Mobile Applications

9. Introduction to cross-platform apps development

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1. Introduction

- As we have learned, there are different ways for developing mobile apps:
- **1.** Native development involves creating apps specifically for a given platform (Android or iOS) using platform-specific programming languages and tools
- 2. Hybrid development combines web technologies (HTML, CSS, JavaScript) with a *WebView* native container to create apps that work across multiple platforms
- **3.** Cross-platform development uses frameworks that allow developers to write code once and deploy it on multiple platforms
 - Unlike hybrid apps, cross-platform apps are compiled into native code
- 4. Progressive Web Apps (PWAs) are websites that behave like apps
 - They run in a browser but can be installed on a device and used offline
- 5. Low-Code/No-Code Platforms that allow non-developers to create apps using drag-and-drop interfaces and pre-built templates

1. Introduction

App type	Pros	Cons	
Native	 + High performance and responsiveness + Best user experience and design consistency 	 Requires separate codebases for each platform (more development time and cost) 	i
Hybrid	 + Easy for developers familiar with web development + Single codebase for multiple platforms 	 Slower performance compared to native apps Limited access to advanced device features 	
Cross- platform	+ Saves development time and cost with a single codebase+ Good performance for most apps	 Performance may not match fully native apps Limited access to certain platform-specific features (depending on the framework) 	React Native
PWAs	 + No app store submission required + Can work on any device with a browser + Cost-effective and fast to develop 	 Limited access to device hardware and native features Can't match the performance of native apps 	
Low-Code/ No-Code	 + Speeds up development for simple apps + Requires little to no programming knowledge 	- Limited flexibility and scalability for complex apps	outsystems
		basics of React Native and Flutter	

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2. React

- React is an open source front-end JavaScript library for building user interfaces (UIs) based on components created by Meta (formerly Facebook)
 - It is typically used to build Single-Page Application (SPA)
 - SPAs are web applications that interacts with the user by dynamically rewriting the current web page with new data from the web server
 - Some popular SPAs are the web versions of Instagram, Facebook, Netflix, or Airbnb



React

The library for web and native user interfaces

https://react.dev/

2. React

• The key features of React are the following:

- Component-based
 - React apps are built using reusable components (like Lego blocks)
 - Each component manages its own state and logic
- JSX (JavaScript XML)
 - JSX allows us to write HTML elements in JavaScript and place them in the DOM (Document Object Model)
 - It is not mandatory, but recommended for easier development
- Virtual DOM (lightweight, in-memory representation of the real DOM)
 - React uses a Virtual DOM to optimize updates, making rendering faster
 - Instead of updating the real DOM directly, React compares changes in memory first
- Rich ecosystem
 - Works well with libraries and frameworks like <u>Redux</u> (state management), <u>React Router</u> (navigation), or <u>Next.js</u> (server-side rendering)

2. React

- There are different ways to create React apps:
- 1. Using a sandbox
 - A sandbox refers is an isolated, browser-based environment where we can write, run, and test React code without setting up a local project
 - It is a convenient way to quickly prototype without setting anything up locally
 - A popular sandbox is <u>CodeSandbox</u>
- 2. Setting up a local project
 - Using a build tool (convenient for basic projects)
 - The classical tool is called <u>Create React App</u>, but it is deprecated nowadays
 - Modern options are: <u>Vite</u>, <u>Parcel</u>, or <u>Rsbuild</u>
 - Using a framework (convenient for complex projects)
 - Provide enhanced features (e.g., SEO, routing, optimizations, and others)
 - For example: <u>Next.js</u>, <u>Remix</u>, <u>Gatsby</u>, or <u>Expo</u>

