5.0 Lesson - Get Help Quickly From the Online Community

Paul Solt - Paul@SuperEasyApps.com
SuperEasyApps.com

5.0 - Community Forum Links

- 5.0 Community - Get Help Quickly from Online Resources
- 5.3 Homework - Introduce yourself to the Community

5.1.1 Lecture - Quickly Get Help from the Online Community

There are a ton of great online resources for iPhone apps. The biggest challenge for a beginner is learning which resources are best for the task at hand. Getting comfortable with Google and developing general searching skills are key to finding answers to common bugs or learning brand new APIs (application programming interfaces) that Apple releases each year.

In these lessons you will learn how to take advantage of the Community forums, email support, and the video comments.

Links

- Super Easy Apps Community Forum
- 5.0 Community - Get Help Quickly from Online Resources

5.1.2 Lecture - How to Learn iPhone App Programming Faster

To learn faster, you need to be proactive. I keep a notebook (Moleskine squared) with me where I write down things that I'm working on, as well as questions that I need to answer.

Keeping track of what you're working on is super important in terms of staying productive and avoiding distraction. Plus, it can give you a place to return to when you take a short walk, stretch break, or lunch break.

Join the Community

Super Easy Apps is an approachable community of people who want to learn and use the latest technology from Apple to execute on their own visions. You might be job searching or you might be thinking about your next million dollar app idea–either way, it's really important to connect with like minded individuals so that you can make progress toward your goals.

I have set up a variety of places where you can seek help from multiple sources, including myself, my staff and your peers:

Helpful Online App Resources

1. Ask short and concise questions (not code questions) below each course video.
2. If you have a code or user interface (UI) question, use the Super Easy Apps Community forum.
3. Take time to answer questions on the Super Easy Apps Community forum, because this will help you learn faster in addition to helping someone else.
4. If you want more real-time help and discussion, the private iPhone Mastermind group might be right for you.

Links

- Paul's Notebook: Squared Extra-large Moleskine

- Paul's Pens: Staedtler Pigment Liner 0.3
- Paul's Quick Notes: Post-it Notes

5.2.1 Tutorial - How to Ask Questions that Get Answered Quickly

When you have a problem, it's important that you seek help in a manner that allows others to answer your question without tons of effort.

To receive the fastest help, is important to be concise and clear.

Have you ever received an email that was super long and asked a question at the very end? Maybe you've sent a couple of emails that were like that and never got a response. That's because nobody wants to spend 20 minutes struggling through a boring narrative about your problems when they could easily answer a simple question in 20 seconds.

When you ask short, concise, and clear questions, you will get faster responses.

You should strive to ask a question within 1–3 sentences, and you can follow your question with some more details about your issue if necessary.

Email Question Checklist

1. Should you ask this question on the community forum? Would it help others?
2. Did you attach a .zip (or github/dropbox link) of your entire Xcode project or Playground?
3. Did you test your .zip file on your Desktop (unzip and run the project)?
4. Is your question clear and concise (1–3 sentences)?
5. Do you need to attach any screenshots or Youtube links (30-second video)?

Email Your Question to an iOS Developer

Please use this format when you email Paul (or anyone else).

Subject

Do: Write a clear and descriptive title for your email

> *My iPhone app was rejected from the App Store*

> *Crashing bug in viewDidLoad using touch gestures*

Don't: Write a generic message or I won't prioritize your email if it's a blocking problem

> *Hey*

> *question*

Body

Ask your question in the beginning–not the end. Use 1–3 sentences.

> *Hey Paul,*

> *I was following along in video X and I had an issue that I can't solve. Can you look at my code sample (.zip Xcode project) that I have attached?*

> *Here is the link to the lesson/tutorial: http://courses.SuperEasyApps.com*

> *Thanks for your time!*

> *-John*

1. Including the link to the lesson is very helpful so I can understand which resource is not clear, as well as background context.
2. By asking the question within the first three sentences, he has allowed me to easily skim and get the gist within 10 seconds.
3. Calling out the lesson or copy/pasting the exact error code makes it easier for me to know exactly what is wrong.

