



Article published on June 11th 2012 | [Web Design](#)

Mobile applications or apps are compact software programs that perform specific tasks for the mobile user. It is a term used to describe Internet applications that run on smartphones and other mobile devices. Mobile applications usually help users by connecting them to Internet services more commonly accessed on desktop or notebook computers, or help them by making it easier to use the Internet on their portable devices. A mobile app may be a mobile Web site bookmarking utility, a mobile-based instant messaging client, Gmail for mobile, and many other applications. There are two types of mobile app:

1) The native app must be installed on the device; they either arrive pre-installed on the phone “ these might include address book, calendar, calculator, games, maps and Web browser “ or they can be downloaded from for free or a small fee from Web sites “ today these sites are called app stores. Native apps are either written specifically for a type of handset “ as many iPhone applications have been “ so they can take more advantage of a phone’s functions, or as Java applications “ this was norm with download apps until recently “ to run on many handsets.

2) The Web app resides on server and is accessed via the Internet. It performs specified tasks “ potentially all the same ones as a native application “ for the mobile user, usually by downloading part of the application to the device for local processing each time it is used. The software is written as Web pages in HTML and CSS, with the interactive parts in Java. This means that the same application can be used by most devices that can surf the Web (regardless of the brand of phone).

It is much easier for the mobile user to conceptualize what this means in practice with the download app: click (pay) “ download “ install “ click on icon “ run. With the Web app it’s not so easy: you go to a mobile site and it does things for you “ isn’t that just a mobile site? In the real world this shouldn’t matter, but the world has become obsessed by apps “ partly due to the awesome power of the Apple marketing machine and some pretty ignorant journalism. Consumers on their PC will just play a game, music or video or update their social networking page; it might be installed locally, via disk or download or accessed via the Web, but no one considers if it is an application or not. On mobile, the same consumers want “ or marketing people think consumers want, or have convinced them they want “ apps. It’s all about the packaging.

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Article Keywords:

web designer , Mobile Web Application Development