText.Text += pressed;
138
139
                  double number:
```

Advantages of markup

- ♣ HTML has taught us that markup languages are a great way to define user interfaces because they are:
 - Toolable
 - Human readable
 - Extensible





What is XAML?

❖ Extensible Application Markup Language (XAML) is a markup language created by Microsoft specifically to describe UI



Xamarin Forms + XAML = Sweetness!



XAML benefits





Microsoft XAML vs. Xamarin.Forms

* Xamarin.Forms conforms to the XAML 2009 specification; it differs from traditional Microsoft XAML mainly in the controls and layout containers

Microsoft XAML (WinRT)

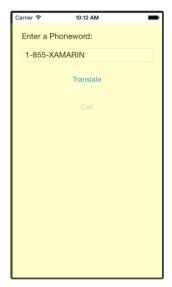
Xamarin.Forms

Feature	Supported in Xamarin.Forms
XAML 2009 compliance	✓
Shapes (Rectangle, Ellipse, Path, etc.)	BoxView
Resources, Styles and Triggers	✓
Data binding	✓ *not all features
Data templates	✓
Control templates	Custom renderers
Render Transforms	✓
Animations	Code-only
Custom XAML behaviors	✓
Custom markup extensions	✓
Value converters	✓



Adding a XAML Page

❖ There are two Item Templates available to add XAML content



ContentPage is an entire screen of content

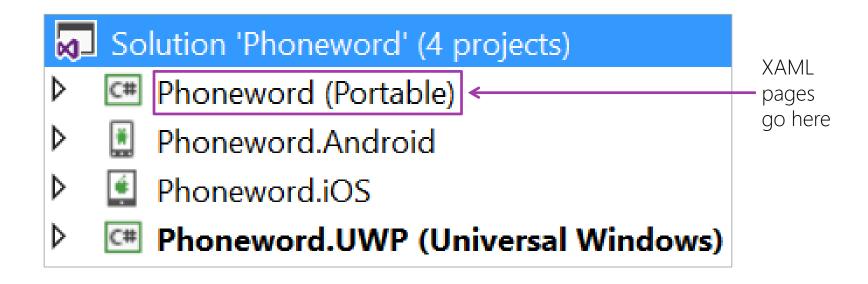


ContentView is a composite control (smaller than a page)



Where do the XAML pages go?

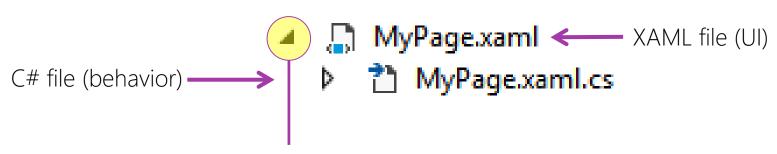
❖ Add XAML content to the platform-independent project in your application – this is shared UI and code for all your target platforms





XAML-page structure

* XAML pages have two related files that work together to define the class

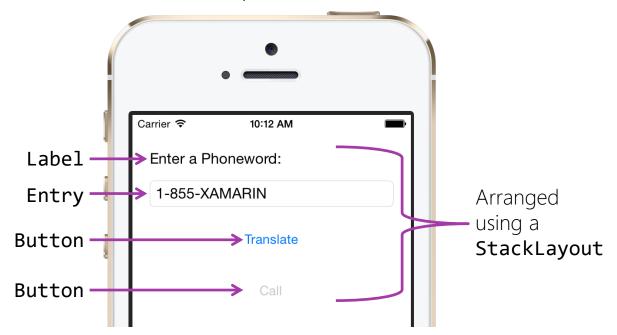


Disclosure arrow *collapses* the C# file and indicates these files go together



Example: creating a XAML UI

• Our goal is to build the UI for a "Phoneword" app that translates a text phone number to its numeric equivalent





* XAML is used to construct object graphs, in this case a visual Page

XML based: case sensitive, open tags must be closed, etc.



* XAML is used to construct object graphs, in this case a visual Page



* XAML is used to construct object graphs, in this case a visual Page

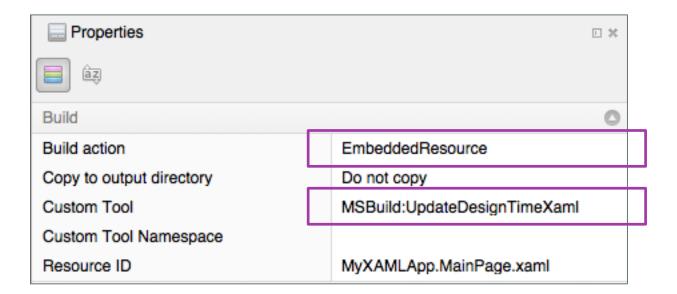


* XAML is used to construct object graphs, in this case a visual Page



XAML build type

❖ XAML files are stored as embedded resources and have a special build type of MSBuild:UpdateDesignTimeXaml





XAML + Code Behind

* XAML and code behind files are tied together

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
<ContentPage x:Class="Phoneword.MainPage" ...>
```

```
namespace Phoneword
{
   public partial class MainPage : ContentPage
   {
      ...
   }
}
```

