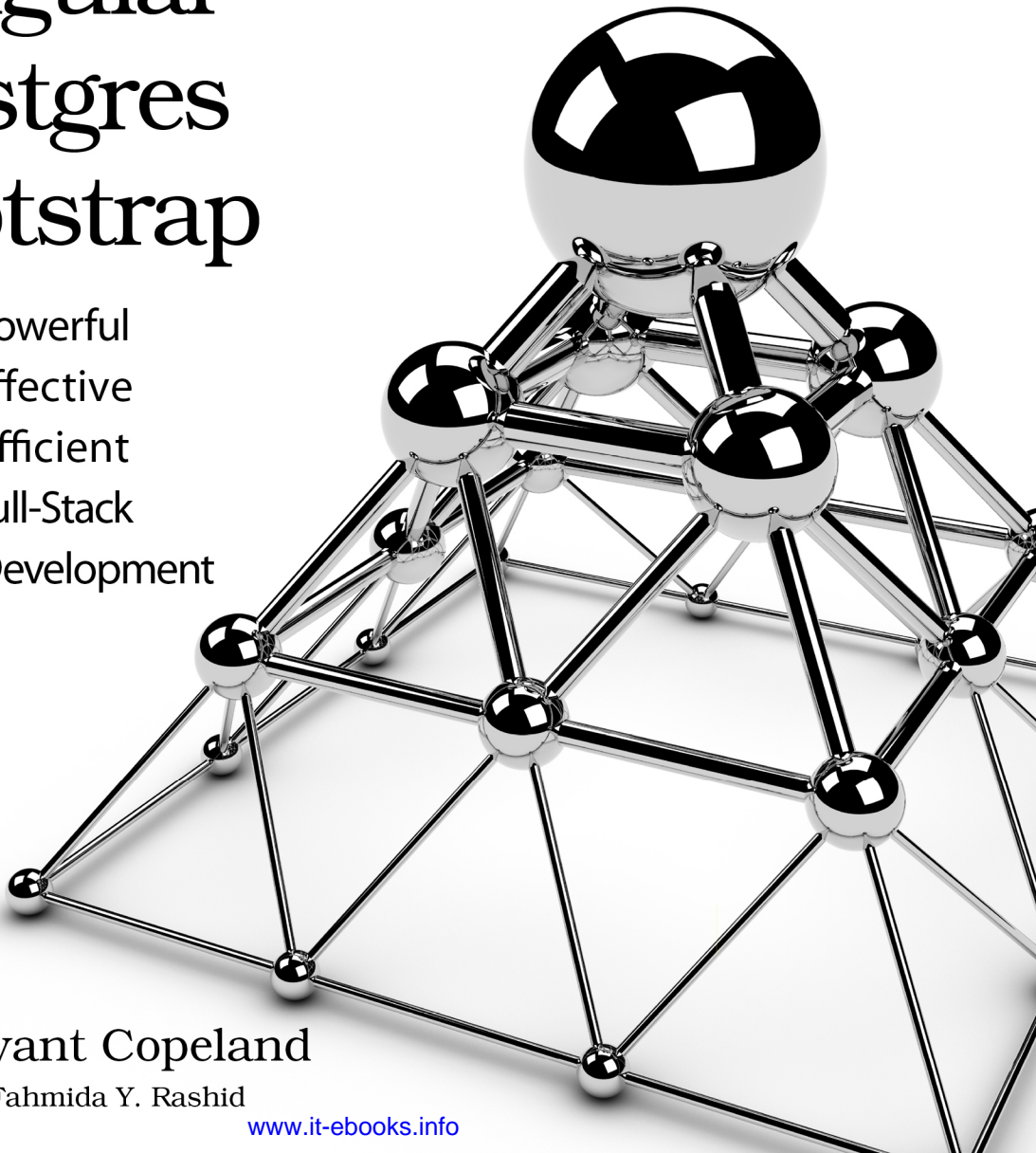


Rails Angular Postgres Bootstrap

Powerful
Effective
Efficient
Full-Stack
Web Development



David Bryant Copeland

edited by Fahmida Y. Rashid

www.it-ebooks.info

Early praise for *Rails, Angular, Postgres, and Bootstrap*

This book is a fantastic resource for anyone looking to gain a practical understanding of full-stack development using contemporary, ubiquitous technologies. I was particularly impressed by how well the author was able to cover so many different software components in such a constructive and cohesive manner. As an engineer who spends most of my time at the data layer, I walked away with a ton of helpful insight into the other layers of the typical application stack.

► **Matthew Oldham**

Director of data architecture, Graphium Health

A book that deals with integrating Angular into Rails is something I've been waiting a long time for, and what's here is a definite step above existing online tutorials. Like the author, I'm used to viewing different database management systems as black boxes that are much like each other, and this book made me reconsider that line of thinking. I highly recommend this book for Rails developers who want to try Angular and make use of PostgreSQL's advanced features.

► **Nigel Lowry**

Company director, Lemmata

Rails, Angular, Postgres, and Bootstrap is a powerful resource for all software engineers interested in full-stack development. No matter your proficiency at each level in the stack, you'll acquire a new technique that's immediately applicable to your project.

► **Simeon Willbanks**

Lead software engineer, Stitch Fix

This book provides beginner developers with solid steps to get “your” application running and to be able to see/do it yourself. I recommend the book to Rails developers beginning their learning journey with Angular.

► **Maricris Nonato**

Senior Ruby on Rails developer, Premiere Speakers Bureau

Rails, Angular, Postgres, and Bootstrap

Powerful, Effective, and Efficient
Full-Stack Web Development

David Bryant Copeland

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Introduction

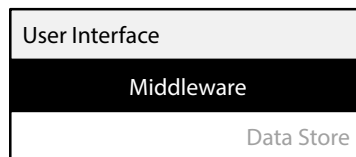
Think about what part of an application you're most comfortable working with. If you're a Rails developer, there's a good chance you prefer the back end, the Ruby code that powers the business logic of your application. What if you felt equally comfortable working with the database, such as tweaking queries and using advanced features of your database system? What if you were *also* comfortable working with the JavaScript and CSS necessary to make dynamic, usable, attractive user interfaces?

If you had that level of comfort at every level of the application stack, you would possess great power as a developer to quickly produce high-quality software. Your ability to solve problems would not be restricted by the tools available via a single framework, nor would you be at the mercy of hard-to-find specialists to help you with what are, in reality, simple engineering tasks.

The Rails framework encourages developers not to peer too closely into the database. Rails steers you away from JavaScript frameworks in favor of its *sprinkling* approach, where content is all rendered server-side. This book is going to open your eyes to all the things you can accomplish with your database, and set you on a path that includes JavaScript frameworks. With Rails acting as the foundation of what you do, you'll learn how to embrace all other parts of the application stack.

The Application Stack

Many web applications—especially those built with Ruby on Rails—use a layered architecture that is often referred to as a *stack*, since most diagrams (like the one we use in this book) depict the layers as stacked blocks.



Rails represents the middle of the stack, and is called *middleware*. This is where the core logic of your application lives. The bottom of the stack—the data store—is where the valuable data saved

and manipulated by your application lives. This is often a relational database management system (RDBMS). The top of the stack is the user interface. In a web application, this is HTML, CSS, and JavaScript served to a browser.

Each part of the stack plays a crucial role in making software valuable. The data store is the canonical location of the organization's most important asset—its data. Even if the organization loses all of its source code, as long as it retains its data, it can still survive. Losing all of the data, however, would be catastrophic.

The top of the stack is also important, as it's the way the users view and enter data. To the users, the user interface *is* the database. The difference between a great user interface and a poor one can mean the difference between happy users and irritated users, accurate data and unreliable data, a successful product and a dismal failure.

What's left is the part of the stack where most developers feel most comfortable: the middleware. Poorly constructed middleware is hard to change, meaning the cost of change is high, and thus the ability of the organization to respond to changes is more difficult.

Each part of the stack plays an important role in making a piece of software successful. As a Rails developer, you have amassed many techniques for making the middleware as high quality as you can. Rails (and Ruby) makes it easy to write clean, maintainable code.

Digging deeper into the other two parts of the stack will have a great benefit for you as a developer. You'll have more tools in your toolbox, making you more effective. You'll also have a much easier time working with specialists, when you *do* have access to them, since you'll have a good grasp of both the database and the front end. That's what you'll learn in this book. When you're done, you'll have a holistic view of application development, and you'll have a new and powerful set of tools to augment your knowledge of Rails. With this holistic view, you can build seemingly complex features easily, sometimes even trivially.

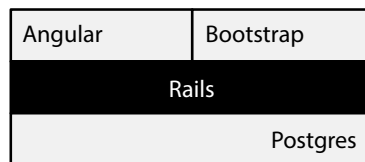
You'll learn *PostgreSQL*, *AngularJS*, and *Bootstrap*, but you can apply many of the lessons here to other data stores, JavaScript libraries, and CSS frameworks. In addition to seeing just how powerful these specific tools can be, you're going to be emboldened to think about writing software beyond what is provided by Rails.

PostgreSQL, Angular, and Bootstrap: The Missing Parts of Our Stack

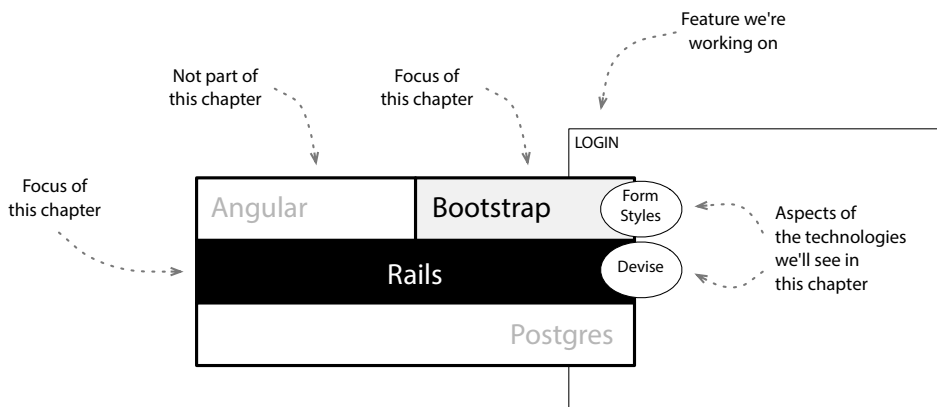
If all you've done with your database is create tables, insert data, and query it, you're going to be excited when you see what else you can do. Similarly, if all you've done with your web views is sprinkle some jQuery calls to your server-rendered HTML, you'll be amazed at what you can do with very little code when you have a full-fledged JavaScript framework. Lastly, if you've been hand-rolling your own CSS, a framework like Bootstrap will make your life so much simpler, and your views will look and feel so much better.

In this book, we're going to focus on PostgreSQL (or simply *Postgres*) as our data store—the bottom of the stack—and AngularJS (or just *Angular*) with Bootstrap as our front end—the top of the stack. Each of these technologies is widely used and very powerful. You're likely to encounter them in the real world, and they each underscore the sorts of features you can use to deliver great software outside of what you get with Rails.

With these chosen technologies, our application stack looks like this:



In each chapter, we'll highlight the parts of the stack we'll be focusing on and call out the various aspects of these technologies you'll be learning. Not every chapter will focus on all parts of the stack, so at the start of each chapter, you'll see a roadmap like this of what you'll be learning:



Let's get a taste of what each has to offer, starting with PostgreSQL.

PostgreSQL

PostgreSQL is an open source SQL database released in 1997. It supports many advanced features not found in other popular open source databases such as MySQL¹ or commercial databases such as Microsoft SQL Server.² Here are some of the features you'll learn about (and I'll show you how to use them with Rails):

Check constraints

You can create highly complex constraints on your table columns beyond what you get with not null. For example, you can require that a user's email address be on a certain domain (which we'll see in [Chapter 2, Secure the Login Database, on page 25](#)), that the state in a U.S. address be written exactly as two uppercase characters, or even that the state in the address must already be on a list of allowed state codes.

While you can do this with Rails, doing it in the database layer means that no bug in your code, no existing script, no developer at a console, and no future program can put bad data into your database. This sort of data integrity just isn't possible with Rails alone.

Advanced indexing

In many database systems, you can only index the values in the columns of the database. In Postgres, you can index the *transformed* values. For example, you can index the lowercased version of someone's name so that a case-insensitive search is just as fast as an exact-match search. We'll see this in [Chapter 3, Use Fast Queries with, on page 33](#).

Materialized views

A database view is a logical table based on a SELECT statement. In Postgres a *materialized view* is a view whose contents are stored in an actual table—accessing a materialized view won't run the query again like it would in a normal view. We'll use one in [Chapter 9, Cache Complex Queries, on page 151](#).

Advanced data types

Postgres has support for enumerated types, arrays, and dictionaries (called HSTOREs). In most database systems, you have to use separate tables to model these data structures.

1. <https://www.mysql.com/>

2. <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/server-cloud/products/sql-server/>

Free-form JSON...that's indexed

Postgres supports a JSON data type, allowing you to store arbitrary data in a column. This means you can use Postgres as a document data store, or for storing data that doesn't conform to a strong schema (something you'd otherwise have to use a different type of database for). And, by using the JSONB data type, you ensure that the JSON fields can be indexed, just like a structured table's fields.

Although you can serialize hashes to JSON in Rails using the TEXT data type, you can't query them, and you certainly can't index them. JSONB fields can interoperate with many systems other than Rails, and they provide great performance.

AngularJS

AngularJS³ is a JavaScript Model-View-Controller (MVC) framework created and maintained by Google (Angular bills itself as a Model-View-Whatever framework, but for this book, the *Whatever* will be a controller). Angular treats your view not as a static bit of HTML, but as a full-blown application. By adopting the mind-set that your front end is a dynamic, connected interface, and not a set of static pages, you open up many new possibilities.

Angular provides powerful tools for organizing your code and lets you structure your markup to create intention-revealing, testable, manageable front-end code. It doesn't matter how small or large the task—as your UI gets more complex, Angular scales much better than something more basic like jQuery.

As an example, consider showing and hiding a section of the DOM using jQuery. You might do something like this:

`jquery_example.html`

```
<section>
  <p>You currently owe: $123.45</p>
  <button class="reveal-button">Show Details</button>
  <ul style="display: none" class="details">
    <li>Base fee: $120.00</li>
    <li>Taxes: $3.45</li>
  </ul>
</section>
<script>
  $(".reveal-button").click(function($event) {
    $(".details").toggle();
  });
</script>
```

3. <https://angularjs.org>

It's not much code, but if you've ever done anything moderately complex, your markup and JavaScript becomes a soup of magic strings, classes starting with `js-`, and oddball data- elements.

An Angular version of this might look like this:

```
angular_example.html
<section ng-app="account" ng-model="showDetails"
          ng-init="showDetails = false">
  <p>You currently owe: $123.45</p>
  <button ng-click="showDetails = !showDetails">Show/Hide Details</button>
  <ul ng-if="showDetails">
    <li>Base fee: $120.00</li>
    <li>Taxes: $3.45</li>
  </ul>
</section>
<script>
  var app = angular.module("account", []);
</script>
```

Here, the view isn't just a description of static content, but a clear indication of how it should behave. Intent is obvious—you can see how this works without knowing the underlying implementation—and there's a lot less code. This is what a higher-level of abstraction like Angular gives you that would otherwise be a mess with jQuery or just plain JavaScript.

Unlike Postgres—where there are very few comparable open source alternatives that match its features and power—there are many JavaScript frameworks comparable to Angular. Many of them are quite capable of handling the features we'll cover in this book. We're using Angular for a few reasons. First, it's quite popular, which means you can find far more resources online for learning it, including deep dives beyond what we'll get to here. Second, it allows you to compose your front end similarly to how you compose your back end in Rails, but it's flexible enough to allow you to deviate later if you need to.

If you've never done much with JavaScript on the front end, or if you're just used to jQuery, you'll be pleasantly surprised at what Angular gives you:

Clean separation of code and views

Angular models your front end as an application with its own routes, controllers, and views. This makes organizing your JavaScript easy and tames a lot of complexity.

Unit testing from the start

Testing JavaScript—especially when it uses jQuery—has always been a challenge. Angular was designed from the start to make unit testing your JavaScript simple and convenient.

Clean, declarative views

Angular views are just HTML. Angular adds special attributes called *directives* that allow you to cleanly connect your data and functions to the markup. You won't have inline code or scripts, and a clear separation exists between view and code.

Huge ecosystem

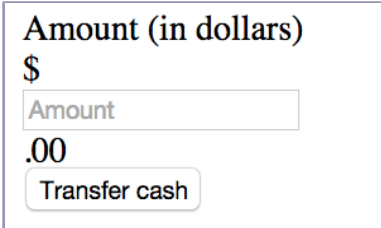
Because of its popularity, there's a large ecosystem of components and modules. Many common problems have a solution in Angular's ecosystem.

It's hard to fully appreciate the power of a JavaScript framework like Angular without using it, but we'll get there. We'll turn a run-of-the-mill search feature into a dynamic, asynchronous live search, with very little code.

Bootstrap

Bootstrap⁴ is a CSS *framework* created by Twitter for use in their internal applications. A CSS framework is a set of CSS classes you apply to markup to get a particular look and feel. Bootstrap also includes *components*, which are classes that, when used on particular HTML elements in particular ways, produce a distinct visual artifact, like a form, a panel, or an alert message.

The advantage of a CSS framework like Bootstrap is that you can create full-featured user interfaces without writing any CSS. Why be stuck with an ugly and hard-to-use form like this?



Amount (in dollars)


\$

Amount

.00

Transfer cash

By just adding a few classes to some elements, you can have something polished and professional like this instead:



\$ Amount .00 Transfer cash

4. <http://getbootstrap.com>

In the next chapter we'll do this to the login and registration forms provided by the Devise gem. We'll have a great-looking user sign-up and sign-in experience, without writing any CSS.

Bootstrap includes a lot of CSS for a lot of different occasions.

Typography

Just including Bootstrap in your application and using semantic HTML will result in pleasing content with good general typography.

Grid

Bootstrap's grid makes it easy to lay out complex, multicolumn components. It can't be overstated how important and powerful this is.

Form styles

Styling good-looking forms can be difficult, but Bootstrap provides many CSS classes that make it easy. Bootstrap-styled forms have great spacing and visual appeal, and feel cohesive and inviting to users.

Components

Bootstrap also includes myriad *components*, which are CSS classes that, when applied to particular markup, generate a visual component, like a styled box or alert message. These components can be great inspiration for solving simple design problems.

It's important to note that Bootstrap is not a replacement for a designer, nor are all UIs created with Bootstrap inherently usable. There are times when a specialist in visual design, interaction design, or front-end implementation is crucial to the success of a project.

But for many apps, you don't need these specialists (they are very hard to find when you do). Bootstrap lets you produce a professional, appealing user interface without them. Bootstrap also lets you realize visual designs that might seem difficult to do with CSS. In [Chapter 4, Create Clean Search Results, on page 51](#) and [Chapter 8, Design Great UIs with, on page 137](#), you'll see just how easy it is to create a customized UI without writing CSS, all thanks to Bootstrap.

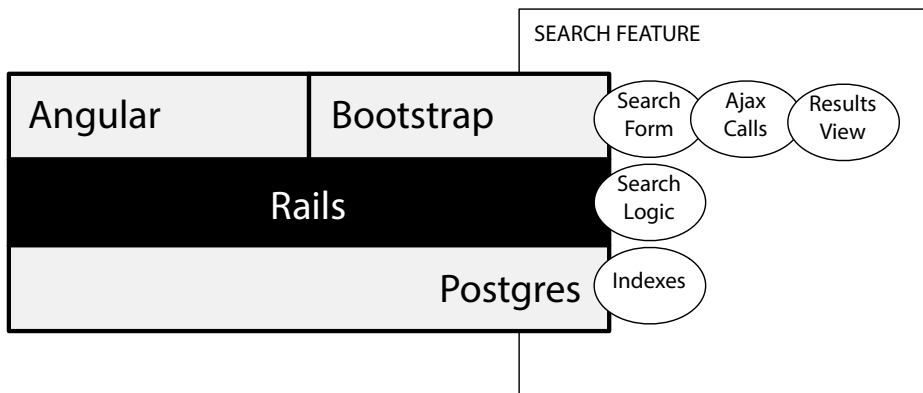
Even if you have a designer or front-end specialist, the skills you'll learn by using Bootstrap will still apply—your front-end developer isn't going to write every line of markup and CSS. They are going to hand you a framework like Bootstrap that enables you to do many of the things we'll do in this book.

Now that you've gotten a taste of what we'll be covering, let's talk about how you're going to learn it.

Postgres, Angular, and Bootstrap—At the Same Time

If you’ve already looked at the table of contents, you’ll see that this book isn’t divided into three parts—one for Postgres, one for Angular, and one for Bootstrap. That’s not how a full-stack developer approaches development. A full-stack developer is given a problem to solve and is expected to bring all forces to bear in solving it.

For example, if you’re implementing a search, and it’s slow, you’ll consider both creating an index in the database as well as performing the search with Ajax calls to create a more dynamic and snappy UI. You should use features at every level of the stack to get the job done.



This holistic approach is how you’re going to learn these technologies. We’ll build a Rails application together, adding features one at a time. These features will demonstrate various aspects of the technologies we’re using.

To keep things simple, each chapter will focus on a single technology, and we’ll complete features over several chapters. For example, in the next chapter we’ll set up a simple registration system for our application and use Bootstrap to style the views. In [Chapter 2, Secure the Login Database, on page 25](#), we’ll continue the feature but focus on using Postgres to add extra security at the database layer. This will allow us to see each feature evolve as we bring in relevant parts of the application stack. This will give you the confidence to do the same for other features that you build in your own apps.

It’s also worth emphasizing the role of Rails in all of this. Although Rails doesn’t have built-in APIs for using Postgres’s advanced features, nor support for Angular’s way of structuring code, it doesn’t outright prevent our using them. And Rails is a *great* middleware; probably one of the best.

So, in addition to learning Postgres, Angular, and Bootstrap, you're going to learn how to get them working with Rails. You'll see not just how to create check constraints on columns in our tables, but how to do that from a Rails migration. And you won't just learn how to style Angular components with Bootstrap—you'll do it using assets served up by the asset pipeline.

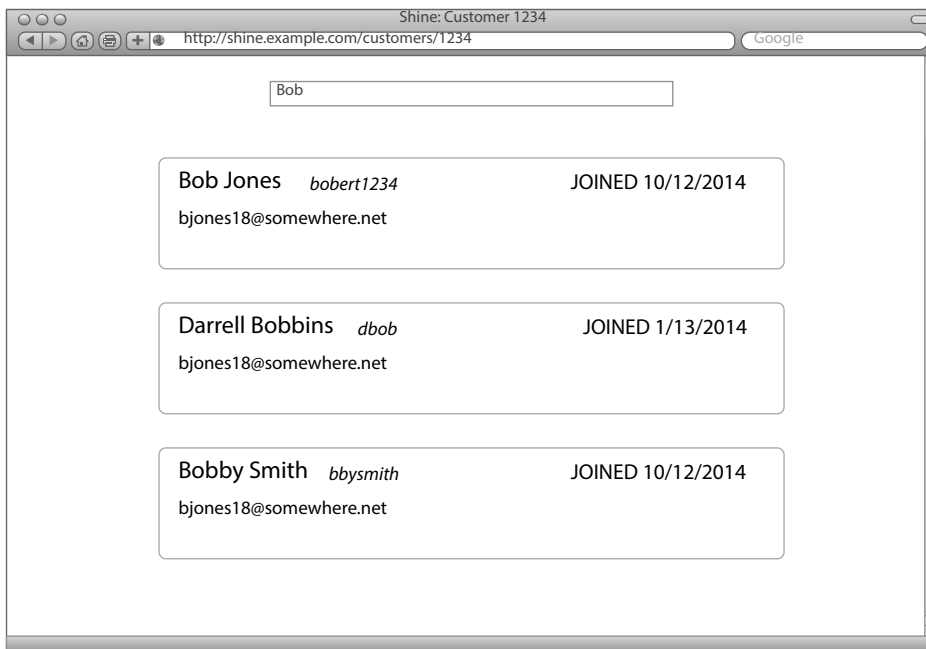
Let's learn about the Rails application that we'll be building in this book.

Shine, the Application We'll Build

In this book we'll create and add features to a Rails application. We're creating this application for the customer service agents at the hypothetical company where we work. Our company has a public website that its customers use, but we want a separate application for the customer service agents. You've probably seen or heard about internal-facing apps like this. Perhaps you've even worked on one (most software *is* internally facing).

The application will be called *Shine* (since it allows our great customer service to *shine through* to our customers). The features that we'll build for this application involve searching for, viewing, and manipulating customer data.

For example, we'll allow the user to search for customers.



And they can click through and view or edit a customer's data.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Shine: Customer 1234". The address bar displays "http://shine.example.com/customers/1234". The page layout includes a "Customer Info" section with fields for first name (Bob), last name (Jones), email (bobbyj@somewhere.net), and a join date (JOINED 2/13/2014). Below this is a "Shipping Address" section with fields for street (123 Any St), unit (Unit 101), city (Washington), state (DC), and zip (20002). The right side features a "Billing Info" section showing a VISA card with the number ****.*-1234 and an expiration date of 12/18, along with a "View at Payment Processor..." button. Below that is a "Billing Address" section with a "Same as Shipping?" checkbox. A yellow tooltip with the text "Hide if 'Same as Shipping' checked" is positioned over this checkbox. The billing address fields (123 Any St, Unit 101, Washington, DC, 20002) are visible, indicating the checkbox is checked.

These features may seem simple on the surface, but there's hidden complexity that we'll be able to tame with Postgres, Angular, and Bootstrap. In each chapter, we'll make a bit of progress on Shine, and you'll learn features of Postgres, Angular, Bootstrap, and Rails in the process.

How to Read This Book

As mentioned, each chapter will focus on one part of our stack as we build a part of a feature. To help you keep track of where we are, each chapter will start with a diagram that shows which parts of the stack we'll be focusing on, what feature we're building, and what aspects of each technology you're going to be learning.

The first feature we'll build is a registration and login system, which will allow us to style the user interface with Bootstrap but also secure the underlying database with Postgres. We'll get our Rails application set up and style the login in [Chapter 1, Create a Great-Looking Login with Bootstrap and Devise, on page 1](#). We'll then tighten up the security by learning about *check constraints* in [Chapter 2, Secure the Login Database, on page 25](#).

We'll then move on to a customer search feature, which is a fertile ground for learning about full-stack development. In [Chapter 3, Use Fast Queries with,](#)

[on page 33](#), we'll implement a basic fuzzy search, and you'll learn how to examine Postgres's *query plan* to understand why our search is slow. We'll then use Postgres's advanced indexing features to make it fast. In [Chapter 4, *Create Clean Search Results*, on page 51](#), you'll learn how to use some of Bootstrap's built-in components and helper classes to create nontabular search results that look great.

[Chapter 5, *Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS*, on page 61](#), is an introduction to AngularJS, which we'll use to make our customer search much more dynamic. This chapter will explore how to set up and manage Angular as part of the asset pipeline, as well as how to read user input and do Ajax calls to our Rails application.

With a fully implemented customer search, we'll take a pause at [Chapter 6, *Test This Fancy New Code*, on page 83](#) to discuss how to write tests for everything you've learned. Testing has always been a big part of Rails, so whenever we veer off Rails's golden path, it's important to make sure we have a great testing experience.

[Chapter 7, *Create a Single-Page App*, on page 119](#) will be our first step in building a more complex feature that shows customer details. We'll turn our customer search into a client-side, single-page application that allows the user to navigate from search results to customer details without reloading the page. This will give you an opportunity to learn about Angular's router and navigation features.

In [Chapter 8, *Design Great UIs with*, on page 137](#), you'll learn about a powerful web design tool called *the grid* and how Bootstrap implements it. We'll use it to create a dense UI that's clean, clear, and usable. In [Chapter 9, *Cache Complex Queries*, on page 151](#), we'll implement the back end of our customer details view by turning a query of highly complex joins into a simple auto-updated cache using Postgres's *materialized views*.

In [Chapter 10, *Asynchronously Load Data*, on page 171](#), you'll learn how Angular's asynchronous nature allows us to keep our front end simple, even when we need data from several sources. We'll finish off our customer detail page feature, as well as our in-depth look at these technologies, in [Chapter 11, *Wrangle Forms and*, on page 193](#), by exploring Angular's data binding, which will allow you to auto-save changes the user makes on the front end.

All of this is just a small part of what you can do with Bootstrap, Angular, and Postgres, so in [Chapter 12, *Dig Deeper*, on page 213](#), we'll survey some of the other features we don't have space to get to.

When it's all said and done, you'll have the confidence needed to solve problems by using every tool available in the application stack. You'll be just as comfortable creating an animated progress bar as you will be setting up views and triggers in the database. Moreover, you'll see how you can use these sorts of features from the comfort of Rails.

Example Code

The running examples in the book are extracted from fully tested source code that should work as shown, but you should download the sample code from https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/source_code. Each step of our journey through this topic has a different subdirectory, each containing an entire Rails application. While the book is showing you only the changes you need to make, the downloadable code records a snapshot of the fully working application as of that point in the book.

Command-Line Execution

We'll be running a lot of commands in this book. Rails development is heavily command-line driven, and this book shows the commands you need to execute as we go. It's important to understand how to interpret the way we're using them in the book. Each time you see a command-line *session*, the text will first show how you call the command line, followed by the expected output.

In the following example, we invoke the command line `bundle exec rails generate devise:install`. This is the command you'd type into your terminal and press Return. The lines *following* the command line display expected or example output.

```
$ bundle exec rails generate devise:install
  create  config/initializers/devise.rb
  create  config/locales/devise.en.yml
```

Sometimes I need to show a command-line invocation that won't fit on one line. In this case, I'll use backslashes to show the continuation of the command (which is how you'd actually run a multiline command in a shell like bash). The last line *won't* have a backslash. For example, here we're typing everything from rails to shine.

```
$ rails new --skip-turbolinks \
  --skip-spring \
  --skip-test-unit \
  -d postgresql \
  shine
  create
  create  README.rdoc
```

```
create Rakefile
create config.ru
create .gitignore
create Gemfile
```

The sample output won't always match exactly what you see, but it should be close. It's included so you have a way to sanity-check what you're doing as you follow along.

A second form of command-line session is when we're interacting with Postgres. We'll indicate this by executing `rails dbconsole` first and then showing SQL commands inside the Postgres command-line interpreter. In the following listing we're executing `rails dbconsole`; then we're executing `select count(*) from users;` inside Postgres (note how the prompt changes slightly). After that we see the expected or sample results of the command.

```
$ rails dbconsole
postgres> select count(*) from users;
| count |
+-----+
|    100 |
+-----+
```

Online Forum and Errata

While reading through the book, you may have questions about the material, or you might find typos or mistakes. For the latter, you can add issues to the errata for the book at <https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/errata>. Think of it as a bug-reporting system for the book.

For the former—questions about the material—you should visit the online forum at <https://forums.pragprog.com/forums/389>. There, you'll be able to interact with other readers and me to get the most out of the material.

What You Need to Know

This book covers a lot of advanced topics in web development. However, my hope is that you can get a lot out of it regardless of your skill level. Nevertheless, the code and concepts are written assuming some basic exposure to the topics at hand:

Ruby and Rails

Much of the Rails content in the book is in configuration, specifically to get Rails to work with Angular, Bootstrap, and the ecosystem in which they live. If you've created a simple Rails app, and you know what controllers, models, views, migrations, and tests are, you should have no

problem understanding the Rails code. If you're new to Rails, check out [*Agile Web Development with Rails 4 \[Rub13\]*](#).

SQL

We're also assuming you know some SQL. If you know the basics of how to select, update, and insert data, along with how to do a join, you know everything you need to understand the Postgres parts of this book. For those of you new to SQL, there's an online course called "Learn SQL the Hard Way"⁵ in development that will give you the necessary skills. As of this writing, Exercises 0–6 should give you a grounding in the basics, including joins.

JavaScript

You don't need to be a JavaScript expert, but you should know the basics of how JavaScript works as a language. [*JavaScript, the Good Parts \[Cro08\]*](#) is a quick read and should give you these basics if you need them. You don't have to know *any* Angular. I'll cover what you need and assume you've never seen any Angular code.

CSS

There's no actual CSS code in this book. You just need to know what CSS is and what it does. All the styling we'll do will be using Bootstrap and we won't assume any prior knowledge.

Getting Set Up

To get ready to follow along, you don't have to do much to get yourself set up. You'll just need to install Ruby, Rails, and Postgres.

Ruby and Rails

If you don't have Ruby installed, follow the instructions on Ruby's website.⁶ I recommend using an installer or manager, but as long as you have Ruby 2.2 installed and the ability to install gems you'll be good to go.

With Ruby installed, you'll need to install Rails. This is usually as simple as

```
$ gem install rails
```

Be sure to get the latest version of Rails, which is 4.2 as of this writing.

5. <http://sql.learncodethehardway.org/book/>

6. <https://www.ruby-lang.org/en/downloads/>

Postgres

Postgres is free and open source, and you can install it locally by looking at the instructions for your operating system on their website.⁷ Be sure you get at least version 9.4, as some of the features we'll discuss were introduced in that version. In [Chapter 2, *Secure the Login Database*, on page 25](#), we'll outline how to set up a user to access the databases.

An alternative is to use a free, hosted version of Postgres, such as Heroku Postgres.⁸ You can sign up on their website, and they'll give you the credentials to access the hosted database from your computer (you'll learn where to use them in the first chapter).

Library and Tool Versions

For everything else you need, I'll show you how to set up and install as we get to it. We'll be using a lot of third-party libraries and tools—integrating them together is what this book is about. Pay particular attention to the versions of libraries in Gemfile and Bowerfile that are included in the example code download. While I've tried to make the code future compatible, there's always a chance that a point release of a library breaks something.

I wrote the book with the following versions of the tools and libraries:

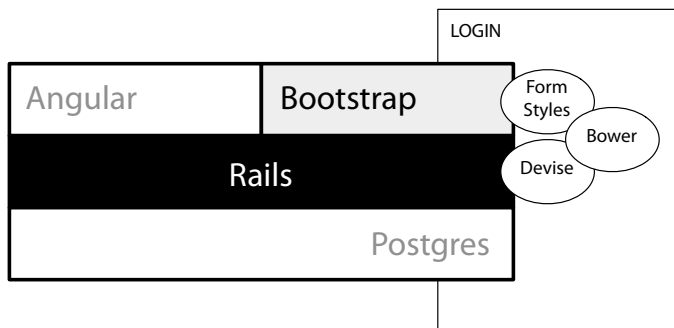
- Ruby 2.2
- Rails 4.2
- Bootstrap 3
- Angular 1.4
- Teaspoon 2
- Devise 3.5
- Postgres 9.4 or 9.5

I expect everything here to work with Rails 5. As of this writing, Angular 2 is set to be a ground-up rewrite—essentially a totally new framework—but 1.4 is expected to be supported for quite some time. Bootstrap 4 is also on the horizon, which will have breaking changes, but the team currently plans to support 3.x for the foreseeable future.

I hope you're ready to start your journey in full-stack application development! Let's kick it off by creating our new Rails application and setting up a great-looking, and secure, login system.

7. <http://www.postgresql.org/download/>

8. <https://www.heroku.com/postgres>



CHAPTER 1

Create a Great-Looking Login with Bootstrap and Devise

Applications aimed at a company's employees require some sort of restrictions as to who can access them. These *internal apps* are instrumental in running the company's operations, so we want to be careful about who has access to them. This means we need an authentication system.

An authentication system is a great first step into thinking about problems as a full-stack developer—we want the user experience to be great, but we also want the back end to be secure, all the way down to the data layer. In this chapter, we'll use the *Devise* gem to handle the middleware bits of authentication, and we'll use Bootstrap to make the user experience great.

Because this is the first chapter, we'll set up our fresh Rails application. But we'll also need to get Bootstrap installed. Since Shine (the name of our Rails application) will eventually use AngularJS and other front-end components, we'll use the installation of Bootstrap as a way to learn about *Bower*, which is like Bundler¹ but for JavaScript and CSS libraries.

The figure at the top of this page (and at the top of subsequent chapters) shows where everything you'll learn sits in our application stack.

Let's get to it, and set up our fresh Rails application with a simple login system powered by Devise.

1. <http://bundler.io/>

Setting Up Devise for Authentication

Creating an authentication system from scratch is rarely a good idea. It's difficult to get every part of it correct since security controls can be subverted in unusual and counterintuitive ways. Because of this, we're going to use a tried-and-true Rails plugin called Devise.²

Devise is built to handle almost any sort of authentication requirement, and will definitely suit our needs. Here's what we want our authentication system to do:

- Employees who need to use our app will sign up on their own.
- They must use their company email when signing up.
- Their password must be at least 10 characters long.

We aren't going to require users to validate their email addresses, mostly to keep things simple by avoiding email configuration. You should consider it for a real app, and Devise makes it easy to use once you've fully configured your mailers.³

Since adding a login is the first feature we're going to implement, we'll start by setting up our Rails application. Note that while we're adding Devise to a brand-new Rails application, it's just as simple to add Devise to an already-in-development application.

Setting Up Our Rails App

We really don't need much more than the basic Rails application we'll generate with `rails new`, but since we know we're using Postgres now and later in the book we'll be using AngularJS, there are a few options we want to set now.

Let's call our new application *shine* (since it will allow our users to *shine* as they do their work, assisted by all the wonderful features we'll be able to add for them). It will use Postgres instead of the default SQLite database.

We don't want to use TurboLinks,⁴ because it's going to clash with the JavaScript we'll be writing later on when we start to use AngularJS. We're skipping Spring⁵ as well, mostly because it isn't 100% reliable, and it could cause your experience with these examples to not mimic the one we're describing in the book. Finally, we're skipping Test::Unit as our testing framework, because we're

2. <https://github.com/plataformatec/devise>

3. http://guides.rubyonrails.org/action_mailer_basics.html#action-mailer-configuration

4. <https://github.com/rails/turbolinks>

5. <https://github.com/rails/spring>

going to be using RSpec.⁶ As you'll see in [Chapter 6, Test This Fancy New Code, on page 83](#), we have good reasons to use RSpec, so bear with me for now.

Here's the command to create a Rails app according to our specifications (if you haven't installed Rails, you'll first need to issue `gem install rails`).

```
$ rails new --skip-turbolinks \
      --skip-spring \
      --skip-test-unit \
      -d postgresql \
      shine
```

This will create our new application as you'd expect. Since almost all of our work will be in this Rails app, let's go ahead and change our current directory to the `shine` directory that contains our new Rails application:

```
$ cd shine
```

Before we run the Rails application, we'll need to set up our database (if you don't have Postgres installed, review the setup instructions in [Postgres, on page xxvi](#)). If you've installed Postgres locally, you'll need to create a user (if you're using Postgres-as-a-service, you should have a user created already and should skip this step). Our user will be named `shine` and have the password `shine`. We can create it using the command-line app installed with Postgres called `createuser`.

```
$ createuser --createdb --login -P shine
```

You'll be prompted for a password, so enter `shine` twice, as requested. `--createdb` tells Postgres that our user should be able to create databases (needed in a later step). The `--login` switch will allow our user to log in to the database and `-P` means we want to set our new user's password right now (which is why you were prompted for a password).

If the `createuser` Command Isn't Found on Your System



In some Linux installations, the `createuser` command isn't available. While you should consult the installation documentation for your operating system, you can create a user inside Postgres directly. You'll need to access the postgres schema, which you can usually do with `psql` like so:

```
$ psql postgres
```

6. <http://rspec.info/>

If the `createuser` Command Isn't Found on Your System

Doing *this* could be tricky, as you may need to be the `postgres` user in your system. Again, the installation instructions for your operating system should show the way. Once you've done this, you can create a user inside `psql`:

```
$ psql postgres
postgres> CREATE USER shine PASSWORD 'shine';
```

Next, modify `config/database.yml` so the app can connect to the database.

```
default: &default
  adapter: postgresql
  encoding: unicode
  host: localhost
  username: shine
  password: shine
  pool: 5

development:
  <<: *default
  database: shine_development

test:
  <<: *default
  database: shine_test
```

Note that if you're using Postgres-as-a-service, you'll need to use the credentials you were given instead of what's shown here. Typically, you'll get a URL, so you'll have to manually break it up into the pieces needed in `config/database.yml`. The URL is usually of the form `postgres://some_user:their_password@some_host.com:PORT/database_name`.

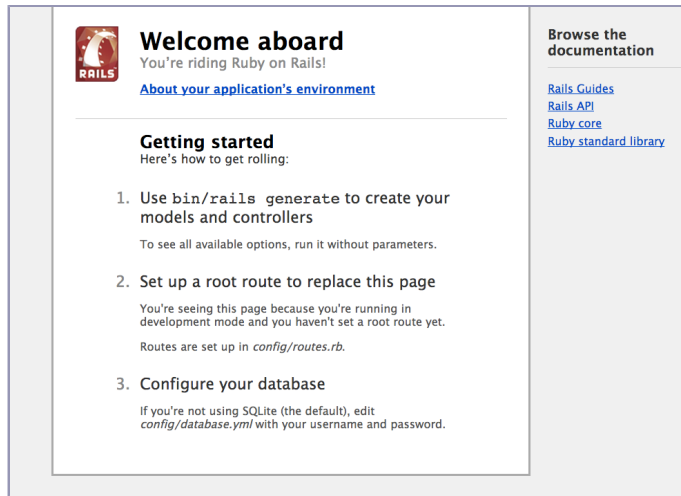
Next, we'll set up our database.

```
$ bundle exec rake db:create
$ bundle exec rake db:migrate
```

We can now start the app to verify that everything worked. Although we don't have any database tables, Rails should complain if the database configuration is wrong, so this is a decent test of our configuration.

```
$ bundle exec rails server
```

You can now visit <http://localhost:3000> and see the familiar [Rails welcome page on page 5](#).



Lastly, we need to make a page in our app that will require authentication. We'll call this the *dashboard*, and our initial version will have a simple, static view.

Add the route to `config/routes.rb`.

```
login/create-dashboard/shine/config/routes.rb
root 'dashboard#index'
```

Next, create `app/controllers/dashboard_controller.rb`.

```
login/create-dashboard/shine/app/controllers/dashboard_controller.rb
class DashboardController < ApplicationController
  def index
  end
end
```

Finally, create `app/views/dashboard/index.html.erb` with some basic content.

```
login/create-dashboard/shine/app/views/dashboard/index.html.erb
<header>
  <h1>
    Welcome to Shine!
  </h1>
  <h2>
    We're using Rails <%= Rails.version %>
  </h2>
</header>
<section>
  <p>
    Future home of Shine's Dashboard
  </p>
</section>
```

Restart your server, reload your app, you should see the page we've created.

Welcome to Shine!

We're using Rails 4.2.5

Future home of Shine's Dashboard

Now that we have a working Rails app, we can install Devise to get our login going.

Installing Devise

First, we'll add Devise to our Gemfile.

```
login/install-devise/shine/Gemfile
gem 'devise'
```

Next, we'll install it using Bundler.

```
$ bundle install
```

Devise includes several generators⁷ we can use to simplify the setup and initial configuration. The devise:install generator is the first one we'll need to bootstrap Devise in our app.

```
$ bundle exec rails generate devise:install
   create  config/initializers/devise.rb
   create  config/locales/devise.en.yml
```

This command will also output a fairly lengthy message about further actions to take to set up Devise. We'll be addressing all of that advice in this section, so don't worry about it for now.

Next, we need to tell Devise what model and database table we'll use for authentication. Even though our company's public website has a user authentication mechanism for our *customers*, we want to use a separate system for our internal users. This allows both systems to vary as needed for different parts of the business. It also creates a much more explicit wall between customers and users, and prevents customers from having access to our internal systems.

Devise is part of that separate system, but we also need a separate database table and model. Since we refer to our customers as "customers," we'll refer to our internal users as simply "users." Devise can create that table for us, using a generator called devise. It will create a User Active Record model and database table (called USERS) with the fields necessary for Devise to function.

7. http://guides.rubyonrails.org/command_line.html#rails-generate

```
$ bundle exec rails generate devise user
  invoke  active_record
  create   db/migrate/20150228234349_devise_create_users.rb
  create   app/models/user.rb
  insert   app/models/user.rb
  route    devise_for :users
```

Let's have a look at what it created by examining the migration.

```
login/install-devise/shine/db/migrate//20150228234349_devise_create_users.rb
class DeviseCreateUsers < ActiveRecord::Migration
  def change
    create_table(:users) do |t|
      ## Database authenticatable
      t.string :email, null: false, default: ""
      t.string :encrypted_password, null: false, default: ""

      ## Recoverable
      t.string :reset_password_token
      t.datetime :reset_password_sent_at

      ## Rememberable
      t.datetime :remember_created_at

      ## Trackable
      t.integer :sign_in_count, default: 0, null: false
      t.datetime :current_sign_in_at
      t.datetime :last_sign_in_at
      t.inet :current_sign_in_ip
      t.inet :last_sign_in_ip

      t.timestamps
    end

    add_index :users, :email, unique: true
    add_index :users, :reset_password_token, unique: true
  end
end
```

Each section that's commented indicates which Devise modules the fields are relevant to. Don't worry about what those are for now. We also won't add any fields of our own at this point. If we need some later, we can always add them with a new migration.

There's one last step before we can finally see Devise in action. We need to indicate which controller actions require authentication. Without that, Devise won't do anything, as it will perceive all pages as being open to anonymous users.

Devise provides a controller filter called `authenticate_user!`, and we can use that in our ApplicationController, since we want *all* pages and actions to be restricted.

```
login/install-devise/shine/app/controllers/application_controller.rb
```

```
class ApplicationController < ActionController::Base
  protect_from_forgery with: :exception
  ➤ before_action :authenticate_user!
end
```

As a way for us to be certain we've actually authenticated the user, let's show the email address on the dashboard. Devise provides a helper method called `current_user`, which returns the User instance of the currently authenticated user. Since it's a helper, we can use it directly in our view.

```
login/install-devise/shine/app/views/dashboard/index.html.erb
```

```
<header>
  <h1>
  ➤ Welcome to Shine, <%= current_user.email %>
  </h1>
  <h2>
    We're using Rails <%= Rails.version %>
  </h2>
</header>
<section>
  <p>
    Future home of Shine's Dashboard
  </p>
</section>
```

Now, we're ready to see it working. We'll need to run migrations and then start our server.

```
$ bundle exec rake db:migrate
== 20150228234349 DeviseCreateUsers: migrating =====
-- create_table(:users)
  -> 0.0538s
-- add_index(:users, :email, {:unique=>true})
  -> 0.0043s
-- add_index(:users, :reset_password_token, {:unique=>true})
  -> 0.0025s
== 20150228234349 DeviseCreateUsers: migrated (0.0608s) =====
$ bundle exec rails server
```

Navigating to `http://localhost:3000` will no longer show the dashboard page, but will instead ask us to log in or sign up.

You need to sign in or sign up before continuing.

Log in

Email

Password

☐ Remember me

[Sign up](#)
[Forgot your password?](#)

Since we don't have a user account yet, let's create one by clicking "Sign up."

Sign up

Email

Password (8 characters minimum)

Password confirmation

[Log in](#)

If you fill in the fields, your account will be created and you'll be automatically logged in. You should be able to see your email address on the dashboard page, just as we wanted.

Welcome! You have signed up successfully.

Welcome to Shine, user2392@example.com

We're using Rails 4.2.5

Future home of Shine's Dashboard

We can also see that Devise has created an entry in the USERS table by going into the database directly. Use the Rails `dbconsole`⁸ command.

```
$ bundle exec rails dbconsole
postgres> \x on
Expanded display is on.
postgres> select * from users;
-[ RECORD 1 ]-----+-----
id              | 1
email           | exampleuser@example.com
encrypted_password | $2a$10$h60FdaL5FsYwoRTwUF.hCrSgT0XEiMUT1x40wk3Kqe
reset_password_token |
reset_password_sent_at |
remember_created_at |
sign_in_count    | 1
current_sign_in_at | 2015-02-28 23:51:40.315758
last_sign_in_at   | 2015-02-28 23:51:40.315758
current_sign_in_ip | ::1
```

8. http://guides.rubyonrails.org/command_line.html#rails-dbconsole

```
last_sign_in_ip      | ::1
created_at           | 2015-02-28 23:51:40.302823
updated_at           | 2015-02-28 23:51:40.322173
```

Note that you can exit `dbconsole` by typing `\q` and hitting Return.

This is an amazing amount of functionality just for installing a gem and adding a few lines of code to our application. And, since Devise is tried and tested, we know our authentication system is solid and dependable. But it's ugly.

We could open up `app/assets/stylesheets/application.css` and start trying to make it look better, but we don't have to. Bootstrap provides a ton of styles we can apply to our markup that will make our login look great, and we won't have to write any CSS.

Installing Bootstrap with Bower

We want our users' experience with Shine to be good, but we don't have hours and hours to spend styling and perfecting it. We also might not even have the *expertise* to do a good job. The reality of software development, especially for internal tools, is that there's rarely enough time or people to work on a great design.

Fortunately, there are now many *CSS frameworks* available that can help us produce a *decent* design. A framework is a set of reusable classes that we can apply—without writing any actual CSS—to style our markup. For example, a framework might set up a set of font sizes that work well when used together. It may also provide classes we can apply to form fields to make them lay out effectively on the page.

Bootstrap⁹ is one of the most popular and widely used CSS frameworks, and it will give users an immense amount of power to control the look and feel of the app, without having to write any CSS ourselves. Bootstrap is no replacement for an actual designer—its default visual style won't win any design awards. But, for an internal application like Shine, it's perfect. It will make our app look good.

To turn our ugly login and sign-up forms into something we can be proud of, we need to install Bootstrap, configure it in our Rails application's asset pipeline,¹⁰ and then make a few changes to the markup Devise provides for those screens.

9. <http://getbootstrap.com>

10. http://guides.rubyonrails.org/asset_pipeline.html

Installing Bootstrap

There are three ways to install Bootstrap into a Rails application: as a Ruby Gem, by referencing a publicly available version hosted on a CDN,¹¹ or by downloading it and storing it within our application's source.

We're going to use the latter, assisted by a tool called Bower.¹² Later in the book, we'll need to use some front-end assets (CSS and JavaScript libraries) that aren't available as RubyGems, so Bower will become our one-stop shop for all things front-end (rather than having some assets managed via our Gemfile and some managed by Bower; see the following sidebar for more information about this decision).

Why Not Use RubyGems?

It may seem easier to just use the gemified versions of front-end assets instead of setting up Bower to download and manage everything. The problem is that RubyGems becomes a needless middleman, obscuring the actual versions of the assets you are using (as of this writing, the `jquery-rails` gem is at version 4.0.3, is compatible with Rails 4.2, and bundles jQuery 2.1.3, which I find incredibly confusing).

Further, you end up relying on others to package assets you need, so you have to hope that the asset you want is available, *and* that the latest version has been packaged by the gem's maintainer. If neither of those is the case, you have to find an alternate solution, which means either *you* become the gem's maintainer, or you just download the assets manually.

This is a very real problem, since the world of front-end libraries is much larger than Rails. The community around front-end asset frameworks like Bootstrap has chosen Bower as the means to manage these assets. Even though it's a bit of extra work to set up on our end, using Bower will give us flexibility and predictability in our toolchain.

To install Bootstrap using Bower, we'll first need to install Bower; then we'll instruct it to download and install Bootstrap; and, finally, we'll configure the asset pipeline to make Bootstrap available.

Install Bower

Bower bills itself as a package manager for the web. It was created by Twitter and is analogous to RubyGems, but manages front-end assets (including CSS frameworks like Bootstrap and JavaScript libraries like Angular). Bower is

11. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Content_delivery_network

12. <http://bower.io>

written in JavaScript, and so it requires a JavaScript runtime in order to work. That means you'll have to install Node.js.

To install Node,¹³ simply visit <http://nodejs.org> and follow the instructions for your operating system. In particular, you may want to check out the page on installing Node via package managers,¹⁴ as it has extensive documentation for various operating systems.

Once you have Node installed, you'll have access to the npm command-line application. This is a package manager for JavaScript, and we'll use that to install Bower.

```
$ npm install -g bower
```

It may seem comical to install a package manager just to install another package manager that we'll use alongside our existing, Ruby-based package manager, but that's how it is. Bower is going to make our lives easier by giving us clear and complete control over our front-end assets. This initial setup is going to be more than worth it.

With Bower installed, we *could* manage our dependencies using the bower command-line application. However, there's a Ruby gem called bower-rails that makes our interaction with Bower a bit more "Rails-like," so let's install that as well by adding it to our Gemfile.

```
login/install-bootstrap/shine/Gemfile
gem 'bower-rails'
```

We can install it with Bundler.

```
$ bundle install
```

The bower-rails gem does two things for us. First, it allows us to specify dependencies in a simple file called Bowerfile, which will be easier to work with than the JSON format¹⁵ required by the bower command-line app. Bower-rails also provides rake tasks to run Bower for us.

```
$ bundle exec rake -T bower
rake bower:cache:clean      # Clear the bower cache
rake bower:clean            # Attempt to keep only files...
rake bower:install[options] # Install components from bower...
rake bower:install:deployment[options] # Install components from bower...
rake bower:install:development[options] # Install both dependencies...
rake bower:install:production[options] # Install only dependencies, exc...
```

13. <http://nodejs.org>

14. <https://github.com/joyent/node/wiki/Installing-Node.js-via-package-manager>

15. <http://bower.io/docs/creating-packages/#bowerjson>

```

rake bower:list           # List bower components
rake bower:resolve        # Resolve assets paths in bower...
rake bower:update[options] # Update bower components
rake bower:update:prune[options] # Update existing components...

```

We'll see how Bowerfile works in the next section, when we download Bootstrap into our application.

