



King's College London Goes Digital with Welcome Week App; Gets 17,000 Downloads in Two Month Period

How the university uses mobile apps built on Guidebook to create
a sense of belonging for new students



CHALLENGE

University Seeking Mobile Solution
to Streamline Communication

King's College London was looking for a mobile-friendly alternative to replace the time-consuming process of updating static PDFs and streamline communication to their students. Previously, the information was difficult for students to access via mobile and the scope of human error was massive.



SOLUTION

Move to Mobile with
Guidebook's App Platform

By implementing a mobile app solution for their undergraduate and postgraduate students, King's College London was able to reach thousands of students and their families about hundreds of Welcome Week events spread across four central London campuses.



RESULTS

Mobile App Leads to Increased
Student Engagement

Through mobile, King's College London was able to align with their larger digital enhancement programme, improve processes for their administrative team and engage with their students — they had an app adoption rate of over 100% and 85% of students rated the app 4 or 5 (out of 5) stars.



"Guidebook is easy for us to use as staff and easy for students to navigate. It's been a win-win, which you don't always get when investing in new systems."

King's College London is one of the top 25 universities in the world and among the oldest in the UK. King's has more than 27,600 students (including 10,500 postgraduate students) from 150 countries, and nearly 7,000 staff.

In 2017, King's implemented a Welcome Week app built on Guidebook for incoming undergraduate and postgraduate students. Before the university even started actively promoting the app, they had over 1,500 downloads. In the two month time period around Welcome Week, they saw this increase to 17,000 downloads from students, families, and staff – an impressive number considering there were 14,000 new students starting.

By the numbers

From the two-month period around Welcome Week, August 1-September 30, 2017



570 days

Cumulative time app used



17,000

Number of total downloads



580,000

Number of sessions during two-week period of Welcome Week events



1,000,000+

Number of sessions

During this time, there were over one million sessions on the app (580,000 during actual Welcome Week activities), and the cumulative time spent on the app added up to more than 570 days.

Following this very successful pilot, King's has continued to use mobile apps to drive engagement with tens of thousands of students during Welcome Week and beyond.

Moving beyond PDFs to improve event management & communication

Mobile apps align well with the college's larger digital enhancement programme. Overwhelmed by emails, students are searching for new ways to consume information and the university is delivering – with apps that streamline communication for students to access on their mobile phones.

Previously, Welcome Week information for all students (postgraduate and undergraduate) was housed in PDF documents on the King's website. Since the site was not yet mobile-friendly, it was difficult for students to use their mobile phones to access timetables and locations for hundreds of events and inductions spread across the university's four central London campuses.

According to Emma Young, Head of Student Engagement & Communications, it was time consuming to constantly make manual corrections on rooms, times and dates for

hundreds of events.

“Prior to Guidebook, the scope of human error was massive,” said Emma. “A student may have downloaded a copy of the PDF, but it could have incorrect information. It was really inconvenient for everyone.”

Event updates available in live time

By replacing PDFs with the mobile app, the university streamlined communication with a central place to easily access information specific to Welcome Week. Since everything is updated in “live time,” students, parents and staff can be confident they’re looking at accurate information. One feature that’s especially popular is scheduling: students can build their own personalised schedule and use the built-in map navigation to figure out where they need to be.

The move to mobile also eased the administrative headache of such a massive undertaking of events, simplifying the team’s ability to manage constant changes to timetabling, event location, etc. It’s easy to make changes on the go with Guidebook’s Mobile Admin feature, which allows the team to make schedule updates directly via their mobile phones, publish the new content, and send a push notification to alert students of a change, such as a rescheduled event. King’s also takes advantage of Guidebook’s Collaborate Portal, leveraging templates to collate input from multiple contributors. By sharing the workload, new content can be approved and published in minutes.

Time previously spent editing PDFs can now be used for more strategic initiatives, such as continuing to build out a well-rounded communications strategy across all channels: app, email, social, etc.

“Students are using lots of different ways to get their information, and mobile is an important part of that mix,” said Emma. “It’s important that we’re always looking at how we communicate and find new ways to reach students in the way they want.”

Creating a sense of belonging

One of the missions of the Student Success Division is to engender a sense of belonging for students. Welcome

Week kicks that off. According to Emma, there’s a positive social impact of having a really clear event schedule; students are more likely to discover something happening that they’re interested in and get to know their peers.

“Since King’s spans four campuses across Central London, the digital space of the app fosters new connections that help incoming students feel part of the community,” said Emma. “It’s amazing to watch the power of mobile in creating a new type of engagement that contributes to a greater sense of belonging for students.”

That sense of digital community will continue to grow as the app extends to other areas of the campus. After seeing the popularity of the Welcome Week app, the marketing team decided to create an app for Open Days – held four times (once at each campus) over the summer as a way for prospective students to learn about the school.

Impressive adoption & engagement metrics

Emma and her team did an excellent job promoting the app to students via email, social media channels, their website, all printed materials, and the King’s Insider Magazine (which students get before they arrive on campus). The response was instant: while the original adoption goal was to reach a 50% download rate, or around 7,000 downloads, King’s surpassed that before Welcome Week even started.

They also promoted the app internally, hosting a formal launch event for staff, including IT. The app became a valuable resource for staff during Welcome Week; if a student stopped to ask them a question about what’s happening or where an event is, they could easily find the answer in the app without sending the student back to reception.

“The app made everything a bit more tangible for staff and they were able to engage in Welcome Week in a way that they couldn’t do in the past,” said Emma. In 2017, nearly all of the incoming students used the ‘app’; an engagement metric that’s contributed to the team’s ability to show strong ROI. 85% of students who used the app during Welcome Week rated it as 4 or 5 (out of 5) stars. With all information in one place, they found it incredibly easy to use to schedule their week.



King's College London

King's College London is among the oldest universities in England and has more than 29,600 students (of whom nearly 11,700 are graduate students) from some 150 countries worldwide, and some 8,000 staff.

King's has an outstanding reputation for world-class teaching and cutting-edge research. In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF), eighty-four per cent of research at King's was deemed 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent'.

Since our foundation, King's students and staff have dedicated themselves in the service of society. King's will continue to focus on world-leading education, research and service, and will have an increasingly proactive role to play in a more interconnected, complex world. Visit our website to find out more about Vision 2029, King's strategic vision for the next 12 years to 2029, which will be the 200th anniversary of the founding of the university.

World-changing ideas. Life-changing impact.

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. Founded in January 2011 by Peter Lada, Jeff Lewis and Kevin Wood, all veterans of the SaaS industry, Guidebook was created 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.

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