

ECE 1778 – Creative Applications for Mobile Devices
January 2012
Programming Assignment #A2, for Appers

App Design Principles, Mockingbird & Practice

The goal of this assignment is to learn how to use an app ‘wireframe’ design package that is often used in industry, and to use it to create a specific layout.

1 Basics of Mockingbird

Mockingbird is a package that allows you to design the look and some of the activity of a smartphone app. It gives you the ability to ‘draw’ the different screens of your planned app, and to say what buttons link the launching of one screen from another.

Go to the website <https://gomockingbird.com/> and sign up for a free account (which is in a kind of hard-to-find link at <https://gomockingbird.com/signup/free/>). A free account allows you to have one active ‘project’ which is all you need for this assignment. (You can have archive or delete practice projects).

Spend an hour learning how to use the tool, either by doing what the first page suggests, or reading the help FAQ. Be sure to learn the following:

- To create a new page
- To duplicate a page
- To change the size of the page, and its length to width ratio.
- To place a text field on a ‘screen’ or *page* as Mockingbird calls it
- To resize text
- To place a button on a page
- To draw a line
- To change the colour of a line
- How to resize objects
- How to make a button (or anything else) link to another page
- How to preview your design to see how it works (and then go back to edit mode)
- How to share your design with someone else
- How to make a Pie Chart and Bar Chart, and to set the size of the regions/bars
- How to create a web link that shares your project with someone else.

2 Reading About Design

The following web page gives a description of the overall design of applications, in the Android context: <http://developer.android.com/design/patterns/app-structure.html> Read it to learn about some notions of design.

Next, to learn from the experts at Apple, go to:

<http://developer.apple.com/library/ios/#documentation/UserExperience/Conceptual/MobileHIG/Introduction/Introduction.html>

There, read the sections labeled Platform Characteristics, Human Interface Principles and App Design Strategies, the Case Study, and the User Experience Guidelines.

3 Assignment

In this assignment, you are to gain skills in the design and conception of an application. The application will be based on the following capability: software that can ‘listen’ through the microphone, and determine the fraction of the conversation that each person in a conversation can take up. You are to conceive of an application that makes use of this capability, and to mock it up.

So, you are really being asked to do two things:

1. Be creative in making use of this capability to design an app that does something interesting. It should be beyond the obvious app of simply displaying the result of the measurement.
2. Design the app’s layout and structure, from a user interface perspective, using what you learned from Part1 and Part 2.

Along with your Mockingbird mockup, you should hand in a maximum 1000 word document that describes 1) What your application does, and 2) Why you ‘designed’ it the way you did. It would help to make reference to the principles of good design you see in Part 2. The document you hand in should contain the link to the Mockingbird mockup that you have created.

Due date: Monday January 30th, at 6pm, Marked out of 10, 0.5 marks off every hour late.

Submit your document on the Blackboard Course Portal. Be sure to submit it to the 'A2' Assignment.