

Designing a Learner-Centered Digital Reading Platform.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

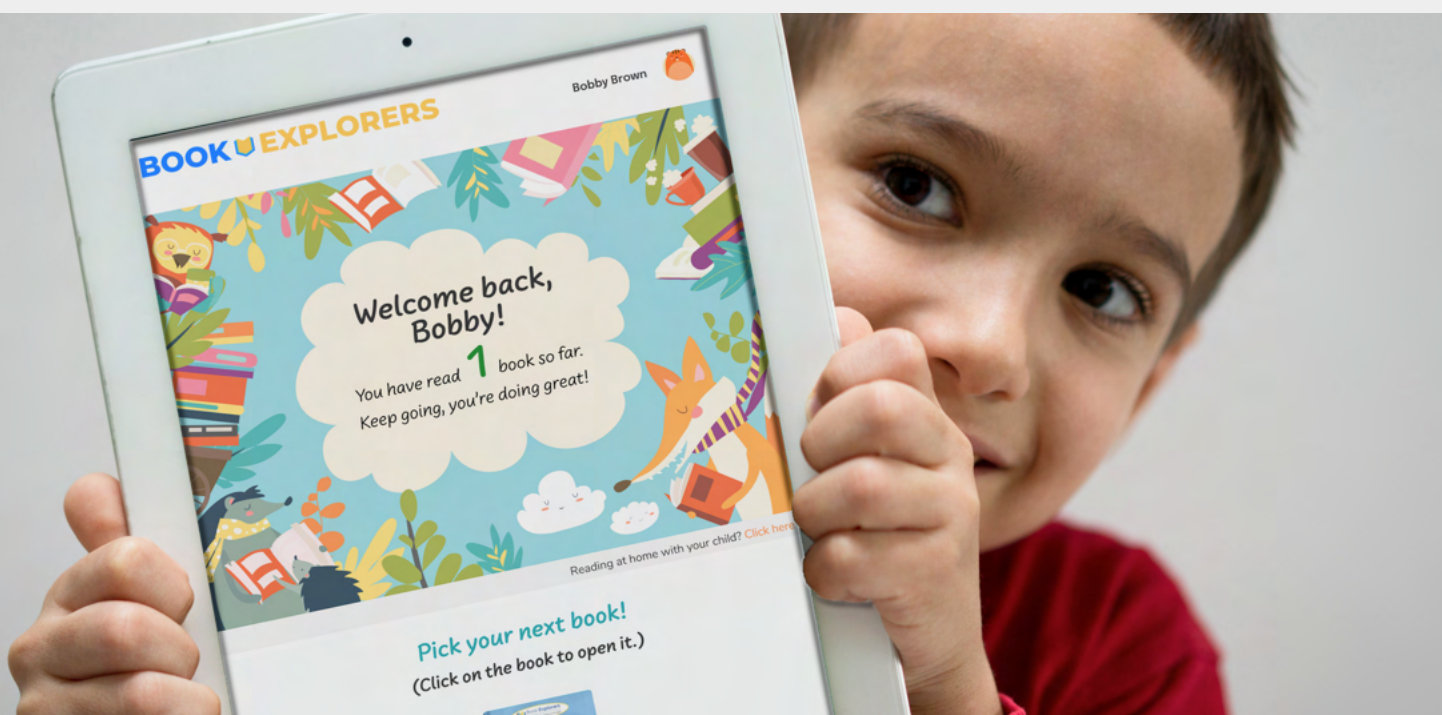


BARBARA BUSH
FOUNDATION *for*
FAMILY LITERACY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Book Explorers
Digital Learning Platform

C|R partnered with the Barbara Bush Foundation to create a custom Digital Learning Platform that enables elementary students and their mentors to progress through the Book Explorers reading program. The program is designed for first, second, and third graders, using targeted strategies and activities to build literacy skills and confidence. The application empowers mentors and students to read books in person and virtually. The platform also tracks attendance, reading progress, and survey answers to measure product outcomes and program success.



