

Apps that have changed the world

For better or worse (but mostly for better), mobile apps have shaped our modern world. There is an app for almost anything we can think of. They satisfy our need for information, make communicating and connecting with people easier, help to increase our work productivity and make everyday tasks simpler. The following six apps are considered to have made the biggest impact on our lives so far.

Even before it became an app, Google had got us used to having information at our fingertips. But what really revolutionized the way we perceive the world are **Google Maps**. With a smartphone and a decent connection, we can't get lost any more. It also provides recommendations on restaurants, shops, clubs, and all the different ways to get there. It is great not only for car drivers but also for people using public transport or even for bike riders.



It is difficult to single out just one social network, because **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **Twitter** have similar impact, though in different ways. They started out as a way to keep us connected to other people, but have evolved over time. Nowadays, they are the fastest way to keep up-to-date with current events. We can get the most relevant news, weather forecast, or even updates if there is a disaster, so we know whether our family is safe, and how we can help the victims.



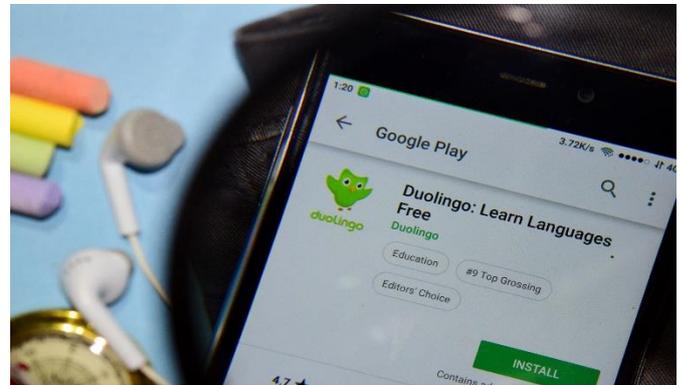
In under ten years, **Uber** became the largest cab operator in the world, although it does not own a single car. It connects drivers with their clients, showing the user where the cab is and its estimated time of arrival (ETA). It is easier to pay for than a traditional taxi, as it is linked to the users' debit or credit cards. These are just some of the reasons why more than 8 million people in hundreds of cities across 70 countries use Uber on a daily basis.



Just like the previous app, **AirBnB** does not own a single property, but is the world's largest accommodation provider. How is this possible? The idea is to connect house and flat owners with their guest. In this way, the cost of the stay is lower than it would be in a hotel.



Duolingo is an app that currently has 21 language courses. It helps people learn foreign languages with no cost and lots of fun. It also helps with the translation of documents for people or companies who can't afford a translator. It is easy to use, the content is interactive, and the learning structure well researched. Thanks to the data collected from the users, Duolingo improves its teaching methods to make the learning process better and faster.



Questions:

- 1 **Research:** How many people around the world use mobile phone apps, and which ones?
- 2 Which apps do you and your friends use most?
- 3 Which of the apps from the text do you use a lot? Why?
- 4 If they decided to discontinue an app, which one would you most hate to lose?
- 5 What did people used to do when they didn't have the apps mentioned? How did they keep in touch, meet, get a taxi, find accommodation?
- 6 Do you need an app for something, but it does not exist yet?
- 7 Can you think of some future apps? How would they be useful? Think of their design as well: come up with an icon and name.