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October 21, 2008 6:39 PM PDT

# App stores shift power balance in mobile market

by [Marguerite Reardon](#)

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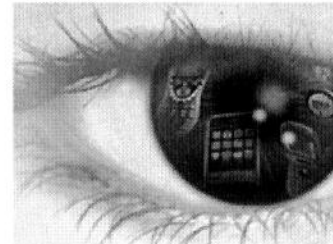
New mobile app stores launched by Apple, Google, and Research In Motion could shift the balance of power in the mobile market away from wireless operators and toward device and platform developers.

Until recently, wireless operators served as the gatekeepers of what content and applications made it onto mobile phones. Now mobile platform developers such as Apple, Google, and Research In Motion are providing marketplaces where consumers can get access to thousands of new applications tailored specifically for each of these device platforms.

On Tuesday, Research In Motion, the maker of the BlackBerry smartphone, became the latest device maker to announce it will offer an application storefront branded specifically for its own operating system.

Earlier this summer, Apple made headlines with the launch of the App Store, an online marketplace of games and other software designed to run on the iPhone and iPod Touch devices.

More than 3,000 applications are currently available, and Apple has said that users downloaded more than 100 million applications between the site's launch on July 11 and the beginning of September.



Google followed with its own application store for phones that use its Android operating system. The first phone, called the G1, will go on sale Wednesday on T-Mobile's network in the U.S. And the on-device application marketplace will also go live with it.

For developers, these new storefronts should make it easier to develop and distribute applications. For consumers, it means more choice in applications. But for operators, it means ceding some control over what applications make it onto their phones to other companies.

"The big picture trend is that mobile carriers are playing less of a central role in the marketing and distribution of individual applications," said Charles Golvin, a principal analyst with Forrester Research. "It's analogous to what happened on the Web. People initially accepted the walled garden of AOL, but as they became more skilled users they found that to be too restrictive."

To a certain extent, wireless operators appear to have accepted the trend. Verizon Wireless, which has developed a new open network initiative to speed up certification of devices and applications running on its network, claims that it is happy to allow new applications and services on its network, since ultimately it will drive network usage.

"We want users to bring any device or application to the network that they want," Eric Reed, vice president, Market Issues and Policy for Verizon, said during a panel discussion at the Consumer Electronics Association Industry Forum in Las Vegas on Tuesday. "That is what our open development initiative is all about."

But it's clear that carriers don't want to give free reign to application developers to put anything on their network. Wireless operators still insist there needs to be certification.

"We also have a responsibility to make sure that these applications and devices don't crash the network or hurt the user experience," Reed added.

That said, Forrester's Golvin believes that wireless carriers see the writing on the wall, and they realize they must be more open to new applications if they hope to drive usage on their networks.

"It's true that the role of the carrier as the key distributor of applications is dissipating," he said. "But the upside is that these same operators still stand to make money on their data plans."

The danger for wireless operators is that by ceding application distribution to handset makers or platform developers, they are essentially making themselves into dumb pipe providers. This is a wireless operator's worst fear and one they have already begun to see play out in the broadband market.

But Reed of Verizon said he still expects wireless consumers to come to Verizon for applications, too.

"There is not a one size fits all solution here," he said. "There will be multiple business models."

RIM has also acknowledged that there will be multiple ways for consumers to get applications. And it will continue to work with its carrier partners to provide on-device application centers that are created by the carriers to help promote application downloads. These centers will allow each carrier to offer a catalog on the device so that customers can discover and download applications.



### **Marguerite Reardon**

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Marguerite Reardon has been a CNET News reporter since 2004, covering cell phone services, broadband, citywide Wi-Fi, the Net neutrality debate, as well as the ongoing consolidation of the phone companies.

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## APP Store Comparison, Apple vs BlackBerry vs Nokia vs Android Shootout



<http://snapvoip.blogspot.com/>

TechRadar did a [App store](#) shootout about a month ago. With All the [App Stores](#) currently running to keep their clients coming back, and staying, do wonders to the stores. But according to the author, the race is a two horse race.

iPhone (Apple App Store) and Android ([Google Android Market](#)) easily being ahead of the other two major stores, Nokia ([Nokia Download](#)) and Blackberry ([blackberry Application Center](#)).

The Apple [app store](#) seem to be doing well and that is where we spend most of the time. (We just got the [iPhone 2.2.1 update](#) and seem do good to the phone, iPhone 3G). Few days ago, I visited Android Market with a [Google Phone \(Android Developer Device\)](#) and seem to be pretty busy with a lot of very good free mobile applications.

