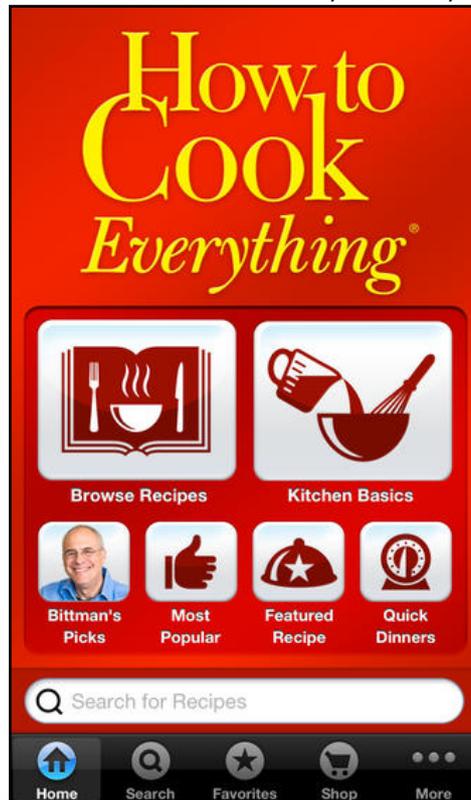


Mobile Applications as Actual Gifts

Ben Munson

Mobile applications have earned their throwaway reputation. Or at the very least, they most often deserve the low level of commitment they require. That makes it a seldom occurrence in which an app is given as an actual gift, outside of a \$25 gift card burned through buying \$1 and \$2 mobile games.

But the gifting function in the App Store begs to be used and sending someone a nice mobile app is a good way to use it. Unfortunately, the Google Play store doesn't have the same feature, but persistent app givers with Android-using loved ones can always just pass along a gift card and a strong recommendation for what to use it on. Regardless the ecosystem, to get away with gifting an app—especially in lieu of a physical present—the app should be substantial, useful, fun and



probably cost more than a buck or two.

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (\$7)

With the release of Grand Theft Auto V, set in a fictionalized Los Angeles, the timing is good for a mobile version of the franchise's previous California debauchery fest. The Rockstar game for iOS and now Android as well, ports over the console experience with the controls on the screen, which could make for clumsy action. Maybe this title would pair nicely with a smartphone controller like the Logitech Powershell for iPhones or new Samsung GamePad, though that probably won't hit the U.S. before the holiday.

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How to Cook Everything (\$10)

For the tech-savvy chef, the How to Cook Everything app packs in the full content of the classic cookbook from New York Times columnist Mark Bittman. That means 2,000 recipes, 400 illustrations and photos of weekly recipes available on the iPad. Couple this app up with a sturdy stand or under-cabinet mount for an iPad and it could make for a happy cook who doesn't mind getting a little mess on their tablet.

Audubon Birds Pro (\$15)

Now that the birds have hightailed it out of the chilly climes for the sunny south, it could be a while before this app comes in handy for any northerners on your list. But for much of the year, Audubon Birds Pro will offer up a handy guide for the birdwatcher. This app was just updated in November and eight percent of every sale goes toward Audubon's conservation and protection mission.

LogMeIn Ignition (\$30)

For the traveling professional or just non-stop person, remote access to a desktop like LogMeIn Ignition provides could be essential. With this app, an Android device can jump right into a PC or a Mac, provide a better UI than the average web-based portal and run enterprise applications like Salesforce and Microsoft Office. Plus you can set up the most computer-smart person on your list with IT-level access to the family's computers, assuring you can bug them with problems all the time.



Zombies, Run (\$4)

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If there's a couch potato on your list whose only hope for exercise is literally running for their life, *Zombies, Run* could be the best option. The normally \$8 app combines community, fitness tracking and an apocalyptic storyline that plays out several episodes—40 with this app and another 57 available for purchase. Developer Six to Start recently released *The Walk*, a cinematic thriller mixed with cardio set in London. Hopefully something similar will come out for the U.S., but in the meantime *Zombies, Run* could make a nice gift for the lazy-bones sci-fi/horror fan.

Adobe Photoshop Touch (\$5)

After years of running square photos through the same filters, a mobile photo fanatic on your list could be ready for the next stage of smartphone/tablet editing. This version packs a lot of the core features from the full desktop version of Photoshop, like layers, selection tools, adjustments and even filters. The app comes with a free membership to Creative Cloud, including 2GB of storage, allowing editors to shift between working on a project on their mobile device and their computer without too much hassle.

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