

# Social Apps

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**Abstract:** Social apps are about people connecting with other people. They are predominantly web-based services which help to connect people by providing on-the-go services. They merge different online communication tools like instant messaging, text chat, internet forums, blogs, etc to provide interactive services to the users. This article describes four interesting apps developed for both mobile phones and computer systems.



**Introduction:** Social apps help to connect people with common interests, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of other people. They help users to explore wide range of services ranging from sharing photographs or videos to professional uses like advertising, marketing, job-search, etc. Various fields using social apps include government, business, education, medical, friends, etc.

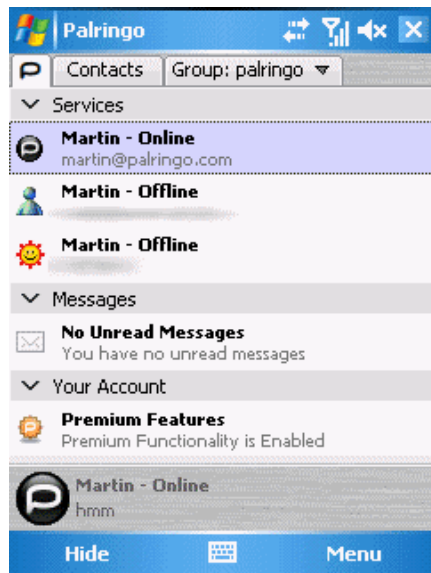
**Description:** The article describes four apps namely: Palringo, Beejive, Google wave and Centrl.

These apps can be accessed from mobile phones. The use of mobile phones for social networking is rapidly increasing. A recent study conducted on the individuals of US and Canada shows that the social networking via mobile phones has doubled in the last six months.

**Palringo:** Palringo is an interesting app which can be used from both mobile phones and computer systems. A user has to create an account with them on their website to start using the app. Palringo helps the users to organize all friends into a single contact list, i.e., it provides one universal instant messenger. Some interesting features include accessing and updating our own location and also view the location of others, voice messages, group chats, etc. It is free to download, but not free to use. It works on pay-as-you-use basis. So, the user has to pay only for the amount of service that he will be using. The exact cost of use depends on our data package. Typically, 1MB of data lets the user to send 100,000 words of text, 32 picture messages or up to 15 minutes of voice messages.

Palringo allows the users to show their current location to all of their friends. Every time our location change, the application automatically updates the user's status, so that everyone knows where the user is. Palringo combines instant messaging and location, so now one can see where their buddies are in real-time. Palringo displays a

contact list and the town name and flag next to their names. This will let the users know where they are, or even view their location on a map to get the full picture.



So the users can let everyone know where they are by sharing location in the status messages. It uses the Google Maps API to display peer locations, and also offers a "Nearby" section in group and friend lists to show nearby users. To calculate location, Palringo Local uses a proprietary algorithm that picks up cell site (2G, 3G, 3.5G) locations, Wi-fi access points and other identifying signals.

There is an element of triangulation in the calculations, but the algorithm makes a significant level of adjustment to identify the location accurately. The algorithm also learns with passing time, through the addition of new location, that the data is being added to the database.

The location option is totally free to use. This feature is entirely optional and people desiring privacy can turn it on or off any time. There is another feature called snap and share, which uses the camera feature.

When a user selects a contact to chat with, he can tap the camera icon in the lower right corner and can either take a fresh photo that will be instantly sent, or send an already-saved photo from his own album.

