

# Identification of leading mobile app developers creating apps for arts and cultural events



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Prepared for:



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## **Background and Executive Summary**

In the summer of 2010, The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance commissioned Groupofminds to research mobile app development firms in an effort to identify mobile app vendors making significant strides in apps for arts and culture. Now that the research is complete, GPCA has generously released this report to the arts and cultural community, so that all arts and cultural groups seeking information on mobile app vendor options can benefit. This research is part of the Cultural Alliance's Engage 2020 initiative, sponsored by a lead grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, with additional support from The Wallace Foundation and The Philadelphia Foundation.

Groupofminds was tasked with researching mobile app developers currently doing exceptional work in creating mobile apps related to arts and cultural events, and creating a contact list of those developers for potential future communication. The specific goals of this research was the:

- Discovery of vendors who have significant experience programming apps for multiple platforms
- Discovery of vendors who have significant experience creating apis
- Discovery of vendors who have created events-based apps
- Review of existing major apps and rating of their ease of use, originality, and user interface design, bugs, and usefulness, to identify creative design
- Notation of vendors who focus specifically on creating apps for nonprofits or for-profits (or both)
- Notation of the status of the vendor itself as non-profit or for-profit
- Notation of clients who have had nonprofit apps created (to whom we could contact to ask about their experience working with the vendor, and thus color your decision)
- Creation of final vendor identification in the form of a report listing the "top" vendor candidates

Working with these goals, we have identified a total of twenty-three developers for your consideration.

## **Methodology of identification**

Given the more than 300,000 apps currently listed in the Apple app store, it was clear that we needed to come up with a robust filtering mechanism for finding exceptional apps listing arts and cultural events.

Apple's iTunes software does not have an advanced searching mechanism capable of carrying out this research, so we chose one of the well-known app review sites with advanced search capabilities, <http://appstorehq.com>.

We then began running keyword searches on a variety of keywords associated with arts and cultural event calendaring apps, such as:

Events Calendar (590 apps)  
Arts Calendar (36 apps)

Nonprofit (170 apps)  
Heritage Festival (68 apps)  
Arts festival (85 apps)  
Culture festival (312 apps)

For additional samples, we also ran keyword searches for apps related to other aspects of arts and culture, such as:

Opera:Music (277 apps)  
Symphony (240 apps)  
Theatre:Entertainment (74 apps)  
Film:Entertainment (885 apps)  
Tickets:Entertainment (136 apps)  
Classical:Music (275 apps)  
Culture Festival (312 apps)

We then created an internal scoring system to identify exceptional apps based on factors such as attractiveness of design, and originality of functionality. In all, this rubric was applied to more than 3,500 apps on the website, to identify 54 exceptional examples of both event calendaring apps, and apps relating to specific arts and cultural genres. Those 54 apps are:

Hot Potato Mobile  
Diacarta  
A Day's Outing - The Most Exciting Outings Around You  
ArtsMemphis  
BandMate: Personalized Live Music Calendar  
The Landing  
m.UW  
Discover Rockford Michigan  
Magic Kingdom Planner  
Sundance Festival 2010  
LA Weekly  
Village Voice  
FilmFest Frameline34 San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival  
iGubbio Turist Guide  
New York Asian Film Festival  
SFF2010  
Vanderbilt University  
Disneyland Wait Times - WalkeeWait  
Fordhouse Museum  
Houston Travel Companion  
Stratford Festival Guide  
Rotterdam City Guide  
KCA  
NashRamblas  
iSolstice  
Le journal La Terrasse  
Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival  
Adventures in Taste Nova Scotia

Pride Toronto 2010  
Graffito  
Unlike Global City Guide  
iBroadway  
Bush Tales: Music Album (International)  
Flavorpill  
Melbourne Historical  
The Fox Theatre  
Dinosaurs: The American Museum of Natural History Collections  
MoMA  
Yours, Vincent The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh  
SFMOMA Rooftop Garden  
Museum of the Phantom City: Other Futures  
Gravilux (cool to create art)  
JD Reflect (cool to create art)  
Smithsonian Channel  
Wikihood Plus  
dreamgrove  
K11  
NARB: people filtered art  
Santa Monica - Official Guide  
SuperGlued  
Muse App  
BSO Media Center  
Cirque du Soleil  
Scales & Modes

Roughly 50% of the apps found were one-off creations by the organization with no identification of a specific developer, or with identification that the development was done by in-house staff. They are identified here in the case that the reader would like to look at additional exceptional arts and culture app examples for functionality only.

