

iPhone App Development: Thriving in an Overflowing App Store

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Introduction

Since the 2008 release of Apple Inc.'s Software Development Kit (SDK) for the iPhone's mobile operating system (iOS), 3rd party developers have been ruthlessly making applications (apps) for the iPhone, and distributing them through the "Apple App Store." The Online market place, known as the "App Store," has been publishing created apps, ever since it opened in July 2008. According to a 2012 Apple announcement, there are now over 500,000 apps on the App Store! That being said, competition for app publicity has never been fiercer. With so many apps floating around, developers are constantly asking: what kind of apps will thrive on the market?

Purpose

This presentation aims to provoke innovative iPhone app ideas while discouraging those that are already flooding the market.

Diffusing Misconceptions

Some developers may think the only way to make a popular app is to mimic the highly downloaded apps on the "Top" lists.

The "Top" lists on the Apple App Store are a ranking of popular apps, which many iPhone users browse (when on the hunt for a new app).



But According to app developer Marco Arment, the App Store's "Top" lists are usually just for simple, "shallow," apps that come and go quickly. He suggests that the "Top" lists only portray a segment of the apps in demand, and that elsewhere, there exists apps that also do well on the market (but aren't labeled among the "Top"). Arment concludes that his app does successful in this alternate market of clientele that demands complex, more thoroughly-developed apps that are maintained .

Utilizing iPhone Technology

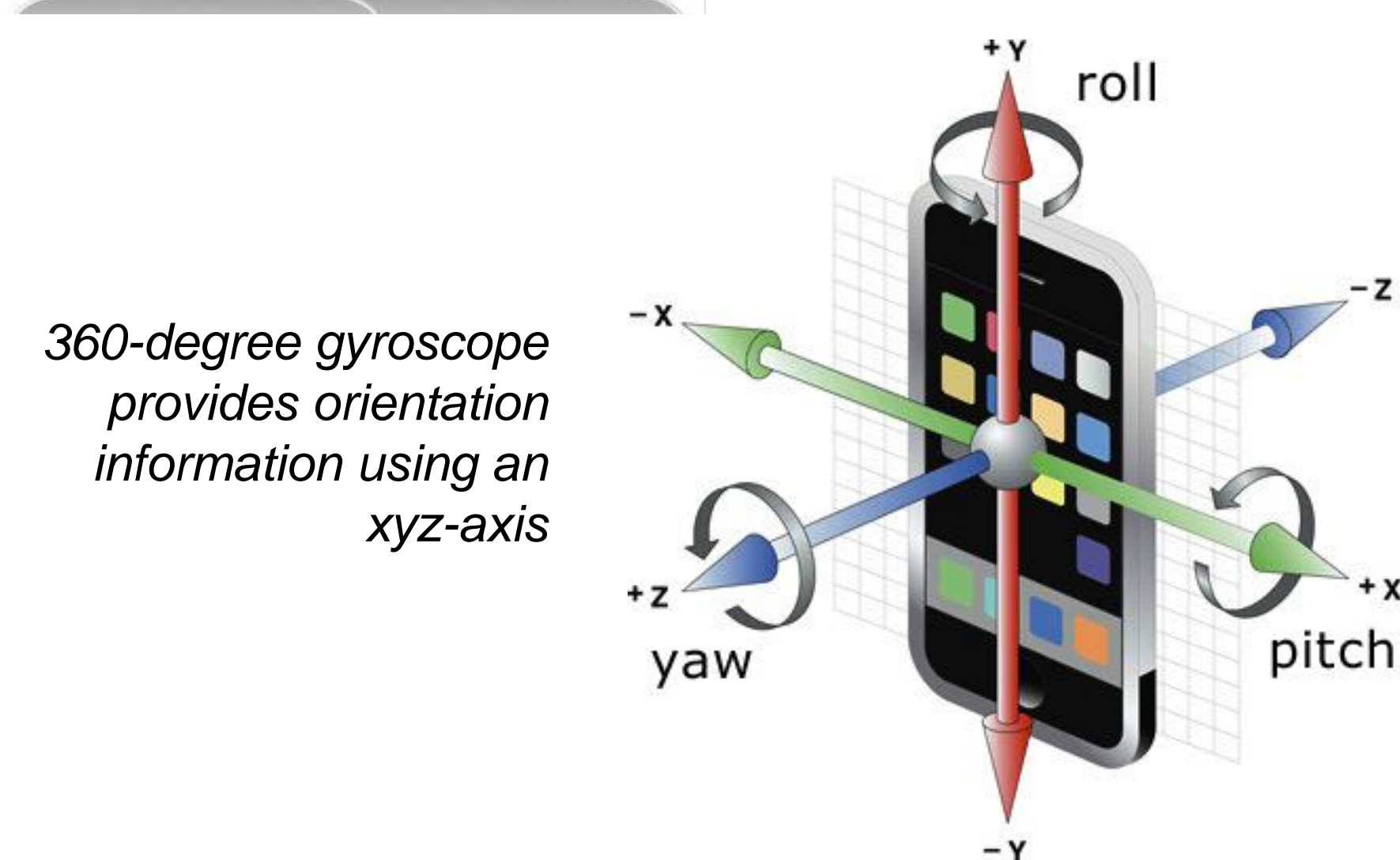
When considering an idea for an application, it's always important to realize the unique physical and programmatic features of your platform. The iPhone provides some exceptional technology as a platform:

