OxfordLanguages

Wizzie Words
Case Study

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The Product

Wizzie Words is a next-generation dictionary app created by Datalake Creative Ltd, a UK-based creative agency committed to using technology to empower young minds. The app reimagines how learners engage with vocabulary and comprehension, especially in the context of reading. Rather than interrupting the learning process, Wizzie Words is designed to integrate seamlessly into a student's study routine, offering support that is immediate, intuitive, and deeply personalized.

As its core, Wizzie Words addresses a fundamental challenge in language learning: the gap between encountering a new word and truly understanding it. Traditional dictionaries serve as static tools - useful for quick definitions but limited in their ability to reinforce learning or provide context. Wizzie Words changes that by embedding dictionary functionality directly into the reading experience. Learners can scan unfamiliar words as they read, instantly access definitions, and save them for later review. All of these features are offered for free. The app then builds on this interaction by offering reinforcement through free games, categorization, and social learning features that encourage daily engagement.

To further enhance comprehension, Wizzie Words automatically highlights phrases and idioms in the text, making them easy to identify and look up. And for users whose first language isn't English, the app allows a default translation language to be set, so every word looked up is instantly shown in their native language. These features are also available at no cost.

The app is especially tailored for English learners and ESL students, including those preparing for high-stakes exams such as the SAT, 11+, GCSEs, IELTS, and TOEFL. It also supports learners with accessibility needs, offering features like text-to-speech, dyslexia-friendly fonts, and visual overlays. These design choices reflect a broader mission: to make vocabulary acquisition not only more effective, but more inclusive. Wizzie Words is not just a dictionary - it's a learning companion that adapts to the needs of each user, helping them build confidence and fluency in English through meaningful, sustained interaction.
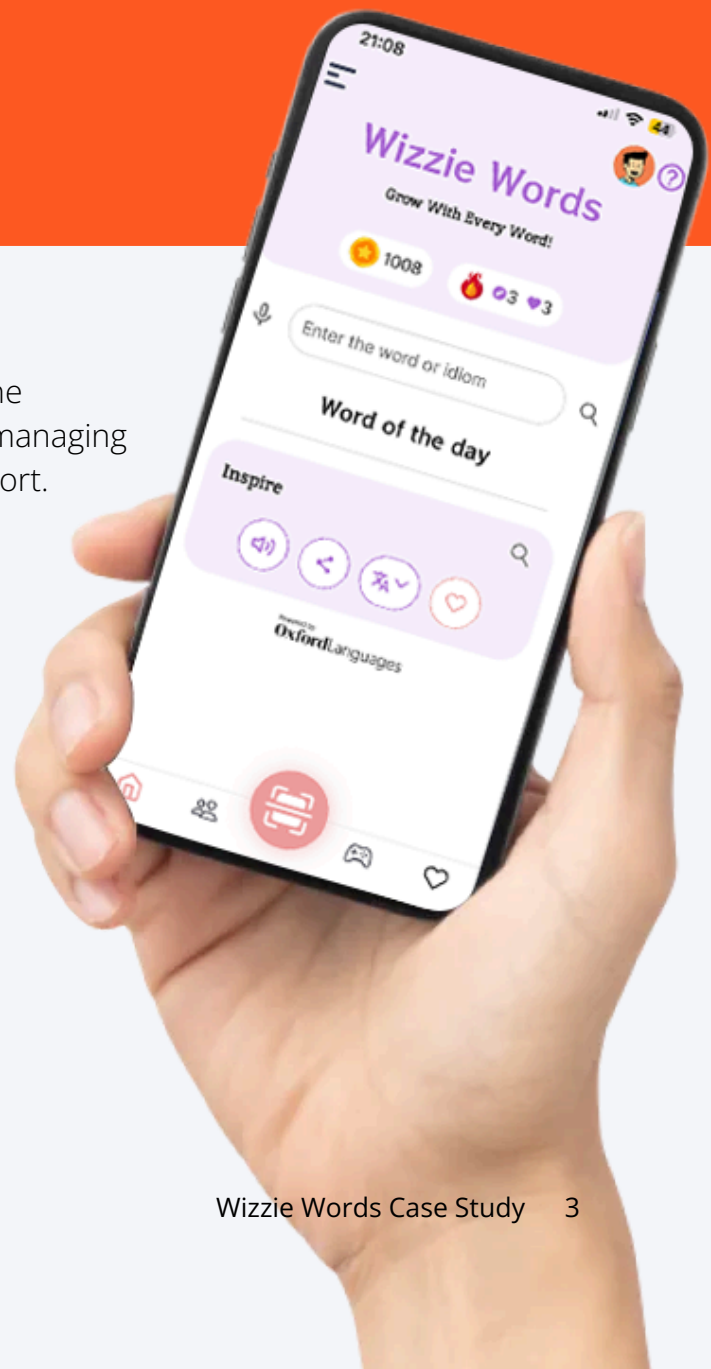
"Wizzie Words helps users - particularly those facing language, learning or accessibility barriers - develop the vocabulary and comprehension skills needed to unlock educational, professional, and personal growth opportunities."

