How to Sell Apps to Your Clients

The Comprehensive Guide

AppPresser

Increase Your Revenue with Mobile Apps

If you are a WordPress website builder and you don't already offer mobile apps to your clients, doing so can increase your revenue.

Adding an entirely new service to your business is not only exciting, it's good for profits. Here's how things usually go for your average WordPress developer…

You just landed a new client who wants a WordPress site, sweet!

Normally you'd build it, launch it, and you're done. But what if they want a mobile app?

> *Sorry Mr. Client, we don't make mobile apps. You might want to try this other company…*

With AppPresser, you now have the power to make that app for them, and increase your revenue! You can add an app into the initial project scope, or upsell them after the site is done. You can even go back to old clients and sell them an app.

The best part is that you don't have to hire an Objective C or Java developer, increasing your overhead. You can now keep app development in-house, and add another income stream to your business.

You may be wondering, how can I make this happen? That's what this guide is all about.

We'll be going over everything you need to sell apps to your clients, including how to communicate the value of an app to your clients, how much to charge, why WordPress works great for an app, how to create mockups, a real lif case study, and lots more.

Let's get started!

How to Sell Mobile Apps to Your Clients

Selling mobile apps to your clients can provide extra revenue and help you grow your business.

If you don't have much experience in this area, it can be intimidating. Perhaps you want to sell mobile apps, but you just don't know where to start.

Educating yourself about what's involved, how much to charge, and how to communicate benefits will help you get more comfortable selling apps. In this article I'll help you with everything you need to deliver a great app to your clients while increasing your revenue.

We'll go over these areas:

1. How to communicate the benefits of a mobile app
2. Why WordPress?
3. Features, Examples, and More
4. Estimating cost
5. Getting started

Feel free to steal any of the ideas here to present to your clients!

Communicating Mobile App Benefits

The first step in selling mobile apps to your clients is convincing them that it will help their business. There are 4 basic benefits that you can present to them, let's take a look.

1. Your Customers Use Apps. A Lot.

Chris Lema says that your customers take 3 things with them everywhere they go. Their keys, wallet, and phone. An app allows your client to go with their customers everywhere.

Apps are fun to use, and really easy to access. In fact, they are so popular that they account for 86% of device time, as opposed to only 14% on the mobile web.
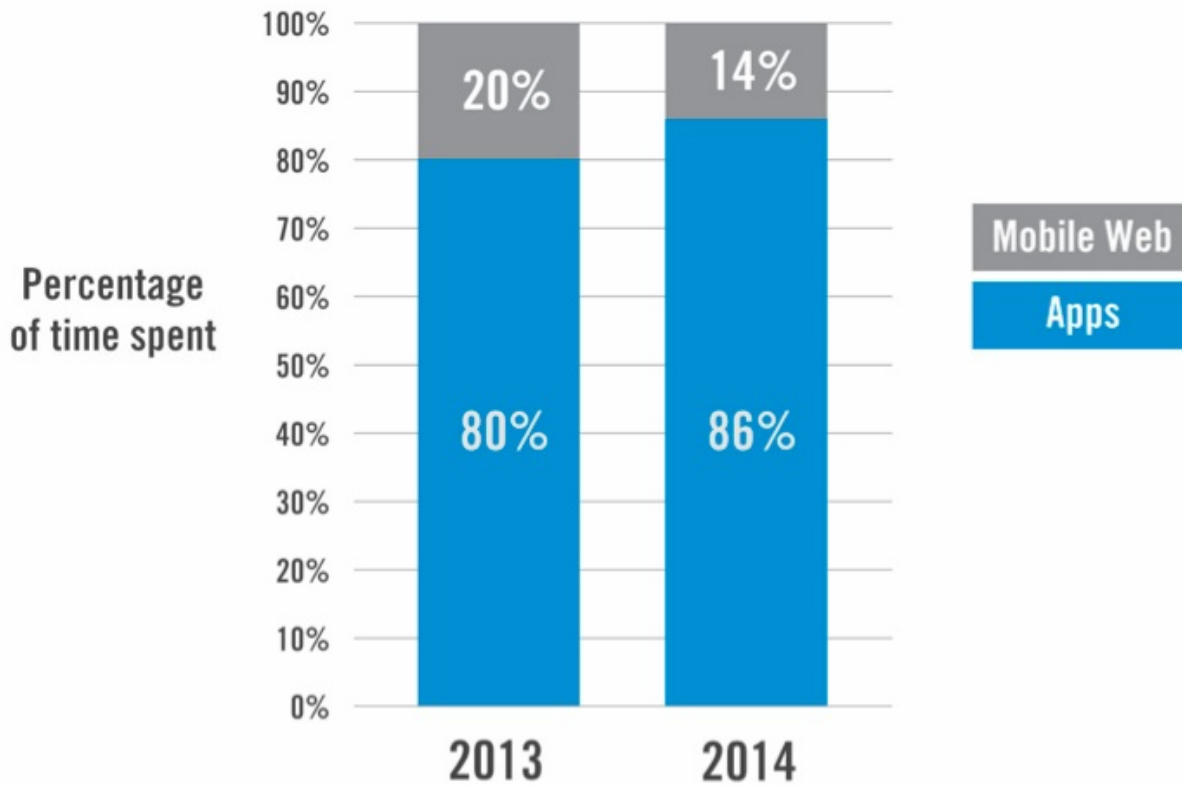
Image: Flurry Insights

With an app, your client can be part of that 86% percent, which is in addition to any website time. Not only that, but they get the branding of having their logo on the home screen of their customer's devices.

Without a mobile app, you are missing out on being a part of that 86%. Let's look at why mobile apps dominate device usage.

2. Apps are faster, easier, and more focused.

An app can present your client's content faster, and in a more focused way.

Take a look at the screenshots below. To get to the website on the left, you need to click on the web browser, enter the site address (or search for it), then click to go there. Once you get to the site, the content is not as prominent as it could be (in this case, only 50% of the screen is focused on content).

