



TRAVEL APP TESTING

Overcoming the top challenges of
travel application testing

THE CHALLENGES OF TRAVEL APPLICATIONS

The travel industry is all about being on the go. If website and mobile app developers want to keep up with their users, applications need to be spot on – no matter where in the world your user is.

Because of the nature of travel, developers in this industry face a unique set of challenges. In addition to apps working on-the-go, they also need to be properly localized so users understand the plans they're making. Tight security is another vital factor, ensuring users' personal information isn't leaked. But those are just a few of the challenges facing travel app developers and testers.

With travelers drifting away from traditional travel agents and turning to the internet for planning and execution, websites and mobile apps are more important than ever. According to a 2013 press release by comScore, US consumer online travel spending surpassed \$100 billion for the first time in 2012. Their study declared travel apps as the second fastest growing app category.

If you want to get in on the trend – and build a base of recurring users – you need to please them the first time and every time. That means you can't fall victim to any of these common travel app challenges.

FUN FACT

87% OF TRAVELERS USED THE INTERNET FOR THE BULK OF THEIR TRAVEL PLANNING.

30% OF TRAVELERS HAVE USED MOBILE APPS TO FIND HOTEL DEALS.

29% OF TRAVELERS HAVE USED MOBILE APPS TO FIND FLIGHT DEALS.

(FUNSHERPA)

IN-THE-WILD TESTING

In-the-wild testing is the practice of moving part of your QA out of the lab and into the real world. Testing under real-world conditions provides a better perspective of how apps will work in the hands of your users. It also gives you access to a greater range of devices, operating systems, versions and carriers. [Learn more >>>](#)

MUST TRAVEL WELL

THE PROBLEM •• Whether a traveler makes plans sitting in front of a desktop or on a mobile device, they're not going to be stationary for long. A mobile-optimized site or a native app is vital for continued user interaction.

Once your users are on-the-go, geo-location services need to work flawlessly and your app cannot encounter problems as it moves across towers or connectivity levels. If a GPS-based event fails, it can mean big problems for your user – and their trust in you. (We all remember the original Apple Maps.)

HOW IN-THE-WILD TESTING HELPS ••

You simply cannot test motion and GPS-based functionality while sitting in a lab. The only way to ensure your app will work correctly while it's on-the-go in the real world is to test it on-the-go in the real world. In-the-wild testing does just that.

FUN FACT

Of those who use a mobile device while traveling, 67% use an app for GPS and map functions while 61.5% use an app to find nearby restaurants and attractions. (Prosper Mobile Insights)

APPLAUSE EXPERIENCE •• A transportation company produced an app to help limo drivers and their passengers connect at pick-up points. To test this app, the company needed a pair of testers on-location at more than a dozen airports around the world to ensure the geo-location feature functioned properly. This type of testing is cost-prohibitive to perform with in-house teams.

APPLAUSE TAPPED ITS GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO FIND VETTED TESTERS WITHIN THE VICINITY OF THE TARGET AIRPORTS. THESE TESTERS WENT TO THE NEARBY AIRPORTS AND TESTED THE APP ON-LOCATION.

By leveraging Applause's in-the-wild testing services, the transportation company was able to test its app efficiently and cost effectively and ensure a consistent user experience around the world.

LOCALIZATION

THE PROBLEM •• Unlike other industries, travel companies are often trying to appeal to users around the world. This requires a high degree of app localization.

Simple translations aren't enough. For every new region you target, your app needs to be localized for factors like language, formatting, cultural relevance, conversions and a slew of other factors. A mistranslated word is bad enough; an app that doesn't properly calculate taxes when a user books a trip or an app that doesn't format a phone number in a way native users recognize will cause major problems.

HOW IN-THE-WILD TESTING HELPS •• Translation services simply translate text from one language to another. They're not checking for cultural understanding or other important factors a native consumer will notice right away.

In-the-wild testing gives you the ability to test your website or mobile app with native speakers on location in your target market. These testers are immersed in the culture and will catch issues you never even considered.

EXTRA TIP

Localization testing doesn't have to be a daunting task. Learn how leveraging a global community of professional testers allows companies of any size to conduct L10N testing.

LEARN MORE

APPLAUSE EXPERIENCE •• An international online travel booking company wanted to test the localization of their apps targeting South American countries.

ONE OF OUR TESTERS, A CULTURAL NATIVE, RAISED THE ISSUE THAT IN THAT REGION OF THE WORLD "MOTEL" CARRIES A STIGMA OF BEING A PLACE TO MEET PEOPLE OTHER THAN ONE'S SPOUSE. SUCH A MISTAKE COULD CAUSE A DROP IN BOOKINGS AND POTENTIALLY DAMAGE THE COMPANY'S REPUTATION.

Because Applause uses cultural natives to perform localization testing, customers gain confidence that their localized app not only has correct translations, but also the proper context necessary for running business in different countries.

AVOIDING FEATURE CREEP

THE PROBLEM •• Many travel app users are trying to accomplish a very specific task. They might even be in a time crunch scenario (getting a cab, boarding a flight, checking the status of a train). Even if users are casually browsing your site, they are likely there for a purpose, such as researching vacation ideas or trying to find information for later. It's important not to complicate the user experience by adding unnecessary features.

HOW IN-THE-WILD TESTING HELPS

•• When in-house teams test an app, they already have an idea of what it does and how it works. This understanding of the app means they might not realize that some features go unnoticed – or get in the way – during real-world use.

Testing in-the-wild, with your app being used by people who have never seen it before and who are thinking from the point of view of an unbiased end user, can help you determine if features should be cut.

