

*September Newsletter 2012*

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## And the winner is...

In last month's TechPoints newsletter, we offered to give a TechSolutions mug to anyone who elected to Like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter, and also enter them into a drawing for a \$50 gift card. Well we conducted our drawing and are pleased to announce that Nancy Walter of Gateway Practice Services was the winner. We congratulate Nancy on winning the gift card and wish to thank all those who participated and will be receiving a TechSolutions mug.



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## Facing an Emergency? Turn to These Apps

These are dangerous times. Mother Nature is unleashing droughts and record-setting high temperatures. It seems a new tornado is ripping

through the Midwest every day. And those are just the big emergencies. What if you lock yourself out of your car when your toddler's stuck inside it?

Fortunately, there's a whole class of apps that can help you deal with emergencies big and small.

Here is a closer look at three of these apps that might be able to bail you out in case of an emergency.



### **AroundMe**

AroundMe has been around for a while, but it remains a top locator app. With it, you can find everything from the nearest gas station to the nearest bank.

It's easy, too, to see how AroundMe might help in case of an emergency.

Say your toddler is sick, you're in a strange city, and you need to find a hospital as soon as possible. Just log onto the app, click the category that you need — in this case, “Hospital” — and find the nearest medical provider to you.

It's little surprise that many consumers consider AroundMe to be a must-have app.

### **CPR & Choking**

The name of this app says it all: CPR & Choking will give you tips and full-fledged lessons on how to deal with a person who is choking or who is not breathing. It can be especially handy if you've never taken CPR classes or have forgotten what you've learned.

This app, which is free, was developed by the University of Washington and King County EMS to save lives. It contains a variety of videos that tell you exactly what to do if someone you know is in the middle of a medical emergency or cardiac event.

There aren't too many apps that can save a life. CPR & Choking is one of them.

### **Emergency Radio Free**

What if there's an armed criminal on the loose in your community? What if a tornado has been spotted?

You can stay informed with Emergency Radio Free, an app that lets you access hundreds of police, fire, weather, and other live emergency radio feeds from around the country.

It's easy, too, to identify and tune into radio feeds in your specific community. You can also save radio feeds to a favorites area so that you can access them quickly should an emergency strike.

Of course, no app, no matter how impressive, will be able to protect you completely from harm should danger arise. These apps, though, will give you the chance to be better prepared should an emergency strike.

If you would like more information, click on the link below to access an article from CNET. Contrary to the article's title, some of these apps, like the AroundMe and CPR & Choking apps, are available for the

Android and other types of smartphones.

[Read more at CNET.](#)

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## Need Some Brain Food? Follow These People on Twitter

Admit it: Your Twitter friends just aren't that engaging. They're wasting your time tweeting about what they ate for breakfast or what happened to their favorite character on their favorite reality show.

You crave more from Twitter. You actually want to learn something.

You're in luck. Mashable recently ran a list of 25 Twitter accounts that will make you smarter. Need some brain food? Then follow some of these mentally enriching Twitter accounts.



### Trivia that matters

Mashable lists Mental Floss first in its list of 25 must-follow Twitter accounts. The [@mental\\_floss](#) account is actually an extension of Mental Floss magazine. The magazine publishes esoteric trivia on a wide range of topics. For instance, the Mental Floss Twitter example published by Mashable states that for several years fine-art competitions were part of the Olympics. Did you know that?

In the same vein is the [@GoogleFacts](#) Twitter account. Though this account isn't actually affiliated with Google, it does provide plenty of offbeat facts to help make you at least seem smarter. Mashable's example? "You can't snore and dream at the same time."

### Some words from the experts

Of course, the best Twitter feeds are often from individuals. Fortunately, Mashable found plenty of smart people using Twitter to share their knowledge with the rest of us. One is Neil deGrasse Tyson. He's an astrophysicist who answers some often strange questions. Again, Mashable provides a great example: Did you know that a fly adds weight to an airplane even if the fly never lands during the plane's trip?

Elon Musk is plenty interesting, too. He's the CEO of SpaceX and CEO of Tesla Motors. He usually tweets about science and statistics. For instance, Mashable points to a recent tweet in which Musk pokes fun at the tobacco industry for saying 30 years ago that scientists still disagree on whether smoking causes cancer even though 98 percent of those scientists said that it did.

### The big brains

You can also find plenty of stimulating tweets from the biggest brains at the most important scientific and research organizations across the country. Mashable cited NASA as a prime example. NASA's tweets were especially relevant during the Mars Curiosity rover landing. You might also be interested in following the Twitter account of DARPA, part of the U.S. Department of Defense responsible for

developing new military technology.

[Read more at Mashable.](#)

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## Not using LinkedIn to Market Your Business? You're Missing Out

LinkedIn deserves to be ranked among the big three of social media sites, right alongside Facebook and Twitter. But LinkedIn is actually more important for your small business because unlike its rivals, this social-media site focuses specifically on business.

In other words, you won't have people on LinkedIn posting about how good their oatmeal tasted this morning.



