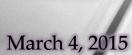
Filemaker Go or No Go?

A brief overview of iOS solution development challenges

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The Challenges

- 1. Filemaker or SAAS? Is Filemaker the right way to go? WebDirect?
- 2. Requirements: Stand-alone + Sync or direct access ('Open Remote')
- 3. Syncing options (GoZync, EasySync, MirrorSyc, In-House..)
- 4. Layout design (iOS before desktop, grids, consistency, styles)
- 5. To Kiosk or not to Kiosk that is the question
- 6. Security (use FM built-in security or build a management interface, encryption)
- 7. Version control (updating users in the field)
- 8. Compatibility (making sure everyone is on the same iOS and FM Go version)
- 9. Back Office
- 10. Filemaker Go limitations

1. Is Filemaker Go the right way to go?

- How many users will be using the app?
- Is the client willing to provide iOS devices for all the users?
- Are they going to input information or just pull? (Webdirect?)
- 'Heavy users' or ad-hoc?
- Is there an off-the-shelf free or cheap app that will do the job?
- If so, does it make more sense to use it than creating a new app?

2. Stand-alone + Sync or direct access

(assuming Filemaker Go was chosen)

- Are they going to use it over Wi-Fi (LAN) or the internet (WAN)?
- If WAN then most likely you will need a Stand-alone+Sync
- If LAN then 'Open Remote' (direct from local server) may do
- If Wi-Fi signal is unstable or weak you may still need a Stand-alone+Sync solution (e.g. in basement where there no signal)
- Sync integration is costly both in integration and maintenance (3rd party solutions require licenses in addition) Avoid if possible

3. Syncing

- Avoid if possible
- Developing on your own is extremely time consuming and could cost you more than integrating someone else's solution
- Consider how and when to suggest a sync to the user. (Don't shove it down their throat when they have a slow 3g connection)
- Make sure not to leave an open link to the server after the sync
- Keep the number of tables down, even at the cost of some 'denormalization' (in some cases breaking up tables can speed up things)
- Make the solution lean and mean

4. Layout design

- Use a grid and snap-to (big time saver). We use a 64/16 grid for flexibility
- Design first for iOS, then adapt to desktop
- Use Apple's guidelines as long as it makes sense (button sizes, fonts, etc.)
- Keep colour scheme simple (we don't use more than 5 colours usually)
- Always use styles, except for one-offs (reduces maintenance later)
- Decide in advance if to kiosk or not otherwise you will need to change all layout sizes
- Stick to familiar design patterns don't confuse the users
- Less is more

5. To Kiosk or not to Kiosk

- Pros:
 - Limit user damage
 - Save screen real-estate (20 pixels?)
- Cons:
 - More hassle to prepare/edit (especially if removing Admin user)
 - Causes issues when opening on PC (not sure about Mac)
 - Breaks the 'edit value list' from drop-down

6. Security

- Using the 256AES encryption on a stand-alone causes an extra pop-up
- Create a user management module or just use the built-in one? (problem if more then one file solution)
- Modular Filemaker has a user management module (partial solution)
- How do you manage new users with stand-alone apps?
 (we log in a minimum access user that is allowed to sync user list)
- Forgot password option



- Capture the version (build) that the user is using and suggest updates to users if not current
- GoZync and EasySync have a module for pushing new versions out



- Try to make sure that everyone (including yourself) is using the same iOS and FM Go
- Create a log tool that can send info (or the whole file) back for analysis

9. Back Office

- In most cases you can use the iOS version as a basis for the back office and add the missing functionality
- Consider a separation model: iOS file as the main data source and a back office file to store additional office data and UI (not advisable with GoZync)
- Keep the same look and feel as the iOS for simplicity

10. Filemaker Go limitations

- Less processing power than desktop
- Wi-Fi only
- No plug-ins
- iOS only
- Can't use Apple Script
- Different design quirks than PC\Mac
- New iOS releases can break things
- Printing (there are options but requires either special printer or more complex)

Resources

- Best Practices:
 - Filemaker:
 - http://www.filemaker.com/solutions/ios/docs/fmi_guide_design_en.pdf
 - http://www.filemaker.com/solutions/ios/docs/fmi_guide_ios_usage_en.pdf
 - http://www.filemaker.com/solutions/ios/docs/fmi_guide_sync_en.pdf
- Syncing:
 - http://360works.com/filemaker-sync/
 - http://www.seedcode.com/filemaker-sync-gozync/
 - http://fmeasysync.com/
 - Filemaker Sync group
- Layout Design
 - Grid tool: http://www.infografix.eu/gridmaker/
 - Richard Carlton video the use of styles

Resources

- Icons:
 - https://icomoon.io/
 - http://icons8.com/
 - http://retinaicon.com/
- Filemaker Modules:
 - http://www.modularfilemaker.org/ (date picker, contact picker, navigation..)
- Colour Schemes:
 - https://color.adobe.com
- UI\UX
 - https://developer.apple.com/design/tips/
 - http://www.designingfilemaker.com/