

Stop Making 0,99€ Apps

Philippe Casgrain



Lightspeed POS

The Lightspeed POS homepage features two main promotional sections side-by-side.

Retail Section: On the left, there's a white background image of two brown leather boots with laces. A small, rectangular yellow tag hangs from the laces of the boot on the left. Below this image is a red button with the text "For Retailers".

Restaurant Section: On the right, there's a dark grey background image of a black rectangular plate filled with a colorful salad containing shrimp, shredded carrots, and cucumbers. A pair of red chopsticks lies next to the plate. Below this image is a red button with the text "For Restaurants".

At the top left of the page is the Lightspeed logo, which consists of a red stylized flame icon followed by the word "lightspeed" in a lowercase sans-serif font.

At the top right, there are navigation links: "RETAIL", "BLOG", "ABOUT US", and a language selector "en".

The central text on the page reads: "The right point of sale for your business."



NSNorth 2013, 2014, 2015



The image shows a large, multi-story wooden building with a prominent green copper roof and a tall stone chimney. The building is illuminated from within, with warm light coming from the windows and doors. The sky is clear and blue.

NSNorth 2015
Fairmont Le Château Montebello, Canada
April 10 - 12, 2015

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Cacaocast

The screenshot shows the iTunes Store interface on a Mac. The top menu bar includes standard OS X icons (red, yellow, green circles) and Apple logo, followed by tabs for 'Mes podcasts', 'Mes stations', 'Listes de lecture', and 'iTunes Store'. A search bar with placeholder 'Store' is on the right. Below the menu, the breadcrumb navigation reads 'Podcasts > Technologie > Neues aus der Technik > Philippe Guitard et Philippe Casgrain'. The main content area displays the 'Cacaocast' podcast page. It features a purple and white graphic with a coffee cup and bubbles, labeled 'Cacaocast' and 'Cacao'. Below the graphic is a 'Abonnieren' (Subscribe) button. To the right, the episode list is shown:

NAME	LÄNGE	ERSCHIENEN	BESCHREIBUNG	BELIEBTHEIT	PREIS
1 Épisode 152 - ...	44 Min.	18.06.2015	NSNorth, Swift Song, Swift, w...	i	Laden
2 Épisode 151 - ...	49 Min.	03.06.2015	WWDC 2015, iTunes Analytics...	i	Laden
3 Épisode 150 - S...	50 Min.	22.05.2015	SwiftConf, Apple Watch, Inclu...	i	Laden
4 Épisode 149 - V...	44 Min.	08.05.2015	Visual Studio Code, WWDC A...	i	Laden
5 Épisode 148 - ...	42 Min.	16.04.2015	NSNorth 2015, Programmatio...	i	Laden
6 Épisode 147 - ...	44 Min.	27.03.2015	Objective-Cologne, Compone...	i	Laden
7 Épisode 146 - A...	58 Min.	10.03.2015	Philippe Casgrain et Philippe ...	i	Laden
8 Épisode 145 - ...	53 Min.	02.03.2015	Mac App Store, Origami, YAP...	i	Laden
9 Épisode 144 - s...	40 Min.	17.02.2015	simctl, quarantine, Stackit, Shr...	i	Laden
10 Épisode 143 - l...	41 Min.	31.01.2015	iOS 8 et 64Bit, cours à Stanfor...	i	Laden
11 Épisode 142 - ...	46 Min.	10.01.2015	NSNorth, swiftdoc.org, MMW...	i	Laden
12 Épisode 141 - A...	40 Min.	10.12.2014	Automator, Liens iTunes, Carth...	i	Laden
13 Épisode 140 - ...	49 Min.	21.11.2014	WatchKit, Obtenir est le nouve...	i	Laden



