

Google AppMaker

Or, “Why the machines will one day take my web developer job.”



The
machines
are coming!

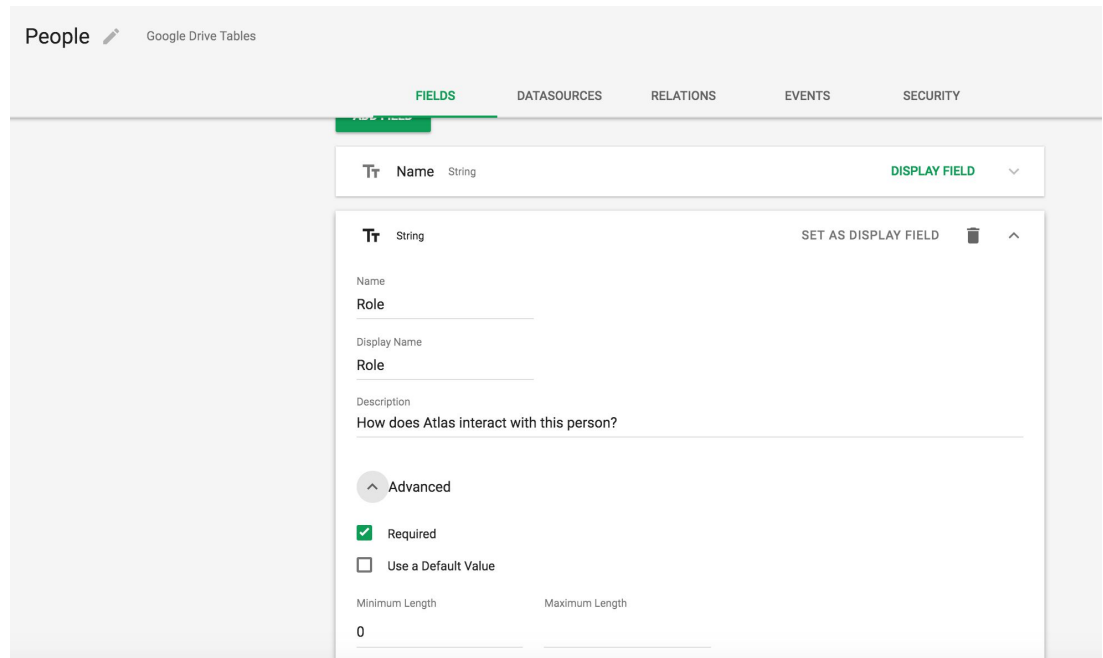
What is AppMaker?

Exactly what it sounds like:

- Create multi-page apps with custom data schemas and scripts
 - Easily link forms to data models and server requests
 - Pre-fab UI elements using Google's material design standards
 - Easily integrate Google user accounts
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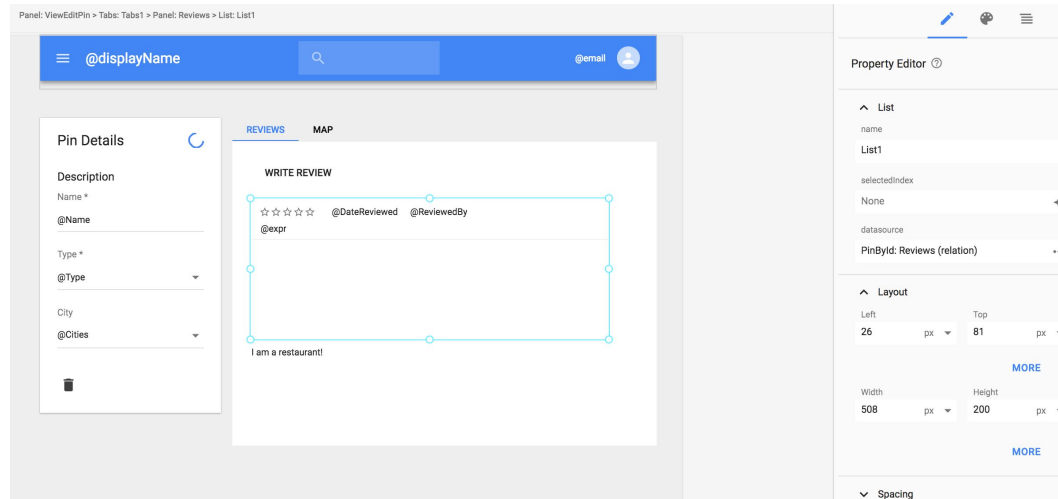
The Data

