



XAM310

# Data Binding in Xamarin.Forms

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# Objectives

1. Use data binding to decouple code-behind from UI
2. Use value converters to bind incompatible types





Use data binding to decouple  
code-behind from UI



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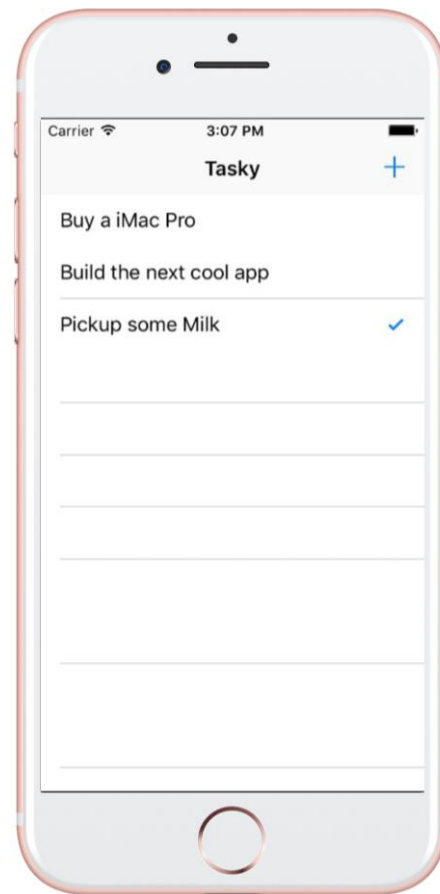
# Tasks

1. Map data to visuals
2. Create bindings in code
3. Create bindings in XAML
4. Work with binding context
5. Change binding modes
6. Implement property change notifications



# Apps are driven by data

- ❖ Most applications display and manipulate data in some form
  - internally generated
  - read from an external source
- ❖ Classes created to represent data are often referred to as Models
  - can also refer to "entity" objects



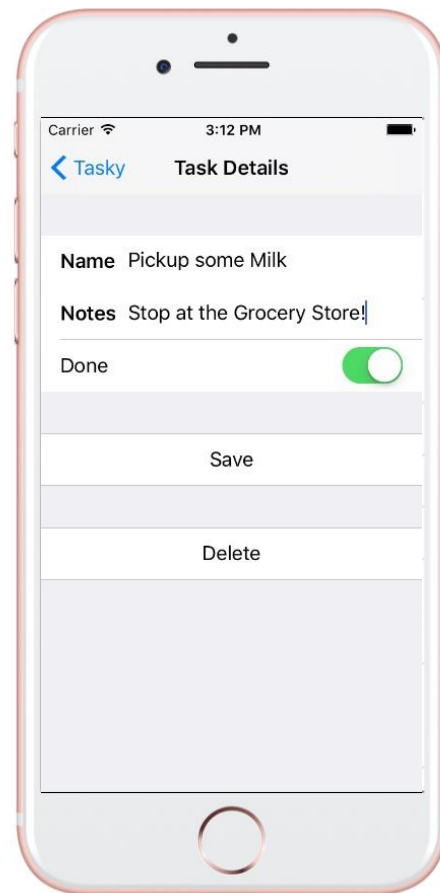
# Data > Views

- ❖ We use code to display internal data in our pages

```
Name.Text = task.Title;  
Notes.Text = task.Notes;  
IsDone.IsToggled = task.Completed;  
...
```

- ❖ ... and events to provide interactivity / behavior

```
Name.TextChanged += (sender, e) =>  
    task.Title = Name.Text;  
IsDone.Toggled += (sender, e) =>  
    task.Completed = IsDone.IsToggled;
```



# Data > Views in code

- ❖ This approach works, and for small-ish applications is perfectly adequate but it has disadvantages as the application grows in complexity



