

iOS - Implementing Cordova plug-ins

Overview

In some cases, developers of a MobileFirst application might have to use a specific third-party native library or a device function that is not yet available in Apache Cordova.

With Apache Cordova, developers can create an Apache Cordova plug-in, which means that they create custom native code blocks, and then call these code blocks in their applications by using JavaScript.

This tutorial demonstrates how to create and integrate a simple Apache Cordova plug-in for iOS, in the following topics:

- Creating a plug-in
- Declaring a plug-in
- Implementing `cordova.exec()` in JavaScript
- Implementing the Objective-C code of a Cordova plug-in
- Sample application

Note: In Cordova-based applications, developers must check for the `deviceready` event before they use the Cordova API set. In a MobileFirst application, however, this check is done internally.

Instead of implementing this check, you can place implementation code in the `wlCommonInit()` function in the `common\js\main.js` file.

Creating a plug-in

1. Declare the plug-in in the `config.xml` file.
2. Use the `cordova.exec()` API in the JavaScript code.
3. Create the plug-in class that will run natively in iOS.

The plug-in performs the required action and calls a JavaScript callback method that is specified during the call to `cordova.exec()` method.



Declaring a plug-in

You must declare the plug-in in the project, so that Cordova can detect it.

To declare the plug-in, add a reference to the `config.xml` file, located in the native folder of the iOS environment.

```
<feature name="sayHelloPlugin">
  <param name="ios-package" value="sayHelloPlugin" /
>
</feature>
```

Implementing cordova.exec() in JavaScript

From the JavaScript code of the application, use the `cordova.exec()` method to call the Cordova plug-in:

```
function sayHello() {
  var name = $("#NameInput").val();
  cordova.exec(sayHelloSuccess, sayHelloFailure, "SayHelloPlugin", "sayHello", [name])
;
}
```

sayHelloSuccess - Success callback

sayHelloFailure - Failure callback

SayHelloPlugin - Plug-in name as declared in the `config.xml` file

sayHello - Action name

[name] - Parameters array

The plug-in calls the success and failure callbacks.

```
function sayHelloSuccess(data) {
  WL.SimpleDialog.show(
    "Response from plug-in", data,
    [{text: "OK", handler: function() {WL.Logger.debug("Ok button pressed");}}
  ]
  );
}

function sayHelloFailure(data){
  WL.SimpleDialog.show(
    "Response from plug-in", data,
    [{text: "OK", handler: function() {WL.Logger.debug("Ok button pressed");}}
  ]
  );
}
```

Implementing the Objective-C code of a Cordova plug-in

After you have declared the plug-in and the JavaScript implementation is ready, you can implement the Cordova plug-in.

Prerequisite: Ensure that the project is built in Eclipse and opened in the Xcode IDE.

Step 1

1. Add a new Cocoa Touch Class file, make sure that it is a subclass of `UIViewController`, and save it in the `Classes` folder of the Xcode project.

2. Import the `Cordova/CDV.h` header file and inherit the `CDVPlugin` class.
3. Declare the `SayHelloPlugin` signature.

```
#import <Foundation/Foundation.h>
#import <Cordova/CDV.h>

@interface SayHelloPlugin : CDVPlugin
- (void)sayHello:(CDVInvokedUrlCommand*)command;
@end
```

Step 2

1. Implement the method. The `command` argument contains references to the parameters that are sent from JavaScript and callbacks:

```
#import "SayHelloPlugin.h"
@implementation SayHelloPlugin
- (void)sayHello:(CDVInvokedUrlCommand*)command {
```

2. Write this statement to retrieve the parameters that are sent from JavaScript.

```
NSString *responseString = [NSString stringWithFormat:@"Hello %@", [command.arguments
objectAtIndex:0]];
```

3. The `pluginResult` object is created with data retrieved from JavaScript. The `CDVCommandStatus` parameter defines whether the plug-in call was successful or not.

```
CDVPluginResult *pluginResult = [CDVPluginResult resultWithStatus:CDVCommandStatus_OK
messageAsString:responseString];
```

4. Use the `sendPluginResult` method to return a response back to JavaScript (invoke callback).

```
[self.commandDelegate sendPluginResult:pluginResult callbackId:command.callbackId];

}
@end
```

Important note:

If you work with existing .m and .h files, reference them while you are working in Xcode.
Placing the .m and .h files only in the iphone\native\Classes folder in Eclipse is not sufficient, because these files are not referenced in the Xcode project unless they were added in Xcode.

Sample application

Click to download (<https://github.com/MobileFirst-Platform-Developer-Center/ApacheCordovaPlugins>) the MobileFirst project.