x:Class Identifies the full name of the class defined in the code behind file

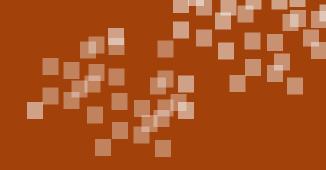


XAML initialization

❖ Code behind constructor has call to **InitializeComponent** which is responsible for loading the XAML and creating the objects

```
public partial class MainPage : ContentPage

{
    public MainPage ()
    {
        InitializeComponent ();
    }
}
implementation of method
    generated by
    XAML compiler as a result of the
    x:Class tag —
    added to hidden
    file (same partial class)
```



Demonstration

Creating a XAML-based application





* XML attributes only allow for **string values** – works fine for intrinsic types

```
<Label Text="This is a Label" IsVisible="True" Opacity="0.75"
FontAttributes="Bold,Italic" FontSize="Large"
Margin="5,20,5 0" TextColor="#fffc0d34" />
```

Text is a **string** which is just set directly



* XML attributes only allow for **string values** – works fine for intrinsic types

```
<Label Text="This is a Label" IsVisible="True" Opacity="0.75"
FontAttributes="Bold,Italic" FontSize="Large"
Margin="5,20,5,0" TextColor="#fffc0d34" />
```

IsVisible is a **bool** which is converted from the value using **Boolean.TryParse**



* XML attributes only allow for **string values** – works fine for intrinsic types

```
<Label Text="This is a Label" IsVisible="True" Opacity="0.75"
FontAttributes="Bold,Italic" FontSize="Large"
Margin="5,20,5,0" TextColor="#fffc0d34" />
```

Opacity is a double which is converted from the value using Double. TryParse



* XML attributes only allow for **string values** – works fine for intrinsic types

```
<Label Text="This is a Label" IsVisible="True" Opacity="0.75"
FontAttributes="Bold,Italic" FontSize="Large"
Margin="5,20,5,0" TextColor="#fffc0d34" />
```

Enumerations are parsed with **Enum.TryParse** and support **[Flags]** with comma-separated values



* XML attributes only allow for **string values** – works fine for intrinsic types

```
<Label Text="This is a Label" IsVisible="True" Opacity="0.75"
FontAttributes="Bold,Italic" FontSize="Large"
Margin="5,20,5,0" TextColor="#fffc0d34" />
```

```
[TypeConverter(typeof(ThicknessTypeConverter))]
public struct Thickness
{
    ...
}
```



* XML attributes only allow for **string values** – works fine for intrinsic types

```
<Label Text="This is a Label" IsVisible="True" Opacity="0.75"
FontAttributes="Bold,Italic" FontSize="Large"
Margin="5,20,5,0" TextColor="#fffc0d34" />
```

Margin is of type Thickness



* XML attributes only allow for **string values** – works fine for intrinsic types

```
<Label Text="This is a Label" IsVisible="True" Opacity="0.75"
FontAttributes="Bold,Italic" FontSize="Large"
Margin="5,20,5,0" TextColor="#fffc0d34" />
```

Colors can be specified as a known value (e.g. "Red", "Green", ...) or as a hex value (RGB or aRGB)



