

Thinking in XAML: An Introduction to Developing on the Universal Windows Platform

A class created and taught by Billy Hollis

Executive summary

This class is for developers and teams starting work on the Universal Windows Platform (UWP) as their UI technology stack, and targeting Windows 10 as their user operating system. It stresses core concepts and helps students build a conceptual skeleton as their starting point for XAML development on the UWP: layout and composition concepts, data binding, templating, styling, and animation. The emphasis is on using XAML to create applications that help users enter, visualize, and locate the complex data in a modern business application.

The class can significantly reduce the time required for developers to gain the expertise for production quality work in XAML, and help them leverage the technology to produce software applications that are more productive, more intuitive, and contain more business value.

The class is taught by world-renowned XAML expert Billy Hollis, who has been teaching XAML classes since 2007. It is available in three-day, four-day, and five-day versions, with longer versions including more advanced technical topics, more exercises, and content on helping developers produce better user experiences.

Detailed description

Windows 10 and the Universal Windows Platform are Microsoft's foundation for future applications on a wide range of devices. To get the most out of software for those devices, including business desktops and tablets, you need to program them natively, and the user interface technology for that is XAML.

XAML has many advantages over other UI technologies, but that power comes at a price - it is not easy to learn. It takes many months for a developer to become proficient alone, and until then the XAML-based views they produce will often be limited in functionality and suffer from sub-optimal construction.

This class, led by one of the foremost XAML experts in the world, can make a substantial difference, allowing development teams to gain XAML expertise far more quickly and use it to produce more valuable and better crafted results. Billy Hollis has taught XAML classes to teams from half a dozen Fortune 1000 companies and dozens of other organizations. He also leads a development team that has a worldwide reputation for producing innovative user experiences in XAML.

But this class is not just for developers. Parts of the class can help business analysts, development managers, visual designers, and others involved in software development, by making them aware of what XAML can do. The class has a flat rate fee, and is thus open to anyone at your organization who can benefit from it.

Basic technical topics include:

- Syntax of XAML
- The composition model that knits parts of the UI together
- The layout system and how it works

- The base set of visual elements
- Data binding
- Templating for data visualization – data templates and control templates
- Graphical elements needed for visualization and aesthetics: brushes, opacity, shapes, gradients, etc.
- Styling and animation
- Deployment of Universal Apps through the Windows Store

Longer classes can also have more advanced technical topics, including:

- XAML internals
- The dependency property system
- Creating controls and components for XAML
- Architecture of navigation shells, patterns to use, and other parts of a typical business framework

Classes can also incorporate non-technical topics to help developers see how to design for XAML more effectively:

- Windows 10 UWP design guidelines
- Fundamental design do's and don'ts based on important principles of design
- Lightweight design process for developers
- Interaction and navigation patterns
- Designing touch-based interfaces

Classes are available in three-day, four-day, and five-day versions. The three-day version covers the core concepts for XAML development, and longer classes incorporate the topics listed above in an appropriate mix for a particular team.

The class requires attendees to have a Windows 10 machine with Visual Studio 2015. The class contains many hands-on exercises. Almost all of them are “challenge” exercises, in which a result or outcome is shown and the class attendee is tasked with finding a way to accomplish the outcome in XAML.

Class materials also include helpful samples and videos, and a special bonus: a draft electronic version of Billy's forthcoming book on XAML development for Universal Apps.

If your development team is changing to the Windows 10 / UWP platform, help them get there faster, produce better, more maintainable results, and create user experiences that will add significant business value. Call today for a syllabus and to check availability for your organization. You can reach Billy on his mobile phone at 615.400.7678.