Research on Xamarin

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August 19, 2015

1. Introduction

1.1 Main Features

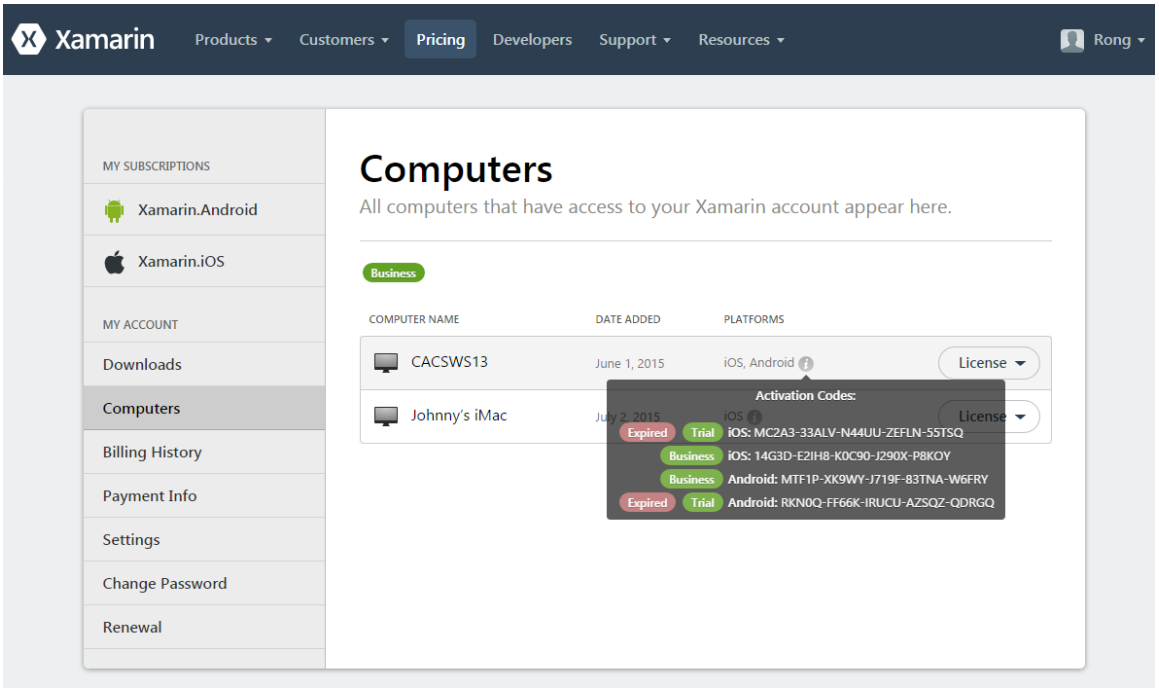
- Cross-Platform(C#)
  - iOS(Xamarin.iOS)
  - Android(Xamarin.Android)
  - Mac(Xamarin.Mac)
- Xamarin Insights
- Xamarin Test Cloud(Xamarin.UITest)

1.2 IDE

- Mac: Xamarin Studio, Xcode
- Windows: Xamarin Studio or Visual Studio+Xamarin's plug-in for Visual Studio, Mac, Xcode, Xamarin.iOS Build Host

1.3 Xamarin Account(per developer, per device platform)

- Trail(30days)-free
- Indie-$25/Month($300/Year)
- Business-$83/Month($999/Year)
- Enterprise-$158/Month($1899/Year)
- For Student-Free(Need to apply)



2. iOS Development

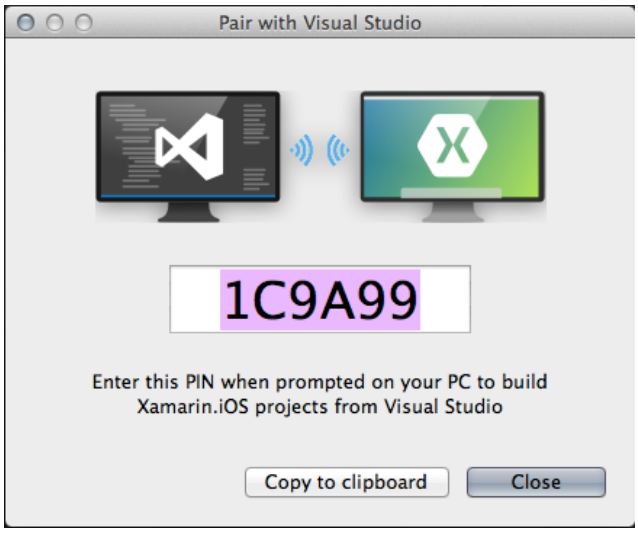
There are two options to setup the development environment for iOS:

- Xamarin Studio on Mac
- Visual Studio on PC(with another mac connected to the same network of PC), see below.

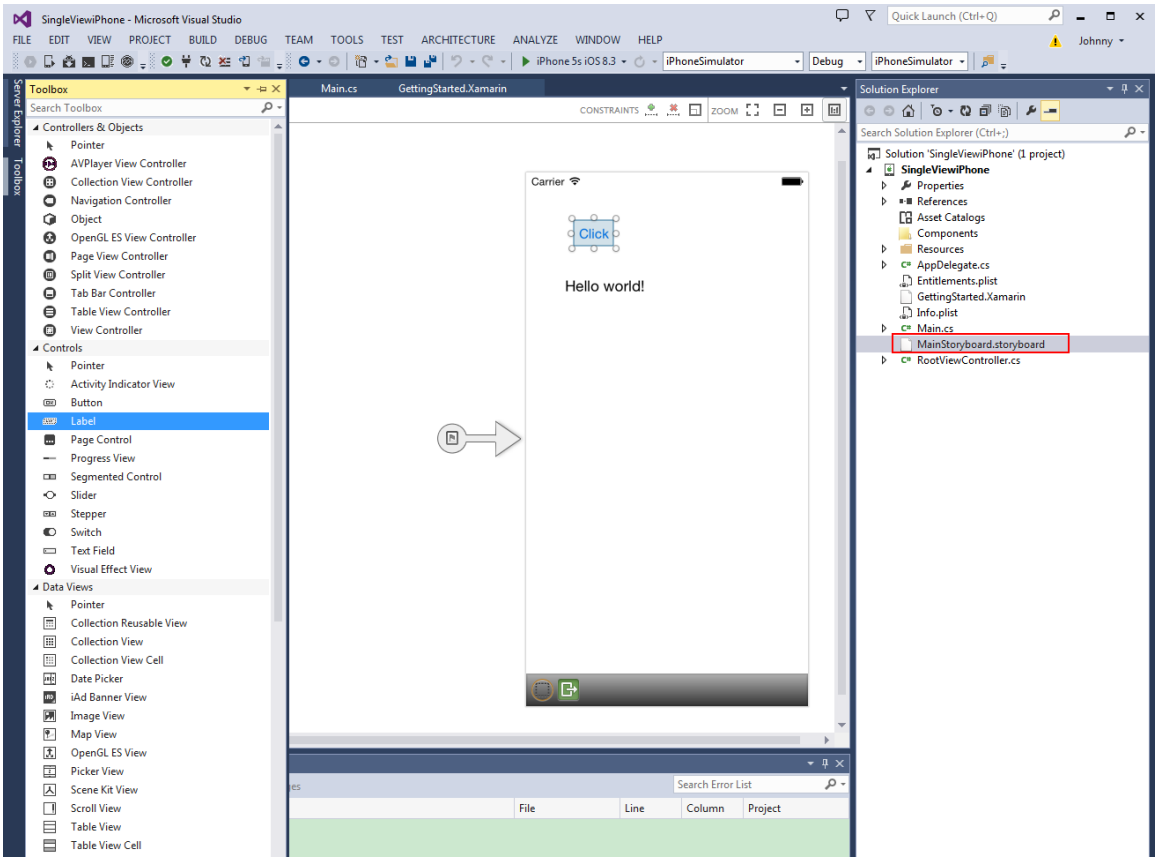
Note: Xamarin Studio on PC cannot be used for iOS development.

