14 OUTSTANDING APPS

THE READER
EVAN RATLIFF
Brooklyn, New York
Freelance journalist | iOS user

Editor of the long-form reading app The Atavist (and a contributor to publications like Wired, National Geographic, and The New Yorker), Evan Ratliff appreciates an app that gets the reading part right. One of his favorites is NYPL Biblion, an iPad app that takes users deep inside the hidden collections of the New York Public Library. The inaugural issue in what is projected to be an ongoing series focuses on the 1939–1940 New York World’s Fair. “The amazing old photos and documents seem endless,” Ratliff says. “But somehow they’ve also engineered in serendipity, which is remarkably hard to do.” Here are some of his other go-to apps for iPad story time.

INSTAPAPER
“If you don’t have Instapaper you’re not really using your iPad correctly. It lets you save stories on the Web and then read them in a clean, elegant, controlled environment when you’re away from your annoying desktop. It’s particularly good for longer pieces.”

THIS AMERICAN LIFE
“This NPR show has been made eminently iPad-able, with on-demand access to episodes dating back to its 1995 launch. It’s not really reading, I suppose—it’s listening. But it’s addictive enough that I’d need some sort of iPad to gorgaie to get off of it.”

TRVL
“This is a travel magazine with a heavy emphasis on photography, and it’s probably the next best thing to trekking to exotic locales yourself. Trvl has taken a simple, logical approach without a lot of useless fancy widgets. Each issue looks at a specific region (the Sinai, Havana) or even a particular aspect of that region (the rich-poor gap in Moscow, small-town rodeos in Texas). The photography is often stunning, and the issues are free.”

Illustration by Matt W. Moore

BBC NEWS
iPhone | iPad | Android
There’s no better English-language source for breaking international news. The Beeb’s content is organized in rows of thumbnails, grouped by either topic (technology, business, science & environment, etc.) or region. Set your preferred topics to appear at the top of the home screen. Wired stream live BBC radio. Related video content for selected stories. Cache for offline reading. Tired Thumbnails limit headlines. Photo content is lacking compared with other big-name news apps. | 8/10 | Free

CNBC REAL-TIME
iPhone | iPad | Android
Turn your device into a full-blown stock-market command center, with real-time quotes from Nasdaq and the NYSE, historical charts, and commodities and currency pricing. CNBC packs data into every available pixel, but you can keep tabs on favorite stocks with customizable watch lists. Wired Trend charts go back five years. Stream CNBC shows like Mad Money With Jim Cramer. Omnipresent ticker in tablet version. Tired Distracting banner ads. Kind of cluttered. | 7/10 | Free