

7.1 AsyncTask and AsyncTaskLoader

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Threads

The main thread

- Independent path of execution in a running program
- Code is executed line by line
- App runs on Java thread called "main" or "UI thread"
- Draws UI on the screen
- Responds to user actions by handling UI events

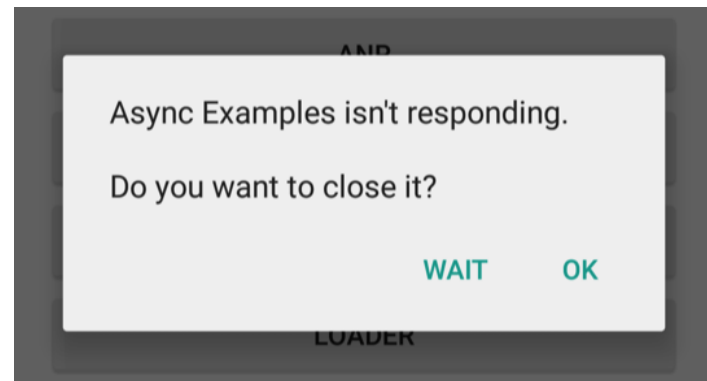
The Main thread must be fast

- Hardware updates screen every 16 milliseconds
- UI thread has 16 ms to do all its work
- If it takes too long, app stutters or hangs



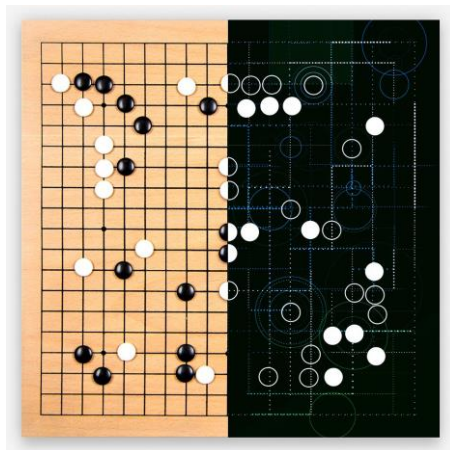
Users uninstall unresponsive apps

- If the UI waits too long for an operation to finish, it becomes unresponsive
- The framework shows an Application Not Responding (ANR) dialog



What is a long running task?

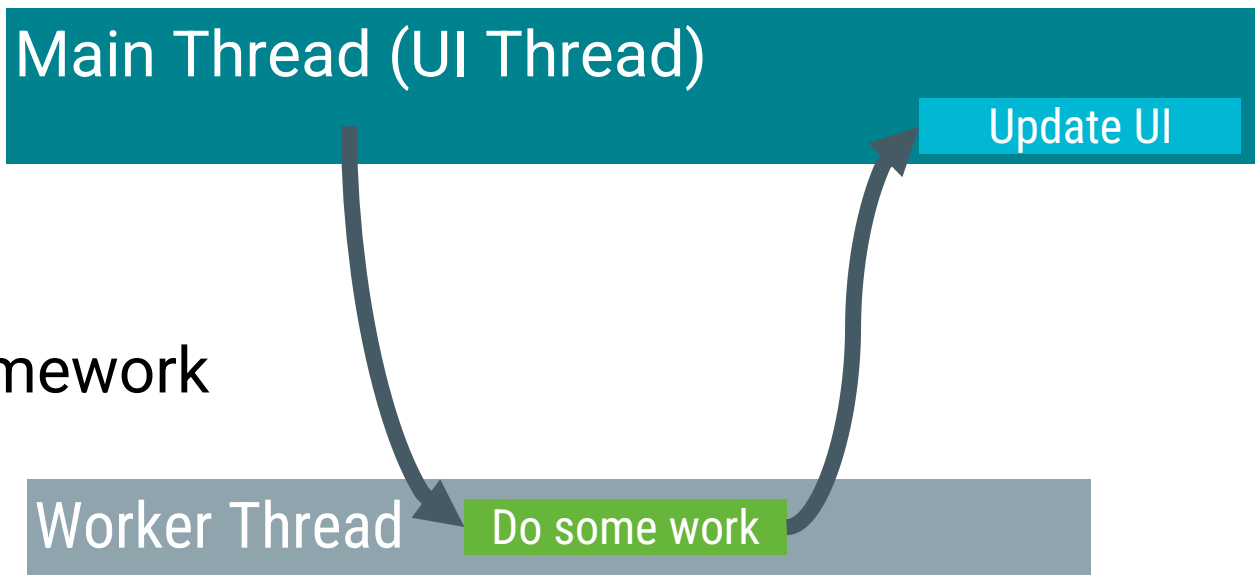
- Network operations
- Long calculations
- Downloading/uploading files
- Processing images
- Loading data



