UI Implementation Tips for Metro Style Apps

ROUGH NOTES

Navigation

* When you navigate in a page hierarchy, be sure to have a back button on the page.

Controls (General):

* Avoid using a custom control that is similar to a built-in control. Be aware that built-in controls have very flexible styling capabilities to create any look you need, without changing the fundamental feel or behavior. This way, users will understand how to interact with a certain kind of control no matter how it looks. If, on the other hand, you implement a custom control that looks very similar to a built-in control, but it behaves differently (as with touch, keyboard, accessibility, etc.), then the user experience becomes very inconsistent and confusing.
* For example, creating a custom button with its own press animation can be confusing. The standard button can be styled in any way, including using an image, so the standard animations will then be used.
* Avoid styling different states a control such that they are too similar. In a Ratings control, for instance, the average rating style (for when the user has not user indicated their rating) should be distinct from the user rating style (for when the user has indicated their rating).

ListView (General)

* Inappropriate use of ListView:
  + A ListView is designed to render items from a single data source. It was not designed to be used as the basis for a home page/hub layout where different columns have very different types of data from different sources. In these cases, the app should just use a pannable element (an HTML div or a XAML GridView) and lay out other elements within it.
  + A ListView is also overkill when you just need a grid layout for simple data. In HTML/CSS, you can use the WinJS.Binding.Template control independently of a ListView if you want to do templated rendering.
  + A problem with using ListView for varied content, especially where some items are invocable and others aren’t, is that control-wide styles like the tap behavior can create a confusing user experience. For example, invocable items typically have a small animation to visually show a “press,” but this is inappropriate for non-interactive items. Selectively turning that effect off can be done, but requires much more work. If the whole list is non-interactive, then set the tap behavior to “none” for the control.
  + Refer to Selection mode documentation <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/windows/apps/hh465449.aspx>; Call preventDefault to prevent specific items to be selected
* Combining collection controls
  + In general, nesting ListView controls inside another ListView is problematic, and can result in extra scrollbars appearing especially when the mouse is used. It’s better to nest ListView controls within a simple pannable element.
  + Avoid nesting a FlipView inside a ListView item. The two were not meant to be used together, and causes a confusing user experience when panning (e.g. panning on the FlipView pans that control but not the page)
    - It is appropriate to have a list of items on the main page, then create a FlipView overlay to effectively “zoom in” to a larger view of those items, where tapping outside that overlay returns to the list.

ListView Templates and Styling

1. Avoid using CSS margins or padding inside an item template. This creates an empty space that appears to be the list’s background, but pointer events will invoke the item. To change the space between items, set the margin styles on the **win-container** class instead, as this class is used for a ListView-supplied div that surrounds each item.
2. If the zoomed-out view (for Semantic Zoom) has too much empty space, set the maxRows on gridLayout to 1 *and* give some left padding. <TODO: what docs? Ask abarlow—not clear what this means>
3. Cross-slide. When you select items, they should bring up app bar with appropriate commands; set swipeBehavior to select. Also avoid having to select an item to perform a single action where simply tapping/invoking it is sufficient.
4. Make sure there is consistency with items being invocable or not.
5. If tapping a header brings down a menu or list, be sure to include a down arrow next to the header.