Download Bootstrap

Now that Bower is installed, we'll add our first front-end dependency, which is for Bootstrap. Bower-rails will look for Bowerfile to find our list of dependencies. It looks very similar to a Gemfile and exposes the method `asset` for specifying a front-end dependency. We'll create Bowerfile like so:

```

login/install-bootstrap/shine/Bowerfile
asset 'bootstrap-sass-official'

```

How did we know to use the string `'bootstrap-sass-official'` to download Bootstrap? We found it by searching the Bower central registry. Bower packages are hosted in public git repositories (usually hosted on GitHub) and registered at <http://bower.io/search>, which is analogous to <http://rubygems.org>. You can search that registry for any package with the name “bootstrap” by running `bower search bootstrap`.

```
$ bower search bootstrap | head
```

Search results:

```

bootstrap git://github.com/twbs/bootstrap.git
angular-bootstrap git://github.com/angular-ui/bootstrap-bower.git
bootstrap-sass-official git://github.com/twbs/bootstrap-sass.git
sass-bootstrap git://github.com/jlong/sass-bootstrap.git
bootstrap-datepicker git://github.com/eternicode/bootstrap-datepicker.git
bootstrap-select git://github.com/silviomoreto/bootstrap-select.git
angular-ui-bootstrap-bower git://github.com/angular-ui/bootstrap-bower
angular-ui-bootstrap git://github.com/angular-ui/bootstrap.git

```

The list of results is *much* longer than what we've shown here (Bootstrap has a *ton* of add-ons in Bower's registry), but the very first result shows a URL to the official Bootstrap source code on GitHub. The string preceding that URL is the name you need to use in your Bowerfile to bring down that asset.

In our case, we don't want to use the first one, because that version is using LESS¹⁶ as a CSS preprocessor. Rails uses SASS for CSS preprocessing (this will become useful in [Glyphicons, on page 235](#), when we need to alter the asset pipeline's font handling).

16. <http://lesscss.org>

With our Bowerfile ready to go, we'll use the `bower:install` rake task, provided by `bower-rails`, to install Bootstrap.

```
$ bundle exec rake bower:install
```

```
bower.js files generated
/usr/local/share/npm/bin/bower install -p
bower bootstrap-sass-official#* cached git://github.com/twbs/bootstrap-...
bower bootstrap-sass-official#* validate 3.3.1 against git://github.co...
bower bootstrap-sass-official#* new version for git://github.com/...
bower bootstrap-sass-official#* resolve git://github.com/twbs/bootstr...
bower bootstrap-sass-official#* download https://github.com/twbs/bootss...
bower bootstrap-sass-official#* extract archive.tar.gz
bower bootstrap-sass-official#* resolved git://github.com/twbs/bootstr...
bower jquery#>= 1.9.0 cached git://github.com/jquery/jquer...
bower jquery#>= 1.9.0 validate 2.1.3 against git://github.co...
bower bootstrap-sass-official#* install bootstrap-sass-official#3.3.3
bower jquery#>= 1.9.0 install jquery#2.1.3
```

```
bootstrap-sass-official#3.3.3 bower_components/bootstrap-sass-official
└─ jquery#2.1.3
```

```
jquery#2.1.3 bower_components/jquery
```

Bower Uses git under the Covers



As you might guess from the output of `bower search`, Bower is a wrapper around `git` and will `git clone` the repositories to pull them down. If you're on an Internet connection that blocks certain ports, you might experience an error here like "connection refused." In that case, try modifying your `git` configuration via `git config --global url."https://"insteadOf git://`.

By default, `bower-rails` places files in `vendor/assets/bower_components` and if you look in that directory, you'll see all of Bootstrap's JS and CSS files have been downloaded. You'll also notice that jQuery was installed. This is because the JavaScript parts of Bootstrap require jQuery. Bower detects this transitive dependency and handles downloading it, much as `RubyGems` would in a similar situation.

We won't actually be using Bootstrap's JavaScript, nor will we be using jQuery, but there's no easy way to avoid downloading them (no "CSS-only" version of `bootstrap-sass` exists). Ultimately, it won't matter because we won't configure the asset pipeline to serve them—they'll essentially be inert files in our project.

Now that Bootstrap has been downloaded, we want to configure Rails to serve it up as part of our application's CSS assets.

Add Bootstrap to Our Asset Pipeline

The Rails asset pipeline manages the deployment of front-end assets to a user's browser. Essentially, it allows us to organize our JavaScript and CSS however we'd like, but have all of it packaged up at runtime into only two files: one for CSS, one for JavaScript.

By default the asset pipeline packages the files in `app/assets/stylesheets` and `app/assets/javascripts` as `application.css` and `application.js`, respectively. Since Bower adds CSS (and, eventually, JavaScript) outside of `app/assets`, we have to add a bit more configuration for the asset pipeline to know about them.

Much like how we piece together a Ruby application by setting paths and using `require`, the asset pipeline (which is powered by sprockets¹⁷) is configured with *asset paths* that contain *directives*, which describe all the files we want to serve as assets.

Bower-rails will automatically add `vendor/assets/bower_components` to the asset path for us, so there's no need to do any additional configuration. To use Bootstrap's CSS files, we'll use the `require` directive to tell it to bring them into our application. Because the default application layout references `application.css` we can add this directive in `app/assets/stylesheets/application.css`, which is where Rails places that file by default.

```
login/install-bootstrap/shine/app/assets/stylesheets/application.css
```

```
/*
  *= require_tree .
  *= require_self
  ➤ *= require 'bootstrap-sass-official'
  */
```

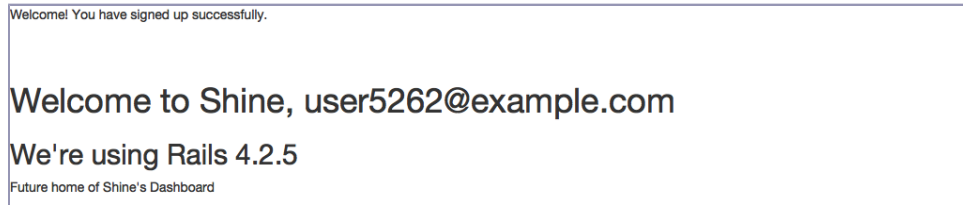
Generally, `require` will bring in a file named for the string following the directive, which would be `bootstrap-sass-official.css` in this case. If you look in `vendor/assets/bower_components`, you won't see that file, so how does this work?

Distributing assets for Bower requires creating a *manifest* file named `bower.json` that describes the package. Bootstrap is packaged this way and if you look at `vendor/assets/bower_components/bootstrap-sass-official/bower.json`, you can see its manifest. Sprockets actually knows to look for that file.

Sprockets sees that we've required `bootstrap-sass-official`, sees that there's a directory named that inside one of its asset paths (namely `vendor/assets/bower_components`), and sees that *that* directory contains a `bower.json`. It then reads that file to figure out the actual files to serve up as assets.

17. <https://github.com/sstephenson/sprockets>

Let's see it in action. When you navigate to the homepage, you'll see that the font has changed from your browser's default (likely Times New Roman) to Helvetica, which is what Bootstrap uses by default.



If you view the source being served, you'll see that our application has picked up the assets in `vendor/assets/bower_components/bootstrap-sass-official`.

```
<link
  rel="stylesheet"
  media="all"
  href="/assets/application-78386373b678ffd4f96d8483bd55b01c.css?body=1" />

<link rel="stylesheet"
  media="all"
  href="/assets/bootstrap-sass-official/assets/stylesheets\
    /_bootstrap-242cc2b1c4514d91448d4c8fdeb4662b.css?body=1" />
```

This has been reformatted to fit the page here, but you can see that Rails has figured out from `bower.json` that the CSS files are in `vendor/assets/bower-components/bootstrap-sass-official/assets/stylesheets`.

With Bootstrap now installed, we can make use of the classes and components it provides to make our login experience look great.

Styling the Login and Registration Forms

Bootstrap doesn't do much to naked elements in our markup. It sets the default font and makes a few color changes, but most of what Bootstrap does requires us to add classes to certain elements in a particular way. This means we'll need access to the markup before we get started.

You might recall that we didn't write any markup for our login screens—they were all provided by Devise. Devise is packaged as a Rails Engine,¹⁸ so the gem itself contains the views. But it also contains a generator called `devise:views` that will extract those views into our application, allowing us to modify them.

```
$ bundle exec rails generate devise:views
  invoke Devise::Generators::SharedViewsGenerator
  create  app/views/devise/shared
```

18. <http://guides.rubyonrails.org/engines.html>

```

create    app/views/devise/shared/_links.html.erb
invoke   form_for
create    app/views/devise/confirmations
create    app/views/devise/confirmations/new.html.erb
create    app/views/devise/passwords
create    app/views/devise/passwords/edit.html.erb
. . .
invoke   erb
create    app/views/devise/mailer
create    app/views/devise/mailer/confirmation_instructions.html.erb
create    app/views/devise/mailer/reset_password_instructions.html.erb
create    app/views/devise/mailer/unlock_instructions.html.erb

```

Now that we can edit these files, we can use Bootstrap's CSS classes to make them look how we'd like.

Since we'd like to style both the login screen *and* the registration screen, we need a way to log ourselves out so we can see them. Devise set up all the necessary routes for us, so we just need to create a link to the right path in `app/views/dashboard/index.html.erb`.

```
login/use-bootstrap/shine/app/views/dashboard/index.html.erb
```

```

<section>
  <p>
    Future home of Shine's Dashboard
  </p>
  ➤ <%= link_to "Log Out", destroy_user_session_path, method: :delete %>
</section>

```

With that link in place, we can log out to see the screens we're going to style. We're just going to be using the styles Bootstrap provides—we aren't writing any CSS ourselves. You'll be amazed at how much better our screens are with just these simple changes.

First, we need to make sure all of our markup is in one of Bootstrap's "containers," which will "unlock" many of the features we need. We can apply this to the body element in our application layout.

```
login/use-bootstrap/shine/app/views/layouts/application.html.erb
```

```

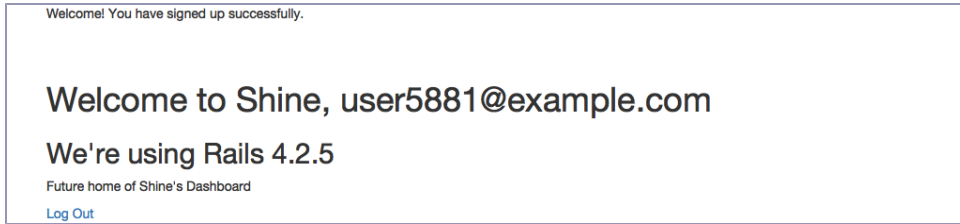
➤ <body class="container">
  <p class="notice"><%= notice %></p>
  <p class="alert"><%= alert %></p>

  <%= yield %>

</body>

```

Reloading our app, we can see that this class added some sensible margins and padding.



Let's start with the login screen.

Styling the Login Screen

Since Devise uses Rails's RESTful routing scheme, the “resource” around logging in is called a “user session.” Therefore, the view for the login screen is in `app/views/devise/sessions/new.html.erb`.

For styling forms, Bootstrap's documentation¹⁹ has several different options. We'll use the first, most basic, one, which is perfect for our needs.

We'll wrap each label and input element in a `div` with the class `form-group` and we'll add the class `form-control` to each control. The check box requires slightly different handling—we put it inside its own label, which is inside an element with the class `checkbox`—and the submit tag will need some classes to make it look like a button.

Here's what our revised template looks like:

```
login/use-bootstrap/shine/app/views/devise/sessions/new.html.erb
<header>
<h1>Log in</h1>
</header>

<%= form_for(resource, as: resource_name,
              url: session_path(resource_name)) do |f| %>
  <div class="form-group">
    <%= f.label :email %>
    <%= f.email_field :email, autofocus: true, class: "form-control" %>
  </div>

  <div class="form-group">
    <%= f.label :password %>
    <%= f.password_field :password, autocomplete: "off", class: "form-control" %>
  </div>

  <% if devise_mapping.rememberable? -%>
    <div class="checkbox">
      <label>
```

19. <http://getbootstrap.com/css/#forms>


```

      <%= f.check_box :remember_me %> Remember Me
    </label>
  </div>
<% end -%>

  <%= f.submit "Log in", class: "btn btn-primary btn-lg" %>
<% end %>
<%= render "devise/shared/links" %>

```

If you reload your browser, the form now looks *a lot* better than before.

The spacing and “vertical rhythm” of the elements is more pleasing. The form controls feel more spacious and inviting. The “Log in” button looks more clickable. You’ll even notice a subtle animation and highlight when switching the active form field. And all we did was add a few classes to our markup!

Before we move on to the registration screen, there’s one more thing to fix here. If you submit the form without providing an email or password, you’ll see the login form again and, up at the top, you’ll see an error message: “Invalid email or password.” It’s hard to see.

This message is placed into the Rails flash²⁰ by Devise, and we should be styling it in a way that allows users to more easily see it. This will help users better understand when they’ve messed something up.

Styling the Flash

In addition to classes designed to work with existing HTML entities like forms, Bootstrap provides “components,” which are a set of classes that, when applied to an element (or set of elements), create a particular effect. For the flash, Bootstrap provides a component called an alert.²¹

20. http://guides.rubyonrails.org/action_controller_overview.html#the-flash

21. <http://getbootstrap.com/components/#alerts>

In our application's default layout file, `app/views/layouts/application.html.erb`, there are dummy placeholders for the flash messages.

```
<p class="notice"><%= notice %></p>
<p class="alert"><%= alert %></p>
```

Since there's no styling for the notice or alert class, this is why our flash messages look so bad. Let's re-create them using Bootstrap's alert component, which just requires using the class `alert` and then either `alert-danger` or `alert-info`, for the alert and notice flash messages, respectively.

```
login/style-flash/shine/app/views/layouts/application.html.erb
<body class="container">
>   <% if notice.present? %>
>     <aside class="alert alert-info">
>       <%= notice %>
>     </aside>
>   <% end %>
>   <% if alert.present? %>
>     <aside class="alert alert-danger">
>       <%= alert %>
>     </aside>
>   <% end %>
>
>   <%= yield %>
>
> </body>
```

Our markup got a bit more complex. We're using `aside` instead of `div` since it's more semantically correct (Bootstrap doesn't generally care which type of element styles are applied to). We've also had to wrap each alert component in code to check whether that message was actually set. This is because even without content, the Bootstrap alert component will still show up visually and look strange.

With that done, we can navigate to a page requiring login, provide incorrect login details, and see that the flash messages are styled appropriately. Users can now easily see their mistakes and understand their successes, as shown in [the screenshots on page 21](#).

The only thing left to do is to style the registration page.

Styling the Registration Page

Devise refers to the resource for a user signing up as a *registration*, so the registration form is located in `app/views/devise/registrations/new.html.erb`. We'll apply the same classes to this page that we did to the previous.

Invalid email or password.

Log in

Email

Password

☐ Remember Me

Log in

[Sign up](#)
[Forgot your password?](#)

Welcome! You have signed up successfully.

Welcome to Shine, user2346@example.com

We're using Rails 4.2.5

Future home of Shine's Dashboard

[Log Out](#)

```
login/style-registration/shine/app/views/devise/registrations/new.html.erb
```

```
<h2>Sign up</h2>
<%= form_for(resource, as: resource_name,
              url: registration_path(resource_name)) do |f| %>
  <%= devise_error_messages! %>

  <div class="form-group">
    <%= f.label :email %><br />
    <%= f.email_field :email, autofocus: true, class: "form-control" %>
  </div>

  <div class="form-group">
    <%= f.label :password %>
    <% if @validatable %>
      <em>(<%= @minimum_password_length %> characters minimum)</em>
    <% end %><br />
    <%= f.password_field :password, autocomplete: "off", class: "form-control" %>
  </div>

  <div class="form-group">
    <%= f.label :password_confirmation %><br />
    <%= f.password_field :password_confirmation, autocomplete: "off",
                      class: "form-control" %>
  </div>

  <%= f.submit "Sign up", class: "btn btn-primary btn-lg" %>
<% end %>

<%= render "devise/shared/links" %>
```

Reload the page and navigate to the Sign Up screen. We can see it's now styled similarly to the login page.



Devise also provides screens for resetting your password and for editing your login details. We'll leave that as an exercise for you to style those pages, but it will be just as simple as what we've seen already.

We now have a secure login system that looks great, and we've hardly written any code at all. We still have a few login requirements left to implement that aren't provided by Devise by default. In the next section, we'll see how to configure Devise to meet these requirements.

Validating Registration

If we look at the User model that Devise created for us, we can see that a Devise-provided method named `devise` is being used. This is how you can control the behaviors Devise uses for registration and authentication on a per-model basis.

`login/add-devise-validations/shine/app/models/user.rb`

```
class User < ActiveRecord::Base
  devise :database_authenticatable,
         :registerable,
         :recoverable,
         :rememberable,
         :trackable,
         :validatable
end
```

The `:validatable` *module* is what we're interested in. By using this in our model, Devise will set up various validations for the model, namely that the password is at least eight characters and that the email address looks like an email address. These defaults are set in the initializer Devise created when we ran `rails generate devise:install`.

The initializer, located in `config/initializers/devise.rb`, has copious documentation about all of Devise’s configuration options. If we search for the string “validatable” we can find the options we want to change, which are `password_length` and `email_regexp`. We’ll change the minimum password length to 10 and require that emails end in our company’s domain (which will be `example.com`).

```
login/add-devise-validations/shine/config/initializers/devise.rb
```

```
# ==> Configuration for :validatable
config.password_length = 10..128
config.email_regexp = /\A[^@]+\@example\.com\z/
```

Since we changed an initializer, we’ll need to restart our server. Once we do that, if we try to register with a short password or an invalid email, we’ll get an error message.

Sign up

2 errors prohibited this user from being saved:

- Email is invalid
- Password is too short (minimum is 10 characters)

Email

Password

Password confirmation

[Sign up](#)

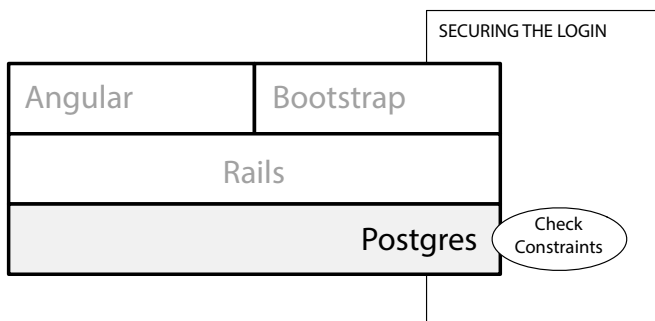
[Log in](#)

This covers the user experience and, because this is implemented using Active Record validations, also covers most typical code paths that might change the user’s email address. Most, but not all.

Next: Using Postgres to Make Our Login More Secure

Devise cannot absolutely prevent users from getting into our database that do not meet our security criteria. For example, Active Record provides the method `update_attribute`, which skips validations and could be used to insert a user with any email address into the `USERS` table. What we need is for the data layer itself to enforce our requirements.

Postgres’s *check constraints* can do this.



CHAPTER 2

Secure the Login Database with Postgres Constraints

Our registration and login system looks great, thanks to Bootstrap, and works great, thanks to Devise. But it's not as secure as we'd like. As you recall, we used validations to prevent users from registering with a non-company email address. Because this is done in Rails, it's easily circumventable using Rails's APIs or a direct database connection. Even something unintentional like bugs in our code could introduce vulnerabilities.

What we'd like is to prevent non-company email addresses getting into the database entirely. Most SQL databases do not have powerful features for preventing bad data. With Postgres, however, we can, by using a feature called *check constraints*. This chapter will be about setting up a check constraint for Postgres as part of our Rails database migrations.

Before we see how Postgres can solve our vulnerability, let's explore it briefly, so we know exactly what problem we're solving.

Exposing the Vulnerability Devise and Rails Leave Open

You can easily verify the security hole in our application by creating a new user, signing out, changing that user's email in the database, and logging back in using the new email and previous password. This problem may seem academic, but it's more likely than you might think.

Even in a small company, there could be processes that access the database that aren't part of our application, and so won't benefit from the validations in our User model. Further, Rails itself provides methods like `update_attribute` that circumvent the validations, meaning a software bug could exist that used one of these methods and introduce a vulnerability.

How could this issue become a real problem? Consider a new employee named Sally. On Sally's first day, her company email wasn't set up properly, but she needed access to Shine. Sally was recruited by one of the engineers, Bob. Bob tries to help his friend Sally on her first day of work, and so creates a user for her using her personal email address, so she can start using Shine.

Months later, Sally leaves the company and Aaron in HR goes to deactivate her access to company systems. Aaron assumes that by deactivating Sally's email account, she won't have access to any more internal systems. Aaron doesn't know that Sally is using her personal email account to do that, so we are now in a situation where the company thinks Sally's access has been cut off, but it actually hasn't been.

Although this is all hypothetical, it now feels more possible than it might have seemed at first. When faced with security issues like this, you must weigh the cost of the security breach against the cost of preventing it. This means we need to figure out how much effort is required to prevent this vector of attack.

If preventing it required even a few days, it might not be worth it. Since we're using Postgres, it's a one-liner using *check constraints*.

Prevent Bad Data Using Check Constraints

If you've done any database work at all, you're no doubt familiar with a "not null" constraint that prevents inserting null into a column of the database.

```
CREATE TABLE people (
  id      INT      NOT NULL,
  name    VARCHAR(255) NOT NULL,
  birthdate DATE    NULL
);
```

In this table, `id` and `name` may not be NULL, but `birthdate` may be. Postgres takes the "null constraint" concept *much* further by allowing arbitrary constraints on fields. Postgres also has support for regular expressions. This means we can create a constraint on our email field that requires its value to match the same regular expression we used in our Rails code. This would prevent non-company email addresses from being inserted into the table entirely.

First, we'll create a new migration where we can add this constraint.

```
$ bundle exec rails g migration add-email-constraint-to-users
  invoke  active_record
  create  db/migrate/20150303133619_add_email_constraint_to_users.rb
```

The *Domain-Specific Language* (DSL) for writing Rails migrations doesn't provide any means of creating this constraint, so we have to do it in straight SQL. Although Postgres *Data Definition Language* (DDL) looks different from what we normally use in our migrations, it's still relatively straightforward and well documented online.¹

The basic structure of our constraint is that we want to “alter” the USERS to “add” a constraint that will “check” the email column for invalid values. Here's what our migration will look like (see the following sidebar to learn why we're using the older up and down methods).

```
login/add-postgres-constraint/shine/db/migrate/20150303133619_add_email_constraint_to_users.rb
class AddEmailConstraintToUsers < ActiveRecord::Migration
  def up
    execute %{
      ALTER TABLE
        users
      ADD CONSTRAINT
        email_must_be_company_email
      CHECK ( email ~* '^[^@]+\@example\\.com' )
    }
  end
  def down
    execute %{
      ALTER TABLE
        users
      DROP CONSTRAINT
        email_must_be_company_email
    }
  end
end
```

The ~* operator is how Postgres does regular expression matching. Therefore this code means that the email column's value must match the regular expression we've given or the insert or update command will fail. The regular expression is more or less identical to the one we used when configuring Devise.

Let's see it in action. First we'll run our migrations.

1. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/ddl-constraints.html>

Why Aren't We Using `change` in Our Rails Migrations?

Rails 3.1 introduced the concept of *reversible migrations* via the method `change` in the migrations DSL. The Rails authors realized that most implementations of `down` were to reverse what was done inside `up` and Rails could figure out how to reverse the code in the `up` method automatically.

To make this work, programmers would need to constrain the contents of the `change` method to only those migration methods that Rails knows how to reverse, which are itemized in `ActiveRecord::Migration::CommandRecorder`.^a

In most of the migrations we'll write in this book, we aren't using those methods, and are typically just using `execute`, because we need to run Postgres-specific commands. We could work within the Reversible Migrations framework by using `reversible`, but the resulting code is somewhat clunky:

```
class AddEmailConstraintToUsers < ActiveRecord::Migration
  def change
    reversible do |direction|
      direction.up {
        execute %{
          ...
        }
      }
      direction.down {
        execute %{
          ...
        }
      }
    end
  end
end
```

Since `up` and `down` aren't deprecated, it ends up being easier to stick with the older syntax for the types of migrations we'll be writing.

a. <http://api.rubyonrails.org/classes/ActiveRecord/Migration/CommandRecorder.html>

```
$ bundle exec rake db:migrate
== 20150303133619 AddEmailConstraintToUsers: migrating =====
-- execute("
  ALTER TABLE
    users
  ADD CONSTRAINT
    email_must_be_company_email
  CHECK ( email ~* '[A-Za-z0-9._-]+@example\.com' )
;
")
-> 0.0012s
== 20150303133619 AddEmailConstraintToUsers: migrated (0.0013s) =====
```

If you ran the migrations and saw something like the following error, you'll need to do a bit more work to apply this change.

```
$ bundle exec rails db:migrate
```

```
ActiveRecord::StatementInvalid: PG::CheckViolation: ERROR:
```

```
check constraint "email_must_be_company_email" is violated by some row:
```

```
ALTER TABLE
```

```
  users
```

```
ADD CONSTRAINT
```

```
  email_must_be_company_email
```

```
CHECK ( email ~* '[A-Za-z0-9._%~]+@example\.com' )
```

```
;
```

This means that at least one row in your development database has a value for the email column that violates our new constraint. Postgres is refusing to apply the constraint because it doesn't know what to do.

In your development environment, you can easily change or remove those rows that violate the constraint. If you were doing this to an active, production data set, you wouldn't have that luxury. You'd need to get more creative. There are several ways of handling this:

- Create a migration that deletes all users using a bad email address. This is drastic, but would work.
- Create a migration to assign bogus company email addresses to the existing bad accounts. This would prevent those users from logging in but maintain their history. You could correct the accounts manually later on, but the constraint would be satisfied.
- You could also do something more complex where you demarcate active users with a new field, and prevent inactive users from logging in. Your check constraint could then only check for active users, for example, `active = true AND email ~* '[A-Za-z0-9._%~]+@example\.com'`.

In any case, if you're adding constraints to a running production system, you'll have to be more careful.

The Constraint in Action

With the migration applied, let's see how it works. First, we'll insert a user whose email is on our company's domain.

```
$ bundle exec rails dbconsole
```

```
shine_development> INSERT INTO
```

```
  users (
```

```
    email,
```

```
    encrypted_password,
```

```

        created_at,
        updated_at
    )
VALUES (
    'foo@example.com',
    '$abcd',
    now(),
    now()
);
INSERT 0 1

```

This works as expected. Now let's try to insert a user using a *different* domain.

```

shine_development> INSERT INTO
    users (
        email,
        encrypted_password,
        created_at,
        updated_at
    )
VALUES (
    'foo@bar.com',
    '$abcd',
    now(),
    now()
);
ERROR:  new row for relation "users" violates
        check constraint "email_must_be_company_email"
DETAIL:  Failing row contains (4,
                                foo@bar.com,
                                $abcd,
                                null,
                                null,
                                null,
                                0,
                                null,
                                null,
                                null,
                                null,
                                '2015-03-03:12:12:14.000',
                                '2015-03-03:12:12:14.000'0) .

```

We can see that Postgres will refuse to allow invalid data into the table (and that we get a pretty useful error message as well). This means that a rogue application, bug in our code, or even a developer at a production console will not be able to allow access to any user who doesn't have a company email address.

Given how little effort this was, and the peace of mind it gives us, it's a no-brainer to add this level of security. Postgres makes it simple, meaning the cost of securing our website is low.

There's one last thing we'll need to change, because we're using a feature that's Postgres-specific. By default, Rails stores a snapshot of the database schema in `db/schema.rb`, which is a Ruby source file using the DSL for Rails migrations. Rails creates this by examining the database schema and creating what is essentially a single migration, in Ruby, to create the schema from scratch. This is what tests use to create a fresh database.

The problem is that Rails doesn't know about check constraints, so the one we just added won't be present in `db/schema.rb`. This is easily remedied by telling Rails to use SQL, rather than Ruby, for storing the schema. We can do this by adding one line to `config/application.rb`.

```
login/add-postgres-constraint/shine/config/application.rb
config.active_record.schema_format = :sql
```

We'll then need to remove the old `db/schema.rb` file, create `db/structure.sql` by running migrations, and finally reset our test database by dropping it and re-creating it. We can do all this with rake.

```
$ rm db/schema.rb
$ bundle exec rake db:migrate
$ RAILS_ENV=test bundle exec rake db:drop
$ RAILS_ENV=test bundle exec rake db:create
```

You May Get Churn in `db/structures.sql`

Because `db/structure.sql` is a Postgres-specific dump of the schema, certain aspects of it are dependent on the local environment. For example, if you use `add_foreign_key`, the names Postgres auto-generates might be different on different machines.



It's not a big problem for your application's behavior, since `db/structure.sql` is not used in production, but it can make for unnecessary churn in your version control history. You can combat this by tightly controlling the versions of Postgres each developer is using, providing explicit names for constraints and indexes, and not committing spurious changes to the file.

Why Use Rails Validations?

Given the power that check constraints give us, why would we bother with Rails validations at all? The answer is part of why taking a full-stack view of development is so important—the user experience.

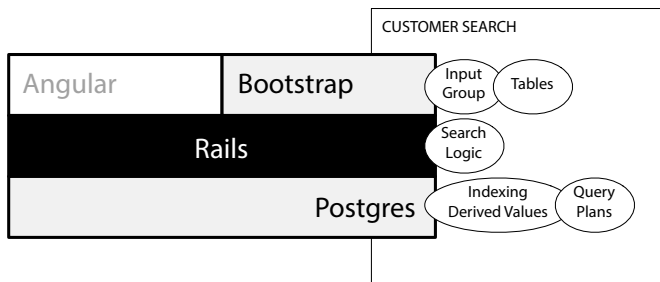
Rails validations are an elegant and powerful way to give users a great experience when providing data via web forms. The validations API is incredibly expressive, configurable, and extensible. If you remove the validations from our code and attempt to register with an invalid email, you'll get an exception—not a good user experience.

This *does* result in some duplication, which is a chance for inconsistency to creep into our app, but we can fight this by writing tests for each part of the stack (which we'll do in [Chapter 6, Test This Fancy New Code, on page 83](#)).

Next: Using Postgres Indexes to Speed Up a Fuzzy Search

Our registration and login feature is now secure *and* pleasant to use. By using the best of both Postgres and Bootstrap, we've gotten a good taste of using the full application stack to deliver a great feature. The power of these tools allowed us to tackle an important part of any application—authentication—easily and quickly, without sacrificing security or user experience.

In the next chapter, we'll start on a new feature: customer search. Search is a great way to learn about all aspects of full-stack development. It's got everything: user input, complex output, and complex database queries. We'll start this feature by implementing a naive fuzzy search that we can then examine and optimize using special indexes that Postgres provides.



CHAPTER 3

Use Fast Queries with Advanced Postgres Indexes

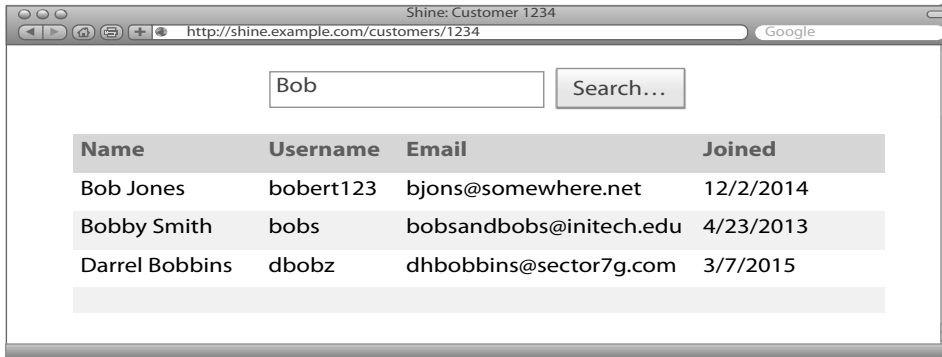
Our users can now securely log in to Shine using a well-designed login form, which was a great way to get a taste of what Postgres and Bootstrap can offer. In the next few chapters, we'll implement a customer search feature, digging deeper into Postgres and Bootstrap. We'll also start learning AngularJS in [Chapter 5, *Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS*, on page 61](#).

In this chapter, we'll implement the basics of our search, which will perform poorly. This will allow you to learn about the advanced indexing features of Postgres that will speed this search up without changing any code or setting up new infrastructure. You'll also learn how to understand query performance in Postgres, so you can be sure that the indexes you create have the performance improvements you want.

Because this is the first bit of code we're writing for this feature, we'll also need some UI and middleware logic. Although this chapter is mostly about Postgres, we'll be working in all parts of the stack.

Specifically, we'll write the basics of our search logic in Rails, and you'll learn how to style forms in Bootstrap using input groups, as well as how Bootstrap styles tables. In [Chapter 4, *Create Clean Search Results*, on page 51](#), we'll spend more time on the search results themselves.

First, we'll implement a naive fuzzy search that allows our users to locate customers based on first name, last name, or email. It'll look something like the following:



After that, we'll look at the performance of Active Record's SQL query using Postgres's *query plan*. We'll then use a special type of index on our tables to speed up our search, which we'll then verify by reexamining the new query plan. This all might feel really low-level, but you'll be surprised just how easy it is to get great performance out of Postgres with just a few lines of code.

Let's get to it by implementing a naive version of the search.

Implementing a Basic Fuzzy Search with Rails

As we mentioned in [Introduction, on page xi](#), Shine will be sharing a database with an existing customer-facing application. The customer-search feature we're building will search one of the tables in that database.

In the real-world, our database would already exist and we'd hook up to it directly. Since that's not the case, we'll need to simulate its existence by creating the table in Shine's database. And, because we'll use Postgres query performance optimization, our table is going to need a lot of data in it.

Setting Up the New Table and Data

If we were using an existing table, we wouldn't need a migration—we could just create the Customer model and be done. That's not the case (since this is an example in a book), so we'll create the table ourselves. It will ultimately look like [the schema on page 35](#).

A customer has first and last names, an email address, a username, and creation and last update dates. None of the fields allow null and the data in the username and email fields must both be unique (that's what the "index_customers_on_email" UNIQUE, btree (email) bit is telling us). This is more or less what we'd expect from a table that stores information about our customers.

The Final Customer Table Schema

Table "public.customers"		
Column	Type	Modifiers
id	integer	not null default nextval('customers_id_seq')
first_name	character varying	not null
last_name	character varying	not null
email	character varying	not null
username	character varying	not null
created_at	timestamp without time zone	not null
updated_at	timestamp without time zone	not null
Indexes:		
"customers_pkey" PRIMARY KEY, btree (id)		
"index_customers_on_email" UNIQUE, btree (email)		
"index_customers_on_username" UNIQUE, btree (username)		

Since this table doesn't exist yet in our example, we can create it using Rails's model generator. This will create both the database migration that will create this table as well as the Customer class that allows us to access it in our code.

```
$ bundle exec rails g model customer first_name:string \
    last_name:string \
    email:string \
    username:string

invoke active_record
create db/migrate/20150304140122_create_customers.rb
create app/models/customer.rb
```

The migration file Rails created will define our table, column names, and their types, but it won't include the not null and unique constraints. We can add those easily enough ourselves by opening up db/migrate/20150304140122_create_customers.rb.

```
search/setup-customer-data/shine/db/migrate/20150304140122_create_customers.rb
```

```
class CreateCustomers < ActiveRecord::Migration
  def change
    create_table :customers do |t|
      t.string :first_name, null: false
      t.string :last_name, null: false
      t.string :email, null: false
      t.string :username, null: false
      t.timestamps null: false
    end

    add_index :customers, :email, unique: true
    add_index :customers, :username, unique: true
  end
end
```


With that created, we can go ahead and run the migrations.

```
$ bundle exec rake db:migrate
== 20150304140122 CreateCustomers: migrating =====
-- create_table(:customers)
   -> 0.0193s
-- add_index(:customers, :email, {:unique=>true})
   -> 0.0037s
-- add_index(:customers, :username, {:unique=>true})
   -> 0.0029s
== 20150304140122 CreateCustomers: migrated (0.0262s) =====
```

Next, we'll need some customer data. Rather than provide you with a download of a giant database dump to install (or include it in the code downloads for this book), we'll generate data algorithmically. We'll aim to make 350,000 rows of “real-looking” data. To help us, we'll use a gem called *faker*,¹ which is typically used to create test data. First, we'll add that to our Gemfile.

```
search/setup-customer-data/shine/Gemfile
gem 'faker'
```

Then, we'll install it.

```
$ bundle install
Installing faker 1.4.3
```

We can now use *faker* to create real-looking data, which will make it much easier to use Shine in our development environment, since we'll have real-sounding names and email addresses. We'll create this data by writing a small script in `db/seeds.rb`. Rails's seed data² feature is intended to prepopulate a fresh database with reference data, like a list of countries, but it'll work for creating our sample data.

```
search/setup-customer-data/shine/db/seeds.rb
350_000.times do |i|
  Customer.create!(
    first_name: Faker::Name.first_name,
    last_name:  Faker::Name.last_name,
    username:  "#{Faker::Internet.user_name}#{i}",
    email:     Faker::Internet.user_name + i.to_s +
              "@#{Faker::Internet.domain_name}"
  )
end
```

The reason we're appending the index to the username and email is to ensure these values are unique. As we added unique constraints to those fields when creating the table, *faker* would have to have over 350,000 variations, selected

1. <https://github.com/stympy/faker>

2. http://guides.rubyonrails.org/active_record_migrations.html#migrations-and-seed-data

with perfect random distribution. Rather than simply hope that's the case, we'll ensure uniqueness with a number. With our seed file created, we'll run it (this will take a while—possibly 30 minutes—depending on the power of your computer).

```
$ bundle exec rake db:seed
```

With our table filled with data, we can now implement the basics of our search feature.

Building the Search UI

When starting a new feature, it's usually best to start from the user interface, especially if we didn't have a designer design it for us ahead of time. Recall that our requirements are to allow searching by first name, last name, and email address. Rather than require users to specify which field they're searching by, we'll provide one search box and do an inclusive search of all fields on the back end. We'll also display the results in a table, as that is fairly typical for search results.

The search will be implemented as the index action on the customers resource. First, we'll add a route to `config/routes.rb`.

```
search/search-ui/shine/config/routes.rb
resources :customers, only: [ :index ]
```

That route will expect an index method on the `CustomersController` class, so let's create that next. We'll implement it to just grab the first 10 customers in the database, so we have some data we can use to style the view.

```
search/search-ui/shine/app/controllers/customers_controller.rb
class CustomersController < ApplicationController
  def index
    @customers = Customer.all.limit(10)
  end
end
```

We can now start building the view in `app/views/customers/index.html.erb`. We'll need two main sections in our view: a search form and a results table. We'll also want a header letting users know what page they're on.

```
search/search-ui/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb
<header>
  <h1 class="h2">Customer Search</h1>
</header>
```

Next, we'll create the search form. Because there's just going to be one field, we don't need an explicit label (though we'll include markup for one that's

only visible to screen readers). The design we want is a single row with both the field and the submit button, filling the horizontal width of the container (a large field will feel inviting and easy to use).

Bootstrap provides CSS for a component called an *input group*. An input group allows you to attach elements for form fields. In our case, we'll use it to attach the submit button to the right side of the text field. This, along with the fact that Bootstrap styles input tags to have a width of 100%, will give us what we want.

```
search/search-ui/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb
<section class="search-form">
  <%= form_for :customers, method: :get do |f| %>
    <div class="input-group input-group-lg">
      <%= label_tag :keywords, nil, class: "sr-only" %>
      <%= text_field_tag :keywords, nil,
        placeholder: "First Name, Last Name, or Email Address",
        class: "form-control input-lg" %>
      <span class="input-group-btn">
        <%= submit_tag "Find Customers",
          class: "btn btn-primary btn-lg" %>
      </span>
    </div>
  <%= end %>
</section>
```

The `sr-only` class on our label is provided by Bootstrap and means “Screen Reader Only.” You should use this on elements that are semantically “required” (like form labels) but that, for aesthetic purposes, you don’t want to be visible. This makes your UI as inclusive as possible to users on all sorts of devices.

With our search form styled (we’ll see what it looks like in a moment), we’ll create a simple table for the results. Applying the class `table` to any table causes Bootstrap to style it appropriately for the table’s contents. Adding the second class, `table-striped`, will create a “striped” effect where every other row has a light gray background. This can help users visually navigate a table with many rows.

```
search/search-ui/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb
<section class="search-results">
  <header>
    <h1 class="h3">Results</h1>
  </header>
  <table class="table table-striped">
    <thead>
      <tr>
        <th>First Name</th>
        <th>Last Name</th>
```

```

      <th>Email</th>
      <th>Joined</th>
    </tr>
  </thead>
  <tbody>
    <% @customers.each do |customer| %>
      <tr>
        <td><%= customer.first_name %></td>
        <td><%= customer.last_name %></td>
        <td><%= customer.email %></td>
        <td><%= l customer.created_at.to_date %></td>
      </tr>
    <% end %>
  </tbody>
</table>
</section>

```

Now that we've got the table styled, we can see the entire view. It looks pretty good, and we still haven't had to write any actual CSS.

Customer Search

Results

First Name	Last Name	Email	Joined
Maritza	Schaefer	jaleel.prohaska0@wiza.biz	2016-01-02
Nicola	Douglas	brett1@crooksheldenreich.info	2016-01-02
Noelia	Considine	gabriel.hickle2@graham.co	2016-01-02
Jazmin	Bailey	jake_donnelly3@ferry.io	2016-01-02
Armand	Strosin	lina4@little.co	2016-01-02
Phyllis	Reynolds	eula_hamill5@ratkeauer.biz	2016-01-02
Deion	Schumm	katelynn6@hauck.io	2016-01-02
Chyna	Simonis	flavie7@conroy.info	2016-01-02
Rosetta	Stoltenberg	jefferey8@rogahn.org	2016-01-02
Paul	Cartwright	harry9@weber.org	2016-01-02

Now that we have our UI, all we need to do to implement our search is replace the implementation of `index` in `CustomersController` with the actual search.

Implementing the Search Logic

At a high level, our search should accept a string and do the right thing. Because our users are interacting with customers via email, we want to search by email, but because customers sometimes use multiple email addresses, we also want to search by first name and last name. To more strictly state our requirements:

- If the search term contains a “@” character, search email by that term.
- Use the *name* part of the email to search first and last name (for example, we’d search for “bob” if given the term “bob123@example.com”).
- If the search term does *not* contain an “@” character, don’t search by email, but *do* search by first and last name.
- The search should be case-insensitive.
- The first and last name search should match names that start with the search term, so a search for “Bob” should match “Bobby.”
- The results should be ordered so that exact email matches are listed first, and all other matches are sorted by last name.

This isn’t the most amazing search algorithm, but it’s sufficient for our purposes here, which is to implement the feature, but also demonstrate the performance problems present in an even moderately complex query.

There are two tricky things about the search we’re running. The first is that we want case-insensitive matches, and Active Record has no API to do that directly. The second is that we want exact email matches first. Fortunately, Postgres provides a means to do both of these things. We can use SQL like `lower(first_name) LIKE 'bob%'` and we can use complex expressions in the order by clause. Ultimately, we’ll want a query that looks like this:

```
SELECT
  *
FROM
  customers
WHERE
  lower(first_name) LIKE 'bob%' OR
  lower(last_name)  LIKE 'bob%' OR
  lower(email)      =    'bob@example.com'
ORDER BY
  email = 'bob@example.com' DESC,
  last_name ASC
```

The order by in Postgres can take a wide variety of expressions. According to the documentation, it can “be any expression that would be valid in the query’s select list.”³ In our case, we can order fields based on the results of matching the email column value to bob@example.com. This will evaluate to true or false for each row.

3. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/queries-order.html>

Because Postgres considers false less than true, an ascending sort would sort rows that *don't* match bob@example.com first, so we use desc to sort email matches first.

To execute this query using Active Record, we'd need to write the following code:

```
Customer.where("lower(first_name) LIKE :first_name OR " +
               "lower(last_name) LIKE :last_name OR " +
               "lower(email) = :email", {
               first_name: "bob%",
               last_name: "bob%",
               email: "bob@example.com"
             }).order("email = 'bob@example.com' desc, last_name asc")
```

Note that we're appending % to our name search term and using like so that we meet the “starts with” requirement. We have to do this because Active Record has no direct API for doing this. To create this query in our code, let's create a class called CustomerSearchTerm that can parse params[:keywords] and produce the arguments we need to where and order.

Our class will expose three attributes: where_clause, where_args, and order. These values will be different depending on the type of search being done. If the user's search term included an @, we'll want to search the email column, in addition to last_name and first_name. If there's no @, we'll just search first_name and last_name.

Let's assume that two private methods exist called build_for_email_search and build_for_name_search that will set the attributes appropriately, depending on the type of search as dictated by the search term. We'll see their implementation in a minute, but here's how we'll use them in the constructor of CustomerSearchTerm:

```
search/naive-search/shine/app/models/customer_search_term.rb
class CustomerSearchTerm
  attr_reader :where_clause, :where_args, :order
  def initialize(search_term)
    search_term = search_term.downcase
    @where_clause = ""
    @where_args = {}
    if search_term =~ /@/
      build_for_email_search(search_term)
    else
      build_for_name_search(search_term)
    end
  end
end
```

We're converting our term to lowercase first, so that we don't have to do it later, and we're also initializing `@where_clause` and `@where_args` under the assumption that they will be modified by our private methods.

Let's implement `build_for_name_search` first. We'll create a helper method `case_insensitive_search` that will construct the SQL fragment we need and use that to build up `@where_clause` inside `build_for_name_search`. We'll also create a helper method called `starts_with` that handles appending the `%` to our search term.

```
search/naive-search/shine/app/models/customer_search_term.rb
def build_for_name_search(search_term)
  @where_clause << case_insensitive_search(:first_name)
  @where_args[:first_name] = starts_with(search_term)

  @where_clause << " OR #{case_insensitive_search(:last_name)}"
  @where_args[:last_name] = starts_with(search_term)

  @order = "last_name asc"
end

def starts_with(search_term)
  search_term + "%"
end

def case_insensitive_search(field_name)
  "lower(#{field_name}) like :#{field_name}"
end
```

Next, we'll implement `build_for_email_search`, which is slightly more complex. Given a search term of "bob123@example.com" we want to use that exact term for the email part of our search. But because we want rows where `first_name` or `last_name` starts with just "bob" we'll create a helper method called `extract_name` that uses regular expressions in `gsub` to remove everything after the `@` as well as any digits.

```
search/naive-search/shine/app/models/customer_search_term.rb
def extract_name(email)
  email.gsub(/@.*$/, '').gsub(/[0-9]+/, '')
end
```

There's one last bit of complication, which is the ordering. To create the order by clause we want, it may seem we'd have to do something like this:

```
@order = "email = '#{search_term}' desc, last_name asc"
```

If building a SQL string like this concerns you, it should. Since `search_term` contains data provided by the user, it could create an attack vector via SQL injection.⁴ To prevent this, we need to SQL-escape `search_term` before we send it to Postgres for querying. Active Record provides a method `quote`, available on `ActiveRecord::Base`'s connection object.

Armed with this knowledge, as well as our helper method `extract_name_from_email`, we can now implement `build_for_email_search`.

```
search/naive-search/shine/app/models/customer_search_term.rb
def build_for_email_search(search_term)
  @where_clause << case_insensitive_search(:first_name)
  @where_args[:first_name] = starts_with(extract_name(search_term))

  @where_clause << " OR #{case_insensitive_search(:last_name)}"
  @where_args[:last_name] = starts_with(extract_name(search_term))

  @where_clause << " OR #{case_insensitive_search(:email)}"
  @where_args[:email] = search_term

  @order = "lower(email) = " +
    ActiveRecord::Base.connection.quote(search_term) +
    " desc, last_name asc"
end
```

Note that we don't need to use `quote` when creating our SQL fragment in `case_insensitive_search`, because the strings involved there are from literals in our code and not user input. Therefore, we know they are safe.

Now that `CustomerSearchTerm` is implemented, we can use it in `CustomersController` to implement the search.

```
search/naive-search/shine/app/controllers/customers_controller.rb
class CustomersController < ApplicationController
  def index
    if params[:keywords].present?
      @keywords = params[:keywords]
      customer_search_term = CustomerSearchTerm.new(@keywords)
      ➤ @customers = Customer.where(
      ➤   customer_search_term.where_clause,
      ➤   customer_search_term.where_args).
      ➤   order(customer_search_term.order)
    else
      @customers = []
    end
  end
end
```

4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SQL_injection

This may have seemed complex, but it's important to note that this search is quite simplified from what we might actually want. We might really need something more complex; for example, a search term of "Bob Jones" would result in a first name search for "bob" and a last name search for "jones." The point is that our simplistic search is still too complex for Active Record's API to handle. We had to create our own where clause and our own order by.

Now that our search is implemented, we can see the results by starting our server (via rails server) and navigating to <http://localhost:3000/customers>. You'll see that the email match is listed first, while the remaining ones are sorted by last name.

Customer Search

Results

First Name	Last Name	Email	Joined
Robert	Jones	bob123@somewhere.net	2015-12-02
Vivien	Bob	ashleigh_block0@muller.org	2015-12-02
Isobel	Bob	isaac.wyman1@morar.org	2015-12-02
Dariana	Bob	genesis2@west.net	2015-12-02
Isabel	Bob	makenna.tillman3@breitenberg.co	2015-12-02
Janelle	Bobby	darion_jacobson5@herzogokon.info	2015-12-02
Bob	O'Kon	trevor1@williamson.name	2015-12-02
Bob	Padberg	pansy_thiel4@connelly.org	2015-12-02
Bob	Schulist	kattlynn2@huel.name	2015-12-02
Bob	Skiles	gennaro0@smithammorar.info	2015-12-02
Bob	Ullrich	caidy3@bechtelar.io	2015-12-02

Depending on the computer you're using, the search might seem fast enough. Or it might seem a bit slow. If customers had more rows in it, or our database were under the real stress of production, the search might be unacceptably slow. It's popular to solve this problem by caching results in a NoSQL⁵ database like Elasticsearch.

While there may be a case made for caching, Postgres gives more options than your average SQL database to speed up searches, which means we can get a lot more out of a straightforward implementation before complicating our architecture with additional data stores. In the next section, you'll learn about the powerful indexing features Postgres provides. You'll see that they're much more powerful than the indexes you get from most SQL databases.

5. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NoSQL>

Understanding Query Performance with the Query Plan

If you aren't familiar with database indexes, Wikipedia has a pretty good definition,⁶ but in essence, an index is a data structure created inside the database that speeds up query operations. Usually, databases use advanced data structures like B-trees to find the data you're looking for without examining every single row in a table.

If you *are* familiar with indexes, you might only be familiar with the type of indexes that can be created by Active Record's Migrations API. This API provides a “lowest common denominator” approach. The best we can do is create an index on `last_name`, `first_name`, and `email`. Doing so won't actually help us because of the search we are doing. We need to match values that *start* with the search term and ignore case.

Postgres allows much more sophisticated indexes to be created. To see how this helps, let's ask Postgres to tell us how our existing query will perform. This can be done by preceding a SQL statement with `EXPLAIN ANALYZE`. The output is somewhat opaque, but it's useful. We'll walk through it step by step.

```
$ bundle exec rails dbconsole
shine_development> EXPLAIN ANALYZE
      SELECT *
      FROM   customers
     WHERE
        lower(first_name) like 'bob%' OR
        lower(last_name)  like 'bob%' OR
        lower(email)      = 'bob@example.com'
     ORDER BY
        email = 'bob@example.com' DESC,
        last_name ASC ;

      QUERY PLAN

-----
1  Sort  (cost=15479.51..15494.00 rows=5797 width=79)
      (actual time=957.825..957.843 rows=234 loops=1)
      Sort Key: (((email)::text = 'bob@example.com'::text)), last_name
      Sort Method: quicksort  Memory: 57kB
2  -> Seq Scan on customers  (cost=0.00..15117.17 rows=5797 width=79) #
      (actual time=33.091..955.392 rows=234 loops=1)
3  Filter: ((lower((first_name)::text) ~~ 'bob%'::text) OR
      (lower((last_name)::text) ~~ 'bob%'::text) OR
      (lower((email)::text) = 'bob@example.com'::text))
      Rows Removed by Filter: 388153
4  Total runtime: 957.945 ms
```

6. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Database_index

This gobbledegook is the *query plan* and is quite informative if you know how to interpret it. There are four parts to it that will help us understand how Postgres will execute our query.

- ❶ Here, Postgres is telling us that it's sorting the results, which makes sense since we're using an order by clause in our query. The details (for example, cost=15479.51) are useful for fine-tuning queries, but we're not concerned with that right now. Just take from this that sorting is part of the query.
- ❷ This is the most important bit of information in *this* query plan. "Seq Scan on customers" means that Postgres has to examine every single row in the table to satisfy the query. This means that the bigger the table is, the more work Postgres has to do to search it. Queries that you run frequently should not require examining every row in the table for this reason.
- ❸ This shows us how Postgres has interpreted our where clause. It's more or less what was in our query, but Postgres has annotated it with the internal data types it's using to interpret the values.
- ❹ Finally, Postgres estimates the runtime of the query. In this case, it's almost a second. A second isn't much time to you or me, but to a database, it's an eternity.

Given all of this, it's clear that our query will perform poorly. It's likely that it performs poorly on our development machine, and will certainly not scale in a real-world scenario.

In most databases, because of the case-insensitive search and the use of like, there wouldn't be much we could do. Postgres, however, can create an index that accounts for this way of searching.

