

The Art of Building Reusable UI

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github.com/smbarne/RZLoadingBananaPeel

Who is this guy?

- Senior Mobile Developer at Raizlabs here in Downtown Boston
- Most recently worked on the [B&H Photography app](#)



[@smbarne](#)



[smbarne](#)

[engineeringart.io](#)

Resources

This class assumes you are comfortable with using Android UI components and editing layout xml files.

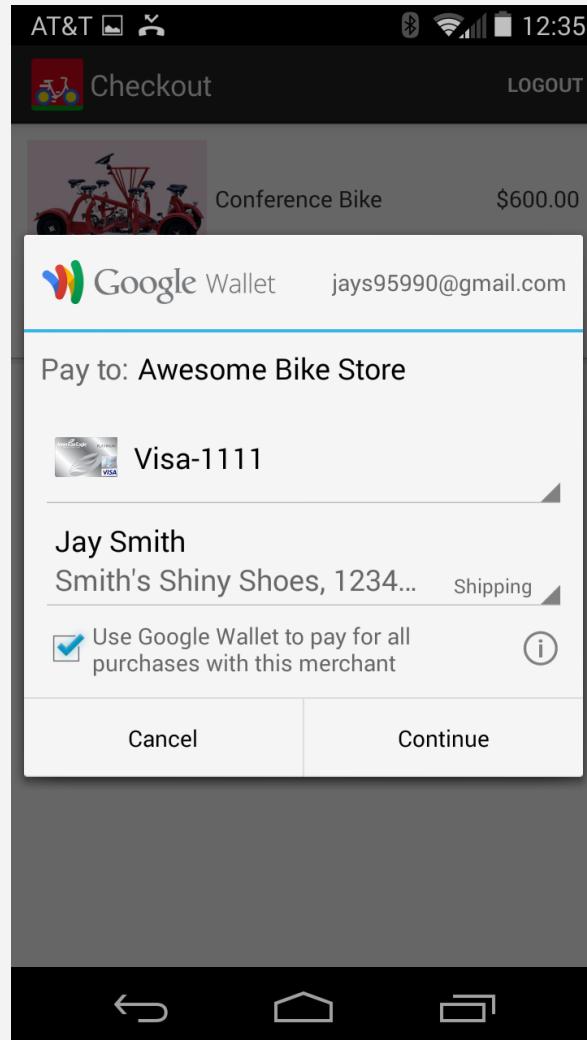
Slides and sample code can be found on Github at
github.com/smbarne/AndroidReusableUI

What is Reusable UI

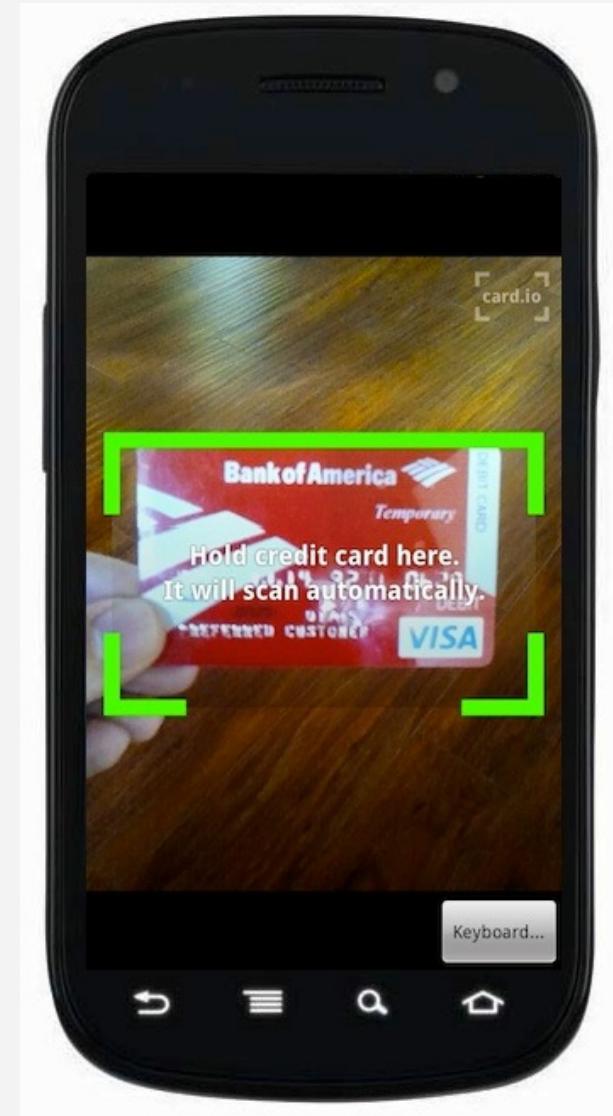
A Reusable UI element is an encapsulated component with a user facing element.

- Responsibilities for a reusable component can be large or small.
- Reusable UI elements are typically extensions of system components.
- Good Reusable UI is opinionated: it describes a narrow situation.

