7 Mistakes BIM Managers Should Avoid When Collaborating on a Project

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"Many hands make light work."

Or do they?

Most of the time, sure, that is likely the case. But when it comes to a BIM project, BIM managers could make mistakes that turn that collaboration to chaos. In this article, we are sharing seven major mistakes you could make when collaborating on a project. But don't worry, we aren't all doom and gloom; we also share our favorite tips to avoid those pitfalls and make collaboration a success.

Mistake #1: Lack of Clarity on Company Standards

When collaborating with others, you want to make sure that they have a clear understanding of your company's workflow and content standards. Otherwise, they may unintentionally disrupt your company workflow and wreak havoc on your content organization.

Solution

To fix this, make sure that outsiders understand how your company handles content requests and content uploads. You'll also want them to know and follow company standards. In addition to any training documents you may provide, you can also equip them with a BIM Execution Plan to help them understand content standards such as wall types and best practices when it comes to understanding file size and file performance.

Mistake #2: Sharing Outdated Content

One of the most painful mistakes you can make when collaborating on a project is sharing outdated content. This could happen when you share initial content at the beginning of the project, but as the project progresses, the content is updated multiple times or even replaced. Collaborators need to know that the piece of content that they are using is the correct and most up to date one for their project.

Solution

To prevent collaborators from using outdated content, you could share a project-specific library through UNIFI. This is particularly helpful for Owners and Clients, as this results in the Owner's content being used in the project with the Architect of Record rather than the AOR's standard.

UNIFI simplifies the shared library process by allowing you to set a pinned library in Project Analytics. This feature lets users search certain libraries connected with a project when that project is open in Revit. This ensures that the owner's standard is used.

Type	Name	Owner	Pinned
Show all ▼	Filter sources by name	Show all owners ▼	Show all ▼
LIBRARY	AEC – Architecture	UNIFI - Demo AEC	⬤
LIBRARY	AEC - Civil	UNIFI - Demo AEC	◯
LIBRARY	AEC - Structural	UNIFI - Demo AEC	◯
LIBRARY	GC – Construction	UNIFI - Demo AEC	◯

Mistake #3: Not Ensuring Project Security

Another major mistake that BIM managers could make when collaborating is not ensuring project security. For example, you could share content that you purchased, but someone could reuse that content without licensed permission. Without proper security on a project, private information could be released without permission. This leads to a lack of trust and confidence in your firm.

Solution

To ensure project security, you could utilize a tool such as BIM 360, which offers granular permissions when it comes to viewing, downloading, and editing content and project files.

Mistake #4: Not Customizing the Level of Access Outsiders Can Have

In sharing secure content, it's helpful to be able to customize user access to your materials, or you could end up with undesirable content changes. For example, if you are an owner sharing content with multiple Architects of Record (AOR's) and they can make changes to the content that other AOR's are accessing, then suddenly you may have multiple projects with updates. This can cause some serious problems.

Here's another example: if you are working collaboratively on a project and all users are iterating the same content, then the project could end up with different versions of the same piece of content if collaborators don't have permission to make updates.

Solution

When customizing access to content, you'll want to consider whether you want collaborators to have admin capabilities (approve/reject uploaded content, submit content requests, etc.) or if you simply want them to be able to access content from a protected library that requires Company Admin approval for any updated content. Using a cloud-based BIM management platform that allows you to customize user access is vital to protecting your content.


🔓 Protect this library
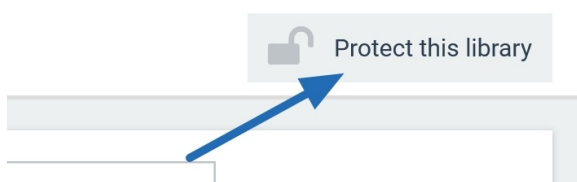
Mistake #5: Making It Difficult for Collaborators to Find Content

You never want your collaborators to feel like you dropped them in the middle of a maze with no map to guide them out. And that is exactly how they'd feel if your content is not structured intuitively and is not searchable.

Instead, you want the content to be easy for users to find. This reduces miscommunication, saves time, and increases the overall quality of your project since team members can find exactly what they are looking for.

Solution

To prevent this from happening, utilize saved searches and tags. You could also create a library or private channel that includes only content that collaborators would need.
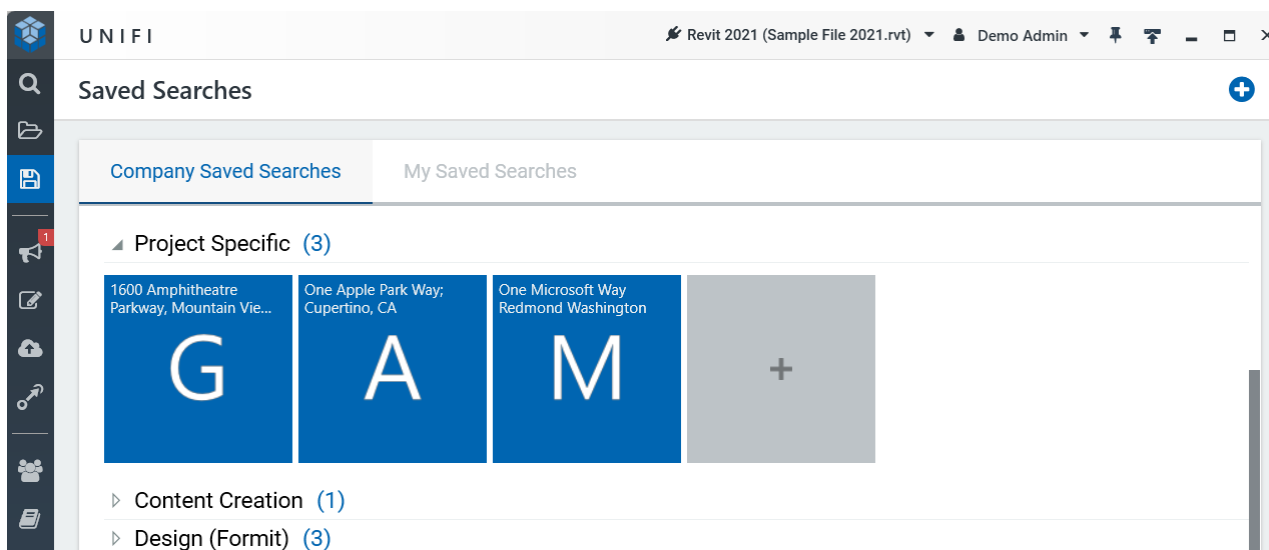
Mistake #6: Not Having an Easy Way to View Revision History

