Top Social Apps That Telco Directors Should Check Out

By Tom Seymour, SRT Communications Board Member

As a rural telco director, first you bought a smartphone and now you have added a tablet computer to your tech arsenal. But are you making the most of all the computing power that you are carrying around? There are thousands of apps to choose from that can help you become a better director, find great telco information, invest better and travel faster.

The last decade has seen an explosion of social networking apps that have been adopted by millions of users all over the world. The trend to be in close communication with others through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Foursquare, a blog and other social networking services has permeated the telco industry and its leadership.

Apps In Action

Aside from the standard apps available on most smartphones and iPads—including the ability to send and receive email and text messages, browse the Web and listen to podcasts—a host of social networking Web applications and mobile phone/iPad apps are available for the iPhone, iPad, Android and Windows mobile devices for enhancing mobile teaching and learning. The following list includes a variety of apps that I recommend for telecom leaders.

Documents to Go (www.dtaviz.com):

This app enables users to view, create, edit and save Microsoft Word and Excel files, as well as view PowerPoint, PDFs and text files. This is a very handy tool to have when traveling, especially if you need to make some last-minute edits before a meeting or conference presentation.

Wikipanion (www.wikipanion.net):

Telco leaders need instant information many times during board meetings and other business meetings; this is the perfect tool for instant information. The free Wikipanion app makes it easy to search, navigate and display Wikipedia entries.

Twitterific (www.dtaviz.com):

Twitter enables its members to send and receive 140-character text messages known as "tweets." The Twitterific app makes it easy to post quick messages and announcements to telco groups while on the go.
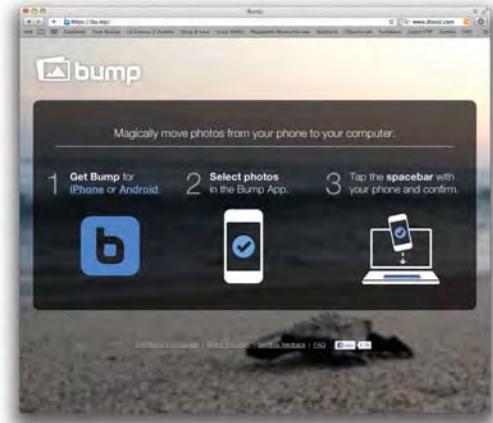
Bump (www.bu.mp):

This free app comes in handy when you meet colleagues at an NTCA conference with whom you want to exchange contact information. Instead of trading business cards, which are easily lost or misplaced, launch the app and "bump" your mobile phone with the other person's mobile phone to immediately exchange contact information automatically stored in your phone's contacts list.

Unsocial (http://unsocial.mobi/):

Unsocial is a mobile application for conference attendees. Unlike many other social networks, Unsocial is focused on the people you don't know, but should connect with. Unsocial connects you with business professionals in your proximity by enabling you to broadcast information about yourself and your brand, and by displaying nearby professionals who share a common interest. You can connect with other professionals through the messaging feature or call them directly if they share their number.

Keeping Up With Change

With over 200,000 apps available on the iPhone, and thousands of new apps coming for the Android and Windows-based smartphones, the possibilities for integrating social networking applications into your traditional telecom leadership positions seem endless. The convergence of the exponential growth of the social networking phenomenon, coupled with an increase in the use of smartphones and iPad devices and explosion in the availability of Web 2.0 apps, creates unique opportunities for telco leaders to keep up with change.