

# The use of apps for shopping malls

**The use of apps for shopping malls. A market overview for Austria, Germany and Switzerland**

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## **Structured Abstract:**

This research paper focuses on the appliance of real estate applications (RE-Apps) concerning apps in the field of shopping malls. For shopping malls apps are used as a marketing instrument and there are several RE-Apps concerning indoor mapping and orientation in the existing building. Apps are small programmes on smartphones or tablets which are classified by their usage. A sub-classification is made for the ability of Augmented Reality (AR) functions.

In the German speaking region only a view shopping malls offer an application for their customers. Our paper gives a market overview of which shopping malls in Austria, Germany and Switzerland have launched an app. Furthermore a comparison of the different app functionalities is given. First results have been shown at the International Jubilee Conference of the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy (UACEG) conference 2012 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The field of applications for real estate is not yet explored, especially the usage of apps for shopping malls. The work is based on extensive literature research providing a methodical comparison of applications available and qualitative interviews with several shopping mall marketing managers in Austria. Based on the results of the research the paper covers a structural and technological overview and a market potential analysis of apps for shopping malls with a visionary conclusion of expected future developments is given especially in the field of AR.

**Keywords:** app, application, augmented reality, smartphone, shopping mall, shopping center, indoor mapping, indoor navigation, new technology, real estate marketing

**Article Classification:** Research Paper

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**Running Heads:**

**THE USE OF APPS FOR SHOPPING MALLS  
A MARKET OVERVIEW FOR AUSTRIA, GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND**

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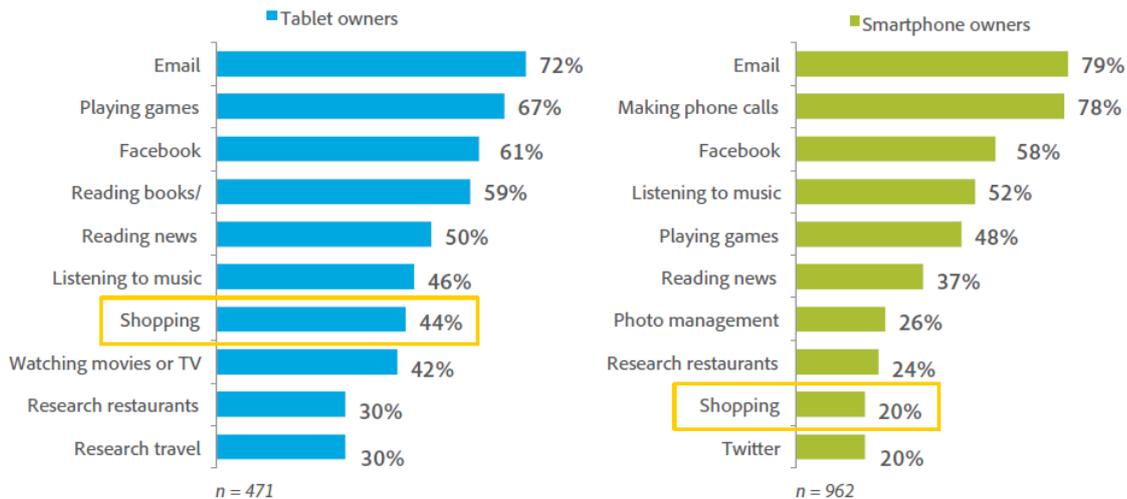
**INTRODUCTION**

During the last three years apps became very popular. In January 2011 only eleven billion apps were downloaded via Apple's 'App Store'. [Lang and Sittler, 2012b] In September 2012 thirty five billion apps have been downloaded. [Statista, 2012a] In less than two years the download figures raised up by more than 218%. These figures show that apps have a big market growth and a high market potential.