We were able to identify developers for the other 50% of the apps, and research the specific criteria requested by GPCA, including the ability to create apps on multiple platforms, experience in creating apps for nonprofits, etc. Generally, all developers were listed as for-profit companies, and no developers specifically mentioned the creation of APIs on their websites, but one can believe that API creation capability exists, as interacting with APIs is a core part of the app development process.

Developers were broken into two tiers:

Tier 1 -- developers of merit that most-highly matched the search criteria (9 developers)

Tier 2 -- developers of merit that either matched the search criteria to a lesser degree, or for whom search criteria matching was not complete for some reason (as an example, a developer who didn't specifically say that they create apps for multiple platforms was put into the Tier 2 list). (14 developers)

Full contact information is listed for each developer, along with a web link to the app reviewed, and a description of the reasons we considered the app to be a good candidate to reflect the capabilities of its developer.

## Tier I Developers

### **RESOLUTE Games Corp.**

Address: 516 Tennessee Street, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

Email: [chris@resolutegames.com](mailto:chris@resolutegames.com) | Web: <http://resoluteinteractive.com> | Phone: None

Multiple platforms: Yes | Events-based: Yes | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**ArtsMemphis**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/artsmemphis-iphone-77851/app>

"ArtsMemphis" is the first app running on data from an Artsopolis Network City. It has a colorful and engaging design, and allows the user to access artsopolis-specific features such as the Top 10 list, videos, and events broken down by category. Event photos are associated with each event, but takes some time to load. The event detail page has a host of great options, allowing to review events, call the box office, go to the org website, add to your calendar map it, and connect via social networks.

### **Rage Digital**

Address: 2401 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80304

Email: [info@ragedigitalinc.com](mailto:info@ragedigitalinc.com) | Web: <http://www.ragedigital.com/> | Phone: 303-263-2025

Multiple platforms: Yes | Events-based: Yes | App serves: For-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**The Fox Theatre**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/thefoxtheatre-iphone-97087/app>

"The Fox Theatre" app is a good implementation of event listings for a specific music venue. It allows users to listen to music samples of upcoming events, see their location in reference to the venue, and has a capability for a chat function, which wasn't working as expected during our testing. But the app design is clean and attractive, with nice eye candy in the design.

### **XS2TheWorld**

Address: Wilgenweg 10 A, 1031 HV Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Email: [info@xs2theworld.com](mailto:info@xs2theworld.com) | Web: <http://www2.xs2theworld.com> | Phone: +3120-8458-780

Multiple platforms: Yes | Events-based: N | App serves: For-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**Rotterdam City Guide**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/rotterdamcityguide-iphone-273652/app>

This info-packed, expertly designed Rotterdam City Guide app makes Rotterdam seem like one of the most abundantly cultural cities in the Netherlands (if not the world). The app takes full advantage of being part of a phone -- links allow you to create a contact file for a business so you can call directly. Same with email. You can also link directly to the phone's GPS Google map to plan a trip to a particular business when you're in the city.

### **Discover Anywhere Mobile**

Address: 377 Old Orchard Grove, Toronto, ON M5M 2G1, Canada

Email: [joanne@discoveranywheremobile.com](mailto:joanne@discoveranywheremobile.com) | Web:

<http://www.discoveranywheremobile.com/> | Phone: 416-785-4425

Multiple platforms: Yes | Events-based: No | App serves: For-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**Adventures in Taste: Nova Scotia**"

<http://www.appstorehq.com/adventuresintastenovascotia-iphone-257234/app>

Who knew Nova Scotia had such riches in the way of food and wine? Adventures in Taste Nova Scotia makes a case for the region as more than worth a gustatory visit. There's a nice sharing function that allows you to write about your adventures, complete with photos, and share on Facebook, Twitter or Flickr. In addition to the requisite info on restaurants, wineries, events and such, there's a great section packed with package deals on tours, getaways and

special meal deals.

