Jury Selection System
for Filemaker Go

Product Description

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The Importance of Voir Dire (Jury Selection)

A court case can be won or lost before the opposing attorneys even have a chance to make their opening arguments.

Voir Dire (jury selection) is the process by which attorneys research and interview potential jurors from a pool, with the goal of striking (eliminating) potential jurors they believe might be biased against them and favoring jurors they believe might be sympathetic.

It is a highly competitive phase of a trial, becoming even more prominent recently with more powerful research tools and psychological studies. Legal teams sometimes utilize jury selection consultants, who specialize in this field entirely.

Our Project

We were approached by an attorney wanting to invest in a software tool that would give him a competitive edge.

He had a clear vision of what he wanted, had not found an existing solution that fit that vision, and had done enough research to determine that FileMaker Pro could be a powerful and economical solution.

The custom solution we built provides **real-time multi-user collaboration**, based on a shared database built in FileMaker Pro.

By centralizing all data in real-time, the legal team can dramatically streamline the collaborative process, helping them **make better decisions faster**. The time-consuming hassle of collecting and synthesizing notes is eliminated.

What sets this solution apart, and the reason FileMaker Pro is so uniquely suited, is the ability to connect computers and people, even in the courtroom.

With a **personal wireless router** and a regular version of FileMaker Pro, a team of up to 5 can collaborate even if outside internet access is not allowed in the courtroom.

Who Else Could Use it?

We believe the system, as is, appeals broadly to the legal segment.

It was a custom solution, however, so some modification might be needed to suit the need of attorneys in different regions.

» The juror card data entry format would likely differ from region to region

» More seating chart grid options might be needed

» The research component may not be as compelling in regions that don't allow time before questioning for research

» "Pet features" specifically designed for this client might need to be removed

Why FileMaker Pro?

» **Multi-user support, out of the box**
Host up to 5 users of a solution, with the desktop version

» **Economical**
Very competitive cost, compared to other database platforms

» **Customization**
Custom development is also comparatively economical, and savvy owners can even get under the hood themselves to make tweaks, with a little knowledge
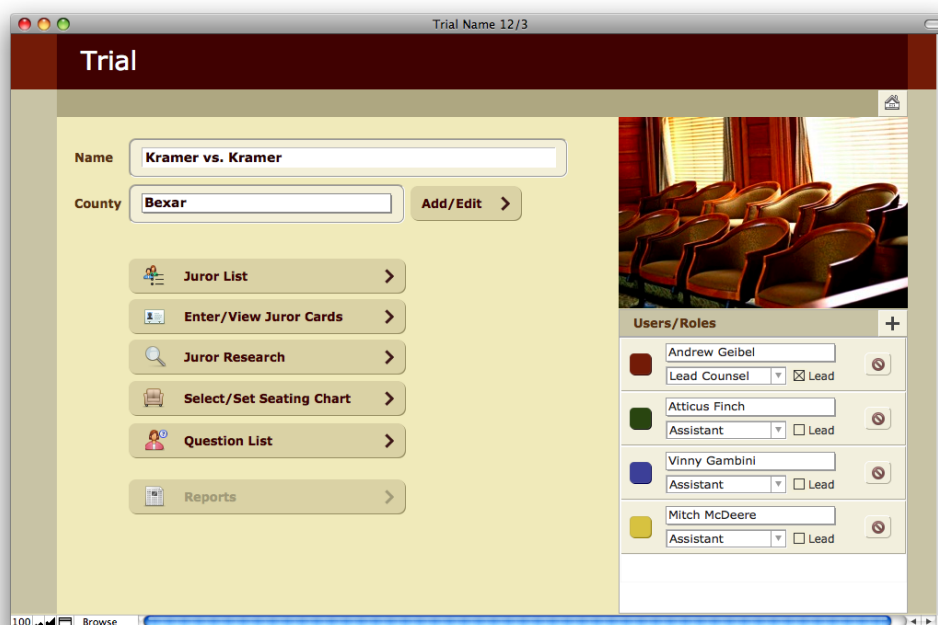
Why use the iPad? Why use FileMaker Go?

   The system was built to be used on desktops (Mac or PC), laptops, and/or the iPad using FileMaker Go. FileMaker Go is a full featured FileMaker client, which can open and use the same FileMaker solutions used on a desktop.