Always-on internet	• A well-integrated, constant internet experience (over 3G, 4G or Wi-Fi)
Power consciousness	• Capable for use all day
Location-aware	• GPS technology detects where device is
Orientation-aware	• Built-in gyroscope detects rotations in space
Unique input	• A smooth Finger-based touch screen
Camera	• High quality photos and video

While extensive battery life and constant internet connection drive a powerful experience, other features such as the GPS, built-in gyroscope, or camera offer many possibilities in the use of an app.



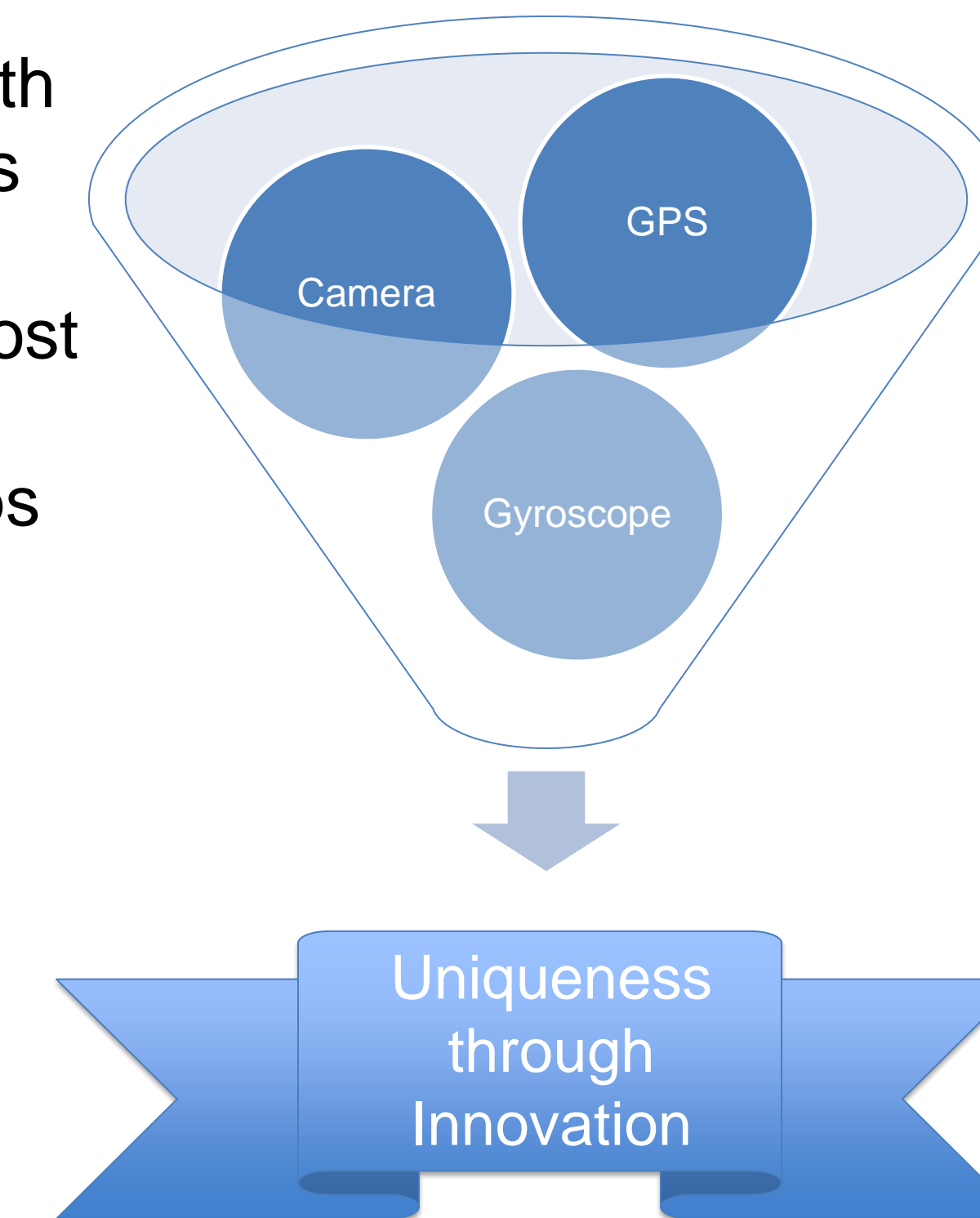
Satellites send Geolocation data to device which can be utilized to provide pinpoint coordinates on live maps



iPhone camera captures exceptionally sharp images and video for a mobile phone.

