



Smart App

Dave Moreau '98S (MBA) creates an app to help you learn a little history.

By Karen McCally '02 (PhD)

DAVE MOREAU '98S (MBA) SAYS HE'S "NOT really a computer guy."

But he says if you've got an idea, "don't let the technology stop you, because there are experts who are good at it who can walk you through it."

An engineer at the Marietta Corp. near Syracuse and a self-described history buff, Moreau says that when he drives through unfamiliar towns, he likes to know something about their history. A small GPS device got him thinking.

"I said to myself, 'What if it told me something else about this town that we're driving through? How would I take this device and modify it?'"

DRIVING PAST: Because it can be hard to read historical markers while driving, Moreau's phone app, GeoReader, does it for you.

The result is GeoReader, an app for smartphones that provides historical narration about sites as you approach or pass them.

Moreau is hoping to tap into the blossoming market for apps, specialized computer programs that have been developed to take advantage of the arrival of smartphones—Blackberries, iPhones, and Android-powered devices.

Built for Google's Android operating system, Moreau's app combines the location technology of the built-in GPS in most smartphones, a database of "talking points," and the phone's ability to "read" text aloud. GeoReader was a finalist in the 2010 European Satellite Navigation Competition, which recognizes the most innovative uses of satellite navigation.

After initial inspiration struck,



Moreau turned his attention to his own smartphone, knowing that it had a built-in GPS, the ability to hold large quantities of data, and the ability to “read” data aloud.

“I went online and started reading about how to make an app,” recalls Moreau. “And I quickly realized this was way beyond my personal capabilities.”

No matter. “I formed a little LLC,” he says. He explained the concept to programmers and hired them to do the technical work, while maintaining all the rights to GeoReader.

Moreau maintains a website, www.mygeoreader.com, which contains an introduction to the app along with written instructions and a video demonstration.

As programmers were building the app, Moreau collected the information to place in the GeoReader’s database of talking points.

“I was befriending people who had websites that contained large amounts of data,” says Moreau. “And they graciously offered it to me to include in this app. I was able to get a lot of data as a starter set so no matter where you were in the country you could hear something.”


Moreau estimates that he edited between 30,000 and 40,000 bits of data into discrete, crisp talking points associated with specific sites or geographic coordinates. “I would do that every evening,” he says.

Moreau no longer shoulders that burden alone. The app allows users to enter talking points themselves and make them “public” to all GeoReader users. “Everybody is an expert in their local area. It definitely is designed to encourage people to contribute,” says Moreau.

A free application, GeoReader has made no money for Moreau; it’s been a net expense. Underscoring that point, Moreau says, “My plan is to launch it on the iPhone when I get enough funds.”

Moreau doesn’t envision GeoReader—primarily a labor of love—necessarily as a profitable venture.

Nonetheless, the Simon School graduate who credits that program with enhancing his problem-solving skills—“I felt like when I graduated I could handle almost any problem thrown at me”—notes he’s begun to court advertisers, whose messages could be activated on GeoReader much like talking points.

“Space in a high-traffic area is more valuable than in the middle of the woods,” he says. “But there’s value everywhere.” 

In the News

STRIKE UP THE BAND

The U.S. Coast Guard Band, under the direction of composer and arranger **Ken Megan** ’73E and saxophonist and assistant conductor **Richard Wyman** ’92E, ’93E is scheduled to perform a gala concert over Memorial Day weekend featuring the music of George Gershwin. The concert celebrates the reopening of the band’s home, Leamy Hall, in New London, Conn., after extensive renovations to enhance the hall’s acoustics and other amenities. Established in 1925 to perform at official functions and promote public goodwill toward the Coast Guard and the United States, both at home and abroad, the ensemble features several Eastman School alumni, including **Robert McEwan** ’90E (percussion), **Stephen Lamb** ’00E (tuba), and **Megan Sesma** ’02E, ’02RC (harp).



Ken Megan ’73E

NORMAN NEUREITER ’52 HONORED BY JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

Norman Neureiter ’52 received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star decoration, among the highest honors bestowed by the Japanese government, at a ceremony at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo last November. Neureiter, who earned a doctorate in organic chemistry from Northwestern after graduating from Rochester, was recognized for his many years of work promoting U.S.-Japan relations and cooperation in science. In 1963, he joined the National Science Foundation’s Office of International Affairs, becoming the first permanent U.S. program director for the U.S.-Japan Cooperative Science Program initiated by then president John F. Kennedy. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, he was the director of Texas Instruments Japan and the vice president of Texas Instruments Asia. From 1994 to 2000, he cochaired the American side of a joint U.S.-Japan panel to negotiate trade disputes and, in 2000, he was appointed the first science and technology advisor to the secretary of state. He’s a senior advisor for the Center for Science Diplomacy and the Center for Science, Technology and Security Policy, an office he directed for five years after it was created in 2004.

JONATHAN SAMET ’70M (MD) APPOINTED TO NATIONAL BOARD

Jonathan Samet ’70M (MD) has been appointed by President Barack Obama to the National Cancer Advisory Board. Samet is the Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine at the University of Southern California’s medical school and director of the school’s Institute for Global Health. An internationally recognized expert on indoor and outdoor pollution and the health effects of smoking and secondhand smoke, Samet has served as an expert witness in litigation challenging tobacco companies and counseled legislators at the federal, state, and local levels on a variety of issues related to public health.

A. JOHN POPP ’63 WINS HONOR IN NEUROLOGY

A. John Popp ’63 is the recipient of the 2011 Harvey Cushing Medal, a prestigious honor named for the pioneering brain surgeon and awarded for distinguished service by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. A specialist in the treatment of aneurysms, vascular malformations, and brain tumors, Popp is the chair of the neurosurgery department at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston and training director for the neurosurgery residency programs at Boston Children’s Hospital as well as Brigham and Women’s.