   But why go out of our way to design the system to be used on the iPad? In this case, the iPad tablet was uniquely suited to the solution. For a lead attorney, appearing in front of a potential juror pool with an iPad has some advantages.

   » **The touch screen**
   There may be as many 128 potential jurors, each represented by a square on the seating chart. Using a laptop trackpad to navigate the cursor to a juror's seating square is inefficient, and using a mouse is impractical or even impossible on a podium. With an iPad touch screen, juror info is just a simple finger tap away.

   » **Unobtrusive**
   The iPad lays flat on the podium or table, and is barely noticed by the potential jurors. There is no screen between the lead attorney and the jurors, who are more likely to feel they are being paid attention to.
   » **Cost**
   An iPad is cheaper than a MacBook by far, and cheaper than most PC laptops. The cost of FileMaker Go is about 1/3 the cost of the FileMaker desktop version.

What Other Solutions are Available?

» **iJuror - iPad app**
There is an iPad app available in iTunes, with a subset of features. Critically, it lacks multi-user support, and does not store the attorney's questions or record the potential jurors' responses. It is intended only to house basic demographic info, and mark "strikes".

» **Various small PC software solutions**
Nominal research turned up some small solutions; none seemed to be based on a database platform, or support multiple users.

What are the System Requirements?

» **FileMaker Pro 11 Desktop Client (for multi user)**
The system does not work with versions earlier than 11, due to extensive use of filtered portals - a feature new to v11.
FileMaker Go does not host files, so the desktop client is required for multi-user support.

» **FileMaker Go for iPad (optional)**
The system is designed for optimal use on both desktops and the iPad. We highly recommend the iPad for lead attorney use, for the reasons previously explained.

» **Internet access, or personal wireless router**
For best reliability, we recommend a personal wireless router, to ensure performance and security in the courtroom.

» **Mac or PC**
FileMaker solutions are natively cross-platform.

Key Features

» **Built-in web research component**

» **Fully customizable seating chart setup**

» **Seating chart grid display**

» **Record closed-ended (yes/no) question responses with just a tap**

» **Record open-ended question responses**

» **Create followup questions on the fly**

» **"Follow the Leader" feature lets the team know which question the lead attorney is on, at all times**

» **Assign questions to specific jurors, based on research**

» **"Tap Modes" change what info you get when you tap on a juror's square**

» **User table tracks roles and color codes users**

» **Each member of the team can enter their own notes, questions, and 5-star ratings**

» **City/County setup allows import from Excel, to streamline juror data entry**

Key Features

» **Built-in web research component**

Uses FileMaker's Web Viewer to dynamically perform internet searches. Comes with Google name, Google images, Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace searches already in place. Create your own custom searches, too, by entering your own URLs.

Key Features

» **Fully customizable seating chart setup**

Create a perfect representation of the court seating chart by juror number, by just clicking on the screen. Once jurors are assigned to the seats, you will now who is sitting where, without confusion or hesitation. Adjust on the fly if needed.

Lacking this feature was a particular weakness of the iJuror iPad app - the client said "this renders iJuror totally useless to me".