2.1 Installation(Windows)

- Xamarin Platform for Windows
- Xamarin.iOS Build Host on Mac

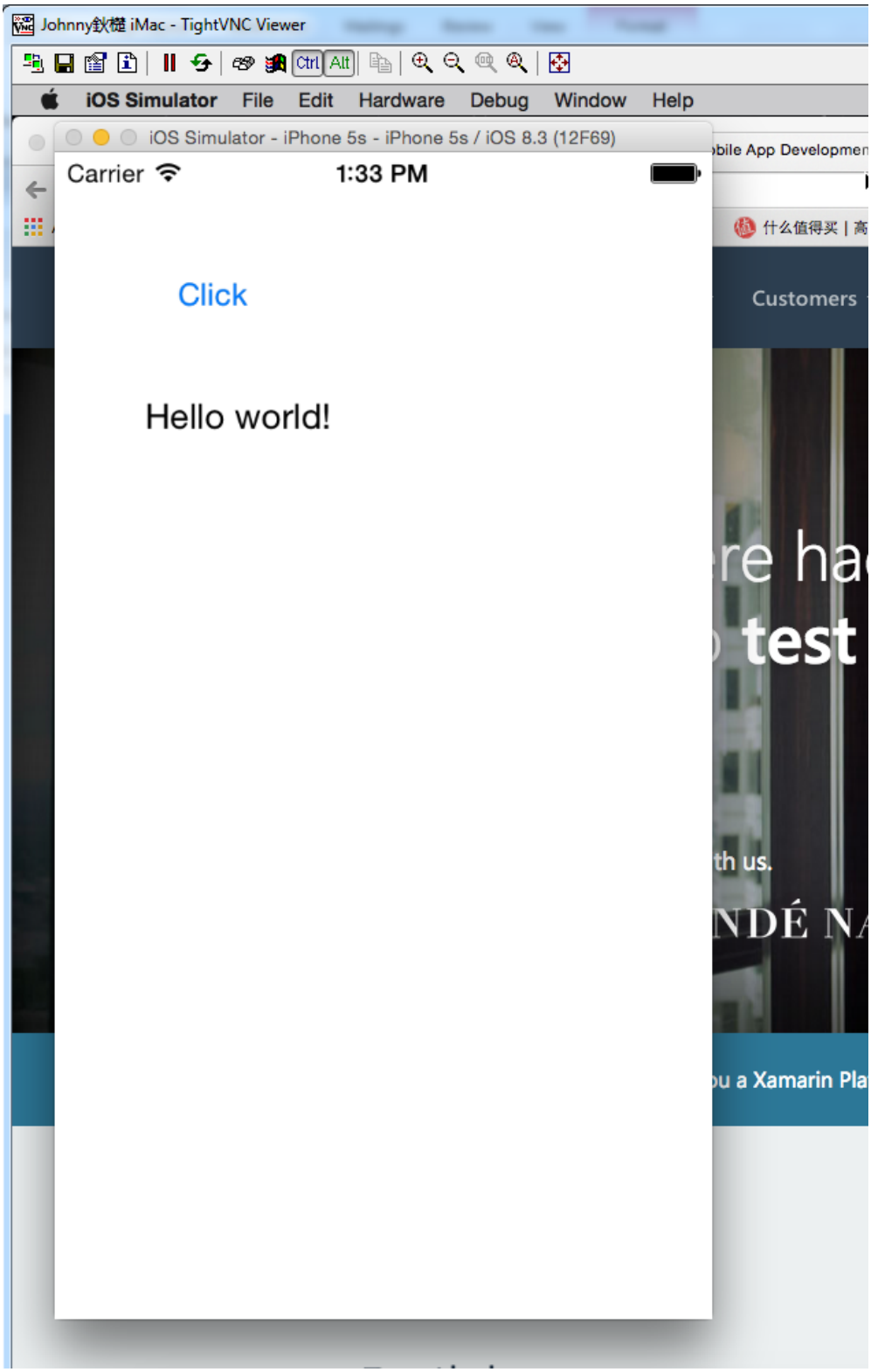


2.2 Developing in Visual Studio 2013

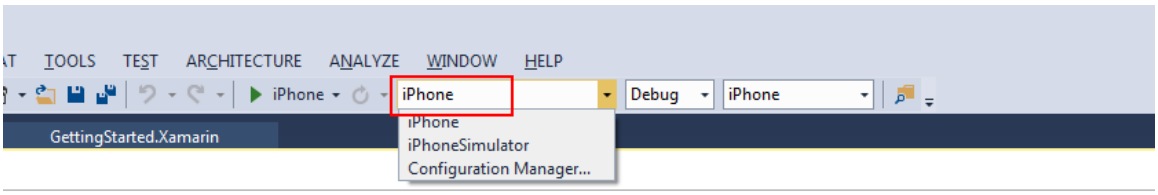


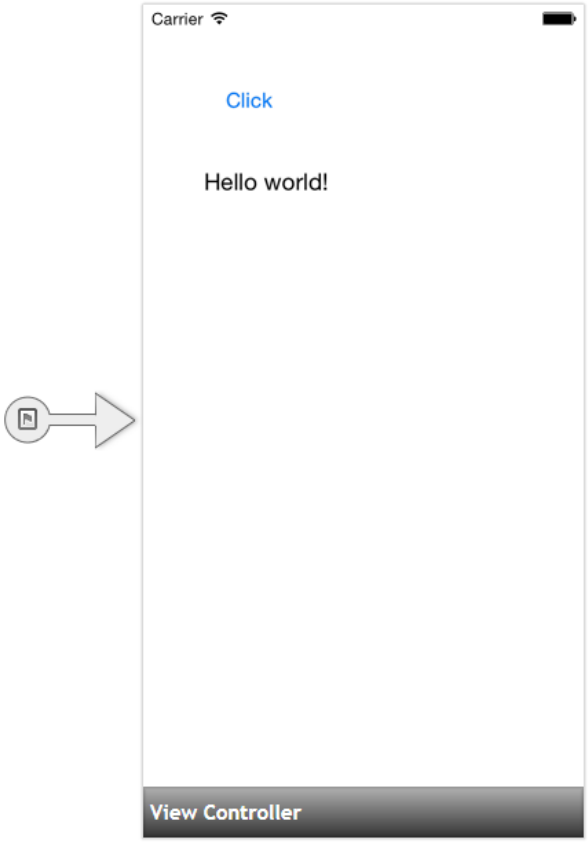
Note: Must be connecting to Build Host of Mac when editing the layout.

2.3 Test in simulator on Mac.



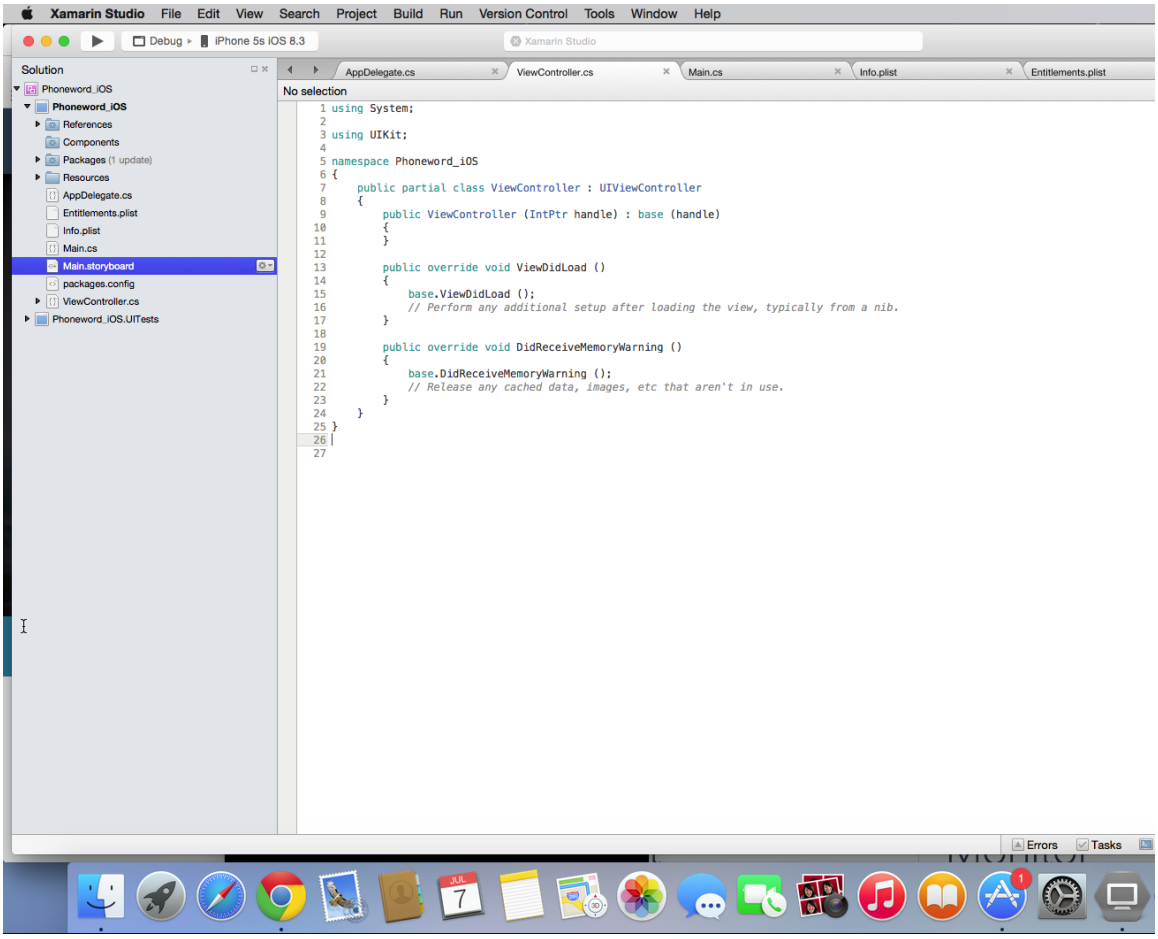
2.4 Test on real device.





Note: Plug in your iphone or ipad to MAC before running the test.

2.5 Developing in Xamarin Studio(Mac)



2.6 Deployment

Publishing to the App Store

http://developer.xamarin.com/guides/ios/deployment,_testing,_and_metrics/app_distribution_overview/publishing_to_the_app_store/

3. Android Development

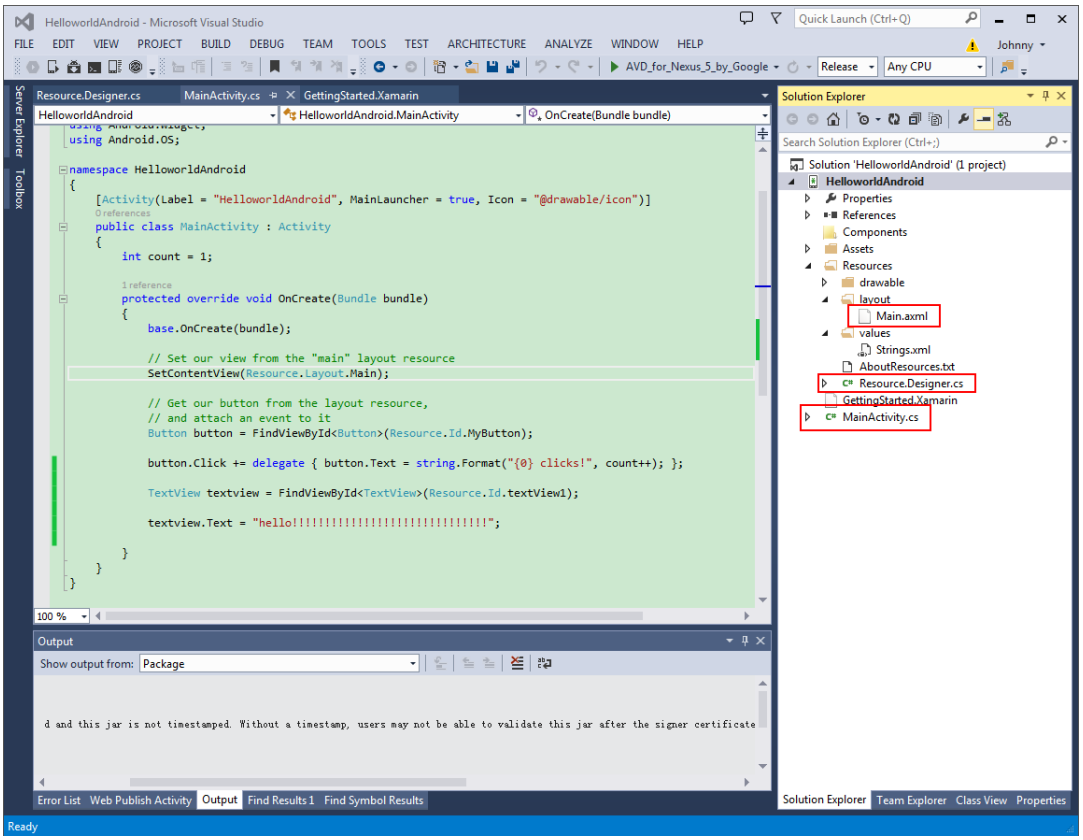
There are three options to setup the development environment for Android:

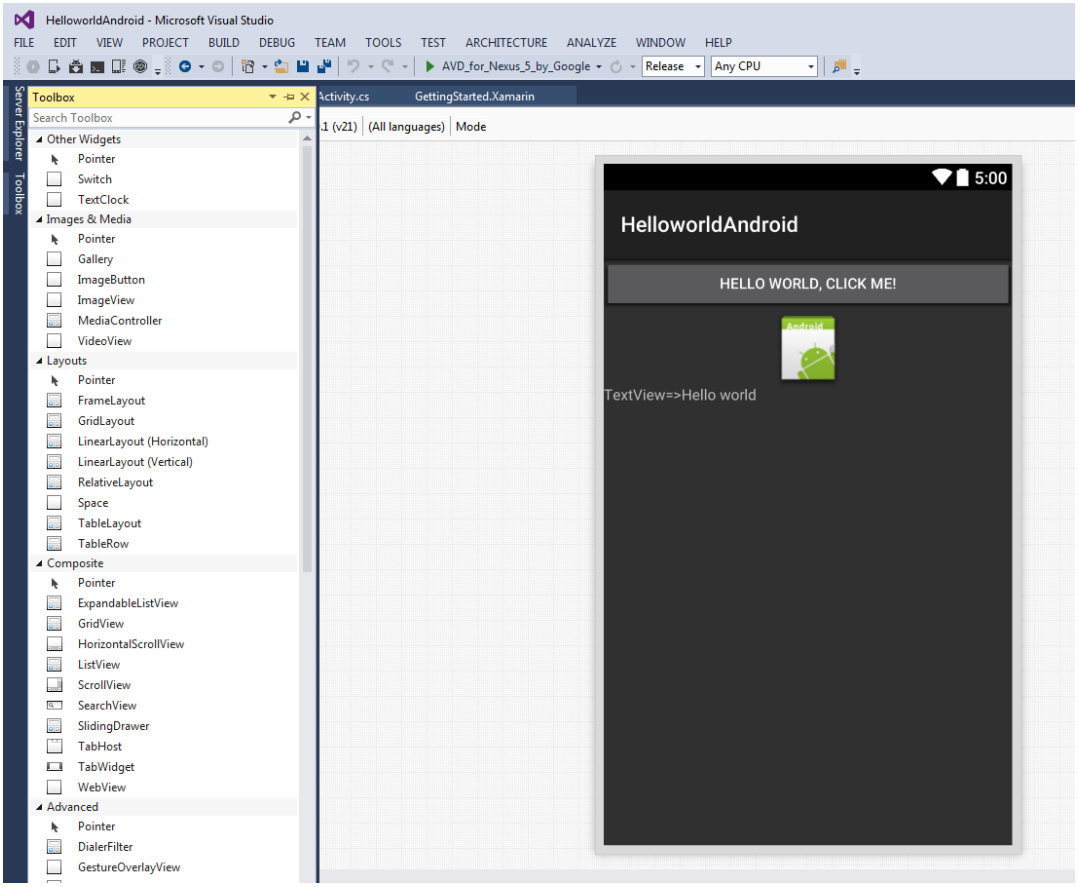
- Xamarin Studio on Mac
- Xamarin Studio on PC
- Visual Studio on PC