Ground Rules

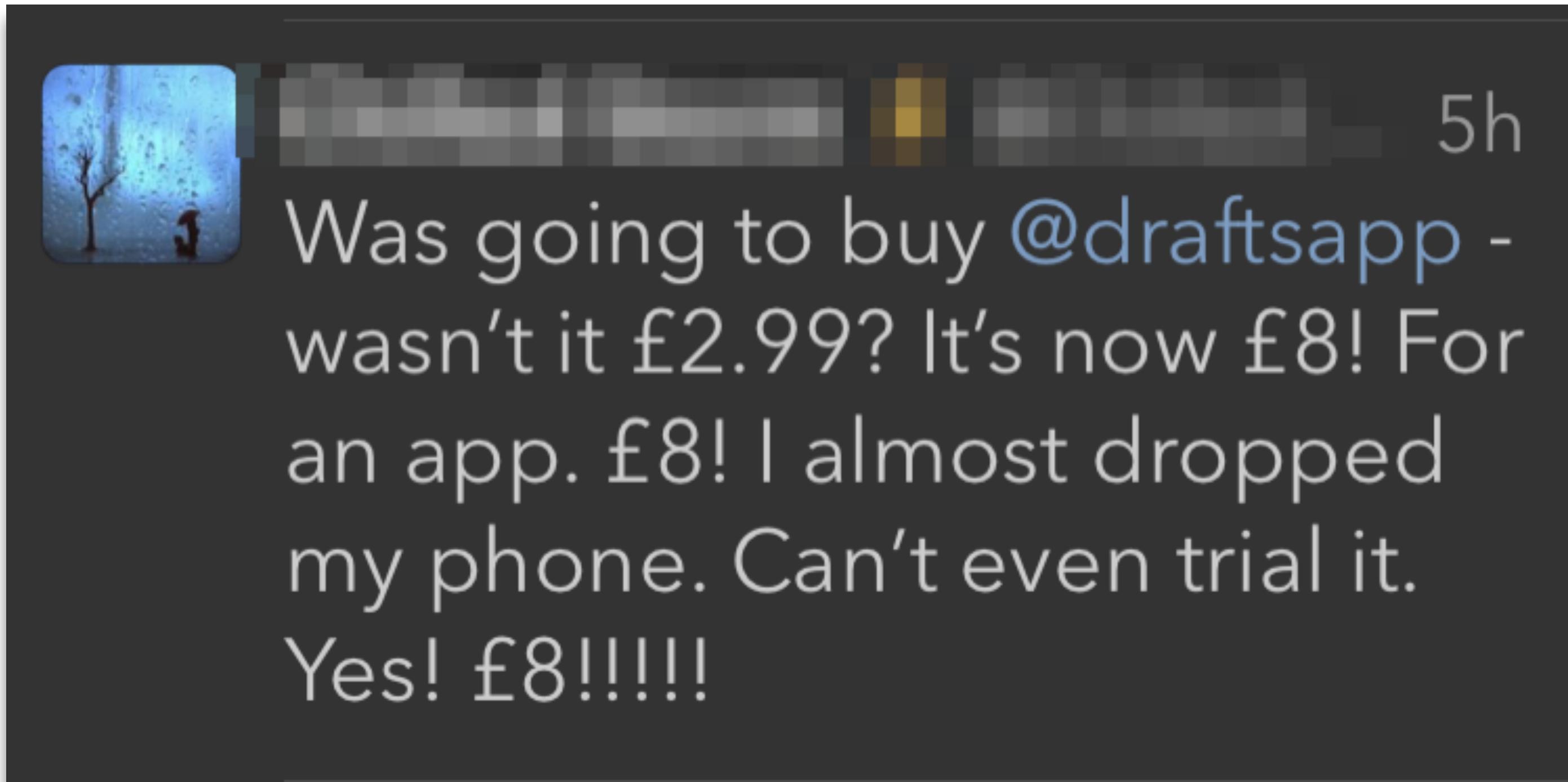


- Not about changing the App Store rules
- Not about working around the rules
- Not about MAS vs self-distribution
- Assume you have read or are familiar with Michael Jurewitz' « App Pricing » series
- These slides and reference material are on Github

<http://github.com/philippec/SwiftConf2015>



How often did you see this...



