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[Home](#) » [Market Research](#) » App Math — Simple methods to know market numbers

App Math — Simple methods to know market numbers

The App Store is such a vital tool to your success. It's unlike any other industry in that there's a TON of information readily available for you. You can see the popular trends, successful graphics, top apps, companies making the most money, and customer feedback all in real time. However, to really understand the market you need to also do some behind the scene's research as well. With any part of the app development process, you have to be analyzing your numbers.

How do I know how many downloads someone else is getting on their app?

While most App Store stats are transparent, this is one thing you aren't really able to see. You can see general reports on downloads for top chart apps (below), but if you're trying to emulate particular apps, you won't be able to see how many downloads they're getting. However, there is a little formula we learned from Apptopia that can provide a relatively good guess for downloads of an app:

Number of reviews X 55 = number of downloads

However, this number can be skewed so you have to look at a couple things:

Are they actively encouraging customers to rate the app once inside?

Is there some where inside the app that makes it easy for customers to review?

If leaving a review is too cumbersome for a customer, there's a 90% chance they won't. Keep this in mind when building your apps.

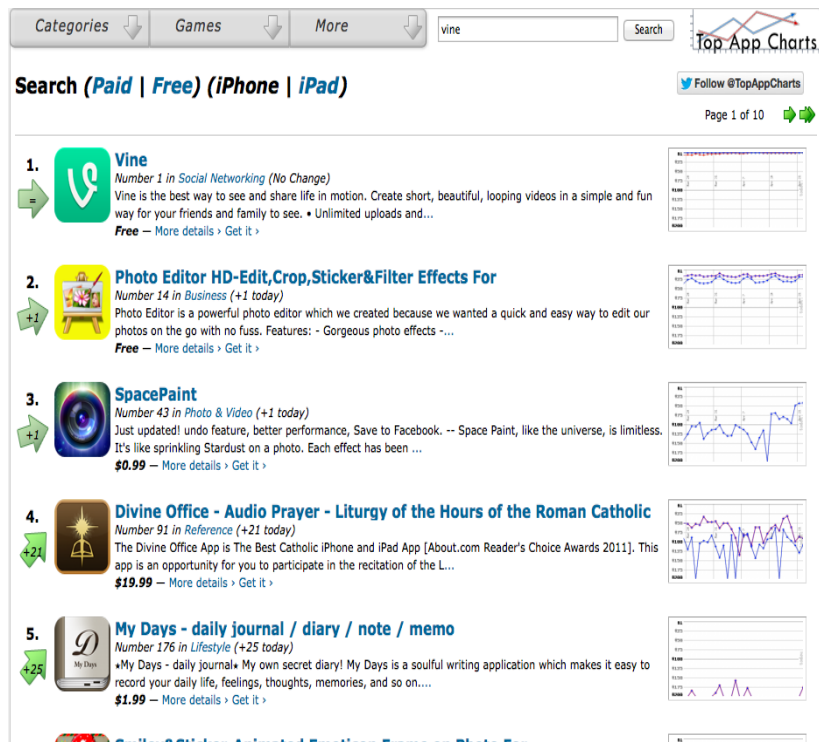
How do I know where people rank, overall?

The best tools for determining where a particular app ranks (other than the App Store) would be to lookup apps via AppAnnie.com or TopAppCharts.com.

You can view how much an app has jumped up or down in the current week, overall ranking history, daily rankings per country, versions and release dates. This is great data to keep track of an trend or idea's sustainability in the marketplace.

App Annie Top Charts

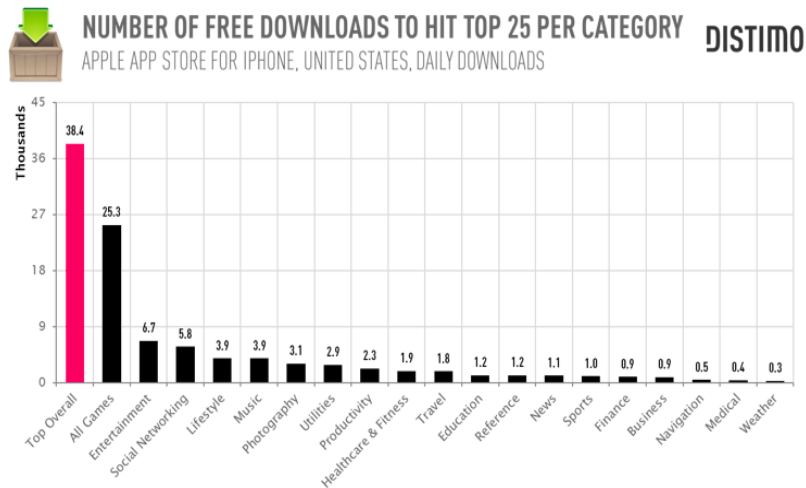
In-App Purchases		Paid		Free		Grossing	
• All Apps	1	📈 Cut the Rope: Time Travel ZeptoLab UK Limited	=	Vine Vine Labs, Inc.	=	📈 Candy Crush Saga ® King.com Limited	=
In-App Purchases							
No In-App Purchases	2	📈 WhatsApp Messenger WhatsApp Inc.	▲1	📈 Candy Crush Saga ® King.com Limited	=	📈 Clash of Clans Supercell	=
Countries							
Australia	3	📈 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle... Nickelodeon	▼1	Draw Rider Anton Vazhinsky	=	📈 Pandora Radio Pandora Media, Inc.	=
Canada							
China	4	📈 Fish Out Of Water! Halfbrick Studios	▲1	📈 Wedding Day Makeover Ninjabish Studios	=	📈 Hay Day Supercell	▲1
France							
Germany	5	📈 Minecraft – Pocket Edition Mojang	▼1	📈 Twitter #music Twitter, Inc.	▲4	📈 MARVEL War of Heroes Mobage, Inc.	▼1
Italy							