3.1 Installation(Windows)

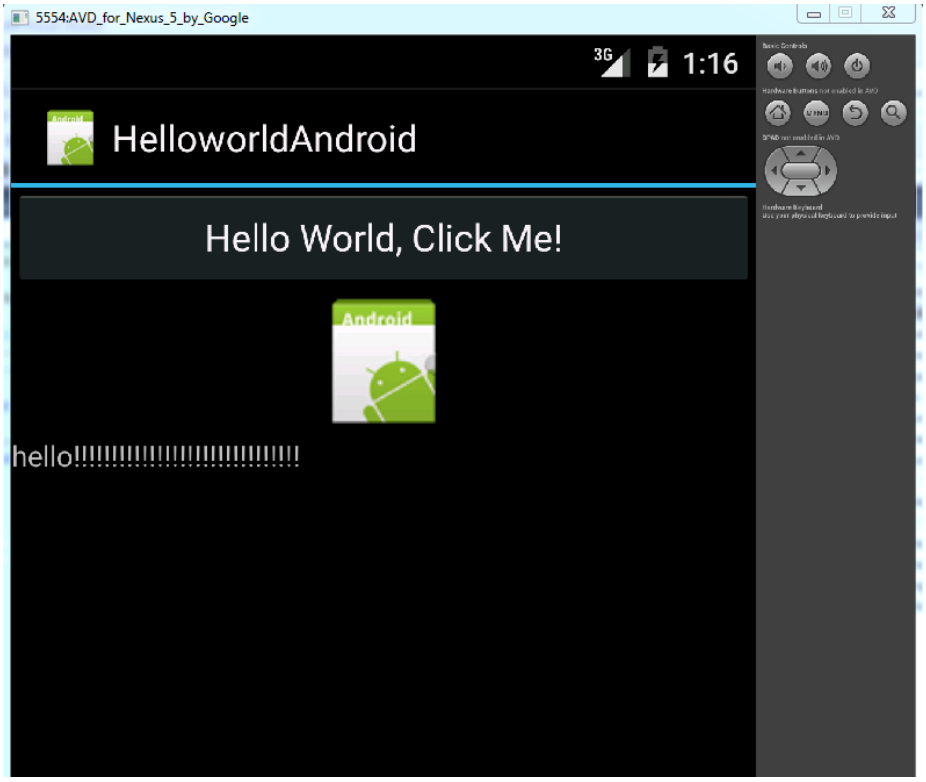
- Xamarin Platform for Windows
- Android SDK and Emulator

3.2 Developing in Visual Studio 2013.

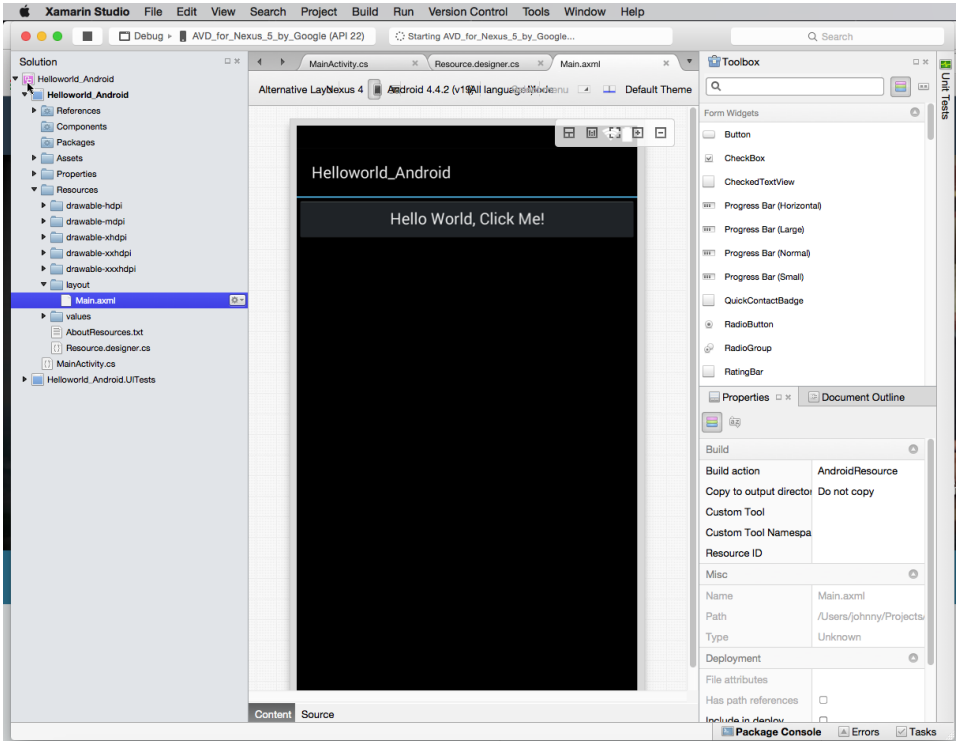

HelloworldAndroid - Microsoft Visual Studio
FILE EDIT VIEW PROJECT BUILD DEBUG TEAM TOOLS TEST ARCHITECTURE ANALYZE WINDOW HELP
Quick Launch (Ctrl+Q)
Johnny
AVD_for_Nexus_5_by_Google
Release
Any CPU
Resource.Designer.cs
MainActivity.cs
GettingStarted.Xamarin
HelloworldAndroid
HelloworldAndroid.MainActivity
OnCreate(Bundle bundle)
using Android.OS;
namespace HelloworldAndroid
{
[Activity(Label = "HelloworldAndroid", MainLauncher = true, Icon = "@drawable/icon")]
0 references
public class MainActivity : Activity
{
int count = 1;
1 reference
protected override void OnCreate(Bundle bundle)
{
base.OnCreate(bundle);
// Set our view from the "main" layout resource
SetContentView(Resource.Layout.Main);
// Get our button from the layout resource,
// and attach an event to it
Button button = FindViewById<Button>(Resource.Id.MyButton);
button.Click += delegate { button.Text = string.Format("{0} clicks!", count++); };
TextView textview = FindViewById<TextView>(Resource.Id.textView1);
textview.Text = "hello!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!";
}
}
}
100 %
Output
Show output from: Package
d and this jar is not timestamped. Without a timestamp, users may not be able to validate this jar after the signer certificate
Error List Web Publish Activity Output Find Results 1 Find Symbol Results
Solution Explorer
Search Solution Explorer (Ctrl+;)
Solution 'HelloworldAndroid' (1 project)
HelloworldAndroid
Properties
References
Components
Assets
Resources
drawable
layout
Main.axml
values
Strings.xml
AboutResources.txt
Resource.Designer.cs
GettingStarted.Xamarin
MainActivity.cs
Solution Explorer Team Explorer Class View Properties
Ready


HelloworldAndroid - Microsoft Visual Studio
FILE EDIT VIEW PROJECT BUILD DEBUG TEAM TOOLS TEST ARCHITECTURE ANALYZE WINDOW HELP
AVD_for_Nexus_5_by_Google
Release
Any CPU
Toolbox
Search Toolbox
Other Widgets
Pointer
Switch
TextClock
Images & Media
Pointer
Gallery
ImageButton
ImageView
MediaController
VideoView
Layouts
Pointer
FrameLayout
GridLayout
LinearLayout (Horizontal)
LinearLayout (Vertical)
RelativeLayout
Space
TableLayout
TableRow
Composite
Pointer
ExpandableListView
GridView
HorizontalScrollView
ListView
ScrollView
SearchView
SlidingDrawer
TabHost
TabWidget
WebView
Advanced
Pointer
DialerFilter
GestureOverlayView
GettingStarted.Xamarin
(All languages)
Mode
5:00
HelloworldAndroid
HELLO WORLD, CLICK ME!
TextView=>Hello world

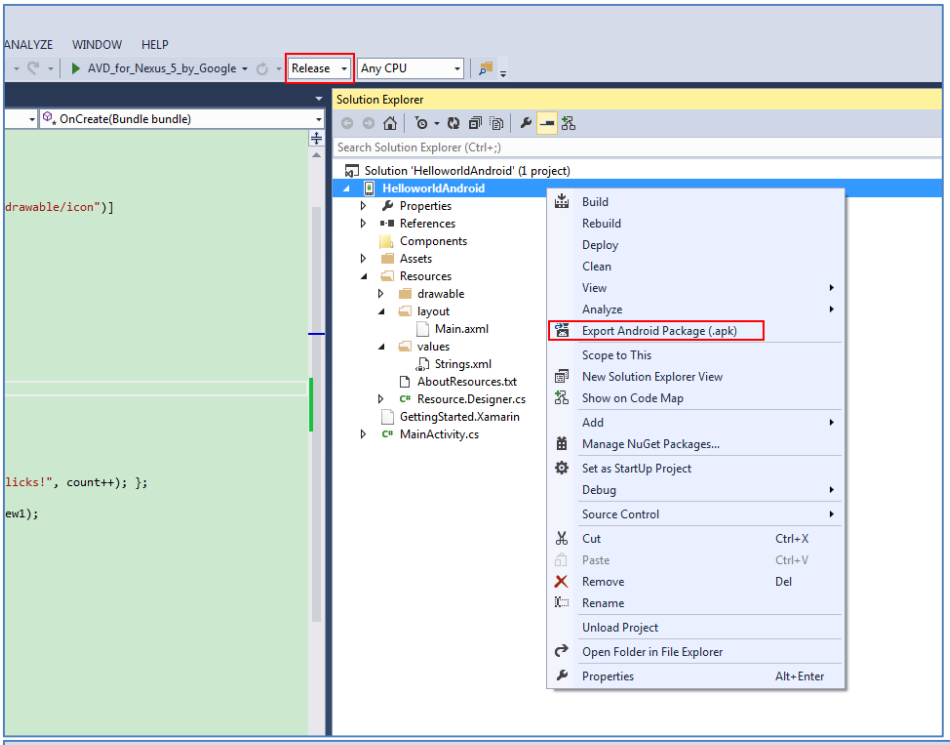
3.3 Test in emulator, AVD(Android Virtual Device).