Indexing Derived and Partial Values

Postgres allows you to create an index on *transformed* values of a column. This means we can create an index on the lowercased value for each of our three fields. Further, we can configure the index in a way that allows Postgres to optimize for the "starts with" search we are doing. Here's the basic syntax:

```
CREATE INDEX
  customers_lower_last_name
ON
  customers (lower(last_name) varchar_pattern_ops);
```

If you're familiar with creating indexes in general, the `varchar_pattern_ops` might look odd. This is a feature of Postgres called *operator classes*. Specifying an operator class isn't required; however, the default operator class used by

Postgres will only optimize the index for an exact match. Because we're using a like in our search, we need to use the nonstandard operator class `varchar_pattern_ops`. You can read more about operator classes in Postgres's documentation.⁷

Now that we've seen the SQL needed to create these indexes, we need to adapt them to a Rails migration. Rails doesn't provide a way to do this with ActiveRecord's migrations API, but it *does* provide a method, `execute`, which will execute arbitrary SQL. Let's create the migration file using Rails's generator.

```
$ bundle exec rails g migration add-lower-indexes-to-customers
  invoke  active_record
  create  db/migrate/20150308225243_add_lower_indexes_to_customers.rb
```

Next, we'll edit the migration to use `execute` to create our methods.

```
search/add-indexes/shine/db/migrate/20150308225243_add_lower_indexes_to_customers.rb
```

```
class AddLowerIndexesToCustomers < ActiveRecord::Migration
  def up
    execute %{
      CREATE INDEX
        customers_lower_last_name
      ON
        customers (lower(last_name) varchar_pattern_ops)
    }
    execute %{
      CREATE INDEX
        customers_lower_first_name
      ON
        customers (lower(first_name) varchar_pattern_ops)
    }
    execute %{
      CREATE INDEX
        customers_lower_email
      ON
        customers (lower(email))
    }
  end
  def down
    remove_index :customers, name: 'customers_lower_last_name'
    remove_index :customers, name: 'customers_lower_first_name'
    remove_index :customers, name: 'customers_lower_email'
  end
end
```

Note that we aren't using the operator class on the email index, since we'll always be doing an exact match. Sticking with the default operator class is

7. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/indexes-opclass.html>

recommended if we don't have a reason not to. Next, we'll run this migration (note that it may take over 30 seconds due to the volume of data being indexed).

```
$ bundle exec rake db:migrate
== 20150308225243 AddLowerIndexesToCustomers: migrating =====
-- execute("CREATE INDEX
      customers_lower_last_name
      ON
      customers (lower(last_name) varchar_pattern_ops)
    ")
-> 9.8050s
-- execute("CREATE INDEX
      customers_lower_first_name
      ON
      customers (lower(first_name) varchar_pattern_ops)
    ")
-> 10.1730s
-- execute("CREATE INDEX
      customers_lower_email
      ON
      customers (lower(email))
    ")
-> 13.5807s
== 20150308225243 AddLowerIndexesToCustomers: migrated (33.5590s) =====
```

Before we try our app, let's run the EXPLAIN ANALYZE again and see what it says. Note the highlighted lines.

```
$ bundle exec rails dbconsole
shine_development> EXPLAIN ANALYZE
      SELECT *
      FROM customers
      WHERE
        lower(first_name) like 'bob%' OR
        lower(last_name)  like 'bob%' OR
        lower(email)      = 'bob@example.com'
      ORDER BY
        email = 'bob@example.com' DESC,
        last_name ASC
      ;
      QUERY PLAN
-----
Sort  (cost=6308.33..6322.83 rows=5797 width=79)
      (actual time=19.802..19.820 rows=234 loops=1)
      Sort Key: (((email)::text = 'bob@example.com'::text)), last_name
      Sort Method: quicksort  Memory: 57kB
➤ -> Bitmap Heap Scan on customers
      (cost=159.03..5945.99 rows=5797 width=79)
      (actual time=15.437..17.333 rows=234 loops=1)
```

```

Recheck Cond: ((lower((first_name)::text) ~~ 'bob% '::text) OR
               (lower((last_name)::text) ~~ 'bob% '::text) OR
               (lower((email)::text) = 'bob@example.com '::text))
Filter: ((lower((first_name)::text) ~~ 'bob% '::text) OR
         (lower((last_name)::text) ~~ 'bob% '::text) OR
         (lower((email)::text) = 'bob@example.com '::text))
-> BitmapOr (cost=159.03..159.03 rows=5826 width=0)
    (actual time=15.307..15.307 rows=0 loops=1)
    -> Bitmap Index Scan on customers_lower_first_name
        (cost=0.00..43.85 rows=1942 width=0)
        (actual time=9.331..9.331 rows=234 loops=1)
    Index Cond: ((lower((first_name)::text) ~>= 'bob '::text) AND
                 (lower((first_name)::text) ~<= 'bob '::text))
    -> Bitmap Index Scan on customers_lower_last_name
        (cost=0.00..43.85 rows=1942 width=0)
        (actual time=4.851..4.851 rows=0 loops=1)
    Index Cond: ((lower((last_name)::text) ~>= 'bob '::text) AND
                 (lower((last_name)::text) ~<= 'bob '::text))
    -> Bitmap Index Scan on customers_lower_email
        (cost=0.00..66.99 rows=1942 width=0)
        (actual time=1.122..1.122 rows=0 loops=1)
    Index Cond: (lower((email)::text) = 'bob@example.com '::text)
> Total runtime: 20.027 ms

```

This time, there is *more* gobbledegook, but if we look closely, Seq Scan on customers is gone, and we can see a lot of detail around our where clause. The highlighted lines indicate *index scans*, in contrast to the Seq Scan we saw before. And the index scan is using our index and thus *not* examining each row in the table to find the correct results. We can see that it's doing three lookups, one for each field, using our indexes, and then or-ing the results together.

Setting aside the details of how Postgres does this, we can see that the results are about 50 times faster—the query should complete in 20 milliseconds!

If we try our search in Shine now, the results come back almost instantly. We've improved the performance of our search by more than a factor of 50, all with just a few lines of SQL in a migration. *And* we didn't have to change a line of code in our Rails application. If we were using a less powerful database, we'd need to set up new infrastructure for making this search fast, and that could have a significant cost to development, maintenance, and production support.

This sort of index is just the tip of the iceberg—Postgres has many advanced features. Fortunately, Rails makes it easy for us to use these features via `execute`, even if they aren't baked directly into the Active Record API.

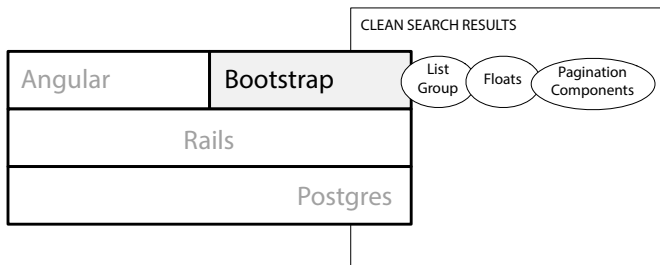
With our search performing better, let's take a final pass at the user interface. Bootstrap's default table styling made it a snap to create a reasonable user

interface in no time. This then enabled us to focus on the Rails application's behavior and performance. If we stopped now, and shipped what we have, we'd be shipping a feature we could be proud of. But, since we haven't spent *that* much time on this feature, let's see if there's any way to make the UI better for our users.

Next: Better-Looking Results with Bootstrap's List Group

We've got a solid back end going for our search. It's now really fast and we didn't have to do anything other than add a few indexes to our database. The user interface actually isn't too bad, either, considering we didn't spend much time on it. But it could be better.

The next chapter will bring us back to the front end, as we redesign the results. We'll see that Bootstrap's many helper classes and components can make it easy to try out new designs. This means we can provide better software for our users without investing huge amounts of time in writing CSS.



CHAPTER 4

Create Clean Search Results with Bootstrap Components

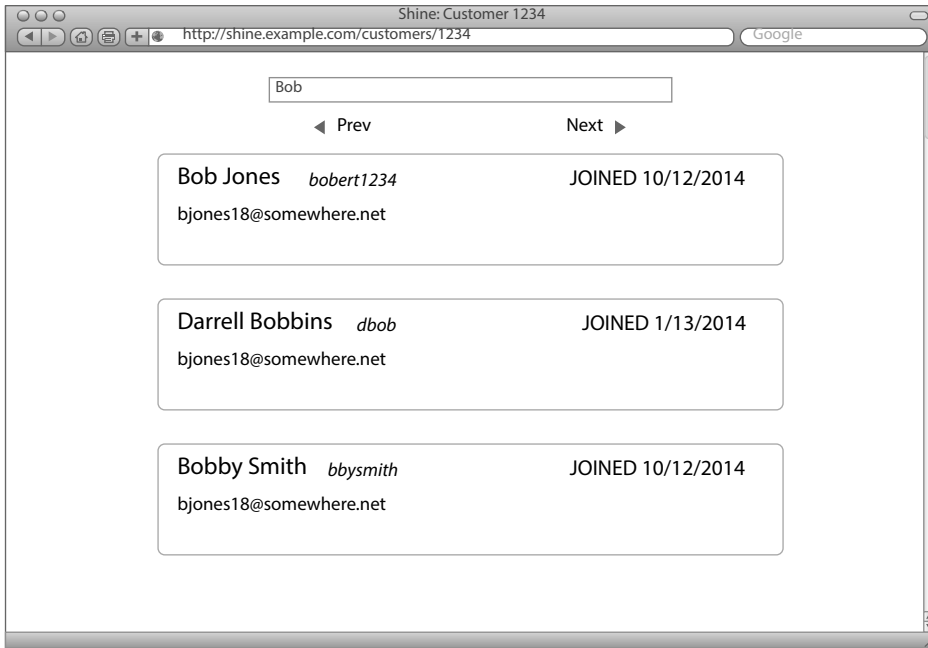
The customer search we've implemented is using tables to display the results. Tables are a common design component to use, but they aren't always the best. The reason they are so common isn't because the results are necessarily tabular, but because tables look decent by default. Everything lines up reasonably well, and the rows and columns nature of tables tends to be usable by default.

Bootstrap provides us with a lot more options than tables to get great-looking results. That's what we'll learn in this chapter. We're going to re-style our results to do two things: first, we're going to get rid of the tables and create a more Google-like result that formats each customer in a *component* style, rather than as a row in a table.

This will demonstrate how easy it is to build a seemingly complex design by using Bootstrap's *list group*, its typographic styles, and CSS floats. We're also going to paginate the results using one of Bootstrap's custom components. And we aren't going to write *any* CSS.

The UI we'll build will look like [the screenshot on page 52](#).

Let's start by removing the table and replacing it with component-based results.



Creating Google-Style Search Results Without Tables

If we were styling this application on our own, the prospect of a customized, nontabular search results page (like Google's, for example) would not be very appealing. We'd need to figure out the layout, design, and CSS to get it just right. Since we're always under pressure to ship our software and move on to the next feature, we might not be able to spend the time to give the user a better experience.

Bootstrap provides many components that make it easy to at least *attempt* something different, without a huge time investment. Let's try using the *list group* component. This component renders information in a list, but allows us to format what's in each list item with more flexibility than a table.

You'll recall the original motivation for this feature—users want to search customers by name or email to see if they signed up before a certain date. That means that the sign-up date is fairly important. It's also worth considering that our users will be getting emails from customers that will likely contain their full name written out, such as Bob Jones. Finally, our users might include their usernames in their email.

Perhaps the user interface would be better served with a mini component for each user, instead of a row in a table?

Robert Jones bobby_kathlyn
bob123@somewhere.net

JOINED 2015-12-02

Unless you write a lot of CSS, this layout will appear to be somewhat tricky to pull off, especially if you consider how well aligned all the subcomponents are. Fortunately, Bootstrap makes this simple. We'll use three features of Bootstrap to do this: the list group component, the behavior of typography inside a small HTML element, and some floating-element helper classes.

The list group component styles a list of elements so that the contents of each element are set inside a bordered box, with appropriate spacing and padding to work well in a list of similar elements. To use it, we'll replace our table with an ordered list that has the class `list-group` and give each list item the class `list-group-item`. Inside each list element, we'll put each bit of information inside the appropriate "H" element, based on how important it is to the task at hand.

[search/simple-list-group/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb](#)

```
<section class="search-results">
  <header>
    <h1 class="h3">Results</h1>
  </header>
  <ol class="list-group">
    <% @customers.each do |customer| %>
      <li class="list-group-item">
        <h2><%= customer.first_name %> <%= customer.last_name %></h2>
        <h3>Joined <%= l customer.created_at.to_date %></h3>
        <h4><%= customer.email %></h4>
        <h5><%= customer.username %></h5>
      </li>
    <% end %>
  </ol>
</section>
```

The results are a bit mixed, but we can see our design starting to form, since Bootstrap's list group does a reasonable job formatting the information. Have a look at [the screenshot on page 54](#).

Next, we want to change the position of the elements to match our earlier design. The main challenge is getting the customer's join date aligned to the right side of the component. To do that, we'll use some helper classes Bootstrap provides for floats.

Customer Search

Results

Robert Jones Joined 2015-12-02 bob123@somewhere.net bobby_te
Easton Bob Joined 2015-12-02 andres0@hamill.net brionna0
Tillman Bob Joined 2015-12-02 constance.blanda1@kris.io cortney_kreiger1

Floats in CSS are a way to shift content to the right or left and allow other content to flow around it. For example, if we float some content to the left, the markup that follows that float will render to the right of the floated content. Floats are the basis of many advanced layout techniques in CSS.

Getting this working can be tricky, especially if you aren't familiar with how floats behave in various contexts. Bootstrap provides two classes that we'll use to help achieve our design: pull-right and clearfix (there's also a pull-left, but we don't need it for this design).

`search/list-group-positioned/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb`

```

<section class="search-results">
  <header>
    <h1 class="h3">Results</h1>
  </header>
  <ol class="list-group">
    <% @customers.each do |customer| %>
      <li class="list-group-item clearfix">
        <h3 class="pull-right">
          Joined <%= l customer.created_at.to_date %>
        </h3>
        <h2><%= customer.first_name %> <%= customer.last_name %></h2>
        <h4><%= customer.email %></h4>
      </li>
    </do>
  </ol>
</section>

```

```

      <h5><%= customer.username %></h5>
    </li>
  <% end %>
</ol>
</section>

```

We moved the h3 that contains the join date above the h2 containing the customer's name because we want the name to flow to the left of the joined date. If we kept the join date in its original position, only the username and email would flow to the left.

The clearfix class is provided by Bootstrap to “reset” the floats. Because of the way floats are implemented, our page will explode to the right if we don't reset them (it's hard to explain, but try removing the clearfix class and see what happens). Now our design is pretty close to what we want to achieve.

Customer Search

Results

Robert Jones bob123@somewhere.net bobby_franco_hagenes	Joined 2015-12-02
Lulu Bob emanuel0@kub.com pearl_smith0	Joined 2015-12-02
Florencio Bob leanne_rutherford1@weinattthompson.co maria.schuppe1	Joined 2015-12-02

The last thing we need to do is reduce the visual weight of both the username as well as the label “Joined.” This allows the other information to be highlighted in a subtle way. To do that, we'll put both elements inside small tags, which will trigger alternate typography from Bootstrap. We'll also use the class text-uppercase on the “Joined” label so that it has a subtle, yet distinct visual appearance from the more dynamic parts of our component.

```
search/better-ui/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb
```

```

<section class="search-results">
  <header>
    <h1 class="h3">Results</h1>
  </header>

```

```

<ol class="list-group">
  <% @customers.each do |customer| %>
    <li class="list-group-item clearfix">
      <h3 class="pull-right">
        <small class="text-uppercase">Joined</small>
        <%= l customer.created_at.to_date %>
      </h3>
      <h2 class="h3">
        <%= customer.first_name %> <%= customer.last_name %>
        <small><%= customer.username %></small>
      </h2>
      <h4><%= customer.email %></h4>
    </li>
  <% end %>
</ol>
</section>

```

Note that we've also added the `h3` class to the user's name. This will render it visually identical to the `h3` containing the join date. Doing this will ensure that both elements' text is horizontally aligned properly. It's a subtle difference, but polish like this will make Shine *feel* better to its users.

Now, the search looks pretty darn good!

Customer Search

Results

Robert Jones bobby_kathlyn bob123@somewhere.net	JOINED 2015-12-02
Clyde Bob celine_towne0 sofia0@townekilback.info	JOINED 2015-12-02
Isac Bobby vernie5 miguel.schaden5@hauck.com	JOINED 2015-12-02
Bob Luettgen amos.kilback0 sedrick_heidenreich0@greenholt.org	JOINED 2015-12-02
Bob Schmidt merlin1 enrique_boyle1@metz.info	JOINED 2015-12-02

This layout is much trickier than you've seen before, but Bootstrap made it simple to achieve, and we *still* haven't written any CSS. This is the power of

a CSS framework like Bootstrap: if you have a design in mind, even if you just want to quickly try it out, Bootstrap provides a lot of tools, at every level of abstraction, to implement it.

There's one last thing we should take care of before moving on. Ordinary searches are returning a *lot* of results. This could be because our fake data only had so many fake usernames to choose from, but even in a real data set, common names could generate more results than a user will want to scroll through. Let's paginate the results, so our users can see only ten results at a time, under the assumption the result they want is in the first ten.

Paginating the Results Using Bootstrap's Components

Adding pagination can be done in just two steps: adjusting the query to find the right "page," and adding pagination controls to the view. There are several RubyGems out there that can help us, but it's not that much code to just do it ourselves. Since we'll be porting our view over to Angular in the next chapter, there's little benefit to integrating a gem at this point.

We'll take it one step at a time. First, we'll adjust the controller to handle pagination.

Handling Pagination in the Controller

For simplicity, we'll hard-code the size of a page to ten results, and look for a new parameter, `:page`, that indicates which page the user wants, with a default of 0.

```
search/pagination/shine/app/controllers/customers_controller.rb
class CustomersController < ApplicationController
  PAGE_SIZE = 10

  def index
    @page = (params[:page] || 0).to_i

    # ...

  end
end
```

Next, we'll use both `PAGE_SIZE` and `@page` to construct parameters to Active Record's `offset` and `limit` methods. Since our results are sorted, we can rely on these two methods to allow us to reliably page through the results without the order changing between pages.

```
search/pagination/shine/app/controllers/customers_controller.rb
```

```
@customers = Customer.where(
  customer_search_term.where_clause,
  customer_search_term.where_args).
  order(customer_search_term.order).
  ➤ offset(PAGE_SIZE * @page).limit(PAGE_SIZE)
```

That's all there is to our controller. Now, we'll adjust the view to allow paging.

Adding Pagination Controls to the View

To keep things simple, we'll go with previous/next pagination. This means we'll need two links on the page, which we can create by adding or subtracting 1 to @page and passing that to the Rails-provided `customers_path` helper.

To style the links, Bootstrap provides a component we can use, called a *pager*. Let's set it up in a partial, which we'll then use to place the pager before and after the results list (this allows the user to always have the pager handy). We've highlighted the markup and classes Bootstrap requires to style the pager. Pay special attention to `disabled`, which will give our Previous button a disabled look if we're on the first page.

```
search/pagination/shine/app/views/customers/_pager.html.erb
```

```
<nav>
➤ <ul class="pager">
➤ <li class="previous <%= page == 0 ? 'disabled' : '' %>">
  <%= link_to_if page > 0, "&larr; Previous".html_safe,
    customers_path(keywords: keywords, page: page - 1) %>
  </li>
➤ <li class="next">
  <%= link_to "Next &rarr;".html_safe,
    customers_path(keywords: keywords, page: page + 1) %>
  </li>
</ul>
</nav>
```

Now, we'll include the partial in `app/views/customers/index.html.erb`.

```
search/pagination/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb
```

```
<section class="search-results">
  <header>
    <h1 class="h3">Results</h1>
  </header>
  <%= render partial: "pager", locals: { keywords: @keywords, page: @page } %>

  <ol class="list-group">
    <!-- ... -->
  </ol>
  <%= render partial: "pager", locals: { keywords: @keywords, page: @page } %>
</section>
```

If we start our server and search, we'll now only see ten results, and our pager controllers work to allow us to step through them.

Customer Search

Results

← Previous
Next →

Robert Jones bobby_brook.waters bob123@somewhere.net	JOINED 2015-12-02
Bob Aufderhar jackson4 shyanne4@towne.org	JOINED 2015-12-02
Celestine Bob breanne0 allan_barton0@leuschke.org	JOINED 2015-12-02
Ethelyn Bob ocie_orn1 desmond_cormier1@friesen.biz	JOINED 2015-12-02
Scottie Bob lavern2 hal2@hintz.biz	JOINED 2015-12-02
Cathy Bob julia3 maude3@blickabbott.info	JOINED 2015-12-02
Erika Bobby crystal_ritchie5 guido_huels5@pfannerstill.org	JOINED 2015-12-02
Bob Borer willis2 flo_wiegand2@bogisichferry.biz	JOINED 2015-12-02
Bob Hermiston zora.turcotte1 carley.bode1@rath.name	JOINED 2015-12-02
Bob Kunze lorenza3 wilhelm.prosacco3@nader.name	JOINED 2015-12-02

← Previous
Next →

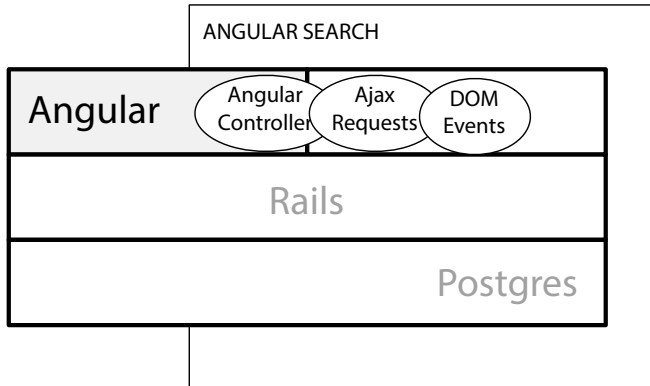
Because of our indexes, Postgres’s powerful implementation of order by, and Bootstrap’s premade components, we were able to add performant pagination in just a few lines of code.

Next: Angular!

In the next chapter, we’ll add a third tool to our toolbox—AngularJS. AngularJS is a full-fledged Model-View-Controller (MVC) framework for JavaScript. Unlike libraries like jQuery, Angular provides a higher level of abstraction for designing interactive user interfaces.

Even though Angular might feel heavyweight for the features Shine currently has, it’s not. Angular can be applied lightly, on a screen-by-screen basis, to make interactive behavior far easier than it would using jQuery. Angular also scales with the complexity of your views—where your jQuery code would start to get messy, Angular keeps things simple.

Getting Angular working with Rails requires a bit more setup than simply installing a gem, so in the next chapter, we’ll set up Angular and learn how it works by implementing a “typeahead” search. Instead of requiring our users to type a search term and click a search button, we’ll fetch results in real time, as they type. Because our search is so fast now—thanks to our Postgres-specific indexes—the user interface will feel snappy, and the code that powers it will be clean, clear, and maintainable.



CHAPTER 5

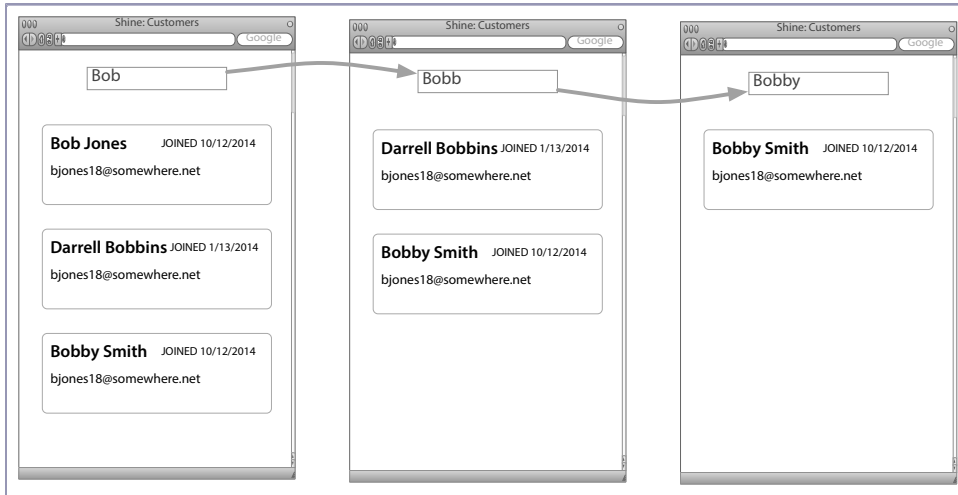
Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS

We've seen some of what Postgres and Bootstrap can do, but our user interface is still fairly static. It's now time to see what AngularJS is all about and how it can improve the experience for our users.

We're going to rework our search feature so that the system searches as our users type, dynamically changing the results as they type out a user's name. For example, if a user wants to find a customer named Bobby Smith, a search for just Bob may return more results than needed. The user would have to search again with a more refined query. If the results were visible while typing, the user could simply type Bobby and potentially get the desired record right away, without having to wait for the browser to re-render the view. [The screenshot on page 62](#) shows this in practice.

Angular makes it easy to implement this feature, although there's a fair bit of one-time setup we have to do to get there. That's what this chapter is about. We'll explore how to install and set up Angular in our Rails application. We'll then use it to perform an asynchronous search as the user types, by listening for the right DOM events and using Angular's Ajax features.

First, we'll get Angular set up in our application, validating that setup with a simple Angular *app*. We'll then use Angular to power our existing search feature, maintaining the existing user experience of entering a search term and clicking a button. Finally, we'll remove the button and make the search happen while the user is typing.



“App” vs. “Application”



One thing to keep in mind is that an Angular *app* is the front-end code and templates, whereas a Rails *application* refers to our entire Rails codebase, in this case Shine. Put another way, our Rails application can (and will) power multiple Angular apps. We’ll stick to this convention throughout the book.

Configuring Rails and Angular

To start using Angular with Rails, we mostly just need to install Angular using Bower, and arrange for Angular’s code to be served up by the asset pipeline. First, we’ll add Angular to Bowerfile.

`typeahead/install-angular/shine/Bowerfile`

```
asset 'bootstrap-sass-official'
# START_HIGHLIGHT
# END_HIGHLIGHT
asset 'angular', '~> 1.5'
resolution 'angular', '1.5'
```

Note the use of the resolution keyword. Bower isn’t as sophisticated as Bundler at handling dependencies, and when it isn’t 100% sure what version of something to grab, it asks you, interactively. This is somewhat inconvenient, so you can specify a specific version to use for a specific asset. In this case, it *does* look confusing, because we really only have Bootstrap and Angular, but later on, when we add more Angular modules, this will ensure our assets are of predictable versions.

Next, we'll install it using the rake task provided by bower-rails.

```
$ bundle exec rake bower:install
bower.js files generated
/usr/local/share/npm/bin/bower install -p

bower angular#1.4.3 not-cached git://github.com/angular/...
bower angular#1.4.3 resolve git://github.com/angular/...
bower angular#1.4.3 download https://github.com/angul...
bower angular#1.4.3 extract archive.tar.gz
bower angular#1.4.3 resolved git://github.com/angular...
bower angular#1.4.3 install angular#1.4.3
```

With Angular installed, we need to bring it into the asset pipeline by adding it to `app/assets/javascripts/application.js`. This file is a manifest for all JavaScript in our application, just like `app/assets/stylesheets/application.css` (which we modified in [Chapter 1, Create a Great-Looking Login with Bootstrap and Devise](#), on page 1 to bring in Bootstrap) is a manifest for CSS.

```
typeahead/install-angular/shine/app/assets/javascripts/application.js
```

```
//= require jquery
//= require jquery_ujs
➤ //= require angular
//= require_tree .
```

As we mentioned, we want to validate that this configuration is working before we delve into learning Angular. I find when learning a new technology, it's best to take very small steps to ensure that the setup and configuration is working so that if it isn't, I can easily narrow down where the problem is. In this case, we'll create the world's simplest Angular application. It will require a four-line controller, a simple HTML template, and exactly one line of JavaScript. But it will do the job—verifying that Angular is working in our application.

First up is `angular_test`, a basic controller and view. We add the route to `config/routes.rb`:

```
typeahead/install-angular/shine/config/routes.rb
get "angular_test", to: "angular_test#index"
```

Then we create `AngularTestController` to serve up the index action.

```
typeahead/install-angular/shine/app/controllers/angular_test_controller.rb
class AngularTestController < ApplicationController
  def index
  end
end
```

Next, we write our ERB template with certain custom HTML attributes to *activate* Angular. These attributes bind the value of our header text to the value inside an input field. Because of this binding, Angular will update the header's value as we change the text in the input field. Don't worry too much about *how* this works for the moment—we're just testing our configuration.

Our template, in `app/views/angular_test/index.html.erb`, looks like this:

```
typeahead/install-angular/shine/app/views/angular_test/index.html.erb
```

```
<article ng-app="angular_test">
  <header>
    <h1 ng-if="name">Hello, {{name}}</h1>
  </header>
  <section>
    <form class="form-inline">
      <div class="form-group">
        <label for="name">Name</label>
        <input class="form-control"
              name="name"
              type="text"
              placeholder="Enter your name"
              autofocus
              ng-model="name">
      </div>
    </form>
  </section>
</article>
```

We'll explain more later, but the existence of the `ng-app` attribute will *Angularize* this markup. The app name we gave to that attribute, `angular_test`, must be defined somewhere. We'll create the file `app/assets/javascripts/angular_test_app.js` to define it (remember that the default configuration of Rails will pick up all files in `app/assets/javascripts`, so there's no need to add this file to `application.js`). Angular provides the function module that allows us to declare our app.

```
typeahead/install-angular/shine/app/assets/javascripts/angular_test_app.js
```

```
angular.module('angular_test', [ ]);
```

Start Shine with rails server and browse to `http://localhost:3000/angular_test`:

Name

If we (say) Bob into the text field, the header should appear and update live.

Hello, Bob

Name

This verifies that Angular has been installed and is working with our Rails application. This tiny app that we've created also gives us a sneak peak into how our typeahead might work. You'll notice that we didn't write any real code to make this work—Angular is detecting our keypresses and updating our UI automatically. We'll see how that works when we implement the typeahead feature, but for now, let's reimplement our existing search as an Angular app.

Porting Our Search to Angular

Although Angular works best when we have a dynamic user interface, it's often easier to introduce new technology by using it to solve an existing problem. That way, you aren't wrestling to understand both the new feature and technology. To that end, we'll rewrite our existing search feature in Shine using Angular. As before, the user will still type in a keyword and hit a submit button to perform the search. The difference is that the search will be powered by Angular, not by a browser submitting a form.

We'll write JavaScript code that grabs the search term the user entered, submits an Ajax request to the server, receives a JSON response, and updates the DOM with the results of the search, all without the page reloading.

This feels straightforward, at least conceptually. Again, this isn't the best demonstration of Angular's power, but it's simple enough to get our feet wet with some of Angular's concepts. We'll need this grounding to see more powerful features later. So, despite how simple this example seems, we're going to take things step by step.

First, we'll *Angularize* our view by removing all the Rails helpers and adding some Angular-specific attributes (similar to the ones we used when validating our configuration in the previous section). Next, we'll write some JavaScript that shows us how to respond to a click event. Then, we'll update that JavaScript to put canned data into the view when the user does a search—this will demonstrate how we can manipulate the DOM. Finally, we'll change our code to get real results from the server by making an Ajax call.

Angularizing Our View

When we were verifying that Angular had been installed and configured properly, we added the `ng-app` attribute to our HTML. In Angular parlance, `ng-app` is called a *directive*. Even though it's an attribute on a DOM element, using *directive* allows us to distinguish between special attributes that control our Angular app from plain attributes that are part of HTML.

HTML with ng- Attributes Will Not Validate

Technically, an HTML document containing Angular's ng- attributes will not validate, as they are not recognized by the HTML spec. You can get around this by prepending them with data-, as in `<article data-ng-app='angular_test'>`.



Practically speaking, it doesn't matter as browsers handle the invalid elements just fine. Just using ng- also makes your markup more compact, easier to read, and easier to write. But if you have a strong need or desire to have your HTML validate, you'll need to use the data- versions.

The presence of this directive tells Angular to start managing the markup of all child elements of the element that contains the ng-app directive. *Managing* means two things. First, Angular creates a root scope to hold any data and code that we write. Second, it compiles the DOM inside the element containing the ng-app directive (this is analogous to how Rails processes our ERB templates).

To make our existing search form ready to be used with Angular, we'll first need to wrap it in an element where we can place ng-app. Unlike the situation with our test app, *this* app will need some substantive code. Angular expects that code to be in a *controller*, which is similar to a Rails controller.

Unlike Rails—which can derive the name of the controller from a route—Angular requires that you explicitly name the controller you want to use. That can be done using the ng-controller directive. This directive will also be placed on the element we're using to wrap our markup.

We'll use an article element to wrap the markup in `app/views/customers/index.html.erb` and to hold the ng-app and ng-controller directives.

```
<article ng-app="customers" ng-controller="CustomerSearchController">
  <!-- rest of the existing markup -->
</article>
```

Before we see how to define CustomerSearchController, let's flesh out the rest of the search form. Previously, we were using the various Rails form helpers. Those won't work with our Angular template, so we'll need convert the form back to HTML. There are a few new Angular directives in there that I'll explain in a minute, but let's see the code first.

```

typeahead/port-search-front-end/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb
<section class="search-form">
  <form>
    <div class="input-group input-group-lg">
      <label for="keywords" class="sr-only">Keywords</label>
      <input type="text"
        name="keywords"
        class="form-control input-lg"
        placeholder="First Name, Last Name, or Email Address"
        ng-model="keywords">
      <span class="input-group-btn">
        <button class="btn btn-primary btn-lg"
          ng-click="search(keywords)">
          Find Customers
        </button>
      </span>
    </div>
  </form>
</section>

```

You'll notice we're using `ng-model` on the input field. We saw that directive previously in our simple test app. This directive tells Angular to *bind* the symbol we've provided—in this case `keywords`—to the value of the form field. This variable lives in the scope Angular creates that we mentioned earlier (we'll see it manifested as an object later on).

The other directive we're using is one we haven't seen: `ng-click`. Like `ng-model` it binds a DOM element to an object in code. In this case, however, it's binding a function and not a variable. Using `ng-click` like this tells Angular that when the user clicks the button, call the function named `search` that's defined in the scope that was set up for us, passing the current value of `keywords` to it.

Now that we have our view ready for our Angular app, we need to define `CustomerSearchController`, which will contain an implementation of `search`.

Creating Our First Angular Controller

To keep things as simple as possible, we'll write just enough code to see something working. Our aim is to implement the `search` function so that it records the user's search term in a variable that we'll expose in the view. This way, we can see how to set up our controller and get it working, without worrying too much about the specifics of the search feature itself.

First, we'll need to define our Angular app using `angular.module`, much like we did before when we created our test app. We'll need to use the same string we gave to `ng-app` in our view (`customers`) and we'll put the code in `app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js` (see the following sidebar for a brief explanation

of why we aren't using CoffeeScript). Our new file will be automatically picked up by the asset pipeline, because it's in `app/assets/javascripts`.

```
var app = angular.module('customers', []);
```

Next we'll define our controller. Since JavaScript has no real concept of classes, Angular models everything as a function. Thus, our controller will be a function. Angular will call this function one time when bootstrapping the Angular app. Angular will pass the *scope* we've been referring to as an argument to our controller function.

That scope is a `Scope`¹ and we'll name the argument `$scope`. Angular-provided objects are usually prepended with a `$`. We can then set properties on this object (both data and functions), and those properties will be available to the view.

Why Aren't We Using CoffeeScript?

CoffeeScript^a is the default setting in Rails for writing front-end code. If you aren't familiar with it, CoffeeScript is a language that can be translated into JavaScript. The theory is that CoffeeScript is easier to read and write, and using it helps us avoid common mistakes developers make using JavaScript.

CoffeeScript is a fine language, and you can absolutely write your Angular apps using it. We aren't using it in this book for a couple of reasons. First, when you search online for help with Angular, you'll almost always see code written in JavaScript. By learning Angular in JavaScript, it'll be easier for you starting out.

Second, JavaScript reads better in print. CoffeeScript relies heavily on whitespace for structure and meaning, and that makes it hard to format CoffeeScript code using the narrow margins imposed by print. With JavaScript, and all of its commas, parentheses, and curly braces, we can format our code for print more easily.

a. <http://coffeescript.org/>

For right now, we want to assign the property `search` to our search function. Inside our search function, we'll assign the property `searchedFor` to the keywords *passed* to the search function.

```
var CustomerSearchController = function($scope) {
  $scope.search = function(searchTerm) {
    $scope.searchedFor = searchTerm;
  }
}
```

1. [https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/type/\\$rootScope.Scope](https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/type/$rootScope.Scope)

In our view we wrote `ng-click="search(keywords)"`. When the user clicks that element, Angular will look in `$scope` to find a function named `search`, which we've just defined.

We aren't quite done, however. Although we declared a function named `CustomerSearchController`, this isn't sufficient for Angular to know that this function is what we are referring to when we wrote `ng-controller="CustomerSearchController"`. Angular is not designed to look for variables of particular names, but instead looks at an internal registry.

So, we need to register our controller with Angular so it can find it. The object returned from `module` (that represents our app, and was assigned to the variable `app`) is an `angular.Module`² and has a function named `controller` that will register our controller function.

Before we see the actual call, I want to show you a simplified use of `controller` that demonstrates the concept but that won't actually work in production.

```
// This code is conceptually correct, but won't work in production
app.controller("CustomerSearchController", CustomerSearchController);
```

We can see what `controller` does: it registers our `CustomerSearchController` function under the string `CustomerSearchController`. These two values don't have to be the same—we could've called our controller `CustomerSearchCtrl`. Angular doesn't care that the names match, only that they are registered properly. But why won't this work in production?

Angular is highly flexible. As such, there is no formal contract for what a controller function should accept as arguments. We wrote our controller expecting to be passed the scope we needed to expose values and functions to the view. Like everything in Angular, `$scope` is registered internally and mapped to the string `$scope`. And, in our development environment, Angular will actually inspect the *names* of our functions arguments, and use those to locate the registered objects.

This may seem strange, so let me give a little more detail. Angular will see that the name of the parameter we declared in our controller function is `$scope`. It will then look in its internal registry for an object mapped to the string `$scope`. Since Angular itself registered a `Scope` under that name, it will find it and pass it to our controller function.

2. <https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/type/angular.Module>

You'll notice I said "in our development environment." In production, the Rails asset pipeline will *minify*³ the JavaScript. If you've ever looked at minified JavaScript, it's pretty unreadable. Among other things that minification does, it will change variable names to much shorter ones, all in an effort to save space and bandwidth when users download the JavaScript in their browser. Our `$scope` argument might be renamed during minification.

When Angular examines the arguments to our controller function after minification, the names of the arguments will be different. If `$scope` became `a`, Angular will look in its registry for the string `a`, find nothing, and generate an error.

We need to tell Angular what objects we want passed to our function by putting that information somewhere where it won't get minified away. To do that, we can use an array as the second argument to controller. Earlier, we simply passed in our controller function. Now, we'll pass in an array that contains a list of the names of all objects we want passed to our controller function, with our controller function being the last element in that array.

```
app.controller("CustomerSearchController",
    [ "$scope", CustomerSearchController ]
);
```

Now, when this code gets minified, the string `"$scope"` in the array won't be touched, since minification won't change string literals. Angular will see that, no matter what the name of the argument to our controller function *actually* is, we want it to pass in the object mapped to the string `"$scope"` from its internal registry.

Like I said, this is strange. The reasons for this are partly due to JavaScript's overall lack of sophisticated language features, partly due to the minification issue, and partly a design decision by Angular to be as flexible as possible. All I can say is that you'll get used to it. In fact, you'll find it easier to declare your controllers like so:

`typeahead/port-search-front-end/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js`

```
app.controller("CustomerSearchController", [
    "$scope",
    function($scope) {
        $scope.search = function(searchTerm) {
            $scope.searchedFor = searchTerm;
        }
    }
]);
```

3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minification_%28programming%29

The alignment of "\$scope" and scope in the function definition will underscore this strange-but-necessary way of setting up your code.

Now that we have our controller defined, let's add some code to the view so we can see the value of searchTerm. After our closing form tag, we'll add an h1 that displays the value of searchedFor, if it has a value.

`typeahead/port-search-front-end/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb`

```
</form>
<h1 class="searchedFor" ng-if="searchedFor">
  <small>Searched for:</small> {{searchedFor}}
</h1>
```

We've seen the curly-brace syntax before in our test app. This is Angular's templating system, and will substitute the value for searchedFor into the view, updating it as the value changes. It will expect to find the current value in \$scope.searchedFor, which you'll recall is where we set the value in our controller, inside the search function.

The ng-if directive works as you might imagine: it renders the element it's applied to (the h1), and all its children, *only* if searchedFor has a value.

This template is analogous to the following ERB:

```
<% if searchedFor.present? %>
  <h1>
    <small>Searched for:</small> <%= searchedFor %>
  </h1>
<% end %>
```

Start your server, navigate to <http://localhost:3000/customers>, enter a search term, and click Find Customers. You should see the h1 appear with your search term.

What this demonstrates is that we can use Angular directives to access data from form elements, and execute code that we write using that data. Now, we need to render a list of results in our view. We'll do this by modifying search

to return a canned set of results that look like what we'll expect from the server. This will allow you to learn a bit more without getting wrapped up in Ajax requests and JSON responses from the server.

Rendering Canned Search Results

Now that we have our search form in place, let's change the search method to populate the results section with some canned results. This will accomplish two things: it will allow us to understand how to render collections with Angular, but it will also motivate us to figure out what sort of data we'll need to get back from the server, when we finally implement the search itself.

First, let's change search to assign a list of results to a new object in `$scope` called `customers`. We'll use keys that map the fields of our Active Record object—this will make it a snap to implement the back end later.

`typeahead/canned-results/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js`

```
$scope.customers = [];
$scope.search = function(searchTerm) {
  $scope.customers = [
    {
      "first_name": "Schuyler",
      "last_name": "Cremin",
      "email": "giles0@macgyver.net",
      "username": "jillian0",
      "created_at": "2015-03-04",
    },
    {
      "first_name": "Derick",
      "last_name": "Ebert",
      "email": "lupel@rennerfisher.org",
      "username": "ubaldo_kaulke1",
      "created_at": "2015-03-04",
    },
    {
      "first_name": "Derick",
      "last_name": "Johnsons",
      "email": "dj@somewhere.org",
      "username": "djj",
      "created_at": "2015-03-04",
    }
  ]
}
```

You'll notice on the first line of the listing that we've explicitly initialized `$scope.customers` to an empty array. While this isn't strictly necessary, it's good

form as it lets future readers of the code know what values we're exposing to the view. Now we need to modify our template to render these canned results.

In an Angular template, to render a collection we can use the `ng-repeat` directive. This will repeat the markup it's placed on (and its contents) once for each element in the collection. For example, our canned customers array has three elements in it. This Angular template:

```
<div ng-repeat="customer in customers">
  {{customer.name}}
</div>
```

will render the following:

```
<div>
  Schuyler
</div>
<div>
  Derick
</div>
<div>
  Derick
</div>
```

To convert our ERB template to Angular, remove `@customers.each` and replace it with `ng-repeat`, and replace `<%= .. %>` with Angular's curly-brace syntax.

```
typeahead/canned-results/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb
<section class="search-results">
  <header>
    <h1 class="h3">Results</h1>
  </header>
  <%= render partial: "pager", locals: { keywords: @keywords, page: @page } %>

  <ol class="list-group">
    > <li class="list-group-item clearfix"
    >   ng-repeat="customer in customers">
     <h3 class="pull-right">
       <small class="text-uppercase">Joined</small>
       {{ customer.created_at }}
     </h3>
     <h2 class="h3">
       {{ customer.first_name }} {{ customer.last_name }}
       <small>{{ customer.username }}</small>
     </h2>
     <h4>{{ customer.email }}</h4>
     </li>
  </ol>
  <%= render partial: "pager", locals: { keywords: @keywords, page: @page } %>
</section>
```

Now when we click Find Customers we can see our search results render on the page.

Customer Search	
<input type="text" value="bob123@somewhere.net"/> <input type="button" value="Find Customers"/>	
Results	
<div>← Previous</div> <div>Next →</div>	
Schuyler Cremin <small>jillian0</small> giles0@macgyver.net	JOINED 2015-03-04
Derick Ebert <small>ubaldo_kaulke1</small> lupe1@rennerfisher.org	JOINED 2015-03-04
Derick Johnsons <small>djj</small> dj@somewhere.org	JOINED 2015-03-04
<div>← Previous</div> <div>Next →</div>	

All that's left is to have search make an Ajax request to the back end to get the real results.

Making an Ajax Request to Complete the Circle

Our Rails controller currently just handles regular browser-based requests. To serve results via an Ajax request, we'll need to use a more JavaScript-friendly format. JSON is the best fit, so we'll modify our controller to serve JSON if requested.

We need to use Rails's `respond_to` method to indicate that we handle JSON and then use the `json` method to specify the JSON we want to return.

[typeahead/angularized-search/shine/app/controllers/customers_controller.rb](#)

```
class CustomersController < ApplicationController
  def index

    # existing index method

    respond_to do |format|
      format.html {}
      format.json { render json: @customers }
    end
  end
end
```

Rails will handle converting our Customer instances into JSON,⁴ which will be in the format we used for our canned results, meaning we won't have to change our template once we start using this now-JSON-ified endpoint.

To get this data into our view, we need to modify search to use this endpoint. Angular provides a service called `$http`⁵ that we can use to make Ajax requests. Much like how `$scope` was registered under the name `$scope`, Angular also registers `$http` under the name `$http`. This means that if we want access to it, we add the string `"$http"` to our constructor initializer array, and add a second argument to our initialization function.

```
typeahead/angularized-search/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.controller("CustomerSearchController", [
  "$scope", "$http",
  function($scope, $http) {
```

To make our Ajax request using `$http`, we'll use the `get` function it provides.

The `get` function takes a URL and some options (which is where we specify the request parameters) and returns a *promise* object (we'll talk more about them in [Promises, on page 174](#)). This object exposes the `then` function, which accepts two parameters, both functions. These functions allow us to specify what to do on a successful or unsuccessful Ajax request, respectively. They're called whenever the Ajax request completes. It can be slightly confusing, but this is how almost all JavaScript code works—asynchronously. Let's see the code.

```
typeahead/angularized-search/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
$scope.search = function(searchTerm) {
  $http.get("/customers.json",
    { "params": { "keywords": searchTerm } })
    .then(function(response) {
      $scope.customers = response.data;
    }, function(response) {
      alert("There was a problem: " + response.status);
    })
  };
}
```

This will make the Ajax request to the server and, when we get a successful response, call the first function passed to `then`. If the response is not successful (an HTTP error code of 400 or greater), the *second* function we passed to `then` will be called instead.

4. http://guides.rubyonrails.org/v3.2.9/action_controller_overview.html#rendering-xml-and-json-data

5. [https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/service/\\$http](https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/service/$http)

These functions both accept one argument called `response`. It has four properties on it, but we only care about one of them: `data`. This will be an object representing the parsed JSON our server returned. Since that's in the exact format we used for our canned data, we can assign it to `$scope.customers` directly.

The function passed as the second argument—that handles our errors—works similarly. Using `alert` to handle errors from the server isn't a great user experience, and we'll make this better later on. But for now this will suffice, especially since we aren't expecting any errors from the server.

If we start our server and navigate to `http://localhost:3000/customers`, we can now perform a search just as it worked before, but entirely powered by Angular!

One thing you'll notice is that `created_at` is a timestamp, not a date, so it's not rendering exactly how we'd like it. In our ERB template, we converted it to a date using the `| date` helper method. Angular has a different way to handle this.

In Angular there are *filters* that work more like Unix pipes than method calls. In this case, Angular provides a filter named `date` that can be used inside the curly brackets in our templates, like so:

`typeahead/angularized-search/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb`

```
➤ <li class="list-group-item clearfix"
➤   ng-repeat="customer in customers">
  <h3 class="pull-right">
    <small class="text-uppercase">Joined</small>
➤   {{ customer.created_at | date }}
  </h3>
  <h2 class="h3">
    {{ customer.first_name }} {{ customer.last_name }}
    <small>{{ customer.username }}</small>
  </h2>
  <h4>{{ customer.email }}</h4>
</li>
```

The `date`⁶ filter can take a lot of options to customize how the timestamp is rendered, but for our purposes, the default behavior will work. Angular includes other filters,⁷ and it's straightforward to write your own (as you'll see later).

With that in place, our search looks just like it did before.

6. <https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/filter/date>

7. <https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/filter>

Customer Search

Results

Robert Jones bobby_hank_johns bob123@somewhere.net	JOINED Jan 10, 2016
Caesar Bob alex_lynnh0 celestine0@funk.net	JOINED Jan 10, 2016
Sarina Bob pierce1 deontae_nee	JOINED Jan 10, 2016
Bob Leannon rowan0 omari0@effertz.net	JOINED Jan 10, 2016
Bob Raynor dusty3 burdette3@funk.net	JOINED Jan 10, 2016
Bob Schaden reyna.mckenzie2 pablo.conroy2@senger.net	JOINED Jan 10, 2016

We still need to deal with the pagination, however.

Reimplementing the Pagination

In the original version of our search, our controller exposed `@page` to the view, so the view would know what page was being viewed. This allowed us to pass back either `@page + 1` or `@page - 1` as the page parameter in our links. Our Angularized version is using Ajax, so we'll need to send the right page number with those requests.

To do this, we'll need to keep track of what page we are on, and use it in our call to `$http.get`. We'll also need to reimplement the pager buttons. First, let's modify the controller and Ajax request.

```
typeahead/angularized-pagination/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
```

```
function($scope , $http) {
```

- `var page = 0;`
- `$scope.customers = [];`
- `$scope.search = function(searchTerm) {`
- `$http.get("/customers.json",`
- `{ "params": { "keywords": searchTerm, "page": page } }`
- `).success(`

Note that `page` is not part of `$scope`—it's local to our controller function. As the view doesn't access this value, there's no need to expose it. JavaScript's scoping rules mean `$scope.search` will have access to it, but the view won't.

Next, we'll modify our pager partial to use `ng-click` instead of Rails link helpers. We'll assume two functions on our controller named `nextPage` and `previousPage` exist. We'll see their implementation in a moment.

```
typeahead/angularized-pagination/shine/app/views/customers/_pager.html.erb
```

- ```
<nav>
 <ul class="pager">
 <li class="previous">
 ← Previous

 <li class="next">
 Next →

</nav>
```

Note how much simpler our template is. Instead of having links that we have to remember will change the current page of results on the server, we have shorter and more readable markup. Even if you didn't know Angular at all, you can immediately tell what the intention of this code is.

To implement `previousPage`, we need to grab the value of `keywords` from the view. Because we used `ng-model` on our input element, `$scope.keywords` will always have the value of the keywords in the field (which implies that we didn't really need to send it to search, but it will make testing this method easier later on). So, we just need to decrement `page` (assuming it's not zero) and call `search`.

```
typeahead/angularized-pagination/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
```

```
$scope.previousPage = function() {
 if (page > 0) {
 page = page - 1;
 $scope.search($scope.keywords);
 }
}
```

nextPage looks very similar.

```
typeahead/angularized-pagination/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
```

```
$scope.nextPage = function() {
 page = page + 1;
 $scope.search($scope.keywords);
}
```

Now, when we start our server and do a search, we can click Next, and the next page of results will be fetched and displayed in our view.

Converting our search to use Angular is just a step toward our goal of making the search feature work better for our users. By keeping the functionality the same while converting to Angular, we were able to just focus on the Angular-based aspects of the feature. Now that we've done that, we can change the search so that it searches as we type.

## Changing Our Search to Use Typeahead

Given everything we've done up to this point, changing the search from one where you must click a button to search to one where the search happens as you type will actually be fairly straightforward. Because Angular has allowed us to separate our concerns, we have all the code we need in place. We'll just need to connect it to the user interface in a different way.

First, let's modify search so it will only hit the server if the user has typed three or more characters. It's unlikely users will make sense of results based on one or two characters, so we can save a couple of trips to the server.

```
typeahead/actual-typeahead/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
```

```
$scope.search = function(searchTerm) {
➤ if (searchTerm.length < 3) {
➤ return;
➤ }
 // ... rest of the function
```

We need to arrange for search to be invoked when the user is typing and *not* when the user clicks the Find Customers button. Just as we used ng-click to bind the click event on the button to our search function, we can use the ng-change on the input field to invoke search when the text field contents change.

Let's lose the search button. This makes our form simpler, as we no longer need to put the text field and the submit button into a Bootstrap input-group.

`typeahead/actual-typeahead/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb`

```
<section class="search-form">
 <form>
 <label for="search.keywords" class="sr-only">Keywords</label>
 > <input type="text"
 > name="keywords"
 > class="form-control input-lg"
 > placeholder="First Name, Last Name, or Email Address"
 > ng-change="search(keywords)"
 > ng-model="keywords">
 </form>
</section>
```

You'll note that we've highlighted the input tag, and you can see that we've used ng-change to arrange for search to be called with keywords whenever the typing changes.

Start the server and begin typing. In my test data, I have three users whose last names start with bob, one of which has the last name Bobby. Typing just bob, I see all three results.

### Customer Search

#### Results

← Previous
Next →

<b>Tabitha Bob</b> <small>scot0</small> maximillian0@hilpert.net	JOINED Dec 1, 2015
<b>Preston Bob</b> <small>mohammad1</small> dee1@graham.info	JOINED Dec 1, 2015
<b>Alison Bobby</b> <small>newton5</small> naomie5@bosco kuhic.info	JOINED Dec 1, 2015

← Previous
Next →

If I keep typing out bobby, the results automatically reduce to only those that match.

**Customer Search**

bobby

**Results**

← Previous      Next →

<b>Alison Bobby</b> newton5 naomie5@boscokuhic.info	JOINED Dec 1, 2015
--------------------------------------------------------	--------------------

← Previous      Next →

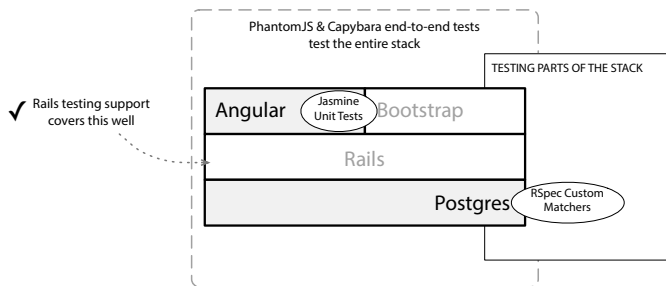
The typeahead works! The entire feature required very little code (once we installed and configured Angular—a one-time cost), and instead of implementing typeahead with a special-purpose library, we have set up a framework for implementing any user interface we might need. Because of how Angular works, we aren't wrestling with how to attach our JavaScript to our DOM elements or how to interact with the back end. Because of how Rails works, our back end is almost identical to the original back end.

In other words, by using what Rails gives us, and using what Angular gives us, we were able to create a fairly sophisticated feature quickly, without a lot of code. And it's fast, thanks to Postgres's sophisticated indexing and ordering features.

## Next: Testing

It's one thing to get code working in a browser, but it's another to have the confidence in that code that you can ship it to your users. To get that confidence, you need automated tests. We've completely avoided writing tests up to this point, because it would complicate the tasks of learning about Angular, Bootstrap, and Postgres.

Now that we've got a bit of confidence with these new technologies, we're at a point where we can turn our attention to tests. In the next chapter, we'll build on the testing tools that Rails provides, and learn how to test database constraints, write unit tests for our Angular code, and write acceptance tests that execute our Angular app in a real browser.



