

Guestbook

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Assessment of Appcelerator platform

Appcelerator platform is a great open-source development environment for creating native cross-platform mobile application. To create a mobile application, one requires knowledge about Javascript and the Titanium API. The learning curve for this platform is average. It does require extensive knowledge about the Titanium API if you desire to create a rich and engaging mobile application. My development experience with Titanium API is as follows:

Pros:

- Easy to install and get started
- Great API documentation and developer community
- Can develop an application in couple of hours, very good for prototyping IMO
- Animation and persistent data storage is simple and straight forward

Cons:

- Lot of workaround to use native UI elements/Theme(Android)
- Compiling and releasing an application on Device and Emulator takes a bit long compared to Native
- Performance of application is very laggy and sluggish compare to a native application

Application Design

Technical Design & Process Flow

The application contains three screens Main screen, View Guestbook Screen, Sign In Screen. These screens are used to interact with the users. In the Main screen, the user has the options to navigate to the View Guestbook Screen or Sign In Screen. If the user selects the View Guestbook Screen via a Button, the View Guestbook screen will be laid on top of the Main Screen. The View Guestbook screen has a listview that displays all the guest sign in. If the user press the guest name, a dialog will appear showing the comment and what date they signed it on. If the user does a long press then contact information will be displayed. The user can email or call them by pressing the two options. Now at any point in the application, they can press the back button navigate to the Main Screen. If the user had selected the Sign In option, they will arrive at a form with fields. All of these fields are required to be filled out and once they are completed they can press the Submit button. When the Submit button is pressed, the user will be taken to the View Guestbook Screen. If they decide not to submit their information they can simply press cancel and Main screen will be displayed.

Behind the scenes of the applications, there are various event listeners for the buttons and the listview. The button event listener navigate the user to different screens. The listview event listener display more information via dialog. All of the data entered are stored into a database. When the data is to be displayed, a query is done to pull all the information from the data. In the database, the table is created with following structure, 'id INTEGER PRIMARY KEY, firstName TEXT, lastName TEXT, email TEXT, phone TEXT, date TEXT, comment TEXT'.

For the Sign In screen, a form.js module(see <http://developer.appcelerator.com/blog/2011/10/forging-titanium-episode-10-forms.html>) was used to simplify the process of adding fields and saving data. Each field values are stored into the database when Submit is clicked.