THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECT
Custom Residential Architects Network

CRAN CHRONICLE

Letter from the CRAN Chair

By Dawn Zuber, AIA

I will admit to being a little nervous about stepping into the role of chair of CRAN, given how hard my immediate predecessor worked to keep us on track in so many ways. James Walbridge is an amazing leader and we have been lucky to have him serve as chair of our advisory group for the past year. He has been appointed to the AIA Strategic Council, where he will continue advocating for custom residential architects.

Looking back on 2015, we have a lot to be proud of. CRAN helped organize three national convention programs specifically geared towards custom residential practitioners, and we plan to continue advocating for speakers who will address challenges and concerns particular to residential pros at future conventions. We also threw a heck of a symposium in Minneapolis in September. We received great feedback from attendees, who thought our speakers were among the best we've had. And the CRAN Chronicle continues to be an excellent communication tool for us. It's hard to believe that it was three years ago when we started what we lovingly referred to as the CRANicle.

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Project Profiles

RE - TIRE - TENT, Cat Shelter

Stuart Narofsky, FAIA | Jean-Pierre A. Pirrello, AIA

The concept of our design focuses on adaptive reuse (11AR"). In the practice of architecture, adaptive reuse refers to the process of reusing an old site, building, or recycled materials for a purpose(s) that may be different then original use. Throughout the design process, we continually challenged ourselves to identify materials that were deemed waste items to use as functional components of our assembly. During this investigation we discovered that the inner profile of a tire was a perfect fit for a cat.

RE - TIRE - TENT
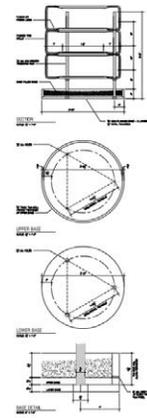
[Read more]

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Cathedral Bluff Residence

Stig Carlson Architecture

This project involved a "down-to-the-studs" renovation and addition to a 1970's era home on Whidbey Island, Washington. The architect was contacted by the owners shortly after they had purchased the property as a weekend getaway & gathering place for their family. The home sits perched at the top of a southwest facing bluff with spectacular views across Puget Sound to the Olympic Peninsula and Mountain Range. The existing home was sited quite nicely to take advantage of these views, but relatively low ceilings, cropped window openings and a small deteriorating deck left plenty of room for improvement.

[Read more]

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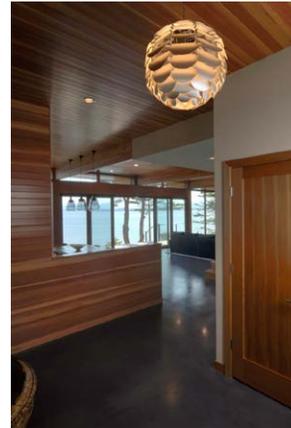
Features

Technological Tools for Managing Your Time & Making the Most of Every Day

By Enoch Sears, AIA | The Business of Architecture

"It is not that we have so little time but that we waste so much. ... The life we get is not short but we make it so; we are not ill provided but use what we have wastefully." - Roman Stoic philosopher Lucius Seneca, quote from the essay "On the Shortness of Life"

As the new year rolls around, your mind turns to getting things done. You look forward anxiously to 2016 and imagine how it will be better than 2015. You get better, more fulfilling, more profitable projects.


Hartwig HKD/Flickr

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Is BIM Right for Your Company?

By Josh Bone | [JBKnowledge](#)

I have been using BIM for over 15 years. I have had the opportunity to help hundreds of residential architecture firms transition from CAD to BIM, but I will be the first to tell you that transitioning to BIM is not the right move for every firm.

When a company transitions to BIM, they have to shift their workload to accomplish more in the early design stages of the project. Many of you have probably seen the image below.
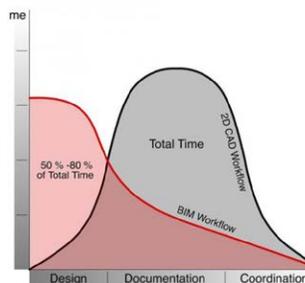
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Home of the FUTURE! Home of the Past...

By Brenda Nelson, Assoc. AIA | [Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, Inc.](#)

During the Summer of 2014, I wandered into an airport bookstore while waiting for my flight. Browsing the racks I spotted the July 7th, 2014 issue of Time magazine with a cover proclaiming the smart home was here. I decided to buy a copy and see what a smart home was by Time's definition.

Read more

Relationships

Interview by John Altobello | [John Altobello Architecture](#)
Interviewee Sally Wilson & John Kelsey | [Wilson Kelsey Design](#)
(Part 2)

Photo credit � Eric Roth

How a couple, both interior designers, work with their clients and with each other.

This is the second part of an interview by John Altobello. To read the first part of this article, [click here.](#)

The most successful client relationships

JA: what makes for the most successful client relationships?

Photo credit � Laura Moss

W / K: Good people, with solid values, who appreciate the designer's skills. We like to treat people the way we would like to be treated. We want our clients to feel/know that they are working with good people, with solid values, who appreciate their needs, budget, project and family life.

Client, budget and designer

JA: Can you talk about the role budget plays in a project? How do you handle a situation in which a client has exquisite and expensive tastes, but not the financial wherewithal to carry through?

Read more

Photo credit � Michael J. Lee

TECHNOLOGY- From the Perspective of an Architect Who Still Hand Drafts

By Michele Grace Hottel | Michele Grace Hottel, Architect

I find it kind of ironic that I am writing an article about technology because I will confess, I do not use any CADD programs in my practice. AutoCad, Revit, etc., it is all the same to me, it is drafting on the computer and ever since I had a class in AutoCad version 1, in architecture school, I was less than enchanted by the whole thing. I guess because I could actually draw and draft by hand, very well, and I was not intrigued at all by this innovation . I can open files and make some changes and I have colleagues who excel at the skill.

Alexander Strugach/Flickr

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Symposium Recap

By Josh Divelbiss, AIA | The HR Group Architects

The 2015 CRAN Symposium survey results are in and rich with positive and constructive feedback. The Symposium's core experiences received glowing reviews across the board, from the speaker sessions to home tours, networking opportunities and the product exhibit. Michael Anschel and Carl Seville's "Review of Green Building Products & Systems" dominated the survey with 89% of attendees indicating the session was above average or outstanding.

Ryan Siemers

Read more

Why Digital Transformation?

Ann Novakowski | AIA National

The Digital Transformation matters for a couple of reasons. First, to deliver services to AIA members and the broader AEC community. Our new platforms will help us engage those audiences in new ways and develop closer relationships with them. Second, it gives the AIA an opportunity to think differently about how it conducts its operations.

The Preiser Project/Flickr

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What's Your Favorite?