<https://twitter.com/agiletortoise/status/573669763357937665>



First, a confession



Literal Ivory Tower



Pavillon Roger-Gaudry, Université de Montréal — Official photo on Flickr



Research



- *Vesper*, by Q Branch (Gruber, Wiskus and Simmons)
- *Coda*, by Panic (Sasser *et al.*)
- *Overcast*, by Marco Arment
- *Release Notes*, by Perry and Cieplinski
- *Fantastical*, by FlexiBits (Simmons and Sutherland)
- *Monument Valley*, by UsTwo
- *Manual*, by William Wilkinson
- *Sustainable Indie Pricing*, by Dzhumerov and Mahony
- *Unread*, by Jared Sinclair
- *Market First Development*, by Perry
- *1Password*, by AgileBits (Teare, Karimov, *et al.*)



Put another way, we're going to charge something sane or die trying. We tried following the iOS App Store trend by pricing Vesper at just \$2.99 for months. It didn't work. Prices like that are not sane, and not sustainable, at least for well-crafted productivity apps. So Q Branch is drawing a line in the sand, and we hope other iOS developers will follow.

–John Gruber, Q Branch



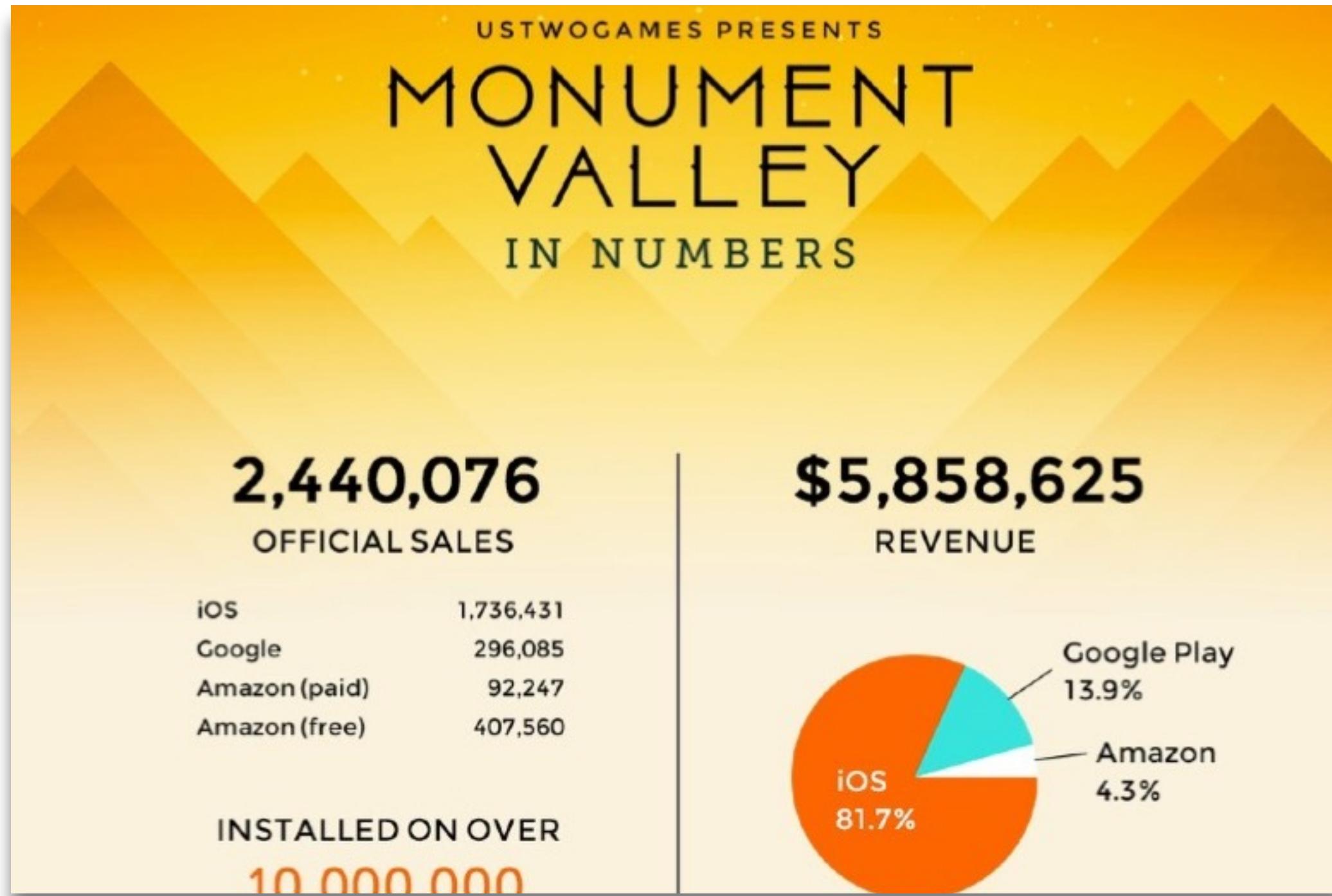
The second undesirable and very toxic side effect is that unsustainable pricing requires and encourages a dump-and-run attitude.