Setting Complex Properties

- When a more complex object needs to be created and assigned, you can use the *Property Element* syntax
- This changes the style to use an element tag (create-an-object) as part of the assignment

Property value is set as a child tag of the <Type.PropertyName> element



Setting Attached Properties

Attached Properties provide runtime "attached" data for a visual element

Used by layout containers to provide container-specific values on each child

```
<Grid>
 <Label Text="Position" />
 <Entry Grid.Column="1" />
</Grid>
Set in XAMI with
```

OwnerType.Property="Value" form, can also use property-element syntax for more complex values



Content Properties

Some types have a *default* property which is set when child content is added to the element

This is the Content Property and is identified through a [ContentAttribute] applied to the class

```
<ContentPage ...>
 <Lahel>
    This is the Text
 </Label>
</ContentPage>
                    These create
                    the same UI
<ContentPage ...>
 <ContentPage.Content>
   <Label>
     <Label.Text>
       This is the Text
     </Label.Text>
   </Label>
 </ContentPage.Content>
</ContentPage>
```



Identifying Types

❖ XAML creates objects when it encounters an element tag, XML namespaces are used to correlate .NET types to tags

Default namespace includes most of the Xamarin. Forms types you use

```
<ContentPage ...
    xmlns="http://xamarin.com/schemas/2014/forms"
    xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2009/xaml">
    <StackLayout ... />
    <ContentPage>
```

x: namespace includes XAML types and known CLR types (Int32, String, etc.)



Custom Types

❖ XAML can create any public object, including ones with parameterized constructors – you just need to tell it where the type lives

Must supply the namespace, and possibly the assembly, the type is defined in

xmlns definition can be placed on a single element, or a parent element to use with any children



Individual Exercise

Create a XAML-based version of Calculator



Summary

- ❖ Why use XAML?
- ❖ Microsoft XAML vs. Xamarin.Forms
- ❖ Using XAML with Xamarin.Forms





Add Behavior to XAML-based pages



Tasks

- ❖ Accessing elements in Code Behind
- ❖ Handling Events





Naming Elements in XAML

- Use x:Name to assign field name
 - allows you to reference element in XAMI and code behind

- ❖ Adds a private field to the XAMLgenerated partial class (.g.cs)
- ❖ Name must conform to C# naming conventions and be unique in the file

```
MainPage.xaml
<Entry x:Name="PhoneNumber"</pre>
     Placeholder=|"Number" />
public partial class MainPage : ContentPage
   private Entry PhoneNumber;
   private void InitializeComponent() {
      this.LoadFromXaml(typeof(MainPage));
      PhoneNumber = this.FindByName<Entry>(
                   "PhoneNumber");
```

MainPage.xaml.g.cs



Working with named elements

❖ Can work with named elements as if you defined them in code, but keep in mind the field is not set until after InitializeComponent is called

```
Can wire up
events, set
properties,
even add new
elements to
layout

public partial class MainPage : ContentPage
{
    public MainPage () {
        InitializeComponent ();
        PhoneNumber.TextChanged += OnTextChanged;
    }

void OnTextChanged(object sender, TextChangedEventArgs e) {
        ...
}
}
```



Sharing elements

❖ Generated field is always private, but **Page** owner can wrap in a public property to allow external access

```
public partial class MainPage : ContentPage
{
    public Entry PhoneNumberEntry
    {
       get { return this.PhoneNumber; }
    }
    ...
}
```

should *not* provide a setter – replacing the field's value will not change the actual element on the screen



Handling events in XAML

❖ Can also wire up events in XAML – event handler *must be defined* in the code behind file and have proper signature or it's a runtime failure

```
<Entry Placeholder="Number" TextChanged="OnTextChanged" />
```

```
public partial class MainPage : ContentPage
{
    ...
    void OnTextChanged(object sender, TextChangedEventArgs e) {
        ...
    }
}
```



Handling events in code behind

- Many developers prefer to wire up all events in code behind by naming the XAML elements and adding event handlers in code
 - Keeps the UI layer "pure" by pushing all behavior + management into the code behind
 - Names are validated at compile time, but event handlers are not
 - Easier to see how logic is wired up
- ❖ Pick the approach that works for your team / preference