► *The CRAN Chronicle team wants you to tell us about your favorite products. This issue features a time-tracking app review. Consider contributing by emailing cran@aia.org.*

App Review: ATracker Pro

Jennifer Honebrink | Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture

I use [ATracker Pro](#) for tracking my time. I love how it makes it so simple to fill out my timesheet and bill everyone appropriately. I can add as many projects as I need, giving them each a unique icon and color for easy reference.

Within each entry you can add notes as reminders for yours elf about what you were working on (or whatever else you want to make note of). Every couple of months I go through and move the projects I am not using to inactive. Then when I get another project for that client or they spring to life again, I can turn them back on.

Read more

In the News & On the Web

► *Editorial Note: Do you have exciting CRAN activities planned for your chapter? The CRAN Chronicle is interested in your local CRAN events, news and stories. Consider contributing by emailing cran@aia.org. You can also email your most recent chapter contact information to cran@aia.org to be sure your information is up-to-date.*

CRAN Chair Quoted in Washington Post

The Washington Post published an article on building disaster resistant homes and quoted **Dawn Zuber.** You can read the [article here.](#)

Web Surfing

An article titled "What The Future Holds for 3-D Printing in Architecture and Design" was recently featured on Houzz.com, an AIA partner organization. It asks the question, "Is 3-D printing changing our architecture, and is it the way we'll design our homes in the future?" It also provides some interesting answers to that question. To read more about the impact this technology is having on design, [click here.](#)

Upcoming Events

CRAN at the 2016 AIA Convention

Join CRAN at [this year's AIA Convention](#) in Philadelphia, May 19-21.

- **EV102 - Find Your Community at the AIA Welcome Party**
  May 18 | 6-8PM | The Racquet Club of Philadelphia | [Learn More](#)
  Kick off your convention experience! Connect with first time and returning attendees who share your interests at this new event as you indulge in festive cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and partake in fun activites all while reveling in unique architectural details of the venue.

- **EV213 - CRAN Forum: Focusing Exclusively on the Practice of Residential Architecture**
  May 19 | 1:30-3PM | [Learn More](#)
  Join the annual moderated, collaborative, and interactive forum hosted by the AIA Custom Residential Architects' Network. Discover insights and anecdotes about the challenges and triumphs faced by today's residential architects, from a knowledge community that provides support, advocacy, and education to everyone involved in custom residential design.

Explore the convention schedule with 500+ sessions by [clicking here.](#)

Save the Date: 2016 CRAN Symposium

September 18-22, 2016
The 2016 CRAN symposium will be held at the Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel and Spa in Santa Rosa, Claifornia. Santa Rosa is about 55 miles north of San Francisco in the heart of wine country. Please mark your calendars and join us this year!

[View photos from previous symposiums](#)

Research Grant

Application Deadline: 5:00 p.m. EST on March 23, 2016
The AIA Small Project Practitioners ([SPP](#)) and Housing Knowledge Community ([HKC](#)) are proud to offer the 2016 AIA Innovation and Practice in Housing Design Research Grant. This grant will fund one design professional to conduct research on a topic related to residential design on a small scale or by small firms.

The Researcher will be funded in the amount of $7,000 which may be used for time and/or materials.

[Learn More]

Upcoming Webinars

The Path to Licensure: How to Best Support Your Interns
Monday, March 14, 2016 | 3:00 - 4:00pm ET | **Earn 1.0 AIA LU** | [Learn more](#) | [Register now](#)
Sponsored by: AIA Contract Documents
Registration fees: **Free**

Explore Master Agreements, Task Orders and Other Small Firms Agreements
Tuesday, March 29, 2016 | 2:00 - 3:00pm ET | **Earn 1.0 AIA LU** | [Learn more](#) | [Register now](#)
Sponsored by: AIA Contract Documents
Registration fees: **Free**

Call for Articles

Would you like to be featured in the CRAN Chronicle?
The theme for the next issue is "Financial". We would like you to contribute articles about how financial topics affect you as an architect. Tell us about the challenges and successes of running your own business. Has a client found a creative way to finance a project? What money-savers have you discovered? If you have a financial-related article, please send us an email to CRAN@aia.org

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Resources

AIAU Courses for CRAN Members

Take the latest courses in residential architecture on AIAU. New courses include the best of the fall CRAN Symposium, firm strategies for sustainability, netzero residential construction, and managing design-build projects.

You'll learn from top instructors on your schedule, from anywhere in the world. Once you complete a course, we'll automatically update your AIA transcript with your continuing education credits.

Check out these great courses:

- CRAN Symposium 2015: Client Attraction │ **Earn 1.5 LU / RIBA**
- CRAN Symposium 2015: Profit...then Art: 12 Steps to Building a Successful Small Firm │ **Earn 1.5 LU / RIBA**
- CRAN Symposium 2014: Paradise Planned │ **Earn 1 LU / HSW / RIBA**
- CRAN Symposium 2014: Traditions of Home │ **Earn 1 LU / HSW / RIBA**
- CRAN Symposium 2014: The New Modern House │ **Earn 1.5 LUs / HSW / RIBA**
- CRAN Symposium 2014: The New Traditional House │ **Earn 1.5 LUs / HSW / RIBA**
- Profiting From Design Build for a Residential Practice │ **Earn 1.5 LUs / RIBA**
- Avoiding or Reducing Architect–Contractor Conflicts in Small Projects │ **Earn 1.5 LUs / RIBA**
- Fundamentals of NetZero Residential Construction │ **Earn 1 LU / HSW/ RIBA**
- Small Firm Sustainable Strategies: Applying Sustainable Principles to Small Projects │ **Earn 1.50 LUs / HSW/GBCI / RIBA**

Individual courses are $25 for AIA members and $40 for non-members. Buy four or more courses and save 15%, no promo code needed.

Check out more great courses on AIAU >

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Did you know anyone can join AIA Custom Residential Architects Network for FREE? Sign-up on AIA KnowledgeNet and start a discussion in the AIA CRAN Discussion Forum.

Letter from the Chair

By Dawn Zuber, AIA | 2016 AIA Custom Residential Architects Network Chair

I will admit to being a little nervous about stepping into the role of chair of CRAN, given how hard my immediate predecessor worked to keep us on track in so many ways. James Walbridge is an amazing leader and we have been lucky to have him serve as chair of our advisory group for the past year. He has been appointed to the AIA Strategic Council, where he will continue advocating for custom residential architects.

Looking back on 2015, we have a lot to be proud of. CRAN helped organize three national convention programs specifically geared towards custom residential practitioners, and we plan to continue advocating for speakers who will address challenges and concerns particular to residential pros at future conventions. We also threw a heck of a symposium in Minneapolis in September. We received great feedback from attendees, who thought our speakers were among the best we've had. And the CRAN Chronicle continues to be an excellent communication tool for us. It's hard to believe that it was three years ago when we started what we lovingly referred to as the CRANicle. I was the first editor, and I am proud of the team led by Brenda Nelson who has produced it since I was involved.