The four biggest virtual markets are Google's 'Google Play', Apple's 'App Store', Microsoft's 'Windows Phone Store' and RIM's 'Blackberry App World'. The market leader is Google's 'Google Play' with 800,000 apps. In Apple's 'App Store' there are 775,000 apps available. Microsoft's 'Windows Phone Store' and RIM's 'Blackberry App world' do not play a significant role in the app economy. [Statista, 2012b]

Another trend is the use of tablets. Tablet owners use their device for shopping twice as much than smartphone users do. [Adobe, 2013, p. 3]

## Use of tablets and smartphones for shopping

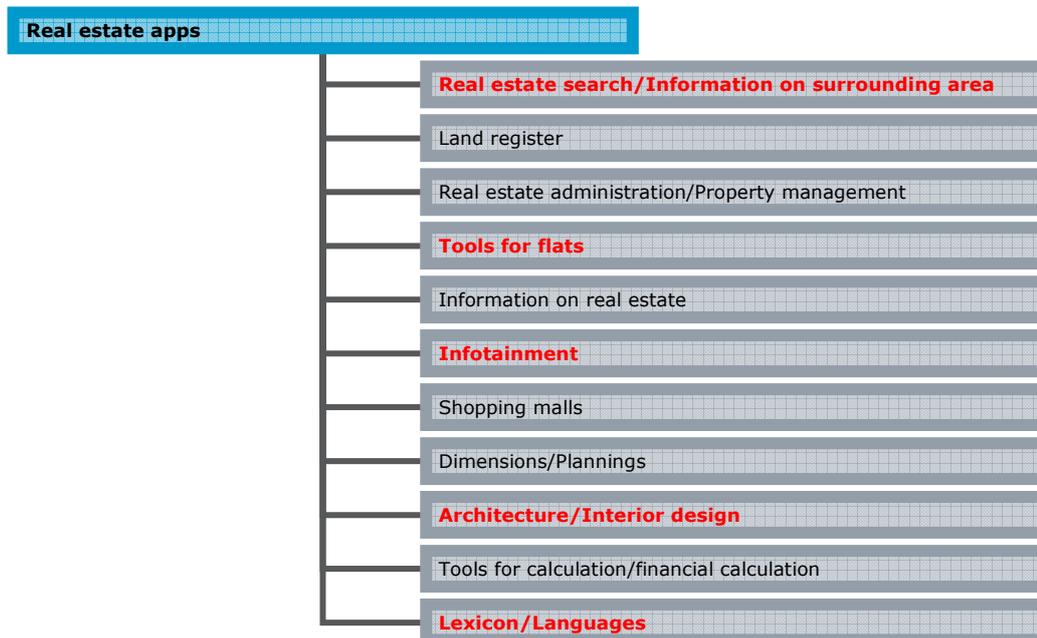


[Adobe, 2013, p. 3]

Applications (Apps) are small programs on smartphones or tablets<sup>1</sup> which were classified by their usage. A sub-classification is made for the ability of Augmented Reality (AR) functions (bold red). [Lang and Sittler, 2012b, p. 5] The main characteristics of an app are its simple usage and a flat training/learning curve. Furthermore a flat has a short life cycle. An app is a cheap product, created for customers and is distributed via virtual markets. [Lang and Sittler, 2011, p. 1]

It can be seen that apps for shopping malls/centers are one category in the field of real estate apps.

## Classification of the real estate apps



[based on Lang and Sittler 2012b, p. 5]

Apps are not common as a marketing instrument and as a part of a whole marketing strategy of a shopping mall in the German speaking region (Austria, Germany, Switzerland). Only a few shopping malls have launched an app. The shopping malls/centers which have an app use this 'tool' on the one hand to be seen as an innovative and dynamic enterprise and on the other hand to sell coupons or vouchers to their customers. [Wieking, 2012] An app has to produce an additional value for the customer. It has to be intuitively operated and must have an attractive design. [Mayer, 2012]