Updates to data are not centralized



Relationships in data or UI behavior is harder to manage



Hard to unit test

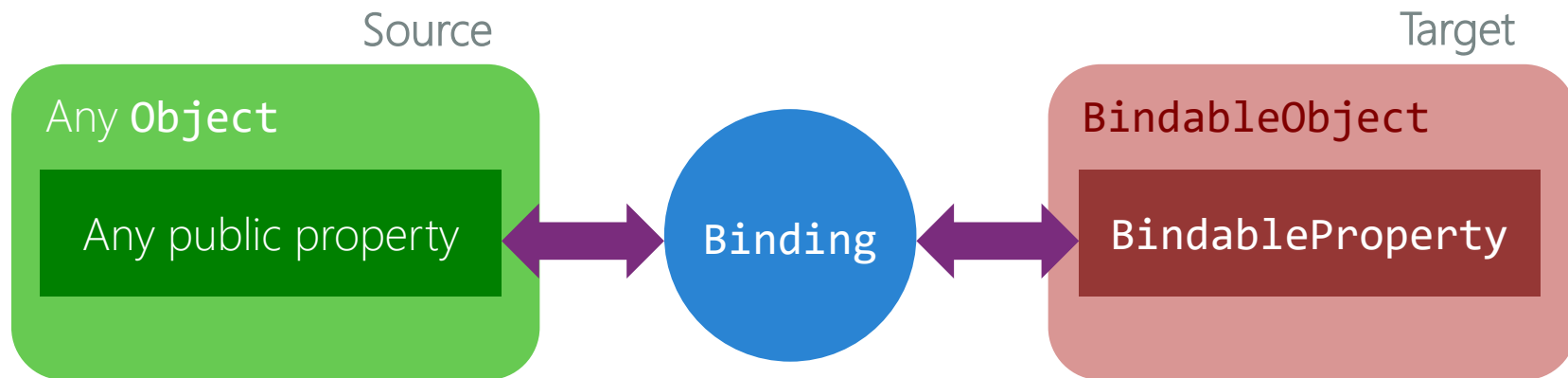


UI is tightly coupled to the code behind logic, changes ripple through code



# Introducing: Data Binding

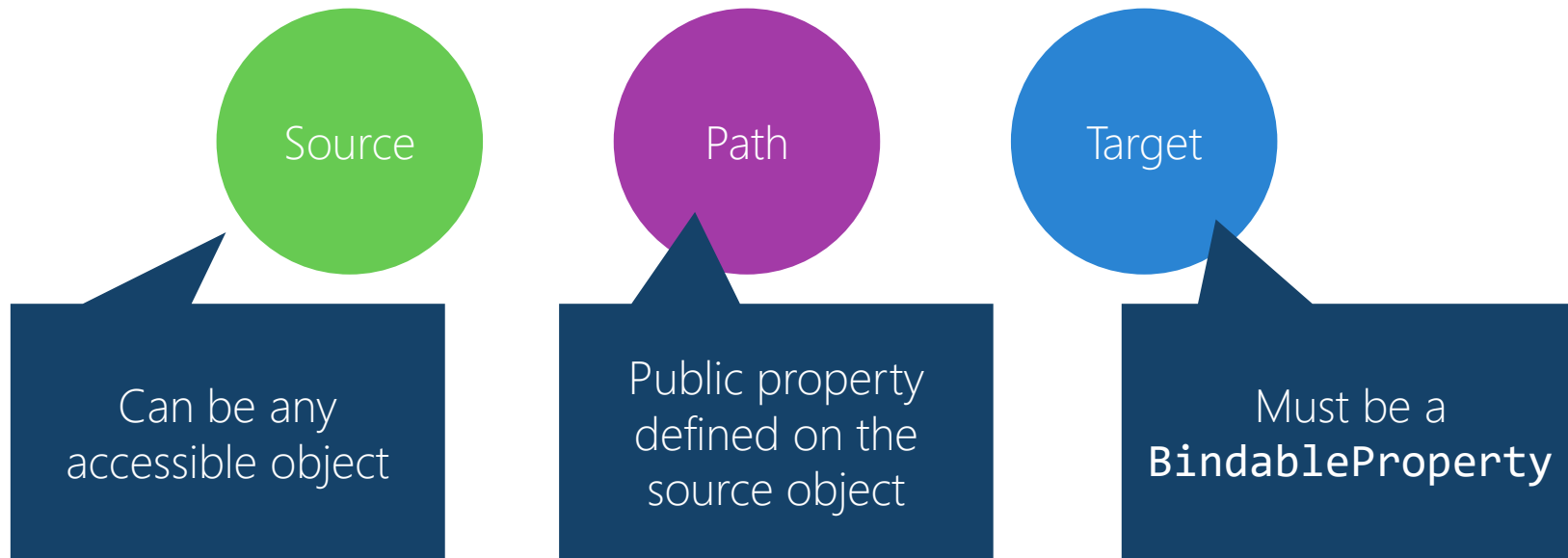
- ❖ Data Binding involves creating a loose **relationship** between a **source property** and a **target property** so that the source and target are **unaware of each other**



Binding acts as an *intermediary* – moving the data between the source and target