### **Mobile Fringe**

Address: 701 Lee Rd., Suite 300, Chesterbrook, PA 19087 (based in Toronto according to website)

Email: Via their site | Web: <http://www.mobilefringe.com/> | Phone: 888-854-5796

Multiple platforms: Yes | Events-based: Yes | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: **"Pride Toronto 2010"** <http://www.appstorehq.com/pridetoronto2010-iphone-257670/app>

In addition to straightforward calendar info (with maps and links), Pride Toronto 2010 makes effective use of Twitter (follow Pride Toronto and also read what's being said about Pride Toronto), Facebook (links to the event page and its posts), YouTube (more than two dozen Pride-related videos), Flickr (view photos from Pride Toronto and use the phone camera to take a photo and send directly to the Pride Toronto Flickr page) and Foursquare.

### **Zumobi**

Address: 520 Pike St., Suite 1375, Seattle, WA 98101

Email: [http://www.zumobi.com/contact\\_us](http://www.zumobi.com/contact_us) | Web: <http://www.zumobi.com/> | Phone: None

Multiple platforms: Yes | Events-based: Yes | App serves: For-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: **"iBroadway"** <http://www.appstorehq.com/ibroadway-iphone-244472/app>

A comprehensive guide to Broadway and off-Broadway shows, iBroadway packs in all the info you might need in choosing a show to see on Broadway or just to keep up with what's going on in mainstream New York theater. Each entry features a YouTube video from each show, the ability to share your thoughts on the show via email, Twitter, or Facebook, complete schedule and ticket information (with links to purchase, of course), cast and creative listings, maps to the theaters (via the phone's Google maps, which takes you out of the app) and a link to iTunes for the musicals (which also takes you out of the app).

### **NOUS-Guide**

Address: 647 Duncan Street, San Francisco, CA 94131

Email: [usa@nousguide.com](mailto:usa@nousguide.com) | Web: <http://www.nousguide.com/en/explore.html> | Phone: None

Multiple platforms: Yes | Events-based: No | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: **"SF MOMA Rooftop Garden"** <http://www.appstorehq.com/sfmomarooftopgarden-iphone-123932/app>

This gorgeous, slickly designed app is the next best thing to being on SFMOMA's rooftop garden. You can scroll through the sculpture artists (either via cover flow or a more prosaic list) and enjoy a striking slide show for each sculptor's work accompanied by a minimalist soundtrack. You can also hear commentary about the art and the artist, Tweet about the art and share your own photos of the art or share these photos of the art via email. The video content (embedded, not via YouTube) is fantastic. This is a phenomenal app that truly enhances the artistic experience.

### **Antenna Audio**

Address: P.O. Box 176, Building 1058, Fort Cronkhite, Sausalito, CA 94966

Email: [inquiry@antennaaudio.com](mailto:inquiry@antennaaudio.com) | Web: <http://www.antennaaudio.com/> | Phone: 415-332-4862

Multiple platforms: Yes | Events-based: No | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: **"Yours, Vincent: The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh"**

<http://www.appstorehq.com/yoursvincentthelettersofvincentvangogh-iphone-84370/app>

"Yours, Vincent" took a long time to download (about 15 minutes as opposed to about a minute for all the other apps here) but yields abundant riches. Most of the content is video (not YouTube), and it's all fantastic. Efficiently designed, this simple app also includes a section called "Insight" that allows users to experience Vincent's take on any number of things, from sex to flowers to brushstrokes. The VanGogh Museum has essentially created an interactive documentary for itself, with a peek into all the galleries complemented by narration from Vincent's letters. In one letter, Vincent says, "Looking at paintings should rest the mind or the imagination," and that's exactly what this app does.

### **MobiLaurus**

Address: 343 Washington St., Suite 200, Newton, MA 02458

Email: [Chris@Mobilaurus.com](mailto:Chris@Mobilaurus.com) | Web: <http://www.mobilaurus.com/> | Phone: None

Multiple platforms: Yes | Events-based: Yes | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**BSO Media Center**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/bsomediacentre-iphone-273115/app>

The best part of the BSO Media Center is its collection of videos, especially the performance clips. For instance, try not to be moved by the 2 1/2-minute excerpt from "The Dream Lives On: A Portrait of the Kennedy Brothers." The clip is phenomenal, and that then makes you want to click through to iTunes to buy the whole thing (or call the toll-free number to buy it). The dozens and dozens of audio clips are also nice, but short -- and tease you to buy the whole pieces on iTunes. The calendar contains all the necessary info and links for scheduling and ticket buying, and there's easy access to all the program notes.

