Kindle Fire App Development

Essentials

Kindle Fire App Development Essentials

Kindle Fire App Development Essentials – First Edition

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Chapter 1

1. Introduction

The Kindle Fire is the latest addition to Amazon's Kindle family of devices. Unlike previous Kindle models, however, the Kindle Fire is the first device from Amazon to move beyond eBook reading by providing a full tablet experience with a multi-touch color screen and the ability to watch movies, read books and magazines, play music and install applications from the Amazon App Store.

1.1 About Kindle Fire App Development Essentials

The goal of this book is to teach the skills necessary to develop Android based applications for the Kindle Fire family of devices.

Beginning with the basics, this book provides an outline of the steps necessary to set up an Android development environment. An introduction to the architecture of Android is followed by an in-depth look at the design of Android applications and user interfaces. More advanced topics such as database management, content providers and intents are also covered, as are touch screen handling, gesture recognition, camera access and the playback and recording of both video and audio.

In addition to covering general Android development techniques, the book also includes Amazon and Kindle Fire specific topics such as creating Kindle Fire emulators for application testing, connecting Kindle Fire devices to the debugging environment, using the Amazon In-App Purchasing and Mobile Ads APIs, implementing maps using the Amazon Maps API and submitting apps to the Amazon Mobile App Distribution portal.

Assuming you already have some Java programming experience, are ready to download Eclipse and the Android SDK, have access to a Windows, Mac or Linux system and ideas for some apps to develop, you are ready to get started.

1.2 Downloading the Code Samples

The source code and Eclipse project files for the examples contained in this book are available for download at:

http://www.ebookfrenzy.com/code/kindlefire.zip

Once the file has been downloaded and unzipped, the samples may be imported into an existing Eclipse workspace by selecting the Eclipse *File -> Import…* menu option and choosing the *Android -> Existing Android Code Into Workspace* category. When prompted, select the folder containing the sample project folders as the *Root Directory* before choosing the sample projects to be imported from the resulting list.

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Chapter 2

2. An Overview of the Kindle Fire

Amazon decided to enter the market for e-reader devices in 2004 with the formation of a hardware research and design division named A2Z Development Corp based in Palo Alto, California. The name originates from the Amazon.com logo, which incorporates an arrow in the shape of a smile swooping between the "A" and the "Z" in the company name (presumably intended to suggest that Amazon.com sells everything from A to Z). This secretive operation was later renamed "Lab126", the letter "A", of course, being the first letter of the alphabet and "Z" the 26th.

The initial Kindle e-reader devices proved to be extremely successful and, within a few years, Amazon announced that eBooks had begun to outsell printed books in a variety of categories. In 2009, however, a threat appeared in the form of the iPad from Apple. Closely tied to Apple's iTunes and iBooks stores, the iPad clearly posed a serious threat to Amazon's dominance in digital goods, entertainment and services.

Recognizing the tablet computer as a key gateway to controlling access to digital content, Lab126 began work on a project codenamed "Otter". The results of the Otter project were made public on September 28, 2011 when Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos walked onto a stage in New York and announced the device that we now know as the Kindle Fire.

2.1 Kindle Fire Operating System

The operating system running on the first generation Kindle Fire was (and still is) based on Google's Android 2.3 (Gingerbread) mobile operating system. Though originally intended for use on smartphone devices, and superseded by more recent Android releases designed specifically for tablets, Amazon has heavily customized this older version of Android to meet the specific needs of the Kindle Fire user. The subsequent second generation Kindle Fire and more recent Kindle Fire HD models run an operating system that is currently based on Android 4.0.3.

2.2 Kindle Fire, the Cloud and Pricing

By just about any measure, the technical specifications of the first Kindle Fire were unremarkable. When compared to the iPad, for example, the absence of front and rear facing cameras, GPS, gyroscope, Bluetooth, 3G connectivity and greater amounts of memory appeared to make the Kindle Fire seem uncompetitive. It should be noted, however, that this first Kindle Fire model was priced extremely aggressively ($199 in the United States).

The feature gap between the Kindle Fire and the iPad has subsequently closed with the introduction of the Kindle HD 7" and HD 8.9" models. Pricing, on the other hand, has remained extremely competitive. In fact, it is estimated by industry analysts that Amazon has priced the devices so aggressively that the company

actually loses money on each sale. The goal, of course, is to reach a mass market of customers and generate revenue far in excess of that lost on the device by selling digital content from Amazon.com.

In addition to the on-board storage, all digital content purchased through Amazon can be stored free of charge on Amazon's cloud servers. This essentially means that there are is no limit to the amount of content that can be stored and accessed from a Kindle Fire as long as that content is purchased from Amazon and the device is connected to a Wi-Fi network.

2.3 Summary

Many tablet manufacturers have attempted to gain a competitive edge by relying on screen size, memory configuration, operating system versions and built-in hardware features. Instead of taking this approach, Amazon began by focusing on creating an affordable device that provided the functionality needed by the majority of users, and then integrated it with a vast catalog of digital content and potentially unlimited cloud storage.

With the introduction of the latest Kindle Fire HD models, Amazon has begun to match many competing devices in terms of hardware features. The pricing, however, remains equally aggressive and no other tablet provider yet comes close to matching Amazon in terms of digital content.

The Kindle Fire remains one of Amazon's top selling products and was estimated at the start of 2012 to account for over 30% of the U.S. tablet market. Clearly, there is a large market waiting for any applications developed for the Kindle Fire.

Chapter 3

3. Setting up a Kindle Fire Android Development Environment

Before any work can begin on the development of an Android application for the Kindle Fire, the first step is to configure a computer system to act as the development platform. This involves a number of steps consisting of installing the Java Development Kit (JDK), the Eclipse Integrated Development Environment (IDE) and the appropriate Android Software Development Kit (SDK). In addition to these steps, it will also be necessary to install the Eclipse Android Development Tool (ADT) Plug-in.

This chapter will cover the steps necessary to install the requisite components for Kindle Fire development on Windows, Mac OS X and Linux based systems.

3.1 System Requirements

Kindle Fire application development may be performed on any of the following system types:

- Windows XP (32-bit)
- Windows Vista (32-bit or 64-bit)
- Windows 7 (32-bit or 64-bit)
- Windows 8
- Mac OS X 10.5.8 or later (Intel based systems only)
- Linux systems with version 2.7 or later of GNU C Library (glibc)

3.2 Installing the Java Development Kit (JDK)

Both the Eclipse IDE and Android SDK were developed using the Java programming language. Similarly, Android applications written for the Kindle Fire are also developed using Java. As a result, the Java Development Kit (JDK) is the first component that must be installed.

Kindle Fire development requires the installation of the Standard Edition of the Java Platform Development Kit version 6 or later. Java is provided in both development (JDK) and runtime (JRE) packages. For the purposes of Kindle Fire development, the JDK must be installed.

3.2.1 Windows JDK Installation

For Windows systems, the JDK may be obtained from Oracle Corporation's website using the following URL:

http://www.oracle.com/technetwork/java/javase/downloads/index.html

Assuming that a suitable JDK is not already installed on your system, download the latest JDK package that matches the destination computer system. Note that although Oracle provides JDK packages for 32-bit (Windows x86) and 64-bit (Windows x64) systems, Amazon recommends use of the 32-bit download even when running a 64-bit version of Windows. Once downloaded, launch the installation executable and follow the on screen instructions to complete the installation process.

3.2.2 Mac OS X JDK Installation

The Java SE 6 environment or a more recent version should already be installed on the latest Mac OS X versions. To confirm the version that is installed, open a Terminal window and enter the following command:

```
java -version
```

Assuming that Java is currently installed, output similar to the following will appear in the terminal window:

```
java version "1.6.0_37"
Java(TM) SE Runtime Environment (build 1.6.0_37-b06-434-11M3909)
Java HotSpot(TM) 64-Bit Server VM (build 20.12-b01-434, mixed mode)
```

In the event that Java is not installed, issuing the “java” command in the terminal window should initiate the JDK installation process.

3.2.3 Linux JDK Installation

Firstly, if the chosen development system is running the 64-bit version of Ubuntu then it is essential that the 32-bit library support package be installed:

```
sudo apt-get install ia32-libs
```

As with Windows based JDK installation, it is possible to install the JDK on Linux by downloading the appropriate package from the Oracle web site, the URL for which is as follows:

http://www.oracle.com/technetwork/java/javase/downloads/index.html

Packages are provided by Oracle in RPM format (for installation on Red Hat Linux based systems such as Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Fedora and CentOS) and as a tar archive for other Linux distributions such as Ubuntu.

On Red Hat based Linux systems, download the .rpm JDK file from the Oracle web site and perform the installation using the *rpm* command in a terminal window. Assuming, for example, that the downloaded JDK file was named *jdk-7u10-linux-x64.rpm*, the commands to perform the installation would read as follows:

```
su
rpm –ihv jdk-7u10-linux-x64.rpm
```

To install using the compressed tar package (tar.gz) perform the following steps:

1. Create the directory into which the JDK is to be installed (for the purposes of this example we will assume */home/demo/java*).

2. Download the appropriate tar.gz package from the Oracle web site into the directory.

3. Execute the following command (where *<jdk-file>* is replaced by the name of the downloaded JDK file):

```
tar xvfz  <jdk-file>.tar.gz
```

4. Remove the downloaded tar.gz file.

5. Add the path to the *bin* directory of the JDK installation to your $PATH variable. For example, assuming that the JDK ultimately installed into */home/demo/java/jdk1.7.0_10* the following would need to be added to your $PATH environment variable:

```
/home/demo/java/jdk1.7.0_10/bin
```

This can typically be achieved by adding a command to the *.bashrc* file in your home directory (specifics may differ depending on the particular Linux distribution in use). For example, change directory to your home directory, edit the *.bashrc* file contained therein and add the following line at the end of the file (modifying the path to match the location of the JDK on your system):

```
export PATH=/home/demo/java/jdk1.7.0_10/bin:$PATH
```

Having saved the change, future terminal sessions will include the JDK in the $PATH environment variable.

3.3 Downloading the Android Developer Tools (ADT) Bundle

Most of the work involved in developing applications for the Kindle Fire will be performed using the Eclipse Integrated Development Environment (IDE). If you are already using Eclipse to develop for other platforms, then the Android Developer Tools (ADT) plug-in can be integrated into your existing Eclipse installation (a topic covered later in this chapter). If, on the other hand, you are entirely new to Eclipse based development, the most convenient path to take is to install a package known as the *ADT Bundle*. This bundle includes many of the tools necessary to begin developing Android applications in a single download.

The ADT Bundle may be downloaded from the following web page:

https://developer.android.com/sdk/index.html

From this page, either click on the download button if it lists the correct platform (for example on a Windows based web browser the button will read “Download the SDK ADT Bundle for Windows”), or select the “Download for Other Platforms” option to manually select the appropriate package for your platform and operating system. On the subsequent screen, accept the terms and conditions, the target architecture of your computer system (32-bit or 64-bit) and click on the download button.

3.4 Installing the ADT Bundle

The ADT Bundle is downloaded as a compressed ZIP archive file which must be unpacked to complete the installation process. The exact steps to achieve this differ depending on the operating system.

3.4.1 Installation on Windows

Locate the downloaded ADT Bundle zip file in a Windows Explorer window, right-click on it and select the *Extract All…* menu option. In the resulting dialog, choose a suitable location into which to unzip the file

before clicking on the *Extract* button. When choosing a suitable location, keep in mind that the extraction will create a sub-folder in the chosen location named either *adt-bundle-windows-x86* or *adt-bundle-windows-x86_64* containing the bundle packages.

Once the extraction is complete, navigate in Windows Explorer to the directory containing the ADT bundle, move into the *eclipse* sub-folder and double click on the *eclipse* executable to start the Eclipse IDE environment. For easier future access, right click on the eclipse executable and select *Pin to Taskbar* from the resulting menu.

