ClassACT HR73 Webinar Series

Building an App for Your Nonprofit

PRESENTED BY JOHN NORAN

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About the Presenter

John Noran

- For just over 21 years, John managed outreach activities for one division of a large not-for-profit organization in Washington DC.
  - Conducted in-person training sessions each year for up to 350 school and library staff members per session in many locations around the US
  - Wrote a weekly newsletter distributed to around 60,000 subscribers
  - Managed the development of online tools to assist program applicants
- In the past, John has also managed grants and contracts for a state library, provided accounting services for an economic think tank, taught Western music in Taiwan, and apprenticed as a tracker organ builder, among other assorted occupations

Steps to building an app

- Do some research on apps and gain support within your organization
- Create a list of desired app features
- Find a developer
- Review and edit your features list within your organization and then discuss it with the developer
- Get developer accounts
- Test your app and design a review and update process
- Deploy your app, promote it, and get feedback
- Maintain and update your app as needed

Why build an app?

- Apps have certain advantages over websites
  - Speed – content can load quickly
  - Flexibility – easier for users to personalize, easier for you to send and receive notifications
  - Accessibility – available anywhere a smartphone can get a signal
  - Facility of managing user interactions – create a personal account, choose notification options, register/cancel registration for webinars and other events
  - Slimmed-down content – you can provide access to larger documents, recordings and features through links to your website
    - Note: Collecting donations or registration fees directly through an app involve more programming and bureaucracy; instead, link to your website from the app
  - Greater reach – Younger users more likely to access content by smartphone

Do some research

- Look at other apps for desirable features and good content organization
- Think about your current website
  - How well do your website functions work now?
  - Which could be made more accessible by using an app?
  - Are there new possibilities that an app could handle?
- Start a list of app features you feel are desirable

Gain support

- Write a short description of the advantages of an app and share it with members of your organization

- Have at least one discussion meeting where you go over the advantages of an app, the results of your research, and solicit feedback
  - Pros and cons of getting an app
  - Desirable features
- See if everyone is comfortable with a decision to move forward

Create a features list

▶ Start with your draft list and incorporate any features mentioned or discussed with your colleagues

    ▶ Format your list as a numbered table with several columns

    ▶ Consecutive numbers in first column

    ▶ Short name for each feature in second column

    ▶ Details about the feature in third column – the more details the better

    ▶ Blank columns are for additional details from discussions with your colleagues and with the developer

Find a developer

- Multiple ways to locate a developer
  - Word of mouth – colleagues, friends, business acquaintances
  - Professional networking websites
  - Freelance app developer websites
- Use your features list as a starting point for your discussions with candidates
  - Candidates can use your list to develop a proposal and cost estimate
- Ask for work samples
- Choose the developer who best meets your needs and comfort level
- Sign a contract when you're ready
  - Note: Contracts may include monthly maintenance fees

Get developer accounts

- For your app to be available from both the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store, you or someone in your organization must first fill out an application and be approved for a developer account with Apple and one with Google

- Apple's process includes the following:

  - Your organization must have a D-U-N-S number issued by Dun & Bradstreet (D&B); if you don't already have one, you can get one at **https://www.dnb.com/duns/get-a-duns.html**

  - Your Apple developer account holder must be a "Principal" or "Contact" (usually an officer of the company) and must be prominently featured on your D&B account

  - Someone from Apple will review your application and verify the data you provide with a Principal of record on your D-U-N-S account

- Google is in the process of tightening its requirements to be similar to Apple's

Get developer accounts (cont.)

- Costs:
  - There is no cost to obtain a D-U-N-S number, unless you want expedited service
  - A nonprofit organization can request a waiver of the fee to apply for an Apple Developer Account
  - Google currently charges a modest one-time fee to apply
- Next steps:
  - After your developer accounts have been approved, you permit your developer to create one or more developer accounts to do work on your behalf
  - The developer can start submitting drafts of your app to both Apple and Google for review
- Follow-up: Apple occasionally modifies its agreements or adds other requirements for the Apple Developer Account holder's assent

Build and beta test the app

- Communicate with the developer as work progresses to answer any questions and review draft screens, content and features as needed
    - You may need to solicit feedback from your colleagues for some questions
- When the draft app is ready, the developer can provide a downloadable test version for Apple and Google (Android) users
- Select a small group to test
    - Include at least one tester without much app experience
    - Include both Apple and Android smartphone users
- Verify the work done by the developer is correct based on your features list table that includes all notes
- Go over any issues with the developer and, if appropriate, request fixes

Design an update process

- Plan for customary updates before you deploy the app
  - Examples: adding announcements for upcoming events, deleting or archiving outdated information, website updates, text changes due to program changes
  - This planning step is easy to forget but will become necessary soon after deployment
- Developer may post updates for you as part of monthly maintenance or create a tool for you to perform some or all of these updates yourself
- Verify with the developer whether the app will automatically update a previously downloaded version of the app with a new version
- More substantial changes may involve additional programming work

Deploy, publicize and get feedback

- Work with your developer to determine when your app is ready to go live
- Immediately after deployment, test again to verify that everything is working correctly
- Put together and implement a plan for announcing that the app is available
  - Include a way for users to provide feedback (e.g., an email address)
- Collect and review the feedback received
  - You may or may not decide to implement structural changes to the app
- If structural changes are needed, discuss your thoughts with the developer
  - Changes may or may not be within the scope of your contract

Questions?

▶ To contact the developer we chose, send an email to **classacthr73@gmail.com**, and we will forward your request

 ▶ The developer will contact you

 ▶ Be sure to have your draft features list ready