## CHAPTER 6

# Test This Fancy New Code

To be confident with new libraries and technologies, we need to do more than just write working code—we have to be able to test it. Rails has a long history of supporting and encouraging testing, providing many useful features for testing every part of your application. We want the same experience testing Angular and database constraints that we get with Rails models and controllers. We also want a seamless experience testing end to end in a browser.

Rails has no built-in support for testing JavaScript, nor does it provide a direct way to test database constraints. And there's no Rails Way for running an end-to-end test in a browser. But Rails is configurable enough to allow us to set it up ourselves. That's what we'll focus on here.

You'll learn how to write a clean and clear test of the database constraint we created in [Exposing the Vulnerability Devise and Rails Leave Open, on page 25](#). You'll then learn how to create acceptance tests that run in a real browser, executing our client-side code the same way a user's browser would, using Capybara, PhantomJS, and Poltergeist.

Finally, I'll show you how to write a unit test for the Angular code we wrote in [Chapter 5, Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS, on page 61](#) using the JavaScript-based test library Jasmine. This will allow us to write small, focused tests for the individual pieces of our Angular app, without relying entirely on the browser-based acceptance tests.

For the tests we'll write in Ruby, we'll use RSpec instead of `Test::Unit`, and this requires some additional setup to our Rails application. So, before we get into our actual tests, let's get that set up, and understand *why* we want to use RSpec.

## Installing RSpec for Testing

Rails ships with `Test::Unit` as the default testing framework. `Test::Unit` is a fine choice, and demonstrates the concepts of testing in Rails quite well. Despite that, RSpec is quite popular among Ruby developers. An annual survey conducted by Hampton Catlin<sup>1</sup> shows that, of the developers polled, 69.4% prefer RSpec for testing.

While this is a good reason to become familiar with RSpec, it's not the main reason we want to use it here. When we get to [Writing Unit Tests for Angular Components, on page 103](#), we'll be using Jasmine for testing our JavaScript, and both Jasmine and RSpec share a similar syntax. Here's an RSpec test:

```
describe "a simple test" do
 it "should test something" do
 expect(number).to eq(10)
 end
end
```

Here's that same test in Jasmine:

```
describe("a simple test", function() {
 it("should test something", function() {
 expect(number).toEqual(10);
 });
});
```

As you can see, both tests have a similar shape and structure. This means that when you're bouncing between Ruby and JavaScript tests, the mental overload will be less, since you'll be looking at the same overall way of structuring and organizing your tests. So, while RSpec has many virtues, our reason for using it here is to reduce friction as we test throughout the stack of our application.

With that said, setting it up is easy. First, add *rspec-rails* to the Gemfile. This gem includes tight Rails integration for RSpec and will bring in the base RSpec gems as dependents.

```
group :development, :test do
 gem "rspec-rails", '~> 3.0'
end
```

Now, we bundle install.

```
$ bundle install
```

---

1. <http://www.askr.me/ruby>



RSpec comes with a generator that will add the necessary configuration to get RSpec working.

```
$ bundle exec rails g rspec:install
create .rspec
 exist spec
create spec/spec_helper.rb
create spec/rails_helper.rb
```

The majority of RSpec's configuration is in `spec/spec_helper.rb`. It includes a set of defaults, commented out, that it recommends you uncomment. We're going to uncomment most of them so we can use them, but also add a few nondefault configuration options. Here's what the file should look like, with our additions highlighted.

```
testing/install-rspec-from-blank/shine/spec/spec_helper.rb
```

```
RSpec.configure do |config|
 config.expect_with :rspec do |expectations|
 expectations.include_chain_clauses_in_custom_matcher_descriptions = true
 ➤ expectations.syntax = [:expect]
 end

 config.mock_with :rspec do |mocks|
 ➤ mocks.verify_partial_doubles = true
 ➤ mocks.verify_doubled_constant_names = true
 end

 config.filter_run :focus
 config.run_all_when_everything_filtered = true

 ➤ config.disable_monkey_patching!
 ➤ config.expose_dsl_globally = true

 if config.files_to_run.one?
 config.default_formatter = 'doc'
 end

 config.profile_examples = 10

 config.order = :random

 Kernel.srand config.seed
end
```

We're explicitly requiring the `expect(..)` syntax—we don't want to use the `.should` assertions because this would be counter to our desire for our Ruby and JavaScript tests to be similar. We've set `verify_doubled_constant_names` as an extra safety measure if we should need to mock class behavior (this warns us if we mock classes that don't exist). Finally we're setting `expose_dsl_globally`, which

will allow our tests to just use RSpec's DSL methods like `describe` without prefixing them with `RSpec`.

The Rails-specific configuration in `spec/rails_helper.rb` is fine as is for now. Let's create a dummy spec file to verify everything's working in `spec/dummy_spec.rb`.

```
testing/install-rspec-from-blank/shine/spec/dummy_spec.rb
require "rails_helper.rb"

describe "testing that rspec is configured" do
 it "should pass" do
 expect(true).to eq(true)
 end
 it "can fail" do
 expect(false).to eq(true)
 end
end
```

When we run `rake`, it will run this spec, and we should see one test pass and the other fail.

```
$ bundle exec rake
testing that rspec is configured
 should pass
 can fail (FAILED - 1)
```

Failures:

```
1) testing that rspec is configured can fail
 Failure/Error: expect(false).to eq(true)

 expected: true
 got: false

 (compared using ==)
 # ./spec/dummy_spec.rb:8:in `block (2 levels) in <top (required)>'
```

```
Finished in 0.00388 seconds (files took 4.06 seconds to load)
2 examples, 1 failure
```

Failed examples:

```
rspec ./spec/dummy_spec.rb:7 # testing that rspec is configured can fail
```

This looks good, and we're ready to test the new features and technologies we've discussed. Note that we won't be going over the sorts of tests you'd typically write for a Rails app. This isn't because you shouldn't write them (you should), but because we want to focus on the new types of tests we need for what we're discussing. The Rails code we've seen is tested, and you can

refer to the source included with the book if you want to see how we've done that.

Let's start by writing tests of our User model that exercise the database constraints we created in [Exposing the Vulnerability Devise and Rails Leave Open, on page 25](#).

## Testing Database Constraints

When treating your SQL database as a “dumb store” (or when using an RDBMS that lacks the sophisticated features of Postgres), you'd typically use various features of Active Record to ensure database integrity and you'd naturally want to test that code. Although we're using constraints to enforce database integrity (like the check constraint from [Exposing the Vulnerability Devise and Rails Leave Open, on page 25](#)), we'd still like to have test coverage that the constraint is doing what we want.

We can easily test this constraint in RSpec, but it requires a somewhat cumbersome assertion mechanism using exceptions. First, we'll see how this works, and then we'll create an RSpec matcher to abstract the awkward syntax away so our tests can be cleaner and clearer.

### Asserting That Constraints Exist Using RSpec's Matchers

To test our database constraint, we'll need to force Active Record to insert bad data into the database so that *Postgres* is generating the error about bad data, not Active Record. You'll recall that we added Active Record validations to assist in the registration process, which means it will be difficult to use Active Record to insert bad data into the database. Difficult, but not impossible.

The method `update_attribute` is available on all Active Record instances and it circumvents validations. We can use this in our test to attempt to insert bad data and simulate a rogue agent that's not using Active Record. It will attempt to write to the database immediately, so invoking it with a non-example.com email address should fail. Here's what it looks like in the Rails console.

```
$ bundle exec rails c
2.2.0 :002 > User.first.update_attribute(:email,"foo@somewhere.com")
User Load (0.7ms) SELECT "users".* FROM "users"
 ORDER BY "users"."id" ASC LIMIT 1
(0.1ms) BEGIN
SQL (1.8ms) UPDATE "users" SET "email" = $1,
 "updated_at" = $2
 WHERE "users"."id" = $3
[
```

```

 ["email", "foo@somewhere.com"],
 ["updated_at", "2015-03-18 15:33:08.091547"],
 ["id", 2]
]
 }
}
PG::CheckViolation: ERROR: new row for relation "users" violates
check constraint "email_must_be_company_email"
ActiveRecord::StatementInvalid: PG::CheckViolation: ERROR:
new row for relation "users" violates
check constraint "email_must_be_company_email"

```

I've reformatted the error message to show only what we're interested in, but we can see that the internals of Rails raised a `PG::CheckViolation`, which ActiveRecord wrapped inside an `ActiveRecord::StatementInvalid` exception. To test that this error occurs, we'll need to use RSpec's `expect { ... }.to raise_error(...)` form.

The `raise_error` matcher accepts two arguments: the exception we're expecting, and the message it should contain (or a regular expression it should match). Since `ActiveRecord::StatementInvalid` is so generic, if we just check that we've received that exception, our test might pass if there are different errors happening. We want the test to pass *only* when our constraint is violated. So, we'll expect both that an `ActiveRecord::StatementInvalid` is raised and that the error message names our constraint. This isn't as precise as we'd like, but it's the best we can do, and it's a reasonable compromise.

```
testing/test-postgres-constraint/shine/spec/models/user_spec.rb
```

```
require 'rails_helper'
```

```

describe User do
 describe "email" do
 let(:user) {
 User.create!(email: "foo@example.com",
 password: "qwertyuiop",
 password_confirmation: "qwertyuiop")
 }
 it "absolutely prevents invalid email addresses" do
 expect {
 user.update_attribute(:email, "foo@bar.com")
 }.to raise_error(ActiveRecord::StatementInvalid,
 /email_must_be_company_email/i)
 end
 end
end
end

```

Note that we're using a regular expression as the second argument to `raise_error` so that we aren't too tightly coupled to the specific error message. Let's run our tests (note that we're using `rspec` to run a single test file—`rake` still works to run our entire test suite).

```
$ rspec spec/models/user_spec.rb
```

```
Randomized with seed 16383
```

```
User
```

```
 email
```

```
 absolutely prevents invalid email addresses
```

```
Finished in 0.09785 seconds (files took 4.91 seconds to load)
```

```
1 example, 0 failures
```

Our test passes. This gives us a way to drive the addition of sophisticated database constraints with tests. But it's pretty ugly catching exceptions and asserting that their messages match a regular expression. Unfortunately, there's not a better way to do it, but we *can* make our test code a bit cleaner and more intention revealing by creating a custom RSpec matcher.

## Using RSpec Matchers to Make Our Test Code Cleaner

RSpec uses the term *matcher* to describe the constructs it provides to evaluate assertions. In a line of code like `expect(2 + 2).to eq(4)`, the method `eq` is a matcher. It's matching the result of `2 + 2` against the constant `4`.

We can create our own custom matchers to test attributes of our code that are more particular to what we're doing. This saves us test code and can make our tests clearer. Ideally, we'd be able to write our test like so:

```
testing/custom-rspec-matcher/shine/spec/models/user_spec.rb
```

```
it "absolutely prevents invalid email addresses" do
```

```
 expect {
```

```
 user.update_attribute(:email, "foo@bar.com")
```

```
➤ }.to violate_check_constraint(:email_must_be_company_email)
```

```
end
```

If we could create the matcher `violate_check_constraint`, it would not only make our tests clearer, but would also allow us to abstract the method we're using to test: catching an exception and checking its message. This means if we could devise a better way of testing the constraint, we'd have to change it in only one place—our matcher.

RSpec makes it easy to create such a matcher. The code to do so is quite dense, but once you see how it works, you'll find it's straightforward to create your own custom matchers.

We'll create our custom matcher in `spec/support/violate_check_constraint_matcher.rb`. It's customary to put code that supports your specs in `spec/support`. Naming the file `violate_check_constraint_matcher.rb` will make it easy to know what's in there and where to find it, since it uses the name of the matcher with a `_matcher` suffix.

Let's see the code, and then we can walk through it line by line.

```

1 testing/custom-rspec-matcher/shine/spec/support/violate_check_constraint_matcher.rb
2 RSpec::Matchers.define :violate_check_constraint do |constraint_name|
3 supports_block_expectations
4 match do |code_to_test|
5 begin
6 code_to_test.()
7 false
8 rescue ActiveRecord::StatementInvalid => ex
9 ex.message =~ /#{constraint_name}/
10 end
11 end
12 end

```

Like I said, this code is dense, so we'll take it one step at a time.

- ❶ Here, we define our matcher and state its name. Since RSpec has an English-like syntax, you'll want your matcher to follow from the word “to.” In this case we expect our code “to violate check constraint email\_must\_be\_company\_email.” Any arguments given to the matcher are passed to the block as arguments. We've named the argument we're expecting constraint\_name.
- ❷ By default, custom matchers don't support the block syntax we're using. In that case, the match method (discussed next) would be given the result of the code under test. Since we need to actually *execute* the code under test ourselves—so we can detect the exception that was thrown—we must use the block syntax. The supports\_block\_expectations method tells RSpec that this is the case.
- ❸ This is where we define what passing or failing means. match takes a block that is expected to evaluate to true or false if the actual value matches the expected one, or not, respectively. Since we used supports\_block\_expectations, the argument passed is the block used, unexecuted. Our job is to execute it and see what happens.
- ❹ Here, we run the code under test.
- ❺ If we didn't get an exception, this is where the flow of control will end up. Since we *want* an exception, getting here means our test failed, so we return false.
- ❻ Here, we catch the exception we're expecting. If we get any other exception, the test will fail. Catching the exception is only part of the test.

- ⑦ The final part of the test is to examine the message of the caught exception. Just as we did before, we'll simply assert that it contains the name of the constraint we're expecting should be violated.

We're almost ready to use our custom matcher. The last thing to do is to bring it into our spec file. While it's possible to configure RSpec to auto-require everything in `spec/support`, doing so can make your specs much harder to understand. Because RSpec plays so fast and loose with Ruby's syntax, it can be challenging to look at the use of a matcher and figure out where it's defined.

To that end, we'll explicitly require our customizations, like so:

```
testing/custom-rspec-matcher/shine/spec/models/user_spec.rb
require 'rails_helper'
➤ require 'support/violate_check_constraint_matcher'

describe User do
 describe "email" do

 # ... rest of the test

 end
end
```

Running our spec, we can see it still passes.

```
$ rspec spec/models/user_spec.rb
Randomized with seed 2818
User
 email
 absolutely prevents invalid email addresses

Finished in 0.15076 seconds (files took 5.78 seconds to load)
1 example, 0 failures
```

We've now seen how RSpec can allow us to test our database constraints and, by using custom matchers, do so with clean and clear test code.

Now, let's head to the total opposite end of our application stack and learn how to write end-to-end acceptance tests that run in a real browser, thus executing the Angular code we've written and simulating user behavior.

## Running Headless Acceptance Tests in PhantomJS

*Acceptance tests* are the way in which we assure that our application meets the needs of the users. In most Rails applications, an acceptance test performs a *black box test* against the HTTP endpoints and routes.

When our application uses a lot of JavaScript—as our Angular-powered typeahead search does—it’s often necessary for our acceptance tests to execute the downloaded HTML, CSS, and JavaScript in a running browser, so we can be sure that all of the DOM manipulation we are doing is actually working.

Typically, developers would use Selenium, which would launch an instrumented instance of Firefox, running it on your desktop during the acceptance testing phase. This is quite cumbersome and slow, and for running tests on remote continuous integration servers, it requires special configuration to allow a graphical app like Firefox to run.

Ideally, we’d want something that executes our front-end code in a real browser—complete with a JavaScript interpreter—but that can run *headless*, that is, without popping up a graphical application. *PhantomJS*<sup>2</sup> is such a browser.

PhantomJS describes itself as “a headless WebKit, scriptable with a JavaScript API.” WebKit is the browser engine that powers Apple’s Safari (and was the basis of Google’s Chrome). The “scriptable JavaScript API” means that we can interact with it in our tests.

Most Rails acceptance tests use *Capybara*,<sup>3</sup> which provides an API to interacting with such an instrumented browser. To allow Capybara to talk to PhantomJS, we’re going to use *Poltergeist*,<sup>4</sup> which is analogous to Selenium if we were using Firefox.

This may sound like a *ton* of new technologies and buzzwords, but it’s all worth it to get the kind of test coverage we need. We need to add the PhantomJS and Poltergeist gems to our Gemfile, do a bit of configuration, and start writing acceptance tests as we normally would. Let’s get to it.

## Installing and Setting Up PhantomJS and Poltergeist

First, you’ll need to download and install PhantomJS. The specifics of this depend on your operating system, but the details for Mac, Windows, and Linux are on PhantomJS’s download page.<sup>5</sup>

You can verify your install by running `phantomjs` and issuing some basic JavaScript.

2. <http://phantomjs.org/>

3. <https://github.com/jnicklas/capybara>

4. <https://github.com/teampoltergeist/poltergeist>

5. <http://phantomjs.org/download.html>



```
$ phantomjs
phantomjs> console.log("HELLO!");
HELLO!
undefined
phantomjs>
```

This is the only time you'll need to interact with PhantomJS in this way, but it's enough to validate your install.

Now, we'll install Poltergeist, which is an adapter between the Ruby code we'll write for our acceptance tests and the “scriptable JavaScript API” PhantomJS provides. To do this, add it to the testing group in your Gemfile and then do bundle install to install it.

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/Gemfile
group :development, :test do
```

```
 # other gems...

 gem 'rspec-rails'
 # START_HIGHLIGHT
 gem 'poltergeist'
 # END_HIGHLIGHT
end
```

Installing Poltergeist will bring in Capybara as a dependency. If you aren't familiar with it, we'll explain more when we see the acceptance tests.

To use Poltergeist now that it's installed, we'll need to do two things. First, we have to configure Capybara to use it during test runs. Second, we must configure RSpec to handle the testing database differently for acceptance tests than for our unit tests. I'll explain more in a minute.

To connect Poltergeist and Capybara, we just need a few lines in spec/rails\_helper.rb. We'll need to require Poltergeist and then set Capybara's drivers to use it. Capybara has two different drivers: one default and one for JavaScript. This is handy if we don't have a lot of JavaScript and want our acceptance tests to normally run using a special in-process driver that won't execute JavaScript on the page. That's not the case for Shine, so we'll use Poltergeist (which is powering PhantomJS) for all acceptance tests.

Here are the changes to spec/rails\_helper.rb:

```
ENV['RAILS_ENV'] ||= 'test'
require 'spec_helper'
require File.expand_path('../../config/environment', __FILE__)
require 'rspec/rails'
➤ require 'capybara/poltergeist'
```

- `Capybara.javascript_driver = :poltergeist`
- `Capybara.default_driver = :poltergeist`

```
ActiveRecord::Migration.maintain_test_schema!
```

```
RSpec.configure do |config|
```

```
 # rest of the file ...
```

```
end
```

Note that we're using `spec/rails_helper.rb` and not `spec/spec_helper.rb` because these tests require the full power of Rails to execute (namely, access to Active Record and the path helpers).

Configuring Poltergeist is the easy part. The trickier part is how to deal with the testing database. In a normal Rails unit test, the testing database is maintained using *database transactions*.<sup>6</sup> At the start of a test run, Rails opens a new transaction. Our tests would then write data to the database to set up the test, run the test (which might make further changes to the database), and then assert the results, which often require querying the database. When the test is complete, Rails will *roll back* the transaction, effectively undoing all the changes we made, restoring the test database to a pristine state.

This works because the process that starts the transaction can see all of the changes made to the database inside that transaction, even though no other process can. Since Rails runs our tests in the same process that it uses to execute them, using transactions is a clever and efficient way to manage test data. But our acceptance tests will actually run *two* processes: our application and our test code (which will use PhantomJS to access our application).

This means that if our tests are setting up the test database inside a transaction, our server won't be able to see that data and our tests won't work. What we need to do is *actually* write the data to our database and commit those changes permanently.

Doing this creates a new problem, which is that we now need a way to restore the test database to a pristine state between test runs. For example, if we are testing our search by populating the database with four users named "Bob," but we are also testing our registration by signing up a user named "Bob," our search test might fail if the registration test runs first, since there would be *five* users named "Bob."

---

6. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Database\\_transaction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Database_transaction)

Fortunately, this is a common problem and has a relatively simple solution: the *DatabaseCleaner*<sup>7</sup> gem.

DatabaseCleaner works with RSpec and Rails to reset the database to a pristine state without using transactions (although it can—it provides several strategies). RSpec allows us to customize the database setup and teardown by test type. This means we can keep the fast and efficient transaction-based approach for our unit tests, but use a different approach for our acceptance tests.

First, we'll add DatabaseCleaner to our Gemfile and bundle install:

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/Gemfile
```

```
group :development, :test do
```

```
 # other gems...
```

```
 gem 'database_cleaner'
end
```

Now, we'll configure it in spec/rails\_helper.rb. To do this, we'll disable RSpec's built-in database handling code by setting `use_transactional_fixtures` to `false` (note that the generated rails\_helper.rb will have it set to `true`). We'll then use RSpec's hooks<sup>8</sup> to allow DatabaseCleaner to handle the databases. By default, we'll use DatabaseCleaner's `:transaction` strategy, which works just like RSpec and Rails's default. But for our acceptance tests (which RSpec calls "features"), we'll use `:truncation`, which means DatabaseCleaner will use the SQL `truncate` keyword to purge data that's been committed to the database.

Here's what we'll add to spec/rails\_helper.rb, with the most relevant parts highlighted.

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/spec/rails_helper.rb
```

```
RSpec.configure do |config|
 config.fixture_path = "#{::Rails.root}/spec/fixtures"
```

- `config.use_transactional_fixtures = false`
- `config.infer_spec_type_from_file_location!`

```
 # rest of the file...
```

```
 config.before(:suite) do
 DatabaseCleaner.clean_with(:truncation)
 end
```

7. [https://github.com/DatabaseCleaner/database\\_cleaner](https://github.com/DatabaseCleaner/database_cleaner)

8. <https://www.relishapp.com/rspec/rspec-core/v3-2/docs/hooks/before-and-after-hooks>

```

config.before(:each) do
 DatabaseCleaner.strategy = :transaction
end

➤ config.before(:each, :type => :feature) do
➤ DatabaseCleaner.strategy = :truncation
➤ end

config.before(:each) do
 DatabaseCleaner.start
end

config.after(:each) do
 DatabaseCleaner.clean
end
end

```

Now that we've set up PhantomJS, Poltergeist, and DatabaseCleaner, we're ready to write an acceptance test.

## Writing Our First Acceptance Test

To validate that our testing setup is working and that PhantomJS is properly executing our JavaScript in the browser, let's write a test for the test Angular app we created in [Chapter 5, Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS, on page 61](#). As you recall, this Angular app had a text field where we could type a name. As we typed, a heading would dynamically update with what we had entered.

Before we see the actual test, let's plan how it will work. First, we have to log in, since every page in Shine requires a login. That means we'll need to set up a test user and fill in that user's name and password on the login screen. Then, we'll enter some text in the text field in our Angular test app. Finally, we'll assert that the DOM updated with what we typed.

Way back in [Chapter 2, Secure the Login Database, on page 25](#), we talked about how Devise properly secures our user information, including passwords. This means it will be very difficult for us to write a valid encrypted password from our tests. Fortunately, the additions Devise made to our User model allow us to do this directly.

```

User.create!(email: "bob@example.com"
 password: "password123",
 password_confirmation: "password123")

```

This is what happens when a user registers, so we can just call code like this in our test. RSpec provides the method `before` to allow us to run code before any test runs (we saw something similar when setting up DatabaseCleaner).

We'll also use the `method` feature (instead of `describe`) to indicate that this is an acceptance test.

Finally, we want to avoid duplicating the test user's email and password, so we'll put those into variables using `let`. Here's an outline of our acceptance test so far, which is in `spec/features/angular_test_app_spec.rb`.

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/spec/features/angular_test_app_spec.rb
require 'rails_helper'
```

```
feature "angular test" do

 let(:email) { "bob@example.com" }
 let(:password) { "password123" }

 before do
 User.create!(email: email,
 password: password,
 password_confirmation: password)
 end

 # tests will go here...

end
```

Our test itself will need to log in, assert that we're on the Angular test app's page, fill in a name, and assert that the DOM was updated. This is where we'll see Capybara's DSL in action. A good reference for everything you can do can be found on Capybara's GitHub page,<sup>9</sup> but I'll call out the methods we're using.

Primarily we'll simulate user behavior with `visit` (to navigate to a particular URL), `fill_in` (to enter data into a text field), and `click_button` (to, you guessed it, click a button). For asserting that our application is working, we'll use the `have_content` matcher, which checks for text within a given DOM element. By default, it checks the entire page. We'll also use `within`, which will restrict the part of the page where we're asserting content.

Let's see the test.

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/spec/features/angular_test_app_spec.rb
require 'rails_helper'
```

```
feature "angular test" do

 # setup from before...
```

9. <https://github.com/jnicklas/capybara#the-dsl>

```

scenario "Our Angular Test App is Working" do
 visit "/angular_test"

 # Log In
 fill_in "Email", with: "bob@example.com"
 fill_in "Password", with: "password123"
 click_button "Log in"

 # Check that we go to the right page
 expect(page).to have_content("Name")

 # Test the page
 fill_in "name", with: "Bob"
 within "header h1" do
 expect(page).to have_content("Hello, Bob")
 end
end

```

Thanks to Capybara's DSL, the test is pretty readable. When we run it, it works, thus validating that PhantomJS is executing the Angular app on the page.

```

$ rspec spec/features/angular_test_app_spec.rb
angular test
Our Angular Test App is Working

```

```

Finished in 2.05 seconds (files took 4.43 seconds to load)
1 example, 0 failures

```

Before we move on, let's write a test of our typeahead feature from the previous chapter. Doing so will be a bit more involved and allow us to test an *actual* feature of Shine as well as see how to use Capybara in light of a dynamic page with a heavier client-side code.

## Testing the Typeahead Search

There are two parts of the typeahead search we can test. The first is that merely typing in the search field will perform the search. The second is that our results are ordered according to our original specification from [Chapter 3, Use Fast Queries with, on page 33](#).

To test the search, we'll write two tests: one that searches by name, and a second that searches by email. This will allow us to validate that matching emails are listed first. Both tests will assert that merely typing in the search term returns results.

Unlike the test for our Angular test app, *this* test requires a bit more setup. We need to create customers in the database, create a test user, log in as that user, and navigate to the customer search page.

To create customers, we're going to create them manually inside our test file. Although Rails provides *test fixtures*<sup>10</sup> to do this, we're not going to use them here. Because tests related to search require meticulous setup of many different rows, we want that setup to be in our test file so that we (and future maintainers of our code) can clearly see what we're setting up for our test.

To help us create customers, we'll define a helper method, `create_customer`, that will allow us to specify only those fields of a customer we want, using `Faker` to fill in the remaining required fields.

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/spec/features/customer_search_spec.rb
require 'rails_helper'

feature "Customer Search" do
 def create_customer(first_name: nil,
 last_name: nil,
 email: nil)

 first_name ||= Faker::Name.first_name
 last_name ||= Faker::Name.last_name
 email ||= "#{Faker::Internet.user_name}#{rand(1000)}@" +
 "#{Faker::Internet.domain_name}"

 Customer.create!(
 first_name: first_name,
 last_name: last_name,
 username: "#{Faker::Internet.user_name}#{rand(1000)}",
 email: email
)
 end
end
```

We'll also re-create the user and password let statements from our Angular test app test, since we'll need to create a user here and log in before the test.

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/spec/features/customer_search_spec.rb
let(:email) { "bob@example.com" }
let(:password) { "password123" }
```

With `create_customer`, `email`, and `password` in place, we can now create the test data we need to run our tests. As before, we'll do this in a `before` block.

The `before` block is *also* useful for behavioral setup, like logging the user in before the test. In our Angular test app test, we logged the user in as *part* of

10. <http://guides.rubyonrails.org/testing.html#the-low-down-on-fixtures>

the test. Since we aren't testing user login explicitly, this makes our test more verbose than it needs to be. We can test login elsewhere, so for *this* test, we'd like to avoid having login code in the actual test itself. But we still need to be logged in to run our tests. This kind of *behavioral setup* can go in the before block.

Our before block now looks like so (I've highlighted the login code copied from the Angular test app test):

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/spec/features/customer_search_spec.rb
before do
 User.create!(email: email,
 password: password,
 password_confirmation: password)

 create_customer first_name: "Robert",
 last_name: "Aaron"

 create_customer first_name: "Bob",
 last_name: "Johnson"

 create_customer first_name: "JR",
 last_name: "Bob"

 create_customer first_name: "Bobby",
 last_name: "Dobbs"

 create_customer first_name: "Bob",
 last_name: "Jones",
 email: "bob123@somewhere.net"
> visit "/customers"
> fill_in "Email", with: "bob@example.com"
> fill_in "Password", with: "password123"
> click_button "Log in"
end
```

Now we can start writing tests. Our first test will search by name. If we search for the string "bob", given our test data, we should expect to get four results back. Further, we should expect that the test user named "JR Bob" will be sorted first, whereas the test user "Bob Jones" will be last (since our search sorts by last name).

To assert this, we'll use the `all` method of the page object Capybara provides in our tests. `all` returns all DOM nodes on the page that match a given selector. In our case, we can use a CSS selector to count all list items with the class `list-group-item` (you'll recall from [Chapter 4, Create Clean Search Results, on page 51](#) that we designed our results using Bootstrap's List Group component).



We can also dereference the value returned by `all` to make assertions about the content of a particular list item.

Here's what our test looks like (note the use of `scenario` instead of `it`—this is purely stylistic, but most RSpec acceptance tests use this for readability).

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/spec/features/customer_search_spec.rb
```

```
scenario "Search by Name" do
 within "section.search-form" do
 fill_in "keywords", with: "bob"
 end
 within "section.search-results" do
 expect(page).to have_content("Results")
 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item").count).to eq(4)

 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[0]).to have_content("JR")
 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[0]).to have_content("Bob")

 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[3]).to have_content("Bob")
 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[3]).to have_content("Jones")
 end
end
```

It's likely that this test will not pass. Despite the fact that the test makes logical sense, if you look more closely, we are assuming that the back end will respond (and results will be rendered) between the time *after* the `fill_in`, but *before* the first `expect`. This is likely not enough time, meaning we'll start expecting results in our test before they've been rendered in the browser (this is a form of *race condition*). Worse, if you try to debug it (see the following sidebar for some tips), the test will pass.

What we want to do is have the test wait for the back end to complete. There are many ways to do this, but the cleanest way, and the way Capybara is designed, is to write our markup and tests so that a change in the DOM signals the completion of the back end.

For the Capybara part, we are actually already set up to wait for the DOM. `within` is implemented by using `find`,<sup>11</sup> which is documented to wait a configured amount of time for an element to appear in the DOM—exactly what we want!

The problem is that the results we are testing for (contained in `<section class='search-results'>`) are always shown, even before we have results. This means that the `within` won't have to wait, since the element is there, and it will proceed with the expectations, which fail. So, we'll change our template to only show this markup if there are search results by using `ng-if` like so:

11. [http://www.rubydoc.info/github/jnicklas/capybara/master/Capybara/Node/Finders#find-instance\\_method](http://www.rubydoc.info/github/jnicklas/capybara/master/Capybara/Node/Finders#find-instance_method)

```

testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb
➤ <section class="search-results" ng-if="customers.length > 0">
 <header>
 <h1 class="h3">Results</h1>
 </header>

 <!-- ... -->

</section>

```

What `ng-if` *really* does is remove elements from the DOM if the expression evaluates to false. This means that until we have results, there won't be any element that matches `section.search-results`, which means that `within` will wait on that element to appear. As long as our back end returns in three seconds (Capybara's default wait time), our test will pass. If you find that adding calls to `sleep` makes your tests pass, consider reexamining your use of `within` and `find` and see if you can change your markup to use this approach.

### Debugging Browser-Based Tests

In a Selenium-based testing setup, you can observe the browser during the tests. This makes it possible to debug tests that are failing for features that are working when executed manually. For headless tests, it's much more difficult. Here are two techniques I've used to help debug these tests.

**Printing the HTML** Capybara's page object has a method called `html` that will dump the HTML of the current browser. A simple call to `puts page.html` right before a failing expectation can often be quite illuminating as to what the state of the page is. If you combine this with debugging information in your view code, the answer to your test woes often reveals itself.

**Taking a Screenshot** Capybara can also take screenshots via the `save_screenshot`<sup>a</sup> method (in fact, this feature is what has created most of the screenshots in this book). You can give it a filename and it will show what the browser would render at that moment—for example, `save_screenshot("/tmp/screenshot.png")`.

a. [http://www.rubydoc.info/github/jnicklas/capybara/master/Capybara/Session#save\\_screenshot-instance\\_method](http://www.rubydoc.info/github/jnicklas/capybara/master/Capybara/Session#save_screenshot-instance_method)

Now that we understand the importance of `within`, let's see our test for searching by email. It will be structured similarly to our previous test, but we want to check that the user with the matching email is listed first. We'll then check that the remaining results are sorted by last name, using a similar technique to what we saw in our search-by-name test.

```
testing/setup-poltergeist/shine/spec/features/customer_search_spec.rb
```

```
scenario "Search by Email" do
 within "section.search-form" do
 fill_in "keywords", with: "bob123@somewhere.net"
 end
 within "section.search-results" do
 expect(page).to have_content("Results")
 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item").count).to eq(4)

 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[0]).to have_content("Bob")
 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[0]).to have_content("Jones")

 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[1]).to have_content("JR")
 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[1]).to have_content("Bob")

 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[3]).to have_content("Bob")
 expect(page.all("ol li.list-group-item")[3]).to have_content("Johnson")
 end
end
```

Now, let's run our tests.

```
$ rspec spec/features/customer_search_spec.rb
```

```
Customer Search
 Search by Email
 Search by Name
```

```
Finished in 3.63 seconds (files took 7.08 seconds to load)
2 examples, 0 failures
```

They pass! We now have a way to test our features the way a user would use them: using a real browser. Our tests can properly handle our extensive use of JavaScript, but they don't need to pop up a web browser, which makes them easy to run in a continuous integration environment.

Of course, testing our Angular code purely in the browser is somewhat cumbersome, especially if it becomes complex with a lot of edge cases. To help us get good test coverage without always having to go through a browser, we need to be able to unit test our Angular code.

## Writing Unit Tests for Angular Components

Browser-based acceptance tests are slow and brittle. Even though we've eschewed starting an actual browser for each test by using PhantomJS, we still have to start our server and have it serve pages to the headless browser. Further, our tests rely on DOM elements and CSS classes to locate content

used to verify behavior. We may need (or want) to make changes to the view that don't break functionality but break our tests.

Although we don't want to abandon acceptance tests—after all, they are the only tests we have that exercise the system end to end—we need a way to test isolated bits of functionality (commonly called *unit tests*). In Rails, we have model tests and controller tests that allow us to do that for our server-side code. Unfortunately, Rails doesn't provide any help for unit testing our client-side code.

In a classic Rails app, there simply isn't much client-side code, so we are comfortable not explicitly testing it. In our more modern app, where a nontrivial amount of logic is written in JavaScript, the lack of unit testing will be a problem. For example, in our Angular app that powers the typeahead search that we built in [Chapter 5, Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS, on page 61](#), the `previousPage` function has logic to prevent going to negative page numbers. That should be tested, and it makes a lot more sense to test it as a unit test than to set up an entire acceptance test to verify we can't go to a negative page.

In this section we'll set up a means of writing and running unit tests for our Angular code. We'll use *Jasmine*, which is a commonly used JavaScript testing framework. We'll also use *Teaspoon*, a Rails plugin, to help integrate Jasmine into our workflow. With those in place, Angular provides everything else we need for testing (in fact, testing is the reason Angular does all the dependency injection we saw earlier). We'll start with a simple test of our code, and then see how to use *test spies* to do more sophisticated tests.

First, let's get Jasmine and Teaspoon installed so we have a place to write unit tests for our Angular code.

## Setting Up Jasmine and Teaspoon

*Jasmine*<sup>12</sup> is a JavaScript testing framework similar to RSpec. It has nothing to do with Rails, and is designed to run either in the browser or on the command line. *Teaspoon*<sup>13</sup> is a JavaScript test-runner for Rails. It isn't specific to Jasmine, but it can run Jasmine tests. In this section we'll get them both working together in Shine so we can then write unit tests for our Angular code.

12. <http://jasmine.github.io/>

13. <https://github.com/modeset/teaspoon>

First, we'll add Teaspoon to our Gemfile and run bundle install. Note that we're adding the gem `teaspoon-jasmine` and not just `teaspoon`. Teaspoon has a core gem that requires a second gem specific to the test framework we're using. In our case, that's Jasmine, and `teaspoon-jasmine` depends on the `teaspoon` gem, so we just need to add `teaspoon-jasmine`.

```
testing/setup-jasmine-and-teaspoon/shine/Gemfile
```

```
group :development, :test do

 # rest of gems...
 gem 'teaspoon-jasmine'
end
```

After installing `teaspoon-jasmine` with `bundle install`, we can use a Rails generator that Teaspoon provides that will get us set up. We'll run it, telling it we don't want to use CoffeeScript (see [Why Aren't We Using CoffeeScript?](#), on page 68 for some details on why we aren't using CoffeeScript).

```
$ bundle exec rails generate teaspoon:install --no-coffee
 create spec/teaspoon_env.rb
 create spec/javascripts/support
 create spec/javascripts/fixtures
 create spec/javascripts/spec_helper.js
```

```
+=====+
Congratulations! Teaspoon was successfully installed. Documentation
and more can be found at: https://github.com/modeset/teaspoon
```

If you look at `spec/javascripts/spec_helper.js`, you can see a lot of comments in that file, as well as what appear to be Sprockets directives like `//= require application`. Teaspoon is using the asset pipeline to pull in our code. This is good news for us Rails developers, because it means we don't have to learn a second means of bringing our JavaScript into scope to execute it and test it.

Note also that we don't need to explicitly install Jasmine—Teaspoon brings in the version it needs on its own.

To validate our setup we'll write a bare-bones test using Jasmine and make sure it runs. Jasmine's test syntax is similar to RSpec in that we use `describe` to set up a test suite and it to write a single test. We'll make the simplest test we can in `spec/javascripts/dummy_spec.js`.

```
describe("Testing Jasmine", function() {
 it("can run a test", function() {
 expect(true).toBe(false);
 });
});
```

You'll notice we're expecting true to be false. This will let us see a test fail, so we can fix it and see it succeed.

To run our test, Teaspoon provides a rake task, `teaspoon`.

```
$ bundle exec rake teaspoon
Starting the Teaspoon server...
Puma 2.11.1 starting...
* Min threads: 0, max threads: 16
* Environment: test
* Listening on tcp://0.0.0.0:53430
Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:53430/teaspoon/default

F

Failures:
 1) Testing Jasmine can run a test
 Failure/Error: Expected true to be false.

Finished in 0.00600 seconds
1 example, 1 failure

Failed examples:

teaspoon -s default --filter="Testing Jasmine can run a test."
rake teaspoon failed
```

This is a good failure. This means that our test was executed and our assertion failed. We can fix the test by changing `toBe(false)` to `toBe(true)`.

```
testing/setup-jasmine-and-teaspoon/shine/spec/javascripts/dummy_spec.js
describe("Testing Jasmine", function() {
 it("can run a test", function() {
 expect(true).toBe(true);
 });
});
```

Now, we can run our tests again and see success.

```
$ bundle exec rake teaspoon
Starting the Teaspoon server...
Puma 2.11.1 starting...
* . . .
Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:53459/teaspoon/default
.
Finished in 0.00400 seconds
1 example, 0 failures
```

This validates our JavaScript unit-testing setup. Next, we'll use this setup to write a test of our Angular code.

## Writing a Unit Test for Our Angular Code

Testing Angular components is just like testing our Ruby code: we set up the conditions of a test, execute one of the publicly exposed functions of our code, and check the results. In the case of our Angular code, the setup is a bit more complex, but once we start writing the tests, they will look familiar.

We'll approach our testing in three steps. In the first, we'll walk through the steps needed to set up our test. This is surprisingly involved but allows our actual tests to be simple. In the second step, we'll test that `$scope.customers` is empty when the controller loads. That will let us examine the process for setting up the test, but without worrying about simulating the Ajax calls. Finally, we'll use a function provided by Angular's *angular-mocks* package to simulate the Ajax calls.

### Setting Up an Angular Controller Test

As you'll recall from [Chapter 5, \*Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS\*, on page 61](#), Angular stores our controller function in a repository, and Angular will call it one time when starting up the app. Further, you'll recall that our controller function's arguments are expected to be passed by Angular during this process.

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.controller("CustomerSearchController", [
 '$scope', '$http',
 function($scope, $http) {
```

In the test context, we won't be starting up the Angular app; instead, we need to find our controller function and call it explicitly. Further, we need access to `$scope` in order to write our tests. `$scope` is where our public functions live, and where the values available to the view are available—it can be thought of as the public interface of our controller.

Before we can think about accessing our controller, we need to instruct Angular to load our app (which isn't the same as *starting* the app). Since all of our Angular code is in callback functions, none of them are executed by default. We can use the function module (provided by Angular) to load our app.

```
module("customers");
```

To create an instance of our controller, Angular provides a service function named `$controller`.<sup>14</sup> This function accepts two arguments: the name of the

14. [https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/service/\\$controller](https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/service/$controller)

controller to instantiate, and an object of variables to be injected into the controller's constructor function. We'd use it like so:

```
module("customers");
var scope = {};
var controller = $controller("CustomerSearchController",
 { "$scope": scope });
```

This call will find our controller function and call it. For the first argument (named `$scope`), the local variable `scope` will be passed in. For the second argument (named `$http`), because we didn't specify it in the second argument to `$controller`, Angular will find the default implementation and pass it for us.

This is the mechanism we can use to exercise and examine the public members of the controller. Because the values and functions get set on the passed-in `$scope`, and we've overridden the default behavior to pass in our own scope, we can then call functions like `search` and examine values like `customers`.

That said, we don't want to pass in a vanilla object for `$scope`. We should pass in the same sort of object that Angular would use. This is because our controller might rely on getting an actual scope and not just an object. Passing in an object could cause our tests to fail in unexpected ways.

In order to do pass in a real scope, we need access to `$rootScope`,<sup>15</sup> which exposes a function `$new` (note that preceding dollar sign). When we call `$new`, we'll get back a new `$rootScope.Scope`,<sup>16</sup> which is the same type that Angular passes in at runtime. The result will look something like this:

```
module("customers");
➤ var scope = $rootScope.$new();
var controller = $controller("CustomerSearchController",
 { "$scope": scope });
```

You might be wondering how we get access to the `$controller` and `$rootScope` functions. Here's where it starts to feel like *Inception*.<sup>17</sup>

Our controller-declared arguments, along with the array of strings naming them, allow Angular to find those registered objects and pass them into our controller function. We can use this mechanism ourselves via the `inject` function. This function can be used to ask Angular to call a function with any objects in its internal registry. So, we'll ask Angular to pass both `$controller` and `$rootScope` into a function in which we'll set up our controller as outlined earlier.

15. [https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/service/\\$rootScope](https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/service/$rootScope)

16. [https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/type/\\$rootScope.Scope](https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/type/$rootScope.Scope)

17. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1375666/>



This is Angular's flexibility rearing its head. It seems weird, and feels like work Angular should be doing for us. All I can say is that you'll get used to it. Here's what our code will look like.

```
module("customers");
inject(function($controller, $rootScope) {
 var scope = $rootScope.$new();
 var controller = $controller("CustomerSearchController",
 { "$scope": scope });
});
```

If you're paying close attention, you'll notice that our use of inject is a bit different than how we used controller in our production code, namely that we aren't using the array of strings argument. In [Creating Our First Angular Controller, on page 67](#), we went into great detail about why we have to keep the names of arguments in a string so that Angular knew what to pass in at runtime. Since our tests won't be minified and served up through the asset pipeline, there's no concern that the arguments to inject will be minified away. Therefore, we just use plain syntax and allow Angular to examine the argument names directly.

A more pressing question might be where inject comes from. Do we have to call another function to get *that* passed into our test?

The answer is “no.” inject is an alias to angular.mock.inject,<sup>18</sup> which is provided by the *angular-mocks* module. This module adds inject to the global namespace, specifically so we can write the code we've seen.

To install angular-mocks, we'll need to add it to our Bowerfile and then run rake bower:install.

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/Bowerfile
asset 'angular-mocks'
```

Once it's installed, we need to bring it into our testing code using the Sprockets require directive. Since we don't want it in our production code, we'll add the require directive to spec/javascripts/spec\_helper.js (instead of app/assets/javascripts/application.js). Note that angular-mocks needs to be required *after* other Angular modules have been brought in, so we'll add the require after we've required application.js (which is what brings our production JavaScript into the tests):

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/spec/javascripts/spec_helper.js
//= require application
➤ //= require angular-mocks
```

18. <https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ngMock/function/angular.mock.inject>

With that done, our call to inject will work as described. The next question is where to call it? Jasmine provides a function named `beforeEach` that works like `before` in RSpec. We'll also need to call `module("customers")` in a `beforeEach` block, so our app is always loaded.

Lastly, we want to hold a reference to our scope and controller so we can use them in our tests. To do that, we'll declare scope and controller outside our `beforeEach` functions. This means our setup code will look like so:

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/spec/javascript... p/controllers/customer_search_controller_spec.js
describe("CustomerSearchController", function() {
 describe("Initialization", function() {

 var scope = null,
 controller = null;

 beforeEach(module("customers"));

 beforeEach(inject(function ($controller, $rootScope) {
 scope = $rootScope.$new();
 controller = $controller("CustomerSearchController", {
 $scope: scope
 });
 }));

 // tests go here...

 });
});
```

There's no particular location where the test files themselves should go, so we've defaulted to using a directory inside `spec/javascripts` based on our Angular app name (`customers_app`) and, inside there, a directory for the type of component (controllers). Further, we're naming our file using Rails's convention of under-scoring the class name (`customer_search_controller_spec.rb`). Angular, Jasmine, and Teaspoon don't care one bit about this, so you can use whatever makes sense to you.

Now that we've set everything up, writing the test is, as promised, straightforward.

### Writing a Simple Test of Our Angular Code

For this test, we'll assert that the initial value of `$scope.customers` is the empty array. It might seem like you should write the test this way:

```
it("defaults to an empty customer list", function() {
 expect(scope.customers).toBe([]);
});
```

This will fail with an oh-so-helpful error message:

```
$ bundle exec rake teaspoon
```

```
Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:65305/teaspoon/default
F.
```

Failures:

- 1) CustomerSearchController Initialization defaults to an empty customer list  
Failure/Error: Expected [ ] to be [ ].

```
Finished in 0.01700 seconds
```

```
2 examples, 1 failure
```

I don't know about you, but [ ] sure looks equal to [ ], so what's going on? The issue is that `toBe` expects both objects being tested to be the exact same object, not just two objects that have the same value.

While this issue isn't a big deal for this particular test—we could just check that the length of `scope.customers` is 0—we'll write another test in a minute that will expect `scope.customers` to have data in it. Unfortunately, Jasmine doesn't provide a matcher to compare the values inside arrays and objects. But, much like RSpec, Jasmine allows us to create custom matchers. Further, Angular provides the function `angular.equals`,<sup>19</sup> which can do the comparison we want, so all we need to do is create a custom Jasmine matcher using `angular.equals`.

Adding a custom matcher in Jasmine is a bit complex (see the documentation<sup>20</sup> for a great walkthrough), but it's not something we'll be doing a lot in this book, so we don't have to worry about the details. All we need to do is add this code to the end of `spec/javascripts/spec_helper.js`:

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/spec/javascripts/spec_helper.js
```

```
beforeEach(function(){
 jasmine.addMatchers({
 toEqualData: function(util,customEqualityTesters) {
 return {
 compare: function(actual,expected) {
 ➤ var result = {};
 result.pass = angular.equals(actual, expected);
 return result;
 }
 };
 });
 });
 });
```

19. <https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/function/angular.equals>

20. [http://jasmine.github.io/2.3/custom\\_matcher.html](http://jasmine.github.io/2.3/custom_matcher.html)

We've highlighted the meat of the matcher, which is the call to `angular.equals`. Jasmine looks for the returned result object's `pass` property to be true or false. We can now write our test like so:

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/spec/javascript...p/controllers/customer_search_controller_spec.js
describe("CustomerSearchController", function() {
 describe("Initialization", function() {

 // setup code from before...

 it("defaults to an empty customer list", function() {
 expect(scope.customers).toEqualData([]);
 });
 });
});
```

And, our test passes!

```
$ bundle exec rake teaspoon
```

```
Starting the Teaspoon server...
```

```
Puma 2.11.1 starting...
```

```
* Min threads: 0, max threads: 16
```

```
* Environment: test
```

```
* Listening on tcp://0.0.0.0:65382
```

```
Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:65382/teaspoon/default
```

```
..
```

```
Finished in 0.02500 seconds
```

```
2 examples, 0 failures
```

Despite how cumbersome the setup was, our actual test—the code that's most important—is straightforward and readable. Next, let's write a test for search. We'll want to see that calling search with a keyword makes an Ajax call and populates `$scope.customers` with the results. Because this is a unit test, we'll need to fake the HTTP call to the server.

### Simulating Ajax Calls in a Unit Test

You'll recall that we injected `$http` into our Angular controller in order to make Ajax calls. We could pass in our own implementation of `$http`—much as we did with `$scope`—but this would be a lot of work. `$http` packs a lot of features and we'd need to mimic those in our test object to make sure the controller could function when executed from the test. Instead, `angular-mocks` provides a test-only version of `$httpBackend`, which is what `$http` uses under the covers.

The mocked version of `$httpBackend`<sup>21</sup> lets us specify what Ajax requests might get made, and to control what gets returned. The function `when` can be used to configure an HTTP call, and the function `respond` controls the response:

testing/angular-unit-test/shine/spec/javascript... p/controllers/customer\_search\_controller\_spec.js

```
describe("Fetching Search Results", function() {
 beforeEach(module("customers"));
```

```
➤ beforeEach(function() {
➤ httpBackend.when('GET', '/customers.json?keywords=bob&page=0').
➤ respond(serverResults);
➤ });
});
```

As before, we need Angular to inject `$httpBackend` into our test code so we can grab a reference to it. We do this by adding `$httpBackend` to our call to inject when we set up our controller. While we're making changes, we'll also populate `serverResults` with the fake results passed back from the server.

testing/angular-unit-test/shine/spec/javascript... p/controllers/customer\_search\_controller\_spec.js

```
describe("Fetching Search Results", function() {
```

```
➤ var scope = null,
 controller = null,
 httpBackend = null,
 serverResults = [
 {
 id: 123,
 first_name: "Bob",
 last_name: "Jones",
 email: "bjones@foo.net",
 username: "jonesy"
 },
 {
 id: 456,
 first_name: "Bob",
 last_name: "Johnsons",
 email: "johnboy@bar.info",
 username: "bobbyj"
 }
];
➤ beforeEach(inject(function ($controller, $rootScope, $httpBackend) {
➤ scope = $rootScope.$new();
➤ httpBackend = $httpBackend;
➤ controller = $controller("CustomerSearchController", {
➤ $scope: scope
➤ });
➤ }));
```

21. [https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ngMock/service/\\$httpBackend](https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ngMock/service/$httpBackend)

With that in place, we can now write our test. All our test needs to do is call `scope.search` and then check that `scope.customers` has the right data in it. The only catch is that HTTP calls in JavaScript are asynchronous. Therefore, we need a way to tell `$httpBackend` to call our callback functions registered in our controller. We can do that with the function `flush`.

Our test looks like so:

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/spec/javascript ... p/controllers/customer_search_controller_spec.js
// previous setup code

it("populates the customer list with the results", function() {
 scope.search("bob");
 httpBackend.flush();
 expect(scope.customers).toEqualData(serverResults);
});
});
```

If we run our tests again, we can see that our new test is passing.

```
$ bundle exec rake teaspoon
Starting the Teaspoon server...
Puma 2.11.1 starting...
* Min threads: 0, max threads: 16
* Environment: test
* Listening on tcp://0.0.0.0:49187
Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:49187/teaspoon/default
...

Finished in 0.02400 seconds
3 examples, 0 failures
```

With these building blocks, we can test all sorts of server interactions. The `respond` function is highly flexible, allowing us to simulate different responses, including errors from the server. If you recall, our error-handling code pops up a JavaScript alert. While that's not the greatest user experience of all time, it's (a) sufficient and (b) what our code is currently doing. It would be ideal if we could test this. In the next section we'll learn how to do that using *test spies*.

## Testing Browser-Provided Features Using Spies

If you've written a lot of tests for a Rails app, you've no doubt used (or at least heard of) *mock objects*. A mock object is a stand-in for a real object that you use for test isolation. The `$httpBackend` variable we used in the previous section is an example. We don't want our test making real HTTP calls; we can assume that Angular's `$http` service is working and just focus on our code.

Jasmine provides a form of mock object called a *test spy* that allows us to record interactions with an object and check those interactions later. It's perfect for when we want to test the behavior of a function (as opposed to its return value).

Our error-handling code for our customer search provides an example.

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
```

```
}).error(
 function(data,status,headers,config) {
 alert("There was a problem: " + status);
 });
```

Here, we're calling `alert` with a particular message. Because `alert` pops up a dialog, and our unit tests aren't running in a real browser, we'd like to *spy* on `window` (which is the global scope where `alert` is defined) and verify that, when we get an error, `window.alert` is called with the message we expect.

To test this, we'll need to configure `$httpBackend` to return an error, instead of a customers list. We'll also need to tell Jasmine to start *spying on* `window`'s `alert` function by using the `spyOn` function. `spyOn` takes two arguments: the object to spy on and the function to watch. Jasmine will capture any calls made to that function on the spied-upon object, allowing us to check later if the function was called and what arguments were passed.

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/spec/javascript...p/controllers/customer_search_controller_spec.js
```

```
describe("Error Handling", function() {

 // same setup as previous test...

 beforeEach(function() {
 httpBackend.when('GET', '/customers.json?keywords=bob&page=0').
 ➤ respond(500, 'Internal Server Error');
 ➤ spyOn(window, "alert");
 });
```

The `respond` function's arguments are quite flexible. Before, we passed an object as the first argument. In that case, `$httpBackend` interprets that as an HTTP 200 response, returning the given object as JSON. Here, we're using a number—500—which is interpreted as an HTTP status code. This should trigger the error callback in the search function in our controller.