Large, Activity Level Components

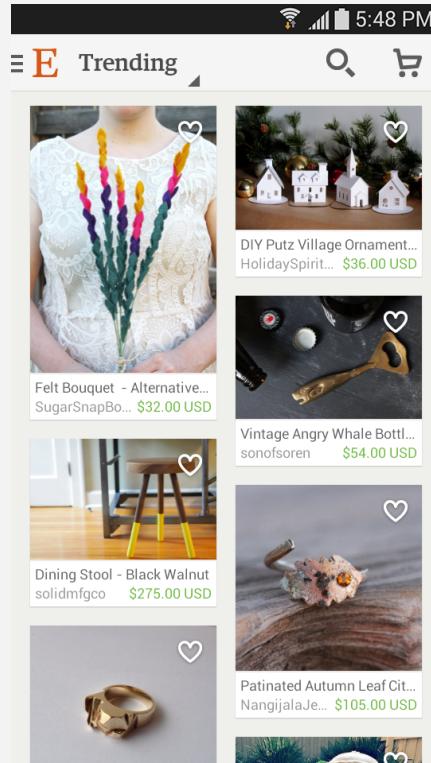


Google Wallet



Card.io

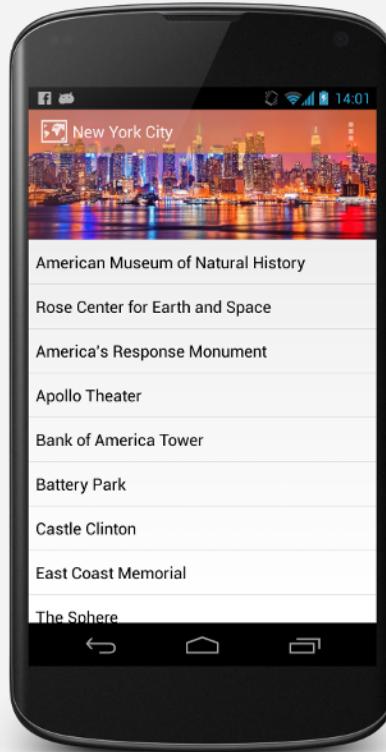
Small, Modular Reusable UI Components



StaggeredGrid



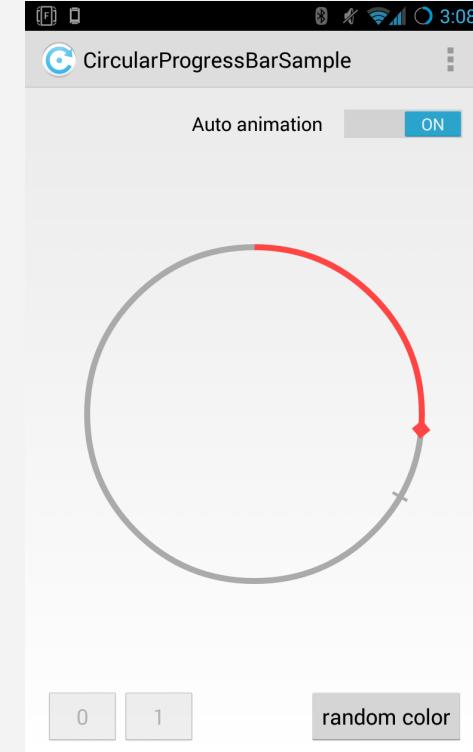
github



FadingActionBar



github



CircularProgressBar



github

“Before software can
be reusable it first has
to be usable.”

– Ralph Johnson

Outline for Creating Great Reusable UI

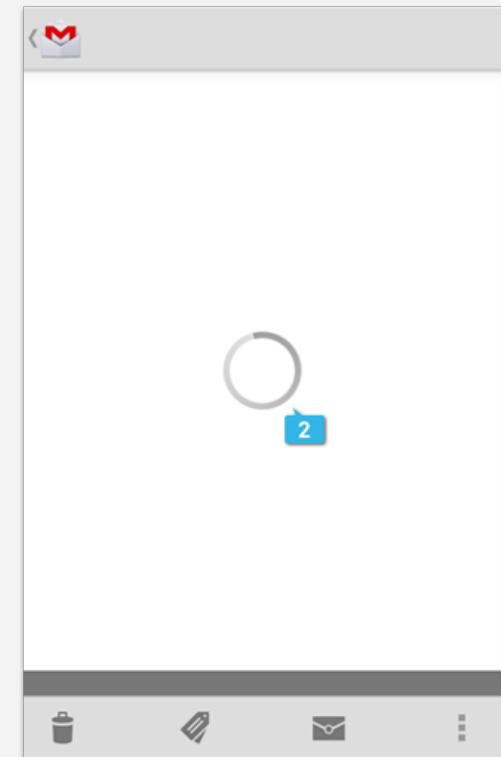
- **User Happiness:** Design UI that provides a good user experience and lasts the tests of time.
- **Developer Happiness:** Create a clear, friendly API and make it easy to use.
- **Operating System Happiness:** Take advantage of OS capabilities such as utilizing XML properties in Android.

Let's Build Something!

Problem

To provide a good UX, it is best to not block user interaction with a progress dialog when loading (the Android Design guidelines cover this [here](#)).

One approach is to use the 'Activity Circle' pattern. However, often, when loading data from the web, we need a tri-state ViewGroup.



Gmail's Activity Circle

The States

- Loading Data State
- Content State
- Empty State (Banana Peel*)

A "banana peel" is a Raizlabs term coined by Jon Green ([@gildedsplinter](#)) for a useful empty state graphic. The empty state is something you can slip on, so be careful!

Agenda

1. Create an engaging, robust, design.
2. Create an initial API description
3. Core UI implementation
4. Create and use the control via code
5. Create and use the control via XML

Agenda Pt 2

6. Default component styling
7. Create a library
8. Integrate into another project
9. Customize styles via overridden XML
10. Customize via Subclassing

Practical UI Design

Define Primary Features

- Three states
- Can contain any content
- Empty state needs a description and an image
- Empty state needs to be tappable

A good reusable
component can do one
thing very well.

