

Language Learning Application Design for Vista Higher Learning



Client Background

Independent, specialized, and privately owned, Vista Higher Learning (VHL) was founded in 2000, as a publisher focused exclusively on world languages instructional materials. VHL's main goal is to provide students with the tools necessary for achieving success in languages learning, both inside and outside the classroom. VHL's mission is to create superior quality language programs that boldly integrate text, technology, and media.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

To encourage more users to learn languages through their products, Vista Higher Learning created an application to help introductory students of Spanish successfully and confidently communicate in real-life situations. The current mobility era pushed VHL to expand their products to mobile platforms and devices. Hence, the company decided to iteratively transfer features of their main Web product to mobile. The application needed to be supported on both iOS and Android platforms to serve the needs of more users. Having developed the core features of the application, Vista Higher Learning partnered with SoftServe to ensure its usability through unique design and powerful course management tools.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Within a 6-month project divided into three stages SoftServe's team of 2 iOS and 2 Android developers, as well as a Quality Control engineer and a Project Manager accomplished the following:

- **Stage 1.** Refactoring and optimization of the existing iOS app code base; implementing tweaks to UX.
- **Stage 2.** Building Android app from scratch (with functionality identical to iOS).
- **Stage 3.** Reworking both iOS and Android apps to support bookshelf approach, i.e. when every book and every particular lesson within a book can be downloaded independently from the rest of the content.



To streamline the process, increase stakeholders' awareness, and reduce rework, the SoftServe's team:

- Applied Scrum iterations of 1-2 week length
- Established frequent communication (emails, Skype chat, on demand calls) with product owners and other decision makers to clarify requirements
- Set daily stand-ups and delivered weekly demos for all stakeholders to report on every iteration.

The collaborative SoftServe's and VHL's teams accomplished the following:

- Divided the application features into two groups: *functional units* and *content*. As a result, functionality handled content by parsing the appropriate XML files, which allowed customization or a complete update of lesson materials without any changes to the application logics.
- Enabled the application in both online and offline modes.
- Developed and implemented an intuitive design taking into account the iOS User Interface guidelines and standards, as well as UI/UX expertise of the client's designer team.
- Added the ability to share users' achievements with their friends via Facebook, Twitter, or email.

"When our customers asked us to deliver learning products on mobile devices, we turned to our trusted partner, SoftServe. SoftServe worked closely with us to deliver mobile learning applications that satisfy Vista Higher Learning's rigorous quality standards."

Kurt Gerdenich,
SVP, Technology, Vista Higher Learning

BUSINESS VALUE

As SoftServe has vast expertise in mobile apps development, Vista Higher Learning addressed our company to create their language learning application from scratch. As a result of the project, SoftServe designed multifunctional and fully tested mobile iOS and Android applications with user friendly and intuitive interface. Another benefit for Vista Higher Learning is application's scalability. Even though the current version of the application serves only Spanish learners, the content update approach facilitates easy expansion with minimum intervention in the core application logic.

ABOUT SOFTSERVE INC.

SoftServe, Inc. is a leading global software application development and consulting company. We immerse ourselves in our client's business and relentlessly focus on providing technology solutions that create tangible business value. Our robust competencies include business and technology consulting, software optimization, SaaS/Cloud, Mobile, UI/UX and BI/Analytics for vertical markets such as healthcare, retail and high tech.

SoftServe developed Abiliton, a set of adaptive best practices and processes for software development optimization comprised of people, processes and technology. Abiliton ensures predictable, repeatable results and faster time to market, positioning businesses for scalable growth.

With over 20 years of industry excellence, SoftServe delivers rich user experiences, intuitive products and solutions providing our clients with a strong competitive advantage. Our offices are located in North America, Europe and Russia.

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US OFFICES

Austin, TX
Fort Myers, FL
Boston, MA
Newport Beach, CA
Salt Lake City, UT

EUROPE OFFICES

United Kingdom
Germany
Netherlands
Ukraine
Bulgaria
Russia
Poland

EMAIL

info@softserveinc.com

WEBSITE:

www.softserveinc.com

USA TELEPHONE

Toll-Free: 866.687.3588
Office: 239.690.3111

UK TELEPHONE

Tel: 0207.544.8414

GERMAN TELEPHONE

Tel: 0692.602.5857