

Android **Development Patterns**

Best Practices for Professional Developers



SAMPLE CHAPTER



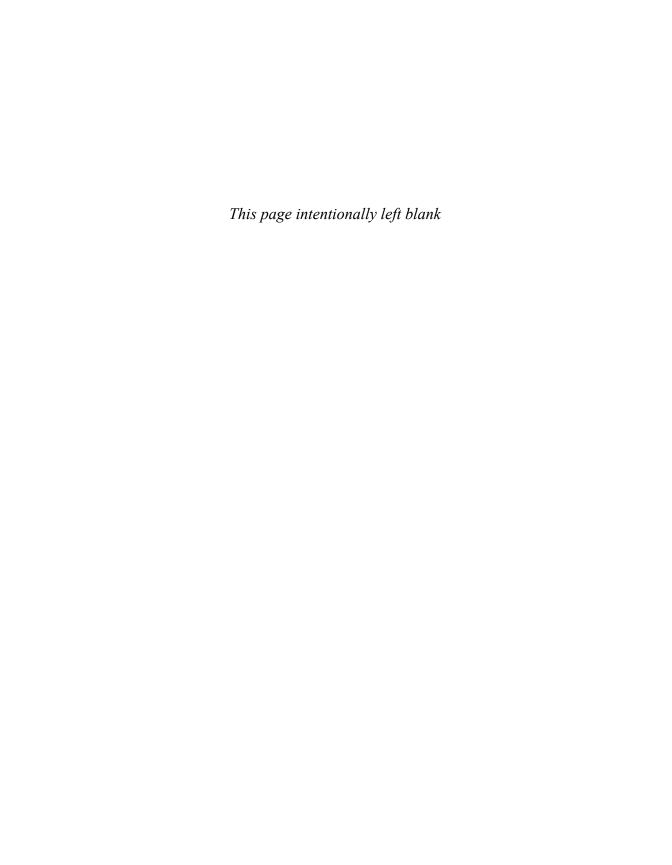








Android[™] Development Patterns



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Best Practices for Professional Developers

Phil Dutson

★Addison-Wesley

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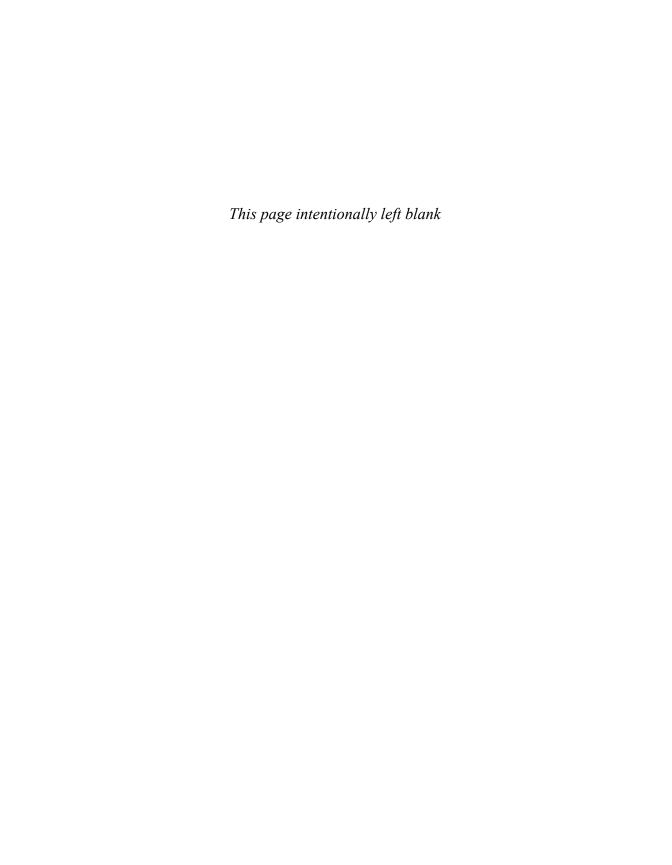
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*

To all of those who believe in magic, especially the digital kind.