To test that this is the case, we want to assert that our customers list is still empty *and* that `window.alert` was called with the "There was a problem: 500" string. We can test the latter with the matcher `toHaveBeenCalledWith`, which asserts that a given function was called and that it was called with particular arguments.

```
testing/angular-unit-test/shine/spec/javascript...p/controllers/customer_search_controller_spec.js
it("alerts the user on an error", function() {
 scope.search("bob");
 httpBackend.flush();
 expect(scope.customers).toEqualData([]);
➤ expect(window.alert).toHaveBeenCalledWith(
➤ "There was a problem: 500");
});
```

Running our test, we can see that it passes.

```
$ bundle exec rake teaspoon
Starting the Teaspoon server...
Puma 2.11.1 starting...
* Min threads: 0, max threads: 16
* Environment: test
* Listening on tcp://0.0.0.0:64968
Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:64968/teaspoon/default
....
Finished in 0.02400 seconds
4 examples, 0 failures
```

For completeness, let's see it fail by expecting a different message.

```
it("alerts the user on an error", function() {
 scope.search("bob");
 httpBackend.flush();
 expect(scope.customers).toEqualData([]);
➤ expect(window.alert).toHaveBeenCalledWith("OH NOES! 500");
});

$ bundle exec rake teaspoon
Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:64993/teaspoon/default
..F.
Failures:
 1) CustomerSearchController Error Handling alerts the user on an error
 Failure/Error: Expected spy alert to have been called with
 ['OH NOES!']
 but actual calls were
 ['There was a problem: 500']

Finished in 0.04000 seconds
4 examples, 1 failure
```

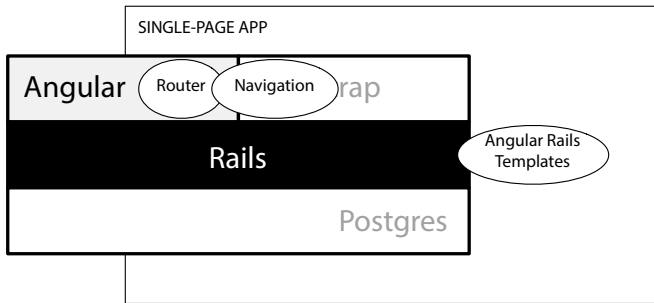
You've now seen how to set up unit test running in your Rails apps using Teaspoon and Jasmine. You learned how to write a unit test for your Angular code, including using some mock objects provided by Angular. Finally, you saw how to use Jasmine's test spies to assert your code is calling the external functions you expect it to. These are the building blocks you need to write tests for your front-end code.



## Next: Level Up on Everything

You learned a ton in this chapter about testing our Rails application at every level of the stack. Now that we can test anything from database constraints, to JavaScript functions, to end-to-end user interactions, we're ready to move on to more complex features.

Now it's time to up our game on everything. Over the next several chapters, we'll build a complex customer detail view. This will be a great chance to learn how to design a dense UI with Bootstrap, wrangle multiple data sources with Angular, and optimize complex queries inside Postgres. But first, we need to turn our simple search screen into a *single-page app* by learning about Angular's router and navigation services.



## CHAPTER 7

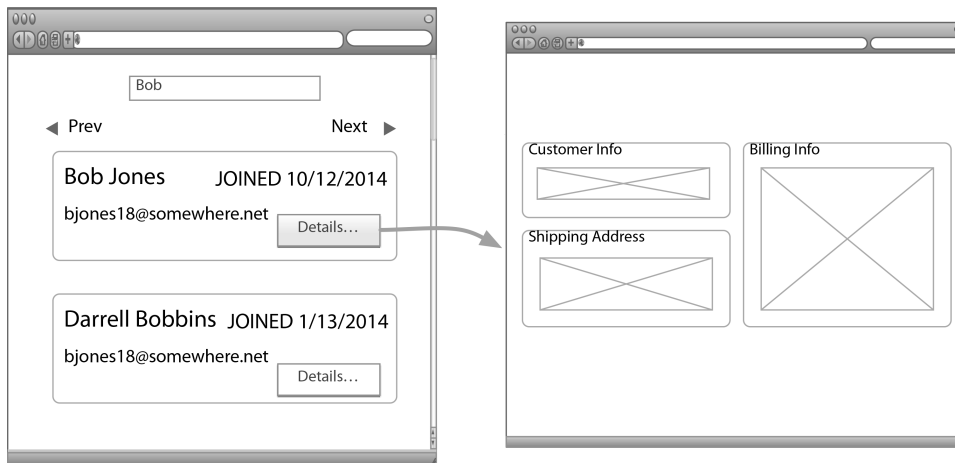
# Create a Single-Page App Using Angular's Router

At this point, we are starting to feel confident. We experimented with some powerful features of Postgres, quickly made great-looking screens with Bootstrap, and created a dynamic user interface without a lot of code thanks to Angular. We also have rock-solid tests for every part of it. Now, it's time to level up.

In this chapter, we're going to turn our simple customer search feature into a full-fledged *single-page app* by using Angular's router and navigating users between pages, all within the browser. You'll learn how to manage your Angular views in different templates—just like we do in Rails—and have them play well with the asset pipeline.

We'll implement the first part of a feature we'll be building over the next few chapters. The feature is a detailed view of the customer's information, which includes more data than we saw on the result page, and requires pulling in data from many different sources, all viewable on one screen, as shown in [the screenshot on page 120](#).

To get us started, we'll turn our existing Angular app into a *single-page application* that allows navigating from the search results to the detailed view (which will initially just be bare-bones).



Doing this will demonstrate how to use Angular's router—which is at the heart of any Angular app—as well as some Angular services for navigation and URL parsing. You'll also learn how to serve up Angular templates using the asset pipeline. Once we've done that, we can add a second view to our Angular app, and set up navigation between the search results and the fledgling details view.

First, let's set up the router.

## Using Angular's Router for User Navigation

Like Rails, Angular has a way to support navigation-by-URL. Because Angular's design ethos is based around flexibility, an Angular app isn't required to use the router, though in most cases you would, and would set it up from the start. We didn't initially, just to keep our introduction to Angular as simple as possible and reduce the number of new concepts you had to absorb.

Now, we'll need to convert our existing Angular app to use the router.

Currently, our Angular app hard-codes both the view and the controller. The view is hard-coded by virtue of having all the HTML inside `<article ng-app='customers'>`. The controller is hard-coded by the use of the `ng-controller` directive. We'll break that hard-coding with the router.

To accomplish this, we'll do three things. First, we install the *angular-route* module, which provides the router itself. Next, we'll configure it with a single route to match what we have now—a single slash (/) should render the customer search view. Finally, we'll extract our existing view code into a standalone template, which will require using a Rails plugin called *angular-rails-templates* to help with asset pipeline integration.

### Installing Angular's Router

Because Angular is highly configurable and flexible, there's no router installed by default. Instead, we'll need to install the module *angular-route*, which we can do by adding it to Bowerfile and running `rake bower:install`.

```
complex-views/setup-angular-router/shine/Bowerfile
asset 'angular-route'
```

We'll need to bring it into the asset pipeline by adding it to `app/assets/javascripts/application.js`.

```
complex-views/setup-angular-router/shine/app/assets/javascripts/application.js
//= require angular
//= require angular-route
```

Although we've installed *angular-route* and configured it to be available via the asset pipeline, our Angular app won't be able to just start using it. Our Angular app needs to explicitly bring the module in as a dependency. This is more of Angular's configurability and flexibility—even though most apps will use Angular's router, not *all* apps will, so Angular wants us to opt in to use the router.

Each Angular app, when declared, has a list of dependent modules. If you recall, when we declared our app using `angular.module`, the second argument was an empty array:

```
var app = angular.module('customers',[]);
```

That argument is our app's list of dependent modules. It's currently empty, because we haven't needed anything other than what's provided by Angular. Now, we'll need to add `angular-route` to this array.

Unfortunately, it's not as simple as adding "angular-route" to the array. In Angular, the module name for declaring dependencies doesn't have to be the same as the name of the module we downloaded. For official Angular-provided modules this is unfortunately the case.

By convention, the name to use in code for an Angular module can be derived by replacing the `angular-` with `ng` and camel-casing the remaining module name. That means that `angular-route` becomes `ngRoute` and so "ngRoute" is the string to add to our list of dependencies.

```
var app = angular.module(
 'customers',
 [
 'ngRoute'
]
);
```

Now that we've installed `angular-route`, the next step is to use the router to configure a single route.

## Configuring the Router

At a high level, configuring Angular's router is similar to adding routes to Rails's `config/routes.rb`. But Angular's router could be thought of as one level lower in abstraction. Rails deals in resources and actions, deriving the names of the controllers, URLs, and views. Angular's router deals directly at that level, requiring you to map URLs to controllers and views.

The route our app is using now is effectively `/`, even though we haven't set it anywhere. If you expected me to say that our Angular app was using the route `/customers`, you are not alone in getting confused about Angular routes versus Rails routes.

When talking about an Angular app with Rails, there are three routes in play:

- The full URL that users see in their browser. In our development environment, that's `http://localhost:3000/customers`.

- The Rails route, which Rails uses to figure out which controller and view to use. In our case, that's `/customers`.
- The Angular route, which is *relative to the URL that rendered the `ng-app` directive*. In our case, that's `/`.

Because the Rails route `/customers` caused the `CustomersController` to render the `index` action, which, in turn, rendered `app/views/customers/index.html.erb`, which contains the `ng-app` directive, all routes visible to the *Angular app* are relative to `/customers` and thus our app's route is `/`.

This may seem confusing, but you'll get used to it. It will make a bit more sense when we add the route for our new view in the next section, but let's configure our existing view to use the router.

## Converting Our Existing View to an Angular Template

To configure routes using `angular-route`, we need access to the object `$routeProvider`. This object has a function named `when` that allows us to configure the controller and template to use for a given URL.

Like `$http` and `$scope` in our Angular app, and `$controller` in our tests, we need to arrange for Angular to pass `$routeProvider` into a function that we've defined, so that we can call functions on it. Angular apps provide the function `config` that will do just that.

In `app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js`, you'll remember we assigned our Angular app to the variable `app`. We can then call `config` on `app`, passing it an array similar to the one we used to define our controller in [Creating Our First Angular Controller, on page 67](#). That array has two elements. The first is the string `"$routeProvider"`, which is the name Angular uses to store the object `$routeProvider` in its internal registry. The second is our function that will be given the actual `$routeProvider` as an argument.

```
complex-views/setup-angular-router/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.config([
 "$routeProvider",
 function($routeProvider) {

 // configure our routes here...

 }
]);
```

As you do more Angular, you'll find that most of your setup and configuration of components happens inside the function you pass to `config`. That function

is a general place for you to set up anything you need before the Angular app starts.

Now that we've configured our function to get `$routeProvider` passed into it, we'll tell it that we'd like to use the controller `CustomerSearchController` for the URL `/`. We also need to give it a view template, so we'll use the name `"customer_search.html"` (which we'll fill in later with our view code). We can register this route using the `when` function.

`complex-views/setup-angular-router/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js`

```
app.config([
 "$routeProvider",
 function($routeProvider) {
 > $routeProvider.when("/", {
 > controller: "CustomerSearchController",
 > templateUrl: "customer_search.html"
 > });
 }
]);
```

We're almost done. The last step is to move our view template code out of `app/views/customers/index.html.erb` and into the file specified in our routing config, `customer_search.html`. To do *that*, we need to know where that file goes, and how Angular will access it at runtime. This requires configuring the asset pipeline to serve Angular templates.

## Serving Angular Templates from the Asset Pipeline

The way we've configured our routes, Angular will ask the server for the file `/customer_search.html`, which will result in a 404. We could place our view file in `public`, but most Rails deployments do not serve static assets from that directory, preferring to serve them from a CDN or a web server. Ideally, we want our templates managed the same as all other assets—through the asset pipeline.

That this is an HTML file poses a bit of a challenge, especially if we are using a CDN. Because our assets would be served from a different server on a different domain than our Rails application, most browsers won't allow Angular to fetch the HTML file without configuring the CDN server for cross-origin resource sharing (CORS). That can be complicated to do and hard to debug.

Instead, we'll arrange for our templates to be compiled into JavaScript, so they'll be bundled in our application's asset bundle, the same as all our other JavaScript. We can do this with the Rails plugin *angular-rails-templates*. This

gem will handle compilation of our HTML templates and the necessary configuration within Angular to make it all work.

First, we'll add angular-rails-templates to the Gemfile:

```
complex-views/setup-angular-router/shine/Gemfile
```

```
gem "angular-rails-templates"
gem "sprockets", "~> 2.0"
```

#### Sprockets and angular-rails-templates Compatibility



You'll note that we've pinned Sprockets to 2.x. Sprockets is the basis of the asset pipeline and a change in version 3.x breaks angular-rails-templates. Currently, there is no workaround; however, Sprockets 2.x is perfectly fine for our use. Specifying it in the Gemfile ensures we get compatible versions. Note that you may need to run bundle update after making this change so that Bundler will update all dependent gems.

After we install it with bundle install, we'll need to add it to app/assets/javascripts/application.js. angular-rails-templates assumes our HTML templates are in app/assets/javascripts/templates and requires us to add that directory to our application's JavaScripts bundle as well.

```
complex-views/setup-angular-router/shine/app/assets/javascripts/application.js
```

```
//= require angular-route
➤ //= require angular-rails-templates
➤ //= require_tree ./templates
//= require_tree .
```

app/assets/javascripts/templates may seem like an odd place for templates. angular-rails-templates allows you configure this location, but it's usually easier to stick with defaults when learning something new. So, even though it doesn't feel like the right place, we'll stick with it for now.

The JavaScript code included with angular-rails-templates is an Angular module that our Angular app must depend on (much the way it had to depend on the router). The name of the included module is templates, so we need to modify our Angular app's dependencies like so:

```
complex-views/setup-angular-router/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
```

```
var app = angular.module(
 'customers',
 [
 'ngRoute',
 ➤ 'templates'
]
);
```



With that configuration, we can move all the markup inside the outermost `<article>` tags into `app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_search.html`. We'll also remove the use of `ng-controller` from `app/views/customers/index.html.erb`. Lastly, we need to add an HTML element there with the `ng-view` directive. This allows Angular to know where to put the view. Ultimately, `app/views/customers/index.html.erb` will look like this:

```
complex-views/setup-angular-router/shine/app/views/customers/index.html.erb
```

```
<article ng-app="customers">
 <div ng-view></div>
</article>
```

We'll also need to remove the use of the Rails partials for the pagination controls, since Rails partials won't work inside Angular. We can do this by simply inlining the markup, like so:

```
<section class="search-results" ng-if="customers.length > 0">
 <header>
 <h1 class="h3">Results</h1>
 </header>
 <nav>
 <ul class="pager">
 <li class="previous">
 ← Previous

 <li class="next">
 Next →

 </nav>

 <!-- Rest of the markup -->

 <nav>
 <ul class="pager">
 <li class="previous">
 ← Previous

 <li class="next">
 Next →

 </nav>
</section>
```

With all that configuration out of the way, Shine should work the same way it did before. We can verify this by running our test suite and verifying that nothing has broken.

```
$ bundle exec rake
```

```
Randomized with seed 46987
```

```
.....
```

```
Finished in 6.4 seconds (files took 2.59 seconds to load)
```

```
26 examples, 0 failures
```

```
$ bundle exec rake teaspoon
```

```
Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:50159/teaspoon/default
```

```
.....
```

```
Finished in 0.03000 seconds
```

```
4 examples, 0 failures
```

Now that we've refactored our Angular app to use the router, we can easily add our detail view and the necessary links to let the user navigate to it.

## Adding a Second View and Controller to Our Angular App

Now that we've installed and configured Angular's router, we can add the detail view. In this section, we'll set up some navigation from our existing search results view to the detail view, which will initially just be a bare-bones view to validate that the navigation and back end are working.

Our initial back end will just expose the data we already have and do so in a minimal way. We're just trying to get navigation working, so we don't want to get bogged down in UI design or complex back-end integrations—we'll see that in the chapters to come.

To make our bare-bones view, we'll need to do three things: add navigation to a new route that uses a new view and controller, design the bare-bones version of the view, and have its controller make an Ajax call to Rails to get the customer details.

### Navigating from One View to Another

In Rails, we create navigation by using a helper like `link_to`, which creates an `a` element in HTML. We give `link_to` an argument, which is usually the result of calling the Rails URL helper of the route you want the user to navigate to—for example, `customers_path`. In Angular, it's a bit different.

The Angular view is designed much more like a user interface than a document, so to link the user from one route to another, we bind the click action on an element to a function. We saw something similar in [Chapter 5, \*Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS\*, on page 61](#), where we created a binding between the change event of our text field and the search method of our controller, using the `ng-change` directive.

Here, we'll use the `ng-click` directive on a new button we'll add to each search result. That directive will bind to the function `viewDetails`, which will handle the navigation. First, let's see how that looks, and then we'll see how to implement `viewDetails`, before finally adding our new route.

### Adding the Navigation Button

We want the button that navigates the detail view to be named *View Details* and appear in the bottom right of the search result list view component. We can do that using the `pull-right` class, provided by Bootstrap, the same as we did for the *last login* field.

`complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_search.html`

```
<ol class="list-group">
 <li class="list-group-item clearfix"
 ng-repeat="customer in customers">
 <div class="pull-right">
 <button class="btn btn-small btn-primary"
 ng-click="viewDetails(customer)">
 View Details...
 </button>
 </div>
 <h4>{{ customer.email }}</h4>


```

The search results now contain a button to allow viewing the customer details:

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Customer Search". At the top is a search input field containing the text "bobby". Below the search bar is a section labeled "Results". This section contains a list of search results. The first result is for "Berniece Bobby" with the email "kiara5 zella5@ullrich.net". To the right of the name and email, it says "JOINED Dec 1, 2015". Below the email, there is a blue button labeled "View Details...". Navigation controls are present: "← Previous" and "Next →" buttons are located above and below the results list.

Note that we need to put the button *before* the email so that the email flows to the left of the button (since this is what `pull-right` does). Note also that the value for `ng-click` contains the call to `viewDetails`, including the argument `customer`. When we click a button, Angular will pass in the right customer to our function, based on which result we clicked on.

Now, we'll see how to implement `viewDetails` by using an Angular service to navigate the user to a different route.

### Navigating Between Routes

Angular has a service named `$location` that allows us to change the route that the user is using. It has a function `path`, which takes, as an argument, the new route we want the user to navigate to.

Unlike with Rails, where the view ultimately contains the route embedded in an HTML attribute, Angular has a level of indirection between the user action and the routing, namely the function we gave to `ng-click`. It results in a bit more code, but keeps a better separation between the view and the code that responds to user actions.

Like the other Angular service we've seen—`$http`—`$location` can be passed to our controller function by placing the string `"$location"` in the argument list and adding an argument to the function at the end of that list (see [Creating Our First Angular Controller, on page 67](#) for a refresher on how this argument list works).

```
complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.controller("CustomerSearchController", [
➤ '$scope', '$http', '$location',
➤ function($scope, $http, $location) {

 // rest of controller....
}
```

With the `$location` service getting passed in, we can now use it to route the user to the new view.

### Routing Using the `$location` Service

As we mentioned, the function `path` on `$location` is the function we can use to route the user. `path` takes a string argument representing the path we want to route to. Because of Angular's flexibility, we can use any path we'd like.

Since we're getting a detail view of a single customer, the path should have the customer ID in it, so that the controller we'll write later can grab that ID out of the URL (just like we would in Rails), and request the details for the right customer. In Rails, we'd use the URL `/customers/1234` for the detail view of the customer with ID 1234.

Remember that the Rails portion of the URL for our Angular app is `/customers/`. That's why the route for our customer search is just `/`—our Angular app is just about customers. An additional `/customers` would be redundant. There's no sense in routing the user to the *Angular route* `/customers/1234`, because the

URL in the user's browser would be `http://localhost:3000/customers#/customers/1234`. So, let's use `/1234` as the route to our detail view.

Given this, the implementation of `viewDetails` will simply create the URL using the customer's ID like so:

```
complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
$scope.viewDetails = function(customer) {
 $location.path("/") + customer.id);
}
```

To make this URL actually route the user somewhere, when we pass it to `path`, we'll need to configure the route (similar to how we would configure a Rails route in `config/routes.rb`). Just as in Rails, Angular routes can have dynamic information in them. Angular even uses the same string format—`:id`. So, our route for the detail view will be `/:id`, and we'll use a new, unwritten, controller named `CustomerDetailController`.

```
complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.config([
 "$routeProvider",
 function($routeProvider) {
 $routeProvider.when("/", {
 controller: "CustomerSearchController",
 templateUrl: "customer_search.html"
 }).when("/:id", {
 controller: "CustomerDetailController",
 templateUrl: "customer_detail.html"
 });
 }
]);
```

Now when we click the View Details button on one of our search results, say customer 1234, Angular will set the user's route to `/1234` (which, remember, results in a complete URL of `http://localhost:3000/customers#/1234`). Setting that route will cause the router to display the view in `app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html` and use the controller `CustomerDetailController`.

Since neither of them exists yet, you'll see an error if you open the JavaScript console in your browser. In the next section, we'll create them.

## Creating and Rendering the Bare-bones View

To close the loop on navigation and routing, we just want to create the most basic view we can of the customer data we have. We'll design the full detail view in the next section, and then learn how to retrieve the data it needs in the next chapter. For now, we'll just show the data we have.

To do that, we need to create the view markup itself, and then create a new controller to make the appropriate Ajax call to the server.

### Creating the View Markup

Per our configuration of this route, the view markup should be in `app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html`. Since we're going to rework this view in the next section, we just need something to show dynamic data in it. So, we'll put each field we have on our customer inside the appropriate `h` tag.

```
complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
<article class="customer-details">
 <h1>Customer {{customer.id}}</h1>
 <h2>{{customer.first_name}} {{customer.last_name}}</h2>
 <h3>{{customer.email}}</h3>
 <h4>{{customer.username}}</h4>
 <h5>
 <small class="text-uppercase">Joined</small>
 {{customer.created_at | date}}
 </h5>
</article>
```

The way this view is written, it's expecting an object named `customer` to be exposed on the scope from the controller. Let's create the controller first, and then we'll make an Ajax call to the server to fill in `$scope.customer`.

### Creating the Controller

Our controller ultimately needs to make an Ajax call to our Rails back end, and to do that, it needs to extract the customer ID out of the route. Angular provides a service named `$routeParams` that can do just that. Because we'll be making an Ajax call, we know we'll also need the `$http` service, so we'll create our new controller, much as we did with `CustomerSearchController`, so that it accepts these as parameters.

```
complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.controller("CustomerDetailController", [
 "$scope", "$http", "$routeParams",
 function($scope, $http, $routeParams) {

 // Make the Ajax call and set $scope.customer...

 }
]);
```

Our controller is all ready to be implemented.

## Implementing the Detail View's Controller

To implement the controller we'll need to flesh out the function for our `CustomerDetailController` so that it makes an Ajax call to our Rails application, and we'll need to then implement the Rails side.

Since we know how to write unit tests for our controllers, let's use test-driven development (TDD) to drive this test. This will demonstrate a difference between `CustomerDetailController` and `CustomerSearchController`, namely that `CustomerDetailController` makes the Ajax call when it loads, not when the user initiates an action.

First, we'll set up the same sort of boilerplate we saw before. This is mostly declaring variables we'll need in the test, but we'll also create the test customer we'll pretend is being sent to our controller from the back end.

`complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/spec ... p/controllers/customer_detail_controller_spec.js`

```
describe("CustomerDetailController", function() {
 describe("Initialization", function() {
 var scope = null,
 controller = null,
 id = 42,
 httpBackend = null,
 customer = {
 id: id,
 first_name: "Bob",
 last_name: "Jones",
 username: "bob.jones",
 email: "bobbyj@somewhere.net",
 created_at: "2014-01-03T11:12:34"
 };

 beforeEach(module("customers"));
```

Next, we'll set up the controller. Much of this code will look similar to what we saw in [Chapter 6, Test This Fancy New Code, on page 83](#), but I've highlighted a few differences. First, you'll notice we're injecting `$routeParams` into our setup. This service allows our controller to access the dynamic parts of the route. So, when our route indicated `:id` as part of the route, the value at runtime will be available from `$routeParams.id`. So, we set that explicitly in our test.

You'll also notice that we've set our expectations on `httpBackend` *before* we call `$controller`. This is because calling `$controller` will execute the controller function, and we want that function to make the Ajax call automatically. So, we need to configure what call we're expecting and how it should respond first.

```

complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/spec ... p/controllers/customer_detail_controller_spec.js
beforeEach(inject(function ($controller,
 $rootScope,
 $routeParams,
 $httpBackend) {
 scope = $rootScope.$new();
 httpBackend = $httpBackend;

 ➤ $routeParams.id = id;
 ➤
 ➤ httpBackend.when('GET', '/customers/' + id + '.json').
 ➤ respond(customer);

 controller = $controller("CustomerDetailController", {
 $scope: scope
 });
}));

```

Lastly, we conduct our test. Our test is that our controller has set `$scope.customer` to have the same data as the customer we configured as a response to the Ajax call.

```

complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/spec ... p/controllers/customer_detail_controller_spec.js
it("fetches the customer from the back-end", function() {
 httpBackend.flush();
 expect(scope.customer).toEqualData(customer);
});

```

When we run our test via rake teaspoon, we should see a failure.

```

$ bundle exec rake teaspoon
Starting the Teaspoon server...
* Listening on tcp://0.0.0.0:63241
Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:63241/teaspoon/default
F....

```

Failures:

```

1) CustomerDetailController Initialization fetches the customer
 from the back-end
 Failure/Error: No pending request to flush ! in
 http://127.0.0.1:63241/assets/angular-mocks/angular-mocks....

```

```

Finished in 0.03900 seconds
5 examples, 1 failure

```

This failure is expected, since we haven't implemented the controller yet.

To do that, we use `$http` in a fashion similar to what we saw in `CustomerSearchController`. Since we'll be hitting Rails to get the customer data, we'll want to



trigger the show action of CustomersController, which means we want to build a URL like /customers/1234.json.

As mentioned, \$routeParams provides access to the specific ID from the Angular route, so we'll set that in the variable customerId. We then use that to build the URL to pass to \$http's get method and, inside the success callback (which you'll recall is the first argument to then), we set \$scope.customer to the value we get (note also that we initialize it to {}, which is purely a stylistic choice to make it clear what we'll be exposing to the view).

[complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers\\_app.js](#)

```
app.controller("CustomerDetailController", [
 "$scope", "$http", "$routeParams",
 function($scope, $http, $routeParams) {
 var customerId = $routeParams.id;
 $scope.customer = {};

 $http.get(
 "/customers/" + customerId + ".json"
).then(function(response) {
 $scope.customer = response.data;
 }, function(response) {
 alert("There was a problem: " + response.status);
 });
 }
]);
```

With this code in place, our controller should now work as expected when we run our test.

**\$ bundle exec rake teaspoon**

Starting the Teaspoon server...

Teaspoon running default suite at http://127.0.0.1:63375/teaspoon/default

.....

Finished in 0.03300 seconds 5 examples, 0 failures

The last thing to do is to implement the actual endpoint on the Rails side. Fortunately, this is Rails's bread and butter, so it's only a few lines of code.

First, we'll add the :show route in config/routes.rb:

[complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/config/routes.rb](#)

```
resources :customers, only: [:index, :show]
```

Then, we'll implement the show method in CustomersController:

```
complex-views/navigation-to-new-view/shine/app/controllers/customers_controller.rb
```

```
def show
 customer = Customer.find(params[:id])
 respond_to do |format|
 format.json { render json: customer }
 end
end
```

Now, when we run our app, search for users, and get the details of one of them, our bare-bones view works as expected.



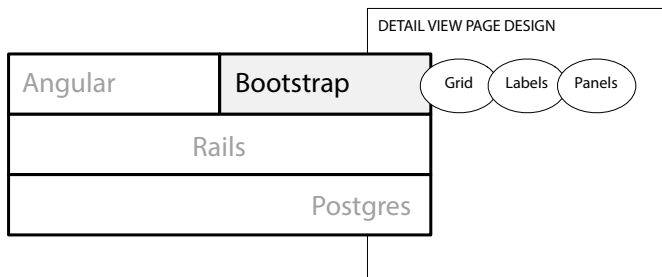
Rails makes the middleware part of this dead simple. We had a few lines of configuration for the new route, a line of code to navigate there from the search results page, and a few more lines to fetch the customer details from the server. Angular provided all the heavy lifting with `$routeParams` and `$location`.

We've now explored the basics of making a single-page application using Angular. We can use Angular's built-in router to configure various routes, controllers, and views. We can serve those views up using the asset pipeline, and make use of built-in Angular services like `$routeParams` and `$location` to allow the user to navigate between them.

## Next: Design Using Grids

With this scaffolding set up, we can now set about the more difficult task of designing the actual detail view. In the next chapter, you'll learn about Bootstrap's *grid*, as well as various components Bootstrap provides.

These features of Bootstrap will unlock your inner web designer and allow you to easily mock up, design, and implement complex user interfaces without writing any CSS.



## CHAPTER 8

# Design Great UIs with Bootstrap's Grid and Components

At the start of [Chapter 7, \*Create a Single-Page App\*, on page 119](#), we saw a mock-up of the customer detail view. We're going to build this page now to learn about the true power of Bootstrap—its grid. We'll also examine some of Bootstrap's many components, which will allow us to create a polished and visually appealing user interface.

We'll tackle this topic in three parts. First, I'll provide some background on grid-based design. This will help you understand why Bootstrap is based on a grid, and how you can break down any UI into grids, to make your work easier. Next, you'll lay out the customer detail screen I hinted at in the previous chapter, using Bootstrap's grid to make it easy. Finally, you'll use various Bootstrap components, such as panels and labels, to polish up our UI. By the end of the chapter you'll have a solid foundation in building user interfaces with Bootstrap, and even a bit of confidence in designing them yourself. You'll still be a far cry from being a “real” web designer, but you'll be able to do common, simple tasks on your own.

We saw the mock-up in the previous chapter, but here it is again, in a slightly expanded form, so you know where we're headed:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address `http://shine.example.com/customers/1234`. The page title is "Shine: Customer 1234". The interface is a customer profile form with the following sections:

- Customer Info:** Includes text inputs for "Bob", "Jones", and an email address "bobbyj@somewhere.net". It also shows a date "JOINED 2/13/2014".
- Shipping Address:** Includes text inputs for "123 Any St", "Unit 101", and "Washington DC 20002".
- Billing Info:** Shows a "VISA" card with a masked number "\*\*\*\*.\*\*\*\*.\*\*\*\*-1234" and an expiration date "Expires 12/18". A button "View at Payment Processor..." is present.
- Billing Address:** Includes text inputs for "123 Any St", "Unit 101", and "Washington DC 20002". A checkbox labeled "Same as Shipping?" is checked. A yellow callout box points to this checkbox with the text "Hide if 'Same as Shipping' checked".

Let's learn about the grid and how it helps us create user interfaces.

## The Grid: The Cornerstone of a Web Design

I don't know about you, but looking at a complex layout like the one we're going to build gives me a bit of anxiety. It's not just that CSS can be difficult to use, but it's also not immediately clear how to wrangle all the parts of this design.

Like functional decomposition in programming, a *grid* is how we can decompose a user interface into smaller parts. We can focus on each part of our design, and rely on the grid to keep everything looking visually cohesive.

A grid is more or less what it sounds like—a means of aligning elements along a fixed horizontal and/or vertical axis. You might not have realized it, but you've been using a grid already. By just using Bootstrap's default styles and form classes, the forms we created in [Chapter 1, \*Create a Great-Looking Login with Bootstrap and Devise\*, on page 1](#) (as well as the search results from [Chapter 4, \*Create Clean Search Results\*, on page 51](#)) are using a *horizontal grid*. This means that each row of information is spaced in a particular way to make the text and other elements pleasing and orderly.

For the view here, we need a vertical grid, which allows us to place content into side-by-side columns. This is how we'll achieve most of the layout we want. Bootstrap provides a set of CSS classes that allow us to create a grid. Under the covers, it uses CSS floats, which can get messy quickly, but Bootstrap's grid abstracts that away.

Bootstrap's grid has 12 columns. You can combine columns in any way you like to make larger columns, without disrupting the flow and spacing of the grid. For example, you could have a two-column layout where the first column is 25% of the entire width, leaving the remaining 75% for the second column, or you could have three columns of equal size, each taking 33% of the available width.

If you think about your design in terms of rows and columns, you can start to see the grids pop out of our design. You can see two grid cells, each taking 50% of the available space, for the main columns of our design, but you can also see a grid nested in each form. The city/state/zip part of the shipping address could be thought of as a grid where the city takes 50% (six grid cells), the state takes 17% (or two grid cells), and the zip code takes the remaining 33% (or four grid cells).

Shine: Customer 1234  
http://shine.example.com/customers/1234

GRID CELL 50%

Customer Info

Bob Jones @ bobert1234

bobbyj@somewhere.net JOINED 2/13/2014

Shipping Address

123 Any St

Unit 101

Washington DC 20002

NESTED 50%

17%

33%

GRID CELL 50%

Billing Info

VISA \*\*\*\* \* -1234 Expires 12/18

View at Payment Processor...

Billing Address ☐ Same as Shipping?

123 Any St

Unit 101

Washington DC 20002

Hide if "Same as Shipping" checked

What this means is that, if we have sufficiently generic CSS classes that allow us to place content into grid cells, and to place those cells into rows, and to nest grids within each other, all with proper padding, spacing, and margins, we can break up any design into a series of grids.

This is exactly what Bootstrap's grid system will do.

## Using Bootstrap's Grid

Bootstrap's grid is quite powerful, especially if you've never used one before. In this section, we'll build the layout for our view using Bootstrap's grid. As we saw in the previous section, our layout starts with two equal-sized grid cells: one that holds the customer information and shipping address, and the other that holds the billing information.

First, we'll create these cells, which will demonstrate the various CSS classes needed to enable Bootstrap's grid. Then, we'll see how the grid can nest within itself to lay out the customer information and shipping address as a grid-within-a-grid.

### Laying Out the Two Main Columns

The most obvious grid in our design is one that holds the two main columns, each taking half the available space. To do this, we'll create two nested div tags inside a parent div, giving each the appropriate CSS class—provided by Bootstrap—to lay it all out in a grid (see the [sidebar on page 141](#) for some details on why we're using divs).

The outer *div* has the class `row`, which tells Bootstrap we're going to place columns inside it. The divs inside the row have class `col-md-X` where *X* is the number of columns, out of 12, that this particular column should take up. As we want two equal-sized columns, we want each of *our* columns to take up six of Bootstrap's. Thus, each div will get the class `col-md-6` (see [Design for Mobile Devices with Ease, on page 237](#) for what the `-md-` means).

We can add this markup to `app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html`, replacing the bare-bones markup we had there from the last section.

```
<form><div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-6">
 <h1>Customer</h1>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-6">
 <h1>Billing Info</h1>
 </div>
</div></form>
```

## Why Do We Sometimes Use div and Sometimes Not?

Before HTML5, there weren't a lot of standard elements we could use to describe our content. As a result, the `div` element came into favor as the way to organize content, particularly for targeting by CSS styling. With the advent of HTML5, more meaningful elements are available, such as `article`, `section`, `header`, and `footer`.

Because of this, the W3C recommends that `div` be used only as a last resort,<sup>a</sup> when no other elements are available.

What this means is that we want to use the right tags when describing our content, regardless of the visualization we are going for. We can then use `div` tags to achieve the layouts that we want. Since `div` is semantically meaningless, it allows anyone reading our view templates to see clearly what parts of the view are for styling and layout and what parts are for organizing the content.

So, the general rule of thumb is to use `div`s in cases where you need an element to style against, and *not* as a way to describe content.

a. <http://www.w3.org/TR/html5/grouping-content.html#the-div-element>

If you bring this up in your browser, you'll see that our two headings are shown side by side.

Customer	Billing Info
----------	--------------

Now, let's tackle the content *inside* these columns. As we saw earlier, we can think of each section of our page as having a nested grid inside this one. Bootstrap's grid works exactly this way.

## Building Forms Using a Grid-Within-a-Grid

Bootstrap's grid is not a fixed width, so whenever you write `<div class="row">`, Bootstrap will divide up the grid in that row based on the available space. This is a powerful feature of the grid system. Much like how we decompose complex objects into smaller ones to make our code easier to understand, we can decompose larger views into smaller ones using the grid.

By thinking of each page's component as a grid, we can design that component without worrying about where it is on the page. Bootstrap's grid components will make sure it works.

Let's style the customer info section using the grid. We can see from our mock-up that we have three rows, and the first row has three columns. Since the second and third rows just have one column that takes up the entire row,

we don't need to use the grid markup for them. So, we just need to create a grid for the first row.

We'll be using the form classes we saw in [Chapter 1, \*Create a Great-Looking Login with Bootstrap and Devise\*, on page 1](#), so hopefully this will look familiar. The first name, last name, and username are all about the same size data-wise, so we can create three equal-sized columns for them. Because Bootstrap's grid is 12 columns, we want each of our columns to take up four of Bootstrap's columns, so we'll use the class `col-md-4` on each div.

```
<form><div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-6">
 <h1>Customer</h1>
 >
 <div class="row">
 >
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="first-name">First Name</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="first-name" value="Bob">
 </div>
 </div>
 >
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="last-name">Last Name</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="last-name" value="Jones">
 </div>
 </div>
 >
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="username">Username</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="username" value="bobert123">
 </div>
 </div>
 >
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="email">Email</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="email" value="bobbyj@somewhere.net">
 </div>
 <label for="joined">Joined</label> 12/13/2014
 <h2>Shipping Address</h2>
```

Note that we used `form-group` on a different element as `col-md-4`. This isn't technically required but is commonly done to separate concerns. Generally, you want classes used for your grid to be separate from classes used for styling so that you can be sure your grid doesn't get messed up by styling classes.



Also, we can add more styling later without worrying about how the grid will affect it. If we look at what we've done in our browser, we can see that it looks pretty good!

<b>Customer</b>		<b>Billing Info</b>
<input type="text" value="Bob"/>	<input type="text" value="Jones"/>	<input type="text" value="bobert123"/>
<input type="text" value="bobbyj@somewhere.net"/>		
Joined 12/13/2014		
<b>Shipping Address</b>		

Up to now, we've created grid cells that are all the same size. Let's lay out the shipping address part of our page, which requires that some of the grid cells be larger than others.

## Using Grid Cells of Different Sizes

The main columns of our view, as well as the user info, all used grid cells of the same size. That won't work for the address views, since the city, state, and zip code are all different sizes. It also won't work for the credit card info view, because the card number and type can be quite long, but we still need room for the button that will (eventually) take the user to the payment processor's page for the customer's card.

In this section, we'll style both of these views using different grid sizes. The result will be a cohesive, well-laid-out page, even though the grid cells aren't the same size.

First, we'll start with the addresses.

### Laying Out the Addresses

In a typical US address, the state code is very short—two characters—and the zip code is typically five or nine characters. So, let's make a column for the city—which is usually longer—that takes up half the available space. In the remaining half, we'll give the zip code two-thirds of the remaining space, leaving the last third for the state code.

That works out to six columns for the city, two for the state code (since  $6 \div 3$  is 2), and the remaining four for the zip code (the two street address lines can use up an entire row each, so we don't need the grid markup for them).

```
<h2>Shipping Address</h2>
<div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="street-address">
 Street Address
```

```

 </label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="street-address" value="123 Any St">
 </div>
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="street-address-extra">
 Street Address Extra
 </label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="street-address-extra" value="Unit 101">
 </div>
➤ <div class="row">
➤ <div class="col-md-6">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="city">City</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="city" value="Washington">
 </div>
 </div>
➤ <div class="col-md-2">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="state">State</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="state" value="DC">
 </div>
 </div>
➤ <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="zip">Zip</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="zip" value="20001">
 </div>
 </div>
 </div>
</div>

```

We can repeat this markup for the billing address, which just leaves us the credit card info to style.

### Laying Out the Credit Card Info

The credit card area has two distinct parts: the card info itself, and the button that will link the user to the payment processor's page for that card. We'll give the card info seven of the twelve columns, and use the remaining five for the button (these values might seem somewhat magic, and they were arrived at experimentally—feel free to change them and see how it affects the layout, making sure everything in the row adds up to 12).

```

<div class="col-md-6">
 <h2>Billing Info</h2>
➤ <div class="row">

```

```

➤ <div class="col-md-7">
 <p>
 ****_****_****-1234
 VISA
 </p>
 <p>
 <label>Expires:</label> 04/19
 </p>
</div>
➤ <div class="col-md-5 text-right">
 <button class="btn btn-lg btn-default">
 View Details...
 </button>
</div>
</div>
<h3>Billing Address <input type="checkbox"> Same as shipping? </h3>
<!-- Same markup as used for the shipping address -->

```

Note that we've used the helper class `text-right` on the button so that it aligns to the right side of the grid, and thus stands apart from the card info. Previously, we used `pull-right` to achieve this in our search results. Thinking back now, you might have more success using a grid for each result, rather than using floats. Fortunately, it's easy enough to try on your own!

Now that we've placed everything in a grid, we can see that the page is really starting to come together.

### Customer

Bob

Jones

bobert123

bobbyj@somewhere.net

Joined 12/13/2014

### Shipping Address

123 Any St

Unit 101

Washington

DC

20001

### Billing Info

\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*-1234 VISA

Expires: 04/19

View Details...

### Billing Address ☐ Same as shipping?

123 Any St

Unit 101

Washington

DC

20001

Bootstrap's grid is probably its single most useful feature. Before I knew about grids as design tools, and before I'd used one like Bootstrap's for creating them in CSS, a design like this would've taken me a very long time to create. Depending on the time pressure I was under, I might've opted for a different, less optimal design that was easier to build, simply because my ability to create the right view was hampered by my lack of knowledge and lack of tools.

Now that the layout is solid, let's go through our view and polish up a few of the rough edges.

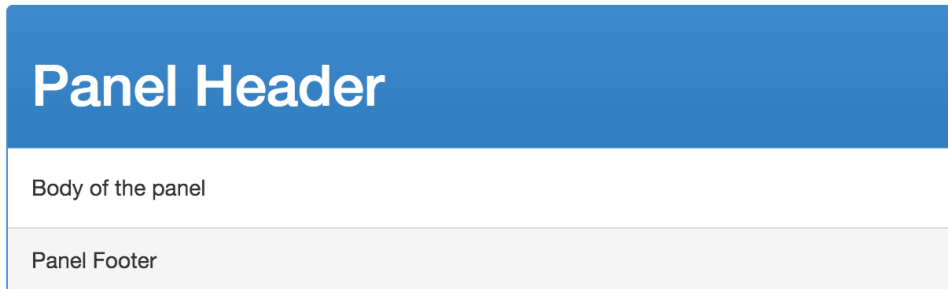
## Adding Polish with Bootstrap Components

Our view looks pretty good—certainly better than what we might achieve in the same amount of time without Bootstrap—but it could be better. For example, the header text is a bit too large, no clear distinction exists between the three sections of the view, and the credit card info is a bit jumbled, since all the text uses the same size and weight font.

We'd like to distinguish parts of the view to make it easier for the user to visually navigate. If you look through Bootstrap's documentation, you can get some inspiration as to how we can do this. The trick with complex forms is allow users to navigate all the data with their eyes. We can get a long way with the *panel* component, which is a box surrounding our content along with a header and footer.

### Using Panels

A panel looks like so:



It can be created with Bootstrap with markup like this:

```
<article class="panel panel-primary">
<header class="panel-heading">
 <h1>Panel Header</h1>
</header>
<section class="panel-body">
 Body of the panel
</section>
<footer class="panel-footer">
 Panel Footer
</footer>
</article>
```

Let's put each of the three sections of our screen inside its own panel. Panels can be given different styles, so let's make the customer info panel styled differently from the other two so that it stands out more clearly. Each panel requires two classes: `panel` and then a second one that determines its style.

We'll use `panel-primary` for the customer info, which will use an inverse color scheme for the header, and `panel-default` for the other two. Finally, we'll move the *joined* field inside the customer panel's footer. As we'll see, this value won't be editable by the user, so moving it to the footer will reinforce this fact.

The result looks pretty nice:

Next, let's improve the credit card info section. If we could have the card type more distinct from the card number and expiration, that would help users quickly distinguish this information. We can do that using *labels*.

## Highlight Information with Labels

A *label* is a Bootstrap component that renders text inside a colored box with an inverse color scheme (not to be confused with the HTML element `label`, which is used to label fields in a form). In lieu of finding and downloading images for each credit card type, we can simply put the credit card type inside a label, and it'll stand out.

Labels, like panels, take two classes: a label class, and a decorative one that controls the color. We'll use `label-success`, which will create a green label.

```

<div class="col-md-7">
 <p>
 ****_****_****_1234
 VISA
</p>
 <p>
 <label>Expires:</label> 04/19
 </p>
</div>

```

With just this markup, the credit card type stands out pretty well.



Lastly, we'll make a few adjustments to the typography—the headers are a bit too large.

## Using h Classes to Tame Typography

The headers in our view are all a bit too large, and although our markup is semantically correct, some subheadings are larger than others. Further, the masked credit card number is a bit too small.

We can use the h classes provided by Bootstrap to manage the size of our headings (it may seem strange, but these classes allow us to keep the semantically correct element without inheriting their visual size). We can also use them on the p tag surrounding the credit card number to make it stand out a bit.

We'll see the entire markup in a moment, but here's an example of what I'm talking about:

```

<article class="panel panel-default">
 <header class="panel-heading">
 <h2 class="h4">
 Billing Info
 </h2>
 </header>
 <!-- ... -->
 <p class="h4">
 ****_****_****_1234
 VISA
 </p>

```

This sort of thing is a more art than science, so the values I've chosen here represent what looks right to me. The great thing about Bootstrap is that it's easy to play around with this stuff, and whatever you do will end up looking pretty decent, thanks to the horizontal grid that underlies all of the type.

One last bit of polish we'd like to add is to distinguish the username from the first and last names in the Customer Info section. You'll notice on our mock-up, the username was preceded with an @ symbol. Bootstrap makes this easy using *form add-ons*.

## Form Add-ons

Often, a symbol prepended (or appended) to a value can give it enough context for users to understand what it means, without using a label. This can be handy on dense pages like our customer detail view. Since the first row of the customer info section is just three equal-sized strings, it might not be clear what they mean.

If we prepend the username with @ (similar to what Twitter does for mentioning someone in a tweet), that can be enough context for users to know that the third field is the username, and the first two are the first and last names, respectively.

Bootstrap provides the class `input-group-addon` that will do this in a pleasing way. We just surround the form element with an `input-group` and create an inner `div` with the class `input-group-addon` that contains the text we'd like prepended (you can place that `div` after the element to append it, instead).

```
<div class="input-group">
 <div class="input-group-addon">@</div>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="username" value="bobert123">
</div>
```

With all of these tweaks in place, the [rendered form on page 150](#) looks polished and professional, embodying the spirit of the mock-up.

HTML markup is quite verbose (especially since we have to heavily wrap it to fit the margins in this book), so we've only seen bits and pieces. The entire screen's markup can be seen in [Appendix 1, Full Listing of Customer Detail Page HTML, on page 249](#), although it will be easier to examine it by downloading the sample code.<sup>1</sup>

Note that we *still* haven't written any CSS. We were able to create a highly complex form, displaying a lot of data, in a clean and easy-to-read way, using just a few simple classes, coupled with Bootstrap's grid system.

In this chapter, we saw several new features of Bootstrap, notably its grid system, but also some UI components that allowed us to polish our UI

1. [https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/source\\_code](https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/source_code)

quickly and easily. What you should take away from this is what we mentioned at the start of the section: these are tools that allow you to design and build in the browser.

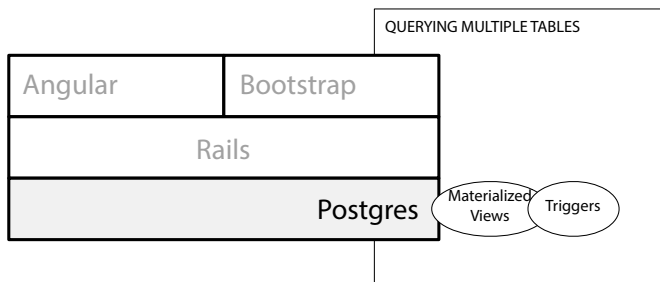
This eliminates much of the friction in getting started on a new user interface. Armed with just Bootstrap, you can create complex interfaces quickly, and iterate on them as you find the most optimal design.

## Next: Populating the View Easily and Efficiently

This chapter focused on the top of the stack: the view. You learned how to configure our Angular app to allow for routing to different views, backed by different controllers. You saw how easy it is to design a complex UI for our customer detail view.

In the next chapter, you'll learn how to bring the actual data into the UI we've created. We'll use a feature of Postgres called *materialized views* to make querying the data from Rails very easy. You'll also see how Angular's asynchronous nature allows us to easily implement our UI using data from our database as well as from our third-party payment processor's system.





## CHAPTER 9

# Cache Complex Queries Using Materialized Views

When we need to query data stored in several tables, there is a trade-off. Either we keep our code simple by using Active Record—which makes several queries to the database—or we make our code more complex by using a single, efficient query specific to our needs. Performance is an issue in both cases because we’re pulling back a lot of data. Postgres solves this dilemma with its *materialized views* feature, which provides clean code, accesses data with a single query, and exhibits high performance.

In this chapter, we’ll continue to build on our running example where we display a customer’s details. To do this, we need to fetch data from five different tables. We’ll see how the idiomatic *Rails Way*, using Active Record, actually results in our having to make seven queries to the database. In contrast, a single, more direct query results in convoluted code but with potentially better performance.

We’ll then create a materialized view of our single query. A materialized view is part view and part table. Like a view, it’s backed by a query that is the source of its data. Like a table, the data is stored on disk. The materialized view provides a way to update the data on disk by rerunning the backing query. This means we get to use Active Record in our Rails code in an idiomatic way but still get extremely high performance: the best of both worlds! We’ll also see how we can use *database triggers* to automatically keep the view up-to-date.

First, let's look at the performance characteristics of the two approaches—Active Record versus using a single, more complex query—by learning about the tables we need to access.

## Understanding the Performance Impact of Complex Data

In [Chapter 8, \*Design Great UIs with\*, on page 137](#), we built the user interface for the data we'll be querying here. In addition to the data we've already seen in the CUSTOMERS table, we need to display the customer's billing address, shipping address, and credit card information. The credit card information is stored elsewhere (we'll deal with that in the next chapter), so we're just querying the customer's billing and shipping addresses for now.

We've already seen the CUSTOMERS table, and we know it doesn't include either of these pieces of data. As you'll recall from [Chapter 3, \*Use Fast Queries with\*, on page 33](#), our hypothetical company has tables in a shared database, which Shine can access. In this case, we'll assume that the tables we need to access billing and shipping addresses are also available to us via the shared database.

Let's look at how well both Active Record and a single query perform when accessing all of these tables together. We start with the structure so we know what we're dealing with.

### The Tables We'll Query

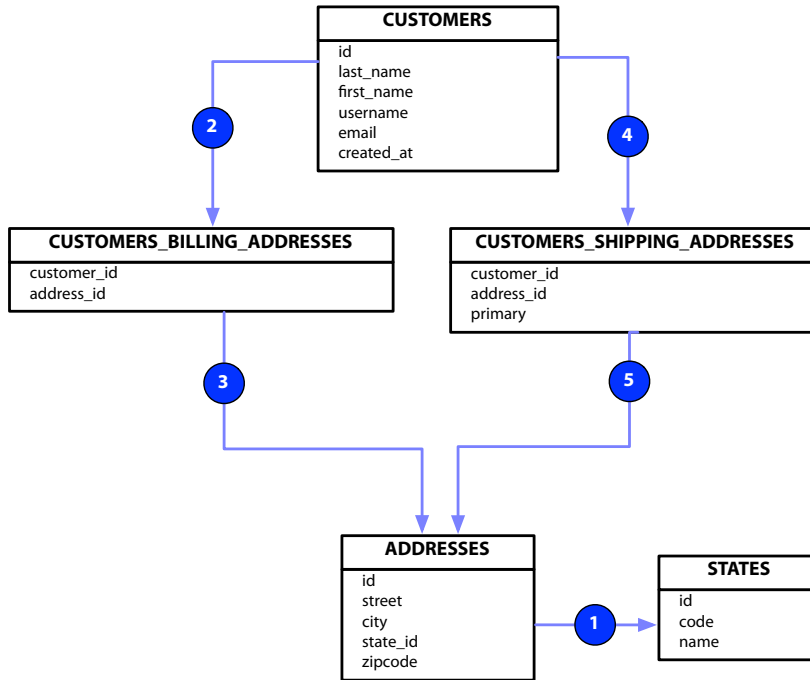
The [diagram on page 153](#) shows the tables we'll be accessing, and their relationships to one another.

In our hypothetical system, all addresses are stored in the table ADDRESSES. This table contains fields you'd expect in a US-style address, except for the postal codes for US states. The states are stored in STATES, and ADDRESSES references that table via the column STATE\_ID (marked "1" on the diagram).

Since all addresses are stored in ADDRESSES, we need to know which of those are for billing and which are for shipping. To determine that, we have two join tables called CUSTOMERS\_BILLING\_ADDRESSES and CUSTOMERS\_SHIPPING\_ADDRESSES.

In the diagram, we can see the relationship marked "2" references a customer via CUSTOMER\_ID, while the relationship marked "3" references an address via ADDRESS\_ID. This is how we join the two tables together.

CUSTOMERS\_SHIPPING\_ADDRESSES uses a similar structure, with the relationships marked "4" and "5." You'll notice, however, that there's a column called PRIMARY. This is because, in our hypothetical system, a customer may have more than



one shipping address. PRIMARY denotes their primary shipping address, and this is the one we'll display in Shine.

Just as we did with CUSTOMERS in [Setting Up the New Table and Data, on page 34](#), we'll set up these new tables for our local development. In the real world, these would already exist, but we have to create them manually here in order to follow this example.

Our migrations look like this:

[materialized-views/data-model/shine/db/migrate/20150616120711\\_add\\_addresses.rb](#)

```

class AddAddresses < ActiveRecord::Migration
 def change
 create_table :states do |t|
 t.string :code, size: 2, null: false
 t.string :name, null: false
 end

 create_table :addresses do |t|
 t.string :street, null: false
 t.string :city, null: false
 t.references :state, null: false
 t.string :zipcode, null: false
 end
 end
end

```

```

create_table :customers_billing_addresses do |t|
 t.references :customer, null: false
 t.references :address, null: false
end

create_table :customers_shipping_addresses do |t|
 t.references :customer, null: false
 t.references :address, null: false
 t.boolean :primary, null: false, default: false
end
end
end
end

```

With this in place, we can run `rake db:migrate` to create the tables. We'll need to have data in them, so we'll enhance `db/seeds.rb` to create data for us. Since we need to create all 50 US states, as well as shipping and billing addresses for all of our customers, it's going to be a bit of code. The full listing is in [Appendix 2, Creating Customer Address Seed Data, on page 253](#), or available in the source code you can download from the book's website.<sup>1</sup>

There are two main ways to access this data: we can map these tables to Active Record objects, model the relationships, and navigate them in our controller, or we can pull the data back with one big query. Let's examine the performance of each of these approaches.

