

# Application Types

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Applications, in the main, are programs created to assist a user in accomplishing certain tasks. Al be it communication, information, entertainment, browsing, data storage, compatibility etc. Applications, more commonly known as 'apps', change the way we use our personal computers and more recently our mobile technologies. Applications function on a level accessible to users. They usually allow for user input via Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs) and can supply feedback to the user in many creative ways, thanks to GUI.

When speaking about applications it is necessary to distinguish between the different types available and how they influence our daily interaction with technology as well as their usefulness in certain situations. There is a list of main application types that basically cover any kind of application most of us come in contact with. Each one of these application types have sub categories. The list includes: Web applications, mobile applications, server application, desktop applications and scripting applications.

A web application is an application that is accessed over the internet or an intranet, according to an article on Wikipedia. Web applications are one of the most popular types of applications. Their versatility as well as platform compatibility makes them extremely useful. Web applications act as thin clients between users and serves. A definition given on Upedu.org defines a thin client as: ' ...usually refer[ing] to a system that runs on a resource-constrained machine or that runs a small operating system. Thin clients don't require local system administration, and they execute Java [etc] applications delivered over the network.' (Glossary, 2011)

This enables many users to use the web application at the same time without needing to download or install anything on their local systems. Companies have embraced this feature of web applications and have started offering their products as web applications. Users pay monthly/yearly fees for the use of these applications and do not have to ever receive any software to install on their local machines. (Software Application, 2012)

Mobile applications have greatly changed how we use mobile technology. It has changed mobile technology from being merely tools for communication into weathermen, banks, newspapers, televisions and much more. Mobile applications have revolutionized modern information sharing and gathering as well as greatly improved mobile communication. Mobile applications such as Opera Mini created a whole new world of mobile web browsing by converting any website into a mobile compatible format. This reduces the overhead as well as removes unnecessary data and compresses information to effectively display on mobile screens. MXIT and WhatsApp are just two of the many instant messaging applications available on mobile technologies. These applications communicate using mobile data infrastructures such as 3G or GPRS. Advances in mobile internet has lead to the development of these useful little applications. Android and tablet PC's have even advanced further than just mobile applications by creating apps similar to those most users use to on their desktops.

Server applications are not usually something that a mainstream user would encounter in his/her everyday technology use. They are seen as the middle-men between browser-based front-ends and the database back-ends. These applications are said to function in a three-tiered system where a web application would be the user interface side, or the first tier, the server application the second tier and a database application as the third tier. They would most likely be used to direct data given by a user on a website form or any other input format to a database application to be stored and recalled. Recalling data in a database also requires server applications to carry the data from the back end to the user interface end. These applications can be seen as the mail boy in a large company carrying mail to and throw from the mail(database) room and the different offices(web applications).

Scripting, or a script, is a sequence of instructions interpreted by a program and then executed by that program and not the computer's processor. Scripting applications are usually code parcels written to be compiled or interpreted by programs such as Python Idle or Pycharm, for instance. Many languages can be seen as mainly scripting. Perl is one of those, for example. Scripting applications can then be interpreted as background code being run by something like a web browser to display and external bit of code's output. (Application Server, 2000)

One of the most common, if not the most, types of applications used every day is desktop applications. These applications basically run the show whilst we are using any computer. Most applications on a computer are operating system defaults, such as Paint for Windows. The sub categories of desktop applications are numerous. They range from utility applications to web browsers and word processors and mail clients. (Palaniswamy, 2009)

Applications are everywhere and must be given a certain respect. They add immense value to services offered on the web as well as by our personal computers. I see applications as the embodiment of modern front-end technological development. Advancements in communication and globalization might not have been achieved without certain applications, especially mobile and web based ones.

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