Compare that to an app, which is a single click, and it displays the content using 90% of the screen. Not to mention it
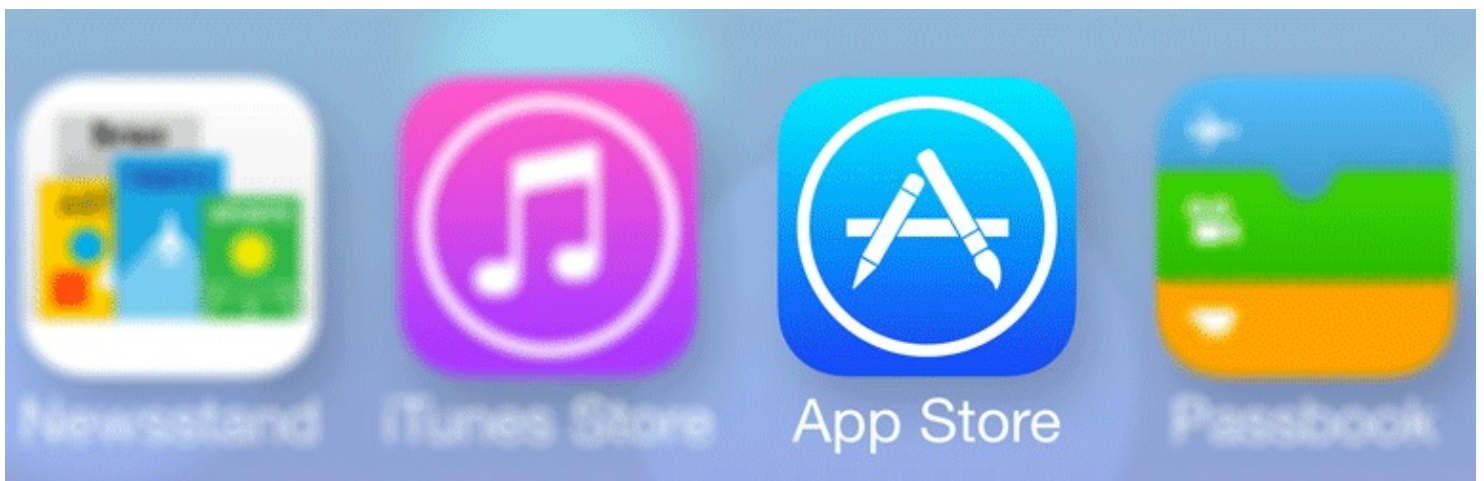
is faster in many cases.
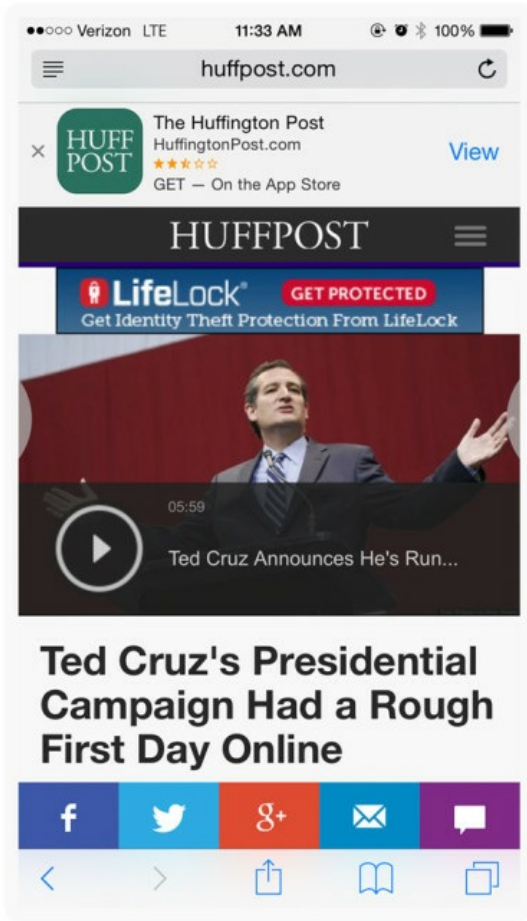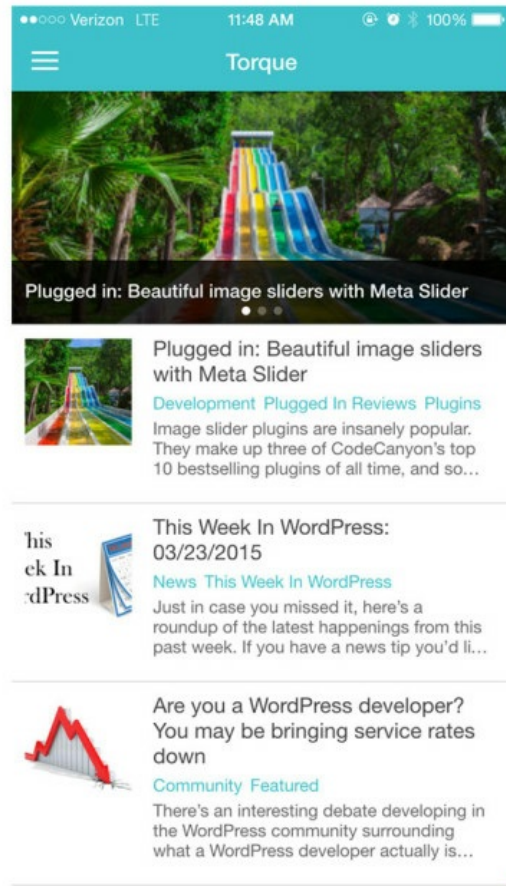
3. Distribution

Putting your client's business on the app stores is a great way to create another distribution channel.

It is a way to stay on top of the customer's mind, and be everywhere they go. Being on the app store offers other unique advantages, because apps can do things that websites can't, like push notifications.

As an added bonus, mobile apps can even enhance your client's SEO.

4. Engagement

A mobile app allows your client to engage with her customers in a new and exciting way. Offering up content in a new medium that is faster and easier to use creates more engagement.

Not only that, but push notifications allow your client to get intimate access to customer devices. Send a notification when a new post is published, or when you have a holiday sale.

That type of engagement can only come from a mobile app.

Read this post for more statistics to help convince your clients.
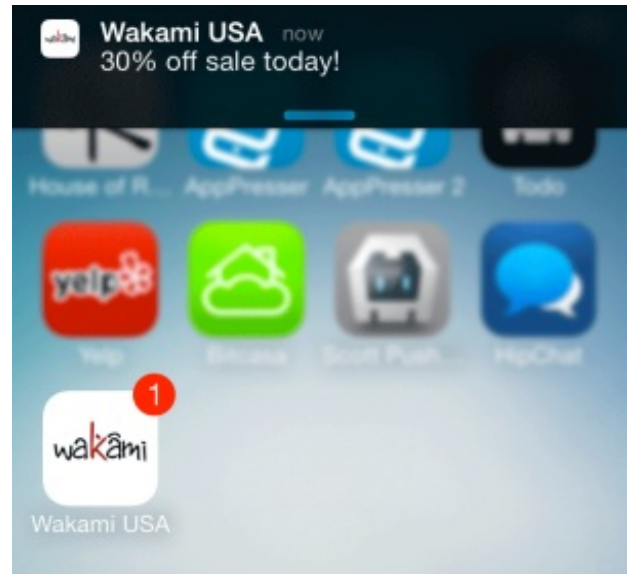
Why WordPress?

Now that you've communicated the benefits of a mobile app, your client may ask about the technology involved.

If you are using a product like AppPresser that connects WordPress to a mobile app, it's important to tell your client why that's so beneficial.

They already have all of their content in WordPress, so using that same content in an app seems like a no-brainer. Why remake all of it somewhere else?

The main benefits of using WordPress are ownership, ease of use, and control.

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

Why WordPress works great with a mobile app

Using WordPress with mobile apps is a fairly new concept, and it's certainly not mainstream.

If you ask a traditional mobile app developer about using WordPress with a mobile app, they would probably look at you funny. There is certainly skepticism about how well it can work, and that's understandable.

After doing this for more than a year, and hearing from lots of customers, I would make the case that WordPress works great as a back end for mobile apps. I wouldn't claim it's perfect for every project, but there are things you can do that are almost impossible with other platforms.

Here's why.

WordPress for websites, and apps

WordPress is the most popular way to publish on the web (24% of all websites) for a reason: it's easy to use, highly extendable, and open source. You can get a website up quickly, keep everything on your own server, and scale it up almost infinitely. You don't need to be a web developer to publish a new post, or change themes. These are the biggest strengths of the platform, and they translate to mobile apps as well.

In my experience, there are 3 main things people want:

1. Ownership: To own their data by keeping it on their own server.
2. Ease of use: To use existing website content, and customize easily.
3. Control: To update their website and their app in the same place.

I actually underestimated the importance of these 3 things. Performance and features are important, but they only come after these. These are the essential strengths of WordPress as an application platform, let's look at them in more depth.

Ownership

Most apps require some sort of database, and possibly creating a UI for a client. WordPress already does this, so why not modify WordPress instead of re-inventing the wheel? The data is already structured in an easily usable format for content, media, users, and lots more. Not to mention custom plugins that add functionality like Ecommerce, events, forms, etc.

Some companies even require all the data to be on their own server, so a 3rd party app builder is out of the question. Building out your own database and server just for the app is certainly possible, but it can be difficult and expensive.

WordPress already has a pre-built database structure, and a UI to go along with it, for free. It's hard to beat that.

Ease of use

Many businesses have existing content in WordPress that is very difficult to get into an app. For example, a BBPress forum, WooCommerce products, or a BuddyPress social network.

Most app builders require rebuilding all of this content in their CMS, for technical reasons. It's much easier to put their existing website content directly from WordPress into the app, instead of having to rebuild everything.

More control

What people love about WordPress is that they can make a change to their site without calling their developer. It puts the power of web design in the layman's hands. It does the same thing for mobile apps as well, if you update your site, the app is also updated.

I recently talked to a gentleman with a podcasting app. When he creates a new podcast, he has to add it to his website, then go over to the app CMS and add it there as well. If he used WordPress as the CMS for the website and the app, he could update everything in one place.

You can even send push notifications to the app from WordPress, which allows developers to easily hand off control when a project is completed.

WordPress for all apps?

WordPress is a tool, just like any other technology. It's not perfect for every project.

However, many developers simply aren't aware of the advantages of using an open source CMS as a back end for a mobile app.

No tool is perfect for every project, but WordPress works great for small businesses that want an affordable app that is easy to manage.

Statistics

Now that we've clearly communicated to our client that WordPress is a good fit, they may be wondering why they should pay for an app at all.

You don't want to lose the sale if they get cold feet, so make sure you have some statistics on hand to convince them the app is worth the investment.

Let's look at 7 statistics you can provide your client.

7 Mobile Statistics That Paint A Convincing Picture

You know by now that mobile is an incredibly important part of your business, whether that's on the web or in an app.

Perhaps you know someone who needs a little convincing, a boss, client, or friend? Share these statistics with them, and let the facts do the talking.

1. More people access the internet on mobile than on the desktop

We all knew it was coming, but the tipping point where mobile overtook desktop occurred in mid 2014.