Two grid templates are available: 12x7 and 16x8, for support of up to 128 potential jurors. A larger 24x8 option will be added later.
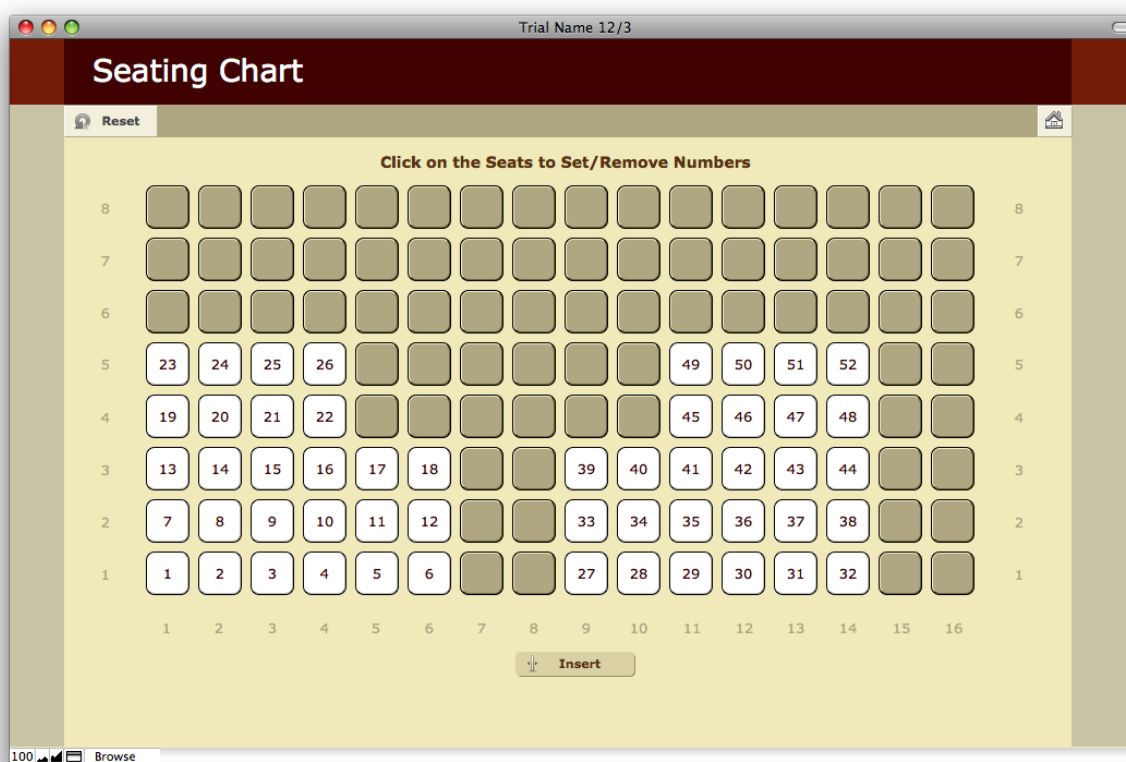
Key Features

» **Seating chart grid display**

When potential jurors are assigned to seats and questions begin, the jurors' last name, gender, and 5-star rating are displayed on the Question Grid View.
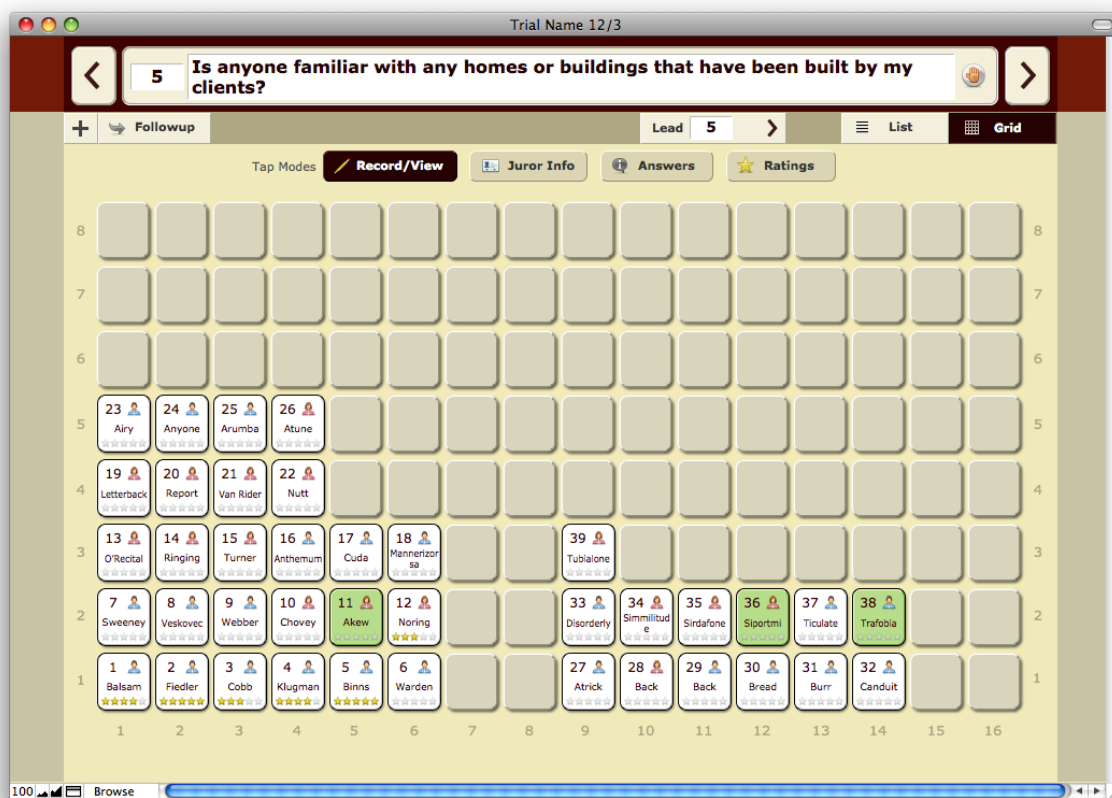
Key Features