It is possible that Windows will display a Security Warning dialog before Eclipse will launch stating that the publisher could not be verified. In the event that this warning appears, uncheck the "Always ask before opening this file" option before clicking the *Run* button. Once invoked, Eclipse will prompt for the location of the workspace. All projects will be stored by default into this folder. Browse for a suitable location, or choose the default offered by Eclipse and click on *OK*.

3.4.2 Installation on Mac OS X

On Mac OS X systems, open a terminal window, change directory to the location where Eclipse is to be installed and execute the following command:

```
unzip /<path to package>/<package name>.zip
```

For example, assuming a package file named *adt-bundle-mac-x86_64.zip* has been downloaded to */home/demo/Downloads*, the following command would be needed to install Eclipse:

```
unzip /home/demo/Downloads/adt-bundle-mac-x86_64.zip
```

Note that the bundle will be installed into a sub-directory named *adt-bundle-mac-x86_64.* Assuming, therefore, that the above command was executed in */Users/demo*, the software packages will be unpacked into */Users/demo/adt-bundle-mac-x86_64.* Within this directory, the files comprising the Eclipse IDE are installed in a sub-directory named *eclipse.*

Using the Finder tool, navigate to the *eclipse* sub-directory of the ADT bundle installation directory and double click on the *eclipse* executable to launch the application. For future easier access to the tool, simply drag the eclipse icon from the Finder window and drop it onto the dock.

3.4.3 Installation on Linux

On Linux systems, open a terminal window, change directory to the location where Eclipse is to be installed and execute the following command:

```
unzip /<path to package>/<package name>.zip
```

For example, assuming a package file named *adt-bundle-linux-x86.zip* has been downloaded to */home/demo/Downloads*, the following command would be needed to install Eclipse:

```
unzip /home/demo/Downloads/adt-bundle-linux-x86.zip
```

Note that the bundle will be installed into a sub-directory named either *adt-bundle-linux-x86* or adt-*bundle-linux-x86_64* depending on whether the 32-bit or 64-bit edition was downloaded. Assuming, therefore, that the above command was executed in */home/demo*, the software packages will be unpacked into */home/demo/adt-bundle-linux-x86.* Within this directory, the files comprising the Eclipse IDE are installed in a sub-directory named *eclipse.*

To launch Eclipse, open a terminal window, change directory to the *eclipse* sub-directory of the ADT bundle installation directory and execute the following command:

```
./eclipse
```

Once invoked, Eclipse will prompt for the location of the workspace. All projects will be stored by default into this folder. Browse for a suitable location, or choose the default offered by Eclipse and click on *OK*.

Having verified that the Eclipse IDE is installed correctly, keep Eclipse running so that it can be used to install additional Android and Kindle specific SDK packages.

3.5 Installing the Correct Android and Kindle Fire SDK Packages

The steps performed so far have installed Java, the Eclipse IDE and the current set of default Android SDK packages. In order to develop applications for the Kindle Fire family of devices, particular versions of the Android SDK packages need to be installed along with some Kindle Fire specific SDK packages. This task can be performed using the *Android SDK Manager*, which may be launched from within the Eclipse tool by selecting the *Window -> Android SDK Manager* menu option. Once invoked, the SDK Manager tool will appear as illustrated in Figure 3-1:

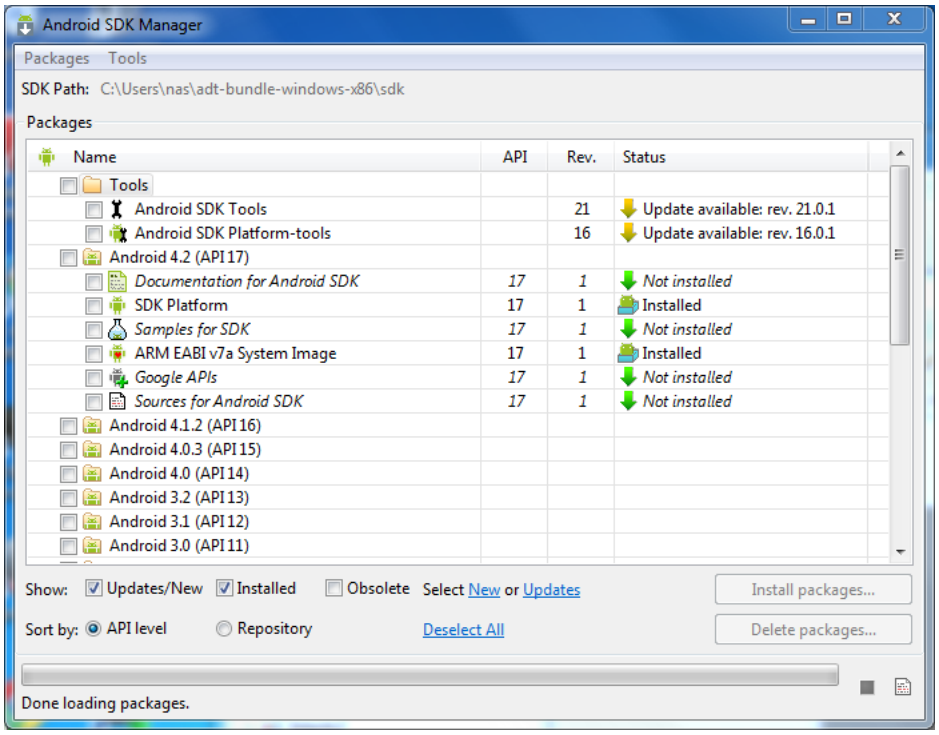

Figure 3-1

Once the SDK Manager is running, return to the main Eclipse window and select the *File -> Exit* menu option to exit from the Eclipse environment. This will leave the Android SDK Manager running whilst ensuring that the Eclipse session does not conflict with the installation process.

Begin by checking that the *SDK Path:* setting at the top of the SDK Manager window matches the location into which the ADT Bundle package was unzipped. If it does not, relaunch Eclipse and select the *Window -> Preferences* option. In the *Preferences* dialog, select the *Android* option from the left hand panel and change the *SDK Location* setting so that it references the *sdk* sub-folder of the directory into which the ADT Bundle was unzipped before clicking on *Apply* followed by *OK*.

The ultimate goal at this point is to download and install the SDK packages needed for Kindle Fire development. Most of these will be downloaded from the standard Google repository servers. A few packages, however, will need to be downloaded direct from Amazon. In order to make this possible, a new *Add-on Site* needs to be added to the list of sites in the manager. To achieve this, select the *Tools -> Manage Add-on Sites* menu option. In the resulting window, select the *User Defined Sites* tab as illustrated in Figure 3-2:

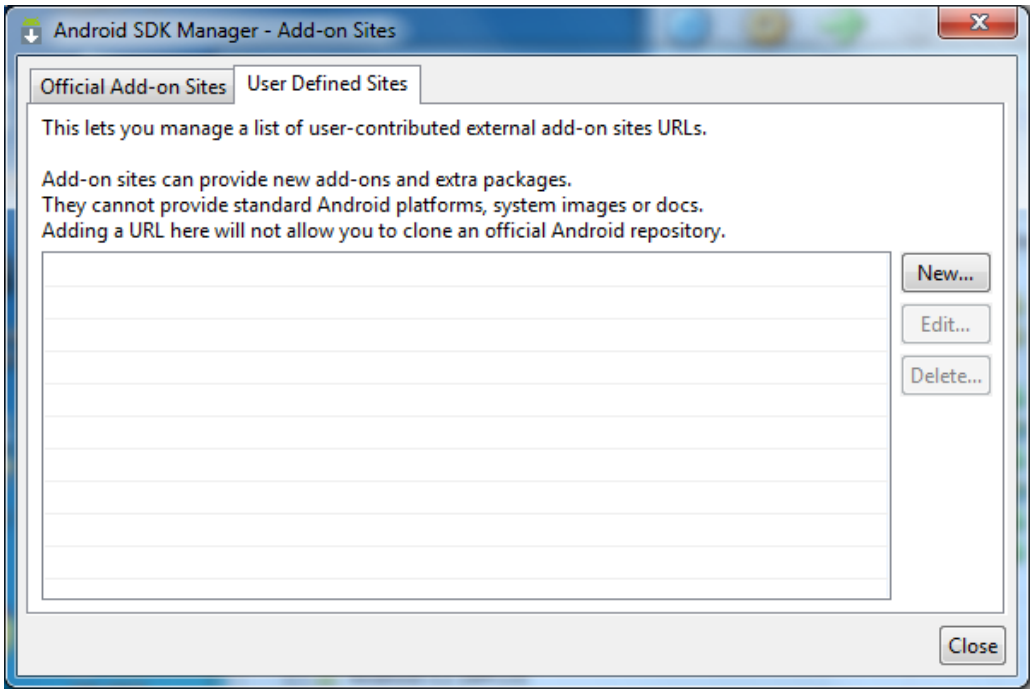

Figure 3-2

Click on the *New…* button and enter the following URL into the resulting dialog:

http://kindle-sdk.s3.amazonaws.com/addon.xml

Click *OK* to close the dialog, make sure the URL is now listed under User Defined Sites and then click *Close*. The main SDK Manager window should now list *Extras* options to install the *Kindle Fire Device Definitions* and the *Kindle Fire USB Driver* packages.

At the time of writing, Kindle Fire application development is performed using the Android 2.2.3 API Level 10 and Android 4.0.3 API level 15 SDKs. The current versions supported by the Kindle Fire device family can be identified by referring to the following web page:

https://developer.amazon.com/sdk/fire/setup.html

For the purposes of this tutorial, the assumption is made that Android 4.0.3 is still the current release for newer Kindle Fire models.

Within the Android SDK Manager, make sure that the check boxes next to the following packages are selected:

- Tools > Android SDK Tools: Rev. 21
- Tools > Android SDK Platform-tools: Rev. 16
- SDK Platform Android 4.0.3 API 15 > SDK Platform
- SDK Platform Android 4.0.3 API 15 > ARM EABI v7a System Image
- SDK Platform Android 4.0.3 API 15 > Kindle Fire (2nd Generation)
- SDK Platform Android 4.0.3 API 15 > Kindle Fire HD 7”
- SDK Platform Android 4.0.3 API 15 > Kindle Fire HD 8.9”
- SDK Platform Android 2.3.3 API 10 > SDK Platform
- SDK Platform Android 2.3.3 API 10 > Kindle Fire
- Extras > Kindle Fire USB Driver (Not applicable for Mac OS X or Linux.)
- Extras > Kindle Fire Device Definitions
- Extras > Android Support Library

With the appropriate package selections made, click on the *Install packages* button to initiate the installation process. In the resulting dialog, accept the license agreements before clicking on the *Install* button. The SDK Manager will then begin to download and install the designated packages. As the installation proceeds, a progress bar will appear at the bottom of the manager window indicating the status of the installation as illustrated in Figure 3-3:

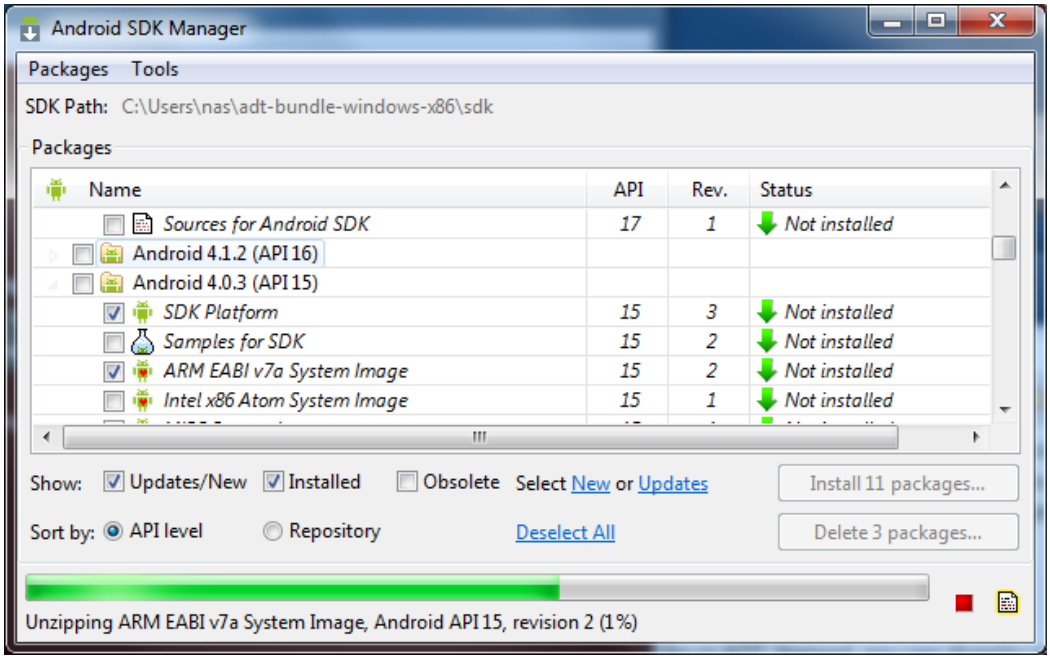

Figure 3-3

Once the installation is complete, review the package list and make sure that the selected packages are now listed as *Installed* in the *Status* column. If any are listed as *Not installed* (usually the Kindle Fire specific packages need to be installed separately from the generic Android packages), make sure they are selected and click on the *Install packages…* button again.

