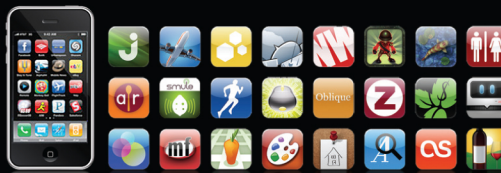


Best iPhone Apps

The Guide for Discriminating Downloaders





Discover Great Apps to Help You:

- Get stuff done
- Connect with friends
- Play games
- Juggle documents
- Explore what's nearby
- Get in shape
- Travel the world
- Find new music
- Dine out
- Manage your money

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Best iPhone Apps

The Guide for Discriminating Downloaders

With over 50,000 iPhone apps to choose from, there's a mind-boggling number of ways to make your favorite device do just about anything you can imagine—and almost certainly a few things you would never think of. While it's not hard to find apps for your iPhone or iPod Touch, it's frustratingly difficult to find the *best* ones.

Best iPhone Apps guides the way, shining the light on over 200 gee-whiz apps that delight, empower, and entertain. Author **Josh Clark** stress-tested thousands of titles from the App Store emporium to hand-pick apps that will make the biggest difference in every aspect of your life: at work, on the town, at play, at home, and on the road.

Capitalize on your time with genius productivity apps, or fritter it away with deliriously fun games. However you use your iPhone or iPod Touch, *Best iPhone Apps* shows you how to unlock its full potential and make the most of your glossy gadget.

Best iPhone Apps

The Guide for Discriminating Downloaders

⊕ by Josh Clark

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Best iPhone Apps: The Guide for Discriminating Downloaders

by Josh Clark

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[9/09]

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Foreword

My elementary school in Minneapolis had sensational student assemblies. It wasn't the stock parade of Just Say No and Scared Straight folks, or the usual collection of career-day speakers. We got a swami. We got a Secret Service agent. I'm just saying: We had great assemblies. One of them, though, stuck with me more than the rest.

It was 1977. I don't remember the speaker's name, but he made music—electronic music, with big, heavy equipment. His gear filled the stage of our homely auditorium, and he sprang from machine to machine to make this weird music of blips and bleeps and eerie organ sounds. He knew how to warm up an under-10 crowd; Star Wars had arrived in theaters that spring, and he used his outrageously fancy equipment to boom R2-D2 sounds at us, all chirps and whistles. He owned us.

At the end, he stepped to the front of the stage. "One day," he said, "all of you will be able to have a machine that does all this, makes music like this." He pulled out his wallet and held it up. "And it will fit in your pocket." I'll never forget it: "It will fit in your pocket." I was six years old, and it was the first time I really ached for a specific vision of the future. For me, the future wasn't rocket cars. It wasn't living on the moon. It wasn't even R2-D2. The future was having my own little synthesizer, a computer in my pocket to make stuff.

And so I waited, for three decades, until the iPhone finally arrived in 2007. Apple's fabulous device is the only thing that's ever resembled my childhood notions of the 21st century, the first time the future finally got here. A computer. In your pocket. That helps you makes stuff. People are using iPhones to paint, to compose music, to write novels... and sure, to goof off, too, to connect with friends and interact with their surroundings in entirely new ways. Add to that all the magical things that we've already begun to take for granted: plucking information and video from thin air; taking commands by voice or touch; mapping out the world around us. Now we're talking. This is what my mystery man from 1977 was getting at.

But the future came on so fast that it's a little overwhelming. After two years of living and working with my prized iPhone, I'm still discovering and marveling at the things it can do. Nearly every iPhone owner I know is paralyzed by the options in the App Store, more than 70,000 apps at last count. We're awash in the future.

I wrote this book to help you stay ahead of the current. I scoured the App Store to find the best apps that will make your iPhone shine and make you more productive, more creative, more happy. Try as many of them as you can, play a little, discover what your magical device can do. This is the future we're talking about, after all. It's here, and it fits in your pocket.

Happy downloading.

About the Author



Josh Clark is a writer, designer, and developer who helps creative people get clear of technical hassles to share their ideas with the world. When he's not writing about clever design and humane software, he's building it. Josh is the creator of Big Medium, friendly software that actually makes it fun to manage websites. In a previous life, Josh worked on a slew of national PBS programs at Boston's WGBH. He shared his three words of Russian with Mikhail Gorbachev, strolled the ranch with Nancy Reagan, and wrote trivia questions for a primetime game show. Now Josh makes words and spins code at his hypertext laboratory www.globalmoxie.com. He welcomes your feedback at jclark@globalmoxie.com.

