



The Current State of Apps – The Tech Talk Series



James Schramko brings back AppMatch's Jarrod Robinson to talk all about apps - where they're at, who they benefit, and what they can do for your business, in the first episode of The Tech Talk Series



Jarrod Robinson

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 611. If you like anything we talk about today, you can look that up at superfastbusiness.com. Today's the first Tech Talk Series podcast episode with a guest who's been here several times before. Welcome back, Jarrod Robinson.

Jarrod: Thanks for having me, James. I was just trying to think, is this like, maybe number four or third?

James: There's quite a few episodes with you, but this time we're dedicating the discussion to tech talk. Because in my life, you're the person I go to to find out about technology. You are what I call, affectionately, my tech sniffer.

Jarrod: Yeah.

James: You're like the canary in the coal mine. You get down there and you can find technology and sniff it out before everyone else is talking about it. You are literally years ahead of the curve. And you often tell me about stuff. You've been my eyes and ears with tech, "Hey, check this out. Check that out." And it's a remarkable skill. And, you know, I've got pretty deep filters, it takes a while for me sometimes to get using a thing. I might say, no, that's not for me. I don't really need an app to save up my tips. You found a really, really good app which has subsequently been replaced by the iPhone software itself. And that was the app that tracks what you're doing on your phone. But of course, that's standard now. But you were able to do that before they made it generally available. So for that, I'm grateful.

So what I'm hoping with this series is we can come and talk about technology. Because if you're in an online business, we need to know about technology. Just for my own example, I've had about seven or eight apps now. I know you had hundreds. The thing is, I'm not in the business of apps generally. I'm in the business of coaching and having a membership advisory, as you are, too. And we should just have a little bit of history there. You and I met probably about three years ago, you set up your membership in full strength back then. How's things going now?

A little bit of history

Jarrold: Yeah, it's crazy to think three years ago, I didn't have a membership. Now, I do. And it's pretty much the only thing we sell as per your advice. And it's going along super strong - 1200 members, and about two to three percent churn. A big part of that is because of some of the tools that we use, namely mobile apps to keep people engaged and keep people coming back in. And that's what frames all of this tech sniffing, as you call it, James. Like, how can I find things that are going to be useful to the people in that one product that we sell now, and it's a really sort of freeing thing to be able to do. Because when you met me, I was doing the same stuff, but it was across 52 different things.

James: You had a lot going on.

Jarrold: I did, yeah.

James: You had your own DJ track for PE teachers and like, t-shirt kind of clothes.

Jarrold: Exactly, yeah. Finding all these tech tools to solve all these different things, but really, when I had one product I could hone in on the tech that really sort of helped me with that, if that makes sense. And it's really helped it go to new strengths.



James: One of the things I've been known for over the years is this concept of [Own the Racecourse](#). I have been talking about it for about a decade. And I've updated my training on it several years apart. The most recent one was 2017, I think I did a big update. But what my message was, is you need to have a little bit of control over your own customers, and where you're serving your information, and don't build on someone else's platform and then get upset if they take it away from you. But you know, what's fascinating is what has happened to Facebook, since you and I met three years ago. Back then, it was like the darling of groups and pages and you could get your content found and it was easy and fun. These days though, there's been the Cambridge Analytica scandal, there's been a lot more research released on the dangers of social media in terms of how it's affecting people's emotions. And people are getting depressed, and all this sort of stuff. And actually sort of walking down the street, glued to a phone.

So a couple of things here, if people are going to use phones, and they do increasingly, it is nice to have control over that. And the easiest way to do that is to have your own app for your business, which is the portal through which people are able to interact with your product and avoiding the need for them to be on a desktop or to have to use a browser, right, Jarrod?

Jarrod: Yeah. Well, if you think about our own experiences, it's something like 95 percent of the things we do on our on our own devices, happen to be inside of apps. Just to probably use someone else's apps in a social media app that we spend most of our attention in. And it's just this space that we are spending more and more time in which has its detriment. But from a business communication perspective and having your customers in these really easy experiences, there's a lot to be said about that app space.

