EPA Native and Hybrid Mobile App Look and Feel Document

Contents

Background

This Native and Hybrid Mobile App Look and Feel document provides recommendations for developers building EPA-branded mobile applications. EPA encourages the development of applications (apps) using a generic, cross-platform tool such as jQuery mobile; this unified creation and distribution tool ensures the consistency and availability of apps across platforms. If developers have considered tools such as jQuery mobile and decide to build native apps, these guidelines are meant to provide the framework for a consistent EPA identity. Considering that developers may choose to use a variety of frameworks and platforms for building apps, this guide is neither exhaustive, nor a list of requirements. The primary purpose is to provide developers with useful standards and tools for branding mobile apps.

Need

Mobile apps developed for EPA require a more cohesive look and feel to ensure consistency with the EPA identity. This guide was developed in response to requests from developers for specific elements that will help to achieve this consistent identity.

Benefits

Consistent branding across all mobile apps developed by the EPA will help to ensure that users know when a given app is part of the EPA suite. If all contractors and developers use the same branding elements, then the EPA apps will comprise a cohesive package with a variety of utility, regardless of the app's creator or platform.

Creative Vision

The creative vision for EPA mobile applications is a guiding strategy for developing all mobile apps, regardless of the type or function. A creative vision will allow developers to make the many decisions regarding app creation that may not be specifically detailed in this document.

The creative vision is derived in part from the following points of USA.gov's Mobile Apps Policy:

- The content of the mobile app should be specific to a mobile device. The mobile app should use government data or provide a government service.
- The mobile app should be relevant to a national audience. It should not be limited to a specific geographic location or event.
- The mobile app should be easy to use and easy to understand.
- The mobile app must be free.
- The mobile app must be up-to-date and accurate.

Building Blocks

Launch Icons

An app's launch icon provides users with a first impression of the app.

Splash Screen

The splash screen is an optional first screen that users see after launching an app. The following examples illustrate our recommendation for how it should look.

Developers may choose to use the provided splash screen PSD files. If they choose to code their own splash screen, developers can use the provided PSD logo files.

Background gradient:
Light blue – #336699 Dark blue – #012b42

Background and Header

It is important to minimize application chrome (i.e., additional headers, footers, and menus that are separate from the content of the interface), to give developers maximum space and flexibility in creating the apps. The header bar is commonly used for the title of a page or the name of the app.

Header gradient:
Light blue – #336699 Dark blue – #012b42

Background gradient:
Light gray: #DDDDDD
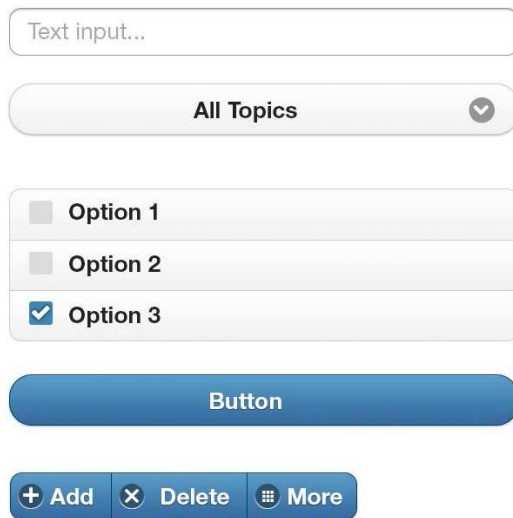White: #FFFFFF

User Interface Elements

The "ease of use" objective is a primary goal for user interface (UI) elements. Consistency across EPA Mobile apps is ideal, but the variety of development environments and platforms make it difficult to recommend a single set of UI elements. Therefore, we recommend using the default widgets and interface elements available in the various native environments.

Both Apple and Android have extensive UI documentation. The Apple Interface Builder contains ready-to-use widgets and UI elements. Google has documentation for the UI design of the latest version of Android. Eclipse supports Android development through the Android Development Tools (ADT), although it does not include a "WYSIWYG" editor for UI development.

Form Elements

The jQuery Mobile 1.3.0 library contains UI elements that can be used for Web apps or for apps developed with HTML5 and packaged for distribution. Because the existing form elements are complete and stylistically similar to EPA's current website styles, they can be leveraged to avoid the need to build new ones from scratch.