Best Apps at Work



Your iPhone's elegant design may drip with sophistication, but don't let its pretty face fool you: This is one gadget that's not afraid to muscle in and get its hands dirty with serious work. Whether you're wrangling projects, hoisting spreadsheets, slinging documents, or crunching numbers, your workhorse iPhone has the brawn and know-how to help make quick work of the job at hand.

This chapter shows you how to turn your iPhone or iPod Touch into a paragon of productivity. Download the best apps for **getting stuff done** to help manage your time, to-do lists, ideas, and work environment. Show off your remarkable talent for **juggling documents** with apps that let you create, share, and sync files from the palm of your hand. And in all this app-addled excitement, don't forget that your capable little iPhone is actually, y'know, a phone, too... You'll learn about apps for **making calls** easier, cheaper, and faster. You'll finish up with a crash course in **advanced geekery**, where you'll discover such arcane secrets as how to use your iPhone or iPod Touch to access your computer from miles or even continents away.

So stop lollygagging, and get to business. A new day of productivity lies ahead.



Best App for To-Do Lists



Things

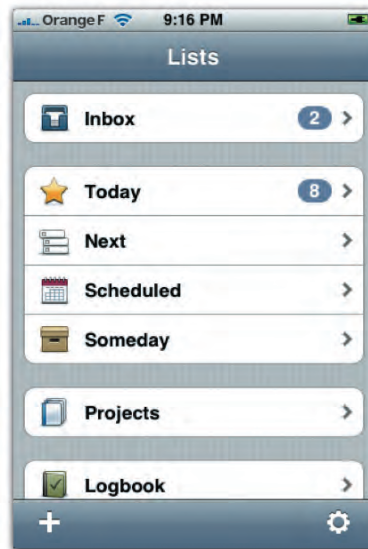
\$9.99

Version: 1.3.10

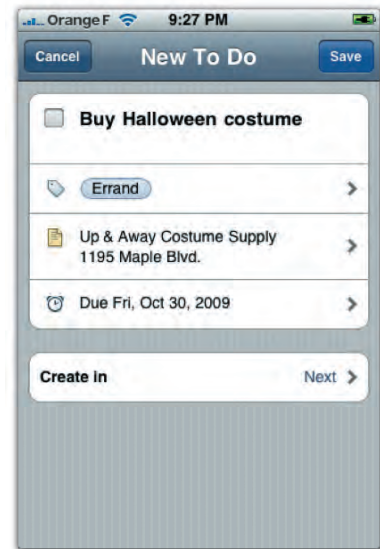
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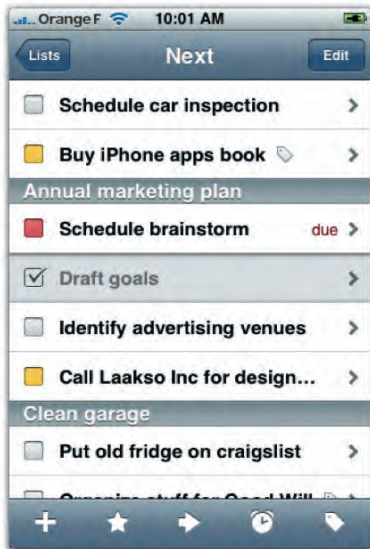
The App Store is chockablock with to-do lists, but Things sets itself apart in flexibility and ease. Organization systems are hugely personal, and Things adapts easily to your own approach, growing with you as your needs (and to-do list) expand. Keep it simple with a single checklist, or juggle a sprawling collection of projects, responsibilities, and contexts, staged over time. As complex as your tasks might be, Things makes it easy to manage them.

LIST OF LISTS: Organize to-dos into lists or projects. New items land in Inbox until you put them in a list. Tap Today to see your front-burner tasks (due items also appear there automatically). The Next list shows the full rundown of all your active to-dos. Stage tasks in the Scheduled list to start on a specific date, or use the Someday list to park items for the vague and hazy future. Tap Projects to review tasks by individual project.

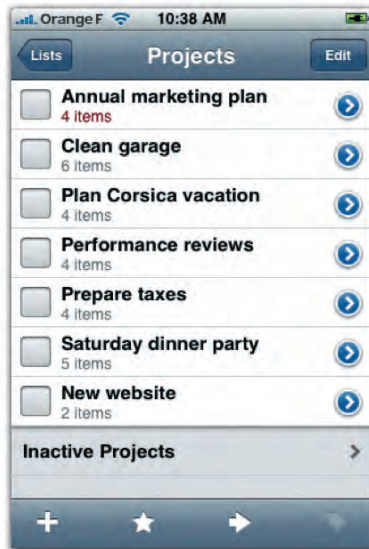


COLLECT 'EM ALL: Things makes it easy to collect new to-dos to get them out of your head fast. Call up the New To Do screen by tapping the + button at the bottom left of any other screen. Type the name of the task and you're done; or add additional details as shown here. Tag it with a category (for contexts like errand, home, work, priority, and so on), add notes, set a due date, or assign the task to a specific project or list.