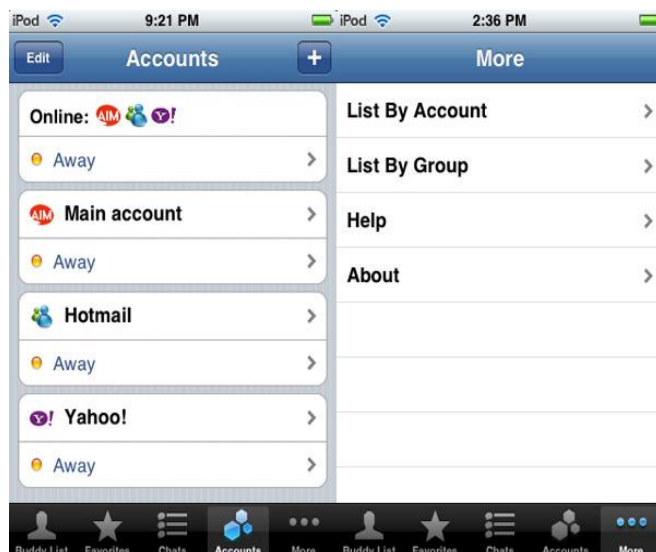
It works on the 3 major operating systems Windows, Mac OS X and Linux and also supports most of the mobile phones and platforms including Android, Apple iPhone and iPod touch, BlackBerry, Java, Symbian and S60 and Windows Mobile.



**Beejive:** Beejive initially opened as a software development company in California in 2006, and Beejive IM was its first product. The application has a high popularity in the iPhone app store, owing to some interesting features like allowing users to access incoming chats while running in the background. Version 3.0 of this application debuted in September of 2008 and was equipped with Push technology, which is integral in notifying users of incoming chats. To do this, Beejive IM sends users an email advising when a chat is pending. This added feature proved to be very useful and the application was nominated for the 2008 Best App Ever Award in the Social Networking category. In Beejive, users can also mention a time out in the settings and the app will continue to receive messages even when it is closed. The messages will be displayed again as soon as the app is launched. Notification

sounds are also provided as an added advantage. With the new updated version of the Beejive application, iPhone users can now record and send voice notes to their friends. They can also send images from their iPhone and can see them while chatting with their friends. On clicking the toolbar located at top, a user will be offered four options. The microphone option will enable the user to see any recordings as well as record audio. The recorded audios can be saved, deleted and can be send to a friend.

File format supported by this application include Word documents, PDFs, PowerPoint and Excel as well as video and audio clips. These files can be shared with a friend and also can be viewed on personal iPhone. Also, the received files can be forwarded to friends. Beejive provides a default sound for incoming and outgoing messages that will alert the user when he receives an IM. This sound can be changed according to personal preferences.



A user can send a message either by choosing a contact from the address book, IM list, or typing in the phone number directly. Then he needs to tap on the tab of accounts that supports this feature. The contact at the receiving end will receive a push notification and can then reply by sending a text. Tapping on a user's name at the top of the screen also gives the options to IM, text, or video message.

Beejive IM supports most of the instant messaging services including AIM, Yahoo! Messenger, MSN Messenger, and Jabber, as well as Facebook, which makes almost every popular chat system accessible on the go. It is also preferred as it provides a clean user interface to the users.

Most reviewers focus primarily on the ability to close out of Beejive IM and still be notified about incoming chats. Other points frequently mentioned are the application's ease of use, and a landscape option for easier typing. The program will restart automatically if the connection with the service provider is dropped, and running the application will not significantly affect battery life. It is even possible to send copies of chats via email.