2016 promises to be an exciting year for CRAN, as well. The symposium committees have already been hard at work planning our 2016 event in Sonoma. Mark your calendar now: we'll be at the Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel in Santa Rosa from Sunday, September 18, through Thursday, September 22, 2016. Highlights will include an opening reception hosted by the local AIA chapter, AIA Redwood Empire, on Sunday evening; a winemakers' dinner in the hotel gardens on Monday evening, including the debut performance by the yet-to-be-named CRAN band (suggestions welcome!); a home tour on Tuesday afternoon; educational sessions on design, technology, and practice; nightly cocktail receptions; and networking dinners with sponsors. Come early or stay longer for a nice getaway in Wine Country. The local chapter will be hosting several tours and other special events before and after the symposium.

In addition to the symposium, we have several other projects for 2016. At the AIA Convention in Philadelphia, we'll again be hosting the CRAN forum, giving attendees an opportunity to meet other residential practitioners and discuss issues and concerns as a group. We also have three CRAN convention sessions (Rock-Star Presentation Skills for the Architect: The Next Level, BIM Power Users

[and the Small Firm](#), and [The NEW Collaboration Between Residential Architects and Custom Home Builders](#)). We are in the very early stages of planning a magazine that you'll be able to use to educate your clients about working with an architect. We continue to work on the next book in the Houses for all Regions series, and produce CRANtv videos to educate clients and potential clients.

I'd like to invite you to contact me directly if you have any suggestions for how CRAN can better represent you and your fellow residential architects.

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Technological Tools for Managing Your Time and Making the Most of Every Day

By Enoch Sears, AIA | [The Business of Architecture](#)

"It is not that we have so little time but that we waste so much. ... The life we get is not short but we make it so; we are not ill provided but use what we have wastefully." - Roman Stoic philosopher Lucius Seneca, quote from the essay "On the Shortness of Life"

As the new year rolls around, your mind turns to getting things done. You look forward anxiously to 2016 and imagine how it will be better than 2015. You get better, more fulfilling, more profitable projects. You'll tighten up your project and time management systems to increase efficiency and reduce mistakes and errors. You'll take a few more vacations this year and spend more time with your children or grandchildren.

While we all start out the year with energy, motivation and the best of intentions, it doesn't take long for us to fall into our old familiar (and comfortable) habits. We react to deadline after deadline, fire after fire - instead of taking the reigns of our life and directing it with purpose and strategy, we bounce from 'good idea' to 'good idea' and leave our most important initiatives half done.

Often times the most persistent problems have the simplest solutions. It all goes back to the famous Peter Drucker quote: "What's measured, improves." And what could be more important to measure than our time?

Here are 3 great reasons you should be tracking time in your firm:

1. You can see if you have any 'time vampires' that are sucking your personal time (and your profit and productivity).

2. You'll be able to gauge project profitability on the fly.

3. You'll know exactly how to calculate the right fee based on previous, similar projects.

Tracking your time effectively will open up a whole new world of insight about how you get things done. And just a note - resist the temptation to reduce the number of hours you spend on a project when you bill for those hours. This will nip you later when you do the budgeting for your next

project - your historical data won't be right and you'll under-estimate the amount of time it takes to do the project.

Ok. Onward.

Enter the time-tracking apps.

What are time tracking apps? Time-tracking apps are computer applications that allow you to track your time with stopwatch-like functionality, both in the office and on the road. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of time tracking applications. At the end of the day, all I care about is making effective use of my time. So being the tech geek that I am, here are my 4 favorite time-tracking apps that I've used personally (and can recommend):

Toggl

I've used Toggl for years. The interface is dead simple and there is both a desktop app and a mobile app for both Android and iPhone. The time reports are very clean and intuitive. For simple time-tracking, Toggl is best-in-class.

Financial Integrations: Freshbooks, Quickbooks Online, Xero

Harvest

Harvest is the most full featured time-tracking app listed here. When I say 'full-featured', I mean all the bells and whistles. It includes timesheet approval, expense logging, and professional invoicing. Since I do my project management and invoicing with another platform, these features are irrelevant for me, so I ended up ditching Harvest for the simpler and more intuitive Toggl.

Financial Integrations: Quickbooks Online, Xero

Timely

Timely app is my current favorite for one reason: it allows me to manage my time strategically. Most time-tracking applications give a backward looking view at your time. For example, they'll tell you: this is how much time I've spent doing X. Timely on the other hand, allows you to plan out your time in a forward looking way.

With the Timely app, I can plan out my week ahead of time by deciding how much time I'm going to spend each day on my critical tasks. I put time-blocks on my calendar to represent what I'll be working on. This gives me an estimated picture of what my week will look like. As I go through the week, I just track my time as normal but know that I need to constrain my time to certain limits based on my pre-planned time blocks.

If I don't get around to working on a priority, I can just drag it to the next day.At the end of the week, I can look back and see my estimated vs. actual time. This gives me a clear picture of how effective I'm being at working on my critical tasks.

Integrations: None currently. You can export time records to Excel.

I recommend *Timely* if you are a sole-practitioner or you want to use it to increase your productivity.

As you can see, there is no 1 time tracking software that will appeal to everyone.

Happy time-tracking!

About the Author: Enoch Bartlett Sears AIA is the founder of the Architect Business Institute. Get his book FREE here: [Social Media For Architects](#)

Is BIM right for your company?

By Josh Bone | Business Development Manager and Professional Speaker

I have been using BIM for over 15 years. I have had the opportunity to help hundreds of residential architecture firms' transition from CAD to BIM, but I will be the first to tell you that transitioning to BIM is not the right move for every firm.

