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Hello App Inventor!: Android Programming For Kids And The Rest Of Us



Synopsis

SummaryHello App Inventor! introduces creative young readers to the world of mobile programming—no experience required! Featuring more than 30 fun invent-it-yourself projects, this full-color, fun-to-read book starts with the building blocks you need to create a few practice apps. Then you'll learn the skills you need to bring your own app ideas to life. Purchase of the print book includes a free eBook in PDF, Kindle, and ePub formats from Manning Publications.

About the BookHave you ever wondered how apps are made? Do you have a great idea for an app that you want to make reality? This book can teach you how to create apps for any Android device, even if you have never programmed before. With App Inventor, if you can imagine it, you can create it. Using this free, friendly tool, you can decide what you want your app to do and then click together colorful jigsaw-puzzle blocks to make it happen. App Inventor turns your project into an Android app that you can test on your computer, run on your phone, share with your friends, and even sell in the Google Play store.

Hello App Inventor! introduces young readers to the world of mobile programming. It assumes no previous experience. Featuring more than 30 invent-it-yourself projects, this book starts with basic apps and gradually builds the skills you need to bring your own ideas to life. We've provided the graphics and sounds to get you started right away. And a special Learning Points feature connects the example you're following to important computing concepts you'll use in any programming language. App Inventor is developed and maintained by MIT.

What's InsideCovers MIT App Inventor 2How to create animated characters, games, experiments, magic tricks, and a Zombie Alarm clockUse advanced phone features like:Movement sensorsTouch screen interactionGPS CameraText Web connectivity

About the AuthorsPaula Beer and Carl Simmons are professional educators and authors who spend most of their time training new teachers and introducing children to programming.

Table of ContentsGetting to know App InventorDesigning the user interfaceUsing the screen: layouts and the canvasFling, touch, and drag: user interaction with the touch screenVariables, decisions, and proceduresLists and loopsClocks and timersAnimationPosition sensorsBarcodes and scannersUsing speech and storing data on your phoneWeb-enabled appsLocation-aware appsFrom idea to appPublishing and beyond

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Age Range: 9 and up

Grade Level: 5 - 8

Customer Reviews

View larger Why should you be an App Inventor? Programming is a great skill to learn because it helps you think in a certain way this is sometimes called computational thinking. What this really means is that once you can program, you can solve lots of problems in the real world, too. Even if you become an architect, an artist, an engineer, or a scientist, the skills you learn from programming are useful. Why choose the App Inventor language? There are loads of choices of programming languages LOGO, Python, Small Basic, JavaScript, Logo, Scratch, and Kodu. We think you should try them all! What's different about App Inventor is that it gives you access to some powerful hardware that you can carry in your pocket a smartphone. Ways of using this book We've written this book in sequence so you get the essential ideas of computing and programming in an order that we think makes sense. The early examples in the book include step-by-step instructions (walkthroughs). Later, we assume you already know lots of things; and as you progress, the activities become more challenging as your skill level increases. The apps tend to get more complicated as you go through the book, too, and those in chapter 14 bring all the ideas you've learned together in two quite big and complicated apps. If you're a beginner, we suggest that you work through the book in order; it probably makes the most sense that way. If you know a little about programming, you might find it useful to skip around and try different sections that interest you. We've included Try It Out and Taking It Further sections that give you additional challenges. This is how you find out just how much you know! It's easy to follow a set of instructions, but can you apply those skills to something else? We strongly suggest that you try these exercises and suggestions. You'll also find some quiz questions at the end of each chapter to check that you understand the computing

concepts covered. We've included setup instructions in chapter 1, and there's more on the App Inventor website A computer running Windows, Mac OS X, or Linux (we used Windows). A web browser. Firefox, Chrome, or Safari is fine A Google account An Android phone isn't essential, but it makes things a lot more fun! A wireless internet connection or USB lead from your phone to your computer is required too.

Paula Beer is a professional educator who spends most of her time training new teachers and introducing children to programming. Paula is the author of *The Process of Technology Learning and Applying Theory to Educational Research*. Carl Simmons is a professional educator who spends most of his time training new teachers and introducing children to programming. Carl co-authored a popular textbook about teaching computers to high school children: *Teaching ICT*.

Great book! Very helpful in learning to use App Inventor.

I highly recommend this book for parents, kids, role models (grandparents, aunts/uncles, mentors, teachers), but I also fully recommend it for any adult who would love to create something on their smartphone quickly and even experienced industry professionals so they can dream and invent. The authors have worked really hard not just to transmit knowledge (which they do well), but coming up with engaging challenges that can hook the attention and imaginations of young and old alike. As an adult, I am now a software architect, but have created with software since I was a young child, and now have children of my own. Creating software hooked my interest early, yet I have repeatedly tried to interest the kids in our family tree to create with software: every single experiment has failed. I even tried to get the oldest kids into App Inventor when I had early access years ago, but to my dismay, could not get them engaged. I specifically acquired this book to try again. By creating not just a readable book, but an excellent experience - the authors have helped me finally achieve this goal successfully... and quite amazingly, with my four year old son. Plus, I had more fun creating software than I have in quite a long time, reminiscent of when I was a child. The obvious work they put into creating this book is why I give it such a high rating. At first glance, one may say it would be easy to write a great book on this topic because it is such a great subject/platform to teach: Google initially and MIT now have done a tremendous job in building something with App Inventor that allows children and anyone to create smartphone apps quickly and enjoyable. Yet, teaching this platform could be done in a number of different ways, ranging from pure boring rubbish all the way to a quality and engaging experience. The high edge of this scale is what the authors have achieved

