

M O B I L E C A L E N D A R F O R T O U R I S M

making events and attractions instantly available everywhere

BARBADOS MOBILE CALENDAR APP

CASE STUDY ON MARKETING TOURISM

What's On In Barbados

Discover Travel Info Accommodation Vacations Real Estate Events Business Contacts

Events

What's On In Barbados: Mobile Apps

Want to have quick and easy access to events happening in Barbados? Simply install our mobile app! Suitable for both phones and tablets. Ideal for both visitors and locals.

Our mobile apps feature full event details of what's on in Barbados, top featured events, mapping & geolocation to get you to the event and links to event tickets.

Event by Month - Calendar View
December 2012
 Free Admission
View

Events By Day
click to select day
 Free Admission
Show Day

Events By Type
- select event type --
 Free Admission
Search

Events By Name

 Free Admission
Search

Android

What's On In Barbados
Tue Dec 4 2012

- Atlantic Submarine Night Dive
- Art Spanish Exhibition - Art and Children of the World
- Authentic Spanish Tapas at Cafe Bar Cartina
- BAC Exhibition - Independence Group Show
- Barbados Movie Guide
- BBQ Exhibition: A Few of our Favourite Things
- Bridgetown Gallery Exhibition: Carnival Prize
- Colony Club Seaside Grill and International Buffet
- GCA Exhibition: Almost Paradise
- Live Entertainment at Leroy's Piano Bar
- Labrador Alibi Tuesday Dinner with Cool Jazz
- The Ash Second-Hand Book Sale
- World AIDS Day 2012 - Week of Activities

BARBADOS TOURISM ENCYCLOPEDIA

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS

2012

Project Background

What's On In Barbados began as a section of the <http://Barbados.org> website from as far back as 1997, highlighting the top events taking place in the Caribbean island of Barbados including the annual jazz festival, Holders Season of theatre, opera and drama, Crop Over summer carnival, and the winter Open Houses and Open Gardens programmes. The calendar was primarily designed for and used by visitors to the island.

Over the years Axes recognized that visitors to the island were increasingly interested in more than just the major island festivals. In particular long stay visitors known as 'snowbirds', who stay on the island for several months between December and April to escape the cold at home, wanted to attend local events on a regular basis. Barbadians too were turning to the Web to find out what events were taking place on the island.

In July 2010, Axes began distribution of the What's On In Barbados weekly newsletter. From an initial subscriber base of 4,000 subscribers the newsletter has grown to 16,000 subscribers - comprising locals and visitors. The newsletter is eagerly awaited by subscribers each Thursday morning and it is actively used to plan weekend and vacation activities!

Newsletter archive:

http://www.icontact-archive.com/cm/cO_IP76ClhvABwBBxKH07oEJRTVWDoDq34q5MeqNgYypemGjhJdP-A==?w=3

In December 2011, Axes relaunched the What's On In Barbados website. New features included an improved user interface, extensive search capabilities (by event name, event category and subcategory, by day, and by month), photos and other media, and mapping.

Acknowledging the reach of social media, What's On In Barbados' next technology release was a Facebook app and page. The page highlights a special event each day, delivering that event directly to fans timelines. The app gives complete access to each day's events and is installed on many pages within Facebook including those of local hotels:

<https://www.facebook.com/WhatsOnInBarbados/>

https://www.facebook.com/YellowBirdBarbados/app_186042386260

https://www.facebook.com/PeachAndQuietBarbados/app_253849921328065

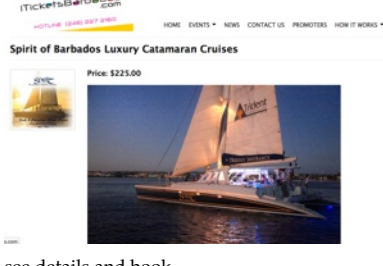
https://www.facebook.com/BarbadosBeaches/app_253849921328065

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Palm-Garden-Hotel-Barbados/163990416972262>

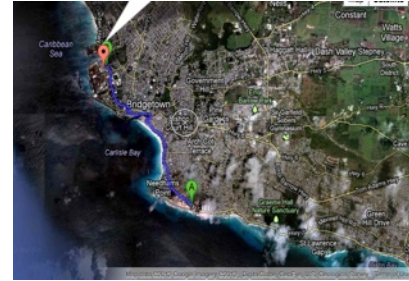
The next logical step was the creation of a mobile app that would allow users to quickly access the events calendar while on the go.