# Creating Bindings in Xamarin.Forms

❖ Bindings require three pieces of information



# Creating bindings [Source]

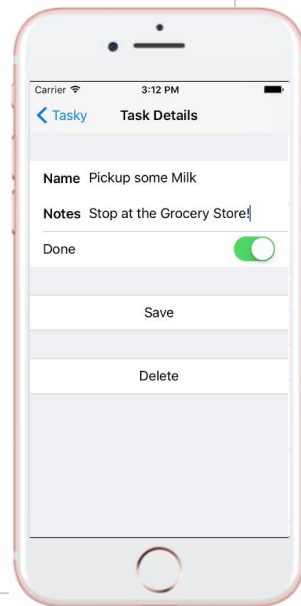
```
Todo task = new Todo() { Title = "Pickup some Milk", ... };
```

```
Entry Name = new Entry();
```

1 `Binding nameBinding = new Binding();`  
`nameBinding.Source = task;`

...

**Binding** identifies the **source** of the binding data – this is where the data comes from, in this case it's a single person defined in our application



# Creating bindings [Path]

```
Todo task = new Todo() { Title = "Pickup some Milk", ... };
```

```
Entry Name = new Entry();
```

```
Binding nameBinding = new Binding();
```

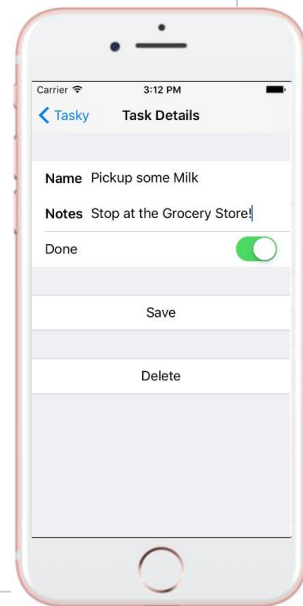
```
nameBinding.Source = task;
```

2 

```
nameBinding.Path = "Title";
```

```
...
```

Binding identifies the *property path* which identifies a property on the source to get the data from, in this case we want to get the value from the **Todo.Title** property



# Creating bindings [Path]

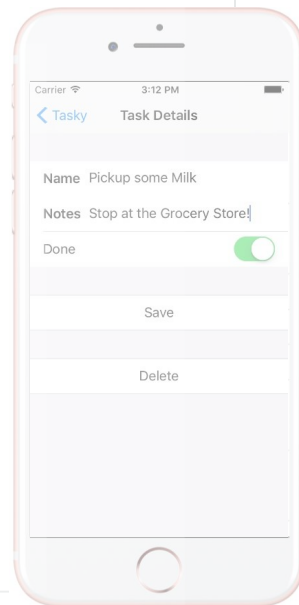
```
Todo task = new Task { Name = "Pickup some Milk" };
```

```
Entry Name =
```

```
Binding nameBinding = new Binding("Name");
nameBinding.Source = task;
nameBinding.Path =
```

## More Path Examples

```
new Binding("Property")
new Binding("Property.Child")
new Binding("Property[Key]")
new Binding("Property[1]")
new Binding("[Key]")
new Binding(".");
```



# Creating bindings [Target]

```
Todo task = new Todo() { Title = "Pickup some Milk", ... };
```

```
Entry Name = new Entry();
```

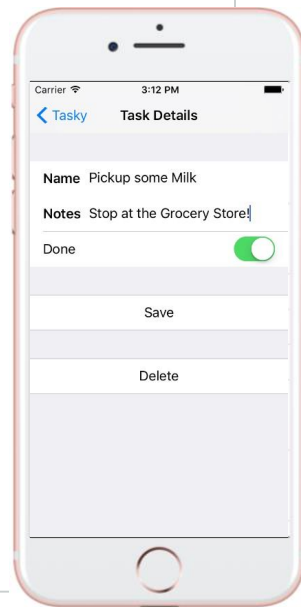
```
Binding nameBinding = new Binding();
```

```
nameBinding.Source = task;
```

```
nameBinding.Path = "Title";
```

3 `Name.SetBinding(Entry.TextProperty, nameBinding);`

Binding is associated to the target property using the **BindableObject.SetBinding** method



# Creating bindings [Target]

```
Todo task = new Todo() { Title = "Pickup some Milk", ... };
```

```
Entry Name = new Entry();
```

