

PolitiFact
Truth be told



PolitiFact, produced by the
St. Petersburg Times
St. Petersburg, Florida
www.politifact.com

Pulitzer Prize-winning news organization launches high-impact mobile application for iOS and Android™ devices, using the Adobe® Flash® Platform to help sort out the truth in politics

Political rhetoric can be confounding, even to the sharpest mind. But accuracy trumps oratory at PolitiFact, where no statement made by politicians, pundits, and anyone else who speaks up in government goes unchecked. Fact checking has long been integral to news reporting in print and on the web. But never has American politics been so accessible, transparent, and fun to follow on mobile devices than with the PolitiFact® Mobile app, where the Adobe Flash Platform helps people separate political fact from fiction—from anywhere.

Started in 2007, PolitiFact is a project of the *St. Petersburg Times*, which is owned by Times Publishing Co. PolitiFact provides unprecedented insight into the American political landscape—leveraging Adobe technology to capture and visualize data to rate, rank, and publish the facts about political claims. When politicians make statements, PolitiFact reporters research the facts and rate the accuracy on a Truth-O-Meter™ from True to False—or the lowest rating, Pants on Fire. PolitiFact also tracks campaign promises of candidates and rates them a variety of ways, including In the Works, Promise Kept, or Promise Broken. During the 2008 U.S. presidential race, PolitiFact published nearly a thousand ratings and articles in print and on the web, for which it was awarded a 2009 Pulitzer Prize in national reporting.

“Without question, the Adobe Flash Platform—specifically Adobe Flash Builder™ 4.5—allowed us to create a scalable, portable experience that is more compelling than we ever could have imagined.”

Bill Adair
Editor, PolitiFact, and
Washington bureau chief, *St. Petersburg Times*

Challenge

- Transform the web experience readers were used to into a new mobile channel
- Repackaging existing data into a compelling, pocket-sized data visualization experience

Solution

- Cross-platform mobile app

Benefits

- Rapid development and built-in testing capabilities allowed for deployment of mobile app in three weeks
- Saved development resources by building once, deploying across multiple platforms
- Created scalable solution for potential customized versions for different states
- Received positive reviews from the media and users

Toolkit

Adobe Flash Platform. Components used include:

- Adobe Flash Builder 4.5
- Adobe Flex framework

Adobe Creative Suite®. Components used include:

- Adobe Illustrator CSS

Now, using Adobe Flash Builder 4.5 and the Flex™ framework, PolitiFact’s reach has broadened to the mobile marketplace—with the launch of the first fact-checking app in the Android marketplace and the iTunes store. With its innovative user experience featuring data visualization not found anywhere else, the PolitiFact Mobile app is available on all major platforms and devices: iOS, Android, BlackBerry® PlayBook, and Barnes & Noble NOOKcolor.

“Without question, the Adobe Flash Platform—specifically Adobe Flash Builder 4.5—allowed us to create a scalable, portable experience that is more compelling than we ever could have imagined,” says Bill Adair, editor of PolitiFact and Washington bureau chief of the *St. Petersburg Times*.

Rapidly building dashboards and data visualizations

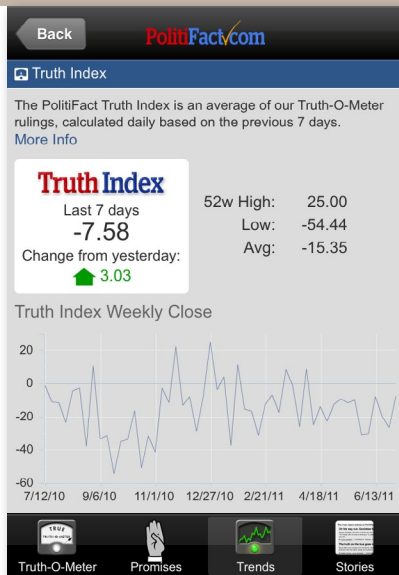
One of the most important criteria for this app was to tap into the robust framework of PolitiFact, and repackage it for mobile consumption. The impetus for the mobile app was to create a new channel where users gain greater insight into PolitiFact’s timely findings through the use of intuitive dashboards and charts—bringing static data alive and putting it into the palm of the hand. Not an easy feat.

A prototype app connected to live data was built in two days. The entire development took only three weeks, with one developer working part-time. Out-of-the-box charting components in Flash Builder enabled rapid iteration and testing on different devices, streamlining the development process and easily turning new ideas into reality.

Adobe Flash Builder 4.5 and the Flex framework made it possible to develop just one code base and, with only minor tweaks to suit the size, resolution, and density characteristics of different screens, easily deploy across all mobile platforms and test across multiple mobile devices—eliminating the time-consuming and expensive need to build and test a separate native application for each individual device. Deploying the application on multiple mobile and tablet screens is resolved with Adobe Flash Builder 4.5 tooling, including media queries and support for multiple dpi bit maps. Additionally, vector graphics created in Adobe Illustrator® CSS were quickly scaled to fit different device screen sizes, which are all preconfigured in Adobe Flash Builder 4.5.

“The Adobe Flash Platform enabled us to rapidly produce a compelling mobile experience that unquestionably appeals to a highly engaged mobile audience,” says Adair. The PolitiFact Mobile app performs like lightning by leveraging the embedded support for databases in the Flex framework, enabling any device to cache static data without making a call to the server.

Developing with Adobe Flash Builder 4.5 and the Flex framework helped get PolitiFact Mobile to market significantly faster at considerably less cost, helping to increase adoption within the mobile communities.



“The new PolitiFact Mobile app repackages our extremely rich data to present it in creative and helpful ways. The Adobe Flash Platform made it easy to create a great app quickly and efficiently.”

Bill Adair
Editor, PolitiFact, and
Washington bureau chief, *St. Petersburg Times*

The PolitiFact app has many features not available on the web that cater to mobile users, two of which really stand out. One is the Truth Index—a rolling Dow-Jones-Average type of visualization that aggregates the ups and downs of Truth-O-Meter ratings across the entire American political scene on a daily basis. The app also provides tallies of Truth-O-Meter and Flip-O-Meter ratings that aren't available on the PolitiFact website.

Cross-country scalability

Now that PolitiFact has completed its national app, the organization is drilling down to a more granular level—state by state. The skinning and styling capabilities in Adobe Flash Builder makes it easy to implement a separate, branded version of the mobile app for the nine PolitiFact state sites.

“Building the PolitiFact Mobile app in Flex with Adobe Flash Builder got us to market significantly faster at considerably less cost, allowing us to far exceed our expectations of adoption within the massive Android and iOS communities,” notes Adair.

For more information
www.adobe.com/flashplatform



Adobe Systems Incorporated
345 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110-2704
USA
www.adobe.com

© 2011 Adobe Systems Incorporated. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

Adobe, the Adobe logo, Creative Suite, Flash, Flash Builder, Flex, and Illustrator are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. Android is a registered trademark of Google Inc. BlackBerry, RIM, Research In Motion and related trademarks, names and logos are the property of Research In Motion Limited and are registered and/or used in the U.S. and countries around the world. Used under license from Research In Motion Limited. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

91053318 8/11