UP NEXT: Select a list to review its tasks. Here, the Next list shows your entire list of active to-dos (don't panic!). Yellow shows tasks in your Today list; red items are due. Tap a task's checkbox to mark it done, or tap its name to edit the task. In the bottom icon menu, tap the star to mark tasks for today, the arrow to move them to a new list, the clock to sort by due date, or the tag to filter by category (for tasks tagged "work," for example).



PROJECT PRO: Use Projects to manage more complex goals, collecting their to-dos into individual lists. In the Projects screen shown here, tap a project to see all of its tasks. Projects with due items are highlighted in red. Mark a project complete—along with any of its remaining tasks—by tapping its checkbox. Tap Inactive Projects to see the list of projects you've stashed in your Scheduled or Someday list.

The Task at Hand

A to-do list is useful only when you actually have it with you, which is why your iPhone is an ideal place to keep your tasks within reach. More than a notebook, a desktop computer, or a messy collection of Post-it notes, your phone probably never leaves your side (especially not your prized iPhone). With an app like Things, that means it's always convenient to refer to your list or add a new task—no matter where you are.

Even so, you might want your lists in a different format—in print or on your computer. For that, Mac users can sync Things with the software's equally excellent desktop version (available from culturedcode.com). If you don't use a Mac and syncing is a priority, take a peek at the runner-up apps on the next page.



Other Apps for To-Do Lists

+ HONORABLE MENTION



Todo

\$9.99 (free demo available)

Version: 3.0

Appigo

Todo does everything you'd want in a to-do list—and almost certainly more. With so many features, fields, colors, icons, and customization options, Todo lacks the easy elegance that earns Things the top pick in this category. But Todo has a nifty set of bells and whistles that hardcore organizers may consider essential.

Todo is great at talking to other online and desktop to-do lists. Sync your web-based lists at *toodledo.com* or *rememberthemilk.com*, or use Appigo's free software to sync with iCal for Mac; similar software is planned for Outlook. Other features you won't find in Things: Subcategorize to-do lists; label tasks with tags, priorities, or contexts (in Things, you use tags for all three); add repeating tasks like monthly rent or weekly trash pickup; get alerts when tasks are due; and customize list colors, completed task graphics, and priority icons. Especially cool: "task types" let you turn to-dos into one-tap actions to call, email, text, or map a contact.

+ HONORABLE MENTION



Remember the Milk

Free, but requires \$25/year subscription

Version: 1.1.1

Remember the Milk

Rememberthemilk.com is cool and refreshing, a justly popular website for managing to-do lists. Like Todo, the site's official app lets you work with your online task list, provided you've purchased the site's \$25/year "pro" account (you get a 15-day free trial). As you might expect, the official app is more tailored to the site's features than Todo and makes the best fit for devoted RTM fans.

The app adds a location feature not offered in Things or Todo, letting you link tasks to nearby places where you can tackle 'em: When you're near the grocery store, Remember the Milk reminds you to, yes, remember the milk. The standard setup emphasizes due dates more than the other apps, with dock icons to quickly view tasks due today, tomorrow, or this week. You can customize the dock icons for other views, including lists, tags, nearby location, and a search feature that lets you save common searches.



Best App for Tracking Big Goals



Goal Tender

\$2.99

Version: 1.0.5

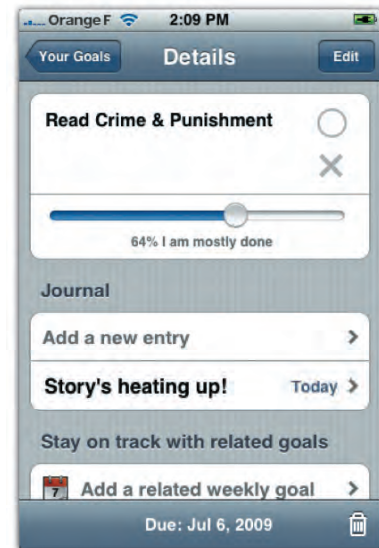
Roobasoft

Don't let the small things you've gotta do today make you forget your grand plans for tomorrow. Goal Tender is a little app about the big picture, a tidy complement to the nitty-gritty task managers of the last few pages. Tap in the goal to accomplish, and watch the progress bar surge as you wind your way to completion. The app optionally stores your goals online, too, letting you see them in your Outlook 2007, iCal, or Google calendar.