- they have obviously worked really hard in brainstorming ideas that would spark childlike imagination in kids, teenagers, adults, industry professionals, and obviously even themselves. The combination of the underlying platform and the author's delivery and creativity lead to this result: kids and adults alike can be creating smartphone apps with enjoyment in minutes thanks to their hard work. I have not seen any other book in my field do that with such speed - it is a testament to the technology and the authors work. I don't want to steal the book's thunder by revealing all of their clever 'app inventions' but just wanted to give a glimpse of the creative work they put in. In these experiences, the reader will learn about working with events of the touchscreen, clocks and timers, animations, sensing movement and the outside world, getting the phone to speak aloud or interpreting speech, connecting to the web and APIs, and knowing where in the world you are - but this is standard knowledge. The experiences will have kids creating games with making a sheep making sounds but getting scared when shaken, a spooky sound generator, a game for learning flinging/dragging/touching, recording dreams, a compass app that takes three minutes to make, and the list goes on and on, all the way up to a nice 'capstone' app inventor project - a full multi-level game at the end. I want to dive into specifics briefly rather than overarching statements: While teaching the core material, they kept explanations brief (for short attention spans, whatever age) and when they did explain something complex or novel (which abound in software), they came up with very creative analogies for relating the material (some that impressed me). Each chapter is conceptually related to achieving some goals with the new unlocked knowledge and then has several 'apps' that the reader can build and these can usually be done in only a few minutes (varies between 5 and 30 on average). These apps are where the biggest value of their work is: they obviously worked much harder than most authors in coming up with something that would truly engage their target audience (kids and the rest of us) and they truly succeeded, through nearly the entire book. Finally, they purposefully made their apps not 'complete' or 'perfect' and suggested ways to take their initial work further, either by using skills unlocked later in the book (inviting readers to come back to their previous puzzles) or by suggesting ways to make it better by using your own creativity. My son and I were able to brainstorm and play with nearly all of the apps to take them further in our own ways (for example, we always wanted an app icon, something they taught us early so we kept reusing). One final caveat: I thought about giving it 4.5 stars simply because the book isn't a work of utter perfection, but no book is. These things are minor - there are some editing errors (where incorrect properties are missed) or conventions aren't always followed - this will probably confuse some young readers, especially those who are old enough to take it on themselves. These are few in count though. The only other feedback I can offer is that the book

dragged in a crucial part - where it was getting initial momentum. This is because it got caught up in the place where every single software teacher does - explaining the drudgery of conditions, loops, logic, and operators. I would have preferred they just mixed this in along the way and not went into this valley where they will certainly incur some casualties in lost readers (either metaphorically or actually). Yet, these comments are getting picky and suggesting further improvements for what I hope will be a future edition of the book (once App Inventor 3 comes out with I hope cross-compiling to iPhone, Windows Phone, and Android and touch enabled user interface for building apps) - all in all, a superb work!

This book is an excellent introduction to using the graphical programming language App Inventor to create apps for Android devices. The book's subtitle emphasizes that the book is meant for people of all ages. Its step-by-step approach with an abundance of full color illustrations supports this claim. The ubiquitous use of color draws the reader in and makes the book both interesting and entertaining. Color is absolutely necessary for accurately representing both the layouts of the screen elements and the manipulations of the underlying graphical blocks that animate the programs. The authors have done a superb job here and the care that was taken is evident throughout the book. The authors walk the reader through the creation of 35 apps using a step-by-step approach. These apps exercise a significant number of the interactive features present on Android devices. The associated graphical and sound resources needed to create the apps are provided as a download by the authors on the publisher's web site. Unfortunately, this is one area where the authors' attention to detail stumbled. This reviewer used the book to create nine of the apps from scratch. Instances of missing or misnamed files disrupted what should have been a smooth process. In addition, some of the audio files were provided in a format that this reviewer's Samsung device refused to play, displaying an error message during execution instead. Since this book is targeted at novice programmers, more care should have been taken in providing these files to avoid situations where readers would encounter errors and unpredictable behavior that are not a result of actions on their part. With that said, this reviewer highly recommends this book to anyone wanting to create apps for Android devices. The book is well done and is an excellent resource for learning about the App Inventor environment. This reviewer used a Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 8.0" running Android 4.4.2 during the review.

Excellent book, easy to read, step by step complete tutorials. All tutorial's codes (*.aia files) are available online to the buyer includind all the assets (images, sounds, etc) used in the tutorial. Best

book for App Inventor 2.

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