## **Tier II Developers**

### **App Publishing**

Address: P.O. Box 7681, Portland, Maine 04112

Email: <http://www.appublishing.com/m/contact.php> | Web: <http://www.appublishing.com/m/> |

Phone: 800-985-9277

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: Yes | App serves: For-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**The Landing**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/thelanding-iphone-74647/app>

"The Landing" features an event venue in Maine. It has a clean and attractive design with a great use of flash-like fade graphics. The app features info on rental/use of the venue for weddings, corporate, and other events, and lists upcoming concert info via a built-in calendar.

### **Six Voices**

Address: PO Box 61359, Sunnyvale, CA 94088

Email: [contact@sixvoices.com](mailto:contact@sixvoices.com) | Web: <http://sixvoices.com/> | Phone: None

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: No | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**Discover Rockford Michigan**"

<http://www.appstorehq.com/discoverrockfordmichiganiphone-101513/app>

"Discover Rockford Michigan" is a promotional app for the city, featuring dining, shopping, and event information. It has an interesting "slide" navigation structure to look at data, which doesn't require complicated menus. Images on some pages also launch small, professional videos.

### **DVP Web**

Address: 1786 9th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94122

Email: [FilmFest@DVPweb.com](mailto:FilmFest@DVPweb.com) | Web: <http://filmfest.dvpweb.com/> | Phone: 415-625-FEST

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: Yes | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit  
Creator of: "**FilmFest Frameline34 San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival**"  
<http://www.appstorehq.com/filmfestframeline34sanfranciscointernationallgbtfilmfestival-iphone-240496/app>

"FilmFest Frameline34 San Francisco International LGBT Film Festival" uses a film-festival template structure used for several other festivals. It features an interesting "bookmark" feature, allowing the browsing user to store pieces of information in a separate area for later access. The app also includes access to an audience survey, which we have not encountered before in an arts & cultural app.

### **Caravan Interactive, Inc.**

Address: 348 Classon Ave., Brooklyn, New York 11238

Email: [contact@crvn.net](mailto:contact@crvn.net) | Web: <http://www.crvn.net/> | Phone: 646-533-8441

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: Yes | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit  
Creator of: "**New York Asian Film Festival**"

<http://www.appstorehq.com/newyorkasianfilmfestivaliphone-241855/app>

"New York Asian Film Festival" has a cool and funky design that stands out from other film festival apps. It stays away from the normal iPhone button graphics, and features a nice selection of engaging film photos. There are also video clips, the ability to post individual films to Facebook, and transit line info to reach venues, email newsletter signup, and a "bookmark" function to store films you want to see.

### **eFirst Group**

Address: 27 / 296 Bay Rd, Cheltenham Victoria Australia 3192

Email: [iManage@eFirst.com.au](mailto:iManage@eFirst.com.au) | Web: <http://www.efirst.com.au/> | Phone: +61-3-9427-9233

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: Yes | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit  
Creator of: "**SFF2010**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/sff2010-iphone-229202/app>

"Sydney Film Festival" has features similar to other film festival apps (looking up films to see, finding the venue location, film trailers, etc.), but also has unique features such as a real-time update on what tickets are "selling fast" which would presumably add urgency to ticket sales, and a help section for "how to use this app" which is rarely seen in app design.

### **Straxis, LLC**

Address: 1325 E. 15th St., Suite 202, Tulsa, OK 74120

Email: [jchristensen@straxis.com](mailto:jchristensen@straxis.com) | Web: <http://www.straxis.com/> | Phone: 918-585-6900

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: No | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit  
Creator of: "**Vanderbilt University**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/vanderbiltuniversity-iphone-264358/app>

"Vanderbilt University" has a gorgeous design on top of the skeleton of a simple iPhone left-to-right navigation system. There are also other nice little touches; we especially liked the "chant" button which plays the school's fight song while you're doing other things in the app (this is reason enough to download the app). There is a pretty gallery section of school photos, a display of today's weather, Twitter integration, a large video section, and a campus map displaying your current location in reference to the campus.