GOAL IN SIGHT: Goal Tender's main screen lists your goals, along with due-date countdowns and your progress to completion. Add daily or weekly tasks to each of these big goals to help stay on track with bite-sized actions. Here, the "Read Crime & Punishment" goal has a daily "Read a chapter" task. Tap the Someday tab to browse long-term dreams, so you don't lose track of that goal to dogsled the Yukon.



PILGRIM'S PROGRESS: As you make your journey to your goal's completion, slide the progress bar in the goal's Details screen to show how far you've come. Every goal has its own journal where you can record your efforts and discoveries. This screen is also where you can add related weekly or daily goals.



Best App for Remembering Stuff



reQall

Free

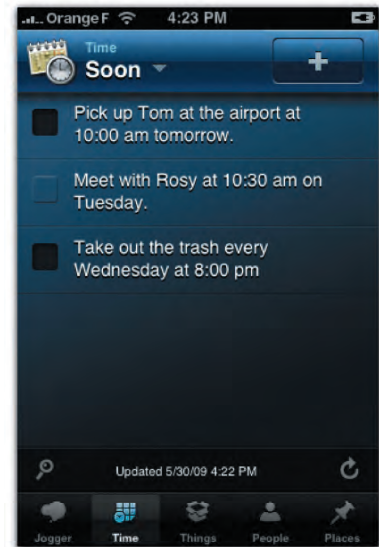
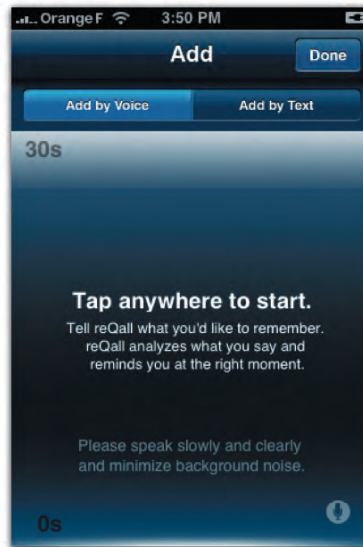
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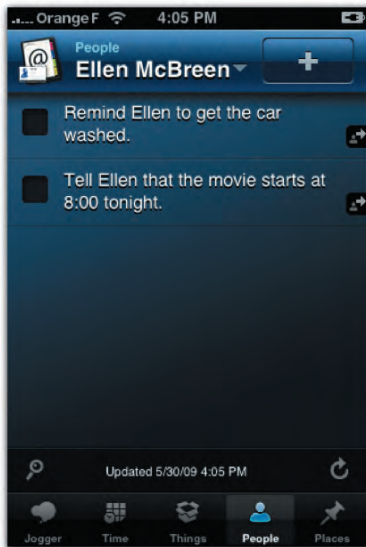
QTech

Turn your iPhone into an unflinching executive assistant, ready to remind you of calendar items, notes, and to-dos. It's almost magic: Say, "Meet Rich at 4:30 pm tomorrow," and reQall transcribes the text, creates a to-do, adds an event to your calendar, and sends you a reminder before the meeting. It's like an outboard memory for the overloaded modern mind. The app requires a free account at reqall.com.

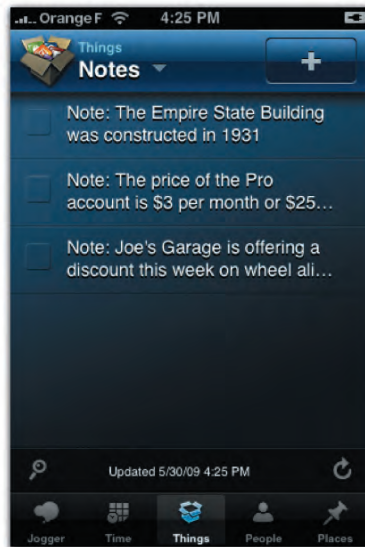
SPEAK YOUR MIND: Don't just mutter about all the things you've got to do, say it out loud to reQall. Tap the Add screen, speak for up to 30 seconds, and the app transcribes your words over the Internet. Within a couple of minutes, the text appears on your to-do list, filed in all the appropriate places. You can also type reminders or submit them via instant message, toll-free call, or email (email requires a paid reQall "pro" account).

TIME-CONSCIOUS: ReQall scours your messages for meaning. Mention a time, date, or day, and the app queues a reminder. The reqall.com website lets you choose how to receive these alerts. Ask to receive reminders via email or instant message; pro accounts (\$3/month or \$25/year) can receive SMS texts, too. The website also lets you set up your Outlook, iCal, or Google calendar to see your reminders there as well.

