

---

## Do Mobile 'Apps' Hinder your Productivity?

Are you an *app* junkie? Does your tablet or smartphone harbour an endless stream of apps that you hardly use? Or do you use them so often that you hardly have time for anything else? In recent times, many individuals have been using apps to help in the completion of tasks and activities on their mobile phones.

***Question: Are those apps that you have placed on your mobile slowing you down or improving your productivity?***

In this fast pace and evolving business environment people are striving to be more productive. As a result, many tech developers have designed an abundance of apps to aid users in getting more tasks done on their mobile devices. However, many of these applications are not self-sufficient. In other words, the user may only get a task completed when one app is used in unison with one or many others.

In his article, 'The biggest productivity killer is that there's an app for that ... and that ... and that, too' on Quartz.com, Ryan Kalember, an enterprise mobility expert states,

'There are thousands of solutions on the market today, but a glance at the "productivity" category of your favourite app store reveals a sea of options with limited functionality, requiring users to cobble together various apps to get the simplest things accomplished.'

He goes on, ‘Think about a task as simple as marking up a spreadsheet with your feedback on your iPad. You first need to get the file onto your device, either via a file sync and share app or by emailing it to yourself. Then you need to find an app with annotation capability in the app store and buy or download it. From there, you need to open the file in your new app, which may provide an unpleasant surprise: most apps will not allow you to annotate a spreadsheet, unless you convert it to a PDF file, which of course, you can only do on your PC or Mac. Once you sort that part out, you create a new, annotated version of that file and finally figure out how to get it back into your file sync and share app (since your device’s email client doesn’t support attaching a file) in order to share your notes with your colleagues. That seemingly simple task required three different apps, created three versions of the file and involved an eight-step process. While they may work for some people, these machinations can kill the productivity benefits of mobile devices, and the new mobile workforce will need to avoid this type of app overkill in order to thrive.’

Unlike apps, *applications* on the other hand come with a wide range of features that help workers do their job as accurately and efficiently as they would on a normal PC. Kalember suggests that it is time for the mobile workforce to demand from software designers, fully functioning applications for their devices.

‘When an employee creates, calculates and writes an earnings report, for example, she uses a suite of applications. That suite generally includes text, spreadsheet, and graphics functionality, as well as the capability to render, annotate and edit different document types. Until recently, all of these actions more or less had to take place at the desktop; mobile devices could only mimic this

functionality by combining scores of apps to handle each individual task—one to create, one to annotate and so on. Savvy mobile workers see this as a productivity killer, and they're right.”

He recommends that the mobile enterprise should demand comprehensive applications that can focus workflows in more consolidated streams.

There is evidence that some vendors are demanding similar integrations and services to be available on one common platform. An example of this being Skype's recent integration with Outlook. However, today's device driven workforce wants and needs more. The number of tools needed to complete a task on a device can hamper productivity. Therefore, improvement is needed if smartphones and tablets are to be as productive to the average office worker as a personal computer.

**(For more information on technology in the office and productivity contact the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council on the 7th Floor of the Conway Business Centre at 468 2180. You can also visit the Council's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/stluciancpc> or email them at [stluciancpc@gmail.com](mailto:stluciancpc@gmail.com))**