### **Audissey Media**

Address: 494 Sumner Street, Suite 1, Boston, MA 02128

Email: [info@audisseyguides.com](mailto:info@audisseyguides.com) | Web: <http://www.audisseymedia.com/> | Phone: 888-402-4671

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: No | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit  
Creator of: "**Fordhouse Museum**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/fordhousemuseum-iphone-273629/app>

This app is currently offline in the iTunes store, but description reads "Enter the story of an American treasure: the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House. This app gives you an insider's tour of the estate's landscape and grounds and an intimate, privileged look into the story of an iconic American family that few people have ever encountered. Explore the estate at your own pace using this self-guided, engaging, interpretive experience. The tour features beautiful videos about points of interest throughout the property as well as rare Ford Family home movies. Special guest narrators, stunning landscape photography, and an atmospheric musical score create a breathtaking and cinematic experience." We scored this app based on screenshots provided by the developer.

### **New Media Gateway**

Address: Campbell Center - North Tower, 8350 N. Central Expressway, 16th Floor, Dallas, TX 75206

Email: <http://www.newmediagateway.com/contact-us/request-a-demo> Web: <http://www.newmediagateway.com/marketing-services/mobile-marketing> | Phone: 800-330-9450

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: No | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit  
Creator of: "**Houston Travel Companion**"

<http://www.appstorehq.com/houstontravelcompanion-iphone-282452/app>

Houston Travel Companion is a cleanly designed, wonderfully thorough guide to the city with the added bonus of being able to email yourself coupons for discounts on dinners, event tickets and more. Beautiful photo/video section provides a nice intro to the city.

### **Electric Mapping Company (Applied Information Group)**

Address: 26–27 Great Sutton Street, Clerkenwell, London EC1V 0DS, United Kingdom

Email: [nashramblas@electricmapping.com](mailto:nashramblas@electricmapping.com) | Web: <http://electricmapping.com/> |

Phone: +44-0-20-7017-8488

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: No | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit  
Creator of: "**Nash Ramblas**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/nashramblas-iphone-256576/app>

This walking tour through an architecturally significant section of London is enjoyable even if you're not actually in London. Each of the 30 stops on the NashRamblas tour features a number of current and historical photos, drawings and maps, along with links for more information. The design is uncluttered, and there's a navigation tool if you're actually in London and need help to find the next spot.

### **The Enilon Group**

Address: 650 W. Vickery Blvd., Suite 180, Fort Worth, TX 76104

Email: <http://www.enilon.com/contact/default.asp> | Web: <http://www.enilon.com> | Phone: 817-632-3200

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: Yes | App serves: Non-profit | Company is: For-profit  
Creator of: "**Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival**"

<http://www.appstorehq.com/mainstfortworthartsfestival-iphone-176166/app>

Before and during the festival, Main Street Fort Worth Arts Festival must have been invaluable to patrons because it contains the equivalent of an arts and artists catalog complete with artist info (including their booth number) and gorgeous photos of their work but lets you call or email them directly or link to their websites without leaving the app. The

group's website, which you can link to internally, is also nicely configured for the iPhone. You can also keep track of your favorite artists and events, which makes this wealth of information manageable.

### **Sutro Media**

Address: None (S.F. Bay Area)

Email: [tobin@sutromedia.com](mailto:tobin@sutromedia.com) | Web: <http://www.sutromedia.com/> | Phone: None

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: No | App serves: For-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**Melbourne Historical**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/melbournehistorical-iphone-143375/app>

With more than 110 entries, this \$2.99 tour guide contains a paragraph or so on each topic along with a swiftly moving slide show and Google map (within the app). Some of the entries include external links, along with all relevant visitor information (admission fee, address, phone number, website, etc.). Melbourne Historical is also soliciting reviews for each entry to be edited and included in future editions of the guide. You can sort the attractions by name, cost, distance or neighborhood.

### **Drifting City**

Address: 453 S. Spring St., #824, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Email: [contact@driftingcity.com](mailto:contact@driftingcity.com) | Web: <http://www.driftingcity.com/> | Phone: 213-327-2085

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: No | App serves: For-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**dreamgrove**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/dreamgrove-iphone-100203/app>

Described as an "interactive dream garden," The \$.99 dreamgrove is a collaboration of artists in Athens and Los Angeles and is affiliated with the Hong Kong & Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism and Architecture. As befits a dreamgrove, the app is a little perplexing, but it's all about exploring and stumbling onto pieces of writing about dreams that intrigue. The info page mentioned sounds, but we never heard any. When you exit a dream page, a different photo flashes briefly, which is ghostlike and dreamy. There's nothing super practical about this app -- it's an ongoing, participatory work of art, after all -- but it's fun and interestingly designed to invite exploration.

