



Mobile Apps Designed For Community Oriented Policing

(Considerations for including a mobile app as a communication tool)

Today, more than ever, it is important to stay connected with your community in ways that meet their needs. Two specific technologies have significantly altered how and where people receive and send information.

The first technology is the Internet.

The second technology is the development and adoption of mobile devices. **Mobile devices have unchained people from their desktop computer and provided unparalleled access to information on demand from virtually anywhere.** In January 2014 access to the Internet from mobile devices surpassed that from desktop computers for the first time and the gap is steadily growing.

What does this mean for you and your community? When the majority of Internet access and communication is occurring on mobile devices, **agencies need to include mobile technology in their community oriented policing.** A mobile app's ability to publish and receive information and push important notifications to mobile devices immediately has evolved into a reliable technology. Allowing people to respond directly using an app to connect with your department gives real meaning to when people see something, they should say something.

Once you decide that using a mobile app could be part of your communication strategy, what are the elements that must be considered before moving ahead with such a project?

Considerations

The first consideration is cost. Building a custom mobile app is rather costly. The general consensus is that custom apps typically cost anywhere from \$15,000 to \$80,000, depending on the complexity of the project and the number of design modifications that take place during the course of the project.

The second consideration is time to completion. Naturally, this will depend on the complexity of the design and the capabilities of the app developer. Typically this can run from a few months to as long as ten months.

The third consideration is the time to train staff in the use of the app and the ongoing cost to operate and maintain the app and database. The inability to keep the app up-to-date in real time may be an obstacle to adoption as well. There is no point in having an app if you cannot use it to respond quickly whenever you want to add content or communicate with your audience with news or an urgent issue. Furthermore, if the design of the app is such that only the developer can maintain it, the ongoing

expense will be prohibitive. An app's content flexibility, an agency's functionality requirements, ease of use for updating the app with content, client control of how an app presents information and ongoing cost of maintenance are critical to the success of the project.

The fourth consideration is how to build a mobile app that works on the two device platforms – Android and Apple iOS. Because the goal when building mobile apps is to communicate with your community and varied audiences, you must consider how you will do that on the major mobility platforms. This can increase the cost of development significantly.

As you can see, **these four considerations create barriers to adopting a mobile app strategy that cannot be overcome for many agencies and organizations.** So it would seem that only large or well-financed agencies can afford mobile apps. In a world where technological advances should equalize the use of technology, we felt that agencies of all sizes should have the opportunity to use mobile app technology in their communication outreach programs. **So we at LogicTree IT Solutions decided to do something about that.**

An Alternative Approach

The LogicTree IT Team examined these four major considerations for mobile apps and undertook a mission to deal with all of them. This has led to a major breakthrough in the way mobile apps are delivered, with minimal time required for training and operation, and available on the two mobile platforms for one affordable price. **The USPDhub system is the culmination of two years of development and testing and a year of multiple client beta use.**

What is the USPDhub? It is really three things. **First it is a platform for the creation and maintenance of custom mobile apps. Second, it is a delivery platform that enables us to provide mobile apps as a hosted service published in the two mobile app stores. And third, it is a communication platform that enables and encourages the flow of information between an agency and its community, including the ability to push crucial notifications.**

By creating a single system that delivers all of these functions we are able to achieve some truly incredible cost savings while providing a framework for the delivery of a customizable mobile app that is published in the app stores with your organization's name and branding. The base design of the app has been crafted to deliver a modern, easy to use interface that can be customized to provide the look and feel that you desire and allow you to control how information is presented.

A major feature of our USPDhub is the ability to submit the initial base design to the app stores for publication in about four business days; the app store publication time runs typically two to four weeks. During the App Store publication period your staff has ample time to learn the system and input content on the app for the day it goes live in the app stores.

The **USPDhub** system was specifically designed for law enforcement and public safety agencies by listening to their feedback and designing the functionality to manage those requests.

We believe one of the biggest deficiencies of typical mobile apps is the lack of quick and efficient two-way communication via the app. We designed the platform specifically to make those kinds of interactions possible. This takes the concept of staying connected with your community to a completely new level.

The HUB system has an intuitive management dashboard that is easy to learn and simple to use. Anyone with entry-level computer skills can manage access to the app and the content that can be posted both publically and privately. The system has **many time-saving features** built into it such as options to automatically post app content to your website and social media sites. The USPDhub system is a platform that makes mobile apps affordable for agencies that want and need to stay connected with people in an increasingly mobile world.

The Next Step

If you believe that a mobile app can make a difference for your department, we are ready to get you up and running quickly and easily. For more information and access to informative videos, just call or send an email request and we will be delighted to discover what you want to accomplish with a mobile app and show you how we can deliver the tools to do so.



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