search for events & attractions by type, name and date etc



see details and book

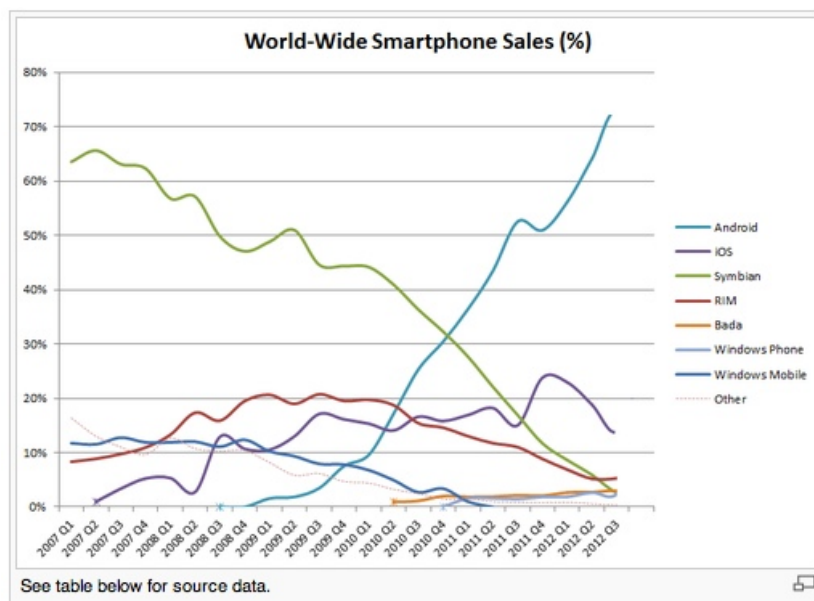


get directions and view locations

Technology

The initial goal was to launch a mobile app for the Blackberry platform, given the popularity of that mobile OS in the local market. However as the project lifecycle progressed the Android platform began to emerge as the platform of choice in both the smartphone and tablet markets.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile_operating_system#Market_share



Axes has always been as an agile company and quickly shifted its focus from the Blackberry platform to a more device-agnostic approach that would use a one-development, multi-packaging strategy to deliver apps to multiple platforms.

This approach utilized HTML5 and the jQuery mobile touch-optimized framework in conjunction with PhoneGap Build. This methodology leveraged the existing web development skills of the project team to create a core app that could be easily packaged to target multiple platforms including iOS, Android, Windows Phone, Blackberry, webOS and Symbian.

While the single codebase was a huge step towards increased productivity and ease of development it was recognized by the project leader that wherever possible native features should be included to create an experience most familiar to users on their respective platforms.

An example of this is the application date picker. While a standard widget can be used across multiple platforms, the decision was taken to include an Android-style widget for the release of the Android app.



The initial release of the app targeted the Android platform, while also including WebOS, Symbian and Windows Phone. Within the first 2 weeks of release, the What's On app has been installed nearly 50 times via the Google Play app store and is steadily making its way up the list of Barbados apps.

The iOS and Blackberry versions will be released in January 2013.

Ease of Use

Any mobile app needs to be intuitive and fast. A hallmark of the jQuery mobile framework is its lightweight code and consistent design, making it the perfect technology match for this application.

This framework is used by a number of high profile companies including Ikea and Disney World and by educational institutions such as Stanford University.

The app uses progressive enhancement and **responsive web design** to adapt to users devices, orientations and screen resolutions delivering an optimal experience on phones, tablets and e-readers. For example on smaller smartphone devices, several icons are removed from the screen leaving room for more critical event information.

The user interface is relatively simple, aimed at getting users quickly to the information that they want and need on their mobile. The app supports a browse-type experience with lists of daily events and highlighted monthly featured events. For users who know the type of events they want to research there are friendly search features by event name and by event type (sports, arts, music, food and drink, etc.).

jQuery mobile was again a help in this regard as it uses CSS3 properties such as text-shadow and gradients to produce a polished, custom branded interface that is consistent with expectations of mobile users.

Content

In addition to being fast and easy to use, any successful mobile app must have decent content. 'Content is king' is still true! This is where the What's On In Barbados mobile app really stands

out. The calendar is updated daily and any changes and additions to the calendar's database are immediately accessible in the app.

To source event information the What's On In Barbados content manager maintains close ties with entertainers, event promoters and managers of local entertainment venues. The press, TV, radio and social media are also carefully researched daily to identify suitable activities and add them to the What's On calendar.

Event promoters often submit their events directly to the What's On editor, either directly via e-mail or through the online event submission form at

<http://whatsoninbarbados.com/whatsoninbarbados-submit.php>

Future Enhancements

Technology is changing and improving at a furious pace. Android has surged to 75% of the smartphone OS market in the 3rd quarter of 2012; expect Apple to fightback with improved product offerings in 2013; while Blackberry is losing marketshare its instant messaging service and enterprises services are strong worldwide; and Microsoft is the latest player to make a serious push in the mobile space with the release of Windows Phone 8.

User expectations of mobile apps will also continue to increase as mobile bandwidth becomes cheaper and WiFi connections more accessible worldwide.

What's On In Barbados app will continue to be upgraded to keep pace with these changes.

Technology licenses

The platform is cloud based and integrates the desktop with multiple mobile systems and devices. The entire platform may be licensed and integrated with any website or travel portal.

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