

Developers Say They're Ready to Build Windows Phone 8 Apps

By Robert Mullins | Posted 2012-10-25 [✉ Email](#) [🖨 Print](#)



At the Sprint Open Solutions Conference application developers who've been building applications for Apple and Android devices say they are shifting their attention to software for the coming Windows Phone 8 OS from Microsoft.

SAN JOSE, CALIF. – [Mobile application](#) developers who've concentrated most of their efforts on creating applications to run on Apple iPads, iPhones and various Google Android OS devices are now starting to shift their attention to Windows Phone 8 with the mobile operating system due to officially [premiere Oct. 29](#).

Developers interviewed at the Sprint Open Solutions Conference Oct. 24 and 25 here say they have had to concentrate on writing apps for the Apple iOS and Google Android platforms because that's where the customers are.

The Apple App Store has 975,000 apps, 275,000 of them optimized for the iPad, according to the latest count. The Google app store, now called Google Play, has 675,000 apps for Android-powered smartphones and [tablets](#). The Microsoft Store, whose opening will coincide with the [debut of Windows 8](#) Oct. 26, offers an inventory of 100,000 apps and games, according to a company statement.

Microsoft faces a chicken-and-egg dilemma in that developers are reluctant to build apps until there are more WP8 devices on the market and consumers are reluctant to buy WP8 devices until there are more apps available.

But developers at the Sprint conference see the market starting to turn.

"People are beginning to realize that their device can do more and be more with better apps," said Jacob Orrin, director of business development at Quixey, a maker of an application

programming interface (API) for creating an application search function inside a mobile Web browser.

Quixey APIs power the search function in Maxthon's mobile browser and as just announced Oct. 24 at the Sprint event, Skyfire Horizon will add a mobile search function powered by Quixey to its browser extension [platform](#).

As many as 63 percent of application downloads in the Apple and Android stores are apps the user found through search, said Orrin.

While Quixey has been devoting its efforts toward the Apple iOS and Android platforms, he finds the possibilities with [Windows Phone 8](#) "exciting."

"Microsoft doesn't shy away from a challenge," Orrin said. "We know they've been behind in the mobile space for a while now, but they're not scared of trying something fantastic and really going with it."

He also lauded Nokia for [leveraging](#) its Symbian app development team to help benefit the Windows Phone ecosystem. Nokia is phasing out its Symbian OS for its devices and replacing it with Windows Phone.

Microsoft may also gain wider adoption in the application space given the [enterprise](#) focus of the company with Microsoft Office, which can run on Windows Phone 8, Windows 8 RT for tablets and Windows Pro 8 for desktop computers, Orrin said.

His sentiment is seconded by Toby Rush, CEO of EyeVerify, a startup that delivers access authentication for smartphones to access a corporate network or a highly secured site such as a bank Website.

EyeVerify uses unique [technology](#) to identify a user by taking a photo of the user's eyes with the device's camera. The camera saves an image of the veins in the sclera, the white part of the person's eyes, not the iris, which Rush says are more accurate than a retina scan and more unique than fingerprints.

EyeVerify only launched in January, got its Apple application approved just four weeks ago and expects to release its Android app in November, Rush said. Next up is [Windows Phone 8](#), as EyeVerify bases its rollout plans on which platforms are most in demand.

Given its enterprise bent, EyeVerify sees Windows Phone 8 as a viable platform to accommodate the bring-your-own-device (BYOD) trend and the need for security for enterprises.

"Our next target is [enterprise](#), corporate, [virtual private network] or anything that involves corporate resources, so Microsoft makes a little bit more sense," Rush said.

But the bigger names at the conference were the most reticent about their support for Windows Phone 8.

Sprint declined to provide a representative to be interviewed about its support for Windows Phone app development, issuing only a brief statement: "Sprint is committed to providing a broad portfolio of operating systems for our customers including Windows 8, [BlackBerry] 10, iOS and Android. That's all we've shared publicly."

It's possible that Sprint is holding any further announcements until the official release of Windows Phone 8 at the Oct. 29 [Microsoft](#) event in San Francisco. The same may hold true for Samsung, which has [already unveiled devices](#) that will run WP8.

At the Sprint conference, Michael Ludden, marketing manager for Samsung's developer programs, presided over a presentation about upcoming workshops and hackathons all related only to Android. Asked afterward what its plans for WP8 are, Ludden would only say that "Samsung has announced devices for both of those platforms [WP7 and WP8] and all we can say is they're very important for us."

Corporate caginess aside, Windows Phone 8 has brighter prospects, though it's still unclear how long it will take for it to gain serious market share against Apple and Android.

"Microsoft has a huge base of developers and the great majority of them are excited about the prospects for Windows 8," wrote Francisco Kattan, vice president of marketing for Tiggzi, in an email. Tiggzi is a [cloud based service](#) for developing apps across OS platforms, but was not represented at the Sprint Conference.

"Windows 8 will enable the Microsoft ecosystem with a platform to deliver more compelling experiences across more form factors and this presents a significant opportunity for them," Kattan said.

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