

Hands-on lab

Lab 8: The Windows Store APIs

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Overview

One of the most compelling reasons to write Windows Store apps is the ease with which you can publish them to the Windows Store. With more than 700 million PCs worldwide currently running Windows 7, and with each of those PCs representing a potential upgrade to Windows 8, the market—and revenue potential—is both huge and diverse. With a revenue-sharing plan that directs up to 80% of the sales proceeds to the author, there is no shortage of motivation for developers to write great apps and offer them to the world.

The Store has very flexible monetization options: you can do trials, one-time purchases, in-app purchases, third-party commerce, and advertisement.

For trials, you can use the Windows Store APIs in the **Windows.ApplicationModel.Store** namespace to detect whether an app is running in a trial license. The Windows Runtime also offers other APIs that make it easy to upgrade from trial versions to paid versions, support in-app purchases of additional products, retrieve licensing information, and more. The **CurrentAppSimulator** class of the Windows Runtime provides a handy means for simulating purchases and testing code that relies on Windows Store APIs, all in a controlled environment.

In this lab, you’ll use the Windows Store APIs to monetize Contoso Cookbook.

First, you’ll modify the About box to detect trial versions and include a purchase button if the app has not been paid for. Next, you’ll use **CurrentAppSimulator** to simulate a purchase when the purchase button is clicked. Finally, you’ll simulate in-app purchases by offering Italian recipes as a paid add-on rather than for free.

# Objectives

This lab shows you how to:

* + Detect whether your app is running as a trial version.
  + Simulate purchases of the app from within the app itself.
  + Simulate in-app purchases of additional products.
  + Retrieve licensing information regarding apps and products.

# System requirements

* 1. You must have the following items to complete this lab:
  + Windows 8
  + Microsoft Visual Studio 2012

# Setup

* 1. To prepare your computer for this lab, you must:
  2. Install Windows 8.
  3. Install Microsoft Visual Studio 2012.

# Exercises

This Hands-On Lab comprises the following exercises:

* 1. Detect trial versions
  2. Simulate app purchases
  3. Simulate product purchases

Estimated time to complete this lab: **30 to 40 minutes**.

Exercise 1: Detect trial versions

In this exercise, you’ll use the Windows Store APIs in the Windows Runtime to customize the content of Contoso Cookbook’s About page. If the app has been purchased, you’ll display licensing information. If it hasn’t been purchased—that is, if it’s running as a trial version—you’ll display a purchase button instead. Moreover, the price displayed on the purchase button won’t be hardcoded, but will come from listing information retrieved from the Windows Store.

Task 1 – Add a license file

We’ll be using the **CurrentAppSimulator** class to simulate purchases, retrieve licensing information, and more. To make the simulation as realistic as possible, we’ll use a file named license.xml to provide information about pricing, expiration dates, and more to **CurrentAppSimulator**.

* 1. Open the ContosoCookbook project you finished in Lab 7 in Visual Studio. If you didn’t complete Lab 7 or would like to start with a reference copy, you’ll find a completed version of the lab in the starting materials.
  2. If the project doesn’t already have a Data folder, create the folder in solution explorer.
  3. Right-click the Data folder and use the **Add > Existing Item** command to import license.xml from the data folder of the starting materials.
  4. Open App.xaml.cs and add the following statements to the **OnLaunched** method. Position this code after the **if** clause that checks connectivity and subscribes to push notifications.
     1. C#

1. // Initialize CurrentAppSimulator
2. var file = await Package.Current.InstalledLocation.GetFileAsync("Data\\license.xml");
3. await Windows.ApplicationModel.Store.CurrentAppSimulator.ReloadSimulatorAsync(file);
   1. Open license.xml and take a moment to inspect its contents. The <ListingInformation> element contains information about the app itself and about the Italian-recipes product we’ll offer for purchase in Exercise 3. <LicenseInformation> contains licensing information about the app and the product. In real life, all of this information would come from the Windows Store. In a simulation, however, the information comes from WindowsStoreProxy.xml.

Task 2 – Modify the About page

Now let’s modify the About page you created in Lab 6. Currently, the words “Trial Version” appear underneath the app title in the About page. We’ll use Windows Store APIs to determine whether this is indeed a trial version and customize the page’s content based on the results.

