

# Interview with Mr. Court Simas

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**Interviewee:** Mr. Court Simas – Co-Founder and Director of Technology at Oven Bits

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**Summary:**

I had the pleasure of interviewing Mr. Court Simas, the Co-Founder and Technical Director of Oven Bits a design, development and product strategy agency based in Dallas, Texas. We discussed the app/web development process from pitching to the client to delivering the product and about app/web development in general as well as a few details about the development at Oven Bits.

**Interview:**

We began by discussing Mr. Simas's Background and his experience founding his company, Oven Bits, and what he did as the Director of Technology. Mr. Simas attended California State University in Sacramento and Dallas Baptist University. He later worked as an Interactive programmer at Click Here Inc. where he worked on front-end development programming websites, blogs, emails and banners using JS, XHTML and CSS for top name companies and organizations like Hyundai, Travelocity, and TimeWarner. In 2010, Mr. Simas co-founded Oven Bits and now is the Director of Technology. As the Director of Technology he works and manages numerous projects and oversees technology in the company. At Oven Bits Mr. Simas has crafted results-driven, award-winning software for many notable clients including the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Frito Lay, Vogue, and many more.

We then discussed the design and development process that is used at Oven Bits. It begins with "Discovery", the Discovery stage is where the client meets with Oven Bits and begins discussing the wants and needs as well as understanding what is possible from a technical standpoint. An efficient discovery phase prepares a product for success by outlining key metrics and focuses on Product concepting, KPIs, High-level use cases, User personas, Future-friendly tech, Multi-lingual experiences, Customer research, Analytics research, Industry research, Best practices, Industry standards, and Competitor analysis. Also during this phase both sides decide

# Interview with Mr. Court Simas

if the other side is someone they'd like to work with. After deciding and understanding what the client wants they move onto the next step in the process "Design & Usability".

The Design & Usability phase marks the start of product design where developers begin to create an outline for how the product will fulfill the clients' requirements. Oven Bits uses the iterative process for design and get feedback and validations every step of the way to ensure customer satisfaction. When working on the Design & Usability phase teams work on Visual design, Usability testing, Interaction design, Information architecture, Interactive experiences, and Content strategy. After creating a design Engineers begin working and developing in "Technical Development".

In the Technical Development phase engineers begin creating the product. Engineers are focused on the latest trends and technologies across the major web and mobile platforms and ensure their product implements the latest most modern technological practices. They work with large architectures, third-party integrations and often work side-by-side with their clients' internal technology teams. Developers at Oven Bits work on Native iOS, Native Android, API integrations, Responsive Web, API development, Back-end architecture, Content management, Highly-scalable services, and Multilingual applications.

Even though Oven Bits goes through this whole process, and strive to create the best product possible, problems are inevitable. Mr. Simas said that for both the native app and responsive web page, the biggest problem as an agency isn't something technical. The biggest issue was nailing down all the requirements, and making sure that they get the user experience figured out and approved from the client in a timely manner. Often they get feedback from clients throughout the product development process, however, if the client is slow or they suddenly pivot on their game plan, it can throw the development team into a huge holding pattern and jeopardize the timeline.

We also discussed a few technical details about the development and learned that at Oven Bits 99% of backend development is done in Ruby or Node JS. We also discussed security for Oven Bits applications where I learned that their applications must support the authentication of individual users. All native apps must communicate via https protocol (SSL), never transmit over, or store passwords in, plain text or in any easily reversible form. Also all

## Interview with Mr. Court Simas

encryption keys and passphrases must meet complexity requirements described in Oven Bits' Password Protection Policy. These precautions ensure the security of their applications. Overall through this interview I learned a lot about the development process including the "Discovery", "Design & Usability", and the "Technical Development" phases; this interview also shed some light on how agencies design and create applications and web pages and gave me some specific details on the development of these products.