

Advancing mobile storytelling with Adobe's distributable player solution

Untravel Media was formed in 2006 to develop location-based stories over mobile devices. Sometimes known as "mixed reality," "heads up media," and "location-based storytelling," the concept is to bring the rich character and narrative strategies from filmmaking to media that mixes your surroundings with interactive, geo-coded media on mobile devices (see Figure 1). Untravel currently brings this expertise to the museum, travel, and film industries, while our long term vision is to develop a global channel of location-specific travel stories.



Figure 1. Examples of location-based mobile applications

Click figure 1 above to view an example of a location-based mobile application.

Flash Lite is rapidly becoming a prominent solution for such a mobile vision, and in this article we will discuss some key features in the Adobe Flash Lite distributable player solution, which are helping us overcome previous limitations in media size, format, and distribution. We will focus on our experience working with the Flash Lite marketing team last fall to develop one of the first implementations of the distributable player for Adobe's *2008 MAX Conference* in San Francisco.

Untravel worked with the distributable player solution group at Adobe to create a multimedia guide that allowed attendees to quickly browse the hundreds of sessions, events, and workshops at the conference. The guide also had short speaker videos linked to the session and workshop details. All of this was integrated into a lively Flash application hosted by the Conference mascot, Max. The content was delivered via website (<http://adobe.untravelmedia.com>), mobile web, and kiosks at the conference.

This article will provide an overview of our early work in Flash Lite from 2004 to 2006, and then get into some of the advancements we experienced working with the new distributable player solution. We will finish with some discussion of the future of this technology and its implications for how we explore places we visit.

About the authors

Max Antinori has been working with Flash for over a decade. His company, Max Media, produces rich content for a wide range of clients using Flash, Flex, and Flash Lite, with a particular focus on education and science-based projects. Max is an Adobe Community Expert (Mobile), an avid member of Boston Adobe Mobile and Devices User Group, and is always on the lookout for new ways to push the boundaries of Flash on devices.

Michael Epstein is the founder of Untravel Media, a Boston-based mobile media production and software company, working with the museum, film, and travel industries. Michael started working in this field in 2004 with a highly-publicized mobile narrative project in Venice, Italy in partnership with MIT, Dell and the European Union. The tour highlighted new forms of location-based storytelling, featuring documentary vignettes set in backstage areas of this tourist destination. Michael's more recent work in the mobile narrative field includes a mobile application for Adobe's MAX 2008 conference, global marine conservation tour of the New England Aquarium, and an urban history project on Boston's controversial use of eminent domain. Michael is fluent in four languages, was a reporter on NPR's Morning Edition and the author of two Macromedia books on classroom use of multimedia. Michael holds an M.S. in Comparative Media Studies from MIT.

Caitlin Maily is a Syracuse University graduate with professional graphic, print, and web design experience. She has worked as a web designer and graphic artist with Untravel for two years and also designs user interfaces related to Untravel's web and mobile multimedia productions.

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