

BUSINESS ON THE GO



Yes, There's A Business App For That!

27 smartphone apps
that make your job easier

The new revolution in smartphone technology has turned mobile phones into traveling offices.

But not all of the software applications designed for smartphones are created equal.

And not all apps have a version for every operating system.

So when selecting your smartphone, it's important to keep in mind which apps you'll need to keep up with business when you're traveling away from home base. It

could be that your phone (or wireless carrier) doesn't have a version of the app you need that works with your operating system.

By far the phone with the most apps is the iPhone, but not all 160,000 apps currently available (and counting) have a whole lot to do with business productivity.

Take "Sit or Squat." Please. This iPhone app actually finds the closest public toilet for users. Now some folks might spin that as productive, but it won't generate revenue and there's not going to

be a whole lot of ROI involved, right?

Of course, you'll be the hit of the next sales meeting with iFart Mobile or Fat Booth (the former makes a variety of gas passing sounds and the latter expands on the theory that the camera adds 15 pounds – this one adds 50.)

Real business productivity apps depend a lot on your line of business and what information or services you need to get your work done.

Some apps are very specific to an industry or profession. Docs will love the Physicians Desk Reference that fits in their hand instead of the conventional model supported by steel I-beams on a bookstand.

Attorneys will enjoy the case law aggregators and law books that are available.

For most workers, however, there will always be the usual needs of the office and computer-bound employee: Read, write, store and retrieve documents, spreadsheets and presentations.

The following is a list of current apps that get good reviews from business folks.

Some will be handy for actually getting your work done. Others will be useful if you spend a lot of time on the road or commuting to and from the office.

Business productivity apps

Documents to Go: Data Viz makes these apps for a wide range of units. The software lets you create and edit Word and Excel files and PowerPoint presentations, and view PDF documents. A free version only lets you view Word and Excel documents. The paid app includes a desktop application for both Windows and Mac machines to provide two-way file synchronization and a version with support for Google Docs, Box.net, Dropbox, iDisk, and SugarSync. Plus, you can send and receive e-mail attachments through Microsoft Exchange.

QuickOffice: This app is great for making minor edits to Word and Excel files attached to e-mails or in online storage services like DropBox, Box.net, and Google Docs (\$15 for BlackBerry; \$10 for iPhone).

PrintMagic: This is the easiest remote-printing app to set up. It automatically finds printers on your network and lets you wirelessly print photos, Web pages, or copy-and-pasted text for iPhone.

PrinterShare: The mobile version of this app can send files directly to a wireless printer (good for Android; \$5), as can ActivePrint, which can also connect to a printer via cable (\$4 with iPhone; \$20-\$40 with Windows Mobile).

Scan2PDF Mobile: This app, by Burrotech, lets you use your phone's camera to scan contracts, receipts, and other documents as full-color PDFs and e-mail them to your desktop. Available in Android and iPhone versions. A BlackBerry app's now in development.

Box.Net: Lets you sync all your files and computers, even Google Apps data, in one place online. The closest thing to a mobile office with real-time syncing and commenting on shared files.

Dragon Dictation: It's the next best thing to having a secretary with shorthand skills. This voice recognition app lets you speak and view your text or e-mail message. For the iPhone; Dragon for e-mail now available for BlackBerry.

Bump: Tired of exchanging business cards with folks and then losing them or using them as coasters during happy hour? Bump replaces the business card exchange. You can share your contact info with another Bump user by just tapping phones together. Or you can share the contact info of others stored on your phone. Developed by a Ph.D. in quantum mechanics, we can't even begin to explain how it works. But it does. And it's free. Currently available for iPhone and Android platforms.

Communications

TextPLUS: Conference via text message with TextPLUS, which lets users text up to 20 people at once. It's a fast and cheap way to communicate with your employees and colleagues. Available for iPhone and Android.

WaveSecure: Losing your phone is pretty much a part of life. WaveSecure takes a little of the edge off by allowing you to remotely lock the device, track the SIM card, and back up any data so you won't lose any precious info or contacts. Subscription service available for Android, BlackBerry, Symbian and Windows phone platforms. (Apple's version of this is MobileMe, also a subscription service.)

