Nokia Device Lending Libraries

This article contains links to groups that maintain libraries of Nokia devices for loan to developers.

Introduction

One of the biggest challenges for developers is getting access to a range of test devices. While simulator testing is pretty good, and Nokia's platform promise means that generally devices in a platform version are compatible, there are always exceptions where a particular app does not work on a particular device.

Nokia provides Remote Device Access (RDA) for remote testing on a large number of device variants. However not *every* device is present, and even if they were, there is nothing like the rapid turnaround cycle of being able to test on an actual device.

This article contains links to local device libraries and remote device access services we know about, along with further contact details. Please add any addition details about groups and what devices they have in the sections below.

Group list

Warning: The number of device labs and their available devices is growing quickly - particularly those belonging to the OpenDeviceLab group. You are strongly advised to check the website links to see what devices are available and add labs you discover.

Group	Country	City	Contacts
Open Device Labs	Many	Many	Check website for details
Local Device Program	Finland	Helsinki	matti.nelimarkka at hiit.fi
Local Device Program	Finland	Tampere	cybette at gmail, @cybette
Open test lab	Netherlands	Amsterdam	info at 80beans.com
Clearleft Test Lab	UK	Brighton	http://clearleft.com/testlab/
Exeter-Web Device Lab	UK	Exeter	About Exeter-Web
AJ Computers	USA	Marietta, GA	mobiledevicelab at ajcomputers.com
Device Lab DC	USA	Washington DC,	Contact
Mobile testing lab	USA	Oakland, CA	Contact the lab
Mobile Portland	USA	Portland, OR	TBD
Nomad Device Lab	South Africa	Cape Town,	nomad at devicelab.co.za
modl	Sweden	Malmö	modl at 1r.nu
-	-	-	-

In addition, for a more complete list of labs and devices available check out AVOID THE TAMAGOTCHIS – A LIST OF OPEN DEVICE LABS.

Contributing your devices to a library

If you have a spare device you're not using any more, why not contribute to one of the local libraries above? Then other developers can benefit, and of course if you need it, you can always borrow it back. Use the contact details provided above to arrange contribution.

Setting up a local device library

If there isn't a local device library in your area, then you may want to set one up yourself. Below is a brief Q&A with an existing library owner to give you a starting point.

What is the most important thing to think about when setting up a new library?

Having a well thought out mechanism to get new devices. If you don't have devices on call or all the devices are too old, then people won't use your service

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How do you suggest getting devices then?

Obviously the best way is to have a contact within Nokia (or your OEM of choice). We've had a team of interested people so some have contributed their own devices, and we even grouped together and all pitched in for the odd device or two.

How do you manage the actual lending process?

Our aim is to keep the paperwork to a minimum. So we manage the lending through a google spreadsheet.

What about legal issues?

Lending is done on a trust basis, and we have yet to be let down. Again, our aim is to keep the paperwork to a minimum, so while we understand other groups might want some legal agreement with borrowers, we have chosen not to do so.

How do you find the time to manage all this?

At the moment the library use is manageable, so I have enough time. I certainly don't want hundreds of emails though, so if we were successful I'd have to look at sharing the load or having a more automated system.

This sounds interesting, I want to know more from the people that run other labs

There is an open initiative called LabUp! that you should check out. Many people have collected their ideas and experience there, you will find suggestions and ideas on how to run an open device lab in your area.

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