Chapter 2

Building a Mobile HTML Entry Form

Creating a simple, mobile-friendly web page is very easy. By the end of this chapter, you will know not only how to build a mobile web page and form, but understand how to apply some simple CSS (including some CSS3) to give a web form a very similar feel and experience to what you would find in a native application.

The samples in this chapter and subsequent chapters work towards creating a simple to-do list web application optimized for Android. Building mobile web applications has a heavy focus on JavaScript in addition to HTML and CSS. So, in addition to understanding mobile web app development techniques, understanding how to structure JavaScript-heavy applications will be explored.

HTML for the Mobile Web

HTML for the mobile web is much the same as it is for the desktop—just with smaller screen sizes (in most cases at this stage). Additionally, there is an increased focus on optimizing for performance given the reduced bandwidth that a mobile device has access to when browsing via a mobile broadband connection.

The focus in this chapter is on the techniques and tools required to make the jump into mobile web app development, primarily from an application presentation perspective.

Mobile-Ready Web Pages

Building mobile-ready web pages is quite simple, and only requires the addition of some extra information to tell the mobile browser to recognize the page as “mobile ready.” Let’s start this chapter by having a look at a simple web page.

We will first have a look at a mobile browser without the appropriate tweaks applied. This will give you an understanding of why you need to optimize your web pages for mobile if you want people to be able to use them effectively. This is especially important...
if you are building applications that people may compare side by side with an Android application that has been constructed using a native user interface (UI).

Our test web page is a simple page that consists of nothing more than a heading and a paragraph of text (*lorem ipsum* paragraph condensed):

```html
<html>
<head>
  <title>Simple Mobile Web Page</title>
</head>
<body>
  <h1>Welcome</h1>
  <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet ...
</p>
</body>
</html>
```

Figure 2–1 shows how the preceding HTML appears in the Android browser.

Figure 2–1. *Our simple web page with no mobile readiness applied*

While the browser has successfully rendered the page, there are a few things that it hasn’t done well:

- The text on the page is quite small; this is because the browser has assumed that it has been built for a desktop screen resolution and has thus applied some scaling to ensure the page will fit properly.

- Because the browser believes the page is designed for desktop display, it is permitting zoom and xy-axis scroll operations on the page.