When a company transitions to BIM, they have to shift their workload to accomplish more in the early design stages of the project. Many of you have probably seen the image below. I have shared it with many companies prior to them making the move to BIM. I understand that changing the workflow that you have used since your first summer internship is a significant undertaking. Many will try to stick with what they know when making the transition. Forcing a square peg into a round hole is never the right fit. I cannot tell you how many times someone has asked me, "Can you have me a front elevation by lunch?" This is not how BIM works. You have to build the entire model, much like how you would build the home. Others will start down the right path, but as they approach the construction documentation phase the concerns of eating up too much of the budget leads them to abandon the BIM process. Then they jump back into CAD where they are most comfortable. If you decide to make the move to BIM, first make sure that you are willing to change the way you work. This will
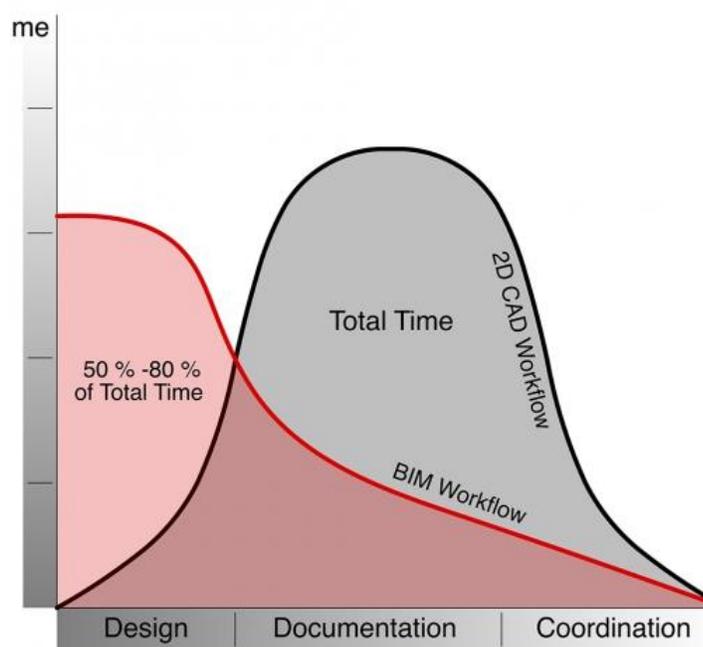
minimize your frustration and improve morale in the office. The best advice I can give any office is for those designing and signing checks to understand how BIM works. I am not saying that you have to drive, but I am saying that you have to know the rules of the road.

The Detail Anchor

BIM has it weaknesses. The one that I have had to address the most over the years is the art of architecture. If you're asking specific questions about pen weights on the first day of training, just let it go. Diving into the weeds with your instructor to get that one line to look just right is going to make this a painful process for everyone involved. BIM solutions give you a lot of control of your line weights. However, the effort that goes into controlling this requires a certain level of knowledge and shifts your focus from where it needs to be in this initial learning stage. Know that your first couple of projects are not going to be something that you will ever see hanging on someone's wall. In some cases, the first project would not even make it to your mother's refrigerator. If the look of your plans is not something you are willing to compromise initially then stick with CAD. In time, you will be able to refine your template and improve your outputs with BIM. You will have to get a few projects under your belt before you are happy with the look of your documents.

The level of detail in your model can sometimes be your anchor. Some projects are so complex and detailed that you will ultimately end up drafting a tremendous amount to supplement the model to produce your construction documents. At some point all the 2D drafting will diminish the value of BIM. Drafting with lines and fills have no intelligence and they do not have any connection with the model. I see too many firms use their BIM tool as a glorified CAD software.

There are a select group of BIM users in every market that can build any model to any level of detail efficiently. Some can model all the details, but they cannot do it cost effectively. The question, when to model and when to draft is different for each user. This is a very important question and there is not one answer that applies to every project or designer. My rule of thumb on the first project is model to ¼" = 1'-0". This translates to any drawing you see at ¼" = 1'-0" comes directly from the model with the exception of text, dimensions, and notes. In time you will be able to reach ½" and some will even be able to model to ¾" level of detail. I refrain from using the LOD matrix to keep things simple. You can learn more about it [here](). The more efficient you are modeling the more profitable you will be with BIM. The days of drafting details does not translate when using BIM tools. Keep in mind that you can still use your old CAD details with your BIM software. These should be rolled into your template over time.

3D Hurdles

Your clients can get hung up viewing models. Be careful when walking clients through the models. Some clients will be distracted by colors and elements that have not been fully developed. You will need to develop workflows that enable your clients to make quicker decisions based on relevant information. I tell everyone, just because you can render that view in 5 minutes does not mean that you should. I personally would never provide a photo realistic rendering to a client at no cost. Use the 3D window and turn off colors and possibly hatching in the early design meetings to help your clients focus on what matters in each stage.

Why You Should Consider Moving to BIM

When used correctly, BIM will significantly enhance your relationships and communications with your clients. Almost everyone has been on the jobsite with a client and heard, "Oh no, that is what that is going to look like." BIM clarifies interior elevations, details and much more for your clients prior to starting any construction. Having a 3D model that clients can navigate and share with their family and friends will engage your customers and ensure that their dreams come to fruition.

BIM can help you make more informed decisions earlier in the design stages. From sustainability to handling site conditions, BIM helps designers know more in the early stages of design. It is in these stages that your design decisions have the most impact.

The most important benefit of using BIM is that it will automate your construction documentation process. BIM will result in fewer errors and omissions in your documents. Features like automatic dimensions, smart bubbles, smart tags, and autotext will shift the focus back to design. I firmly believe that this should be your main focus when transitioning to BIM. This is where you stand to gain the most return on your investment. When changing the size of the window in a schedule (that was automatically generated from your model) updates every plan, elevation, section, schedule, etc. you will question how you ever did things in the past. The ability to drag and drop drawings from sheet to sheet while tags are automatically updated will save you hours of time in the office and problems during construction. Can you imagine never having to type out your sheet index again? Add, move, delete a sheet from your set and the index automatically updates.

BIM is fun! I have yet to see in over 15 years anyone willing to go back to CAD after fully making the transition to BIM. It usually takes 3 projects to change your mindset and establish workflows that compliment the way your office works. Once you reach this point, you can add on tools to further enhance your client's experience. Tools like SmartReality, BIMx, Revizto, Arch Virtual and more will open your eyes to new world of technology that can transform your business.

In the past I would have said that the cost of the software, training, and ramp up time could be a deterrent for many companies. That has changed in the past couple of years. BIM solutions like ArchiCAD Solo, Revit LT, and Vectorworks are less expensive than what you paid for your CAD software years ago. It is also easier than ever before to find online training videos. I use YouTube and blog post to help me learn any software these days.

Even with all the benefits that BIM presents it still does not make business sense for some firms to make this move. You have to take into consideration your company culture, your clients, and your willingness to make significant changes to your process. Sticking with CAD will not be the death of your business. I do not foresee BIM being a prerequisite for residential design anytime soon. As for commercial design, BIM is quickly becoming the standard.

If you are ready to change your process and your business could benefit from the items listed above, find a good trainer/advisor/BIMer that can help you develop an implementation plan that fits your company. I would also suggest talking to your local peers that have made the switch to BIM in the previous 1-2 years. Ask them about their experience, and who helped them make the transition from CAD. See if they liked who they worked with and if that person was comfortable with high-end residential design workflows. Finally, I would also suggest developing a template to help minimize your learning curve. There are some great free templates available which you can find on blogs and forums. These can help you but ultimately, you will need to add your own personal touches that are unique to your business.

