



Humanizing digital communications

2mee brings mixed reality to
messaging on IBM Cloud

by Kristin Fern Johnson

5-minute read

What if you could send a digital version of yourself to your customers in an instant? It might sound like science fiction, but 2mee Ltd., together with [IBM Cloud®](#) and [IBM Garage™](#), is making it a reality—a mixed reality, that is.

The company has come a long way on that journey since its founding in 2012. “We set out to explore the way we communicate with each other digitally,” says James Riley, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of 2mee. “Most digital communications are text-based. As people, we’re designed to interact in an emotional capacity—I wink or smile at you, and you respond accordingly. But all that is stripped out in the digital world.”

Based at the University of York, in York, England, 2mee was able to tap into expertise across a wide range of disciplines—from computer sciences to psychology. “We concluded that humans are designed to communicate face to face. And a great way to do that is to send a human as the message and merge that message with the channel the customer is using at that time,” explains Riley.

Based on its research, the team developed a patent for technology that displays real-world people in AR as holograms—the first of several patent families the company now has established for the technology globally. The holograms can be projected on a variety of devices—such as mobile phones, tablets or laptops—through messaging applications or simple-to-install software development kits (SDKs) integrated into the client’s digital collateral.

To support its new offering, 2mee needed a stable, scalable back-end platform that would allow it to deliver messages securely and in real time. “We have a very lean team, and our strength lies in development, not infrastructure management,” says Riley. “So we wanted to house our solution in a cloud environment to save us valuable time, expense and effort.”

E-commerce retailer
achieved an

87%

click-through rate on a hologram website promotion

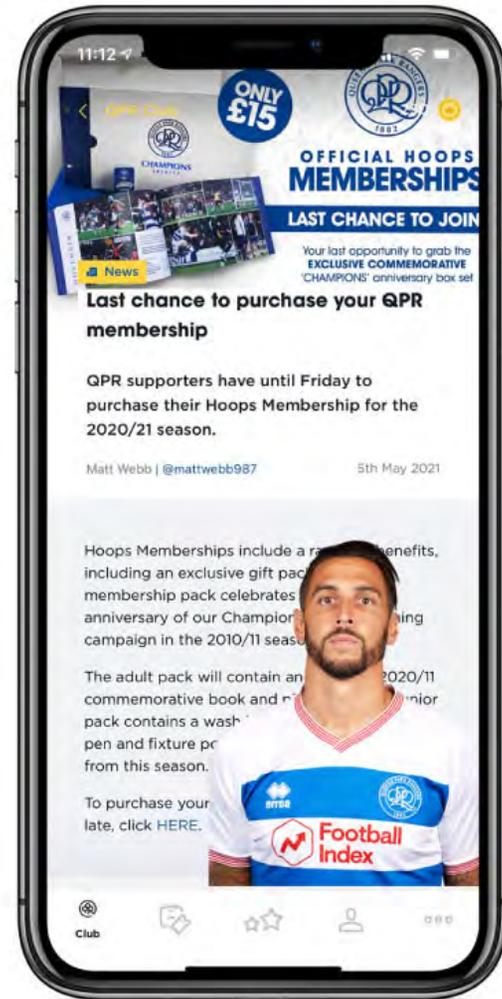
Hologram messages
provided up to

10X

the engagement rate of traditional texts in a customer marketing campaign

“IBM Cloud has given us access to a rich set of services and APIs that have allowed us to take our solution to the next level. Plus, the knowledge and support of the IBM Garage team has been second to none. I don’t think we would have been able to achieve everything we have without that kind of personal engagement.”

James Riley, Chief Executive Officer, 2mee Ltd.



