



Abstract

Open Reply has been working with Tesco as one of the key partners in the creation of the Hudl Tablet, which marks another significant step towards the retailer's vision of the future – to be an outstanding international retailer in stores and online.

Tesco is deadly serious about taking its online presence to new levels in the digital space, which will enable it to fend off competitors like Amazon and Google and go on a digital journey with its customers.

Tesco chose Open Reply as a strategic development partner to work on a number of areas:

- To customise Hudl's Android Operating System and adapt it to work on the tablet and deliver the brand message
- Create the 'Over The Air' update distribution system
- Create the 'Getting Started App' which covers everything for the new user from hardware to software and how to customise internet safety settings

Scenario

Tesco is one of the world's largest retailers, operating in 12 countries globally, employing over 530,000 people and serving tens of millions of customers every week.

A British company, headquartered in the UK, Tesco's origins were in the grocery trade. Since the early 1990s, however, Tesco has expanded geographically and has diversified into the sale of books, clothing, electronics, furniture, petrol and software. It has also set up as a provider of financial, telecoms and internet services.

Tesco has always been close to its customers. From inception of the Clubcard in 1995, Tesco has worked hard to understand its customers' needs and respond to how they are living their lives; offering them the best value, choice and service across all of its products and services.

Today's connected world means that many of us, including Tesco's customers, live in a 'mixed reality' enabled by technology. We have a new generation who don't really distinguish between online and offline and they expect a seamless experience between the two. People want convenience from one device; they want to communicate with friends and family as well as shop, browse and search for information at home, at work or on the go.

In a recent study carried out by Reply on the role of mobile in retail commerce, results show shopping to be one of the most popular tablet-related activities. According to the research, 90% of tablet owners use their device to browse websites, with some 79% using them to make a purchase.

Using this digital environment, Tesco wanted to develop new ways of communicating and reaching out to customers, whilst making their lives easier and more enjoyable. With technology fast becoming a core part of family life and tablets being a growing part of that, Tesco set about building its own tablet computer, Hudl.

The development of Hudl would enable it to get closer to its customers by providing everything they needed from the retailer in one place, not only making life easier but offering a shopping and entertainment experience that is second to none. There also seemed to be a gap in the market for an affordable device that could be customised to a family where the users would be of different ages and have different interests.

The concept for the 'Hudl' was born, a new 7-inch HD tablet which carried all the features and content Tesco's customers are looking for in an easy to use, family friendly way.

Tesco designed and built the tablet from scratch, tailoring it around customer needs and ease of use. Hudl users can enjoy instant access to Tesco's full range of digital services, in one place, through a convenient, dedicated launcher button. These include the latest blinkbox movies and TV, music, Clubcard TV (which offers free films and TV programmes exclusively for Clubcard holders), banking services and, of course, online shopping for groceries, clothing, home-ware and much more.

The solution

Open Reply, the Reply company that specialises in the delivery of creative and technologically innovative mobile brand and commerce solutions, has been a key partner in the creation of Hudl.

Reply's role as a development partner had many facets. Open Reply worked closely with Tesco and its other partners on this project from 2012 working on many aspects of the device; from customising the core Android OS, the development of apps and widgets, through to advising Tesco and its design partners on how best to design the Apps and Widgets in delivering the optimal Android experience.

Tesco had a clear strategy and vision to deliver a native Android experience subtly enhanced with its branding and convenience of accessing its digital services. This vision required a light customisation of the Android Operating System, something that requires deep expertise and knowledge of Google's Android Operating System, which very few tablet manufacturers have achieved.

Open Reply worked with Tesco to find the best way to personalise Android to Tesco's specifications. Open Reply's knowledge of Android enabled Tesco, as a device manufacturer, to gain access to the key Google services so essential to today's mobile device.

The biggest element of the Android customisation was the modification of the classic Android navigation bar to incorporate a Tesco specific launcher button that provides one touch access to all the Tesco online services. The launcher button is simple to use and makes it easy and enjoyable for Tesco customers to access its services.

Other cosmetic but important details like the 'wallpaper', boot logo and sound were amongst the other Android customisation changes.

In addition to the operating system, Open Reply worked on many apps that would introduce the device and its features to the user including the tailor made 'Getting Started App' found on the Hudl device. Reviews of this app have been positive with a special nod to the guidance provided to enable users to set up locks and filters with young family members in mind.

Trusted Reviews on 28 October 2013 said: "For total tablet newbies, the Tesco Hudl Getting Started application is a good place to head to first. As guides go, this is one of

the better ones we've seen on a tablet. Covering hardware and software, everything is explained clearly and the addition of interactive pins to find out about precise buttons and features in different apps makes getting to drips with the Hudl really easy."

The app is a showcase for the most advanced Android UX patterns, combining the ability to navigate through a wealth of content with short and easy to assimilate concept cards, while using gamification to show user progress. The development team also created widgets to 'push' access to other elements of the Hudl proposition - so, for example, a Clubcard widget to give Clubcard owners access to their points; and a Tesco Direct widget to introduce the on-line store.

The final element of the development from Open Reply was the design, delivery, hosting, and on-going management of the 'Over The Air' update distribution system. This enables operating system updates to be distributed to the device and download via WiFi, as new versions become available, enabling Tesco to continue to evolve and innovate the Android OS / Tesco experience keeping customers up to date with the latest android technology. With a customer base as big as Tesco's and taking into account the Christmas season 'spikes' of new device activations, this exercise required careful planning and scoping.

Reply value

Open Reply's contribution, as a strategic development partner with deep expertise on Android has been essential to the success of the project, with the team working closely with Tesco, from interface design through to software customisation.

Open Reply acted as an integrator to many elements of the software design and infrastructure behind the design of the Tablet. This integration required an international approach with 24/7 communications needed to encompass all the parties involved. The team's ability to manage an international project, with multiple partners working remotely from different continents, ensured that the project was carried out with an impressively low time to market, allowing Tesco to launch Hudl well in advance of the Christmas season - a point that is critical for most retailers.

Open Reply is a Reply company that specialises in delivering creative and technologically innovative mobile brand and commerce solutions. From mobile web to native apps, on both smartphone and tablet, Open Reply fuses the best creative and technology to deliver conversations optimised for the mobile device that increase engagement and commerce conversions.

Reply [MTA, STAR: REY] specialises in the design and implementation of solutions based on new communication channels and digital media. Through its network of specialist companies, Reply supports some of Europe's leading industrial groups in Telco & Media, Industry & Services, Banks & Insurance, and Public Administration to define and develop business models, suited to the new paradigms of Big Data, Cloud Computing, Digital Media and the Internet of Things. Reply services include consulting, system integration and application management.

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