About Josh: For more than a decade Josh Bone has been implementing, training and presenting construction technology solutions to AECO (Architecture, Engineering, Construction, Owners) professionals. Having worked with some of the top technology leaders in the industry, Josh specializes in identifying best practices and methodologies for integrating BIM and mobile applications into everyday workflows. Josh started his career working with design teams, then transitioned into helping construction professionals leverage technology in both the preconstruction and construction phases with companies like Graphisoft and SmartUse.

Josh recently joined JBKnowledge, a technology solutions provider to the construction and insurance industries, in 2016 where he specializes in business development and consulting on preconstruction and BIM technology. JBKnowledge is also the maker of the SmartBidNet, SmartCompliance, SmartReality and SmartInsight cloud, mobile and wearable solutions. The company is headquartered in Bryan/College Station, TX with offices in North America and South America. Josh and his family live in Atlanta, Georgia.

Home of the FUTURE! Home of the Past...

By Brenda Nelson, Assoc. AIA | Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, Inc.

During the Summer of 2014, I wandered into an airport bookstore while waiting for my flight. Browsing the racks I spotted the July 7th, 2014 issue of Time magazine with a cover proclaiming the smart home was here. I decided to buy a copy and see what a smart home was by Time's definition.

It covered a myriad of gadgets designed to create a safer, smarter and more efficient house. There were the usual suspects of programmable thermostats, thermostats that learn, security systems and systems which run off of smart phone apps. The one that I remember most was the gadget, which can start barking if your cat decides to jump up on the counter while you're away. It all felt a little familiar. This wasn't a new trend; it was just the latest iteration of something that has been going on for a long, long time.

A year and a half later, I watched a YouTube video on mid-century houses and saw a film clip of a house that still had its built-in wall phone. It reminded me of all the old technology I've seen in various houses as I've moved over the years. Mid-century houses in particular seem to have a treasure trove installed in them thanks to the innovative atmosphere that World War II brought with it. Homes came equipped with wall-mounted refrigerators and freezers which matched the pastel colored metal cabinets perfectly. We now see a similar trend with drawer freezers and beverage coolers available today. The mid-century home may have also come equipped with a built-in blender, an intercom with radio system and a phone jack in the master bedroom. I personally lived in a mid-century house with a low-voltage lighting system, the kind which allows you to turn off every light in the house from one central set of switches, usually in the bedroom. I wonder why some of these inventions have faded away over time—that lighting system proved very helpful whenever I left a light on downstairs at bedtime.

Over time houses became more electrified and technologically advanced. Garage doors were fitted with automatic openers and houses, which once had one or two phone jacks, became

wired for phone access in every room (often for multiple phone lines). The television became a bigger part of our lives and cable access was no longer relegated to one central living room; it too multiplied and landed in most bedrooms and even in some kitchens. I'm old enough to have a good chuckle about a somewhat short-lived trend of telephones being installed in 1980's bathrooms. Then again, maybe that's not such a short-lived trend as the cell phone now travels with many into that private chamber! Regardless, homes became consumers of copper wire by the mile as we connected multiple devices throughout the house.

While many of the mid-century house's technological solutions have disappeared or been superseded (or are being replaced by the smart home trend), there is still one old piece of technology that is a central part of our houses today: central heating and air conditioning systems. We might get a good chuckle out of built-in wall radios and early versions of central vacuuming systems, but we get down-right cranky when the heating and cooling systems aren't running correctly. Many homes built in the mid-century were being equipped with the latest air cooling technology, which forever changed the design of homes. We had to begin to accommodate duct work above ceilings and below floors. Large units had to be placed on the side of the house, and became a visual feature of our backyards. The way air flowed in and out of the home created new microclimates within wall cavities and the orientation of a house didn't seem to be a major consideration any more as our heating and cooling systems countered any side effects of direct sun or cold wind. Technology, rather than design, "fixed" the problem of thermal comfort and as a result our homes became dependent on a specific solution.

As we move further into the 21st century with this idea that houses are becoming smart, I would ask what does a smart home actually mean? Are our homes really becoming smarter, or just hungrier? Does our ability to turn off our lights from 50 miles away mean we've created a smarter home or just a home that we're simply more connected to? I think we can look back at all the inventions which have been installed in homes over the last 75 years and compare that home to today's. We've spent decades adding more energy using devices to our house, with the current trend being the option of making all those devices wireless. While this removes the miles copper wires installed in wall cavities, does it make a house "smart"?

I've been accused on more than one occasion, about living in the past or being much older than I really am. However, I can't help but love the idea of a working vintage built-in wall radio. Even though I don't have that in my current house, I find that my love of old houses, and their old technologies, has helped me gain a clearer understanding of where today's smart homes are headed and to consider the bigger picture of technology's relationship with our current built environment.
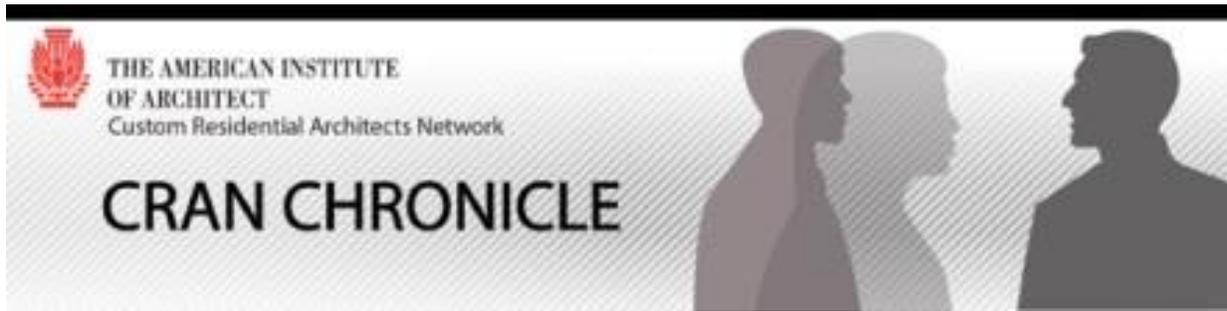
Relationships (Part 2)

Interview by John Altobello, AIA | [John Altobello Architecture](#)
Interviewee Sally Wilson and John Kelsey | [Wilson Kelsey Design](#)

[Part 1](#)

How a couple, both interior designers, work with their clients and with each other.

The most successful client relationships

JA: what makes for the most successful client relationships?

W / K: Good people, with solid values, who appreciate the designer's skills. We like to treat people the way we would like to be treated. We want our clients to feel/know that they are working with good people, with solid values, who appreciate their needs, budget, project and family life.

Client, budget and designer

JA: Can you talk about the role budget plays in a project? How do you handle a situation in which a client has exquisite and expensive tastes, but not the financial wherewithal to carry through?

Photo credit © Laura Moss

W / K: There are always 3 things that determine a beautiful project - the client, the budget, and the designer. The client drives the needs (the program), the designer controls the visual solution, and the budget hems them both in.

