



CASE

NAKYPILLO
RADIO

“**Good Morning, Kharkiv: Incorporating Local Radio into Listeners’ Daily Lives**”

STUDY

IN SHORT

Nakypilo Radio designed, developed, tested, and successfully launched a fully functional mobile application for iOS and Android. The app provides users with easy access to live streams, programs, and articles, strengthening the station’s ability to reach and engage its community.

ABOUT THE NEWS OUTLET

Nakypilo Radio is a community radio station and part of the Nakypilo Media Group. It provides balanced, verified, and deeply local journalism for residents of Kharkiv and the broader region. Its programming includes local news; reports from de-occupied territories; interviews with military personnel, volunteers, and civic activists; investigations into alleged war crimes; debunking disinformation; discussions on military rehabilitation and women in service; updates on reconstruction; and conversations about memory, culture, humor, music, and literature.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Nakypilo Radio aimed to transform its existing mobile app from a basic radio player into a full-featured media hub that supports deeper audience engagement and daily use. The project sought to improve user experience, increase access to non-live content, strengthen community connection, and create a foundation for future monetization.



IMPLEMENTED SOLUTIONS

The team designed and launched a redesigned iOS and Android app using iterative prototyping and internal testing. New features included a “Texts” section for written content, a Favorites function for personalization, easy link sharing, notification controls, and clearer pathways to community engagement and advertising opportunities.

WHY THIS PROJECT?

The station decided to focus on updating its app to improve the user experience and increase audience engagement with non-live content. Adding the new “Texts” section was crucial for giving users access to written materials, and the Favorites feature allowed them to create a personalized space. Additionally, Nakypilo Radio integrated the ability to copy a direct link to any piece of content for easy sharing. This was a strategic decision to transform the app from a simple player into a full-fledged media hub.

HOW DID APPLYING DESIGN THINKING PRINCIPLES HELP?

Nakypilo Radio used several design-thinking practices, especially iterative prototyping and structured internal feedback cycles. Early-stage Figma prototypes allowed the team to map user flows, refine layouts, and identify potential issues before development started. Designers and developers worked in parallel, updating UI elements and testing functionality as features became available. Internal testers on both iOS and Android acted as first users, providing continuous feedback on navigation, offline behavior, synchronization, and UI consistency. Two full rounds of bug-fixing, informed by internal user testing, improved stability and usability. Even without external user interviews, the rapid prototyping and feedback loop ensured the final product aligned closely with real user needs and expectations.

DID NAKYPILO RADIO'S APPROACH CHANGE ENGAGEMENT WITH ITS AUDIENCE IN ANY WAY?

Yes, the approach significantly changed engagement. Implementing notification settings allowed the station to communicate with its audience more effectively. The possibility to set the radio as an alarm clock integrated Nakypilo Radio into users' daily routines. Crucially, the station enhanced both communication channels and monetization opportunities by integrating dedicated sections into the “About Us” page: one with a direct link to the community and another offering advertising placement on the radio.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID NAKYPILO RADIO ENCOUNTER AND HOW DID IT ADDRESS THEM?

Several challenges emerged during development. App development took longer than anticipated. Apple's restrictions on background processes made an alarm-clock function unfeasible on iOS. After multiple attempts and comparisons with other radio apps (none of which had an alarm feature), the team decided to drop the feature entirely for iOS and include it only on Android. Technical and design challenges required repeated iteration. Issues related to app stability without Internet, offline messaging, database queries, and player controls required several rounds of refinement. From this experience, Nakypilo Radio learned the importance of requesting highly detailed technical plans from contractors and allocating extra time for revisions when developing complex digital products.

HOW WAS NAKYPILO RADIO'S PROJECT RECEIVED BY ITS AUDIENCE?

The project was received positively by the audience, especially due to its practical features. Users highly appreciated the ability to add favorite materials to a dedicated list. The “Texts” section was praised as a convenient way to consume content. Also, the new feature to quickly copy a link to any material simplifies content sharing and distribution.

WHAT INSIGHTS OR LESSONS DID NAKYPILO RADIO GAIN FROM THIS PROJECT?

The main lesson is that personalization and functionality that integrates into the user's daily life are key to sustainable growth. The ability to set the radio as an alarm clock is a powerful tool for forming content-consumption habits. Providing access to textual content and the ability to copy a link directly in the app meets the audience's need for fast and convenient consumption and sharing of materials. Integrating the "Community" and "Advertising" sections directly onto the "About Us" page significantly increased the visibility of both features, thereby maximizing Nakypilo Radio's potential for future monetization and strengthening audience connection.

WHAT DOES NAKYPILO RADIO PLAN ON DOING NEXT?

Building on the success of this project, the team's next priority is to expand communication around the mobile app and increase its visibility among users. They plan to actively promote the application through their radio channels, social media, and partner networks. By growing the user base, the team aims to strengthen community engagement and make their programming more accessible. At the same time, the app has become a new and successful case study for the organization. Nakypilo Radio now has a concrete example of delivering a complex digital product despite technical challenges. This outcome allows the team to share knowledge and lessons learned with colleagues in the independent media sector, encouraging them to explore similar tools for audience development. The team also sees opportunities to position the app as part of broader discussions on innovation in media. By presenting their experience at professional gatherings or through peer exchanges, they can inspire others to experiment with new technologies and collectively strengthen the media ecosystem. In short, the project outcomes are not an endpoint but a foundation for further growth, visibility, and collaboration.

Furthermore, the team is committed to the continuous improvement of the app, aiming to transform it into a self-sustaining monetization tool. This evolution will allow Nakypilo Radio to convert audience reach into a reliable financial resource without placing additional operational strain on the team. To achieve this, the team plans to integrate paid subscription functionality and contextual advertising. This hybrid model will offer users a choice between free access supported by ads or a premium, ad-free experience through a paid subscription.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD NAKYPILO RADIO GIVE TO OTHER JOURNALISTS OR ORGANIZATIONS CONSIDERING A SIMILAR PATH?

Focus on routine: add functionality that integrates your media into the user's daily routine. Simplify sharing: ensure easy copying of direct links to material to encourage organic sharing. Unite formats: combining audio and text in one place significantly increases the app's value. Integrate monetization and connection options: to enhance visibility, integrate monetization and user engagement features (such as advertising options and community links) directly into your product interface. Ensure personalization: give users control over content, such as a favorites feature and detailed notification settings.



VISUALS FROM THE PROJECT

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