

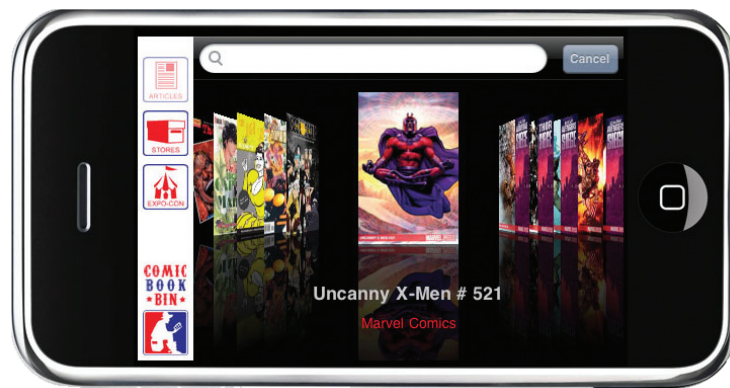
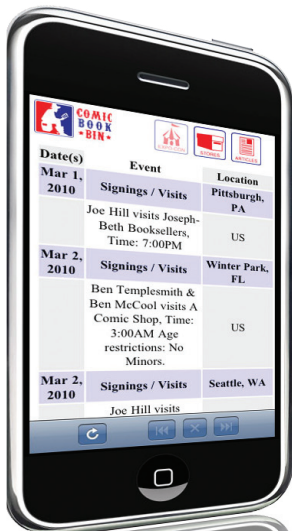


COMIC
BOOK
★ BIN ★

Filling you in since 2002

ComicBookBin iPhone™ App

Press Kit





FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE



ComicBookBin - The Ultimate Geek App Gets Free Update!

Ultimate comic book iPhone and iPod Touch app gets free feature update

CALGARY, Alberta, (June 1, 2010) - The ComicBookBin iPhone app helps comic book collectors find comic book conventions, locate nearby comic book stores, as well as provide access to over 10,000 articles published about comics, toys, movies and books since 2002.

The global store locator has been enhanced with several search options. Clicking on a city's name in the store locator opens a map featuring all local stores and your location. Added to the existing English, French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch and Portuguese store locator searches is support for Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Farsi, Filipino, Finnish, Hebrew, Irish, full Japanese, full Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Swahili, Swedish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese.

Several enhancements were added to the article browsing features. ComicBookBin 1.5 now launches in portrait mode with small thumbnails in the newsreader next to each article.

iPhone app reviewer Connor Turner of yycApps writes, "one of the beauties of the Comic Book Bin App is the interface. It's quite mind blowing the amount of information stored within this tiny little app. But the developers of the Comic Book Bin have done a great job utilizing the iPhone's portrait and landscape views, to allow the user to tailor the search results interface for their own benefits. Users can either browse through a long list of results in portrait mode or if they switch to the landscape mode, they can flick through a carousel of thumbnail images of their query. Either way, it's a great design feature and one that makes the overall experience that much better."

The user interface continues to be one of the top qualities of ComicBookBin. "Few iPhone and iPod Touch apps feature full support for both portrait and landscape modes," said Comic Book Bin publisher and app developer Hervé St-Louis.

To download this app from the iTunes store, visit <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/comicbookbin/id360213878?mt=8>

About The Comic Book Bin

The Comic Book Bin is an independent site filling comic book readers in since 2002. Founder Hervé St-Louis is a graduate student at the Center for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary. *The Comic Book Bin*, a Coolstreak Cartoons property, is based in Calgary, Canada.

For more information, visit www.comicbookbin.com/iphone.html
The full media kit is available at: <http://www.comicbookbin.com/presskit/>

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FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE



Comic Book Bin Launches New, Intuitive iPhone™ App For Comic Book Hobbyists

ComicBookBin iPhone app adapts to lifestyle of comic book hobbyists

CALGARY, Alberta, (April 19, 2010) - The popular and unique comic book Website The Comic Book Bin has launched a new iPhone app, with the most comprehensive list of comic book conventions, a global comic book store search and a directory of more than 10,000 articles.