This includes mobile apps and mobile web, that means anything from Safari on iOS to the Facebook and YouTube mobile apps. The percentage of mobile over desktop is only increasing, and may climb as high as 70% in coming years.

2. Mobile apps account for 86% of device time

As we've mentioned before, mobile apps dominate device usage (by a lot). Much of this time is in popular apps like Facebook, Twitter, Mail, games, etc. That doesn't mean mobile apps are more important than your responsive website, but it definitely shows that people like their favorite mobile apps better than the mobile web.

Source: Smart Insights
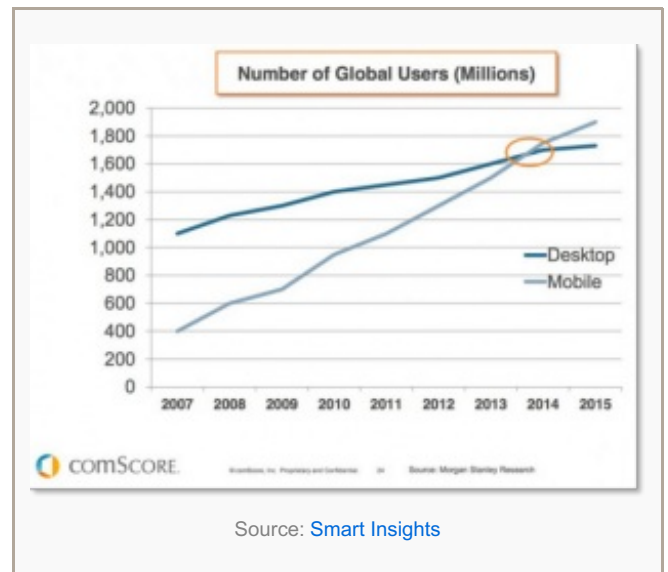
Percentage of device time

86% Apps

14% Web

Source: Flurry Insights

3. Android is the most popular mobile OS

Android holds about 53.2% of the smartphone market, while iOS is 43%. The Android market is fragmented between Samsung, LG, Motorola, and HTC, while iOS is obviously all Apple. This is not surprising, given that Android phones tend to be far less expensive, opening up a wider market.

Source: comScore

4. iOS users have more money to spend

Android may have more market share, but iOS users have more money to spend .

They make more, and spend more time on their devices, according to this statistic from 2014. It makes sense, since their devices tend to be much more expensive.

5. 8 of the top 10 mobile apps are owned by Facebook and Google

The other two? Pandora and Amazon. Google has 5, Facebook has 3 of the top ten apps. Here they are:

1. Facebook

2. YouTube

3. Google Play

4. Google Search

5. Facebook Messenger

6. Google Maps

7. Pandora Radio

8. Gmail

9. Instagram

10. Amazon Mobile

Source: comScore

Source: Techcrunch
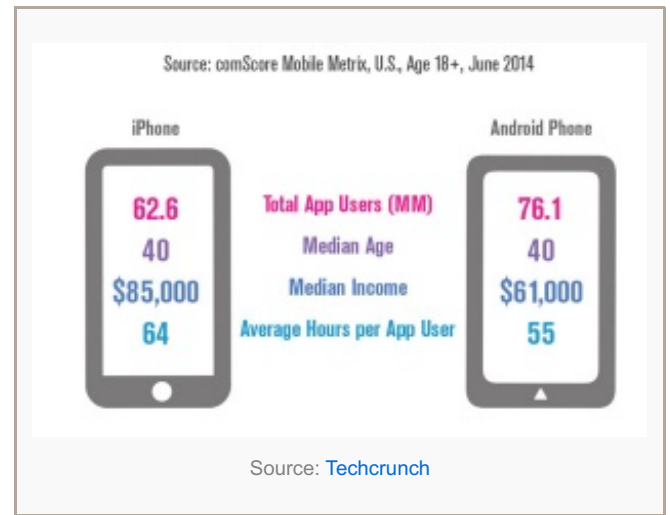
6. Conversion rates are lower on mobile than on desktop

Monetate.com reported that conversion rates on smartphones were significantly lower than desktop, by almost half. Tablets weren't as bad, only trailing by .36%. While this is just one report, it may indicate that customers use mobile devices for research purposes, but make their purchases on larger screens.

Source: Smart Insights.

7. 50% of adults worldwide own a smartphone

In the US, it's closer to 75%. Worldwide smartphone penetration is expected to reach 80% by 2020.

Bonus: Active Facebook users exceed US and European population combined

Facebook has 1.39 billion monthly active users, which is more than the populations of the US and Europe combined (1.06 billion). Not too shabby!

Source: Zephoria

Moving Forward

If you showed your client these statistics, hopefully they are convinced they need an app. They may ask, so how much is it?

Let's look at how to estimate your mobile app project.

How to Estimate a Mobile App Project

Many agency owners I talk to like the idea of offering apps to their clients, but they just don't know where to start.

For an agency, part of the problem is lack of experience building apps, and the other part is they don't know how much to charge. There is this fear that they will get into something over their heads, and lose money.

The reality is that your agency can build apps for your clients right now. You already have good developers on your team who can handle the technology, and if you start with a small app project you won't get in over your head.

In this article I will go over everything you need to know to start building apps for your clients, including what skills your team needs, how long it will take, how much you should charge, and more.

Skills

AppPresser leverages the existing features of WordPress, so you don't need to have a mobile app developer on your team to get started.

AppPresser helps you setup a basic app easily, which does not require special skills. However, most clients want some customizations, which will require at least:

- Intermediate WordPress plugin and theme development
- Intermediate Javascript

AppPresser works with WordPress themes and plugins, so most of the work will be done in a child theme or custom plugin. Your developers already know how to do this, it's very similar to building a custom WordPress site.

Your developer does not need to know anything about native app code, or even in-depth knowledge of PhoneGap. *(PhoneGap is the framework that AppPresser uses to access native device features)* That stuff all happens behind the scenes. The only time you would need intimate knowledge of PhoneGap is if you are trying to utilize a custom native device feature that is not already included in AppPresser, for example a barcode scanner.

Your First App Project

If you haven't built an app before, it's important you pick a good project to start with.

Some clients want extremely complex apps, that's not a good place to start. I would hand pick a good client with a simple business, such as a restaurant, magazine, church, school, or other service business. Keep the feature scope extremely simple, just displaying website content like pages and posts, and sending push notifications. Your client may want more, but let them know you can do that in Phase 2.

Keeping your first app simple will ensure you don't get in over your head.

Estimating Time

If you haven't used AppPresser before, estimating time can be difficult. It's best to pad your hours for unexpected hangups, and be transparent with your client.

Cody Landefeld of Mode Effect recently completed his first AppPresser client project. Here's what he says:

> *Approaching a mobile app with WordPress has to involve the estimation for not only the WordPress theme design and development, but also the mobile app setup and configuration with Apple and Google. This will affect timelines and your production time to bill the client against. Especially if you need to make changes to the app that cause you to test and re-submit the app to both the Google and Apple stores.*

Apple review takes up to 14 days after you've submitted the app, Android takes about 24 hours. Make sure your client is aware of this.

There are 4 phases of the project that you will need to estimate for. We'll go into these in more detail below.

1. Design/revision: similar to a custom child theme build.

2. App build: any custom plugin work, plus PhoneGap app setup.

3. Testing: get the app on multiple devices for testing and debugging.

4. App submission: iOS and or Android.

Tip: your client will need iOS and Android developer licenses. Apple takes a couple weeks to review this, so get it started before the project begins.

Design/revision phase

The design phase in an app project is slightly different than a website, only because an app has certain conventions you don't want to stray from.

Apps have fixed toolbars and footers, sliding left menus, conventional styles for lists, etc. Our Ion theme has these conventions in place, it is best to leave these as is. The design customization is more a matter of customizing these existing elements in subtle ways, not completely designing a new interface. Of course, you can do whatever you want, and AppPresser does not limit design in any way.

Once you are out of the mockup phase, the design is mostly done in a child theme. You do not need device testing at this point, so it is all done with custom CSS/JS and templates and tested in a browser.

Tip: keep your mockups simple. Good app developers spend most of their time designing a good user experience, not fancy layouts.

Building it out

In this phase you'll implement your custom design, and any custom features the client has requested. Without custom features this phase can go pretty quickly.

1. Install and configure AppPresser plugins
2. Build/implement child theme
3. Setup PhoneGap

Installing and configuring AppPresser plugins is pretty straightforward. This should only take an hour at most. Building your child theme may take slightly longer for the app, so your developer can get used to the elements of our

themes. You will also want to test on a device as soon as possible, we'll get to that in the next section.