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Preface

The growth of Android since the launch of Cupcake has been astonishing. Today, Android powers more than just mobile phones; it has become the go-to solution for manufacturers of audio equipment, tablets, televisions, cars, and more.

As the use of Android becomes more prevalent, the demand for developers who are familiar with using it has also scaled. Developers who understand how the system can be built, leveraged, and used are necessary to provide the next wave of amazing and must-have applications.

Many people around the world are being introduced to Android for the first time, and we as developers need to make sure to provide them with a first-class experience that will put a smile on their face and help them understand how truly amazing the Android system is.

Why Development Patterns?

In the fast-paced world of development, patterns are the time-saving solutions that developers use and access to maximize their output and minimize time wasted creating a solution that will ultimately fail.

Android development is a special place that is both familiar and foreign to many Java and object-oriented programmers. The relationship it has with the Java language and structure helps to bring in developers who have experience and get them up to speed in an almost effortless manner. However, there are some optimizations and memory-handling techniques that are not optimal for the seasoned Java developer.

This particular book is the bridge that helps seasoned developers understand the Android way of building and thinking. It is written so that those new to Android development gain a foundation for the platform and how to work with the many facets and intricacies that Android brings to the table while giving some in-depth hints and strategies that advanced developers will need to make their app a success.

Who Should Read This Book?

Anyone interested in how Android development works should find this book enjoyable and helpful. Those just beginning their Android journey may not find this as complete of a volume, but some development experience will help; however, those who are tenacious and don't mind getting elbows-deep should find this to be an acceptable companion on their quest toward their perfect app.

Those who are interested in seeing only theoretical development patterns with large explanations about individual bit-shifting and hand-tuning memory management will be disappointed in that this book instead focuses on how Android works together piece-by-piece with example snippets that help solidify how things should be accomplished in a best-practices manner.

Getting Started

For those new to developing Android applications, the minimum requirement is a computer running either OS X, Windows, or Linux. On these systems, you should download Android Studio from http://developer.android.com/sdk/. Android Studio comes with the Android SDK.

Full use of the Android SDK requires downloads of the version and sample code for which you want to develop. Although you can certainly download only a specific version of Android, you should download all versions of Android on which you want your app to work.

You should also use the Android SDK to download system images of emulators or Android Virtual Device (AVD) files. These system images allow you to test your app without actually having an Android device.

It is highly recommended that you acquire at least one Android device for testing, with a preference of having multiple devices in many form-factors so that you can accurately test, monitor, and experience your app as your users will.

Visit the following websites to keep up on Android and see when new features are introduced and how to use them:

- StackOverflow: http://www.stackoverflow.com/
- Official Android Developer Site: http://developer.android.com/
- Android Developers Blog: http://android-developers.blogspot.com/
- Google Developers on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/androiddevelopers
- Android Source Code (AOSP): http://source.android.com/

Book Structure

This book starts with the basics of Android development, including how to set up an environment. It takes you through the importance of creating a proper development flow and adding testing to your app to make sure your code performs and behaves the way you expect.

It continues step by step through the various pieces and parts that make up the Android framework. This includes how applications are structured, using widgets and components, and learning how to use and create views.

You are then introduced to application design paradigms and learn how to make sure you are creating an app that you can manage and update easily. This includes adding media and network connections that will not end up wasting precious battery power and giving users the most accurate and up-to-date information possible.

Optional hardware components, Android Wear, and Android TV are also covered later in this book to expose you to taking your app to the next level and exploring new opportunities. As Android finds itself being included in more devices, you'll understand how and why it is in your best interest to provide apps to users who invest in these platforms.

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Finally, you learn about some key optimization strategies as well as how to package your app for distribution through enterprise systems, email, and the Google Play Store.

When you are finished with this book, you will have an understanding of how the Android system works and, more importantly, how to craft an app that is optimized, distributed, and enjoyed by what will hopefully be millions of users.

Register your copy of Android Development Patterns at informit.com for convenient access to downloads, updates, and corrections as they become available. To start the registration process, go to informit.com/register and log in or create an account. Enter the product ISBN 9780133923681 and click Submit. Once the process is complete, you will find any available bonus content under "Registered Products."

