How useful is learning GWT? [closed]

Asked 16 years ago   Modified 5 years, 10 months ago   Viewed 6k times

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Closed 4 years ago.

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I develop web applications and in my job so far, I have been waging battles with various browsers whenever some JS or CSS quirks happen. I believe using GWT will help me tremendously from what I understand from this description:

> Writing web apps today is a tedious and error-prone process. Developers can spend 90% of their time working around browser quirks. In addition, building, reusing, and maintaining large JavaScript code bases and AJAX components can be difficult and fragile. Google Web Toolkit

> (GWT) eases this burden by allowing developers to quickly build and maintain complex yet highly performant JavaScript front-end applications in the Java programming language.

What is the general opinion on GWT? How easy is it to learn and use it?

EDIT: I am a Java developer!

java   gwt

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edited Jan 30, 2019 at 22:40

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6 revs, 2 users 64%
Vijay Dev

GWT has been supplanted by Web Components and other modernized standardized web technologies. For the Java developer wanting to make Web app, look to the *Vaadin Flow* framework for a fast productive way to build a Web GUI without having to learn HTML, CSS, JavaScript, etc. *Vaadin Flow* long ago was based on GWT, but has since moved to full support of Web Components instead. – Basil Bourque Oct 4 at 2:51 ✎

5 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default) ⬍

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You don't say if you've got any background with Java. If you don't, then, well, I can't speak to what your learning curve may be.

However...as someone who's been working with Java for ~9 years, and much of that time spent with Swing, I've found GWT very easy to learn.

The widgets are different from Swing, so that takes some getting used to. But, from my perspective, it's really no different than learning any other library.

Personally, I love that I can use IntelliJ (my editor of choice) and take advantage of all the fantastic Java tools that help me write better code. (BTW...that's part of the [GWT mission](#).)

I love the fact that this is a vibrant, and highly active toolkit, with lots of people really interested in making it better. (Again, take a look at the discussion group, or even browse through the [Contributor's discussion group](#).)

If you want access to more or different widgets, there are lots of projects looking to fill the gaps:

- [GWT-Ext](#)

- [ExtGWT](#)

- [SmartGWT](#)

- [Advanced GWT Components](#)

- [GWT Incubator](#) (where lots of interesting ideas from the GWT team originate)

(NOTE: I am NOT endorsing any of these project or commenting on their relative merits, just trying to provide some references...)

I think if you dig around on the web, especially taking a look at the [GWT Discussion Group](#) you can get a good feeling for what others are doing with GWT.

Having said all that, beware...you will still find some issues with how things render on IE6 vs IE7 vs FireFox 3, vs... I've not written a webapp in straight JavaScript or with any other toolkits, so I can't say how much better GWT is in this respect. All I know is that in 10+ months of working on the application I work on, we've encountered only a few cases where we had to specialize CSS for one browser or another.

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answered Dec 11, 2008 at 18:31

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If you're coming from Java background or are used to something like Swing I think it makes sense to use GWT as it keeps you coding in a familiar environment with familiar concepts. The other good reason to use GWT is if your team consists of mostly Java developers and very

few web developers. In these cases it should be fairly easy to learn and use.

On the other hand, I' not sure it's the right level of abstraction for building most web applications, especially if you're not building a desktop-like application but web pages mixed with rich functionality.

Javascript is a powerful language, more suited for web in some ways than Java (Groovy could amend that, but I'm not sure how easy it is to integrate with GWT), there are plenty of mature JS frameworks that keep you away from most browser quirks and offer just the right level of abstraction, there are unit testing frameworks for JS, and there are some good programming practices to make your code more managable.

For writing web apps I prefer doing client development on the client, and would like to see browsers evolve more in that direction instead of becoming containers for various sandboxes like Flex or GWT.

Share Improve this answer   answered Dec 11, 2008 at 18:49

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al4nis

I came from a C# background and the switch to Java and GWT was not a painful one. Once you understand the

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concept of asynchronous RPC calls, JSNI and similar you are on the right path.

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answered Dec 11, 2008 at 19:11

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Drejc

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Personally if you can find an alternative to Ext-GWT do, as the support is awful, the whole thing is buggy and ill conceived. In Addition, I have failed to find any tutorial on running Ext-GWT in Eclipse. I have successfully installed and run a GWT sample app in Eclipse with small fuss, but now I wish to use the Ext-GWT library, they cannot play together. The Eclipse GWT Plug-in sets up its own little environment, which won't accommodate Ext-GWT components and visa-versa. For example how does Ext-GWT fit in with GWT moduleOnloadFunction, when it needs its own entry point? We regularly use the JS library at work which is fine, but the forums are abysmal, the moderators are often rude, or too vague, and there appears to be no such thing as a "simple answer"

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answered Jun 10, 2010 at 12:15

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Steve

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I maybe a little late to the party... but for future readers...

I have been building GWT apps for a little less than 3 years now, so I maybe in a good position to answer the "how easy it is to learn GWT" question.

When I decided to write GWT apps, my Java skills weren't as comfy, so my GWT learning journey, was a bit bumpy. By the time my Java was were I wanted it to be, an [online book](#) by Marius Andreiana, made my GWT learning experience better.

The general opinion? From a [History and Future of Google Web Toolkit Google I/O 2012](#) talk by Ray Cromwell, he describes GWT as a tool to help Java developers develop for the web without learning any extra technologies, testing frameworks, build tools and all that. Its kind of like how [Phone-gap](#) is mobile development tool made for web developers.

Now, by the time of the posting of this question, if referred to [Cromwell's presentation](#), GWT did not feel as much, at least, when one looks at it from where it is right now; The community is robust, the [documentation](#) is a work of art, and of course [more books](#), my personal favorite is the one by [Daniel Guermeur and Amy Unruh](#). However, I still feel as if there's a GWT tutorials deficiency at YouTube, but, all in due time.

For my closing, the HTML/CSS/JavaScript world has also changed drastically, better frameworks for front-ends,

build automation, dependency management, testing, and you name it. Personally, I choose to write GWT when building google app engine apps, so that its all java code, and choose to depend on CSS/JavaScript frameworks the rest of the times.

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answered Oct 25, 2015 at 19:37

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user3451822