The most time consuming part of building out the app is implementing all of your customizations. This may involve custom PHP and Javascript in custom plugins or your child theme. I would recommend estimating this similar to building a custom website feature, but padding the hours for device testing and unexpected issues.

Testing

Testing on a device is very important for your app.

The first stage of testing will take place in your web browser. On your WordPress website, go to the AppPresser settings, and check "enable AppPresser for admins only." This will allow you to view the theme you are using for your app right in the browser.

When things look good in the browser, you'll want to move to device testing. The easiest way to do this is with the AppPresser Preview app, available in the app stores. Just download the app, add your site url, and the app will load. The url cannot be a localhost, it must be live on the internet. Most device features will work in our preview app, with the exception of push notifications.

When you are getting ready to submit to the app stores, you will need to build your own version of the app.

This is done by filling out our build form, and uploading those files to PhoneGap Build. You will need to setup a free account, and upload the files we provide. You can test on Android immediately without any further steps, but iOS is a bit more complex.

Getting your app onto an iOS device requires an Apple developer account, and creating some certificates. This process is detailed in our documentation, but it will probably take you 1-2 hours to figure this out for the first time.

With the app on your device, you can now use USB Debugging to do a final once over. You have to plug your device into a computer via USB cable, and then open a browser inspector. You can then inspect app elements and see console errors, the same way you would with a website.

Tip: build your own app and use USB debugging as soon as possible, this is the only 100% sure way to test your app.

Submitting

Submitting the app can be difficult if you've never done it before. Android is fairly straight forward, but Apple has not made it easy for app developers.

Make sure to pad your estimate for several extra hours toward app submission. We have great step by step documentation on how to submit your app, but dealing with Apple certificates can be frustrating.

Tip: we offer an app submission service for $497 if you don't want to deal with any certificates or submission headaches.

Gotchas

Like any client project, sometimes things don't go as expected. Remember the first few website projects you did?Did they go 100% perfectly? Probably not, but you learned and got better.

Cody Landefeld tells us about about their first app project:

For Mode Effect it was our first ever proper mobile app so the time to test, create a build, and wait for submission review was enough to cause some unexpected delays in the project. Next time we'll estimate the total hours for app specific setup and configuration and communicate the potential affect on the timeline with the client.

The best thing you can do to avoid difficult situations is to keep the feature scope very simple, and be very open and transparent with your client.

What if my app gets rejected?

I have never seen an app that was rejected outright from the app stores. If you follow their basic guidelines, the worst that can happen is that they ask you to make a couple of changes. In every case, if you make the changes they suggest, the app will be accepted.

Ongoing Maintenance

Just like a website, your client's app may need maintenance.

The app doesn't need a lot of special attention on it's own, but your client may want more features, or bugs may arise.

If an issue arises, the app can be updated through WordPress code without having to resubmit to the app stores. The only time you need to resubmit is if a major new feature or platform upgrade is added. For example, if you submitted without push notifications and you want to add them, or iOS 12 is released and it causes an issue.

It's important to discuss this with your client ahead of time, and possibly setup a retainer agreement for the app.

Conclusion

Creating an AppPresser app for your clients is not as difficult as you think, and it's a great way to bring in new revenue.

You can get started today using your team's existing skills, you don't have to hire a new mobile app developer. If you follow the advice in this article to plan for your development, testing, and submission costs, you will be able to get your client an app they love in a timely manner.

After the Estimate

If you successfully present an estimate to your client and it gets approved, it's time to move to the next phase.

You will need to design and possibly mock-up the app for your client. If you are using AppPresser, it's easy to create a basic version of the app using our browser based app builder. You can then send them screenshots without using a mockup tool.

Sometimes a client wants a more custom app, and you may want to use an external mockup tool. Let's look at a few resources you can use for mocking up the app design.

10 Great Resources for Mocking Up a Mobile App

Presenting a mockup design for your clients is a great way of showcasing them your mobile applications and responsive designs. There are a lot of great resources and services available that help you do this.

In this article, I would like to share with you ten useful resources for creating mockups for mobile designs and mobile applications. Some of the resources are interactive mockup tools, and some of them are for static images, both are useful in different ways.

Resources are listed in no particular order.

1. InVision App

InVision App is a design protocol tool that transforms static designs into clickable prototypes that support gestures, transitions and animations.

You load in your static mockups, then define which areas you want to be interactive, and what they should do. For example, make a menu item clickable, so that it transitions to another page.

Clients can click on any part of your design in order to communicate to you what they like and dislike. This feedback can then be transformed into a to-do list.

InVision App is free to use for one project. Three projects costs $15 per month and unlimited projects costs $25 per month.
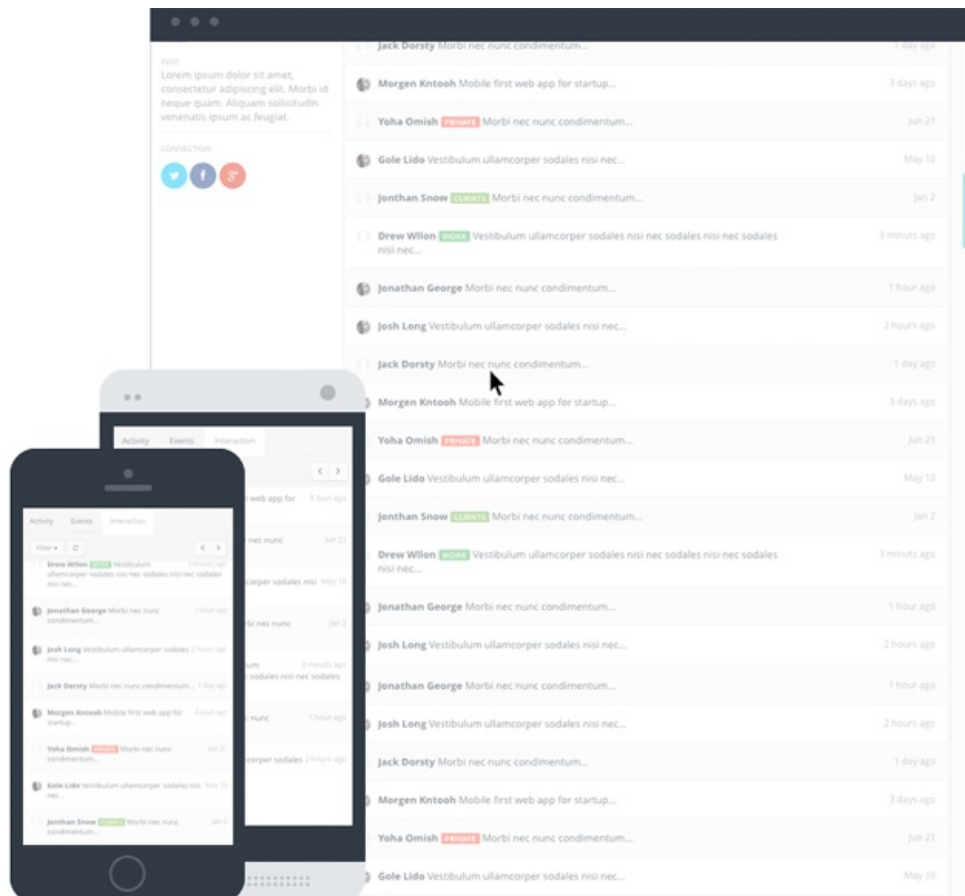
2. Cool Mockups

Cool Mockups has a huge collection of free and premium mockup designs (although they only offer a couple of free designs). Designs are available individually or as collections.

These are Photoshop files that allow you to save a flat screenshot or image to a smart object layer, and it is automatically inserted into the 3D scene.

Prices start at only $5 for a single PSD file. Collections offer much better value. For example, you can purchase a collection of 29 Macbook and iPad mockups for only $11.

