

Use of Languages in Android Applications

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University of Bern*



RELEVANCE

Android smartphone market share > 85%

Used for sensitive applications
(*e-banking, healthcare, etc.*)

Languages influence app development



MOTIVATION

LEVERAGING INFORMATION

Not much information is available about the use of languages

"Missing generalization" of languages in Android development

IMPROVING CODE QUALITY

Problems may arise due to the use of complex languages, or their improper integration

Support of practical use



ASSESSMENT TOOL

cloc

github.com/AIDania/cloc v 1.76 T=0.10 s (667.6 files/s, 57257.8 lines/s)

Language	files	blank	comment	code
Java	23	442	478	2262
XML	40	221	564	1736
Groovy	3	10	49	47
Markdown	1	24	0	42
YAML	1	5	7	14
ProGuard	1	2	15	0
SUM:	69	704	1113	4101

Structure

File structures used in projects





STRUCTURE

- android
- core
- desktop
- gradle
- .gitignore
- build.gradle
- CHANGELOG
- gradle.properties
- LICENSE
- local.properties
- README.md
- settings.gradle
- assets
- gradle
- libs
- res
- src
- AndroidManifest.xml
- build.gradle
- local.properties
- proguard-project.txt
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BUILD TOOLS

Features and differences





BUILD TASKS

Dependency
resolution

Cleansing

Compilation
and build

Dependencies: JUnit, Hamcrest



ANT



`ivy.xml`

Ivy dependencies specified in `ivy.xml`

`build.xml`

build script



MAVEN



`pom.xml` (main config)

Compiles project by using parameters

`pom.xml` (supplemental config)

Plugins



GRADLE



`build.gradle`

Custom DSL based on Groovy



LINES OF CODE

GRADLE

9

MAVEN

72

ANT

35



BUILD TOOLS OVERVIEW

Ant

Full control
over the build process.

Build scripts use **XML**.

Maven

Flexibility.

Strictly structured,
highly standardized.
Complicated.

Gradle

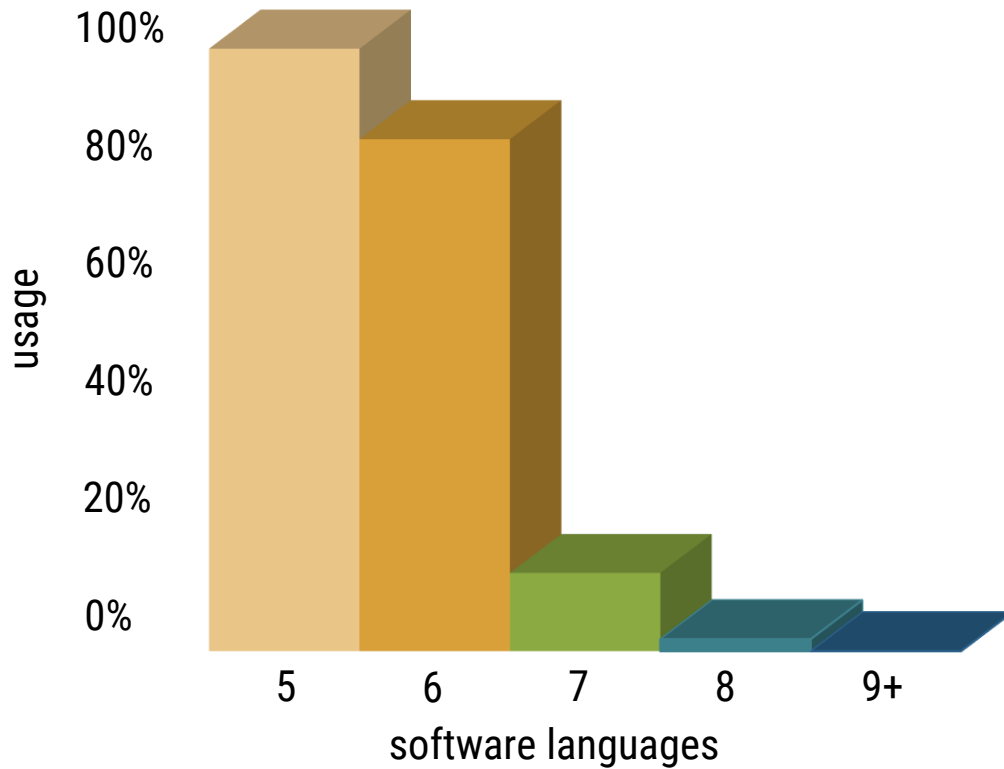
Provides all features.