* 1. Right-click the project’s DataModel folder and use the **Add > New Item** command to add a new class to the project. Name the file AppLicenseDataSource.cs.
  2. Replace the file’s contents with this.
     1. C#
     2. using System;
     3. using System.Collections.Generic;
     4. using System.ComponentModel;
     5. using System.Linq;
     6. using System.Text;
     7. using System.Threading.Tasks;
     8. using Windows.ApplicationModel.Store;
     9. using Windows.Foundation;
     10. namespace ContosoCookbook
     11. {
     12. class AppLicenseDataSource : INotifyPropertyChanged
     13. {
     14. public event PropertyChangedEventHandler PropertyChanged;
     15. private bool \_licensed = false;
     16. private string \_price;
     17. public AppLicenseDataSource()
     18. {
     19. if (CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.IsTrial)
     20. {
     21. CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.LicenseChanged += OnLicenseChanged;
     22. GetListingInformationAsync();
     23. }
     24. else
     25. \_licensed = true;
     26. }
     27. private async void GetListingInformationAsync()
     28. {
     29. var listing = await CurrentAppSimulator.LoadListingInformationAsync();
     30. \_price = listing.FormattedPrice;
     31. }
     33. private void OnLicenseChanged()
     34. {
     35. if (!CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.IsTrial)
     36. {
     37. \_licensed = true;
     38. CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.LicenseChanged -= OnLicenseChanged;
     40. ((ContosoCookbook.App)App.Current).Dispatcher.RunAsync(Windows.UI.Core.CoreDispatcherPriority.Normal, () =>
     41. {
     42. if (PropertyChanged != null)
     43. {
     44. PropertyChanged(this, new PropertyChangedEventArgs("IsLicensed"));
     45. PropertyChanged(this, new PropertyChangedEventArgs("IsTrial"));
     46. PropertyChanged(this, new PropertyChangedEventArgs("LicenseInfo"));
     47. }
     48. }); }
     49. }
     50. public bool IsLicensed
     51. {
     52. get { return \_licensed; }
     53. }
     54. public bool IsTrial
     55. {
     56. get { return !\_licensed; }
     57. }
     58. public string LicenseInfo
     59. {
     60. get
     61. {
     62. if (!\_licensed)
     63. return "Trial Version";
     64. else
     65. return ("Valid until " + CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.ExpirationDate.LocalDateTime.ToString("dddd, MMMM d, yyyy"));
     66. }
     67. }
     69. public string FormattedPrice
     70. {
     71. get
     72. {
     73. if (!String.IsNullOrEmpty(\_price))
     74. return "Upgrade to the Full Version for " + \_price;
     75. else
     76. return "Upgrade to the Full Version";
     77. }
     78. }
     79. }
     80. }
     81. **Note:** The AppLicenseDataSource class you just added implements **INotifyPropertyChanged** and exposes bindable properties named IsLicensed, IsTrial, LicenseInfo, and FormattedPrice. The first two use **CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.IsTrial** to determine whether the app that’s currently running has been purchased or is running as a trial version. LicenseInfo returns the string “Trial Version” if the app is a trial or a string containing the license’s expiration date if it’s not. FormattedPrice returns a button label containing the app’s price, which is obtained from the Windows Store (or, in this case, WindowsStoreProxy.xml). Pricing information comes from the **ListingInformation** object retrieved with **CurrentAppSimulator.LoadListingInformationAsync**.
  3. Open AboutUserControl.xaml and add an **xmlns:common="using:ContosoCookbook.Common"** attribute to the UserControl element at the top of the page.
     1. XAML
     2. <UserControl
     3. x:Class="ContosoCookbook.AboutUserControl"
     4. xmlns="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml/presentation"
     5. xmlns:x="http://schemas.microsoft.com/winfx/2006/xaml"
     6. xmlns:local="using:ContosoCookbook"
     7. xmlns:d="http://schemas.microsoft.com/expression/blend/2008"
     8. xmlns:mc="http://schemas.openxmlformats.org/markup-compatibility/2006"
     9. xmlns:common="using:ContosoCookbook.Common"
     10. mc:Ignorable="d"
     11. d:DesignHeight="300"
     12. d:DesignWidth="400">
  4. Now add the following statements just above the Grid element.
     1. XAML
     2. <UserControl.Resources>
     3. <local:AppLicenseDataSource x:Key="License" />
     4. <common:BooleanToVisibilityConverter x:Key="BooleanToVisibilityConverter"/>
     5. </UserControl.Resources>
     6. **Note:** **BooleanToVisibilityConverter** is a simple value converter that converts the Boolean value **true** into **Visibility.Visible**, and **false** into **Visibility.Collapsed**. It was included when the project was created by Visual Studio.
  5. Replace the TextBlock whose text is “Trial Version” with the following statements.
     1. XAML
     2. <TextBlock Text="{Binding LicenseInfo, Source={StaticResource License}}" FontFamily="Segoe UI" FontWeight="SemiLight" FontSize="18" TextWrapping="Wrap" />
     3. <Button x:Name="PurchaseButton" Width="225" Height="120" Margin="0,24,0,0" Visibility="{Binding IsTrial, Source={StaticResource License}, Converter={StaticResource BooleanToVisibilityConverter }}">
     4. <Button.Content>
     5. <TextBlock Text="{Binding FormattedPrice, Source={StaticResource License}}" TextWrapping="Wrap" TextAlignment="Center" />
     6. </Button.Content>
     7. </Button>
  6. Take a moment to examine the XAML you just added. The TextBlock text now comes from the LicenseInfo property of the AppLicenseDataSource object. The button text comes from the FormattedPrice property of the same object, and the button’s visibility is linked to the IsTrial property. As a result, the button won’t even appear in the page unless the app is running as a trial version.