Unless you have an unlimited budget, money always plays a role. When the desires outweigh the money available, we discuss their options, such as, reducing the scope, planning expenditures over time, modifying their expectations to a slightly different vision. If there is a disparity, we try to address it quickly. It is easier to come to grips with reality sooner, rather than later. For instance, if someone comes to us wanting a full kitchen remodel, with all the best appliances, and they say they have $50,000 for this renovation, we tell them right away that our experience shows that this money will not stretch that far. Then we give examples.

Getting new clients

JA: What's your most effective means of getting new clients? Do you use social media as well as traditional means?

Photo credit © Eric Roth

W / K: By being active in many arenas all at once. No one avenue is enough. We network at professional events frequently. We advertise to some extent to keep our name out in front. We keep up with renewing our website, so it is always fresh. We use other online methods, such as Houzz. We blog so that our personal voices come forward to those interested in reading about us. We do use social media, posting regularly to sites such as Linked In, Facebook,

Google+, etc. We have an assistant who helps us keep this current. We, of course, get personal referrals, too.

Photo credit © Michael J.

Small or large projects

JA: Do you have a preference for smaller or larger projects? What are the most / least demanding challenges you encounter in projects large or small?

W / K: Tough question. We have both been attracted over the years to creating "little gems". They can occur within a larger project, or we can be hired to do only one room. We care much more about quality than quantity. Always have. We are at our very core "Quality" people. However, larger projects have their appeal, because you can keep your mind wrapped around one family. When we have a lot of little projects, our minds have to stretch and bend and keep up with moving from one thing to another. It can be hard to keep all the details in the front of your mind.

Challenges: larger projects - keeping up with the sheer volume; small projects - keeping them all moving forward at the same time, which means keeping a lot of details in your head.

The nature of a married team

JA: How can you be married and still work successfully as a team to carry out your design work?

John: I have no idea. It just happens. Seriously, after 30+ years of marriage and working together it is mostly an unconscious process. I believe our success is based on our knowing that both the business and the marriage require constant hard work and an understanding that a relationship evolves/changes over time. Both require trust and faith in each other, especially in the heat of the moment. You learn when to push, when to back off and when to walk away - to try again when the moment isn't so emotionally charged. We both recognize we are two very different people. It is continually finding joy and pleasure in those differences that makes our marriage and work richer.

Sally: We must be lucky. Actually, it is because we - very deep down, - respect and trust each other. John and I are like the yen and yang. We have different personality types. We are type A and type B. We have different communication styles. This used to drive us crazy, but we have learned to honor each other's style and go with the flow. This took a lot of work! But it actually helps us because some clients favor John's communication style and some prefer mine. So we use that to our advantage, and deploy our resources where they work the best.
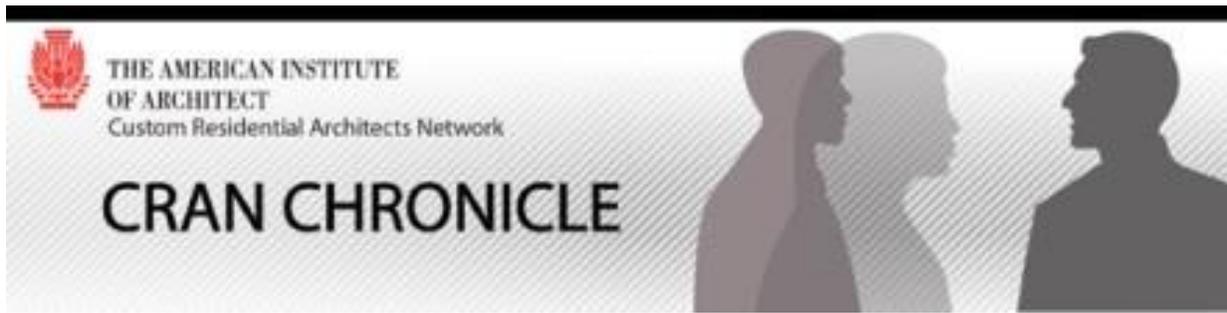
TECHNOLOGY- From the Perspective of an Architect Who Still Hand Drafts.

By Michele Grace Hottel | Michele Grace Hottel, Architect

Credit: Michele Grace Hottel, my desk

I find it kind of ironic that I am writing an article about technology because I will confess, I do not use any CADD programs in my practice. AutoCad, Revit, etc., it is all the same to me, it is drafting on the computer and ever since I had a class in AutoCad version 1, in architecture school, I was less than enchanted by the whole thing. I guess because I could actually draw and draft by hand, very well, and I was not intrigued at all by this "innovation". I can open files and make some changes and I have colleagues who excel at the skill. If I was ever approached by a client who had to have their project in any of the above formats, those colleagues have offered to help me in that regard.

I do however, use a computer for writing and my blog and most other business (except for completing AIA Contracts, because I still use a typewriter for those) which brings me to my history of technology of the computer.

When I was a senior in high school, I was encouraged by my mother to take a personal typing class so that I could write my papers in college. I had my home room in a typing class filled with IBM Selectrics, that we were forbidden to touch, but the second the homeroom and typewriting teacher would leave the room, several other students would flick the switch and type furiously creating such a din but by the time she ran back to the room, the typewriters would be absolutely silent.

So, when I went to take the personal typing class, I thought it would be easy as I had some experience with these machines and we had a manual typewriter at home. What nobody had told me was that in order to be an expert typist, one cannot look at the keys while typing! I was doing horribly in the class because we were still expected to do timed typing and had to be accurate as well. I only passed because the teacher became ill and we had a substitute for the rest of the trimester who thought that we should be graded on our improvement in the class and so it ended well. As I relayed this story to some architects last week, I said, "Well, I did not believe that I would ever have to type BECAUSE, I planned on being an architect and having a secretary (now referred to as an administrative assistant) do all of my typing and phone calls". One of the other architects thought that was hilarious I had that insight as a high school student.

Of course, the reality is that when I wasn't able to have my mother type for me, I was really at the mercy of how much correctable tape and Wite-Out was available. She was a paralegal who tried to correct my grammar or language, but I would tell her that it was exactly what I wanted to say and those were the terms that we used in architecture. She would say, "You are definitely going to be a professional because you speak like all of the attorneys I have worked for, they make up things too".

I did take a class on the history of the computer in my first year of college, so that I was familiar with Binary Code and Basic, Cobol and Fortran and how it took up rooms and rooms of machines and accomplished very little from what I could see, and there seemed to be an inordinate amount of typing involved for anyone who was actually a computer science major.

I went to Denmark for a year for architecture school in 1986-87, and I brought my Nikon FG (black body of course) and a ton of film. I would take photos and mail the canisters back to my parents who would develop them because it was very expensive in Europe, and in turn my parents would say, "I know there are a lot of buildings in Europe that you are seeing but could you please put yourself in front of one of them". We wrote letters because the phone rates were so incredibly high that a thirty minute phone call could cost $100.00. We took the train everywhere and travelled and nobody knew what we were doing for days at a time because there was no Facebook.

