Building the
2016 NAATW
Event App

My First App

Inspired by NCCYPAA's
2016 Conference

When I attended NCCYPAA's 2016 conference in September, I downloaded their app. While having the schedule and a contained social chat wall were cool additions, I was most impressed with the push notifications. They used them to notify us of schedule changes and to help get folks to sessions when they were about to start. I talked with the app creator and learned what he used.

buildfire.com

Buildfire is basically like wix or squarespace for apps.

Almost
Drag 'n Drop

While not quite drag 'n drop, it's pretty simple to navigate the workspace... once you're acquainted with it. It works with plugins (think widgets) that you create and then add to your app. There are many to choose from and they can get really complex and graphically interesting. As our app is only for use over the weekend, I didn't invest much time in making it pretty. Were it to be used for a longer term, it would be worth investing time to build it out.

Easy
Quirky

While it is pretty easy to work in, the backend is a little quirky. Things like having to set times with selectors rather than typing them in can be frustrating when you're in the groove. Additionally, with it all being online, you're at the mercy of content loading. Waiting for the schedule items list to populate before scrolling made me have to pause (hooray for the results of meditation!), for not pausing just sent me to the bottom of the page.

Getting Published

Getting published is easy... Kinda. With wanting to keep our costs low, we wanted to stay within 4 weeks from when we signed up to when the event is over and we pull the app from the stores. We had no issue getting published in the Apple App Store. Google Play was a different story. We were rejected with a form letter stating it was due to our violating their impersonation policy. There was no detail as to WHAT violated it. We sent them documentation about NAATW and that the app was a valid use of the logo and such. A day or so later, we were published. It took about a week for us to even know what to send them. From our experience, I recommend a lead time of 2+ weeks prior to event start to initiate publishing the app.

$25 one-time fee for Google Developer Account

Costs are minimal. $25 one-time fee for a Google Developer Account is needed to submit an app to Google Play. It's good for the life of the account.

Premium
$59/mo

iOS + Android + HTML5

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20k Downloads

50k Sessions / mo

50k Push
Notifications / mo

Unlimited Plugin
Instances

Email + Intercom Support

User Management

User Tagging

Analytics

$59/month hosting at buildfire.com

Buildfire's Premium plan is the cheapest plan they have that supports iOS & Android.

Tour the App

Let's take a look at the back end of the app (which also let's us see the front end as we're working)

Feel free to contact me with questions. Keep in mind this is my first app!
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