



Learn Apple HomeKit on iOS

A Home Automation Guide for
Developers, Designers, and
Homeowners

Jesse Feiler

Apress®

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Jesse Feiler
Plattsburgh, New York
USA

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About the Author



Jesse Feiler Jesse Feiler helps people and organizations get to know and use new technologies. Projects have included building the page caching module for the Prodigy Web Browser for Mac in the very early days of the Web, location-based apps for iPhone and iOS, as well as books and classes on new technologies. Recent books include *iPad For Seniors for Dummies* (9th ed.) and *Learn Apple HomeKit for iOS*.

Current projects involve using apps and FileMaker databases for identifying and managing risk in nonprofit organizations as well as helping small communities

build location-based apps to promote tourism, downtown economic development, and the wise use of natural resources.

He is founder and president of Friends of Saranac River Trail (saranacrivertail.org) whose flagship events are the annual Talks, Treks & Tasks which include treks to the Plattsburgh Water Pollution Control Plant, treks focusing on edible plants along the trail as well as invasive species, and talks on current issues in trail and path design and development.

Born in Washington, DC, Jesse currently lives in Plattsburgh, NY, where this book was written.

For more information on development as well as updates to this book, visit Jesse's web site at northcountryconsulting.com. For information on his apps and app consulting, visit champlainarts.com.



About the Technical Reviewer

Aaron Crabtree A passionate developer and experience enthusiast, Aaron Crabtree has been involved in mobile development since the dawn of the mobile device. He has written and provided technical editing for a variety of books on the topic, as well as taken the lead on some very cool, cutting-edge projects over the years. His latest endeavor, building apps for augmented reality devices, has flung him back where he wants to be: as an early adopter in an environment that changes day by day as new innovation hits the market. Hit him up on Twitter where he tweets about all things mobile and AR: @aaron_crabtree.



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Introduction

HomeKit is something new from Apple. Something really new. It's not a new device like an iPhone, an iPad, or even the Mac itself. And it's not a new app like Pages, Keynote, or even Xcode, the heavy-duty app that is used by Apple and third-party developers to build apps as well as the operating systems themselves (macOS, iOS, tvOS, and now watchOS). HomeKit is basically a data management framework that manages home automation. It joins Apple's HealthKit, which is another data management framework that focuses on health.

There's a pattern here. Apple is bringing its massive resources to a targeted database and framework in the expectation that third-party developers of software and hardware will gather around the framework. It's no coincidence that HomeKit actually runs on the Apple iOS devices: as the HomeKit ecosystem grows, more and more people use it and appreciate the ease of use that comes with most of what Apple touches. The HomeKit framework is designed to support accessories such as lamps, doors and their locks, thermostats, sensors, and the other automated components of a home for the 21st century. And the fact that this flexible and powerful framework just happens to run on the Apple devices is a great incentive for Apple to have built it and to build it in such a way that it is robust enough to handle yet-undreamed-of devices from developers and vendors around the world.

The architecture of a framework such as HomeKit (and HealthKit) is such that there's a relatively modest investment of skill and time needed to extend and customize it for all of the third-party accessories that integrate with it. This is one way of whittling away at the enormous backlog of code that needs to be written to bring the benefits of modern technology to as many people as possible.

This book provides you with two introductions to HomeKit. In the first chapters, you'll see how to set up HomeKit in your home and how to manage your home's *accessories*, *rooms*, and *scenes* (those everyday terms are used in HomeKit's vocabulary with their everyday meanings).

In the second part of the book, you'll see how the point-and-tap commands from the first part of the book can be reimplemented in code so that you can build your own HomeKit apps that combine the components of HomeKit in new and different ways.

As we move into this new type of technology (the kits of frameworks and data management), you can use HomeKit as your entrée to gain experience with a new way of working with technology. If you're not particularly interested in how the software development world is changing with these kits, feel welcome: you can use HomeKit to manage your home's rooms, scenes, and accessories.

Managing your home in this way can make your life easier, but it also can pay off. Deciding when lights and appliances are used helps you create a comfortable home that does not waste electricity and may even manage the use of electricity in such a way as to take advantage of off-peak lower pricing.

It's time to get started.