So, returning from study abroad, imagine my surprise when we discovered that while we were gone, the personal computer had arrived at the campus. The College of Environmental Design

(ENV) had one computer lab in an adjacent building with about five MacIntosh computers. That's right Millenials, we had to share five computers between the Schools of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning.

Credit: Apple Computer Inc.

And even though my experience with the company of Apple at that time was limited, I was enamored by the little smiley face computer icon that would appear when one turned on the Mac. And the amazing thing was that I could type and type and no longer have to worry about whether I was making any mistakes, because I could just hit "delete" and it would disappear! I could write and the computer could sense whether I was spelling things correctly or if there was a grammatical error! The computer helped make a typist out of me!
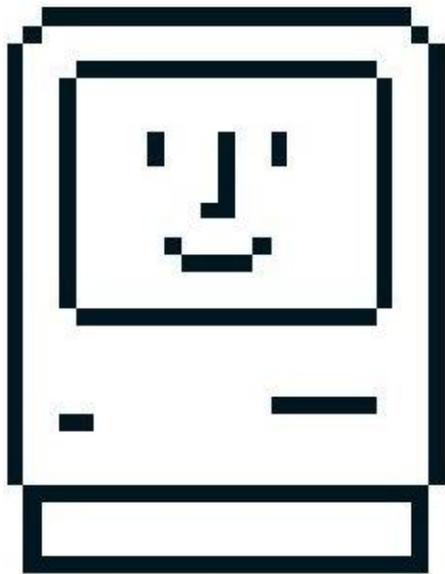
Happy Mac   Sad Mac

Credit: Apple Computer Inc., Susan Kare Icons

Twenty years ago, the offices where I worked were primarily custom residential and still drafted by hand, we still made blueprints, and we used a computer for all of the office management, word processing and billing. Most people did not own a cell phone and the ones who did had a car phone because quite literally you didn't take the suitcase it was in out of the car. We had numerous catalogs and drawings in endless piles. Okay, we still have those….

So, here I am in 2016, I still use a pencil and trace for sketching, I still use a lead holder and vellum for drafting. However, my practice has still changed multitudes because of technology.

I have a desktop, a laptop, a printer (with a fax machine incorporated into it where the fax is rarely used because of a thing called a scanner), and a digital camera. We don't make blueprints anymore, even though people call asking for them. We can give other architects, consultants, clients and contractors drawings, even my hand drawn ones, by scanning and sending them via the internet.

And I own a smartphone, and it is an iPhone.

Credit: Michele Grace Hottel, Apple iPhone

Which quite literally, can almost transport you to the meeting or job site, though if you really want to get the project or a signoff from the plan checker or inspector, you will show up in person. I can send emails, I can take photos and video and send it instantaneously to people who maybe care about it, and of course this is a curse and a blessing. I am seriously considering making an addendum to the contract about "Text Messages are not a formal means of communication and should not be used after business hours".

Of course I think that one of the best ways to use technology in our practice is our sharing of ideas and stories through social media, and while some architects are somewhat wary of this way of disseminating information, and I am not for divulging all of my life on it, I enjoy the camaraderie of social networking. Where once architects were limited to getting together at the AIA conventions once a year, we can now connect in less cost-prohibitive ways several

times a year or a day depending upon how much time you want or have, to put into it. One year ago, after I made a comment on women in architecture on Bob Borson's Life of an Architect blog, I started writing in the #ArchiTalks series. Every month, we are given a prompt, a deadline and a spreadsheet that we update and publish to share everyone else's. I am able to put my words and images into a digital format and publish it and have people from all over the world read it. I can create in my mind, input them into the computer, refine, delete, copy/paste, insert, download, save, etc., and hit "send".
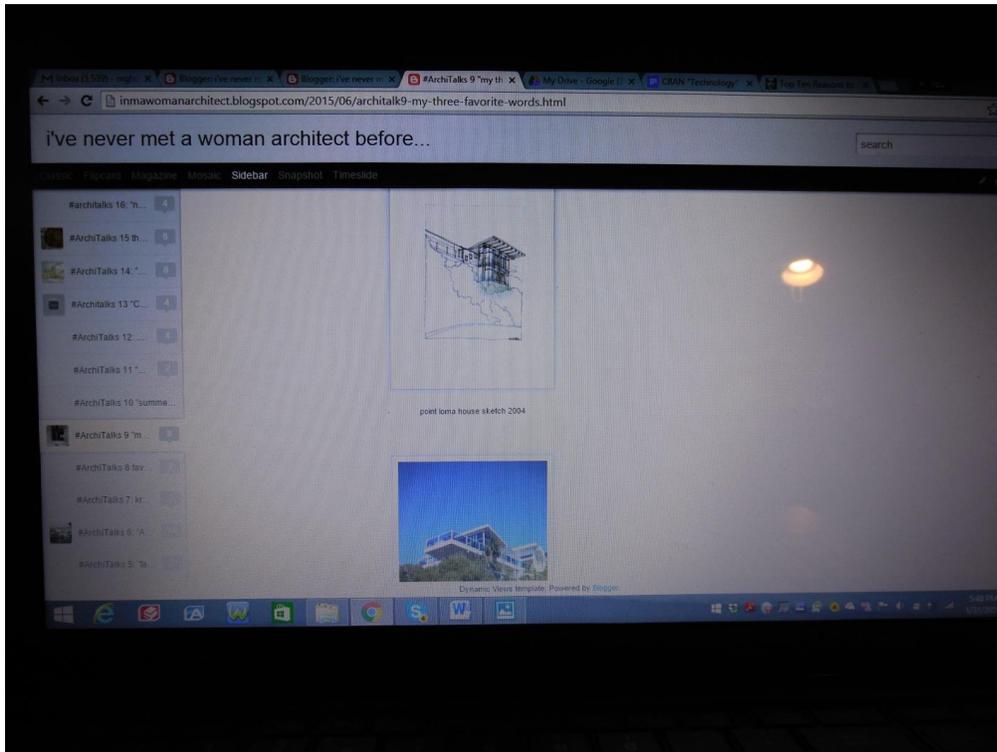
Credit: Michele Grace Hottel, "I've never met a woman architect before"

My friends say that they understand my blog better than me because now my thoughts and perspective are organized and this is how I use technology.

And I still do not have a secretary.

Credit: Kelley Elizabeth O'Leary

*Michele Grace Hottel has been practicing Architecture with her own firm, Michele Grace Hottel, Architect since 1994. **She is licensed in California (1994) and Texas (2015).** She is a Commissioner and Subject Matter Expert for the California Architects Board and a City of La Mesa Planning Commissioner.*

One can read her blog, "I never met a woman architect before…" (the trials and tribulations of being a woman, architect, wife and mother) as part of the #ArchiTalks series.