Links

1. Email Etiquette
2. How to Email a Busy Person

5.2.2 Homework - Email Paul a Short Question

- Do you have any questions?
- Did something not work?
- Are you confused?
- Are you struggling with learning?
- Why do you want to make apps?

If you have any questions at this point, I want you to email me directly.

Right now.

Email me: Paul@SuperEasyApps.com

I read every email I get, and I respond to every one (it just takes time).

Use the previous lesson to keep your question short and on point, and I will get back to you as soon as I get to your email.

PS: I respond more quickly to short, concise emails. =)

5.0 - Community Forum Links

- 5.0 Community - Get Help Quickly from Online Resources
- 5.3 Homework - Introduce yourself to the Community

5.3.1 Tutorial - How to Use the Discourse Community Forum

The Super Easy Apps Community forum is a great place to get help.

Community Interactions

To keep the discussion relevant, helpful, and easy to read please use the following features.

"Like" a Topic or Reply

If you just want to show appreciation for a helpful response or answer, use the "like" button (heart).

Respond with a Quoted Reply

You can select text in a previous response and then press "Quoted Reply" to insert a snippet of the previous response in your new post.

You can even do this multiple times to group responses or to address different points.

I recommend using this approach when responding, because it makes it easier to follow who is responding to what. By including some context, it's a lot easier to answer a question or provide feedback on your ideas.

Make a Linked Topic Reply

To keep message threads relevant, if you want to ask a question that is similar to the original post, just click on the plus icon (+) on the right to start a new Topic from the current post.

This linked Topic is a great way to start a separate conversation based on an existing conversation, without overtaking the main point of the original question.

Links

- Discourse Overview

5.0 - Community Forum Links

- 5.0 Community - Get Help Quickly from Online Resources
- 5.3 Homework - Introduce yourself to the Community

5.3.2 Tutorial - Introduction to CommonMark and Markdown Formatting

You need to learn Markdown or CommonMark text formatting.

These are text formatting mediums that will enable you to create HTML markup (i.e.: formatted webpage/blog post content) without learning HTML code.

Markdown was created by John Gruber, but it hasn't been updated since 2004.

CommonMark is a community standard built off of the Markdown format. It is becoming an open standard and fixes bugs and inconsistencies from the original Markdown format.

You can use Markdown to write a book, ebook, github.com project README, github.com comments, reddit comment, Squarespace post (Markdown widget), or a Discourse post (i.e.: Super Easy Apps Community forum), etc.

Links

- Why CommonMark?
- CommonMark Cheat Sheet
- CommonMark Tutorial

5.0 - Community Forum Links

- 5.0 Community - Get Help Quickly from Online Resources
- 5.3 Homework - Introduce yourself to the Community

5.3.3 Homework - Share Swift Code Samples From Xcode on Discourse

The best way to get help is to post your code snippet (chunk of code) on the Super Easy Apps Community forum.

Indentation is the way you format code in a Discourse topic post or response. It will need to be either four spaces or eight spaces depending on the text formatting.

- **Code**: Indent Four spaces
- **Numbered list code**: Indent eight spaces

Homework: Print Your Name and Three Facts

1. Create a new Xcode project to play with indentation and then add code to display your name, city, and three facts about yourself.

```
print("Hi I'm Paul Solt from Rochester, NY")
print("I love to throw a 175g Ultra-star disc from Discraft")
print("I enjoy cooking food and chopping vegetables")
print("I like when technology gets out of the way and helps me do something")
```

2. Create a new reply and paste your indented code within the community:
   - 5.3 Homework - Introduce yourself to the Community

Use Xcode to Format Code Quickly

1. Indent your code properly
   1. Re-indent code: Select code and press `Control + i`
   2. Shift Right: `Command + ]`
   3. Shift Left: `Command + [`
2. Copy the code the start of the first line to the end of the last line
3. Paste the code directly into your Markdown supported editor

Update the Formatting in the Community Markdown Editor

You can also fix your code formatting on the Community forum when you edit a post (your own or someone else's that was formatted incorrectly).