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As always, the world-class team at Pearson deserves more thanks than I believe they get. Specifically, I would like to call out Laura Lewin, Olivia Basegio, Elaine Wiley, Kristy Hart, Mark Taub, and the entire production staff. The steps that are taken to create these volumes of technical instruction do not happen overnight, and these fine folks have undergone hours of meetings, emails, phone calls, and more to make sure that you get the greatest-and-latest book possible.

I want to thank my family for letting me disappear almost every night and every weekend for the past year. It has been an epic struggle keeping the book on schedule, working a sometimes more-than-full-time job, and also making sure that I attend the activities that matter most with them. I believe that it is all of you who have let me keep a pretty good work-life-book balance.

Finally, I thank you! Thank you for picking up this book and giving it a place on your shelf (digital or otherwise). With all the amazing people I have had the opportunity to work with, I believe we have crafted a book that will get you on the best path to creating Android applications that will be used for years to come.

About the Author

Phil Dutson is a Solution Architect over client-side and mobile implementation for one of the world's largest e-commerce retailers in fitness equipment. He has been collecting and developing for mobile devices since he got his hands on a US Robotics Pilot 5000. He is the author of *Sams Teach Yourself jQuery Mobile in 24 Hours* (Sams, July 2012), *jQuery, jQuery UI, and jQuery Mobile: Recipes and Examples* (Pearson, November 2012), *Android Developer's Cookbook, Second Edition* (Pearson, July 2013), and *Responsive Mobile Design* (Addison-Wesley Professional, September 2014).

5 Views

Of all the pieces of the Android system, views are probably the most used. Views are the core building block on which almost every piece of the UI is built. They are versatile and, as such, are used as the foundation for widgets. In this chapter, you learn how to use and how to create your own view.

The View Class

A view is a rather generic term for just about anything that is used in the UI and that has a specific task. Adding something as simple as a button is adding a view. Some widgets, including Button, TextView, and EditText widgets, are all different views.

Looking at the following line of code, it should stand out that a button is a view:

```
Button btnSend = (Button) findViewById(R.id.button);
```

You can see that the Button object is defined and then set to a view defined in the application layout XML file. The findViewById() method is used to locate the exact view that is being used as a view. This snippet is looking for a view that has been given an id of button. The following shows the element from the layout XML where the button was created:

```
<Button
 android:layout width="wrap content"
 android:layout height="wrap content"
 android:text="@string/button text"
 android:id="@+id/button"
 android:layout below="@+id/textView"
 android:layout centerHorizontal="true" />
```

Even though the element in the XML is <Button>, it is still considered a view. This is because Button is what is called an indirect subclass of View. In total, there are more than 80 indirect subclasses of View as of API level 21. There are 11 direct subclasses of View: AnalogClock, ImageView, KeyboardView, MediaRouteButton, ProgressBar, Space, SurfaceView, TextView, TextureView, ViewGroup, and ViewStub.

The AnalogClock Subclass

The AnalogClock is a complex view that shows an analog clock with a minute-hand and an hour-hand to display the current time.

Adding this view to your layout XML is done with the following element:

```
<AnalogClock
  android:layout_width="wrap_content"
  android:layout_height="wrap_content"
  android:id="@+id/analogClock"
  android:layout_centerVertical="true"
  android:layout_centerHorizontal="true" />
```

This view can be attached to a surface by using the onDraw(Canvas) method, and it can be sized to scale to the screen it is being displayed on via the following method:

```
onMeasure(int widthMeasureSpec, int heightMeasureSpec)
```

It should be noted that if you decide to override the onMeasure() method, you must call setMeasuredDimension(int, int). Otherwise, an IllegalStateException error will be thrown.

The ImageView Subclass

The ImageView is a handy view that can be used to display images. It is smart enough to do some simple math to figure out dimensions of the image it is displaying, which in turn allows it to be used with any layout manager. It also allows for color adjustments and scaling the image.

