Using and Managing Dialogs

Rather than creating new instances of a Dialog each time it's required, Android provides the OnCreateDialog and onPrepareDialog event handlers within the Activity class to persist and manage Dialog-box instances.

By overriding the onCreateDialog class, you can specify Dialogs that will be created on demand when showDialog is used to display a specifi c Dialog. As shown in this code snippet, the overridden method includes a switch statement that lets you determine which Dialog is required:

```
static final private int TIME_DIALOG = 1;
@Override
public Dialog onCreateDialog(int id) {
switch(id) {
case (TIME_DIALOG) :
AlertDialog.Builder timeDialog = new AlertDialog.Builder(this);
timeDialog.setTitle("The Current Time Is...");
timeDialog.setMessage("Now");
return timeDialog.create();
}
return null;
}
```

After the initial creation, each time a showDialog is called, it will trigger the onPrepareDialog handler.
By overriding this method, you can modify a Dialog immediately before it is displayed. This lets
you contextualize any of the display values, as shown in the following snippet, which assigns the current
time to the Dialog created above:

```
@Override
public void onPrepareDialog(int id, Dialog dialog) {
switch(id) {
case (TIME_DIALOG) :
SimpleDateFormat sdf = new SimpleDateFormat("HH:mm:ss");
Date currentTime;
currentTime = new Date(java.lang.System.currentTimeMillis());
String dateString = sdf.format(currentTime);
AlertDialog timeDialog = (AlertDialog)dialog;
timeDialog.setMessage(dateString);
break;
}
}
```

Once you've overridden these methods, you can display the Dialogs by calling showDialog, as shown below. Pass in the identifi er for the Dialog you wish to display, and Android will create (if necessary) and prepare the Dialog before displaying it:

```
showDialog(TIME_DIALOG);
```

As well as improving resource use, this technique lets your Activity handle the persistence of state information within Dialogs. Any selection or data input (such as item selection and text entry) will be persisted between displays of each Dialog instance.