Task 3 – Test the results

Now let’s test these changes to see **CurrentAppSimulator** and WindowsStoreProxy.xml in action.

* 1. Press F5 to start the app.
  2. Display the charms and tap the Settings charm.
  3. Tap **About** in the settings menu to display the About page.
  4. Confirm that a purchase button appears on the About page, and that the purchase price is $12.99, as shown in Figure 1.
     + 1. 
     1. Figure 1
     2. The About page for the trial version of the app
  5. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.
  6. Open license.xml and change the purchase price in the <Price> element in the <App> section from $12.99 to $8.99.
  7. Start the app again and go to the about page. What price appears on the purchase button now?
  8. Return to Visual Studio again and stop debugging.
  9. Open license.xml again and change the price back to $12.99. Also change <IsTrial> from “true” to “false”.
  10. Start the app and go to the About page. Verify that the purchase button is gone and that you now see the message “Valid until Saturday, December 31, 2022” in Figure 2.
      1. 
      2. Figure 2
      3. The About page for the purchased version of the app
  11. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.
  12. In preparation for the next exercise, change <IsTrial> from “false” back to “true” in license.xml.

Exercise 2: Simulate app purchases

1. You can use license.xml to test changes to your user interface (UI) based on whether the app is a trial version, but that’s no substitute for being able to simulate actual purchases. In this exercise, you’ll write a handler for the purchase button so you can “purchase” the app from the Windows Store.

Task 1 – Write a handler for the purchase button

To simulate app purchases, we’ll call **CurrentAppSimulator.RequestAppPurchaseAsync** when the user clicks the About page’s purchase button. And to detect when the purchase has been completed successfully, we’ll use the LicenseChanged event handler already present in AppLicenseDataSource.

* 1. Open AboutUserControl.xaml.
  2. Add the following **Click** attribute to the purchase button.
     1. XAML
     2. Click="OnPurchaseButtonClicked"
  3. Open AboutUserControl.xaml.cs and add the following using statement.
     1. C#
     2. using Windows.ApplicationModel.Store;
  4. Then add the following event handler.
     1. C#
     2. private void OnPurchaseButtonClicked(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
     3. {
     4. // Purchase the app
     5. CurrentAppSimulator.RequestAppPurchaseAsync(false);
     6. }
     7. **Note: RequestAppPurchaseAsync** is an asynchronous method. To determine whether the purchase was carried out, you handle **LicenseChanged** events. You’re not handling those events here because you’re already handling them in AppLicenseDataSource.cs. When a **LicenseChanged** event fires, the handler verifies that the app is no longer a trial version and fires **PropertyChanged** events to update controls bound to IsTrial and other AppLicenseDataSource properties.
  5. Before we go test our license, we need to cache the **App** object’s dispatcher because the **LicenseChanged** event can fire in a background thread, and we are using data binding to update our UI from within the event. Open App.xaml.cs and add the following member and property to the **App** class.
     1. C#

