

DIRECTV, Inc.

Nation's No. 1 satellite TV service kicks off groundbreaking Adobe video experience across multiple devices that scores big with NFL football fans

DIRECTV

www.directv.com



In Partnership With

BLITZ

www.blitzagency.com

gskinner.com

www.gskinner.com

Industry

Entertainment

Challenges

- Extend the DIRECTV experience beyond the home
- Build strong services that retain customers

Solution

- Rich, device- and platform-independent video experience
- DIRECTV drives football fans wild with ultra-cool, premium service that customizes the NFL season across devices.

Results

- Helped boost premium subscriptions
- Increased use over previous attempt at web delivery
- Achieved thousands of desktop downloads at start of season
- Enhanced customer satisfaction
- Protected licensed properties
- Helped to ensure content security
- Enabled cost-effective, rapid team development process

Richest experience in the game

Football fans, boot up. It's National Football League (NFL) game day, and DIRECTV is streaming live, every play, every minute of every game onto your computer. Log in to Supercast™, DIRECTV's innovative service that extends the entire interactive NFL SUNDAY TICKET™ video experience beyond the living room and directly to subscribers' computers and on the web in real time.

DIRECTV, Inc., the nation's No. 1 satellite television service, presents the finest television experiences to more than 17.6 million customers. DIRECTV customers enjoy access to over 265 channels of 100% digital picture and sound, exclusive programming, and superior technologies that include the highest level state-of-the-art interactive sports packages available anywhere.

Using Adobe® Flex®, Flash® Professional, and AIR®, a pair of cutting-edge design and development firms—interactive marketing agency BLITZ and gskinner.com—collaborated with DIRECTV to produce the Supercast solution, which is a free service offered to NFL SUNDAY TICKET SuperFan® subscribers.

“DIRECTV continues to transform the media landscape by creating more ubiquity to the DIRECTV viewing experience,” says Steven Roberts, senior vice president, New Media and Business Development, DIRECTV, Inc. “Adobe tools enabled us to provide our customers with a rich, platform-agnostic professional sports service that far surpasses what other providers offer. This personalized video solution provides unparalleled functionality, quality, and performance.”

Better season coverage

Football fans want access to information in a quick and easy way. DIRECTV partnered with the right players to build a compelling, consistent, interactive experience across devices that would differentiate DIRECTV in the satellite entertainment space.

“Supercast is a gift that makes DIRECTV's customers extra happy,” says Brendan Works, senior project manager at BLITZ. Subscribers can instantly enjoy live Sunday NFL games, highlights of major plays, and real-time scores on a Mac or PC—either as a downloadable desktop application or within their web browser. Fans can view uninterrupted, high-quality streaming video of the day's action (all 14 games), without having to miss any of their favorite games.

Within the first weeks of launch, thousands of subscribers downloaded Supercast powered by Adobe AIR. Supercast is contributing to the steady rise of SuperFan subscriptions year over year, as well.

“Fan reaction was incredible and we saw significant growth compared to the previous year,” says Roberts. “Enabling our customers to enjoy their video entertainment experience wherever and whenever they want it is an important differentiator for DIRECTV and we see enormous opportunities in this area in the years ahead.”

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Steven Roberts,
Senior vice president,
New Media and Business Development,
DIRECTV, Inc.

Systems At A Glance

- Adobe AIR
- Adobe Flex
- Adobe Flex Builder™
- Adobe Flash Professional
- Adobe Flash Media Server
- Adobe Flash Media Rights Management Server

For More Information

www.adobe.com/products/air/
www.adobe.com/products/flash/
www.adobe.com/products/flex/
www.adobe.com/products/flashmediaserver/

User interface end run

According to the developers, it is the depth of the Adobe development platform with Adobe Flex, Flash Professional, and AIR that made this project not only feasible but extremely successful. Adobe solutions brought this project to life and made it exciting and unique.

Grant Skinner of gskinner.com sums it up. “We could have streamed the video with QuickTime, but we couldn’t have delivered such rich interaction. We could have deployed to multiple environments using Java™, but without the great customization. We could have used HTML, but getting full-screen video would have been a problem and there would be no picture-in-picture feature. So it is really a combination of all the functionality that Flash Professional, Flex, and AIR bring to the table that makes this project so compelling.” The same code base is deployed on the Mac and PC, and it even works on Linux®.

The teams used Adobe Flex for layout and standard controls, and used Adobe Flash Professional for skinning and custom controls under tight deadlines in rapid iterative workflows. “There’s no other environment that would let us provide such a rich experience across as many platforms,” says Skinner. “We could have approached this challenge as three separate projects, but it would have taken us three times as long. There’s no other technology that can deliver such high performance across devices and platforms in such a cost effective way.”

The web version of Supercast is a subset of the AIR client version, so the two code bases are maintained simultaneously. “To create the web project, I just pointed to the AIR project, opened up a new Flex project, and overrode a handful of code,” says Skinner.

As well, the combination of Flash Media Server and Flash Media Rights Management Server helps ensure that the video streams are secure. The system authenticates users as current DIRECTV customers and prevents content from being copied to the desktop, or other sites such as YouTube.

Scoring brand value

While consuming streaming video today on the web has become such a pervasive part of the popular lifestyle, DIRECTV believes the desktop aspect of Supercast as an Adobe AIR application is an important exploration into the future of digital content consumption.

DIRECTV has demonstrated what is technically possible and delivered a rich, satisfying, user experience across platforms and devices. It is committed to Adobe technology to further push what is possible in viewing its content on multiple platforms.



Adobe

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