What would we do without our smartphones and connected devices? With 1.2 billion apps1 (as of 2015) and a steady stream of new ones coming our way, consumers have access to the world at their fingertips. Millennials (not to mention every succeeding generation) have grown up with this technology and will demand better access to information and resources. So how is parking evolving with the smartphone and mobile app revolution?

IPI’s 2015 Emerging Trends in Parking report found that technology continues to drive parking. Among the top 10 emerging trends in parking, half relate directly to a range of different technologies that have revolutionized the parking sector in the past few years.

**Top 10 Emerging Trends in Parking.**

- Move toward innovative technologies to improve access control and payment automation: 53%
- Prevalence of mobile applications: 47%
- Collaboration between parking, transportation, and decision-makers: 46%
- Demand for electronic (cashless) payment: 44%
- Real-time communication of pricing and availability to mobile/smartphones: 41%
- Demand for greater parking revenue: 35%
- Demand for environmentally sustainable solutions: 27%
- Wireless sensing devices for traffic management: 22%
- Need to accommodate electric charging stations: 20%
- Need for improved customer service: 20%

With 327.6 million cell phones in the US, and 64 percent of adults actively using them and downloading an average of three apps a month2, the parking industry has kept pace, offering apps designed to help customers locate, reserve, and pay for parking.

See the sidebar on the right for a sampling of this ever-expanding list.

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**Use Parking & Transportation Mobile Apps to:**

- Find a parking space.
- Reserve a parking space.
- Pay for a parking space.
- Compare costs to park.
- Report accessible parking abuse.
- Decipher parking signs.
- Avoid and contest parking tickets.
- Request on-demand valet parking.
- Access alternative transportation, including car share.
- Call for Uber, private cars, and taxis.
- Get public transit information and plan multi-modal trips.
- Arrange ride share.
- Find, reserve, and purchase bike share/rental.
- Get point-by-point directions, with real-time traffic information.
- Find, reserve, and pay for alternative fueling stations, including EV parking and connections.
- and more…
AT A GLANCE: Mobile Apps for the Parking Industry

So Why All the Interest in Mobile Apps?

Smartphone apps put real-time information into the hands of patrons. They can improve the convenience, security, and reliability of each parking experience. Customers locate and compare pricing for parking facilities, make parking reservations, and start and stop parking sessions from the comfort of their cars or before they even begin their trip.

Parking apps allow patrons to make more informed parking and transportation decisions that are based on real-time information. This increased access to information and convenience may reduce barriers to making a trip downtown or to another busy urban location. But the benefit does not stop with the consumer; parking apps and other mobile technologies can assist parking professionals through more efficient (and informed) asset management, increased compliance, and satisfied (and connected) patrons.

For the Parking Professional

Considering launching a new app or integrating with an existing app. Make sure you ask these questions first.

- What are your success factors and goals for the application?
- Will the app have universal log-in and be enabled for Google, Facebook, Android Pay, and Apple Pay?
- What is the business model of the app – how does it generate revenue? Does its business model affect yours?
- Who will own the data and usage of that data generated by the app?
- What security processes does the app provide? What does your organization need to provide?
- How will the app be updated to reflect changing rates and information? Will the console be linked to your system or require an additional process?
- What are the adoption and retention rates for the app to date? What is the cost to acquire a routine user?
- Who is responsible for the branding and marketing?

Resources for Additional Research

The Parking Professional: App Nation
CNN: Mobile apps transforming the future of parking
USA Today: Smartphone apps put parking spots at your fingertips