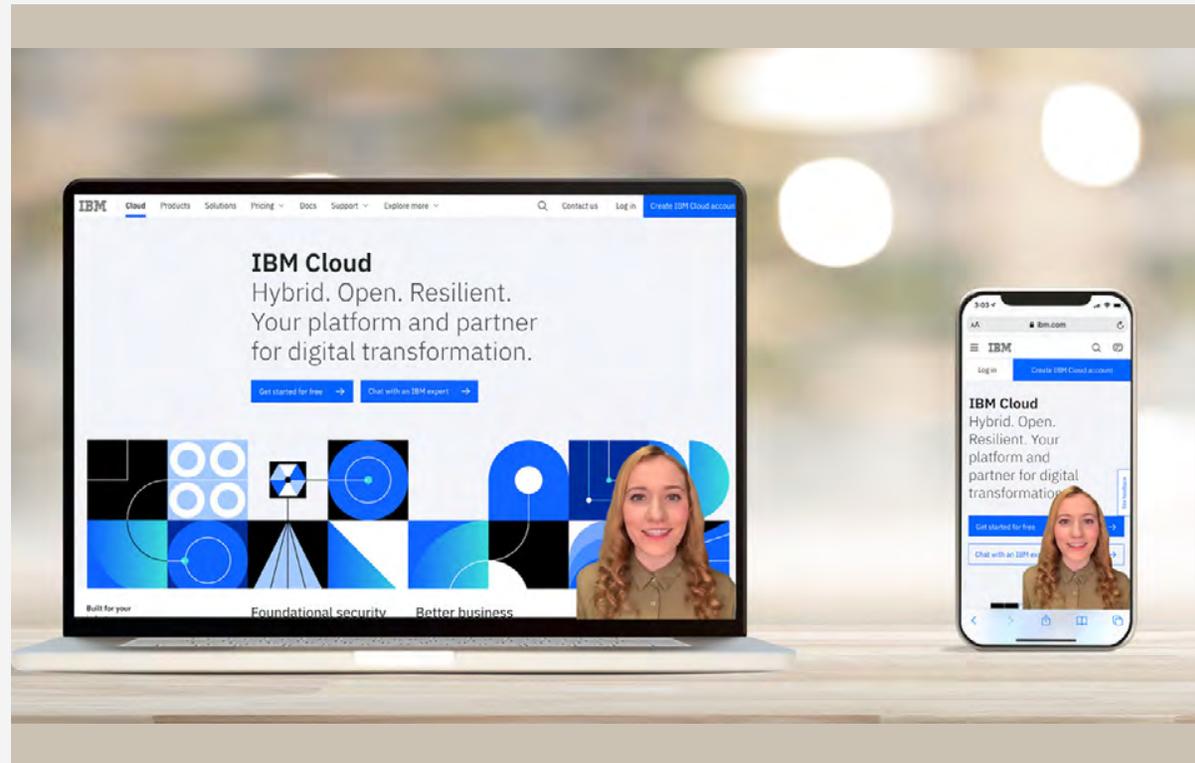
QPR Football Club

A true partnership

After looking at several other cloud providers' offerings, 2mee chose IBM Cloud to support its platform. "IBM instantly understood our vision and was genuinely excited about the concept," recalls Riley. "With IBM, we didn't just get a cloud services provider, we found a true partner."

