CARLA WHITE

Idea to iPhone®

The essential guide to creating your first app for the iPhone and iPad

WILEY

Idea to iPhone

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Let your developer create the distribution build for you

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Prepare your message

Close shop

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Announce your launch date

3…2…1…Launch!

Double-check the important stuff

Roll out your new site

Blog your big news

Get the word out on social media

Ready, set, email!

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The Law of the Vital Few

Let Your Inspiration Guide You

Idea to iPhone

The essential guide to creating your first app for the iPhone and iPad

Carla White

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About the Author

Carla White is a designer, writer and business-MacGyver whose apps have been featured by Apple, USA Today, NPR, Oprah, Successful Living Magazine and many other major publications across the globe. As both a speaker and a consultant, she helped software giants and small businesses bring breakthrough ideas to life. She's a Human Factors specialist with an MBA and MIS and has launched business practices and products all over the world for companies as big as Microsoft and as small as her own two-person startups.

Born to a farmer and a photographer, Carla inherited her dad's work ethics and resourcefulness and her mom's artistic eye. She was also born with an insatiable curiosity, which earned her an alphabet soup of degrees, but more importantly provoked her to travel solo coast-to-coast in a beat up Chevy (twice). She lived in California to learn how to surf (and failed) and Colorado to learn how to snowboard (and loved it). She got her first “big girl” job working for the Pentagon and was also a translator for the 1996 Olympics. She's since ventured to all corners of the globe, lived in Europe for over ten years, and speaks multiple languages. Her life recently

has come full circle and she now resides back in her home state of South Dakota with her husband, son, and dog. When Carla isn't having adventures with her family, she enjoys yoga, running, and throwing a mean dinner party.

Today Carla runs her app agency Happy Tapper, creator of the apps Gratitude Journal, Vision Board, and Little Buddha, where she offers consulting as well as design services. Carla is on a mission to show everyone how to find happiness through gratitude and giving back as well as motivating women to succeed.

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Dedication

To Colin and Nico—I love you beyond words.

To my parents, John and Jeanette—I owe everything to you.

Gratitude

“I honor the place in you where the entire universe resides. I honor the place in you of love, of light, of truth and of peace. And when you are in that place in you and I am in that place in me, there is only one of us.”

--posted on my Facebook wall

First, I want to thank my loving and above-and-beyond supportive husband, Colin. You put your life on hold while I worked early mornings and weekends. You believed in me and I'm forever grateful. I love you dearly.

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be, and am forever grateful to each and every one of you for getting in touch. I look forward to seeing it grow.

Last, but certainly not least, I'm forever grateful to my dear mom for always letting me leap, no matter how much it scares you. Our friendship is my cornerstone.

Introduction

I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious.

—Albert Einstein

In early 2008, when I got my first iPod touch, I knew instantly that I had to create an app for that darling little device. I wasn't a programmer, had never used a Mac, and had a measly $500 budget. In fact, I didn't even have an iPhone, just my iPod touch. But none of that was going to stop me. A few months later my app stormed into the top position on the App Store and was hailed in major news publications around the globe.

If you had peered in my window during those few months, you would have seen me huddled at my computer, absorbed in design tools, messaging developers, and fumbling with Xcode—all before going to my day job. I was determined to figure out how to create a hit app on a shoestring budget, without learning how to code.

It wasn't easy, but I managed to teach myself how to do all the designs, outsource the development, and grab people's attention—all on a budget that paid for itself by noon on the first day of sales. My apps have since graced the front page of *USA Today*, been featured on *Good Morning America*, and been praised in the media from Fargo to France as proof that anyone can create a killer app.

Now I'd like to share everything I learned with you, so you can do it too.

Who Should Read This Book

I'm writing this book for people whom I like to call “ideapreneurs”—folks who come up with innovative and breakthrough ideas but don't know how to design or build them. You might be a business owner, project manager, marketing genius, or the one-person shop doing all the work yourself. Or maybe you're a developer or a designer who already created an app, but it's not getting the attention and downloads you hoped for.