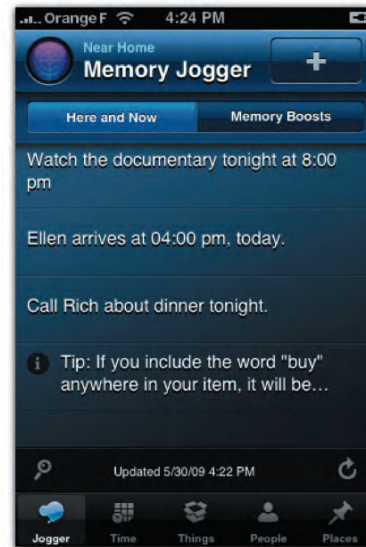




SHARE THE LOVE: Send reminders to friends, family, and coworkers, too—anyone from your iPhone's contact list. Once added to reQall, the app recognizes their names and sends them reminders when you start a message with “remind,” “tell,” or “ask.” Your freshly reminded pals receive these alerts by email; they’ll also see a notice in their account lists if they happen to use reQall, too.



DULY NOTED: Start your message with the word “note,” and reQall stashes the message away as note text for future reference. reQall’s transcription is impressively accurate, but even when it’s off, you can always edit the text or listen to the original recording. Tap any note or reminder to bring up the Details screen to edit or listen, or to add due date, location, or a contact with whom you want to share.



A FAST JOG: The Memory Jogger screen filters your reminders to show the items most relevant to the current place and time. Paid pro accounts can set up locations so that when you say “at work,” for example, the reminder pops up in Memory Jogger when you’re at your desk.



Best App for Tracking Time



Jobs

\$1.99

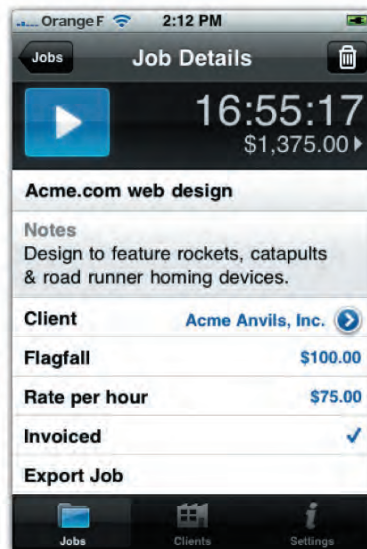
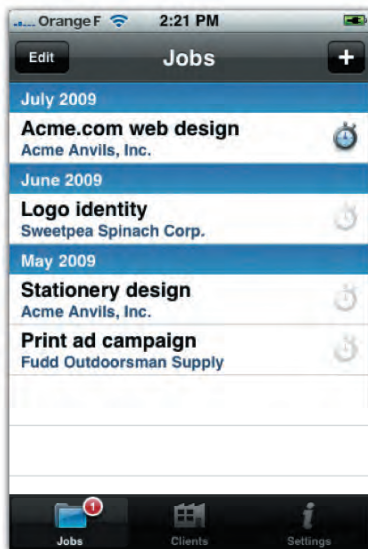
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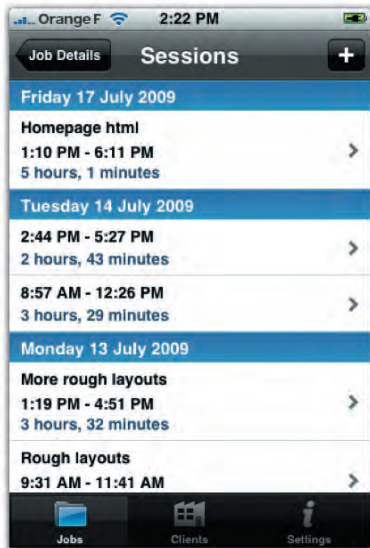
Bjango

Time is money, especially if you're a freelance designer or an hour-tallying lawyer. When you need exact counts of billable hours—or just want to track how you spend your time—Jobs watches the clock for you. Add all your projects to the app, and run the stopwatch for a job while you're working on it. When you're ready to send a bill, email yourself the timesheet info in one of several formats to whip up your invoice.