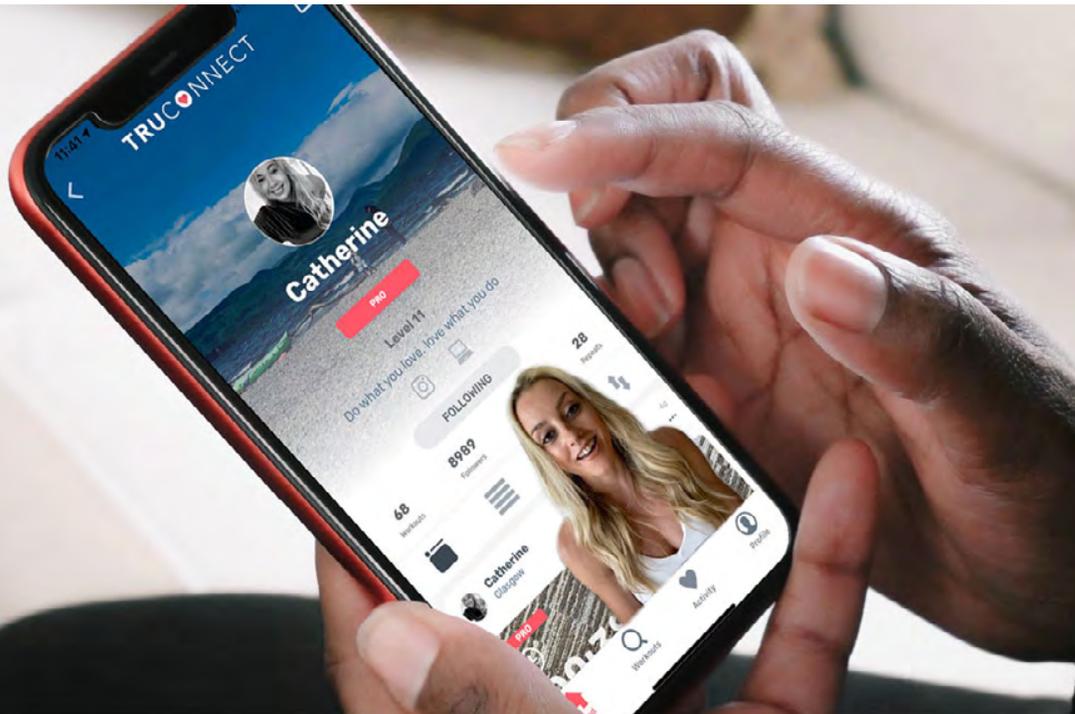
It also didn't hurt that an IBM R&D team was located on the floor below 2mee's offices at the university. "What stood out for us was the personal nature of IBM," says Riley. "It ties into our DNA—talking directly to people and seeing the whites of their eyes. Plus the IBM name has a gravitas we can stand by."

The company worked closely with the London IBM Garage—a transformation framework that integrates people, processes and technology. Following the agile and user-centered IBM Garage Methodology, the joint team designed and built the back end for its solution. This included creating the 2mee Exchange—a sophisticated and highly scalable gateway running on the [IBM Cloud Foundry](#) platform that stores the solution's messages using the [IBM Cloud Object Storage](#) solution and pushes them out to any enabled device.



"It was quick and easy for us to get up and running on IBM Cloud," confirms Riley. "IBM handles much of the ongoing IT management, which means that we are free to spend time innovating. We also see

that IBM is invested in developing the cloud platform; many new cloud services have come online since we started this process, and we've been making use of quite a few of them."



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For example, 2mee is using [Cloud Databases on IBM Cloud](#), a security-rich platform that enables the company to integrate data from clients' customer relationship management (CRM) systems with the 2mee solution. Now companies can use their CRM data as well as data from end users' devices—such as location data from a smart phone—to create campaigns targeting specific customer segments.

