

UK publisher scores huge, cost effective hit with BlackBerry apps for leading titles

Key Benefits:

- BlackBerry apps represent 65% of all downloads
- Over 450,000 downloads in 6 months
- 5x more downloads than iOS devices
- 10x more downloads than Android devices

BlackBerry Customer Success Story

Northern & Shell is the UK's largest independent publisher. It owns four national newspapers, including the Daily Express, and is a 50% joint venture partner for two more in Ireland and owns Channel 5, one of Britain's leading national terrestrial television networks. Northern & Shell is also a leader in key parts of the consumer news and magazine markets in the UK and worldwide, operating in all major areas of publishing, with diverse interests in new media, print, distribution, investment and property.

The Challenge

The proliferation of digital channels has transformed news publishing. Readers who migrated from print to the web are now embracing smartphones and tablets as well. In addition, social media has become an increasingly important part of people's digital lives. In order to adapt to these changing media consumption habits, Northern & Shell needed to build new opportunities to engage with its current and potential readers. "I think for us, as a big publisher and moving rapidly into the digital world, it's about eyeballs. So we are very keen to do anything which expands the audience," explains Geoff Marsh, Online editor at Express Newspapers (Northern & Shell).

Industry:
Media & Entertainment

Region:
UK

Company Size:
Large

Solution:
BlackBerry® apps
BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM™)

To ensure its titles were reaching as broad an audience as possible, Northern & Shell decided it needed to offer its content on smartphones and tablets. In particular, the publishers knew that BlackBerry® users made up a significant portion of its readership and wanted to deliver its various titles to this demographic. But the company was concerned by the apparent cost and complexity of having to develop individual applications for each title on each mobile platform. "We knew we weren't in the business of paying astronomical sums up front for developing apps, and then sticking a finger in the air and hoping they worked. We wanted to get it right slowly and grow it organically," says Marsh. Northern & Shell also wanted to take full advantage of social media to increase the sharing and readership of its articles.

About Mippin

Mippin is the world's leading app builder platform; their app builder implementations have delivered over 50,000 apps to app stores globally. The company is on a mission to tear down the barriers of mobile app creation by reducing cost and complexity. Their vision is an app for everything and everyone including media owners, small businesses, individuals and products.

www.mippin.com



“The demographic overlap between the consumption of the media and the sharing is helping downloads of our apps to grow organically, and it’s been strongest on BlackBerry.”

Geoff Marsh, Online editor at Express Newspapers (Northern & Shell)

The Solution

For Northern & Shell, the answer was to team up with Mippin, a London-based company and a member of the BlackBerry® Alliance Program, that develops and distributes mobile apps for digital publishers across multiple platforms. Using its innovative template model, Mippin built applications for five of Northern & Shell’s publications, including the Daily Express, the Daily Star and OK! Magazine in under a month.

The applications are available for all the main smartphone and tablet platforms, keeping a consistent look and feel. The BlackBerry version of the application takes advantage of native BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM™) integration and the apps were developed using the BlackBerry® WebWorks HTML5 development platform. “Given how fundamental BBM is to BlackBerry users, integrating our content with this application was one of the areas we really wanted to focus on and we’ve had a lot of positive comments from users on this particular feature,” said Marsh.

Northern & Shell Benefits

The Northern & Shell for BlackBerry apps have been a runaway success, accounting for 65% of the total app downloads in the last six months. “To put it into perspective, we often get five times the number of downloads on BlackBerry than we do on iOS in a single month and more than ten times the number we get on Android,” says Marsh. He credits the

success to the fit between the titles and BlackBerry users. “We all know people don’t consume media in the same way anymore. They tend to want to consume and share almost at the same time, concurrently. It’s the demographic overlap between the consumption of the media and the sharing of it that is helping downloads of our apps to grow organically and it’s been strongest on BlackBerry.”

Behind the scenes, the solution from Mippin enabled Northern & Shell to focus on what it does best: producing news. Marsh says that the solution “doesn’t create additional work, in fact it takes the development completely out of our hands. It has enabled us to concentrate on what we do best which is to generate and publish stories.”

Marsh is also very positive about the future of the BlackBerry apps. First, because he is impressed with the user experience that the BlackBerry® PlayBook™ provides: “The image clarity is fantastic and enables us to do our job almost better than we can in print. That’s absolutely invaluable and unsurprisingly, it’s reflected in the popularity of the PlayBook app in the download figures,” he says. Second, Marsh and the team at Mippin are very excited about the new BlackBerry® 10 platform. “From what we understand, there will be functionality on there that will massively help us do what we’re trying to do better...we think it will really help us improve the user experience another notch again.”

www.blackberry.co.uk/casestudies



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