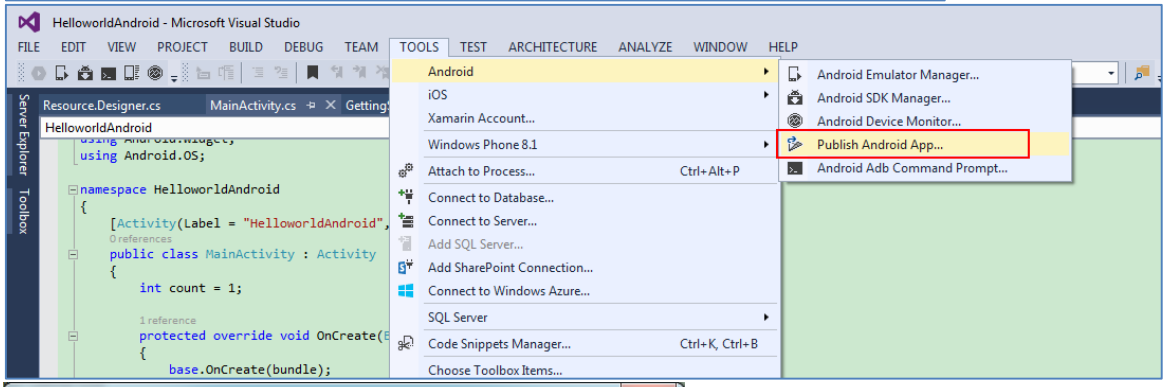


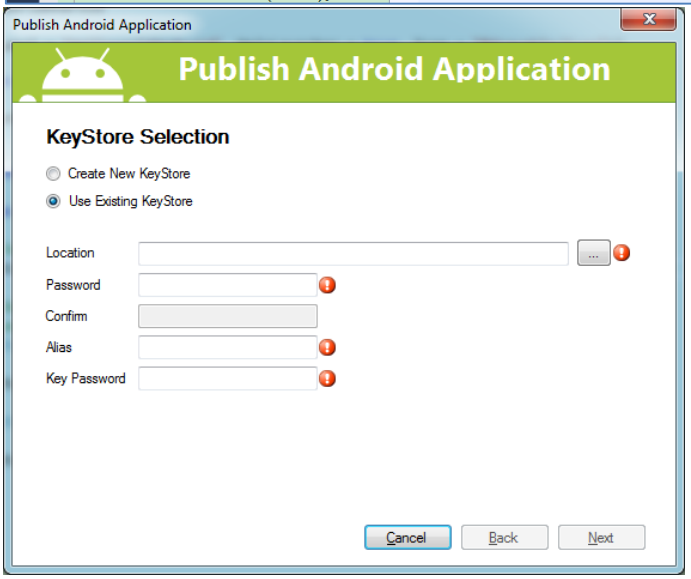
3.4 Developing in Xamarin Studio(Mac)



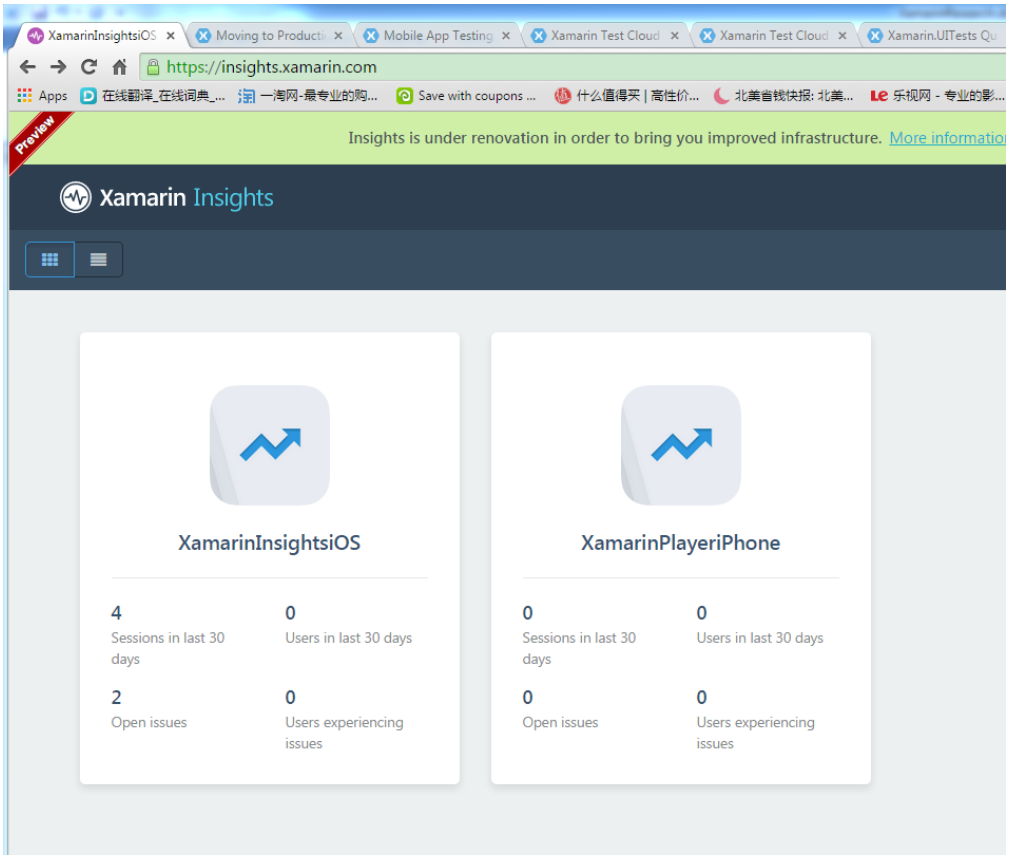
3.5 Publish and Deployment in Visual Studio.

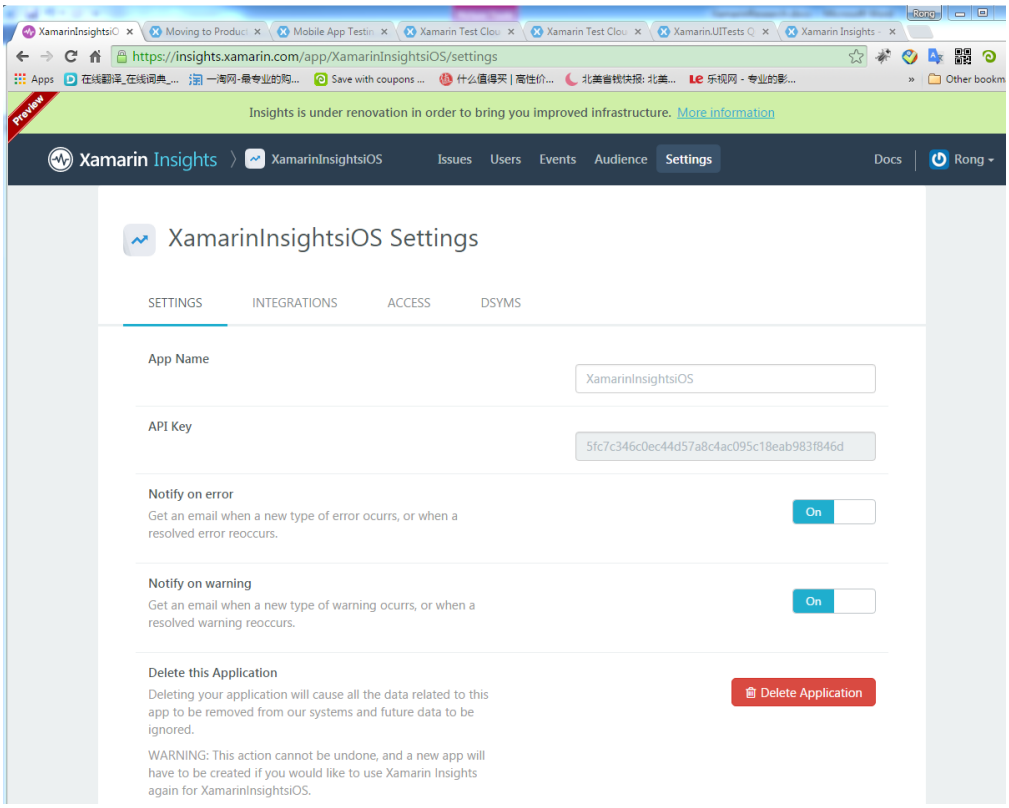

ANALYZE WINDOW HELP
AVD_for_Nexus_5_by_Google
Release
Any CPU
OnCreate(Bundle bundle)
drawable/icon")]
licks!", count++); };
ew1);
Solution Explorer
Search Solution Explorer (Ctrl+;)
Solution 'HelloworldAndroid' (1 project)
HelloworldAndroid
Properties
References
Components
Assets
Resources
drawable
layout
Main.axml
values
Strings.xml
AboutResources.txt
Resource.Designer.cs
GettingStarted.Xamarin
MainActivity.cs
Build
Rebuild
Deploy
Clean
View
Analyze
Export Android Package (.apk)
Scope to This
New Solution Explorer View
Show on Code Map
Add
Manage NuGet Packages...
Set as StartUp Project
Debug
Source Control
Cut Ctrl+X
Paste Ctrl+V
Remove Del
Rename
Unload Project
Open Folder in File Explorer
Properties Alt+Enter


HelloworldAndroid - Microsoft Visual Studio
FILE EDIT VIEW PROJECT BUILD DEBUG TEAM TOOLS TEST ARCHITECTURE ANALYZE WINDOW HELP
Android
iOS
Xamarin Account...
Windows Phone 8.1
Attach to Process... Ctrl+Alt+P
Connect to Database...
Connect to Server...
Add SQL Server...
Add SharePoint Connection...
Connect to Windows Azure...
SQL Server
Code Snippets Manager... Ctrl+K, Ctrl+B
Choose Toolbox Items...
Android Emulator Manager...
Android SDK Manager...
Android Device Monitor...
Publish Android App...
Android Adb Command Prompt...
Resource.Designer.cs
MainActivity.cs
HelloworldAndroid
using Android.OS;
namespace HelloworldAndroid
[Activity(Label = "HelloworldAndroid",
public class MainActivity : Activity
int count = 1;
protected override void OnCreate(
base.OnCreate(bundle);
Server Explorer
Toolbox


Publish Android Application
Publish Android Application
KeyStore Selection
Create New KeyStore
Use Existing KeyStore
Location
Password
Confirm
Alias
Key Password
Cancel
Back
Next

