

The evolution of hybrid app development

 By Nick Durrant

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What do Google, Twitter, Uber, Instagram, Amazon, Facebook, Netflix and Microsoft have in common? Aside from being some of the most influential tech companies in the world with legions of customers, they all either started out as or transitioned into hybrid apps.



Bluegrass Digital CEO Nick Durrant | image supplied

Hybrid mobile app development techniques are not only gaining popularity among some of the tech industry's biggest brands, but they hold equal appeal for smaller brands too. Businesses are increasingly using hybrid mobile app development because it allows them to build applications that operate across various platforms including Android, Windows and iOS.

Most people don't realise that many of the apps they're using every day are hybrid. If you've watched the latest Netflix blockbuster, joined a quick Teams call, posted a Reel on Instagram or sent a mail using Gmail, you've used a hybrid app.

Why do some of the biggest tech companies use this approach? I believe that the main reason is versatility. Hybrid app development just makes sense when you consider the number of customers that these tech brands have. But this approach isn't only appealing for the big guys, it is also beneficial for smaller businesses.

When using a hybrid approach to app development, developers only need to write code once. This code can then run on many different operating systems. For businesses with limited budgets, and thus, limited resources, it doesn't make sense to have to do the same thing over and over again. It makes sense to embrace different approaches that allow you to use the resources you have in the most efficient way.

Below, I highlight eight reasons why hybrid mobile apps are garnering so much support from some of the tech industry's most successful, and influential tech businesses.

They're quicker to develop

This is probably one of the most appealing selling points of hybrid mobile apps. Hybrid mobile apps are easier and faster to develop when compared to native apps. This is because hybrid apps make it possible to use an existing web development toolkit so you don't have to create separate codebases for each platform.

They're more cost-effective

When you don't have to spend time developing different applications for different platforms, you spend less money. As long as hybrid apps take less time to create, they will be cheaper to build.

As mentioned above, hybrid applications have a single line of code that can be used across several platforms, so development teams can move a lot quicker and they don't have to waste maintaining numerous code bases. This, obviously, reduces budgets.



Reduce the cost of mobile app development

Nick Durrant, Bluegrass Digital 12 Nov 2020



They make it easier to connect with a wider audience

If your application is only available on one app store, you're limiting the number of customers you can reach. With hybrid app development, your code can be published across several mobile app marketplaces. This delivers greater brand visibility, which, hopefully, translates into securing more customers.

They're highly scalable

Hybrid apps can scale much quicker because it's easy to build in new features. If, for example, you develop a new feature for Android but iOS users have to wait to access this fresh functionality, the delay could cause some frustration among users.

With hybrid apps, this issue is avoided because developers can optimise these apps for use on multiple operating systems without significant effort. This makes it far easier for businesses to scale.

They provide an enhanced user experience

Today, perhaps more so than ever, user experience is everything. With hybrid apps, the benefits of native apps and web apps are combined so that the user experience is consistent across different platforms and devices.

Hybrid apps immediately adapt to the user device and screen size so that users are given the same experiences whether

they're using the app on their computer, tablet or smartphone.

They're easy to fix and maintain

With native apps, developer teams have to release updates and new versions for each platform. By doing away with versioning, hybrid apps make real-time app administration possible, which means that app maintenance is as simple as updating a web page. As mentioned above, this makes it much easier for the app to grow with the business as it scales up.

They run faster

We typically download mobile apps because we want to do something faster and more conveniently, but if the app they are using takes a long time to respond, people won't want to use it.

Hybrid apps perform a lot faster because they can handle heavy loads of content and large numbers of users. This reality is particularly appealing for the likes of Instagram and Twitter, for example, who have massive numbers of users and who always want to deliver a smooth experience.

They integrate easily

The beauty of hybrid mobile apps is that they use a device's programming language to synchronise with other compatible apps. This is important because it means that developers don't have to worry about integration.

Being able to seamlessly integrate features GPS, games, messages, camera and other device data makes it possible to provide the best user experience, which, in turn, increases customer satisfaction.

ABOUT NICK DURRANT

Nick Durrant is MD at Bluegrass Digital, a digital solutions company with offices in Cape Town, Johannesburg and London. We are experts in crafting web and mobile products and platforms. After spending 17 years in working the tech industry in the UK and setting up the Bluegrass in London in 1999, Nicholas now runs the company from Cape Town, developing the business into Africa and Europe offering world class digital solutions.

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