Cover The Details

- Remember press states
- Plan around transitions
- Design for any aspect ratio
- Your UI should adapt to the content
- Thumb-friendly tap areas
- Respect the OS: don't repurpose common UI elements or patterns for new ones (ex: don't highjack the back or up buttons)

Get Inspired, But Stick to the Rules

Inspiration Resources

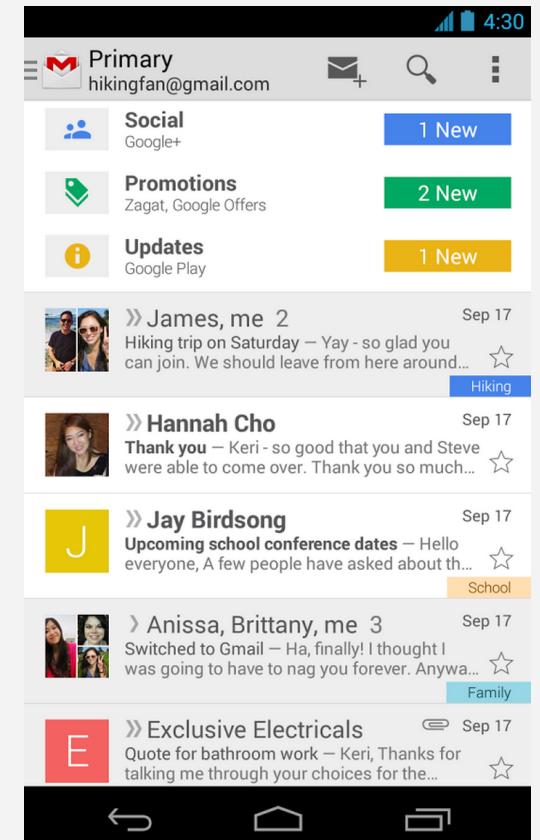
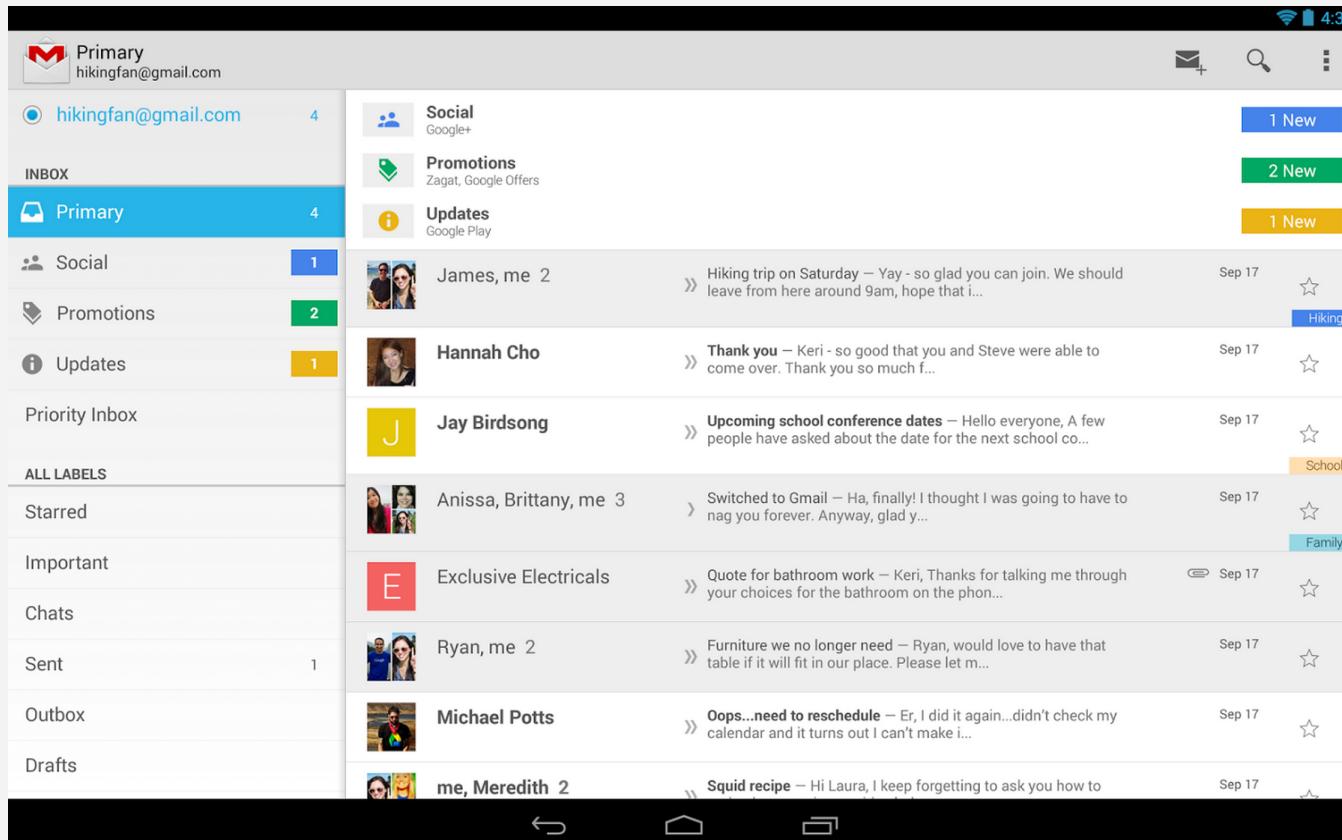
- mobile-patterns.com/android
- androidniceties.tumblr.com
- android.inspired-ui.com/

Design Rules

- developer.android.com/design
- [petrnohejl.github.io/Android-Cheatsheet-For-Graph Designers/](http://petrnohejl.github.io/Android-Cheatsheet-For-Graph-Designers/)

Holo is Your Friend

The Holo design language is powerful and well documented at developer.android.com/design. iOS has Apple's HIG (Human Interface Guidelines), Google has the Android Design Guidelines.

