Developing Applications for iOS



Lab 6: Nearby Deals (2 of 6)

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Description:

We are going to build a new application that will show deals from nearby restaurants and bars. The application will display the deals in two modes: a list view (using a UITableViewController) and a map view (using a MKMapView). We will request the deals from a server (www.geoadsplus.com to be more precise). We will use XML to communicate with this server. Note that XML and JSON are standard ways of communicating with a server.

We have to pass the device location (latitude, longitude) to the server so that it gives us nearby deals. Thus, we will need to use Location Services to determine the device location.

We will offer details about our deals. We are going to use a navigation controller to navigate between the list View and the details View.



Task: Add the CoreLocation framework to your project.

- Launch Xcode and go to "File > Open" and select the Xcode project (.xcodeproj) inside the "NearbyDeals(1of6)" folder. You can also double-click on the .xcodeproj file to open it in Xcode.
- 2. Run the application in iOS Simulator and take a look to remember what was done last time.
- 3. Stop running the application.
- 4. Open Project Navigator and follow the steps in the next slides to add the CoreLocation framework to your project.

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Task: Add the CoreLocation framework to your project.

- 5. Select the MainStoryboard.storyboard file.
- 6. Hide Project Navigator and let's #import the CoreLocation framework inside the DealsTableViewController.
- We need this framework because we will declare a method soon that has a CLLocationCoordinate2D argument. This is a C struct from the CoreLocation library that contains two properties: latitude and longitude.

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- 1. Before creating a request from code, we should check out the GeoAds+ API in a web browser. Let's open the API documentation first: http://www.geoadsplus.com/api_documentation in Safari.
- 2. Note that you need an app_key to make a request to the GeoAds+ API. We will use this one: fe008041973b66760017.
- 3. Let's try the following request in Safari and see what we get:

http://www.geoadsplus.com/ads.xml? app_key=fe008041973b66760017&latitude=44.25&longitude=26.06 &limit=20&category=Restaurants,Bars

4. Note that you should right-click in Safari and select View Source to see the XML returned by the GeoAds+ API.



- 5. Let's return to our project in Xcode. We will declare two constant strings for the GeoAds+ URL and for the app key.
- 6. Select DealsTableViewController.m in Assistant Editor.
- 7. Right after the #import declare a static NSString that holds this URL: http://www.geoadsplus.com/ads.xml.
- 8. In a similar way, declare another static NSString to hold our app key: fe008041973b66760017.

The next screenshot shows you how to declare these string constants.

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- 9. Next, we are going to make an asynchronous request to the GeoAds+ API. For this, we implement a method that starts the request by using an NSURLConnection object. While this request is processed by the server it can send some messages to its delegate.
- We will declare a private @property that will contain the stream of bytes (NSData) that the delegate receives through the NSURLConnection object. Name this property webData. Because we (the Controller) have the only reference to it, we use the strong storage type.
- 10. Synthesize this property and prefix its instance variable with underscore.

The next screenshot shows you how to do these steps.

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11. Let's declare and implement the method that makes the request for nearby deals to the GeoAds+ API.

Open DealsTableViewController.h in Assistant Editor.

12. Declare the requestDealsNearLocation:limit: method that has two arguments: the location (GPS coordinates) of the device and the maximum number of deals to be returned by the server.

This method will return a BOOL value that indicates whether the request was successfully started or not.

The next screenshot shows you how to do declare this method.

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13. Go back to DealsTableViewController.m in Assistant Editor.

14. Implement the requestDealsNearLocation:limit: method after the nearbyDeals getter.

The next screenshots guide you through the implementation of this method.

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- 15. We should continue by implementing the methods for the NSURLConnection delegate. Let's mark the section of code that will contain these delegate methods using the #pragma mark compiler directive.
- 16. Name this section "NSURLConnection load callbacks".

The next screenshot shows where to add this section.

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17. When the server has provided sufficient data to create an NSURLResponse object, the delegate receives the following message: connection:didReceiveResponse:.

You should be prepared for your delegate to receive the connection:didReceiveResponse: message multiple times for a single connection. This message can be sent due to server redirects, or in rare cases multi-part MIME documents. Each time the delegate receives the connection:didReceiveResponse: message, it should reset any progress indication and discard all previously received data.