2. React - Sandbox

• There are basic sandboxes examples in the React doc using JSX, e.g.:

```
function MyButton() {
function ({ name }) {
                                                                                              React components are JavaScript
  return <h1>Hello, {name}</h1>;
                                                  return (
                                                                                                functions that return markup
                                                    <button>
                                                                                               (Greeting and MyButton in
                                                      I'm a button
                                                    </button>
let App = function App() {
                                                                                                       these examples)
  return <Greeting name="world" />
                                                  );
                                                                                              Iocalhost:8080/sandbox.html
                                                                                                              × +
                                                                                                                                let App = function MyApp() {
  🐻 localhost:8080/sandbox.html 🗙 🕂
                                    return (
                                                                                                    🛈 localhost:8080/sandbox.html 🛣
                                                                                                                                 (2) ÷
                                i 🛃 👔 🗄
       Iocalhost:8080/sandbox.html
                          ☆ Ď
                                                    <div>
                                                                                           Welcome to my app
Hello, world
                                                       <h1>Welcome to my app</h1>
                                                       <MyButton />
                                                                                            I'm a button
                                                    </div>
                                                  );
```

https://react.dev/learn

2. React - Local setup

- To set up a local React project, the requirements are:
- 1. Node.js
 - Node.js is an open source, cross-platform JavaScript runtime environment that enables the execution of JavaScript code outside a web browser
 - Node.js comes with NPM, its default package manager



> node --version
v22.15.0
> npm --version
10.6.0

After install Node.js, we can execute node and npm as command-line tools

- 2. Code editor (not mandatory, but highly recommended)
 - One of the most popular IDEs for React is Visual Studio Code
 - Other alternatives are: WebStorm, Sublime Text, or Atom



2. React - Local setup

• For instance, we can use Vite to set up a local React project:



https://react.dev/learn/build-a-react-app-from-scratch

2. React - Frameworks

- React frameworks support all the features required to deploy and scale an app in production
 - For example, Next.js:

installing them globally or locally



https://nextjs.org/

Create Next App

× +

2. React - TypeScript

- JavaScript (JS) is a high-level, often just-in-time compiled programming language
 - JavaScript was first released on Netscape 2 (a web browser) in 1996
 - It is most well-known as the scripting language for web pages, being one of the core technologies of the Web, alongside HTML and CSS
 - It has dynamic typing, i.e., type of a variable is known at runtime. Type checking occurs also at runtime
- **TypeScript** (TS) is an open source programming language developed by Microsoft, first released in 2012
 - TypeScript is often referred to as a superset or extension of JavaScript
 - TypeScript extends JavaScript by adding static typing, i.e., the type of a variable is known at compile-time. This feature help developers build large-scale, robust applications more effectively
 - Unlike JavaScript, TypeScript can't be executed directly in a browser it must be transpiled into JavaScript first



2. React - TypeScript

• The following table summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of using JavaScript and TypeScript in React development:

	JavaScript	TypeScript
Pros	 Faster development time: JavaScript is a dynamic and flexible language that allows developers to build applications quickly Easier to learn: Shallow learning curve 	 Code quality: TypeScript adds static typing to JavaScript, which helps catch bugs at compile-time Developer experience: Features such as auto- completion and error checking
Cons	 No static typing: JavaScript is a dynamically typed, which can lead to bugs at runtime Code become complex: Without the benefit of static typing, it can be challenging to maintain code quality and readability as applications grow 	 Steep learning curve: TypeScript is more difficult to learn than JavaScript Longer development time: TypeScript's additional syntax and static typing can slow down development time, especially for small projects

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3. React Native

- **React Native** is an open source cross-platform app framework for building mobile apps (Android and iOS)
 - Internally it uses the React library to manage the components. For that reason, we can use JavaScript or TypeScript to develop React Native apps
 - Like React, React Native is maintained by Meta (formerly Facebook) and a community of individual developers and companies



https://reactnative.dev/

3. React Native - Expo

- The recommended way to set up a local React Native project is using a Framework (i.e., a toolbox with all the necessary features to build production ready apps) like Expo
- Expo is a framework and platform for building and deploying universal React Native apps
- Expo Go is an open source mobile app for testing React Native apps on any Android or iOS device
 - It is available on both the Android Play Store and iOS App Store
 - <u>Android Play Store</u> (Android Lollipop and greater)
 - iOS App Store (iOS 13 and greater)



https://expo.dev/

https://expo.dev/client

3. React Native - Hello world

• We can create a basic React Native app with Expo using npx as follows:

> npx create-expo-app hello-world
√ Downloaded and extracted project files. √ Installed JavaScript dependencies.
✓ Your project is ready!
To run your project, navigate to the directory and run one of the following npm commands.
- cd hello-world - npm run android - npm run ios # you need to use macOS to build the iOS project - use the Expo app if you need to do iOS development without a Mac - npm run web

