



American University Boosts Attendance and Engagement with Mobile Apps Built on Guidebook

How the university empowers students with personalized mobile experiences



CHALLENGE

University Seeking Mobile Solution to Streamline Communication

American University was looking for a mobile solution to disseminate information to their students in an efficient way. They wanted a proven and popular method for delivering information.



SOLUTION

Move to Mobile with Guidebook's App Platform

With a mobile app, they were able to empower students, staff, and guests with focused and easy-to-access information. The mobile app is now used by more than a dozen campus departments for events, mobile tours, and more.



RESULTS

Mobile App Leads to Increased Student Engagement

The mobile app has improved attendance and engagement and has created personalized mobile experiences for different users. The range of apps has helped them empower users with the information they need more than any other tool could have.



"The combination of the app's visualization plus having it right at your fingertips makes the act of scheduling more tactile. That gets people excited for events before they even start, which then improves attendance and engagement all around."

*Cole Wrampelmeier,
Web and Student Systems Manager for the Office of Campus Life at AU*

D.C.-based American University (AU) is a student-centered research institution with highly-ranked schools and colleges, internationally-renowned faculty, and a reputation for creating meaningful change in the world. In 2015, the university turned to the Guidebook mobile app platform to empower students, staff and guests with focused, easy to access information. Today, more than a dozen departments across campus have created mobile apps for use cases like events and mobile tours.

"Attendance and engagement are two major currencies on campus, and mobile apps contribute to both," said Cole Wrampelmeier, Web and Student Systems Manager for the Office of Campus Life at AU. "We see Guidebook as a massive packet of information available in a very accessible space at your fingertips."

Scheduling at your fingertips

The main driver for creating mobile apps was to disseminate information in an efficient way. "We wanted a proven and popular method for delivering information, and mobile made the most sense," said Cole. "Our phones have become a standard tool we're all using. They're glued to our hands in one way or another."

Instead of printing out thousands of flyers for events like graduation or Preview Days, AU shares information with students, parents and staff through the app, making it easy to access and hone in quickly on the information that's most important to them.

For example:

- The Admissions Freshman Day app houses a schedule for the one-day event, including where to go and what to see, as well as helpful information for students and families like a map of the area and restaurants.
- The Job and Internship Fair Guide is also popular, enabling students to easily view and plan their time with different employers they'd like to meet with.
- The MBA Immersion app welcomes students from outside the city and country, offering site information and help with managing logistics.

Mobile apps across the university

In addition to information-heavy use cases, such as event apps for the Freshman Day, Job Fair and Orientation, AU has also built apps that are more evergreen, used throughout the year.

The American University Library app helps students easily identify what resources are located on what floor of the building, while the Student Staff Training app serves as a quick reference for student employees working in Dining and Housing. The Sustainability Office also created an app that offers an audio tour describing the building's environmental design, as well as steps the university has taken to become carbon neutral.

The AU campus has unique offerings that prospective students and international visitors to D.C. are interested in learning about, and the app offers a way to extend that knowledge to a broader base of visitors.

Since other guests to campus include conference and camp attendees, the university's Conference & Guest Services Team created a welcome app that, in essence, promotes their product: the campus itself.

Personalizing the mobile experience

The app has also been a powerful way for AU to create truly tailored mobile experiences. Once a user self selects from a drop-down menu (with categories that include Veteran, MBA/Grad Student, Undergrad, Guests) the app highlights one specific resource they may be interested in.

For example, if a user self selects as a student veteran, the app shows where the Veteran Lounge is. The same goes for grad students, who first see details about the Graduate Advising building and resources like the grad-only floor of the library.

"There's so much out there competing for attention - the app lets us deliver the most pertinent info to users," said Cole. "Instead of having to dig through a bunch of information, we bring what they want to know directly to them."

Realizing the value of mobile apps

With Guidebook, apps have proven easy to create and update without any involvement from IT. Non-technical content creators can simply choose a template, select features, update content (including complicated schedules that can be easily imported) and publish.

In addition, because AU had so many users interested in creating apps, they were able to bundle together licenses for multiple departments which was a cost-effective option for adopting a new technology solution. Not only did that encourage more widespread use on campus, but it also made it easy to manage the cost.

Cole evaluates adoption success not by the raw numbers, but the more nuanced value. He says one of the more interesting questions to consider is: Did the app make your job easier? If it saves one person two hours a week for the entire semester, then that's a measure a success.

Consider the app used for the Kogod School of Business Analytics Practicum, a weekend-long course offered for professionals who work full-time. Since many participants had never been to campus before, the app was particularly useful, offering useful information about the weekend conveniently on their phones. Maybe only 47 people used the app, but that's 100% adoption for that particular course.

Said Cole: "The range of apps has helped us empower users with the information they need more than any other tool could have."





American University

Recognized for its emphasis on personalized teaching and experiential education, American University provides for the direct involvement of faculty and students in the institutions and culture of the most important capital city in the world. Since its founding by an Act of Congress in 1893 as a private, independent, coeducational institution, AU has been a national and international university. This is reflected in the scope of its teaching and research programs and the diversity of its faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and student body, today representing over 135 countries.

The university actively encourages a commitment to public service, inclusive participation in university governance, equity and equal access, and an appreciation of diverse cultures and viewpoints. Its commitment to social justice, its ability to respond to the needs of a changing world while retaining its core values, and its capacity to turn to educational advantage the resources of the nation's capital are hallmarks of the institution.

Guidebook

At Guidebook, we don't think it should be difficult or expensive to create elegant, functional mobile guides for your audience. You can make a mobile app in minutes, or join the organizations who subscribe for year-round access to features that inspire audiences, connect people and drive revenue.

Our feature set focus is always ease of use for the app builder and mobile user, making Guidebook the safest and most trusted option. With thousands of customers and millions of guides downloaded, Guidebook's leading design and development team constantly test and update the app platform for usability and security.

Guidebook is a venture-funded, Bay Area-based company that provides a standard platform to build mobile apps for events and locations. Guidebook was founded in January 2011 by Jeff Lewis, Peter Lada and Kevin Wood, all veterans of the SaaS industry, because they identified a need for highly stable and easy-to-manage mobile guides for companies of all sizes.

Our global audience all say the same thing: Guidebook is refreshing and easy.

CONNECT WITH US

 [guidebookapp](#)

 [guidebook](#)