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Technology turns cell phones into portable databases or favorite games

By Cindy Wolff

Posted February 4, 2010 at 12:05 a.m.

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RICHARD ROBBINS/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

There was a time when calling someone from a phone not attached to a wall was a miracle of modern invention.

Now Traci Hampton of Cordova can set her home DVR through her cell phone. She can find where movies are showing near her house or where the closest Starbucks is located. All with applications on her mobile phone.

When Apple introduced the iPhone three years ago, it set users atwitter about a generation of smart phones that use "apps."

Apps, short for applications, are all the things a cell phone can do besides make calls.

What kind of bird is that? What's the weather radar look like? What's the name of that song? Where's a good Italian restaurant?

There are apps for all those questions and thousands more.



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"What's your favorite app?" has become as common a question as Apple's slogan "There's an app for that."

iPhone is the behemoth of the app world with more than 100,000, some free, others costing from 99 cents up to \$1,000 for BarMax CA, an

application to help law students preparing for the bar exam in California. The developers plan to add more states to the list.

Apple has competition from several other cell phone platforms including Google through its Android Market, Research in Motion's BlackBerry Apps World, Microsoft's Mobile Marketplace for Windows and Palm's Apps Catalog.

Many apps work across various platforms. Web sites like mplayit.com help users weed through the applications.

Last month, Apple announced downloads through the company's App Store for the iPhone and iPod Touch were more than 3 billion in less than 18 months. Last week, it announced its new iPad that will also interface with Apple apps.

Hampton, a director at the West Clinic, has nearly 100 apps on the iPhone she bought in October.

"I'm a list person, so it lets me make lists and put them in different files on my phone," she said. "I put in recipes from the holidays, and I can call them up and get the ingredients list whenever I want."

She has game apps Scrabble, Jeopardy, Trivial Pursuit.

Her brother Chad Hampton, an outreach pastor at the south campus of Raleigh Assembly of God keeps an audio Bible app on his phone that lets him look up verses instantly.

He also likes to play Blackjack on his phone.

Consumers will spend \$6.2 billion in 2010 in mobile application stores, according to Stamford, Conn.-based Gartner Inc., a leading information technology research and advisory company.

Local public relations company Howell Marketing Strategies used Memphis-based Resolute Games to create a free app for the company. It links users to the latest news, blogs and Twitter information generated by Howell.

"We see it as another tool in our toolbox to get our message out," said Amy Howell, founder of Howell Marketing. "It's all about being found, and believe me, people find us."

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Srini Dharmaji, chief executive officer of GoldSpot Media, an interactive mobile media technology provider, predicts the mobile applications will get easier for consumers to use.

"There will be applications for various stores, which will have their ads displayed with bar codes," said Dharmaji.

He said gaming applications have a short shelf life and apps that provide service will be the ones that will have longevity in the industry.

Sarah Trouy, who lives in Memphis and works at the Shelby County Assessor's office, plays on her iPhone waiting for her son to finish basketball practice, if she's stuck at a railroad crossing or at night when there's nothing on television to watch.

She plays games like Floodit, Word Scramble 2. She likes Pandora Radio for music and Shazam to help her identify what song is playing.

The app also tells the artist and takes the user to the iTunes store to download the song to your phone or computer.

"I have mixed emotions about my phone," said Trouy. "It's cool having the latest technology and keeping up-to-date with everything. But I spend too much time playing with it when I should be reading a book or doing something productive. I hate being in social situations and everyone's head is down looking at their phones."

-- *Cindy Wolff: 529-2378*

What's your favorite app?

What's on your phone? Here are some of the more popular apps that are available through several cell phone service providers:

Facebook: The Internet social network can be accessed on cell phones.

Pandora Radio: Got a favorite band? Plug it in Pandora and it will create a personalized radio station for you that plays music of similar genre.

Scrabble: The popular board game lets users play with people from around the world, or from your own household.

Yelp: Need to find a dry cleaner, a restaurant, a gas station, just give a Yelp. The app uses GPS to fix your location and help you find stores near you.

Flixster: Watch movie trailers. Find show times for your nearest theater and viewer ratings.

Redbox: Rent a movie, reserve it at a location near you, all for \$1.

Bubblewrap: An addictive waste of time app for those who love to pop packaging bubbles.

Floodit: Try to get all the squares the same color in 22 moves or less.

Business: e.g. salon

Location: e.g. Memphis, TN

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Allrecipes.com Dinner Spinner: Thousands of free recipes that can be read while grocery shopping.

Bump: You literally bump your phone against someone else's phone and information can be transferred like address books and contact information.

Twitterrific: An easy-to-use app for people who like to look at status updates or make them on Twitter.



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[MollyThom](#) writes:

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