3.6 Making the Android SDK Tools Command-line Accessible

Most of the time, the underlying tools of the Android SDK will be accessed from within the Eclipse environment. That being said, however, there will also be instances where it will be useful to be able to invoke those tools from a command prompt or terminal window. In order for the operating system on which you are developing to be able to find these tools, it will be necessary to add them to the system's *PATH* environment variable.

Regardless of operating system, the PATH variable needs to be configured to include the following paths (where *<path_to_adt_installation>* represents the file system location into which the ADT bundle was installed):

```
<path_to_adt_installation>/sdk/tools
<path_to_adt_installation>/sdk/platform-tools
```

The steps to achieve this are operating system dependent:

3.6.1 Windows 7

1. Right click on *Computer* in the desktop start menu and select *Properties* from the resulting menu.
2. In the properties panel, select the *Advanced System Settings* link and, in the resulting dialog, click on the *Environment Variables…* button.

3. In the Environment Variables dialog, locate the *Path* variable in the *System variables* list, select it and click on *Edit…*. Locate the end of the current variable value string and append the path to the android platform tools to the end, using a semicolon to separate the path from the preceding values. For example, assuming the ADT bundle was installed into */Users/demo/adt-bundle-windows-x86_64*, the following would be appended to the end of the current Path value:

```
;C:\Users\demo\adt-bundle-windows-x86_64\sdk\platform-
tools;C:\Users\demo\adt-bundle-windows-x86_64\sdk\tools
```

4. Click on OK in each dialog box and close the system properties control panel.

Once the above steps are complete, verify that the path is correctly set by opening a *Command Prompt* window (*Start -> All Programs -> Accessories -> Command Prompt*) and at the prompt enter:

```
echo %Path%
```

The returned path variable value should include the paths to the Android SDK platform tools folders. Verify that the *platform-tools* value is correct by attempting to run the *adb* tool as follows:

```
adb
```

The tool should output a list of command line options when executed.

Similarly, check the *tools* path setting by attempting to launch the Android SDK Manager:

```
android
```

In the event that a message similar to following message appears for one or both of the commands, it is most likely that an incorrect path was appended to the Path environment variable:

```
'adb' is not recognized as an internal or external command,
operable program or batch file.
```

3.6.2 Windows 8

1. On the start screen, move the mouse to the bottom right hand corner of the screen and select *Search* from the resulting menu. In the search box, enter *Control Panel*. When the Control Panel icon appears in the results area, click on it to launch the tool on the desktop.
2. Within the Control Panel, use the *Category* menu to change the display to *Large Icons.* From the list of icons select, the one labeled *System*.
3. Follow the steps outlined for Windows 7 starting from step 2.

3.6.3 Linux

On Linux this will involve once again editing the *.bashrc* file. Assuming that the bundle package was installed into */home/demo/adt-bundle-linux-x86*, the export line in the *.bashrc* file would now read as follows:

```
export PATH=/home/demo/java/jdk1.7.0_10/bin:/home/demo/adt-bundle-linux-
x86/sdk/platform-tools:/home/demo/adt-bundle-linux-x86/sdk/tools:$PATH
```

3.6.4 Mac OS X

A number of techniques may be employed to modify the $PATH environment variable on Mac OS X. Arguably the cleanest method is to add a new file in the */etc/paths.d* directory containing the paths to be added to $PATH. Assuming an installation location of */Users/demo/adt-bundle-mac-x86_64*, the path may be configured by creating a new file named *android-sdk* in the */etc/paths.d* directory containing the following lines:

```
/Users/demo/adt-bundle-mac-x86_64/sdk/tools
/Users/demo/adt-bundle-mac-x86_64/sdk/platform-tools
```

Note that since this is a system directory it will be necessary to use the *sudo* command when creating the file. For example:

```
sudo vi /etc/paths.d/android-sdk
```

3.7 Adding the ADT Plugin to an Existing Eclipse Integration

The steps outlined so far in this chapter have assumed that the Eclipse IDE is not already installed on your system. In the event that you are already using Eclipse for Java based development, the appropriate Android development tools and SDKs can be added to this existing Eclipse installation. Eclipse editions with which the ADT Plugin is compatible are as follows:

- Eclipse IDE for Java Developers
- Eclipse Classic (versions 3.5.1 and higher)
- Eclipse IDE for Java EE Developers
- Eclipse for Mobile Developers

The ADT Plugin for Eclipse adds a range of Android specific features to what is otherwise a general-purpose Java edition of the Eclipse environment. To install this plugin, launch Eclipse and select the *Help –> Install New Software…* menu option. In the resulting window, click on the *Add…* button to display the *Add Repository* dialog. Enter “ADT Plugin” into the *Name* field and the following URL into the *Location* field:

```
https://dl-ssl.google.com/android/eclipse/
```

Click on the *OK* button and wait while Eclipse connects to the Android repository. Once the information has been downloaded, new items will be listed entitled *Developer Tools* and *NDK Plugins* as illustrated in Figure 3-4:

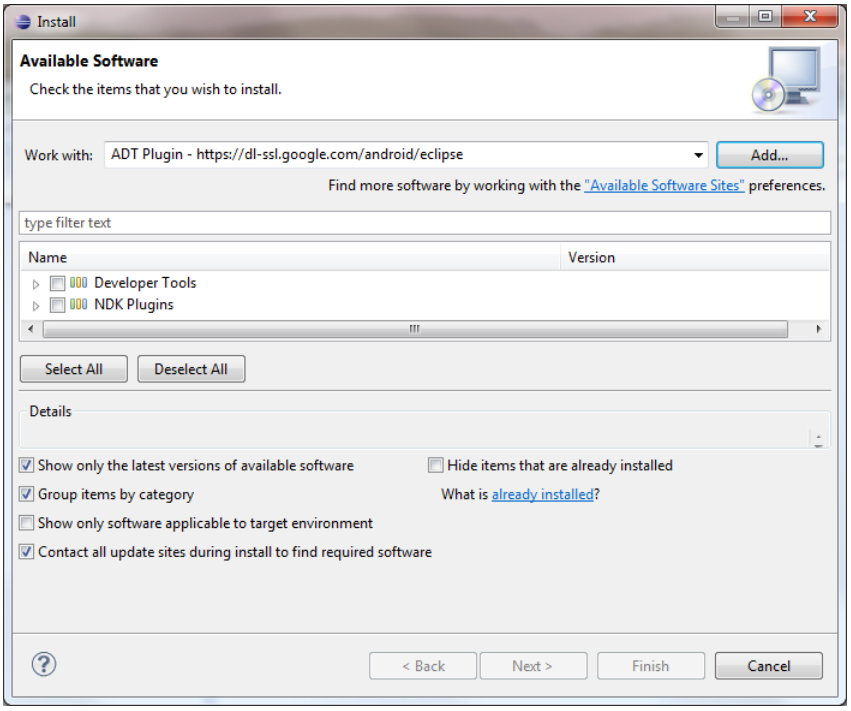

Figure 3-4

Select the checkbox next to the *Developer Tools* entry and click on the *Next >* button. After requirements and dependencies have been calculated by the installer, a more detailed list of the packages to be installed will appear. Once again click on the *Next >* button to proceed. On the subsequent licensing page, select the option to accept the terms of the agreements (assuming that you do, indeed, agree) and click on *Finish* to complete the installation. During the download and installation process, you may be prompted to confirm that you wish to install unsigned content. In the event that this happens, simply click on the option to proceed with the installation.

When the ADT Plugin installation is complete, a dialog will appear providing the option to restart Eclipse in order to complete the installation. Click on *Yes* and wait for the tool to exit and re-launch.

Upon restarting, the *Welcome to Android Development* dialog will appear as illustrated in Figure 3-5:

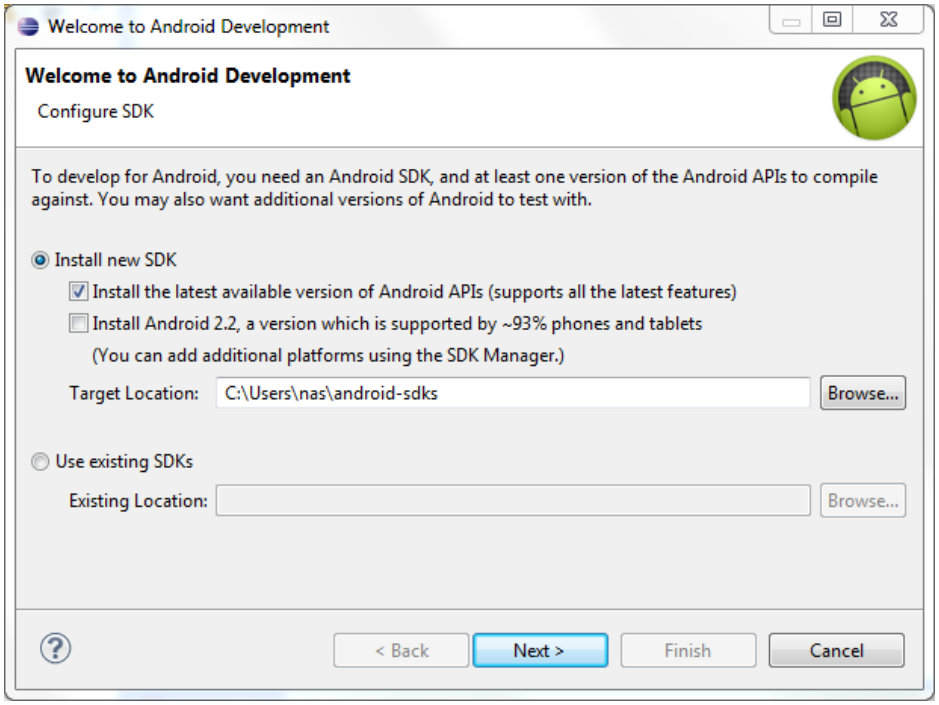

Figure 3-5

At this stage there is no existing SDK installed so the *Use Existing SDKs* choice is not a viable option. Unfortunately, the ADT Plugin does not provide the option at this point to install the SDKs of our choice so we will need to install the latest available SDK versions and then manually install the ones we actually need for Kindle Fire development. With this in mind, select the option to install the latest available version of the Android APIs. Make a note of the *Target Location* path and change it if you prefer the SDKs to be installed in a different location, then click *Next.* Choose whether to send usage information to Google, accept all the licensing terms and click on *Install.* The Android SDK Manager will now download and install the latest Android SDKs. Once this process is complete, follow the steps outlined in the earlier section entitled *Installing the Correct Android and Kindle SDK Packages* to install the appropriate Android and Amazon packages for Kindle development.

At this point, the Eclipse environment is ready to begin the development of Android applications for the Kindle Fire family of devices.

3.8 Summary

Prior to beginning the development of Android based applications for the Kindle Fire, the first step is to set up a suitable development environment. This consists of the Java Development Kit (JDK), Android and Kindle Fire SDKs, Eclipse IDE and the Android ADT Plugin for Eclipse. In this chapter, we have covered the steps necessary to install these packages on Windows, Mac OS X and Linux.

