Mobile App Development Interview Series: Igor Chertenkov – Sibers

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Igor Chertenkov is iOS Development Team Leader at Sibers. The company, founded in 1998 by Yuriy Bannov, is located in Akademgorodok, Novosibirsk, Russia, and employs more than 150 people. Here's what Igor had to say about his company and the mobile world:

— What does Sibers?

This raises an interesting question: are we a team of professional IT enthusiasts or are we a team of enthusiastic IT professionals? I think we're both! Anyways, we possess 17+ years of programming experience and work with numerous technologies: .NET, PHP, Objective-C, Java, C++, and many more. Our diverse proficiency allows us to pick the perfect technology combination that best meets our clients' needs.

Sibers was founded in 1998. Our first five years were mostly focused on desktop and web development. In 2003 we formed our first mobile apps team and started developing mobile apps for Blackberry and Symbian; this was way before the iOS/Android era. In 12 years our team has built over 800 mobile applications, from simple arcade games to established business automation solutions. Sibers' mobile apps team works closely with our PHP, UNIX, and .NET teams to build server sides and/or websites that supplement the apps we develop.

Our industries of expertise include multimedia, retail, healthcare, sports, edutainment, manufacturing and business automation, games, just to name the major.

— Which would you say are the best apps you have developed, and why?

My personal favorites (and I think most of the team would agree) are Videoshop and Pro Angler.

Videoshop is a top-rated mobile video editing app available on iOS, Android, and Windows Mobile. The app was featured on iTunes' Top-10 chart and has been downloaded over 500,000 times. Abundant features let users create astounding video clips using just their mobile phone — and perhaps best of all, the app works smoothly and quickly even with high-resolution videos. Achieving this level of performance was the main challenge for us, but well worth it in the end.

Pro Angler is an all-in-one mobile fishing guide offering top fishing locations

and a comprehensive species guide, along with suggestions on the best times to fish, the weather forecast, and myriad tips and tricks. Users can also create their personal fishing portfolio, complete with catch-related photos and info. What makes this app outstanding is not so much its technical complexity, but rather its stunning user interface, which was developed with lots of input from actual fishing enthusiasts.

Both of these projects are great examples of successful apps born from an activity enjoyed by the client on a personal level. Sadly, it's become commonplace in the mobile app market to mindlessly copy existing successful apps in the hopes of piggybacking on someone else's idea and making money off of someone else's hard work. It's great that Videoshop and Pro Angler are the exact opposite. Much effort was involved in the development process, not only from Sibers' side but also from the client's side.

The huge popularity these apps enjoy with users worldwide is the payoff for our hard work.

— Which apps would you have loved to develop, and why?

Wow, tough question. On one hand, there are some incredible apps with mind-blowing functionality like SoundHound, which can identify the song playing on your radio; or Autodesk 123D, which can build a 3D model using only a photo. However, in both cases all of the magic happens on the server-side, while the mobile app itself is really just a control menu. The end-user doesn't care how much of the functionality is implemented in the app itself, but for a developer it's always satisfying when there's an opportunity to work on complicated algorithms, big data analysis, rendering, etc.

On the other hand, there are great, high-quality apps that just make life easier — e-wallets, fitness trackers, etc. Even though they're not complicated from a development standpoint, it's still amazing when you create something that enhances a user's everyday life. But what would be truly amazing is if we could combine both and design a complicated system for everyday use — like Skype, for example.

Maybe we could make it less buggy. :)

— Which five apps do you use the most on a daily basis?

Nothing extraordinary. Paypal for online shopping. Smartbudget for expense tracking. In terms of social networks: WhatsApp messenger and Instagram. I also really like Endomondo Life. Even though I'm a developer and spend half my life on a computer, laptop or iPhone, I still want to be healthy — and being able to track my daily progress certainly keeps me motivated.

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Another app I use frequently is Splittbill, which is actually a Sibers creation that helps you calculate your share of a restaurant bill. Every time I go out, this app makes me a hero in the eyes of friends, family, even complete strangers.

— Which mobile device is the best right now?

I'm a dedicated Apple user, so for me it's the iPhone. However, the flagship Android-based phones are great as well. It comes down to personal preference. Speaking of iPhones, I still use my 5S. I haven't felt the need to switch to the 6 or 6S just yet. I'll probably skip those and buy an iPhone 7 — we'll see what next year brings. For now, Sibers HQ is a great place to satisfy my curiosity about new phones and features, since we test our applications on all the newest devices, and some older models too.

— What kind of device/platform will be the next big thing?

The "next big thing" will arrive once we have more capacious batteries. Performance used to be the bottleneck in applications development; we had to carefully optimize every process, with no excess — just control panel and assembler code. Years passed, and processors became increasingly powerful. These days there are plenty of free resources with which to make amazing things.

In the past, these resources would've been considered a waste of precious computing power. Before, you had to be an outstanding developer to afford a visual effect. Now anyone can add bells and whistles because there's no need to conserve processor resources anymore. Now it's about saving battery life. I want to say "Hey, Siri" every time I need to, not just when my phone is plugged in. But I can't, since the battery will die in a few hours if I'm constantly asking the phone (via the microphone) to analyze data.

If we have longer-lasting batteries, we have everything. Constant alert assistants, drones able to operate all day long instead of just 20 minutes, you name it. There would be no need to say, "Ok, Glass. Take a picture!" when you see something spectacular, because the camera will always be on. We'll only need to charge our phones once a week — just like in 2003! Stronger batteries will open up new frontiers that will be incredibly exciting for users and developers.

— Why is AppFutura useful to you?

As a company, we are great advocates of close interactions between providers and platforms, since this is the only way to maximize workflow efficiency and convenience for both providers and clients.

AppFutura seems to share this point of view. We're impressed by the attentiveness AppFutura gives to providers and their ideas for improving the platform. Not long

ago we began developing a new iOS application for a client we met here. He's a nice, passionate person with an interesting app idea. It's a pleasure working with him. So we're excited to continue building our presence on AppFutura and meeting more amazing clients.

Thank you for hosting us!

You can get more information about Sibers visiting their AppFutura [company profile](#).

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