In the field of IT, one of the fastest growing specialties is mobile application development for Android. Usage of mobile devices to go online, buy products, find store locations, and more is increasing year over year, quickly catching up to online desktop and laptop use. One of the key ways businesses are tapping into the mobile market is by developing a mobile app for their business. This has also increased the demand for app designers significantly in recent years.
Skills & Knowledge Needed for App Design

From 2012 to 2013, Android jumped from controlling 69.1% of the market share of smartphone OS to 79.3%. Apple still continues to lose its market share to Android products. Designing for Apple’s iOS versus Android OS is a different process, requiring some different programming skills. However, most demand is currently for Android app development, so aspiring developers should be aware of which system their app development training classes prepare them for. For Android application development, professional app developers and designers should have the following skills:

- Programming Basics and Coding
- Java Programming
- Performance Tuning Tools for Java Apps
- Program Mobile Devices
- Identify Business Needs for Mobile Apps
- Create & Post an App to the Android Marketplace
App Design & Development Stages

After securing a job, developers will be expected to be able to put an app together, already familiar with how to develop each stage of the project. In general, these steps can be broken down into the following:

**TASK ASSESSMENT**

Before any coding can take place, designers will have to do background research. First, they need to make sure they understand project goals by gathering information about their company, their audience, and the desired function(s) of the app.

**COMPETITOR ANALYSIS**

After understanding what your own goals are, become familiar with what the competition has been doing. Find similar apps to what yours will be and read user reviews and expert opinions on them. Explore the app store to broaden your search from just the main competition’s products to other similar products. Try out different competitor apps to test the functionality and style for yourself.

**DESIGN & INTERFACE MECHANICS**

Familiarize yourself with popular design styles and concepts. Trending features may give you a good indication of what functions are going to be useful for your brand’s app. After this research, solidify which design you will use.

**STREAMLINE FUNCTIONS**

During the design process, you or your team may have added more features. If that’s so, now is the time to strip down all the unnecessary components of the app. This is essential to create an app that consumes less of a mobile device’s battery. Troubleshoot the primary functions for performance, and compare the current app with the original goals of the project. Also be sure to compare your app with the Android guidelines, which provides the standard features for Android apps to follow. Other platforms have their own guidelines to dictate the look of buttons, the placement of icons, etc.
App Design & Development Stages cont.

TEST THE PROTOTYPE
The main aspects you will be looking for during usability testing are: 1) easy to navigate, 2) available actions are clear to the user, and 3) consistent theme/design from page to page. Also be sure to assign specific tasks to yourself or a team member (e.g. make a purchase, schedule an appointment, etc.). Note down the ease of completing the task, how many steps it took, and the overall experience of completing the task. Also be sure to test the prototype on different devices with varying screen dimensions.

ADD DETAILS
After the core functions are running smoothly, you may want to add in small details to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the app. This may include inserting animations, sound, or other features. It is important to do this before beta testing to present as much of a finished product as possible.

BETA TEST
Beta testing will be the final test, during which third-party users will interact with your app and provide feedback on its performance and appeal. Google Play currently allows for simultaneous alpha and beta testing, letting developers try out different versions of an app on separate test groups before deciding which to use. Further development may be needed before the final rollout of the product if you receive consistent negative feedback.

MARKETPLACE RELEASE
After making sure that your app follows all of the platform’s guidelines, publish it on the Android Marketplace. Be sure to promote the release of your app through your main website and social media profiles.

GATHER REVIEWS
Even after the release of the app, follow press and blog reviews about the product. If bugs appear, you may want to revisit the app and release an update.
Trends in App Use & Development

Developers are constantly designing new ways for apps to be used so that consumers are more willing to download the app and engage with the brand. Here are some recent app trends that designers are taking advantage of:

• **Geo-targeted push notifications and advertising:** When users are passing near a store, the brand’s app will alert the user to deals or store promotions through a push notification.

• **Transactional apps:** If users make frequent online purchases, they can save time by using an app to place their order instead. By already having the user’s information stored, buyers can get through the payment process quickly. For businesses, this means a reduced bounce rate and increased conversions because with a faster process, users are less likely to be distracted or hesitate on the transaction.

• **Light on battery:** One of the biggest complaints for apps is that they consume too much battery. A major goal for developers is often to reduce the battery load as much as possible so that users will be more likely to keep an app after they become familiar with it.

• **Integration with cloud and Dropbox:** One of the benefits of cloud computing is the ability to sync up multiple devices so users have the most up-to-date information no matter which device they’ve switched to. This is especially useful for calendars, media downloads, and setting preferences.

• **Sharing options for social media:** It’s becoming instinctive for people to share interesting information and great deals across social media. However, this behavior can be further encouraged when social media sharing buttons are noticeable on a page. Consumer-to-consumer advertising can increase conversions and deliver more traffic to a site, so smart companies are capitalizing on social media sharing.

Android App Development Training

Individuals with an interest in design and technology may find mobile app development to be a rewarding career. Mobile app development programs will enable graduates to learn the entire app development process, giving them practical experience that they can apply later in the field. The skills and experience gained from an Android app development program will translate well into the workplace and make candidates more competitive.
MTI College is a career college in Sacramento, CA. It provides students with professional training for in-demand careers for administrative assistant, paralegal, legal assistant, cosmetologist, network administrator, accounting technician, medical assistant, medical billing and coding specialist, and application developer. Programs also prepare students for industry-related certification. For more information about training for a career in Sacramento, contact an MTI College Admissions Counselor.