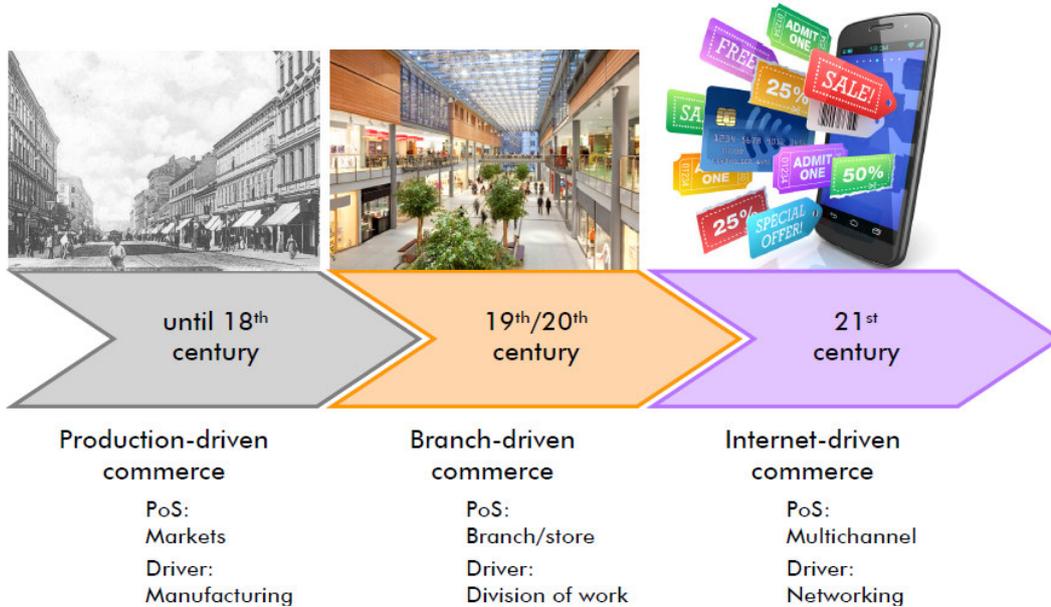
Furthermore the app requires frequent feature updates. If the app isn't updated regularly the audience/customers will lose the interest in the app and will quit using the app and quit coming to your website. An app has to be seen as a dynamic product. Each update helps addressing customer comments/suggestions/complaints and keeps the relationship with the customers intact. [Hughes, 2010]

**OVERVIEW OF APPS FOR SHOPPING MALLS**

“Shopping malls are large-scale, multi-functional types of business which are characterised by a consistently planning, form and construction. Furthermore each shopping mall has a central management and wide structure of supply (goods and services). Each shopping mall has its own image and has an individual marketing strategy”. [Besemer, 2004, p. 24]

If trade is seen in the mirror of epochs there are three states. Traditional production-driven up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, modern branch-driven in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century and individual in the internet-driven 21<sup>st</sup> century.

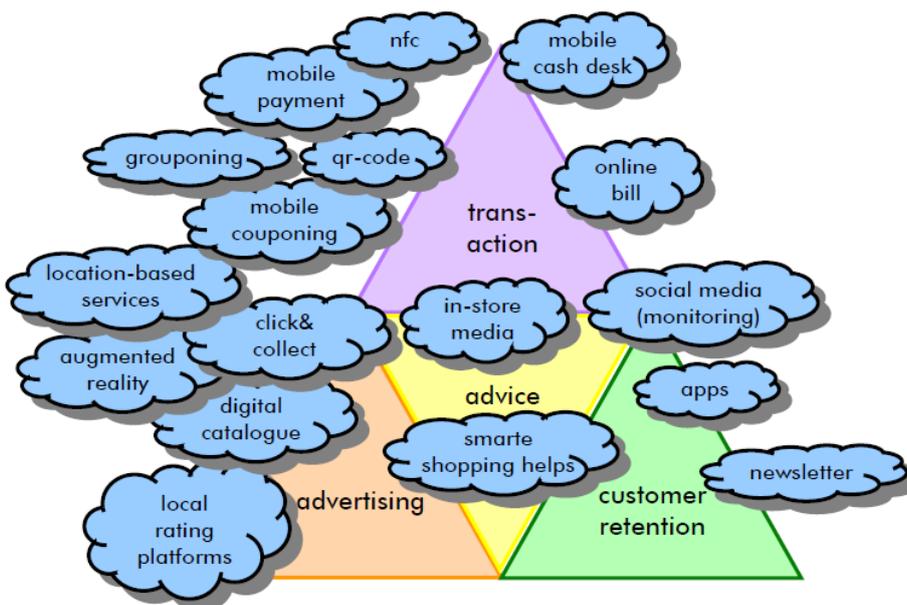
**Trade in the last centuries**



[adapted from Haderlein, 2012, p. 16]