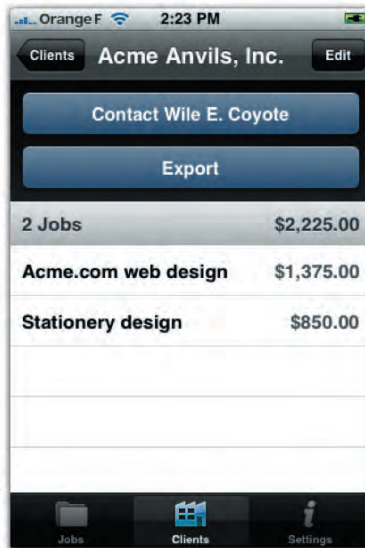
ON THE CLOCK: The Jobs screen shows all your current projects. Tap the stopwatch next to a job's name to start a time session for the job, and tap again to stop. The red badge in the dock icon shows how many stopwatches are running. The app's icon also shows this tally on the home screen of your iPhone or iPod Touch; the app keeps the clock running even when it's not active. Cool.

TIME TALLY: Tap a job to see the Job Details screen, which shows the total time and earnings for the job so far. Tap the blue Play button to start the timer, and tap again to stop. This screen also lets you set the big-picture info for the job, including notes, client, and your hourly rate. The Flagfall field lets you set a starting fee for the job, and the app counts up from there. To email yourself timesheet data, tap Export Job.

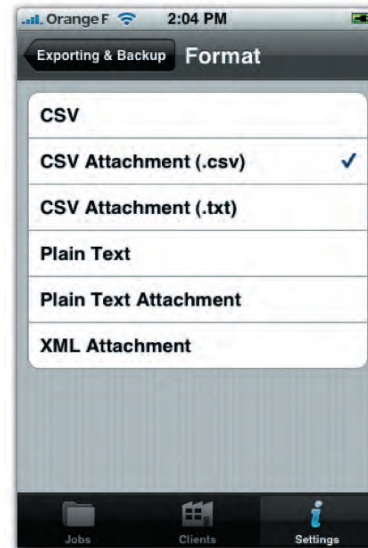




JAM SESSIONS: The Sessions screen lets you review and edit a job's individual time sessions. Tap a session to add a descriptive name for that period or to edit the start or stop time. If you forgot to run your timer for part of the job, get your time back by tapping the + button at top right to add a session manually. Alas, you can view sessions only for one job; there's no way to see today's sessions across all jobs, for example.



CUSTOMER FOCUS: Choose a client from the app's Clients screen to see all the jobs for that client (tapping a job takes you to its detail screen). You can link a client to an entry from the Contacts app, giving you one-tap access to your customer's contact info. Tap Export to pluck out the timesheet info for the jobs shown.



EXPERT EXPORT: All your hard-earned time data doesn't do much good if you leave it trapped in your phone. Jobs lets you email the data in several formats, including CSV (for editing in a spreadsheet), plain text, or XML. The app lets you choose whether to include individual session info or just the bottom-line tally. When the data arrives in your inbox, pour it into your invoice and start cashing in on those long hours.



Best App for Tracking Packages



Delivery Status Touch

\$2.99

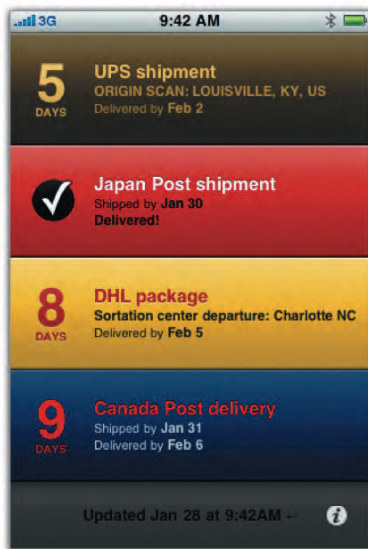
Version: 2.3.3

Junecloud

Who knew tracking deliveries could be so classy? This stylish, efficient app tracks packages from over 40 stores and delivery services, even mapping your package's current-ish location. Set up a free account at the app's website to sync tracking info; once done, you can paste or bookmark tracking numbers from your computer instead of tapping them into your iPhone.

SPECIAL DELIVERY: The app's screen counts down the delivery of all your packages, color-coded by store or parcel service. Tap the number or icon for a package to see complete order details from the shipper, including a View Map button to see the package inching your way. Add or delete packages from the list by tapping the Info icon at bottom right.

MISTER POSTMAN: Delivery Status Touch supports a long list of services. You can track orders mailed from stores like Amazon, Apple, or Nintendo, for example, or track directly with the carrier for a wide range of US and international parcel services, including the US Postal Service, UPS, FedEx, DHL, TNT, and even the Italian postal service.



