

A Frontline Apps Companion for Customer-end App Designer

Get the most you can out of Frontline Apps to reduce administrative burden. This template aims to assist app managers to encourage managers to not design apps as silos, and instead to switch the focus from “what an app needs from multiple users” to “what a user needs from multiple apps”.

The Apps

Try to keep app design primarily about a user retrieving data previously saved in the green zone below, processing that data, and then sending it back. Try to design workflows in the blue zones and reports in the red zones.

Communicating with the User

You might, for example, configure the Workflow and Actions Tool to give the user a “pop up” as the user visits the Home Page to invite the user to fast-track into various screens awaiting his or her attention.

Frontline Apps Central Databases

Data for all apps combined is treated as co-mingled (which allows data sharing between apps) and stored in three tables*:

- * Cost Centre Table
- * Staff Table
- * Client Table

Reporting

Reports should be about reviewing what users have entered into apps, not trying to get users to enter things into apps in the first place. Try to avoid designing reports aimed primarily at driving user compliance, and leave this to the blue zone. The blue box cranks itself up on a timer, and sends, for example, email reminders to a non-complaint user, with the third reminder cc'd to the user's line manager. This takes the administrative burden of chasing staff away from managers. Also, this approach gives users a sporting chance of compliance before they need to be chased by managers

The screenshot shows the Frontline Apps interface. At the top, it says "You are currently in Disability View" with a "Switch to HR View" button. Below this are navigation links: "Home Page", "About Us", "Contact Us", "Help Desk", and "Log a Request". There is also a link to "Click here to update your email address". The main content area is titled "Disability View" and contains three sections:

- Group Home Apps** (highlighted with an orange box):
 - Case Notes
 - Residential Statements
 - Client Funds Management
 - Rostering and RosterCoster
 - OHS Risk Management
- Workflow Tools** (highlighted with a blue box):
 - House Profile Tools
 - Client Profile Tools
 - Workflow Control Console
 - Lists and Permissions Control Tool
- Reporting Tools** (highlighted with a red box):
 - Corporate Reporting Tool

At the bottom of the screenshot, it says "Frontline Apps is supplied by Frontline Resourcing ACN 121 761 699. All rights reserved."

Our Terminology

fResourcing	Frontline Resourcing, suppliers of Frontline Apps.
fApps	Frontline Apps, a platform that hosts apps, tools and services.
USS	The fApps User Support System, where the first level of user support is in the App Design, and where the user may be escalated from there to automated user supports such as online user manuals and a help desk, and even onto training ¹ .
App Register²	Our online register for all apps, tools, modules and services at fApps. Doubles up as a status report and high level work plan.
App Creator³	The generic app into which we configure App Designs, after which App Creator takes on a new identity, for example, the “Residential Statement App”.
App	A function-specific system, for example, the “Residential Statement App”.
Tool	Essentially, no different to an app, except that it is not function-specific, and tends to serve multiple apps at once; for example, the “Notifications Tool”.
Module	It sometimes becomes convenient to refer to the component parts of an app or tool. For example, within “RosterCoster” there is a “Submit Module”.
Our Sector	The Human Services Sector

¹ We note that any escalation to a higher level is viewed as a trigger to improve the previous level, with the overarching ideal being no user manual required, no help desk required and no training required.

² Which also tracks tools, modules and services, but “App, Tool and Module Register” is less catchy.

³ Which also creates tools, but “App and Tool Creator” is less catchy.

⁴ As it turns out, for reasons beyond our control we have kept DHS on an older (MS Excel) update of the fApps Menu while all other areas (and DHS’s test version) have pushed ahead with the latest update. However, this is currently well managed, because the rules of exponentiation are that $1 \times 1 = 1$ and $2 \times 2 = 4$ (manageable), but $3 \times 3 = 9$ times the complexity, a risk to be avoided even removing the issue of cost.

⁵ A key example is the OHS collaboration between DHS and the CSO E. W. Tipping.

Our Development Model

Preamble

Development of fApps, App Creator and USS is continuous, even between approved tasks. There is no development cycle with versions being released every quarter or, as is the case with Microsoft every few years (MS Office 2003, 2007, 2010, 2013...).

About

fApps is shared between many different organisations, and different areas within some of the larger organisations. This is how we achieve economy of scale cost savings, app sharing and better features.

It is also the essence of our Best Practice in Action driver, where a good idea in the smallest organisation (for example our “incubator” partners at Northern Support Services) can be translated by software into even the largest organisations, and also to remote corners of the country, in sometimes startlingly quick ways.

This Best Practice in Action also works in reverse: good ideas inside a government department can be promoted out to CSOs and regions by software in likewise startlingly quick ways. For example, the idea of software-forced policy compliance.

As such, organisations rarely ask us for an “own version” of fApps with no reference to the constraints forced by other areas. The cost would simply be too prohibitive, and even putting cost aside, the sheer version control issues would be exponential⁴.

In short, organisations tend to prefer to work together⁵ and accommodate each other.

Our Business Rule for Effective Communication of Changes

The overwhelming majority of changes, which can be forced by any organisation large or small⁶ are incremental and not communicated, otherwise there would be a constant stream of emails going to a large number of managers.

But occasionally (perhaps a few times per month, which is approximately how often an iPad app communicates an update and change), we feel more risk managed communicating a key change. Recent examples include:

- * Impact of the manager email addresses for workflows in one area in our sector being moved by in June 2013 one level up to cover a policy requirement.
- * The February 2013 inclusion of the New Legislation Residential Statement into the CSO and DHS Test Install Package, and then the July 2013 rollback to Old Legislation Residential Statement into the CSO and DHS Test Install Package.
- * Upgrade in July 2013 of a key module in our USS from the previous "Login as a Project Manager" to the new "App Register"

Having said that, if an App Designer is happy to have a login and password to the new "App Register", then the chances of us ever needing to send you an email between regular review meetings becomes very low.

Further Reading

For more information regarding Frontline Apps and available Apps, please visit our website, or contact us;

www.frontlineresourcing.com.au
Damien Ryan-Green 0438 388 922

⁶ The instant the smallest CSO, running just four houses, went to MS Office 2007 some years ago, this forced major changes to be rolled out to the entire sector, including DHS and all its services.