More intuitive and shorter
build scripts.



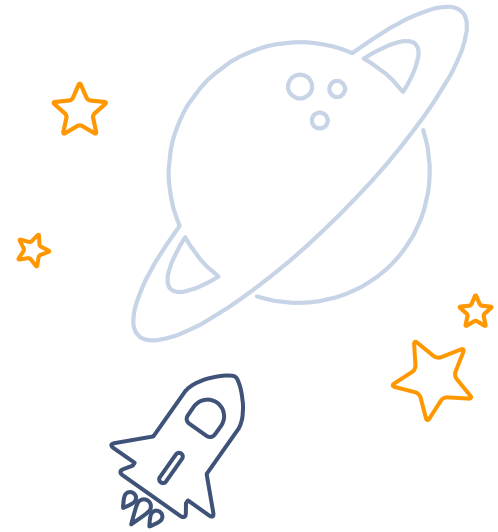


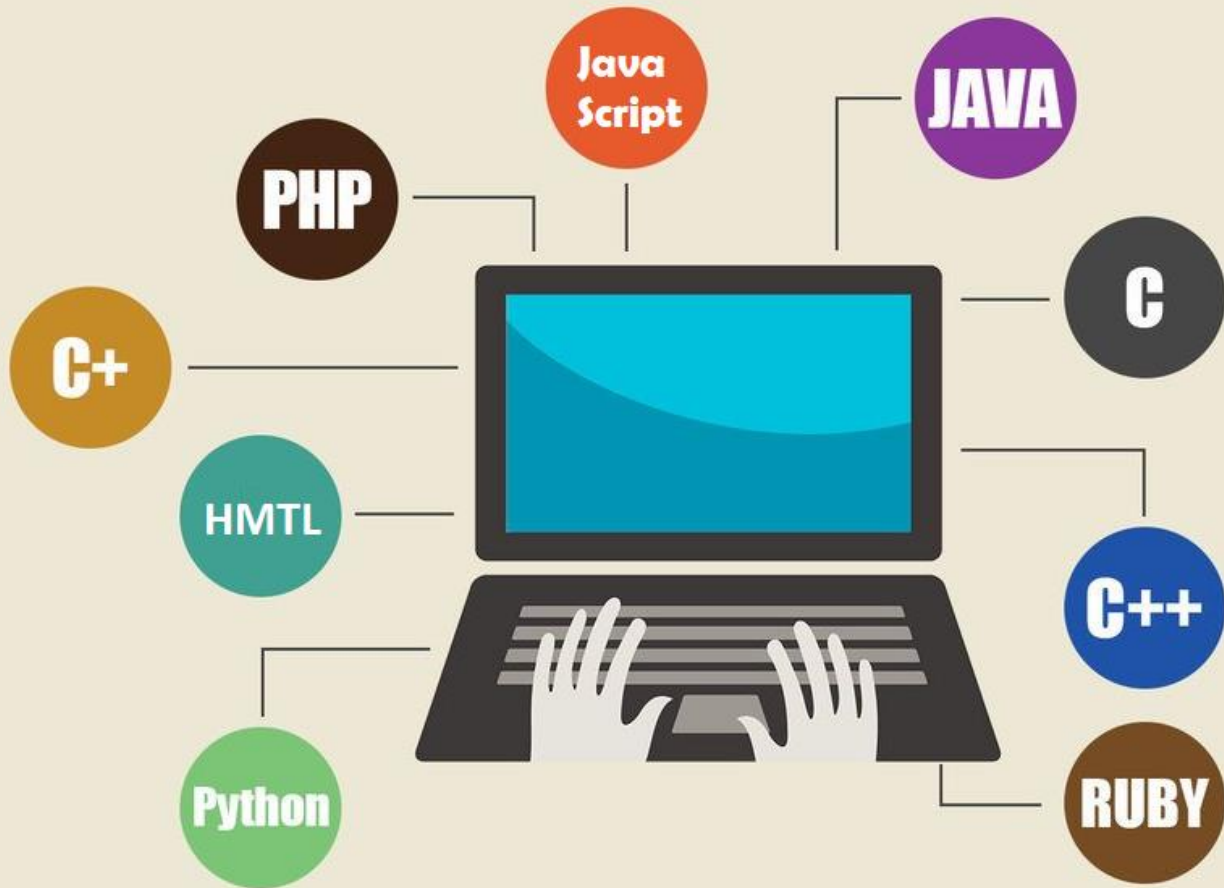
PROGUARD



LANGUAGES

Features and differences

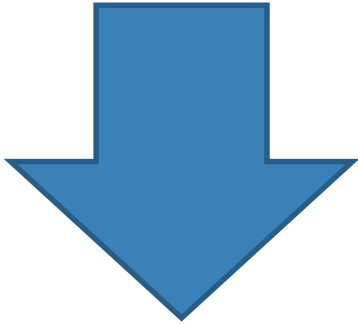






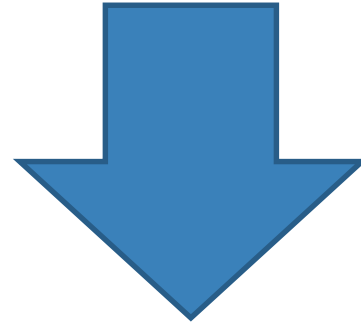
XML

Single language



Language package(s)