» **Record closed-ended (yes/no) question responses with just a tap**

For efficiency, most Voir Dire questions are closed-ended - "raise your hand if..."

Questions created in the system are closed-ended by default, but the user can make them open-ended with just a click.

To record an affirmative answer to a closed-ended question, just tap the juror's square, which turns green.

= Closed-Ended

= Open-Ended
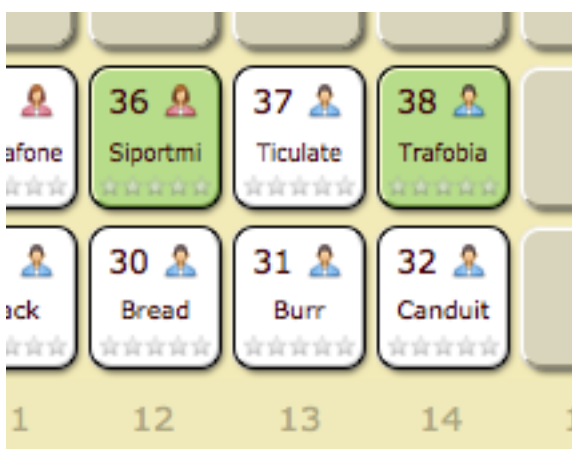
» **Record open-ended question responses**

This is where the teamwork comes in. The lead attorney obviously does not have the bandwidth to type in a juror's verbal response - but an assistant can be logged in to the same system and enter responses in real-time.

If the question is open-ended, the system knows automatically to present a popup window with an entry field. Again the juror's square turns green. Just click on the green square to read their response later.
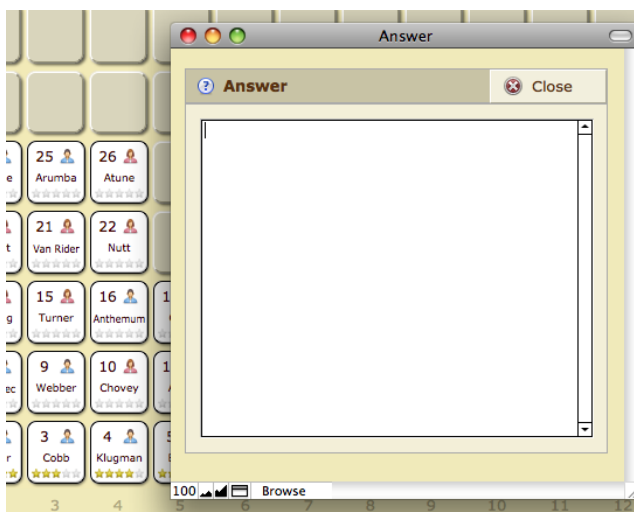
Key Features

» **Create followup questions on the fly**

Followup questions are typically open-ended - "tell me more…"

So the system makes followup questions open-ended by default, but the user can change that with just a click.