Best App for Working the Web



Google Mobile App

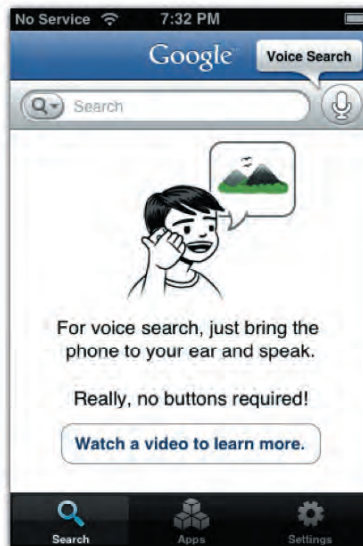
Free

Version: 0.3.1448

Google

So you might've heard. There's this company called Google that knows a thing or two about Web search, and they've figured it out for iPhone, too, with the best app for searching the Web. The secret ingredient is voice search. Just talk into your iPhone or microphone-enabled iPod Touch, and the app fetches the results for your spoken keywords. Tap a result to launch Mobile Safari and you're in business.

TALKING POINTS: Searching the Web has never been so easy. Just lift the phone to your ear, wait for the tone, and say what you're looking for. Google's a good listener, and the speech recognition is excellent. But there are rewards to tapping out your search phrase instead: The app suggests a list of popular searches or additional keywords to hone your search. Google also suggests matches from your contact list or past searches.



LOCAL COLOR: Your iPhone always knows where you are, and Google Mobile App puts that info to work to show you results for your surroundings. Search for "weather" to see the local forecast for your location, for example, or "movie showtimes" to find out what's playing in the area. Likewise, if you start tapping out a search for "restaurants," Google offers to find places nearby to grab a bite.



Best App for Brainstorming



iThoughts

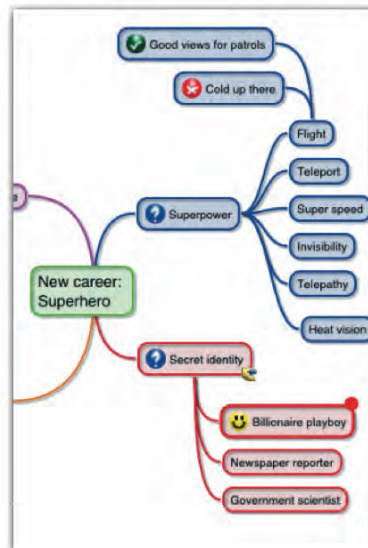
\$7.99

Version: 1.10

CMS

Cross an outline with a flow chart, and you get a “mind map,” a visual sketch for capturing and organizing stream-of-consciousness ideas. iThoughts diagrams these brainstorm sessions on your iPhone. A bubble represents your topic; draw links to more bubbles for related ideas, which grow like tendrils across the screen. When you’re done, prune and organize branches into shape. Email or share maps online in several formats.

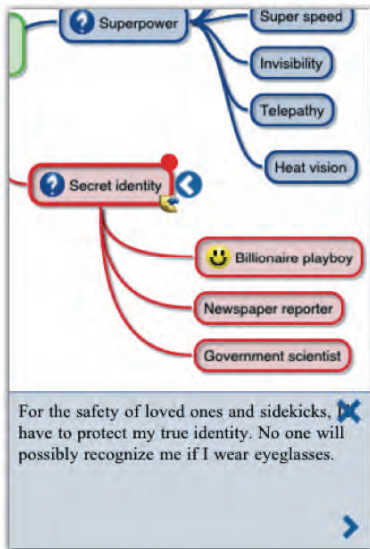
BRANCH OUT: Start with a central idea—starting a new career as a superhero, for example—and add branches for the concepts and topics to consider. The diagram sprouts clouds and tentacles of topics and subtopics. iThoughts provides a big canvas for your mind map, about 100 iPhone screens. Swipe to move around, pinch to make the map larger or smaller, or flip your iPhone or iPod on its side for landscape view.



BUBBLING WITH IDEAS: Tap a bubble to select it (here, “Billionaire playboy” is selected). Toolbars materialize to let you add a subtopic bubble or add another bubble at the same level. Tap the arrow at top right (or double-tap the bubble) to edit an item’s text, color, shape, or add an icon. You can drag bubbles anywhere on the map, or cut, copy, and paste them into different branches, along with any subtopic bubbles.



TAKE NOTE: Bubble text is typically brief, but iThoughts lets you attach longer notes to any item, including a link to a web page, phone number, or email address. Select a bubble with a note, and its text appears at the bottom of the screen, as shown here for the “secret identity” bubble. When the selected bubble has subtopics, tap the blue arrow icon to show or hide those subtopic bubbles.



