

**I have compiled a list of my favorite apps, most of which I have found very useful as an airline employee. While most of these apps are available across all smartphone platforms, my perspective is from the Android market, so I'm not certain if they're available for the Apple or RIM markets.**

**By Capt. Greg Roberts (United)**

*Editor's note: This article is adapted with permission from the summer/fall 2011 issue of Bayliner, United Council 34's publication.*

## Free apps (captain's special)

**ALPA Mobile**—This app is continually evolving and becoming even more useful. It now has a complete jumpseat guide showing airline jumpseat policies as well as contact phone numbers. In the private members-only area, after signing in with your member number and password you have access to the master executive council section with committee listings and contacts. The app is available for Droid and iPhone users and for the Blackberry market but with fewer functions (scan the QR code to download the apps).



**Flight Plan Mobile**—This free app interfaces with the website [fltplan.com](http://fltplan.com). Do you ever wish you had the capability that Dispatch has to view our flight plan overlaid on the current Doppler radar map? Well, now you do. You can even view any airborne flight with its actual route, including any reroutes. Other functions with this app include one-button push to get airport weather, including METAR, TAF, and NOTAMS. You can even download airport charts (10-7, 9-1, etc.). Even more functionality is available if you sign up (for free) on [fltplan.com](http://fltplan.com).



**Relax & Sleep**—Trying to sleep after flying the all-nighter, only to have loud noises in the hallway, and the air conditioning isn't loud enough to cover up the errant noises or it cycles on and off? This app is basically a white-noise generator on steroids with more than 50 sound selections that can be used independently or mixed together with other sounds with fully customizable sound levels. Your phone or alarm will still come through while this app is active.



# There's (or We For

**Skype**—When in Wi-Fi range, this app allows you to use your Skype account straight from your mobile device to talk into your phone just as you would if you were on your mobile network while away in foreign locations. The app is free; however, to make calls to land lines or cell phones requires a balance on your Skype account.

**Viber**—An alternative to Skype, try Viber for free international (or domestic) calls and text messages to other Viber users using 3G/4G or Wi-Fi (Skype only allows calls on a Wi-Fi network). Just get your friends and family members to also download Viber. It uses your existing contact list and recognizes which ones are already on Viber. This app is also a good option for anyone who has a limited text and/or calling minutes plan.

**Google Translate**—Translate any word or sentence from one language to another, then send it via SMS or e-mail without retyping it. After translating your entry, just press the speaker button to hear the correct pronunciation.



**TuneIn Radio**—Are you always on a trip when your favorite football team is playing and want to hear the play-by-play or do you find that you just want to listen to a hometown radio station? TuneIn Radio is a simple and free app that once loaded on your mobile device will give you streaming access to more than 50,000 channels of local, global, and internet radio.

**Mobo Music**—Free MP3s downloaded to your phone. Just type in the name of the artist or song, then select Download, and the song is added to your phone memory or SD card.

**Ringdroid**—Want to use one of your MP3s as an incoming ringtone but the intro to the song is too quiet for you to hear in a loud environment? Ringdroid allows you to customize any song to start and end from any point, enabling you to pick your favorite section of the song as your ringtone.

**Myxer**—This app interfaces with the myxer.com website and has hundreds of free and pay sounds to assign as incoming ringtone or SMS text alert.

**Gasbuddy**—Interface with gasbuddy.com to find current gas prices at local gas stations. You can load in your favorite stations for a one-click view to find the cheapest gas. Frequent-user updates keep the database current. While traveling, you can use this to plot the best gas stops along your route.

**Handcent SMS**—This independent SMS app has better functionality than most stock messaging applications for incoming and outgoing SMS messages, and it also lets you assign independent sounds for each incoming SMS.

**Pocket Cloud**—This is a free app (also available is one paid app with more functionality for \$14.95) that gives you access to your always-on home computer through VNC interface. With this app you get full-function access to any program or file on your home computer as if you were sitting in front of that computer.

**No LED**—If your smartphone screen goes black with no LED notification of a missed call, SMS, or voice mail while out of the room (specifically the Galaxy S and other Samsung phones), then you might find No LED useful. With any missed event, a different customizable colored pixel blinks and moves around the screen, giving you a visual alert of anything you might have missed.

**Where/Places/Yelp**—All are good GPS-based apps that give user reviews, addresses, and contact phone numbers as well as access to menus for pubs, restaurants, and areas of interest near your location. Good for those 19-hour and 59-minute layovers in unfamiliar cities.

**Scanlife**—This is a good barcode scanner and is useful when shopping. Just scan the product barcode and the app will interface with online price comparisons to compare other store prices.

## Paid apps

**FlightTrack**—\$4.99. As a commuter, this is possibly my most useful app, but I get quite a bit of use out of it while flying my trips as well. Just load in an airline and flight number, and the app will alert you to any change in departure time, arrival time, or gate assignment. Select a flight, and FlightTrack will give the historic performance and actual scheduled flight time (once the flight plan has been filed with ATC). You can also view the aircraft over a map once it is airborne (not as good as Flight Plan). As a commuter, just select “Find alternate flights,” and you will get a list of all flights from every carrier between the two city pairs (including whether they are delayed or not). Then, for those scheduled deadheads, there is also a link to Seatguru.com to determine whether you got stuck with a bad seat.

**PDAnet**—\$15.95. This app allows your mobile device to be tethered to your laptop and functions as a modem. You then use your laptop at whatever speed your phone is functioning at the time (3G, 4G). In some 4G areas, I have connected at 4–6 MBPS download speeds, quite often faster than the Internet access provided by the hotel (can you say Holiday Inn Chantilly)? Stuck in the cockpit or the terminal with a ground stop? Just fire up your laptop with PDAnet, and you are all set. 🌀