5.0 - Community Forum Links

- 5.0 Community - Get Help Quickly from Online Resources
- 5.3 Homework - Introduce yourself to the Community

5.3.4 Homework - Take and Share iPhone App Screenshots

There are many ways to take screenshots on your Mac. In this lesson, you can leverage any or all of the approaches that I demonstrate. These skills are essential if you are planning to publish your app on the App Store, design marketing materials, or create a Press Kit for media attention.

Your Homework

1. Add UI (user interface) controls to your iPhone app using your own photo, name, and three quick facts.
2. Change any of the text fonts, colors, and sizes as you see fit.
3. Take a screenshot of the Simulator using: `Command + S`
4. Take a screenshot of the iPhone screen: Press and hold `Power` followed by the `Home` button.
5. Upload the photo from your Desktop to your post from the previous homework.
6. Tip: You can use Photos via USB import, Air Drop, email, or iMessage to share the device screenshot to your Mac.

4 Ways to Take App Screenshots

1. Mac Screenshots
   - Window: `Command + Shift + 4 + Spacebar` (Spacebar toggles between Area + Window)
   - Area: `Command + Shift + 4`
2. Simulator Screenshot Keyboard Shortcuts
   - Save screenshot: `Command + S`
     - iOS 9+ Simulator will save to your Desktop
   - Copy to clipboard: `Command + Control + S`
     - Saves to clipboard for quick import into Photoshop or Sketch
3. iOS Device Screenshot
   - iPhone/iPad: Hold `Power` button + Tap `Home` button
   - Apple Watch: Press both the `Home` button + `Side` button
4. Xcode Screenshot
   - Go to `Xcode > Window > Devices > Select Device > Press the Take Screenshot` button
   - Screenshots in Xcode 7+ are saved to your Desktop

Disable Mac Screenshot Drop Shadows

1. Use Spotlight (`Command + Spacebar`) and type `Terminal`
2. In Terminal paste the following commands to toggle shadows:
   - **Disable drop shadows:**
     ```
     defaults write com.apple.screencapture disable-shadow -bool TRUE;
     killall SystemUIServer
     ```
   - **Enable drop shadows:**
     ```
     defaults write com.apple.screencapture disable-shadow -bool FALSE;
     killall SystemUIServer
     ```

Links

- Mac Screenshot Keyboard Shortcuts
- iPhone Screenshots on iOS 9+
- Disable Screenshot Drop Shadow on Mac using Terminal

Share Your Homework

- 5.3 Homework - Introduce yourself to the Community

5.3.5 Homework - Share a Video Using Quicktime and YouTube

Youtube and Quicktime are great tools for sharing progress on your apps, or even introducing yourself.

Post your video online via YouTube and update your previous homework with the new video introduction.

Please be respectful and keep your video safe for work.

Create a Video Using Quicktime on Mac

1. Make a video using Quicktime
    1. Screen Recording: `File > Screen Recording`
    2. Movie Recording: `File > Movie Recording > Choose Camera`
2. Capture your iPhone Screen
    1. Plug in your iPhone via a USB Lightning cable
    2. Movie Recording `File > Movie Recording > Choose iPhone Camera`
    3. Record
3. Save the video to your Desktop

Upload the Video to YouTube

1. Go to http://YouTube.com
2. Create an account
3. Click `Upload` to upload your video
4. Copy the URL on the left side from Upload screen (or video view page)
5. Edit your previous post and paste the URL on a separate line.

Create a Thumbnail

1. Seek to a position in the saved Quicktime video
2. Take a screenshot of the Quicktime window
    1. Resize the window to 1280x720 or 1920x1080
    2. Move your mouse cursor off the Quicktime video window
    3. Press `Command + Shift + 4 + Spacebar`
3. Open the `.png` image file in Preview or Photoshop and save it as a `.jpg` file
4. On the Edit page for your YouTube video, upload the new `.jpg` thumbnail.

Links

- Brew Coffee Demo on YouTube
- Youtube Guide
- QuickTime X Guide

Homework Link

Upload your video to YouTube and then update your original Reply on the Super Easy Apps Community forum link below with that new video link.

- 5.3 Homework - Introduce yourself to the Community