To help himself and his friends stay on top of turnip prices in the latest Animal Crossing video game, independent developer James Montemagno built Island Tracker, a Xamarin.Forms app for sharing, tracking, and predicting price information. With Syncfusion’s large collection of Xamarin controls, James was able to give Island Tracker a delightful UI that matched the cheerful, playful atmosphere of the game itself.

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James Montemagno
Independent developer

**CASE STUDY**

Animal Crossing Meets Xamarin and Syncfusion

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**BENEFITS**

- Cut development time in half.
- Impressed users with rich feature set.
- Consistent UX across Android and iOS.

**SUMMARY**

To help himself and his friends stay on top of turnip prices in the latest Animal Crossing video game, independent developer James Montemagno built Island Tracker, a Xamarin.Forms app for sharing, tracking, and predicting price information. With Syncfusion’s large collection of Xamarin controls, James was able to give Island Tracker a delightful UI that matched the cheerful, playful atmosphere of the game itself.

**SCENARIO**

When the latest entry of the immensely popular Animal Crossing video game franchise finally arrived, millions of players reached out to strangers and friends alike, across every social media platform and messaging service imaginable, to ask, “What are your turnip prices?”

Put simply, turnips in Animal Crossing: New Horizons function similarly to stocks in the real world. The goal is to buy low and sell high. The problem in the game, just like in the real world, is that no one can predict the future. At best, one can observe historical trends to make an educated guess.

For most players, this meant using poorly moderated group chats, increasingly desperate social media polls, tangled email threads, and, for the ambitious few, a spreadsheet on a shared drive to figure out
which direction turnip prices were trending. As most developers are inclined to do, James Montemagno, principal lead program manager at Microsoft and independent developer in his free time, figured he could build an app to solve the turnip troubles.

**CHALLENGE**

James outlined the key requirements he wanted in his app, Island Tracker:

- Offer a great-looking, cross-platform iOS and Android app that is as fun to use as Animal Crossing is to play.
- Track and predict weekly turnip prices.
- Back up all data in the cloud, no login required.
- Provide rich, deep functionality without having to custom render anything.

**SOLUTION**

As an independent developer, James values productivity above all else, and uses as much of what’s in the box as possible. Rather than mixing and matching libraries or building entirely from scratch, James prefers a single library that can deliver everything he needs. For Island Tracker, he turned to a familiar, reliable toolkit that he’s been using for over a decade and a half: Syncfusion Essential Studio.

Since he was targeting both iOS and Android, he decided on Syncfusion’s Xamarin.Forms controls to quickly build a cross-platform solution that provided a native app experience. Thanks to the maturity of the controls, he could build most of the pages in the app, 15 total (his largest personal project to date), by reusing code and controls to implement common functionality. James barely had to write any code on his own to build out the features he wanted, which included charts, graphs, a friend system, customizable user profiles, user statuses, login-free cloud backup, and more.

In all, James used the following Syncfusion Xamarin.Forms controls:

- Charts
- Expander
- ComboBox
- NumericUpDown
- Masked Edit
- Segmented Control
- Shimmer
- Busy Indicator
- Effects View
- Text Input Layout

Even though he used all these controls, he was able to keep the UI from becoming cluttered thanks to several built-in features. In particular, he was able to let users hide and display charts by swiping them out of the way and pulling them back down as needed.

The Charts control helped him implement several different chart types that looked impressive and never impacted the app’s performance. The ComboBox control offered end users the flexibility to leave details about their in-game items and accessories. One of James’ favorite controls deployed in this project was the Shimmer control because it improved the user’s experience when loading data if they had a slow or unstable internet connection.
With the Syncfusion Xamarin arsenal at his disposal, James was able to maintain a high level of productivity and build the app in half the time he would have needed if he had built everything from scratch. Since he built it only in his spare time, every hour and minute saved meant that he didn’t have to compromise on a feature down the line. Once Island Tracker was finished, he added it to Google Play and the Apple App Store, where it was immediately successful due to the popularity of Animal Crossing: New Horizons.

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