Shemal Rajapakse, Co-Founder
Wizzie Words

For many learners, especially those navigating the challenges of studying in a second language or managing learning differences, traditional resources fall short.

Wizzie Words was built to close that gap. By embedding vocabulary support directly into the reading experience, Wizzie Words removes the friction that often discourages learners from engaging with unfamiliar texts. It turns every new word into a moment of growth, reinforcing learning through context, repetition, and play - all within an ad-free environment that keeps the focus on learning, not clutter.

Whether a student is preparing for exams, adjusting to a new country, or simply trying to keep up in class, Wizzie Words meets them where they are - and helps them move forward with confidence.

The problem

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Despite the importance of vocabulary and comprehension in language learning, traditional dictionary use is often disruptive and ineffective. Learners - especially ESL students - struggle with manual lookups that offer little reinforcement. This challenge is magnified for underserved groups, including migrants, refugees, and neurodiverse learners.

"We initially started with AI generated definitions but soon realized the AI hallucination is making definitions unreliable and decided that we need a trusted and reliable source for definitions."

Shemal Rajapakse, Co-Founder
Wizzie Words

Initially, Wizzie Words attempted to solve this problem using AI-generated definitions. But the limitations of AI quickly became apparent. Hallucinated definitions, inconsistent phrasing, and a lack of reliability led to user complaints and even the collapse of pilot programs with two Suffolk-based colleges. The team found themselves constantly performing manual checks to ensure accuracy - an unsustainable solution for a product meant to scale.

Without a trusted source of language data, the app couldn't deliver on its promise of being a reliable, educational tool. Wizzie Words needed a solution that could offer depth, accuracy, and trust. The team began searching for dictionary APIs and discovered Oxford Languages - a name they had trusted since their own student days.

The solution

By replacing unreliable AI-generated definitions with Oxford Languages' trusted data, Wizzie Words rebuilts its foundation - transforming both its technical architecture and its credibility with learners and educators.

Faced with mounting reliability issues from AI-generated definitions, Wizzie Words made a pivotal decision: to replace its core language data with trusted, structured content from Oxford Languages. This shift wasn't just a technical upgrade - it was a strategic transformation that redefined the app's credibility, usability, and educational value.

The team at Datalake Creative Ltd had firsthand experience with Oxford dictionaries as students, which made Oxford Languages a natural choice. But beyond brand recognition, it was the depth, breadth, and reliability of the data that stood out.

Oxford's comprehensive datasets offered everything Wizzie Words needed: definitions, examples, synonyms, antonyms, idioms, and phrases - all structured in XML format for efficient integration.

The team rebuilt the app using React Native, integrating Oxford's XML datasets directly to improve lookup speed and eliminate latency issues previously caused by AI processing.

The results were immediate and transformative:

- **Reliability restored:** No more hallucinated definitions or flagged errors.
- **Speed improved:** Direct access to structured data eliminated delays.
- **Educational partnerships revived:** Conversations with schools and colleges resumed.
- **User trust rebuilt:** Learners now engage with the app confidently.

"With Oxford data we do not have to worry about reliability... We are now able to speak to educational institutes about the app, which is something we couldn't do before."

Shemal Rajapakse, Co-Founder
Wizzie Words

Beyond the data itself, the support from Oxford Languages played a crucial role. Wizzie Words praised the responsiveness and patience of Oxford's representatives, who guided them through the decision-making and implementation process.

Learn more about Wizzie Words

Explore Wizzie Words and discover how their innovative app is helping students master language and communication.

Visit their website:

wizziewords.com

DOWNLOAD THE WIZZIE WORDS APP:

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and so do you.