How To Develop An Android App Via DrupalGap

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Drupal is a wonderful web development tool that has interestingly evolved as a versatile tool to cater to the growing demand for mobile content support. The significance of mobile presence is no more hidden from anyone. Before diving into mobile app development process, it is better to streamline your choice and find out which type of application will more benefit your business.

Since, there are three options available including, Native apps, Mobile web apps and Hybrid apps. There are several app developers available out there who can help you accomplish your project with greater proficiency. Each type of application offers certain merits and demerits.

Let's consider them individually to understand their distinct features.

- **Native apps** are primarily developed to target a specific mobile device. You can integrate the integral functions of the mobile device in these kind of applications. Users can download them from the app stores like the Apple App Store, the Google Play store or any other third-party app store.
- **Mobile web apps** are basically Internet-enabled application that mobile users can access from their Smartphones or other Internet-enabled mobile devices. These can be easily found and downloaded from the Internet.
- **Hybrid apps** include the benefits of both the aforementioned types of applications. These kind of apps implements web functionalities and possess the attributes of native apps.

While native apps deliver great performance and offer access to the built-in functions and events of a mobile device, the mobile web applications can be developed rather quickly as, they need not to be developed for multiple OS. Mobile web apps are comparatively less expensive and supports cross-platform compatibility. Hence, if you don't require a complex app that integrates with the mobile device's features, the mobile web apps would be a much sought after choice.

However, if you are interested in creating a mobile application that implements Drupal as a content store, the native applications stand out to be a viable choice. This is because the low network speed and poor mobile browser attributes can create performance bottlenecks for the mobile web apps featuring Drupal content.

How to Create a Native Android App via DrupalGap

There are several tools and frameworks available out there that facilitate simple and efficient development of Drupal powered mobile applications. For instance, **DrupalGap** is open-source development kit that helps develop a native mobile application. It features Drupal, jDrupal, jQuery Mobile and PhoneGap. There are basically three major components that are included in the kit. It contains:

- **DrupalGap Module –** It helps establish a reliable and secure connection between a Drupal-powered website and mobile application. The module basically deploys the View Datasource modules and services that facilitate the easy communication via JSON.
- **DrupalGap Mobile App Development Kit –** This kit and API facilitate custom multi-platform mobile app development. Here, the jQuery Mobile is implemented for developing UI for the mobile apps and PhoneGap helps compile the developed app.
- **DrupalGap Web App Development Kit –** To support a headless drupal, one can also use the DrupalGap for developing a web application.

Let's ponder into the functioning of PhoneGap.

What it does is, it just accepts the JavaScript, CSS and HTML as input and compiles it as the mobile app for the targeted mobile platform (either Android or iOS). In order to facilitate access to the native features of the mobile devices like camera, GPS, contacts, etc., it uses JavaScript that augments easy accessibility.

Now, here is a step-by-step guide that will help you develop a mobile

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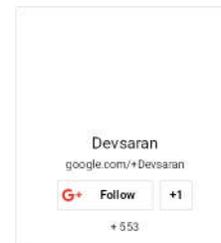
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application via the DrupalGap.

Step 1: Configure a Drupal website.

For developing a mobile application via the DrupalGap, the first vital thing is an active website running on the latest version of the Drupal (currently, Drupal 7 is the latest version and Drupal 8 beta version is available).

For the folks, who already own a spectacular Drupal-enabled website, they can directly move to the next step, and those who want to create a Drupal website can reap the benefits of the plentiful resources available out there and create a website in just a few minutes.

Step 2: Set the DrupalGal Module as enable.

By enabling the DrupalGap Module, you can ensure convenient communication between your Drupal-powered website and application.

Step 3: Configure the environment for mobile app development.

Here, you are required to create a mobile app development environment to support the execution of DrupalGap. The environment could be same as that possessed by PhoneGap, because DrupalGap implements the PhoneGap.

Step 4: Congrats, the requisite mobile application is developed.

After following the aforementioned steps precisely, you are done with the native mobile application development.
Your mobile application is ready for execution. Load the application and run it to ensure its smooth and consistent performance over mobile devices. If it is running without any hiccups, release the app publicly in the targeted app store. To ensure a wider audience base, it is advisable to create apps for both iOS and Android devices, as these are the two leading mobile platforms that are most admired by the majority of the population.

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Thank you for posting this, this cleared my mind about the app world. I like Drupal and I've created a site and a demo app with DrupalGap. I can access the app in the browser with Google Ripple or from my Safari iPhone but I don't understand how can I create an .ipa file from this? Or how could I use DrupalGap as a starting point to create an .ipa file so I can actually install it on my iPhone? Any "kick" in the right direction would be greatly appreciated.
Thanks!

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