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18. Our Table View Controller (the delegate) is periodically sent connection:didReceiveData: messages as the data is received. The delegate implementation is responsible for storing the newly received data.

We should append the new data to webData in this method.

Note that you can also use this method to provide an indication of the connection's progress to the user. This is useful when we transfer large files from/to a server.

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						Ð	93 94 95 96 98	<pre>if (serverConner { self.webDate return YES; }</pre>	ction != nil) a = [NSMutableD;	ata data];				
			Nearb	y Deals			100 101	<pre>return NO; }</pre>						
2		Prototy	ype Cells				102	#pragma mark - NSUR	LConnection load	d callbacks				
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							130 131 132	static NSString UITableViewCell	*CellIdentifien *cell = [table	er = @"DealCell' View dequeueRe	"; usableCellWithI	dentifier:CellIc	dentifier];	
							133 134	cell.textLabel.	text = [self.nea	earbyDeals obje	ctAtIndex:index	Path.row];		
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-							142 143	// Return NO if return YES;	you do not want	nt the specified	d item to be ed	itable.		

19. If an error is encountered during the download, the delegate receives a connection:didFailWithError: message. The NSError object passed as the parameter specifies the details of the error. After our delegate object receives the connection:didFailWithError: message, it receives no further delegate messages for the specified connection.

We set webData to nil in this method because we have finished the request (without success).

20. It would be nice to let the user know that we have a connection problem. A standard way to present ad-hoc messages to the user is to use an UIAlertView object. We are going to build an alert programmatically that will display an error message on the screen. It will have a dismiss button too.

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		94 { 95 96 97 }	<pre>self.webData = [NSMutableData data]; return YES;</pre>			
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2	>	103 - (void	<pre>d)connection:(NSURLConnection *)connec</pre>	tion didReceiveResponse:(NSURLRes	ponse *)response	
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		139 - (UITa	ableViewCell *)tableView:(UITableView	*)tablwantitorshow-the	e alert with the error	
		141 sta 142 UTT	atic NSString *CellIdentifier = @"Deal TableViewCell *cell = [tableView_denue	cell"; message and le	t the user dismiss it	
1.0		143		by pressing	the "Ok" button.	- 3

- 21. Finally, if the connection succeeds in downloading the request, the delegate receives the connectionDidFinishLoading: message. The delegate will receive no further messages for the connection.
- Let's transform the received bytes into a string and print it with an NSLog for now.
- This represents the simplest implementation of a client using NSURLConnection. Additional delegate methods provide the ability to customize the handling of server redirects, authorization requests and caching of the response.

The next screenshot shows how to implement this callback method.

22. Run the application in iOS Simulator and check out the console to see if it gets the XML from the server.

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	Table View	116 117 UT	AlertView *errorAlert = [[UTAlertView all	ocl initWithTitle:@"Connection	Problem"
30		118		message:@"The applic	ation was unable to connect to the server"
	Prototype Content	119		cancelButtonTitle:nil	
		121 122 [e	rrorAlert show]:	otherButtonTitles:@"Ok", nil];	
		123 }			
		124 125 - (voi	d)connectionDidFinishLoading:(NSURLConnec	tion *)connection	
T		126 {	Extract XML from webData. */		
		128 NS 129 130	<pre>String *receivedXML = [[NSString alloc] i</pre>	nitWithBytes:[self.webData mut length:[self.webData len encoding:NSUTF8StringEncod	ableBytes] gth] ing];
		132 se 133 NS 134 }	lf.webData = nil; Log(@"Received XML : %@", receivedXML);		
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- 22. We want to make this request right when our Table View appears on screen. Note the each View Controller has a lifecycle that starts with its creation. We will discuss this later in detail, but for now you should know that you (the Controller) get notified when your View appears on screen.
- If we want to do something custom (such as making a request to a server) when it appears on screen we should implement the viewDidAppear: method.
- We are going to make a request from a fake location that we create using the CLLocationCoordinate2DMake helper C function. Later we will use the GPS location of the device.