Online trading is growing but the classic way of shopping would not be replaced by it. There will be changes in the types of shops. In five years there won't be any 'normal shops'. There will be flagship stores (showpiece of company), concept stores (special experienced shopping), pop-up stores (space is a venue that is temporary) and convenience stores (stocks a range of everyday items). Trading is leisure activity. Several ways of attracting the customers are arising. [Haderlein, 2012, p 19-23] And the technological development is growing rapidly. [Wengler, 2005, p. 44-45]

**Digitizing, internet and point of sale**



[adapted from Haderlein, 2012, p. 30]

## Findings in Austria

In Austria only four shopping centers (Donauzentrum, Messepark Dornbirn, Shopping City Süd, Shoppingcity Seiersberg) have launched an app. The app of ECE only gives an overview of the managed shopping malls of ECE.

Interesting is, that the smaller shopping centers were the first which launched an app. In May 2011 the first shopping mall app was launched by Shoppingcity Seiersberg. [Matuschek, 2012]

Seiersberg is only No. 4 in the ranking of Austria's largest shopping center (rankingweek, 2010). The second app was launched in June 2011 by Messepark Dornbirn [Walter and Weber, 2012]. Messepark Dornbirn is only No. 13 in the ranking. Shopping City Süd (No.1) and Donauzentrum (No.6) launched their apps in March 2012. [Lang and Sittler, 2012c]

## Overview of shopping mall apps in Austria



App-Name	Messepark Dornbirn	Shoppingcity Seiersberg	Shopping City Süd	Donauzentrum	ECE Shopping-Center
City	Dornbirn	Seiersberg	Vösendorf	Vienna	Vienna
Vendor	Einkaufszentrum Messepark Verwaltungsgesellschaft mbH.	Shopping Center Management GmbH / eLibera OG	Unibail Rodamco Austria Verwaltungs GmbH	Unibail Rodamco Austria Verwaltungs GmbH	ECE Projektmanagement G.m.b.H. & Co. KG
Operating System	iOS, Android	iOS, Android, Symbian	iOS, Android	iOS, Android	iOS
Price	free	free	free	free	free
Link	<a href="http://www.messepark.at">www.messepark.at</a>	<a href="http://www.shoppingcityseiersberg.at">www.shoppingcityseiersberg.at</a>	<a href="http://www.scs.at">www.scs.at</a>	<a href="http://www.donauzentrum.at">www.donauzentrum.at</a>	<a href="http://www.ece.com">www.ece.com</a>

[Lang and Sittler, 2012c, p. 185]

## Findings in Germany

Actually there are 444 shopping centers (with more than 14,000,000 square metres) in Germany existing [EHI Handelsdaten, 2012].

From the ten largest shopping centers in Germany only the CentrO Oberhausen has launched an app (December 2012). From the smaller shopping malls only the Kaufhaus des Westens (KaDeWe), Potsdamer Platz Arkaden (Arkadi), Lilien Carré, Boulevard Berlin, Dodenhof, Lago Shopping Center Konstanz (Lago Lobby), Ettlinger Tor, Alexa Shopping Center and the Allgäu Outlet have an app.

The app of ECE, iCenter and Arcaden App give only an overview of the managed shopping malls by ECE, and by and the mfi management Immobilien AG (Arcaden App) and furthermore shopping centers which are member of the German Council of Shopping Centers (iCenter App).