Background threads

Execute long running tasks on a **background thread**

- AsyncTask
- The Loader Framework
- Services



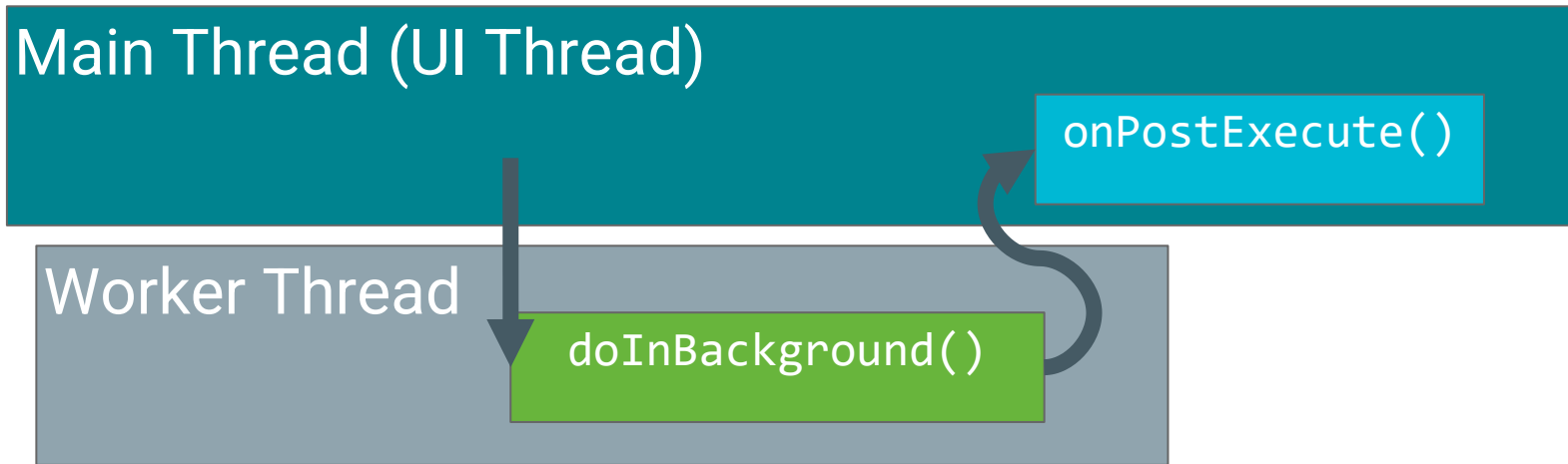
Two rules for Android threads

- Do not block the UI thread
 - Complete all work in less than 16 ms for each screen
 - Run slow non-UI work on a non-UI thread
- Do not access the Android UI toolkit from outside the UI thread
 - Do UI work only on the UI thread

AsyncTask

What is AsyncTask?

Use [AsyncTask](#) to implement basic background tasks



Override two methods

- `doInBackground()`—runs on a background thread
 - All the work to happen in the background
- `onPostExecute()`—runs on main thread when work done
 - Process results
 - Publish results to the UI

AsyncTask helper methods

- `onPreExecute()`
 - Runs on the main thread
 - Sets up the task
- `onProgressUpdate()`
 - Runs on the main thread
 - receives calls from `publishProgress()` from background thread

AsyncTask helper methods

Main Thread (UI Thread)

onPreExecute()

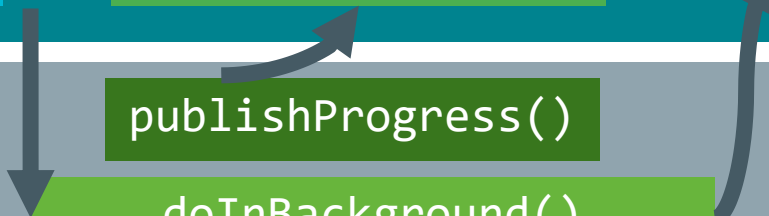
onProgressUpdate()

onPostExecute()