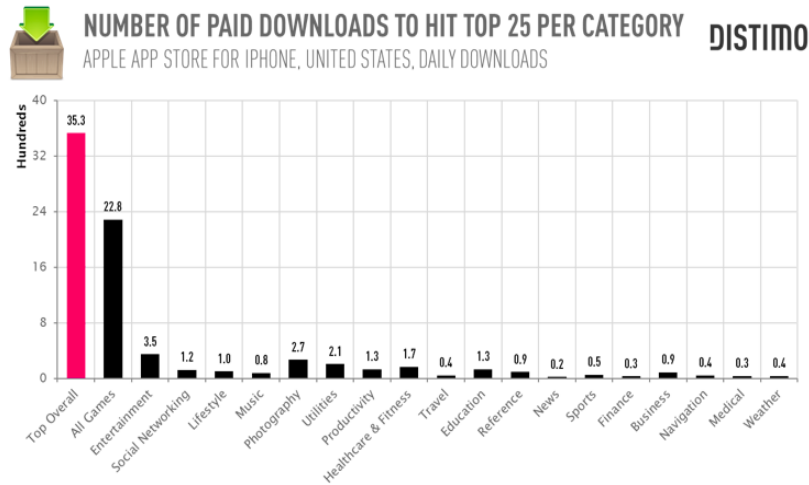
How do I find out how many downloads someone got to earn their position?

This is another "market secret," however Distimo has released some interesting stats that shed light on the top apps download counts. It varies by country, but it takes the most downloads to be in the U.S. top charts so that's the best data to reference. These charts show the daily downloads needed in the thousands to hit the top charts:

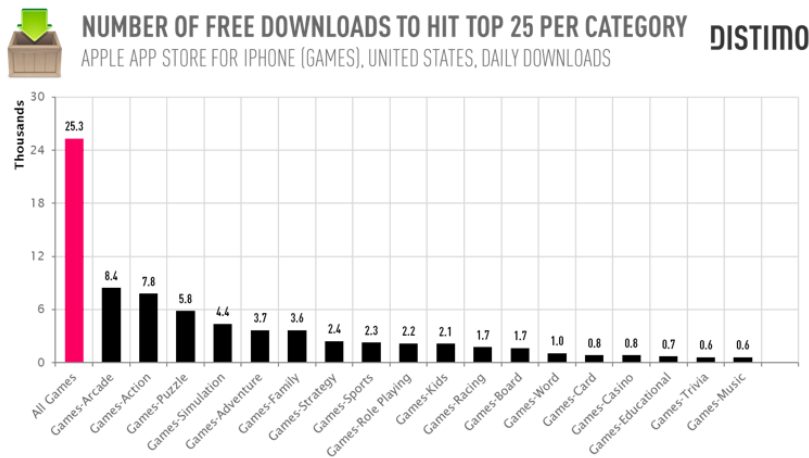
Top 25 Free apps



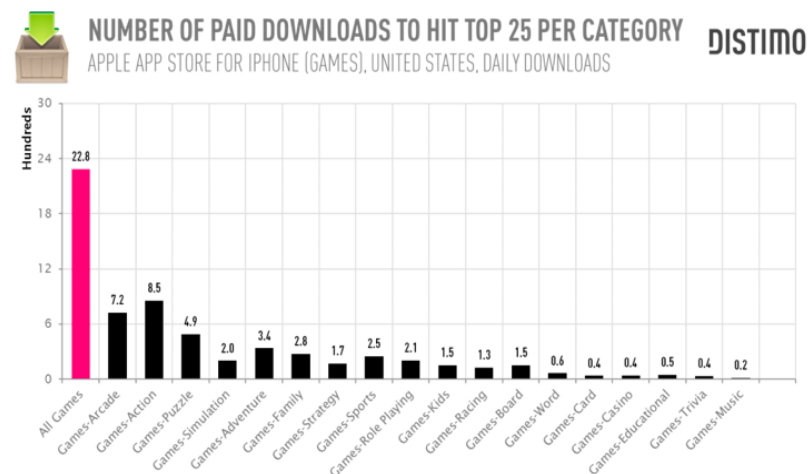
Top 25 paid apps



They also separated games from the total stats, since Games are the most popular category with many subcategories, which is broken down below.