- ① Putting an **x:Name** tag onto an element ______. (Select all that apply)
 - a) Creates a private field in the associated code behind file
 - b) Creates a protected field in the associated code behind file
 - c) Makes the element accessible to other things in XAML
 - d) Makes the element accessible in the code behind after InitializeComponent returns



- ① Putting an **x:Name** tag onto an element ______. (Select all that apply)
 - a) Creates a private field in the associated code behind file
 - b) Creates a protected field in the associated code behind file
 - c) Makes the element accessible to other things in XAML
 - d) <u>Makes the element accessible in the code behind after</u>
 <u>InitializeComponent returns</u>



- ② Event Handlers in code behind that are wired up in XAML must be public
 - a) True
 - b) False



- ② Event Handlers in code behind that are wired up in XAML must be public
 - a) True
 - b) False



Individual Exercise

Adding Behavior to XAML Calculator



Summary

- ❖ Accessing elements in Code Behind
- ❖ Handling Events





Explore XAML capabilities





Tasks

- Using device-specific values
- Markup Extensions
- Using ContentView to share XAML
- ❖ Compiling XAML





Using device-specific values

❖ XAML is a static (compile-time) definition of the UI; can provide different values for each platform just like we do in code with **Device.OnPlatform**

x:TypeArguments used for generic instantiation

can then supply different platform-specific value for property



Using runtime values

❖ XAML defines a way to set properties to values known at runtime called markup extensions, these conform to the IMarkupExtension interface

```
public interface IMarkupExtension
{
   object ProvideValue(IServiceProvider serviceProvider);
}
```

method is called during the XAML load process to retrieve a runtime value and apply it to the property



Using Markup Extensions

Markup Extensions are identified by "{extension_here}" curly braces

parser expects to find a class named **BindingExtension** that implements **IMarkupExtension** when it encounters the curly brace as the first character

```
<StackLayout BindingContext="{Binding Details}">
  <Label Text="{}{Want a Curly Brace Here!}" />
    ...
  </StackLayout>
```

literal curly braces need to be escaped properly to avoid a parser error



Reading static properties

A very useful markup extension is **x:Static** which lets you get the value of public static fields or properties

```
public static class Constants
{
    public static string Title = "Hello, Forms";
    public static Thickness Padding = new Thickness(5, Device.OnPlatform(20, 0, 0), 5, 0);
    public static Color TextColor = Color.Yellow;
}
```

```
<ContentPage ... Padding="{x:Static me:Constants.Padding}">
     <Label Text="{x:Static me:Constants.Title}"
          TextColor="{x:Static me:Constants.TextColor}" />
     </ContentPage>
```



Other built-in Markup Extensions

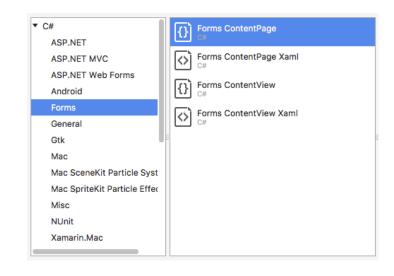
- Use resource values with {StaticResource} and {DynamicResource}
- ❖ Supply a null value with {x:Null}
- Lookup a Type with {x:Type}
- Create an array with {x:Array}

Create data bindings with {Binding}



Sharing XAML fragments

- Can be useful to split XAML into different files
 - Reuse useful UI pieces
 - Refactor large pages
- ContentView allows for this
 - Similar to Android Fragments
 - ... or User Controls in Windows





