Windows Phone 7.8 Tutorial

The new SDK 7.8 for Windows Phone enables to use many new tiles on existing 7.1 phones that were introduced in Windows Phone 8.

Windows Phone 7.8









Windows Phone 7.8 brings 3 sizes to tiles to the start screen of the 7.x line of Windows Phones. Now, users can reorganize their start screen the same way as Windows Phone 8. But for developers, Windows Phone 7.8 is actually a minor update, the SDK 7.8 is only an update to the previous SDK with no *visible* API changes. Windows Phone 7.8 is actually code version 7.10.8858.

Creating a new Windows Phone 7.8 application



When you create a new application, there are only two targets, so you need to select 7.1 as target for your Windows Phone 7.8 app.

Setting up the project

Some manual editing is required to enable the new live tile features in a Windows Phone 7.1 project. You need to open *WMAppManifest.xml* using the xml editor, and add an *AppExtract* block right before the *App* element

See [1] for more details

New tile classes

There are three new classes in the SDK 7.8 for the tiles:

- FlipTileData
- IconicTileData
- CvcleTileData

But unfortunately, since there is no new target, these classes are not visible in Visual Studio. To create and configure your tiles, the only option is to use reflection.

Using the new tiles

click away using NuGet. The beauty of MangoPollo, is that you can write a single code that will work for all Windows Phone versions.

To configure the default tile with a wide background image, you can use the following code

```
var tileId = ShellTile.ActiveTiles.FirstOrDefault();
if (tileId != null)
{
  var tileData = new FlipTileData();
  tileData.Title = "My app";
  tileData.BackContent = "";
  tileData.BackgroundImage = new Uri("/Images/Icon173x173.png", UriKind.Relative);
  tileData.BackBackgroundImage = new Uri("/Images/Icon173x173_back.png",
  UriKind.Relative);
  tileData.WideBackContent = "";
  tileData.WideBackgroundImage = new Uri("/Images/Image346x173.png", UriKind.Relative);
  tileData.WideBackgroundImage = new Uri("/Images/Image346x173_back.png",
  UriKind.Relative);
  Debug.WriteLine("Activating live tile: " + Mangopollo.Utils.CanUseLiveTiles);
  tileId.Update(tileData);
}
```

The reflection underneath will configure the tile according to the phone version.

Tile sizes

I haven't found an exact document that specifies the optimal sizes for Windows Phone 7.8 but here are my guesses:

- 173x173 for the square ones
- 346x173 for the wide ones
- 82x82 for the small ones

Can see the follow article (MSDN)Windows Phone OS 7.1 Tiles &, which contains some information about this subject.

Limitations

- Unlike Windows Phone 8, Wide tiles are only possible programatically, there are no new options in the manifest and neither in the visual studio editor
- It is not possible to set a wide live tile as default tile (you need to start the app once to set a new default tile programatically)
- The only way to configure the default tile is to replace the default tile with a new one using ShellTile.Update
- Remote live tiles don't seem to work on actual devices (see below)

Remote live tiles

I spent a lot of time trying to setup remote live tiles in Windows Phone 7.8 and Windows Phone 8 projects and it is an obscure area, the limitations of Mango are still here Tips and tricks about updating live tiles in Mango .

- Remote live tiles (pull mode) work perfectly in the emulator
- On an actual device, remote (pull mode) tiles simply don't seem to work at all. My Lumia 800 refuses to set my tile in wide mode as soon as **any** of my URLs is a remote one.
- The only solution is to use the isostore to store images and update them using a background agent

Summary

With a bit of code, you can make use of the new live tiles features for both Windows Phone 7.8 and Windows Phone 8. Except the default live tile, it will all look the same from an end user perspective, and unless your app needs other new Windows Phone 8 features, you can write a single code for all devices.

References

- Now Available: Windows Phone SDK Update for 7.8 🗗
- Windows Phone 7.8 and Windows Phone 8 Live Tile light up for Windows Phone OS 7.1 apps

- $\,\blacksquare\,$ Adding Windows Phone 8 and 7.8 Tile functionality to Windows Phone OS 7.1 apps $\,\varpi\,$
- Mangopollo