

iAnnotate Keeps Millions of Workers in Motion with BlackBerry Dynamics



At a Glance



Customers of Partner 1.5 million users globally, over 1,000 enterprise customers and 100,000 enterprise users Partner

Location Chicago

Product iAnnotate

www.branchfire.com

Since 2011, Branchfire has sought to help people of all walks sort through and work with their information, regardless of its origin – and independent of the device they're using. For years, they have been solely dedicated to the idea of a paperless workplace. Their primary product, the award-winning iAnnotate®, goes a long way towards realizing that goal.



The Partner

Branchfire was one of Good Technology's first partners, before Good was acquired by BlackBerry. They had a core role in the platform's early development, and have maintained their partnership ever since.

"We had a couple customers that were evaluating Good Technology, so we wanted to build something that they could hand to board members and decision makers fairly quickly," explains Ravi Bhatt, Branchfire's Co-Founder and CEO. "It was a bleeding-edge SDK rather than the mature product you see today – and even then, it took less than two days to get it up and running. Subsequent to that, it has only continued to improve."

The Product



iAnnotate®

A document review and mark-up tool on iOS®, iAnnotate is available as both a consumer and enterprise-focused application. It sees widespread use across industries and verticals all around the globe. In many cases, those who use the consumer version push for their business to adopt the enterprise edition.

iAnnotate's impact has been undeniable – billions of annotations have been made on hundreds of millions of documents, and those numbers keep growing.

"We do very well in financial services, and a lot of our tech actually grew up in the legal industry," says Bhatt, who has a background as a lawyer. "Real estate, healthcare, manufacturing, and government are all major verticals too, but we also have a nice footprint in entertainment. Modern Family, The Walking Dead, Dexter, The Grammys, The Oscars, and the VMAs all have a lot of production staff and actors who use us for digital script review and rundowns."



“As an ISV comes to market, they have a choice of where to prioritize – technology or marketing. Our partnership with BlackBerry lets us focus on building a better core experience in iAnnotate. We leverage the BlackBerry platform to amplify what we build and maximize our sales and marketing potential. Their ecosystem is one of the strongest on the market, and we wouldn’t have many of our current clients without it.”

Ravi Bhatt
Co-Founder & CEO, Branchfire

One of Branchfire’s first customers was Stanford University. Bhatt and his team worked with Apple® and several partners to build the UI in a way that could withstand the battle-tested environment of a medical school classroom. At the time, each student generated a stack of papers every term that was five to six feet tall – and cost nearly a thousand dollars.

The greatest challenge in eliminating that cost lay in finding a means by which a digital solution could beat the speed of paper.

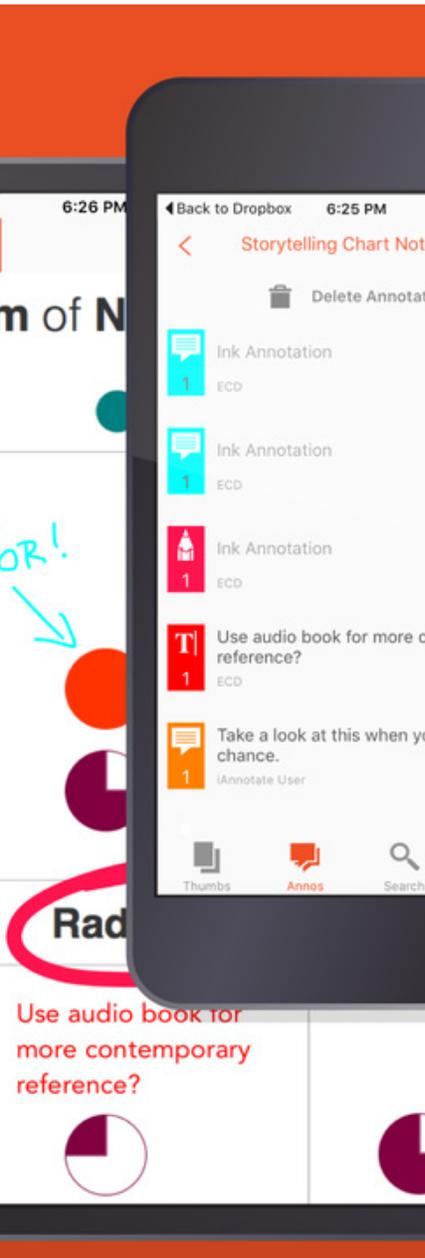
“Whether you’re looking at students taking notes in class or lawyers going over a brief, it’s very high-velocity, very paper-based,” says Bhatt. “With that focal point, we designed iAnnotate to be fast. If you can’t keep up with a meeting or a classroom lecture, you’ll switch back to paper.”

“iAnnotate lets you create a custom workflow so it’s easy to switch between tools, work on many documents at once, and search all your notes and annotations in one place,” he continues. “The ability to capture and send important feedback and comments without requiring a secretary is huge. It’s like every user always has a smart binder immediately on-hand. They aren’t just crudely replicating a paper workflow, they’re working better.”

