



HomeSuite Home - Crestron Dealer Creates Outside-the-box Custom iPad® App

DES introduces HomeSuite, a customized remote management mobile app for the iPad®

Background

With offices in Rogers and Little Rock, AR, Austin, TX and Trinidad, Crestron dealer, DES specializes in the development of custom electronic systems that enhance daily life without the clutter of modern electronics. DES completed a fully-integrated Crestron home automation system for a client more than a year ago and recently returned to integrate the Apple® iPad® using its own customized mobile app.

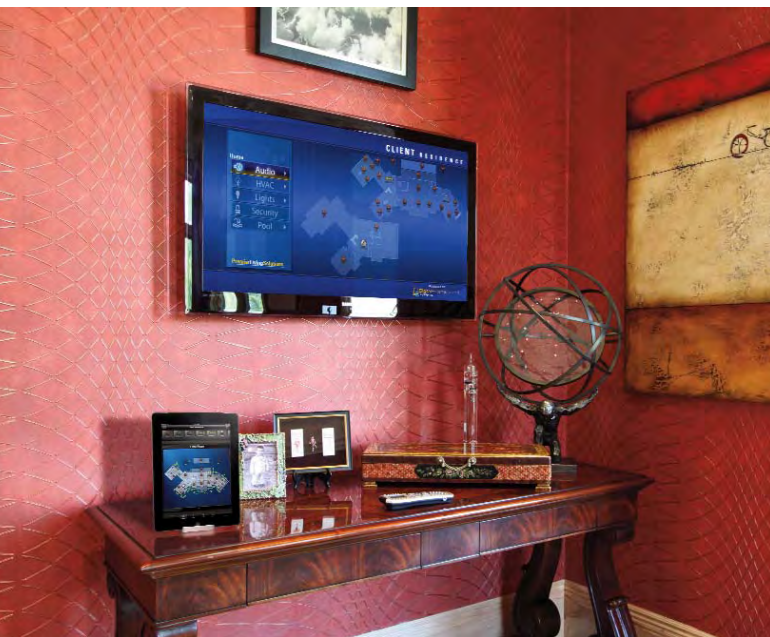
The 14,500 square foot Mediterranean-style home sits on a bluff overlooking the Arkansas River, and features 191 lighting loads, 33 audio zones, 19 video zones, 10 HVAC zones, 12 intercom zones, and 24 paging zones, all controlled by Crestron integrated home technology.

Enter HomeSuite

With the popularity of the iPad® and emerging apps that offer remote home control, DES clients started requesting an iPad® app to control their Crestron homes. DES was already in development of an app that could provide all the necessary features that a homeowner expects from an automated home system, such as controlling lights and thermostats from their iPhone® and iPad®.

The flexibility of the Crestron open platform allowed DES to develop the ideal custom app and maximize the client experience through intuitive graphics and navigation tools. “Crestron provides a much bigger tool box for us to work with,” says DES Director of Business Development, Kevin Lambidonis. Shortly thereafter, HomeSuite was launched and deployed in the new luxury home.

“The homeowners like to travel so we knew HomeSuite would be a good fit for them,” says Lambidonis. “They have the same control of their home whether they use the iPad or a Crestron touch screen.”



Featuring drag-and-drop functionality on a floor plan-based interface, the app controls audio, HVAC, lighting, paging, intercom, security and surveillance. HomeSuite provides the client with similar look and feel across all control devices.

Challenge

The new homeowners enjoyed their Crestron system for months and didn't want to learn an entirely new operating system to control the system with the iPad®.

"One of the benefits of developing our own app from scratch is providing our clients with similar control functions across all control devices," says Lambidonis. "Ultimately, we wanted to provide our clients the best solution that they could not get anywhere else."

DES also faced the challenge of using the iPad®, a wireless device, to do intercom and paging. "Our customer was used to using his system to do intercom and paging and wouldn't understand the technology required to do so on the iPad®. They had come to expect that it was a feature consistent throughout their system," explains Lambidonis. DES decided to develop their own SIP client, embedded in the HomeSuite app to meet the needs of their customer.

Systems at a Glance

"We always believed that global control works best when a floor plan-based interface is provided," explains Lambidonis.

DES followed the Apple® iOS Human Interface Guidelines, such as pinch to zoom, swiping to change floors, and drag-and-drop functionality to create simple, easy-to-use control for any user.

"We feel that the iOS framework and guidelines have changed the user experience for the better, and we are excited about taking the same design guidelines to Crestron touch screen interfaces using the Adobe Flash tools," explains Lambidonis.

Audio

From the iPad®, the audio control feature provides access to any of the distributed sources in any room. The homeowner simply drags the source icon to a room and then controls the music content. With a double tap, music can be played throughout the home. Each zone has independent controls for volume, mute and source selection.

Lighting

The lighting control program allows the homeowner to see every lighting load on the floor plan. Once selected, an image of the room's lighting keypad appears onscreen to control lights and fans. A rolling slider allows precise dimming of any or all lights.

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Kevin Lambidonis, Director of Business Development, DES

HVAC

The main HVAC page shows a snapshot view of the temperature within each heating/cooling zone. Local weather information is displayed on the side of the screen so the homeowner can adjust and schedule temperature settings depending on the forecast. The feature uses an on-screen thermostat with sliders to adjust heat, AC and humidity to desired levels with a few finger swipes.

"The HVAC feature is especially helpful when homeowners log in to view their vacation homes or primary residences when away," explains Lambidonis.



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Intercom & Paging

Using the built-in iPad® microphone, the homeowner can page any zone on the multi-room audio system, and the message is relayed to the room speakers. The intercom uses any device with a SIP client on the home's network including iPad® to iPad®, iPad® to Crestron touch screen, iPad® to door or gate station, or iPad® to telephone for two-way communications.

Security

The security feature provides a graphic overview of each security device on the network including window and door contacts, motion sensors, smoke detectors and more. The user can arm and disarm the system, receive notifications if the system is triggered, and view streaming video from surveillance cameras in real-time.

For example, when there is a delivery and the client isn't home, the iPad receives an audible alert. The homeowner can view the security camera to see who is at the gate, and open the gate to allow for the package to be delivered. Another button press closes the gate and secures the home, all from the owner's iPad®.

The DVR for the surveillance system allows snapshots to be taken and stored for later use. HomeSuite allows the homeowner to take a snapshot of live footage and store it locally in the iPad's photo album, whether at home or away.

Benefits

DES implemented HomeSuite in 12 projects so far, and clients couldn't be happier. "They love it. The app works and does everything our clients expect it to," notes Lambidonis. "Customers show it to their friends and their friends don't understand why their apps don't do the same thing."

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Click here to view the HomeSuite demo

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