Perhaps you attempted to study the technical manuals with computer languages you don't understand, and discovered that even the most basic books assume some knowledge of programming. Then you scoured the Internet for information but still don't know what to believe or where to begin. You just want a simple and affordable way to shift your idea into a top-selling app that appears on iPhones and iPads all over the world.

You might not have created anything artistic since grade school or know the first thing about software development, but you're willing to roll up your sleeves and make the most of your greatest talents. Step by step, I walk you through the technical jargon, breeze you past the time wasters, and help you jump through Apple's hoops, making the process as simple as possible. I show you ways to build on the skills you already have by engaging in activities that excite you.

My experience alone isn't enough of a solution to all the different challenges, so I interviewed some of the most successful app developers out there. These incredible folks have apps that blasted the App Store charts, including *tap tap tap, Tapbots, Montessorium, Weetaps,* and creators of *Lose It* and *Wood Camera,* and *Letterpress*. These people have mentored me over the years and are now sharing their insights, mishaps, and advice with you.

If I Can Do This, So Can You

When I started, I owned a flip phone, had no programming skills, and worked at a job so remote the building was in the middle of cornfields. For the longest time, blogs or books for app developers simply didn't exist. And because I was financing everything myself, I had to hold down my day job, too.

That was quite a few years ago, back when George W. Bush was president and Beijing hosted the Olympics. I create apps full time now, but I'm still not a programmer. I shy away from venture capital and haven't added a single person to my payroll. I outsource the development, and everything else I do myself.

Over the years I have witnessed firsthand how this industry and the tools to create apps are evolving at an insane pace. App designs continue to get better and the competition fiercer. Still, my overall formula for creating apps remains the same. But the formula alone won't produce successful apps. It also takes drive and courage. While some are dreaming of success, the real winners wake up and work hard to achieve it.

A Glance into the App Development Process

To keep things simple, this book is organized to reflect the main phases of an app project. It aims to shorten development time and keep costs low, with the goal to start earning within a few months.

To do that, there is one important rule to remember: **Go for the quick wins.**

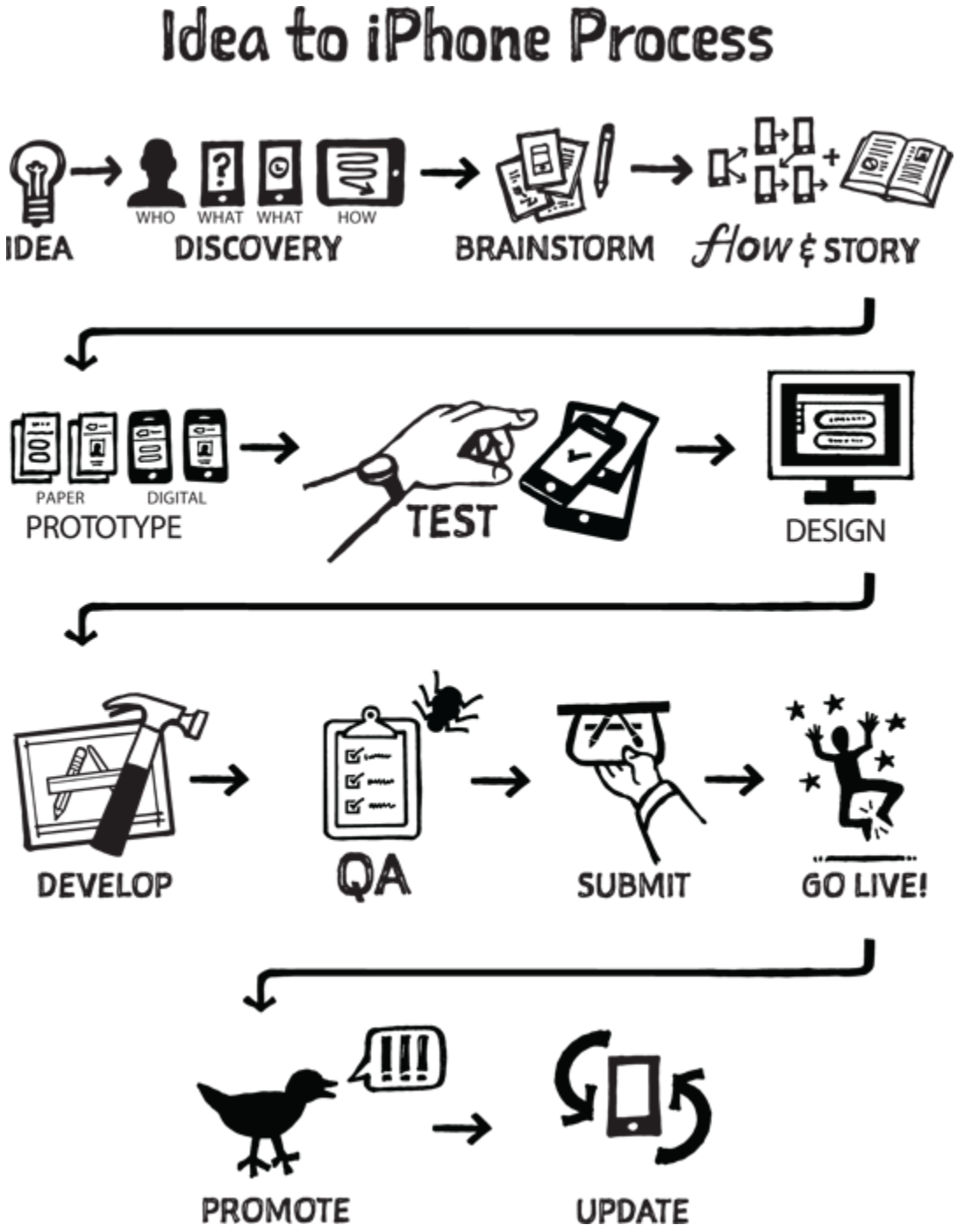
Break the development process into short phases so you can get things done and move on to the next thing. This approach keeps momentum going and keeps your project from fizzling to a slow death.

