

# /dev/random

## Apps for Saps

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Ahoy, Social Medians: new smartphone apps for 2012 are now available from the prestigious (and yet wholly fictional) Ferrell Institute for Technology Sarcasm (FITS). We here at FITS are always on the lookout for new ways to mock you and your ridiculous addiction to being connected twenty-four hours a day to people you don't really even know or like that much.

N.B.: I don't use apps on my phone (it has moments of feigned cleverness, but I wouldn't really call it "smart"), and I don't track the app development community. If one or more of these actually exists, my apologies to—and concern for the mental health of—the developer(s), along with my deepest sympathy for our species. All we can do at this point, it seems to me, is to keep it comfortable, give it plenty of fluids, and hope it gets better.

**Splat:** When this app is activated and the user points the smartphone's camera at an offending pest of the insect/arachnid variety, a reticle appears on the screen. The user positions the phone above the pest until the reticle turns red and then smashes that sucker with the phone. Splat probably voids your warranty, but is that too high a price to pay for one less vermin-carrying, blood-sucking mosquito in the world? I think not, so long as it's your phone, not mine.

**Power Play:** The phone emits a high, piercing noise when the battery level reaches 10%. When the noise stops, either the battery is dead or some irritated passers-by have clubbed you unconscious with their iPads.

**Text Wrex:** Combined with selected elements from Google's Self-Driving Car, this app detects when you are sending text messages from the driver's seat and immediately steers the vehicle into the nearest stationary object. A real time-saver that gets you off the road quickly.

**Dork-B-Gone:** Using voice actuation, this app detects when you are making a verbal ass of yourself at parties and gives you increasingly potent electric shocks until you change the subject or shut up entirely. May require optional external battery pack or small portable generator for some users.

**Flatline:** Monitors your vital signs and, in case of cessation (see "Dork-B-Gone," for example), sends text messages to people you've indicated are in your will to let them know they can come pick up your stuff now.

**What's-Her-Name:** Stores photos of people you've met and then when you casually bring the phone up as though you're reading a text, uses facial recognition

software to match the person's face to that database and tell you his or her name in large letters. Don't forget to turn off the speaker, though.

**Andy C-app:** Phones your spouse with a pre-recorded excuse (thought up and created while you were sober and nominally rational) as to why you're going to be late getting home tonight. Excuse can be selected from a menu or, if you're too far into your cups to summon that level of manual dexterity, just have one of your more sober friends (designated dialer) select "shuffle."

**The Rockin' Butt Dialer:** Allows the user to call up to four speed-dial numbers by wriggling their posterior in a certain manner. Often referred to as the "Ants in the Pants" app. Not advisable for use on board aircraft.

**Domestic Tranquility:** Allows the user to designate numbers, texts, and photos as private, so that when the Significant Other picks up the phone and scrolls through it without entering the secret "full access" code first, none of those entries are visible. Also comes with a non-functional "decoy" secret code that gives the impression of unlocking the hidden files, but actually does nothing, in order to throw off more tech-savvy SOs. An optional add-on module is available that routes an incoming call from one of the private numbers directly to voice mail while playing a pre-recorded donation solicitation message (voice or text) on the receiving end if the secret code is not entered before answering.

**App-athy.** Doesn't do anything at all but register itself as an app. For people who are tired of being labeled Luddites because they don't have any apps on their phone.

**Occupy Yourself:** This is an app that refuses to let you use the phone until a set list of demands is met. Usually they entail taking the day off, buying yourself something nice, and cheating on your diet. At random times it may insist you break a window or set a trash barrel on fire, but what's a protest without a little property damage?

**Angry Nerds:** Customizable geek avatars fling large sacks of cash at flimsy structures containing the fast-food workers, janitorial personnel, and used car salesmen who taunted them incessantly in high school.

**Virtual Vengeance:** Lets you take a photo of a vehicle whose driver has cut you off or committed some other unforgiveable offense in traffic and then obliterate it repeatedly in a variety of creative and violent ways. Sociopathic, but cathartic.

**Super Walkie-Talkie:** A third-party company assigns you a unique series of integers. You share this sequence with your friends. When they enter this secret number on their keypad, it establishes a walkie-talkie connection to you. Best of all, you don't even have to press a "talk" button every time: the app does that for you. It works over surprisingly long distances (up to 12,450 miles under certain conditions).

Next up from FITS R&D: a new FB plugin called RedFace. It selects a rumor, accusation, or sordid confession from our extensive database and posts it from your account to a random selection of your friends. Then you get to spend the next few days/weeks denying it and doing damage control. A great way to get to know your online acquaintances much better.

If you have suggestions for apps you'd like to see developed by our team of part-time programmers here at FITS, write them on the back of a stained napkin, crumple it up, and drop it in the nearest dumpster. That's where we get all of our ideas.