ContentView structure

ContentView combines a piece of XAML with code behind behavior just like ContentPage, can name elements, wire up events, etc.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
   <ContentView xmlns="http://xamarin.com/schemas/2014/forms"</pre>
       xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2009/xaml"
       x:Class="Phoneword.PhoneView">
       <!-- Content goes here -->
                                               using Xamarin.Forms;
                                           3 □ namespace Phoneword
   </ContentView>
                                                  public partial class PhoneView : ContentView
                                           5 🖃
                                                      public PhoneView()
Can be placed into a separate
                                                          InitializeComponent();
class library if desired
```



Using a ContentView

❖ ContentView is not displayed on it's own - must be added to a Page

ContentView can expose it's own properties and events to provide customization or "hooks" into the logic







- ① To specify a platform-specific value in XAML you use _____.
 - a) Device<T>
 - b) OnPlatform<T>
 - c) Platform<T>
 - d) x:Platform<T>



- ① To specify a platform-specific value in XAML you use _____.
 - a) Device<T>
 - b) OnPlatform<T>
 - c) Platform<T>
 - d) x:Platform<T>



- 2 To share a value you can use _____ (select all that apply).
 - a) Resource Dictionary with {StaticResource}
 - b) Resource Dictionary with {x:Static}
 - c) Static properties in code and {x:Static}
 - d) Static properties in code and {StaticResource}



- 2 To share a value you can use _____ (select all that apply).
 - a) Resource Dictionary with {StaticResource}
 - b) Resource Dictionary with {x:Static}
 - c) Static properties in code and {x:Static}
 - d) Static properties in code and {StaticResource}



- 3 Which one of these is <u>not</u> a system-provided markup extension?
 - a) {StaticResource}
 - b) {x:Null}
 - c) {ImageResource}
 - d) {x:Type}



- 3 Which one of these is <u>not</u> a system-provided markup extension?
 - a) {StaticResource}
 - b) {x:Null}
 - c) {ImageResource}
 - d) {x:Type}



- 4 To have a property value be set to "{Text" you would type: _____.
 - a) "\{Text"
 - b) "{{Text"
 - c) "{Text"
 - d) "{}{Text"



- 4 To have a property value be set to "{Text" you would type: _____.
 - a) $^{"}\{Text^{"}\}$
 - b) "{{Text"
 - c) "{Text"
 - d) <u>"{}{Text"</u>



XAML resources

❖ By default, your XAML files are included as a plain-text resource in the generated assembly which is **parsed at runtime** to generate the page

```
private void InitializeComponent()
{
    this.LoadFromXaml(typeof(MainPage));
}
```

This **Page** method looks up the embedded resource by name, parses it, and creates each object found; it returns the **root created object**

Compiling XAML

- ❖ XAML can be optionally compiled to intermediate language (IL)
 - Provides compile-time validation of your XAML files
 - Reduces the load time for pages
 - Reduces the assembly size by removing text-based .xaml files





Enabling XAMLC

* XAMLC (the XAML compiler) is disabled by default to ensure backwards compatibility; can be enabled through a .NET attribute

Can enable the compiler for all XAML files in the assembly



Enabling XAMLC

* XAMLC (the XAML compiler) is disabled by default to ensure backwards compatibility; can be enabled through a .NET attribute

```
using Xamarin.Forms.Xaml;

[XamlCompilationAttribute(XamlCompilationOptions.Compile)]
public partial class MainPage : ContentPage {
```

... or on a specific XAML-based class



What does XAMLC do?

❖ Attribute presence causes MSBuild command to be run which parses the XAML and generates **InitializeComponent** to create the page in code

```
private void InitializeComponent()
   Label label = new Label();
   StackLayout stackLayout = new StackLayout();
   stackLayout.SetValue(VisualElement.BackgroundColorProperty,
        new ColorTypeConverter().ConvertFrom("Red"));
   stackLayout.SetValue(Layout.PaddingProperty,
        new ThicknessTypeConverter().ConvertFrom("10"));
   stackLayout.SetValue(StackLayout.SpacingProperty, 5);
   label.SetValue(Label.TextProperty, "Hello, Forms");
   stackLayout.Children.Add(label);
   this.Content = stackLayout;
```



Disabling XAMLC

❖ Attribute also lets you disable XAMLC for a specific class

```
using Xamarin.Forms.Xaml;

[XamlCompilationAttribute(XamlCompilationOptions.Skip)]
public partial class DetailsPage : ContentPage {
```

Specify **Skip** to turn off compiler for this specific page; goes back to using **LoadFromXam1**



Individual Exercise

Cleanup the XAML code and tailor the UI to the platform





Summary

- Using device-specific values
- Markup Extensions
- ❖ Using ContentView to share XAML
- Compiling XAML



Thank You!

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