AppInventor vs. Appery.io

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AppInventor and Appery.io are tools used to create mobile phone applications (apps). They are excellent for anyone who wants to learn how to create mobile applications without having previous computer programming experience. However, they offer different features that are appealing to different users. Here we describe the main features of each tool and their pros and cons.

A major similarity between these two programs is the screen designer or editor. This is a simple drag and drop interface used to create the graphical user interface (GUI) of the app to be developed. The screen editor provides a set of components such as buttons, text boxes, lists, image containers, etc., that can be used to create the windows and elements the user will see in the screen. App developers can arrange the components on the screen and modify their appearance by configuring their properties such as the height, width, position, fonts, text, and color.

Once the screen design is completed, developers have to make the application behave as expected; that is, create the app's functionality. Here is where the first difference between the two tools comes in.

AppInventor provides a separate window called the *blocks editor* where the logic or functionality of the app is programmed. On the *blocks editor*, developers can find a list of components in the form of puzzle blocks that represent events, functions, and instructions for the phone. Thus, by dragging and dropping the instructions blocks in the right order and place, developers code the functionality of the screen components and the whole app. For example, if the app were to have a button to display a message when is clicked, developers would simply take the block that represents the click event handler of that button and place, in the right order, the instruction blocks needed to create and display the message.

In Appery.io, the way the functionality is coded is completely different. Once the component is placed on the screen, developers must click on the events tab to give their components a function. The number of options provided in the events tab is what really sets Appery.io apart, offering way more complex features. Some of these features include opening a URL, creating a pop up message or menu, setting an HTML attribute or even running a JavaScript code. Additionally, Appery.io provides an online database backend service where developers can store information from their application.

Although it is clearly more complex than AppInventor, Appery.io does not make the developer create every aspect of the application. Most of the

"programming" work is reduced to configuration by linking or connecting outputs to inputs from one component to another, in a graphical environment. Some of the functionality is already preconfigured. Thus, developers do not need as much programming knowledge. Working with the preconfigured functions is nice, easy, and quick. On the other hand with AppInventor, developers must program every part of the application by using blocks. It requires the user to understand computer-programming concepts in order to make the application function properly. The user has to actually use variables, expressions, if-then and loops statements, and all the techniques a computer programmer should know. AppInventor is a better learning environment for amateur programmers.

One additional advantage of AppInventor is the cost. AppInventor is completely free and users can create as many applications as they want. To use Appery.io a developer has to have an account. Free Appery.io accounts only allow creating one project at a time. Standard accounts allow three projects at a time for $19.00 per month. Premium accounts allow up to 40 projects for $135.00 a month.

With AppInventor, developers can only deploy their apps on Android based devices. Appery.io allows developers to create applications for Android, Apple iOS, Windows Phone, and other devices. This is its greatest advantage since not everyone who wants to create mobile applications has an Android device.

In conclusion, Appery.io is an amazing professional tool that allows amateur developers to create mobile applications without the need of computer programming knowledge. AppInventor, on the other hand, is a tool to gain computer-programming knowledge, since developers actually have to use the essential logic to make an app work. It is more of a graphical educational tool for teaching or learning computer programming. AppInventor is completely free. Appery.io provides free accounts; however, it requires a paid subscription to use the tool to its full advantage. Finally, the greatest advantage of Appery.io is that apps created with it can be deployed in different types of phones, including Apple iOS and Windows Phone. AppInventor's apps are restricted to Android based devices.