Chapter 4

4. Creating a Kindle Fire Android Virtual Device (AVD)

In the course of developing Android apps for the Kindle Fire it will be necessary to compile and run an application multiple times. An Android application for the Kindle Fire may be tested by installing and running it either on a physical device or in an *Android Virtual Device (AVD)* emulator environment. Before an AVD can be used, it must first be created and configured to match the specification of a Kindle Fire model. The goal of this chapter, therefore, is to work through the steps involved in creating such a virtual device.

4.1 About Android Virtual Devices

AVDs are essentially emulators that allow Android applications to be tested without the necessity to install the application on a physical Android based device. An AVD may be configured to emulate a variety of hardware features including options such as screen size, memory capacity and the presence or otherwise of features such as a camera, GPS navigation support or an accelerometer. As part of the installation process outlined in the previous chapter, a number of emulator definitions were installed allowing AVDs to be configured for the current range of Kindle Fire devices.

When launched, a Kindle Fire specific AVD will appear as a window containing an emulated Kindle Fire device environment. Figure 4-1, for example, shows an AVD session configured to emulate the Kindle Fire HD 7” device:

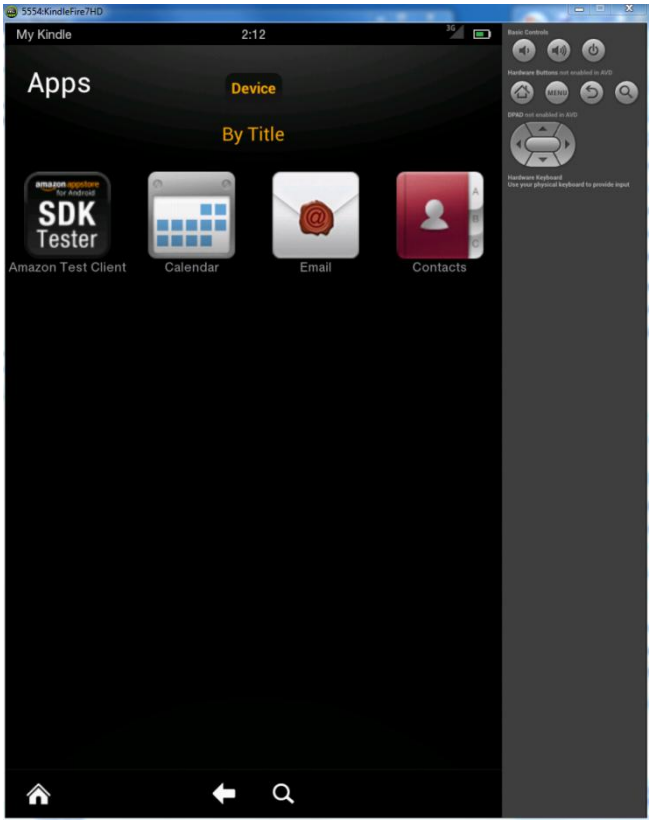

Figure 4-1

New AVDs are created and managed using the Android Virtual Device Manager, which may be used either in command-line mode or with a more user-friendly graphical user interface.

4.2 Creating a Kindle Fire AVD

In order to test the behavior of an application on the full range of Kindle Fire devices it will be necessary to create an AVD for each device configuration. At time of writing this consists of Kindle Fire (1st Generation), Kindle Fire (2nd Generation), Kindle Fire HD 7" and Kindle Fire HD 8.9" devices. For the purposes of this chapter, an AVD will be created configured to emulate the Kindle Fire HD 7" device.

In order to create a new AVD, the first step is to launch the AVD Manager. This can be achieved from within the Eclipse environment using the *Window -> Android Virtual Device Manager* menu option. Alternatively, the tool may be launched from the command-line using the following command:

```
android avd
```

Once launched, the tool will appear as outlined in Figure 4-2. Assuming a new Android SDK installation, no AVDs will currently be listed:

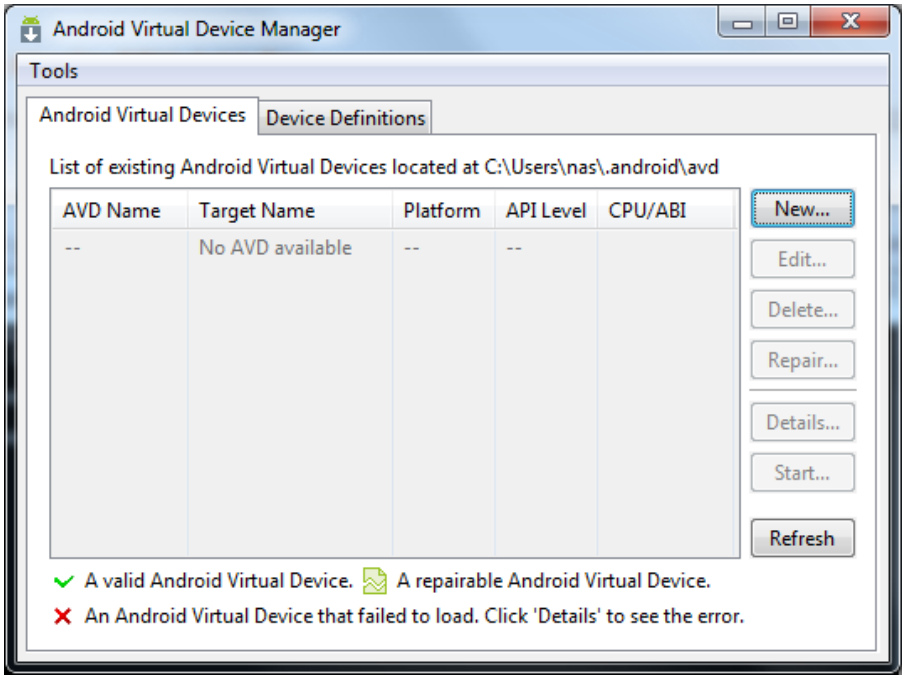

Figure 4-2

Begin the AVD creation process by clicking on the *New…* button in order to invoke the *Create a New Android Virtual Device (AVD)* dialog. Within the dialog, perform the following steps to create a Kindle Fire compatible emulator:

1. Enter a descriptive name (for example *KindleFireHD7*) into the name field. Note that spaces and other special characters are not permitted in the name.
2. Set the *Device* menu to *Kindle Fire HD 7" (800 x 1280: hdpi).*
3. Use the *Target* menu to select the option matching the *Device* setting, in this case the *Kindle Fire HD 7" (Amazon) – API Level 15* target.
4. Set the *CPU/ABI* menu to *ARM (armeabi-v7a)*.
5. Leave the default *RAM* value in *Memory Options*.
6. The *VM Heap* value should be set to 64MB for the Kindle Fire – 1st Generation and to 256MB for the Kindle Fire – 2nd Generation and Kindle Fire HD models.
7. Set *Internal Storage* to 1024 MiB.
8. If the host computer contains a web cam the *Front Camera:* emulation may be configured to use this camera. Alternatively, an emulated camera may be selected. If camera functionality is not required by the application, simply leave this set to *None*.

Whether or not you enable the *Hardware Keyboard* and *Display skin with hardware controls* options is optional. When the hardware keyboard option is selected, it will be possible to use the physical keyboard on the system on which the emulator is running. As such, the Kindle software keyboard will not appear within the emulator.

The skin with hardware controls option controls whether or not buttons appear as part of the emulator to simulate the hardware buttons present on the sides of the physical Kindle Fire device.

Note that it may also be possible to speed the performance of the emulator by enabling the *Use Host GPU* option. In the event that the emulator crashes during startup when this option is selected, edit the virtual device properties and disable this option.

Figure 4-3 illustrates the dialog with the appropriate settings implemented for a Kindle Fire HD 7" emulator. Once the configuration settings are complete, click on the *OK* button.

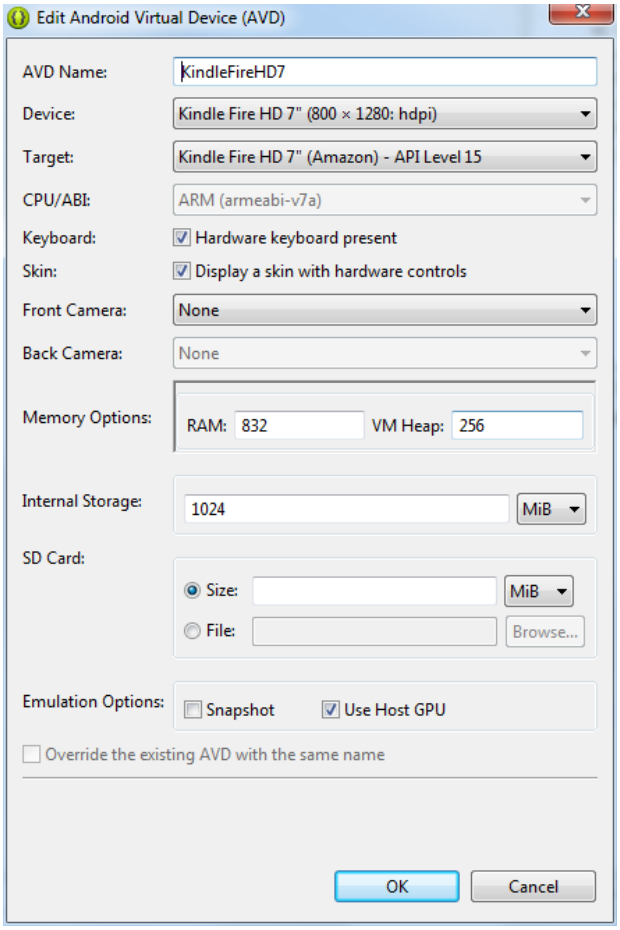

Figure 4-3

With the AVD created, the AVD Manager may now be closed. If future modifications to the AVD are necessary, simply re-open the AVD Manager, select the AVD from the list and click on the *Edit…* button.

4.3 Starting the Emulator

To perform a test run of the newly created AVD emulator, simply select the emulator from the Android Virtual Device Manager and click on the *Start…* button followed by *Launch* in the resulting *Launch Options* dialog. The emulator will appear in a new window and, after a short period of time, the "kindle fire" text will appear in the center of the screen. The first time the emulator is run, it can take up to 10 minutes for the emulator to fully load and start. On subsequent invocations, this will typically reduce to a few minutes. In the event that the startup time on your system is considerable, do not hesitate to leave the emulator running.

The ADT system will detect that it is already running and attach to it when applications are launched, thereby saving considerable amounts of startup time.

Once fully loaded, the emulator will display either the standard Kindle Fire lock screen, or the home screen showing a small selection of pre-installed applications as previously shown in Figure 4-1.

4.4 Kindle Fire AVD Command-line Creation

As previously discussed, in addition to the graphical user interface it is also possible to create a new AVD directly from the command-line. This is achieved using the *android* tool in conjunction with some command-line options. Once initiated, the tool will prompt for additional information before creating the new AVD.

