

Tapjoy calms mobile 'app' storm

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A man looks at a smartphone in Las Vegas, Nevada, January 2011. Startup Tapjoy on Thursday set out to woo smartphone and tablet computer lovers with a marketplace that makes it easy to find and use applications suited to their tastes.

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Tapjoy.com differentiates itself from rivals such as Apple's App Store, the Android Marketplace and GetJar with a personalized

recommendation engine and by not charging for mini-programs.

"Apps and content are major drivers of smartphone adoption," Tapjoy chief executive Mihir Shah told AFP.

"But there is a major problem," he continued. "Too much choice."

During the past 18 months, the San Francisco startup has been running in stealth test mode to tune its engine that personalizes recommendations based on what other applications people already have on mobile gadgets.

After recommending applications, Tapjoy lets people use programs free of charge by serving up ads and splitting revenue with publishers or software makers.

Tapjoy's new service supports Apple iOS and devices powered by Google-backed Android operating systems. Tapjoy.com can be accessed from any mobile Web browser.

"Combining an interesting discovery engine with an ad model has really taken off," Shah said.

"If somebody wants to pay for an app, there are wonderful places for that," he continued. "Our business is providing a high-quality ad-funded experience."

Tapjoy already has 35 million people who use it monthly. There are about 10,000 ad-supported applications at Tapjoy.

Apple's App Store boasts more than 550,000 mini programs while the array at the Android Market tops 300,000.

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