Developers will go and build something, price it at a low pricing thinking they will just make it up in volume and when reality hits, they realise there is no point in continuing to work on their app.

–Milen Dzhumerov, helftone



Monument Valley



This is the biggest problem we've been grappling with all year: we simply don't make enough money from our iOS apps. We're building apps that are, if I may say so, world-class and desktop-quality. They are packed with features, they look stunning, we offer excellent support for them, and development is constant. I'm deeply proud of our iOS apps. But... they're hard to justify working on.

—Cabel Sasser, Panic



Overall, I'm very satisfied with Overcast's finances so far. It's not setting the world on fire, but it's making good money. For most people, the App Store won't be a lottery windfall, but making a decent living is within reach for many.

—Marco Arment, Overcast



Considering the enormous amount of effort I have put into these apps over the past year, that's a depressing figure. I try not to think about the salary I could earn if I worked for another company, with my skills and qualifications. It's also a solid piece of evidence that shows that paid-up-front app sales are not a sustainable way to make money on the App Store.

–Jared Sinclair, Unread

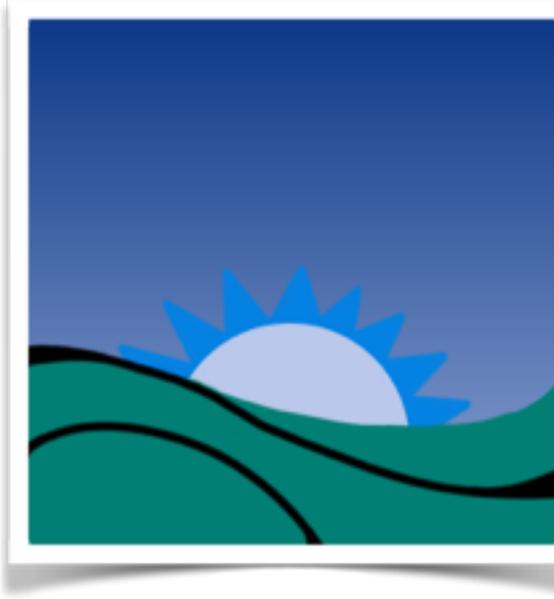


Figurative Ivory Tower



- I am *not* an indie developer
- I do not depend on these apps to feed my family
- My marketing experience is on the conference side of things





Daylight



TrainScan



STO Synchro



STO Synchro Plus



- « My First App »
- Worldwide distribution
- Localized in French, English, German
- Free



I literally got this yesterday



Hallo und herzlich Dank für so eine schöne app ich nutze es täglich aber leider stört es mich das man das Datum selber einstellen muss jeden Tag.
Bitte um eine Verbesserung.

Hello and a warm thanks for such a nice app I use it every day but unfortunately it bothers me that you have to set the date himself every day.
Asking for an improvement.

