Eclipse 4 Plug-in Development by Example: Beginner's Guide

By Dr Alex Blewitt

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This is a truly hands-on book for developing Eclipse plug-ins. A whole series of "Time for Action" sections gets you involved in practical examples that teach you everything from the very basics to more advanced activities.

Overview

- Create plug-ins to extend the Eclipse runtime covering Eclipse 3.x and the changes required for Eclipse 4.x
- Plug-ins from design to distribution — wide coverage of the entire process
- No prior OSGi or Eclipse plug-in development experience necessary

In Detail

As a highly extensible platform, Eclipse is used by everyone from independent software developers to NASA. Key to this is Eclipse's plug-in ecosystem, which allows applications to be developed in a modular architecture and extended through its use of plug-ins and features.

"Eclipse Plugin Development by Example: Beginner's Guide" takes the reader through the full journey of plug-in development, starting with an introduction to Eclipse plug-ins, continued through packaging and culminating in automated testing and deployment. The example code provides simple snippets which can be developed and extended to get you going quickly.

This book covers basics of plug-in development, creating user interfaces with both SWT and JFace, and interacting with the user and execution of long-running tasks in the background.

Example-based tasks such as creating and working with preferences and advanced tasks such as well as working with Eclipse's files and resources. A specific chapter on the differences between Eclipse 3.x and Eclipse 4.x presents a detailed view of the changes needed by applications and plug-ins upgrading to the new model. Finally, the book concludes on how to package plug-ins into update sites, and build and test them automatically.

What you will learn from this book

- How to create plug-ins for Eclipse 3.x and 4.x and automatically test plug-ins with JUnit
- How to display tree and table information in views
- What are the specific differences between the Eclipse 3.x model and the Eclipse 4.x model
- How and when to build user interfaces from SWT and JFace
- How to run tasks in the background and update the user interface asynchronously
- How to build plug-ins, features and update sites with Maven Tycho and automate user interface tests with SWTBot
- How to store and obtain preferences, and how to integrate with the Preferences panel
- How to work with the Eclipse resources model for creating and updating files and reporting errors to the user

Approach

A Beginner's Guide following the "by Example" approach. There will be 5-8 major examples that will be used in the book to develop advanced plugins with the Eclipse IDE.

Who this book is written for

This book is for Java developers who are familiar with Eclipse as a Java IDE and are interested in learning how to develop plug-ins for Eclipse. No prior knowledge of Eclipse plug-in development or OSGi is necessary, although you are expected to know how to create, run, and debug Java programs in Eclipse.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Dr. Alex Blewitt

Dr Alex Blewitt has been developing Java applications since Version 1.0 was released in 1996, and has been using the Eclipse platform since its first release as part of the IBM WebSphere Studio product suite. He even migrated some plugins from Visual Age for Java to WebSphere Studio/Eclipse as part of his PhD on Automated Verification of Design Patterns. He got involved in the open source community as a tester when Eclipse 2.1 was being released for Mac OS X, and then subsequently as an editor for EclipseZone, including being a finalist for Eclipse Ambassador in 2007.

More recently, Alex has been writing for InfoQ, covering generic Java and specifically, Eclipse and OSGi subjects. He keynoted the 2011 OSGi Community Event on the past, present, and future of OSGi. The coverage of both new releases of the Eclipse platform and its projects, as well as video interviews with some of the Eclipse project leads can be found via the InfoQ home page, for which he was nominated and won the Eclipse Top Contributor 2012 award.

Alex currently works for an investment bank in London. He also has a number of apps on the Apple AppStore through Bandlem Limited. When he's not working on technology, and if the weather is nice, he likes to go flying from the nearby Cranfield airport.

Alex writes regularly at his blog, **http://alblue.bandlem.com**, as well as tweets regularly from Twitter and App.Net as **@alblue**.

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