+ HONORABLE MENTION



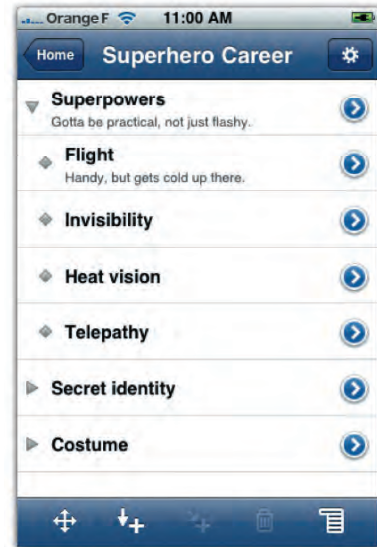
Outliner

\$2.99

Version: 1.5.2

CarbonFin

If the freeform sprawl of mind maps makes you antsy, fall back to more traditional methods. Outliner lets you create and share outlines in an effortless interface that lets you get your ideas down fast. Change an item to a task, and Outliner adds a checkbox so you can mark it done after you’ve knocked it off your list. Email your outline as plain text or OPML, a format for sharing with desktop outline software. You can also sync and share outlines online with a free account at the app’s website, where you invite others to come admire your clear, organized ideas.



OUTSTANDING OUTLINES: Create an outline of topics and subtopics. Tap one of the + icons in the dock to add an item at the same level as the selected topic, or to create a subtopic. Move a topic in the outline by tapping the four-point compass arrow; you can indent, outdent, or move it higher or lower in the list. Tap the blue arrow for an item to edit it, add a note, or turn the item into a task for your to-do list.



Best App for Shutting Out Noise



SoundCurtain

\$3.99

Version: 1.2

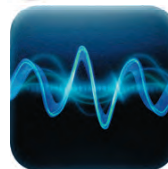
FutureAcoustic

Got a cubicle neighbor yammering on the phone? Jackhammers going strong outside? SoundCurtain quiets the din so that you can focus on work (or catch some shuteye). The app uses your iPhone's microphone to analyze the surrounding sound and play a corresponding level of ambient music or white noise, covering distracting sounds with something more soothingly relaxing.

NOISE BUSTER: Plug a microphone into your iPhone or iPod Touch (the standard iPhone headphones work just fine), and SoundCurtain plays one of five audio themes, adjusting the levels to compensate for surrounding noise. The "Rain Masker" theme is especially soothing, but you can choose from other sounds, including two that play new-agey harmonic tunes. Tap the screen to call up settings to adjust sound level and sensitivity.



+ HONORABLE MENTION



Ambiance

\$4.99

Version: 2.1

Matt Coneybeare

Unlike SoundCurtain, Ambiance doesn't respond to the surrounding environment. Instead it simply provides a big, big collection of calming sounds to drown out the clamor around you. Think iTunes for zen audio. The app comes loaded with three sounds—rain, wind chimes, and loon calls—and you can download more from a free library of hundreds of tension-melting clips. Make a mix of sounds, play them in loops, or set a timer to stop—after you fall asleep, for example.



Best App for Offbeat Inspiration



Oblique Strategies

Free

Version: 1.0.1

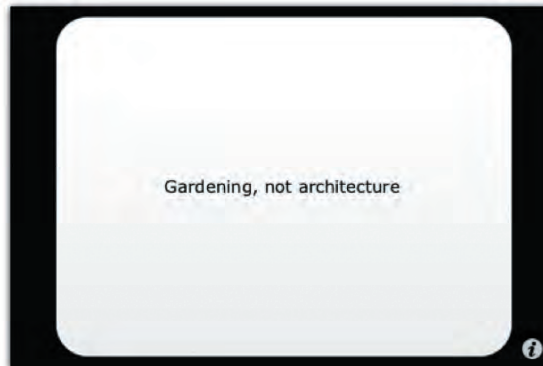
Far Out Labs

When writer's block strikes or procrastination descends, this app helps you tackle your project from a fresh direction. In 1975, musician Brian Eno and artist Peter Schmidt published a deck of cards titled "Oblique Strategies: One Hundred Worthwhile Dilemmas." Each card featured an enigmatic phrase to help break creative deadlocks by suggesting a fresh mindset. This app reproduces all five editions of the card set, letting you draw a fresh idea from the top of the stack when inspiration runs dry.



PRACTICAL STEPS:

Some cards suggest a practical exercise to jog your mind and nudge you out of your rut. "Take a break," one card advises. "Go outside. Shut the door," counsels another. Hey, if you're stuck, you're stuck. What've you got to lose?



OBSCURE HINTS:

Most of the cards contain cryptic phrases to remind you that there's more than one way to approach a problem. Here, the card seems to suggest that a more organic approach might be better than a top-down, structured method.