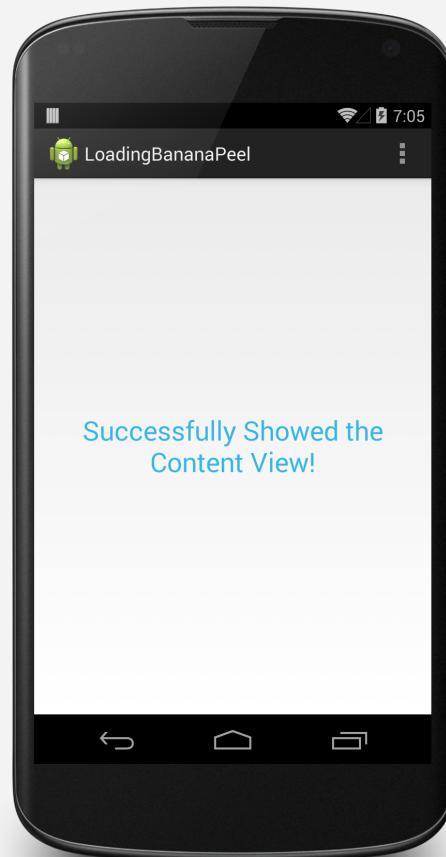


Designing Our View

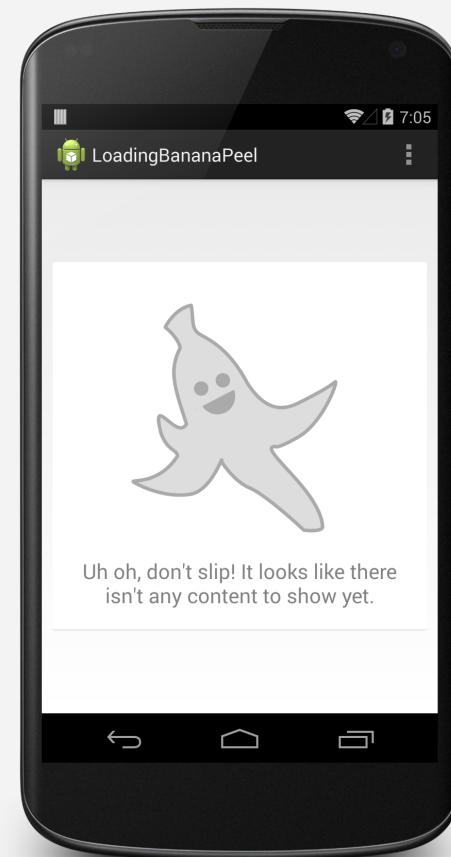
Create a customizable, reusable ViewGroup with loading, content, and empty state.



Loading



Content



Empty State

Research: Examples of Empty States

The image displays three mobile application screens illustrating different approaches to empty states:

- Eventbrite (Left):** Shows a search result for "Food/Wine". It features a cartoon character holding a sign that says "Oh snap!". Below the character is a message: "We couldn't find any events that matched your search. Change your search terms, adjust your location, or tweak your filters."
- Pinterest (Middle):** Shows the home screen with the Pinterest logo at the top. It includes a search bar, user profile icon, and a welcome message: "Tap to get started" and "Welcome home! When you follow people or boards, their pins will show up here."
- Google Keep (Right):** Shows the note-taking interface with the title "Add quick note". It includes a toolbar with icons for list, checkmark, microphone, and camera. Below the toolbar is a large, empty note area with a placeholder image and the text "Take a note".

Friendly API Design

A Word on API Design

A Few API Requests:

- Modular
- Approachable
- Documented
- Platform Friendly

An API Should be as Minimal as Possible

The more options an API has, the harder it can be to learn. Have an opinion: implement things with authority. Mirror the primary features as methods. For example, a primary primary feature of our UI is the three UI states.

```
public void showLoading() { }
public void showContent() { }
public void showBananaPeel() { }

public View setContentView(int contentViewLayoutResourceId) { }
public View setBananaPeel(int messageResourceId, int
imageDrawableResourceId, final BananaPeelActionListener listener) { }
```

Ready to Go, Out of the Box

Do not **require** additional methods to have a component work after initialization, but do allow for it.

```
/**  
 * Create a banana peel with the given message and image drawable.  
 * @param messageResourceId - The string resource id for the banana  
 * peel text.  
 * @param imageDrawableResourceId - The id for the drawable to be  
 * displayed.  
 * @param listener - (optional) An event listener for when the  
 * banana peel is clicked.  
 */  
public void setBananaPeel(int messageResourceId, int  
imageDrawableResourceId, final BananaPeelActionListener listener) {  
    configureBananaPeel(imageDrawableResourceId, listener);  
    setBananaPeelMessage(messageResourceId);  
}
```