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CRAN CHRONICLE

Symposium Recap

By Josh Divelbiss, AIA | The HR Group Architects

The 2015 CRAN Symposium survey results are in and rich with positive and constructive feedback. The Symposium's core experiences received glowing reviews across the board, from the speaker sessions to home tours, networking opportunities and the product exhibit. Michael Anschel and Carl Seville's "Review of Green Building Products & Systems" dominated the survey with 89% of attendees indicating the session was above average or outstanding. Session topics were diverse in addressing the many roles of a residential architect, as exemplified by John DeFazio's, AIA "The Idea of House Through American History" to Enoch Sears', AIA session on "How to Use New Media Tools to Capture High Value Clients."

"(I) still feel the Symposium is far and away the best and most rewarding AIA event I've attended relating to residential architecture" - 2015 Symposium attendee.

The 2016 CRAN Symposium will be held from September 18th to the 22nd in Santa Rosa, California. We hope to see you there!

To read the complete survey, click here.

About the Author: Josh Divelbiss, AIA is an Associate at The HR Group Architects in Sacramento, California. He is a member of the Sacramento County Design Review Advisory Committee and the AIA CRAN Chronicle Committee.

Why Digital Transformation?

By Ann Novakowski | AIA National

The Digital Transformation matters for a couple of reasons. First, to deliver services to AIA members and the broader AEC community. Our new platforms will help us engage those audiences in new ways and develop closer relationships with them. Second, it gives the AIA an opportunity to think differently about how it conducts its operations.

One of the goals we have is to put the user first and gather information from internal stakeholders. The end product will align itself with value to AIA members. The agile process you may have heard about gives us a smart way to prioritize and set achievable goals. Organizational change will evolve over time. What the Digital Transformation does is help us accept a level of risk and employ an iterative process.

Change is healthy. But change also means engaging everyone in the process—and rewarding them for their engagement. The agile process, for instance, operates in two week cycles—called sprints—and every two weeks we can see a level of change that we can be proud of.

What's Changing Now

Training has begun in several departments with test group staff members using the programs to load web content and send e-newsletters. The new inside experts will provide feedback that will help to create training materials for the extended AIA community of content creators such as local chapter leaders and Knowledge Community contributors.

Each of the 2016 releases represents an improvement on the technology foundations being built:

- Q1 will deliver a new member/professional site
- Q2 will deliver newsletter and unified email tools
- Q3 will deliver Component tools.

Over the holidays you may have missed the beta release of the new public site for the AIA, which is called "Topic Architecture." After the soft launch of the public site platform, the AIA digital content staff will lead the charge on updating, curating, editing, and testing content on the site for maximum impact. You can see the work in progress at www.topicarchitecture.com.

This new public face will launch in early 2016 to engage clients, students, and enthusiasts in an accessible, memorable, and meaningful way in order to raise the profile of architects and architecture.

What's Next: AIA.org

Now that the Topic Architecture platform is launched, we are ramping up for Release 3: the new member logged in site. This is a big deal for the team, and for the AIA.

There has been a lot of foundational work done over the last 9 months: we've combed through over 4000 pages of the existing AIA website. The new member and professional site will launch with the top 300 pages that receive the most traffic on AIA.org. The Digital Transformation team is not simply copy & pasting things over. The top 300 pages are going to get a makeover. We are working with internal AIA departments, such as the Knowledge Communities staff and Communications teams, to update the most popular pages. The rewriting, redesigning, and reformatting guarantees the new site has a consistent style, design, tone of voice, and editorial style throughout.

The entire staff at AIA is going to be helping us clean up and update the content. It's great to have that much man power and support because this is a huge project – and, if we've done it right, not one we'll have do again for a long time to come.

We are using the latest technology to make the site dynamic, too:

- Calendar items will be filtered by the user's geography (Californians see items in California)
- Leadership lists will pull from the database instead of being typed manually
- Chapter finder information will pull the most recent mailing address
- Content will be tagged with topics, and those topics are surfaced to the members who are interested in them the most

Amazing work is being done on big data and how we are making personalized content recommendations. The steps in our development process for the new AIA.org site are:

- Discovery: figure out what we have and what needs rewriting
- Information Architecture: figure out a way to navigate and explore the site, store and share content in a standardized way
- Requirements: meet with content owners and develop functional stories and content requirements
- Wireframes: Block out the basic parts of the page and annotate what the functions are
- Creative: Design web wireframes and apply the new "AIA Style" to them
- Development: Take functional stories, the wireframes, and comps to start programming and actually make the website
- UAT: User testing to make sure everything works

What's Next: Email

In February a trial of an email marketing and automation tool, Real Magnet, will continue with subject matter experts from AIA staff. There is a Pilot Group of a select few AIA staff participating in trainings and meetings to help explore the new tool.

The limited scope and size of the Pilot Group means the AIA and Digital Transformation can test, experiment, and refine the tool without negatively impacting existing email communications. The work of the Pilot Group in tinkering with Real Magnet has given us a better idea of what kinds, which format, and how much training would be needed for a full roll-out. In addition to the AIA Architect email newsletter, the Component Update and a handful of 2016 Grassroots Conference communications have been successfully created and sent through the new tool.

APP Review: ATracker Pro

By Jennifer Honebrink | Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture

The CRAN Chronicle team wants you to tell us about your favorite products. This issue features a time-tracking app review.

I use *ATracker Pro* for tracking my time. I love how it makes it so simple to fill out my timesheet and bill everyone appropriately. I can add as many projects as I need, giving them each a unique icon and color for easy reference.

Within each entry you can add notes as reminders for yourself about what you were working on (or whatever else you want to make note of). Every couple of months I go through and move the projects I am not using to inactive. Then when I get another project for that client or they spring to life again, I can turn them back on. You can order the list of projects numerically, alphabetically or manually (by those you use most at the top for example). When I switch projects, I have it set so starting one automatically stops tracking another, but for those needing to track IDP hours, you can track things concurrently.

The app has a history tab where I can view my day as if I filled out a day planner, seeing the day in blocks of time, or I can view it as a simple list. The report tab lets me see my time as a pie chart or bar chart, with totals for the day at the bottom as both hours and minutes, and as a percentage of my overall day (e.g. Central High School 2:37, 34%). You can sync the data between different devices (although I haven't tried this feature), back it up and even send yourself an Excel file of the data. Data can be reviewed for a day, week, month or your own specified range.

There is a free version called *ATracker Lite* which allows you to have 3 projects. This was a great way to try it out. The full version was worth every penny. The amount of time I saved filling out one timesheet alone was worth it.