

Mobile Computing - Assignment 6

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1) Differences between designing an interface on Windows Phone 7 & iOS:

- Windows Phone UI designing follows the XAML & C# guidelines. UI development on iOS follows the Cocoa coding guidelines. The UI on a Windows Phone app can be designed either on the .xaml file using the toolbox, or externally using Microsoft Expression Blend. iOS UI development can be done either on a .xib file, or in some cases a Storyboard, which are a part of the created app classes. iOS does not have an external tool like Expression Blend.
- Windows Phone UI designing does not include different touch functionalities like 'push down', 'touch up', 'touch down' etc. These are included in iOS. Also, it is necessary to explicitly 'connect' UI items on iOS to specific functions. On Windows Phone, a method is generated for every UI item, if needed.
- Windows Phone has a different set of tools for UI designing than iOS. iOS includes labels, table cells, item pickers and view controllers. Windows Phone features hub tiles, text blocks, panoramic screens among others. Some of these are similar in function to iOS, but designated differently.

2) Reasons to develop for Windows Phone 7 instead of iOS:

- iOS is an established player in the mobile application world. There are thousands of apps for iOS that can do practically anything. Windows Phone is relatively new and there are not many apps available. Hence, it is better to develop for Windows Phone as an app can actually add productivity to the Windows Phone Marketplace and be of benefit to its users, thus increasing the number of Windows Phone apps.
- Windows Phone development uses xaml & C# whereas iOS development uses Objective C & Cocoa. C# is much more readable and easier to understand than Objective C, as it is syntactically similar to popular programming languages like C++ & Java. Objective C is far too complicated.
- Apple does not allow the installation and use of iOS on non-Apple devices. Microsoft and Google are more towards the open source philosophy and allow the use of their mobile operating systems on devices not manufactured by them. Apple has imposed too many restrictions on their software, that has led to the worldwide spread of jailbreaking. We feel it is better to develop applications that cater to a variety of phones, and not just the iPhone.

3) We prefer the Windows platform. Although iOS is much more intuitive, Windows Phone is very different and the tiles and aesthetic appeal of the phone GUI is much better. iOS has been following the same UI since iOS 3.0. Different version of XCode and the iOS SDK require methods to be implemented differently, thus showing poor backward compatibility. Such is not the case on the Windows platform, as the same code works perfectly on Visual Studio 2010 and 2012. iOS does have superior compatibility with third party services like AWS or CloudMine, but we personally believe that Apple likes to complicate things unnecessarily, as we witnessed in the course of the previous 5 assignments. Windows application development was far less complicated.

Due to all these reasons, we would like to develop apps on the Windows Phone platform, rather than iOS.