

National Archives: Today's Document



A New Historical Document Brought to You Every Day of the Year

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. Previously, this meant having to visit one of their locations to look up records, photographs, films, and other material. With the advent of the Internet, much of the material is now available online. Realizing that many Americans are quickly adopting smartphones, they wanted to also make the material available to iPhone, iPad, and Android users as well via an app.

About the App

Today's Document is an interactive gallery that allows you to explore the holdings of the US National Archives through a collection of 365 fascinating documents and photographs from throughout history.



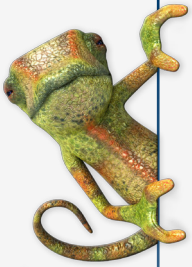
Learn what significant event happened on your birthday, search the documents by keyword, or browse the collection at your leisure.

The National Archives wants as many Americans as possible to have access to our Nation's Vital Historical Documents

Zoom in on the high resolution images to get a closer look at the featured documents and photographs, use the calendar feature to select a specific date, or select "Surprise Me" to show a document at random. Want to learn more? Tap the "info" icon to read background information on the document and link to related websites. You can even share documents via email, Facebook and Twitter, and add documents to your list of favorites by tapping the "star" icon.



National Archives: Today's Document



Migrating a web app to the iPhone, iPad, and Android mobile OS

The Development Process

The most challenging part of building this application was keeping the file size down. Each document has four images, a thumbnail, small, medium, and full-size image; there was a balancing act of what to store locally on the phone versus what to pull in from a remote database. Storing images on the phone allows the app to run smoother, but creates a much larger file; while accessing the images from the database lowers the file size, it causes the app to run slower. Apple also restricts an app's file size to 20 MB so it can be downloaded over the network; apps over 20 MB must either be downloaded via iTunes on a user's computer, then ported over to the phone, or via a WiFi network on the user's phone.

Accella developers were able to store thumbnail images within the application and access larger images via a connection to a SQL database.

Overall, the first version of the application was developed in a little over three weeks for both the iPhone and Android versions. This fast turnaround was accomplished through a successful partnership between a web design firm, Viderity, and Accella; while Viderity focused on the graphics and user interface, Accella worked on building the backend SQL database along with the proper "hooks" to allow the app to access the data.

Conclusion

So far the app has been well received by the public. Released on January 6th via iTunes and the Android Market as a free application, the app has already received many positive reviews:

- Great start in making our national treasures available for all.
- I love browsing these documents and the app's interface is really nice.
- I'm all for displaying the records in any and all forms. Having this historical touchstone on my iPhone is really amazing. There's so much to see and learn about, just amazing.

That National Archives' Today's Document App is just one example of the US Government attempting to make our Nation's historical record available to all.

Download the App via iTunes



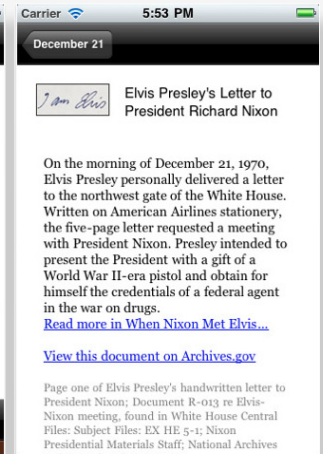
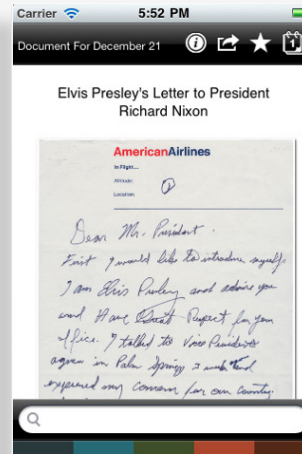
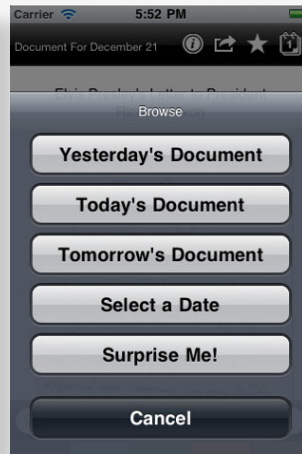
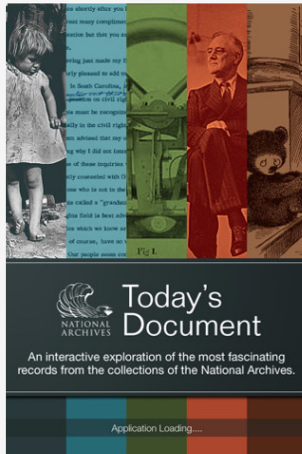
Download the App via The Android Market



National Archives: Today's Document



Migrating a web app to the iPhone, iPad, and Android mobile OS



About Accella

Accella designs, builds, and integrates websites and mobile applications based on our client's requirements. Whether it's implementing an idea from scratch, or migrating an existing website/application, our dedicated project managers and design team work with our 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.



For more information about Accella, please visit:
www.accella.net

About Our Partner: Viderity

Viderity is an information technology (IT) and business consulting company headquartered 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