

Universal Mind Helps RIM Launch the BlackBerry PlayBook in Style



COMPANY NAME

<http://www.rim.com/>

<http://us.blackberry.com/playbook-tablet/>

INDUSTRY

Technology

COMPANY PROFILE

Research In Motion (RIM), is the designer and manufacturer of the award-winning BlackBerry® smartphone, used by millions of people around the world. The company also creates software for businesses and the operating system that allows the BlackBerry smartphone to provide mobile access to email, IM, apps, media files, the Internet and more.

BUSINESS SITUATION

A leading creator of mobile devices for business users, RIM was entering the tablet market with an eye toward gaining a new set of consumer customers. RIM needed to demonstrate that its new tablet could offer the visually rich, immersive, and entertaining experiences consumers crave.

CHALLENGE

When Research in Motion (RIM) was preparing to debut its BlackBerry PlayBook tablet to the world at the Adobe MAX and CES trade shows, the company wanted to create some showcase applications to demo on the slick new device. While the BlackBerry has a strong legacy of business-oriented apps, RIM wanted to round out the PlayBook launch with a visually engaging, consumer-facing app.

With PlayBook development in its final stages and the launch just six weeks away, RIM called Universal Mind.

"We have a track record of working with cutting-edge technologies before they launch to the mainstream," says Brett Cortese, President and CEO of Universal Mind, "and in this case we were trusted to work in parallel with RIM as they were still finalizing the hardware development."

PROCESS

A team from Universal Mind's User Experience (UX) practice proposed the idea of a fantasy football application, and RIM gave the green light. The UX team then brought its vast design and technology expertise to the development process, and it leveraged the company's best practices to ensure successful delivery on the accelerated schedule.

Starting with Discovery, the team interviewed fantasy football enthusiasts, created user personas, examined the types of data involved in fantasy football games, and explored existing fantasy sports applications and web sites. They used findings from this research to create wireframes of possible game workflows.

Moving on to Design, the team's industry-acclaimed UX specialists worked to create a best-in-class game experience in which the look, feel, and interactions came together to show off the PlayBook's rich entertainment potential. The app enabled users to get football stats and news, watch highlight videos, trade players, and even design their own team helmets, with a fun, straightforward, and visually compelling interface.

During the Develop phase, because the work on the application ran concurrently with the tablet's development, Universal Mind used a PlayBook simulator on a virtual machine to test and debug the app throughout the process.

"RIM's team embraces the same agile development processes that Universal Mind has always championed, so our collaboration was very efficient," says Brian O'Connor, Universal Mind's Director of Technology.

RESULT

The PlayBook was launched to wide acclaim. RIM used the fantasy football app for a range of demos at Adobe MAX, CES, on the RIM website, and at press briefings. The company also used the app in videos introducing the RIM developer community to the PlayBook, and the videos spread virally across a number of Blackberry online publications and enthusiast sites.

Universal Mind also helped RIM develop a process for deploying their PC simulator on Mac OS, which increased the base of developers who can create apps for the PlayBook.

“The fantasy football app is an example of Universal Mind’s commitment to creating the best possible experiences for our clients and their customers—no matter the project timeline or circumstances,” says Cortese. “We enjoy uncharted territory.”

SOLUTION

Universal Mind delivered a best-in-class fantasy football application that showcased the limitless entertainment possibilities of the new PlayBook and helped RIM generate press, consumer, and developer interest.

BENEFITS

- Shows off the tablet’s technical capabilities and powerful visual display
- Generates customer, press, and developer interest to create momentum leading up to the product launch
- Puts competitors on notice with a splashy debut



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Brett Cortese
President and CEO of Universal Mind

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