THE CHALLENGE

Children of low-literate parents are exposed to **30,000,000 fewer** words and enter kindergarten with a much larger skills gap than their peers

BBF introduced **Book Explorers**, an interactive program, to bring the mentor/mentee model to virtual situations and support at-home learning. The program helps educators and caregivers with supplemental literacy tools for enrichment or intervention. It targets the "summer slide," a regression in academic proficiency due to summer break, and similar learning gaps.

Shifting from human interaction to virtual learning was a complex endeavor that involved providing digital books and guides, developing a user-friendly onboarding process for teachers, tracking attendance and assignments, and mapping interactions between student pairs. The program targeted a young age group, requiring the application be easy to use and not require technical expertise.



Our Aligned Innovation Process

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Digital Product Strategy & Vision
- User Research
- Needs to be Met Personas
- Exceptional Product Definition
- User Experience & Interface Design
- Product Requirements
- Product Proof of Concept to MVP
- Product Build Oversight
- Creative Product Management



ABOUT

The Barbara Bush Foundation, or BBF, has been working since 1989 to help families and communities find success and strength in literacy. While BBF has had success with programs using a mentor/mentee model, that model had not evolved to leverage digital innovations.



130 million Americans— 54% of adults between the ages of 16 and 74 years old— ***lack proficiency in literacy***, essentially reading below the equivalent of a sixth-grade level.

Literacy impacts individuals, communities, and society at large. With the rapid evolution of educational methods, digital devices and platforms are augmenting or replacing traditional approaches. This dynamic and interactive experience allows learners to access information and resources anytime, anywhere, transforming the way we learn and creating new opportunities for knowledge and skill development.

A mother's reading skill is the ***greatest factor*** affecting her children's future academic success, outweighing other factors like neighborhood and family income.

Children whose parents are involved with them in family literacy activities ***score 10 points higher*** on standardized reading tests.



IDENTIFYING UNMET NEEDS

BBF initially piloted with an external, third-party mentoring platform to digitally bring the program to life. Unfortunately, it did not engage students and teachers in a way that fostered the learning outcomes the BBF team sought for program participants. As a result, with the help of the C\R team, BBF chose to develop a customized platform to meet the unique needs of its customers.

C\R designed an MVP (minimum viable product) to quickly get the new digital version of Book Explorers to schools and programs. The new delivery platform was named the Digital Learning Platform, or DLP. C\R leveraged the Aligned Innovation process to identify the top needs of teachers and students. Through extensive discovery, user journey development, and testing, C\R developed user experiences and a workflow for mentee and mentor users that prioritized customer needs and learning outcomes.



“C\R really dug in and helped us get a better sense for what we were trying to do, even before we were really sure what we were doing.”

