

# Creating and Monetizing Facebook Applications

## Part 1: The Basics

by  
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### **Introduction**

Facebook is the new wave that has revolutionize social networking on the internet. Previously there were freindsters for teenages and myspace for marketer. Facebook now encompasses features for both the young and the old, the new and the experience, and those who're on it for fun and for money.

The major move that allowed facebook to popularize itself is allowing private developers to develop apps. Which essentially mean anyone, anybody with enough programming skills can have their own application.

This has made facebook a much varied and therefore more interesting network than any others.

However, some predict that this move itself would eventually cause the downfall of the social networking site. With hundreds of thousands of applications, facebook sever is already showing some signs of fatigue in taking the load. Furthermore, no one can predict if user fatigue from seeing many copycat copies of the same application will set in.

But till then, facebook remain an interesting and new frontier for internet marketers and people seeking to make money.

### **Facebook Basics**

I've been earning money from facebook apps from over a year now. The concept itself is really simple. The problem lies in the execution. The problem is that facebook applications themselves are a little complicated when it comes to installing and promoting them.. Many developers themselves, despite being experienced programmers themselves, are still confused by facebook apps and their integration into facebook.

To start making money from facebook apps you need to get your own facebook application.

There are 2 ways to do this

### **1) Program your own app.**

This is not too hard to do if you have basic php skills.

Essentially, facebook apps are actually modified php scripts. However, instead of integrating with html, facebook apps use FBML (facebook markup language). This looks similar to HTML except for some changes.

So if you are already able to write your own scripts, take a look at the wiki resources for developers by facebook here

<http://developers.facebook.com/>

### **2) Get someone to do a program for you.**

The wonderful thing is, there are many people who are very adept in doing facebook apps who're willing to do it at an acceptable price. These are freelancers. Mostly students and some are programmers for the developing world.

There are varied experiences with the freelancers. Therefore look very carefully at the feedback by other buyers.

There are many places to find freelancers, but I personally get my freelancers from 2 major players.

a) [Scriptlance](#)

b) [Getafreelancer.com](#)

Personally, I've had better experiences with scriptlance programmers. It seems like there are more professional freelancers at scriptlance and that means more quality work at the right deadline (I must qualify this is a personal opinion).

Tips: Demand a proposal before you start and state a clear deadline. Beware of quotes of extremely low prices, and look at the ratings of previous projects they have worked on.

### **Making money from the app**

Now that you have your own app, there are 3 ways to earn money from your app

1) Sell PPC (Pay per click) advertising.

To see an example, look at one of my facebook apps

You place a PPC advert at a location not too irritating to the users, usually the top or the bottom. And they rest works like all other PPC

Sadly, google and yahoo haven't made their script facebook friendly. So some ppc companies have stepped in to fill the gap.

The 2 that I use are

1) Zohark Ads

2) Apssaholic

Find them in the application section in facebook. Contact me if you can't find them.

## 2) Sell links.

Sometimes, it's easier to sell you links directly to other facebook developers. I've not found a marketplace where there are people actively trading faceook app links. But most of my links are sold for \$5-20 a month. Most of the time, other developers will approach you to add their app link into your app once your app reaches certain popularity. I've had friends who had success selling links in forum too.

## 3) Sell you app.

There comes a point where you might decide to sell your app. People are willing to pay for the potential of your app.

That is a good app, with good programming and a new unique idea ( not those what something are you quiz), your app is sure to fetch a good price.

For example, I developed this app "Who I wanna be" as a completely new app/ new idea. Listed it on facebook, sent it to 20 of my friends and it went viral with more than 500 installs in 1 week.

Knowing that it's a good app, but rather more keen to develop more apps at that time, I put it up for sale and sold it for USD\$ 950. The new owner did well, with some promotional tips and effort in adding more characters, the app grew to more than 3000 users now.

## **Promote you app**

Like all sites, facebook app will only gain you money if there are users. This begets the question on how to gets users. Facebook is mainly a social networking, so a lot of it is viral. Therefore, here are a few tips to make your app go viral

## **Initial Step**

After you've created you app, you need to list it on facebook. Go to your facebook developer app, click on the "list in application directory". To do that, you need at least 5 users who have installed your app. This means you need to make some friends on facebook 1<sup>st</sup>, which is not all that hard. (Contact me if you have problem)

Once it's listed on the application directory, there will be users adding your app by themselves. How many and how fast depends on how attractive you describe you app to be

2) Send the app out to 20 of your friends. This is a good litmus test of how good you app is. If it's a good app, you should get at least ¼ of you friends accepting the app. And the rest is just viral

3) Some people will use the same PPC engines I describe above to promote their app in the initial stage. This is sometime useful because facebook picks up a few “recently popular” apps and highlight them in their directories. This means that your app will be even more popular and the cycle goes on. I’ve not used this myself, but some of my friends just can’t do without it.

The key thing about the success of promoting you app is simple. The idea of your app itself must be viral in nature. Otherwise, it must make people feel that it’s so unique so that people will want to use it when they see it on other users’ profile.

Some apps, particularly the “quiz” apps “forces” users to invite certain number of users before they can view the results of the app. This tends to irk the users. While they do attain certain amount of success in gaining users, the nature of the app is that it’s a use once and that’s it kind of app.

I tend to like to build apps that will be used again and again. This is to ensure active user participation which naturally means it will be promoted by word of mouth. Also, it makes sense since I use pay per click advertising. So the more users use my app, the more chances of them clicking on the app.

An example is “How you feel today app([Click here to take a look](#))”, where users can change their daily emotions. While this is not a unique idea, I give a different sort of smileys which is not typically found by in other apps and users therefore like it.

## Sumamry

I like to make things simple. And it's the same in facebook apps. Most people treat it as a leisure activity, a place to communicate with friends and to have a little fun. So keeping things simple always helps.

Here are a few tips and summary on creating and monetizing facebook apps

- 1) Create you own if you can, if you can't get someone to do it cheaply for you
- 2) Don't copy/clone apps. Create your own ideas or at least, improve on what the current apps have
- 3) Monetize apps by selling PPC or ad spaces
- 4) Keep in mind that you apps will be more popular if it's viral and if it allows users to use it more than once
- 5) Ask for review/ help when you're stuck. It takes a while to start off, but once you're familiar with all the technicalities, it gets easier

## Conclusion

Until now, nearly 1 year going into creating facebook apps, I've sold more than 8 apps between \$300 to \$980. I'm earning an average of \$200+ a month from PPC from my 3 remaining facebook apps. So it's good money, with not too much of an effort. You just need to get started.

I hope this helps with you starting out.

Regards,  
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p.s. Feel free to email me anytime for help/advice/partnership