

WHEN MOBILE SURPASSED 50% OF TRAFFIC, BLEACHER REPORT TURNED TO SAUCE LABS



Industry:
Digital Media;
Sports and Entertainment

Company Size:
200–400

SUMMARY

- A leading sports news site, Bleacher Report has a monthly audience of more than 16 million unique users. Beginning in December 2012, more than 50% of site traffic originated from mobile devices.
- Previously the QA team tested their native applications manually, but without an automated testing process, their mobile apps had bugs after deployment. Unsatisfied with the process, they searched for a better solution.
- In June of 2013, they started using Appium with Sauce because they could use it with their existing framework and didn't have to learn a new language or set of commands.

THE CHALLENGE

Bleacher Report is a leading publisher of sports content. Turner Sports noticed their promise, and acquired them in 2011. Now with a monthly audience of more than 16 million unique users, they are one of the fastest growing sports media web sites in the US.

In December of 2012, they watched their mobile traffic climb to over 50%, but their mobile testing process and coverage wasn't quite up to sync with this influx of new traffic.

Long-time users of Sauce, the QA team was using Selenium at the time to automatically test their desktop and web applications. But they didn't have an automated tool for testing their native app. While they tested it manually before a deploy, bugs still made it into the application. Unsatisfied with this process, they started looking for a better solution.

"Once we realized our mobile traffic was surpassing our desktop traffic, we knew we needed a way to figure out how to test all the things," said QA Engineer Felix Rodriguez. "We needed native application tests too."

"Everybody counts on us to make sure the quality of our site doesn't deteriorate. We're the rockstars of deployment."



Felix Rodriguez
QA Engineer



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SECTION SUBTITLE

For testing native applications, Bleacher Report's QA team turned to Appium in June of 2013. Appium is an open source test automation framework for native and hybrid iOS and Android apps. When used in tandem with Sauce Labs, it allows you to scale your native and hybrid mobile app testing across multiple device combinations in the cloud.

"What I looked for in Appium was that we didn't have to change our already existing code to integrate it much, and it was using commands that we were already familiar with. And it integrated with Sauce," said Felix.

The Bleacher Report QA team, comprised of five engineers, is constantly updating their applications, doing nearly 20 deploys over a three to four day period. Fragmentation within the Android platform adds an additional layer of complexity and requires quick iterations within the code base to fix issues.

Given the need for frequent updates, the team wanted a tool that was reliable, and they didn't want to reinvent the wheel when it came to mobile test automation. Further, they wanted to employ a similar approach — test early, test often — to mobile testing as they do with web testing, which they've found helps avoid problems down the road.

They now regularly run 12 native application tests and 7 mobile web tests, each checking specific end points in various scenarios. Because they're run in parallel, the test suite only takes approximately 2 minutes. The mobile web tests are run at 4 different times with different parameters to cover iPhone, iPad, and in-app experiences for both.

THE RESULTS

Running these time-saving tests and adding Appium to their tool kit has helped put the QA team in the position of being ahead of the curve, while tempering their company culture in the best way possible.

"I think a lot of us can focus on the bigger picture. We can now work on fun internal tools, such a deployment dashboard, that lets everyone know what's being deployed to what environment," said Felix.

Knowing their tests are set up properly keeps their culture "laid back" — a key component in battling stress and keeping talent within the company.

"Sauce keeps our culture laid back. We can just drop tests in, and we don't need to re-write anything," said Dan Patey, another QA Engineer at Bleacher Report. "Everything can run simultaneously. It's exponentially faster."

"Sauce keeps our culture laid back. We can just drop tests in, and we don't need to re-write anything. Everything can run simultaneously. The solution takes about 15 minutes to get through...it is exponentially faster for us."



Dan Patey
QA Engineer



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