Assuming that the system has been configured such that the Android SDK *tools* directory is included in the PATH environment variable, a list of available targets for the new AVD may be obtained by issuing the following command in a terminal or command window:

```
android list targets
```

The resulting output from the above command will contain a list of Android SDK versions that are available on the system. For example:

```
Available Android targets:
----------
id: 1 or "android-10"
     Name: Android 2.3.3
     Type: Platform
     API level: 10
     Revision: 2
     Skins: HVGA, QVGA, WQVGA400, WQVGA432, WVGA800 (default), WVGA854
     ABIs : armeabi
----------
id: 2 or "Amazon:Kindle Fire:10"
     Name: Kindle Fire
     Type: Add-On
     Vendor: Amazon
     Revision: 3
     Description: Android SDK Add-On for Kindle Fire
     Based on Android 2.3.3 (API level 10)
     Skins: WVGA854, WQVGA400, HVGA, KindleFire (default), WQVGA432,
WVGA800, QVGA
     ABIs : armeabi
     Adds USB support for devices (Vendor: 0x1949)
----------
id: 3 or "android-15"
     Name: Android 4.0.3
     Type: Platform
     API level: 15
     Revision: 3
```

```
     Skins: HVGA, QVGA, WQVGA400, WQVGA432, WSVGA, WVGA800 (default),
WVGA854, WXGA720, WXGA800
     ABIs : armeabi-v7a
----------
id: 4 or "Amazon:Kindle Fire (2nd Generation):15"
     Name: Kindle Fire (2nd Generation)
     Type: Add-On
     Vendor: Amazon
     Revision: 2
     Description: Android SDK Add-On for Kindle Fire (2nd Generation)
     Based on Android 4.0.3 (API level 15)
     Skins: WVGA854, WQVGA400, WSVGA, WXGA720, HVGA, KindleFire (default),
WQVGA432, WVGA800, QVGA, WXGA800
     ABIs : armeabi-v7a
     Adds USB support for devices (Vendor: 0x1949)
----------
id: 5 or "Amazon:Kindle Fire HD 7":15"
     Name: Kindle Fire HD 7"
     Type: Add-On
     Vendor: Amazon
     Revision: 2
     Description: Android SDK Add-On for Kindle Fire HD 7"
     Based on Android 4.0.3 (API level 15)
     Skins: WVGA854, WQVGA400, WSVGA, WXGA720, HVGA, KindleFire (default),
WQVGA432, WVGA800, QVGA, WXGA800
     ABIs : armeabi-v7a
     Adds USB support for devices (Vendor: 0x1949)
----------
id: 6 or "Amazon:Kindle Fire HD 8.9":15"
     Name: Kindle Fire HD 8.9"
     Type: Add-On
     Vendor: Amazon
     Revision: 3
     Description: Android SDK Add-On for Kindle Fire HD 8.9"
     Based on Android 4.0.3 (API level 15)
     Skins: WVGA854, WQVGA400, WSVGA, WXGA720, HVGA, KindleFire (default),
WQVGA432, WVGA800, QVGA, WXGA800
     ABIs : armeabi-v7a
     Adds USB support for devices (Vendor: 0x1949)
----------
```

The syntax for AVD creation is as follows:

```
android create avd -n <name> -t <targetID> [-<option> <value>]
```

For example, to create a new AVD named *KindleFireHD89* using the target id for the Kindle Fire HD 8.9" device (in this case id 6), the following command may be used:

```
android create avd -n KindleFireHD89 -t 6
```

The android tool will create the new AVD to the specifications required for a Kindle Fire HD 8.9" device. Once a new AVD has been created from the command line, it may not show up in the Android Device Manager tool until the *Refresh* button is clicked.

In addition to the creation of new AVDs, a number of other tasks may be performed from the command line. For example, a list of currently available AVDs may be obtained using the *list avd* command line arguments:

```
android list avd

Available Android Virtual Devices:
    Name: KindleFireHD7
    Path: C:\Users\nas\.android\avd\KindleFireHD7.avd
  Target: Kindle Fire HD 7" (Amazon)
          Based on Android 4.0.3 (API level 15)
     ABI: armeabi-v7a
    Skin: 800x1280
---------
    Name: KindleFireHD89
    Path: C:\Users\nas\.android\avd\KindleFireHD89.avd
  Target: Kindle Fire HD 8.9" (Amazon)
          Based on Android 4.0.3 (API level 15)
     ABI: armeabi-v7a
    Skin: 1200x1920
```

Similarly, to delete an existing AVD, simply use the *delete* option as follows:

```
android delete avd –name <avd name>
```

4.5 Android Virtual Device Configuration Files

By default, the files associated with an AVD are stored in the *.android/avd* sub-directory of the user's home directory, the structure of which is as follows (where *<avd name>* is replaced by the name assigned to the AVD):

```
<avd name>.avd/config.ini
<avd name>.avd/userdata.img
<avd name>.ini
```

The *config.ini* file contains the device configuration settings such as display dimensions and memory specified during the AVD creation process. These settings may be changed directly within the configuration file and will be adopted by the AVD when it is next invoked.

The *<avd name>.ini* file contains a reference to the target Android SDK and the path to the AVD files. Note that a change to the *image.sysdir* value in the *config.ini* file will also need to be reflected in the *target* value of this file.

4.6 Moving and Renaming an Android Virtual Device

The current name or the location of the AVD files may be altered from the command line using the *android* tool's *move avd* argument. For example, to rename an AVD named KindleFire2 to KindleFire3, the following command may be executed:

```
android move avd -n KindleFire2 -r KindleFire3
```

To physically relocate the files associated with the AVD, the following command syntax should be used:

```
android move avd -n <avd name> -p <path to new location>
```

For example, to move an AVD from its current file system location to /tmp/KindleFireTest:

```
android move avd -n KindleFire2 -p /tmp/KindleFireTest
```

Note that the destination directory must not already exist prior to executing the command to move an AVD.

4.7 Summary

A typical application development process follows a cycle of coding, compiling and running in a test environment. Android applications may be tested on either a physical Kindle Fire device or using an Android Virtual Device (AVD) emulator. AVDs are created and managed using the Android AVD Manager tool which may be used either as a command line tool or using a graphical user interface. When creating an AVD to simulate the Kindle Fire it is important that the virtual device be configured with a hardware specification that matches that of the physical device.

Now that we have created and configured an AVD, the next step is to create a simple application and run it within the AVD.

Chapter 5

5. Creating an Example Kindle Fire Android Application

The preceding chapters of this book have covered the steps necessary to configure an environment suitable for the development of Kindle Fire based Android applications. Before moving on to slightly more advanced topics, now is a good time to validate that all of the required development packages are installed and functioning correctly. The best way to achieve this goal is to create a simple Android application, compile it and then run it within an Android Virtual Device (AVD) configured as a Kindle Fire emulator.

5.1 Creating a New Android Project

The first step in the application development process is to create a new project within the Eclipse IDE. Begin, therefore, by launching Eclipse and accepting the default path to your workspace in the *Workspace Launcher* dialog as illustrated in Figure 5-1 (or choose another location if the default is unsuitable). Note that if you do not wish to be prompted for the location of the workspace each time Eclipse loads, simply select the *Use this as the default and do not ask again* option before clicking on *OK*.

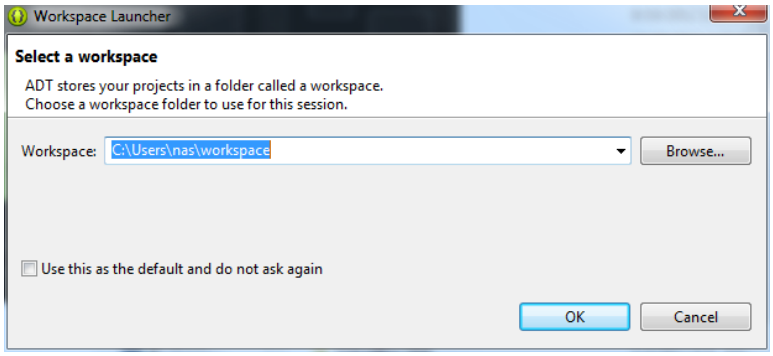

Figure 5-1

Once the workspace has been selected, the main Eclipse workbench window will appear ready for a new project to be created. To create the new project, select the *File -> New -> Android Application Project…* menu option.

5.2 Defining the Project Name and SDK Settings

In the *New Android Project* window set both the *Application Name* and *Project Name* to *KindleTest*.

The *Package Name* is used to uniquely identify the application within the Android application ecosystem. It should be based on the reversed URL of your domain name followed by the name of the application. For

example, if your domain is *www.mycompany.com*, and the application has been named *KindleTest*, then the package name might be specified as:

```
com.mycompany.kindletest
```

If you do not have a domain name, you may also use *example.com* for the purposes of testing, though this will need to be changed before an application can be published:

```
com.example.kindletest
```

The next step is to specify some SDK settings. Since the first generation Kindle Fire ran a variant of Android 2.2, the *Minimum Required SDK* menu should be set to *API 8:Android 2.2 (Froyo)*. The *Target SDK* and *Compile With* menus should be set to *API 17: Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean)*. Once these settings have been configured, the dialog should match that shown in Figure 5-2:

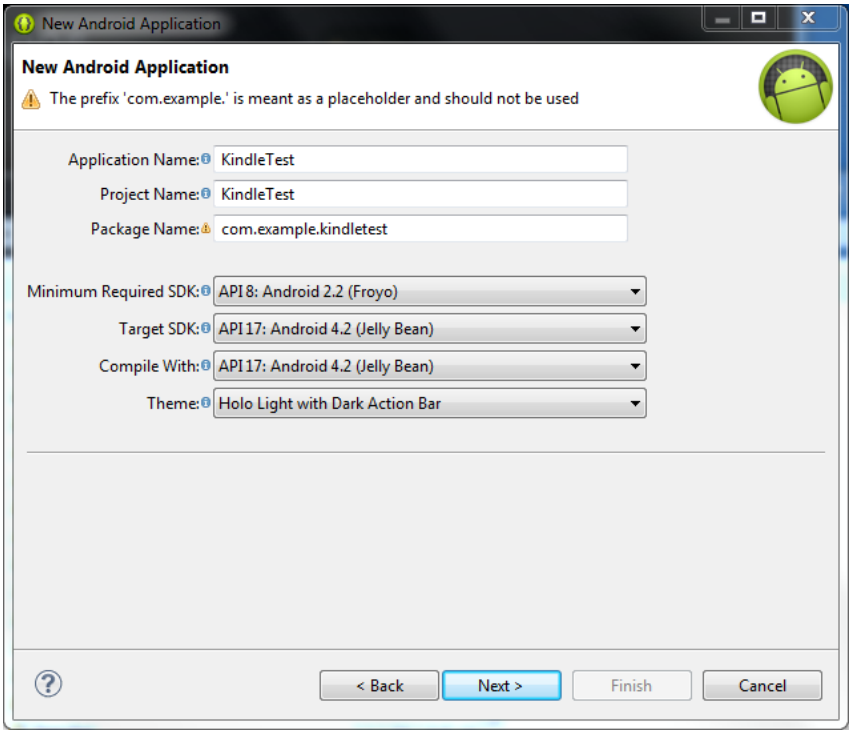

Figure 5-2

5.3 Project Configuration Settings

With the correct settings configured, click *Next >* to proceed to the *Configure Project* screen (Figure 5-3). Within this screen, a number of different configuration options are provided.

Make sure that the *Create Activity* and *Create customer launcher icon* options are selected. The former setting will ensure that the project is preconfigured with a template activity that will make the task of creating an example application easier. An activity is a single task that can be performed by the user within the context of an application and is typically analogous to a single user interface screen within an application. In asking for Eclipse to create an activity for us, therefore, the project will be primed with both a window

onto which a user interface may be displayed and the code to ensure that the window appears when the application runs.

The custom launcher selection, on the other hand, will provide the option to specify the icon that will represent the application on the device screen.

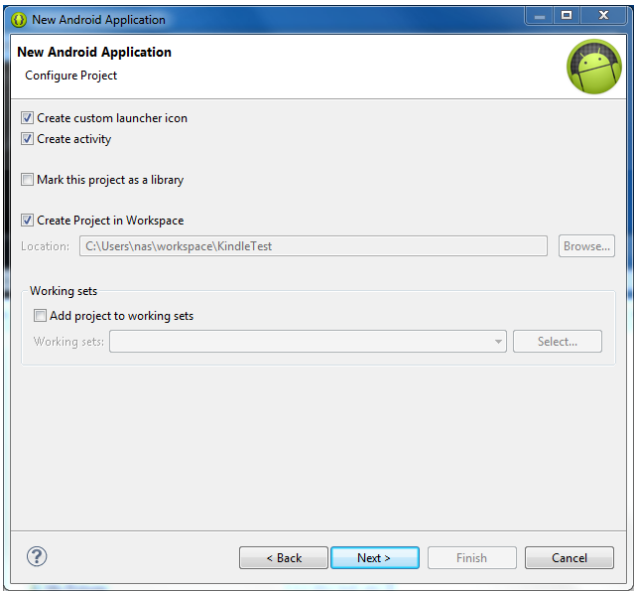

Figure 5-3

5.4 Configuring the Launcher Icon

Clicking the *Next >* button will proceed to the launcher icon configuration screen. Before the application can be submitted to the Kindle Fire app store for sale it will need to have an icon associated with it. This icon is displayed on the screen of the Kindle Fire device and is touched by the user to launch the application. The launch icon can take the form of a set of PNG image files, clipart or even text. Options are also provided on this screen to configure the background color of the launcher and to change the shape surrounding the icon.