At this time, all mockup images feature iPhones, iPads, and Macbooks. Non-Apple devices are yet to be supported.
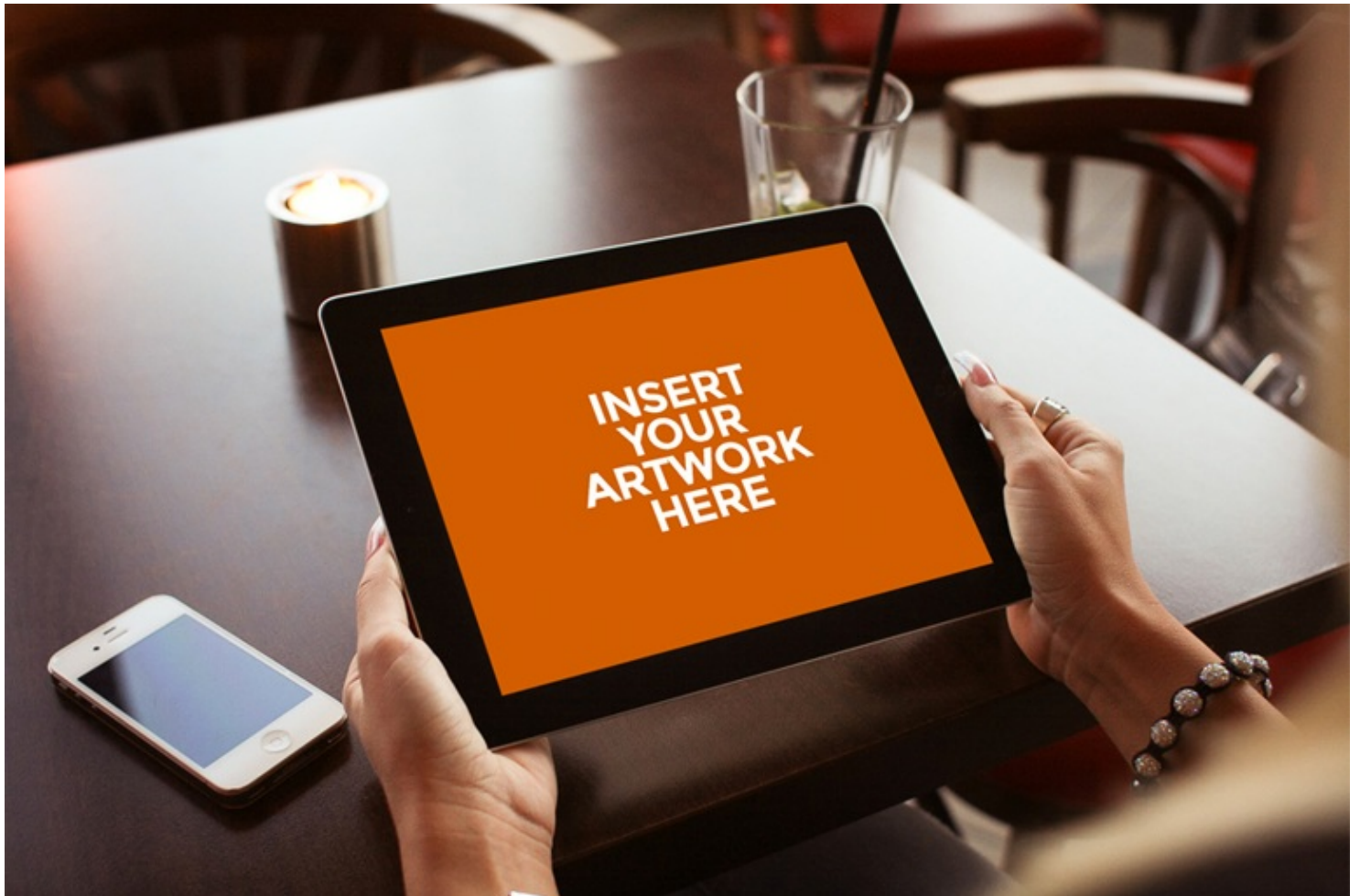
3. PSD Covers

PSD Covers has a good collection of PSD files that can be used to create mockup mobile designs, DVD cases, books, boxes, and more. It also boasts a large tutorial section that explains how you can create mockup designs. Use the tag cloud on the right column to find great mockup designs for mobile devices such as iPads and iPhones.

These are not .psd files, but Photoshop actions. You load the actions into Photoshop, then play the actions to create the base file, add your image, then create the 3D mockup.
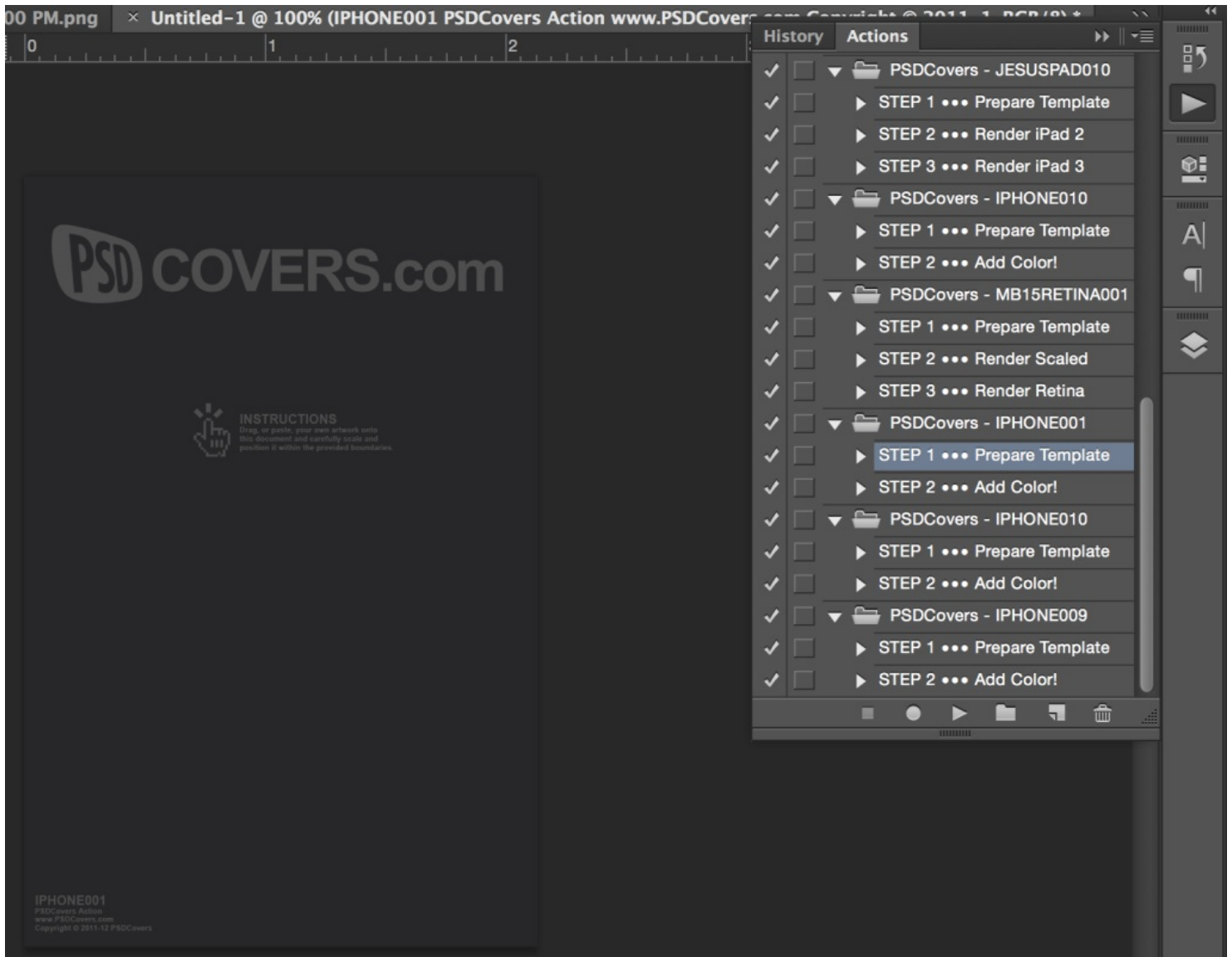
4. Pixeden

Pixeden has a large collection of free and premium user interfaces and mobile app graphic kits. The majority of their resources are geared towards iPhones and iPads.

