

## CASE STUDY

# Timehop uses Embrace to reduce the time to detection of user-impacting issues to minutes

**“With Embrace, the turnaround time from when a user-impacting issue is flagged to determining the cause of the problem is around 10 minutes.”**

Jason Sznol, Lead Android Engineer at Timehop



### CUSTOMER

Timehop aggregates users' past social media memories (photos, videos, tweets, statuses, etc.) and presents it every day to their mobile devices. It's a fun, innovative way to recall your past in a way that ties it to the current calendar day.



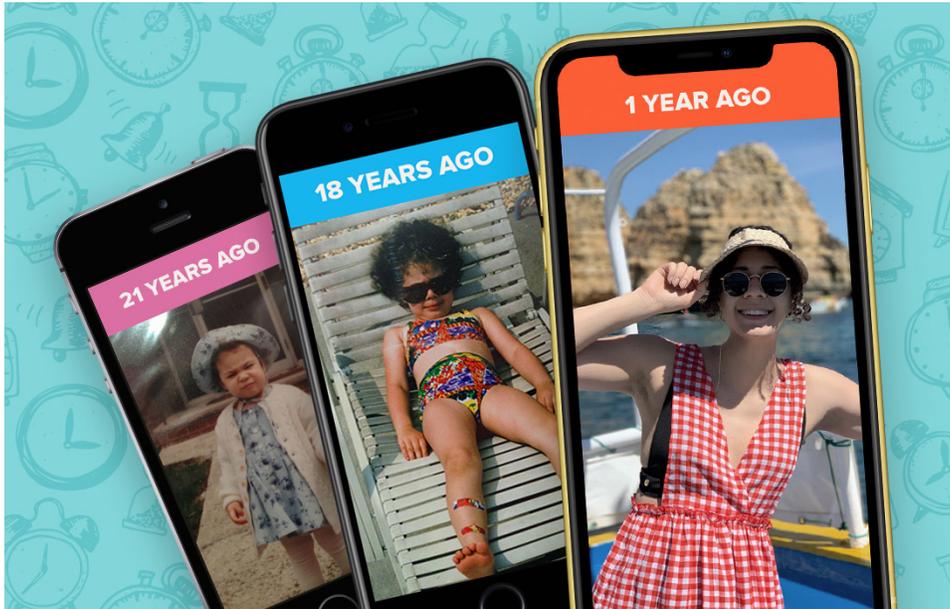
### CHALLENGE

Users sometimes report issues with one of many social media account connections. As an incredibly small team (one person on Android, iOS, QA, and Support respectively), Timehop needed an efficient solution for troubleshooting technical issues so they could focus their time on driving the product forward.



### RESULTS

With Embrace's session replay, Timehop can immediately find the root cause of any issues in sessions where poor user experiences occur. With the added context of network calls and logs, Timehop can much more quickly discover the causes and remediate them.



**INDUSTRY**  
Digital Nostalgia

**LOCATION**  
New York

**PLATFORMS**  
Android and iOS

**EMBRACE FEATURES**  
Session Replay

## Timehop is on a mission to reinvent how we celebrate the past

With so much of how we engage with social media being about the present, Timehop realized there wasn't much being done about celebrating memories. In 2010, Timehop created the digital nostalgia category and continues to be THE team reinventing reminiscing for the digital era.

Timehop collects content across popular social networks and photo apps, including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Dropbox, Google Photos, iCloud, and local photos. With so many integrations, users can relive any memory they've captured, regardless of where it lives.

Having a variety of different social media connections, one of Timehop's biggest goals is helping users with any issues or bad experiences that they report. Being able to quickly find the problems is crucial in being able to quickly fix them.

**“Embrace has been a huge help reducing the amount of time it takes to investigate user-reported issues. When we receive a request that requires more than basic troubleshooting, we're able to get the details we need, fast.”**

Aly Hassel, Research & Support Manager



Before Embrace, Timehop struggled to minimize the time spent on finding the cause of these user-impacting issues.

