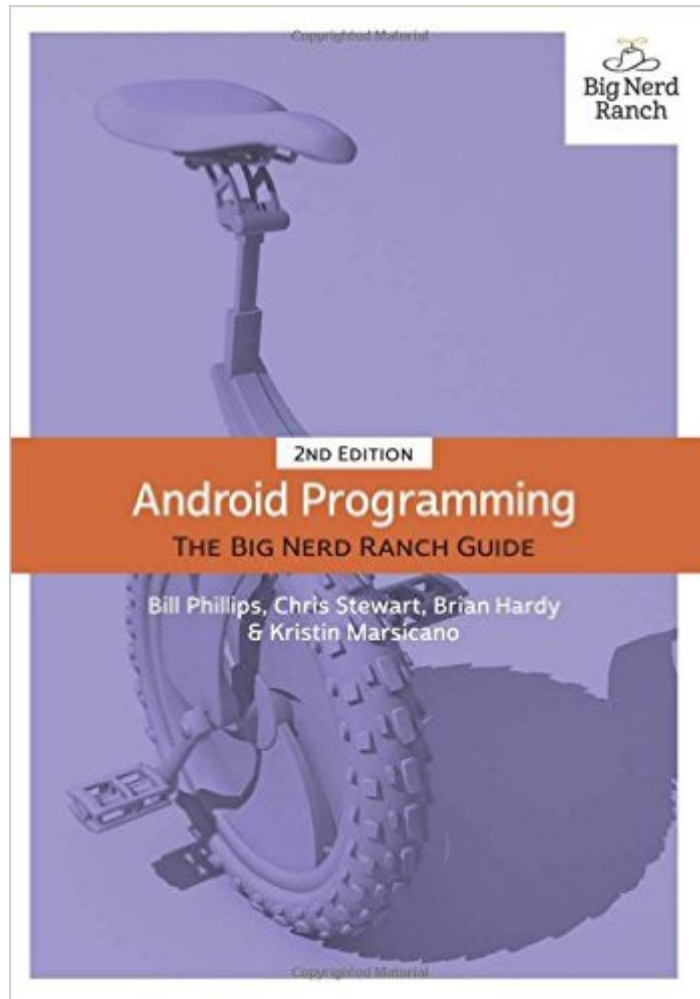# Android Programming: The Big Nerd Ranch Guide (2nd Edition)

Synopsis

Android Programming: The Big Nerd Ranch GuideÂ is an introductory Android book for programmers with Java experience.   Based on Big Nerd Ranch's popular Android Bootcamp course, this guide will lead you through the wilderness using hands-on example apps combined with clear explanations of key concepts and APIs. This book focuses on practical techniques for developing apps compatible with Android 4.1 (Jelly Bean) and up, including coverage of Lollipop and material design.   Write and run code every step of the way, creating apps that integrate with other Android apps, download and display pictures from the web, play sounds, and more. Each chapter and app has been designed and tested to provide the knowledge and experience you need to get started in Android development.   Big Nerd Ranch specializes in developing and designing innovative applications for clients around the world. Our experts teach others through our books, bootcamps, and onsite training. Whether it's Android, iOS, Ruby and Ruby on Rails, Cocoa, Mac OS X, JavaScript, HTML5 or UX/UI, we've got you covered.   The Android team is constantly improving and updating Android Studio and other tools. As a result, some of the instructions we provide in the book are no longer correct. You can find an addendum addressing breaking changes at: https://github.com/bignerdranch/AndroidCourseResources/raw/master/2ndEdition/Errata/2eAddendum.pdf. Â

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Customer Reviews

Disclaimer: I got a free copy of the ebook in exchange for an honest review. I have no other connections to the authors or the publisher.Background: A software engineer for over 12 years, I've worked in mobile development both as a team leader in a big company as well as by myself for personal projects or contractor jobs. I'm not the target for this book, but I can review it more thoroughly than a newbie, I hope.This book is not the typical recap of all the nooks and crannies of a technology (in this case, Android) but a guide elaborated from the experience of imparting a five day course at the Big Nerd Ranch and, believe me, it shows. I found it eminently didactical, in the best meaning of the word. Assuming only a working understanding of Java, it takes your hand and guides you through several very different and somewhat original example applications, which cover a lot of the possibilities of the Android platform and solve a lot of the problems you're going to face in the future. One of the most interesting traits of the writing style is how practical and no nonsense it is. I found most of the explanations crystal clear but really concise, as the authors found the shortest way to talk about every concept without losing you in the way. They really did a great job there.I'm going to rant a bit on the best points about the book and some places where I think it can be improved or where it may not be appropiate for you, as a reader, but the bottomline is I would recommend it to any coder wanting to learn Android in a minute, with just some extra advice about what they should try to learn after finishing it. It's an 8/10 easily, and for some people even more than that.---Pros:-The writing style.

This was not my favorite Android programming book, although it should have been. I had already done some programming in Android using Eclipse, and felt I needed a book that covered the basics - meat and potatoes. Years ago, I used the Big Nerd Ranch Cocoa programming text, and was very satisfied with how they explained everything. I therefore, decided to use this book for Android basics. It was to say the least a bit disappointing. The Big Nerd Ranch may be experts on iOS, but with Android, although theyâ ™re quite knowledgable, felt they did not explain it as well as they could have. This is probably due to Androidâ ™s greater complexity vs iOS programming. Android is NOT user friendly, unlike Xcode.The book is well organized, and lays out basic Android concepts well. Each chapter is either a new project to learn concepts , or a continuation of a project that adds new ones. It reminds me very much of a auto mechanics manualâ |follow all these steps and you too can fix your car - no mechanic needed. The projects range from basic to somewhat complex and are used to illustrate new topics.The problems erupt when things go awry. And with Android unlike iOS, they often do and can go horribly wrong. The Android Studio platform, while good and certainly better than Eclipse, is nowhere near as complete and user friendly as Xcode. The big issue

is tracking down errors and interpreting error messages so that you can quickly and efficiently debug your project. It takes only a small typo to create frustrating problems. And Android Studio will not alert you in an obvious manner, even when the error is minor, such as capital vs lower case letters on objects and variables.

I'm writing this review as someone who is a beginner with both Java and Android, which I believe many who will pick up this book will be. The book does warn you, however that you should have a sufficient level of Java familiarity in order to begin.My initial impressions of the book were good. It was what I was looking for; a step-by-step manual for building your first Android App. The first project was a simple geography quiz app named GeoQuiz. The lines of code and programming concepts were explained as I went along. Diagrams were present in order to explain the structure of the program. If there were further resources available, the book would provide a link to those resources. There were even bonus challenges at the end of one of the chapters.However, things start to unravel by the time we reach the second project. It starts off with inconsistency issues such as the naming conventions used for the files. As a beginner, if you tell me one way to do things, then switch to another way without explanation, then that's going to confuse some people. The bonus challenges by this point also become less present, so there's less chance to put into practice what you've learned.Also, I feel that by the second project, the authors begin to explain things much less so than before. It would be good if this was a gradual progression, but the learning curve seems to have gone from easy-medium to WTF. I feel like this book is the manual Big Nerd Ranch would use in their Android bootcamps, but minus the thorough explanations. Descriptions of new concepts are crammed into 1-2 sentences.

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