

Review: Friday App Appetizers

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Here's a few tasty morsels from the world of apps to get your weekend started right. Google appeals to those who store their docs in the cloud with a streamlined Google Docs app for Android. Video calling and chat are served up hot in Qik and Google Talk, and Amazon impresses with its new Cloud Player app for Android users.

Google Docs for Android

I've been waiting for an official Google Docs app for some time now. The convenience of storing, retrieving and editing documents directly from/on Google's cloud has reduced not only the pains of backing up my work, but also the time I spend worrying about whether I've backed up my work. For now, the official Google Docs app is available for free only at the Android Market, but I'm guessing a version for iOS users isn't too far behind. Google and Apple appear to have been friendlier about things since their notorious spat over Google Voice.

It's worth noting that Google is finally releasing a Google Docs app just as the impending wave of Android tablets slams into the market this late spring into summer. After all, editing documents on a smartphone is never going to be an especially appealing task. However, making last-minute edits on the Motorola Xoom or and iPad just sounds much more appealing, doesn't it? While this, in its current form, isn't the answer to all my prayers, it's a start, and when it comes to Google's slow process of refinement, a start is all one needs to foster hope.

Qik with Video Calling

Eat your heart out Facetime. Qik Video has arrived on pretty much every platform, allowing iOS users to happily commune via video calling with their Android-loving brothers and sisters. Qik Video Connect allows users to video chat, record and share videos via email and MMS, and manage, share and sync videos within the app. It's all free and works over 3G, 4G, and Wi-Fi. Especially unique is Qik's web-based component which allows users to stream content directly to the web. Check to be sure that you're downloading the right version. The Android Market currently features special versions for users of the Motorola Atrix, Sprint users and customers of T-Mobile.

Amazon Cloud Player

This is as close to an iTunes player/store as Android users will get right now. Amazon's Cloud Player app brings Android-toting music lovers into the 21st century. Linked as it is with Amazon's MP3 store, which is extensive, and powered by the online retailer's existing billing system, this is a truly seamless experience. It also appears to tie Amazon.com's future forays into hardware directly to the Android OS (surprise), giving established footing for competing with Apple on the content side

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of things, regardless of whether Apple currently considers iTunes a profitable enterprise. It's hard to imagine that the storm of rumors regarding an Amazon tablet launch later this year would result in anything other than a Honeycomb-based slate. As an iOS devotee who is currently on hiatus with an Android device (at least until the iPhone 5 launches), I have to say that Amazon has done an incredible job with its Cloud Player. Android users rejoice!

Google Talk App Gets Video Support

Google sometimes reminds me of an aloof mad scientist with infinite time and working in a lab of infinite resources. As a company, it's big enough, and makes enough profit off search and advertising, that it seems to approach innovation independent of the market, while still managing to address consumer needs with all kinds of wonderful gadgets and applications. Such is the case with Google Talk. At the time of this writing, Google has just announced that it is rolling out an update to the Nexus S phones that will bring video and voice chat to its long-standing IM client, Google Talk. Amazing that it took this long to add this feature. Check out what Colin has to say on the matter in the video below:

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