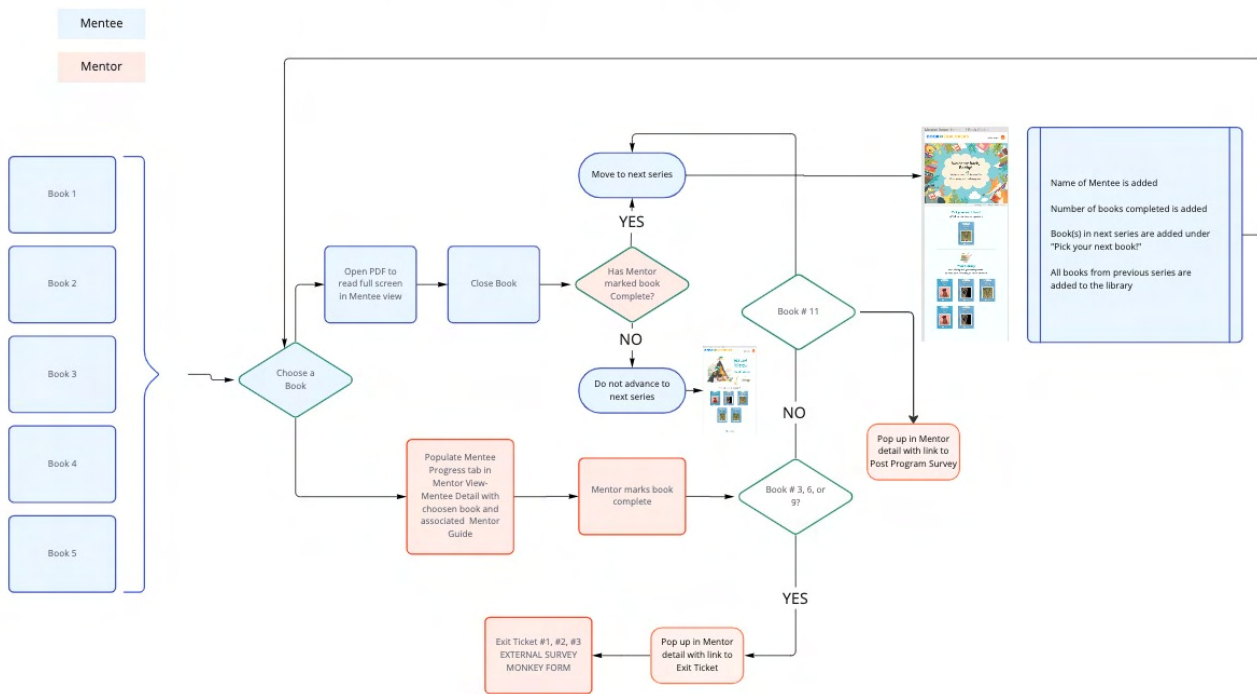
- Andrew Roberts



CREATING AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE

The platform's primary users are elementary school students, so designing a user-friendly and captivating experience for 6-8-year-olds was crucial. Mentors assisted younger users by filling in the essential data needed to track the product's efficacy. Additionally, C\R created data collection tools for program advisors to track engagement, learning, and product outcomes.

After the launch of the MVP, C\R turned their attention to creating a more robust version of the platform. Gathering experience data from students and administrators, C\R is building the next generation of the Digital Learning Platform.



“The DPL was much more user friendly experience, and more geared towards the age range of the users.”