## Performance Using Active Record

Since we're ultimately not going to use Active Record to model this data, I'm going to skip the code you'd need to do so, but you can imagine how it would look. We would be able to write code like this to access all the data we need:

```

def show
 customer = Customer.find(params[:id])
 respond_to do |format|
 format.json do
 render json: {
 customer: customer,
 shipping_address: customer.shipping_address,
 billing_address: customer.billing_address,
 }
 end
 end
end
end

```

This code is going to run seven queries: one to pull back data from `CUSTOMERS`, one to query `CUSTOMERS_BILLING_ADDRESSES`, followed by a query to `ADDRESSES` and

1. [https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/source\\_code](https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/source_code)

STATES. It will then query CUSTOMERS\_SHIPPING\_ADDRESSES, followed by second queries to ADDRESSES and STATES. Let's use EXPLAIN ANALYZE to see how well these will perform.

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE SELECT * FROM customers WHERE id = 2000;
QUERY PLAN
```

```

Index Scan using customers_pkey on customers
 (cost=0.42..8.44 rows=1 width=79)
 (actual time=1.298..1.299 rows=1 loops=1)
 Index Cond: (id = 2000)
Planning time: 5.120 ms
Execution time: 1.387 ms
```

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE SELECT * FROM customers_billing_addresses
 WHERE customer_id = 2000;
QUERY PLAN
```

```

Index Scan using customers_billing_addresses_customer_id
 on customers_billing_addresses
 (cost=0.42..8.44 rows=1 width=12)
 (actual time=0.105..0.106 rows=1 loops=1)
 Index Cond: (customer_id = 2000)
Planning time: 0.241 ms
Execution time: 0.130 ms
```

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE SELECT * FROM customers_shipping_addresses
 WHERE customer_id = 2000;
QUERY PLAN
```

```

Index Scan using customers_shipping_addresses_customer_id
 on customers_shipping_addresses
 (cost=0.42..8.48 rows=3 width=13)
 (actual time=0.118..0.119 rows=2 loops=1)
 Index Cond: (customer_id = 2000)
Planning time: 0.519 ms
Execution time: 0.171 ms
```

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE SELECT * FROM addresses WHERE id = 2000;
QUERY PLAN
```

```

Index Scan using addresses_pkey on addresses
 (cost=0.43..8.45 rows=1 width=47)
 (actual time=1.238..1.240 rows=1 loops=1)
 Index Cond: (id = 2000)
Planning time: 0.984 ms
Execution time: 1.267 ms
```

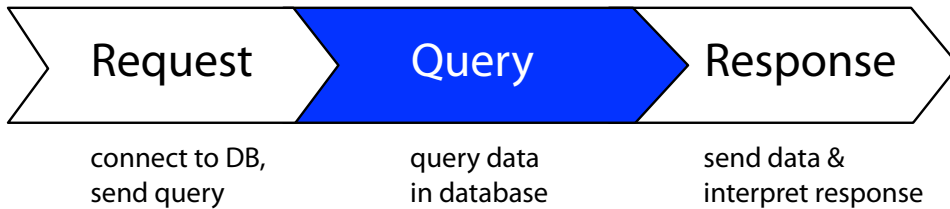
```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE select * FROM states WHERE id = 5;
QUERY PLAN
```

```

Seq Scan on states
 (cost=0.00..7.48 rows=1 width=16)
 (actual time=0.038..0.114 rows=1 loops=1)
 Filter: (id = 5)
 Rows Removed by Filter: 357
 Planning time: 0.355 ms
 Execution time: 0.143 ms
```

All of these queries perform well, which isn't surprising as they are all querying against the primary key of the tables in question. We can see this by the information Index Scan in the query plan (though, interestingly, the queries against STATES use a full table scan—Seq Scan—presumably because this table is so small, it's faster than using the primary key's index). If we assume the timing reported by our query plans is a reasonable average, this means the total of these seven queries is about 13 milliseconds.

The query time isn't the only time it takes to access this data, however. Each request requires network time, as does each response. This is commonly called the *network round-trip*.



We're running seven queries: that's seven network round-trips. A slow network can have a significant impact on our overall response time.

If we could get the data in a single query, our performance would be less tied to the network's performance, and our system would be more predictable (and possibly faster, if our network is habitually slow). Let's craft that query and see how it performs.

## Performance Using SQL

To get this data using one query, we'll need to do a lot of joins. Let's build up the query first, and then see how it performs.

### Crafting the Query

If you are comfortable with database joins, you can skip this section, but I've found that joins across many tables (especially when we need to join the same

table twice, as we will for ADDRESSES) can be tricky, so it might help to see the query built piece by piece.

First, we need to itemize the fields we want back. In our case, we want all the fields from CUSTOMERS that we've been using, all the fields in ADDRESSES for both the billing and the shipping address, and the state codes from STATES for the same. The SELECT part of our query looks like this:

materialized-views/data-model/shine/db/customer\_detail\_view.sql

**SELECT**

```
customers.id AS customer_id,
customers.first_name AS first_name,
customers.last_name AS last_name,
customers.email AS email,
customers.username AS username,
customers.created_at AS joined_at,
billing_address.id AS billing_address_id,
billing_address.street AS billing_street,
billing_address.city AS billing_city,
billing_state.code AS billing_state,
billing_address.zipcode AS billing_zipcode,
shipping_address.id AS shipping_address_id,
shipping_address.street AS shipping_street,
shipping_address.city AS shipping_city,
shipping_state.code AS shipping_state,
shipping_address.zipcode AS shipping_zipcode
```

**FROM**

```
customers
```

Note a few things here. Because all addresses are stored in ADDRESSES, we'll need to join against that table twice (as we'll see). That means that we need to know which join we're referencing—the join that brings in the shipping address, or the join that brings in the billing address. To know *that*, we'll be aliasing<sup>2</sup> the ADDRESSES tables in each join to shipping\_address and billing\_address so we know what we're referring to.

Now that we know the data we're bringing back, we need to add the necessary joins to get it. First, we'll join CUSTOMERS against CUSTOMERS\_BILLING\_ADDRESSES, because that's how we'll eventually get to the actual address.

materialized-views/data-model/shine/db/customer\_detail\_view.sql

**JOIN** customers\_billing\_addresses **ON**

```
customers.id = customers_billing_addresses.customer_id
```

Next, we'll join CUSTOMERS\_BILLING\_ADDRESSES to ADDRESSES. Note that this is where we alias ADDRESSES to billing\_address.

2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alias\\_\(SQL\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alias_(SQL))

```
materialized-views/data-model/shine/db/customer_detail_view.sql
```

```
JOIN addresses billing_address ON
 billing_address.id = customers_billing_addresses.address_id
```

Then, we'll need to join ADDRESSES to STATES so we can get the state code.

```
materialized-views/data-model/shine/db/customer_detail_view.sql
```

```
JOIN states billing_state ON
 billing_address.state_id = billing_state.id
```

Note again that we've had to alias STATES to billing\_state.

Finally, we'll repeat this structure for CUSTOMERS\_SHIPPING\_ADDRESSES, with the addition of restricting by primary in our join.

```
materialized-views/data-model/shine/db/customer_detail_view.sql
```

```
JOIN customers_shipping_addresses ON
 customers.id = customers_shipping_addresses.customer_id
➤ AND customers_shipping_addresses.primary = true
JOIN addresses shipping_address ON
 shipping_address.id = customers_shipping_addresses.address_id
JOIN states shipping_state ON
 shipping_address.state_id = shipping_state.id
```

With our query constructed, let's see how it fares.

### Query Performance

We can use EXPLAIN ANALYZE on our query to see what sort of performance we might expect.

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE SELECT
```

```
 customers.id AS customer_id,
 customers.first_name AS first_name,
 customers.last_name AS last_name,
 customers.email AS email,me,
 customers.username AS username,
 customers.created_at AS joined_at,dress_id,
 billing_address.id AS billing_address_id,
 billing_address.street AS billing_street,
 billing_address.city AS billing_city,
 billing_state.code AS billing_state,
 billing_address.zipcode AS billing_zipcode,_id,
 shipping_address.id AS shipping_address_id,
 shipping_address.street AS shipping_street,
 shipping_address.city AS shipping_city,
 shipping_state.code AS shipping_state,
 shipping_address.zipcode AS shipping_zipcode
FROM
 customers
```

«remainder of the query»



```
WHERE
 customers.id = 2000
;
QUERY PLAN
```

```

Nested Loop (cost=1.12..169.81 rows=1 width=157)
 (actual time=0.028..0.028 rows=0 loops=1)
 -> Nested Loop (cost=0.98..169.64 rows=1 width=158)
 (actual time=0.027..0.027 rows=0 loops=1)
```

«Tons of query plan details omitted»

```
Planning time: 20.192 ms
Execution time: 5.724 ms
```

The planning time is a bit longer, but if we assume this is reasonably representative, at least as compared to the individual queries, it should take less than around 26 milliseconds. This is still pretty fast, but it's twice as slow as all seven queries combined. But this query incurs only one network round-trip. If we assume the network round-trip is 1ms, that means this query will take 27ms, and our seven queries will take 20ms.

What *this* means is that our complex-but-slower query might be reasonable to consider using, *especially* if we can speed that query up (which we'll do using a materialized view).

---

#### A Word on Optimizations

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You should absolutely avoid optimizing your system like this until you know that what you are optimizing is actually a problem, based on your observations. The use of EXPLAIN ANALYZE is useful in explaining poor performance, not in identifying it.

This chapter is about teaching you a technique to deal with poor performance, and is not something you should use by default every time you need to query more than one table. Always measure your system's performance before optimizing it.

---

#### Using This Query in Rails

It will be difficult, if not impossible, to use Active Record's API to produce this query. In these cases, it's easier to just use a string of SQL and execute the query. We can do that by using the method `execute` on the underlying connection object available via the connection method on `ActiveRecord::Base`.

```

class CustomerDetail
 QUERY = %{
 «The big query from before»
 }

 def self.find(customer_id)
 ActiveRecord::Base.connection.execute(
 QUERY + " WHERE customers.id = #{customer_id}"
).first
 end
end

```

This code is not ideal, and we'd like to avoid having code like this in our application. First, it contains a SQL injection vulnerability, since we are constructing SQL without escaping the value of `customer_id`. We can work around this using Postgres's API directly, which would make the code even more difficult to understand. Second, this code doesn't return a nice object, but instead returns a hash that we must reach into in order to access the data.

It's not the worst code in the world, but it's not idiomatic Rails. This code, along with any code that calls it, will stick out like a sore thumb, confusing everyone who looks at it.

It may seem like a minor thing, but this sort of unnecessary complexity can make a codebase hard to read, understand, and manage. Sometimes, we have to live with code like this, but it's always worth trying to find a better way. Even if the Active Record version of the code executed more queries, and incurred a higher penalty for network round-trips, it looked like idiomatic Rails code.

We've now seen that the default *Rails Way* of modeling our access to this data will result in seven queries each time, and that those queries perform reasonably well, but incur a penalty in network round-trips. We've also seen that a large single query using joins *might* perform better, but results in ugly, hard-to-maintain code.

Now, we're going to see the third alternative—materialized views.

## Using Materialized Views for Better Performance

Materialized views are a special form of *database view* that performs much better. If you aren't familiar with views, they are a table-like construct that abstracts away a complex query. For example, we could create a view named `ADDRESSES_WITH_STATES` that abstracts away the need to join `ADDRESSES` and `STATES` together, like so:

```
CREATE VIEW addresses_with_states AS
SELECT
 addresses.id,
 addresses.street,
 addresses.city,
 states.code AS state,
 addresses.zipcode
FROM
 addresses
JOIN states ON states.id = addresses.state_id;
```

Now, we can treat ADDRESSES\_WITH\_STATES just like a normal table for querying:

```
sql> select * from addresses_with_states where id = 12;
-[RECORD 1]-----
id | 12
street | 11828 Kuhn Turnpike
city | Willmsmouth
state | WA
zipcode | 46419-7547
```

We can *also* treat this like a regular table for mapping with Active Record.

```
class AddressesWithState < ActiveRecord::Base
end
```

```
AddressesWithState.find(12).state
=> WA
```

But a view is just a place to store the query. It would make our Rails code better-looking, but would still not necessarily outperform the seven simpler queries, since we'd still be running the complex join underneath.

With most relational databases, we would not be able to use our database to solve this problem. We'd need to set up some sort of caching solution, like memcached<sup>3</sup> or Elasticsearch.<sup>4</sup> We'd run our expensive query offline and populate our cache with the data, then query that data at runtime.

Postgres provides this exact feature via *materialized views*. A materialized view is basically an actual table with the actual data from the underlying query. In effect, Postgres does what these alternative caching solutions do—stores the results of the query in another table that can be quickly searched.

The advantage is that, just like with a normal view, we can access the materialized view as if it were a regular table using Active Record, meaning our

3. <http://memcached.org/>

4. <https://www.elastic.co/>

Rails code will still be idiomatic. But, since the materialized view isn't doing the expensive query each time, we can fetch the data very quickly (though this does come at a cost of increased disk space, because the data for the materialized view is stored on disk).

To create a materialized view, we simply use `CREATE MATERIALIZED VIEW` instead of `CREATE VIEW`. Let's do that now by creating a new migration.

```
$ bundle exec rails g migration create-customer-details-materialized-view
invoke active_record
create db/migrate/20150625130204_create_customer_details_materialized_view.rb
```

Now, we'll use `execute` in our migration to create the materialized view using the large and complex query we were using before. Since a materialized view creates a table under the covers, we're also going to create an index on `customer_id`, because that's the field we'll be using to query the materialized view (it will also allow us to keep the view up-to-date, as we'll see).

```
materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shi ... 204_create_customer_details_materialized_view.rb
```

```
class CreateCustomerDetailsMaterializedView < ActiveRecord::Migration
 def up
 execute %{
 CREATE MATERIALIZED VIEW customer_details AS
 SELECT
 customers.id AS customer_id,
 customers.first_name AS first_name,
 customers.last_name AS last_name,
 customers.email AS email,
 customers.username AS username,
 customers.created_at AS joined_at,
 billing_address.id AS billing_address_id,
 billing_address.street AS billing_street,
 billing_address.city AS billing_city,
 billing_address.code AS billing_state,
 billing_address.zipcode AS billing_zipcode,
 shipping_address.id AS shipping_address_id,
 shipping_address.street AS shipping_street,
 shipping_address.city AS shipping_city,
 shipping_address.code AS shipping_state,
 shipping_address.zipcode AS shipping_zipcode
 FROM
 customers
 JOIN customers_billing_addresses ON
 customers.id = customers_billing_addresses.customer_id
 JOIN addresses_billing_address ON
 billing_address.id = customers_billing_addresses.address_id
 JOIN states_billing_state ON
 billing_address.state_id = billing_state.id
 JOIN customers_shipping_addresses ON
```

```

 customers.id = customers_shipping_addresses.customer_id
 AND customers_shipping_addresses.primary = true
 JOIN addresses_shipping_address ON
 shipping_address.id = customers_shipping_addresses.address_id
 JOIN states_shipping_state ON
 shipping_address.state_id = shipping_state.id
 }
 execute %{
 CREATE UNIQUE INDEX
 customer_details_customer_id
 ON
 customer_details(customer_id)
 }
end
def down
 execute "DROP MATERIALIZED VIEW customer_details"
end
end

```

Next, we run the migration with `rake db:migrate`. It will take a while, as it's basically running this query for every row of all these tables. When it's done, we'll be able to query this data very quickly.

Let's do an EXPLAIN ANALYZE on our new materialized view.

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE
```

```

 SELECT * FROM customer_details WHERE customer_id = 2000;
QUERY PLAN

```

```

 Index Scan using customer_details_customer_id on customer_details
 (cost=0.42..8.44 rows=1 width=404)
 (actual time=0.125..0.125 rows=1 loops=1)
 Index Cond: (customer_id = 2000)
 Planning time: 1.750 ms
 Execution time: 0.196 ms

```

This is pretty darn good! We're pulling back all of the data we need in under 2 milliseconds. That is far faster than *both* the canonical Rails Way using Active Record *and* our complex query.

We can now create a CustomerDetail class and query it just as we would any other Active Record object, keeping our code clean and idiomatic, but it will be blazingly fast.

```

materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shine/app/models/customer_detail.rb
class CustomerDetail < ActiveRecord::Base
 self.primary_key = 'customer_id'
end

```

As our materialized view doesn't have a field named ID, we need to use `primary_key=` to tell Active Record to use `CUSTOMER_ID`. With this in place, our controller looks like a regular Rails controller.

`materialized-views/simple-view/shine/app/controllers/customers_controller.rb`

```
def show
 ➤ customer_detail = CustomerDetail.find(params[:id])
 respond_to do |format|
 format.json { render json: customer_detail }
 end
end
```

It seems we've addressed our performance problem by creating a very fast way to get our data, but without having to write complex code that looks out-of-place or is hard to understand and maintain. Let's see what happens when we insert a new customer into our database.

```
sql> insert into customers(
 first_name,last_name,email,username,created_at,updated_at)
 values (
 'Dave','Copeland','dave@dave.dave','davetron5000',now(),now());
INSERT 0 1
> select id from customers where username = 'davetron5000';
 id |
-----+
 388399 |
(1 row)

> insert into customers_billing_addresses(
 customer_id,address_id)
 values (388399,1);
INSERT 0 1
> insert into customers_shipping_addresses(
 customer_id,address_id,"primary")
 values (388399,1,true);
INSERT 0 1
```

Let's query our materialized view for this new customer.

```
sql> select * from customer_details where customer_id = 388399;
(No rows)
```

Oops, it looks like something's wrong. This is due to the implementation of materialized views. Like any caching solution, the cache (in our case, the materialized view) must be updated when data changes. This is the trade-off of a cache and is why it's able to be fast.

In the next section, we'll see how to set up our database to keep the materialized view updated.

## Keeping Materialized Views Updated

The reason our materialized view is so much faster than the regular view is because it essentially caches the results of the backing query into a real table. The trade-off is that the contents of the table could lag behind what's in the tables that the backing query queries.

Postgres provides a way to refresh the view via `REFRESH MATERIALIZED VIEW`. Before Postgres 9.4, refreshing materialized views like this was a problem, because it would lock the view while it was being refreshed. That meant that any application that wanted to query the view would have to wait until the update was completed. Since this could potentially be a long time, it meant that materialized views were mostly useless before 9.4.

As of Postgres 9.4, the refresh can be done concurrently in the background, allowing users of the table to continue querying old data until the refresh is complete. This is what we'll set up here, and requires running the command `REFRESH MATERIALIZED VIEW CONCURRENTLY`.

Let's try it out.

```
sql> refresh materialized view concurrently customer_details;
sql> select * from customer_details where customer_id = 388399;
-[RECORD 1]-----+-----
customer_id | 388399
first_name | Dave
last_name | Copeland
email | dave@dave.dave
username | davetron5000
joined_at | 2015-06-25 08:28:54.327645
billing_street | 530 Nienow Stravenue
billing_city | West Aniyah
billing_state | RI
billing_zipcode | 72842-8201
shipping_address_id | 1
shipping_street | 530 Nienow Stravenue
shipping_city | West Aniyah
shipping_state | RI
shipping_zipcode | 72842-8201
shipping_address_created_at | 2015-06-20 16:51:06.891914-04
```

Now that we know how to refresh our view, the trick is *when* to do it. This highly depends on how often the underlying data changes and how important it is for us to see the most recent data in the view. We'll look at two techniques for doing that here. The first is to create a rake task to refresh the view on a schedule. The second is to use *database triggers* to refresh the view whenever underlying data changes.

## Refreshing the View on a Schedule

The simplest way to refresh the view is to create a rake task, and then arrange for that task to be run on a regular schedule. We can do this by creating `lib/tasks/refresh_materialized_views.rake` and using the `connection` method on `ActiveRecord::Base`, which will allow us to execute arbitrary SQL.

```
materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shine/lib/tasks/refresh_materialized_views.rake
desc "Refreshes materialized views"
task :refresh_materialized_views, :environment do
 ActiveRecord::Base.connection.execute %{
 REFRESH MATERIALIZED VIEW CONCURRENTLY customer_details
 }
end
```

We can then run it on the command line via rake:

```
$ bundle exec rake refresh_materialized_views
```

With this in place, we can then configure our production system to run this periodically, for example using `cron`. How frequently to run it depends on how recent the data should be to users, as well as how long it takes to do the refresh. If users need the data to be fairly up-to-date, we could try running it every five minutes. If users can do their jobs without the absolute latest, we could run it every hour or even every day.

If users need it to be absolutely up-to-date with the underlying tables, we can have the database itself refresh whenever the underlying data changes by using *triggers*.

## Refreshing the View with Triggers

A *database trigger* is similar to an Active Record callback: it's code that runs when certain events occur. In our case, we'd want to refresh our materialized view whenever data in the tables that view is based on changes.

To do this, we'll create a database function that refreshes the materialized view, and then create several triggers that use that function when the data in the relevant tables changes. We can do this all in a Rails migration, so let's create one where we can put this code.

```
$ bundle exec rails g migration trigger-refresh-customer-details
invoke active_record
create db/migrate/20150626120132_trigger_refresh_customer_details.rb
```



First, we'll create a function to refresh the materialized view. This requires using Postgres's PL/pgSQL<sup>5</sup> language. It looks fairly archaic, but we don't need to use much of it.

```
materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shi ... 150626120132_trigger_refresh_customer_details.rb
execute %{
 CREATE OR REPLACE FUNCTION
 refresh_customer_details()
 RETURNS TRIGGER LANGUAGE PLPGSQL
 AS $$
 BEGIN
 REFRESH MATERIALIZED VIEW CONCURRENTLY customer_details;
 RETURN NULL;
 EXCEPTION
 WHEN feature_not_supported THEN
 RETURN NULL;
 END $$;
}
```

The key part of this is RETURNS TRIGGER, which is what will allow us to use this function in the triggers we'll set up next. Also note the exception-handling clause that starts with EXCEPTION. This is similar to Ruby's rescue keyword and is a way to handle errors that happen at runtime. We can provide any number of WHEN clauses to indicate how to handle a particular exception. In this case, we're handling feature\_not\_supported, which is thrown if we run this function before the materialized view has been updated. In practice this won't happen, but in our testing environment it can, since we are resetting the database during our tests.

The form of a trigger we want will look like so:

```
CREATE TRIGGER
 refresh_customer_details
AFTER
 INSERT OR
 UPDATE OR
 DELETE
ON
 customers
FOR EACH STATEMENT
 EXECUTE PROCEDURE refresh_customer_details();
```

The code for this trigger reflects what it does: any insert, update, or delete on the customers table causes the database to run refresh\_customer\_details. So, we just need to set this up for each table that's relevant.

5. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/plpgsql.html>

If we assume that the list of US states doesn't change, we can set up triggers for the other three tables: ADDRESSES, CUSTOMERS\_SHIPPING\_ADDRESSES, and CUSTOMERS\_BILLING\_ADDRESSES. As the code is almost the same for each table, we'll loop over the table names and construct the SQL dynamically.

materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shi ... 150626120132\_trigger\_refresh\_customer\_details.rb

```
%w(customers
 customers_shipping_addresses
 customers_billing_addresses
 addresses).each do |table|
 execute %{
 CREATE TRIGGER refresh_customer_details
 AFTER
 INSERT OR
 UPDATE OR
 DELETE
 ON #{table}
 FOR EACH STATEMENT
 EXECUTE PROCEDURE
 refresh_customer_details()
 }
end
```

After we run `rake db:migrate`, we can insert new customers and see the view get refreshed automatically.

```
sql> insert into customers(
 first_name,last_name,email,username,created_at,updated_at)
 values (
 'Amy','Copeland','amy@amy.dave','amytron',now(),now());
INSERT 0 1
sql> insert into customers_shipping_addresses
 (customer_id,address_id,"primary")
 values
 (388400,1,true);
INSERT 0 1
sql> insert into customers_billing_addresses
 (customer_id,address_id)
 values
 (388400,1);
INSERT 0 1
> select * from customer_details where customer_id = 388400;
-[RECORD 1]-----+-----
customer_id | 2
first_name | Amy
last_name | Copeland
email | amy@amy.dave
username | amytron
joined_at | 2015-06-26 08:17:17.536305
billing_address_id | 1
```

```

billing_street | 123 any st
billing_city | washington
billing_state | DC
billing_zipcode | 20001
shipping_address_id | 1
shipping_street | 123 any st
shipping_city | washington
shipping_state | DC
shipping_zipcode | 20001

```

Using triggers, you don't have to worry about setting up an external process to keep the materialized view refreshed. The downside is if your table will have a high volume of writes or updates, you'll be refreshing the view a lot, and this could slow down your database. You'll have to evaluate which technique will be best, based on your actual usage.

The path that led us to materialized views was the promise of high performance and code simplicity. It may have felt circuitous, but it's a great demonstration of the type of power you have as a full-stack developer. By understanding the breadth of tools available to you, and how to use them, you can create solutions that are simple.

Although we had to create a materialized view and triggers to keep it updated, we were able to avoid setting up a new piece of infrastructure for caching and can get more out of the database system we already have in place. Our Rails code looks like regular Rails code (we're using Active Record to query data), and we didn't need to write a background process to keep our data updated. Eventually, we'll have complex enough query needs that we can't use this technique, but we're getting a lot further than we would with other RDBMSs.

## Next: Combining Data with a Second Source in Angular

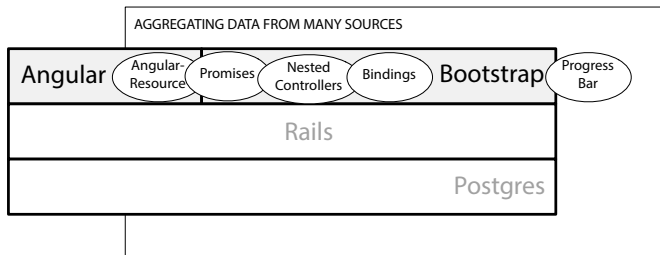
We're about to complete our journey in creating a high-performing, usable, and clean way for our users to see a customer's details. We have our UI designed and built, and our back end is now clean, simple, and fast. We now need to bring them together in our Angular app.

With what we know about Angular, using this data in our view is pretty easy. We've seen how we can request information from the server user \$http and we've seen how to show that data in our view using Angular's templating system, along with the ng-model directive.

One thing you might have noticed is that our CustomerDetail model doesn't expose some of the billing information, such as the last four digits and expiration data of the customer's credit card. We don't store this data in our

database, but we need it in our view. In the next chapter you'll see how Angular manages that by learning more about how its asynchronous nature works.

You'll learn how to can pull data from two separate sources and have it display in the view, showing the data as it comes in, for the best user experience, all without a whole lot of code.



## CHAPTER 10

# Asynchronously Load Data from Many Sources

In the last chapter, we saw how using a materialized view made it easy to aggregate data from several different database tables. But what if data we need comes from more than one source? Do we collect data from all sources at the server, thus making the user wait for all of it to be available before seeing any of it? Or is there a way to show the user data as it comes in, updating the UI along the way?

The latter is a better user experience, and that's what we're going to explore here. We'll use Angular's asynchronous design to show users data as it comes in, rather than making them wait. We'll use the `angular-resource` module to keep our code clean and clear, and keep our code decoupled by using multiple controllers for the view. We'll also use Bootstrap to make sure the user experience is acceptable while the user is waiting for data.

As you recall, our running example shows a detailed view of a customer's information. It includes the data we're pulling back from our materialized view, but also data about their credit card, which is located inside a third-party service (which we'll simulate). We'll solve this problem in a clean way, maintaining the best user experience we can.

We're going to take this in small steps. First, we'll learn about *angular-resource*, which makes it easier to manage asynchronous code, and enables the user experience we want. We'll use this to fetch the customer details we made available in [Chapter 9, Cache Complex Queries, on page 151](#). Next, we'll nest

controllers in our view, so we can make a separate controller for fetching the credit card details.

With the structure of our user interface in place, we'll see how to use Bootstrap's progress component to show the user a loading animation that's connected to the Ajax call. With the user *experience* complete, we'll see how the two controllers can communicate so they can stay decoupled from one another. Finally, we'll revisit how to unit test our Angular controllers in light of this new information.

First, though, let's get an overview of how asynchronous code works in Angular. Since asynchronous code isn't something that is a part of Rails, you might not have a lot of experience with it conceptually, and this can make it hard to understand the code we're going to write. Let's step through the life cycle of some asynchronous requests.

## Understanding How Asynchronous Requests Work

If you've done any JavaScript programming, you are familiar with *callbacks*. These are functions that get called *later*. The simplest example is `setTimeout`, which takes a callback function and a number of milliseconds. After the given milliseconds have elapsed, the function is called.

In this code, we execute the function `errorMessage` one second later:

```
var errorMessage = function() {
 alert("OH NOES!");
};
setTimeout(errorMessage,1000);
```

We also saw this when using `$http` in [Chapter 5, Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS, on page 61](#), where we passed a callback to get that would execute our code once we got a response from the server. We didn't really talk about *why* `$http` works that way. Now we will.

## Why Asynchronous?

Contacting the server takes time. Even with all the improvements we've made in the performance of our Rails controller, fetching data over the Internet is not instantaneous. If our JavaScript were to make an Ajax call and simply wait for a response (called a *synchronous request*), the entire browser would be hung while it waited on the network.

In order to prevent this, we want to make the call in the background and let our main bits of code (and the browser in general) continue to operate while the networking request is happening. In many programming languages, this

is done with threads. JavaScript does not expose the concept of threads to the user, instead requiring programmers to use callbacks managed internally by the runtime.

This means our code is often organized in three chunks: setup to make our Ajax request, making the request, and code to run after the request has completed. Where this can get tricky is when we have more than one request. Consider this code:

```
Line 1 var base = "http://billing.example.com"
2 $http.get(base + "/cardholder/123").then(function(response) {
3 alert("Got card details!");
4 });
5 $http.get("/customer/123.json").then(function(response) {
6 alert("Got customer!");
7 });
8 alert("Requests complete!");
```

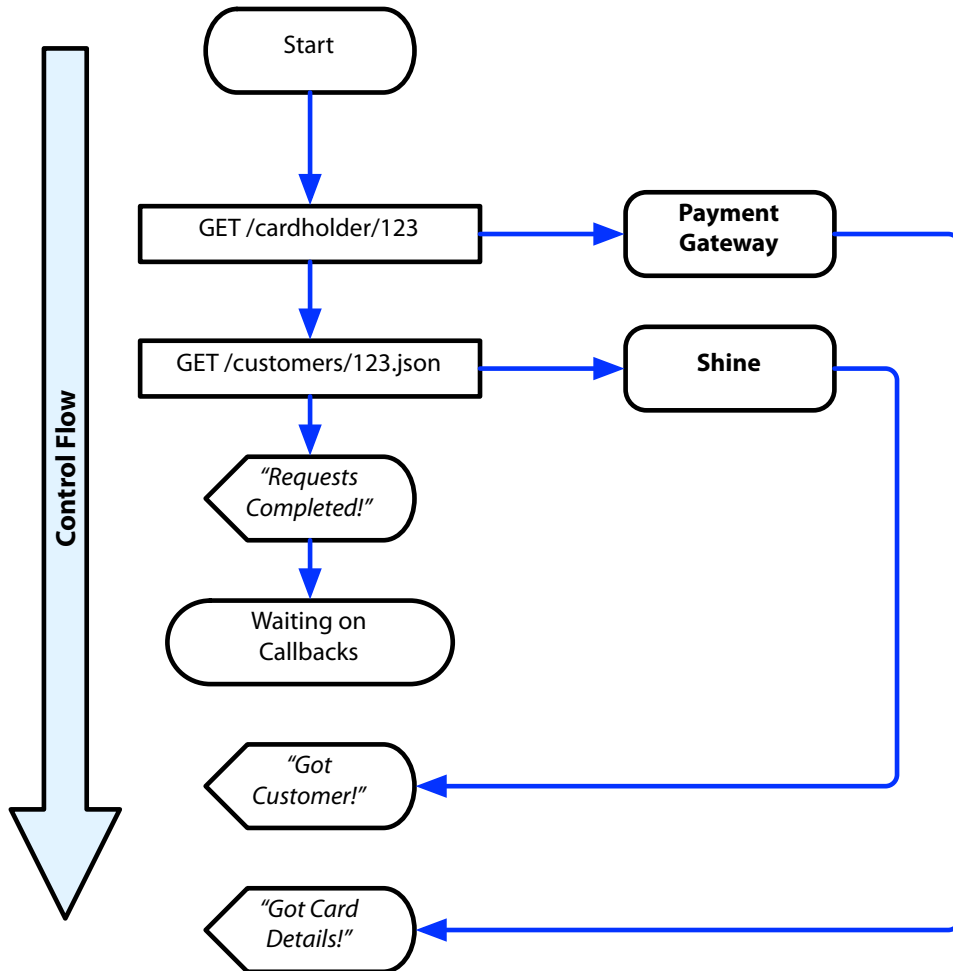
Although this code looks like it runs top to bottom, it actually doesn't. Lines 1 and 2 execute first. While that Ajax call is happening, the code proceeds to line 5. After that, line 8 is called.

This means that lines 3 and 6 haven't executed yet! They'll execute when their respective Ajax calls complete, and that could happen in any order. A big part of our code—handling the responses from the server—cannot rely on any particular ordering. The [figure on page 174](#) shows the overall flow.

This can get confusing fast, especially if the code *does* need to run in a certain order. Consider if we needed a credit card holder ID from our customer details in order to fetch the customer's card information from our third-party billing service. We'd need to make our call to the billing service inside the callback that's called when our customer details are fetched, creating a nested structure like so:

```
var base = "http://billing.example.com"
$http.get("/customer/123.json").then(function(response) {
 alert("Got customer!");
 var url = base + "/cardholder/" + data.cardholder_id
 $http.get(url).then(function(response) {
 alert("Got card details!");
 });
});
alert("Requests complete!");
```

This is called *callback hell*. It makes your client-side code hard to deal with. Partly this is just the reality of programming with an asynchronous model. But there are tools, called *promises*, to help us wrangle this complexity.



## Promises

You'll notice that we aren't passing a function to `$http.get` like we did to `setTimeout`. Instead, we're calling the function then on whatever `$http.get` returns. What it's returning is called a *promise*.

A promise is an object that represents a background call that may or may not have completed. At its most basic, a promise contains a single function that accepts a function to be called when the underlying call has completed. When a promise is completed, it's said to be *resolved* and, when that happens, our function is called with the results.



All of Angular's asynchronous code is build on its \$q library,<sup>1</sup> which uses the function then:

```
var promise = $http.get("/customers/123.json");
promise.then(function(response) {
 // This is called when the Ajax call completed successfully
});
```

Promises are a deep topic that we won't get too far into, but it's important to understand what they are. In the next section, we'll see how promises allow us to clean up our code quite a bit. The main thing you should take away is that there are objects that represent background work that can be accessed while the work is happening.

The code we've written thus far (using \$http) uses the promises returned by \$http, but is still written in with a callback style. Now that you know about promises, let's focus on *angular-resource*, which makes more intelligent use of the underlying promise, providing an API that does *not* require callbacks.

## Using Angular-Resource to Connect to Rails

The Rails way of designing HTTP endpoints (which is a *RESTful* style<sup>2</sup>) isn't particular to Rails. It's quite common outside the Rails world. Because of this, it's possible to use a higher level of abstraction than what \$http gives us. The Angular module *angular-resource* provides such an abstraction.

What it will allow us to do is to write code like so:

```
$scope.customer = Customer.get(customer_id);
```

Although there are no callbacks, this code is still asynchronous. Execution continues after the call; it doesn't wait for the Ajax call to complete. This is because the object returned by *Customer.get* is a promise that, when resolved, will behave like a customer object, exposing the various fields from the call.

This lets us use *customer* in our view as if it were a populated object. When the promise is resolved, the view automatically updates. Without callbacks, our code is clean and easy to follow yet it won't block on the remote HTTP call.

To be able to write our controller in this style, we'll need to install and configure *angular-resource*. It provides the *\$resource* service, which we can use to create an object like *Customer*. *Customer* can then be used to make our Ajax calls as shown earlier.

1. [https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/service/\\$q](https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/service/$q)

2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representational\\_state\\_transfer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representational_state_transfer)

## Installing Angular-Resource

You'll recall how we installed angular-route in [Chapter 7, Create a Single-Page App, on page 119](#), and we'll do the same here for angular-resource. First, we'll add it to Bowerfile and run `rake bower:install` to download it.

**angular-async/start/shine/Bowerfile**

```
asset 'bootstrap-sass-official'
asset 'angular-mocks'
asset 'angular-route'
START_HIGHLIGHT
asset 'angular-resource'
END_HIGHLIGHT
asset 'angular', '~> 1.5'
resolution 'angular', '1.5'
```

Next, we'll add it to `app/assets/javascripts/application.js`.

**angular-async/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/application.js**

```
//= require angular
//= require angular-route
➤ // = require angular-resource
// = require angular-rails-templates
// = require_tree ./templates
// = require_tree .
```

Finally, we'll add angular-resource as a dependent module when setting up our app. As before, we can't use the string `angular-resource`, but have to translate that to the module name `ngResource`.

**angular-async/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers\_app.js**

```
var app = angular.module(
 'customers',
 [
 'ngRoute',
 ➤ 'ngResource',
 'templates'
]
);
```

All this setup will allow us access to the `$resource` service.<sup>3</sup>

## Using \$resource

The `$resource` service is a *factory*<sup>4</sup> function that takes a URL fragment as a parameter and returns an object we can use to make Ajax calls to our Rails controller, without having to use callbacks.

3. [https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ngResource/service/\\$resource](https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ngResource/service/$resource)

4. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Factory\\_\(object-oriented\\_programming\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Factory_(object-oriented_programming))

First, we'll inject it into our `CustomerDetailController` by adding its name to the parameter list and adding the argument `$resource` to our function definition (see [Creating Our First Angular Controller, on page 67](#) for a reminder on why we have to do this).

```
angular-async/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.controller("CustomerDetailController", [
 ▶ "$scope", "$routeParams", "$resource",
 ▶ function($scope, $routeParams, $resource) {
 1});
```

Now that it's available to our controller, we can replace the innards of our controller entirely with the following:

```
angular-async/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
var customerId = $routeParams.id;
var Customer = $resource('/customers/:customerId.json')

$scope.customer = Customer.get({ "customerId": customerId})
```

This code is a lot cleaner and a lot clearer. It *looks* like a simple, synchronous call but it's still asynchronous. This is because the object we get back from `Customer.get` is a promise that, when resolved, will set properties on itself based on the results of the call.

We can see this in action, but first we need to use `$scope.customer` in our view.

## Populating the View

Rather than revisit the entire view we designed in [Chapter 8, Design Great UIs with, on page 137](#), we'll just show a few of the changes we need to make. This shouldn't be anything new if you've been following along.

We'll use the `ng-model` directive to bind our form elements to the values we get back from the Ajax call.

```
angular-async/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
<article class="panel panel-primary">
 <header class="panel-heading">
 <h1 class="h3">
 Customer
 </h1>
 </header>
 <section class="panel-body">
 <div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group ">
 <label class="sr-only" for="first-name">
 First Name
 </label>
```

```

> <input type="text" class="form-control"
> name="first-name" ng-model="customer.first_name">
 </div>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="last-name">Last Name</label>
> <input type="text" class="form-control"
> name="last-name" ng-model="customer.last_name">
 </div>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="username">Username</label>
> <div class="input-group">
> <div class="input-group-addon">@</div>
> <input type="text" class="form-control"
> name="username" ng-model="customer.username">
> </div>
 </div>
 </div>
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="email">Email</label>
> <input type="text" class="form-control"
> name="email" ng-model="customer.email">
 </div>
</section>
<footer class="panel-footer">
 <label for="joined">Joined</label>
> {{ customer.joined_at | date }}
</footer>
</article>

```

The rest of the view will be similar. We should now be able to navigate to our customer search, find a customer, click to view details, and see the data populated into our form (except for the credit card information, which we'll get to in a moment). This is shown in the [screenshot on page 179](#).

We can see the asynchronous promise in action by adding a call to sleep to our controller method.

```

def show
 customer_detail = CustomerDetail.find(params[:id])
> sleep 5
 respond_to do |format|
 format.json { render json: customer_detail }
 end
end

```

This sleep call will make our controller artificially slow, which will make the Ajax call take a long time. We can also add a call to alert in our Angular controller that will execute right after the Ajax call is made, but before it's completed:

```
var customerId = $routeParams.id;
var Customer = $resource('/customers/:customerId.json')

$scope.customer = Customer.get({ "customerId": customerId })
➤ alert("Ajax Call Initiated!");
```

If you reload the detail page now, you should see the alert pop up. If you dismiss it quickly, the screen will show a blank form for a few seconds, and when the sleep in our controller finishes, the data will populate in the view automatically.

Angular knows to do this via *binding*. When we use `ng-model` or simply refer to values from the scope in our view via the `{{value}}` syntax, Angular *binds* those values to the view. It then begins to watch them for changes. When the Ajax call completes and sets values for properties like `customer.first_name` and `customer.joined_at`, Angular notices and updates any parts of the DOM affected by the new values.

We'll learn more about the bindings in [Chapter 11, Wrangle Forms and, on page 193](#), when we save the user's changes back to the server.

Now that we've simplified access to the back end, and hooked everything up to our new detail view, we can start to think about how to get the credit card info into this view. Since that data will come from a different source than the data we've been using so far, it's worth considering if we can keep the code separate.

We'll see how we can do this by placing our new code in a different controller, and having that controller nested in our view, controlling only the part of it that needs its data.

## Nesting Controllers to Organize Code

So far, we've had a setup of one controller per view. We could continue doing that here, and add the necessary code to `CustomerDetailController` to get the user's credit card info from the second source. Although for the task at hand it might not be too complex to do so, you should learn how to do this a better way, especially if things get complex later. It's not much more code, and will make our Angular app easier to work.

We can achieve this separation by using a second, nested controller, attached to a subset of our view using `ng-controller`. We didn't need to use `ng-controller` after we introduced `angular-route`, because the controller to use is configured in the routing configuration. But we can still use `ng-controller` in our view to effectively override this configuration.

Implementing the controller itself will be straightforward: we just need know the URL from which to fetch the credit card info. Since this is just a simulation, we'll create an endpoint in our Rails app to act as the payment processor's website.

First, we'll add a route called *fake\_billing* to `config/routes.rb`:

```
angular-async/start/shine/config/routes.rb
```

```
Rails.application.routes.draw do
 devise_for :users
 root 'dashboard#index'
 resources :customers, only: [:index, :show]

 get "angular_test", to: "angular_test#index"
 ➤ get "fake_billing", to: "fake_billing#show"
end
```

`FakeBillingController` will then use `Faker` to return canned data based on a *cardholder ID*.

```
angular-async/start/shine/app/controllers/fake_billing_controller.rb
```

```
class FakeBillingController < ApplicationController
 skip_before_action :authenticate_user!
 def show
 if params[:cardholder_id]
 sleep 3
 render json: {
 lastFour: Faker::Business.credit_card_number[-4..-1],
 cardType: Faker::Business.credit_card_type,
```

```

 expirationMonth: Faker::Business.credit_card_expiry_date.month,
 expirationYear: Faker::Business.credit_card_expiry_date.year,
 detailsLink: Faker::Internet.url,
 }
 else
 head :not_found
 end
end
end
end

```

We've used `sleep` to simulate a slow response from the payment processor. This will allow us to see the effects of how we've designed our user interface. We should see the customer details pop up quickly, followed later by the credit card info. This will be more what it would like in the real world, and it will also allow us to verify that our asynchronous handling of the various Ajax calls is happening as we expect.

With our simulated payment processor set up, we can write our nested Angular controller, which we'll call `CustomerCreditCardController`. It will work similarly to `CustomerDetailController` in that we'll use `$resource` to create the object `CreditCardInfo`, which will access the credit card endpoint we created earlier, and then use it to fetch the info.

Despite the fact that we are simulating the third-payment processor with Rails, `$resource` isn't restricted to just Rails endpoints. It works with any HTTP endpoint that is RESTful. Were we integrating with a real payment processor, and their API was similar to how Rails works, our code would work just as it does here (of course `$resource` is highly flexible and can be configured to deal with just about anything).

Here's what `CustomerCreditCardController` will look like (we'll use a hardcoded cardholder ID for now and see how to get the real value in a later section of this chapter):

```

angular-async/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.controller("CustomerCreditCardController", [
 "$scope", "$resource",
 function($scope, $resource) {
➤ var CreditCardInfo = $resource('/fake_billing.json')
➤ $scope.creditCard = CreditCardInfo.get({ "cardholder_id": 1234})
 }
]);

```

This is enough for us to get things working in the UI. To do that, we'll use `ng-controller` on the element whose children should be managed by `CustomerCreditCardController`. Doing this will make anything placed into `CustomerCreditCardController`'s

\$scope available to that markup, but *not* available outside of it, thus achieving the separation we were going for.

Here's our template, including how we are using the exposed `creditCard` object.

angular-async/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer\_detail.html

```

<div class="col-md-6">
 <article class="panel panel-default billing-info">
 <header class="panel-heading">
 <h2 class="h4">
 Billing Info
 </h2>
 </header>
 <section class="panel-body">
 <article ng-controller="CustomerCreditCardController">
 <div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-7">
 <p class="h4">
 ****.****.****-{{creditCard.lastFour}}

 {{creditCard.cardType}}

 </p>
 <p class="h5">
 <label>Expires:</label>
 {{creditCard.expirationMonth}}/{{creditCard.expirationYear}}
 </p>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-5 text-right">
 <a href="{{creditCard.detailsLink}}"
 class="btn btn-lg btn-default">
 View Details...

 </div>
 </div>
 </article>

 <!-- rest of the billing address markup... -->

 </section>
 </article>
</div></form>

```

With our UI connected to our nested controller, we can reload the page and see it all in action. Everything will look the same, but you should see that the customer details load quickly and, after a pause, the credit card info will appear. This demonstrates that we have the building blocks to get the user the best experience we can *and* keep our code organized in doing so.



You'll note I said "building blocks." There are two problems with the current implementation. First is that while the request is happening, the app just sits there, providing no indication of what it's doing. The second is that while users are waiting for the data, they see the credit card info in a weird empty state. For example, why should the "View Details" button even be displayed if we don't have the link available?

While we still need to get the actual value for `cardholder_id` into our controller, let's fix the UI issue first. We can do this by combining a property Angular exposes about the state of a promise's resolution, along with Bootstrap's *progress* component.

## Using Bootstrap's Progress Bar When Data Is Loading

In a traditional application, where the views are generated on the server, you get a reasonable user experience during slow-loading pages for free. Most browsers have some sort of loading animation or messaging while the page is being rendered. It's not great, but it's something.

When making heavy use of a front-end framework like Angular, we no longer get that bit of UI. As we are seeing with the customer detail page, there's no indication that anything is happening. It may appear to users that the app is broken or hung. We'd like to fix that.

There are two things we'll need to do. First, we need to know how to detect if the Ajax call is still in progress or if it's completed. We'll use that for the second step, which is to render a loading animation if the call is still in progress.

## Dynamically Rendering Content Based on the Ajax Call's Status

We've seen how we can show or hide parts of the DOM by using the `ng-if` directive. What we need to know is what expression to use to show or hide our UI while the Ajax call is happening. As you'll recall, `$resource` creates a factory (in our case, `CreditCardInfo`) that returns a promise, meaning that `$scope.creditCard` is a promise that gets resolved when the Ajax call completes.

In the documentation for `$resource` you'll see that all such objects include the property `$resolved`, which will be false while the Ajax call is happening and true when it's done.

To use it, create two divs. The first contains our loading animation. It's shown when `$resolved` is false. The second contains the existing credit card info UI.

[angular-async/progress/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer\\_detail.html](http://angular-async/progress/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html)

```
<article ng-controller="CustomerCreditCardController">
 <div class="row">
 <div ng-if="!creditCard.$resolved">

 <!-- loading animation will go here -->

 </div>
 <div ng-if="creditCard.$resolved">

 <!-- Credit Card info component -->

 </div>
 </div>
</article>
```

Because Angular is watching `$resolved`, when it changes from false to true, the loading animation will get hidden and the UI, populated with all the data we got back from the server, will be shown.

We just need to create a loading animation.

## Using an Animated Progress Bar as a Loading Animation

There are countless loading animations across the web, some in pure CSS and some requiring JavaScript. To keep with our theme of not writing any CSS, we're going to use Bootstrap's progress bar component.<sup>5</sup> It has many features, including animation.

Although the progress of our Ajax call is indeterminate, Bootstrap's progress bar can function as an indeterminate progress indicator or loading animation. We'll simply create a progress bar that's at 100%, and animate it, overlaying

5. <http://getbootstrap.com/components/#progress>

the label “Loading.” With custom CSS, we could probably do better, but this will be pretty good, given the tools at hand.

We'd like to give the progress bar some space so it doesn't crowd the panel. We can do this using the grid we discussed in [Chapter 8, Design Great UIs with, on page 137](#). We'll have the progress bar take up ten of the twelve available grid cells, and use a helper class, `col-md-offset-1`, which will offset the cell containing the progress bar by one cell, effectively centering it in the panel, with a padding of one cell on each side.

Inside our cell, we'll put the progress bar's code, which looks like so:

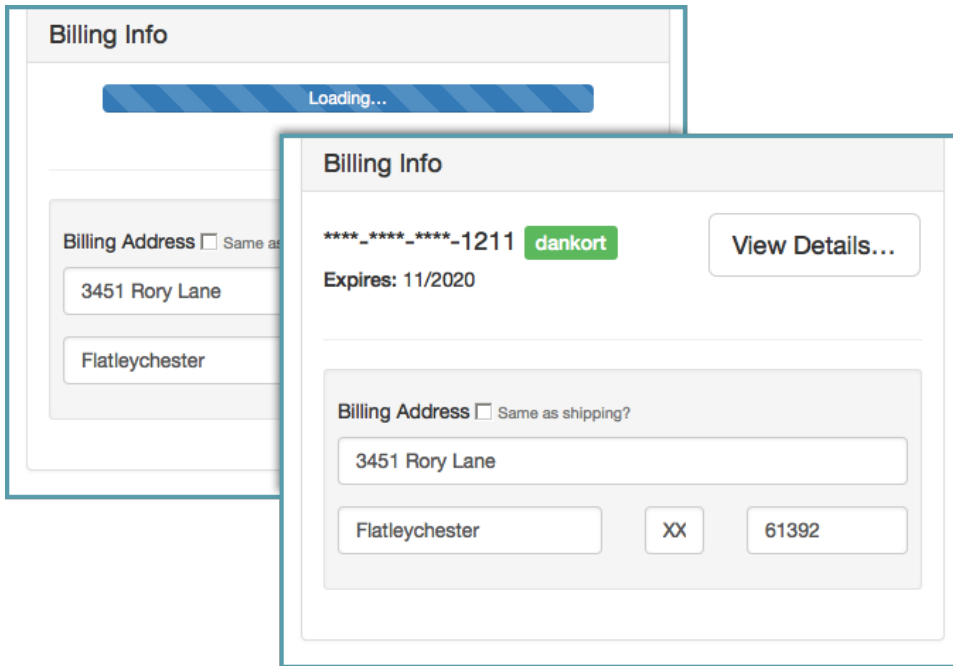
```
angular-async/progress/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
<div class="col-md-10 col-md-offset-1">
 <aside class="progress">
 <div class="progress-bar progress-bar-striped active"
 style="width: 100%">
 Loading...
 </div>
 </aside>
</div>
```

You'll notice that we're cheating a little on our “no CSS” rule, because there is a style element on the inner div of the progress bar. This is the way Bootstrap knows how much progress to render. It's not very sophisticated, but it was designed before widespread use of the HTML5 progress element (which we can't use, because its default styling conflicts with Bootstrap's, and will eliminate the animation we need for this feature). But, it looks pretty good and solves our problem. This is a great example of bending our tools to meet our needs without introducing complexity.

As the [screenshot on page 186](#) shows, loading the detail page now displays an animated progress bar.

After a few seconds, the Ajax call completes and you should see the credit card info UI, with all the data from the back end.

It's pretty amazing what we've been able to accomplish for ourselves and our users with very few lines of code. We're fetching data from the back end, asynchronously, without callback hell, and we give the user a decent experience while a slow-loading resource becomes available. We display the customer details almost immediately, and use a loading animation to let the user know the credit card info is coming.



With our user interface locked down, we now need to get the actual value for `cardholder_id`. We can do this by passing data from our outer controller to our inner, nested controller.

## Passing Data Between Controllers

At this point, we're using a hardcoded value for `cardholder_id`, but we haven't explained what it is. In our simulated payment processor back end, we need to pass an identifier of whose credit card information we want to show.

For the sake of simplicity, let's assume that, elsewhere in our hypothetical system, when we create credit card info with our payment processor, we explicitly state that the cardholder's ID is the same as our internal ID used in the `CUSTOMERS` table. Thus, the value we get back from our controller as `customer_id` should be the value to use for the `cardholder_id`.

Given that, how can we get the ID of the customer we're viewing inside `CustomerCreditCardController`? We could extract it from the route parameters like we do in `CustomerDetailController`, but this feels wrong, as it's copying code. It also makes our `CustomerCreditCardController` more tightly coupled to the view and routing configuration.

Another option is to reach into `$scope`. Because we've configured `CustomerCreditCardController` to be nested in the view that is powered by `CustomerDetailController`, Angular will pass in a scope that has the same data in it that `CustomerDetailController` has. This means that if we access `$scope.customer` inside `CustomerCreditCardController`, it will be the same object that `CustomerDetailController` is dealing with.

This approach isn't great because it maintains tight coupling between our two controllers. `CustomerCreditCardController` shouldn't require being nested inside a view related to `CustomerDetailController` if we can help it. The more `CustomerCreditCardController` can be decoupled the better, both for understanding the code and for testing it.

