

Entrepreneurs getting good reception with apps

BY PATRICK O'GRADY

pograd@bizjournals.com

Several Valley entrepreneurs are seeking financial opportunities in the form of innovative applications for mobile phones — from discussing food allergies in Italian to protecting kids from predators.

But with free apps dominating the market across Apple Inc.'s iPhone, Google

ONLINE: Rose Law Group develops app to track news about immigration, real estate, solar energy, Arizona politics and employment issues. phoenix.bizjournals.com

Inc.'s Android and Research in Motion's BlackBerry platforms, finding a profitable niche has become increasingly difficult.

"I sense what actually seems to be happening ... is that people are starting to understand that having an app doesn't equal making money,"

said Brad O'Hearne, founder and

lead developer for Big Hill Software LLC in Chandler. "You have to build a profitable business, which that app is a part of, to make it."

SEE APPS | 41

NICHE APPLICATIONS

Mobile phone app developers still are finding unique niches to develop business plans. Here are two examples of apps developed with Valley connections and released in the past month.

YouGotKids

DEVELOPER: Kidproof Child Safety, with U.S. headquarters in Chandler
APP: Stores information about children that can be used by their parents in case of an emergency.

COST: \$1.99

Rx: Freedom to Travel

DEVELOPER: Nikki Natale with Evan Gilbert, Chandler

APP: Helps people with medical conditions traveling in foreign countries to describe their conditions in the local language.

COST: 99 cents

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL



July 30, 2010

PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL
phoenix.bizjournals.com

APPS: Entrepreneur's creation helps map BP oil spill

FROM PAGE 3

Many of the new apps coming from the Valley were designed to be moneymakers. Nikki Natale, a Chandler resident who developed a series of audio books to help people translate medical conditions into foreign languages, is one of the local idea people who are outsourcing app development to programmers.



Natale

Her "Rx: Freedom to Translate" offers foreign-language equivalents of how to tell food servers, for example, what you are allergic to. Natale said she created the audio books to address her own issues when traveling, and her family prompted her to create related apps.

"It was really my dad and my brother who are completely obsessed with the iPhone and the iPad and saw this and thought it would make a great app," she said.

At 99 cents, the translation applications are inexpensive. In Natale's business model, each app translates just one language, like the audio books. Italian and German are available now, and she plans to release other languages.

Natale hired designer Evan Gilbert to build the program based on the audio books.

Coming up with an idea and then finding developers to create the products is becoming more common as the number

Map the Spill

DEVELOPER:

Trimble
Outdoors,
Tempe

APP: Allows users to help document the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico to help scientists track it accurately.

COST: Free

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX
BUSINESS JOURNAL

of apps on the market grows. O'Hearne said he sees parallels in today's app market to the early days of website design.

"I think it is likewise with mobile apps. I think we are still in the gold-rush period, but people are starting to understand that having an app in the App Store doesn't equal a windfall — it might not equal a profit, and it might equal a big loss," he said. "An app is one part of a bigger picture, a profitable business."

Other companies are trying their hand at apps that target other underserved niches. Kidproof Child Safety — based in Surrey, British Columbia, with U.S. headquarters in



Chandler — recently put out its YouGotKids app, which aims to replace those wallet-size photos of kids parents carry in case of emergency.

Samantha Wilson, founder of Kidproof, said the app is aimed at parents who want to keep tabs on their children and ensure their safety. It costs \$1.99.

Other niches are strictly for public service. Trimble Outdoors, which develops software and apps at its Tempe office for Trimble Navigation Ltd. of Sunnyvale, Calif., produced "Map the Spill" to help Gulf Coast residents track the BP oil spill.

The free app feeds into a database where

scientists can access it to find where the oil from the BP well has shown up along Gulf shores, said Rich Rudow, general manager of Trimble Outdoors.

"(Researchers) can't rapidly spin up enough people to deal with this," he said. "This is a way to have the general public involved."



Rudow



Wilson

GET CONNECTED

Big Hill Software LLC: www.bighillsoftware.com
Burrus Research Associates Inc.: www.burrus.com
Trimble Outdoors: www.trimbleoutdoors.com
Kidproof Child Safety: www.kidproofusa.com