Worker Thread

publishProgress()

doInBackground()



Creating an AsyncTask

1. Subclass AsyncTask
2. Provide data type sent to doInBackground()
3. Provide data type of progress units for onProgressUpdate()
4. Provide data type of result for onPostExecute()

```
private class MyAsyncTask  
    extends AsyncTask<URL, Integer, Bitmap> {...}
```

MyAsyncTask class definition

```
private class MyAsyncTask  
    extends AsyncTask<String, Integer, Bitmap> {...}
```

doInBackground()



onProgressUpdate()

onPostExecute()

- String—could be query, URI for filename
- Integer—percentage completed, steps done
- Bitmap—an image to be displayed
- Use Void if no data passed

onPreExecute()

```
protected void onPreExecute() {  
    // display a progress bar  
    // show a toast  
}
```

doInBackground()

```
protected Bitmap doInBackground(String... query) {  
    // Get the bitmap  
    return bitmap;  
}
```

onProgressUpdate()

```
protected void onProgressUpdate(Integer... progress) {  
    setProgressPercent(progress[0]);  
}
```

onPostExecute()

```
protected void onPostExecute(Bitmap result) {  
    // Do something with the bitmap  
}
```

Start background work

```
public void loadImage (View view) {  
    String query = mEditText.getText().toString();  
    new MyAsyncTask(query).execute();  
}
```

Limitations of AsyncTask

- When device configuration changes, Activity is destroyed
- AsyncTask cannot connect to Activity anymore
- New AsyncTask created for every config change
- Old AsyncTasks stay around
- App may run out of memory or crash

When to use AsyncTask

- Short or interruptible tasks
- Tasks that do not need to report back to UI or user
- Lower priority tasks that can be left unfinished
- Use AsyncTaskLoader otherwise

Loaders

What is a Loader?

- Provides asynchronous loading of data
- **Reconnects to Activity after configuration change**
- Can monitor changes in data source and deliver new data
- Callbacks implemented in Activity
- Many types of loaders available
 - [AsyncTaskLoader](#), [CursorLoader](#)

Why use loaders?

- Execute tasks OFF the UI thread
- LoaderManager handles configuration changes for you
- Efficiently implemented by the framework
- Users don't have to wait for data to load

What is a LoaderManager?

- Manages loader functions via callbacks
- Can manage multiple loaders
 - loader for database data, for AsyncTask data, for internet data...

Get a loader with `initLoader()`

- Creates and starts a loader, or reuses an existing one, including its data
- Use `restartLoader()` to clear data in existing loader

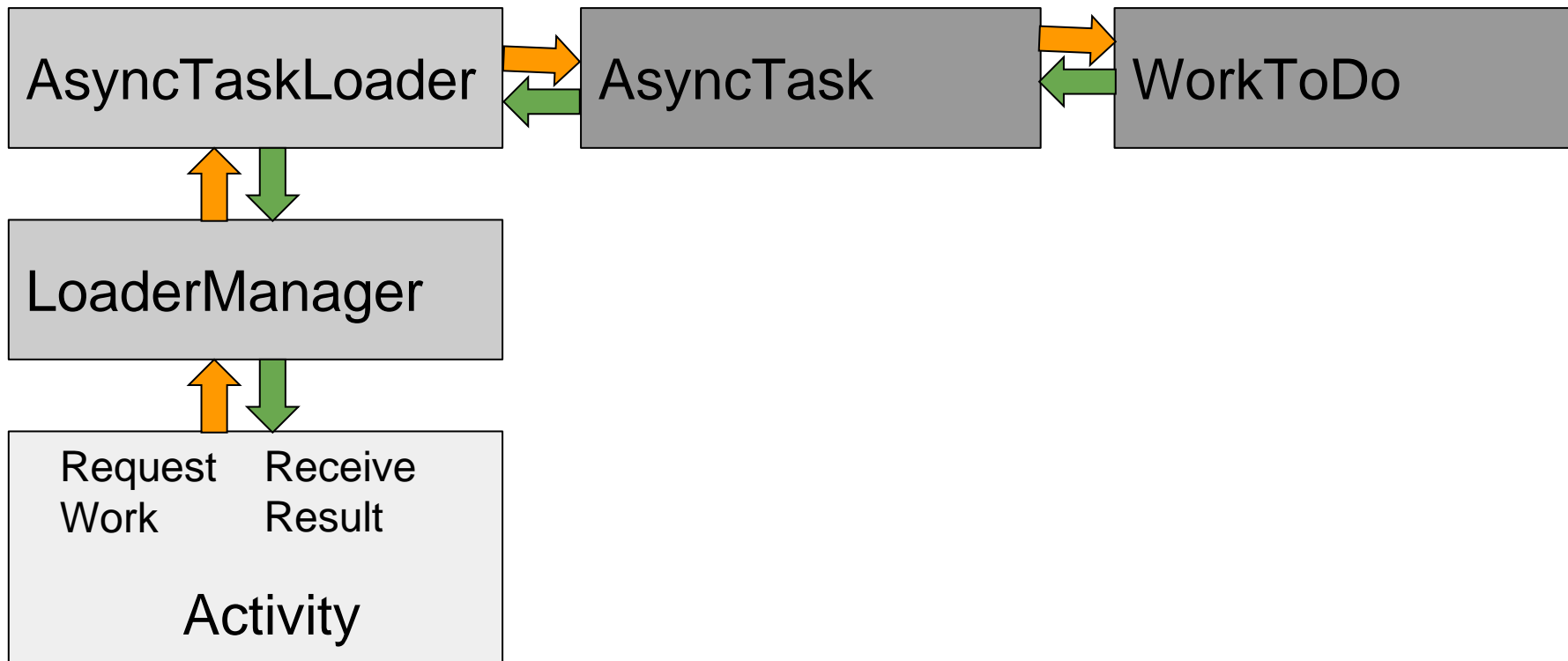
```
getLoaderManager().initLoader(Id, args, callback);
```

```
getLoaderManager().initLoader(0, null, this);
```

```
getSupportLoaderManager().initLoader(0, null, this);
```