Ready to Go, Out of the Box

```
/**  
 * Update the banana peel message text. If 0 is passed in for the  
{@code messageResourceId}  
 * then the image message textview will be set to visibility {@link  
View#GONE}.  
 * @param messageResourceId – The resource id for the banana peel  
text.  
 */  
public void setBananaPeelMessage(int messageId) {  
  
/**  
 * Update the banana peel image drawable. If 0 is passed in for the  
{@code imageDrawableResourceId}  
 * then the image drawable will be set to visibility {@link  
View#GONE}.  
 * @param imageDrawableResourceId – The id for the drawable to be  
displayed.  
 */  
public void setBananaPeelImage(int imageDrawableResourceId) {
```

API Documentation

Take advantage of JavaDoc and **document** your API. The method documentation and API structure should make it possible to use the control without another document.

```
/**  
 * Create a banana peel with a card view with the given message and image  
drawable.  
 * @param messageResourceId - The string resource id for the banana peel  
text.  
 * @param imageDrawableResourceId - The id for the drawable to be  
displayed.  
 * @param listener - (optional) An event listener for when the banana  
peel is clicked.  
 */  
  
public void setBananaPeel(int messageResourceId,  
                           int imageDrawableResourceId,  
                           final BananaPeelActionListener listener) {  
    configureBananaPeel(imageDrawableResourceId, listener);  
    setBananaPeelMessage(messageResourceId);  
}
```

LoadingBananaPeel Implementation

LoadingBananaPeel Approach

- Subclass ViewFlipper.
- Expose the content view and the empty state setters.
- Create and expose an interface for the empty state click listener.
- Inflate and layout our views.
- Make our public API thread-safe.

Let's Go Already!

< Coding Time />

Overrides for Subclassing a View

```
public class MyView extends View {  
  
    // Constructor required for in-code creation  
    public MyView(Context context){  
        super(context);  
        init(context, null);  
    }  
  
    // Constructor required for inflation from resource file  
    public MyView(Context context, AttributeSet attr){  
        super(context,attr);  
        init(context, attrs);  
    }  
  
    // Private common init method  
    private void init(Context context, AttributeSet attrs) {  
        // ...  
    }  
}
```

Loading a Default Layout XML

Often, if UI is non-trivial, it is best to create an XML file to inflate instead of creating elements manually. In this case, create a default XML layout file for your reusable UI (we'll cover overriding this later).

In our case, we want default layouts for each of our three states.

Inflating Our Default XML

Inflating and Adding the default banana peel view state.

```
@Override  
protected void onFinishInflate() {  
    super.onFinishInflate();  
    bananaPeelView =  
inflateAndAddResource(R.layout.view_default_banana_peel);  
}  
  
private View inflateAndAddResource(int layoutResourceId) {  
    LayoutInflator inflater = LayoutInflator.from(getContext());  
    View bananaPeel = inflater.inflate(layoutResourceId, this, false);  
    addView(bananaPeel);  
    cacheViewIndicies();  
    return bananaPeel;  
}
```

Exposing Configuration via Code

State Management

It is important to expose configuration setters publicly. But remember!

- Break out configuration into modular methods.
- Use the same methods to initialize the component.
- Update the component state after setting properties.

BananaPeel Code Example

Public API Convenience Method

```
/**  
 * Create a banana peel with with the given message and image drawable.  
 * @param messageResourceId - The string resource id for the banana peel  
 * text.  
 * @param imageDrawableResourceId - The id for the drawable to be  
 * displayed.  
 * @param listener - (optional) An event listener for when the banana  
 * peel is clicked.  
 */  
public void setBananaPeel(int messageId, int  
imageDrawableResourceId, final BananaPeelActionListener listener) {  
    configureBananaPeel(imageDrawableResourceId, listener);  
    setBananaPeelMessage(messageId);  
}
```

BananaPeel Code Example

Public API Setter

```
/*
 * Update the banana peel message text. If 0 is passed in for the {@code
 * messageResourceId}
 * then the image message textView will be set to visibility {@link
 * View#GONE}.
 * @param messageResourceId – The resource id for the banana peel text.
 */
public void setBananaPeelMessage(int messageResourceId) {
    if (bananaPeelView != null) {
        TextView bananaTitle = (TextView)
bananaPeelView.findViewById(R.id.bananaPeel_TextView);
        if (messageResourceId != 0) {
            bananaTitle.setVisibility(VISIBLE);
            bananaTitle.setText(messageResourceId);
        } else {
            bananaTitle.setVisibility(GONE);
        }
    }
}
```

Exposing Configuration via XML

UI Configuration the Android Way

Often, we want to include our reusable UI in a layout XML file. Wouldn't it be great if we could configure it in the XML file as well?

Styleable XML Attributes

First, we need to define stylable attributes in a XML file specific to our component.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<resources>
    <declare-styleable name="LoadingBananaPeelView">
        <attr name="bananaPeelDefaultMessageStringResource"
format="reference" />
        <attr name="bananaPeelDefaultImageResource" format="reference" />
        <attr name="bananaPeelViewResource" format="reference" />
    </declare-styleable>
</resources>
```

Valid Attribute Formats

```
public enum AttributeFormat {  
    Reference, String, Color, Dimension, Boolean, Integer, Float,  
    Fraction, Enum, Flag  
}
```

Applying Attributes

When configuring your View, you can retrieve and apply the attributes at runtime.

```
public LoadingBananaPeeView(Context context, AttributeSet attrs) {
    super(context, attrs);
    init(attrs);
}
private void init(AttributeSet attrs) {
    hadAttrs = (attrs != null);
    if (attrs != null) {
        TypedArray styledAttributes =
getContext().getApplicationContext().obtainStyledAttributes(attrs,
R.styleable.LoadingBananaPeeView);
        bananaPeeViewResourceId =
styledAttributes.getResourceId(R.styleable.LoadingBananaPeeView_bananaPee
lViewResource, 0);
        styledAttributes.recycle();
    }
}
```

Using Styleable Attributes in Layouts

Lastly, specify values for any of your custom styled attributes in a layout XML file. Note the namespace!

