

**THE NATIONAL PARK
OF THE FUTURE:**

RE-INVENTING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE WITH DIGITAL SERVICES




accenture

OVERVIEW

Accenture teamed with the National Park Foundation and the National Park Service to develop a digital strategy and plan for transforming the visitor experience at America's national parks. Equipped with this comprehensive digital roadmap, the National Park Service is poised to increase visitor engagement and attract a more diverse and younger generation of park stewards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS) is celebrating its Centennial in 2016. Although visits to U.S. national parks remain strong, NPS faces notable challenges preparing for its second century. These include declining attendance among younger, minority, and urban park goers; aging technology and limited Internet access in parks as well as budgetary pressure. To address these challenges, NPS is exploring ways to connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters and advocates. Expanding the visitor experience using mobile applications, social media, immersive technology, and other digital services are key to the solution. The National Park Foundation (NPF), the official charitable partner of NPS, teamed with Accenture to develop a digital strategy, conduct a technology assessment, and build an implementation plan for a seamless national park experience that draws on these services. Armed with a practical innovative digital roadmap, NPS is on the path to achieving high performance. NPS will be able to prioritize projects, build financial support, and create an integrated park experience that appeals to a broad visitor audience.

CLIENT PROFILE

As the charitable partner of NPS, NPF raises private contributions to support the NPS mission: "...preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world." More than 307 million visitors traveled to national parks annually in 2015, and visitation is expected to increase during the 2016 Centennial.

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OPPORTUNITY

The NPS faces critical challenges as it prepares for its second century. Even though visits to America's parks broke records in 2015, attendance among Millennials, minority, and urban visitors hasn't seen the same growth. Parks face several challenges as they work to increase their digital presence and capacity; aging technology, environments that strain connectivity, and limited digital capabilities. This is exacerbated by cuts in federal funding, which curb investment in digital tools that are vital to attracting younger park goers.

Leading up to the Centennial celebration, NPS prioritized using digital services to engage the next generation of park stewards. It set a bold goal: to reinvent the way the public uses, learns about, and experiences national parks. To achieve this vision, the NPF turned to Accenture. The collaboration enabled NPS to draw on cutting-edge capabilities and practices that Accenture has used to transform the customer experience for some of the world's leading organizations.

SOLUTION

Accenture worked closely with the senior leadership of NPF and NPS to develop a comprehensive national park digital strategy and implementation plan. Beginning in the summer of 2014, Accenture visited more than 10 parks and conducted over 70 interviews with field and headquarter staff to assess how well digital tools and capabilities currently support NPS objectives and the existing visitor experience before, during, and after a trip.

The assessment found a wide disparity across the (then) 407 national parks, with virtually no digital services in some of the most popular destinations. It uncovered opportunities to achieve efficiencies by standardizing infrastructure and providing parks with enterprise digital tools and templates. Finally, it looked at ways to better support innovation through both organizational and cultural change.

Accenture then developed a bold vision for the end-to-end digital visitor experience and a strategy for achieving consistency across parks and channels, building lifelong connections with visitors, and inspiring stewardship. A gap analysis identified short and long-term transformation actions needed to realize the vision, which were detailed in an implementation plan.

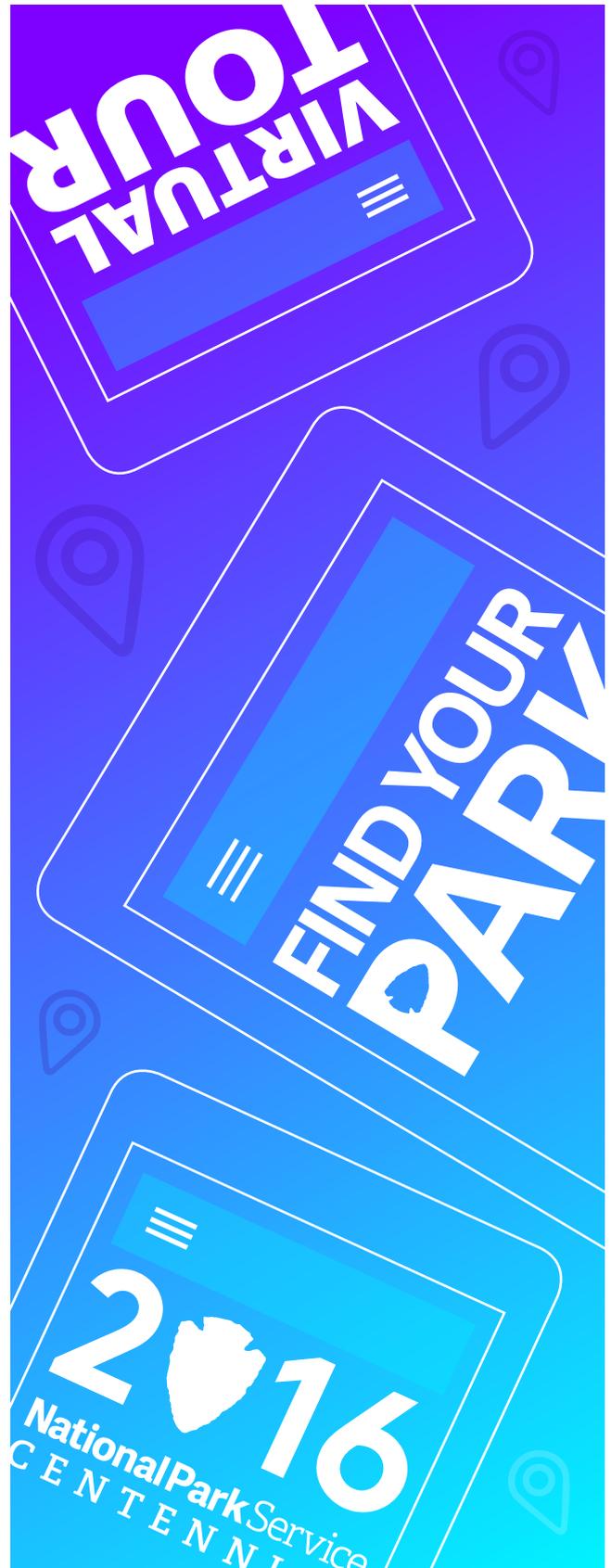
RESULTS

The collaboration between Accenture, NPF, and NPS has resulted in a clear digital strategy and a plan for action that can be used to prioritize projects, build financial support, and engage a broader population of park visitors. The practical roadmap positions NPS to achieve its ultimate goal: a fully integrated visitor experience, from planning trips online, to using mobile applications to guide park visits, to sharing park experiences via social media.

The implementation plan identifies opportunities to accelerate the delivery of digital services while reducing costs. They include centralizing and standardizing tools and mobile applications along with establishing an enterprise-wide digital organization.

Accenture also provided support for the April 2015 launch of the “Find Your Park” centennial campaign. For events in New York City and Washington, DC, Accenture built a mobile app – “NPS Virtual Tour.” The app included images of four national parks that people could also view in 3D using Google Cardboard.

With Accenture’s help, NPF and NPS are on the path to achieving high performance, with user-friendly national parks designed for a new generation of park visitors.



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