Multi-language



Design



JAVA

well-established language

KOTLIN

new programming language

less lines of code

data classes

null safety



BUILD TIME DIFFERENCE

[s]	Without Gradle	With Gradle
JAVA	10.82	9.17
KOTLIN	13.12	11.44

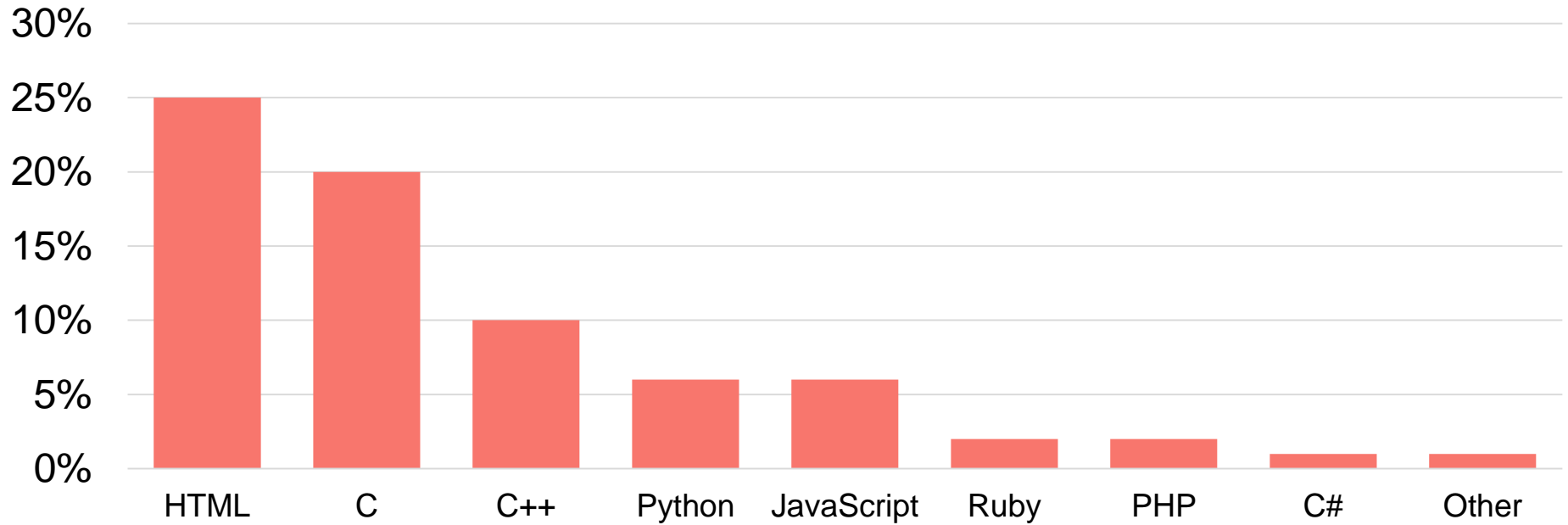


