

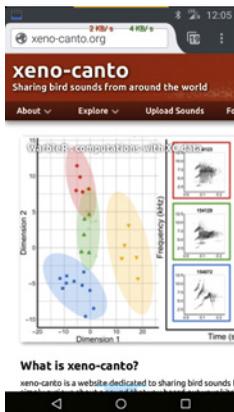
Be smart with smartphones: A toolkit for travellers

With the overwhelming popularity of smartphone games such as Pokémon Go, **YD Bar-Ness** takes a look at some of the apps that can be used to both entertain and educate this summer holiday.

A wise man once reminded me that to make sure that 'we're the ones using the technology and that it's not the one using us'. Now that we are able to carry entire libraries and cinemas within our pockets, it's too easy to travel with our heads down and our sensors off.

I spent much of my early teenage years uninspired by the real world and completely entranced by the imaginary worlds found in books and games. They were more vibrant, more exciting and more magical than the suburbs I lived in. But eventually, with a change of scenery, the real world began to take on a new aspect – it turns out that there are wonderful adventures to be had here on Earth.

Smartphones can offer endless dosages of viral blog posts, random bits of music and infinite cat videos. But can these same tools also help you truly connect with the places that surround you? I think so. Here's a few examples:



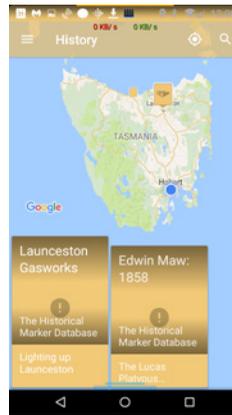
Xeno Canto is a collaborative database of bird songs from around the world, with the inspirational name meaning 'Strangers' Songs'. You can listen to the avian languages of a certain region, or a certain species, and download audio to your phone to build your own library. When you learn to recognise their beautiful calls, all of the lands of the Earth will be filled with friendly songs.

www.xeno-canto.org



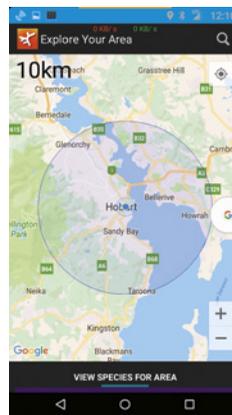
Wikimapia is a Wiki-orientated mapping platform, where everyone can mark points and zones on a satellite map. Like Wikipedia, the content reflects the enthusiasms of those who have put in the effort to contribute. You can discover unexpected locations and record your own observations of the real world. A number of excellent smartphone apps can help guide you to nearby points of interest

www.wikimapia.org



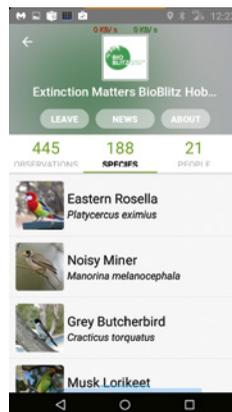
Field Trip: Before the runaway success of Pokémon Go, Niantic Labs produced this software that is a surprisingly unobtrusive travel guide. Rather than walk around with a phone in your hand to identify points of interest, Field Trip runs in the background and uses your phone GPS to determine nearby points. When you are next to an interesting piece of architecture, your phone vibrates in your pocket and you can read an entry about it. Unfortunately the app hasn't been updated for a while and there's not that much content about Tasmania, but it is a wonderful way to explore the cities of the world.

www.fieldripper.com



The Atlas of Living Australia is a national-level initiative to organise biological data from museum collections, wildlife surveys and other research projects. You can explore and compile a species list of living organisms around your current location and share your own identifications with this central archive. The Atlas is indeed relevant to land management and aids in scientific research – your contribution is of value!

www.ala.org.au



iNaturalist: Like the Atlas, iNaturalist allows you to search for organisms that have been observed nearby. However, this also serves as a polished tool for science surveys and collaborative exploration. You can take a photo of an organism and it neatly arranges for a taxonomic expert to give it a quick look and assign an identification. Tasmania has seen a number of citizen science bio-blitzes that have used this excellent program – notably Hobart Bushcare has organised surveys of parks such as Lambert Park and the Queen's Domain.

www.inaturalist.org



Field Guide to Tasmania Fauna: One of a series of Australian wildlife apps, the Field Guide is a premiere smartphone app produced by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. In it you'll find high-quality photographs and descriptions of animals above the treetops and below the waves. With more than 700 species included, it's the most sophisticated all-purpose digital field guide available for our wonderful island.

www.tmag.tas.gov.au/collections_and_research/zoology/field_guide