The process can be broken out into six overlapping and repeating phases. Some phases, such as development and promotion, never truly end. In fact, promotion actually kicks off before anything else, and is part of every phase of the project. The illustration on the following pages provides a brief overview of the process that will be discussed in more detail throughout the book.

- **Conceptualize—Idea, Discover & Brainstorm.** Decide exactly what your app does and who it's for.

Narrow down your target market and mold your app idea into something they want.

- **Design—Flow & Story, Prototype, Test, Final Designs.** Establish a clear blueprint of the features, screen layouts, and navigation. Test your designs and build on the ideas of others, then polish it all off with a design tool.
- **Develop—Code & QA Test.** Create an app that is efficient, bug free, and well tested.
- **Distribute—Submit & Go Live.** Send the app to Apple with images and a description for approval. Execute a launch strategy that gets Apple's and the media's attention.
- **Promote.** Market the heck out of it while you're building your app as well as after it's on iTunes.
- **Maintain—Update & Expand.** Support your customers as well as your app by working on new releases. Expand to new markets and platforms.



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A Few Things You Won't Find in This Book

Not only is this book nontechnical, it also won't sell you a get-rich-quick scheme in which you quickly create an app and then live in the comforts of your private island, sipping cocktails out of a coconut shell. Creating *successful* apps takes hard work, and I'm not about to sugarcoat the process. But if you have the drive and passion, the rewards can be phenomenal.

Here are a few other things you won't find in this book:

- **A one-size-fits-all solution**—I've been creating apps since they first hit the market, and one thing I know is there isn't a process that fits all situations. It's just not that black and white. You will come across roadblocks that will force you to change course. Technology changes so quickly; what works today may not work tomorrow. I do think, however, that there are some guiding principles that don't change, and I will do my best to convey them in this book.
- **Facts and figures to wow you**—If you're holding this book, you don't need me to hear a jaw-dropping figure about what app developers are earning or how many apps are downloaded each day. Apps are selling like hotcakes, and there is no sign of that slowing down. If anything, the flood is just getting started. Some of the best apps are yet to come, and hopefully, from you.
- **Programming languages or jargon**—This book isn't another technical manual about iPhone and iPad development. I don't know any Objective-C or Cocoa Touch because I had to do things a little differently. I will share just enough technical details so you can hire