When assigning image files for the launcher icon, images for a variety of screen resolutions and densities may be specified. If only a single image size is provided, the Android system will scale the image for different screens, potentially leading to some image quality degradation. For the purposes of this example, however, it is adequate to use the default icon images:

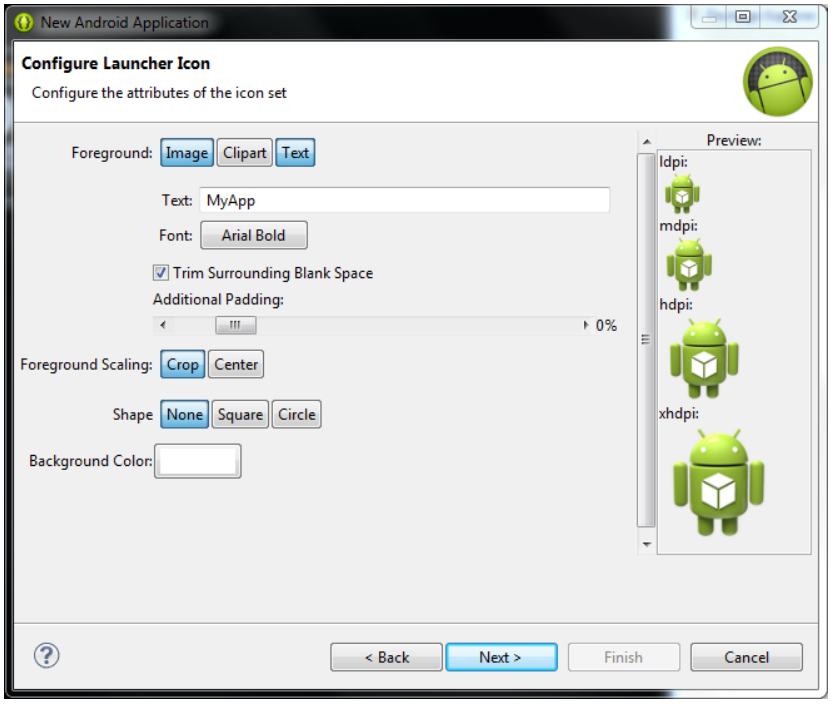

Figure 5-4

Click *Next >* to proceed with the configuration process.

5.5 Creating an Activity

The next step is to define the type of initial activity that is to be created for the application. A range of different activity types is available when developing Android applications, though many of these are not available for the earlier version of Android used by the first generation Kindle Fire. For the purposes of this example, however, simply select the option to create a *BlankActivity* before clicking *Next >.*

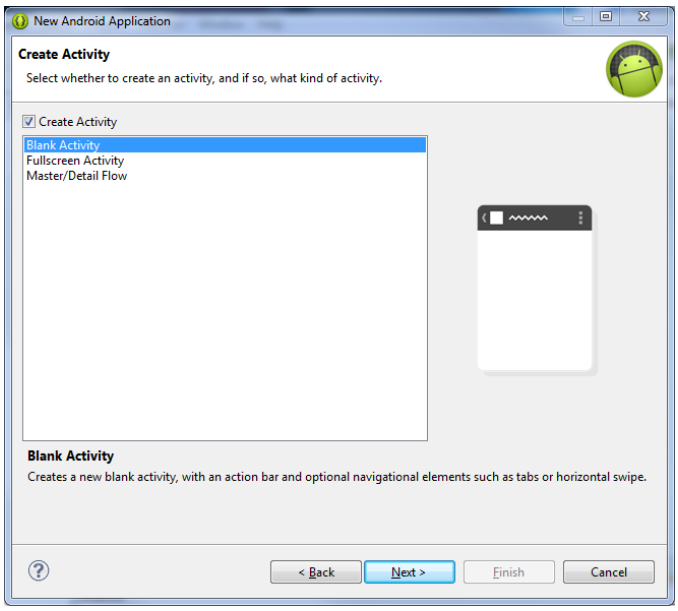

Figure 5-5

With the Blank Activity option selected, click *Next >*. On the final screen (Figure 5-6) name the activity *KindleTestActivity*. The activity will consist of a single user interface screen layout which, for the purposes of this example, should be named *activity_kindle_test*. Finally, since this is a very simple, single screen activity, there is no need to select a navigation type, so leave this menu set to *None* (as with the activity options, these settings are not supported for the older release of Android on the first generation Kindle Fire):

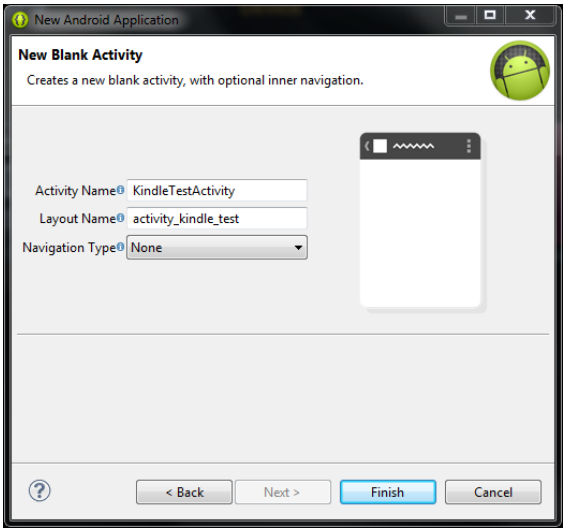

Figure 5-6

Finally, click on *Finish* to initiate the project creation process.

5.6 Running the Application in the AVD

At this point, Eclipse has created a minimal example application project and opened the main workbench screen. If the "Welcome!" panel is still displayed, close it by clicking on the "X" in the "Android IDE" tab.

The newly created project and references to associated files are listed in the *Package Explorer* located in a panel on the left hand side of the main Eclipse window. Clicking on the right facing arrow next to the *KindleTest* project name will unfold the project and list the various files and sub-folders contained therein. This essentially mirrors the directory hierarchy and files located in the project's workspace folder on the local file system of the development computer:

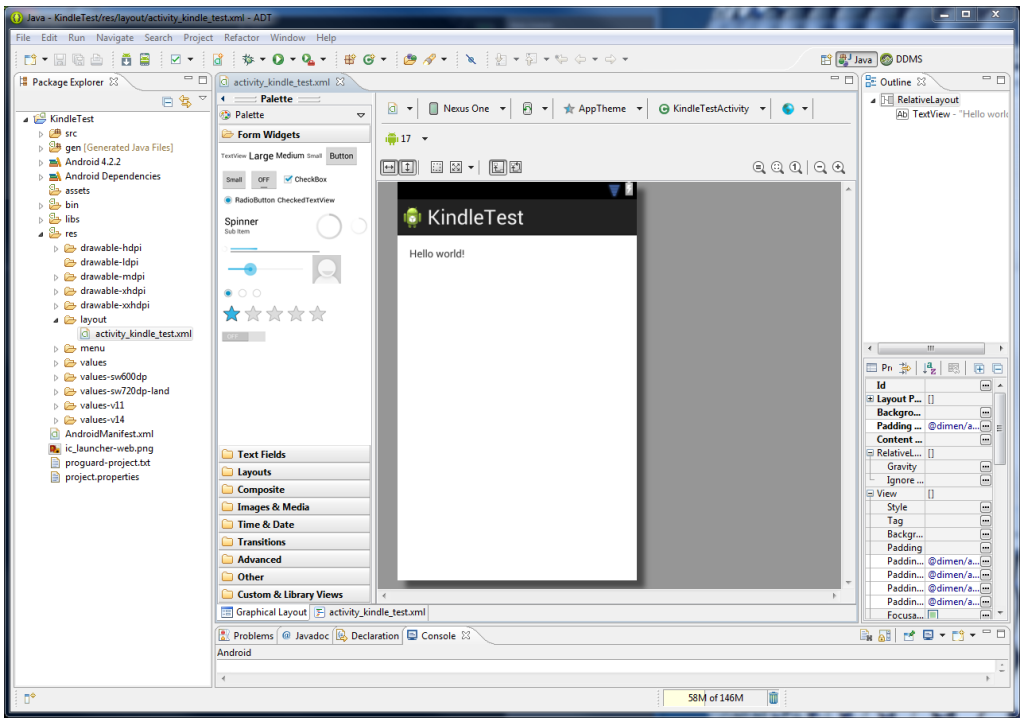

Figure 5-7

The example project created for us when we selected the option to create an activity consists of a user interface containing a label that will read "Hello World" when the application is executed. In order to run the application in the AVD that was created in the chapter entitled *Creating a Kindle Fire Android Virtual Device (AVD)*, simply right-click on the application name in the Package Explorer and select *Run As -> Android Application* from the resulting menu. If, at this point, more than one AVD emulator has been configured on the system, a window will appear providing the option to select which AVD environment the application will run in. If multiple AVDs are listed, select the Kindle Fire emulator created in the earlier chapter. In the event that only one AVD is available, Eclipse will automatically launch that virtual device. The AVD window typically appears immediately, but a delay may be encountered as the emulator starts up and loads the Android operating system. Once the operating system has loaded, the example application will run and appear within the emulator as shown in Figure 5-8:

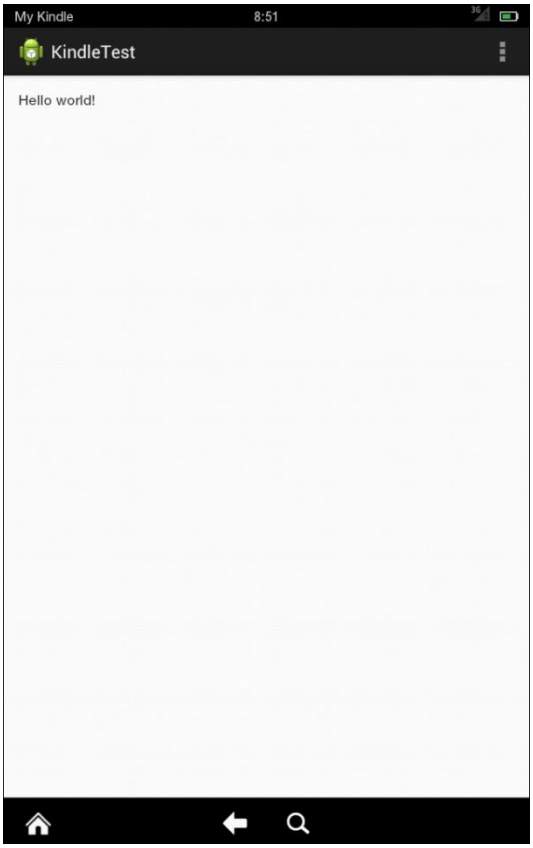

Figure 5-8

In the event that the activity does not automatically launch, check to see if the launch icon has appeared on the emulator screen. If it has, simply click on it to launch the application.

When the application has launched, an additional window may appear asking whether or not LogCat messages should be monitored. When an application is running, a range of diagnostic messages is output by the system. In addition, the application developer may have included diagnostic messages into the application code. It is generally recommended, therefore, that monitoring of these messages be enabled.

Assuming that the application loads into the emulator and runs as expected, we have safely verified that the Android development environment is correctly installed and configured.

5.7 Stopping a Running Application

When building and running an application for testing purposes, each time a new revision of the application is compiled and run, the previous instance of the application running on the device or emulator will be terminated automatically and replaced with the new version. It is also possible to manually stop a running application from within the Eclipse environment.

