

EVERYONE WINS



MOBILE GEOSPATIAL APPS CAN PROVIDE BENEFITS FOR CONSUMERS, PROFESSIONALS – AND EVEN THE DEVELOPERS

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While the likes of Google Maps have done much to popularise geospatial information and technology on the desktop, it's the smartphone and the mobile app that have (literally) put the power of GIS in people's hands.

Sure, having a SatNav in your car is nice. But once you get (roughly) to your destination, how do you find out where the car parks are? Well, there's an app for that. How do you then cover that last mile – or 100m – on foot to your true endpoint? There's an app for that as well. Maybe you don't even know exactly what you're looking for and would like to know what services are available in the general area? There's an app for that, too.

But apps needn't offer geospatial benefits in just one direction, as we learn on page 36 – developers can also benefit from the geospatial information users provide. Many, if not most large music festivals now offer their visitors accompanying apps, to show them who's playing and where, as well as what services are available, and maybe to include ticketing information. So far, so relatively simple – it's a service that's no different from what can be achieved with paper ticketing and a traditional programme and map.

However, what Second Screen and Crowd Connected have been doing is using the location information from users' phones – with their permission, of course – to find

out where they all are. From there, it's easy to work out who are the most popular acts and who are the least popular, for example, which can influence who gets booked for the next festival. If one act or service is maybe too popular or another needs a little love, it's easy for the festival organisers to push notifications to visitors, suggesting they might like to visit somewhere else. That in turn can help to understand visitors' interests and dislikes.

To a certain extent, this replicates existing technology and techniques, such as CCTV monitoring and stewards on the ground. However, all of that is costly, requires additional hardware and provides more things to go wrong. But as long as there's a decent mobile or WiFi signal and enough people have downloaded the app – or even one of the other apps that use the technology – there's far less to go wrong, costs can be saved and everyone benefits.

Just as apps can save consumers money, they can do the same for professionals. Landscape designer Nathan Schutte wants to stand out from his rivals in an area where consumers don't want surveyors visiting their properties. How then to map out the area with professional-grade accuracy, cheaply and easily? You can find out on page 40, but don't be too surprised to learn there's an app for that which benefits both Schutte and his clients.

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