

## Is Your iPhone Cool Enough?

WHAT YOUR APPS SAY ABOUT YOU. By Paul Keegan

IF YOU'RE STILL RACKING YOUR BRAIN trying to think of pre-meeting small talk—about the weather, say, or The Game—help has arrived. Want to break the ice while demonstrating your coolness? Take it from the trendsetters of Silicon Valley: Show off the latest iPhone app, the stupider the better. There's iLightr, Kazoo, More Cowbell.... "The pecking order gets established before you even sit down," says Bruce Carlisle, CEO of Digital Axle, a marketing company. "Someone showed me Crazy Disco the other day, and it blew me away. Never saw it before. I felt like I'd lost for the day."

Crazy Disco, for those using company-issue BlackBerrys and Treos, features a swirling disco ball and campy music. iLightr is a flickering flame for waving at rock concerts. More Cowbell has a clip of Christopher Walken from the famous *Saturday Night Live* skit croaking, "I gotta have more cowbell!" and a cowbell that clangs when you tap it. But woe to the young entrepreneur hoping to impress VCs with Koi Pond, which shows fish swimming in a pool that ripples when you touch the screen. A former No. 1 bestseller, Koi Pond is now utterly passe and raises troubling questions about what else you are behind the curve on. "If I have a three o'clock meeting," says Carlisle, "I want to check the apps store right before I get into my car."

"We're all *amazed* that people are trying to monetize stupidity," says MacKenzie Smith of Quacon, a Bay Area technology tester, who admits to releasing the fartlike sounds of Kazoo during project meetings. But monetizing stupidity, though certainly a worthy goal, is not easy. While the top ten developers of iPhone apps have reaped about \$9 million of the \$21 million total

Apple has paid out, most are like Aaron Berk, a 37-year-old web developer from Atlanta whose biggest hit so far is "Wooo Button" (press a button and a guy hollers, "Wooo!"). Like many apps, "Wooo Button" is free, so Berk got zip from the 40,000 downloads the first three days of its release. But he charged 99 cents for Disco Ball (a precursor to Crazy Disco), which was downloaded 3,000 times. Since developers get 70% of revenues, Berk stands to earn \$2,100—but so far has only one check, for \$315. "Those two apps were more to get my feet wet," he shrugs, promising that his next app, a financial program, will be more useful. Hard to imagine.



### Top 10 Must-Have iPhone Apps

At presstime; subject to change hourly; strictly nonscientific

#### Title // Price // Developer

#### What it does

<b>Crazy Disco</b> // \$0.99 // Ezone	Disco ball spins to music
<b>iBeer</b> // \$2.99 // Hottrix	Beer drains from screen as you "drink"
<b>iLightr</b> // \$0.99 // Übermind	A "flame" to wave during rock concerts
<b>Kazoo</b> // free // Chudigi Software	Makes silly kazoo noises
<b>Koi Pond</b> // \$0.99 // The Blimp Pilots	Fish swim in pond you ripple by tapping
<b>MixMeister Scratch</b> // free // MixMeister	Deejay beats for impromptu rapping
<b>More Cowbell</b> // free // Maverick Software	Clanks like a cowbell
<b>Rimshot</b> // \$0.99 // Sprikit	Badum, Tssss! and so forth,
<b>Sim Stapler</b> // free // Freeverse, Inc.	Makes a stapler sound. Really.
<b>Wooo Button</b> // free // Aaron Berk	Man's voice yells, "Wooo!"