3. React Native - Hello world

> npm run android

> hello-world@1.0.0 android > expo start --android

Starting project at C:\Users\boni\Documents\dev\react-native-examples\hello-world
Starting Metro Bundler
> Opening exp://10.118.107.205:8081 on Pixel_4_API_30



Metro waiting on exp://10.118.107.205:8081
 Scan the QR code above with Expo Go (Android) or the Camera app (iOS)

> Using Expo Go
> Press s | switch to development build

> Press a | open Android > Press w | open web

> Press j open debugger
> Press r reload app
> Press m toggle menu
> shift+m more tools
> Press o open project code in your editor

> Press ? | show all commands

Logs for your project will appear below. Press Ctrl+C to exit. Android Bundled 834ms index.js (644 modules)

To run our app locally, we need a running AVD (e.g., executed with Android Studio)



3. React Native - Hello world

```
import { StatusBar } from 'expo-status-bar';
import { StyleSheet, Text, View } from 'react-native';
export default function App() {
 return (
    <View style={styles.container}>
      <Text>Open up App.js to start working on your app!</Text>
      <StatusBar style="auto" />
    </View>
  );
const styles = StyleSheet.create({
  container: {
   flex: 1,
    backgroundColor: '#fff',
    alignItems: 'center',
    justifyContent: 'center',
 },
});
```



3. React Native - Views

- A **view** is the basic building block of UI both in Android and iOS
 - A view is a rectangular portion of the screen which can be used to display text, images, etc.
- With React Native, we invoke these views with JavaScript using React components
- At runtime, React Native creates the corresponding Android and iOS views for those components



https://reactnative.dev/docs/intro-react-native-components

3. React Native - Core Components

 React Native comes with a set of essential, ready-to-use native components to building ours app. These components are called **React** Native's Core Components

REACT NATIVE UI COMPONENT	ANDROID VIEW	IOS VIEW	WEB ANALOG	DESCRIPTION
<view></view>	<viewgroup></viewgroup>	<uiview></uiview>	A non-scrolling <div></div>	A container that supports layout with flexbox, style, some touch handling, and accessibility controls
<text></text>	<textview></textview>	<uitextview></uitextview>		Displays, styles, and nests strings of text and even handles touch events
<image/>	<imageview></imageview>	<uiimageview></uiimageview>		Displays different types of images
<scrollview><uiscrollview><div>A generic scrolling contained contain multiple component</div></uiscrollview></scrollview>		A generic scrolling container that can contain multiple components and views		
<textinput></textinput>	<edittext></edittext>	<uitextfield></uitextfield>	<input type="text"/>	Allows the user to enter text

https://reactnative.dev/docs/intro-react-native-components

3. React Native - Core Components

```
import React from 'react';
import { StyleSheet, View, Text, Image, TextInput } from 'react-native';
 const App = () => {
  return (
  <View style={styles.container}>
       <Text>Some text</Text>
       <Image source={require('./assets/react.png')} style={{width: 200, height: 200}} />
       <TextInput
         style={{
           width: 200,
       height: 40,
           borderColor: 'gray',
           borderWidth: 1,
         }
         defaultValue="Type in me"
       />
     </View>
   );
};
export default App;
const styles = StyleSheet.create({
     container :{
        justifyContent: 'center', //Centered horizontally
        alignItems: 'center', //Centered vertically
       flex:1
¦        });
```



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4. Flutter

- Flutter is an open source cross-platform framework created by Google used to develop applications for mobile (Android, iOS), web, and desktop from a single codebase
- Flutter applications are written in **Dart** language
 - Dart programming language developed by Google since 2011
 - Dart aims to help developers build UIs effectively
 - Dart is open source, object-oriented, and statically typed





4. Flutter - Setup

- To install Flutter and Dart in our machine, we use the following tutorial:
 - <u>https://docs.flutter.dev/get-started/install</u>
- Once it is installed, we can execute the command-line tools flutter and dart:

```
> flutter --version
Flutter 3.29.3 • channel stable • https://github.com/flutter/flutter.git
Framework • revision ea121f8859 (2 weeks ago) • 2025-04-11 19:10:07 +0000
Engine • revision cf56914b32
Tools • Dart 3.7.2 • DevTools 2.42.3
> dart --version
Dart SDK version: 3.7.2 (stable) (Tue Mar 11 04:27:50 2025 -0700) on "windows_x64"
```

