

Minor Thesis ideas:

My focus would be on mobile and app-store apps. This topic is interesting to me as I've been researching and studying in the field of mobile and desktop apps, but I have never looked at it from a business point of view. Together with another person, we are considering starting our own software company or consultancy company. We have some ideas and the ability to implement them, and would now like to understand how businesses in this area work.

I have identified a couple topics, as follows:

Topic 1: Choosing a side in the ecosystem war

Different platforms have different ecosystems, and different implications for entering the market.

There currently are four big players in the "ecosystem war". These big four are Apple, Google, Google and (to a much lesser extent) Amazon. When choosing to develop an app a firm needs to keep in mind what role, and to which extent, the ecosystem will affect how people access and use the app.

In a world where information is everywhere, information should be available everywhere. For example, developing an app for Android usually means that the developer will have to provide a web-service or Windows app in order to allow the users to access the content on their PCs. However, it is very common for developers on the Apple ecosystem to target first the App Store and the Mac App Store first. These are clearly two very different ways to approach the market, and each one has its own advantages and disadvantages.

My study would be on researching market numbers, and analysing what the costs are to target which ecosystem, and what seem to be the advantages/disadvantages. The research could be enriched by a small questionnaire to assess the user's preferences and opinion in matters of which ecosystem they prefer and why, focusing on which combination of systems they use.

Topic 2: Marketing mobile Apps

An analysis of how big and small players market their apps.

I am interested in analysing the processes that are being used in order to promote mobile apps and new services. I imagine that big players and indie developers have completely different ways of marketing their apps, using different mediums and channels. I suppose that the market size and type also play a role in the decision of channels to reach the users.

My study would be to verify or falsify my hypothesis, and to describe in further detail how the marketing changes according to the size of the company. I would pick a number of companies of different sizes, with a similar customer base and value proposal, and see if there is any common ground or similarities between the way they reach their customers, advertise, and the recognition they have.

Topic 3: The business of Indie development

An analysis of how small software houses and independent developers sell and market their apps.

There are a number of small software houses and indie programmers that are being successful despite targeting a small niche market. For example, Bohemian Coding's Sketch recently received praise from Google, which is promoting it as an alternative to the ubiquitous Adobe Illustrator. Panic's Apps have large recognition between web developers on the Mac platform. The Pixelmator Team saw their app, Pixelmator, featured in the iPhone 6 keynote. Marco Arment, cofounder of Tumblr, along with other indie developers, released sales data for the past year.

My focus would be on picking some of these players and researching how they reach their customers, what their business model is, how they market themselves, and what kind of customer recognition they have. I don't know yet how much data is available for me to use, so that's a risk I will take into account.

Topic 4: Web vs Native

An analysis of what people's preferences are in regards of Native vs Web Apps.

We know that web development is usually faster and much cheaper than developing pure, native apps. Despite this, most mobile apps are still being deployed using native technology. I want to prove or falsify my expectations which are that most of the users express a slight preference for native mobile apps since they are easier to acquire and to use, whereas expert users express a strong preference for native mobile apps.

Focusing on mobile apps, my idea here is to propose a simple study on what people's opinion is, and suggest a reason of why this happens. This study would include a questionnaire distributed to different people/groups in order to understand how they acquire their apps, and whether they have strong feelings in this topic.