Windows.UI.Core.CoreDispatcher \_dispatcher = null;

public Windows.UI.Core.CoreDispatcher Dispatcher

{

get

{

return \_dispatcher;

}

}

* 1. Add an override for **OnWindowCreated** in your **App** class, so we can catch the window’s dispatcher.
     1. C#

protected override void OnWindowCreated(WindowCreatedEventArgs args)

{

\_dispatcher = args.Window.Dispatcher;

base.OnWindowCreated(args);

}

Task 2 – Purchase the app

Now let’s simulate an app purchase. Be aware that **CurrentAppSimulator** stores information about purchases and about changes in licensing status in memory; it doesn’t record them in WindowsStoreProxy.xml. After you purchase the app, then, it will remain “purchased” as long as it is running; but when you restart the app, you’ll once more be running a trial version.

* 1. Press F5 to start the app.
  2. Go to the About page and tap the purchase button to simulate an app purchase.
  3. Complete the simulated purchase by tapping the **Continue** button in the Windows Store dialog.
  4. Display the About page again and confirm that the purchase button has disappeared.
     1. **Note:** Contoso Cookbook doesn’t expose additional functionality to the user after it has been purchased; it merely replaces the purchase button with licensing information. In real life, you might choose to limit what the user can do with a trial version and expose the full functionality only after a purchase has been made.
  5. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

Exercise 3: Simulate product purchases

1. In addition to allowing apps to be purchased, the Windows Store supports in-app product purchases too. For example, a game could allow users to purchase additional levels of the game as they complete previous levels. In Windows Store API terms, features purchased this way are known as *products*, and the Windows Runtime provides the APIs you need for product purchases and for determining which products have been purchased, the licensing status of those products, and more.
2. In this exercise, you’ll modify Contoso Cookbook so that Italian recipes are no longer free, but must be purchased. You’ll add a simple UI for purchasing them that relies on **CurrentAppSimulator**, and logic that prevents Italian recipes from being shown in full until after a product purchase has been made.

Task 1 – Modify the item-detail page

The first step is to add a data-source class to provide product-licensing information. Then we’ll add a purchase button and use data binding to make sure that for Italian recipes, either the purchase button or recipe directions are displayed, but not both.