I have seen both the Nokia and BlackBerry stores but have not spent much time as the former two. So the [article on techradar](#) was a good read. So go find out how the other [app stores](#) doing!

Tags: [Google Android Market](#), [App store shootout](#), [iPhone](#), [Android Market](#), [BlackBerry](#), [Nokia](#), [Nokia Download](#), [blackberry Application Center](#)

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GIZ EXPLAINS

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# Giz Explains: All The Smartphone Mobile App Stores

John Herrman —



It's been less than a year since Apple launched the iPhone App Store, but now virtually every mobile OS is showcasing its own take on the mobile application storefront. How do they all stack up?

The first thing you'll notice about these efforts—coming from such traditionally competitive companies as Palm, BlackBerry, Nokia and Microsoft—is just how similar they all sound. App World? App Catalog? App Market? Mobile Marketplace? This outward likeness actually runs pretty deep—these stores are advertising uncannily similar feature sets, for both users and developers:

Feature	iPhone App Store	Android App Market	BlackBerry App World	Windows Mobile Marketplace	Palm App Catalog	Nokia Ovi Store
Exclusive App Source	Yes	No	No	No	Hybrid*	No
Paid Apps	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free Apps	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Phone Client	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Desktop Client	Yes	No	No	TBD	TBD	No
Multiple Device Support	No**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (See next item)	Yes
Non-App Content	No	No	No	TBD	No	Yes (Magazines, wallpapers, etc.)
Billing System	iTunes	Google Checkout	PayPal	CC Carrier	TBD	CC Carrier
Return Policy	No	24 Hours	No	24 Hours	TBD	No
Carrier-Specific Stores	No	Yes	No	Yes	TBD	Yes
Developer Share	70%	70%	~60-80%	75%	TBD	70%***
Developer Fee	\$99 One Time	\$25 One Time	\$100 One Time	\$99 Annual	TBD	Free
App Listings	Unlimited	Unlimited	10 for every \$200	5, then \$99 per	TBD	Unlimited
Minimum Hardware Price	\$199	\$199	\$299	TBD	TBD	TBD****
Notable Restrictions	Stock App Distribution, Carrier Demands	Carrier Demands	None	None	None/Various SDK	None

\*BlackBerry has Palm's language regarding the need for all apps to be "signed" where we indicate so  
 \*\*Yes, I am aware of the new iPhone/iPod Touch, but most apps work on all models (with rare exceptions)  
 \*\*\*70% commission on CC payments. If charged to carrier bills, the commission can be significantly less  
 \*\*\*\*Though a \$100k limit on the size, Nokia has made mention of nominal price points below \$100 for some

Although it might not be evident in the feature-by-feature breakdown above, there are two distinct kinds of app store: The primary store, which is the first and *only* source of an OS's apps (see Apple), and the secondary store, which is built around an existing stock of third-party apps, and with preexisting developers in mind (see BlackBerry, Microsoft, and Nokia). It's a combination of these different lineages and divergent policy choices that make the smartphone app store experience so varied.

## Apple's iPhone App Store

At least for now, the App Store is the standard by which all others are judged. Beyond that, it's given us a rough guide for what works. With a \$99 dollar developer's fee and a novice-friendly SDK, the barriers of entry for an iPhone developer are fairly low. Distribution, payments and to a large extent marketing are managed by iTunes, which iPhone owners are necessarily familiar and comfortable with. And, of course, there's the iPhone: This store may only serve one handset (and its very similar nonphone brother), but it's a wildly popular one. This makes the app store uniquely attractive to developers, because it provides access to the largest uniform app-buying market in the world. Microsoft can argue that Windows Mobile 6.5 will connect developers to x gazillion different customers through y zillion different handsets, but this variety is a curse: Handsets have different resolutions, processors, 3D hardware, input types and basic feature sets. A motion-sensing 3D game with a GPS social networking feature won't work on a lot of WinMo handsets, but a 2D, keypad-controlled Asteroids clone won't make a developer rich.

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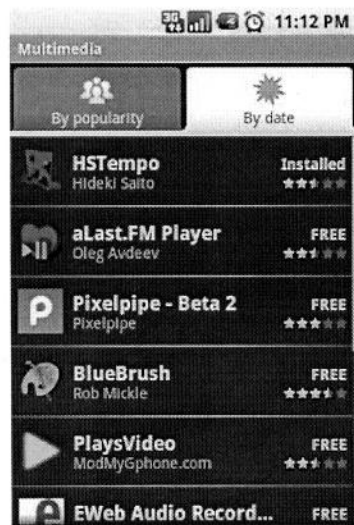
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But the App Store is far from perfect. Apple, like all App Store owners, has the final say in what gets listed, delisted or banned, and they aren't afraid to remind us of this. Along with the typical risque/racist/infringing content prohibitions, Apple enforces strict and often limiting rules against apps that compete with the iPhone's native set—iTunes, Mail.app, Safari to name a few—and apps that their partnered carriers aren't too fond of, i.e video streaming and tethering apps. Now, all these rules are showing signs of loosening with OS 3.0, but as long as the App Store is the sole source of iPhone apps, any rules will seem like too many rules—especially if you're accustomed to a totally unregulated system like Windows Mobile 6.1's. Hence, the gray market.