And you know, many years ago (and when I say many years ago, James, more like four years ago), the idea of building an app was probably, you know, drop 50K? But these days, you don't have to do that because the tech has progressed to a point. And I imagine that's very similar to when you first started, you know, building these websites. Like, it would have been really chaotic and technical and it just got easier and easier. Would that be true?

James: When I started 13 years ago, trying to build a website took me six to nine months.

Jarrod: Yeah.

James: It was a struggle. I tried Dreamweaver and FrontPage. And I had a free site on an easy to build website builder that wasn't that easy, but it had no SEO value. Finally, I discovered this software called XSitePro, and I could now build a website. It was fine, as long as you had a Windows computer and you wanted to build a website yourself. And I got good at it. And I started promoting it and I made a lot of affiliate sales. But if you would have looked at XSitePro now, 13 years later, goneski, it's finished. It's over and out. And WordPress came around and just demolished it.

If you go back and look at the first few apps that I did, I think most of them are out of date now. There's one on leverage and one on Wealthification. And then the next round of apps were [SuperFastBusiness](#) and [SilverCircle](#). Now, that's interesting because they're fairly new. And I recognized, if someone is going to be on the phone (and they are) and if I want them to be using my app, then I need to have a really good app. If I can put my logo and icon right on their home screen page which they're picking up and putting down hundreds of times a day and they can access my content, it's big. It's big data. But I'm now on the second version of the SilverCircle app and we're going for the third version of the SuperFastBusiness app, so it's not enough to just get an app.



Should you DIY your app?

An app is a fluid or dynamic situation where the technology is going to change. But you still want to have that nice usable feature on the homepage of that iPhone but probably it's going to be rewritten or re-uploaded from time to time. And I'm very thankful to you, Jarrod, because you've just done this seamless transition each time. The very first step was quite complex. Remember, I had to log in here and there and do this and that. And eventually, we found a way that you didn't have to do that. And of course, I'm talking about a service at theappmatch.com, which is Jarrod's business where he does all of this for you.

I don't think an app is something you should be doing yourself. That's my point here. You need it to be done for you because it is going to need to change and there will be updates. And there will be things that come down the pipeline. And you want to keep it with current technology. In the same way, you might lease a car and get a new one every two years so that you get the extra airbags and the new braking system and the car can now park itself and it uses less fuel or no fuel, (maybe electricity). Just stay up to date and make it a good experience for your user, because there's nothing worse than finding some clunky old website that's not working on a mobile. It's going to flash loading for the first five, ten seconds before you get the content and nothing on it's easy to navigate. They're out of date and they're finished. And Google's right on to that.

Jarrold: Yeah. Just recently, I got a course and it's one of the first courses I've ever purchased. And the only way that you can really access that course was by going through a desktop and I had to try and remember the login that was issued to me. I couldn't find a way to change it or whatever and it just made the whole experience of completing this course from a famous marketer difficult. It wasn't easy. And therefore, if they're trying to help me get to that result (whatever it was), it was putting barriers in front of me. So I could only imagine how much easier they could do and deliver on their result if they made that experience easier. And an app does that. It can make things like your SilverCircle app, so that people don't ever have to login.

James: That SilverCircle app is like a Ferrari. It's so fast and so easy to use. And so simple.

Jarrold: And you don't have to log in to, you know, make the experience better.

James's app test

James: I don't have to login. Here's the test, I use it myself. That's the test, if I use it. Because I'm not interested in fandangle, extra fancy stuff, I'm not trying to overcomplicate it. I click on that app, I can navigate my own discussions easily and find what I want and it loads so quickly. And I can paste an answer, tick it and it's done. And the members love it too. And it's the same username and password as the desktop version, which is essential. You can't have separate. we've tried that before, it was very difficult for the user. So we've got it seamless. And I think (at the time of recording, at least), we're having a look at making that app work for SuperFastBusiness as well.

But I'm a convert because when I saw the stats, the people accessing my community from a mobile is through the roof. The pre and post stats for the mobile app were ridiculous. I can't remember exactly (you probably do because I think it's on your homepage somewhere at theappmatch.com), but I think I've got 40 percent more sessions logging in. And people log in more often, they stay longer, my retention has improved. It has paid for itself many, many times over.