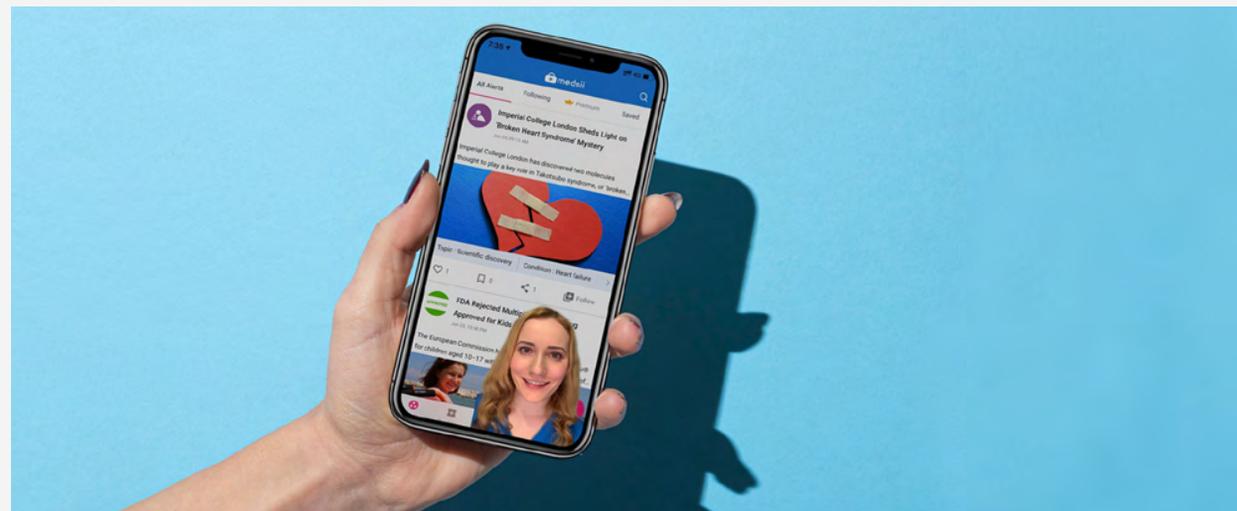
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Initially the company targeted the gambling and sports industries, in which the scalability of the IBM Cloud was essential. “We needed to send messages to up to 10 million people in one fell swoop. At the start of a soccer game, for example, most gambling companies provide a 15-minute window during which you can place a bet,” says Riley. “So it's critical to be able to send out messages during that time to as many people as possible.”

Unprecedented engagement

So far, the 2mee solution has significantly outperformed results for traditional text messaging. During a major horse racing festival, for example, a prominent UK bookmaker sent out multiple hologram messages to its app via push notifications. Engagement rates were an astonishing 650% higher than the average rates for text push messages from bookmakers. And when the captain of a major soccer club used hologram messages to talk directly to fans, the club saw an incredible 2,000% increase in engagement rates over typical messaging rates.

Since 2mee offers both traditional and human hologram messaging to customers, comparisons between the two are easy to come by. “We have a club that uses both types of our messaging, and we are able to analyze activity going through the IBM platform,” says Riley. “Text messages are achieving a 2% – 4% click-through engagement rate, while for hologram messages, it’s 22% – 48%.”



COVID-19 hit the sports and gambling sectors hard, so the company broadened the scope of its target markets to include cross-industry brands. Fortunately, methods for applying the solution often come from the customers themselves. “We’ve stopped trying to tell people how to use our technology,” says Riley. “When people see

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it, they grasp it and automatically fit it into their own business models.”

High engagement rates are proving consistent in those other industries, as well. An e-commerce retailer published a hologram video and a special offer for two weeks that achieved a whopping 87% click-through rate. “These kinds of engagement numbers are unheard of,” says Riley.

Today, the relationship between 2mee and IBM is going strong. “It’s been superb,” says Riley. “When you’re dealing with time-critical communications, if something goes wrong, you need to be able to talk with people to resolve it quickly. IBM is always very responsive.”

By the end of 2021, 2mee plans to bring its technology to social media channels and human messaging via AR, in addition to the traditional app and website channels it currently serves. And it’s looking into how it can use AI for such things as engagement analysis based on audience response to facial expressions or real-person holographic chatbot development. “It’s an exciting time to be an IBM Cloud customer, and we’re looking forward to seeing what the future has in store for the platform,” concludes Riley.



About 2mee Ltd.

2mee is a communications company that has developed patented technology to put humans into the center ground of communications—just as nature intended. 2mee has developed complex algorithms that allow people to be segmented from their background and transmitted as a human hologram message. Founded in 2012, 2mee is headquartered at the University of York, in York, England.

Solution components

- Cloud Databases on IBM Cloud®
- IBM Cloud
- IBM Cloud Foundry
- IBM Cloud Object Storage
- IBM Garage™

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