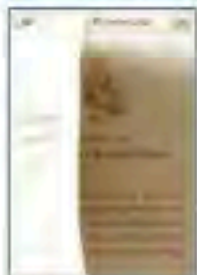


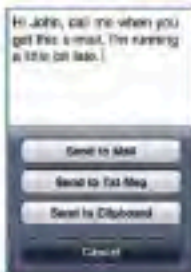
iPhone Life Staff's Favorite Apps**Cindy Downes: My Standouts!**

Choosing the Best Apps for 2009 is a difficult task for me. In nearly every category, I find several that stand out from the crowd. I finally decided to choose the ones that I use the most. Here they are:

BOOKS**Classics**

\$2.99, readstampa.com

I'm not a huge fan of eBooks; I enjoy the visual and tactile experience of reading books. However, the Classics app is changing my opinion. The app includes 23 public domain books available, with "more books coming via free app updates." The graphics are stunning—the available titles appear as beautiful book covers standing in wooden shelves, and the text inside the books is pleasing to the eye. Each book includes a table of contents and a red-ribbon bookmark that makes it easy to find where you left off. Finally, turning the pages is so realistic—I almost believe I'm reading a real book!

BUSINESS**Dragon Dictation**

Free, dragonmobiapps.com

This app easily converts speech to text, making it very handy when I want to create a quick note. Accuracy is about 80 percent, not perfect, but good enough to save a lot of transcribing time.

EDUCATION**Classical Music**

\$0.99, pax-dg.com

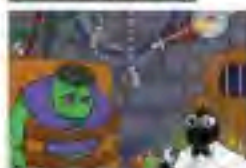
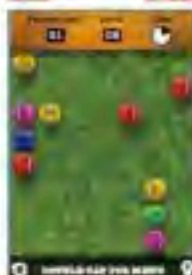
The graphics and animation in Classical Music are exceptional and very nostalgic. After selecting an album, the image of a record moves over to a record player; it begins to spin and the needle arm comes down, simulating the appearance of a real record player.

After listening to one-minute excerpts of classical music from a variety of composers, the app presents information about each piece, as well as biographical information on the composers. You can take a quiz to test your knowledge and even challenge your friends—very fun and educational!

ENTERTAINMENT**MyReef 3D Aquarium**

\$2.99, ixgames.com

MyReef 3D puts a realistic virtual aquarium in your pocket. You can customize it with different fish, backgrounds, and underwater objects. What makes this one of my favorites is the ability to interact with it. I can zoom in on my fish to see them (close up and top on the glass to get their attention [a no-no in a real aquarium]). When I tap on the screen, bits of food float down and my fish swarm after it and gobble it all up—all with realistic sound effects. Best of all, there's no maintenance and my fish never die!

GAMES**Crazy Hamster, Fling, and Hangman**

\$0.99 each, free "Lite" versions available; game-licon.com; crazyhamsterapps.com; fling-mob.com

Crazy Hamster, Fling, and Hangman are my favorite games for 2009. I like Crazy Hamster because the sound effects are entertaining; it's fun trying to keep the hamster from falling in the traps, and the hamsters are darn cute! Fling makes me think, "How DO I get that last fluff!

ball off the board?" Hangman's a favorite because I love word games. It lets me choose easy words, hard words, or words about celebrities, countries and movies. I also enjoy the variety of backgrounds available. For some reason, I find it much more fun to save a turkey or a snowman from the gillows.

HEALTHCARE & FITNESS



Weight Watchers Mobile

Free; weightwatchers.com

The app makes it easy to track Weight Watcher points on my iPhone using the same tools found on the Weight Watcher Web site. I can track points, calculate the number of points in a particular food or activity, find a meal (very helpful when traveling), view my weight history, try new recipes, or use the Cheat Sheets to discover how many points a particular food is with or without certain ingredients. It also lets me create a shopping list from the featured recipes or find out what I can eat within my point range at local restaurants. The only thing missing is the ability to input my weight each week, but I've been told they're working on that.

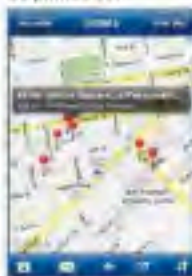
LIFESTYLE

GroceryIQ, AroundMe

\$0.99; groceryiq.com; Free; wsketsoft.com/mobile



GroceryIQ is awesome now that it includes barcode scanning. I simply scan the foods I normally purchase and save them. When I'm ready to shop, I select needed items and move them to my shopping list, which is sorted by store and aisle. This makes it easy to plan shopping trips. GroceryIQ keeps tabs of my bill and offers coupons that can be printed out.



AroundMe lets me find any business I need. I can search for a specific business or business category (restaurant, bank, hospital, post office, etc.). It's easy to use and works with the Maps app to give me directions.

MEDICAL

Merck Manual – Home Edition

\$9.99; gilead.com/apps/merckmanual

The Merck Manual lets me keep a first-aid instruction book with me at all times. I particularly like the Emergencies & Injuries section—if I need to



know how to wrap a sprained ankle or perform the Heimlich maneuver, it provides me with complete instructions and illustrations. Other features include an index of medical definitions, drugs, symptoms, and diseases, as well as topics on various disorders, children's health issues, and women's health issues. I can even email a link to a specific page or mark the page as a favorite for quick access.