Jarrold: Yeah. And this is what we find over and over. So you know, fortunately, we've been able to do this same process for lots of people in exciting spaces – in the membership spaces, in selling content, in selling their information to people. And we've seen it, we've seen people who have been able to make their experience simpler. That's it. They make their experience simpler, people can get access to that content easier through the fact that there's now an app icon staring at them, reminding them of the value that they could get. And now they're more likely to be involved in that thing. It doesn't mean that they are. But it just makes that whole experience just a little bit easier for people to navigate.

Who can benefit from an app?

James: Yeah. One of the things is, the fact that it's there and they're using the app instead of a browser, and it's so fast. What sort of businesses get the best results from it? You've mentioned a couple there. Obviously people with a membership or some kind of course are going to be better off for having an app. People with recipes or what about training? What kind of use cases have you seen?

Jarrold: Yeah, we've done stuff in the space of people with memberships. That's the, you know, the real obvious one. We've done things with people who have courses. We have helped exercise, like personal trainer type people, put their programs into that scenario, and help people be able to go through it and complete whatever the programming is they've been specified. And then we've taken people who have got recipes and content like that. So sellable, you know, some bite-sized content, you might call it, and package that into an app that they can sell on the App Store. So rather than selling outside of it with a membership, they're selling on the app store and then Apple are taking that 30 percent, and you then get to make those little microtransactions, as you might like to call them. And some of those people are doing huge numbers just by selling the \$2, \$3 apps to their audiences, you know, becoming discovered by more people. So, it really is quite wide.

The only thing I would probably suggest is, don't go into the video game creation space. I've spoke about that at your event, James, in my Bug Drop story, creating that.

James: Yeah, that was classic. I love that.

What is more accessible than a PDF?



Jarrold: I had no audience in that particular domain. And that's the real lesson, you know, if you've got this content knowledge and you think you might be able to package it up into like an ebook, which is typically what people go and do. One scenario is that maybe you could take that same exact content and put it in a way that made it even easier for people to access than a PDF, and sell it as like a microtransaction and a lead generation source for what might be your flagship product. And that's something that we do with one of our own apps called PE Games.

Do you remember being at school, James, and doing phys ed lessons and playing all sorts of different games and activities? I'm just, you know, off the cuff here, but do you remember?

James: I remember like captain ball or climbing ropes, that sort of things.

Jarrold: There's so many different games and we used to have this as a PDF. So we would give 200 games in a PDF and people could download that. And what do you think typically happens when people get a PDF on their computer?

James: It stays there and never gets opened.

Jarrold: Exactly. But we took that same content and turned it into this very simple mobile app that was navigable, people could save games, they could come back to them, and get reminded of them. And it's just made it easier – same content, just easier. And that now becomes this really well-sought-after content piece. We sell it for about \$2.99.

But the real secret is that we have their application forms for our membership inside that app. And we also pixel everyone who uses it. And then they're in a custom audience on Facebook, so that we can market to them. And we get their email address when they register for the app. So that's what I mean by using like, these little micro-content pieces, almost like a lead magnet, but it's just in app form. And that's been really successful for us and other people that we've done it with.

Simple is best

James: Right. So I think the genesis of [The App Match](#) was, if you've got a business already, you'll find the app that best matches them. And there are already app templates, or predone apps that you can just plug into, rather than have to pay someone \$50,000 to code one from scratch [which] would be probably about the worst thing you could possibly do ever,

Jarrold: We still get people asking us, you know? They want to go down this really convoluted path for their first app, and I say that you could do that, and you could spend 50K or you could do this way more affordably, way more lean, get a good result for your customers. And if it turned out that that's something you needed to do, you could scale up, like what we did in our own business. But most of the time, James, simple is best. And I think you'd agree with that, too.

James: Someone said exactly the same thing on the [previous podcast episode](#). I do like the simple approach.