* 1. Right-click the project’s DataModel folder and use the **Add > New Item** command to add a new class to the project. Name the file ProductLicenseDataSource.cs.
  2. Replace the file’s contents with this.
     1. C#
     2. using System;
     3. using System.Collections.Generic;
     4. using System.ComponentModel;
     5. using System.Linq;
     6. using System.Text;
     7. using System.Threading.Tasks;
     8. using Windows.ApplicationModel.Store;
     9. namespace ContosoCookbook
     10. {
     11. class ProductLicenseDataSource : INotifyPropertyChanged
     12. {
     13. public event PropertyChangedEventHandler PropertyChanged;
     14. private const string \_name = "ItalianRecipes";
     15. private bool \_licensed = false;
     16. private string \_price;
     17. public string GroupTitle
     18. {
     19. set
     20. {
     21. if (value != "Italian")
     22. \_licensed = true;
     23. else if (CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.ProductLicenses[\_name].IsActive)
     24. \_licensed = true;
     25. else
     26. {
     27. CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.LicenseChanged += OnLicenseChanged;
     28. GetListingInformationAsync();
     29. }
     30. }
     31. }
     32. private async void GetListingInformationAsync()
     33. {
     34. var listing = await CurrentAppSimulator.LoadListingInformationAsync();
     35. \_price = listing.ProductListings[\_name].FormattedPrice;
     36. }
     38. private void OnLicenseChanged()
     39. {
     40. if (CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.ProductLicenses[\_name].IsActive)
     41. {
     42. \_licensed = true;
     43. CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.LicenseChanged -= OnLicenseChanged;
     45. ((ContosoCookbook.App)App.Current).Dispatcher.RunAsync(Windows.UI.Core.CoreDispatcherPriority.Normal, () =>
     46. {
     47. if (PropertyChanged != null)
     48. {
     49. PropertyChanged(this, new PropertyChangedEventArgs("IsLicensed"));
     50. PropertyChanged(this, new PropertyChangedEventArgs("IsTrial"));
     51. }
     52. }); }
     53. }
     55. public bool IsLicensed
     56. {
     57. get { return \_licensed; }
     58. }
     59. public bool IsTrial
     60. {
     61. get { return !\_licensed; }
     62. }
     63. public string FormattedPrice
     64. {
     65. get
     66. {
     67. if (!String.IsNullOrEmpty(\_price))
     68. return "Purchase Italian Recipes for " + \_price;
     69. else
     70. return "Purchase Italian Recipes";
     71. }
     72. }
     73. }
     74. }
     75. **Note:** ProductLicenseDataSource is similar to the AppLicenseDataSource class you added earlier. Whereas AppLicenseDataSource encapsulates data regarding the licensing state of the app, ProductLicenseDataSource encapsulates information regarding the state of the product named “ItalianRecipes.” That product is defined in license.xml.
  3. Open ItemDetailPage.xaml and add the following statements to the <Page.Resources> section.
     1. XAML
     2. <local:ProductLicenseDataSource x:Key="License" />

