Legendary university football team excites and engages fans through interactive apps created using Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Enterprise Edition

Best known as the "Fighting Irish," the legendary University of Notre Dame football team elicits excitement and loyalty among fans. To entertain and capitalize on the football frenzy, the university’s Athletic Department set out to create rich, interactive tablet apps to deliver an even more engaging, multi-screen content experience. To produce the digital publications, the university works with Joe Zeff Design and relies on the powerful Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Enterprise Edition.

The apps support the enthusiasm of Notre Dame football fans by enabling them to access, explore, and share football information—before, during, and after games. As a first endeavor into digital publishing, Notre Dame worked with Zeff to create the comprehensive 2013 Notre Dame Football Bowl Championship Series (BCS) Gameday app—completed in just 11 days.

Available for iOS, the BCS Gameday app is unique. Most other football or BCS-related apps at the time provided a game-by-game approach, but Notre Dame's app reviewed the season and provided a comprehensive preview of the BCS Championship game.

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Results
- Created immersive, interactive BCS Gameday app in 11 days
- Secured 74,000 total app launches and acquired more than one million content impressions
- Created compelling digital yearbook app and folios to keep sports fans engaged and connected with the team and university
- Leveraged existing, in-house skills with Adobe creative software to empower weekly, cost-effective content publishing
A fan favorite

Notre Dame Football’s first public app, BCS Gameday, was an instant hit, with positive user reviews on iTunes and more than 11,000 downloads in two weeks, without an initial promotional push. Then, after marketing the app on CBSSports.com, as well as through social media channels and the Notre Dame website, downloads grew to hundreds per day leading up to the BCS Championship game. “Based on the success of the BCS Gameday app we knew we wanted to expand our digital publishing strategy, take an active look at the upcoming season, and offer something more comprehensive to fans,” says Dan Skendzel, senior associate athletics director for digital media for Notre Dame.

The user experience for the BCS app was phenomenal, and the reactions from fans were impressive, too. With the BCS app, Notre Dame had 74,000 total app launches and acquired more than one million content impressions. They were able to obtain and process these insights with the analytics capabilities available through the dashboard in Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Enterprise Edition.

Energized by the results of the first foray into digital publishing, Notre Dame next worked with Zeff to create another public “year in review” app, the Notre Dame Football Interactive Yearbook. Featured in the yearbook are interactive rosters, history, rivalry trophies, a 3D animation of Notre Dame Stadium, fully immersive panoramic images of campus locations, profiles of each Notre Dame football athlete and coach, previews of each 2013 game, links to video content, live Twitter feeds, and more. The university got the word out about the app on cost-effective channels such as social media and talk radio.

The app was developed using Digital Publishing Suite, Enterprise Edition, which allowed the team to deploy pre-existing, experiential content on nearly every screen: embedded video, animated typography, parallax-infused photography, an up-to-the-minute Twitter feed, social sharing tools, and more. Notre Dame also customized the viewer in the app to connect to the university website, where fans can watch football, purchase merchandise, capture emails, and manage and read content.

Easily consumed, syndicated content for fans

Using the Interactive Yearbook app as a foundation, Notre Dame’s digital publishing team and Zeff then began creating “bite-sized” content folios using Digital Publishing Suite under the “Go Irish” moniker. With Digital Publishing Suite, the feature-rich app was created in less than six weeks, far less time than it would take to create a similar app in another environment. There will be 12 issues of an interactive game day program throughout the 2013 season.

Each issue is packed with previews, rosters, features, and lineups for the upcoming game and multimedia recaps of the previous game. Notre Dame compiles content and shares it with Zeff and his team that then designs the folios and works with Notre Dame to publish them to iOS using Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Enterprise Edition.
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Notre Dame appreciates the flexibility of creating one app, yet fueling it with weekly content to keep fans engaged. The ability to publish content on a more frequent basis keeps university enthusiasts engaged, without incurring ongoing print publishing and mailing costs.

"We want our content to be available through multiple channels," says Skendzel. "We made a conscious decision to package frequent and regularly released content. Every ‘Go Irish’ folio will come out a few days before each football game to excite fans and connect them with the team."

Endless possibilities
To increase the efficiency of Notre Dame’s creative team and make their digital publishing efforts even faster and easier, Joe Zeff Design has created templates for Adobe Digital Publishing Suite that enable in-house contributors at the university to create their own interactive content and publish it to tablets. Notre Dame staff can work within established Adobe creative workflows, including leveraging existing Adobe InDesign expertise, to cost efficiently create tablet applications under tight deadlines.

Notre Dame is leveraging the popularity of the football team DPS apps to draw attention to the University’s other 25 varsity sports, as well as its renowned academic programs.

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For more information