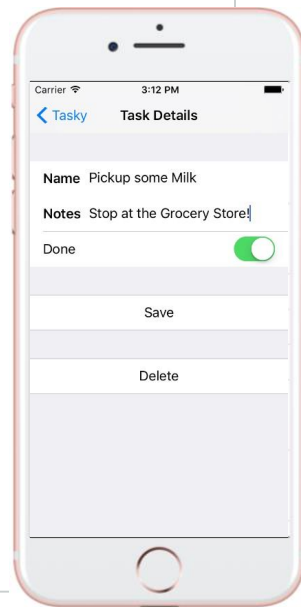
```
Binding nameBinding = new Binding();
```

```
nameBinding.Source = task;
```

```
nameBinding.Path = "Title";
```

3 `Name.SetBinding(Entry.TextProperty, nameBinding);`

This is passed the specific target property the binding will work with – this must be a **BindableProperty**



# Creating bindings [Target]

```
Todo task = new Todo() { Title = "Pickup some Milk", ... };
```

```
Entry Name = new Entry();
```

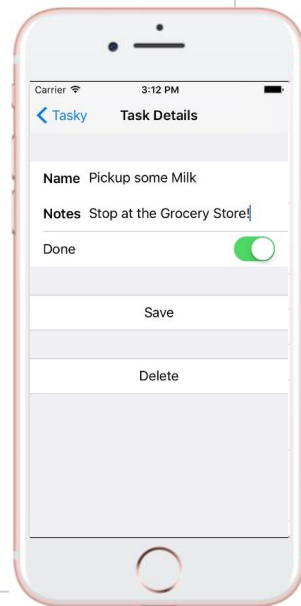
```
Binding nameBinding = new Binding();
```

```
nameBinding.Source = task;
```

```
nameBinding.Path = "Title";
```

3 `Name.SetBinding(Entry.TextProperty, nameBinding);`

... and the binding which identifies the source and the property on the source to apply





# Creating bindings [XAML]

- ❖ Create bindings in XAML with **{Binding}** markup extension

```
<StackLayout Padding="20" Spacing="20">
  <StackLayout.Resources>
    <ResourceDictionary>
      <Todo x:Key="getMilk" Title="Pickup some Milk" />
    </ResourceDictionary>
  </StackLayout.Resources>
  <Entry Text="{Binding Title,
    ...
  </StackLayout>
```

**{Binding}** takes the Path as the first unnamed argument

Source supplied through resource

Assigned to Target property

# Data binding source

- ❖ Pages often display properties from a small number of data objects
- ❖ Can set the binding source on each binding separately, or use the **BindingContext** as the *default* binding source

```
public class Todo
{
    public string Title { get; set; }
    public string Notes { get; set; }
    public bool Completed { get; set; }
}
```

Name Pickup some Milk

Notes Stop at the Grocery Store!

Done



# Multiple Bindings

- ❖ **BindingContext** supplies the source for any binding associated with a view when the **Binding.Source** property is **not** set

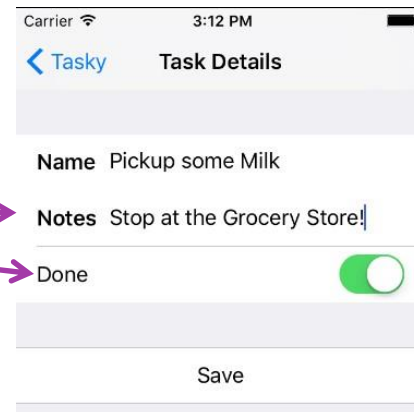
```
Todo task = new Todo() { Title = "Buy a Surface Studio", ... };  
...  
Name.BindingContext = task;  
Name.SetBinding<Todo>(Entry.TextProperty,  
                      data => data.Title, BindingMode.TwoWay);
```

Useful to use a generic form of **SetBinding** to create bindings with typed properties when establishing bindings in code, notice we are *not* setting a source property on the binding – instead, it will use **BindingContext**

# BindingContext inheritance

- ❖ **BindingContext** is automatically *inherited* from parent to child – can set it once on the root view and it will be used for all children

```
public partial class TaskyDetailsPage : ContentPage
{
    public TaskyDetailsPage (Todo task)
    {
        BindingContext = task;
        InitializeComponent ();
    }
}
```




# BindingContext inheritance

- ❖ **BindingContext** is automatically *inherited* from parent to child – can set it once on the root view and it will be used for all children

```
BindingContext = new Todo() { Title = "Buy a Surface Studio" };
```

```
<StackLayout Padding="20" Spacing="20">  
  <Entry Text="{Binding Title}" />  
  <Entry Text="{Binding Notes}" />  
  <Switch IsToggled="{Binding Completed}" />  
</StackLayout>
```