Their premium membership plan costs only $10 per month, $96 per year, or $72 per year if you opt-in to automatic renewal.
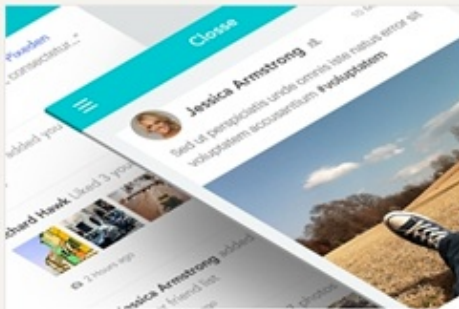
Closse Mobile App UI Kit Psd

Closse is a clean social app UI design theme to help you create your next mobile app layout. You can use…
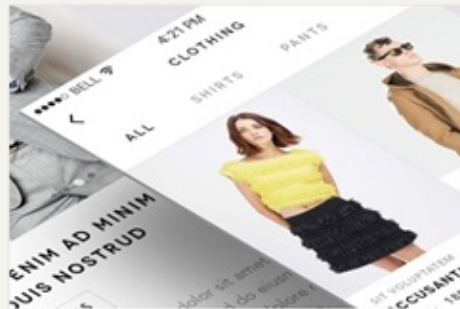
Fabrica Mobile App UI Kit Psd

Fabrica is a fashion mobile app UI design theme to help you create a cloth or e-commerce app. We have created…

Leser Mobile App UI Kit Psd

Leser is a mobile news and blog app UI design theme to help you start your next app project. We have…
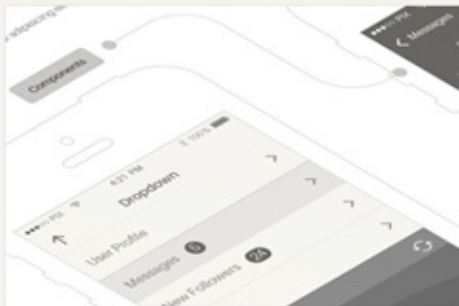
Mobile iOS Wireframe App Stencil v1

This is the first version of a new mobile iOS wireframe stencil kit with a list of typical components such as…
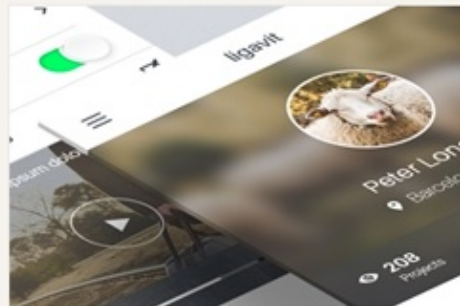
Ligavit iPhone App UI Kit Psd

Ligavit is a social and communication themed mobile app UI design to help your create your next project. Mix and match…
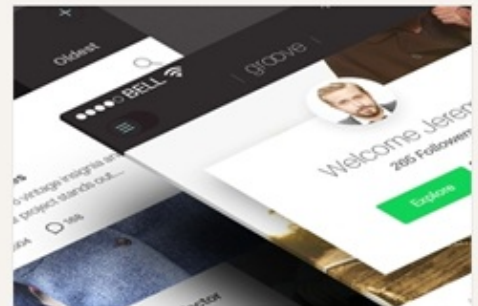
Groove iPhone App UI Kit Psd

Groove is a classic and subtle flat mobile app UI design. You can use the specific custom UI elements to let…

5. MockUPhone

MockUPhone provides a variety of devices for your mockups. Simply choose one, upload your file, and get your mockup.

The interesting thing about this site is that they have harder to find devices such as large TVs, Microsoft Surface, and a good variety of Android devices.
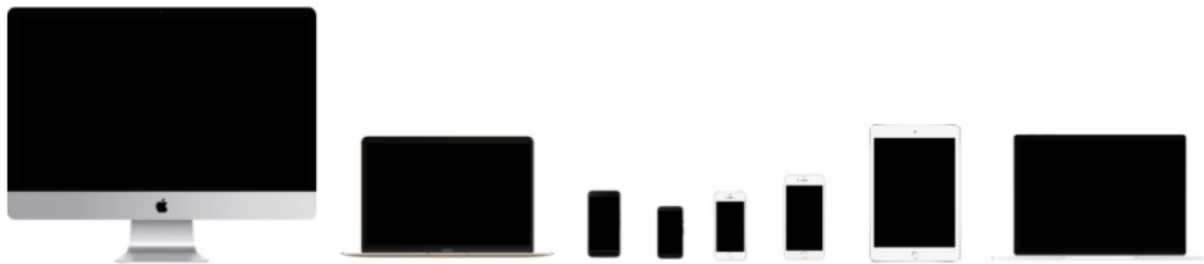
6. Mokk.me

Mokk.me is a free tool that allows you to create mobile app mockups for iPhone, Android, and WebOS. These mockups can be shared and tested on multiple platforms. The code for the HTML, UI CSS, and JavaScript, are provided for use in production.

The interface is very easy to use. All you have to do is drag and drop the fields and elements you want into the mobile interface. Everything can be moved around, configured, or deleted; whether it be text, images, forms, buttons, or maps.
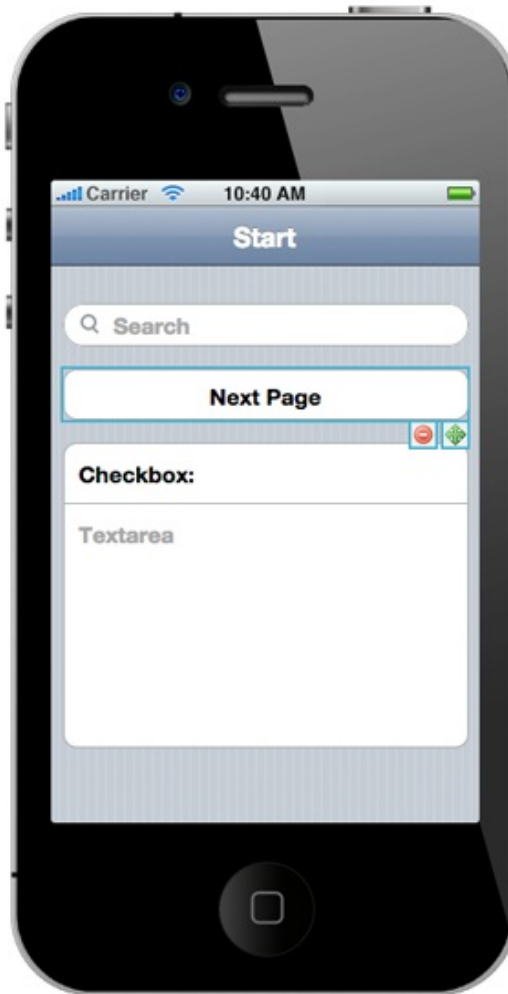
7. NinjaMock

NinjaMock is a service that lets you create wireframe designs for iOS, Android, Windows, and browsers. Mockups can be saved in PDF format and emailed to clients.

The visual editor gives you all the controls you need for creating your mockup. A vector editor lets you create things by freehand. Colleagues and customers can also provide comments about your design via the editor.

The service is free for those of you who want to create three projects for non-commercial use. Unlimited projects costs $10 per month.
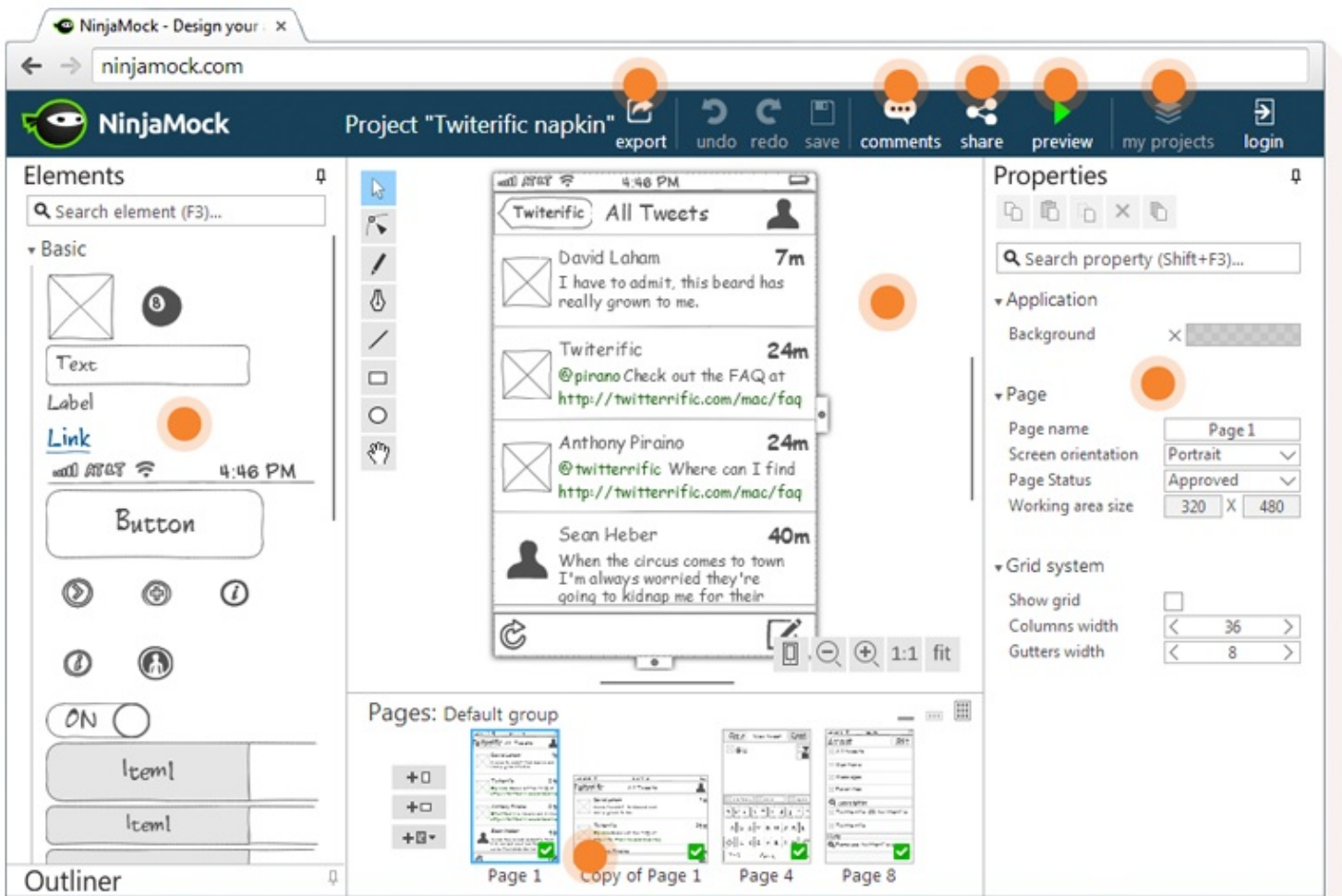
8. Fluid UI

