VIDERITY

STRATEGIC, CREATIVE, TECHNICAL

a viderity case study:

TODAY'S DOCUMENT
# MOBILE APP

02.09.2011

NATIONAL
ARCHIVES

TODAY'S
DOCUMENT

**The National Archives is our nation's record keeper.** Their vision is that all Americans will understand the vital role records play in a democracy, and their own personal stake in the National Archives. Part of that vision includes making sure that every American has access to the Archives. In recent years, their online initiatives (including their flagship website at www.archives.gov) have become vital components in their realization of this vision.

"Today's Document" is one of the most popular features on the National Archives website. Displaying a different historical document from the Archives' holdings for each day of the year, it is a valuable resource for teachers, historians, and the general public. When the Archives asked Viderity for ideas for a new mobile application they wanted to develop, our response was quick and decisive: adapt the "Today's Document" content to the unique strengths of the Apple (iPhone and iPad) and Android platforms.

This case study describes the process, challenges and successes involved in the development of the "Today's Document" mobile app.
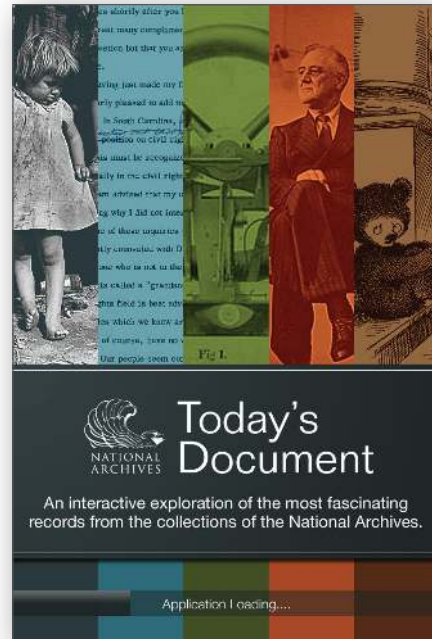
The colorful splash screen incorporates images from the Archives' holdings and design elements from the new Archives website.
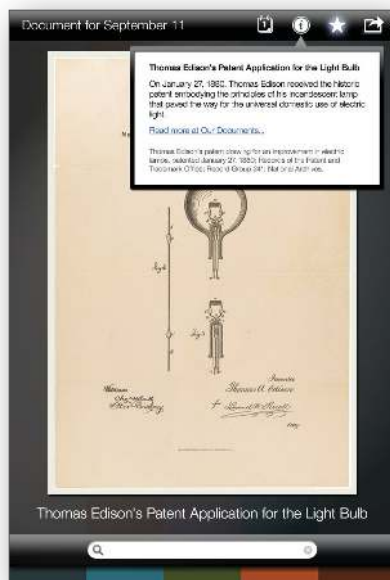
Users can view interesting facts about each document as well as link to websites with additional information.

The Application

Today's Document is an interactive gallery for the iPhone, iPad and Android mobile platforms that allows users to explore selected holdings from the National Archives. It contains a collection of 365 fascinating documents and photographs from throughout American history along with descriptions of their significance.

Users can access the calendar feature to learn what event happened on their birthday, search the documents by keyword, or just browse through the collection at random. They can zoom and pan the ultra-crisp high resolution images to get a closer look at the featured documents and photographs, read background information on the document and link to related websites.

As a part of the Archives' ongoing effort to engage its customers via social media, users are able to share documents via Facebook and Twitter as well as send them to friends in an email and save popular documents in a list of favorites.

The Development Process

Working with staff at the National Archives, Viderity developed the initial set of project requirements and designed the graphical interface. The colorful, user friendly design draws heavily on visual themes developed for the new Archives.gov website (also designed and developed by Viderity) and places the focus on the documents themselves. Separate versions of the design were developed to accommodate the unique requirements of each of the three mobile platforms: iPhone, iPad, and Android.

To assist with the coding of the application, Viderity partnered with Accella, a firm specializing in the creation of mobile apps. At the heart of their code is a clever technique for keeping the application small (under 20mb) and fast while still allowing the display of clear, zoomable images. A full set of low-resolution images is loaded onto the user's mobile device and a remote SQL database is used to progressively download the high-resolution version via the Internet. Thus, when a user accesses a document they can begin viewing it while the high-resolution, zoomable version is loading. This is a perfect solution for users with limited storage space or who don't have access to wireless Internet.

Finally, once the application was built and thoroughly tested, Viderity helped the Archives take their new app to market. We made sure the application met Apple's rigorous application specifications and guided the Archives through the complex process of getting the product listed on the Apple and Android App stores. Since launch, we've made several incremental upgrades to address suggestions made by actual users.
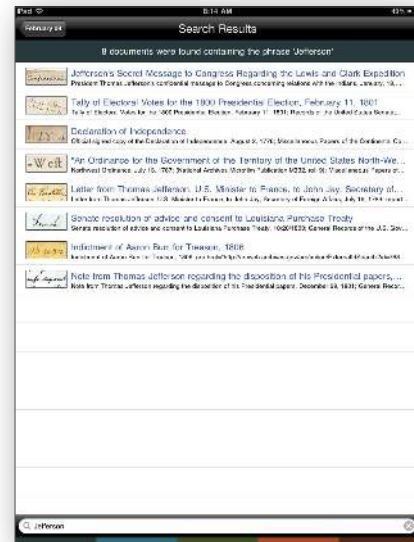
Users can search the full set of documents by keyword, select a specific date or just casually browse the app's contents.

The Result

- Viderity's partnership model and rapid application development process helped us create a working version of the application in less than a month.

- Since its launch in January 2011, there have been over 6,500 downloads of the application.

- Users on Apple's App Store have consistently given the app a four- or five-star rating. Some of their positive (and unedited) feedback has been:

> "Having this historical touchstone on my iPhone is really amazing."

> "Very cool app. Amazing what technology can do!"

> "Wow…this is totally cool!"

If you would like more information about professional web design and development services please contact Viderity at info@viderity.com.

About Viderity

Viderity is an 8(a) certified information technology (IT) and business consulting company head-quartered in Washington, DC, USA. Viderity predominantly provides IT personnel staffing services to state and federal government agencies in the following areas: web site and application development and management; print and online marketing solutions; and IT and business strategy planning. Viderity started in the fall of 2007 with the aim towards helping agencies achieve their most challenging Internet goals. For more information about Viderity, please visit www.viderity.com.

About Accella

Accella designs, builds, and integrates mobile applications based on a client's requirements. Whether it's implementing an idea from scratch, or migrating an existing website/application, their dedicated project managers and design team work with clients to make sure their ideas and visions are implemented on time, in budget, and within scope. Accella started in 2005 and has sustained continued growth over the past six years.

Viderity, Inc. · 1425 K St. Suite 350 · Washington DC, 20005 · 800.690.9170 · www.viderity.com