The Challenge

As an ISV, the core challenge facing Branchfire was ensuring security without compromising the app experience. In order for their solution to see use in regulated industries such as healthcare and legal services, they needed a means of guaranteeing that any data iAnnotate touched would be fully protected.

But they needed a way to do that without sacrificing the productivity gains that distinguished their app in the first place. According to Bhatt, security is extremely important to most enterprise clients. To that end, if Branchfire cannot provide a prospective client with the right answer regarding security, their relationship will not move forward.



“What makes iAnnotate so popular is that it just lets people get so much done,” says Bhatt. “It turns document review into an enjoyable exercise, allowing our customers to do better, more substantive work than ever before.”

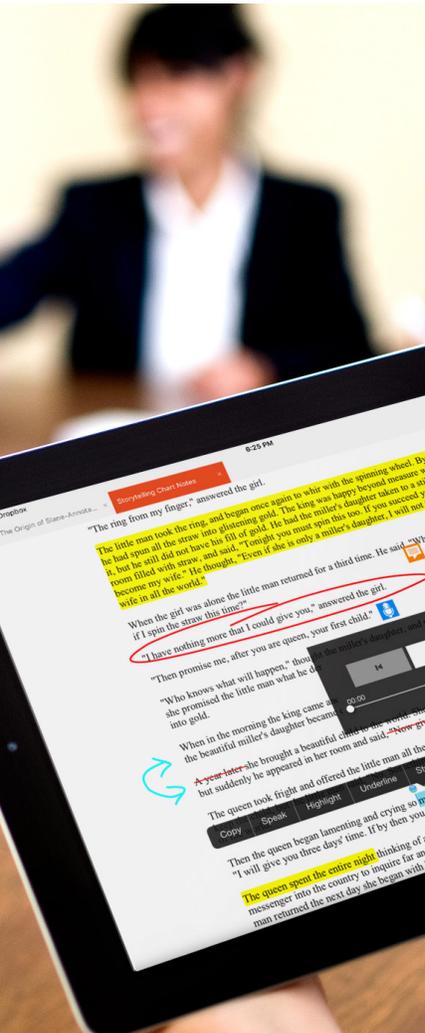
“Balancing productivity and security – reducing everyone’s blood pressure around the intrinsic risk of a device that can be left on a coffee shop table – is the key,” he adds.

The Partnership

Branchfire’s primary enterprise offering is built from the ground-up on the BlackBerry® Dynamics SDK. This solves the security challenges mentioned in the previous section through the BlackBerry® Dynamics Secure Container, protecting iAnnotate’s client data with some of the strongest encryption on the market. But there’s much more to the partnership than that, as well.

A Diverse Application Landscape: The ability to integrate quickly and easily with an array of different services is extremely valuable for any ISV – which is enabled by the BlackBerry Dynamics SDK. Moreover, BlackBerry’s diverse app landscape makes it far easier for iAnnotate’s clients to bring in additional ISV apps, and far likelier that someone who isn’t yet a client will choose iAnnotate.

“If you’re a customer who’s using one ISV app and would like to try a few others, the learning curve is effectively nonexistent,” notes Bhatt. “There’s a standard approach to how documents are shared, how information moves from one walled off area to another walled off area.”



Efficient Security: All data managed by iAnnotate is on-device. This ensures data integrity, and through BlackBerry's containerization, data security. More importantly, it means documents and PDFs can be accessed with ease no matter where a user happens to be.

"In the past, when we prioritized security over other things, it came at the cost of functionality," says Bhatt.

"But that hasn't been the experience with our BlackBerry customers. Through the BlackBerry Dynamics SDK, we're able to give them an experience on the same level as other, more horizontal, principally cloud-based approaches. And we're able to do so while offering better security."

"To add additional protections around data leakage that don't leverage the OS, is a markedly different approach from the rest of the industry," he continues. "BlackBerry's decision to go that road has been better from a security standpoint."

A Powerful, Flexible, Intuitive SDK: BlackBerry Dynamics has made integration with – and control of – iOS's various features and functions incredibly easy for Branchfire's developers. They can spend less time testing, and more time improving the core productivity features of the application. And with access to numerous APIs under BlackBerry, new functionality is a breeze to implement.

"I think it took us maybe a day and a half to get things up and running," Bhatt recalls. "There's just intrinsically less that our developers have to do. What BlackBerry has done over the last several years with respect to setting up testing environments and APIs for developers has continued to get better and better."

About BlackBerry Limited

BlackBerry Limited is an enterprise software and services company focused on securing and managing IoT endpoints. The company does this with BlackBerry® Secure™, an end-to-end Enterprise of Things platform, comprised of its enterprise communication and collaboration software and safety-certified embedded solutions.

Based in Waterloo, Ontario, BlackBerry Limited was founded in 1984 and operates in North America, Europe, Asia, Australia, Middle East, Latin America and Africa. The Company trades under the ticker symbol "BB" on the Toronto Stock Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange. For more information visit BlackBerry.com, and follow the company on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).