Adding an ImageView to your layout XML requires the following:

```
<ImageView
  android:layout_width="wrap_content"
  android:layout_height="wrap_content"
  android:id="@+id/imageView"
  android:src="@drawable/car"
  android:layout_centerVertical="true"
  android:layout_centerHorizontal="true" />
```

To show multiple figures, you can use multiple ImageViews within a layout. Similar to other views, you can attach events such as a click event to trigger other behavior. Depending on the application you are building, this may be advantageous versus requiring the user to click a button or use another widget to complete an action.

The KeyboardView Subclass

The KeyboardView is one of the most interesting views that exist. This is one of the true double-edged components of the Android system. Using the KeyboardView allows you to

create your own keyboard. Several keyboards exist in the Play store that you can download right now and use on your Android device that are based on using the KeyboardView.

The problem is that using an application with a custom keyboard means that all data entry must pass through it. Every "keystroke" is passed through the application, and that alone tends to send shivers down the spine of those who are security conscious. However, if you are an enterprise developer and need a custom keyboard to help with data entry, then this view may be exactly what you are looking for.

Note

The KeyboardView requires creating a new input type for your device, and the keyboard you create will be accessible in all programs. This also means that users may opt to not use your keyboard, and may even disable it as an option.

Creating your own keyboard is an involved process. You need to do the following:

- Create a service in your application manifest.
- Create a class for the keyboard service.
- Add an XML file for the keyboard.
- Edit your strings.xml file.
- Create the keyboard layout XML file.
- Create a preview TextView.
- Create your keyboard layout and assign values.

The KeyboardView has several methods you can override to add functionality to your keyboard:

- onKey()
- onPress()
- onRelease()
- onText()
- swipeDown()
- swipeUp()
- swipeLeft()
- swipeRight()

You do not need to override all of these methods; you may find that you only need to use the onKey() method.

The MediaRouteButton Subclass

The MediaRouteButton that is part of the compatibility library is generally used when working with the Cast API. This is where you need to redirect media to a wireless display or ChromeCast device. This view is the button that is used to allow the user to select where to send the media.

Note that per Cast design guidelines, the button must be considered "top level." This means that you can create the button as part of the menu or as part of the ActionBar. After you create the button, you must also use the .setRouteSelector() method; otherwise, an exception will be thrown.

First, you need to add an <item> to your menu XML file. The following is a sample <item> inside of the <menu> element:

```
<item
android:id="@+id/mediaroutebutton_cast"
android:actionProviderClass="android.support.v7.app.MediaRouteActionProvider"
android:actionViewClass="android.support.v7.app.MediaRouteButton"
android:showAsAction="always"
android:visible="false"
android:title="@string/mediaroutebutton"/>
```

Now that you have a menu item created, you need to open your MainActivity class and use the following import:

```
import android.support.v7.app.MediaRouteButton;
```

Next, you need to declare it in your MainActivity class:

```
private MediaRouteButton myMediaRouteButton;
```

Finally, add the code for the MediaRouteButton to the menu of the onCreateOptionsMenu() method. Remember that you must also use setRouteSelector() on the MediaRouteButton. The following demonstrates how this is accomplished:

```
@Override
public boolean onCreateOptionsMenu(Menu menu) {
   super.onCreateOptionsMenu(menu);
   getMenuInflater().inflate(R.menu.main, menu);

   myMediaRouteItem = menu.findItem(R.id.mediaroutebutton_cast);
   myMediaRouteButton = (MediaRouteButton) myMediaRouteItem.getActionView();
   myMediaRouteButton.setRouteSelector(myMediaRouteSelector);
   return true;
}
```

The ProgressBar Subclass

The progress bar is a familiar UI element. It is used to indicate that something is happening and how far along this process is. It is not always possible to determine how long an action will

take; luckily, the ProgressBar can be used in indeterminate mode. This allows an animated circle to appear that shows movement without giving a precise measurement of the status of the load.