**Android App Market**

This second major entrant into the app store race represents a consciously different approach than Apple's, but not in that many ways. Immediately, we see a lot to compare: A single-handset userbase (at

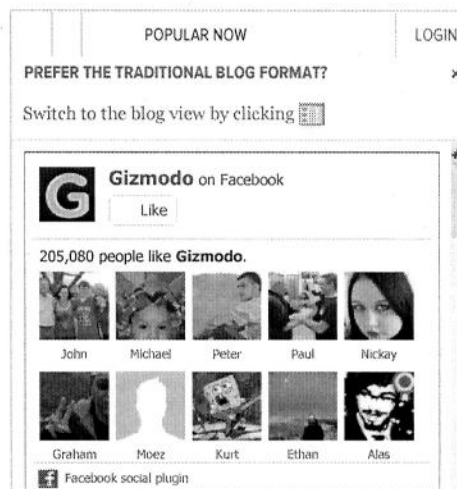
least for now), low costs for developers and a presence as the primary—though not sole—source of apps from Day One.

But the App Market is a different breed than the App Store. Most importantly, it's not the only place you can get apps. Google has been much more lenient about what they allow in their store since the beginning but in the rare case that they *don't* approve of an app, as in the case of tethering apps earlier this month, you can just go download an .APK file and sideload it onto your G1 anyway. This is a healthy middle ground for everyone involved; Google doesn't alienate users by destroying entire categories of apps, but isn't forced to come into conflict with carriers because of overly liberal policies. Google has also made their Market more friendly to consumers, with a no-questions 24-hour return policy.

Great! Then why is the App Market so underwhelming? Well, the G1 wasn't exactly a runaway hit, and the store got off to a slow start. Paid apps weren't made available for months after launch, and when they arrived they didn't benefit from the convenience and familiarity of a storefront like iTunes. Moreover, there's no guarantee that things will change that much in the coming months—more handsets from more manufacturers will boost Android's user numbers, but will lead to the WinMo-style toxic fragmentation that Apple so adamantly avoids.

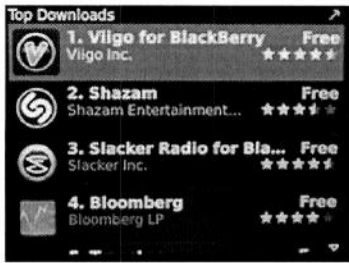
**BlackBerry App World**

Matt took a dive into the newest mobile app store, and found it agreeable, but not spectacular. RIM's is the beginning of this "secondary" app store concept, and it shows: You'll be hard-pressed to find anything here that wasn't previously available elsewhere. It is simply an aggregator for existing applications.



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This was a given, as developers have been cranking out BlackBerry apps for years now. But App World was a great opportunity for RIM to give the lethargic dev community a shot in the arm. Instead of doing that, they've made the store almost *hostile* to would-be app writers.

Listing your wares in App World costs a hefty \$200, which gives you the right to upload 10 apps, but doesn't come with any new SDKs or development

tools. The payment system is PayPal, which is clumsy to use and a pain to set up. A minimum non-free price tier of \$2.99, probably intended to filter out spammy apps and cover PayPal's transaction fees, discourages developers from even *trying* to make simple, useful apps, eliminating the \$.99-to-\$1.99 sweet spot that has been central to Apple's success. App World feels like an afterthought, and a reluctant one. **UPDATE: It should be noted that the 70% dev revenue share figure in the chart is incorrect, and has been update to 80%—a marked advantage over the other stores.**



**Windows Mobile Marketplace**

With Windows Mobile 6.5, Microsoft will introduce the Windows Mobile Marketplace. So far, their announcements have shown an awareness of the pitfalls of both Apple's and RIM's approaches: They're emphasizing non-exclusivity and app approval transparency, a 24-hour return policy and wide device support, but also making sure to get big-name app and game developers on board to ensure that users actually have something *new* to look forward to at launch.