What we can do instead is make the dependency between the two controllers more explicit. This means `CustomerCreditCardController` and `CustomerDetailController` do not have to know about each other at all, which allows us to more easily work with both classes.

To do this, we'll use the directive `ng-init`. `ng-init` is used on the same element as `ng-controller` and allows you to execute code that has access to both scopes. In effect, we can use data exposed by `CustomerDetailController` and pass it to a function exposed by `CustomerCreditCardController`, like so:

```
<article ng-controller="CustomerCreditCardController"
 ng-init="setCardholderId(customer_id)">
```

It might seem odd to put this logic inside the view, and the Angular docs *do* warn against excessive use of this directive, but it's a great solution to our problem. It puts the code that couples the two controllers where the coupling actually exists: the view.

First, we'll create a function in `CustomerCreditCardController` that we can use in `ng-init` to set the customer ID. This function will initiate the call to the payment processor back end.

```
angular-async/ng-init/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
```

```
app.controller("CustomerCreditCardController", [
 "$scope", "$resource",
 function($scope, $resource) {
 var CreditCardInfo = $resource('/fake_billing.json')
 $scope.setCardholderId = function(cardholderId) {
 $scope.creditCard = CreditCardInfo.get(
 { "cardholder_id": cardholderId}
)
 }
 }
]);
```

Notice how we use the name `setCardholderId` instead of `setCustomerId`. This reinforces the de-coupled nature of these two pieces of code—`CustomerCreditCardController` should not have to know that we are using the customer's ID as the cardholder ID in the payment processor's system.

It might seem like we could call this function in `ng-init`, like so:

```
<article
 ng-controller="CustomerCreditCardController"
 ng-init="setCardholderId(customer.customer_id)">
```

This won't work, however, because `customer` is a promise, and so won't initially have a value for `customer_id`. Fortunately, the customer's ID isn't a value we have to wait on from the Ajax response. Since it's part of the `routeParams`, `CustomerDetailController` already has access to it without hitting the back end. We can simply expose this value from `CustomerDetailController` and then use it in `ng-init`.

First, we'll expose the customer ID to the view via `$scope`.

```
angular-async/ng-init/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
```

```
app.controller("CustomerDetailController", [
 "$scope", "$routeParams", "$resource",
 function($scope, $routeParams, $resource) {
 $scope.customerId = $routeParams.id;
 var Customer = $resource('/customers/:customerId.json')
 $scope.customer = Customer.get({ "customerId": $scope.customerId})

 // rest of the controller...
 }
]);
```

Now, we can use it in `ng-init`:

```
angular-async/ng-init/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
```

```
<article
 ng-controller="CustomerCreditCardController"
 ng-init="setCardholderId(customerId)">
 <div class="row">
 <div ng-if="!creditCard.$resolved">
```

With this in place, we're passing the cardholder ID to the fake payment processor, thus keeping all of our code separate and decoupled, but still able to handle getting data from all the right places. This wraps up our feature to view a customer's details, but it's worth revisiting our testing setup in light of this new way of making Ajax calls.

## Testing Controllers That Use Angular-Resource

Before [Chapter 6, Test This Fancy New Code, on page 83](#), our Angular code was using `$http` to make Ajax calls. Our tests used `$httpBackend` to mock out the HTTP interactions between our controller and the server. Will that still work, now that we are using `angular-resource`?

The short answer is yes. Because `angular-resource` is using `$http` under the covers, the same techniques apply. In fact, you can use this information to refactor `CustomerSearchController` to use `angular-resource`.

Because `angular-resource` requires us to understand promises, let's walk through a basic test of the `CustomerCreditCardController`, so it's clear how promises interact with our tests.

First, we'll set up our tests in the usual way:

```
angular-async/ng-init/shine/spec/javascripts/customer_credit_card_controller_spec.js
```

```
describe("CustomerCreditCardController", function() {
 describe("Initialization", function() {
 var scope = null,
 cardholderId = 42,
 controller = null,
 httpBackend = null,
 cardInfo = { lastFour: '4321',
 cardType: 'visa',
 expirationMonth: 3,
 expirationYear: 2018,
 detailsLink: 'http://billing.example.com/foo' };

 beforeEach(module("customers"));

 beforeEach(inject(function ($controller,
 $rootScope,
 $httpBackend) {
 scope = $rootScope.$new();
 httpBackend = $httpBackend;

 httpBackend.when('GET',
 '/fake_billing.json?cardholder_id=' + cardholderId
).respond(cardInfo);

 controller = $controller("CustomerCreditCardController", {
 $scope: scope
 });
 }));
 // tests will go here...
 });
});
```

You can see from the highlighted section that we're using `$httpBackend` the same way we did before, despite the fact that our controller isn't actually using `$http`.

To write the tests, we'll first write one that asserts that nothing happens when the controller is initialized—that no Ajax calls are initiated if `setCardholderId` has not been called.

```
angular-async/ng-init/shine/spec/javascripts/customer_credit_card_controller_spec.js
it("does not hit the backend initially", function() {
 expect(scope.creditCard).not.toBeDefined();
});
```

This test may seem spared, but it *will* fail if any Ajax calls are made during initialization of the controller. The next test is for the actual behavior of the controller, and this is where we'll walk through when the promises get resolved so it's clear how all this works.

```
angular-async/ng-init/shine/spec/javascripts/customer_credit_card_controller_spec.js
1 it("when setCardholderId is called, hits back-end", function() {
2 scope.setCardholderId(cardholderId);
3 expect(scope.creditCard).toBeDefined();
4 expect(scope.creditCard.lastFour).not.toBeDefined();
5 httpBackend.flush();
6 expect(scope.creditCard).toEqualData(cardInfo);
7 });
```

- ❶ Here we simulate what's going on in `ng-init` by calling the public function `setCardholderId` directly. After this call the Ajax call would be in-flight and the promise underlying `$scope.creditCard` would *not* be resolved.
- ❷ Although we wouldn't normally test Angular's underlying promise system, we can see it in action in our tests. Here we see `scope.creditCard` is defined.
- ❸ Here, we can see that although `scope.creditCard` is defined, it doesn't have any properties set on it. Again, you probably wouldn't test this for real, but it does demonstrate the order of operations.
- ❹ This line simulates the completion of the Ajax call by using `httpBackend.flush()` as we've seen before. At this point the promise is resolved, and we'd expect `$scope.creditCard` to have data in it.
- ❺ Finally, we can assert that we got data back from the server. `scope.creditCard` is now populated with all of the data we expect.

Promises can be somewhat confusing in your production code, and in test code it's even more confusing because you have to push each step through manually to see promises get created and then resolved.

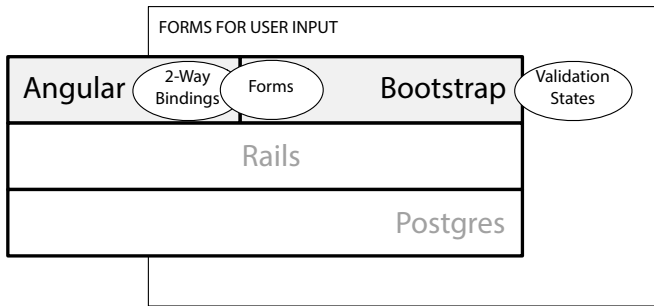


It is worth pointing out how the separation of controllers made our tests simpler. If you imagine that we'd put all the code from `CustomerCreditCardController` in `CustomerDetailController` instead, our tests would be more complex. They would have to simulate two HTTP calls to make sure everything was working properly. By separating concerns and decoupling, our controllers are easier to test.

## Next: Sending Changes Back to the Server

In this chapter, you learned how to use `angular-resource` to easily fetch data from our Rails app (as well as a third-party payment processor), and to display it to the user as it became available using promises. But viewing data is only part of what you need to learn.

In the next chapter, we'll add the functionality to let the user edit some of the data and have it sent back to the server and updated automatically. You'll learn more about Angular's bindings and see how to handle the disparity between our materialized view of a customer's details and the actual database model that backs it.



## CHAPTER 11

# Wrangle Forms and Validations with Angular

So far, we've treated our application as a producer of information, as it shows data quickly, easily, and in a usable way. But applications need to consume information as well, and that's what we're going to discuss in this chapter. So far, we've designed a complex form that shows the user some information about a customer, and the next step is to let the user modify that information.

A typical Rails application has access to various helpers, both in Active Record and in the view, to give the user a good experience. You can specify that a field is required or must match a certain format (for example, the validators we used with Devise in [Chapter 1, Create a Great-Looking Login with Bootstrap and Devise, on page 1](#)). Since we're relying on Angular to render our form, we don't have access to all of Rails's features to let users update the data.

This chapter shows you how to get the same benefits and give the user the same great experience but using Angular's form support, along with Bootstrap's styles for field validation. This will be a true test of your abilities as a full-stack developer, because Angular and Bootstrap were not designed to work in concert, so it'll be a bit tricky making it all work.

To understand how to do this, you'll first learn about *bindings*, which is the core of how Angular manages dynamic values and is the underpinning of ng-model. You'll then build on this to explore Angular's form support. *Angular Forms* provide various hooks into the binding life cycle, which will allow you

to detect when values have changed, inject validations, and generally manage your code for the front end.

From there, you'll learn how to use Angular Forms with Bootstrap's styles so that your form fields properly indicate their valid or invalid states to the user. Then, you'll see how to save the data back to the server. You'll also see how Rails's validators relate to all of this.

But first, let's explore bindings.

## Managing Client-Side State with Bindings

In [Chapter 10, \*Asynchronously Load Data\*, on page 171](#) we saw how Angular uses bindings to detect changes in our model, and how it can update those changes in the view. Angular's bindings are *two-way*, meaning that changes on the form are also reflected back on the model.

We saw this in action when we created our Angular test app in [Chapter 5, \*Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS\*, on page 61](#). If you recall, our app rendered whatever was typed in a text field as the value for an *h1* tag. It was Angular's bindings that made this happen.

Now that we are going to allow users to edit the fields in our form, we'll need to understand more details about how bindings work. On the surface, it may seem that when a user is editing a form field, the value of that field is copied back to the model. While true, there's much more to it.

Angular's bindings keep track of detailed states of the control:

### *Valid vs. invalid*

Angular will keep track of the validity of a field and will *not* sync invalid values back to the model. It can do this using HTML5 validations (like `required`<sup>1</sup>), or custom validators that you write.

### *Dirty vs. pristine*

A control is *pristine* if the user has yet to interact with it and *dirty* otherwise. Angular tracks this, which you can use to avoid showing a user a fresh, blank form with a bunch of error flags for required fields.

### *Touched vs. untouched*

A control has been *touched* if it's been *blurred* (for example, the user has tabbed away from it) and *untouched* otherwise. Angular can track this, too (which you can use to sync only values or show errors after the user is done interacting with the control).

1. <http://www.w3.org/TR/2011/WD-html5-20110525/common-input-element-attributes.html#attr-input-required>

### *Asynchronous validation*

Angular allows you to write validations that are the result of external, asynchronous calls. This can be useful when you need to hit the server for validations.

This feature list should come as no surprise to you at this point, because it's complex, yet powerful—a great description of Angular in general. In the next section, we'll use these features by applying HTML5 validators to our markup. This will add Angular's validations to our form.

## Validating User Input with Angular Forms

In addition to the properties of a binding we discussed earlier, Angular provides sophisticated features to interact with form data.<sup>2</sup> We can use these features to implement various validations on our input fields using HTML5's validations. For example, we can indicate a field is required using `required` like so:

```
<input type="text" name="first_name" required>
```

HTML5 validations, and thus Angular's form validations, can do more than just require values. Here are the validations we're going to implement, and it won't require very much code to make them work:

- First name, last name, and username are required.
- Email is required and should look like an email address.
- Address and city are required.
- State should be exactly two uppercase letters.
- Zip code should be exactly five digits.

To implement these validations, we'll first add the necessary markup to indicate what the validations on each field are. Next, we'll see exactly how this information is exposed to our JavaScript code, before finally adding a submit button that is only enabled if all fields are valid. This will demonstrate how the mechanics of Angular's form validation work, so we'll be ready to style our validated fields in the next section.

### Adding Validation Markup

Angular's built-in validations are documented on each of the input components to which they apply.<sup>3</sup> Since we're using almost entirely text fields, we'll use the validators for `input type="text"`.<sup>4</sup>

2. <https://docs.angularjs.org/guide/forms>

3. <https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/input>

4. <https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/input/input%5Btext%5D>

Of course, our email field should use the new HTML5 input type="email", because that will trigger Angular's email pattern-matching validation. So, let's convert that field:

```
angular-forms/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
```

```
<div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="email">Email</label>
 > <input type="email" class="form-control" required
 > name="email" ng-model="customer.email">
</div>
```

You'll also notice that we used the HTML5 required attribute. Angular will pick this up, too, and use it to validate that this field has a value.

Using HTML5 validations creates a problem, because the browser will try to validate these values, too. Because Angular is going to handle that, we need to disable browser validation on the form element using the novalidate attribute:

```
> <form novalidate><div class="row">

 <!-- rest of the markup -->

</div></form>
```

With that out of the way, we can proceed to add validations for the remaining fields. For the first name, last name, username, two address, and two city fields, we just need to use required like so:

```
angular-forms/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
```

```
<div class="form-group" >
 <label class="sr-only" for="first-name">
 First Name
 </label>
 > <input type="text" class="form-control" required
 > name="first_name" ng-model="customer.first_name">
</div>
```

The markup should look similar for the other fields.

For the state and zip code fields, we'll still use required, but we'll also use the HTML5 pattern attribute, which will allow us to specify a regular expression that the value of the field must match. For the two state fields, the regular expression [A-Z][A-Z] should suffice to capture a two-letter state code. For the zip code field, \d\d\d\d\d will capture the five digits required for a U.S. zip code.

```
angular-forms/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
```

```
<div class="col-md-2">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="state">State</label>
 > <input type="text" class="form-control"
```

```

> required pattern="[A-Z][A-Z]"
> name="shippingState" ng-model="customer.shipping_state">
 </div>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="zip">Zip</label>
> <input type="text" class="form-control"
> required pattern="\d\d\d\d\d"
> name="shippingZip" ng-model="customer.shipping_zipcode">
 </div>
 </div>

```

Now that we've added markup for validations to our fields, let's add a submit button for users to use to save their changes. We'll add the button at the bottom of the grid cell that holds the billing info.

[angular-forms/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer\\_detail.html](#)

```

<form novalidate name="form"><div class="row">

 <!-- rest of the markup -->

 <div class="col-md-6">

 <!-- customer info & shipping markup -->

 </div>
 <div class="col-md-6 billing-info">
 <article class="panel panel-default">

 <!-- billing info markup -->

 </article>
> <div class="text-right">
> <button ng-click="save()" class="btn btn-lg btn-primary">
> Save Changes
> </button>
> </div>
 </div>
</div></form>

```

The result is shown in [the screenshot on page 198](#).

You'll note that we used `ng-click` to bind this button to the `save` function. We haven't written that function yet, but we will in the next section, where we'll see how this validation works.

## Accessing and Handling Validation Results

With the small changes we've made to the markup, we could prevent invalid submissions. When the value of a bound field is invalid, Angular will set that field's corresponding model property to undefined. We could check that all properties of `$scope.customer` are defined and submit to the server only in this case.

This is bad for two reasons: it would be a lot of code that would need changing if we changed the form fields, and it wouldn't afford a great user experience. We'd like to show the user, on the form, where the problems are, as the user is making mistakes, as well as some messaging about what the user needs to do to fix them. Angular provides all of this for us, on an instance of an `NgFormController`.

The `NgFormController` can be queried at any time to get the current state of the form's validations (and other information). To get access to it, we just need to give our form element a name attribute:

```
angular-forms/start/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
<form novalidate name="form"><div class="row">

 <!-- rest of the markup -->

</div></form>
```

Now, we can access an object named `$scope.form` in our controller. We can ask it if the form is valid by calling the `$valid` function (note the leading `$`, which Angular uses frequently to indicate an Angular-provided function). This function is similar to the `valid?` method provided by Active Record, with a small exception: `$valid` is a property that becomes true or false as the data becomes valid or invalid. As you'll recall, `valid?` is a method that checks for validity only when called.

Let's try it out. In `app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js`, implement `save` like so:

```
$scope.save = function() {
 alert($scope.form.$valid);
}
```

If you search for a customer and then click `Save Changes`, you should see a JavaScript alert with the message `true`. If you then modify the data to be invalid—based on our rules and markup—and click again, you'll see `false`. This is already a much better way to check for validity than iterating through each of the values looking for `undefined`.

The `NgFormController` gives us much more, however. As with Active Record's `Errors` class, we can access detailed information about what's wrong with each field. For each field in our form, there is a corresponding object on the `NgFormController`. Those objects expose a lot of data about the field, including the property `$valid` indicating if the field's value is valid, and `$error`, which is an object describing the errors.

Let's see this in action. We'll update our `save` function to show us information about the email field's validity.

```
$scope.save = function() {
 if ($scope.form.email.$valid) {
 alert("Email is valid");
 } else if ($scope.form.email.$error.required) {
 alert("Email is required");
 } else if ($scope.form.email.$error.email) {
 alert("Email must look like an email");
 }
}
```

With this in place, let's play around with different values for the email field. Angular is setting keys in the `$error` object on our field that indicate what the problem is. We'll see how to use these keys in the next section.

In addition to showing the user the errors from `$error`, we'll make the user experience better using Bootstrap. The JavaScript alerts we're currently using aren't a great experience, so we'll make them better.



## Styling Invalid Fields with Bootstrap

Now that we can detect which fields are invalid (and why), we want to show our users this information so they can correct the issue. We could just display a list of errors at the top of the screen, but we can do better. Bootstrap provides classes that allow us to highlight valid and invalid fields as well as show error messages:

Bootstrap refers to this as *feedback*. To display the error state shown earlier, we'll add the classes `has-feedback` and `has-error` to the `div` containing our form elements. To make sure the error message text picks up the same red styling, we'll put it inside a `p` that uses the `help-block` class:

```
<div class="form-group has-feedback has-error">
 <input type="email" class="form-control">
 <p class="help-block">
 This should be an email address
 </p>
</div>
```

For the valid state, we'll use the classes `has-feedback` and `has-success` on the `div`:

```
<div class="form-group has-feedback has-success">
 <input type="email" class="form-control">
</div>
```

To use these features, we must know two things: where the messages will come from and how to conditionally style our form elements.

## Displaying Error Messages

With the knowledge we currently have, we could conditionally display error messages like so:

```
<p class="help-block" ng-if="form.email.$invalid">
 Email is required
 Email must look like an email
</p>
```

Angular has a module, called *Angular Messages*, that makes this a bit easier and allows us to write this:

```
<p class="help-block" ng-messages="form.email.$error">
 Email is required
 Email must look like an email
</p>
```

We'll install it by adding angular-messages to our Bowerfile:

```
angular-forms/bootstrap/shine/Bowerfile
asset 'bootstrap-sass-official'
asset 'angular-mocks'
asset 'angular-route'
asset 'angular-resource'
START_HIGHLIGHT
asset 'angular-messages'
END_HIGHLIGHT
asset 'angular', '~> 1.5'
resolution 'angular', '1.5'
```

We'll then install it with `rake bower:install` and add it to `app/assets/javascripts/application.js`:

```
angular-forms/bootstrap/shine/app/assets/javascripts/application.js
//= require angular
//= require angular-route
//= require angular-resource
➤ //= require angular-messages
//= require angular-rails-templates
//= require_tree ./templates
//= require_tree .
```

As we saw in [Installing Angular's Router, on page 121](#), we must translate the module's name so we can add it to our code to indicate it is a dependency of our Angular app. The translated name we'll use is `ngMessages`:

```
angular-forms/bootstrap/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
var app = angular.module(
 'customers',
 [
 'ngRoute',
 'ngResource',
 ➤ 'ngMessages',
 'templates'
]
);
```

Now we can add this code to each form element:

```
angular-forms/bootstrap/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
<label class="sr-only" for="email">Email</label>
<input type="email" class="form-control" required
 name="email" ng-model="customer.email">
➤ <p class="help-block" ng-messages="form.email.$error">
➤ Email is required
➤ Email must look like an email
➤ </p>
```

Note that we'll have to use different values for `ng-message` depending on the validations we added on that field. For example, the shipping zip code field will look like this:

```
angular-forms/bootstrap/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
<label class="sr-only" for="shippingZip">Zip</label>
<input type="text" class="form-control"
 required pattern="\d\d\d\d\d"
 name="shippingZip" ng-model="customer.shipping_zipcode">
➤ <p class="help-block" ng-messages="form.shippingZip.$error">
➤ Zip is required
➤ Zip must be five digits
➤ </p>
```

Once we add this code to the rest of the form fields, our users will get great feedback on what they've done wrong. But we'll want to visually highlight the errors as well, using the `has-feedback` classes we talked about earlier.

## Conditionally Styling Form Elements

We'd like to show invalid fields in red and valid fields in green, but we don't want to show any special highlighting for fields whose values haven't been touched or changed.

The reason for this is that for a split second when our view template loads, there will be no values in the fields as the controller fetches them from the back end. Since we've configured most fields to be required, they'd be considered invalid until the Ajax call completed. This is why `$pristine` exists.

Further, we don't want to show a field as green unless the user has actually done something to the field. This is where `$touched` comes into play.

This means that the logic for showing the error/invalid state would require that both `form.email.$invalid` *and* `form.email.$dirty` be true. Similarly, the logic for showing the green success state would require that both `form.email.$valid` *and* `form.email.$touched` be true.

So, how do we connect that logic to the classes Bootstrap provides? The answer is `ng-class`. The `ng-class` directive<sup>5</sup> allows us to conditionally add classes to an element.

The value you'll use for the directive depends on what you're trying to do. For simple uses, we can provide an expression that evaluates to a string. For example:

```
<div ng-class="'email-' + form.email.$valid">
</div>
```

The expression we gave to `ng-class` is `'email-' + form.email.$valid`, which, if the email field is invalid, evaluates to `'email-false'`. Thus, the browser will see this:

```
<div class="email-false">
</div>
```

Unfortunately, the Bootstrap feedback classes don't work in a way that allows us to build a class name dynamically like this (or at least, not in a way that doesn't involve a lot of convoluted code). So, we'll use the second form that `ng-class` accepts, which is an object syntax.

In this syntax, the value is a JavaScript object, where the keys represent different classes that might be applied to the element. For each key, if its value evaluates to true, that key is applied as a class on the element. The previous example using the object syntax would look like so:

```
<div ng-class="{ 'email-false': form.email.$invalid,
 'email-true': form.email.$valid }">
</div>
```

This syntax is much cleaner for our purposes. To mark up the email field, we'll do this:

angular-forms/bootstrap/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer\_detail.html

```
<div class="form-group has-feedback" ng-class="{
 'has-error': form.email.$invalid && form.email.$dirty,
 'has-success': form.email.$valid && form.email.$touched
}">
```

```
 <!-- form markup from before... -->
```

```
</div>
```

Try it out by clearing the email address, then changing the value to a non-email, then changing it to a valid email address. You'll see that the field will

5. <https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/directive/ngClass>

be red or green, depending on the value, and the error messages will change dynamically, depending on what the issue is.

The screenshot shows a web form titled 'Customer' with two main sections: 'Customer' and 'Billing Info'. The 'Customer' section has input fields for 'Mikayla', 'Jacobs', '@', 'daisha99', and 'foo@bar.com', along with a 'Joined Dec 1, 2015' label. The 'Billing Info' section has a 'Loading...' indicator and a 'Billing Address' section with a checkbox 'Same as shipping?' checked. The address fields are '77417 Langworth Curve', 'New Cassandreside', 'XX', and '47551'. The 'Zip' field '47551' is highlighted in red with an error message 'Zip must be five digits'. A 'Save Changes' button is at the bottom right.

This is exactly what we want! We'll need to add these lines of code to each field's form-group. It might feel a bit repetitive, and there *is* a way to extract this boilerplate using custom *directives*. This is an advanced topic that we'll go over briefly in [Chapter 12, Dig Deeper, on page 213](#) but for now, we'll just deal with a bit of duplication.

The last thing we should do is to disable the Save button if the form is invalid.

## Disabling the Save Button if Data Is Invalid

As a last indicator to users that something is wrong, we don't want them to be able to click the Save Changes button if there are any validation errors. We can do this in two steps. First, we'll disable the button using the `ng-disabled` directive. This will add `disabled="disabled"` to the button, which Bootstrap will see; it will then render the button in a lighter disabled state.

[angular-forms/bootstrap/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer\\_detail.html](#)

```
<div class="text-right">
 <button ng-click="save()"
 class="btn btn-lg btn-primary"
 ng-disabled="form.$invalid || form.$pristine">
 Save Changes
 </button>
</div>
```

Note that we've also disabled it if the form is pristine. In this case no data has changed, and there's nothing to save to the server.

We'll also change our save function to no-op if the form is invalid.

```
angular-forms/bootstrap/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
$scope.save = function() {
 if ($scope.form.$valid) {
 alert("Save!");
 }
}
```

This isn't strictly necessary, because the browser should disable the button. But it can't hurt, and it prevents our controller code from breaking because of changes in the view.

Our form now works and looks great. Users can see clear indicators when fields are valid or invalid, and get messages explaining the problem, right at the fields in question. The last thing we need to do is actually save the data back to the server.

## Saving Data Back to the Server

Normally, saving back to the server wouldn't be terribly interesting, since we could just post a JSON blob that Rails expects to be given to an Active Record's update method. If you'll recall, our CustomerDetail class is backed by a materialized view and *not* a regular table. That means that we can't call update on it, since you can't update a materialized view.

That means we'll have to figure out how to get the data out of our denormalized CustomerDetail and into the right places in the database. But first, let's get our Angular app and Rails back end set up to receive the data.

## Sending Data Back to the Server

First, let's set up the update action for CustomersController, which is what will receive the payload from our Angular app to update the customer details. We'll modify the route in config/routes.rb like so:

```
angular-forms/save/shine/config/routes.rb
resources :customers, only: [:index, :show, :update]
-----^^^^^^
```

We'll also add a simple controller action that just prints out the parameters:

```
class CustomersController < ApplicationController

 # rest of the controller...
```

```
➤ def update
➤ puts params.inspect
➤ end
end
```

Lastly, we'll modify the save function in `CustomerDetailController` to post data to the server. As you recall, we used `angular-resource` to fetch data from the back end. The object we got back from `Customer.get` contains functions provided by `angular-resource` to save to the server. The function we want for this case is `$save()`. Note the preceding `$` that indicates this is an Angular-provided function.

Calling `$save()` will send the data inside `$scope.customer` to the server by POSTing it to `/customers.json`. This isn't quite what we want. The route we set up in our Rails application wants the data sent via PUT or PATCH, and it wants it sent to a URL with the customer's ID in it, such as `/customers.12345.json`.

Fortunately, these are easy to handle by adjusting our call to `$resource`. Currently, it looks like this:

```
var Customer = $resource('/customers/:customerId.json');
```

When we called `Customer.get`, we supplied the value for `:customerId` as the second argument. Since we're calling `$save()` on `$scope.customer`, Angular can derive the proper value with a little help. The second argument to `$resource` is an object that describes how to do this.

That object's keys should be all the dynamic bits of the URL. The values are strings that explain how to get those values. If the values for the object's keys start with `@`, that tells Angular to look for that attribute on the object itself. So, `{ "customerId": "@customer_id" }` instructs Angular to fill in `:customerId` with whatever the value of `customer_id` is on the object on which we're calling `$save()`.

To handle the HTTP method, we can use the third optional argument to `$resource`. This object is highly flexible, allowing anything from customizing the HTTP method (what we need) to adding custom functions and actions. In our case, we just need to indicate that the `save` action uses the HTTP method `PUT`. We can do this with `{ "save": { "method": "PUT" } }`. Bringing it all together looks like this:

```
angular-forms/save/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.controller("CustomerDetailController", [
 "$scope", "$routeParams", "$resource",
 function($scope, $routeParams, $resource) {
 $scope.customerId = $routeParams.id;
➤ var Customer = $resource('/customers/:customerId.json',
➤ {"customerId": "@customer_id"},
➤ { "save": { "method": "PUT" } });

 // rest of the controller...
 }
]);
```

Now, when we call `$save()` on `$scope.customer`, Angular will look in `$scope.customer.customer_id` to create the URL to send back to the server, using the PUT HTTP method.

`$save()` takes two parameters: a success callback and an error callback. For now, let's keep them simple and just alert the user about what happened. We'll also call `$setPristine` and `$setUntouched` on `$scope.form` to reset it to its normal state. That will clear any green highlights due to successfully changing form values.

```
angular-forms/save/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
$scope.save = function() {
 if ($scope.form.$valid) {
 $scope.customer.$save(
 function() {
 $scope.form.$setPristine();
 $scope.form.$setUntouched();
 alert("Save Successful!");
 },
 function() {
 alert("Save Failed :(");
 }
);
 }
}
```

We can restart our app, navigate to a detail page, modify one of the fields, and click Save. If we look at the Rails server log, we'll be somewhat disappointed in the results.

```
"PUT /customers/217689.json HTTP/1.1" 422 98873 0.2421
```

Instead of seeing the parameters printed out, we just get a lonely 422, which means “Unprocessable Entity.” This is Rails Cross-Site Request Forgery (CSRF) protection<sup>6</sup> getting in our way. CSRF protection is a feature of Rails that prevents malicious entities from trying to hack our systems by exploiting non-GET endpoints. While we could integrate this into our Angular app,<sup>7</sup> the Rails documentation for `RequestForgeryProtection`<sup>8</sup> recommends turning it off for Ajax requests like ours.

We can do this by conditionally skipping the request forgery protection in our `ApplicationController`:

6. <http://guides.rubyonrails.org/security.html#cross-site-request-forgery-csrf>

7. <http://stackoverflow.com/questions/14734243/rails-csrf-protection-angular-js-protect-from-forgery-makes-me-to-log-out-on>

8. <http://api.rubyonrails.org/classes/ActionController/RequestForgeryProtection.html>



```
angular-forms/save/shine/app/controllers/application_controller.rb
```

```
class ApplicationController < ActionController::Base
 protect_from_forgery with: :exception
 ➤ skip_before_action :verify_authenticity_token, if: :json_request?
 before_action :authenticate_user!

 protected

 ➤ def json_request?
 ➤ request.format.json?
 ➤ end

end
```

If we try to save our changes again, we should see our log output the parameters we passed:

```
{ "customer_id"=>217689, "first_name"=>"Bobby", "last_name"=>"Abernathy", "e..."
```

Now, we just need to save them to the database.

## Saving Data from Our Materialized View to the Database

As you recall, this data comes from the CustomerDetail class, which is backed by a materialized view. As such, we can't just call update because we can't update a materialized view using the SQL UPDATE command. But we'd still like our controller code to look as Rails-like as possible. So, let's plan to override update on CustomerDetail to handle the necessary logic so our controller will look like a canonical Rails controller.

```
angular-forms/save/shine/app/controllers/customers_controller.rb
```

```
def update
 customer_detail = CustomerDetail.find(params[:id])
 customer_detail.update(params)
 head :ok
end
```

Note that we're just returning an HTTP HEAD of 200 (:ok). There really isn't any data to report back to the caller, so this will be sufficient to let our Angular app know that everything was saved properly.

Now, we need to implement update in CustomerDetail. To keep this simple, we'll use the IDs in our payload to find the Customer and two Address records and then use their update methods to update them.

We'll need a helper method to translate keys like billing\_street to street, since both addresses are the same class.

```
angular-forms/save/shine/app/models/customer_detail.rb
```

```
class CustomerDetail < ActiveRecord::Base
 # rest of the class...
 def update(params)
 Customer.find(self.customer_id).update(
 params.permit(:first_name, :last_name, :username, :email))

 Address.find(self.billing_address_id).update(
 address_attributes(params, "billing"))

 Address.find(self.shipping_address_id).update(
 address_attributes(params, "shipping"))
 end

 private
 def address_attributes(params, type)
 {
 street: params["#{type}_street"],
 city: params["#{type}_city"],
 state: State.find_by_code(params["#{type}_state"]),
 zipcode: params["#{type}_zipcode"],
 }
 end
end
```

We're not going to dwell too much on this, since this is simple Rails code that you are likely used to. It is worth pointing out that code like this is the downside to what we've done with the materialized view. This is the price we're paying to make our query super fast.

If we reload our page, modify some data, and click Save Changes, we should see an alert indicating success, and our green highlights should disappear. If we reload the page again (forcing our Angular app to hit the server), we should see that the data saved successfully.

Our customer detail feature is done! But you may be wondering about Rails validators. We aren't using them at all and, in fact, have done all validation on the client side. Usually, you don't want the client to be the only place where you validate data, because it doesn't prevent malicious users (or buggy code) from submitting invalid data to the server.

## Understanding the Role of Rails Validators

In a normal Rails application, the use of validators is crucial, as they integrate with Rails form helpers and provide a similar experience to the one we provided with Angular's form support. Given that we aren't using Rails views, where do validators fit it?

There are a few strategies and schools of thought here, and you will need to apply some combination of them to your day-to-day features.

One school of thought is that, given the power of Postgres, there's no need for Rails validators when using Angular for our front end. We would implement all validation on the front end, so the user gets a great experience and understands what the data should look like. We'd then use Postgres check constraints (like the one we created in [Chapter 2, \*Secure the Login Database\*, on page 25](#)) to ensure bad data never gets written to the database.

This is the most ideal situation because it's the least duplication of code and puts everything closest to where it matters: user-friendly validations are in the view, where they are helpful to users, and database constraints are in the database, making it difficult or impossible for anyone to put bad data there. Further, your database will most likely outlive your application code, so having it be the canonical store of what is and isn't valid data makes the most sense.

That said, we aren't always starting from scratch, or might not be able to easily encode all of our constraints as database check constraints. For example, we might insist that the user's email address resides in a third-party system we use for managing marketing campaigns. The database can't check that. It could also be difficult to have our Angular app check that, so it would need to reside in our middleware—that is, Rails.

In these cases, you can use Rails validators (or any middleware mechanism you want) by using the `$asyncValidators` attribute of your form. This object's keys are the names of custom validations you want to run against the server. Their value is a function that takes the new and old values and is expected to return a promise that, when resolved, succeeds or fails if the validation passes or fails. The Angular docs for `NgFormController`<sup>9</sup> contain some good examples.

With this mechanism, you can have your server-side code do the complex checks for you.

A final school of thought is to just use Rails to do all validations. In this case, you'll need to do more work on the Angular app side. You'll need to implement a failure callback to `$save` that extracts the Active Record error object out of the response and marks up each field with the errors that came back. This is probably not worth it unless you have a lot of Rails-powered views that will share this code.

---

9. <https://docs.angularjs.org/api/ng/type/ngModel.NgModelController>

## Next: Everything Else

At this point, our work is done! We've created a highly complex page with a clean design, one that performs well and gives a great user experience. It took expertise in Bootstrap, Angular, and Postgres to make it happen. Take a moment to click around Shine and reflect on what we've done.

Although we've done a lot of setup and installed a lot of software, we've hardly written any code and every layer of our application is clean. We didn't write any CSS, and we've only written the JavaScript specific to the problems we're solving: no hacky data- attributes or code tightly coupled to the DOM. Our Rails controller code looks like a regular Rails controller, even though it's backed by a powerful, self-updating materialized view of our complex data.

There is so much more we could cover. We've only hit the tip of the iceberg with these technologies, but hopefully you are starting to see how employing Angular, Bootstrap, and Postgres together with Rails allows you to get a lot of great work done with little effort. You can keep leveling yourself up by opening the documentation and getting inspired.

But before I send you on your way, I want to take one last trip through these technologies to show some of the other possibilities and amazing things you can do with them. The next chapter is a grab bag of everything we didn't have space to get into earlier.

# Dig Deeper

---

Throughout the book, we implemented a simple feature to search for, view, and edit customer details. This was a great framing example to learn a lot about full-stack development, from optimizing our database to creating a great user experience. Hopefully, this has emboldened you to dig deeper into the tools you're using, where you'll find easy solutions to the problems you face day to day.

And Angular, Postgres, and Bootstrap are *deep* tools. This section is going to expose you to more features that you'll find handy but that we don't have space to delve into deeply. Unlike the previous chapters, we won't wind these into a tale of feature development, but rather show terse examples with links for more information. Think of this section as inspiration for the work you'll be doing.

## Unlocking More of Postgres's Power

For most of my career, I viewed SQL databases as dumb stores for simplistic data. Postgres has shattered that view, and this section will do the same for you. We'll talk about many advanced column types, like JSON, arrays, and enumerated types. We'll then see that Postgres supports full-text search out of the box before finishing up with the most mundane yet frequently needed tasks: CSV export.

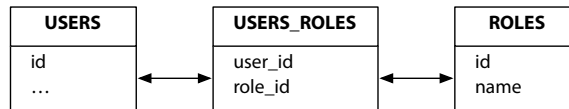
## Modeling Your Data with Advanced Column Types

Most databases store numbers and strings. For storing more advanced structures, like arrays or maps, you typically have to create them using tables. Postgres provides more advanced types to avoid doing that, and they can be a huge time-saver. Let's go over a few of them and show how they might be useful.

## Arrays

Suppose we want to add role-based security to Shine. That is, a user can have zero or more roles, and each action in Shine requires that the user has a certain role. You might need the `view_billing` role to view a customer's billing info, or the `edit_customer` role to edit a customer's data.

In most SQL databases, you would need to create two new tables. The first would be the table of roles, and the second would be a join table that joins users to roles (`USERS_ROLES`).



In Postgres, you can avoid all this and add an array on customers. This works pretty much like you'd expect. Active Record supports this datatype by using `array: true` when defining the column. Here's how we'd add this to our existing `USERS` table:

```

grab-bag/one/shine/db/migrate/20150820224152_add_roles.rb
class AddRoles < ActiveRecord::Migration
 def change
 add_column :users, :roles, :string, array: true, default: []
 end
end

```

We can then use this like a normal array in Ruby:

```

$ rails c
:001 > u = User.first
 User Load (0.8ms) SELECT "users".* FROM "users" ORDER BY "users"."id"...
 => #<User id: 1, email: "dave@example.com", encrypted_password: "$2a$10$aa...
:002 > u.roles = ["admin", "edit_customers"]
 => ["admin", "edit_customers"]
:003 > u.save!
 SQL (0.5ms) UPDATE "users" SET "roles" = $1, "updated_at" = $2 WHERE "us...
 => true
:004 > u.reload
 User Load (0.6ms) SELECT "users".* FROM "users" ORDER BY "users"."id"...
 => #<User id: 1, email: "dave@example.com", encrypted_password: "$2a$10$aa...
:005 > u.roles
 => ["admin", "edit_customers"]
:006 > u.roles.include?("admin")
 => true

```

But that's not all. An array can be searched with SQL. Suppose we want to find all the users with the role `edit_shipment`. Postgres provides the `@>` operator to do just that.

```
SELECT
 *
FROM
 users
WHERE
 roles @> ARRAY['edit_shipment']::varchar];
```

The `::varchar` is needed to allow Postgres to compare the values in our array with the literal `'edit_shipment'` we used. Postgres treats string literals as the type `TEXT`, but Rails declared our array to be an array of `VARCHAR`.

This is already quite handy, but it gets better. We can *index* this array so that a query like the one shown earlier can be optimized. If we have a large `USERS` table, we'll see that the query is somewhat slow. If we use `EXPLAIN ANALYZE` on the query, we'll see the dreaded Seq Scan. As long as we're using the `@>` operator, however, we can improve the query by creating an index.

We can't just create a normal index, though. Postgres can only index arrays if you use a different index type. In [Chapter 3, Use Fast Queries with, on page 33](#), we created an index using a special operator class. There's an additional dimension to indexes we can control in the same way called the *index type*.<sup>1</sup> The default, a B-Tree index, cannot index an array value. But the GIN type can. GIN<sup>2</sup> stands for General Inverted Index, and this index will take up more disk space and will be slower to create than a B-tree—but it indexes arrays.

```
CREATE INDEX
 users_roles
ON
 users
USING GIN (roles)
```

The key part of this is `USING GIN`. With this in place, the query is now quite fast, and our `EXPLAIN ANALYZE` indicates the index is being used:

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE
SELECT * FROM users
WHERE roles @> ARRAY['edit_shipment']::varchar];
 QUERY PLAN

Bitmap Heap Scan on admin_users (cost=9.12..268.20 rows=145 width=...
 (actual time=0.073..0.175 rows=145...
 Recheck Cond: (roles @> '{edit_shipment}'::character varying[])
 Heap Blocks: exact=93
-> Bitmap Index Scan on admin_users_roles
 (cost=0.00..9.09 rows=145 width=0)
```

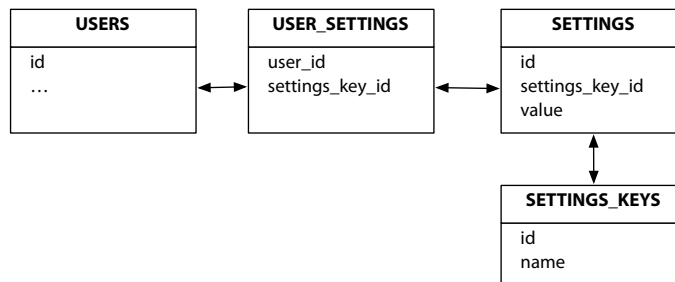
1. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.1/static/indexes-types.html>
2. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.1/static/textsearch-indexes.html>

```
(actual time=0.056..0.056 rows=145 loops=1)
 Index Cond: (roles @> '{edit_shipment}'::character varying[...
Planning time: 0.235 ms
Execution time: 0.219 ms
```

This means that you can use an array on a very large table and still get great performance out of it—performance that would certainly surpass using a join table.

## HSTORE

Another common need we have when modeling data is to store key/value pairs. In most SQL databases, you would need to set up a generalized set of tables to do this, likely a table of possible keys, a table of possible values, and a join table to connect them to the table that needs them. An example might be user settings.



The HSTORE<sup>3</sup> type can solve this with a single field on USERS called settings. An HSTORE is a single-depth key/value store. Active Record supports it and will treat it like a Ruby hash in your code.

This type isn't available in Postgres by default but can be enabled via the command `enable_extension`, which we can do in our Rails migration via `execute`. Once we've done that, we can create the column using the `:hstore` type:

```
grab-bag/one/shine/db/migrate/20150820231159_add_settings.rb
class AddSettings < ActiveRecord::Migration
 def up
 enable_extension :hstore
 add_column :users, :settings, :hstore, default: {}
 end
 def down
 remove_column :users, :settings
 disable_extension :hstore
 end
end
```

3. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/hstore.html>



Now, the settings attribute behaves like a Ruby hash:

```
$ rails c
:001 > u = User.first
 User Load (2.2ms) SELECT "users".* FROM "users" ORDER BY "users"...
=> #<User id: 1, email: "dave@example.com", encrypted_password: "$2a$...
:002 > u.settings[:page_size] = 20
=> 20
:003 > u.save!
 SQL (0.4ms) UPDATE "users" SET "settings" = $1, "updated_at" = $2 W...
=> true
:004 > u.settings[:page_size]
=> 20
```

To query this in SQL, use the `->` operator, which works like Ruby's square brackets.

```
sql> select id,settings from users where (settings->'page_size')::int > 0;
-[RECORD 1]-----+-----
id | 1
settings | "page_size"=>"20"

sql> select * from users where (settings->'page_size')::int > 40;
(No rows)
```

Note that we need to cast the result of `settings->'page_size'` to an int, because Postgres stores the values as strings. You can also check if an HSTORE field contains a key via the `?` operator:

```
sql> select id,settings from users where (settings?'page_size');
-[RECORD 1]-----+-----
id | 1
settings | "page_size"=>"20"

sql> select * from users where (settings?'foo');
(No rows)
```

Indexing options for HSTOREs are limited. You can use a GIN index to assist with the `?` operator, and you can use a B-tree index to help with testing for equality, but there isn't currently a way to index particular keys and values in an HSTORE.

Still, this is a useful data type for storing key/value data, especially if you aren't sure what keys you might need.

## JSON and JSONB

Sometimes, you need to store complex, structured data but it won't fit into the relational model. Either it's hierarchical or it doesn't have a small defined set of attributes. If you were using a normal SQL database, you wouldn't be

able to store this data in a useful way. You'd likely need to use a document-oriented database like CouchDB or MongoDB. Postgres, however, *can* store such data types using the JSON type.<sup>4</sup>

Although you can store JSON in a TEXT field (and even configure Rails to parse it for you), you can't really query a TEXT field in a useful way (for example, querying for rows that have a certain value for a JSON key). This is why many turn to document-oriented databases, because they can delve into the structure of the JSON document for querying.

Let's suppose we want to allow our data science team to store arbitrary insights about our customers in the database. They don't know what format they'll need, so we can just give them a JSON column. Active Record supports this via the `:json` type, so we can create the column as we normally would other columns.

```
grab-bag/one/shine/db/migrate/20150820233327_add_insights_to_customers.rb
class AddInsightsToCustomers < ActiveRecord::Migration
 def change
 add_column :customers, :insights, :json, default: {}
 end
end
```

You can interact with this field exactly as you'd expect:

```
$ rails c
:001 > c = Customer.first
Customer Load (2.3ms) SELECT "customers".* FROM "customers" ORDER BY...
=> #<Customer id: 1, first_name: "Toby", last_name: "McKenzie", email: ...
:002 > c.insights[:spendiness] = 4.5
=> 4.5
:003 > c.insights[:curiosity] = { shoes: 3, hats: 99, accessories: true }
=> {:shoes=>3, :hats=>99, :accessories=>true}
:004 > c.save!
SQL (7.7ms) UPDATE "customers" SET "insights" = $1, "updated_at" = $2 ...
=> true
:005 > c.insights
=> {:spendiness=>4.5, :curiosity=>{:shoes=>3, :hats=>99, :accessories=>t...
:006 > c.insights[:curiosity][:hats]
=> 99
```

JSON columns support the `->` operator (just like an HSTORE does), but this operator returns values that are also JSON types. This makes it hard to query for specific values, and requires complex casting. To address this, the `->>` operator is also available, and this produces a TEXT value, which is much easier to deal with:

4. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/datatype-json.html>

```
sql> SELECT
 id,insights
 FROM
 customers
 WHERE
 (insights->>'spendiness')::decimal > 4;
-[RECORD 1]-----
id | 1
insights | {"spendiness":4.5,
 | "curiosity":{"shoes":3,"hats":99, "accessories":true}}
```

```
sql> SELECT
 id,insights
 FROM
 customers
 WHERE
 (insights->'curiosity'>>'shoes')::decimal > 2;
-[RECORD 1]-----
id | 1
insights | {"spendiness":4.5,
 | "curiosity":{"shoes":3,"hats":99,"accessories":true}}
```

You can also query for equality, at a deeply nested level. Suppose we want to find all customers who are curious about accessories. We can use the @> operator, which checks for containment.

```
sql> select id,insights from customers
where insights@>'{ "curiosity": { "accessories": true } }';
-[RECORD 1]-----
id | 1
insights | {"spendiness":4.5,
 | "curiosity":{"shoes":3,"hats":99,"accessories":true}}
```

This code returns all rows where the insights column contains a key, curiosity, which contains an object that in turn contains a key, accessories, that has a value of true.

This is obviously pretty handy. But it gets better. There is an alternate JSON type called JSONB that allows you to *index* the JSON. You can create a field like this in Active Record using :jsonb instead of :json. By doing so, we can now create a GIN index that will assist in some queries.

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE
 SELECT * FROM customers
 WHERE insights@>'{ "curiosity": { "accessories": true } }';
 QUERY PLAN

Seq Scan on customers (cost=0.00..9586.00 rows=350 width=111) (actual
 Filter: (insights @> '{ "curiosity": { "accessories": true } }'::jsonb)
 Rows Removed by Filter: 349999
```

```

Planning time: 0.116 ms
Execution time: 77.494 ms
(5 rows)

```

```

sql> create index on customers using GIN (insights);
CREATE INDEX

```

```

sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE
SELECT * FROM customers
WHERE insights@>'{"curiosity": {"accessories": true }}';
 QUERY PLAN

Bitmap Heap Scan on customers (cost=74.71..1175.69 rows=350 width=11)
 Recheck Cond: (insights @> '{"curiosity": {"accessories": true}}')::
 Heap Blocks: exact=1
-> Bitmap Index Scan on customers_insights_idx (cost=0.00..74.62)
 Index Cond: (insights @> '{"curiosity": {"accessories": true})
Planning time: 0.169 ms
Execution time: 0.043 ms
(7 rows)

```

It's hard to overstate how powerful this is. This gives you the flexibility of a document-oriented database but the performance of a relational database's queries. It also means you can write features that store both relational and free-form data that take advantage of transactional integrity, which would be impossible if you were using multiple data stores. This means that you can use Postgres for a wide variety of data-storage applications.

Active Record supports this type, but you'll still need to write SQL using these operators to do the advanced querying. For example, to perform the query we looked at earlier in Rails, you'd need to do this:

```
Customer.where("insights @> ?", { curiosity: { accessories: true }}).to_json
```

Since very few databases support features like this, Active Record has no native API for this. Fortunately, `where` is flexible enough for us to make it work.

## Enums

Rails 4 added support for the enum, short for *enumerated type*,<sup>5</sup> which is essentially a field that has a small number of possible values. A common use for this is for status codes. For example, we might give our customers a status of “signed\_up,” “verified,” or “inactive.”

Before Rails's support for enums, you'd need to use a string field in the database, and then something like `validates_inclusion_of` to make sure only the

5. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enumerated\\_type](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enumerated_type)

allowed types were being used. With Rails 4's enum support,<sup>6</sup> you can now do this more explicitly:

```
class Customer < ActiveRecord::Base
 enum status: [:signed_up, :verified, :inactive]
end

c = Customer.first
c.status
=> signed_up
c.signed_up?
=> true
c.status = :foo
ArgumentError: "foo" is not a valid status
```

The problem with this is that, by default, Rails stores this in the database as a number corresponding to the index where the value falls in this array. Not only is this brittle, but it makes the data impossible to interpret without the Ruby code.

We can tell Rails to use strings instead:

```
class Customer < ActiveRecord::Base
 enum status: {
 signed_up: "signed_up",
 verified: "verified",
 inactive: "inactive",
 }
end
```

It's a bit repetitive, but it makes the data easier to understand. But it only enforces valid values from within Rails. To enforce valid values at the database, we could use a check constraint:

```
ALTER TABLE
 customers
ADD CONSTRAINT
 allowed_statuses
CHECK
 (status in ('signed_up', 'verified', 'inactive'))
```

Postgres also has support for enumerated types,<sup>7</sup> eliminating the need for check constraints like this. We can create a custom type named `customer_status` and Postgres will handle everything at the database layer, and it's all compatible with Rails.

6. <http://api.rubyonrails.org/classes/ActiveRecord/Enum.html>

7. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/datatype-enum.html>

```

grab-bag/one/shine/db/migrate/20150821123732_add_status_to_customer.rb
class AddStatusToCustomer < ActiveRecord::Migration
 def up
 execute %{
 CREATE TYPE
 customer_status
 AS ENUM
 ('signed_up', 'verified', 'inactive')
 }
 add_column :customers, :status, "customer_status",
 default: "signed_up",
 null: false
 end
 def down
 remove_column :customers, :status
 execute %{
 DROP TYPE customer_status
 }
 end
end
end

```

The only downside is having to repeat the values in our Active Record model, but this is a small price to pay for an explicitly modeled field in our code and database.

Postgres also has rich support for range types, various date and time types, geometric types, and even IP addresses. The documentation<sup>8</sup> should provide inspiration for what you can store, and how you can index it, in your database.

In addition to having advanced data types available, we can use Postgres as a full-text search engine.

## Searching Free-Form Text

In [Chapter 3, Use Fast Queries with, on page 33](#) we used LIKE to do a fuzzy search of a text field. Postgres actually supports a complete full-text search engine<sup>9</sup> that you can use for searching large swaths of text.

To do this, Postgres has two data types: *tsvector*, which represents a searchable *document*, and *tsquery*, which represents a query of some document. To perform a full-text search, you use the @@ operator. The left-hand side should be a *tsvector* (you can turn any string type into one via the *to\_tsvector* function) and the right-hand side is a *tsquery* (similarly, you can use *to\_tsquery* to turn a string into a *tsquery*).

8. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/datatype.html>

9. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/textsearch-intro.html>

Here's an example that searches the given string to see if it contains both “perform” and “search.”

```
> SELECT to_tsvector('Postgres can perform a full-text search') @@
 to_tsquery('perform & search');
?column?

t
(1 row)
```

You can also give to\_tsquery a config name, which can help it better match the text to a query. A config is often a language, so we can use the config english and Postgres will know that if we search for performs instead of perform that the string still matches, since both words are the same *normalized lexeme*.<sup>10</sup>

```
> SELECT to_tsvector('english','Postgres can perform a full-text search') @@
 to_tsquery('performs & search');
?column?

t
(1 row)
```

Suppose we want to allow customers to write an open-ended bio for themselves and then allow other customers to search those bios to find like-minded shoppers. We can add a new TEXT field to CUSTOMERS and create a special index on it.

The GIN index we talked about earlier is mostly intended for full-text search (it just happens to be useful for arrays and JSON). Let's see what it looks like.

[grab-bag/one/shine/db/migrate/20150822194126\\_add\\_bio\\_to\\_customers.rb](#)

```
class AddBioToCustomers < ActiveRecord::Migration
 def up
 add_column :customers, :bio, :text
 execute %{
 CREATE INDEX
 customers_bio_index ON customers
 USING
 gin(to_tsvector('english', bio));
 }
 end
 def down
 remove_column :customers, :bio
 end
end
```

10. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lexeme>

With this in place, our full-text, fuzzy search of CUSTOMERS by the bio field will be indexed.

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE
SELECT * FROM customers
WHERE to_tsvector('english',bio) @@ to_tsquery('widgets');
 QUERY PLAN

Bitmap Heap Scan on customers (cost=209.57..4015.82 rows=1750 width=...
 Recheck Cond: (to_tsvector('english'::regconfig, bio) @@ to_tsquery...
 -> Bitmap Index Scan on customers_bio_index (cost=0.00..209.13 ro...
 Index Cond: (to_tsvector('english'::regconfig, bio) @@ to_tsq...
Planning time: 0.131 ms
Execution time: 0.036 ms
```

Note that if you omit the config from the call to `to_tsvector`, Postgres will not be able to use the index, since that's the config we used when setting it up.

