Localization

Success Factors for an App

One of your biggest concerns when you complete your app and publish it for distribution or purchase is whether or not a large number of people accept it and use it.

Success factors include:

- Technical features

- Usability

- Cost to acquire the app

- Globalization

Globalization

Globalization refers to the planning, design, and development of products, keeping in mind a multicultural audience. It consists of two phases:

1. Internationalization

2. Localization

Internationalization

Internationalization refers to the planning and preparation for a product to support global markets.

- Removal of cultural assumptions

- Separation of country- or language-specific content to make it easier to adapt the product

Internationalization can be thought of as (re-) designing your product so that it is easier to make country-specific versions of it to sell. Kind of like creating a neutral template.

Localization

Localization is the process of actually adapting an internationalized product to a specific market.

This includes:

- Translation of strings into the local language

- Use of local currency symbols

- Use of local date/time formats

- Use of local address and phone number formats

- Choosing colors, fonts, and other styles as appropriate

- Choosing appropriate music

Companies and Globalization

- Smaller companies tend to dismiss globalization at the start, and then retrofit their applications after once its usefulness is recognized.

- Larger companies have G11N (globalization) experts or departments that review all of the company's products for appropriate localization for all markets.

Software developers trained in I18N (internationalization) learn to design and write their code in such a way that it is easy to prepare multiple locales for the end product.

- Retrofitting code to make 50 or 100 different versions of the product with customized strings, etc., for each locale is expensive.

- If you plan on deploying your application internationally, it's better to plan for it from the very start.

Localization in iOS: Strings

You want to localize whenever you intend on shipping your product to another market with a different language.

One task you would want to perform is to localize all of the strings the end user might see.

You can find strings that need to be localized in:

- User Interface elements
- Strings in code

Localization in iOS: Strings

To help you do this, Xcode offers two methods you can use to manage strings in your code:

- `NSLocalizedString`

- `NSLocalizedStringFromTable`

The goal is to encase all strings in one of these methods, so you can execute a tool that pulls all the strings out of your code, ready to hand to a translator.

What to do:

- Create a file called `Localizable.strings` in your project.

- Add entries in the following format:

```
<key> = <translation>;
```

- Use `NSLocalizedString` for all user visible strings:

```
NSLocalizedString(<key>, <comment>)
```

Argument 1: the key in the table
Argument 2: a comment to put in the table above the string