By setting the binding context to the **Todo**, no explicit source is necessary in XAML

# Group Exercise

Using Data Binding in a Xamarin.Forms Application

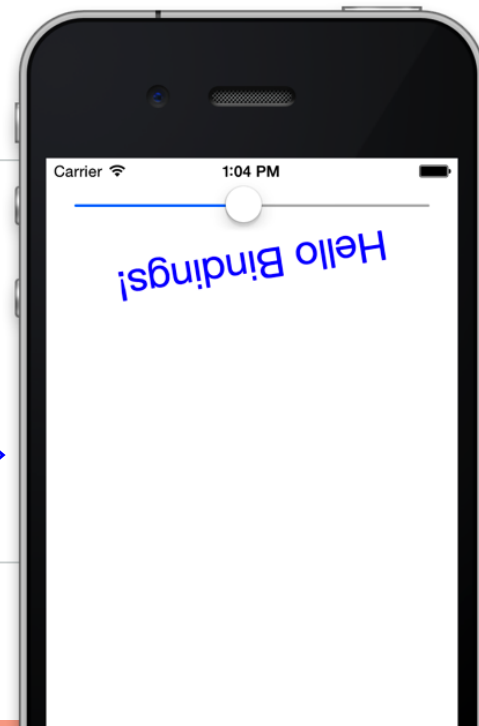


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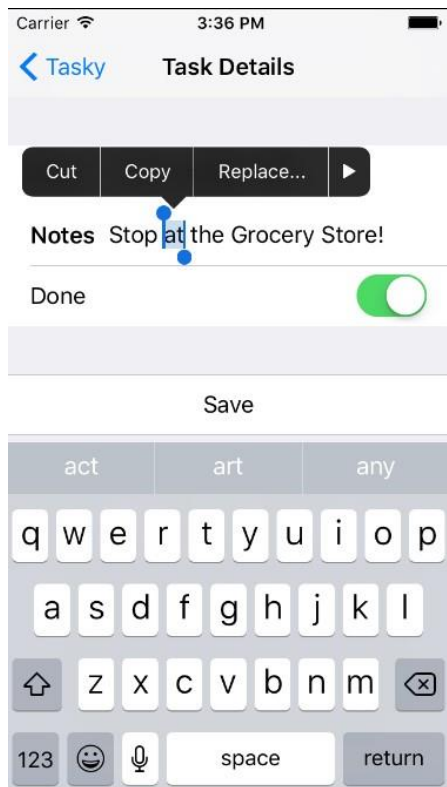
# View-to-View Bindings

- ❖ **{x:Reference}** identifies named elements in the same XAML page – can use this to provide a source to a **Binding**

```
<StackLayout Padding="20" Spacing="20">  
  <Label Text="Hello, Bindings" TextColor="Blue" ...  
    Rotation="{Binding Source={x:Reference slider},  
      Path=Value}" />  
  ...  
  <Slider x:Name="slider" Minimum="0" Maximum="360" />  
</StackLayout>
```



# Creating two-way bindings



- ❖ Typically want data to be bi-directional
  - source > target (always happens)
  - target > source (optional)

```
Notes.TextChanged += (sender, e)
=> task.Notes = Notes.Text;
```



# Binding Mode

- ❖ Binding **Mode** controls the direction of the data transfer, can set to "TwoWay" to enable bi-directional bindings