4. Xamarin Insights





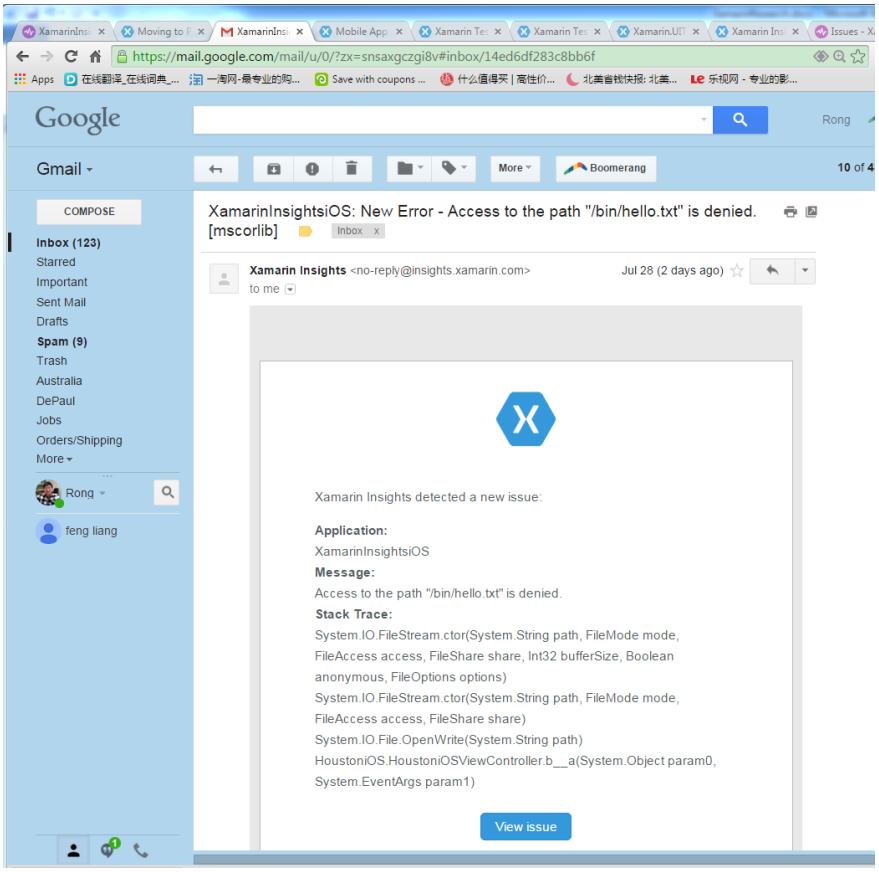
Server Explorer Toolbox

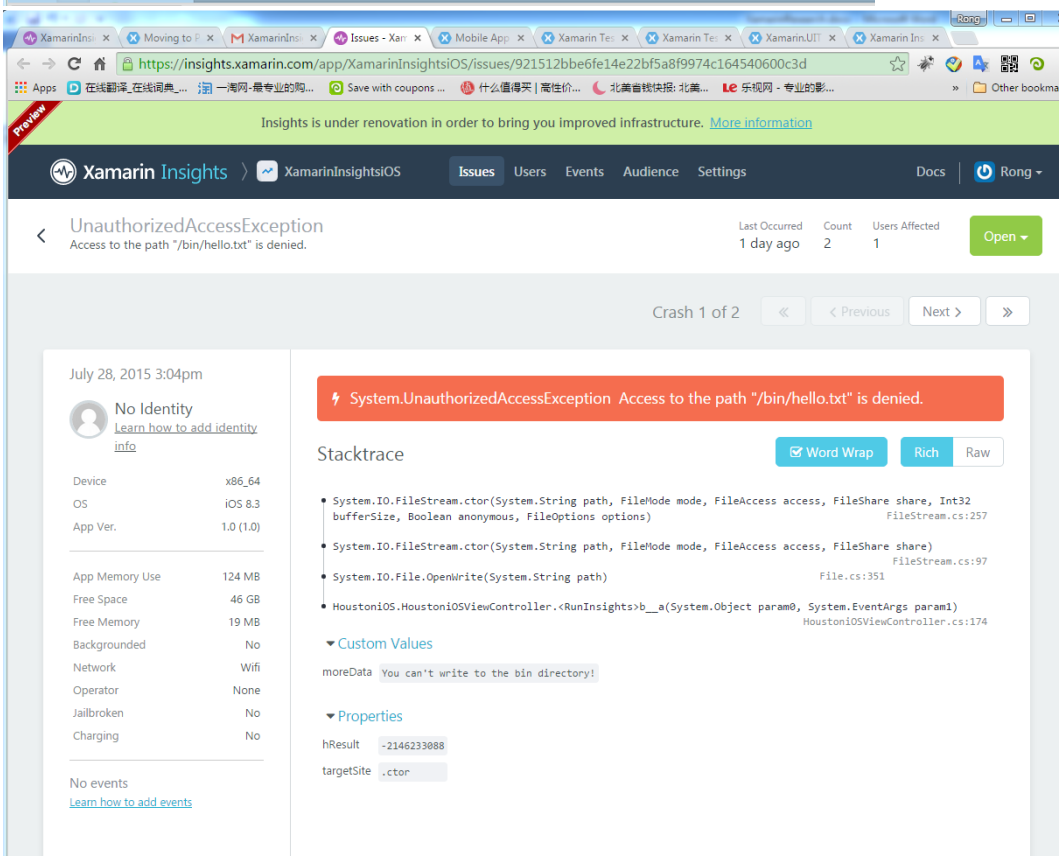
Main.cs | WhiteBoardCanvasView.cs | SecondViewController.cs

XamarinPlayeriPhone | TabbedAppiPhone.Application

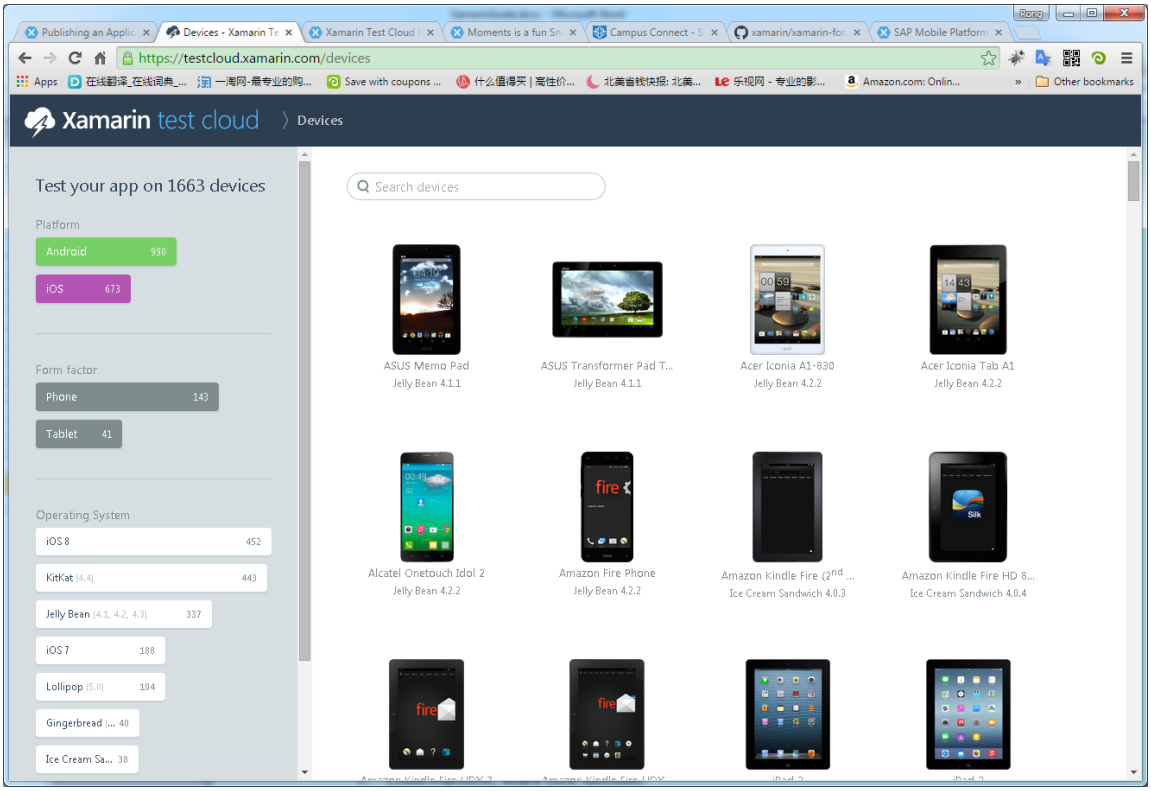
```
1  using System;
2  using System.Collections.Generic;
3  using System.Linq;
4
5  using Foundation;
6  using UIKit;
7  using Xamarin;
8
9  namespace TabbedAppiPhone
10 {
       0 references
11     public class Application
12     {
13         // This is the main entry point of the application.
           0 references
14         static void Main(string[] args)
15         {
16             // if you want to use a different Application Delegate class from "AppDelegate"
17             // you can specify it here.
18             Insights.Initialize("ab3df3055f099f605c77f40d3a72fe7f9d8864db");
19             Insights.Identify("Johnny", "Email", "jojozhuang@gmail.com");
20             UIApplication.Main(args, null, "AppDelegate");
21         }
22     }
23 }
```

```
124            // the next is to send specific information. This can achieved using a Dictionary<string,string>()
125            // and may be constructed as part of the report or outside of it
126
127            // 1. as part of the exception
128
129            btnFileException.TouchUpInside += delegate
130            {
131                try
132                {
133                    using (var text = File.OpenText("some_file.tardis"))
134                    {
135                        Console.WriteLine("{0}", text.ReadLine());
136                    }
137                }
138                catch (FileNotFoundException ex)
139                {
140                    Insights.Report(ex, new Dictionary<string,string>
141                        {
142                            { "File missing", "some_file.tardis" },
143                            { "Source file","MainActivity.cs" },
144                            { "Method name", "protected override void OnCreate(Bundle bundle)" }
145                        });
146                }
147            };
148
```

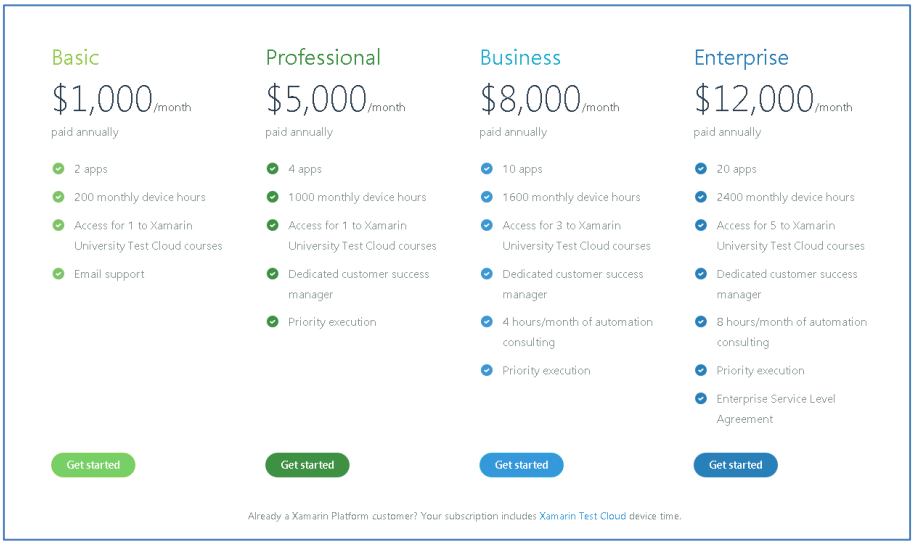

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?zx=snsaxgczgi8v#inbox/14ed6df283c8bb6f
Google
Gmail
COMPOSE
Inbox (123)
Starred
Important
Sent Mail
Drafts
Spam (9)
Trash
Australia
DePaul
Jobs
Orders/Shipping
More
Rong
feng liang
XamarinInsightsiOS: New Error - Access to the path "/bin/hello.txt" is denied. [mscorlib]
Xamarin Insights <no-reply@insights.xamarin.com>
Jul 28 (2 days ago)
to me
Xamarin Insights detected a new issue:
Application:
XamarinInsightsiOS
Message:
Access to the path "/bin/hello.txt" is denied.
Stack Trace:
System.IO.FileStream.ctor(System.String path, FileMode mode, FileAccess access, FileShare share, Int32 bufferSize, Boolean anonymous, FileOptions options)
System.IO.FileStream.ctor(System.String path, FileMode mode, FileAccess access, FileShare share)
System.IO.File.OpenWrite(System.String path)
HoustoniOS.HoustoniOSViewController.b__a(System.Object param0, System.EventArgs param1)
View issue


https://insights.xamarin.com/app/XamarinInsightsiOS/issues/921512bbe6fe14e22bf5a8f9974c164540600c3d
Insights is under renovation in order to bring you improved infrastructure. More information
Xamarin Insights
XamarinInsightsiOS
Issues
Users
Events
Audience
Settings
Docs
Rong
UnauthorizedAccessException
Access to the path "/bin/hello.txt" is denied.
Last Occurred
1 day ago
Count
2
Users Affected
1
Open
Crash 1 of 2
Previous
Next
July 28, 2015 3:04pm
No Identity
Learn how to add identity info
Device x86_64
OS iOS 8.3
App Ver. 1.0 (1.0)
App Memory Use 124 MB
Free Space 46 GB
Free Memory 19 MB
Backgrounded No
Network Wifi
Operator None
Jailbroken No
Charging No
No events
Learn how to add events
System.UnauthorizedAccessException Access to the path "/bin/hello.txt" is denied.
Stacktrace
Word Wrap
Rich
Raw
System.IO.FileStream.ctor(System.String path, FileMode mode, FileAccess access, FileShare share, Int32 bufferSize, Boolean anonymous, FileOptions options) FileStream.cs:257
System.IO.FileStream.ctor(System.String path, FileMode mode, FileAccess access, FileShare share) FileStream.cs:97
System.IO.File.OpenWrite(System.String path) File.cs:351
HoustoniOS.HoustoniOSViewController.<RunInsights>b__a(System.Object param0, System.EventArgs param1) HoustoniOSViewController.cs:174
Custom Values
moreData You can't write to the bin directory!
Properties
hResult -2146233088
targetSite .ctor