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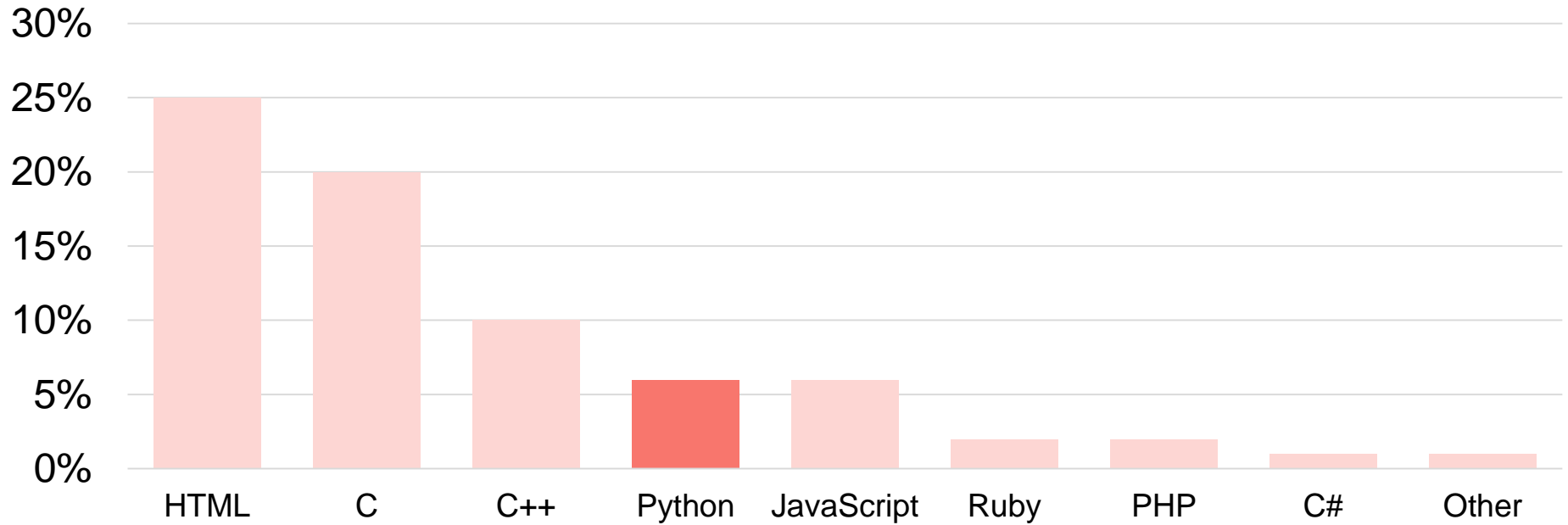


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LANGUAGE USAGE



LANGUAGE USAGE



Why Python?

```
graph TD; A[Why Python?] --> B[Startup speed]; A --> C[Lack of native look]; A --> D[APK size];
```