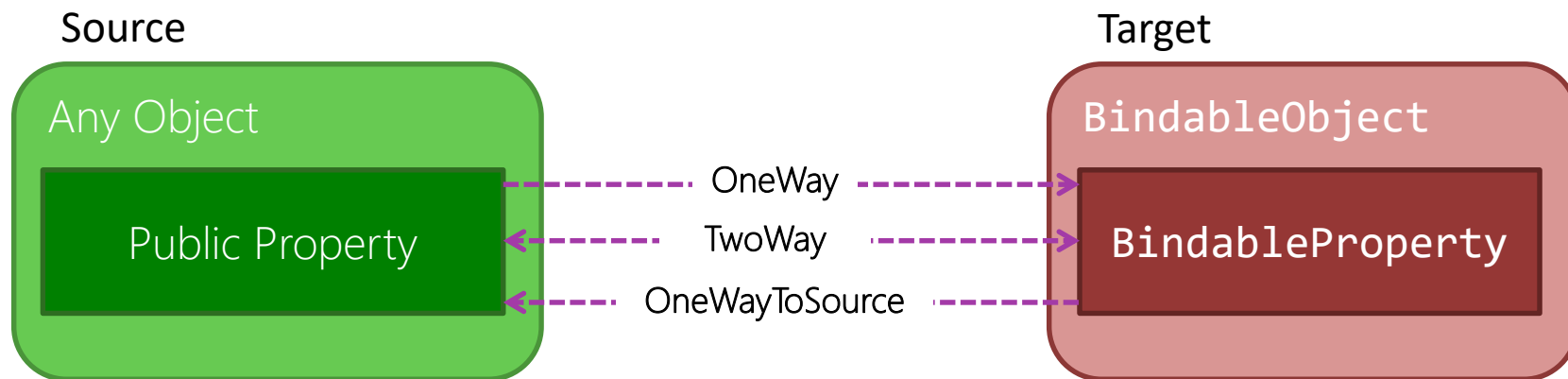
```
Notes.SetBinding(Entry.TextProperty,  
    new Binding("Notes") {  
        Mode = BindingMode.TwoWay  
    });
```

```
<Entry  
    Text="{Binding Notes, Mode=TwoWay}" />
```

Source Property must  
have **public setter**

Manually controlled through the  
**Binding.Mode** property

# Available Binding Modes



**BindingMode.Default** is the default value and it decides the mode based on the target property preference – either **OneWay** or **TwoWay**

# Default Binding Mode

- ❖ Default binding mode is *property-specific*, most are one-way by default with a few exceptions that default to two-way

`DatePicker.Date`

`SearchBar.Text`

`Entry.Text`

`Stepper.Value`

`ListView.SelectedItem`

`Switch.IsToggled`

`MultiPage<T>.SelectedItem`

`TimePicker.Time`

`Picker.SelectedIndex`



XAML platforms handle **binding modes differently**, best practice to get in the habit of explicitly setting the mode if it's not one-way – even if it defaults to what you want

# Pushing changes to the UI

- ❖ One-Way and Two-Way bindings always update the UI when the source property is changed

```
task.Notes = "Buy Groceries";
```

```
public class Todo
{
    public string Title { get; set; }
    public string Notes { get; set; }
    public DateTime By { get; set; }
    public bool Completed { get; set; }
}
```

Q:

How could  
Xamarin.Forms know  
**Notes** has changed?



# INotifyPropertyChanged

- ❖ **INotifyPropertyChanged** provides change notification contract, should be implemented by any modifiable model object you bind to

```
namespace System.ComponentModel
{
    public interface INotifyPropertyChanged
    {
        event PropertyChangedEventHandler PropertyChanged;
    }
}
```

# Implementing INotifyPropertyChanged

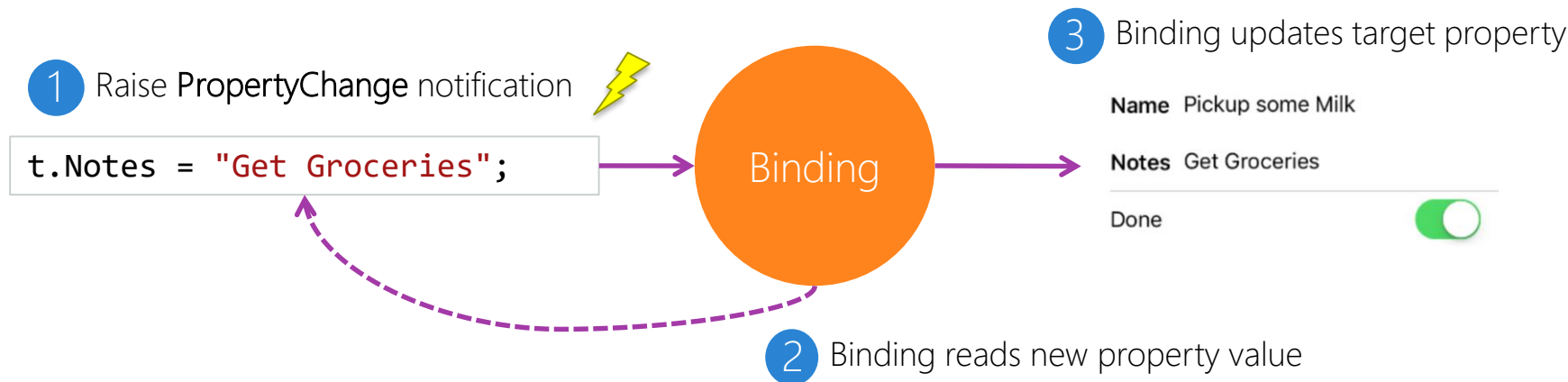
```
public class Todo : INotifyPropertyChanged
{
    public event PropertyChangedEventHandler PropertyChanged;

    string notes;
    public string Notes {
        get { return notes; }
        set {
            if (notes != value) {
                notes = value;
                PropertyChanged?.Invoke(
                    this, new PropertyChangedEventArgs(nameof(Notes)));
            }
        }
    }
}
```

