



SMART MONEY APPS

By Jacob Ansel

IT'S NOT AN UNDERSTATEMENT TO

say we're all addicted to our smart phones, but did you know they can be terrific financial tools to help track what you spend, where you spend, how much money you have, and chart your overall financial picture? There's a growing number of iPhone and Android apps that do a pretty good job helping you to manage your money.

An important app for everyone is a personal banking app which helps you keep track of your spending and income. Download your bank app and log in daily to check debits and deposits. The best way to catch fraud and misuse is to check your account; don't wait until the end of the month to review bank statements.

The app world is gaga about Mint.com – it claims more than 10 million users – which puts all of your financial accounts into one place. The app even puts you on a budget. You enter what you want to spend daily and the program compares your actual spending to your dream budget. Mint.com connects with more than 16,000 financial institutions and supports more than 17 million individual financial accounts. It's a powerful tool to be able to see all of your assets and liabilities instantly on one screen in real time.

It's a smart idea to read about financial markets. *Money* magazine and the Flipboard app that includes CNN Money and Forbes Money are terrific apps to keep you informed of financial news and up-to-the minute alerts. The apps pro-

Americans are pretty bad at managing their finances, but a growing number of apps make it easier to keep tabs on your dollars. Determining the best apps for your needs can be challenging. Our money columnist helps make sense of it.

vide live feeds that allow you to track markets with real-time data which could affect how you react to stock purchases.

Wallaby Financial helps folks get the most out of credit cards by optimizing usage based on individual preferences. Essentially, they help credit card users decide which credit card to use when paying for goods and services, optimizing rewards, credit limits, statement due dates, linked bonuses, and other offers. The company uses a virtual wallet to help track each card to maximize spending, rewards, and cash back. They say they save users \$1,000 a year.

Another must-have app is QuickBooks which is linked to the online version of QuickBooks and allows users to handle all sorts of daily transactions while on the go. Send an invoice, run a credit card, run payroll, manage customers, estimates, invoices, expenses, vendors, payments, and sales receipts right from your mobile device.

The Manilla app sends push notifications to remind you to pay your bills. What sets the app apart is how it displays the account balances of everything from bank and credit card accounts to

your Groupon account or travel rewards programs. You see what you owe or what points you've accrued (and when they expire) from more than 3,500 businesses and services.

For business travelers, Expensify allows you to track spending by keeping a photo log of receipts (which are automatically scanned and input into your expense records). It also imports bank and credit card data from most major providers. If you spend a lot of time in your car, there's a field to input mileage and time spent on the road.

Check – once known as Pageonce – lets you pay bills from your phone, manually or with scheduled automatic payments. It's all tied to a bank or credit card account, which the app also monitors to let you know if your funds are getting low or your credit limit is drawing near.

Dollarbird tracks income and expenditures and shows spending in a color-coded chart, quickly breaking down the data. And if you enter recurring expenses and income, it estimates whether your monthly spending will exceed your budget, giving you the chance to cut back before going into the red.

Would you believe that Facebook and Twitter are smart money apps? It's not unusual today for people to invest in what they know and what their friends like. If a brand is trending on Twitter or has a million likes on Facebook, it's likely that the company may be doing well. As you see trends, analyze what people like and consider buying the stock before it hits the roof in value and stock price.

Smart phone apps can be pretty smart, particularly if you use them to wisely manage your money. □

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