

TOTAL for iPhone

Real Stories: Q & A with Stephen Barnett, Barnett Appraisal Services, Inc.

Stephen Barnett is a professional appraiser in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He uses TOTAL for iPhone as his primary sketching tool in the field. We spoke with Stephen about his experience.

After reading this interview, if you have questions about TOTAL for iPhone or any of our many appraisal tools, visit alamode.com or call 1-800-ALAMODE to get in touch with a representative.

How has TOTAL for iPhone changed how you do appraisals?

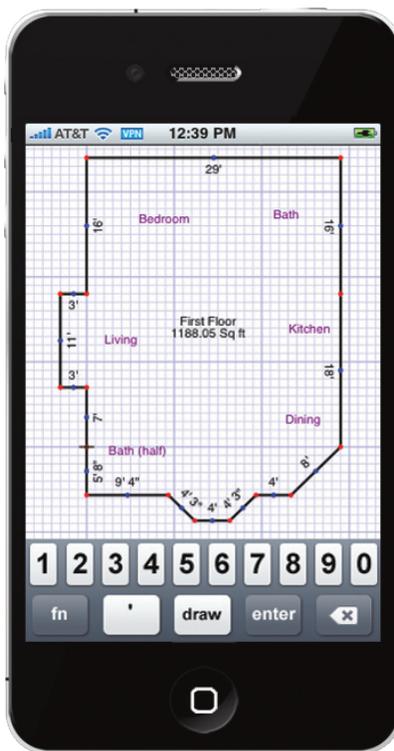
That's hard because I've been using the technology side of things for awhile now. I've been using it since the old Hewlett Packard PDAs in about '04. If you dropped them, they broke immediately and you lost all your data. They were just really finicky.

TOTAL is just a lot easier. It's a lot easier to sketch with your finger and to be more accurate on the lines. It's taken an extra step out of my sketching too and saves me time because I used to literally sketch on those other devices on like a graph type of paper. Even on your mobile version that I was using before, I would sketch on a graph paper and then I would have to go into Apex or TOTAL and re-do the whole sketch. Well now I just do the sketch in the field and that's it. I may make some minor adjustments back at the office.

How long did it take you to learn TOTAL on the iPhone?

I tried to start using it when it was a prototype. And, I don't think it was the prototype. I think it was me, I just got frustrated with it and put it aside for awhile. And then some time in the middle of the summer I picked it back up. I just started watching the videos that have been saved online and started practicing a little bit more with it. I got the hang of it and it just started coming to me. It was more or less a learning curve thing. Online training really helped me for it and just practicing with it.

I had to get a new computer and some other stuff too, and I put Apex, which I was kind of using before, and the mobile version on it. That's kind of what pushed me in the middle of the summer to say, "OK, I'm going to knuckle down and make (TOTAL) work" to get it to work for me because I know it can — and watch the videos and practice and all of that.



So it's much easier than other products?

Oh yeah, definitely. I wouldn't go back to those other things at all. This is so much easier, once I got past me learning how to use it basically. It's so much better. I do one sketch instead of two. I don't draw my house out and then go back and figure out how all the walls matched up and the math to it. I can pretty much do all of that in TOTAL.

It saves me a whole extra step that I think a lot of appraisers are going through. They're hand sketching out a dwelling and then they're going back and putting it in a program that will tell them the square footage and everything.

What would you say are the challenges, if any, of sketching on the iPhone?

Just the learning curve — learning how to do it. Once you learn how to do it, it's easy.

What's your favorite thing about TOTAL for iPhone?

My favorite thing is that I do one sketch, and one sketch only, in the field and I'm done.

What advice would you give appraisers just starting to use TOTAL for iPhone?

Don't give up at first even if it seems like something that's alien or foreign to them. Just stick with it. Practice with it on a couple of dummy properties, at least a few simple houses, and you'll get the hang of it eventually.

You've hardly got anyone using this compared to the iPad but so many more people have phones. Instead of a \$500-\$600 iPad, if more people used this it would just be way more user-friendly.

What would you say to people worried the iPhone is too small?

You can blow it up. You pick the screen and you can zoom in anywhere you want. It is small but you can zoom in and make anything bigger. If you're working on a very large house you can zoom in, and then you can go on a second page too for like a second story. If it's a big house then you'll want to do the first story on the first page, and if it takes up a lot of space you can't start the second story on that page because then it gets even smaller, so you just hit new page and go to the next thing.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

That covers it. The videos did help. The ease of use is there. People just need to take advantage of it and practice with it. I don't think they'll go back.

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