

Technology is all around us. No one is surprised by this any more. It is a vital part of what we do and how we do it, in the entertainment industry. If you stop for a moment to get some sleep, a new program or type of light will have just been invented overnight. And with the introduction of high tech telephones like the iPhone, a whole new group of technical toys are now available to you.

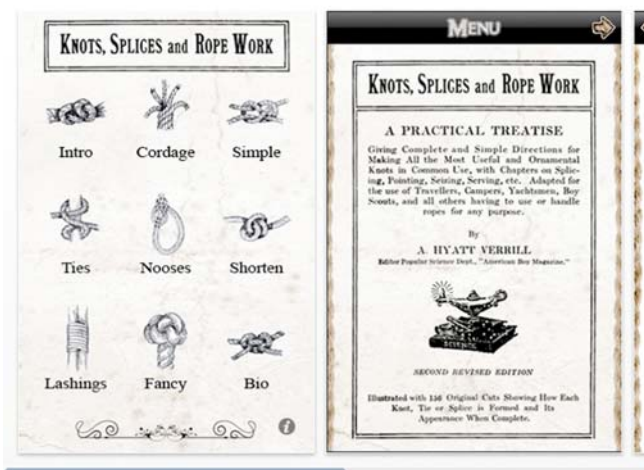
I am talking about the advent of the Apps or application programs that are now available for the iTouch and iPhone. Many are games like Blackjack and Solitaire. Some are programs that assist you in scheduling your day or week. Others are just silly, like the paper toss game or the app that turns your iPhone into a flashlight and uses your batteries incredibly fast.

I have no doubt that other telephone manufacturers will start to offer their software to programmers so that Apps can be written for them as well. And if these programs are found to be useful to the general public, at some point in the future there will be a standard method used to create Apps so they can be used in many different types of telephones. Just like there are programs that work in either a Mac or a PC, I see a time in the future when programs will be written that will work in any phone.

There are many useful Apps that a serious designer or technician should consider having on their phone. If you are a lighting designer there is an App from Rosco called “iGobo” which contains all their gobos. This will make it easier for you to show the pattern you imagine using to your director as you describe to him your ideas for lighting his next show. Within this App you can also compare two different gobo patterns or keep a listing of your favorite patterns, all from within your iPhone.



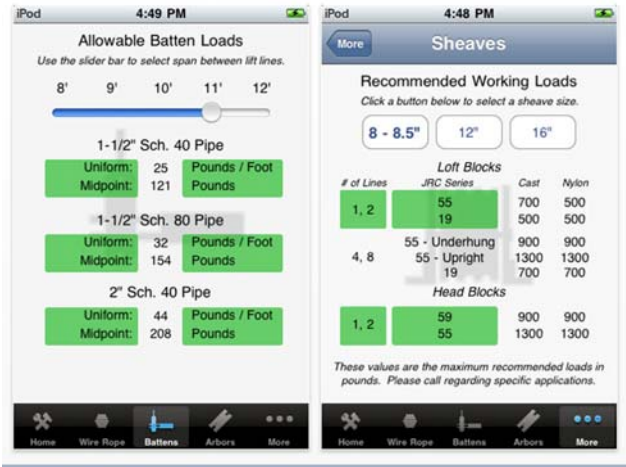
Screenshots



If you are a technician or rigger there are a few Apps that you will want to have. The first is a book that shows you how to make many common types of knots. It is called, “Knots, Splices and Rope Work”. (Photo2) The second is a program from J.R. Clancy called iRigging. (Photo3) It is a reference guide for riggers. You can find out the weight capacity of wire rope sizes and the average breaking strength of manila rope of different sizes. This program is

available in both English and Metric versions.

There is also an App that a modern electrician will want to try out. It is a remote control for the Grand MA lighting desk. Personally, I can't wait to try this one. I just have to find someone who will give me some time to play (I mean "practice") with this App to see how well it works.



Screenshots



Wybron has an App called "Moiré Gobo Library" that contains 3,300 gobos from APOLLO, GAM, INLIGHT, and LEE. Certainly it will be much easier to search for the perfect gobo on your telephone than looking through all the paper flyers that we all have been given by manufacturers. And you won't misplace these files either because your

telephone is always with you. Wybron also has an App that contains all the gell colors from Lee, Rosco, GAM and Apollo gels, showing a preview of the gel and a graph for the transmission of light through each.

Screenshots





Zinman Software has several Apps for the LD or electrician. One of them is the “ML Finder Pro”. It contains a complete list of parameters and channel assignments for over 500 lights, LEDs and media servers. Another App is called “GelCalc” which allows you to work

out the number of sheets of gel needed for your lighting design, best cutting direction and most frames per sheet. This is a nice one to have especially if you have not yet purchased your copy of Lightwright 5 which does this automatically as you are designing your show. (See my April 2009 article for complete details.)

