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Find an app to predict the weather

By Reid Kanaley

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How about a smartphone application that claims to predict the weather a year in advance? How can anyone do that? And who's interested in such information?

Questions, questions. Bill Kirk, chief executive of the company that just released the 99-cent **wt360 Pro** for iPhone, says his app uses statistics, math, and climate-cycle data to predict precipitation and temperatures up to 12 months ahead with about 80 percent accuracy.

As to whom it could help, Kirk has his own questions: "Who's not planning a wedding, a vacation, a party, a golf trip anywhere in the world? Who wants to book a \$3,000-a-week Shore house not knowing that will be the wettest week of the summer?"

Weather apps come in all varieties, from the simple six-day forecaster that comes with the iPhone to the feature-rich app from the Weather Channel.

Kirk's company, Weather Trends International Inc. in Bethlehem, Pa., has been predicting the weather far in advance for more than nine years, for clients who need a long look at which way the wind is blowing, including Wal-Mart and Coca-Cola.

For the record, the wt360 Pro tells me that New Year's Eve this year will be partly sunny with a high of 47 degrees and a low of 28. Shake the phone to move it ahead a day, and we see that the new year is destined to dawn with similar temperatures, but that it's going to rain.

The Weather Channel app doesn't do forecasts a year ahead, but it's free. It also has easy-to-use features that include social media. A "share" button gives choices to post the weather report to Facebook, e-mail the forecast, or see the weather prevailing at the hometowns of people on your contact list.



OLI SCARFF / Getty Images

If only they had used WT360 Pro for their iPhones, which claims to predict weather up to a year ahead of time with 80 percent accuracy, these sopping tennis fans might have given Wimbledon a miss.



This screen shot is from wt360 Pro, which uses statistics and climate-cycle data.

It also posts severe-weather alerts for the places you're interested in. Weather Channel video forecasts for localities and regions are a few taps away, along with "Must See" videos, such as the latest tornado footage from the seemingly endless ranks of daredevil storm chasers.

Weather+ is 99 cents from the International Travel Weather Calculator Association. Some reviewers complain about the large size of the app - a 271-megabyte download with an array of vivid background videos to illustrate each forecast. My download over WiFi got hung up several times.

The customizable display features a big clock, a five-day outlook, details for the day, and a bar showing current humidity, precipitation, air pressure, visibility, wind speed, and direction.

Another 99-cent app, **Fahrenheit**, from the company that makes Weather+, displays the current temperature on the app's little home-screen icon.