Hummingbird Library

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Layout screenshot

Summary

Hummingbird Library: A refreshingly new frontend to Hummingbird, a popular anime watch-tracker and discovery site.

What we like?

Anime fans (like me – that view count on the screenshot is real!) have long been obsessed with keeping track of what they watched. Popular sites in this space include AniDB and MyAnimeList, but Hummingbird is the by far best-looking of them all.

Yet, Hummingbird Library, which sits on top of the existing Hummingbird API, goes one step further, built from scratch with Angular and Material Design. Theme color and manifest make it look super integrated and installable on the home screen, and the whole experience feels very snappy, focussing on the core functionality of the main site.

Possible Improvements

Performance: The app would benefit greatly from utilizing a service worker to offline cache results and UI after initial page load, enabling gzip compression would dramatically improve load time and having a static, initial barebone layout in the HTML would improve perceived performance.

UX: The flex box model used to display the list of shows works well with bigger screens but loses its appeal on smaller ones. A non centered, tighter version of the tiles would work much better on mobile devices.

Q & A with Leif Thomas

Why the web?

Developing for the web allows you to reach virtually every platform with a single codebase, which is a huge advantage when you're the sole developer. And thanks to great features like Add to Homescreen, it's easy to give users an experience that is nearly identical to what they would get in a native application.

What worked really well during development?

The angular/material project on GitHub worked perfectly. It gave me everything I needed to start a project with AngularJS and Material Design.

If you could have any API to improve your app, what would it be?

At the browser level, I think an API for performing voice searches within my web app could really help it. Android has added a lot of voice commands lately and the ability to use that sort of input on the mobile web would make for a great experience.

> Good news, we actually have that already :) Check out the Web Speech API.

Finally, how did you market your app?

I used Facebook, Google+, and Twitter to drive traffic to www.hummingbirdlibrary.com, but my biggest traffic spike happened after posting a link to it on reddit. It's a great way to target an audience that may have a genuine interest in what you're developing.

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