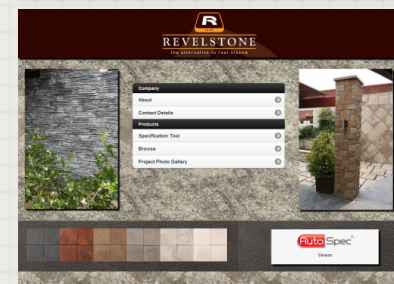




The Situation

NDTec, the software development firm that built Autospec, the most powerful specification writing tool in South Africa, needs to build mobile apps for customers or risk losing the business opportunity. With limited experience in this area, ND Tec turned to Application Craft.



The App

NDTec's architectural clients needed mobile apps in order to accurately specify products when in the field. More, manufacturers signed up with Autospec needed a way to showcase their products to the potentially huge market of mobile device owners. The apps needed to provide access to all the data and specifications generated by using their proprietary Autospec engine, which references thousands of products from more than 400 different manufacturers.

"Architects and product manufacturers needed mobile apps that could duplicate the functionality provided by our existing engine (running on both Windows and the web), which provides them with accurate specifications based on their selections," said Ruan Fourie, Systems Administrator/Developer, Autospec. "The engine is basically an expert system that poses a series of questions to determine the best product for a certain

purpose. It filters your choices based on your previous selections so that only valid options are presented. At the end of the process a final specification is generated which is then added into a specification document by the architect and sent to the builder."

Using the Application Craft Platform, Fourie and his small team built their first app in only 2 months and has since built apps for various clients that each utilize the AutoSpec engine in the background. Many of those iPad apps are now available in the iTunes app store, including [Revelstone](#) and [Rodlin Design](#). Next, they will build a localized solution for those apps that will work when the internet is not available and will sync automatically when a user is within range of a Wi-Fi network.

The Build

"I tried several different platforms and some of them were completely convoluted and didn't make sense. Other ones simply didn't work," said Fourie. "Things were very broken with some of the other RAD platforms I tested. So I decided that I would keep looking and finally found Application Craft. I signed up and had a basic app running on it in 5 minutes and I thought well, here we go. It was dead easy."

Fourie used the widgets that are included in the Application Craft platforms to build much of his app. "I used widgets everywhere I could. The whole idea of having HTML widgets really made sense to me because I could see how building widgets once and then reusing the same code could significantly speed up the development process."

NDTec's mobile apps also use advanced features of the AC Pro Platform, including tools to integrate the app with a server-side backend. According to Fourie it was a simple process. "When we began, I thought it was going to be really difficult, but then in less than a week I realized that if I added the data one manufacturer at a time it was really quite easy to port it over to the app because our engine already pushed out HTML. I just took the data that I would normally feed to the browser and fed it into

Application Craft. The data was all in a compatible format and the transition was made much easier by using the Application Craft tool."

The Results

Fourie has been building mobile and tablet apps for less than a year using Application Craft and has already mastered the technology. Not only has he created an important new revenue stream for NDTec's existing business in South Africa, Australia and the United States, Fourie is now expanding NDTec's reach into new industries. The company has already been approached by organizations in the beauty products, education, wine, and sports industries.

"We are used to dealing with large contracts, but these new industries fall completely out of our normal comfort zone. In the past, we probably never would have diversified so much, but with Application Craft making it so easy, it helped us cross the divide," said Fourie.

The Bottom Line

"If AC didn't exist, I would probably have had to settle for one of the other platforms which would have significantly increased my development time and therefore the costs for our company."