Hello and thanks for the nice app. I use the app daily but having to set the date every day annoys me.
Could you please improve this.
Kind regards



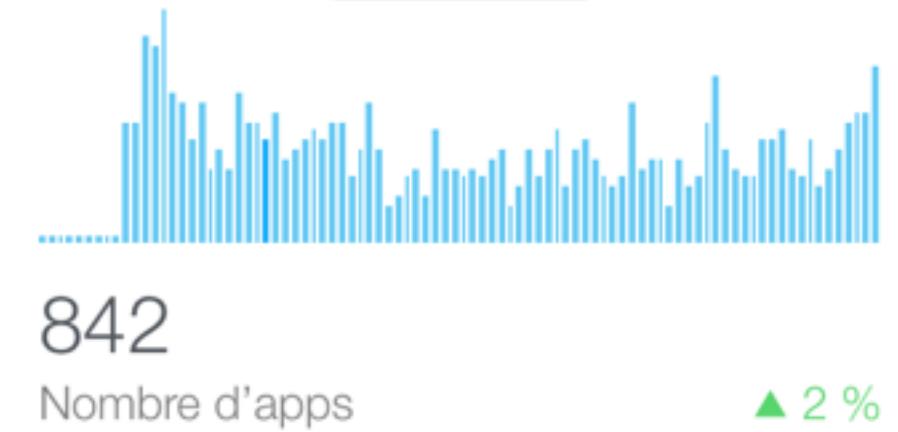
Alex



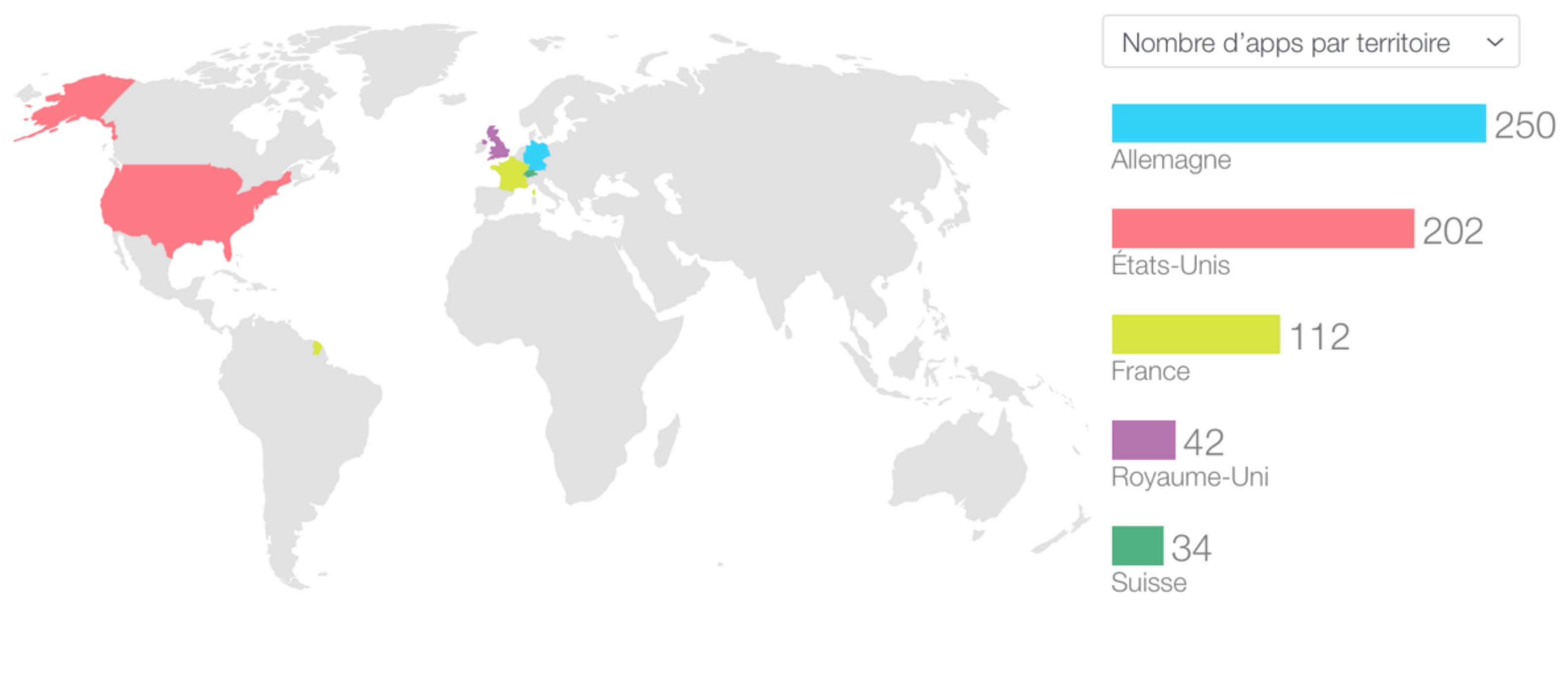
Daylight App Store Stats

< 90 derniers jours

11 16 avr.



Daylight Distribution



- Société de Transport de l'Outaouais, my city-run transit system