Successful Apps

Incorporating iPhone tech with the use of apps has made for some of the most popular and successful apps on the market.



The popular "RunKeeper" app is programmed to track a user's exact route (in red) and distance using Geolocation data



The popular "Real Racing" app uses gyroscope controls to steer the car (by tilting the device's yaw)



"Instagram" gained success by using the camera to create a social network of instant image sharing

Market Analysis

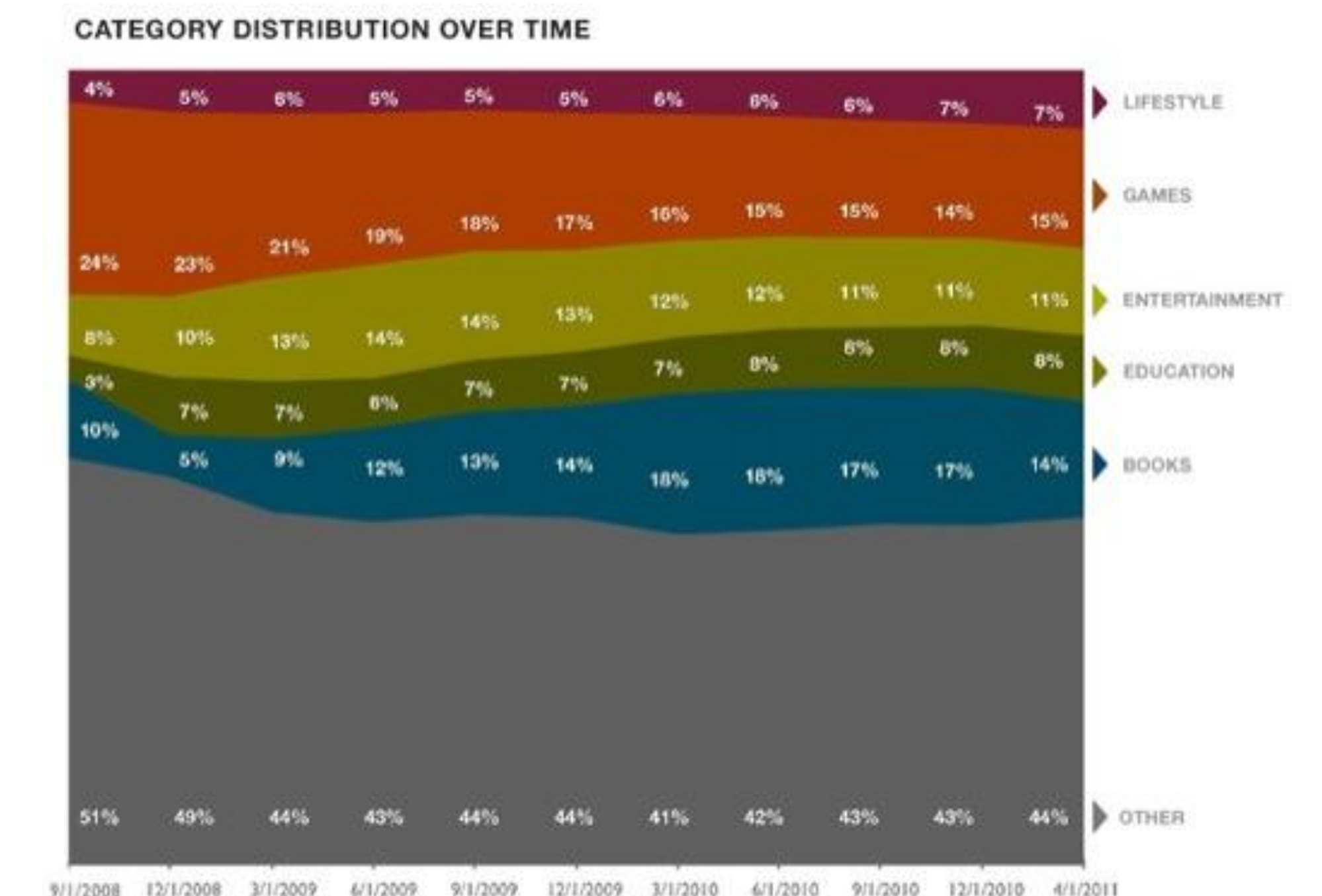


Figure 1. App category distribution (ranked by download) in the Apple App Store over a span of about 3 years (2008-2011). In orange, "Games" remains as the majority, but has diminished over time. In contrast, The "Lifestyle" category (in purple) only started at 4%, but has had a substantial rise over time.

Conclusions

Developers can find success without catering to the clientele of the "Top" lists, therefore they shouldn't let the "Top" lists sway their app development. Furthermore, integrating iPhone tech with the use of apps can promote a unique approach, thus raising chances of market success. Lastly, Figure 1 suggests apps that are "useful" or aid productivity are being downloaded more and more, therefore developers should cultivate that area of the market.

References

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