

# TOTAL for iPad

## Real Stories: Q & A with Neal Grove, Robert Grove Real Estate & Valuation Services

Neal Grove is a professional appraiser in northern California. He uses TOTAL for iPad as his primary sketching and data gathering tool in the field. We spoke with Neal about his experience.

After reading this interview, if you have questions about TOTAL for iPad or any of our many appraisal tools, visit [alamode.com](http://alamode.com) or call 1-800-ALAMODE to get in touch with a representative.

### How long have you been using TOTAL for iPad?

I've been using it for about four or five months now.

### Has TOTAL for iPad changed how you do appraisals, in what ways?

Yeah, the thing is pretty spectacular actually. I was kind of skeptical about TOTAL when I was trying to download it on my wife's little iPod Touch. I put it on there and thought, "this is pretty cool" and I started working on the sketch part. But, as soon as I found out that it would work on the iPad, I went down and bought the iPad immediately.

It was kind of a little learning curve to get it ready. I also had to spend some time figuring out the best way of doing it. I found the best way is to start your report on your computer — get it started with your order information and everything else in there — then get it synced to your iPad, then head out in the field.

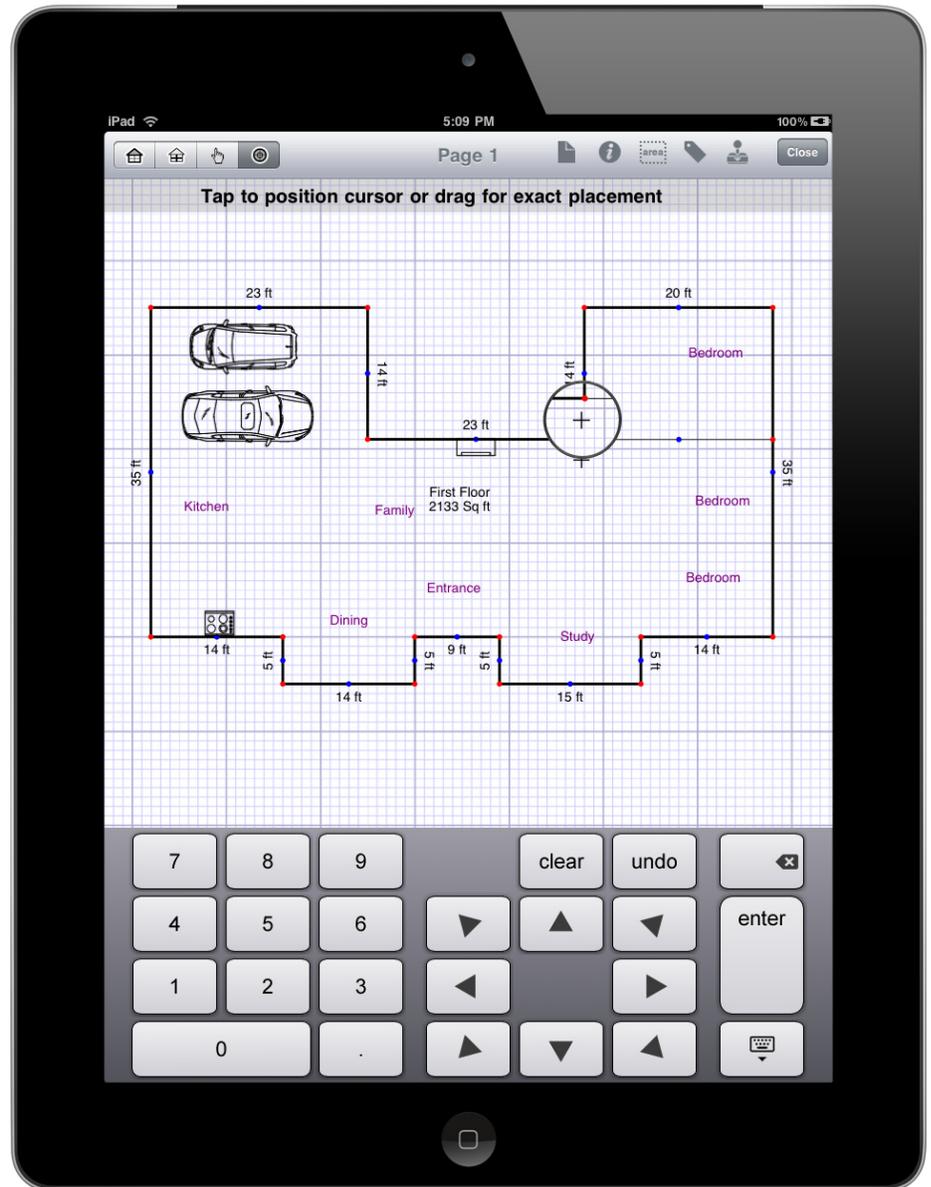
I've been trying to go paperless for the last year or so. This actually makes it totally paperless. Because my paperless method before used to be, sketch out on a notepad, come back to the office and scan that into the computer, and then pull it out and throw the piece of paper away. And now, I can do all my notes on the iPad with all the dropdowns, especially with the new update they just did. That update had a bunch more boxes to fill out while you're in the field, and dropdowns and all that.