- Hyper-local application
- GAE backend (free because too small)
- Free version has no server-side requirement, IAP gives you the same as full version (favorites, server access)
- Lots of work to keep up

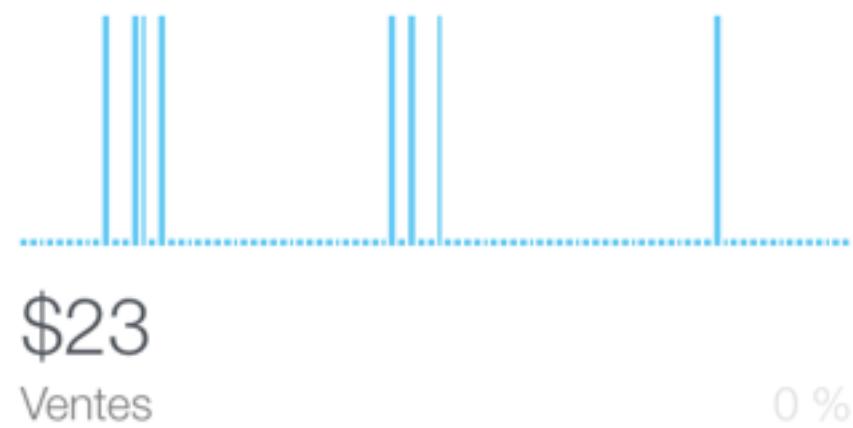
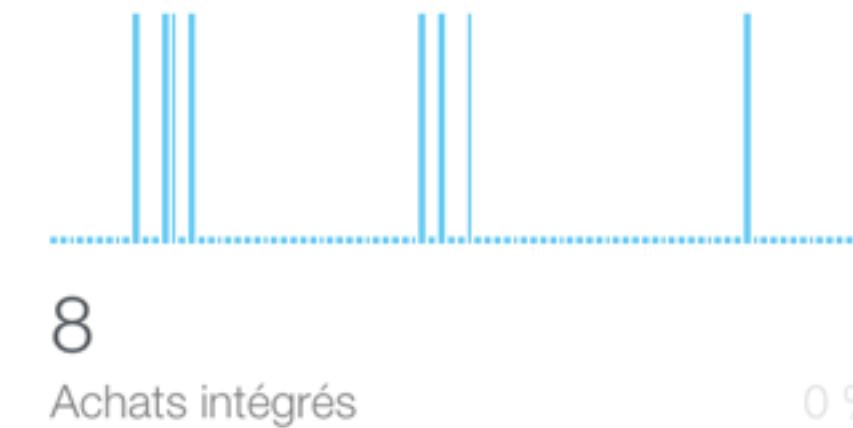
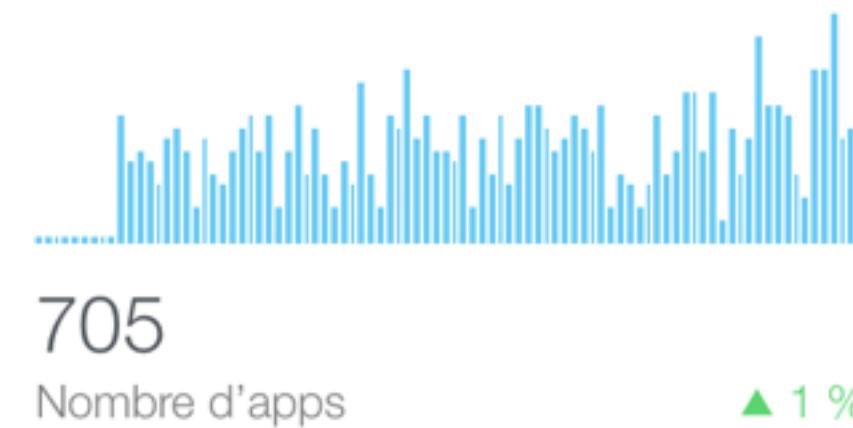