• We can use the following command to verify our installation:

> flutter doctor -v

- The key features of Dart are the following:
 - Compiled language
 - Can be compiled to native machine code (for mobile/desktop apps) or JavaScript (for web apps)
 - Uses Just-In-Time (JIT) compilation during development for hot reload
 - Uses Ahead-Of-Time (AOT) compilation for production for optimized performance
 - Object-oriented and supports for functional programming
 - Classes, inheritance, interfaces, mixins
 - Supports lambdas (anonymous functions), higher-order functions, and collections (like map, filter, reduce)
 - Static typing (types are checked at compile time)
 - Null safety (to prevent null reference exceptions)
 - Asynchronous programming with async/await
 - Built-in support for futures and streams for handling async operations

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4. Flutter - Dart

• Hello world:

void main() {
 print('Hello, Dart World!');
}

> dart hello_world.dart
Hello, Dart World!

• Variables and data types:

```
void main() {
 // Variables (type inference with 'var')
 var name = "Alice"; // String
  int age = 25; // Explicit type
  double height = 5.9;
  bool isStudent = true;
  // Dynamic type (can change at runtime)
  dynamic dynamicVar = "Hello";
  dynamicVar = 42; // Now an int
  // Constants (compile-time)
  const PI = 3.14;
 final currentTime = DateTime.now(); // Runtime constant
  print("$name is $age years old"); // String interpolation
```

> dart variables_data_types.dart
Alice is 25 years old

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4. Flutter - Dart

• Control flow and loops:

```
void main() {
 int score = 85;
  // If-else
  if (score >= 90) {
    print("A");
 } else if (score >= 80) {
    print("B"); // Output: B
  } else {
    print("C");
  }
  // For loop
  for (var i = 0; i < 3; i++) {
    print(i); // 0, 1, 2
  }
  // While loop
  int count = 0;
  while (count < 2) {</pre>
    print("Count: $count"); // Count: 0, Count: 1
    count++;
  }
  // Switch-case
  String grade = "B";
  switch (grade) {
    case "A":
      print("Excellent!");
      break;
    case "B":
      print("Good!"); // Output: Good!
      break;
    default:
      print("Unknown");
```



• Functions:

```
// Basic function
void greet(String name) {
  print("Hello, $name!");
}
// Optional positional parameters
void sayHello(String name, [String? title]) {
  print("Hello, ${title ?? ''} $name");
// Named parameters (with defaults)
void describe({String name = "User", int age = 0}) {
  print("$name is $age years old");
// Main function
void main() {
  greet("Alice"); // Hello, Alice!
  describe(name: "Bob", age: 30); // Bob is 30 years old.
  sayHello("Alice"); // Hello, Alice
  sayHello("Alice", "Dr."); // Hello, Dr. Alice
  // Arrow function (short syntax)
  int add(int a, int b) => a + b;
  print(add(2, 3)); // 5
```

> dart functions.dart Hello, Alice! Bob is 30 years old. Hello, Alice Hello, Dr. Alice 5 Fort me on CitHub

• Collections (list, sets, maps):

```
void main() {
    // List (ordered, mutable)
    List<String> fruits = ["Apple", "Banana"];
    fruits.add("Cherry");
    print(fruits[1]); // Banana
    // Set (unique items)
    Set<int> numbers = {1, 2, 2, 3}; // {1, 2, 3}
    print(numbers.contains(2)); // true
    // Map (key-value pairs)
    Map<String, int> ages = {
        "Alice": 25,
        "Bob": 30,
    };
    print(ages["Bob"]); // 30
```

> dart collections.dart
Banana
true
30

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• Classes and objects:

```
// Class with constructor
class Person {
  String? name;
  int age;
  // Constructor (short syntax)
  Person(this.name, this.age);
  // Named constructor (multiple constructor with
  // descriptive name for different initialization scenarios)
  Person.guest() : name = "Guest", age = 0;
  // Method
  void introduce() {
    print("I'm $name, $age years old");
void main() {
  var alice = Person("Alice", 25);
  alice.introduce();
  var guest = Person.guest();
  guest.introduce();
```