Whenever you are collaborating with others on a project, you want to make sure that you have a simple method for viewing project history. This comes in handy in circumstances when you might have to troubleshoot. For example, if a project is running slow, you need to be able to identify who may have made a significant revision that spiked the file size. This can be difficult to do if you have a large team of collaborators.

Solution

UNIFI's Project Analytics can help you find this information quickly by allowing you to view file size and specific changes that have been made. As an Admin, you'd be able to quickly identify who did which revisions and make any necessary adjustments.

Sync Times and File Size Over Time

64	**00:00:10**	**00:00:30**
Total Syncs	Average Sync Time	Longest Sync Time
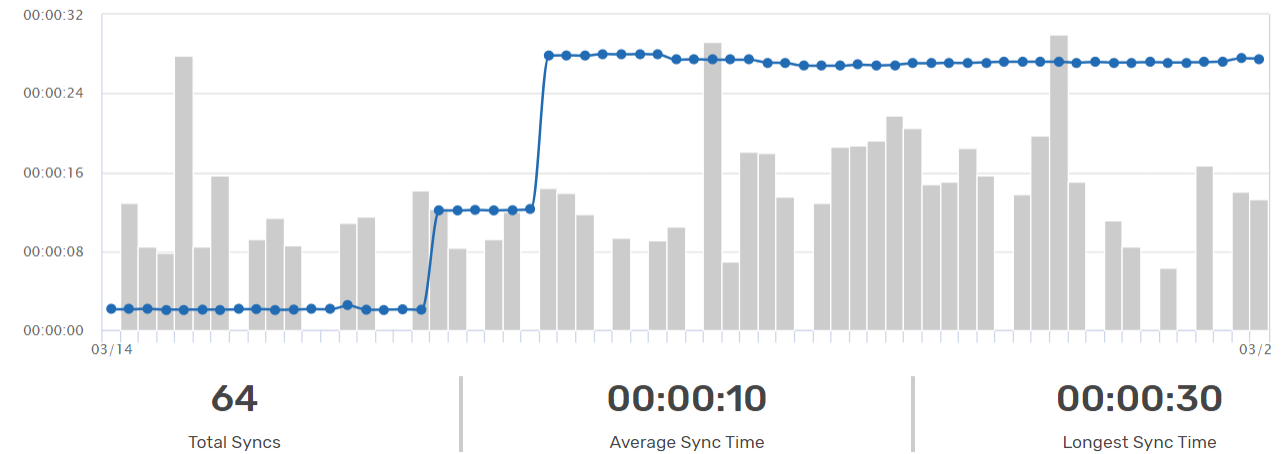
Syncs for this Model

Show all users		Show all Models		Show all Revit versions	

User	Model	Revit Version	Size	Sync Time	Date and Time
KarenPierce@DESKTOP-2H4N4SL	181234_Demo Project_Arch_2018.rvt	Revit 2018.3.3	60.9 MB	00:00:00	Oct 4, 2019 8:40:4
KarenPierce@DESKTOP-2H4N4SL	181234_Demo Project_Arch_2018.rvt	Revit 2018.3.3	57.8 MB	00:00:00	Oct 2, 2019 2:05:2
KarenPierce@DESKTOP-2H4N4SL	181234_Demo Project_Arch_2018.rvt	Revit 2018.3.3	57.7 MB	00:00:00	Sep 18, 2019 9:04
KarenPierce@DESKTOP-2H4N4SL	181234_Demo Project_Arch_2018.rvt	Revit 2018.3.3	57.8 MB	00:00:05	Sep 18, 2019 4:54

UNIFI's Content Request system is another way to provide a clear revision history. Revision notes are automatically generated when content is updated with this system in UNIFI. It's also a fantastic way to encourage feedback on content that may not be built appropriately.

Mistake #7: Allowing Duplicate Content to Be Added to Your Content Management Platform

If users can add duplicate content to your content management platform, it can cause chaos. Soon multiple pieces of the same content are floating around, and no one knows which one to use.

Solution

To avoid BIM content chaos during collaboration, it is vital that users be unable to upload duplicate versions of content. But don't worry, UNIFI has you covered. UNIFI automatically updates previous content to the newly updated piece of content. It also allows you to access previous versions and future-proof content and legacy content.

Base File Chart

Base	Revit 2017	Revit 2018	Revit 2019	Revit 2020	Revit 2021	Revit 2022	TC	
2015	☁	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘		✖
2018	➡	☁	⊘	⊘	⊘			✖
2020				➡	⊘	⊘		✖
2021					➡	☁		✖

Conclusion

Don't worry, we still believe in working together. But it's vital that BIM managers avoid these common mistakes so that a project runs smoothly. UNIFI's secure platform simplifies this management process, allowing managers to customize permissions, manage revisions, and more.