To stop a running application, begin by displaying the Eclipse DDMS perspective (DDMS stands for Dalvik Debug Monitor Server). The default configuration for Eclipse is to launch showing the Java perspective and for a button to be located in the top right hand corner of the main Eclipse screen (Figure 5-9) that allows the DDMS perspective to be displayed.

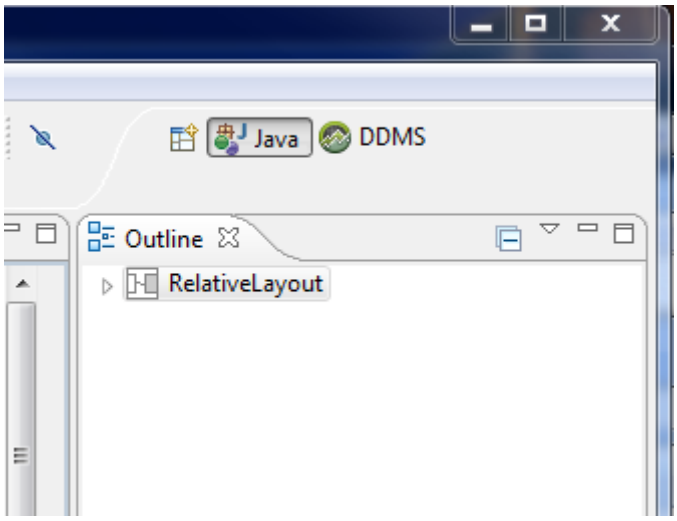

Figure 5-9

In the event that this button is not present, the perspective may be displayed using the *Window -> Open Perspective -> DDMS* menu option. Once selected, the DDMS perspective will appear as illustrated in (Figure 5-10).

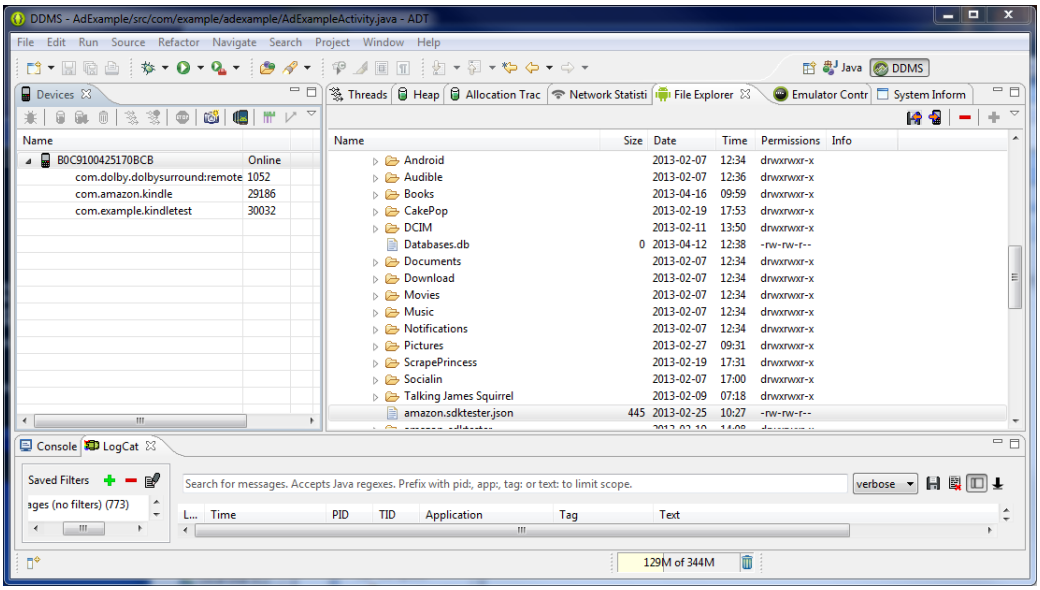

Figure 5-10

The left hand panel, entitled devices, lists any devices or emulators to which the development environment is attached. Under each device is a list of processes currently running on that device or emulator instance. Figure 5-11, for example, shows the Devices panel with the KindleTest application running:

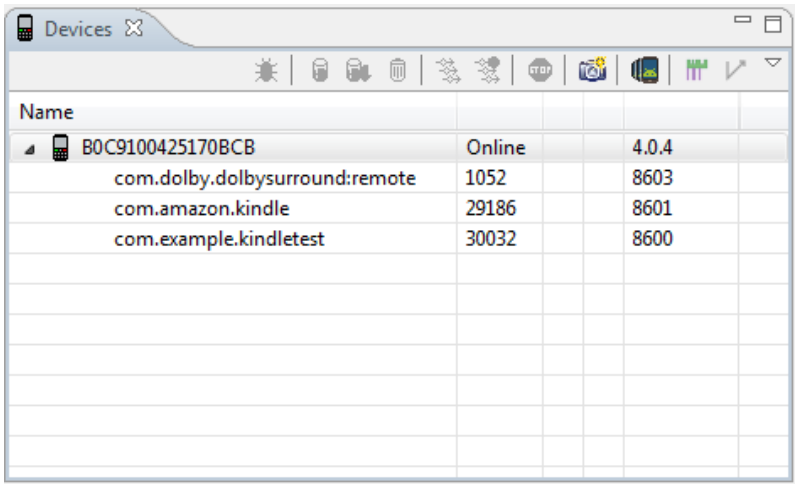

Figure 5-11

To terminate the KindleTest application, select the process from the list and click on the red Stop button located in the Device panel toolbar.

To return to the main Java development perspective, simply click on the Java button in the Eclipse toolbar.

5.8 Modifying the Example Application

The next step in this tutorial is to modify the user interface of our application so that it displays a larger text view object with a different message to the one provided for us by Eclipse.

The user interface design for our activity is stored in a file named *activity_kindle_test.xml* which, in turn, is located under *res -> layout* in the project workspace. Using the Package Explorer panel, locate this file as illustrated in Figure 5-12:

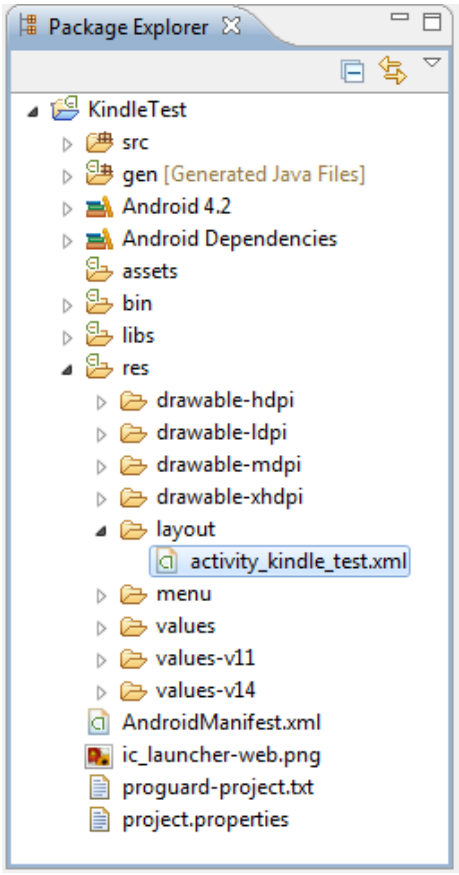

Figure 5-12

Once located, double click on the file to load it into the user interface builder tool which, in turn, will appear in the center panel of the Eclipse main window:

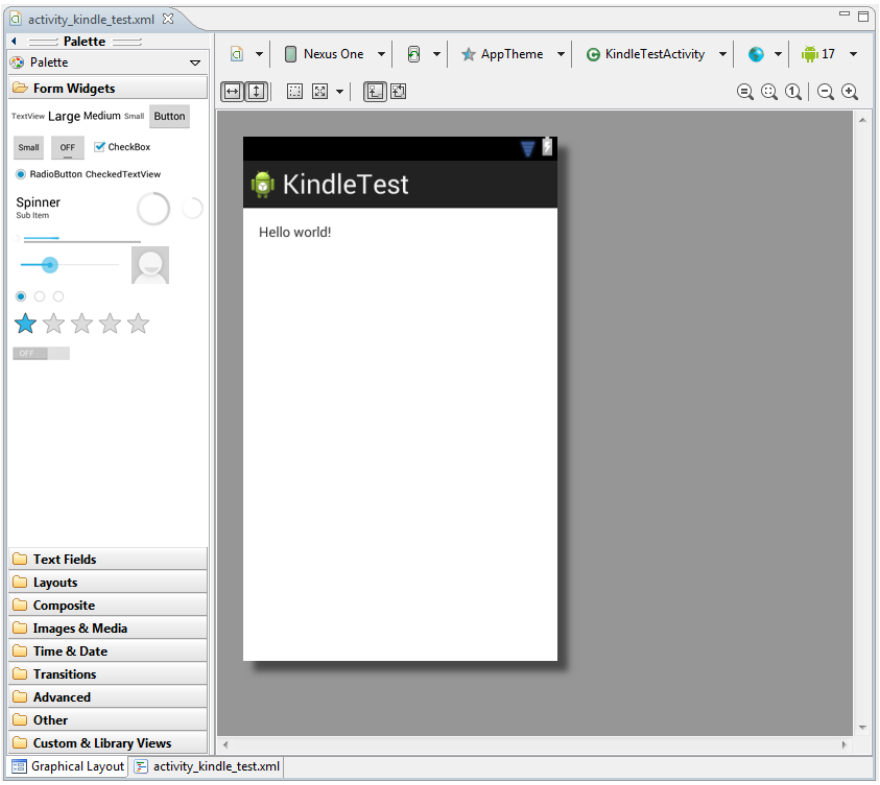

Figure 5-13

In the toolbar across the top of the layout editor panel is a menu that is currently set to *Nexus One*. Since we are designing a layout for the screen of a Kindle Fire device, change this menu to one of the Kindle Fire options. For example, click on the menu and select the *Amazon -> Kindle Fire HD 7" (800 x 1280: hdpi)* menu option. The visual representation of the device screen will subsequently change to reflect the dimensions of the Kindle Fire HD 7" device. To change the orientation between landscape and portrait simply use the drop down menu immediately to the right of the device selection menu showing the  icon.

In the center of the panel is the graphical representation of the user interface design, now within the context of the Kindle Fire HD 7" device. As can be seen, this includes the label that displays the Hello World message. Running down the left hand side of the panel is a palette containing different categories of user interface components that may be used to construct a user interface, such as buttons, labels and text fields. It should be noted, however, that not all user interface components are obviously visible to the user. One such category consists of *layouts*. Android supports a variety of different layouts that provide different levels of control over how visual user interface components are positioned and managed on the screen. Though it is difficult to tell from looking at the visual representation of the user interface, the current design has been created using a RelativeLayout. This can be confirmed by reviewing the information in the *Outline* panel that, by default, is located on the upper right hand side of the Eclipse main window and is shown in Figure 5-14:

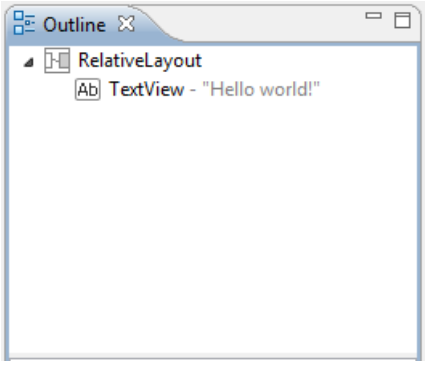

Figure 5-14

As we can see from the outline, the user interface consists of a RelativeLayout parent that has as a child the TextView object.

The first step in modifying the application is to delete the TextView component from the design. Begin by clicking on the TextView object within the user interface view so that it appears with a blue border around it. Once selected, press the Delete key on the keyboard.