Startup speed

Lack of
native look

APK size

AMAZING DISCOVERIES



1

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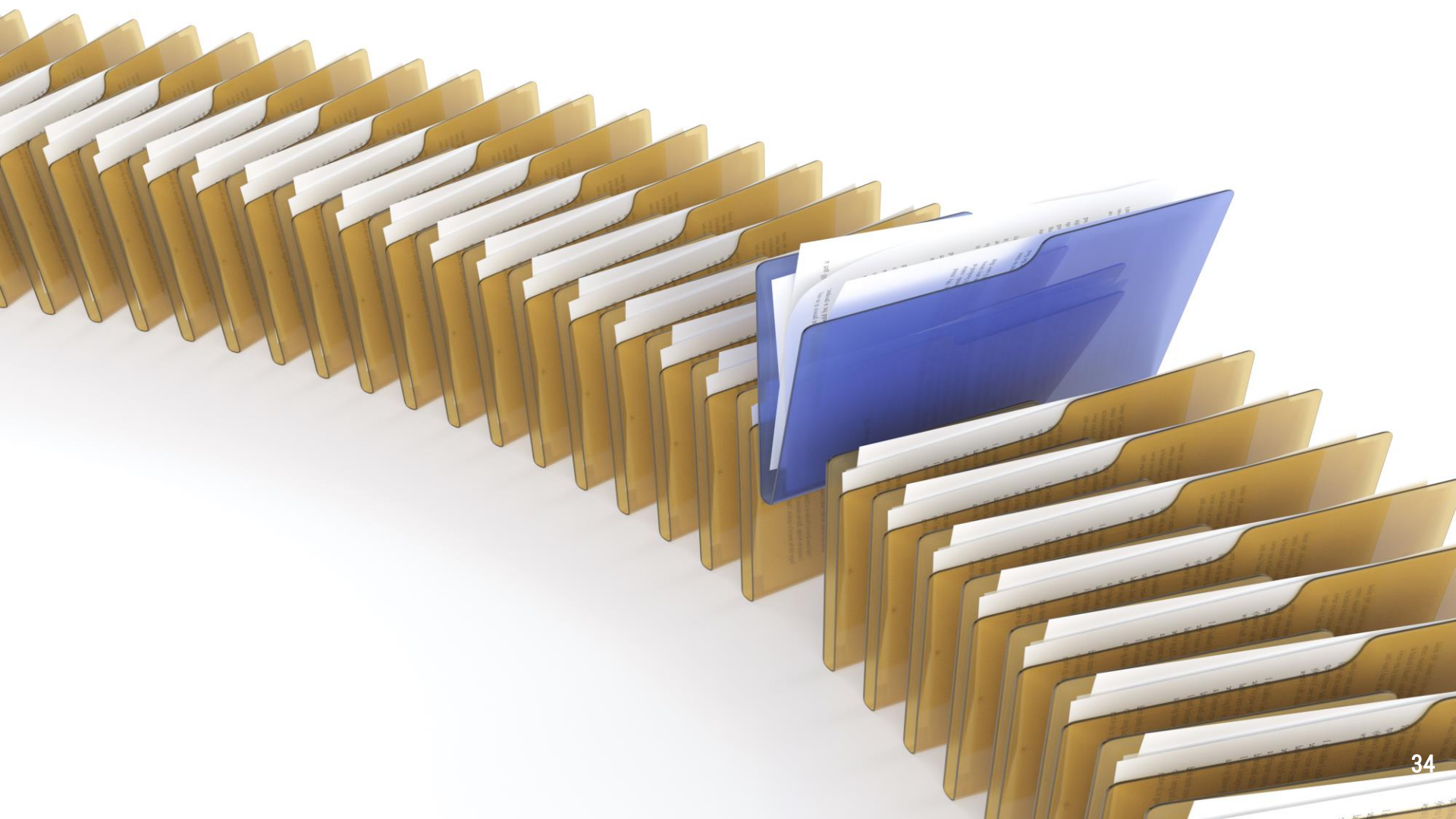
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2



3

-  fragmentAbout.java
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-  MainActivity.java
-  mListAdapter.java
-  NavigationDrawerFragment.java