Below are examples of some jQuery Mobile 1.3.0 form elements.

Fonts

Available fonts vary greatly across different platforms, but we recommend using the fonts listed below for EPA mobile apps. These fonts are similar enough to be substituted for each other, depending on what is available for specific platforms. Web app developers have more freedom in the apps they are able to use via @font-face or web fonts, but they should also stick with the choices below in the interests of consistency.

Helvetica Neue, Helvetica Available on: iOS
Arial Available on: Blackberry, iOS
Roboto, Droid Sans Available on: Android
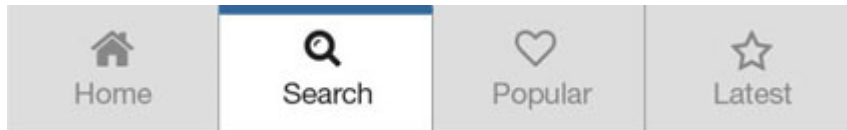Microsoft Tahoma Available on: Windows Mobile

Colors

The interface colors should follow the standards detailed in the Web Style Guide.

Menu

Native app developers should use the default UI elements available for their platforms.
The menu items will vary across different apps. Below is an example menu style that should be
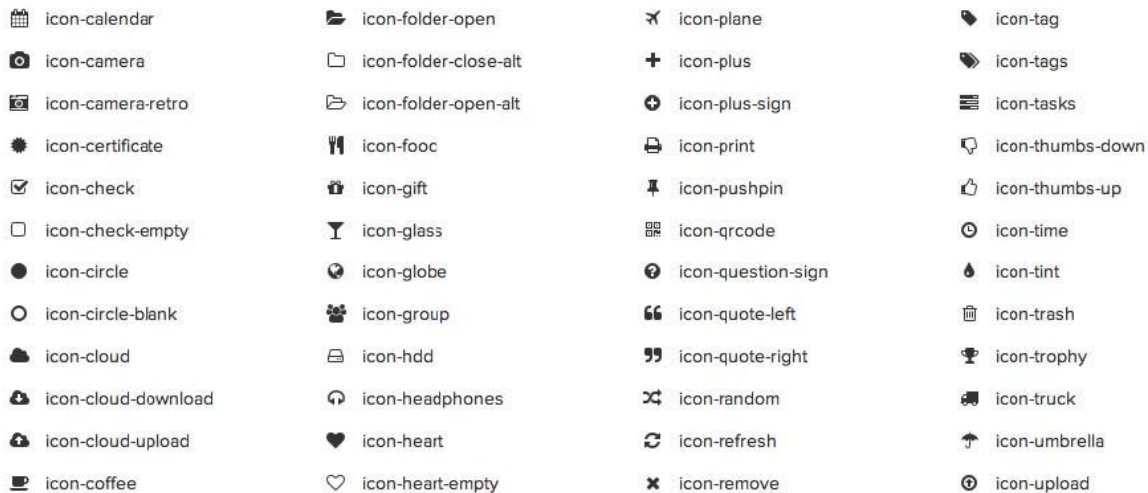
used instead of default jQuery Mobile style for persistent navbars and fixed footer toolbars.

gray background: #DDD
gray icons, text, and dividers: #888
active icons and text: #222
active background: #FFF
active border-top: 7px solid #336699

Utility Icons

If utility icons are needed that are not available through the native application development environment or through jQuery mobile, we recommend using a library of flat, one-color symbols.

Some resources for this style of icons are [Glyphicons](#), [Hlvticons](#), and the open-source [Font Awesome](#) library (for Web app developers). These icon libraries are generally offered as vector files, font files, or as .png files in various sizes, making them usable for both standard and retina displays.

Resources

These following resources can be downloaded and used when developing mobile apps for EPA.

- Splash screen and sample menu – [EPA Mobile Apps PSD/CSS files](#)
- UI Resources – [Apple Interface Builder](#) (XCode) | [Android UI Guidelines](#)
- Form Elements – Native environment defaults | [jQuery Mobile](#)
- Fonts – [Roboto](#), [Droid Sans](#)
- Colors - [Color Guidelines](#)
- Utility icons – [Glyphicons](#) | [Hlvticons](#) | [Font Awesome](#)