MUSIC

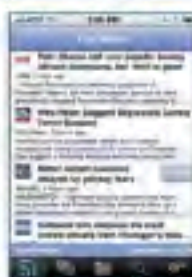


Shazam

Free; shazam.com

Shazam helps me identify music that I hear on the radio, at the mall, or anywhere else. When I hear a song I like, I simply click on "Tag It Now" and hold my iPhone near the source of the music. Shazam identifies the song, provides me with an iTunes "buy" link, and if available, lets me view a music video of the song on YouTube.

NEWS

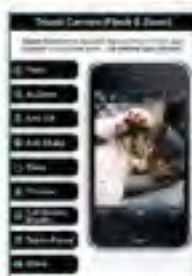


Ruent News Reader

Free; ruentmobile.com

Ruent News gives me the news I want, when I want it. It aggregates news from mobile versions of top online news positions and organizes it into a customizable "mobile newspaper." I can read the Top News or go to specific sections (Business, Sports, Entertainment, etc.). I can save articles to read later or share with friends. And the Search feature allows me to search all the news sources for a specific subject.

PHOTOGRAPHY



Tripod Camera

\$1.99; mktb.co.uk

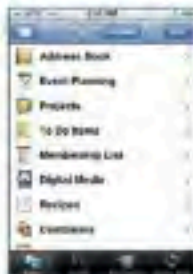
Tripod Camera includes anti-tilt, anti-shake, and tripod-focus (3GS only) features that make all my iPhone photos turn out beautifully. It features a full-screen shutter, so I can click anywhere on the screen to take the photo. No more hunting for that teeny-tiny camera button at the bottom.

of the page). It includes a 4X digital zoom and a fast-saving mode that shortens the processing time by reducing the size of the photo to 640x480 pixels, which is suitable for iVista-e-mail. It also has a timer feature (counts down from 10 seconds) so I can get in the picture. Finally, I can share my favorite photos right from the app via e-mail, Twitter, or Facebook.

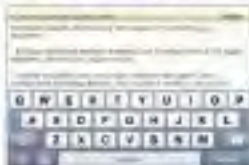
PRODUCTIVITY

Bento, Notebooks.

\$4.99; iappstore.com/products/bentoapp.html—\$5.99—www.ihm.com



Bento keeps track of all my books so I don't buy the same one twice! It allows me to create databases from predesigned templates or design one of my own. By using it with the desktop version of the program, it's easy to input and back-up information.

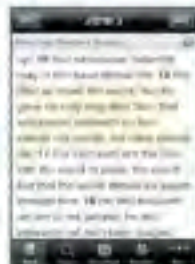


Notebooks allows me to conduct business on-the-go. I can create, save, and send documents in PDF, Word, and other formats right from my iPhone. I can also organize my documents by category and create folders within each category. Best of all, it's simple to use.

REFERENCE

Bible, WordBook, English Dictionary & Thesaurus

Free; www.version.com/mobile/ (iPhone); \$1.99; tmcreative.com



Bible lets me read many versions of the Christian scripture, including versions in foreign languages. It features several reading plans for reading the Bible in a year.



Wordbook is a dictionary and thesaurus all in one! It provides definitions, pronunciations, synonyms, and word origins, as well as links to other related words. It lets me add notes or e-mail information to others, as well as play word games to increase my vocabulary.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Facebook

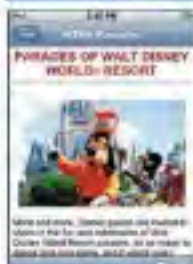
Free; facebook.com

I use Facebook all the time, so this app is my top choice in the Social Networking category. It works just like



the online version, only adjusted in size to fit the iPhone.

TRAVEL

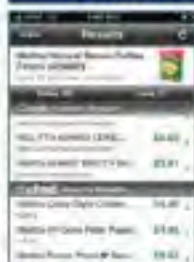


Walt Disney World Guide Nolescost

\$2.99. 5 other versions of this app available for \$0.99 to \$1.99 each; nolescost.com

Planning a visit to Walt Disney World? Don't leave home without downloading Walt Disney World Guide Nolescost. You can use it to plan your vacation and to make reservations. This app provides photos and information on all 118 attractions and includes all four theme parks: Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Animal Kingdom, and Hollywood Studios. Learn what's new since the last time you visited. Find out what events are happening during your visit so you can plan to be there at the right time. Learn how to minimize queue-waiting times and where to take the best photos. The app is self-contained, so you can access all this information and more without an Internet or Wi-Fi connection.

UTILITIES



RedLaser

\$1.99; redlaser.com

I use RedLaser to scan the barcode of an item and then watch as it shows me where I can buy it locally or online at the very best price. I can also use it to create a shopping list or check for reviews on products in which I am interested. RedLaser is a necessity in today's economy.

WEATHER



The Weather Channel Max

\$3.99; free version available; weather.com/mobile/ios/app

I live in Oklahoma, where the weather changes quickly. This app keeps me up to date on the current weather, so I know what to wear, when to travel, and when to hide in the tornado-dwell!