ETC, manufacturer of many lighting desks for TV and theatre has created an App called “iRFR” which can control the Eos, Ion, Element, Congo® and Congo jr consoles.

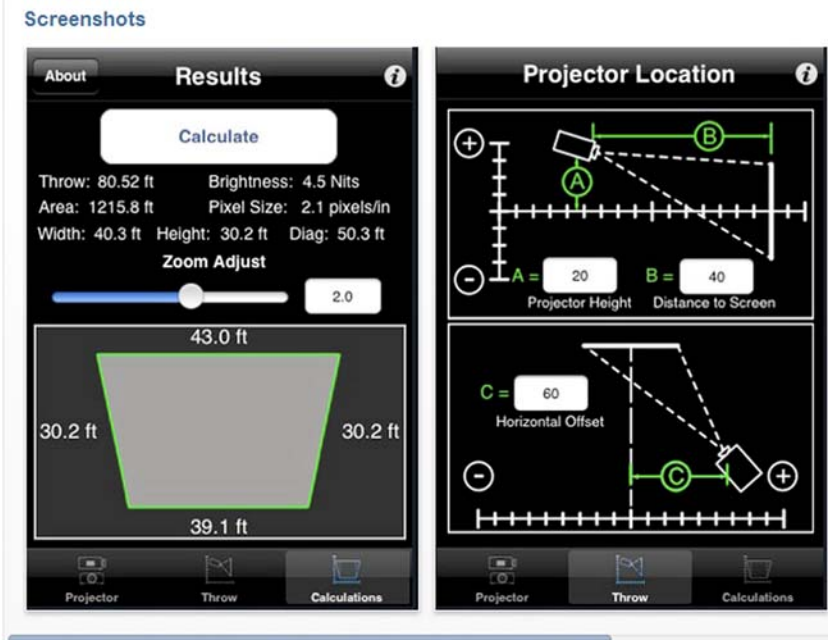


Strand Lighting also has an App to control their lighting desk but, as they explain it, “it still a work in progress, so there are still quite a few annoyances ...”. The fact that this is another new area of programming will mean that we will all find small problems in these Apps from time to time. But maybe they are just “undocumented features” and not true programming errors.

There are Apps for audio people like “ProRemote” which allows you to remotely view & control Apple's ProTools, Apple Logic, Ableton Live & Soundtrack Pro. The only problem I see with this App is that the price is very high. But what is remote control worth to you? “ProRemote” is just under US\$ 200,00. Other Apps to try come from Studio Six Digital which created an FFT analyser, a signal generator, and a loudspeaker polarity checker. But these will only work on the iPhone because the iTouch does not contain a microphone.

And I just found an App for the Video projectionist called “ProjectorCalc” which will determine the size of a projected image, by entering variables like the distance from screen and the size of the lens you will use. It can also estimate the amount of keystone that will result.

The programmers have not forgotten the high technology carpenter either. There is an App available from Stanley (they manufacture tape measures, levels and other carpentry tools) which can assist you to hang a picture on a wall or to see if the frame of your door is really at 90°. And there is one other App called “Bolt & Nut” that is the must have tool for the stagehand with a wrench! It is designed to allow you to quickly determine the wrench size needed for a bolt or nut by using an onscreen full scale image.



There are a number of Apps which allow remote access to your PC, Mac or Linux machine directly from your iTouch or iPhone. They include; “Mocha VNC” (Free or \$5.99); “WinAdmin” (\$9.99); “PT Pocket Office” (\$5.99); “Remote Tap” (\$8.99); “TouchPad Elete” (\$1.99); “Numpad-Wireless Numeric Keypad” (\$3.99) and “Telekinesis” for the Mac (Free).



Many of these Apps are free and some are relatively inexpensive. The average price of an App seems to be around US\$ 10,00. Because Apps are such a new product line and the technology used in the entertainment industry is growing faster everyday, we should take a look at these again sometime next year to see how rapidly the market has grown. I have no doubts that there will be programs to help you in

ways we cannot even conceive of right now. As of today, because Apple is the only one authorized to sell products for the iPhone or iTouch, all of these Apps can be found by plugging in your Apple device and clicking on the iTunes Store icon.

Authors note: As I was preparing this article, I read a New York Times article called "Firms Selling Apps for Simple Phones" (3Jan2010) which confirmed for me that other cellular phones will have Apps written for them. To my surprise, there are thousands of applications available. While they are not written for the entertainment industry, you may find many useful. Go to www.getjar.com and see if your phone has Apps written for it.

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