NSPropertyDescription Class Reference

Data Management

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NSPropertyDescription Class Reference

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	NSObject (NSObject)
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Companion guide	Core Data Programming Guide
Declared in	NSPropertyDescription.h

Overview

The `NSPropertyDescription` class is used to define properties of an entity in a Core Data managed object model. Properties are to entities what instance variables are to classes.

A property describes a single value within an object managed by the Core Data Framework. There are different types of property, each represented by a subclass which encapsulates the specific property behavior—see `NSAttributeDescription`, `NSRelationshipDescription`, and `NSFetchedPropertyDescription`.

Note that a property name cannot be the same as any no-parameter method name of `NSObject` or `NSManagedObject`. For example, you cannot give a property the name "description". There are hundreds of methods on `NSObject` which may conflict with property names—and this list can grow without warning from frameworks or other libraries. You should avoid very general words (like "font", and "color") and words or phrases which overlap with Cocoa paradigms (such as "isEditing" and "objectSpecifier").

Properties—relationships as well as attributes—may be transient. A managed object context knows about transient properties and tracks changes made to them. Transient properties are ignored by the persistent store, and not just during saves: you cannot fetch using a predicate based on transients (although you can use transient properties to filter in memory yourself).

Editing Property Descriptions

Property descriptions are editable until they are used by an object graph manager (such as a persistent store coordinator). This allows you to create or modify them dynamically. However, once a description is used (when the managed object model to which it belongs is associated with a persistent store coordinator), it *must not* (indeed cannot) be changed. This is enforced at runtime: any attempt to mutate a model or any of

its sub-objects after the model is associated with a persistent store coordinator causes an exception to be thrown. If you need to modify a model that is in use, create a copy, modify the copy, and then discard the objects with the old model.

Tasks

Getting Features of a Property

- `entity` (page 7)

    Returns the entity description of the receiver.

- `isIndexed` (page 7)

    Returns a Boolean value that indicates whether the receiver is important for searching.

- `isOptional` (page 8)

    Returns a Boolean value that indicates whether the receiver is optional.

- `isTransient` (page 8)

    Returns a Boolean value that indicates whether the receiver is transient.

- `name` (page 8)

    Returns the name of the receiver.

- `userInfo` (page 13)

    Returns the user info dictionary of the receiver.

Setting Features of a Property

- `setIndexed:` (page 9)

    Sets the optionality flag of the receiver.

- `setName:` (page 10)

    Sets the name of the receiver.

- `setOptional:` (page 10)

    Sets the optionality flag of the receiver.

- `setTransient:` (page 11)

    Sets the transient flag of the receiver.

- `setUserInfo:` (page 12)

    Sets the user info dictionary of the receiver.

Validation

- `validationPredicates` (page 13)

    Returns the validation predicates of the receiver.

- `validationWarnings` (page 14)

    Returns the error strings associated with the receiver's validation predicates.

- `setValidationPredicates:withValidationWarnings:` (page 12)

    Sets the validation predicates and warnings of the receiver.

Versioning Support

- versionHash (page 14)

    Returns the version hash for the receiver.

- versionHashModifier (page 15)

    Returns the version hash modifier for the receiver.

- setVersionHashModifier: (page 13)

    Sets the version hash modifier for the receiver.

- renamingIdentifier (page 9)

    Returns the renaming identifier for the receiver.

- setRenamingIdentifier: (page 11)

    Sets the renaming identifier for the receiver.

Instance Methods

entity

Returns the entity description of the receiver.

- (NSEntityDescription *)entity

Return Value
The entity description of the receiver.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
setProperties: (NSEntityDescription)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

isIndexed

Returns a Boolean value that indicates whether the receiver is important for searching.

- (BOOL)isIndexed

Return Value
YES if the receiver is important for searching, otherwise NO.

Discussion
Object stores can optionally use this information upon store creation for operations such as defining indexes.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
- setIndexed: (page 9)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

isOptional

Returns a Boolean value that indicates whether the receiver is optional.

    - (BOOL)isOptional

Return Value
YES if the receiver is optional, otherwise NO.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
- setOptional: (page 10)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

isTransient

Returns a Boolean value that indicates whether the receiver is transient.

    - (BOOL)isTransient

Return Value
YES if the receiver is transient, otherwise NO.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
- setTransient: (page 11)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

name

Returns the name of the receiver.

    - (NSString *)name

Return Value
The name of the receiver.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
- setName: (page 10)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

renamingIdentifier

Returns the renaming identifier for the receiver.

- (NSString *)renamingIdentifier

Return Value
The renaming identifier for the receiver.

Discussion
This is used to resolve naming conflicts between models. When creating an entity mapping between entities in two managed object models, a source entity property and a destination entity property that share the same identifier indicate that a property mapping should be configured to migrate from the source to the destination. If unset, the identifier will return the property's name.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
- setRenamingIdentifier: (page 11)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

setIndexed:

Sets the optionality flag of the receiver.

- (void)setIndexed:(BOOL)*flag*

Parameters
flag
> A Boolean value that indicates whether whether the receiver is important for searching (YES) or not (NO).

Discussion
Object stores can optionally use this information upon store creation for operations such as defining indexes.

Special Considerations
This method raises an exception if the receiver's model has been used by an object graph manager.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
– isIndexed (page 7)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

setName:

Sets the name of the receiver.

– (void)setName:(NSString *)*name*

Parameters

name
> The name of the receiver.