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		<pre>// Uncomment the following line to preserve selection between presentations. // self.clearsSelectionOnViewWillAppear = NO; // Uncomment the following line to display ap Edit button in the payingtion bar for this view controlled.</pre>	
	Nearby Deals	<pre>// self.navigationItem.rightBarButtonItem = self.editButtonItem; }</pre>	
	Prototype Cells	- (void)viewDidUnload Note that we have to send the	
30		<pre>{ [super viewDidUnload]; // Release any retained subviews of // e.g. self.myOutlet = nil; } viewDidAppear: message to super before we do anything else here.</pre>	
1		<pre>- (void)viewDidAppear:(B00L)animated {</pre>	
0		[super viewDidAppear:animated];	
	Table View	<pre>CLLocationCoordinate2D deviceLocation = CLLocationCoordinate2DMake(44.25, 26.06); [self requestDealsNearLocation:deviceLocation limit:20]; }</pre>	
	Prototype Content	- (B00L)shouldAutorotateToInterfaceOrientation:(UIInterfaceOrientation)interfaceOrientation	
		<pre>return (interfaceOrientation == UIInterfaceOrientationPortrait); }</pre>	
		- (NSArray *)nearbyDeals	
2		if (_nearbyDeals == nil)	
		_nearbyDeals = [NSArray arrayWithObjects:	
1111		return _nearbyDeals;	
	Deals Table View Controller -	<pre>} - (BOOL)requestDealsNearLocation:(CLLocationCoordinate2D)coordinate</pre>	
		<pre>NSString *urlString = [NSString stringWithFormat:@"%@?app_key=%@&latitude=%f&longitude=%f&limit=%d",</pre>	

- 23. Run the application in iOS Simulator and check out the console to see if it gets the XML from the server.
- 24. Stop running the application.
- 25. Disconnect you computer from the Internet (just pull out the cable) and lets see what happens with our request.

Run the application again. This time it should display the error message.

- 26. Stop running the application.
- 27. Don't forget to put back your Internet cable.

Task: Add a new class to your project with helper methods for XML parsing.

- 1. Usually we use the NSXMLParser class to parse XML documents. This class parses XML files in an event-driven manner as it notifies its delegate about the items (elements, attributes) that it encounters as it processes an XML document. This is very efficient when we want to parse large XML files, but in our case we need something simple. Thus, we are going to parse the XML file ourself and build an NSArray with the nearby deals.
- Actually, we are going to add SimpleXMLParser.h/m to our project. This class already contains some helper class methods for parsing XML documents.

Open Project Navigator.

2. Copy and paste SimpleXMLParser.h and SimpleXMLParser.m to the NearbyDeals folder within your project folder. Remember that you can right-click on the NearbyDeals group in Project Navigator and select "Show in Finder".

Task: Add a new class to your project with helper methods for XML parsing.

- 3. Right-click on the NearbyDeals group in Project Navigator and select "Add files to NearbyDeals...".
- 4. Select the SimpleXMLParser.h and SimpleXMLParser.m from the NearbyDeals folder and click Add.
- 5. We should add some functionality to the SimpleXMLParser class in order to parse the XML with nearby deals. It's good if we do this in another tab. Go to "File > New > Tab" in Xcode menu or use the CMD+T shortcut keys to create the new tab.
- 6. Open SimpleXMLParser.m on the left-side of the Editor, and SimpleXMLParser.h on the right-side. The header file should automatically appear on the right-side if you are on automatic mode.
- 7. Take a look at the implementation of the following methods: convertSpecialCharactersToUnicodeInXML: contentOfFirstTagWithName:fromXML:

Task: Add a new class to your project with helper methods for XML parsing.

- 8. Let's declare and implement another class method in the SimpleXMLParser that will parse the XML document with nearby deals received from the server.
- It will build an array of deals. Each deal will be represented by an NSDictionary that will store the deal's title, subtitle, description, etc.

Follow the steps from the next slides to implement this method.

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- 1. Switch to the MainStoryboard.storyboard tab in Xcode.
- 2. Open DealsTableViewController.h in Assistant Editor.
- 3. We want to use the SimpleXMLParser dealsArrayFromXML: class method to obtain an NSArray with the nearby deals from the XML file we received from the server.

The first thing to do is to #import the SimpleXMLParser header file into our Table View Controller so that we can use its methods.

The next screenshot show you how to #import this header file.

