

Mobile Development

Think to the future, today



Delivering the benefits of the Mobile opportunity is on the agenda of each and every CIO and CEO. The massive rise of mobile as a channel and the speed with which it has dominated the business landscape is staggering. This paper looks at the key challenges business and organizations face in the Mobility decade - because these challenges are much more than the ones faced by technology. Clear governance, sound guiding policies, a perfect roadmap, and a keen to tackle TCO, rather than “Just build me an App” will be the key to ongoing success.

Take an Enterprise Architecture approach

If we're honest, the technical possibilities are infinite. In a world where mobile technology permeates every sphere of our social fabric, the IT function can be dazzled by a new App, a new version of a platform, and the massive launch of Mobile Operating Systems and devices. In some ways, IT has become too responsive to the fads of business. The possibilities seem endless and the effort negligible.

Mobile is poised to become the primary interface for both customers and employees within the next years. To be prepared for the future, a substantive amount of apps are being launched. But it's not really that simple - the Apps don't talk to each other, the ERP system can't keep up, the cost of 'feeding and watering' the Mobile landscape rockets, and poor decisions suddenly cost millions to put right. It is because of this that we argue to put Mobile first within any Enterprise Architecture. It is best to forget silo solutions and exotic technologies, and concentrate on the reality of the business imperatives.



User Experience (UX)

Nothing annoys employees or customers more than poor user experience from a brand's Apps or Mobile presence. Consumers and employees expect that your mobile interface is at least on par if not better than the competition. People are quick to note 'clunky' or imperfect UX, and become disaffected. At the same time, they expect the user interface you offer to fit with the apps that they are already using. And what about the performance?

Development

You need the right skills for development, or, in the very least, you need to be able to access those skills. Key elements of the development challenge include supported programming language(s); identifying possibilities for code sharing and re-use; and identifying possibilities for (platform specific) customization and integration of third party components. As mobile technology differentiations erupt and the combination of device, mobile operating system, and mobile service nearly explode, the scarcity of competence affects you. A closer look at your development approach is a necessity in order to keep track of TCO.

Integration

As mobile services evolve, so do the complexities in offering these services. Making sure the mobile service you offer can handle transactions with the required back-end-systems can be simplified by plugging in the right middleware.

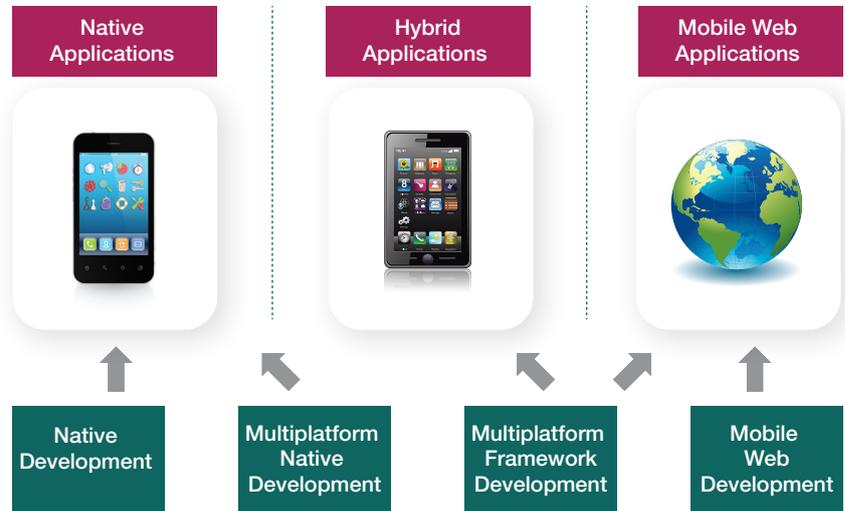
Deployment

The approach of deployment is key to ensure that your consumers and employees are actively involved. Mobile applications are typically published via public App stores or enterprise App stores, but ask yourself if this is always the best approach? Also pay adequate attention to what options you want to consider in order to maximizing download and usage?

Governance

Once mobile applications have been submitted to customers, you need to stay tuned 24x7 to get rid of malfunction, attacks, and negative trends on social media. Your processes, organization, and people will be as tuned as your technology is.





Consider the Development options carefully

When we look at the considerations for mobile development, there are a significant number of options when it comes to the Development framework. With this paper we provide you an overview of the options you have. You may also consider a mix of two or even more options. The core types of development framework are as follows:

Native Development

Using the tools and development frameworks native to the platform an organization is using. It means that the code is optimized for the platform and normally enables the client to use rich tooling assets that make advanced techniques and animation possible. This ensures that users get greater freedom in how they perceive and use it.

Multiplatform native Development

As the name suggests, this means using a shared programming language and development environment across multiple target platforms. Taking this approach, a shared code base can be used, while offering the same advantages as native development: an optimal user experience, access to all device and platform specific features, integration of third-party native components, and optimal performance.

Multiplatform framework Development

'Write once, deploy everywhere' is the promise here, and it is one of the more popular frameworks due to its oven-ready offering. For example, it could be one UI design tool, one programming language (like JAVA), and a set of ready-to-use middleware to connect to back-end ERP systems. Another key selling point of a cross-platform strategy is that it helps to avoid technology 'lock in' by only providing an application for one or a few mobile platforms.

Mobile Web Development

The key difference here is that mobile web applications are not packaged as an App for Android or an App for IOS. Instead, they are accessible via a URL in the browser bar. As you would expect, they are optimized for Mobile screen resolutions and feature detection means the Mobile Web Development can 'see' what platform and device it's on and adjust itself accordingly. At the moment, it looks like the future. In fact, a good example would be Facebook's Mobile Web application, which has had more hits than all their other Apps combined.





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