> dart oop.dart
I'm Alice, 25 years old
I'm Guest, 0 years old

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4. Flutter - Dart

• Mixins:

```
// Mixins are a way of defining code that can
// be reused in multiple class hierarchies
mixin Swimming {
  void swim() => print("Swimming!");
}
mixin Flying {
  void fly() => print("Flying!");
}
// Apply mixins to a class
class Duck with Swimming, Flying {
  void quack() => print("Quack!");
}
void main() {
  var duck = Duck();
  duck.swim(); // Output: "Swimming!"
  duck.fly(); // Output: "Flying!"
  duck.quack(); // Output: "Quack!"
```

> dart mixins.dart
Swimming!
Flying!
Quack!

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4. Flutter - Dart

• Async programming:

```
// Future represents a value (String) that will be available later
// async: Marks a function as asynchronous
Future<String> fetchUser() async {
    // await: Pauses execution until the Future completes (without blocking other code)
    await Future.delayed(Duration(seconds: 2)); // Simulate network request
    return "Alice";
}
// Using async/await
void getUser() async {
    String user = await fetchUser(); // Waits for fetchUser() to complete
    print("User: $user"); // Prints after 2 seconds
}
void main() {
    getUser(); // Starts the async operation
    print("Loading..."); // Runs immediately (non-blocking)
}
```

> dart async.dart
Loading...
User: Alice

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• Error handling:

```
void main() {
  try {
    // The operator ~/ divides two numbers and
    // returns the result as an integer while the
    // operator / returns the result as a double
    var result = 100 ~/ 0;
    print(result);
  } catch (e) {
    print("Error: $e");
  } finally {
    print("Done");
  }
}
```

> dart error_handling.dart Error: IntegerDivisionByZeroException Done Fort ne on CitHub

4. Flutter - Widgets

- Flutter provides a rich set of core **widgets** to build responsive Uis, such as:
- Basic (UI structure and layout)
 - Text, Container, Row & Column, Stack, Padding, Center, SizedBox, Expanded & Flexible
- Interactive
 - Buttons, TextField, Checkbox, Radio, Switch, Slider, GestureDetector, InkWell, ...
- Platform-specific
 - Material (Android): MaterialApp, Scaffold, AppBar, FloatingActionButton, Card, ...
 - Cupertino (iOS): CupertinoApp, CupertinoNavigationBar, CupertinoButton, CupertinoPicker, ...
- Navigation and routing
 - Navigator, PageRoute, BottomNavigationBar, TabBar & TabBarView, ...
- State management
 - StatefulWidget, InheritedWidget, Provider, ValueNotifier, ChangeNotifier
- List and grids
 - ListView, GridView, ListTile, ListView.builder, ...

4. Flutter - Hello World

- To implement a "Hello World" app in Flutter, we can do the following:
- 1. Create a new Flutter project

> flutter create hello_world

- 2. We can check and edit our app (using Dart)
- 3. Run the app



The official doc recommend to use Visual Studio Code for coding (although other IDEs can be used)



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```
4. Flutter - Hello World
```

```
import 'package:flutter/material.dart';
```

```
void main() {
 runApp(const MyApp());
class MyApp extends StatelessWidget {
  const MyApp({super.key});
 // This widget is the root of your application.
  @override
 Widget build(BuildContext context) {
   return MaterialApp(
      title: 'Flutter Demo',
      theme: ThemeData(
        colorScheme: ColorScheme.fromSeed(seedColor: Colors.deepPurple),
        useMaterial3: true,
      ),
      home: const MyHomePage(title: 'Flutter Demo Home Page'),
    );
class MyHomePage extends StatefulWidget {
  const MyHomePage({super.key, required this.title});
 final String title;
  @override
  State<MyHomePage> createState() => MyHomePageState();
```

