Introduction to Screen Time Labs

In 2014, Steve Vangasse found himself spending too much time nagging his three children about how much time they spent on their new tablets. Looking for relief, Steve created a simple, reliable app that rewarded his kids for managing their time responsibly, lessening his household conflict. The app became so useful that he decided to give it a name, Screen Time, and release it on the Google Play store under a newly founded company, Screen Time Labs.

Over two years, Screen Time has been downloaded by more than 1 million parents and boasts over 100,000 daily active users. The app leverages email to send its users important alerts regarding their children’s activities including:

- Which websites and apps their children have used, and for how long.
- New application download requests that parents can approve before installation and use.
- Completion of a pre-defined task such as chores or homework assignments which earn the child more screen time.
- Reaching their daily limit of screen time.

Email is such a cool part of our product and adds a lot of value. Screen Time sends lots of transactional email for parents and is dependent on the customer engagement, loyalty, and retention that email provides.”

- Steve Vangasse, Founder of Screen Time Labs

Launching a Successful App with Google Cloud Platform

Originally started as a side project, Screen Time rapidly proved its potential and gained adoption by other parents. In an effort to meet the demands of a quickly growing business while still working his day job, Steve considered a number of cloud-based partners. He was looking for a solution that would be easy to set up, reliable, and scalable.

Screen Time Labs turned to Google Cloud Platform (GCP) based on its free plan, its ease of integration, and its proven ability to scale. According to Steve, “GCP takes away the worry and hassle of having to scale and manage your infrastructure. You simply deploy your service and GCP takes care of it.”

At first, Screen Time sent email through Google App Engine, which Google Cloud Platform customers can leverage to send a limited amount of email. As Screen Time grew, they knew they needed a powerful email tool to continue to send valuable user communications. “We had to find a solution to send more email, and we had to find it quickly,” says Steve.

Scaling an Email Program with SendGrid

Based on a recommendation from GCP support, Screen Time Labs turned to SendGrid to ensure the scalability of their email infrastructure, including easy-to-manage volume upgrades. “With SendGrid, I have the confidence that email is always up, always delivered. If you hit a monthly quota, you’re not cut off,” says Steve.

In addition to the simplicity of integration and the proven ability to scale—any requirement based on the growth of the business—Screen Time Labs also found the cost of using their own email infrastructure to send a few million emails per month to be too great. “At that point, it just made sense to stop building our own email infrastructure and move to SendGrid,” says Steve.

Screen Time Labs enjoys the robust analytics available with SendGrid. Steve and his team can now segment their audience demographically and geographically to see how different emails are performing internationally. “It’s interesting to see how click through rate or volume changes for each audience as we make changes to UI/UX,” Steve says. “You wouldn’t get analytics like this if you spun up your own service.”

The Bottom Line

SendGrid and GCP are a perfect match for Screen Time Labs because they are:

- Scalable—With high-performance global infrastructure, SendGrid and GCP will meet your needs today and in the future.
- Reliable—Have confidence that your email is sent and delivered every time with the proven infrastructure of SendGrid and GCP.
- Easy to integrate—SendGrid and GCP are simple to set up and use, so you can get back to building great products for your customers faster.

“Google Cloud Platform and SendGrid together have helped us scale our transactional email throughput as our business grows. We don’t need to worry about the headache of shifting to another platform, taking developer time to migrate, renegotiating a pricing plan, and getting used to using a new platform. I have peace of mind with the knowledge that both SendGrid and GCP can scale with us.”

- Steve Vangasse

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Breakdown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOP 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APAC 31.99%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Africa 2.67%</td>
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<td>Others 1.30%</td>
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42.1% Open 99.72% Delivery 2.67% Unsubscribe

By sending email that customers value and using SendGrid’s powerful analytics to test and improve its campaigns, Screen Time is achieving strong delivery and engagement rates.