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**Overview of shopping mall apps in Germany**



App-Name	Alexa	Allgäu Outlet	Arcaden App	Arkadi	Boulevard Berlin	CentrO
City	Düsseldorf	Sonthofen	Essen	Berlin	Berlin	Oberhausen
Vendor	Sonae Sierra	Outlet Ventures GmbH	mfi management für immobilien AG	Freshmilk Creative Media GmbH	Woodapples GmbH	CentrO Oberhausen
Operating System	iOS, Android	iOS, Android	iOS	iOS	iOS, Android	iOS, Android
Price	free	free	free	free	free	free
Link	<a href="http://www.alexacentre.com">www.alexacentre.com</a>	<a href="http://www.allgaeuoutlet.de">www.allgaeuoutlet.de</a>	<a href="http://www.spandau-arcaden.de">www.spandau-arcaden.de</a>	<a href="http://www.potsdamer-platz-arkaden.de">www.potsdamer-platz-arkaden.de</a>	<a href="http://www.boulevardberlin.de">www.boulevardberlin.de</a>	<a href="http://www.centro.de">www.centro.de</a>



App-Name	Dodenhof	ECE Shopping Center	Ettlinger Tor	KaDeWe	Lago Lobby	Lilien-Carré
City	Posthausen		Hamburg	Berlin	Konstanz	Wiesbaden
Vendor	dodenhof	ECE Projektmanagement GmbH & Co. KG	APPKON GmbH	Karstadt Premium GmbH	Werbegemeinschaft LAGO Konstanz GbR	TISCO Softwareentwicklungs- und Beratungs GmbH, Woodapples GmbH
Operating System	iOS	iOS	iOS, Android	iOS	iOS	iOS, Android
Price	free	kostenlos	free	free	free	free
Link	<a href="http://www.dodenhof.de">www.dodenhof.de</a>	<a href="http://www.ece.de">www.ece.de</a>	<a href="http://www.ettlinger-tor.de">www.ettlinger-tor.de</a>	<a href="http://www.kadewe.de">www.kadewe.de</a>	<a href="http://www.lago-konstanz.de">www.lago-konstanz.de</a>	<a href="http://www.lilien-carre.de">www.lilien-carre.de</a>



App-Name	iCenter GCSC
City	
Vendor	Centerscout GmbH
Operating System	iOS
Price	free
Link	<a href="http://www.gcsc.de">www.gcsc.de</a>

**Findings in Switzerland**

From the strongest-selling shopping Centers only the Glatt shopping mall and the Centre Balaxert offer an app. A few months ago also the Pilatusmarkt Kriens had an app but this app does not exist any longer.

Furthermore also the ECE App and the App of the Swiss Council of Shopping Centers give an overview of Swiss shopping malls.

## Overview of shopping mall apps in Switzerland



App-Name	Glattzentrum	Centre Balexert	Marin Centre	ECE Shopping Center Stückli Shopping	Shopping Finder SCSC
City	Glattzentrum/ Wallisellen	Genf	Marin-Epagnier	Basel	
Vendor	Centerscout GmbH	Centre Balexert SA	Marin Centre SA	ECE Projektmanagement GmbH. & Co. KG	Centerscout GmbH
Operating System	iOS	iOS, Android	iOS	iOS	iOS
Price	free	free	free	free	free
Link	<a href="http://www.glatt.ch">www.glatt.ch</a>	<a href="http://www.balexert.ch">www.balexert.ch</a>	<a href="http://www.marincentre.ch">www.marincentre.ch</a>	<a href="http://www.ece.de">www.ece.de</a>	<a href="http://www.scsc.ch">www.scsc.ch</a>

[Lang and Sittler, 2012d, p. 69]

## VALUE FOR THE CUSTOMER

An app has to produce an additional value for the customer; it has to be intuitively operated and must have an attractive design. [Mayer, 2012, p. 204-207] For the individual customer convenience and shopping experience is important. So on one hand the convenience should minimize customers parking-, searching-, waiting- and payment-stress. An app should support convenience for the customer. On the other hand the shopping experience should be improved. Often the customer is more interested in shopping experience than in cheaper shopping. [Wengler, 2005, p. 42-44] The additional value can be created by several functionalities: [based on Lang and Sittler, 2012c, p. 185 and 004 Technologies USA, 2013, p. 10-11]