- Database uses same underlying technology as Google Drive
- Can easily set data type, validations, etc.
- Each table can have a number of “datasources” which are can be linked to from the views
- “Computed tables” allow a sort of virtual data table, aggregating and processing from other data tables and external APIs




The Templates

- Each template, and each component within a template can either have its own datasource or inherit its parent's datasource
- Certain CSS attributes can be easily entered and previewed
- Events on each template can trigger any number of custom client-side scripts



The Scripts

- Either client- or server-side, these allow for a higher degree of customization
- A number of pre-written scripts exist for things like data loading and navigation
- Since this is all edited through the browser, the AppMaker interface acts as an IDE, providing autocomplete functionality

```
EditPerson  Client
```

```
1 function loadPersonById(personId) {
2   var dataSource = app.datasources.PersonById;
3   if(!personId) {
4     dataSource.unload();
5     return;
6   }
7
8   if(dataSource.loaded && dataSource.item._key == personId) {
9     return;
10  }
11
12
13  dataSource.properties.PersonId = personId;
14  dataSource.unload();
15  dataSource.load();
16 }
17
18 function loadEditPerson() {
19   google.script.url.getLocation(function(location) {
20     loadPersonById(location.parameter.PersonId);
21   });
22 }
```

Tell me how you really feel . . .

(There are still some downsides)

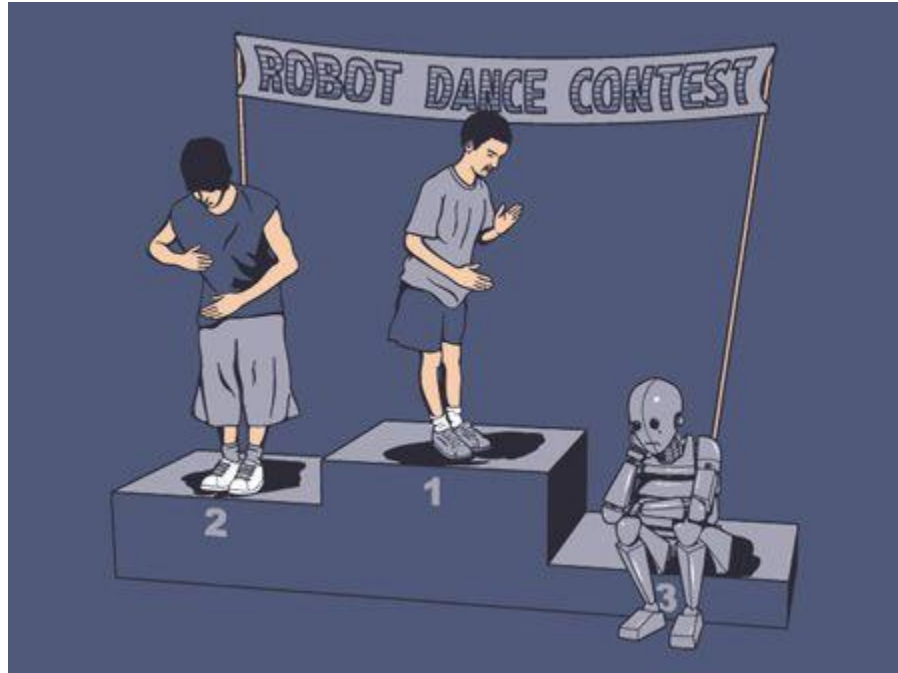
- Enforcing modularity is difficult, since AppMaker was built for simplicity of use and minimum abstraction
 - Surprisingly tricky adding in page parameters during navigation
 - Classic battle of ease-of-use vs. customization
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Takeaways?

(Maybe we won't all be out of jobs. Huzzah!)

- AppMaker takes away some low-hanging fruit, like basic content management
 - Even with AppMaker, developers needed for customization work
 - If you want anything more than a very basic, generic site, you still need dev work
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Take that, robots.



And also, just because they asked me to . . .

