

CASE STUDY

Methylum - how the RadControls for Windows 8 helped Booking.com get into the Windows 8 store ahead of the platform's launch



For Booking.com, getting its app in the Windows 8 store ahead of the platform's official launch date was essential. For the team charged with achieving this, RadControls for Windows 8 by Telerik helped solve a major headache, keeping the project on track for a successful launch.

OVERVIEW

COUNTRY

Holland

SECTOR

Travel

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Booking.com is the world's leading online hotel reservations agency by room nights sold.

Methylum is Holland's leading specialist developer of applications for Windows Phone and Windows 8.

BUSINESS SITUATION

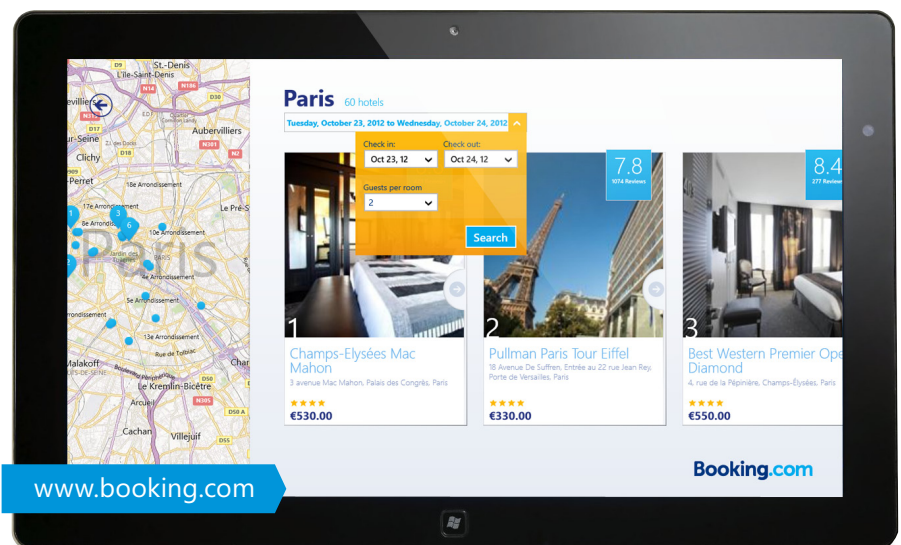
Methylum, tasked with building Booking.com's Windows 8 app, needed sophisticated controls to deliver the app for inclusion in the Windows 8 store.

SOLUTION

Using RadControls for Windows 8, Methylum were able to deliver complex UI behavior in multiple languages including Arabic and Japanese.