Fluid UI helps you visualize the flow of your mobile app interface. It has a huge collection of 3,500 mobile, tablet, desktop, and wearable widgets. Mockups can be tested on iOS and Android and shared with clients.

The service is free to use for one project and ten pages. Their lite plan costs $12 per month and allows one project, an unlimited number of pages, and ten uploads.

Upgrading to the standard plan at $29 per month allows ten projects and unlimited projects and pages. It also offers additional tools such as project cloning, exports and printing. Their top plan costs $49 per month and has no restrictions on projects or pages.


Windows 8
Windows 8 Flat Controls application demo.

Android 2
Android version 2 controls application demo.

Android ICS
Android 4 UI toolkit controls application tour demo.

iPhone
iPhone controls application demo.

Wireframe
Wireframe controls application demo/

Desktop tutorials
Fluid UI tutorial application demo.

Desktop Settings
Fluid UI settings management application demo.

Raymond Chandler App
Raymond Chandler virtual library application demo.

9. POP App

POP App is a service that was designed to help you present, explain, and share your app ideas.

Mockups can be modified on any kind of device and it integrates perfectly with services such as DropBox.

Two projects and one member are permitted under their free plan. Their basic plan costs $10 per month if paid yearly and offers ten projects and three members. Upgrading to their pro plan at $25 per month allows unlimited projects and team members.
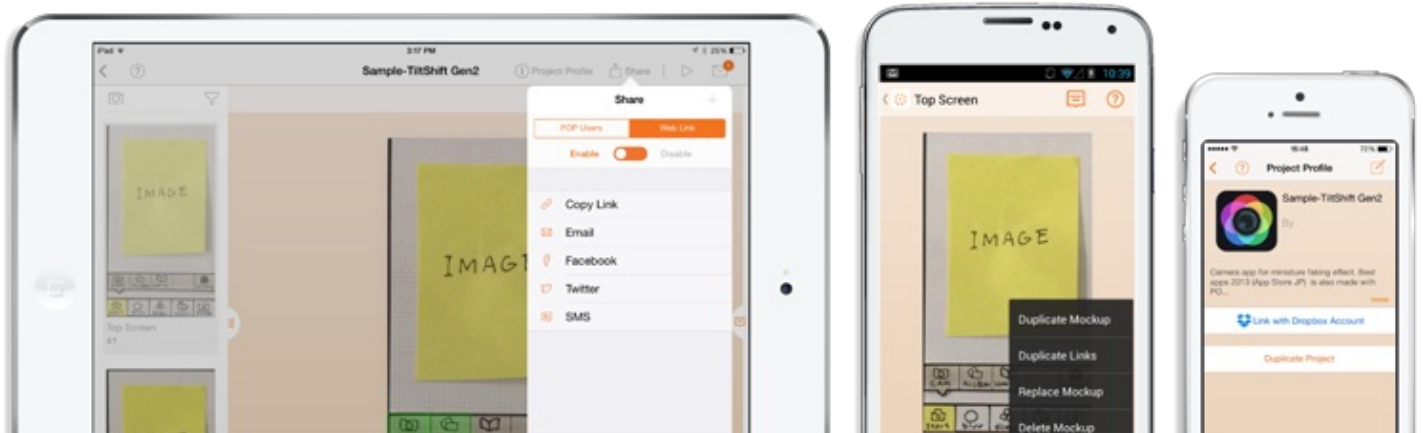
10. The Best Android Lollipop UI Design Kit

UXPin released a fantastic free Android UI kit modestly entitled " The Best Android Lollipop UI Design Kit". With so many mockup services and tools focusing on Apple devices, it's good to see a website offering resources for Android developers.

The kit contains 45 stylish Android Lollipop inspired elements that can be modified in Sketch, Photoshop, and UXPin. A Nexus 5 body, Nexus 6 body, and over 100 icons, are also included with the download file.
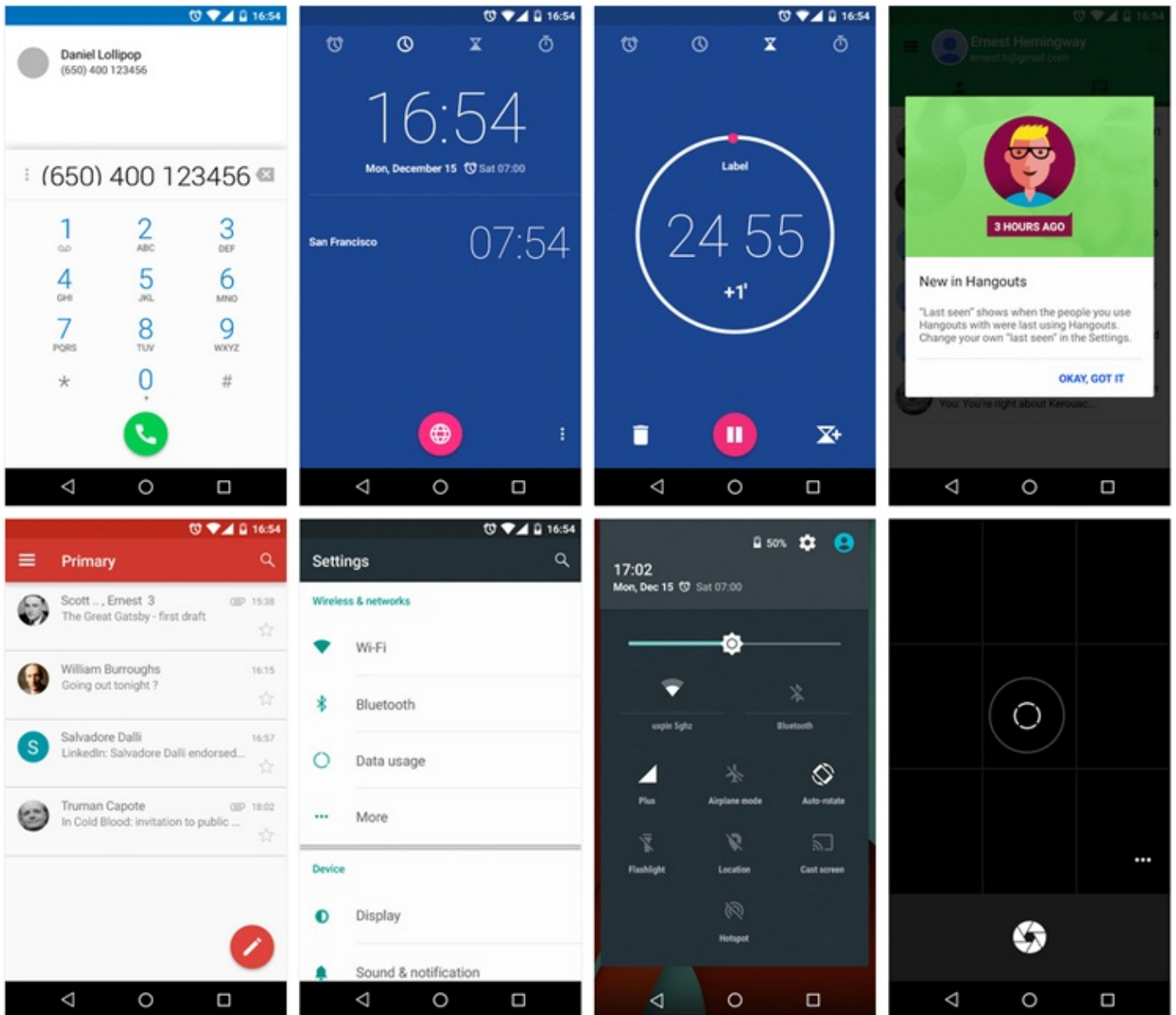
Building The App

If you have successfully proposed the app project to your client, and mocked up the app for them, the next step is to build the app. A great way to build your app is using AppPresser.