EXTRA TIP

[Applause Analytics](#) is a mobile app quality tool that lets you see what real users are saying about your app. Don't spend hours combing through app store reviews – Applause Analytics crawls the ratings and reviews in the Apple App Store and Google Play stores and distills the information into easy-to-understand, actionable data that highlights your strengths and weaknesses in the eyes of your users.

LEARN MORE

APPLAUSE EXPERIENCE •• Applause has tested the websites and mobile apps of some of the biggest names in online travel planning. Several of these customers have found great value in the 'tester review' feature of the Applause platform.

THE REVIEW FEATURE ALLOWS TESTERS TO PROVIDE USER FEEDBACK, WHICH HELPS THE TRAVEL COMPANIES UNDERSTAND WHICH FEATURES RESONATED WELL AND WHICH THE TESTERS DID NOT FIND USEFUL.

This feedback gave the companies a benchmark to build on with each development cycle going forward.

FUN FACT

WHEN ASKED WHICH FEATURES THEY'D LIKE TO SEE MOST IN TRAVEL APPS, TOP USER RESPONSES INCLUDED BETTER HELP MANAGING A TRIP & ITINERARY (32%) AND HELP FINDING A NEARBY PLACE (22%).

(CONCUR)

PERFORMANCE

THE PROBLEM •• Whether users are trying to perform a specific action or are just casually browsing, they expect results quickly. If users don't get results within three seconds, or if they encounter a problem, they are likely to move onto a different application. If you want to keep users coming back to *your* app, performance is key.

The timely performance of push notifications is also exceptionally important for travel apps. If a user's flight is delayed or their cab is about to arrive, getting that push notification at the right time is vital to a good experience.

HOW IN-THE-WILD TESTING HELPS ••

Performance is dependent on many factors – all of which change constantly outside of a lab environment. Connectivity, load, network access and other programs running on the device can all have an affect on how well your app performs.

Testing in-the-wild lets you recreate all of these real-world challenges. Having testers work in the same locations and situations they'd be using the app in will give you a better sense of the performance your end users will experience.

APPLAUSE EXPERIENCE •• A well-known travel company wanted to test its application in its top 12 markets – including major cities in the US and Canada – to ensure performance in these key regions was consistent and up to their expectations.

Applause set up testing teams in all 12 target markets. Working with one testing solution ensured the travel company would get consistent test results and quality reporting from every region and limit the amount of overhead.

APPLAUSE ALLOWED THIS TOP TRAVEL COMPANY TO EXTEND THEIR TESTING REACH AND COVER TESTING NEEDS THAT COULD NOT BE MET WITH REMOTE TESTING. AFTER TESTING IN THEIR TOP 12 MARKETS, THE COMPANY WAS CONFIDENT ITS APP PERFORMS WELL FOR THE MAJORITY OF THEIR USERS.

DEVICE COVERAGE

THE PROBLEM •• Whether your travel app is a traditional website, a mobile site or a native app, it needs to work on a range of browsers, operating systems and devices if it's going to appeal to the modern traveler. Travelers come from all walks of life, which means they'll be using everything from old versions of Internet Explorer to the newest smartphones and OS versions on the market. If your app doesn't work properly on their specific device, you lose a customer. But covering this vast matrix in-house is incredibly costly and time consuming.

HOW IN-THE-WILD TESTING HELPS

•• Leveraging a community of professional testers in-the-wild gives you access to all these hardware/software combinations in the actual environments they function in. Your app will not only be tested on a range of smartphones or browsers, it will be tested in the context of the real world circumstances like add-ons, plug-ins, firewalls, concurrently running apps, outdated versions and any other situation the app will likely encounter in the hands of your users.

APPLAUSE EXPERIENCE •• A well-known travel booking company needed to test their site in the UK, where they didn't have a corporate presence. The company also needed to test on a range of devices they did not have access to.

APPLAUSE CREATED A CUSTOM TESTING TEAM LOCATED IN THE UK. TESTERS WERE SELECTED BASED ON THEIR LOCATION AND THEIR ACCESS TO DEVICES THE COMPANY NEEDED TO TARGET.

After leveraging Applause to fill the testing void, the travel company felt confident their application would work correctly on location and on devices popular in the UK.

WHEN RESEARCHING TRAVEL, 56% OF PEOPLE USE A LAPTOP, 49% USE A TABLET AND 48% USE A SMARTPHONE.

WHEN IT'S TIME TO MAKE TRAVEL-RELATED PURCHASES, 63% USE A LAPTOP, 39% USE A TABLET AND 27% USE A SMARTPHONE.

(JWIRE)

SOME HAPPY CLIENTS



APPLAUSE^o

ABOUT APPLAUSE

Applause is leading the app quality revolution by enabling companies to deliver digital experiences that win – from web to mobile to wearables and beyond. By combining in-the-wild testing services, software tools and analytics, Applause helps companies achieve the 360° app quality™ they need to thrive in the modern apps economy. Thousands of companies – including Google, Fox, Amazon, Box, Concur and Runkeeper – choose Applause to launch apps that delight their users.

Applause in-the-wild [testing services](#) span the app lifecycle, including [functional](#), [usability](#), [localization](#), [load](#) and [security](#).

Applause [app quality tools](#) help companies stay connected to their users and the health of their apps with [Mobile Beta Management](#), [Applause Analytics](#) and the [360° App Quality Dashboard](#).

The company is headquartered near Boston, with offices in San Mateo, Seattle, Germany, Israel and Poland – with resellers serving dozens of international markets. Since launching as uTest in 2008, Applause has raised more than \$80 million in funding, generated triple-digit revenue growth annually, made consecutive Inc. 500 appearances and was named the 7th Most Promising Company in America by Forbes in 2014.

APPLAUSE^o

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