```
sql> EXPLAIN ANALYZE
SELECT * FROM customers
where to_tsvector(bio) @@ to_tsquery('widgets');
 QUERY PLAN

Seq Scan on customers (cost=0.00..12033.00 rows=1750 width=147) (actu...
 Filter: (to_tsvector(bio) @@ to_tsquery('widgets'::text))
 Rows Removed by Filter: 350000
Planning time: 0.136 ms
Execution time: 529.359 ms
```

We can see here that it did a Seq Scan instead of using the index.

Full-text search in Postgres is extremely powerful. You can do much more than what we've just seen. You can create stop words that are not searched/indexed. You can do full-text search on concatenated fields. You can create synonyms so that, for example, a search for “database” could find strings containing “data store.” You can also control how search results are ranked. All within your database!

## Exporting Data to the Outside World as CSV

It's often handy to query the database and produce a comma-separated values (CSV) version of the results. This can be useful for sharing the results with nontechnical members of your team, or for pulling into a system that doesn't support SQL. Postgres makes it very simple to do this via the `COPY`<sup>11</sup> command.

Suppose we wanted to get the names, emails, and IDs of all of our customers. We could do something like this:

11. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/sql-copy.html>



```
sql> COPY (
 SELECT
 id, first_name, last_name, email
 FROM
 customers
) TO '/tmp/customers.csv' WITH CSV HEADER;
```

This will run the given query, format it as CSV, and save it to `/tmp/customers.csv` *on the server*. This isn't always convenient, but you can use `\COPY` to save it to the client. If we run the same command, but using `\COPY` (note the backslash), it will save the CSV locally:

```
sql> \COPY (
 SELECT
 id, first_name, last_name, email
 FROM
 customers
) TO '/tmp/customers.csv' WITH CSV HEADER;
```

Then `/tmp/customers.csv` on *our computer* will have the CSV.

This completes our whirlwind tour of some of Postgres's other useful features. The documentation<sup>12</sup> contains more gems like these, and is quite readable, so be sure to check it out.

## Leveling Up with Angular

Angular is a deep technology, and what you've mostly seen here is how to use it for tasks you'd normally use JQuery for, and how it makes that code simpler and cleaner. As you create more advanced user interfaces, you'll benefit from additional features Angular provides for organizing your code.

### Creating Reusable Markup with Directives

Suppose we want to add a header to our customer details page that looks like the search results component we created in [Chapter 4, Create Clean Search Results, on page 51](#). In Rails, we can accomplish this via a partial. In Angular, we can create our own directive that can act as a partial.

Angular directives are *highly* complex. They aren't just for sharing markup, but this is the simplest use case that's useful in practice and demonstrates the concept. Let's see how it works.

First, we'll extract the markup to a new template, `customer_summary.html`. It uses floats, so we'll wrap the entire thing in a `div` that has the `clearfix` class on it.

12. <http://www.postgresql.org/docs/9.5/static/index.html>

```
<div class="clearfix">

 <!-- original markup -->

</div>
```

Our directive will be called *customerSummary* and we'll use it like so (note that our markup uses the dasherized version, *customer-summary*):

```
<customer-summary cust="customer" view-details-function="viewDetails">
</customer-summary>
```

You'll see that we have to pass in the two dynamic parts of the template, which is the customer object itself and the function to be called when View Details is clicked. We do this so that our component won't be tightly coupled to the code where it's used.

To make it work, we'll use the directive function on app that takes the name of our directive and a function. That function is expected to return an object that describes our directive.

Angular recognizes *many* attributes on the object our function returns, as a directive is highly flexible. In our case, we need only two attributes: *scope* and *templateUrl*. *templateUrl* is the name of our template file, and *scope* is the object containing what we want exposed to that template.

As a simple example, suppose our template just looked like this:

```
Hello {{some_name}}!
```

If our scope contained { "some\_name": "Bob" }, then our template would work as expected and render Hello Bob!. The scope object can recognize special values to make things simpler. If the value is *=*, that tells Angular to grab the value from the attributes declared on the directive.

Let's see the code—this will make it easier to understand.

```
grab-bag/one/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
app.directive("customerSummary", function() {
 return {
 "scope": {
 "cust": "=",
 "viewDetailsFunction": "="
 },
 "templateUrl": "customer_summary.html"
 }
});
```

Recall that we're passing the attributes `cust` and `view-details-function` to our directive. By indicating that the scope values for both `cust` and `viewDetailsFunction` are `=`, we ensure that Angular will grab the values from what we specified.

In other words, `cust` will be the same as `$scope.customer` and `viewDetailsFunction` will be the same as `$scope.viewDetails`. This means that if we use our new `customer-summary` directive elsewhere, we can have control over the values we pass into the reusable directive.

Say we change our results code to use it:

```
grab-bag/one/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_search.html
<ol class="list-group">
 <li class="list-group-item"
 ng-repeat="customer in customers">
> <customer-summary
> cust="customer"
> view-details-function="viewDetails">
> </customer-summary>


```

Now when we try our search, it should look and work just the same as it did before.

Now, we can add it to our customer details page to create the header we want:

```
grab-bag/one/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
<header>
 <customer-summary cust="customer"></customer-summary>
 <hr>
</header>
<form novalidate name="form"><div class="row">

 <!-- rest of the markup -->

</div></form>
```

You'll note that we've omitted `view-details-function`. For this use case, it's not needed, so we don't want it to show up if not specified. We can do that by using `ng-if` in `customer_summary.html`.

```
> <div class="pull-right" ng-if="viewDetailsFunction">
 <button class="btn btn-small btn-primary"
 ng-click="viewDetailsFunction(cust)">
 View Details...
 </button>
</div>
```

Now, our detail page has a header that uses the same markup as the results page!

The screenshot shows a web form for editing customer information. At the top, the customer's name 'Davon Bednar' and email 'alek.west3@weimannwaters.co' are displayed, along with a 'JOINED Dec 1, 2015' timestamp. Below this, there are two main sections: 'Customer' and 'Billing Info'. The 'Customer' section contains input fields for first and last name, an email field, and a 'Joined' date. The 'Shipping Address' section has fields for street address, city, state (dropdown), and zip code. The 'Billing Info' section has a 'Billing Address' field with a 'Same as shipping?' checkbox, and fields for city, state, and zip code. A 'Save Changes' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

This is the most bare-bones means of creating reusable components using Angular directives. There is a lot more you can do with it to keep your code clean and reduce duplication. We'll see some open source directives in [Using Bootstrap-Powered Components with Angular, on page 240](#) that are designed to work with Bootstrap. They are a great source of inspiration in terms of what you can do with directives.

## Format View Content Using Filters

In [Chapter 5, Build a Dynamic UI with AngularJS, on page 61](#), we used the date filter to format our timestamp as a human-readable date. As a reminder, filters are Angular's equivalent of Rails view helpers, but work more like Unix pipes:

```
{{ customer.joined_at | date }}
```

You can create filters yourself using the filter function available on Angular modules. Suppose that the names in our CUSTOMERS table aren't well normalized, and are a mix of all lowercase, all uppercase, and mixed case. We want to display those names properly capitalized, but *only* if the name is either all lowercase or all uppercase (so as to not mess up names like McAvoy or O'Drudy).

We'll create a filter called name. We can do this by calling filter on app in customers\_app.js.

```
grab-bag/one/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js
```

```
app.filter("name", function() {
 return function(input) {
 if (!input) {
 return input;
 }

 if ((input.toLowerCase() === input) || (input.toUpperCase() === input)) {

 return input.charAt(0).toUpperCase() + input.slice(1).toLowerCase();
 }
 else {
 return input;
 }
 }
});
```

We can then use it like we did our date filter:

```
grab-bag/one/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_summary.html
```

```
<h2 class="h3">
 > {{ cust.first_name | name }} {{ cust.last_name | name }}
 <small>{{ cust.username }}</small>
</h2>
```

Now, when we search, we can see that users' names are formatted properly.

### Customer Search

#### Results

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<b>Bob McJones</b> <small>carmelo0</small> larry.cormier0@wyman.co	JOINED <b>Dec 1, 2015</b> <a href="#">View Details...</a>
<b>Bob McJones</b> <small>sheridan.gulgowski1</small> dominique.kemmer1@hane.com	JOINED <b>Dec 1, 2015</b> <a href="#">View Details...</a>
<b>Lucius Bobby</b> <small>ian5</small> miles5@walter.co	JOINED <b>Dec 1, 2015</b> <a href="#">View Details...</a>

[< Previous](#)
[Next >](#)

Filters are a great way to create view logic for formatting that you would normally use Rails helpers for.

## Organize Code in Different Files

Up to this point, all of our Angular code has gone into `customers_app.js`. Angular has no opinions on what files code lives in, and there's no set standard for how to organize it. That said, having all code in one big file isn't recommended in *any* software system.

To make this happen in Rails requires two things. First, we have to move our code into different files, but, more importantly, we have to make sure the asset pipeline picks them in the right way.

As to what code goes in what files, you can essentially do whatever you want. I tend to follow the pattern Rails uses for the middleware code, and make a directory for each type of component. Therefore, I'll have, in `app/assets/javascripts`, controllers, directives, and filters. For Shine, that would mean we'd have `controllers/customer_search_controller.js`, `controllers/customer_detail_controller.js`, `controllers/customer_credit_card_controller.js`, `filters/name_filter.js`, and `directives/customer_summary_directive.js`. This would leave `customers_app.js` as just declaring our module dependencies and setting up the routes.

To make them work with the asset pipeline, we have to do two things. First, because Rails wraps all code in JavaScript inside an immediately invoked function,<sup>13</sup> the `app` variable isn't available outside the file where it's declared. Think of our code in `customers_app.js` as actually being like this:

```
function() {
 var app = angular.module(
 'customers',
 [
 'ngRoute',
 'ngResource',
 'ngMessages',
 'templates'
]
);
}();
```

This means that `app` is private to this file. So, in each file that contains our Angular code, we have to look up our Angular app via `angular.module`. Here's how it looks for `CustomerCreditCardInfoController`'s source:

```
grab-bag/two/shine/app/assets/javascripts/controllers/customer_credit_card_controller.js
➤ var app = angular.module('customers');
 app.controller("CustomerCreditCardController", [
 "$scope", "$resource",
```

13. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immediately-invoked\\_function\\_expression](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immediately-invoked_function_expression)

```

function($scope , $resource) {
 var CreditCardInfo = $resource('/fake_billing.json')
 $scope.setCardholderId = function(cardholderId) {
 $scope.creditCard = CreditCardInfo.get(
 { "cardholder_id": cardholderId}
)
 }
}
});

```

You'll note that we're using `module` with only one argument. Invoked this way, Angular will generate an error if the module we want doesn't exist (when using the two-arg version, as we do in `customers_app.js`, Angular will *create* the module if it doesn't exist, which we don't want to do in our controller files). This means that we must ensure the code in `customers_app.js` runs first. We can do *that* by changing the asset pipeline's configuration in `application.js`.

Our current version has, as its last line, `//= require_tree .` (note the period, which indicates the current directory). The `require_tree` directive to the asset pipeline will tell it to recursively bring in all the JavaScript it finds. The documentation<sup>14</sup> says that the order in which files are required is unspecified and that we cannot rely on it.

So, we just need to explicitly require `customers_app.js` first, before the `require_tree` directive:

```

grab-bag/two/shine/app/assets/javascripts/application.js
//= require jquery
//= require jquery_ujs
//= require angular
//= require angular-route
//= require angular-resource
//= require angular-messages
//= require angular-rails-templates
➤ //= require customers_app
➤ //= require_tree ./templates
➤ //= require_tree .

```

Our app should still work the same, and all our tests will still pass (because Teaspoon uses the asset pipeline to bring in files for testing).

## Extract Reusable Code into Services

In addition to breaking our code down into separate files, it might be nice to extract logic out of our controllers. In Ruby and Rails we can easily extract classes to accomplish this. In Angular, we can do this by creating *services*.

14. [http://guides.rubyonrails.org/asset\\_pipeline.html#manifest-files-and-directives](http://guides.rubyonrails.org/asset_pipeline.html#manifest-files-and-directives)

A service is a function defined like we've been defining controllers, but it has no special purpose other than to hold code we want to organize.

What makes an Angular service different from a regular JavaScript object is that we can arrange for it to have dependencies injected via Angular's dependency injection. For example, we can extract all the search logic out of `CustomerSearchController` into a service called `customerSearch`. We can then inject `customerSearch` into `CustomerSearchController` like so:

```
grab-bag/two/shine/app/assets/javascripts/controllers/customer_search_controller.js
var app = angular.module('customers');
app.controller("CustomerSearchController", [
➤ '$scope', '$location', "customerSearch",
➤ function($scope, $location, customerSearch) {

 $scope.customers = [];
➤ customerSearch.successCallback(function(customers) {
➤ $scope.customers = customers;
➤ });
➤
➤ $scope.search = customerSearch.search
➤ $scope.previousPage = customerSearch.previousPage;
➤ $scope.nextPage = customerSearch.nextPage;

 $scope.viewDetails = function(customer) {
 $location.path("/") + customer.id;
 }
 }
]);
```

We're assuming that `customerSearch` works as follows: we configure a success callback that will be given data based on a search term, and that it has three functions available: `search`, `previousPage`, and `nextPage`. `search` handles searching for customers and giving the results to our success callback declared with `successCallback`. Both `previousPage` and `nextPage` will paginate as before, but they will remember the search term last used, so we don't have to pass it in again.

Note how clean our controller is. All it's doing is surfacing data and functions to the view, but all actual logic has been extracted to the service. This is the sort of thing we strive for in our Rails controllers, so it's nice to be able to do it with our Angular controllers, too.

To set up a service to hold our search logic, we declare a function that will be given all the needed dependencies and is expected to return an object. That object is what is injected into `CustomerSearchController` as the object `customerSearch`. The basic outline looks like so:



```
grab-bag/two/shine/app/assets/javascripts/services/customer_search.js
var app = angular.module('customers');
app.factory("customerSearch", [
 "$http",
 function($http) {

 // ...

 return {
 "successCallback": successCallback,
 "search": search,
 "previousPage": previousPage,
 "nextPage": nextPage
 };
 }
]);
```

The returned object is the public interface to our service. All we have to do is implement these functions. First, let's declare some private variables to store the current page, most recent search term, and success callback:

```
grab-bag/two/shine/app/assets/javascripts/services/customer_search.js
var page = 0;
var mostRecentSearchTerm = undefined;
var success = function() {};
```

The definition of successCallback is straightforward:

```
grab-bag/two/shine/app/assets/javascripts/services/customer_search.js
var successCallback = function(newCallback) {
 success = newCallback;
};
```

The implementations of nextPage and previousPage look more or less like their old counterparts, but they use mostRecentSearchTerm:

```
grab-bag/two/shine/app/assets/javascripts/services/customer_search.js
var previousPage = function() {
 if ((page > 0) && mostRecentSearchTerm) {
 page = page - 1;
 search(mostRecentSearchTerm);
 }
};

var nextPage = function() {
 if (mostRecentSearchTerm) {
 page = page + 1;
 search(mostRecentSearchTerm);
 }
};
```

This leaves `search`, which looks similar to what it did before; however, it defers to the success callback provided by the caller. Note that we aren't passing through the response object we get from `$http`, but instead just passing the resulting data via `response.data`:

```
grab-bag/two/shine/app/assets/javascripts/services/customer_search.js
var search = function(searchTerm) {
 if (searchTerm.length < 3) {
 return;
 }
 mostRecentSearchTerm = searchTerm;
 $http.get("/customers.json",
 { "params": { "keywords": searchTerm, "page": page } })
 .then(function(response) {
 success(response.data);
 },
 function(response) {
 alert("There was a problem: " + response.status);
 }
);
};
```

Notice how the code in both places is fairly cohesive, and focuses on just one part of the whole. Also notice how our controller no longer depends on `$http`, because it's only needed to do the customer search.

At their core, services in Angular are just how you decompose code into smaller bits. We can write tests for services, the same as we have for our controllers. This allows us to manage complexity in our front end in the same way we would in the middleware.

As I've mentioned many times, Angular is a rich, deep, flexible, complex framework. Its popularity means that there are many add-ons and extensions to help you with common tasks. This popularity also means that Angular is highly *Googleable*—you can find answers to common problems easily.

## Getting Everything Out of Bootstrap

Unlike Angular and Postgres, Bootstrap is smaller and more focused in its scope. Its documentation is a great place to find inspiration on solving common layout and design problems. One handy part of Bootstrap that we *can't* easily use is the section titled “JavaScript.” This section contains more interactive components like modal dialogs and tooltips. These are invaluable tools for creating rich client-side applications, but because they're based on JQuery,

it's difficult to use them with an Angular app. Fortunately, the Angular UI<sup>15</sup> project has reimplemented many of them as Angular components.

But first, let's discuss another handy thing that comes with Bootstrap: icons.

## Glyphicons

Bootstrap includes some of the icons that are part of the Glyphicons<sup>16</sup> icon font. This allows you to add icons to your UI by just applying CSS classes to empty elements. Bootstrap's documentation<sup>17</sup> lists the icons that are included.

Our customer detail page is complex, so we used panels to create separation between the elements. But they could be made easier to navigate by adding icons to the panel titles. Let's put a person icon next to the Customer title, an envelope icon next to Shipping Address, a credit card icon next to Billing Info, and a save icon on the Save Changes button:

Create empty elements with the glyphicon class and a class for the icon.

```
<button ng-click="save()"
 class="btn btn-lg btn-primary"
 ng-disabled="form.$invalid || form.$pristine">
 ➤ <i class="glyphicon glyphicon-save" aria-hidden="true"></i>
 Save Changes
</button>
```

15. <https://angular-ui.github.io/>

16. <http://glyphicons.com/>

17. <http://getbootstrap.com/components/#glyphicons>

Since the icons are purely for decoration, we use the `i` tag as well as `aria-hidden="true"` so that screen readers don't get confused and read this markup to users. The `aria-` tags are part of the Web Accessibility Initiative.

If you reload the page, you should see the icons. One thing worth pointing out is that icons are a tricky subject in user experience design. Most research indicates that icons without text are extremely difficult for users to understand. We're using them here as a demonstration, but as with all design choices, be cognizant of the problem you are solving when adding icons. Purely aesthetic reasons can be valid sometimes, but they are not necessarily paramount in making a great experience for your users.

There's a nasty technical problem with our implementation: the icons won't work outside our development environment. The Rails asset pipeline is notoriously opaque when things don't work. Fonts, in particular, are problematic. You can see the troubles if you try to run a test that hits this page. You should get an error like `No route matches [GET] "/fonts/bootstrap/glyphicons-halflings-regular.ttf"`.

To fix this, we need to do three things: change how the fonts are configured in CSS, add Bootstrap's font path as an asset path, and configure the asset pipeline to precompile all fonts. It's unclear why fonts are treated differently than CSS or JavaScript in this regard, but this is what we have to do.

First, we have to rename our `application.css` file to `application.scss` because we're going to need to use SASS's<sup>18</sup> `@import` directive to bring in an auxiliary file that ships with Bootstrap that will fix how the fonts are referred to in our CSS.

```
$ mv app/assets/stylesheets/application.css app/assets/stylesheets/application.scss
```

By default, Bootstrap uses the path `../fonts`, but relative paths don't work reliably in production. Rails provides a SASS function named `font-path` that dynamically figures out the right URL to use for referencing fonts at runtime. We can tell Bootstrap to use this by including the file `bootstrap-sprockets` that comes with Bootstrap.

Now, we need to remove the use of `= require` and replace it with `@import`:

```
grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/stylesheets/application.scss
➤ @import "bootstrap-sass-official/assets/stylesheets/bootstrap-sprockets";
➤ @import "bootstrap-sass-official/assets/stylesheets/bootstrap";
/*
 *= require_tree .
 *= require_self
*/
```

18. <http://sass-lang.com/>

What's going on here is that `bootstrap-sprockets` adds configuration to tell Bootstrap to use the Rails asset pipeline helpers, instead of hard-coding `../fonts`. This helper tells Rails to look in `app/assets/fonts` for the fonts. But that's not where they are—they're in `vendor/bower_components/bootstrap-sass-official/assets/fonts/bootstrap`.

So, in `config/application.rb` we have to do a few things. We must add that path to our asset paths, and we must also specify that all fonts be precompiled. For whatever reason, any font not in `app/assets/fonts` just won't be served up properly unless it's precompiled.

```
grab-bag/three/shine/config/application.rb
module Shine
 class Application < Rails::Application
 config.assets.paths << Rails.root.join("vendor",
 "assets",
 "bower_components")
 ➤ config.assets.paths << Rails.root.join("vendor",
 ➤ "assets",
 ➤ "bower_components",
 ➤ "bootstrap-sass-official",
 ➤ "assets",
 ➤ "fonts")
 ➤ config.assets.precompile << /\.(?:svg|eot|woff|ttf|woff2)|z/
 end
end
```

Now we can confidently use glyphs in our application! Note that if you use other icon fonts like Font Awesome,<sup>19</sup> you'll need to do a similar configuration.

## Design for Mobile Devices with Ease

*Responsive Web Design* is a technique for designing for many different screen sizes and devices. If you've been to a website on your mobile phone that looks great but different from how it looks on your desktop computer, this is responsive design in action.

Bootstrap provides some basic tools to help with responsive design. If you recall from [Chapter 8, \*Design Great UIs with\*, on page 137](#), when we were discussing grid-based design, we used CSS classes that had `md` in them, such as `col-md-6`. That `md` means *this is the column size I want on medium-sized*

19. <https://fortawesome.github.io/Font-Awesome/>

*devices*. But there are other options, as outlined in Bootstrap's grid options<sup>20</sup> documentation.

Let's suppose our complex customer detail view will be used on a mobile phone. We can quickly simulate this by resizing our browser to a narrow width. Because we used the `md` form of our grid, when the screen shrinks to below the medium-sized device width (992px), each grid cell takes up the full width, since this is the default.

Generally, this is fine, but for addresses, it's a bit extreme.

✉ Shipping Address

532 Lucio Green

New Darryl

AZ

99988

Suppose for mobile devices we're fine with the city being 100% of the width, but we want the state and zip code to be on the same line. With Bootstrap's responsive grid, making this happen is simple. In addition to the `col-md` classes we've used, we can add `col-xs` classes (`xs` for extra-small devices below 768px in width—that is, most smartphones).

For the city, we'll use `col-xs-12`, meaning we want the city's grid to be full width (this is somewhat redundant, but it's good to be explicit about our design decisions, since we'll be using other `xs` classes). State will be given the `col-xs-4` class, meaning it should take up four grid cells at the `xs` size, while zip gets the remaining eight cells, which means we need the `col-xs-8` class.

20. <http://getbootstrap.com/css/#grid-options>

```
grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html
```

```
<div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-6 col-xs-12">


 <!-- city form markup -->

 </div>
 <div class="col-md-2 col-xs-4">

 <!-- state form markup -->

 </div>
 <div class="col-md-4 col-xs-8">
 <!-- zip form markup -->
 </div>
</div>
```

The result is as expected:

 **Shipping Address**

With just a few extra CSS classes, we've made drastically different layouts work on different screen sizes. You can even resize your browser to a larger width and watch the screen change layouts back to our original design.

In addition to a responsive grid, Bootstrap has helper classes<sup>21</sup> for use when doing responsive design. For example, we can use a class like `hidden-xs` to hide

21. <http://getbootstrap.com/css/#responsive-utilities>

elements on small screens. This could be useful for nonessential elements that can be omitted for mobile users (like icons).

Responsive design is a deep topic, but Bootstrap gives you a few useful features to help do it more easily and without making radical changes to your markup.

## Using Bootstrap-Powered Components with Angular

Bootstrap has *components*, which are JavaScript-powered features such as modal dialogs and tab controls. The problem is that they don't work well with an Angular app, since they rely on JQuery, which operates on the DOM differently than Angular and could create conflicts. Fortunately, the Angular UI project<sup>22</sup> includes most of these components in its Bootstrap subproject.<sup>23</sup>

These components are made to use Bootstrap's styles and templates, but use Angular instead of JQuery, so you can more easily integrate them into your Angular app. We'll look at two examples that will help you with the most common UI tasks. The first is alert messages, followed by modal dialogs, both of which will enhance Shine's ability to edit customer data.

First, we'll install it and get it all set up.

### Install Angular UI Bootstrap

We've been through this a few times already, so it should be old hat by now. First we'll add asset 'angular-bootstrap' to Bowerfile and run `rake bower:install`. Then, we'll add `//= require 'angular-bootstrap'` to `app/assets/javascripts/application.js`. Finally, we'll add `ui.bootstrap` to the list of dependent modules in `app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js`:

`grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/customers_app.js`

```
var app = angular.module(
 'customers',
 [
 'ngRoute',
 'ngResource',
 'ngMessages',
 'ui.bootstrap',
 'templates'
]
);
```

22. <https://angular-ui.github.io/>

23. <http://angular-ui.github.io/bootstrap/>

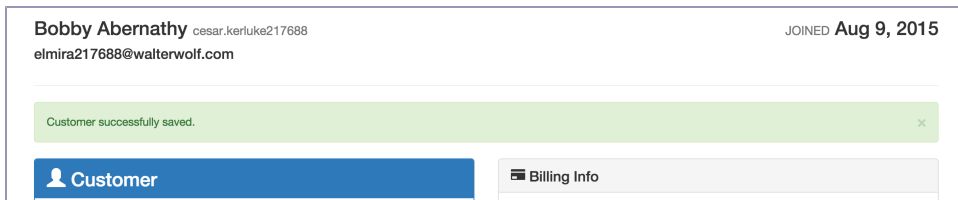


To know what value to use in the modules list, we have to look at the documentation<sup>24</sup> for Angular UI Bootstrap (flexibility comes at a price).

With that in place, let's add a dismissable alert.

## Alerts

Bootstrap has support for creating static alert components,<sup>25</sup> so we could hack up a basic alerting system with what we know right now. Bootstrap *also* includes a more dynamic alert component<sup>26</sup> that can be dismissed. We're going to use the Angular UI equivalent to create an alert after we successfully save a customer's information.



Angular UI Bootstrap includes the `uib-alert` directive, which we can use as if it were an HTML element. We can use the `type` attribute to indicate what sort of alert it is (success vs. danger), and `close` to provide a function we'll implement that removes the alert when the user clicks the close button.

`grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html`

```
<header>
 <customer-summary cust="customer"></customer-summary>
 <hr>
</header>
<section>
> <uib-alert ng-show="alert"
> type="{{alert.type}}"
> close="closeAlert()">
> {{alert.message}}
> </uib-alert>
</section>
<form novalidate name="form"><div class="row">

 <!-- rest of the markup -->
```

To make it work, we need to set `$scope.alert` to the alert we want to show the user, and implement `closeAlert`. Previously, our `save` function used the `alert`

24. [http://angular-ui.github.io/bootstrap/#/getting\\_started](http://angular-ui.github.io/bootstrap/#/getting_started)

25. <http://getbootstrap.com/components/#alerts>

26. <http://getbootstrap.com/javascript/#alerts>

function to show the user the results of the save. We'll replace that and instead populate `$scope.alert`:

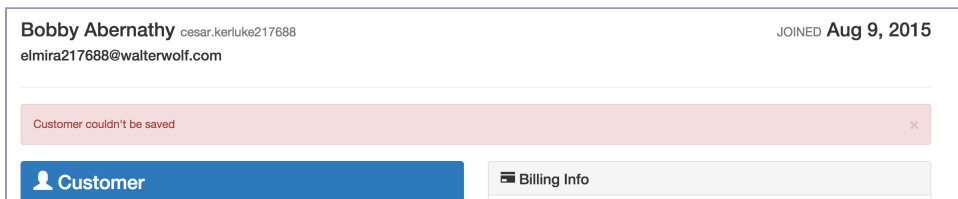
```
grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/controllers/customer_detail_controller.js
$scope.save = function() {
 if ($scope.form.$valid) {
 $scope.customer.$save(
 function() {
 $scope.form.$setPristine();
 $scope.form.$setUntouched();
 $scope.alert = {
 type: "success",
 message: "Customer successfully saved."
 };
 },
 function(data) {
 $scope.alert = {
 type: "danger",
 message: "Customer couldn't be saved"
 };
 }
);
 }
}
```

Because `$scope.alert` is bound to the alert component provided by Angular UI Bootstrap, just setting the value will cause it to show up to the user. We'll also need to clear `$scope.alert` inside `closeAlert`:

```
grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/controllers/customer_detail_controller.js
$scope.closeAlert = function(index) {
 $scope.alert = undefined;
}
```

Now, when we save the customer details, we see a pleasant message like we saw earlier telling us everything worked.

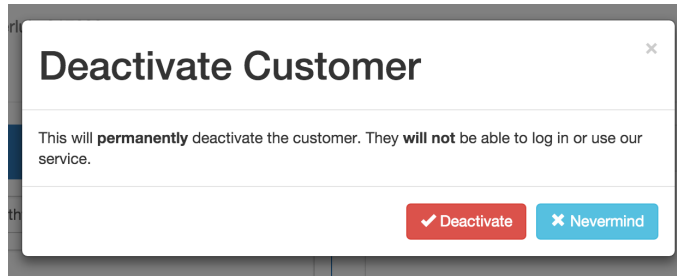
We can also see the error message by loading the page, making a change, stopping our server, and clicking Save Changes. Since the server can't respond to our Angular app's Ajax request, the error callback will be called and we'll see an error message instead.



## Modal Dialogs

Suppose we want to allow Shine's users to deactivate a customer (perhaps they are unhappy with the service and don't want to be a part of it any more). Since this is a destructive action, we'd want Shine's users (who you'll recall are CSRs) to confirm a customer deactivation. We could do this with the JavaScript confirm function to get a confirmation, but that control has some problems. First it's ugly. More importantly, it's inflexible. The buttons can only say OK and Cancel, and we have limited options for formatting text.

Instead, let's create an easy-to-use modal dialog that fits with our design.



Bootstrap provides the CSS to create this dialog, and Angular UI Bootstrap provides the code. We'll need to do a few things to make this work. First, we'll add a button to our view that will initiate the deactivation. Next, we'll inject `$uibModal` into `CustomerDetailController`, which is how we can launch and interact with the modal dialog. We can then use that to launch the modal inside our deactivation function. To make the modal itself work, we'll need a new view and controller for the modal.

Our Deactivate button will live right next to our Save Changes button (notice we're using a Glyphicon as well as the `btn-danger` class to indicate that this action is more dangerous):

`grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer_detail.html`

```
<div class="text-right">
> <button ng-click="deactivate()"
> class="btn btn-lg btn-danger">
> <i class="glyphicon glyphicon-ban-circle"></i>
> Deactivate Customer
> </button>
> <button ng-click="save()"
> class="btn btn-lg btn-primary"
> ng-disabled="form.$invalid || form.$pristine">
> <i class="glyphicon glyphicon-save"></i>
> Save Changes
> </button>
> </div>
```

To implement the function we used for ng-click, deactivate, we'll need access to the \$uibModal service provided by Angular UI Bootstrap. We inject that into our controller in the normal way:

```
grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/controllers/customer_detail_controller.js
```

```
var app = angular.module('customers');
app.controller("CustomerDetailController", [
➤ "$scope", "$routeParams", "$resource", "$uibModal",
➤ function($scope, $routeParams, $resource, $uibModal) {
```

With this done, we can use the function open on \$uibModal to open our modal dialog. This function returns a modal instance that is a promise. We'll call then on it with two parameters, both functions. The first is the function to run if the user confirmed the dialog. The second is the function to run if the user dismissed or canceled the dialog. In both cases, we'll just set an alert related to the results (actually building customer deactivation is out of scope for our discussion here).

```
grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/controllers/customer_detail_controller.js
```

```
$scope.deactivate = function() {
➤ var modalInstance = $uibModal.open({
➤ templateUrl: 'confirm_deactivate.html',
➤ controller: 'ConfirmDeactivateController'
➤ });

 modalInstance.result.then(function () {
 $scope.alert = {
 type: "success",
 message: "Customer deactivated"
 }
 }, function (reason) {
 $scope.alert = {
 type: "warning",
 message: "Customer still active"
 }
 });
};
```

You'll note that open takes an object and we've defined two keys: templateUrl and controller. These indicate the view and controller for the modal.

For the view, we can use Bootstrap's modal markup<sup>27</sup> to create a modal specific to deactivation:

27. <http://getbootstrap.com/javascript/#modals>

```

grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/confirm_deactivate.html
<header class="modal-header">
 <button type="button" class="close" ng-click="nevermind()">
 ×
 </button>
 <h1 class="modal-title">Deactivate Customer</h1>
</header>
<section class="modal-body">
 This will permanently deactivate the customer.
 They will not be able to log in or use our service.
</section>
<footer class="modal-footer">
 <button class="btn btn-danger" type="button" ng-click="deactivate()">
 <i class="glyphicon glyphicon-ok"></i>
 Deactivate
 </button>
 <button class="btn btn-info" type="button" ng-click="nevermind()">
 <i class="glyphicon glyphicon-remove"></i>
 Nevermind
 </button>
</footer>

```

You'll notice we have a close button in the header, as well as a Nevermind button that both call the function `nevermind` when clicked. We also have a Deactivate button that calls `deactivate` when clicked. These labels, along with the rich formatting available for the header and body text, are a big reason why we're going through all this to create a modal dialog instead of using JavaScript's `confirm`.

We can craft a message that helps users understand what they're doing, and we can give the buttons semantically meaningful labels. Instead of the user having to mentally translate that clicking OK means Deactivate, we can just put the word Deactivate right on the button. This makes the feature harder to misuse and easier to understand.

With the view done, we just need to implement the controller for the modal. Since Angular UI Bootstrap is handling the mechanics of launching and hiding the modal, as well as calling our callbacks, the modal's controller looks like a run-of-the-mill Angular controller—which is great!

```

grab-bag/three/shine/app/assets/javascripts/controllers/confirm_deactivate_controller.js
var app = angular.module('customers');
app.controller("ConfirmDeactivateController", [
 "$scope", "$modalInstance",
 function($scope, $modalInstance) {
 $scope.deactivate = function () {
 $modalInstance.close();
 };

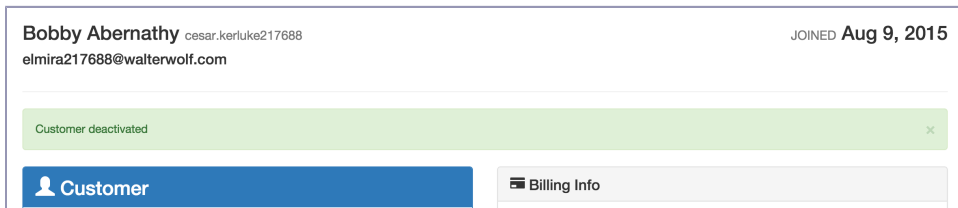
 $scope.nevermind = function () {
 $modalInstance.dismiss('cancel');
 };
 }
]);

```

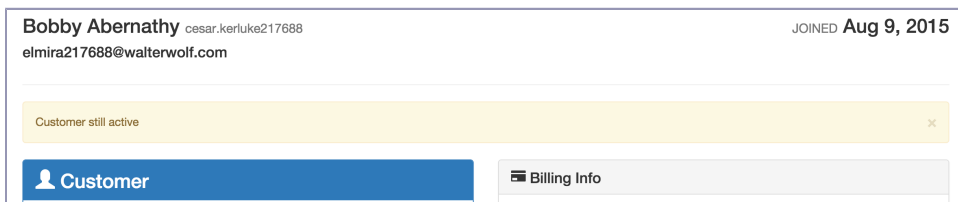
The only thing different is that we're injecting `$modalInstance`. This is the same value returned by `$uibModal.open` in `CustomerDetailController`. It exposes two functions, `close` and `dismiss`. When `close` is called, this resolves the promise, which will call the first function we passed to then. If we call `dismiss`, this rejects the promise, which will trigger the second function we passed to then.

With it all done, when we click the Deactivate Customer button, we get the nice-looking dialog we saw earlier.

If we click Deactivate in the dialog we see a success message, using the alerting system we set up previously:



Clicking Nevermind shows us a warning message that the customer is still active:



These are just two of the many UI components available from Angular UI. As you've seen, they save us a lot of work in managing potentially complex UI interactions, but still afford us great flexibility in how we design for our users.

You can also create components like these yourself. The source code for Angular UI Bootstrap provides examples of how to do this. Angular's directives documentation<sup>28</sup> is also a great place to start to get an overview.

This brings us to the end of our journey. Hopefully, you've learned not just how to use Angular, Postgres, and Bootstrap, but also the value of approaching each software problem with a holistic view of the tools you are using. Some problems are best solved with a better user experience, some with improved database performance, and some require bringing all parts of the stack together.

The information here is just the beginning. The documentation for everything we've used is excellent, and with the grounding you've got, you can now dig deeper with Angular, Postgres, and Bootstrap. And I'm willing to help if I can; just post to our forums.<sup>29</sup>

With the knowledge you've gained in this book, you now have the confidence to explore your toolset more deeply—and the curiosity to discover new and better ways to solve problems.

---

28. <https://docs.angularjs.org/guide/directive>

29. <https://forums.pragprog.com/forums/389>

# Full Listing of Customer Detail Page HTML

This is the full listing of markup for the UI we designed and built in [Chapter 8, \*Design Great UIs with\*, on page 137](#). It's included for completeness, but you will find it much easier to work with the source code, which you can download from the book's website.<sup>1</sup>

complex-views/ui/shine/app/assets/javascripts/templates/customer\_detail.html

```
<form>
 <div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-6">
 <article class="panel panel-primary">
 <header class="panel-heading">
 <h1 class="h3">
 Customer
 </h1>
 </header>
 <section class="panel-body">
 <div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="first-name">
 First Name
 </label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="first-name" value="Bob">
 </div>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="last-name">Last Name</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="last-name" value="Jones">
 </div>
 </div>
 </div>
 </section>
 </article>
 </div>
 </div>
```

1. [https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/source\\_code](https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/source_code)



```

</div>
<div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="username">Username</label>
 <div class="input-group">
 <div class="input-group-addon">@</div>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="username" value="bobert123">
 </div>
 </div>
</div>
</div>
<div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="email">Email</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="email" value="bobbyj@somewhere.net">
</div>
</section>
<footer class="panel-footer">
 <label for="joined">Joined</label> 12/13/2014
</footer>
</article>
<article class="panel panel-default">
 <header class="panel-heading">
 <h2 class="h4">
 Shipping Address
 </h2>
 </header>
 <section class="panel-body">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="street-address">
 Street Address
 </label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="street-address" value="123 Any St">
 </div>
 <div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-6">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="city">City</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="city" value="Washington">
 </div>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-2">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="state">State</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="state" value="DC">
 </div>
 </div>
 </div>
 </section>
</article>

```

```

</div>
<div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="zip">Zip</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="zip" value="20001">
 </div>
</div>
</div>
</section>
</article>
</div>
<div class="col-md-6">
 <article class="panel panel-default">
 <header class="panel-heading">
 <h2 class="h4">
 Billing Info
 </h2>
 </header>
 <section class="panel-body">
 <article>
 <div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-7">
 <p class="h4">
 ****_****_****-1234
 VISA
 </p>
 <p class="h5">
 <label>Expires:</label> 04/19
 </p>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-5 text-right">
 <button class="btn btn-lg btn-default">
 View Details...
 </button>
 </div>
 </div>
 </article>
 </section>
 </article>
 <hr>
 <article class="well well-sm">
 <header>
 <h1 class="h5">
 Billing Address
 <small>
 <input type="checkbox"> Same as shipping?
 </small>
 </h1>
 </header>
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="street-address">

```

```

 Street Address
 </label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="street-address" value="123 Any St">
</div>
<div class="row">
 <div class="col-md-6">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="city">City</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="city" value="Washington">
 </div>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-2">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="state">State</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="state" value="DC">
 </div>
 </div>
 <div class="col-md-4">
 <div class="form-group">
 <label class="sr-only" for="zip">Zip</label>
 <input type="text" class="form-control"
 name="zip" value="20001">
 </div>
 </div>
</div>
</div>
</article>
</section>
</article>
</div>
</div>
</form>

```

## Creating Customer Address Seed Data

This is the full listing for `db/seeds.rb` needed to create sample address data for all the fake customers we've been using to try out Postgres features. This is covered in [Chapter 9, Cache Complex Queries, on page 151](#). It's included for completeness, but you will find it much easier to work with the source code, which you can download from the book's website.<sup>1</sup>

Also note that for this code to work, you'll have to create the `State`, `Address`, `CustomersBillingAddress`, and `CustomersShippingAddress` models. You'll also need to create necessary ActiveRecord associations inside the `Customer` class. Although none of these are needed for Shine to function, they *are* for the seed data to work. Their code follows the seed data code.

Note that we've added a guard around our initial code that creates customers—we don't to create 350,000 customers again if we already have some. Also note that when you run `rake db:seed`, it will take a *long* time—several hours.

`materialized-views/data-model/shine/db/seeds.rb`

```
Guard against re-creating customers if we already have some
➤ if Customer.all.count == 0
 350_000.times do |i|
 email = Faker::Internet.user_name + i.to_s +
 "@#{Faker::Internet.domain_name}"
 Customer.create!(
 first_name: Faker::Name.first_name,
 last_name: Faker::Name.last_name,
 username: "#{Faker::Internet.user_name}#{i}",
 email: email)
 end
➤ end

Create all 50 states in the US
```

1. [https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/source\\_code](https://pragprog.com/titles/dcbang/source_code)

```

State.create!(name: "Alabama" , code: "AL ")
State.create!(name: "Alaska" , code: "AK")
State.create!(name: "Arizona" , code: "AZ")
State.create!(name: "Arkansas" , code: "AR")
State.create!(name: "California" , code: "CA")
State.create!(name: "Colorado" , code: "CO")
State.create!(name: "Connecticut" , code: "CT")
State.create!(name: "Delaware" , code: "DE")
State.create!(name: "Dist. of Columbia", code: "DC")
State.create!(name: "Florida" , code: "FL ")
State.create!(name: "Georgia" , code: "GA")
State.create!(name: "Hawaii" , code: "HI")
State.create!(name: "Idaho" , code: "ID")
State.create!(name: "Illinois" , code: "IL ")
State.create!(name: "Indiana" , code: "IN")
State.create!(name: "Iowa" , code: "IA")
State.create!(name: "Kansas" , code: "KS")
State.create!(name: "Kentucky" , code: "KY")
State.create!(name: "Louisiana" , code: "LA")
State.create!(name: "Maine" , code: "ME")
State.create!(name: "Maryland" , code: "MD")
State.create!(name: "Massachusetts" , code: "MA")
State.create!(name: "Michigan" , code: "MI")
State.create!(name: "Minnesota" , code: "MN")
State.create!(name: "Mississippi" , code: "MS")
State.create!(name: "Missouri" , code: "MO")
State.create!(name: "Montana" , code: "MT")
State.create!(name: "Nebraska" , code: "NE")
State.create!(name: "Nevada" , code: "NV")
State.create!(name: "New Hampshire" , code: "NH")
State.create!(name: "New Jersey" , code: "NJ")
State.create!(name: "New Mexico" , code: "NM")
State.create!(name: "New York" , code: "NY")
State.create!(name: "North Carolina" , code: "NC")
State.create!(name: "North Dakota" , code: "ND")
State.create!(name: "Ohio" , code: "OH")
State.create!(name: "Oklahoma" , code: "OK")
State.create!(name: "Oregon" , code: "OR")
State.create!(name: "Pennsylvania" , code: "PA")
State.create!(name: "Rhode Island" , code: "RI")
State.create!(name: "South Carolina" , code: "SC")
State.create!(name: "South Dakota" , code: "SD")
State.create!(name: "Tennessee" , code: "TN")
State.create!(name: "Texas" , code: "TX")
State.create!(name: "Utah" , code: "UT")
State.create!(name: "Vermont" , code: "VT")
State.create!(name: "Virginia" , code: "VA")
State.create!(name: "Washington" , code: "WA")
State.create!(name: "West Virginia" , code: "WV")
State.create!(name: "Wisconsin" , code: "WI")

```

```

State.create!(name: "Wyoming" , code: "WY")

Helper method to create a billing address for a customer
def create_billing_address(customer_id,num_states)
 billing_state = State.all[rand(num_states)]
 billing_address = Address.create!(
 street: Faker::Address.street_address,
 city: Faker::Address.city,
 state: billing_state,
 zipcode: Faker::Address.zip
)

 CustomersBillingAddress.create!(customer_id: customer_id,
 address: billing_address)
end

Helper method to create a shipping address for a customer
def create_shipping_address(customer_id,num_states,is_primary)
 shipping_state = State.all[rand(num_states)]
 shipping_address = Address.create!(
 street: Faker::Address.street_address,
 city: Faker::Address.city,
 state: shipping_state,
 zipcode: Faker::Address.zip
)

 CustomersShippingAddress.create!(customer_id: customer_id,
 address: shipping_address,
 primary: is_primary)
end

Cache the number of states so we don't have to query
each time through
num_states = State.all.count

For all customers
Customer.all.pluck(:id).each do |customer_id|

 # Create a billing address for them
 create_billing_address(customer_id,num_states)

 # Create a random number of shipping addresses, making
 # sure we create at least 1
 num_shipping_addresses = rand(4) + 1

 num_shipping_addresses.times do |i|
 # Create the shipping address, setting the first one
 # we create as the "primary"
 create_shipping_address(customer_id,num_states,i == 0)
 end
end

```

```

end
end

```

```
materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shine/app/models/customer.rb
```

```

class Customer < ActiveRecord::Base
 has_many :customers_shipping_address

 def primary_shipping_address
 self.customers_shipping_address.find_by(primary: true).address
 end
 has_one :customers_billing_address
 has_one :billing_address, through: :customers_billing_address,
 source: :address
end

```

```
materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shine/app/models/address.rb
```

```

class Address < ActiveRecord::Base
 belongs_to :state
end

```

```
materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shine/app/models/state.rb
```

```

class State < ActiveRecord::Base
 has_many :addresses
end

```

```
materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shine/app/models/customers_billing_address.rb
```

```

class CustomersBillingAddress < ActiveRecord::Base
 belongs_to :address
 belongs_to :customer
end

```

```
materialized-views/actual-materialized-view/shine/app/models/customers_shipping_address.rb
```

```

class CustomersShippingAddress < ActiveRecord::Base
 belongs_to :address
 belongs_to :customer
end

```

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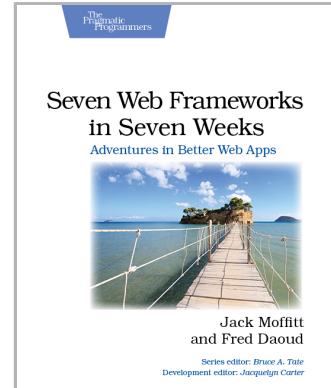
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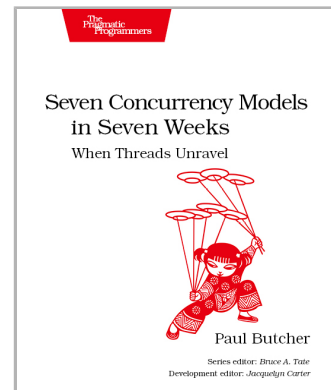


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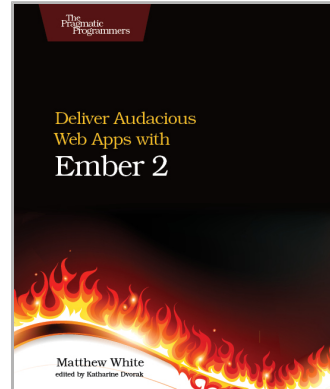
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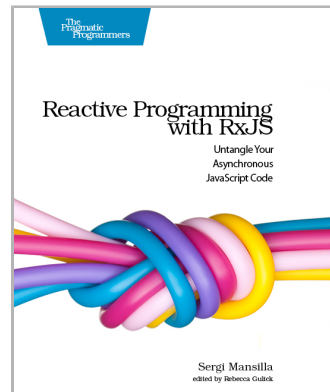
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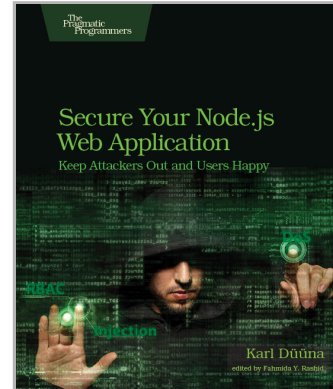
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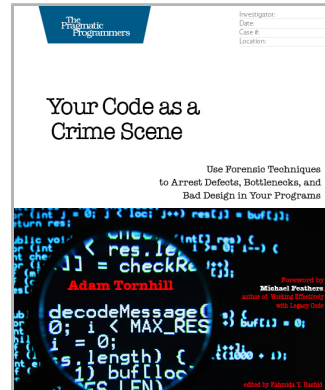
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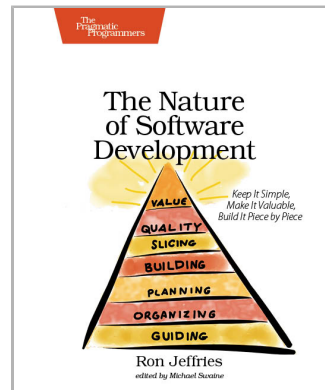
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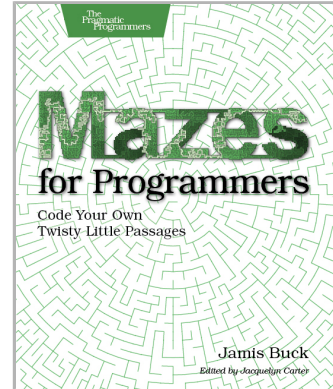
But because it's fun. Remember when programming used to be fun? This book takes you back to those days when you were starting to program, and you wanted to make your code do things, draw things, and solve puzzles. It's fun because it lets you explore and grow your code, and reminds you how it feels to just think.

Sometimes it feels like you live your life in a maze of twisty little passages, all alike. Now you can code your way out.

Jamis Buck

(286 pages) ISBN: 9781680500554. \$38

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## Good Math

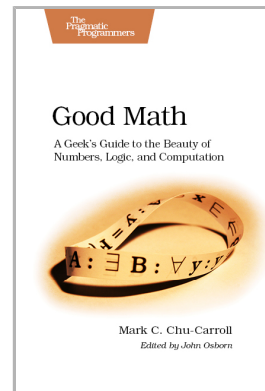
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Mathematics is beautiful—and it can be fun and exciting as well as practical. *Good Math* is your guide to some of the most intriguing topics from two thousand years of mathematics: from Egyptian fractions to Turing machines; from the real meaning of numbers to proof trees, group symmetry, and mechanical computation. If you've ever wondered what lay beyond the proofs you struggled to complete in high school geometry, or what limits the capabilities of the computer on your desk, this is the book for you.

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Use tmux and Vim for incredible mouse-free productivity.

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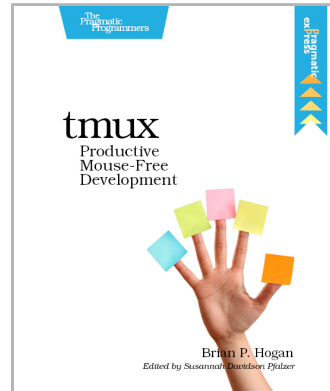
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Your mouse is slowing you down. The time you spend context switching between your editor and your consoles eats away at your productivity. Take control of your environment with tmux, a terminal multiplexer that you can tailor to your workflow. Learn how to customize, script, and leverage tmux's unique abilities and keep your fingers on your keyboard's home row.

Brian P. Hogan

(88 pages) ISBN: 9781934356968. \$16.25

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## Practical Vim, Second Edition

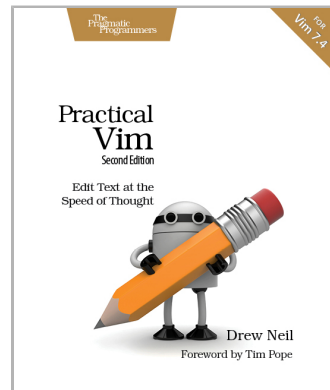
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Vim is a fast and efficient text editor that will make you a faster and more efficient developer. It's available on almost every OS, and if you master the techniques in this book, you'll never need another text editor. In more than 120 Vim tips, you'll quickly learn the editor's core functionality and tackle your trickiest editing and writing tasks. This beloved bestseller has been revised and updated to Vim 7.4 and includes three brand-new tips and five fully revised tips.

Drew Neil

(354 pages) ISBN: 9781680501278. \$29

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# Put the “Fun” in Functional

Elixir puts the “fun” back into functional programming, on top of the robust, battle-tested, industrial-strength environment of Erlang.

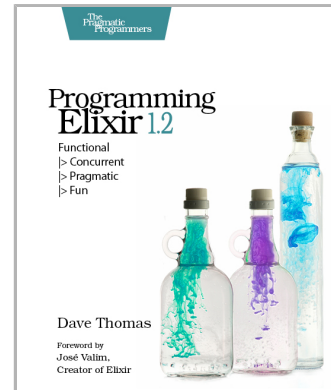
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You want to explore functional programming, but are put off by the academic feel (tell me about monads just one more time). You know you need concurrent applications, but also know these are almost impossible to get right. Meet Elixir, a functional, concurrent language built on the rock-solid Erlang VM. Elixir’s pragmatic syntax and built-in support for metaprogramming will make you productive and keep you interested for the long haul. This book is *the* introduction to Elixir for experienced programmers.

Maybe you need something that’s closer to Ruby, but with a battle-proven environment that’s unrivaled for massive scalability, concurrency, distribution, and fault tolerance. Maybe the time is right for the Next Big Thing. Maybe it’s *Elixir*.

This edition of the book has been updated to cover Elixir 1.2, including the new with expression, the exrm release manager, and the removal of deprecated types.

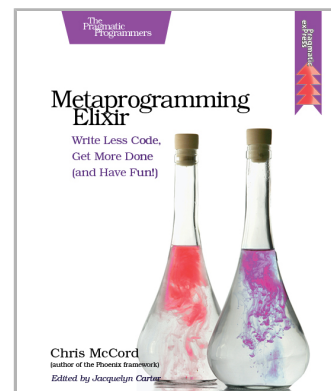
Dave Thomas  
(340 pages) ISBN: 9781680501667. \$38  
<https://pragprog.com/book/elixir12>



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Chris McCord  
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