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Adobe Success Story

THEmedia



THEmedia

"Flash Lite is going to open a whole new market for companies like us and how we start marketing the projects we do as well...I'm sure very soon you will see design companies putting phone UIs on their lists of services."

Trevor Brady
Creative Director
THEmedia

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THEmedia

PRODUCTS USED

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THEmedia is one of Canada's leading multimedia, website, and digital interface design studios. The company specializes in creating unique multimedia applications and digital portfolios for today's informationdriven digital marketplace. Clients include many large companies in the medical and high tech industries.

CHALLENGE

Macromedia commissioned THEmedia to redesign an existing mobile phone user interface using Macromedia Flash Lite 1.1 and Flash MX Professional 2004. THEmedia's task was to enhance the functionality and design of the existing user interface, and then create three interface variations by customizing its look and feel to meet the individual needs of different operators. THEmedia had no prior experience working with Flash for mobile before embarking on this project.

SOLUTION

THEmedia took a two-step approach to this challenge. First, their design and development team, using Flash MX Professional 2004 and the Flash Lite Content Development Kit (CDK), optimized the existing user interface graphics, content, and programming to enhance the performance and look and feel of the existing user interface. Second, THEmedia created three variations of the same user interface and then deployed the redesigned, custom-branded user interfaces to Flash-enabled target phones. During this second step, the team enhanced the existing user interface and added functionality that lets users store certain preferences and settings, such as the phone's default location and language.

BENEFITS**Design Once, Run Anywhere**

- Using Flash MX Professional 2004 and Flash Lite 1.1, THEmedia quickly prototyped and deployed rich, branded user interfaces that scaled to any screen size and played back across different platforms and devices.
- Flash Lite made it easy to leverage existing multimedia assets and content.

Familiar Development Tool

- THEmedia's designers and developers quickly applied their existing Flash design and programming skills to the mobile platform.
- Flash technology enabled THEmedia to save cost and development time.

Great User Experience

- Flash technology enabled THEmedia to create a user interface that enhances the user experience through fast-loading and easy-to-use menus.

PROJECT DETAILS

Flash has long been a staple among THEmedia's team of designers and developers. Building upon that existing knowledge, working with Flash Lite was an easy transition. "We were able to quickly learn to author for Flash Lite 1.1, take into account its differences from the desktop Flash Player, and get the files onto the phones in a short time," said Trevor Brady, THEmedia's creative director.

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The project team consisted of one designer, who built and collected the graphics in Flash, and one scripting expert. The team got up to speed quickly with Flash Lite, and they see the already fast development process becoming even smoother. "With the new mobile UI templates in the upcoming Flash Lite CDK, I can see a project like this being taken on by a single designer, who can focus on the branding and style instead of the technology." Brady added. "The designer could complete the whole project in a very short amount of time."

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Drawing on their existing design skills with user interfaces and Flash, THEmedia team used Flash Lite CDK to port their Flash-based user interface solutions from their desktops to the target phones. "Looking at the [original interface] files we were given," said Brady, "we saw how the files link together offline. We had to do some research to understand how the phones work and how to get the files onto the phones. After that, it was really easy to get into the production phase." In the end, it took the team less than a month to finish the entire project, from concept and design to implementation and deployment. "Trying to create this kind of project in some kind of other programming language like C++ would require a high-level skill set and a lot more time," said Brady. "We only have two people with that skill, but we have an entire studio full of people who know Flash." Looking ahead, Jeff Thiessen, THEmedia's director of business development, added, "Macromedia Flash continues to open all kinds of opportunities for design firms and the Flash community because we can now bring our expertise to any device with a screen."

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