

The Great Indian Mobile App

The smartphone craze is getting stronger day by day & growing app stores for most mobile OS have given plenty of opportunities to professional developers to cash in on the craze, says Aral Lobo



PURNIMA

FROM SOCIAL NETWORK APPS TO communication apps to games, the possibilities with mobile apps are just endless. The latest figures from IDC show that smartphone sales recorded a 34.2% quarter-on-quarter growth and a 294.9% year-on-year growth. **The Informate October 2010 track by Informate Mobile Intelligence** says the number of users visiting an App store has jumped 108% in October 2010 versus the year ago period. All these factors have contributed to a large number of Indian developers jumping on to the mobile app-making bandwagon.

Be it Nokia, iOS, Android or BlackBerry, Indian programmers are excited about the prospects of the sector. "With the rollout of 3G happening across the country, we see the market for apps going up 10 times from its present figure," says Indiagames CEO Vishal Gondal.

Indian developers mostly create apps with local content or themes and these apps are the ones seeing a huge number of downloads on the respective app stores. "Nokia games like Cricket T20 Fever and Cricket T20 World Cup have been our constant chart toppers," says Gondal whose company based in Navi-Mumbai has so far developed 40 games.

Since the smartphone market is still in its infancy and is still very fragmented, app-makers are forced to develop apps cross platform. Most companies like Indiagames have developed tech solutions which allow for the porting of games across different mobile operating systems so as to maximise the revenue they can earn.

Few firms have taken the specialisation route and develop apps just for a single OS. "Corporates spend million on a yearly basis, primarily to allow access to emails and enterprise data. We intend to leverage the existing BlackBerry Enterprise infrastructure that organisations already have and allow senior top executives to learn on-the-move," says Akash Shah director and co-founder Deltecs InfoTech, whose firm primarily develops only BlackBerry apps. "As our solutions are targeted towards corporates, the security aspect is of utmost importance. No other platform (iPhone/Android) other than BlackBerry can give one such a secured communication channel," Shah adds.

One problem that app developers in India face is that they are not properly compensated when they publish their apps on the VAS portals of mobile operators. "In the App Store, Apple keeps 30% of the revenue and the developer gets the rest. But the situation is the opposite here. The service providers keep the majority while the developer gets only a small share. We hope this situation changes soon so that more developers start making mobile apps," says Vishal Gondal.

Despite the few pitfalls, Indian app makers have surely left an indelible mark on App markets and are sure to make their presence felt even more in the days to come. Here are just some of the apps built by Indians.

iOS
LANDMARK LOCATOR
Developer: Net Solutions, Chandigarh

Landmark Finder is an attraction, sightseeing, and historical event finding tool for any traveler. Using your location, Landmark Finder guides you to over 25,000 noteworthy landmarks in both walking and driving distance from you.

BIRDIE THIS
Developer: IndiaNIC Infotech, Ahmedabad
A meditation Application with OM sounds. With this app, you can send positive energy to your friends. Type in your name and up to three email addresses, and just click send.

BlackBerry
DRONA V-CAST
Developer: Deltecs InfoTech, Mumbai
DRONA V-CAST is a BlackBerry enterprise level application for learning and communication for corporates. It is used to deliver highly effective video-based courses to a senior executive's BlackBerry device.

OFFICE YOGA
Developer: Webdunia.com India, Chennai
This app provides quick and easy ways to calm down stress during your day at office desk with Office Yoga exercises.

Android
THE PLATEAU
Developer: Sourcebits Technology, Bangalore
The Plateau is a 50-level game of mind twisting puzzles. Each level is generated using an advanced AI algorithm, so every game you play is unique.

ABILITA
Developer: Openxcell Technolabs, Ahmedabad
Abilita is an Italian word which means the Ability. Abilita is an App for people to share things they're willing to do for \$5. Once one registers, you create a Bingo which can be used by other users to contact you if they are interested.

Symbian
CRICKET T20 FEVER
Developer: Indiagames, Navi-Mumbai
With this game, you can play in a variety of modes including tournaments, ODIs, T20 Matches and the exciting Powerplay style match.

COMICS CREATOR
Developer: Nextwave Multimedia, Chennai
Comics Creator lets you create a cartoon, comic or photo journal on your Nokia handset. One can easily add text, backgrounds and character, whether you're an artist or not. Your finished cartoons can then be shared with your friends.

Make your own App
Inspired by the apps showcased above and want to make one yourself? Well, there are applications like the Nokia Ovi App Wizard and the Google App Inventor which allow you to do just that, even without any coding knowledge. These tools don't allow the creation of complex apps but gives non-developers a way to try their hand at app making.

Ovi App Wizard
This official application from Nokia was created with basic users in mind. The Ovi App Wizard allows users to mobilise their own content within minutes with just a few clicks and simple instruction. The wizard uses RSS feeds to generate content. RSS and Atom feeds for video, audio, text and images for blogs, YouTube, Twitter and news are all compatible with the App Wizard. This ensures that the finished app delivers fresh content to the Nokia device every time the feed is updated. The wizard supports the creation of apps for Symbian^3 and S60 devices. "The Nokia App Wizard is an excellent way for a non-technical user to showcase his or her content," says Jasmeet Gandhi, head of devices, OPM and services - marketing, Nokia India.

The Ovi App Wizard is free, and requires no registration fees. It is open to both businesses and individuals. As of now, publishers in India can't monetise their apps with ads but Gandhi said that developers and publishers in India would get the opportunity to add ads "within the next few weeks". Users can easily publish these apps on the Ovi Store, which are usually approved within 24 hours and then users worldwide can download the app.

"Using the Ovi App Wizard, a student created a GMAT app which provided tips to students studying for the exam. A Rajmikanth fan

used the wizard to create an app which was constantly pulling RSS feeds about the Tamil superstar," said Gandhi while explaining the possibilities of apps that could be created. Till date, over 3,500 apps have been created by more than 2,500 publishers from more than 90 countries. These apps have been downloaded in more than 180 countries across 90 different Nokia devices.

Google App Inventor
Google's App Inventor allows anyone to create simple apps for their Android phones. The App Inventor uses a simple and intuitive web-based graphical user interface that runs on the Java platform and allows users to test the application via a connected phone running the Android operating system at any phase during the creation process.

The App Inventor has a design interface which is used to create the layout and overall appearance of the application. On the left side of the interface is a column of user controls that consist of things like text boxes, labels and buttons. There are also controls for adding media and sensor functionality. Located at the centre of the design interface is the virtual phone screen where the controls can be dragged and dropped. On the right hand side of the interface are the properties for the currently selected control. For example, if a button control is selected, you can add an image or adjust the color and size of the button. Using the App Inventor apps for Android can be developed within minutes.

AppMakr
Though not an official tool, AppMakr is one of the leading platforms for non-developers to create native iOS apps. AppMakr lets users turn existing RSS or Atom news feed quickly into an iPhone application. The RSS or Atom feeds can originate from Twitter, iTunes podcast feeds, Flickr streams, YouTube, Wordpress and many other sources. If you have multiple feeds, you can create multiple tabs within the app to represent each feed. AppMakr also provides a few options for making money off your app. You can submit the app to the App Store as either a free or paid download. A version for Android and Windows Phone devices has also recently been launched.

The Smartphone Destination

For Free Delivery
Call @ 1800-209-8363
www.themobilestore.in

THE MOBILE STORE