Special Considerations

A property name cannot be the same as any no-parameter method name of NSObject or NSManagedObject. Since there are hundreds of methods on NSObject which may conflict with property names, you should avoid very general words (like "font", and "color") and words or phrases which overlap with Cocoa paradigms (such as "isEditing" and "objectSpecifier").

This method raises an exception if the receiver's model has been used by an object graph manager.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
– name (page 8)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

setOptional:

Sets the optionality flag of the receiver.

– (void)setOptional:(BOOL)*flag*

Parameters

flag
> A Boolean value that indicates whether whether the receiver is optional (YES) or not (NO).

Discussion

The optionality flag specifies whether a property's value can be nil before an object can be saved to a persistent store.

Special Considerations

This method raises an exception if the receiver's model has been used by an object graph manager.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
– isOptional (page 8)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

setRenamingIdentifier:

Sets the renaming identifier for the receiver.

    – (void)setRenamingIdentifier:(NSString *)value

Parameters
value
>   The renaming identifier for the receiver.

Discussion
See renamingIdentifier (page 9) for a full discussion.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
– renamingIdentifier (page 9)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

setTransient:

Sets the transient flag of the receiver.

    – (void)setTransient:(BOOL)flag

Parameters
flag
>   A Boolean value that indicates whether whether the receiver is transient (YES) or not (NO).

Discussion
The transient flag specifies whether or not a property's value is ignored when an object is saved to a persistent store. Transient properties are not saved to the persistent store, but are still managed for undo, redo, validation, and so on.

Special Considerations
This method raises an exception if the receiver's model has been used by an object graph manager.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
– isTransient (page 8)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

setUserInfo:

Sets the user info dictionary of the receiver.

```
- (void)setUserInfo:(NSDictionary *)dictionary
```

Parameters

dictionary

> The user info dictionary of the receiver.

Special Considerations

This method raises an exception if the receiver's model has been used by an object graph manager.

Availability

Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also

– userInfo (page 13)

Declared In

NSPropertyDescription.h

setValidationPredicates:withValidationWarnings:

Sets the validation predicates and warnings of the receiver.

```
- (void)setValidationPredicates:(NSArray *)validationPredicates
    withValidationWarnings:(NSArray *)validationWarnings
```

Parameters

validationPredicates

> An array containing the validation predicates for the receiver.

validationWarnings

> An array containing the validation warnings for the receiver.

Discussion

The *validationPredicates* and *validationWarnings* arrays should contain the same number of elements, and corresponding elements should appear at the same index in each array.

Instead of implementing individual validation methods, you can use this method to provide a list of predicates that are evaluated against the managed objects and a list of corresponding error messages (which can be localized).

Special Considerations

This method raises an exception if the receiver's model has been used by an object graph manager.

Availability

Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also

– validationPredicates (page 13)

– validationWarnings (page 14)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

setVersionHashModifier:

Sets the version hash modifier for the receiver.

- (void)**setVersionHashModifier:**(NSString *)*modifierString*

Parameters
modifierString
> The version hash modifier for the receiver.

Discussion
See versionHashModifier (page 15) for a full discussion.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
– versionHash (page 14)
– versionHashModifier (page 15)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

userInfo

Returns the user info dictionary of the receiver.

- (NSDictionary *)**userInfo**

Return Value
The user info dictionary of the receiver.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
– setUserInfo: (page 12)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

validationPredicates

Returns the validation predicates of the receiver.

- (NSArray *)**validationPredicates**

Return Value
An array containing the receiver's validation predicates.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
- `validationWarnings` (page 14)
- `setValidationPredicates:withValidationWarnings:` (page 12)

Declared In
`NSPropertyDescription.h`

validationWarnings

Returns the error strings associated with the receiver's validation predicates.

```
- (NSArray *)validationWarnings
```

Return Value
An array containing the error strings associated with the receiver's validation predicates.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
- `validationPredicates` (page 13)
- `setValidationPredicates:withValidationWarnings:` (page 12)

Declared In
`NSPropertyDescription.h`

versionHash

Returns the version hash for the receiver.

```
- (NSData *)versionHash
```

Return Value
The version hash for the receiver.

Discussion
The version hash is used to uniquely identify a property based on its configuration. The version hash uses only values which affect the persistence of data and the user-defined `versionHashModifier` (page 15) value. (The values which affect persistence are the name of the property, and the flags for `isOptional`, `isTransient`, and `isReadOnly`.) This value is stored as part of the version information in the metadata for stores, as well as a definition of a property involved in an `NSPropertyMapping` object.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
- `versionHashModifier` (page 15)
- `setVersionHashModifier:` (page 13)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

versionHashModifier

Returns the version hash modifier for the receiver.

- (NSString *)versionHashModifier

Return Value
The version hash modifier for the receiver.

Discussion
This value is included in the version hash for the property. You use it to mark or denote a property as being a different "version" than another even if all of the values which affect persistence are equal. (Such a difference is important in cases where the attributes of a property are unchanged but the format or content of its data are changed.)

This value is included in the version hash for the property.

Availability
Available in iOS 3.0 and later.

See Also
- versionHash (page 14)
- setVersionHashModifier: (page 13)

Declared In
NSPropertyDescription.h

Document Revision History

This table describes the changes to *NSPropertyDescription Class Reference*.

Date	Notes
2009-05-25	Added notes that Spotlight indexing is not available on iOS.
2009-02-24	Updated for iOS 3.0.
2006-10-03	Updated for Mac OS X v10.5.
2006-06-28	Enhanced the description of reserved attribute names.
2006-05-23	First publication of this content as a separate document.