Followup questions are indented on the question list view.
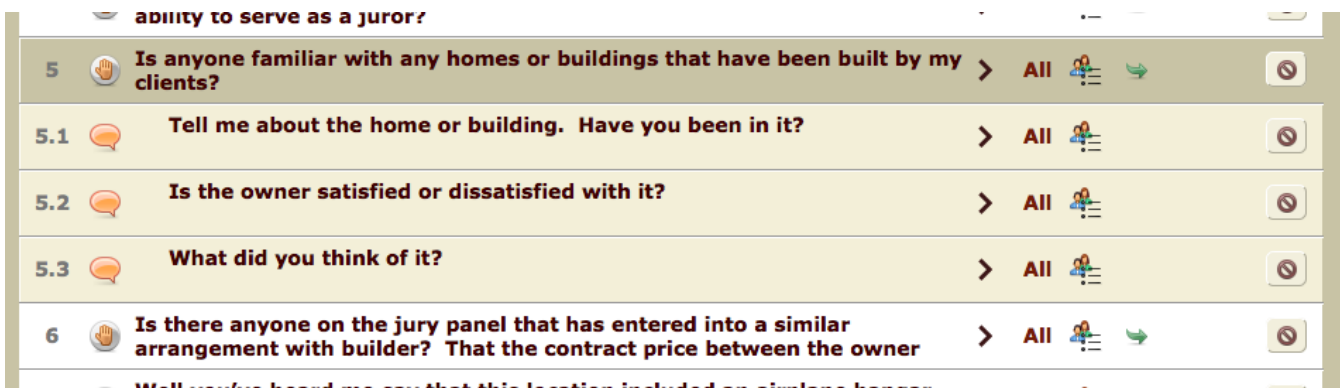
» **"Follow the Leader" feature**

The lead attorney needs to be able to improvise and ad lib, which could cause confusion on the team in a multi-user setting.

The "Follow the Leader" feature shows which question the lead attorney is on, at all times. Just click to go that question and follow along.
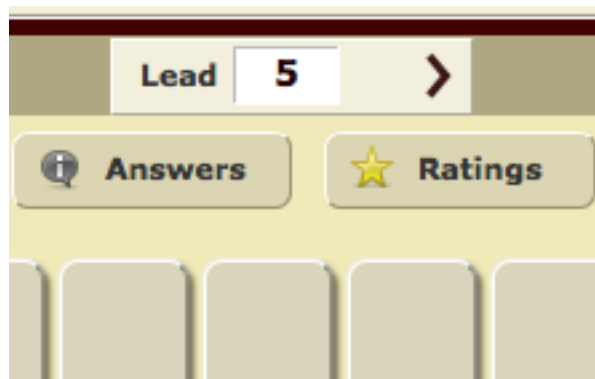
Key Features

» **Assign questions to specific jurors, based on research**

You can prepare a question beforehand, to ask a specific juror or jurors. Once assigned, the juror's square is turned orange on the grid. The lead attorney knows exactly who to ask just by glancing at the grid.

Key Features

» **"Tap Modes" change what info you get when you tap on a juror's square**

The iPad lacks the ability to add modifiers to clicks (option, command, control, etc) if you want different behaviors/results, so the convention is to use "Tap Modes".

The system has 4 Tap Modes which determine what you get when you tap or click on a juror's square.
  » "**Record/View**" is the default - for record answers to questions
  » "**Juror Info**" brings up the Juror Detail page in a new window (hit close to get back to the Question)
  » "**Answers**" brings up the Juror Answer list in a new window, so you can read their answers to ALL questions
  » "**Rating**" brings up the 5-star rating window

Key Features

» **User table tracks roles and color codes users**

Color codes allow you to know who entered a note, question, or rating at a glance.

The user with the "Lead" checkbox determines the "Follow the Leader" functionality.

» **Each member of the team can enter their own notes, questions, and 5-star ratings**