### **Smappsoft**

Address: None

Email: [info@smappsoft.com](mailto:info@smappsoft.com) | Web: <http://www.smappsoft.com/> | Phone: None

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: No | App serves: For-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**Scales & Modes**" <http://www.appstorehq.com/scales-modes-iphone-151200/app>

This \$1.99 app is sort of an interactive piano/guitar scales instruction program. Each scale, from major on top to major pentatonic and blues on the bottom, includes an info page about the history of the particular scale and what it is most often used for. For example, the Dorian scale is used in Santana's "Evil Ways" and the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby." You can have the scale played in guitar mode or piano mode, and it can keep playing until you make it stop. The app is appealingly designed on what looks like old parchment paper.

### **WellAlright**

Address: 4105 Avenue F, Austin, Texas 78751

Email: [pro@wellalright.com](mailto:pro@wellalright.com) | Web: <http://www.wellalright.com/> | Phone: 504-570-1411

Multiple platforms: No | Events-based: Yes | App serves: For-profit | Company is: For-profit

Creator of: "**Bandmate: Personalized Live Music Calendar**"

<http://www.appstorehq.com/bandmatepersonalizedlivemusiccalendar-iphone-77566/app>

For \$1.99, this app pokes into your iTunes library and builds a database of concerts you might like to attend in your general area. The speed with which it's able to do this is based on the number of artists you have loaded into your iPhone iTunes. With each event, you can pull info from the venue's website, the artist's website, the artist's Facebook feed, the tour calendar and a general artist bio (often from last.fm). You can also hear song clips from iTunes, which takes you out of the app and into iTunes. The app also points out new music releases that might be of interest (and takes you to Amazon within the app) and allows you track concerts and new music from artists you denote as favorites. The design pulls together a bunch of outside resources into one very useful app.

## **Additional Notes**

After considering 3,500+ arts and cultural apps, a few key trends were seen. In general, the majority of apps that have been created for arts and cultural events (as of August, 2010) are small, relatively unsophisticated event listings, using simple left-to-right iPhone navigation functionality. The actual usefulness of most of these basic apps for a patron is questionable. Many organizations may have created these apps for the novelty of having an iPhone app, without much real consideration of the usefulness to the end user. In some cases, apps were for temporal events, such as jazz festivals, where the event happened earlier in the year, but now that the event is over, the content in the app is old and abandoned. This is an issue that should be considered by any organization that creates an app; content must be updated over time to stay relevant and useful, and temporal events should have a plan in place for the app once the event is over.

We also saw a lack of creative expression in many apps -- most had simple capabilities (like event search) but no real personality, fun factor, or anything that made the use of the information in the app unique to a mobile phone (i.e. the same content searches could be accomplished on the website and the mobile phone, with no real benefit to using the phone over the website). In a few cases where originality really showed, such as the app for Vanderbilt University allowing the user to hit a button to play the school fight song, we were surprised and happy to play with something "different." This makes us think that the bar for engaging with the arts through a mobile phone is quite low, with easy success if originality is a factor in the app design.

Additionally, while considering the creation of new arts and cultural apps, designers should identify functionality that makes excellent use of the phone's unique capabilities, and that can't be repeated using other data channels. Some apps listed do indeed have these sorts of functionalities, such as showing your current physical location on a map in reference to a venue, but we feel that the capabilities for these functionalities has a lot of room to grow.

Given the list of developers, the next step is to begin to design an app functionality requirements document. This document spells out all of the functionalities that the user of the app will be able to accomplish. This document can then be shared via RFP to the listed developers for pricing and feedback. Normal calendaring functions will be easily implemented by these developers, so we encourage the reader to think outside the box with app creation, and try to create something that is unique and more advanced than the apps listed above, offers features specific to mobile phones, and has some sort of fun factor and can feature your originality and personality.

For questions or comments on this report, please contact:

Ron Evans, Principal

1030 E. El Camino Real, #125, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

408-646-9543 | [ron@groupofminds.com](mailto:ron@groupofminds.com) | <http://groupofminds.com>