<common:BooleanToVisibilityConverter x:Key="BooleanToVisibilityConverter"/>

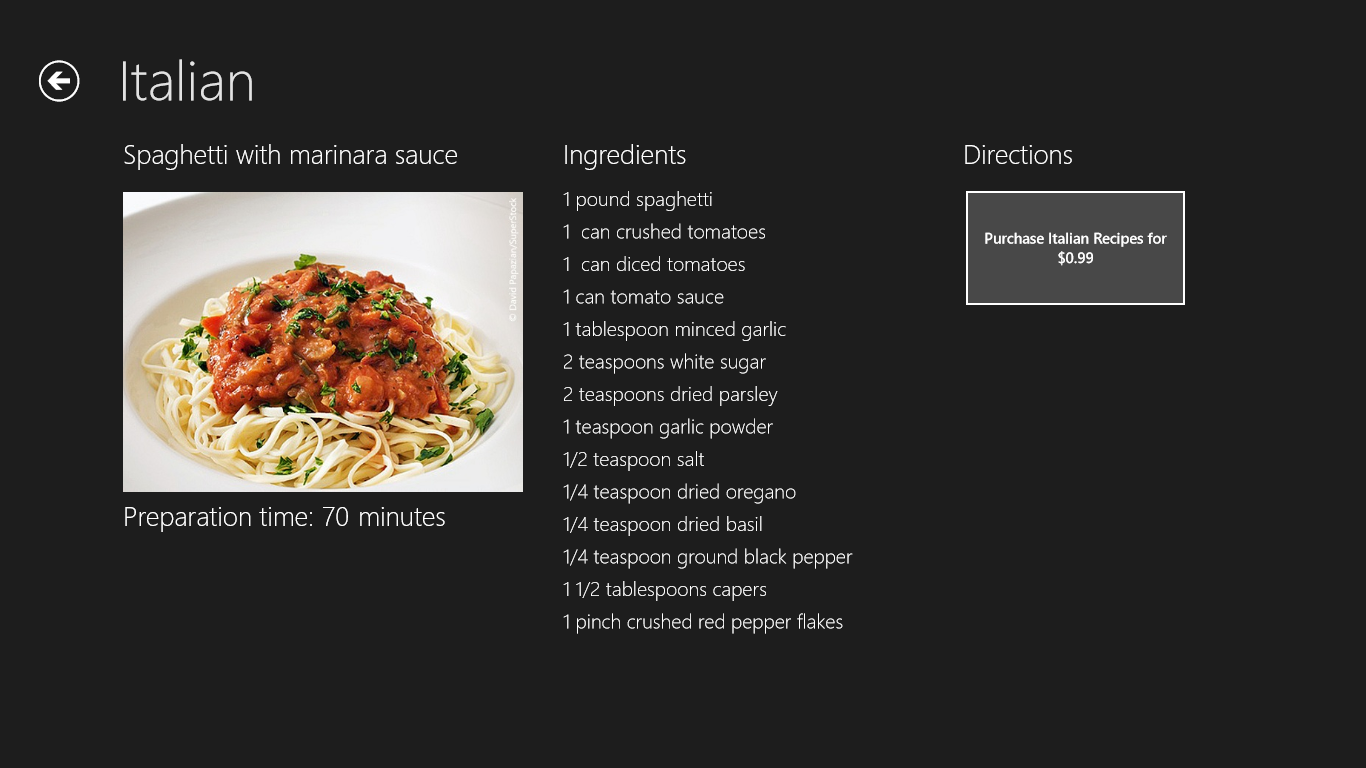
* 1. Find the two TextBlock elements whose **Text** property is “{Binding Directions}”. Replace each TextBlock with the following statements.
     1. XAML
     2. <TextBlock FontSize="20" FontWeight="Light" Text="{Binding Directions}" TextWrapping="Wrap" Visibility="{Binding IsLicensed, Source={StaticResource License}, Converter={StaticResource BooleanToVisibilityConverter }}" />
     3. <Button Width="225" Height="120" Background="#30ffffff" Click="OnPurchaseProduct" Visibility="{Binding IsTrial, Source={StaticResource License}, Converter={StaticResource BooleanToVisibilityConverter }}">
     4. <Button.Content>
     5. <TextBlock Text="{Binding FormattedPrice, Source={StaticResource License}}" TextWrapping="Wrap" TextAlignment="Center" />
     6. </Button.Content>
     7. </Button>
  2. Open ItemDetailPage.xaml.cs and add the following using statement at the top of the file.
     1. C#
     2. using Windows.ApplicationModel.Store;
  3. Add the following statements to the end of the LoadState method.
     1. C#
     2. // Pass the group title to the LicenseDataSource (important!)
     3. ProductLicenseDataSource license = (ProductLicenseDataSource)this.Resources["License"];
     4. license.GroupTitle = item.Group.Title;
     5. **Note:** This code is important because it lets ProductLicenseDataSource know whether the recipe currently displayed is an Italian recipe or another recipe.
  4. Add the following method to ItemDetailPage.xaml.cs to request a product purchase when the purchase button is clicked.
     1. C#
     2. private void OnPurchaseProduct(object sender, RoutedEventArgs e)
     3. {
     4. // Check if this is a trial first, you can’t buy products in trial
     5. if (CurrentAppSimulator.LicenseInformation.IsTrial)
     6. new Windows.UI.Popups.MessageDialog("Please go into About page in Settings and license first", "You must upgrade from trial first").ShowAsync();
     7. else
     8. {
     9. // Purchase the ItalianRecipes product

CurrentAppSimulator.RequestProductPurchaseAsync("ItalianRecipes", false);

* + - 1. }
    1. }

Task 2 – Make a product purchase

All that remains now is to test your changes and see a product purchase in action.

* 1. Press F5 to start the app.
  2. Tap one of the Italian recipes to go to the item-detail page.
  3. Confirm that a purchase button appears in place of the cooking directions, as shown in Figure 3.
     1. 
     2. Figure 3
     3. UI for making a product purchase
  4. Tap the button to initiate a product purchase.
  5. Tap **Continue** in the Windows Store dialog to simulate a product purchase.
  6. Confirm that the button disappears and cooking directions appear in its place.
  7. View some of the other Italian recipes and verify that cooking directions are shown as expected.
  8. Return to Visual Studio and stop debugging.

Summary

The exercises you performed in this lab demonstrate some of the most important aspects of the Windows Store API: how to detect trial versions, how to simulate purchases of an app, how to simulate in-app product purchases, and how to retrieve information about those products. Of course, in a real app, you’ll replace calls to **CurrentAppSimulator** with calls to **CurrentApp**. With that, you’ll have all the tools you need to monetize your app. Go forth and generate revenue!

Happy Windows 8 coding!