



Apps Every Boomer Should Know: A Roundup

By Suzie Mitchell
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Boomers are lovin' their smartphones. Take a look around a local coffee shop at mid-day and you'll see throngs of Boomers reading and punching away on them.

Check out all of the tables and sometimes you see two or three Boomers together, all on their individual smartphones—doing what we chastise our kids for doing—not talking to each other.

“I love my smartphone, my 60 year-old sister-in-law says. “I use it while waiting in doctors’ offices for my appointments, I can catch up on my email, play games, I’m never alone,” she exclaims.

My sister-in-law is a big smartphone gamer; and sometimes I have to remind her to get her eye off the smartphone and back into our conversation.

Being the first one to have something new, or being “in the know” is a badge of honor for Boomers. So it’s only natural to find them showing off their latest downloaded app to their friends.

“Check this out,” I hear one middle-age-man say to his buddy. “This app is great. I can keep all my data in it and I can access it wherever I am,” he explains about Dropbox.

“Really,” his friend adds. “Show me how it works.”

And for the next half-hour these two guys are engrossed in operating a new app.

According to Dr. Ken Dychtwald, author of *Age Wave*, Boomers make excellent product advocates.

Here’s why:

- On average, most baby boomers are asked for product or service recommendations about 90 times per year.
- Nearly 90 percent of boomers who were asked to give advice gave it to their fellow boomers.
- Practically all boomers consider their family and friends to be their most trusted sources of information

Add that to the recent findings of eMarketer that 86% of Boomers own mobile phones and that the Internet will be accessed via mobile browsers or installed apps by nearly 25% of this demographic—it's easy to understand what the chatter is all about.

So here are 8 free apps that my Boomer friends have told me “I just had to download” and the implication if I didn't download them—I would be out of it, so uncool. And Boomers still do not want to be uncool.

- Dropbox—this is a recommendation from my business friends who travel between office and home, or between their northern homesteads and their snowbird houses in the south and west. Dropbox lets you bring your photos, docs, and videos anywhere and share them easily. You load it on your computer and your smartphone then you never email yourself a file again. It's easy to use and easy to set up.
- Flixster– Read reviews, get customer ratings, see screenshots, and learn more about movies. You can find the theaters, get show times, and watch trailers (what many Boomers once called previews). It's fast, visual and easy to use.
- Words with Friends—this app is a takeoff of Scrabble. This is a personal favorite of my sister-in-law, who plays it at every opportunity with friends and strangers. It's mostly played on smartphones and iPads. Very good to keep your mind engaged.
- Whitepages—Stop paying for directory assistance calls from your phone. Use this free, easy to use app from your smartphone. Find, people, businesses and reverse phone lookups from those unknown numbers that show up on your phone.
- Zite—this is probably one of the coolest sites I've seen in a long time. Users select categories of magazines that interest them. Then as you read articles on certain subjects, Zite sends you more articles on those subjects. You have options to email the articles to others or save them later to read on your iPad. This app is so incredible you have to try it yourself to grasp the full experience.
- The Weather Channel—More than 200 meteorologists provide interactive and beautiful hour by hour weather imagery. Great for planning outdoor activities, car washes or snow shoveling.
- WebMD—first aid information, symptom checkers, drugs and treatments, information on various conditions and local health listings. There are also many videos on treatments and common conditions like bad backs, fevers, diabetes signs. An excellent app for Boomers and Seniors.
- Flashlight—So easy and so helpful. With a single touch your phone turns into a valuable flashlight that can be used to find your keys or read a menu. Great app.

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