

Windows Phone Blog

Crowning the “Big App on Campus”: Meet 4 fantastic student-made apps

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by [Ben Lower](#)

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Four months ago we threw down a challenge to college students around the country: Build a great app for Windows Phone. The incentive? \$15,000 in hard cash and other great prizes.

As you might expect, we got a few takers.

Today I'd like to share the winners with you. Why? Because I think they're great apps worth downloading and because the work done by these students was inspiring—not to mention a ton of fun to be part of!

The “Big App on Campus” contest

My job on Windows Phone is working with students to help them bring their passion and creativity to the platform. Sometimes students already know how to develop apps and they just need some motivation (like a big check). Others are new to building apps and need help and coaching. It's a great gig, and I know firsthand how talented and creative this group can be.

We created the Big App on Campus challenge to tap that ingenuity and see what surprises students would come up with. When we saw the high level of interest in the contest, we dispatched members of the Windows Phone engineering and evangelism teams to 19 college campuses around the country, hosting training sessions on our developer tools and competitive app-building “hackathons.”

We judged each Big App entry by several criteria—Was it innovative and polished? Did it take advantage of unique Windows Phone features like Live Tiles? How many people would likely download or pay for it?—and ultimately narrowed the list to our 10 free and 10 paid favorites. Then we turned it over to the public to decide the 10 finalists, based on downloads and Facebook “Likes” each received.

Last week, we flew finalists to the South by Southwest music festival in Austin for an exclusive concert with four amazing bands: The Canvas Waiting, The Gracious Few, Live, and Candlebox. Finalists also earned a private dinner with the groups, who shared amazing stories about creating music and life on the road.



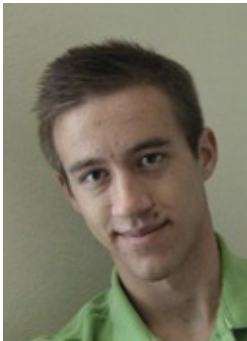


Then I had the pleasure of getting on stage and presenting a big (literally) check to the winners. Two students earned \$15,000 Grand Prizes and the coveted “Big App on Campus” title. The two apps with the most Facebook Likes received \$2,500 People’s Choice awards.

It’s been a fun and inspiring journey, and I’ve enjoyed seeing all the amazing apps students submitted. But enough about me. Here are the winning apps and a few words from their creators about the Big App on Campus experience and what they plan to do with all that cash.

And the winners are...

Power Planner | **Grand Prize**



Andrew Bares of the University of Arizona won a Grand Prize for creating what he calls the “ultimate homework planner,” an app that helps students stay on track with their classes. Windows Phone owners agree: The app has 163 reviews and a 5-star average. \$1.99+free trial

Ninja Fruit | **Grand Prize**



Jeremiah Isaacson of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire earned a \$15,000 Grand Prize for the game Ninja Fruit. You play Green Lime, a citrus warrior seeking revenge on the millions of human ninjas who’ve been slicing and dicing your fellow fruit on a daily basis. Free

ScanBizCards | **People’s Choice**



Chevon Christie of CUNY/Hunter College won a well-deserved People's Choice award for his very handy business card app, which uses the phone camera to scan the info on a card and add it to your contacts. \$6.99+free trial

Baconit | People's Choice



Quinn Damerell of Purdue University also won a People's Choice award for his well-designed Reddit app, which has nearly 1000 ratings and a 5-star average. Free

Winner Q&A

What are your 5 favorite apps?

Chevon: [Snowball Assault](#), [People Hub](#), [Twitter](#), [TouchDevelop](#), and [My Travel Buddy](#).

Andrew: [Kleio Flashcards](#), [AppTracker](#), [Pageonce Money & Bills](#), [MyAuto](#), and [Yelp](#).

Quinn: [Baconit](#), [Carbon](#), [4th & Mayor](#), [Fuse](#), [Messaging Hub](#)

Jeremiah: [Netflix](#), [Ninja Fruit](#), [eBay](#), [Across The Room](#).

What are you going to do with \$15,000?

Andrew: "Repay my parents for all the things they have done for me. After that, I may possibly buy a used motorcycle, or be responsible and invest in some stocks! But hey, motorcycles get 50 MPG, I would call that responsible!"

Jeremiah: "The funds will go to college expenses, to support a great non-profit organization called Kiva.org, to purchasing a new development laptop so that I can continue to develop apps when I am on the go, and a portion will go into savings."

What advice would you give to somebody creating their first Windows Phone app?

Chevon: "Don't wait forever to publish your first app. Just get it out there to get the ball rolling!"

Jeremiah: "Don't be intimidated. Each developer had to start from scratch and the only way to learn is to ask questions and seek answers."

Quinn: "Make it easy for users to give feedback, and when they do, consider it. Users have a lot of great ideas, and often you will find that many users will be suggesting a similar feature in different ways."



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These guys are the cream of the crop! Great work fellas, and please keep it coming... Great things are in store for WP very very soon. A change is amongst us, and many of us are finally going to see what we've been looking for. Thanks to the entire WP Team, and guys like these above, we have this beautiful OS. It truly has been a blessing... Thanks Ben L.

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@Rodney: Please click the Email the editor link above and send me a mail.

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@Rodney: thanks for the feedback & the encouragement!

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@Rodney - you either just got a job, or better yet, A T-SHIRT????!! =)



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