To add a ProgressBar, you need to add the view to your layout XML. The following shows adding a "normal" ProgressBar:

```
<ProgressBar
android:layout_width="wrap_content"
android:layout_height="wrap_content"
android:id="@+id/progressBar"
android:layout_centerVertical="true"
android:layout_centerHorizontal="true" />
```

Other styles of ProgressBar may also be used. To change the style, you need to add a property to the <ProgressBar> element. The following styles may be used:

```
Widget.ProgressBar.Horizontal
Widget.ProgressBar.Small
Widget.ProgressBar.Large
Widget.ProgressBar.Inverse
Widget.ProgressBar.Small.Inverse
Widget.ProgressBar.Large.Inverse
```

Depending on your implementation, you may apply the style either with your styles.xml or from your attrs.xml. For the styles from styles.xml, you would use the following:

```
style="@android:style/Widget.ProgressBar.Small"
```

If you have styles inside your attrs.xml file that you want applied to the progress bar, use the following property in the <ProgressBar> element:

```
style="?android:attr/progressBarStyleSmall"
```

If you are planning on using the indeterminate mode, you need to pass a property of android:indeterminate into the <ProgressBar> element. You may also specify the loading animation by setting the android:indeterminateDrawable to a resource of your choosing.

A ProgressBar that is determinate requires updates to be passed to it via the setProgress() or incrementProgressBy() method. These methods should be called from a worker thread. The following shows an example of a thread that uses a Handler and an int for keeping the progress value, and a ProgressBar has been initialized:

```
new Thread(new Runnable() {
  public void run() {
    while (myProgress < 100) {
     myProgress = doWork();
     myHandler.post(new Runnable() {
      public void run() {
         myProgressBar.setProgress(myProgress);
      }
}</pre>
```

```
});
}
}).start();
```

The Space Subclass

For those who have worked on layouts and visual interfaces, the Space view is one that is both helpful and brings on somewhat lucid nightmares. This view is reserved to add "space" between other views and layout objects.

The benefit to using a Space is that it is a lightweight view that can be easily inserted and modified to fit your needs without you having to do an absolute layout or extra work trying to figure out how relative spacing would work on complex layouts.

Adding a Space is done by adding the following to your layout XML:

```
<Space
android:layout_width="1dp"
android:layout height="40dp" />
```

The SurfaceView Subclass

The SurfaceView is used when rendering visuals to the screen. This may be as complex as providing a playback surface for a live camera feed, or it can be used for rendering images on a transparent surface.

The SurfaceView has two major callbacks that act as lifecycle mechanisms that you can use to your advantage: SurfaceHolder.Callback.surfaceCreated() and SurfaceHolder.Callback.surfaceDestroyed(). The time in between these methods is where any work with drawing on the surface should take place. Failing to do so may cause your application to crash and will get your animation threads out of sync.

Adding a SurfaceView requires adding the following to your layout XML:

```
<SurfaceView
android:id="@+id/surfaceView"
android:layout_width="match_parent"
android:layout_height="match_parent"
android:layout_weight="1" />
```

Depending on how you are going to use your SurfaceView, you may want to use the following callback methods:

- surfaceChanged()
- surfaceCreated()
- surfaceDestroyed()

Each of these callback methods gives you an opportunity to initialize values, change them, and more importantly free some system resources up when it is released. If you are using a SurfaceView for rendering video from the device camera, it is essential that you release control of the camera during the surfaceDestroyed() method. Failing to release the camera will throw errors when you attempt to resume usage of the camera in either another application or when your application is resumed. This is due to a new instance attempting to open on a resource that is finite and currently marked as in use.

The TextView Subclass

The TextView is likely the first view added to your project. If you create a new project in Android Studio that follows the default options, you will be given a project that contains a TextView with a string value of "Hello World" in it.

To add a TextView, you need to add the following code to your layout XML file:

```
<TextView
android:text="@string/hello_world"
android:layout_width="wrap_content"
android:layout height="wrap content" />
```

Note that in the previous example, the value for the TextView is taken from @string/hello_world. This value is inside of the strings.xml file that is in your res/values folder for your project. The value is defined in strings.xml as follows:

```
<string name="hello world">Hello world!</string>
```

The TextView also contains a large number of options that can be used to help format, adjust, and display text in your application. For a full list of properties, visit http://developer.android.com/reference/android/widget/TextView.html.