Team ratings are independent of the main 5-star rating, made by the lead attorney
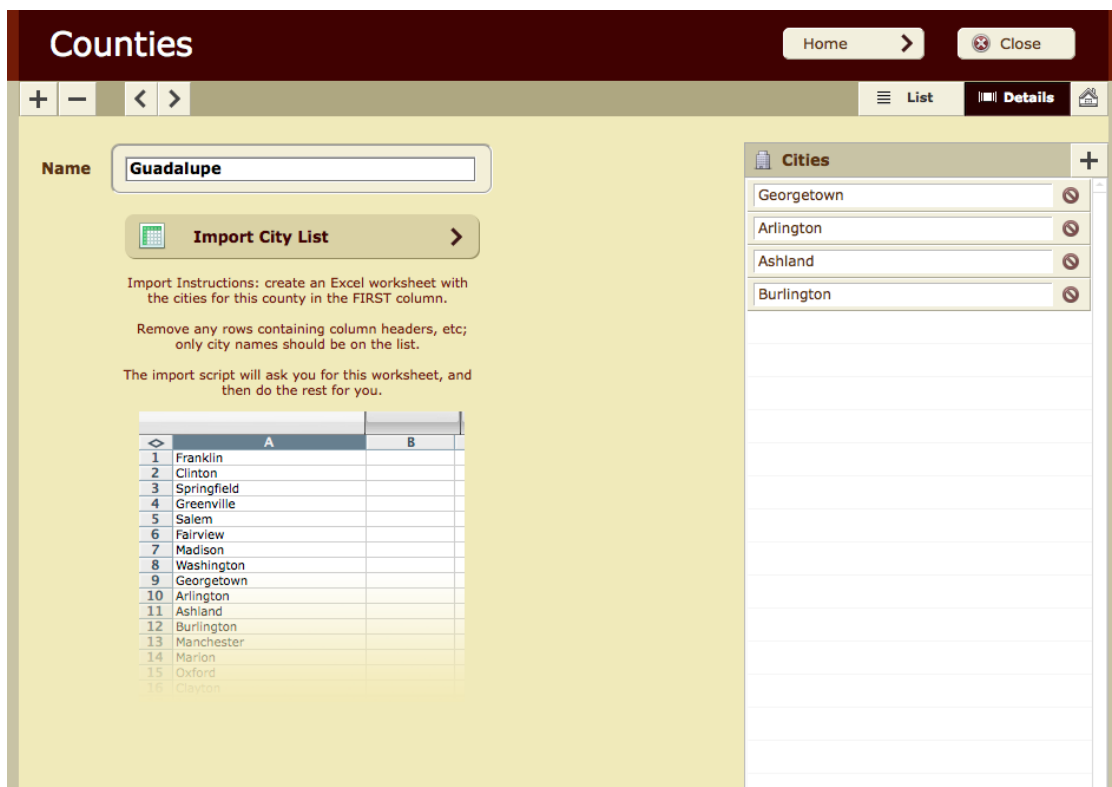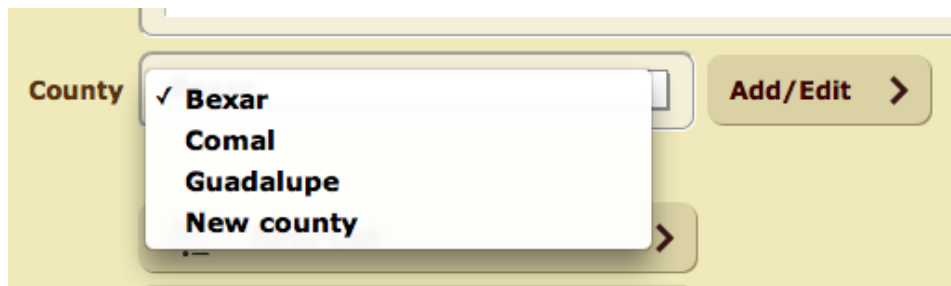
Key Features

» **City/County setup allows import from Excel, to streamline juror data entry**

Streamline juror card data entry, by creating a list of cities in your county before-hand. The "City" entry field is automatically populated according to this list.

Import a list from Excel to streamline even further.

Showcased FileMaker features

» **Web Viewer**
For the web research component

» **Script Triggers**
Played a critical role in solving some performance problems

» **Filtered Portals**
Made developing the Question Grid much easier

Key Strength/Subtle Weakness

» **Strength: User Interface**
We are particularly proud of the easy to use interface, and how well it works on the iPad

» **Subtle Weakness: Performance**
We pushed FileMaker Go and the iPad to the limit, on the Question Grid view. We had to do some development acrobatics to make performance acceptable. It is still a little bit sluggish when moving from question to question, but acceptable.

What's next?

If there is a 2.0, the major new feature would be support for extensive question-naires. Sometimes attorneys craft large questionnaires for potential jurors to fill out - being able to import and synthesize that data would be the next step up.