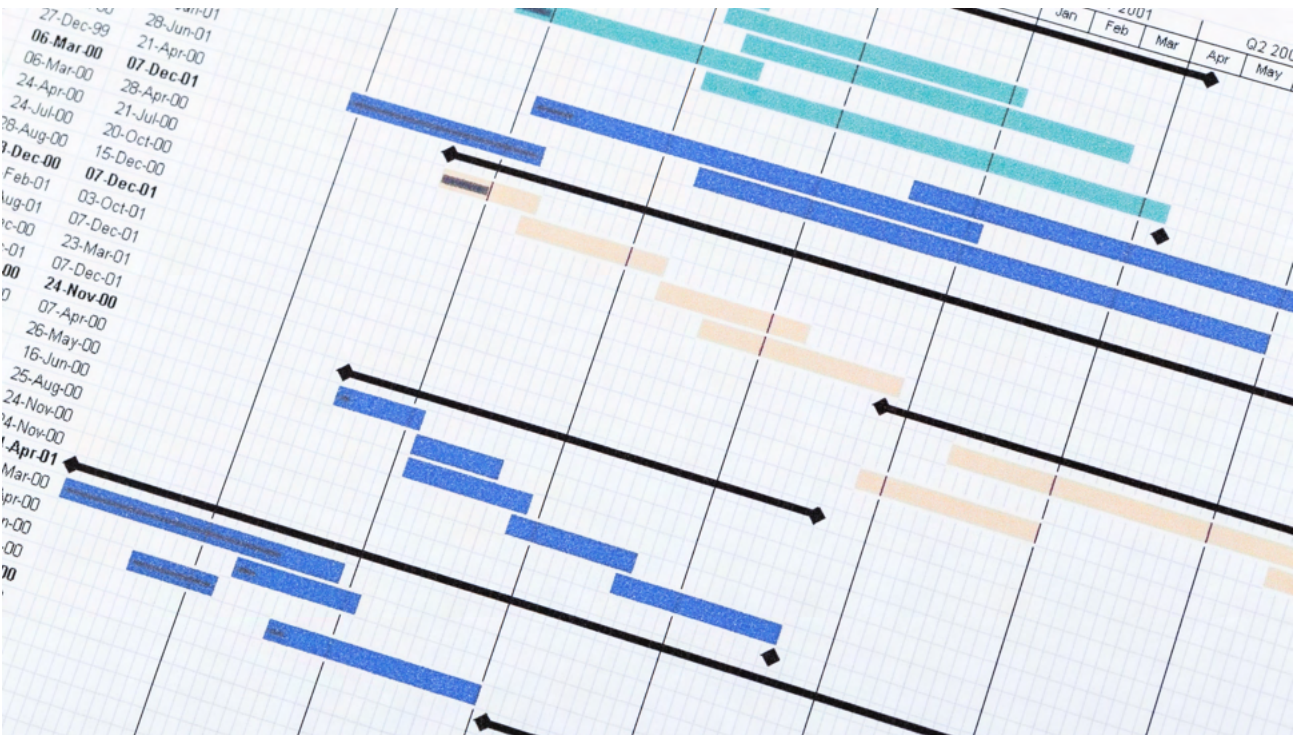
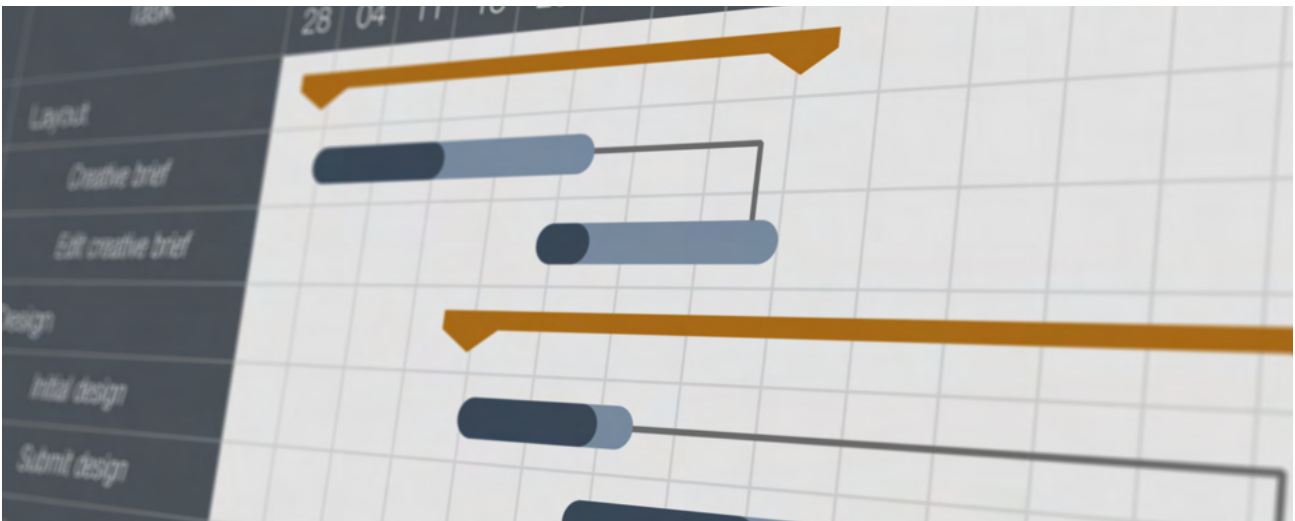
- Heather Brinkworth



BUILD FOR IMPACT

C\R strategy played a critical role in overseeing and managing the development of the Digital Learning Platform by meeting the needs of learners, educators, and administrators. Through effective project management, C\R collaborated with developers and stakeholders to ensure the platform inspired learners and engaged them in meaningful learning experiences to improve reading levels.

In addition, the C\R strategy team continued to improve the platform through product management by gathering user feedback and incorporating new features and functionalities that enhance the learning experience in subsequent builds.



