



Xoriant helps launch a mobile real estate search for Realtors[®]

Client Overview

Our client, a Fremont CA based start-up, builds mobile applications that would be natively available on mobile devices including iPhone, Android, Blackberry, Windows Mobile and other mobile platforms. One such application for the real estate market enables users to search for houses for sale, based on their current geographic location and other factors like price, distance, community, and so on. The client sought to combine the power of location based search on the mobile handset with the typical real estate data available. This would be offered to Realtors® who would be able to sign up customers, and in turn, offer the service during a prospect buyer's search drive.

Client Requirements

The client vision for the application was to provide a platform where the participating Realtors® could list his or her available properties for a particular area, while also browse through the listing based on their requirements on the other hand. Users could access information on the estate by querying the RETS server, based on the search criteria. Our client wanted to build a general-purpose search capability that could also extend to the other verticals.

While our client employs a group of domain experts who understand the nuances of the real estate market and web-based application experts, they were looking for a partner who had the expertise in developing, porting and testing cross-platform applications.

Engagement Situation and Challenges

Engagement Challenges

- The application had to be supported across multiple generations of mobile devices
- The application had to support multiple properties type Residential, Commercial etc
- The application was required to be built based on the web service calls that were already created by client to access real estate data.
- It was necessary to achieve quick time-to-market: Beta launch was expected in 1 month from project kickoff
- It was necessary to achieve a critical performance benchmark: Support search results for maximum input criteria around 1000 property listing
- The application was expected to display the real time property listing data updates on buying and selling of properties.

Technology Challenges

- Building application as per App Store standards – the design team needed to quickly come up with a design for iPhone that will be sophisticated and meet iPhone Human interface guidelines.
- Creating functionality based application so that the work done would be reused for other clients with similar functionality and different UI.
- Further the iPhone application needed to be certified by Apple before it could be made available on the App store
- Integrating with emerging technologies- Client wanted to integrate with the latest technology updates coming in from technology vendors like Google, Apple etc.
- Open Source - Client wanted Xoriant to select the open source technology that would work best for its implementation and provide short release times and faster time-to-market
- Client wanted the iPhone application to be available on iPad as well.

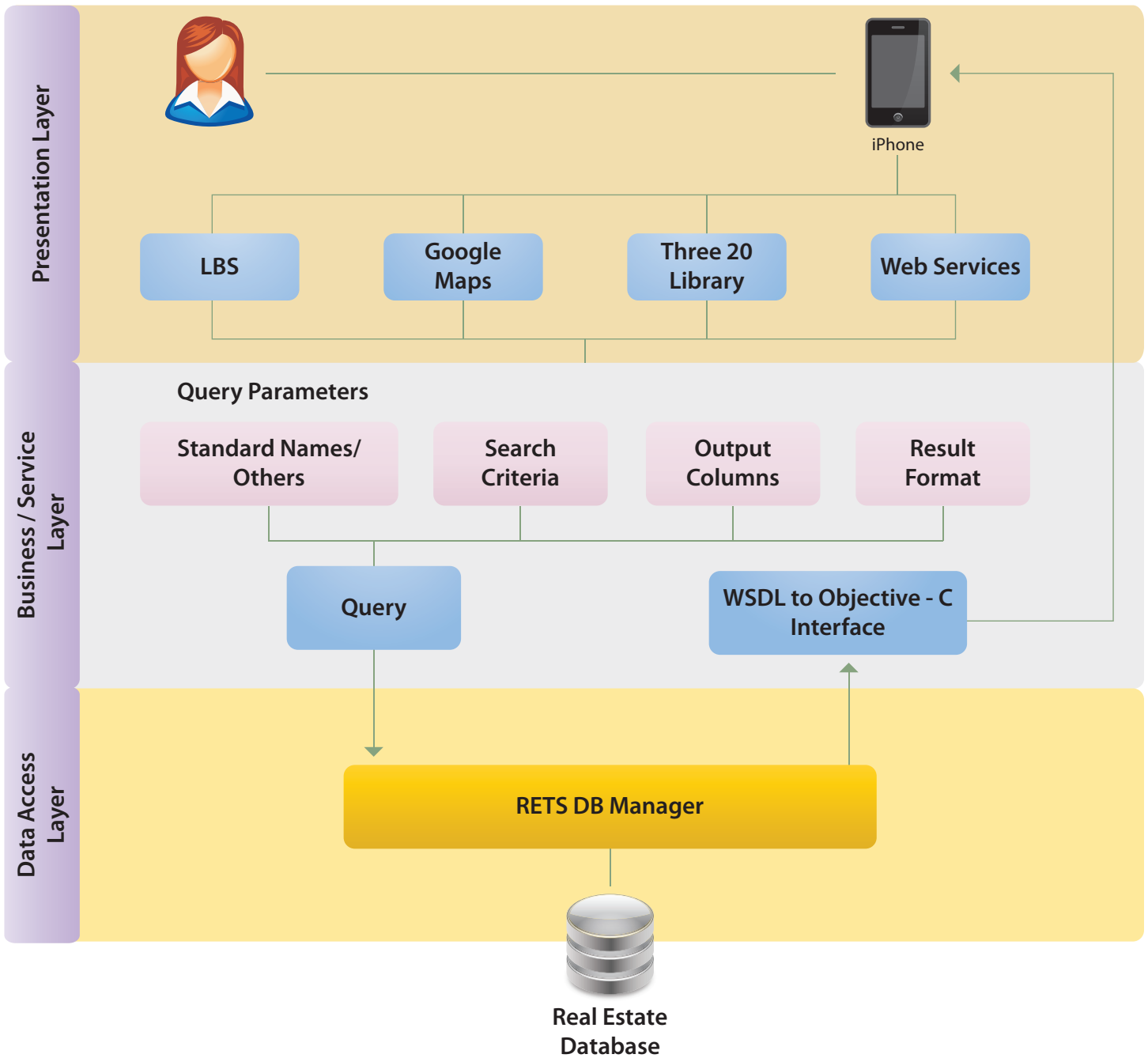
Xoriant's contributions in the engagement