```
<com.raizlabs.views.LoadingBananaPeelView
    xmlns:android="http://schemas.android.com/apk/res/android"
    xmlns:app="http://schemas.android.com/apk/res-auto"
    android:id="@+id/fragment_content_loading_view"
    android:layout_width="match_parent"
    android:layout_height="match_parent"
    app:bananaPeelDefaultImageResource="@drawable/ic_bananapeel_default"
    app:bananaPeelDefaultMessageStringResource="@string/
banana_peel_default_empty_message"
    app:contentViewLayoutResource="@layout/view_example_content" />
```

Exposing Properties via XML

< Coding Time />

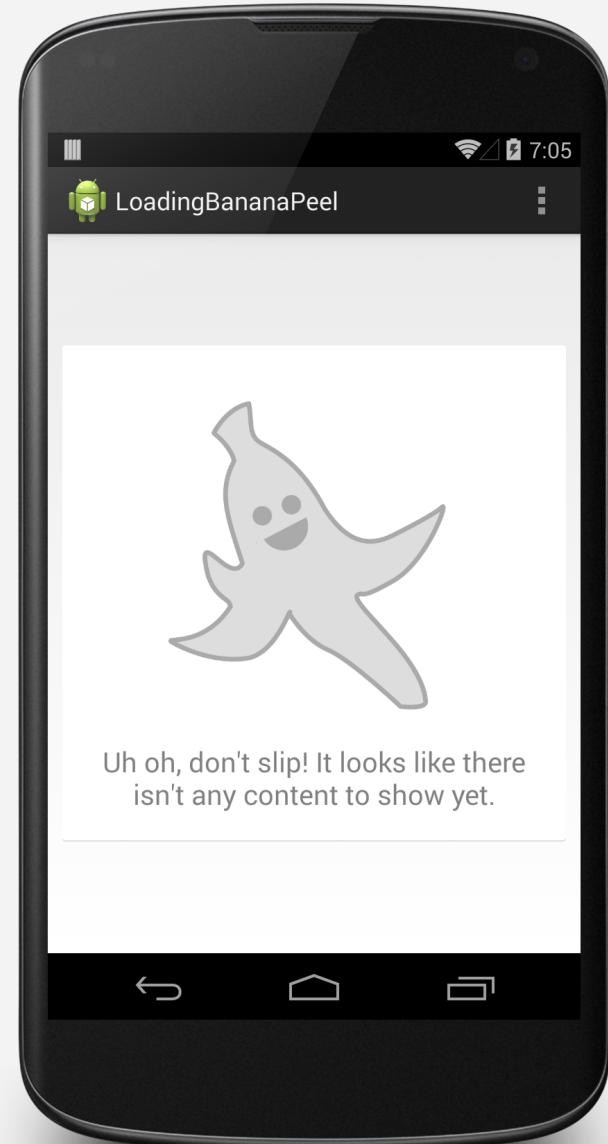
Time to Get
Opinionated: Default
Styling

Zero Effort Pretty

Others are more likely to use the component you have spent your time on if it does not require any styling to make it look nice. Make sure that your UI looks presentable without any overrides.