The TextureView Subclass

The TextureView is similar to the SurfaceView but carries the distinction of being tied directly to hardware acceleration. OpenGL and video can be rendered to the TextureView, but if hardware acceleration is not used for the rendering, nothing will be displayed. Another difference when compared to SurfaceView is that TextureView can be treated like a View. This allows you to set various properties including setting transparency.

In similarity to SurfaceView, some methods need to be used with TextureView in order for proper functionality. You should first create your TextureView and then use either getSurfaceTexture() or TextureView.SurfaceTextureListener before using setContentView().

Callback methods should also be used for logic handling while working with the TextureView. Paramount among these callback methods is the onSurfaceTextureAvailable() method. Due to TextureView only allowing one content provider to manipulate it at a time, the

onSurfaceTextureAvailable() method can allow you to handle IO exceptions and to make sure you actually have access to write to it.

The onSurfaceTextureDestroyed() method should also be used to release the content provider to prevent application and resource crashing.

The ViewGroup Subclass

The ViewGroup is a special view that is used for combining multiple views into a layout. This is useful for creating unique and custom layouts. These views are also called "compound views" and, although they are flexible, they may degrade performance and render poorly based on the number of children included, as well as the amount of processing that needs to be done for layout parameters.

CardView

The CardView is part of the ViewGroup that was introduced in Lollipop as part of the v7 support library. This view uses the Material design interface to display views on "cards." This is a nice view for displaying compact information in a native Material style. To use the CardView, you can load the support library and wrap your view elements in it. The following demonstrates an example:

```
<RelativeLayout
 xmlns:android="http://schemas.android.com/apk/res/android"
 xmlns:tools="http://schemas.android.com/tools"
 android:layout width="match parent"
 android:layout_height="match_parent"
 android:paddingLeft="@dimen/activity horizontal margin"
 android:paddingRight="@dimen/activity horizontal margin"
  android:paddingTop="@dimen/activity vertical margin"
  android:paddingBottom="@dimen/activity vertical margin"
 tools:context=".MainActivity">
 <android.support.v7.widget.CardView</pre>
   xmlns:card view="http://schemas.android.com/apk/res-auto"
   android:id="@+id/card view"
   android:layout_gravity="center"
   android:layout width="200dp"
   android:layout height="200dp"
   card view:cardCornerRadius="4dp"
   android:layout centerVertical="true"
    android:layout centerHorizontal="true">
  <TextView android:text="@string/hello world"
   android:layout width="wrap content"
    android:layout height="wrap content" />
 </android.support.v7.widget.CardView>
</RelativeLayout>
```

This example shows a card in the center of the screen. The color and corner radius can be changed via attributes in the <android.support.v7.widget.CardView> element. Using card_view:cardBackgroundColor will allow you to change the background color, and using card view:cardCornerRadius will allow you to change the corner radius value.

Note

Using the CardView support library requires you to edit your Gradle build files. You need to add the following line to the dependencies section in your build.gradle file:

```
dependencies {
  compile 'com.android.support:cardview-v7:21.+'
}
```

You should change the version number targeted on the end to match your project target.

RecyclerView

The RecyclerView was also added in Lollipop as part of the v7 support library. This view is a replacement for the aging ListView. It brings with it the ability to use a LinearLayoutManager, StaggeredLayoutManager, and GridLayoutManager as well as animation and decoration support. The following shows how you can add this view to your layout XML:

```
<android.support.v7.widget.RecyclerView
    android:id="@+id/my_recycler_view"
    android:scrollbars="vertical"
    android:layout_width="match_parent"
    android:layout_height="match_parent"/>
```

Similar to with a ListView, after you have added the RecyclerView to your layout, you then need to instantiate it, connect it to a layout manager, and then set up an adapter to display data.