5. Xamarin Test Cloud
   - Xamarin.UITest(C#)
   - Calabash(Ruby)

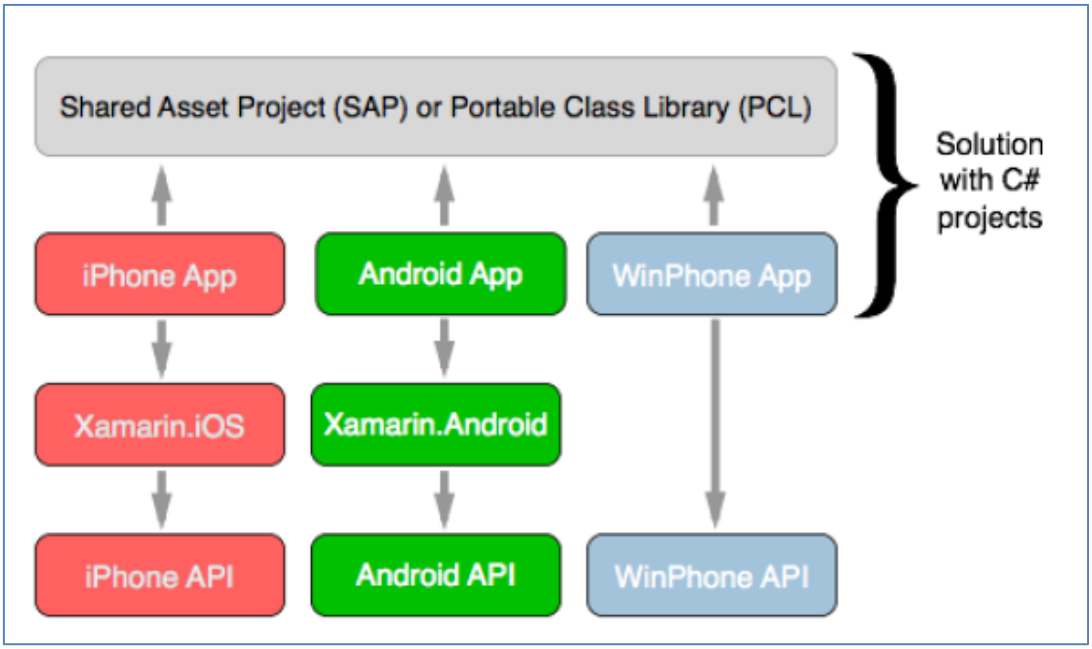


Costs:



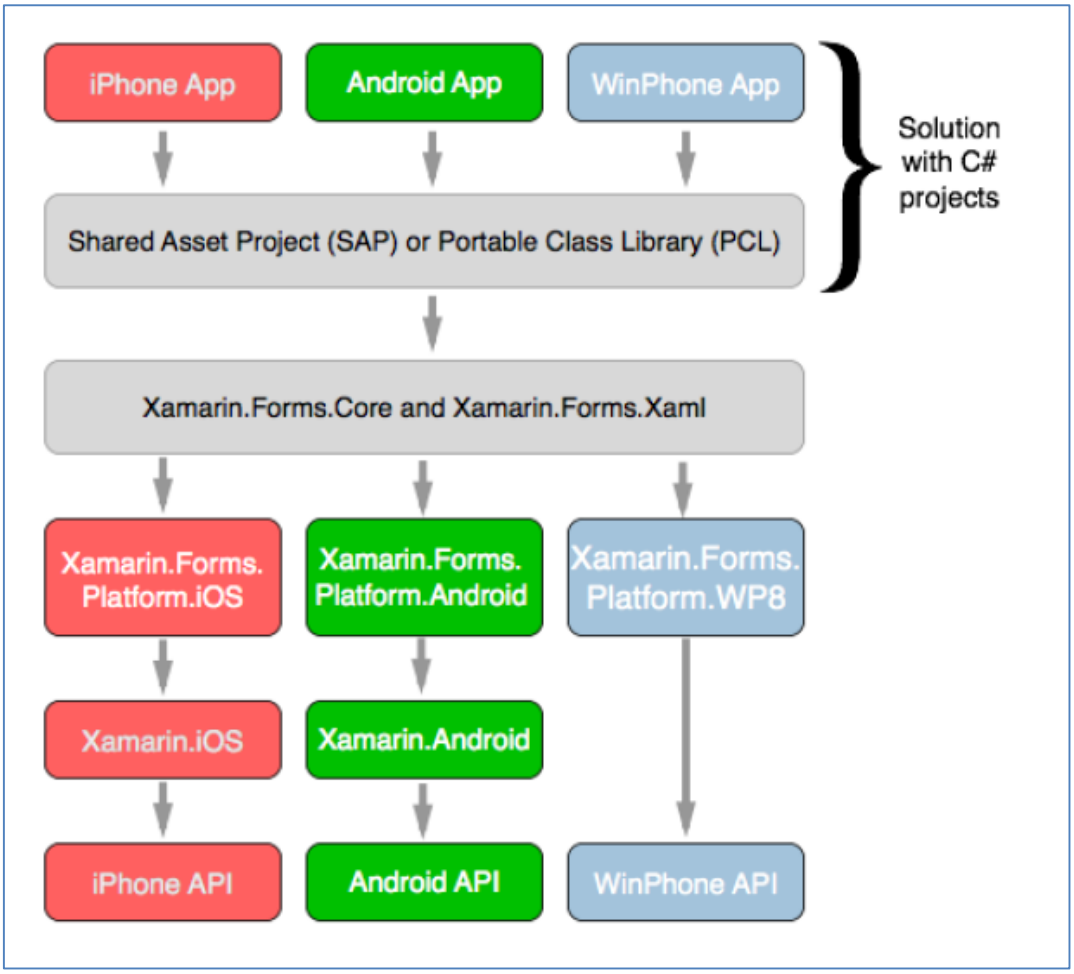
6. Cross-Platform

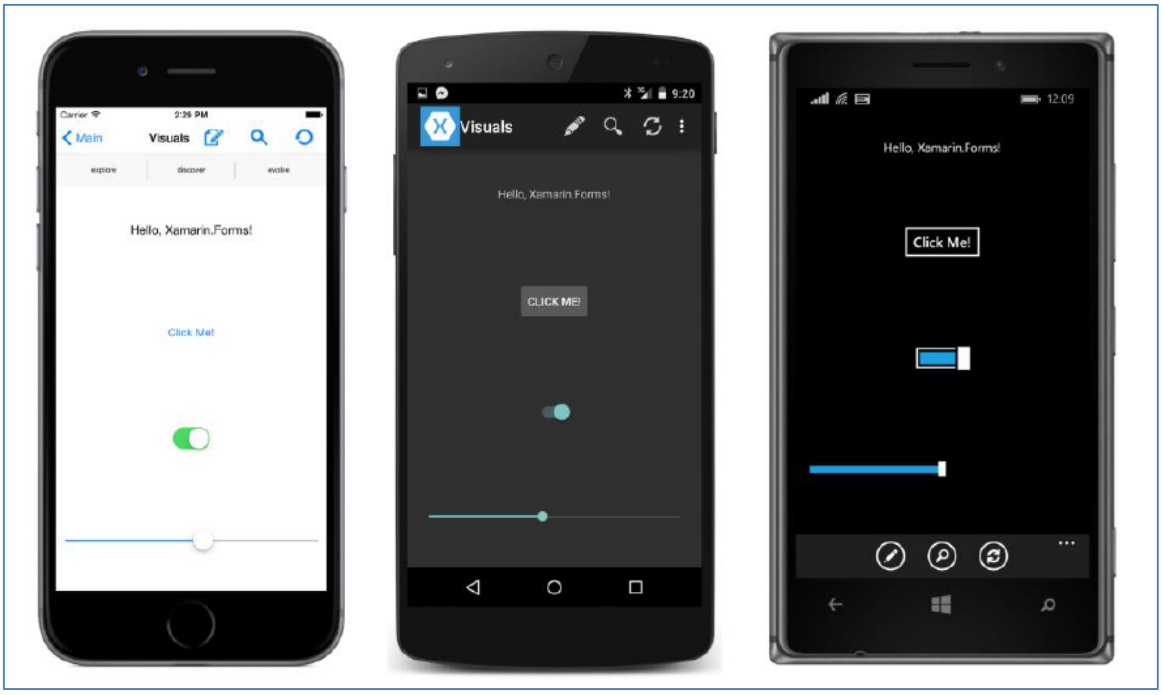
6.1 Separated components
   - Xamarin.Android
   - Xamarin.iOS
   - Xamarin.WP8



6.2 Xamarin.Form(Unified UI development process)

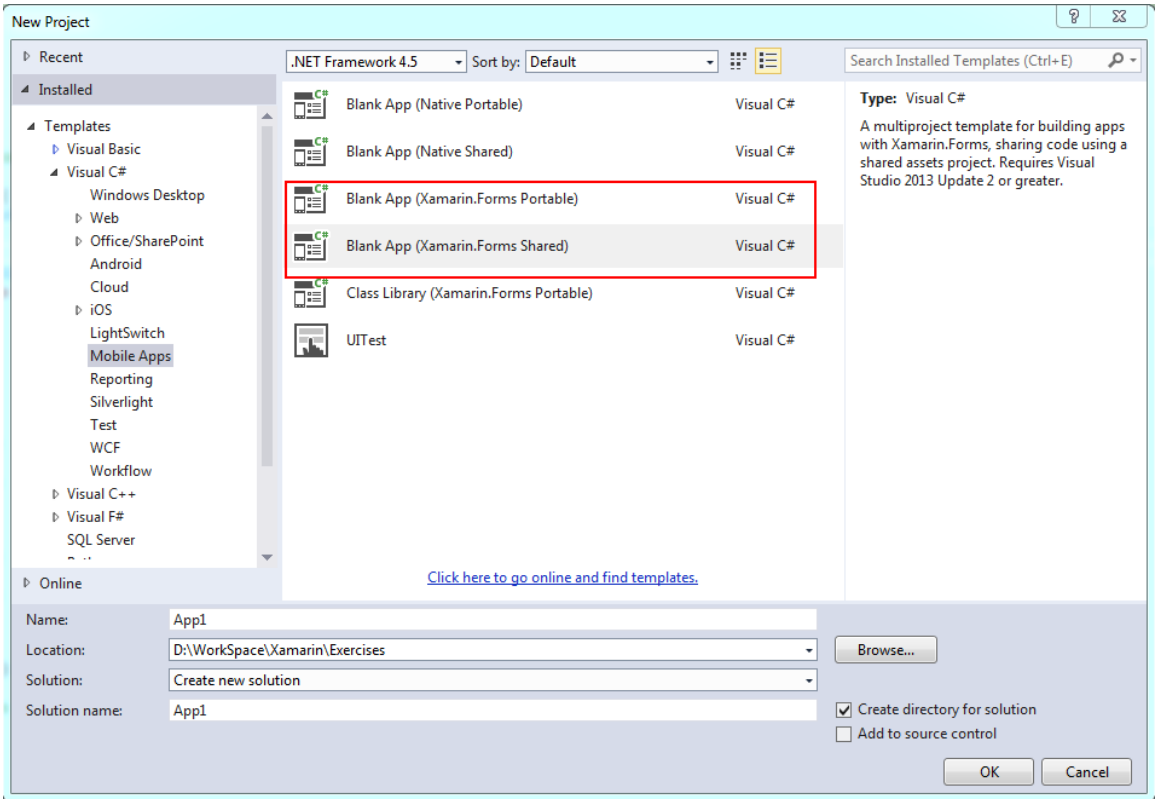
Xamarin.Forms integrates with Xamarin.iOS and Xamarin.Android.