Must raise the **PropertyChanged** event when any property is changed – otherwise the UI will not update

# INPC + Bindings

- ❖ Binding will subscribe to the **PropertyChanged** event and update the target property when it sees the source property notification



# Individual Exercise

Keeping the UI and data in sync using Bindings



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# Flash Quiz

# Flash Quiz

- ① The source data is supplied through \_\_\_\_\_ (Select all that apply).
- a) DataContext property
  - b) Binding.Source property
  - c) BindingContext property
  - d) None of the above

# Flash Quiz

- ① The source data is supplied through \_\_\_\_\_ (Select all that apply).
- a) DataContext property
  - b) Binding.Source property
  - c) BindingContext property
  - d) None of the above

# Flash Quiz

- ② The source can be any object
- a) True
  - b) False

# Flash Quiz

- ② The source can be any object
- a) True
  - b) False

# Flash Quiz

- ③ The target can be any object
- a) True
  - b) False

# Flash Quiz

- ③ The target can be any object
- a) True
  - b) False

# Flash Quiz

- ④ Model objects should perform the following steps when a property setter is called (pick the best answer):
- a) Change the property and raise the PropertyChanged event
  - b) Check if the property is different, change the property and raise the PropertyChanged event
  - c) Check if the property is different, raise the PropertyChanged event and then change the property
  - d) None of these are correct




# Flash Quiz

- ④ Model objects should perform the following steps when a property setter is called (pick the best answer):
- a) Change the property and raise the PropertyChanged event
  - b) Check if the property is different, change the property and raise the PropertyChanged event
  - c) Check if the property is different, raise the PropertyChanged event and then change the property
  - d) None of these are correct

# Summary

1. Map data to visuals
2. Create bindings in code
3. Create bindings in XAML
4. Work with binding context
5. Change binding modes
6. Implement property change notifications





Use value converters to  
bind incompatible types



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# Tasks

1. Perform textual conversions in XAML
2. Create a value converter
3. Apply a value converter in XAML



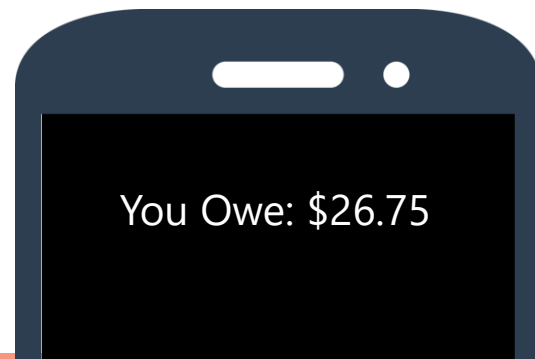
# Simple Textual Conversions

- ❖ Binding can do simple, text formatting when going from Source > Target

```
public double BillAmount { get; set; }
```

```
<Label Text="{Binding BillAmount,  
                StringFormat='You Owe: {0:C}'}"/>
```

Binding calls a **String.Format** passing the specified format string and the source value before assigning it to the target



# Going beyond textual formatting

- ❖ Bindings attempt to **automatically coerce data** when C# would allow it, but sometimes the data available isn't quite what the UI needs to display

Enter Password

Invalid

Enter Password

Excellent

Want the text color to change based on the password strength

```
<Label Text="{Binding PasswordStrength}"  
      TextColor="{Binding PasswordStrength}"  
      FontSize="24" />
```

# Value Converters

- ❖ Value Converters enable type coercion and formatting
- ❖ Assigned to **Converter** property of Binding
- ❖ Supports optional parameter (**Binding.ConverterParameter**)

```
public interface IValueConverter
{
    object Convert(object value,
                  Type targetType,
                  object parameter,
                  CultureInfo culture);

    object ConvertBack(object value,
                      Type targetType,
                      object parameter,
                      CultureInfo culture);
}
```

**Convert** used for source ➡ target  
**ConvertBack** used for target ➡ source

# Creating a Value Converter

```
public class PWStrengthConverter : IValueConverter
{
    public object Convert(object value, Type targetType, object parameter, CultureInfo culture)
    {
        PasswordStrength pwdstr = (PasswordStrength) value;
        ...
        return Color.Red;
    }

    public object ConvertBack(object value, Type targetType, object parameter, CultureInfo culture)
    {
        throw new NotSupportedException();
    }
}
```

Converter performs whatever translation is necessary to provide target with data – this can be simple conversions or even completely different objects!