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				<pre>2 // DealsTableViewController.h 3 // NearbyDeals</pre>	
		Nearby Deals		<pre>4 // 5 // Created by Radu-Tudor Ionescu on 3/21/12. 6 // Copyright (c) 2012MyCompanyName All rights reserved. 7 //</pre>	
0		Prototype Cells		<pre>8 9 #import <uikit uikit.h=""> 10 #import <corelocation corelocation.h=""> 11 #import "SimpleXMIParser.h"</corelocation></uikit></pre>	
S				12 12 13 @interface DealsTableViewController : UITableViewController	
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4. Open DealsTableViewController.m in Assistant Editor.

- 5. Scroll to the connectionDidFinishLoading: method we implemented earlier. Comment the NSLog that prints the XML document to the console.
- 6. Parse the receivedXML using the dealsArrayFromXML: class method and store the result into the nearbyDeals Model.

The next screenshots show you how to perform these steps.

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7. We set the nearbyDeals @property when we receive the XML from the server. We no longer need the lazy instantiation mechanism for nearbyDeals because we instantiate it in the connectionDidFinishLoading: method. Thus, we can delete the getter implementation.

The next screenshot shows the code that needs to be deleted.

- 8. We changed our Model in the connectionDidFinishLoading: method. We have to let the Table View know that we changed the data so that it has a chance to reload the new data. We do this by sending the reloadData message to the tableView.
- Note that tableView is a @property inherited by our Table View Controller from UITableViewController. It is an outlet of our Table View.
- The best place to message the Table View with reloadData is the setter of the nearbyDeals. If we always instantiate our Model through the setter, we make sure that the Table View always knows about this change as soon as possible.
- Let's override the nearbyDeals setter with our own implementation and send the reloadData to the Table View there.
- The next screenshot shows you how to do this.

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9. Let's show up the Utilities area.

10. Click on the Prototype Cell in Interface Builder to see its attributes in Inspector.

11. Change the Prototype Cell's Style to Basic in Attributes Inspector.

Look on the next screenshot for help.

12. Hide back the Utilities area.

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13. Re-implement the tableView:cellForRowAtIndexPath: method to use the data from the new Model (that we received from the GeoAds+ server). Each Table View Cell will display information about a deal. For now, we want to present the deal title and its thumbnail photo. We extract this information from the NSDictionary at indexPath.row inside the nearbyDeals array.

The next slides will guide you through the re-implementation of this method.

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Send synchronous request to download the thumbnail image. is request will block this method until the image data is ... wnloaded from the URL specified by thumbnailUrl. use of this, the Table View will load very slow and it may pleasant for the user. It is better to use an asynchronous est in this case. The asynchronous request will not block ethod (because it will execute on another thread) and the le View loading will look really smooth. We are going to uest the thumbnails asynchronously later. For now, we tick to the synchronous request which is very easy to he number of rows implement in one line of code. nearbyDeals.count; ell *)tableView:(UITableView *)tableView cellForRowAtIndexPath:(NSIndexPath *)indexPath ring *CellIdentifier = @"DealCell"; /Cell *cell = [tableView dequeueReusableCellWithIdentifier:CellIdentifier]; :itle = [[self.nearbyDeals objectAtIndex:indexPath.row] objectForKey:@"title"]; humbnailUrlString = [[self.nearbyDeals objectAtIndex!indexPath.row] objectForKey:@"thumbnail"]; abel.text = title; nbnailUrl = [NSURL URLWithString:thumbnailUrlString]; umbnailData = [NSData dataWithContentsOfURL:thumbnailUrl]; ilData != nil) mageView.image = [UIImage imageWithData:thumbnailData]; support conditional editing of the table view. .ew:(UITableView *)tableView canEditRowAtIndexPath:(NSIndexPath *)indexPath 10 if you do not wan ecified item to be editable Build an UIImage from the thumbnailData and set it to support editing the tabthe imageView of the Table. e)editingStyle forRowAtIn View Cell. First we make sure Style == UITableViewCe te the row from the d that our synchronous request iew deleteRowsAtIndexP imation:UITableViewRowAnima returns something not nil.

Assignment 1

Assignment: Adjust the GeoAds+ URL string that is constructed inside the requestDealsNearLocation:limit: method in order to obtain nearby deals only for Restaurants and Bars.

Hint: Look at the request to GeoAds+ API we made from Safari.

Assignment 2

Assignment: Add the deal's subtitle to the Table View Cell.

Hint: You have to change the Prototype Cell Style to Subtitle and set the cell's detailTextLabel programmatically.

Congratulations!