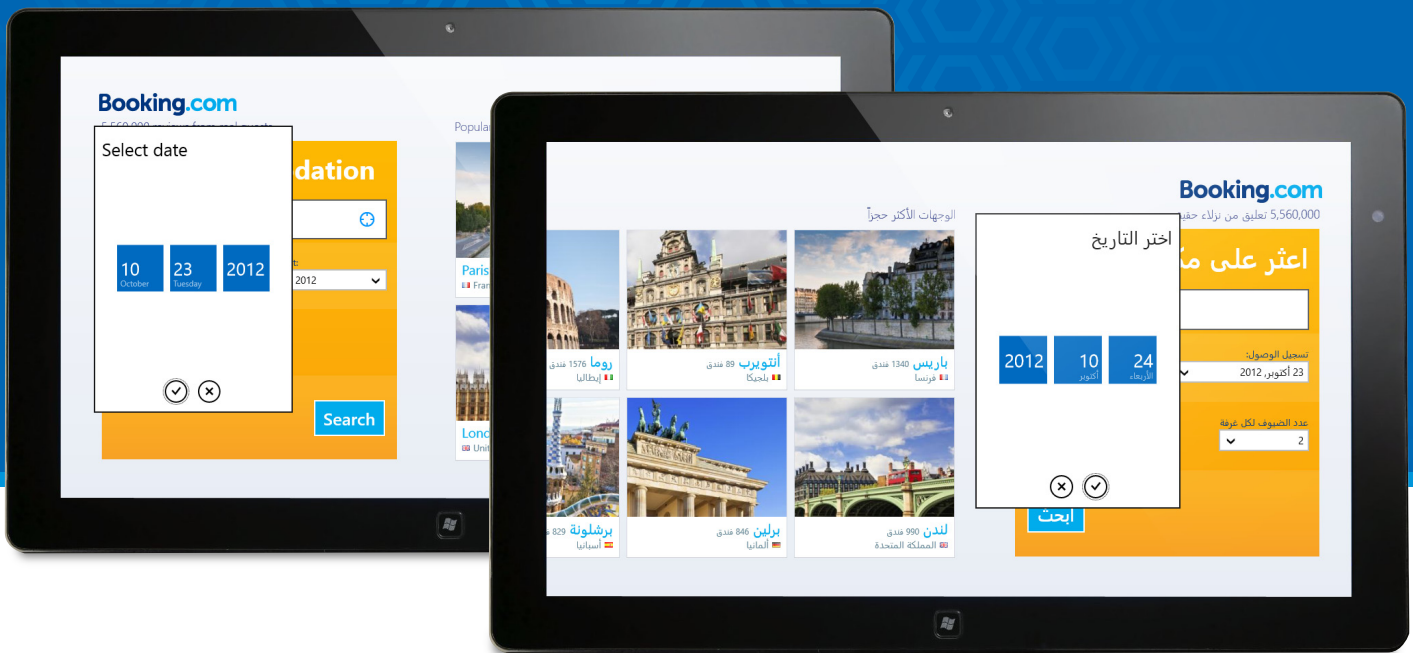
BENEFITS

- Sophisticated, configurable controls built with Enterprise in mind
- Conforms to Windows 8 UI design guidelines
- Eases acceptance to the Windows 8 store



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Tom Verhoeff,
Methylum



BACKGROUND

Booking.com is the world's leading online hotel and accommodation reservations agency by room nights sold. The site attracts more than 30 million unique visitors each month and 350,000 room nights are booked every day, covering 245,000 hotels in over 41,000 destinations worldwide.

Availability for customers is a priority for Booking.com – wherever they are and whatever device they are using. Because of this focus, the company has highly-rated apps for iOS and Android that deliver the full range of Booking.com's 'look to book' services – search, guest reviews and reservations – for mobile and tablet.

With the advent of Windows 8, Booking.com was quick to target the new platform. Determined to get its app into the Windows 8 store prior to the platform's official October 2012 launch, they turned to Windows Phone development expert and Microsoft MVP Tom Verhoeff.

THE CHALLENGE

Based near Delft and employing young graduates from the respected Delft University of Technology, Tom's company – Methylium – specializes in developing applications for Windows Phone and Windows 8. "We are different to other companies who also develop for iOS and Android," says Tom. "Because we specialize in these technologies, we really understand the modern UI style. This means we deliver apps which get the most out of the technology."

Among other projects, Methylium has developed high-profile apps for Dutch national broadcaster NOS and Parkmobile.

Booking.com challenged Methylium to deliver the full Booking.com experience in a Windows 8 app – and in order to get the app accepted to the Windows 8 Store ahead of general availability, they had to do this in just six weeks.

“ We had used Telerik controls before and we knew the quality of the products and the documentation. This was while the products were in Beta so we understood that they were still under development, but we were confident that if we had problems Telerik would be able to resolve them quickly.”

Tom Verhoeff,
Methylium

RADCONTROLS FOR WINDOWS 8 – BUILT WITH ENTERPRISE IN MIND

RadControls for Windows 8 are built from the ground up for Windows 8 – not ported from existing solutions for other technologies. This guarantees optimal responsiveness and longevity of the toolset.

RadControls helps teams transition to Windows 8 development by offering the same intuitive UI and UX whether developers are working in XAML or HTML.

The suite extends WinRT with rich capabilities engineered specifically for enterprise development. As well as highly customizable data entry controls such as the RadDatePicker, the suite includes sophisticated data display controls.

For example, the RadChart's multi-axis support enables the simultaneous display of several data series based on multiple parameters – all in a single chart. Many popular chart types are available out of the box and the rich API makes it easy to fine-tune the look and feel, and to implement customized behavior such as complex drill-downs. The toolset includes other compelling data visualization controls such as the always-popular gauge and bullet graph.

Telerik's industry-leading support is well-recognized in the developer community. With more than ten years' experience serving Fortune 500 organizations around the globe, Telerik understands the technical support needs of the enterprise development team.

