

# 10 iPhone Apps That Last

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As the Apple App Store nears 100,000 downloadable applications, it's becomes less likely that any of the top 10 lists out there will offer a convincing portrait of the best iPhone apps of the year. iPhone apps are relatively cheap, which allows users to download useless apps for .99 cents, or even free, and then discard them without feeling too guilty about it.

According to the folks over at Pinch Media, iPhone users only develop of long-term relationship with 1 percent of the apps they download from the App Store. That's why my top 10 iPhone apps are simply the ones I use every day. To be sure they're not the only great apps on the market right now, but they're pretty good and have demonstrated their usefulness, or at least entertainment value, over a period of time. I also imagine I'll still be using them well into 2010.

## Doodle Jump

By recommending this app, I'm probably doing my readership a terrible disservice, essentially tossing hours of their precious time out the window. Doodle Jump, from Lima Sky, is one of those ridiculously simple, yet challenging, games that will leave you drooling after hours of obsessive playing. The object of the game is to jump your little Doodle Jumper as high as you can. It's almost too simple to explain. However, be cautious with Doodle Jump, it's hard to put down once you start. Doodle Jump is available at the App Store for .99 cents.

## Myst

I played this game on a PC years ago and never got very far. When I downloaded it to my iPhone, I didn't expect much. I remembered Myst being a graphics-laden feast for the eyes and had my doubts that it would translate to a 3.5-inch screen. My concerns were put to rest after being sucked back onto the island of Myst in a matter of minutes. Myst is an island, a first-person adventure puzzle, a mystery and an experience. It's also a totally immersive escape when you're stuck in an airport over the holidays. Myst, from Cyan Worlds, is available for \$4.99 at the App Store.

## Simplify Music 2

There are a lot of services out there that will have you pay a monthly fee to store your iTunes library on their cloud. Simplify Music 2, from Simplify Media, allows you to access your iTunes library from anywhere for just the price of the app download. Using Simplify Music 2, you can access your entire iTunes library from anywhere (so long as your computer back home is on). You can also share libraries with friends. It's the tip of the iceberg for this kind of technology. The buffering that happens between songs can be a little annoying, but considering your options, and depending on the size of your iTunes library, \$7.99 is a steal for Simplify Music 2.

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### Shazam

Shazam is a sophisticated music identification service. Just point your phone at the source of an unknown song, and Shazam will not only identify the tune but also gives you the option of buying the track or sharing it with those in your social network. There's a limited free version available, as well as a \$2.99 version. If you're a music lover, this is one is a must.

### WeatherBug

When I need to know whether to wear my mukluks or my sandals, I turn to WeatherBug. Available in both .99 cent elite or free versions, I find that WeatherBug is more accurate than some of the bigger meteorological sources out there. In the United States, the National Weather Service has over 1,000 stations that update once every hour. Weatherbug has 8,000 weather stations, which update every two seconds. If you need to know the conditions outside before you leave the house, WeatherBug is a good place to turn.

### Dragon Dictation and Search

Dragon Dictation and Dragon Search, from Nuance Communications, are two incredibly accurate voice recognition apps that I use on a regular basis. Dragon dictation does what it says it will do; it dictates what you say into your phone. The text that is generated can then be sent as a text message, email or simply kept as a note. Dragon Search uses the same technology in a voice-activated search application.

### ESPN ScoreCenter

I'm not much of a sports junkie. However, it is considered almost heretical to live in Wisconsin and remain oblivious of the Green Bay Packers. Thus, I turn to ESPN's Score Center every Sunday. The app is free and customizable, allowing users to tailor the app to their interests. You can follow your favorite conferences in college sports, or pick your favorite team. The app is easy to use, but it can bog down a little on Sundays when a lot of fans are checking scores around the NFL. Nevertheless, it's a useful app that was done right.

### Real Racing

I like this app because it allows me to prove to my 7-year old backseat driver that I can drive better than him. Real Racing, from Firemint, allows linked auto racing between the iPhone and iPod touch. The graphics and sound are impressive. Features include one-on-one play, linked play over the Web, as well as career play and lots of tracks and cars to unlock along the way. It's a bit pricey at \$4.99, but when you consider a Nintendo DS game of similar quality goes for about \$25, Real Racing looks like a quite a deal.

### CNN

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I wouldn't say that CNN is my favorite news source, but they did a heck of a job on their app. From push notifications of breaking news to live video feeds, the CNN app is one of the better sources out there for catching up on the latest headlines. The interface was well done here, allowing easy navigation of different news categories. You can also post your own content from news happening in your area. The \$1.99 price of the app was a little disappointing, but it's earned its keep on my iPhone.

### Slacker Radio or Pandora

When it comes to streaming radio, everyone has their preference. I flip-flop between Pandora and Slacker Radio. My guess is that licensing has a lot to do with what you hear when you create a Mel Torme radio station in either of these services. In the end, I find that the songs I get through Slacker represent a better selection of music than I get with Pandora. Again, it's preference that rules the day when it comes to streaming music. If I was on a desert island, and I had to pick one, I'd pick Slacker. Then again, I doubt AT&T's 3G service would reach my island, so I guess it's a moot point.

Well, there you have it, the 10 iPhone apps that have stuck with me through 2009. Not all of these were released this year, but they are nonetheless the cream that has risen to the top of my smartphone latte. In the next decade, let's hope for more cloud-based services and applications, as well as 4G rollouts to power them (and maybe a Lala app for the iPhone sooner rather than later). Happy New Year!

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