From the Palette panel, select the *Form Widgets* category if it is not already selected. Click and drag the *Large* TextView object and drop it in the center of the user interface design (green marker lines will appear to indicate the center of the display):

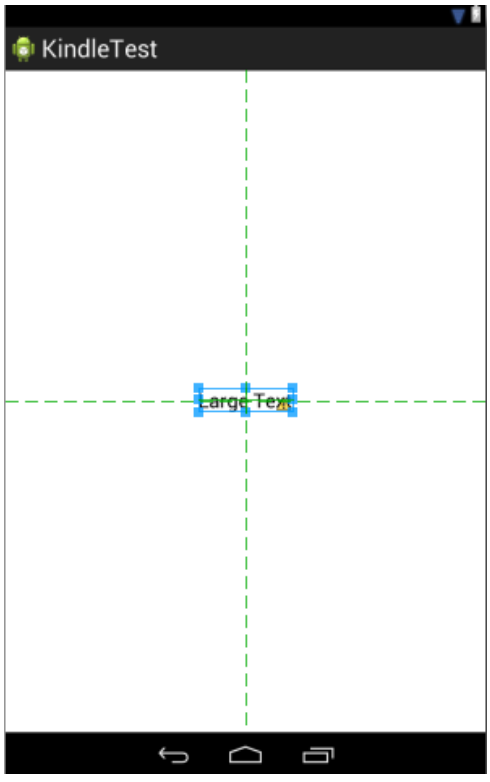

Figure 5-15

Right-click over the TextView and select *Edit Text…* from the menu. When developing applications, attributes and values such as text strings should be stored in the form of *resources* wherever possible. Doing so enables changes to the appearance of the application to be made by modifying resource files instead of changing the application source code. This can be especially valuable when translating a user interface to a different spoken language. If all of the text in a user interface is contained in a single resource file, for example, that file can be given to a translator who will then perform the translations and return the translated file for inclusion in the application. This enables multiple languages to be targeted without the necessity for any source code changes to be made. In this instance, we are going to create a new resource named *welcomestring* and assign the string "Welcome to the Kindle Fire" to it. In the *Resource Chooser* dialog that is currently displayed, click on the *New String…* button and in the resulting *Create New Android String* dialog enter "Welcome to the Kindle Fire" into the *String* field and *welcomestring* into the *New R.string* field before clicking on *OK.* On returning to the Resource Chooser, make sure *welcomestring* is selected before clicking on *OK.*

Once changes have been made to a file within Eclipse, it is important to remember to save the changes before moving on to other tasks. This can be achieved by selecting the *File -> Save* menu option, or by using the Ctrl-S keyboard shortcut. Eclipse also allows multiple files to be open for editing simultaneously. Each open file is represented by a tab along the top edge of the editing panel. To close an open file, simply click on the X next to the file name in the corresponding tab.

When there is insufficient space to display a tab for each open file, a >> symbol appears to the far right of the tab bar together with a number indicating the number of open files beyond those currently visible. Clicking on this will display a dropdown list of all open files. Figure 5-16, for example, shows tabs for three currently open files together with an indication that another seven files are open but not visible. The drop down menu shows the names of all ten open files:

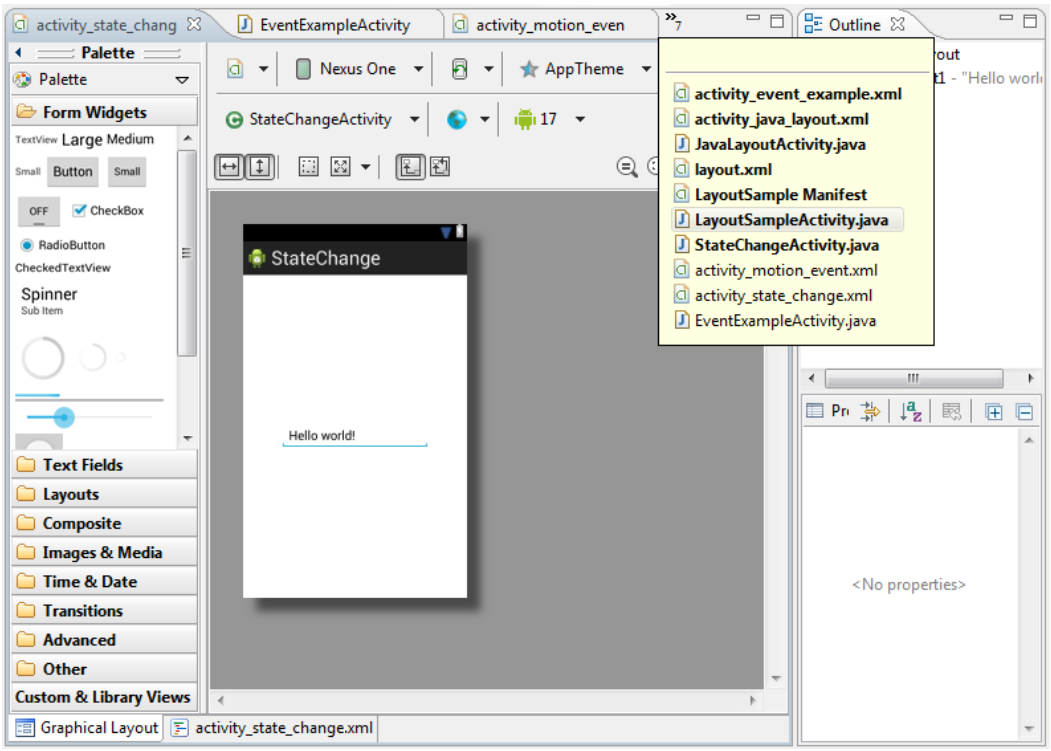

Figure 5-16

Double clicking on a tab will cause that editing session to expand to fill the entire Eclipse window. Double clicking a second time reverts the panel to its original size. Clicking and dragging a tab outside the Eclipse window results in the editing session for the corresponding file appearing in an entirely separate window on the desktop.

Editing panels may be displayed side by side in a tiled arrangement by clicking and dragging a tab to a location to the right or left of, or above or below an existing editing panel. As the dragging motion approaches different locations, guidelines will appear indicating whether the editing panels will be tiled vertically or horizontally.

The design is now complete so once again run the application in the emulator environment. This time the larger TextView will appear in the center of the display containing the new string resource value.

5.9 Reviewing the Layout and Resource Files

Before moving on to the next chapter, we are going to look at some of the internal aspects of user interface designs and resource handling. In the previous section, we made some changes to the user interface by modifying the *activity_kindle_test.xml* file using the Graphical Layout tool. In fact, all that the Graphical Layout was doing was providing a user-friendly way to edit the underlying XML content of the file. In practice, there is no reason why you cannot modify the XML directly in order to make user interface changes, and in some instances, this will actually be quicker than using the graphical layout tool. At the bottom of the Graphical Layout panel are two tabs labeled *Graphical Layout* and *activity_kindle_test.xml* respectively. To switch to the XML view simply select the *activity_kindle_test.xml* tab as shown in Figure 5-17:

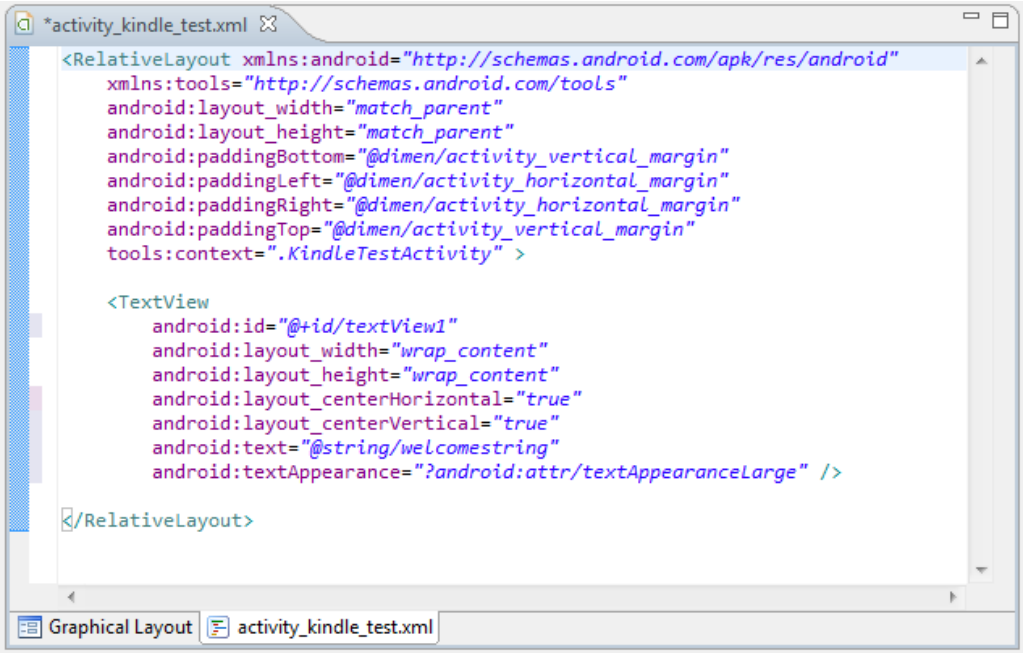

Figure 5-17

As can be seen from the structure of the XML file, the user interface consists of the RelativeLayout component, which in turn, is the parent of the TextView object. We can also see that the *text* property of the TextView is set to our *welcomestring* resource. Although varying in complexity and content, all user interface layouts are structured in this hierarchical, XML based way.

Finally, use the Package Explorer to locate the *res -> values -> strings.xml* file and double click on it to load it into the editor. Tabs at the bottom of the editor pane provide options to use the resource editor (*Resources*) or to view the raw XML content of the file (*strings.xml*). Currently the XML should read as follows:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<resources>
    <string name="app_name">KindleTest</string>
    <string name="hello_world">Hello world!</string>
    <string name="menu_settings">Settings</string>
    <string name="welcomestring">Welcome to the Kindle Fire</string>
</resources>
```

As a demonstration of resources in action, change the string value currently assigned to the *welcomestring* resource then run the application again. Note that the application has picked up the new resource value for the welcome string.

5.10 Summary

Whilst not excessively complex, a number of steps are involved in setting up an Android development environment for the Kindle Fire. Having performed those steps, it is worth working through a simple example to make sure the environment is correctly installed and configured. In this chapter, we have created an application and then run it within a Kindle Fire AVD emulation environment. The Eclipse Graphical Layout tool

was then used to modify the user interface of the application. In so doing, we explored the importance of using resources wherever possible, particularly in the case of string values, and briefly touched on the topic of layouts. Finally, we looked at the underlying XML that is used to store the user interface designs of Android applications.

Now that we have looked at running applications within an AVD emulator environment, the next chapter will cover *testing Android applications on a physical Kindle Fire device*.

Chapter 6

6. Testing Android Applications on a Physical Kindle Fire Device with ADB

Whilst much can be achieved by testing applications using an Android Virtual Device (AVD) there is no substitute for performing real world application testing on a physical Kindle Fire device.

Communication with both AVD instances and connected Android devices such as the Kindle Fire is handled by the *Android Debug Bridge (ADB).* In this chapter we will work through the steps to configure the adb environment to enable application testing on a Kindle Fire device on Mac OS X, Windows and Linux based systems.

6.1 An Overview of the Android Debug Bridge (ADB)

The primary purpose of the ADB is to facilitate interaction between the development system and both AVD emulators and physical Android devices for the purposes of running and debugging applications.

The ADB consists of a client, a server process running in the background on the development system and a daemon background process running in either AVDs or physical Android devices such as the Kindle Fire.

The ADB client can take a variety of forms. For example, a client is provided in the form of a command-line tool named *adb* located in the Android SDK *platform-tools* sub-directory. Similarly, the Eclipse ADT Plugin also has a built-in client.

A variety of tasks may be performed using the *adb* command-line tool. For example, a listing of currently active virtual or physical devices may be obtained using the *devices* command-line argument. The following command output indicates the presence of an AVD on the system but no physical devices:

```
$ adb devices
List of devices attached
emulator-5554   device
```

6.2 Enabling ADB on the Kindle Fire Device

Before ADB can connect to a Kindle Fire device, that device must first be configured to allow the connection. On the first generation Kindle Fire device this is enabled by default. On all other Kindle Fire models, go to the device settings screen, select *Security* and set *Enable ADB* to *On*.