```
class MyHomePageState extends State<MyHomePage> {
  int counter = 0;
 void incrementCounter() {
   setState(() {
     counter++;
   });
 @override
 Widget build(BuildContext context) {
   return Scaffold(
      appBar: AppBar(
        backgroundColor: Theme.of(context).colorScheme.inversePrimary,
       title: Text(widget.title),
     body: Center(
       child: Column(
          mainAxisAlignment: MainAxisAlignment.center,
          children: <Widget>[
            const Text(
              'You have pushed the button this many times:',
           ),
           Text(
              '$ counter',
              style: Theme.of(context).textTheme.headlineMedium,
            ),
          ],
       ),
      floatingActionButton: FloatingActionButton(
        onPressed: incrementCounter,
       tooltip: 'Increment',
        child: const Icon(Icons.add),
     ),
   );
```

4. Flutter - Hello World

> flutter run

Connected devices:

Windows (desktop) • windows • windows-x64 • Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.19044.3086] Chrome (web) • chrome • web-javascript • Google Chrome 123.0.6312.86 • web-javascript • Microsoft Edge 123.0.2420.53 Edge (web) edge [1]: Windows (windows) [2]: Chrome (chrome) [3]: Edge (edge) Please choose one (or "g" to guit): 2 Launching lib\main.dart on Chrome in debug mode... Waiting for connection from debug service on Chrome... 13.5s This app is linked to the debug service: ws://127.0.0.1:63553/08vuDIwFoCo=/ws Debug service listening on ws://127.0.0.1:63553/Q8vuDIwFoCo=/ws

To hot restart changes while running, press "r" or "R". For a more detailed help message, press "h". To quit, press "q".

A Dart VM Service on Chrome is available at: http://127.0.0.1:63553/Q8vuDIwFoCo= The Flutter DevTools debugger and profiler on Chrome is available at: http://127.0.0.1:9100?uri=http://127.0.0.1:63553/Q8vuDIwFoCo=

> The same codebase can be deployed as a desktop or web app



4. Flutter - Hello World

> flutter run	
Launching lib\main.dart on Android SDK built for x86 in debug mode	12:43 0
Running Gradle task 'assembleDebug' 2,477ms	
✓ Built build\app\outputs\flutter-apk\app-debug.apk.	Flutter I
<pre>Installing build\app\outputs\flutter-apk\app-debug.apk 915ms</pre>	
Syncing files to device Android SDK built for x86 48ms	
Flutter run key commands.	
r Hot reload.	
R Hot restart.	
h List all available interactive commands.	
d Detach (terminate "flutter run" but leave application running).	
c Clear the screen	
q Quit (terminate the application on the device).	
A Dent VM Convise on Android CDK built for vQC is evailable at:	You h
A DARE VM SERVICE ON ANUROID SDK DUILE FOR X86 IS AVAILADIE AL:	
The Elutton DevTeels debuggen and profiler on Android SDK built for x86 is available at:	
The Flutter Devious debugger and profiler of Android SDK built for xoo is available at. $b \pm t = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{127}$ 0 0 1.0100 uni-b \pm t = \frac{1}{127} 0 0 1.64007 f = \frac{1}{2} \sqrt{2}	
D/eg[CodecCommon(6814): setVentexAnnayObject: set vap to 0 (0) 1 0	
D/EGL emulation(6814): eglMake(unnent: 0xe06/b780; ver 2.0 (tinfo 0xc76ef3c0)	
D/eglCodecCommon(6814): setVertexArrayObject: set van to 0 (0) 1 0	

If we have a running AVD, the same app will be deployed as an Android APK

12:43 • Flutter Demo Home Page	2325
You have pushed the button this many times: O	
•	

4. Flutter - Examples

• There are plenty of sample apps maintained by the Flutter team:

https://github.com/flutter/samples

For example, this app contains a comprehensive set of Material 3 components



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5. Takeaways

- React Native is an open source cross-platform framework for building mobile apps (Android, iOS) from a single codebase
 - React Native is based in React, and therefore, it allows to create interactive UIs based on JavaScript (or TypeScript) components
 - To ease the testing in real devices, we can use Expo Go to execute the app we are developing
- Flutter is an open source cross-platform framework created by Google that allows to develop applications for mobile (Android, iOS), web, and desktop from a single codebase
 - Flutter applications are written in Dart language
 - Dart is programming language developed by Google aimed to help developers build UIs effectively