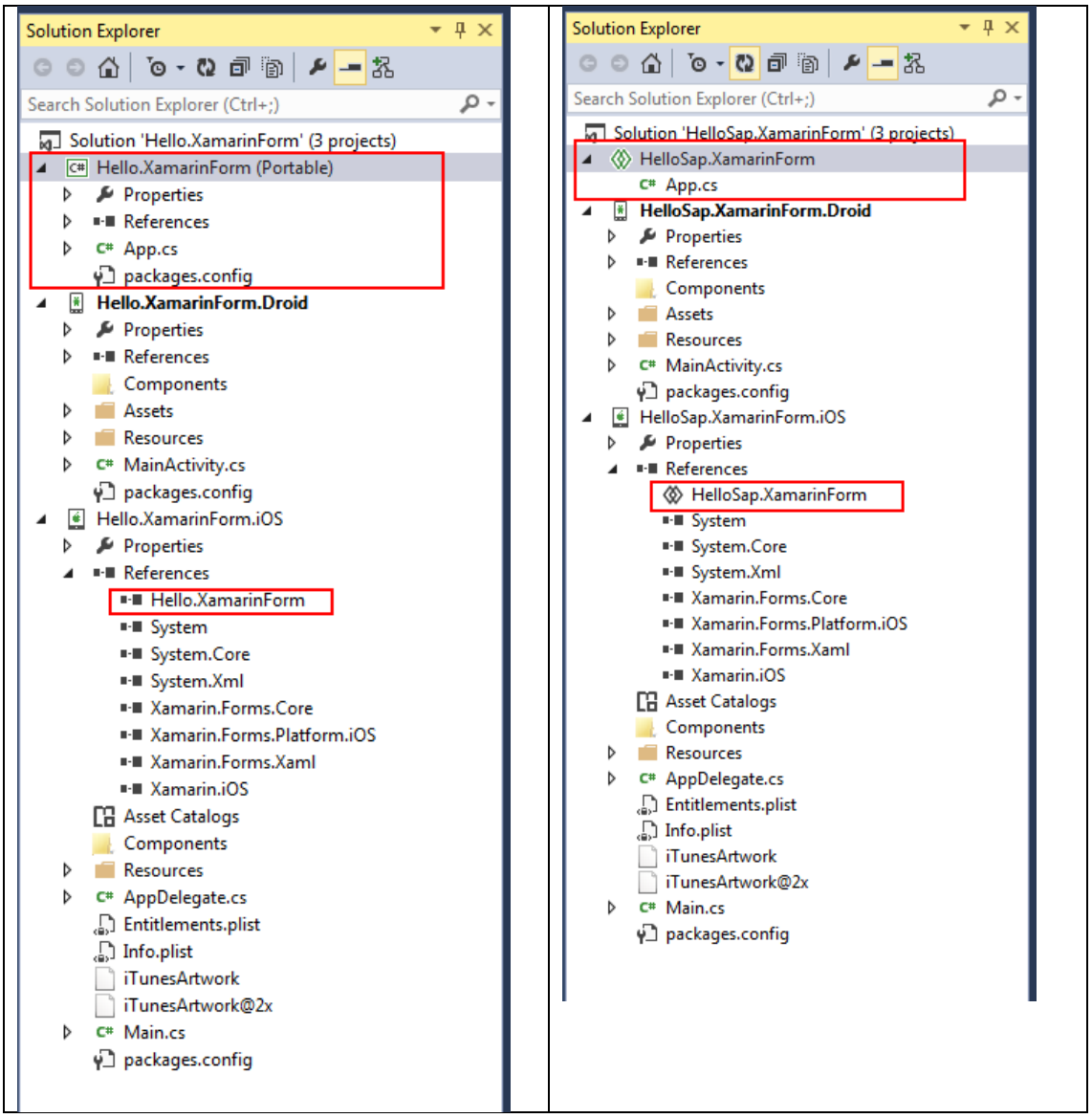




6.3 Sharing Codes

- Portable Class Library (PCL): dlls
- Shared Asset Project (SAP): code and assets files



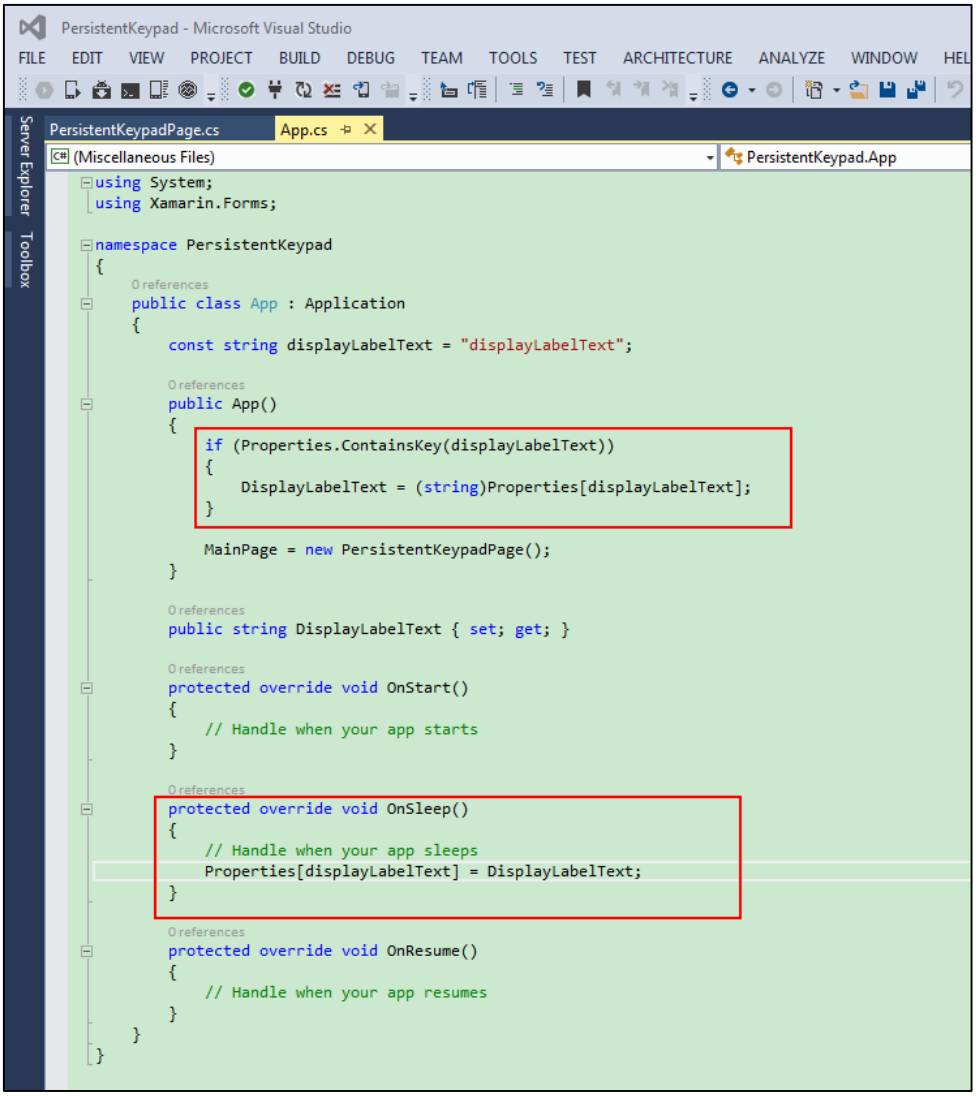


The iOS and Android projects have access to pretty much the same version of .NET, but it is **not** the same version of .NET that a Windows Phone project uses. This means that any .NET classes accessed by the shared code might be somewhat different depending on the platform. As you'll discover later in this book, this is the case for some **file I/O classes in the System.IO** namespace.

7. Store Data

7.1 Transient Data

- Application.Properties(string key, object item)
- Application Events(OnStart, OnSleep, OnResume)



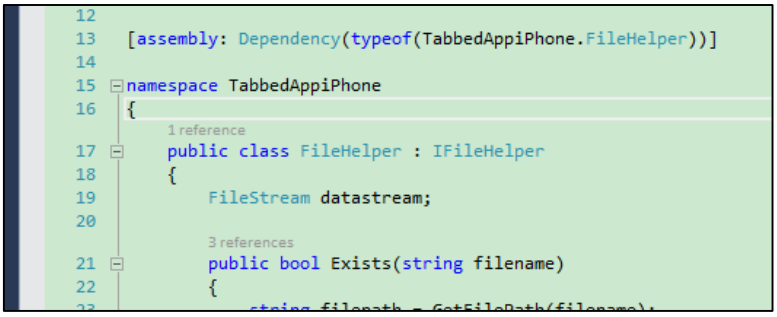
Note: If each item of this data is an entry in the Properties dictionary, each item needs a dictionary key. However, if a program needs to save a large file such as a word-processing document, it shouldn't use the Properties dictionary, but in-stead should access the platform's file system directly.

7.2 Large File

Platform's file system:

```
Environment.GetFolderPath(Environment.SpecialFolder.MyDocuments);
```

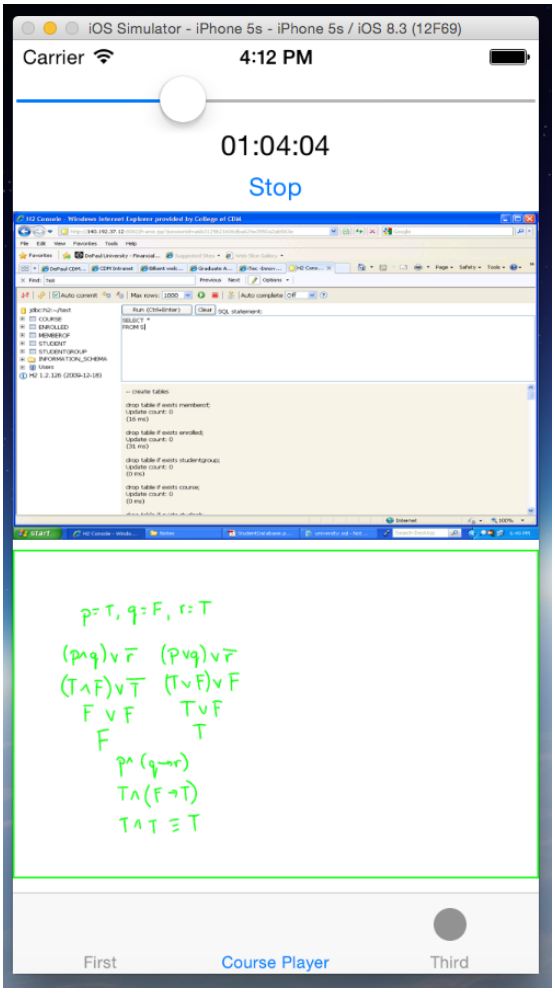
Xamarin.Forms.DependencyService



```
using Xamarin.Forms;

namespace COL.Core
{
    2 references
    class FileHelper : IFileHelper
    {
        IFileHelper fileHelper = DependencyService.Get<IFileHelper>(DependencyFetchTarget.NewInstance);  //create new instance each time

        3 references
        public bool Exists(string filename)
        {
            return fileHelper.Exists(filename);
        }

        3 references
        public void WriteText(string filename, string text)
```