Implementing AsyncTaskLoader r

AsyncTaskLoader Overview



AsyncTask → AsyncTaskLoader

`doInBackground()` → `loadInBackground()`

`onPostExecute()` → `onLoadFinished()`

Steps for AsyncTaskLoader subclass

1. Subclass [AsyncTaskLoader](#)
2. Implement constructor
3. `loadInBackground()`
4. `onStartLoading()`

Subclass AsyncTaskLoader

```
public static class StringListLoader  
    extends AsyncTaskLoader<List<String>> {  
  
    public StringListLoader(Context context, String queryString) {  
        super(context);  
        mQueryString = queryString;  
    }  
}
```

loadInBackground()

```
public List<String> loadInBackground() {  
    List<String> data = new ArrayList<String>;  
    //TODO: Load the data from the network or from a database  
    return data;  
}
```

onStartLoading()

When `restartLoader()` or `initLoader()` is called, the `LoaderManager` invokes the `onStartLoading()` callback

- Check for cached data
- Start observing the data source (if needed)
- Call `forceLoad()` to load the data if there are changes or no cached data

```
protected void onStartLoading() { forceLoad(); }
```

Implement loader callbacks in Activity

- `onCreateLoader()` — Create and return a new Loader for the given ID
- `onLoadFinished()` — Called when a previously created loader has finished its load
- `onLoaderReset()` — Called when a previously created loader is being reset making its data unavailable

onCreateLoader()

```
@Override  
public Loader<List<String>> onCreateLoader(int id, Bundle args) {  
    return new StringListLoader(this,args.getString("queryString"));  
}
```

onLoadFinished()

Results of `loadInBackground()` are passed to `onLoadFinished()` where you can display them

```
public void onLoadFinished(Loader<List<String>> loader,  
List<String> data) {  
    mAdapter.setData(data);  
}
```

onLoaderReset()

- Only called when loader is destroyed
- Leave blank most of the time

@Override

```
public void onLoaderReset(final LoaderList<String>> loader) { }
```

Get a loader with `initLoader()`

- In Activity
- Use support library to be compatible with more devices

```
getSupportFragmentManager().initLoader(0, null, this);
```


Learn more

- [AsyncTask Reference](#)
- [AsyncTaskLoader Reference](#)
- [LoaderManager Reference](#)
- [Processes and Threads Guide](#)
- [Loaders Guide](#)
- UI Thread Performance: [Exceed the Android Speed Limit](#)

What's Next?

- Concept Chapter: [7.1 AsyncTask and AsyncTaskLoader](#)
- Practical: [7.1 AsyncTask](#)