*“We worked hard to achieve a crash-free sessions rate north of 99.95%, but issues with content that doesn’t load or slow/frozen screens is much harder to log. In other words, they tend to be issues that don’t end in a stack trace.”*

Jason Sznol, Lead Android Engineer at Timehop

## **Firestore and Fabric couldn’t help detect user-impacting issues that didn’t lead to a crash**

Previously, Timehop relied on Firestore and Fabric for error monitoring, but lacked the ability to dig into the underlying issue.

And given that these tools are mostly geared towards crash reporting, they lack the context required to discover non-fatal issues like failing network calls or blank screens.

*“With our previous tools, if the session didn’t end in a crash, we didn’t have much to go on. With Fabric, logging was not as useful because you only see the logs if the app crashed, and then only the last 5-10 log lines. Fabric also didn’t help discover performance issues.”*

Jason Sznol, Lead Android Engineer at Timehop

In other words, Timehop needed a tool that could detect and provide context in order to pinpoint the cause of performance-impacting issues that were previously hard to find.

## **Embrace’s session replay allows quick detection of any user-impacting issue**

Embrace helps capture the technical events like network calls, view/activities, and logs, and pinpoint when issues occur. Because Embrace doesn’t sample sessions, Timehop developers can access the technical data they need to troubleshoot any issue.

**“Reproducing issues is a key part of QA, and with millions of users, this can be an almost impossible task. Being able to visually recreate a user’s session and determine exactly how the issue was created helps us tremendously.”**

Alex Rose, Senior QA Automation Engineer



Embrace makes it easy to quickly spot the culprit. Timehop developers see the context of crashes, force quits, OOMs, ANRs, error logs, and network errors. This gives developers much more visibility into what is causing a poor user experience. Often, just knowing the timeline is enough to indicate a potential problem.

*I can quickly look at session length to find problem sessions. Our average session length is 55 seconds to 1 minute. So if I see a session that's less than 30 seconds, I suspect there's probably an issue there. Likewise, if I see a session that's less than 5 seconds, something clearly went wrong."*

Jason Sznol, Lead Android Engineer at Timehop

For issues like frozen or blank screens, developers can inspect network calls to look for slow or failing calls. In addition, Embrace starts labeling ANRs as soon as the main thread is blocked for one second. That means developers get insight into issues causing users to force quit the app that don't result in a stack trace or ANR exit.

*"We can see the 400s from calls for content, so we can tell when the app isn't loading memories properly. In addition, we can infer when the screen is frozen by seeing when an ANR Interval starts."*

Jason Sznol, Lead Android Engineer at Timehop

Embrace allows Timehop developers to immediately go from user complaint to the cause of the issue.

## **Timehop can respond to users quickly and get back to building features**

Timehop saves valuable developer time that would otherwise be spent trying to reproduce issues manually. With previous tools like Firebase and Fabric, Jason and his colleagues wouldn't be able to find the outlier, determine what the issue is, and resolve it quickly.

*"It's a challenge to accomplish everything I need to do. The time recouped by having good debugging tools at our disposal that work on both iOS and Android has allowed us to progress the product without sacrificing the Timehop user experience."*

Jason Sznol, Lead Android Engineer at Timehop

One of the biggest sources of frustration for mobile teams is the amount of time it takes to detect and remediate issues. Crash reporters are great for surfacing code exceptions, but many of the reasons users abandon apps are due to performance reasons that don't end in a stack trace. Relying on traditional server-side monitoring will not present an accurate picture of the user's experience on the device.

Embrace allows mobile-first companies like Timehop to more efficiently act on user reports and immediately observe issues. We're happy to help Timehop and other teams improve mobile experiences everywhere with complete observability into performance and stability.

### **About Embrace**

Embrace is a comprehensive observability, monitoring, and developer analytics platform built for mobile. Identify, prioritize, and solve issues faster with full access to unsampled user sessions. The world's best mobile-first companies use Embrace to ship better apps.

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