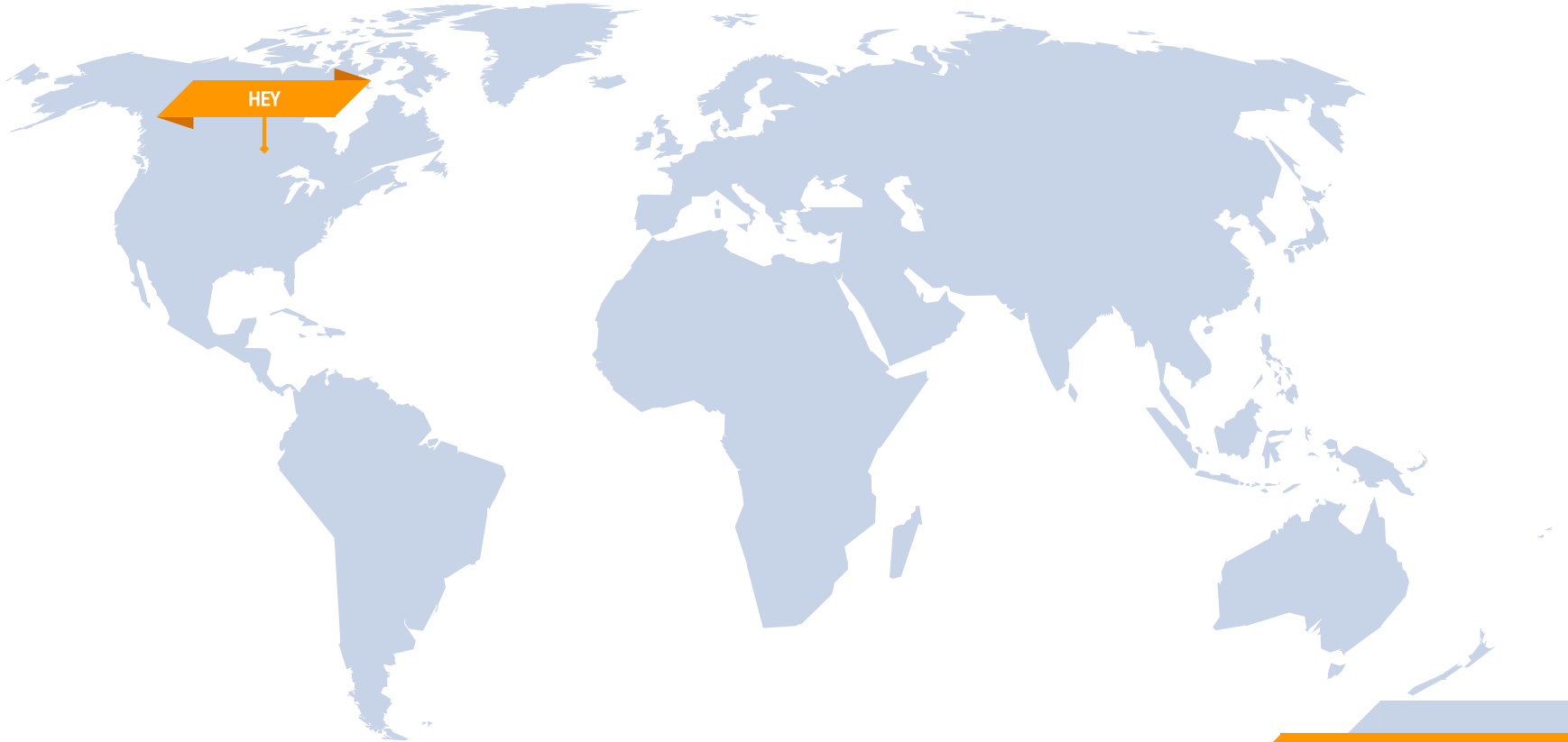
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4

“ I’ve wanted to be able to run **Smalltalk** on Android and iOS for many years. I finally decided to do something about it.

5

FORTRAN





OUTLOOK

Security Investigation

Automatization



SUMMARY

Structure

no consistent implementation
of best practices

Build Tools

many projects lack proper use
of build tools

Languages

diverse use of languages complicates
application maintenance