On the developer side, it's a mixed bag. As in every other store, the dev take-home is 70% of each sale, but the listing fees aren't great. \$99 gets you five apps a year, but anything beyond that will cost an additional \$99. I'm sure this will help vaccinate the Marketplace

against the fart app epidemic that Apple has proven so prone to, but it'll do so at the expense of potentially useful free and \$0.99 apps—again, a crucial price range. One important factor that's still TBD is the payment system. Microsoft says they'll support both credit card payments and carrier charges, but hasn't yet said how that'll look. In both cases the process will need to be as seamless as possible.

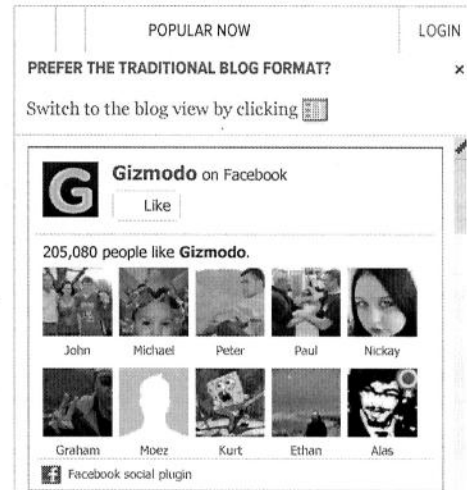
**Nokia Ovi Store**

You probably haven't heard much about this store, set to debut within a month, but it's kind of a big deal for the 40m+ Symbian S40 and S60 users that it'll serve apps to. It's planned to shoehorn into Nokia's new Ovi app suite, which we were introduced to with the XpressMusic 5800, and provide a go-to source for not just apps, but ringtones, wallpapers, and basically everything else that you might have found in a 2001 vintage carrier WAP store.

There has been a decided lack of fanfare surrounding this launch, probably because there just aren't that many Nokia smartphones in the US. But its success or failure will be informative: It will be the most open of all the app stores. For the time being, there is no developer fee, and app listings are free and unlimited. You can easily publish tons of different kinds of content—Flash Lite apps, Java apps, Native S60 apps, multimedia uploads and others—which will be subject to a vetting process that Nokia has assured will be minimal. As Nokia-averse Americans, we can view the Ovi Store as an experiment in *laissez-faire* app-mongering—a multi-handset, mixed-media, unfiltered feed of Symbian content.

**Palm App Catalog**

And finally, we have Palm's App catalog. This is the store we know the least about, but that is already set for a different course than all the others. At launch, the only handset it'll serve will be the Pre—though Palm has indicated that other WebOS handsets are inevitable. It'll be the



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first—and likely exclusive—source of WebOS apps, and developers will be furnished with a solid, though fundamentally limited, SDK.

Palm's still-vague plan for the App Catalog will no doubt be central to the

success or failure of the Pre, but we can make an educated guess at what to expect, assuming that Palm

doesn't get taken over by idiots in the next couple months: Palm will vet the apps thoroughly, provide an in-house payment system, and make development simple and cheap (previewed Mojo SDK apps have shown great promise). The end result will probably look something like the iPhone App Store, but with one *huge* difference: there will be no local natively running apps—the Mojo SDK doesn't provide for that, just for what amount to turbocharged, locally-stored web apps. Granted, these web apps will have privileged access to some of WebOS's core functions, but it's doubtful that high-end gaming, as we've seen on the iPhone, will even be possible on the platform. These limitations (along with WebOS's multitasking advantages) will affect the nature and quality of the apps that are listed in the store much more than the Catalog's policies, though exactly *how*, we'll have to wait and see.

*Still something you still wanna know? Send any questions about app stores, SDKs or the finest in fart-app technology to tips@gizmodo.com, with "Giz Explains" in the subject line.*

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## Comparison of Smartphone App Stores

Last month we pointed to a series of articles and blog posts comparing the various Smartphones currently on the market. Unlike traditional cell phone/Smartphone comparisons, these looked not at the devices themselves but rather at the operating systems and software the devices were running. As the underlying technology has become more uniform, the differences in software have become more significant.

Building on the Smartphone operating system comparison, Gizmodo has now published a comparison of the "app" stores offered for each of the major Smartphones. App stores are the means by which Smartphone users browse, preview, and purchase software to add functionality to their Smartphones. The comparison looks at app stores for the iPhone, Android, BlackBerry, Windows Mobile, Palm, and Nokia (Symbian), and weighs factors like the availability of a mobile client, billing systems, minimum pricing, and restrictions.

