

## Smart-phone apps head to battle zones

Scores of sophisticated mobile apps have arrived in recent months

- By John Edwards
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The tactical edge might seem like a strange place to use a smart-phone application, but with the Army moving forward on its strategy of placing smart phones into the hands of frontline troops, sophisticated apps are now popping up in the most unlikely — and unfriendly — places.

Connecting Soldiers to Digital Applications (CSDA) is an initiative sponsored by the Army Capabilities Integration Center and the Army CIO with support from the Army Training and Doctrine Command and other Army organizations, according to an Army news release. In Phase 1, the Army launched several training- and office-oriented pilot projects using a variety of smart phones. CSDA Phase 2 is assessing the value of smart-phone apps for tactical operations. Planned future efforts will include a gateway and base stations to provide integration with tactical radio networks and battle command systems.

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Spurred by the Army's smart-phone plans, scores of sophisticated mobile apps, many designed for use in battlefield conditions, have arrived during the past several months. The Army has even created its own app store — the Army Marketplace — that's designed to give military personnel a convenient place to look for various types of smart-phone software. Meanwhile, commercial software developers have stepped forward with offerings that target a wide range of tactical and support needs, including intelligence gathering, planning, team coordination and emergency support.

SoldierEyes, for instance, is designed to be the app equivalent of a Swiss Army knife. The software, which runs on iPhone, Android and Windows Mobile devices, aims to help military personnel effectively react to and manage missions and emergencies. Developed by Overwatch Systems, a Textron subsidiary, SoldierEyes lets users receive and gather information about a specific mission as it occurs in real time. The software helps teams respond to events using critical data provided to their smart phones as well as manage investigative processes with command and control centers and other support groups.

With Army support, a growing number of soldiers have begun developing their own smart-phone apps for distribution via the Army Marketplace and other channels. One such tool, Tactical Nav, is an iPhone app that improves firing accuracy by allowing users to share target data before launching an attack. Developed by Army Capt. Jonathan Springer while serving as a battalion fire support officer in eastern Afghanistan, the application enables a squad to carry out joint artillery and mortar strikes with every member knowing the exact direction and location in which to fire.

### About the Author

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