### So you collect all your data in the field using the iPad as well?

I seriously do all of the data in the field. I don't write anything on a piece of paper. It's actually turned me completely paperless. I have nothing when I'm done with it. I do the sketch while I'm out there and I do all the dropdowns

for the major characteristics. Then, when I get back into the truck, I pull up the spot that says condition of the property and I go ahead and use the iPad's keyboard to type in basically my paragraph and a half of "it's a pretty normal house, it's kind of cluttered, it's got this, it's got that, unpermitted space, blah

blah blah." I type all of that up as if I were typing a report, while it's fresh in my mind. Then, when I get back to the office and sync it, it's all there. All I have to do is open up the sketch, move some labels around, kind of just finish it off then start going through the market conditions and all that.



I don't really use the comparables portion of TOTAL for iPad yet. And, of course, my iPad doesn't have a camera, which isn't really necessary anyway. I take pictures with a digital SLR camera that takes them fast.

I guarantee it saves me probably an hour, just being able to do the sketch right there, not write it on paper. Well, I have one of those laser measurers too. That and the iPad save me a lot of time. It saves me probably about a half hour on the inspections. It used to take me an hour and now it takes me a half hour max to do an inspection. Then, at the report writing stage, instead of taking close to two hours it takes me a little over an hour. I mean, it's huge.

### What's your favorite thing about TOTAL for iPad?

It's really simple to use. You just hit 22 feet to the left, 22 feet to the right, 22 feet down. And with the angles it's got diagonals, so you can give it a 45 degree angle with a push of a button. You can put the bedrooms in there, the doors, all those things. I have no idea how they can improve it.

### How long did it take you to learn to use TOTAL on the iPad?

It probably took me 6 or 7 reports until I felt comfortable with the sketching program, so that it would be quick enough to where I wouldn't just be farting around in front of somebody. The good thing is I do

Fannie Mae foreclosures so there's nobody around on a lot of my jobs. I could get in there and practice a lot. But I would say if you did your own house a few times, did a neighbor's house or something like that, you'd get it. And, like I said, that latest update for it makes it super easy. So in less than 10 jobs I felt comfortable with using it in the field collecting all of my data.

The other thing is, you have to spend some time getting the QuickLists down. When you're going through the house and you have all the options right there you're just tapping rather than typing. I have in my QuickLists 25 different variations for floor: hardwood, carpet, tile, vinyl, average condition, good condition, below average condition, and all the different combinations of each. The QuickLists are very important.

It's unbelievable. I don't even know how I did without it. I used to work for an appraisal shop that still used these old fashion tape measures and clipboards and I'd just laugh at them. You guys are taking all day for something I could do in three hours.

### What advice would you give appraisers thinking about using TOTAL for iPad?

I would just say make sure you're using a la mode software. You should be using it anyway. If you're using the QuickLists on the left-hand column for most of your stuff, and not just relying on the dropdown previous item, it's so much better. That's a

big one because most people just click on the box and see the last 10 items that have been entered in instead of actually making a QuickList item for every single category. If you do that, you can spend more time doing actual sketching in the field. It's kind of the prep work. If you can set that all up, then when you get out in the field it's easy.

What I would probably suggest — which is one thing that scares me because I don't have mine hooked up — is getting 3G. I currently can't sync it wirelessly to my computer from the field. I'd recommend getting 3G because I've gone on five or six inspections where I'll be checking around the backyard and almost fell in a pond. If I fell in a pond, I'd lose all the things I just did and have to go in and re-inspect everything. What's also good about 3G is you can use it for so many other things like the GPS apps; you could use Google maps. While you're in the field you could look up appraisal management companies, get online. I'm stuck once I get out in the field. If you had the Internet capability on the iPad, it would be helpful.

### Is there anything else you'd like to say?

I can't believe it's free. It's awesome. I love it.

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