



Staff from Frankwell-based marketing and events agency Yarrington with their new MyAppuccino branding

Appy talking

By Carl Jones

Shropshire is no stranger to an industrial revolution. And now, more than 300 years after Abraham Darby's iron smelting discovery changed the manufacturing landscape, the county could be sitting on another huge game-changer.

The mobile application market – already worth trillions of pounds – is set to skyrocket over the coming years as we choose to run more parts of our daily lives through apps on smart devices.

But there's currently one big sticking point . . . a massive shortage of trained software developers in the UK, which means that supply simply can't meet the current levels of demand.

The cost and complexity of producing an app has also been prohibitive to the vast majority of businesses.

Step forward MyAppuccino, a new Shrewsbury-based venture which believes it is about to re-boot the market.

After years of behind-the-scenes development, it has perfected a system which means that, if you have the know-how to build a WordPress website, you can create an app for iOS or Android devices too.

Like a cup of cappuccino, there are four basic stages to the recipe. First, sign up for



MyAppuccino takes pre-existing skills and applies them to the production of apps

a free account. Then, create a theme for your app with whatever plug-ins you require. Next, pay a one-time fee. And finally, publish your completed work to the Apple store, Google Play, or whichever other platform you desire.

It brings the app-creating process, and costly development time, down from weeks or sometimes months, to just a few days.

"There is nothing else like it on the market today – we believe this really could

be a game-changer," says an excited Mark Allsop, managing director of Frankwell-based marketing and events agency Yarrington, which is behind the venture.

"The rise in the market for advanced technologies, such as smart building, building automation and human/machine interface solutions means the mobile app market is without doubt the one to watch, with pundits predicting a growth rate of 30% each year.



Sales from making smartphone applications in 2018 will exceed £4 billion With the know-how to build a WordPress website, apps are possible too

"Yet currently, the skills needed to develop and publish an app remain in short supply across the UK, and development times - and therefore costs - make apps out of many organisations' reach."

MyAppuccino is a smart piece of software that turns any WordPress web developer into an app creator.

It's not an iframe 'cheat' to convert a conventional website into a mobile viewing format – it's a real stand-alone app, totally compatible to WordPress systems. And this means that, whenever your WordPress website is updated, those changes can be automatically applied to your app too.

The UK is already the largest app developer market in Europe, according to research from Google, and accounts for more than a third of revenues generated from mobile software across the continent.

Some 8,000 UK companies are now involved in app development, employing close to 400,000 people. And Google predicts 30,000 further jobs will be created in the next 12 months as the market continues to expand.

Almost a fifth of European developers of smartphone applications are based in the UK, and sales from making smartphone applications will exceed £4 billion this year. By 2025, that figure is forecast to have hit an eye-watering £31 billion by 2025.

So, really big possibilities for MyAppuccino then? Mark says: "We genuinely believe this has the potential to change the playing field for app development.

"We've not just developed this to create apps for our clients. We're aiming it at digital and creative agencies, website developers and companies with in-house teams so they can offer this service to their clients at a lower cost and shorter lead-in time than their current offering."

The stakes are certainly high. The world's so-called 'Internet of Things' is already worth around £6 trillion, and with our growing dependency on smartphones, opportunities for IT industries to provide mobile apps show no sign of diminishing.

In the UK, the app development market for games, media, e-commerce and social networking is currently growing at around 14% year-on-year – but analysts say the lack of technical expertise and high cost involvement in app development are placing major restraints on market growth, and preventing even quicker expansion.

"Mobile apps first appeared in 2008, and in less than a decade they are everywhere," says Mark.

"According to a recent Statista report, there were nearly 150 billion mobile app



Mark Allsop with Yarrington director of digital services, Joshua Gidman



WordPress technology being used to create apps - it could be a game changer, developers say

downloads in 2016, and the number of apps available in the Google Play store tops 2.8 million, with a further 1.2 million-plus on Apple. The numbers are mind-boggling.

"Having a mobile application is now seen as essential for many organisations to sustain and grow their market, while for tech entrepreneurs, they are a crucial tool to grow their business."

Apps are now taking us to the future of technology – the stuff which was once only the domain of escapist sci-fi movies.

Developers and consultants are already thinking about how to use connected cars, refrigerators TV sets, and just about everything else that could function as a hub.

Joanna Shields, chair of Tech City UK, says: "The UK is a digital powerhouse across a range of technology sectors. The digital industry continues to drive the UK's economic future, and we're leading

the way in Europe when it comes to app development."

Although the market for mobile applications is already massive, it has far from peaked. There are more than a billion smartphones circulating around the planet, and the average app user spends more than 30 hours a month, on an average of 20 different apps.

So why wouldn't tech companies be trying to get a share of this dynamic and hugely lucrative marketplace, by staying ahead of the game?

● MyAppuccino will be showcasing its new product at an official launch event on October 2, at Havana Republic in Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, from 12 noon. It looks set to be one of the largest ever gatherings of Shropshire creative entrepreneurs. More details are available from www.myappuccino.com