If you aren't familiar with AppPresser, it is an app builder that integrates with your existing WordPress website to help you build an app quickly and easily.
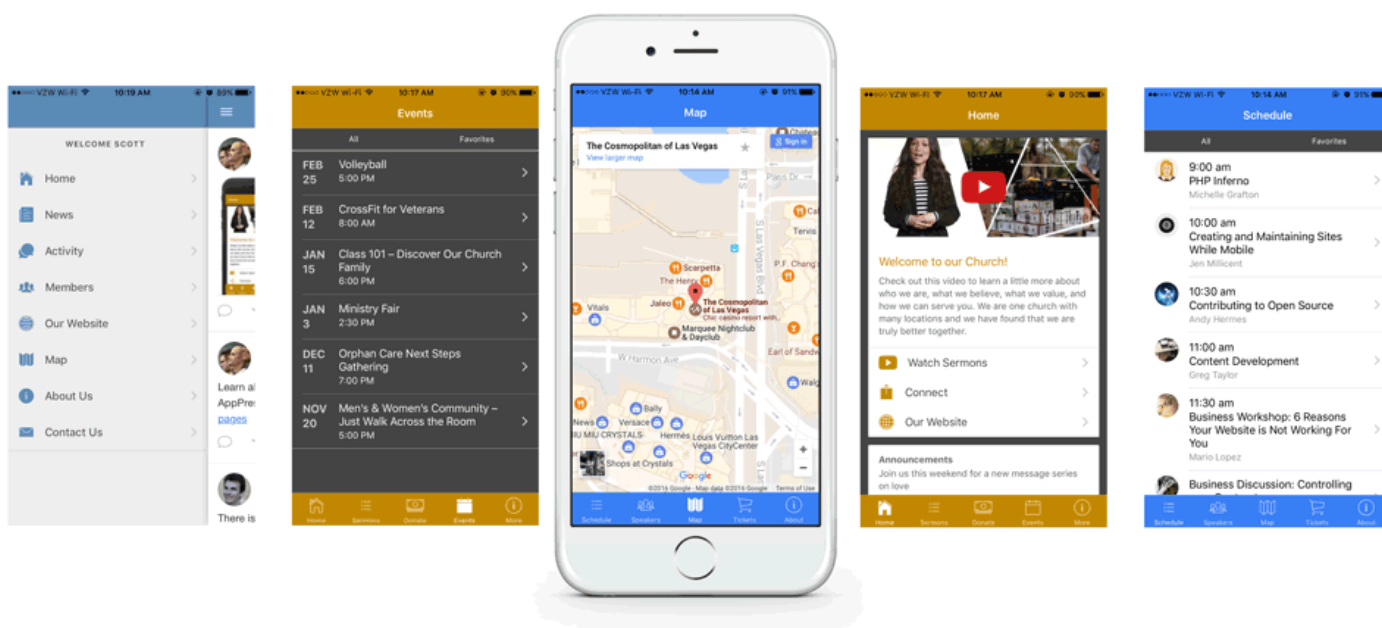

AppPresser includes a cloud based visual app builder, and a set of WordPress plugins and theme.

AppPresser is the best way to create an app that pairs with your WordPress site. AppPresser and your WordPress site go together like wine and steak, copy and paste, Batman and Robin.

Most app builders promise you the world, but let you down when you start talking about WordPress. Custom plugins? Forget about it. They usually just let you use an RSS feed of your blog posts. Who still uses RSS? WP-API FTW!

We know WordPress, and we know the best ways to get your custom content into an app. Custom plugins? Got you covered. WP-API integration? Got that too.

Let's look at a couple features of AppPresser, then I'll give you some resources to get started building your app.
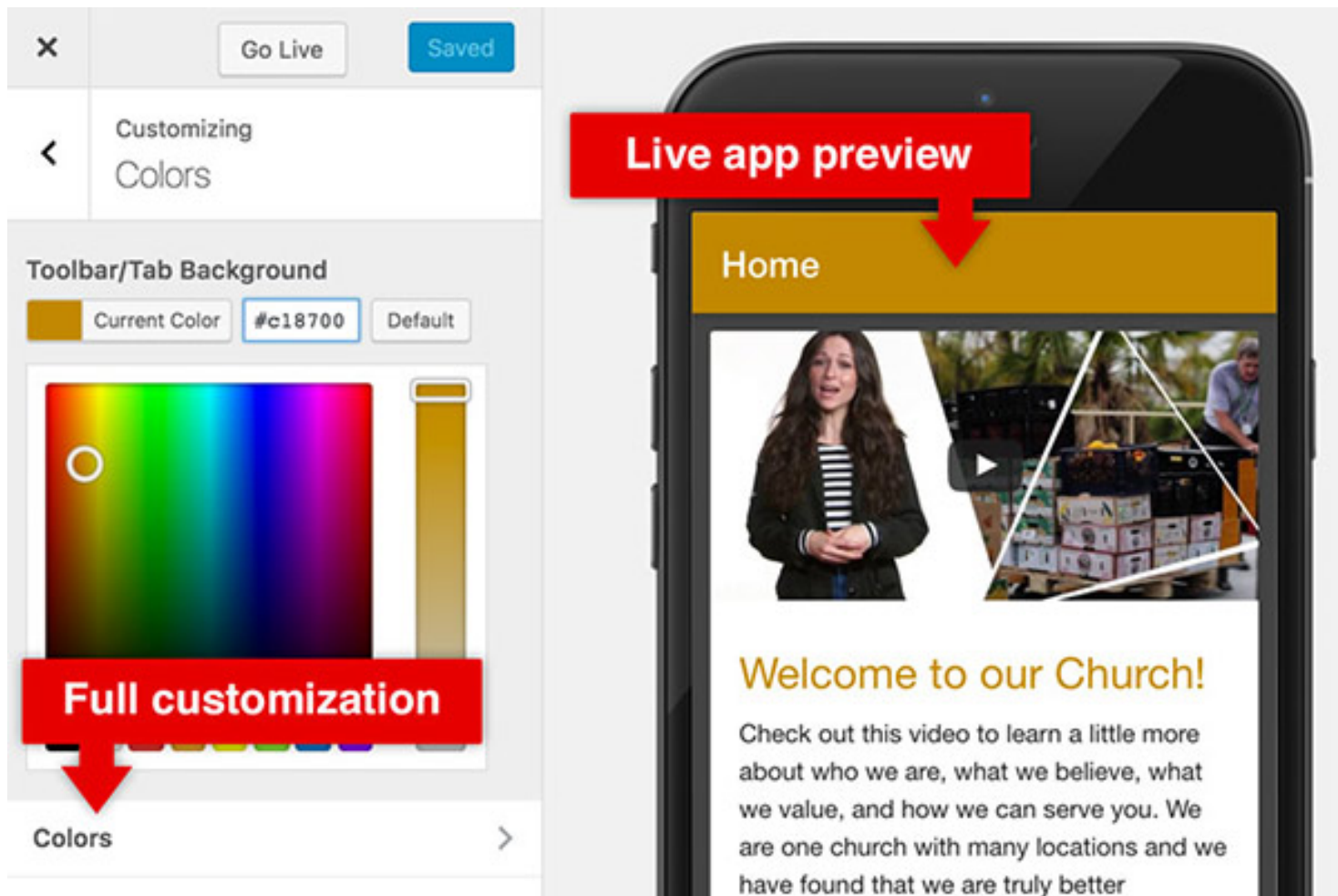
Visual App Builder

AppPresser 3 includes a brand new visual app builder that makes putting your apps together easier than ever before. It's easier to customize and add features to your apps, and get instant visual feedback on how it looks.

The Best WordPress Integration

Other products don't let you use custom plugins and all the features of WordPress in your app.

AppPresser allows you to integrate everything in from WordPress into your app, including posts, pages, login, custom plugins (membership, WooCommerce), payments, media, and more.

This is all done through our plugins and WordPress theme. They work together with your app to integrate your WordPress content better than any other product.

More Features

Other features include offline pages, push notifications, WooCommerce and BuddyPress integration, Geolocation, Facebook login, device camera, and lots more.

To get started building your app, visit https://apppresser.com, or send us an email at support@apppresser.com.