
A Custom-made Tutorial App for iPhone and Android

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Abstract

In 2010, two groups of 3rd-year BIT students designed a tutorial app for handheld devices. The app was designed to assist students taking the NCC course Principles of Computer Networks. One group developed the app for the iPhone, while the other developed it for Android. Screenshots of both versions are presented here.

Keywords

handheld, iPhone, Android, student project, tutorial app

Introduction

A lot of attention is being paid recently to the use of handheld devices in education. This post presents one approach that was taken at Wintec: developing a tutorial app from scratch.

The apps were designed to take advantage of the touch interface which has made handheld devices so useable and popular.

The iPhone app was developed by a team of two while the Android developer worked alone. Thus the iPhone app tends to have more polish, but the size of the development team should be taken into account.

The images were produced using the simulators for iPhone and Android on a Macbook Pro.

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Screen shots



Figure 1: Sample screens for the app: introductory screen (top row), and creating a binary signal (bottom row). The iPhone version is on the left, Android on the right.

Findings

The iPhone team tested the app on NCC students, and received an enthusiastic response. Students reported they would gladly use the app if it were available.

Conclusion

The apps look good and work well. However, they required a considerable amount of effort to develop, and then the result was platform-specific.

The development burden could be made considerably lighter if templates were developed so new apps could be created easily, with a minimum of effort. This is the subject of ongoing work in our department.

An infrastructure for distributing apps locally is currently being put into place at Wintec.