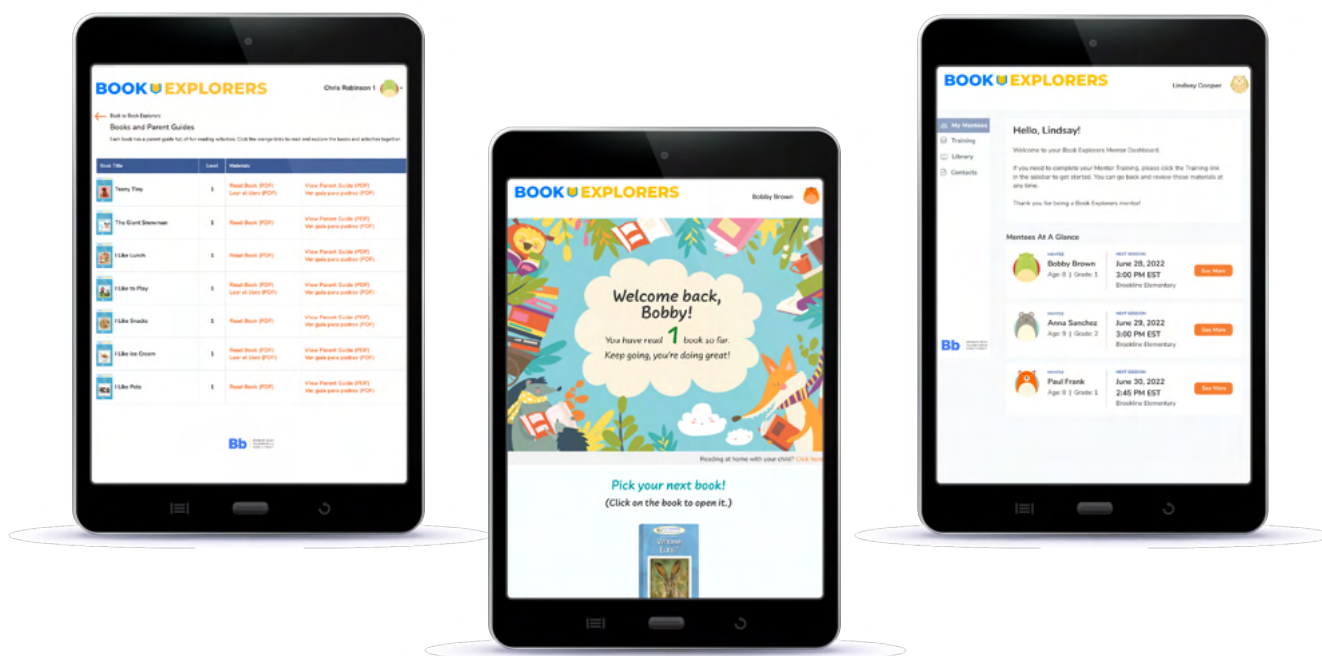


PILOT FOR SCALE

The Digital Learning Platform has extended the program reach of the Book Explorers Program by enabling students from diverse locations - from Florida to Maine and Oklahoma and in rural districts and inner cities - to enhance their reading and writing abilities in an enjoyable and supportive manner. These capabilities have addressed the critical challenge of making quality literacy education accessible to a broader demographic while accurately measuring the program's effectiveness. With the help of technology, the platform offers swift access to learning resources and experiences while keeping track of essential metrics.

The BBF organization successfully piloted the application with 5 test programs, and the platform quickly expanded to 22 programs serving over 500 students. The goal for the next year is to reach over 1,300 students on this robust and scalable platform.

The reaction from teachers and students has been positive. Seeing photos of students showing their love for the platform has been rewarding. BBF is already looking to the future and considering using this program to guide other literacy courses.



“C\ proved to be a reliable and able partner in past projects, allowing BBF to be confident that a custom digital learning platform was possible and would advance their goals with the Book Explorers program.”

- Andrew Roberts