

The Buzz

Five Free Apps That Boost Your Creativity

by Kristen Lowenwirth

Whether you have a mental block or are just overwhelmed, the last place a creative professional wants to be is stuck on an idea. Thanks to technology, there are apps to help unclog your fog and jumpstart your thought process. Try these five free tools to see if one of them helps you find a solution for your next creative block at home, in the office or on the go.

Coffitivity – coffitivity.com

Are you someone who can't fathom how people are productive in a high-traffic coffee shop? The entrepreneurs who built Coffitivity aren't. In fact, they're the opposite. Coffitivity provides the right amount of background noise to distract your distraction. The team believes that sound can stimulate the brain. They even share a study by the University of Chicago on the app's website to support their claim. Take this as another testimonial – I wrote this article to the clatter of the "Morning Murmur" mix.

Brainsparker – brainsparker.com

Shuffle and tap. These are the two steps it takes to spark

new ideas and solutions using Brainsparker. Brainsparker is essentially a mobile deck of cards with random statements instead of numbers. Simply shake your phone to shuffle the deck and then tap a card. One of the prompts you may be presented with could be "find new connections," "be audacious," or a picture of a light post. The notion is that a random word or image could trigger you to think of your project from a different angle. Brainsparker offers 252 free prompts; additional "digital cards" are available for purchase.

Paper by FiftyThree – fiftythree.com/paper

For some, nothing is better than getting an idea out using the traditional pencil and paper. Paper by FiftyThree comes in handy when your pencil lead snaps or paper is nowhere in sight. The app for iPad allows you to draw, sketch, outline, write and more using your finger or the company's Pencil product. In addition, FiftyThree encourages collaboration through Mix, an online community where creatives can share their designs with likeminded individuals to get a remix, or a different perspective, of their original ideas.



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Skitch – evernote.com/skitch

Most creatives know Evernote as a digital workspace for writing, sharing ideas and bookmarking Internet finds. A few years ago, the company expanded its portfolio to include Skitch, an app that enables a person to annotate a picture or a PDF. The basic features comprise arrows, markers, shapes and even emojis, which aid visual brainstorming and communication with others. Plus, the app automatically saves your file to your Evernote account, which eases access to your work and eliminates any concern of losing it.

Behance – behance.net

Behance is another app that many already know about and use. If you don't, it's an online stage where you can display and discover creative work, anything from architecture to web design. As much as others' works can be inspiring, Behance believes knowledge is the foundation of an idea. That's why it formed 99U (www.99U.com). This resource distributes practicable and progressive information, through blogs, books and conferences, to empower individuals to learn and expand their ideas.



Do you use a different app, tool or exercise to overcome creative blocks? Share your experience using it by emailing Klowenwirth@craftandhobby.org. We may feature it on the CHA Blog!

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