"We had to match the functionality of the iOS and Android apps. This included support for 23 languages such as Arabic and Japanese, secure online payment, filtered search, integration with Bing Maps and of course presentation of large volumes of hotel information and guest reviews."

Not surprisingly for an app built for booking hotel rooms, the date picker was a critical piece of the UI. This needed to have functionality to prevent users from selecting invalid dates, as rooms can only be booked for a maximum of 30 days at a time, and the booking must start within the next 365 days. The date picker also needed to support the app's many language options, with appropriate date formatting for different cultures and locales. This is particularly challenging with Arabic, as the text direction and layout is required to flip to read from right to left. Naturally, it also needed to conform to the Windows 8 UI requirements.

However, a sophisticated date picker was not available in the WinRT toolset. "There simply wasn't any decent solution available," says Tom. "We considered building our own date picker, but we had a short project timeframe and we could not spend days building this. We needed a solution that would work out of the box."

THE SOLUTION

Tom chose the RadDatePicker from RadControls for Windows 8 by Telerik. "We had used Telerik controls before and we knew the quality of the products and the documentation. This was while the products were in Beta so we

understood that they were still under development, but we were confident that if we had problems Telerik would be able to resolve them quickly."

The RadDatePicker is entirely consistent with the Windows 8 interface guidelines. The control exposes three elements for selecting day, month and year. Behavior is easily fine-tuned through an accessible API, providing control over available date ranges and how date elements are displayed.

RadControls for Windows 8 are available for XAML and HTML. Methylium was working in XAML, but knowing that the controls are also available for HTML is important. "We have to be free to choose the most appropriate technology for the project. The controls shouldn't determine the technology you use – it should be the other way around."

“Telerik support team was great. Usually the experience with support requests is waiting for days for an answer, but Telerik's team really showed the difference. It was very helpful to know when a solution was coming and that it was being worked on.”

Tom Verhoeff,
Methylium

THE RESULT

Methylum delivered the Booking.com app, meeting the deadline to achieve acceptance to the Windows 8 store ahead of the official launch of the platform.

Using RadControls for Windows 8 saved Methylum several days of development. "We could not spend the time developing a single control. We were working to deliver the whole application."

At the time Methylum used them, RadControls for Windows 8 were in beta release. As might be expected with any beta, they encountered a few rough edges. But they were impressed by the response from Telerik.

"The support team was great. When we posted questions in the Telerik Forums, we got quick responses. Usually the experience with support requests is waiting for days for an answer, but Telerik's team really showed the difference by informing us when to expect

a response. It was very helpful to us to know when a solution was coming and that it was being worked on."

Tom plans to use other Telerik controls for Windows 8 for the app's next update. "Currently the search results are displayed as static content, but we are planning to use the HubTile control to show dynamic content. We will also need two-sided sliders for customers to adjust search filters. These features will bring more of the Booking.com experience to the app."

THE VERDICT

"We are already planning to use Telerik controls in more Windows 8 projects," says Tom. "Telerik controls save us time. They are better quality than anything we would have time to build ourselves while trying to complete an app."

ABOUT BOOKING.COM

Booking.com is the leading worldwide online hotel reservations agency by room nights sold. Established in 1996 and part of Priceline.com (Nasdaq: PCLN), the company's mission is to help travelers of all backgrounds easily discover, book and enjoy places to stay worldwide.

ABOUT METHYLUM

Methylum is one of Holland's leading Microsoft app development companies. With a young team of dedicated developers who have lived in the "app world" since day one, Methylum creates one-of-a-kind, robust applications that leverage the full range of possibilities available on Windows Phone and Windows 8.

ABOUT RADCONTROLS FOR WINDOWS 8 BY TELERIK

The first third-party Windows 8 toolset to reach the market, RadControls for Windows 8 by Telerik fills the gaps in WinRT, helping shorten the development cycle and drive successful app development with rich UI capabilities, whether the target is the enterprise or the consumer marketplace.

ABOUT TELERIK

Telerik is the market-leading provider of end-to-end solutions for application development, automated software testing, agile project management, reporting, and content management across all major Microsoft development platforms. Telerik is trusted by more than 100,000 customers worldwide for its innovation and industry-best technical support.

FIND OUT MORE

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