Top Paid games

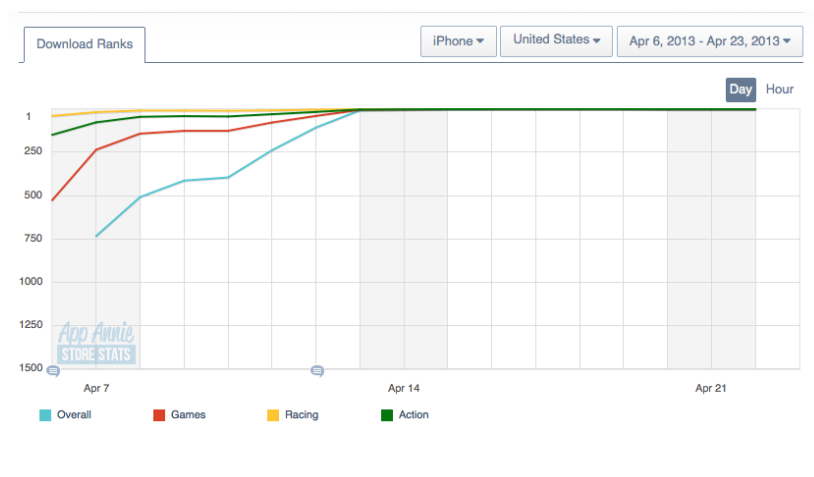


So what do top downloads mean in terms of revenue? It depends on the system that particular app has in place (ads, IAPs, network, price), but a statistic from AdWhirl says that top 100 apps can make \$400 to \$5,000 per day on ads alone.

How do I find out how long it took them to earn this many downloads?

If it takes almost 40,000 to earn Top Overall free, then you compare to App Annie's "rank history" to establish how long

a particular app took to get this many downloads. As you can see below, Draw Rider (currently ranked #3 free) took about 3 weeks to hit their current top 10 status. You can see that Saturday, April 13 was when their app jumped to the top. Why? It probably had something to do with their April 12 "new version" release (noted by the message bubble icon on the bottom line).



If I wanted to find a place to create an app with less competition, how would I figure out this information?

There are a couple different factors in determining a marketplace with less competition:

1. Category
2. SEO
3. App Market (Apple vs Android)

For one, you can look at categories. Automatically, you will see Games has a lot more competition by sheer numbers. However, this is where a lot of people are making their money right now. The app marketplace is a little different in that less competition, or "first-to-market" doesn't necessarily mean better chances – it could mean that there's less interest from customers.

You might also assume Android apps will make you more money due to less competition, but that's not necessarily true either. Research has shown that developers make the most money with iOS apps. But due to growing popularity, Android is starting to close that gap. Android has less guideline rules than Apple, so you are able to "get by" with more things than on the App Store. You may want to consider developing for both to test out your numbers and determine where you feel you are gaining the most advantage. However, right now that advantage is developing for iOS.

App SEO is something you can leverage to minimize the competition. This involves keyword, title, and description research. A site we like to use to determine app seo is Appcod.es. This site will determine the popularity of a keyword, competitors, and your chance that users are searching for it. This is similar to the "Google keyword search," but slightly less accurate since Apple doesn't disclose information quite as openly as Google. However, it's still extremely beneficial in analyzing your SEO data.

Search queries: (edit). Some were cached over 24h ago (refresh)

count	1wk	pos.	search query	🔥	chance	
25	∞	∞	discovering	-	57%	➤
28	∞	∞	investigate	32	50%	➤
70	∞	∞	ispy	33	42%	➤
87	∞	∞	reveal	32	42%	➤
>100	∞	∞	seek	32	42%	➤
>100	∞	∞	detect	32	42%	➤
>100	∞	∞	discover	42	42%	➤
>100	∞	∞	chase	∞	42%	➤

Your notes:
e.g. words that didn't fit, but you might test them in next version, ones that

click to see the iTunes search for the phrase

pos ← your current position

1wk ← position about 1 week ago

count ← apps competing for the query

🔥 ← popularity of the query (0-99).
"∞" means "no data but probably not too high"


chance ← chances of getting to top#16 in iPhone search or top#9 in iPad search

Even with Apple's transparent market (aka iTunes App charts), these are the "behind-the-scenes" numbers that appreneurs sometimes forget to consider upon developing and marketing their apps. Using these tools will help you best assess the market and gain a competitive advantage on the App Store.

What are your favorite tools for researching app numbers?

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1 comments



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Nick Walter · Wilsonville High School

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