- » Center/Mall Maps
- » Store/Shop-Finder
- » Indoor-Mapping/Routing (with navigation functionalities)
- » Additional Information (e.g. for foreign customers)
- » News
- » Couponing/Promotions
- » Shopping-Lists
- » Car Finder
- » Administration of Gifts & Shopping Cards
- » Integration of Social Media (e.g. Facebook)
- » Gaming and entertainment
- » In-App advertising
- » Mall blog
- » Additional tools like QR-reader

Nearly all apps have a map functionality, with which a center map can be viewed. Additionally a store/shop-finder is offered. In all apps the indoor mapping functionality is always solved with identifying the current location with the nearest store, which means that you have to locate your current position yourself. The better way would be an location based service related from the positions of the WLAN router. So the common problem of no GPS data inside a building can be retrieved. [Lang and Sittler, 2012a] Sandström and Svenson point out that *“a common problem with shopping centers and malls is that the visitors do not know where to find certain stores or products. Visitors of the mall could use an indoor map to plan their shopping route or to find information about where the toilets, parking garage, or exits are.”* [Sandström and Svenson, 2010, p. 2] But there are several solutions that can solve that indoor-mapping problem to guide people through the mall on the smartphone. Several projects use the WiFi signal to orientate and find the correct position. [Lang and Sittler, 2012c, p. 186] Even Google has launched indoor-mapping functionalities for their Google maps service. This service is already available for the shopping malls KaDeWe and Dodenhof which offer an app, and for Galeries Lafayette Berlin, which do not offer an app yet. [Kuhn, 2012]

## CONCLUSION

While “stores are becoming ‘high-energy environments,’ where shoppers are encouraged to interact with products and spend more time in store” [Cordt, 2008, p. 54] Augmented Reality (AR) will become more important. The presentation of goods will get more effective with mobile search, buying decision helpers, extended packaging and promotion tools. AR can help couponing to be better used, products can be presented virtually by AR-tools – eg. the Lego Digital Box is already doing this an even promotion tours can be enhanced with this new technology. [Haderlein, 2012, p. 116-118]

The mentioned indoor mapping services can also be combined with social media. For example could Facebook be used by the user to tell all the friends in which shops they are in and they can leave comments and ratings about the different shops or goods for other users. [Sandström and Svenson, 2010, p. 2] This combination of social and geolocated services could enhance the shopping experience in shopping malls. [Gawlitta, 2012, p. 65] This social media trend is supported by a new study concerning retail apps an buying habits. It is mentioned that the most influence over mobile purchasing decisions comes from friends with nearly 90% by smartphone and tablet and from facebook with more than 50% by smartphone and tablet. [Adobe, 2013, p. 11] The app of Shoppingcenter Seiersberg will become such functionalities with the next update. [Matuschek, 2012]

The field of apps for shopping malls is not yet well explored. We covered the area of the German speaking region to give an overview of the available apps. As shown in a whitepaper additionally surveys of mall visitors could be made. [004 Technologies USA, 2013] This could be a future field of research.

Having an app is not a question of Yes or No, it is question of being competitive in the market. It is not granted that the flood of information from the center arrive customers and tenants. But the path is towards connection of digital and real shopping experience. [Diehl, 2012, p. 23] The thesis that the digital natives grow up with the internet and are constantly on social networks and therefore they buy only online in the future is not true. A whitepaper shows that the next generation has very different needs when buying. Not all of them are using online trade and apps. The majority of young consumers feels comfortable with stationary shopping. [Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, 2013, p. 30-34] But the integration of online and offline shopping is for future trade. It is not enough to interleave both channels. The requirements of the consumers have to be understood in a multi-channel approach and specifically covered. The range covers pure shopping pleasure up to exclusive optimization of purchasing efficiency. [Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, 2013, p. 35-37]

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> A tablet is a portable, flat and lightweight computer with touchscreen display.

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