iHeart Radio - Family Case Study

iHeartMedia, a leading global media and entertainment company, specializing in radio, digital, live & on-demand content, expands their reach by launching across OTT platforms.

After successfully launching the iHeartRadio app on Amazon FireTV, the mass media corporation set their sights on developing their family-oriented app to better reach and connect with a new generation.

Challenge

iHeartRadio wanted to be the first in market to launch a family-based radio and audio-content streaming app through over-the-top (OTT) services and quickly seized the opportunity to gain first-mover's advantage. By building and releasing an innovative Amazon Fire TV application geared towards family listening, iHeartRadio would be able to:

+ Gain more users on their OTT platforms   + Increase their total listening hours (TLH)

"Music to live by. Great way to wake up each morning."

- AMAZON REVIEW, APRIL 2019
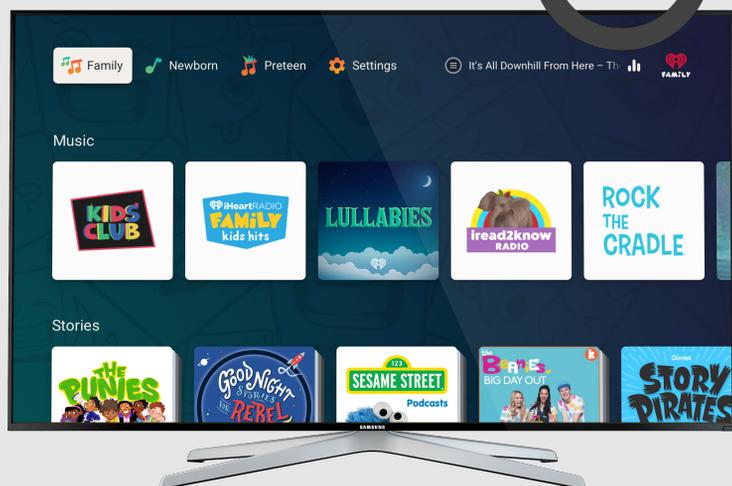
Solution

iHeartRadio partnered with TribalScale for our strong backlog of work in the media industry, and particularly for our expertise in the OTT space. To build out the iHeartRadio Family application for Amazon FireTV, our work included:

+ **DESIGN WORKSHOP:** Our team led an internal design workshop at the iHeart offices in New York with their executive team to best determine their priorities and to outline a potential iHeartRadio Family application for OTT.

+ **USER TESTING:** In conjunction with the internal design workshop, we conducted user interviews and testing to best grasp what features and elements a user would like from the app. This work helped streamline scoping and ensured all were aligned.

+ **ENGAGING ANIMATIONS:** To better resonate with the target audience (ages 0-13) we created a series of 4 animated backgrounds to accompany the audio content. The designs were highly innovative and rendered particularly well on FireTV as the operating systems allows for higher design complexity. Further, our animations were applauded by other companies, including Disney.

+ **EMERGING TECHNOLOGY:** We chose to build the app on FireTV as the operating system (OS) is highly flexible and customizable, and allows for deep-linking across applications. FireTV also continuously releases new devices, as opposed to other OTT platforms, which helps ensure the iHeartRadio Family application will persist across new generations of devices. We pair programmed throughout to ensure delivery of high-quality, clean code.

+ **ITERATIONS AND PIVOTS:** Upon release the minimum viable product (MVP) we conducted further testing and made adjustments based on real user feedback. For example, users expressed desire in being able to choose which background was displayed, and when. In response, we introduce a background selector along with the player.

+ Kotlin

+ Leanback User Interface Library

+ Deep linking applications

+ Deep linking on Fire TV OS

Outcome

Through our work, we helped iHeartRadio expand their reach, attract new and young listeners, and increase overall engagement. However, and most importantly, iHeartRadio was the first in the media streaming space to launch a family-oriented OTT application.

As the iHeart team is headquartered in New York and our team is based in Toronto, our quality assurance engineers stepped in to manage iHeartRadio's expectations and proved highly capable of approving and delivering bug fixes on a daily basis. Through this work, TribalScale and iHeartRadio fostered a trusting relationship and established a long-lasting partnership.

To date, our teams have worked together over 7 successful projects across various OTT platforms.

Promoted on the FireTV Carousel

4 stars on the Amazon Store

"Radio station the whole family can enjoy! Awesome! We all love it!"

- AMAZON REVIEW, APRIL 2019

"A must have. Family friendly & very entertaining."

- AMAZON REVIEW, APRIL 2019

TRIBAL SCALE

TribalScale is a global innovation firm that helps enterprises adapt and thrive in the digital era. We have years of experience in digital strategy, design, and multi-platform engineering and through agile practices, we transform teams, build best-in-class digital products, and create disruptive startups.

Whether we're righting the ship for another company or creating a fresh end-to-end solution, we innovate for a better tomorrow.

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