# Creating a Value Converter

Provides backwards conversion for two-way binding, or can throw exception if this is not supported – this will cause a runtime failure

```
public class PWStrengthConverter :
{
    public object Convert(object value, Type targetType, object parameter, CultureInfo culture)
    {
        PasswordStrength pwdstr =
        ...
        return Color.Red;
    }

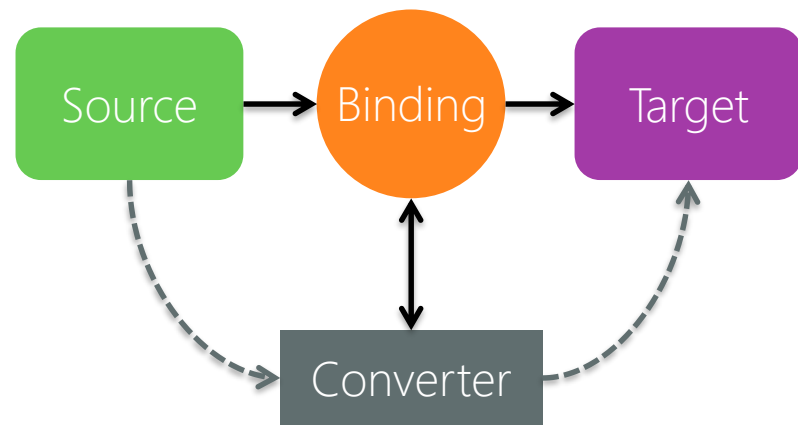
    public object ConvertBack(object value, Type targetType, object parameter, CultureInfo culture)
    {
        throw new NotSupportedException();
    }
}
```

# Using a Value Converter

- ❖ Value Converter is assigned to the binding **Converter** property

```
var binding = new Binding("PasswordStrength"){  
    Converter = new PWStrengthConverter()  
};
```

```
<ContentPage.Resources>  
    <ResourceDictionary>  
        <c:PWStrengthConverter x:Key="pwsCvt"/>  
    </ResourceDictionary>  
</ContentPage.Resources>  
  
<Label TextColor="{Binding PasswordStrength,  
    Converter={StaticResource pwsCvt}}" />
```



Binding passes values through converter

# Debugging Bindings

- ❖ Can use dummy converter to debug data bindings – gets called during the data transfer and provides for a convenient breakpoint location

```
10 public class DummyConverter : IValueConverter
11 {
12     public object Convert(object value, Type targetType,
13                          object parameter, CultureInfo culture) {
14         return value;
15     }
16
17     public object ConvertBack(object value, Type targetType,
18                             object parameter, CultureInfo culture) {
19         return value;
20     }
21 }
```

Check out <https://github.com/xamarinhq/xamu-infrastructure> for several great reusable value converters – including this one

# Individual Exercise

Using Value Converters

# Flash Quiz

# Flash Quiz

- ① **IValueConverter.Convert** is called when going from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_
- a) Source > Target
  - b) Target > Source

# Flash Quiz

- ① **IValueConverter.Convert** is called when going from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_
- a) Source > Target
  - b) Target > Source

# Flash Quiz

- ② To pass a binding-specific parameter to a value converter, you can set the \_\_\_\_\_ property.
- a. Parameter
  - b. ConversionParameter
  - c. ConverterParameter
  - d. BindingParameter



# Flash Quiz

- ② To pass a binding-specific parameter to a value converter, you can set the \_\_\_\_\_ property.
- a. Parameter
  - b. ConversionParameter
  - c. ConverterParameter
  - d. BindingParameter

# Flash Quiz

- ③ **Binding.StringFormat** can be used to convert an integer type to a double type
- a. True
  - b. False

# Flash Quiz

- ③ **Binding.StringFormat** can be used to convert an integer type to a double type
- a. True
  - b. False

# Summary

1. Perform textual conversions in XAML
2. Create a value converter
3. Apply a value converter in XAML



# Thank You!

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