While we're on that topic, that kind of describes the evolution of the mobile apps. For my own app, I remember that the first one we had was quite simple, it just floated my website inside the app. So the app was a browser for my website. And everything that happened on the website would happen in the app, because it was just relaying the exact same site. That was version one, right?

Jarrold: Yeah, very simple. Just the illusion of an app, really.

James: And then we moved to more of a hybrid approach where there was some aspects were native and others were web based.

Jarrold: So that would explain the current, at the time of recording, [SuperFastBusiness app](#). There's the membership which is still floating the browser but then there's other stuff that we do that is native. And then as in current, the current moment, we are working on the native SuperFastBusiness, and that really illustrates how tech changes and how things that were way more expensive, you know, only a couple of years ago, have become more affordable. And you're sitting there now, and you absolutely probably could have an app for your business. And it wouldn't have to cost the 50K, 100K like it used to.

James: Yeah, that's amazing. So the native integration is where the app is doing some pretty clever things. And luckily, the technology is there where you can just plug into a platform that's already around and roll it out. You've had some success with this for quite a few users in different types of membership platforms. And you've got one that works for my membership platform now, too.

Jarrold: Yeah.

James: So in summary, we've covered a few topics here. In bullet points, Jarrod is the guy I look to for the technology. Jarrod has been helping my businesses with the apps themselves to make sure they're usable. And mine was a free to get from iTunes, from [Apple](#) and from [Google](#).

Apple, Google, or both?

Which is interesting, I want to ask you, Jarrod, whether it's important to be in both of those marketplaces.

Jarrold: It certainly is, yes. If you're building an app, you're going to have segments of your audience in one of those camps, and they'll most certainly ask the question like they did to you, James, when we first put your SuperFastBusiness app out – where's Android? Of course, it came a few weeks after that but you have to be in both spaces.

James: Yeah, good to know. And then we've talked about how the technology has changed a bit, what sort of apps are working well, who can get the value from them, and of course, why it's pretty important to actually get help with it.

So anyway, if you've enjoyed this discussion, we certainly will be interested in some comments and questions to guide us in the future Tech Talk Series episodes. Jarrod, I really appreciate you coming, bringing us up to speed and for all your continued help and development for creating an amazing app that has helped my business. Because if you looked at my membership nine years ago to now, some things are the same, like similar amount of members, similar amount of topics, etc. but different topics, different members, different technology running it, different website platform, different email lists, different hosting. It's all changed, but some things are the same and some things are very different.

Jarrold: Would you say that it's a bit more simple in all that as well, that the tech has made it become easier?

James: It has become simpler. And, you know, I've certainly been able to leverage both of my communities to become much more profitable, because I've got a simple solution. So I mean, just sticking them on Amazon for a start is great for my websites. I don't think Amazon's going anywhere in a hurry. And it's just given a fast, good experience. And it's easy. And then the way that the technology is allowing people to access it, means they're getting better results. I couldn't offer personal private coaching without being able to use an app for myself to navigate my own forum and deliver these coaching messages in an efficient, effective way.

So that's what's made it better because, you know, the irony is, the biggest user of my two communities is me. I've done the most posts by not even a close margin. I'm using my forum every day and the app is such an important way to access it, so I'm really excited about the native integration. And will speak to you in a future episode. Jarrold?

The App Match Challenge

Jarrold: Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, I'm happy to if anyone has any questions and wants to actually challenge the App Match concept and you think that you've got a business that does not have an app in its potential arsenal of products or lead generation sources, send me the challenge and I'll tell you and massage your way into how an app could absolutely, realistically work for you. And you might be really surprised what it would be.

And we've seen some tremendous examples of people, you know, selling like clotheslines. What could they potentially use an app for? But there's obviously lots of scenarios where they could sell an app and use it as a lead source. So it's a hugely profitable potential avenue for leads and for your business. And yeah, challenge me. Send me the strangest business proposal and I'll see if I can turn that into an option.

James: There you go. Where do they contact you, Jarrold?

Jarrold: At TheAppMatch.com.

James: Perfect. Thanks, mate. I'll speak to you soon.

Jarrold: See you.



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