8. Prototype of Course Player

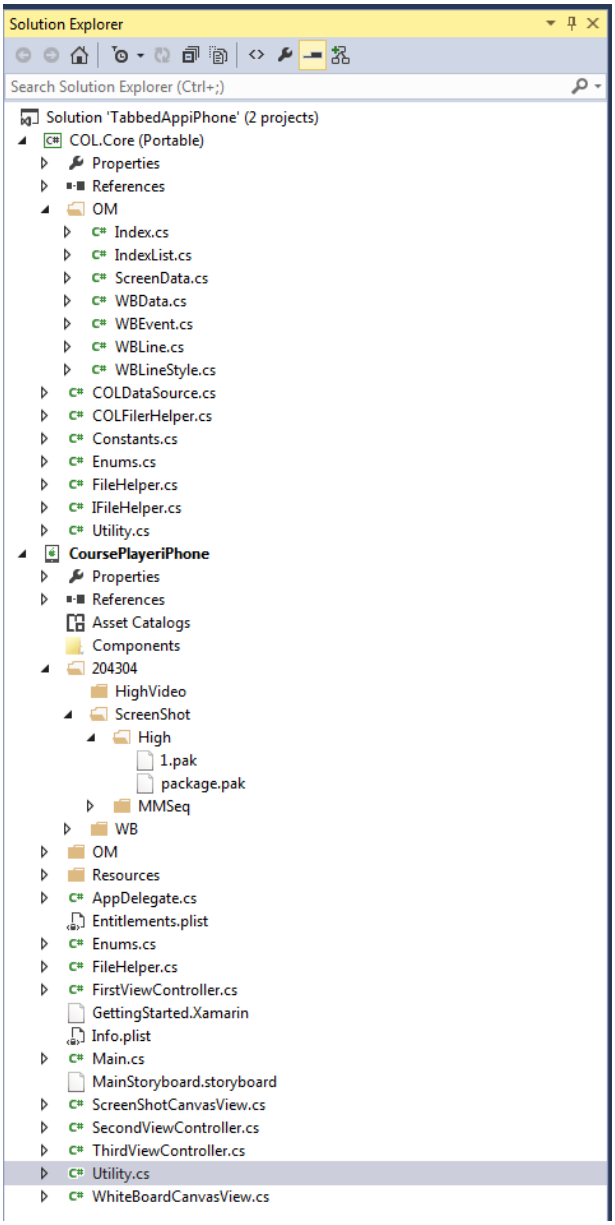
8.1 Layout



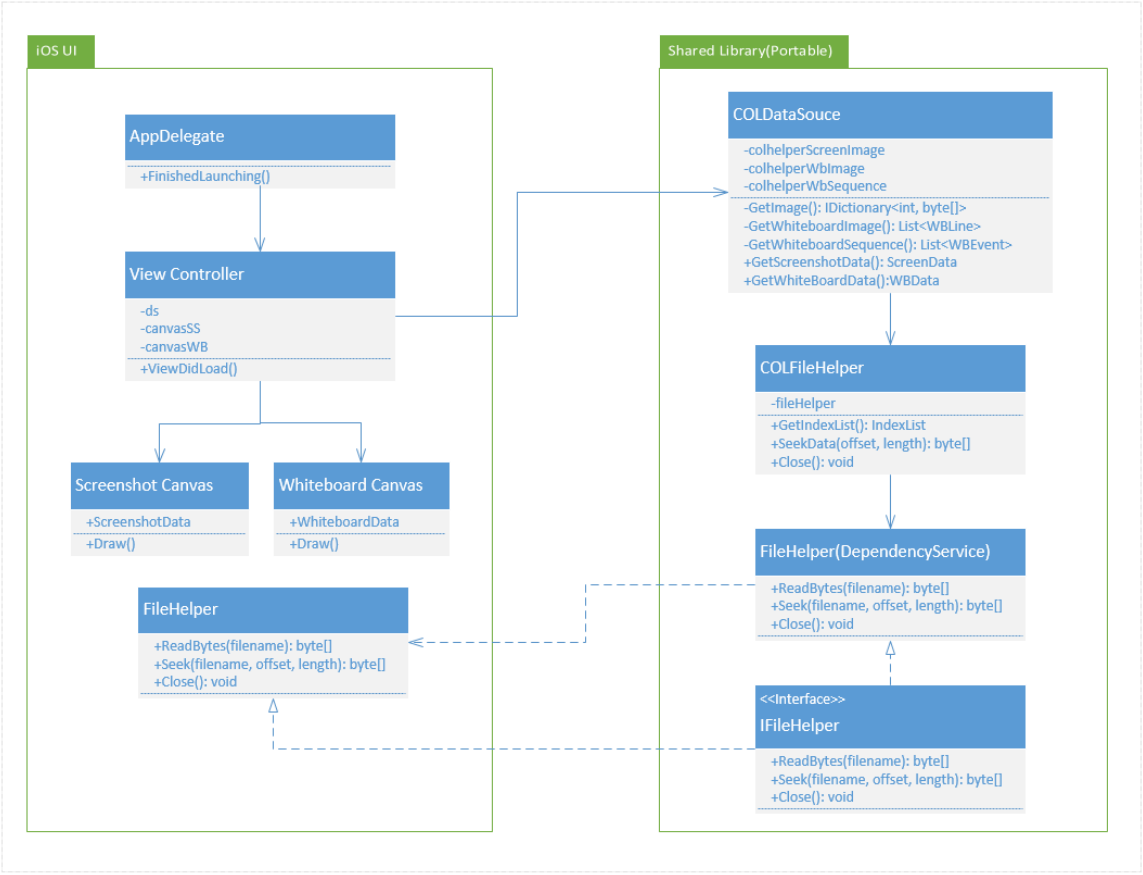
Use a slider, label and button to simulate video playing.

8.2 Components

- COL.Core contains the core function to get and convert data.
- CoursePlayeriPhone contains the course related files and render the UI.



8.3 UML class diagram



9. Important Concerns

9.1 Does Xamarin provide the support of the third-party libraries? How?

Yes, Xamrain supports not only .NET based class libraries, but also Objective-C, Java, HTML or Javascript to reuse in Xamarin.

Walkthrough: Binding an Objective-C Library

http://developer.xamarin.com/guides/ios/advanced_topics/binding_objective-c/Walkthrough_Binding_objective-c_library/

1) First, we'll create an Objective-C static library using Xcode.
2) Then we'll binding this static library with Xamarin.iOS.
3) Next, show how Objective Sharpie can reduce the workload by automatically generating some (but not all) of the necessary API definitions required by the Xamarin.iOS binding.
4) Finally, we'll create a Xamarin.iOS application that uses the binding.

9.2 IO interfaces, eg. file read/write

```
// Private methods.
4 references
private string GetFilePath(string filename)
{
    return Path.Combine(GetDocsPath(), filename);
}

2 references
private string GetDocsPath()
{
    return Environment.GetFolderPath(Environment.SpecialFolder.MyDocuments);
}
```

LocalApplicationData
LocalizedResources
MyComputer
MyDocuments
MyMusic
MyPictures
MyVideos
NetworkShortcuts
Personal

Environmer

9.3 What features, especially the system relevant functionalities, does Xamarin provide? Briefly, Xamarin supports unified cross-platform features. Separately, it supports platform aimed features. http://developer.xamarin.com/recipes/

Cross-Platform

Xamarin.Forms
- Add 'Done' to keyboard
- Choose a keyboard for an entry
- Hide separator lines in ListView
- Geocode a street address
- Reverse geocode a street address
- Perform map-based navigation

IDE
- Launch SDK Manager
- Change the Updates Channel
- Debugging

App Links
- App Links for iOS
- App Links for Android

Game Development
- Collision
- Time Based Movement

Networking
- Report Download Progress

Android

Controls
- Autocomplete Text View
- DatePicker
- EditText
- ImageButton
- ImageView
- SeekBar
- WebView

Networking
- Email
- Detect Strength of GSM Signal
- NetworkInfo
- SMS

Resources
- Device Specific
- General

Data
- Adapters
- ContentProviders
- Files
- Databases

Layout
- Grid View
- Table Layout

OS\/Device Resources
- Accelerometer
- Geocoder
- GPS

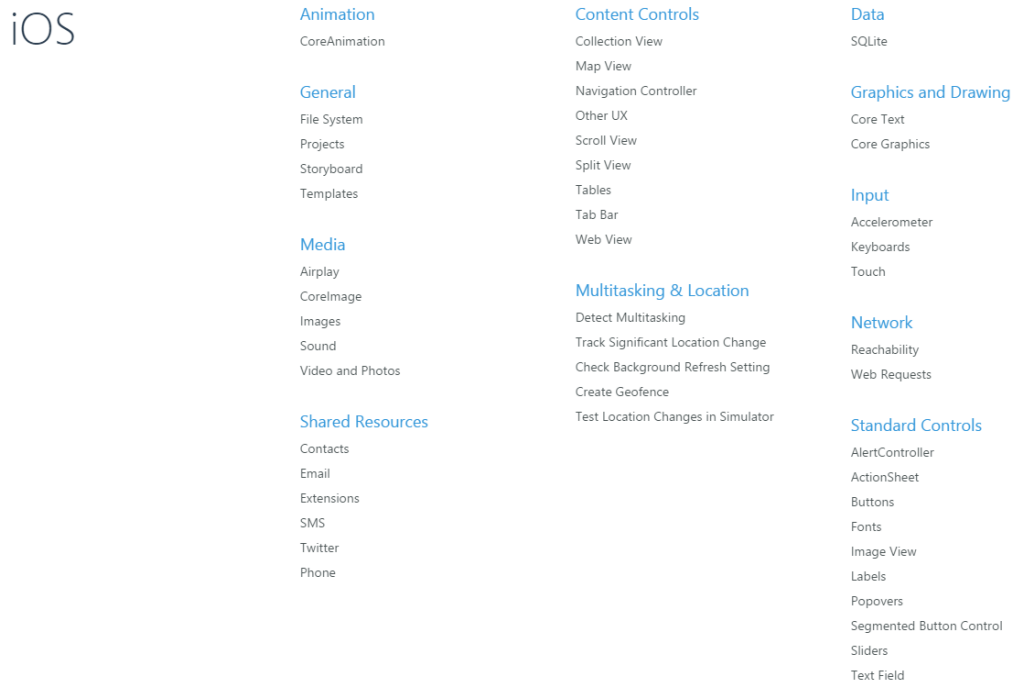
Web Services
- Consuming Services

Fundamentals
- Activity
- Intent
- Service

General
- Projects

Media
- Audio
- Video

Other UX
- Animation
- Camera Intent
- Drawing
- Fragment
- Gestures
- Pick Image on Device
- TextureView



9.4 How does Xamarin follow the new releases of native platforms, iOS and Android?

> How long does it take to add support for a new release from Apple or Google?
>
> A few hours for iOS and very soon for Android. We have extensive tooling and sophisticated processes for binding new APIs from Apple and Google when they are released, as evidenced by our same-day support for iOS 5, iOS 6, iOS 6.1, and iOS 7.

10. Overview Conclusion
    1) Xamarin has great support for cross-platform mobile development.
    2) The development cost is high by using Xamarin.
    3) Developers are required to have the knowledge of C#(.Net), Xamarin(Mono), iOS development and Android Development.
    4) For iOS, the layout design is not supported enough (eg. auto layout), maybe need to create separate projects for iPhone and iPad.

11. Feature Comparison from Portfolio Perspective

	Native	**Xamarin**
Development Community	Matured mobile platform with plenty of materials/documents.	Lack of resources, like, books, third-party libraries, etc.
Features/Functionalities	Can get the entire features/functionalities provided by the SDK.	Some of the native features are not supported very well(eg. Auto layout).
Third-Party Library	Fully supported	Needs some extra effort to achieve the same purpose.
Coding	Pure native codes	Hybrid of Mono, iOS and Android
Debugging	Comfortable with Xcode, Android Studio	Comfortable with Visual Studio
Deployment	Standard procedure	A little more extra work required.
Extendibility	Easy to add new features	In most cases, it is possible to add new feature, but need do some researching work first.
Reusable	Low	High, if more platforms are required. Besides, the shared library can be enhanced to support web application.
Effort in Development phase	High	Low, if more platforms are required
Effort in maintenance phase	High	Low, especially when the bug is not relevant with UI.
Required Developers	2 (1 for iOS, 1 for Android)	3 (1 for Xamarin shared library, 1 for iOS UI, 1 for Android UI)
Developer's Qualification	Platform specified knowledge	Cross-platform knowledge, Xamarin platform, plus C#, Mono
License Fee(Per Year)	iOS $99; Android free	iOS developer account $99 Xamarin iOS: $999 Xamarin Android: $999
Potential Risk	None	Uncertainty of Xamarin's future.

The comparison is based on the assumption that our APP only supports iOS and Android.

12. Reference

- http://xamarin.com/faq
- https://components.xamarin.com/
- http://developer.xamarin.com/recipes/ios/general/file_system/load_a_file/
- http://developer.xamarin.com/recipes/android/data/files/
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