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Construction? There's an App for that.



These days just about every business, organization and association has an app for mobile devices that provides the end user (that's you and me) with tools to help them succeed or at least make their life a little more convenient. Whether it's advocacy, safety, construction news or tools, etc., there is an app for it out there in either the iTunes Store or the Google Android Store (Play) or both. Heck, even NAWIC has an app.

I could try to list all the apps out there, but we would need a larger magazine, so I will break it down to the categories I have mentioned above: legislative advocacy, construction safety and construction news and tools.

Let's start with a couple of longtime NAWIC partners, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) and The American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA). Both of these organizations have some great apps that help the end user connect to their elected officials in Washington. The ARTBA Trascon App (www.artba.org/transcon-app/) gives the user talking points on transportation, videos, stats and congressional directories. The ABC Action App (www.abc.org/abaction) is very much the same as the ARTBA App in that it helps put the end user in touch with his/her congressman, but in their words, it is an "... advocacy tool that enables users to become a vital part of the ABC grassroots advocacy efforts ...". So if political advocacy is your ultimate goal (and you're in one of these two association-related fields) these two apps just might be your ticket.

Let's move on to another area that is very important for today's construction professional. And that is safety. While there are definitely more construction related safety apps out there, I limited mine to two apps. The first is from OSHA (www.osha.gov), and from where I come from, this app can be extremely important. It's called the Heat Safety Tool and is available for both Android and iPhone (www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html). The app is very simple to operate and according to OSHA's website "... allows workers and supervisors to calculate the heat index for their worksite, and, based on the heat index, displays a risk level to outdoor workers." It also provides reminders for protective measures such as heat illness signs and treatments, drinking fluids, new worker buildup, emergency situations, etc.


Another safety app is from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (www.cdc.gov/niosh/). It's simply called the Ladder Safety App (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/>). The app, according to their iTunes description, "Features a multimodal indicator,

which uses visual and sound signals to assist the user in positioning an extension ladder at an optimal angle. Furthermore, the application provides graphic-oriented interactive reference materials, safety guidelines and checklists for extension ladder selection, inspection, accessorizing, and use." In short, it lets you know if the angle is too steep for the ladder you're on and references for ladder safety. And did I mention that it's free?

Okay, Let's move on to another category—news. Actually, to be more specific, that should be construction news. ENR has a great free app that has construction news with breaking news and streaming video included. It also includes top construction news from around the world as well as regional news. Just to warn you, I did find it to have a few minor glitches when running on iOS 7, but don't let it stop you from downloading it and keeping up with the latest in construction news. And to be honest, in this category I did not find a lot of construction-related news apps. So if you know of another one, please send it to me.

So for the last category, let's talk construction tools. There are a lot of them out there but I narrowed it down to two. The first is the McGraw-Hill Dodge BidPro (www.construction.com/dodge/dodge-bid-pro.asp). The app itself is free, but you will have to be signed up for the Dodge BidPro services to use it. But if finding and getting bids for your company is something you need, then perhaps this is the app for you. The app helps find, "relevant Dodge Report information with drill downs to bidders lists, plans, specs, and more."

Another handy tool for construction professionals, especially those sub-contractors out there, is the Construction Master 5 (www.calculated.com/sect62/Mobile-Apps-and-Software.html) from Calculated Industries. Actually, they provide a list of apps helpful to everyone from realtors to estimators. The Construction Master 5 is helpful for those contractors (or DIYers) who need to solve many construction measurement problems quickly and accurately. While this one costs a bit more (around \$15), it does provide a very unique calculator to help find answers to those sometimes-difficult construction measurements.

I have only begun to scratch the surface of construction-related apps that are out there. If you have one that you use, let me know by sending an email to time@nawic.org. Until next time. 

Do you have a question for Tim? Would you like to pass on a tech tip or recommendation? Contact Tim Elmore at time@nawic.org.