You instantiate the RecyclerView by setting it up as follows:

```
myRecyclerView = (RecyclerView) findViewById(R.id.my recycler view);
```

The following shows connecting to a layout manager using the LinearLayoutManager that is part of the v7 support library:

```
myLayoutManager = new LinearLayoutManager(this);
myRecyclerView.setLayoutManager(myLayoutManager);
```

All that is left is to attach the data from an adapter to the RecyclerView. The following demonstrates how this is accomplished:

```
myAdapter = new MyAdapter(myDataset);
myRecyclerView.setAdapter(myAdapter);
```

The ViewStub Subclass

The ViewStub is a special view that is used to create views on demand in a reserved space. The ViewStub is placed in a layout where you want to place a view or other layout elements at a later time. When the ViewStub is displayed—either by setting its visibility with setVisibility(View.VISIBLE) or by using the inflate() method—it is removed and the layout it specifies is then injected into the page.

The following shows the XML needed to include a ViewStub in your layout XML file:

```
<ViewStub
    android:id="@+id/stub"
    android:inflatedId="@+id/panel_import"
    android:layout="@layout/progress_overlay"
    android:layout_width="match_parent"
    android:layout_height="wrap_content"
    android:layout gravity="bottom" />
```

When the ViewStub is inflated, it will use the layout specified by the android:layout property. The newly inflated view will then be accessible via code by the ID specified by the android:inflatedId property.

Creating a Custom View

When developing your own application, you may need a view that doesn't come "out of the box." When this occurs you have two options: You can create a class for your own custom view or you may extend one of the existing views.

To create your own, you need to create a new class, have it extend View, and have it override at least one method. You will also be adding the variables and logic needed to handle the custom properties you will be adding to your view. The following shows a custom view along with the values used as custom properties:

```
public class MyView extends View {
  private int viewColor, viewBgColor;

public MyView(Context context, AttributeSet attrs) {
    super(context, attrs);

    TypedArray a = context.getTheme().obtainStyledAttributes(attrs,
        R.styleable.MyView, 0, 0);

    try {
        viewColor = a.getInteger(R.styleable.MyView_viewColor);
        viewBgColor = a.getInteger(R.styleable.MyView_viewBgColor)
    } finally {
        a.recycle();
    }
}
```

```
@Override
  protected void onDraw(Canvas canvas) {
    // draw your view
  }
}
```

You want to be able to pass values through the XML when used with your application layout XML. To do this you can add an XML file to the res/values folder. This folder houses <resources> with child <declare-styleable> elements. The following shows an example of a custom view XML file:

Now you can add your custom view to your application layout, but you need to add a property so that your custom view can be found. This is done by adding the following line to your layout element:

```
xmlns:custom="http://schemas.android.com/apk/res/com.dutsonpa.mycustomview"
```

Notice that you need to change the value to match your namespace by replacing <code>com.dutsonpa.myview</code> with your own package name. Once you add that to your layout element, you can add your custom view. This is done by referencing the package and then adjusting or setting the values you want to use. The following shows an example of a custom view being added with values being set:

```
<com.dutsonpa.mycustomview.myview
android:id="@+id/"
custom:viewColor="#33FF33"
custom:viewBqColor="#333333" />
```

Notice that Android properties may be used and that your custom properties are used by employing custom:valueName. This provides some flexibility by allowing some built-in features to be mixed with your custom attributes.

The last thing you should do is add getter and setter methods for your attributes. These can be added to your class as follows:

```
public void getViewColor() {
  return viewColor;
}
```

```
public void getViewBgColor() {
   return viewBgColor;
}

public void setViewColor(int newViewColor) {
   viewColor=newViewColor;
   invalidate();
   requestLayout();
}

public void setViewBgColor(int newViewBgColor) {
   viewBgColor=newViewBgColor;
   invalidate();
   requestLayout();
}
```

By using invalidate() and requestLayout(), the layout is forced to redraw using the onDraw() method that is being employed by the custom view.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned what views are and how they are used in applications. You learned that views have multiple subclasses that can be used as is or extended by making a custom View.

You learned about the main subclasses and how to implement them into your application layout XML file, as well as some code that may be used to accompany them.

You also learned about two views that were introduced with Android Lollipop: CardView and RecyclerView. These views are complex ViewGroups that can help display data in the Material design style and update the aging ListView.

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