LoadingBananaPeel Default Styling

- Place the banana peel image and message within a card.
- Give a default banana peel image.
- Update the font size and color.



Use a Custom XML Files

- Style XML File
- Color XML File
- Dimens XML File
- Values XML File
- String XML File

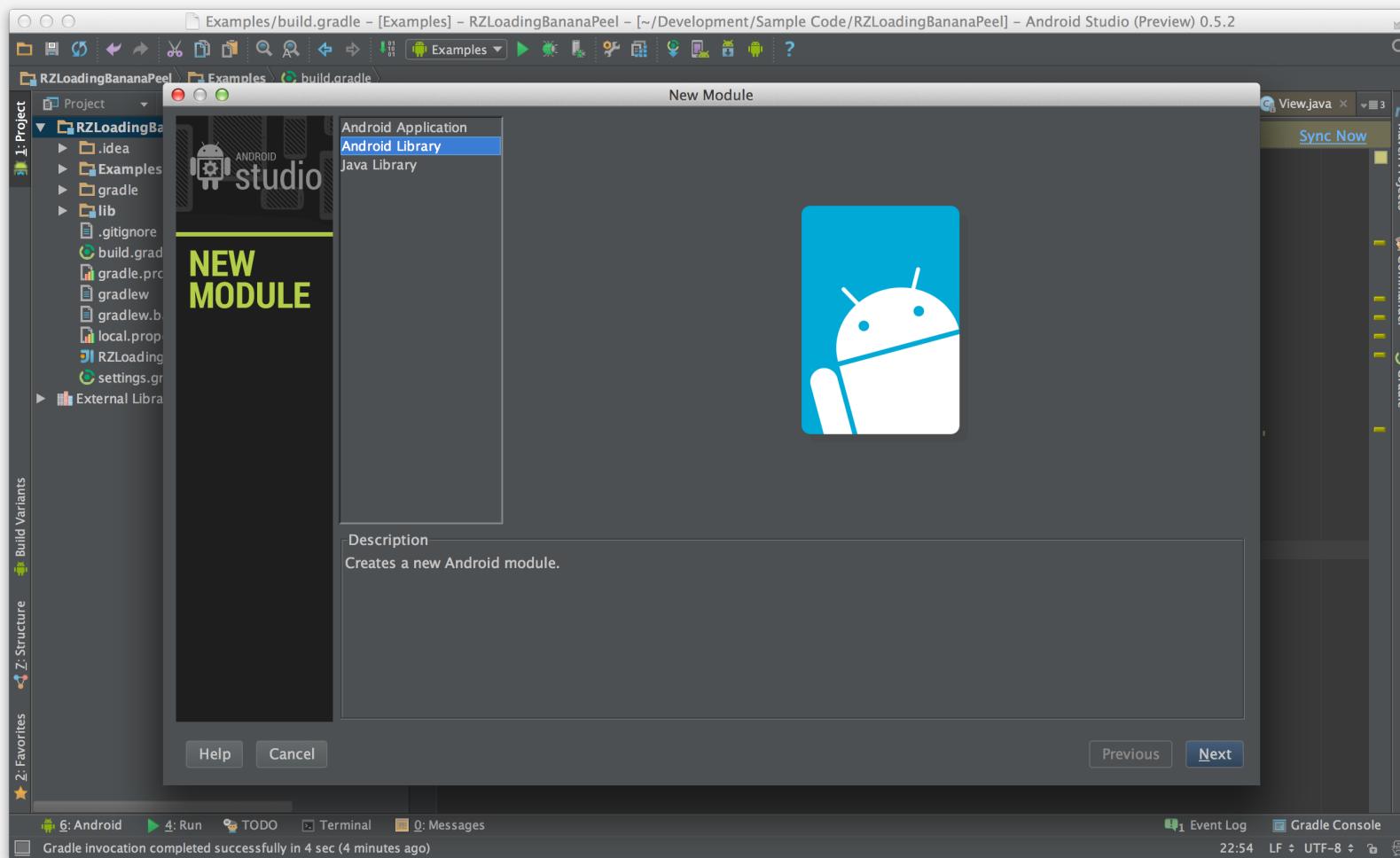
Make All the Things
Pretty

< Coding Time />

Make it Truly Reusable:
Build a Library

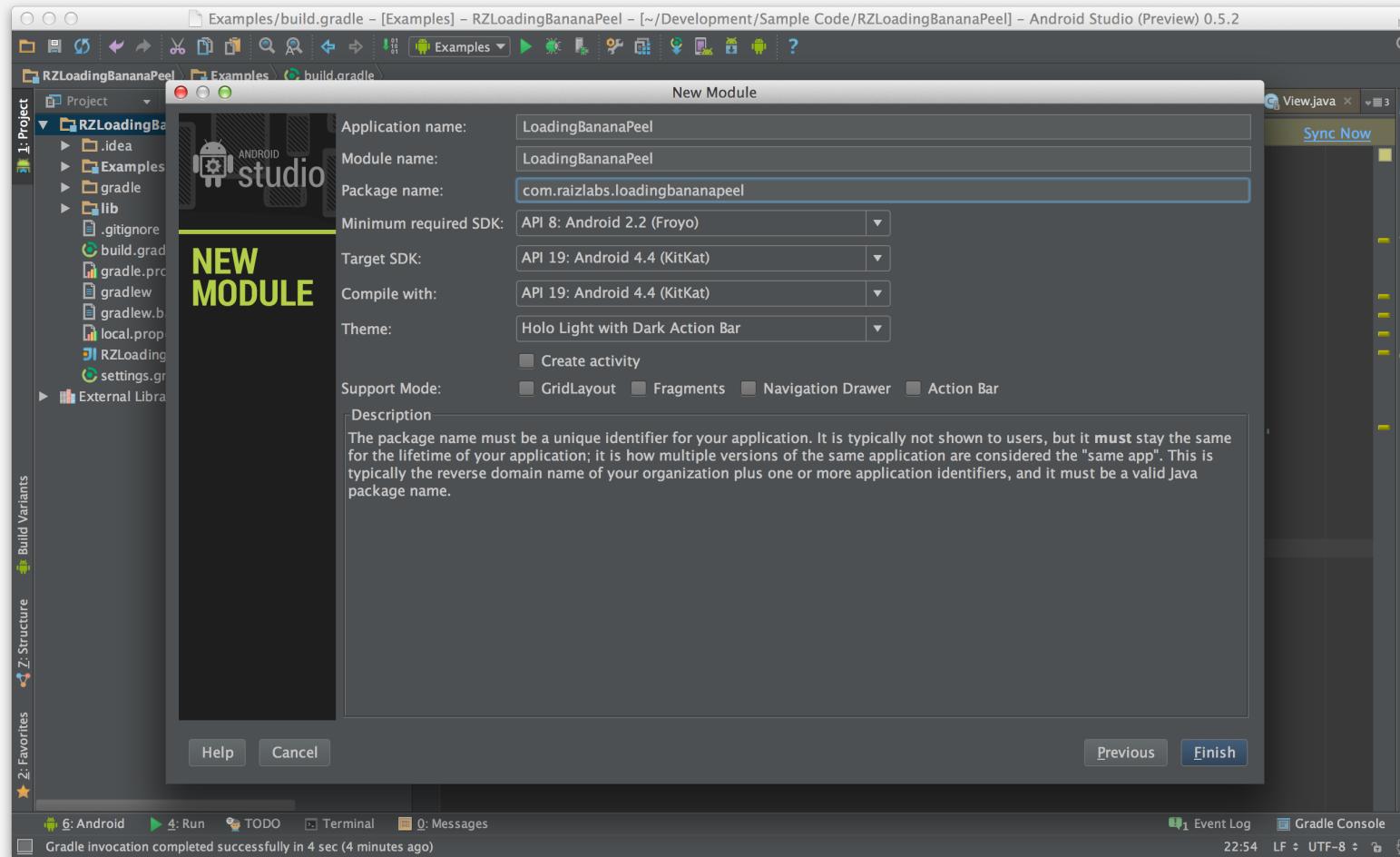
Creating a Library

Start by going to File -> New Module. Select Android Library.



Creating a Library

Configure your Module



Creating a Library

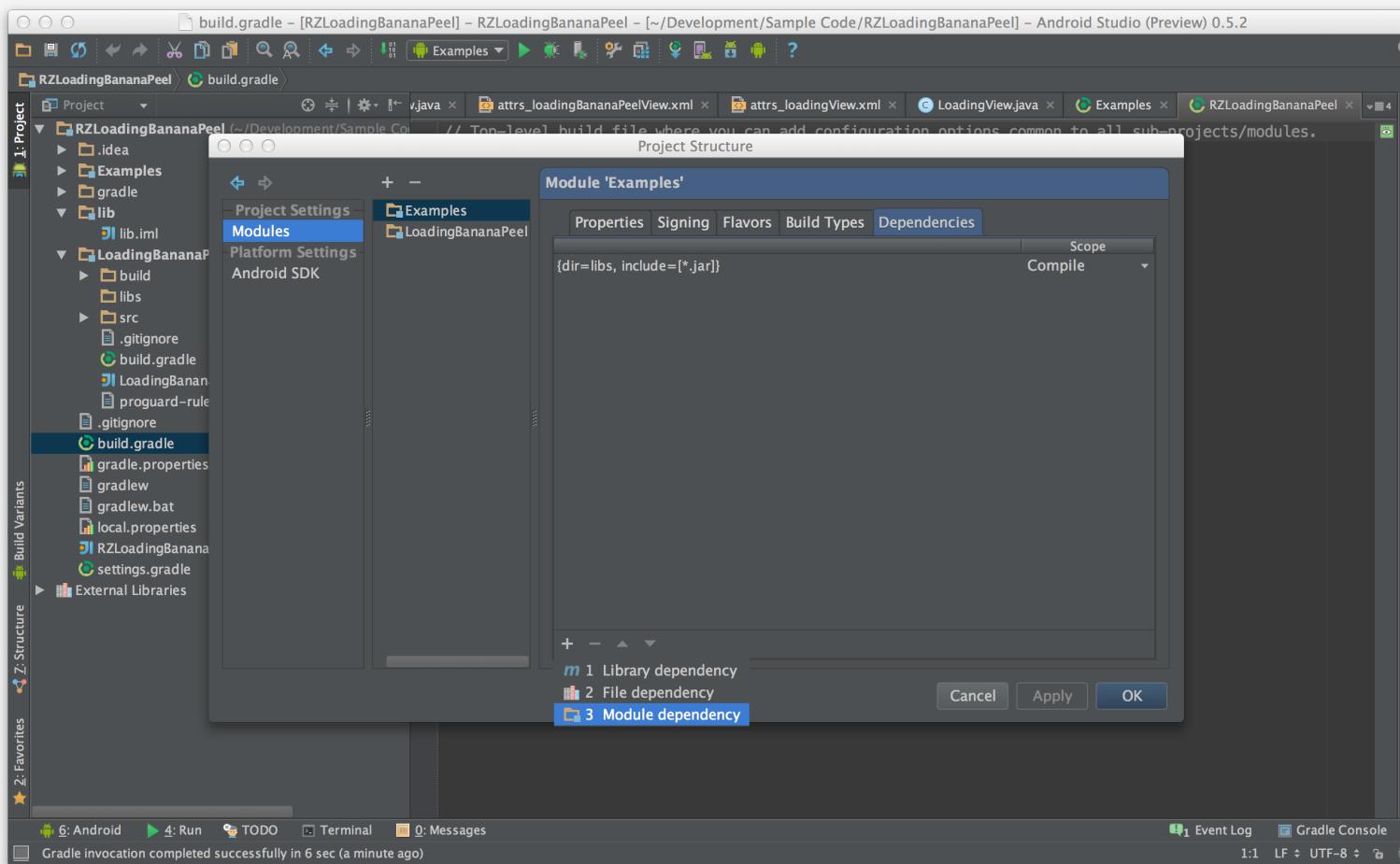
Don't forget to unselect 'Create Activity'



Create activity

Creating a Library

Add your library as a dependency to the main project.



Creating a Library

Note that your build.gradle will update for your primary project.

```
dependencies {  
    compile fileTree(dir: 'libs', include: ['*.jar'])  
    compile project(':LoadingBananaPeel')  
}
```

Library Integration

< Coding Time />

Better than Vanilla: Customizing your Custom UI.

< Coding Time />

Overriding Default XML Styles

Overriding XML Files

XML files In the parent project **override** XML files in library projects. For a quick win, create an alternate implementation of `view_default_banana_peel.xml` with different coloring, spacing, and typography.

Override Specific Values

You can also override specific values such as specific padding dimensions declared in your library.

```
<dimen name="BananaPeeL.DefaultMargin">30dp</dimen>
```

Subclassing Your Reusable UI

< Coding Time />

Subclassing

< Coding Time />

Thanks for Listening!

Slides and sample code can be found on Github at
github.com/smbarne/AndroidReusableUI

Questions?

@smbarne