- Started as a paid app
- Created a new SKU that was freemium (Apple didn't allow that back in the day)
- Been meaning to merge both SKUs but fear that other apps will eat my lunch once OpenData comes out
- STO's mobile site doesn't suck anymore
 - Being offline is not as relevant as 5 years ago



STO Synchro Plus App Store Stats

< 90 derniers jours



Fabric

STO Synchro+
ios com.casgrain.stosynchroplus

Philippe Casgrain
Philippe Casgrain 

2

ACTIVE USERS RIGHT NOW



DAILY ACTIVE USERS 

344

▲ 4.9%



DAILY NEW USERS 

20

▼ -20.0%



MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS 

3.0 k

▲ 0.9%



CRASH-FREE USERS 

100.0 %



SESSIONS 

1.2 k

▲ 15.6%



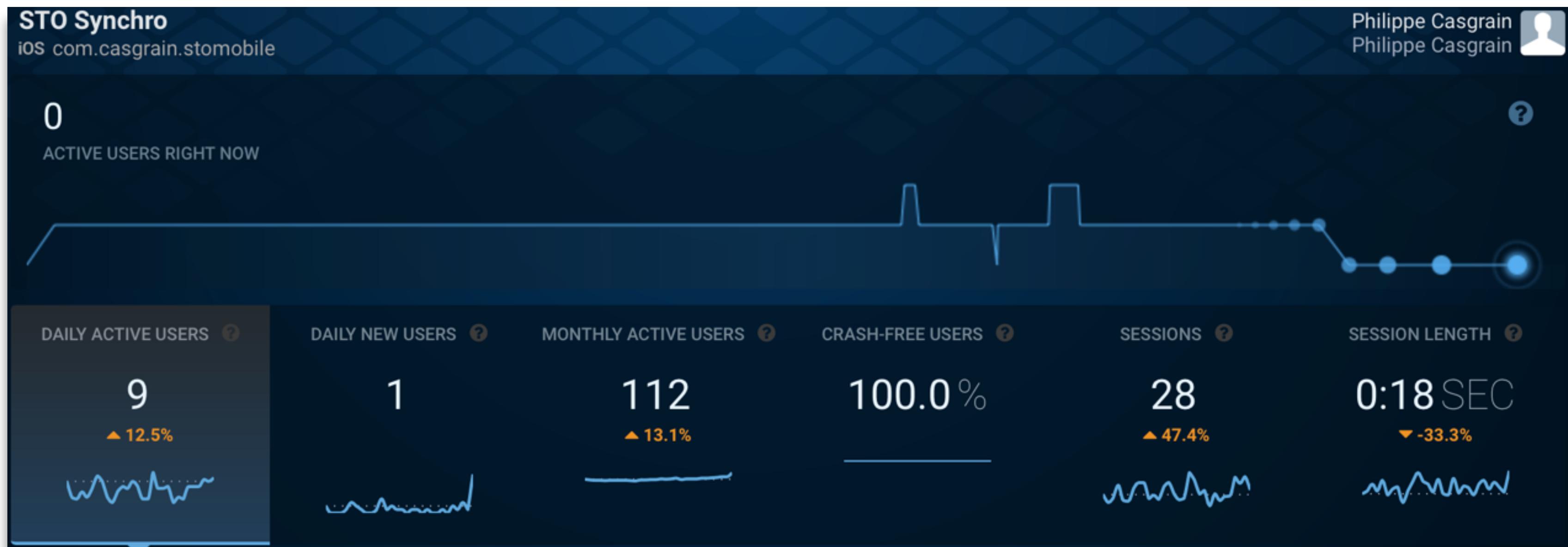
SESSION LENGTH 

0:29 SEC

▲ 3.7%



Fabric



- Converts your train ticket's QR code in a Passbook Pass
 - Apple Watch, Lock Screen, etc
- Optional calendar entry
- Reviews are overwhelmingly positive
- Will be obsolete once Via Rail sends you a Passbook Ticket
- 11,99\$



A Typical Review



Rob Rix
[@rob_rix](https://twitter.com/rob_rix)

[@philippec](https://twitter.com/philippec) ❤ TrainScan



https://twitter.com/rob_rix/status/544579346716180481



TrainScan App Store Stats

<  90 derniers jours



1,320
Vues App Store

▲ 1 %



37
Nombre d'apps



0
Achats intégrés



\$360
Ventes



54
Sessions
Inscrits uniquement



0 (moyenne par jour)
Appareils actifs
Inscrits uniquement



What did I stumble into?

- Daylight: worldwide, competition (free and paid)
- STO Synchro: local, no competition but comparables
- TrainScan: country-wide, no competition
 - Initially thought it was skirting legality
 - Did not want too many users because I wanted to use it
- Who is willing to part with money?



Find users who...

- Value well-designed software (Omni, Panic, Vesper)
- Are already paying a premium (Benjamin)
- Don't necessarily know who you are
 - Name recognition only gets you so far (Arment, 2015)

The Church of Market Share costs a lot of money (Perry, 2014)



Two Pricing Levels



Free



« Reasonable »



- Fixed costs
 - Server
 - Bug fixes
 - New OS releases
 - New device releases
- Variable costs
 - Support
 - One-star reviews