Stephanie Buck, a writer for Mashable.com, recently wrote an illuminating post about how important it is for businesses to turn to LinkedIn for marketing. Here are some of her key points.

### Share your successes

As a small business owner you work hard. You have a right to share your success stories. Besides, promoting your company's successes will also encourage others to look at your business as a successful, thriving company. That's good marketing.

Buck recommends that small business owners post regularly about their new product lines, hires, and milestones on LinkedIn. She also recommends that owners include links in these posts to their external websites or to their YouTube channels.

Once business owners post these news bits, their updates will automatically show up on the activity feed on their company overview page and on the homepages of those LinkedIn members who follow them.

### Find new workers

If your small business is growing, you'll undoubtedly need to hire new employees. LinkedIn is a great place to find new workers.

When posting new job announcements on LinkedIn, not only will you be attracting the attention of an ever-growing network of business professionals, you'll also be telling your fellow business pros that you are, indeed, growing. This, too, is positive marketing for your small business.

### Expert advice

Buck also points out another benefit of posting regularly on LinkedIn: You can uncover great advice on both marketing and running a successful business from other pros who've already done this.

LinkedIn attracts some of the most successful owners of small businesses in the world, and many of these business pros are happy to share their advice and tips with others. Don't be shy: Ask your fellow LinkedIn professionals for their tips on how to keep a small business bustling in today's challenging economy.

[Learn more at Mashable.](#)

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## Odd Romance: Japan Still Loves the Fax Machine

We think of Japan as being infatuated with all things high-tech. It's why Apple loves the place; Japanese consumers gobble up the latest iPad and iPod offerings voraciously.

However, there's one piece of old, old technology for which Japanese consumers still have an unaccountable love — the humble and outdated fax machine.



In the United States we view fax machines as relics—but not at all charming and quaint like, say, an Underwood typewriter. It's a pain to deal with fax machines and remember all those numbers. And that screeching modem sound? We can certainly live without that.

But in Japan, the fax machine, despite the rise of email, is booming.

### Loving the fax

A recent story by BBC News took a closer look at the prominence that the fax machine still holds in Japan. The BBC cited a survey by the Internet Fax Research Institute that found that an amazing 87.5 percent of Japanese businesspeople consider the fax machine to be an indispensable business tool.

The BBC starts its story by interviewing a public-relations expert at a Japanese talent agency. Instead of emailing a proposal for a new project, the public-relations pro was handwriting a letter and faxing it.

His explanation? Communicating in this way better allows his feelings and passions to come through.

### Handwriting still king

This isn't unusual in Japan. According to the BBC story, handwriting remains important. In fact, most job seekers handwrite their resumes because Japanese employers judge people's personalities and character in part from the way they write.

It's why Japanese holiday cards are almost never sent electronically.

### Hard copies are a must

The BBC story says that Japanese people also prefer to hold actual hard copies of documents and

correspondence in their hands. This way, there is a more tangible record of what was said during meetings and what was proposed during business workshops.

It might be difficult to imagine in the United States, but there is a high-tech land in which the fax machine isn't considered a nuisance. So if you're a fan of the humble fax machine, consider taking a trip to Japan. You'll get some great food, see some amazing sights, and you'll be able to enjoy the screeching sound of fax machines in the air.

[Read more at the BBC.](#)

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## Apps That Speak Your Language, and Everyone Else's

You're traveling overseas this summer for the family vacation of a lifetime. Or maybe you need to travel to a foreign country for business. Problem is, you don't speak the language.

There's hope, though, and you can get it from your smartphone. Tech companies today offer a wide range of translation apps for tourists and business professionals who are traveling the globe.



Amy Burke, writing for the American Express OPEN Forum, recently highlighted some of the best of these apps. Here's what she recommends for travelers who need to surmount those language barriers.

### **Jibbiggo**

Burke recommends this app, which charges users \$4.99 for every language they need to speak, for its ease of use. The app, available on both iPhone and Android devices, allows users to speak into their smartphones or tablets in their native language. It then provides a quick translation into a specific language via text and voice.

Jibbiggo comes with more than 40,000 words in its vocabulary. It also doesn't require a network connection. This can be important to travelers in remote locations.

### **Dean Foster's Culture Guides**

These guides are a bit more advanced than Jibbiggo. As Burke writes, the guides are available for 12 countries so far. The apps provide users with an overview of these countries, maps, weather reports, and currency exchange rates. Of course, it also provides solid translation services.

### **Word Lens**

Here's an interesting app that relies on your smartphone's camera to translate. With this app, instead of typing in words or phrases, you can snap a photo of a street sign, menu, or brochure, and Word Lens will translate the writing for you.

The app is a bit limited so far; Burke writes that it only includes Spanish, French, and Italian to English — and vice versa — so far.

Still, it's a neat idea. The app is free, but each language will cost you \$4.99.

These apps represent just a small sampling of translation tools available to travelers today. If you're making a jaunt overseas, be sure to search your app marketplace for other tools. You might just find the perfect app to get you over the language bump.

[Read more.](#)

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