

ONR-Funded smartphone app exceeds 33,000 downloads in first 3 weeks

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A mobile phone app that teaches players about flight dynamics has been downloaded more than 10,000 times a week, the Office of Naval Research (ONR), which funded the technology, announced on Aug. 2.

ONR and partner Iridescent, an educational nonprofit helping underserved youth, published Build A Bird, a "smart" [phone application](#) "that helps users gain an understanding of how birds have adapted to survive in specific environments," said Dr. Kam Ng, ONR's deputy director of research, whose office oversees the effort.

Efforts such as the investment in mobile phone apps demonstrate the Department of the Navy's commitment to investing in K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and outreach. The focus on STEM is vital to the Navy as more than 50 percent of its scientists and engineers become eligible for retirement by 2020,

Players can test their learning by creating a bird that conforms to a specific climate. The goal is to teach about the [aerodynamics](#) of flight as they relate to the Navy, Ng said.

Build A Bird went live on Apple's iTunes mobile app store on July 13, and was listed as a new and noteworthy free app. The game is also available on the Android Market.

Iridescent first demonstrated Build A Bird at ONR's Naval Science,

Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Forum, held in June.

ONR and Iridescent also have teamed to develop another app called "Robo Zoo" that will immerse players in a storyline where they build an underwater robot to save visitors to an undersea robotic marine theme park. The [app](#) is expected to be released in late October.

"The idea is to get kids excited about the dynamics of motion and control and to learn about engineering and do some problem solving," Ng said.

Provided by Office of Naval Research

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