 - Servers



What about « Freemium » ?



1Password goes Freemium

 **Review Monitor by LaunchKit** BOT 12:57 ★

1Password has a new App Store review!

✖  ★★★★☆

They just want money

I really, really like this app. It is an easy way to save all of your passwords in one place. Now, at the bottom of a password, it advertises the pro features of the app, with more categories and password vaults. I recently got the Apple Watch and was disappointed that I was not able to use this app. I already spent so much on the Apple Watch itself, and now I need to pay to use a free app on it?! Now I know that they just want your money. Yet again, this app has a great concept, design, and great features, but they just want you to spend even more money.

by [jhg830](#) for v5.4.2 · [Permalink](#) · [Tweet](#)

<https://twitter.com/roustem/status/611221339001630720>



Freemium is Hard

These seem like opposites: the free tier is both good enough and not good enough. What makes freemium so tricky is that these can both be true simultaneously, and for many app types, this can't be resolved. That's why it's so hard for many apps to succeed with a freemium model.

—Marco Arment, Overcast



- Know your audience
- More users who pay less means lower reviews, increased costs
- Less users who pay more
- Don't play the lottery
- Think in terms of Free vs Reasonable



WWDC Wisdom

A screenshot of a Twitter post from Paul Haddad (@tapbot_paul). The tweet reads: "Apps are great, the future is apps, now how about making apps sustainable?". The post has 71 retweets and 109 favorites. It includes icons for reply, retweet, favorite, and user profile, along with a translation link and a timestamp of 14:25 - 8 juin 2015.

Paul Haddad
@tapbot_paul

Apps are great, the future is apps, now how about making apps sustainable?

RETWEETS 71 FAVORIS 109

14:25 - 8 juin 2015

https://twitter.com/tapbot_paul/status/607976636219138049



Thank you.

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<https://nsnorth.ca>





[LAM]

SwiftConf

.com

Please use the #swiftconf tag
in your tweets, on Flickr etc.

International
Cocoa
Conference
at the ♥
of Europe

Thanks to