Xoriant's team worked closely with the client to understand the requirements & created an engagement roadmap. The engagement roadmap was planned with due consideration to engagement objectives & some key decisions were taken early in the engagement cycle.

Xoriant was involved in complete SDLC process in building the application on the iPhone, following the agile execution methodology to meet demands of evolving requirements without compromise on the client's Time-to-Market goals

Xoriant used tools like Unfudle and Go To Meeting for requirement gathering and implementation design discussions. This ensured that Client team in Fremont and Xoriant's off-site team always had a common understanding on the requirements. This proved to be effective to avoid "requirement gaps" and "quick to changes"

Architecture Diagram



Significant Contributions included

- Configuration management using SVN and Eclipse for the milestone based code branches as defined in the application
- Creation of test cases, test plans and UAT for application. QA testing involved for every milestone
- Location based services (LBS) for determining current location of the user and search based on same
- Integration with Google Maps for driving directions
- Integration with Three-20 library for Photo Collage implementation
- Web Service (WSDL) to Objective - C conversion for accessing the remote data
- Building of reusable components to be used across multiple real estate projects
- Involvement in entire life cycle of mobile application development right from requirement capture, design, implementation, QA testing to delivery phase
- Providing Call, SMS and Email interface for listed Agent and agent offices
- Implementation of feature to enable the application to restart from the last exited state of the application
- Support for the beta application after its launch and submission of application to Apple store

“Our biggest pain point when we engaged Xoriant was we wanted a team that was already ramped up on the technology, except for RETS which we planned to train them on. We might have lost the customer if we did not get timely help from Xoriant. We really liked Xoriant’s dedicated and motivated team of trained professionals and their on demand resource engagement”

Tools & Technologies

- Xcode 3.1.2
- Mac OS iPhone -3G Interface Builder
- Google Maps API
- Three-20 lib APIs
- Location Services
- Photoshop and Dreamweaver for UI designs

Engagement Results

- Our client was able to launch the beta version of the product in 1 month and it was widely accepted by user community. Xoriant's experience on working in mobile applications and the specific domain were keys to achieve this tight timeline for mobile application development
- User interface was implemented of using human interface guidelines from Apple. User experience was well received after the beta launch. Xoriant provided simple and highly cost effective solution to our client by incorporating open-source and free technologies
- Due to these features our client was able to position itself in the same / other verticals very quickly which enabled him to get work in new accounts