

MOBILE DEVELOPMENT FILES & PERSISTENCE: PART 2

Rudd Taylor
Founder, SALT

FILES AND PERSISTENCE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Practice persisting data with plists, flat files, and user defaults
- Breakdown the Core Data stack at a high level
- Create, read, update, delete (CRUD) data with Core Data
- Evaluate when to/not to use Core Data over plists/flat files/user defaults

FILES AND PERSISTENCE

REVIEW OF PERSISTENCE

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USER DEFAULTS

- › Storing small bits of data
- › Backed by an plist shared by the entire app
- › A **key/value** store for use in storing app settings, small bits of app-wide data
- › How we interact with the Settings app
- › `NSUserDefaults.standardUserDefaults().boolForKey("someKey")`
- › `NSUserDefaults.standardUserDefaults().setBool(true, forKey: "someKey")`

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PLISTS

- Storing small-ish bits of data that are only applicable to certain parts of your application
- Reading and writing to plists happens all-at-once, and can be atomic (i.e. not able to fail mid-write)
- Can store the same types as user defaults: String, Date, Data, Number, Array, Dictionary
- Backed by XML, though thanks to Xcode's graphical editor and plist serialization methods, we don't really need to both with actual XML
- Almost always, the top-level object in a plist is either an array or a dictionary

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PLISTS

- Reading and writing:
 - `(["test"] as NSArray).writeToFile(somePathString, atomically: true)`
 - `let arrayFromFile = NSArray(contentsOfFile: somePathString)`
 - `somePathString` here should include the file name and extension

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PATHS

- Apps within iOS are sandboxed from each other
 - They do not share a filesystem
- Even though they aren't usually displayed to the user, apps do have their own directories, files, etc. Each top-level directory has rules about whether it's backed up, whether it can periodically be purged, etc
- As app developers, we are concerned with where files go within our apps (even though users don't ever see the actual directory structure underlying them)

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PATHS

- Getting paths for a built-in file (e.g. plist, PDF, document, etc):
 - `NSBundle.mainBundle().pathForResource("myFileName", ofType: "plist")`
 - Returns a path (as a String) for the bundled plist file `myFileName.plist`
 - Returns nil for files that don't exist
- Getting paths for programmatically generated files:
 - `NSFileManager.defaultManager().URLsForDirectory(.DocumentDirectory, inDomains: .UserDomainMask)[0]`
 - Returns the URL for user's documents directory
 - Note that if you want to write to a file, you must append the file name
 - `let fileUrl = url.URLByAppendingPathComponent("myFile.plist")`

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BUILDING A TODO APP

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TODO APP

- Pair up (groups of 2-3, your choosing)
- User needs to be able to save their name from the settings screen.
- Build a notes app that allows the user to view all notes saved in a table view.
- The user can create a new note and set the file name.
- Users can select and edit the note.
- Recommended structure:
 - Save file names in a plist.
 - Save contents of notes as either dictionaries or flat files (see NSString's initializer with contentsOfFile and encoding)

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CORE DATA

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CORE DATA

- An object persistence framework
- Very powerful, very complicated
- Lots of boilerplate

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CORE DATA

- Managed object model (MOM): a file that represents the data model, essentially the database schema.
- Entity: essentially a class definition in Core Data
- Attribute: a property of an entity (a member variable)
- Relationship: link between two entities. This is where entity (table) relationships are defined.
- Managed object: an entity that we want to store in Core Data. Its instances are placed in managed object context.
- Managed object context: this is the virtual representation of our data. This instance of our data can be manipulated as we like and saved when we are ready.

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CORE DATA

- We always work on the managed object context
- A series of operations are performed on the MOC (insert, fetch & update, delete), then saved when we want them to persist

PERSISTENCE

CORE DATA CODE ALONG

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GROUP ASSIGNMENT

- › Clone your first app, use Core Data to store note information instead of files
- › Bonus: Add title to notes
- › Bonus: To the best of your ability, try and duplicate the UX of the iOS notes app