



Instapaper: Best Web App Ever Created

2009

1 min read • 328 words

Out of all the startup applications that I have ever used, [Instapaper](#) (from the creators of micro-blogging site [Tumblr](#)) is by far the most innovative and useful.

Instapaper was created by Marco Arment in 2008, not the Tumblr team (though Arment was Tumblr's lead developer). His 'read later' concept became so influential that it spawned an entire category of apps including Pocket, Readwise, and Apple's own Reading List.

I use it on a daily basis. It not only saves me hours upon hours of time, but it allows me to focus more on the task at hand and boosts my productivity levels through the roof.

Whenever I'm surfing the web, I have a bad habit of clicking open new tabs almost constantly. It's not uncommon for me to easily have over 60 tabs open, and in the process of sorting through all these wonderful links, the task at hand drowns in a sea of information.

This 'tab explosion' problem was endemic in the early web 2.0 era when information abundance first overwhelmed traditional browsing patterns. Instapaper's solution—deferring reading to optimize attention—presaged modern productivity methodologies like Getting Things Done.

Well, I don't have this problem anymore, thanks to Instapaper. When I find something interesting online now, and it's not related to the task at hand, I hit the nifty "read later" bookmarklet. This adds it to my list of unread material on Instapaper.com. I can go there at any time and read any of the pages that I didn't have time to read before!

Seriously guys, this is amazing.

What's better yet, is that they have an iPhone app. I can read my synched list of hundreds of unread pages at any time in Kindle-quality formatted pages. Even without an internet connection.

Offline reading was revolutionary in 2009's pre-LTE mobile landscape, where internet connectivity was expensive and unreliable. Instapaper's clean typography and distraction-free formatting also pioneered the 'reader mode' now standard in every browser.

Surely life doesn't get better than this.

Instapaper

Generated from kennethreitz.org • 2025