Fring: Consolidate all your IM clients into one handy software application. Allows you to find your AIM, Gtalk and other IM clients all in the same place. Available for most platforms.

Find Wi-Fi: There's no comprehensive Wi-Fi hotspot finder, so it's best to download a few free apps that will search both paid and free access. Wi-Fi Finder covers 135 countries -- some more thoroughly than others -- but requires an Internet connection to search its database (free for Android and iPhone), while Wi-Fi Get can query its worldwide database offline and display signal strength and security (Free for iPhone).

VNC Viewer: This software lets you tunnel into your home computer from your

iPhone and control your desktop as if you were sitting in front of it (good for iPhone; \$10). To transfer Word and other files between your phone and multiple computers, use the Dropbox service and app (good for iPhone; free); for access on Android or BlackBerry, go to dropbox.com from your browser.

Social Networking

Twitterrific: For the Twittering exec, this app's handy, simple and straightforward. Whether you use the service to communicate with customers/clients or your team in the office, this is a great tool for Tweets. Available for iPhone/iTouch.

Seismic: This software groups all your Twitter timelines in one screen. One really cool feature: the ability to customize alerts, so you will be notified only when specific tweets are posted. Available for Android, iPhone and BlackBerry.

WhosHere: Yes, it'll find friends who are in your area, but if you need professional services, it'll locate the pros nearby as well. Available for iPhone and iTouch.

Facebook: It's currently the most popular app on all smartphone platforms except the Android OS, where it comes in No. 2. Available free for a broad range of operating systems, including Black Berry, iPhone and Android.

Reference

Kindle: Yes, the iPad has its own book reader and store, but for folks with a Kindle library, this app is a must (no need to re-buy all those previously purchased books.) The iPad version of the reader's a big improvement over the traditional version too. Amazon's also got a BlackBerry version of the software and is currently working on a version for Android.

Fluent News Reader: There are lots of news apps out there, but this one is a great aggregator of most of them -- from a wide range of perspectives. Currently only available for iPhone/iPod Touch/iPad.

Handmark Pocket Express: This mobile information app brings you news, sports, and weather through a cute icon-based interface. It's free, and it's faster than a Web browser. Available for BlackBerry, Palm OS, and Windows Mobile phones.

PowerOne Financial Calculator: Includes almost 60 finance, real estate, investment and conversion calculators. Also gives you the ability to write your own or add-on pre-created calculator templates. For the iPhone/iPad only, \$5.99.

HiCALC: Contains Arithmetic, Trigonometry, Constants, Biorhythm, Tip, Currency Converter, Unit converter, Base conversion and Date-Time Calculator modules. For Windows Mobile Smartphones.

Travel/Entertainment

Netflix: Stream movies right to your tablet when you're on the go, or just manage your account anywhere, anytime with this well-designed, easy-to use software. Great app to have for those long airport delays. Free for iPhone and Windows Mobile.

KAYAK Flights: For the road warrior or much-traveling exec, this is the probably the best flight finder out there. Nice interface that searches a wide range of sites at once. Available free for iPhone, Android and BlackBerry.

TripIt: Great for consolidating all your travel details—flights, hotels, cars, events—on one site. Just forward your confirmation e-mails to plans@tripit.com and the site will instantly pull the relevant info and build your itinerary. The app includes basic flight tracking, terminal maps, driving directions, and airplane-seat advice (Free for Android, BlackBerry, and iPhone); the Pro service adds loyalty-program tracking and recommends other flights if yours is canceled (\$69 per year).

IXpensesentit: Keep track of expenses on the road with this app that allows for fast data entry, support for taking photos of receipts and simple export of reports in either CSV or HTML format via e-mail. You can even transfer files over Wi-Fi directly between your computer's Web browser and iPhone. For the iPhone only.

ExpenseManager: This is a stripped-down app with no receipt photo support, but it will export to HTML or CSV files for importing to an MS Excel template. For BlackBerry and Windows Mobile.