Check it out: Giz Explains: All The Smartphone Mobile App Stores

Previously:

- Follow Up on iPhone vs. Android
- Smartphone Comparisons: iPhone 3.0 Versus Android
- iPhone v. BlackBerry Take Two: ABA Journal
- iPhone or BlackBerry?

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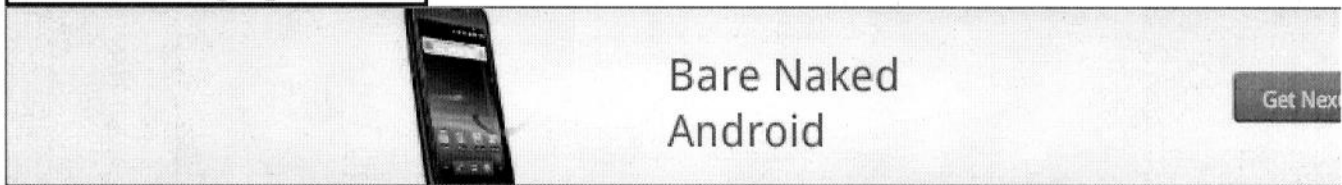
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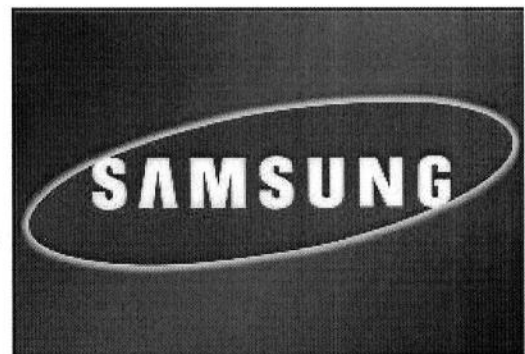
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## Samsung App Store to Arrive Soon?



Everybody who's anybody is developing an App Store of their own. Besides Apple we have RIM, Nokia, T-Mobile, Microsoft, Verizon and Google are or will be ready to offer you a large selection of downloadable content from various application stores.

So what is Samsung doing? Well it looks like Samsung is too very interested in having an app store of its own. The manufacturer is trying out a store in the UK. In the said store you'll find full length movies and an Application Seller Site portal. The portal will allow Symbian and Windows Mobile developers to sell their apps to Samsung customers. The portal will be open in the following weeks as Samsung will launch the Samsung Application Store in Europe this September. Other markets should also get access to the store but that's also to be announced.



In case you're a developer then you should sign up for the new site portal for just \$1. After that you'll be able to start selling apps soon. Now that Samsung has entered this app store frenzy we can't but wonder who's next. Any hints?

via rethink-wireless

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- samsung app store to arrive soon

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## 2 Responses to "Samsung App Store to Arrive Soon?"

1. [Samsung App Store Opens September 14 - Specs, reviews and prices.](#) on [August 31st, 2009 at 11:41 am](#)

[...] and it is only fitting to know that they will be topping all of these releases with their very own App Store. Samsung will be opening its own on-device application store for all its Samsung smartphones this [...]

2. [24mobile Handy Blog für Handys und Handyverträge](#) on [September 5th, 2009 at 5:34 am](#)

**Endlich: Samsung Appstore startet am 14. September...**



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## Samsung Joins the App Store Party

By [Priya Ganapati](#) [✉](#) August 31, 2009 | 1:26 pm | Categories: [Phones](#)



Samsung will be the latest handset maker to get an app store of its own. The company announced plans to introduce a marketplace for games and other applications from developers that will launch Sept. 14.

The app store will initially be available in Europe. And only select models of Samsung phones, including the Omnia and I8910 HD devices can access the app store, says the company.

Samsung is late to the game. Since Apple introduced the iPhone App Store as a centralized clearing house for mobile applications in 2008, app stores have become an important part of the business strategy for most handset makers. BlackBerry manufacturer Research In Motion, Palm and Nokia have all launched app stores this year. Even cellphone carrier Verizon has been courting developers to create programs for its users.

The lack of Samsung's app store's availability in the U.S. is likely to dampen developer interest in its announcement. Earlier this month, the company announced the availability of a mobile widget software developer kit (SDK). The SDK would allow programmers to create widgets for different Samsung phones that use different operating systems, including the company's own version. The company also plans to hold a widget developer camp in San Francisco from September 11-13.

For Samsung, that may not be enough to woo developers away from Apple, Palm and Android.

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1sweetgirl

Seems as though app's are the way to go in '09! Even smaller websites have started some sort of API for app developers, its a little ridiculous if you ask me, but hey, each to their own. Maybe I should start an app store for my barney party supplies website, any Barney app developers out there? lol

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