customer spotlight

Airbus Helicopter

Visual design and rapid prototyping accelerating app dev

How the leading helicopter manufacturer encourages collaboration and fields innovative mobile applications faster with Ionic Framework and Creator.

Accelerating Mobile App Development

Airbus Helicopters, part of Airbus Group, is the world's leading manufacturer of helicopters, maintaining a 45-percent market share in the civil and parapublic markets. The mission of Information Management (IM) Factories within Airbus is to work with Finance, HR, production and assembly lines to develop innovative, data-centric web and mobile applications to improve their business. Building upon their use of Ionic Frameworks, IM Factories used Creator to accelerate the design and development of a global safety application running on multiple platforms.

The Need for More Agility

The Airbus team recognizes the value of the Ionic hybrid development approach for multiple platforms: Android, iOS and Blackberry (BBY). The team had already taken advantage of the Ionic Framework to deliver a mobile application for Finance allowing program managers to see monthly the main KPIs for each helicopter family. Mobile technical expert Heinz Haeussler: "These applications that we are developing are data-centric applications. The Ionic hybrid approach is very effective. Very efficient." Said Heinz. "The Finance app was one of our most successful mobile IM applications in 2016."

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– Heinz Haeussler,
  Mobile technical expert

But Heinz and the rest of the team wanted to push the design process further, to improve their collaboration with application stakeholders. Posting prototypes on an internal

server for review in browsers presented challenges capturing shifting requirements and nailing down navigation, data flow between screens and a consistent look and feel across platforms. They required a tool that allowed stakeholders to express what their ideas may look like and work together to design applications in a more collaborative, agile mode.

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Co-Designing with App Owners and Business Users

They chose Ionic Creator to prototype "Safe Together", an application requested by HR. The application enables employees to use their mobile device to take a picture of a safety concern in any Airbus facility around the globe. Using geolocation data captured from the camera the application generates a report which is automatically routed to the appropriate personnel.

Creator enabled the Airbus team to work with HR to more efficiently capture the desired navigation, dataflow flow between screens, consistent look and feel and shifting project requirements. The most important benefit: they could preview working designs with stakeholders on target devices. Even though requirements changed, Heinz estimates the design phase of "Safe Together" was 2X faster because of Creator.

Head Start on Development – and Security

The design framework, the templates including navigation, 100% of the static elements are automatically generated by Creator – providing a real head start for development. This code

base is fully integrated with the Ionic Framework. The openness of the Ionic Framework also allowed for the easy integration of the more dynamic, data centric application components with Cordova plugins for geolocation, the camera and an email composer.

A critical requirement for "Safe Together" was communication security. Before the report could be communicated to an internal Airbus mailbox it had to be secured. Heinz solved this problem with encryption on the device. The entire message is encrypted on the device using JavaScript libraries for symmetric (AES) and asymmetric (RSA) encryption integrated within the Ionic Framework.

THE CHALLENGES

- Better collaboration with application stakeholders
- Rapid, effective prototyping
- Consistency across platforms

THE SOLUTION

- Visual, on device prototyping with Creator
- One code base in Ionic Framework
- Open third party integrations

THE BENEFITS

- Closer collaboration with internal stakeholders
- 2X faster, agile mobile app design and deployment
- Consistent look and feel across platforms

Agility, Openness and Integration Across Platforms

The Airbus team has more agility in prototyping and is better able to support the organizations' Innovation Initiative by collaborating faster with different mobile application stakeholders. Application development is more efficient as the Creator code is fully integrated with the Ionic Framework. And the open Ionic Framework supports Cordova plugins for innovative mobile solutions, including data-centric applications, consistently, across a variety of platforms.