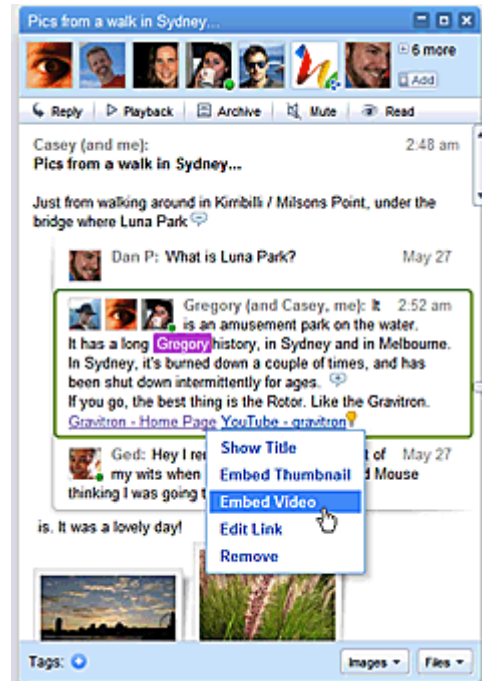
Beejive is priced at \$10 but it can turn quite useful for frequent message senders, as there won't be an additional SMS charge for each chat. For consumers who are serious about accessing chat applications on a mobile phone, Beejive IM is both cost effective and easy to use. With social networking becoming a more important and constant part of modern life, streamlined communication tools such as Beejive will be very helpful.

### Google Wave:

Google Wave is an online tool for real-time communication and collaboration. Every conversation and action can be performed live. A wave can be both a conversation and a document where people can discuss and work together using richly formatted text, photos, videos, maps, and more.



Google wave merges e-mail, instant messaging, wikis, and social networking into one complete app. It has extensions that can provide real-time focus, spelling/grammar checking, automated translation among 40 languages and more.



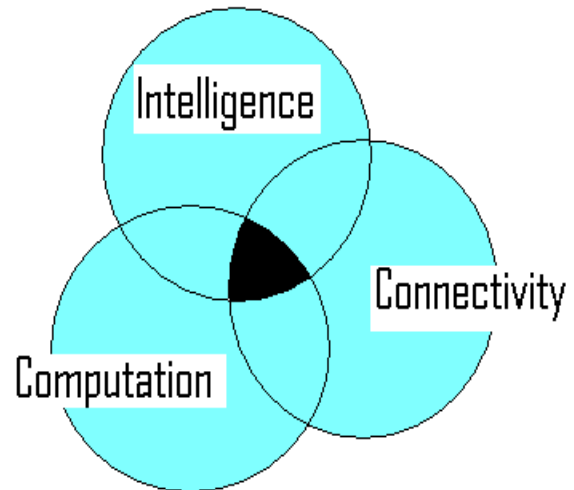
Two of the important features of Google Wave is that it is shared and it is live. Shared, implies that any participant can reply anywhere in the message, edit the content and add participants at any point in the process. Then the user can playback and let anyone rewind the wave to see who said what and when. It is live, which implies that participants on a wave can have faster conversations as they type, see edits and interact with extensions in real-time. Google Wave released about 100 000 invitations on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Each user can invite up to 20 people. Google Wave is receiving positive and negative reviews as it is difficult to understand for naive users.

**Centrl:** Centrl is a location based social app that has all the desired features that an app should have. It uses intelligence, computation and connectivity to provide its services to the end users.



The main advantage of this app is that, it is free to join and free to use. There is no need for the users to create a new account to start using this app. A user is allowed to login using any one of the social networking sites supported by centrl. Centrl allows a user to broadcast his current location to all his friends, help users find coupons, restaurants, bars, gas stations, general points of interest, real estate, or events near you by pulling information from Yelp, Citysearch, Wikipedia and other sites. How centrl supports computation, connectivity and intelligence is discussed below:

**Computation:** Centrl performs statistical calculations to find various coupons or restaurants which are needed by the user.



**Connectivity:** It improves connectivity among friends. One of the notable features of centrl is that it allows users to share coupons with friends by clicking on "Share" within the coupon's information window.

**Intelligence:** This app makes use of intelligence too. Depending on the location of the user and the time of day, Centrl offers special deals that individually cater to the user.

#### **Future Enhancements:**

1. Since many users have multiple accounts, they often tend to forget their usernames or passwords. In the future, it is desirable that an app which allows fingerprints or any other kind of identification to authenticate the user.
2. We may look for an intelligent app that knows what data is relevant and what is irrelevant (viruses or spam) and it should be able to filter the data.

**References:**

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