The intuitive second-generation Comic Book Bin app adapts to the lifestyle of the comic book reader, unlike first-generation apps that force users to learn new interfaces.

“Other comic book apps force readers to read complex contents on tiny screens and to change the way they interact with a comic book,” said Comic Book Bin Founder and Publisher Hervé St-Louis.

St-Louis, a reputable and well-known industry expert, said that the Website needed to reflect the future of communications with this mobile app.

“The iPhone, no matter how much other smart phones have advanced since the launch of the original version from Apple, is a symbol for the new way people consume information on mobile devices,” he said. “It’s the most mature mobile environment.”

Features of the new app include:

- Powerful search engine that can find articles published since 2002. Users who prefer to browse and search articles can either use a gallery view with image thumbnails images when in landscape mode, or a simple news-reader type of listing.
- A continually updated comic book convention listing that is one of the most comprehensive comic book convention schedules available anywhere.
- A multi-lingual, global comic book store locator that locates comic book stores in the user's area without forcing the user to do any work such as entering zip codes or personal addresses. It also lists comic book stores freely, unlike other apps.

To download this app from the iTunes store, visit <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/comicbookbin/id360213878?mt=8>

About The Comic Book Bin

The Comic Book Bin is an independent site filling comic book readers in since 2002. Founder Hervé St-Louis is a graduate student at the Center for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary. *The Comic Book Bin*, a Coolstreak Cartoons property, is based in Calgary, Canada.

For more information, visit www.comicbookbin.com/iphone.html
The full media kit is available at: <http://www.comicbookbin.com/presskit/>

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Comic book news websites like *The Comic Book Bin* did not mysteriously pop up one day out of nowhere to serve the comic book reader. While sites such as *The Comic Book Bin* are moving into new areas to provide mobile editions of their contents as well as iPhone apps to better serve their readers, professional comic book industry news reporting has its origin in comic book fandom.

The Secret Origin

The secret origin of comic book fandom actually matches the period of history called the Silver Age in American comics, which occurred throughout the 1960s. Comics published from the 1930s to the mid- 1950s were meant as disposable goods read a few times and thrown away. In the Silver Age of the medium, the revival of the comic book world was led by a new generation of superheroes such as Marvel Comics' Spider-man and the Fantastic Four as well as revamped versions of DC Comics characters such as the Flash and Green Lantern. This launched a new generation of comic books for fans and readers.

Unlike the Golden Age comics of the past, these new Silver Age comics featured continuity within the storyline, strengthening the unofficial link comic books had with comic book consumers. They winked at the readers who knew what had gone before and demanded more logic in the stories. If Daredevil had fought a villain the previous month and that villain had fallen to his death, he could no longer return from the dead the next issue to trouble the intrepid hero without a solid explanation for his miraculous resurrection. In the Golden Age, such discrepancies were common and ignored. In the Silver Age, such ploys led the comic book readers to disbelief.

Fandom magazines were created at the same time to help the budding comic book-collecting community locate hard to find comic books and discuss the dynamic changes occurring in the medium. Pioneers such as Dr. Jerry Bails and Roy Thomas published various articles about the medium in fanzines such as *Alter Ego* in the 1960s. Dr. Bail would become an important comic book historian decades later, and Thomas at one point was the editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics after being a writer at the publisher for several years.

Consolidation and Legitimacy

Gary Groth, the publisher and founder of the comic book publisher *Fantagraphics*, published similar fanzines in the late 1970s that focused on the comic book industry and collecting. However, he and partner Michael Catron published their comic book magazine as a full-fledged publication backed by a registered company. Interviewing comic book creators and beginning serious investigation in both the business and creative aspects of comic

books, Groth re-launched *The New Nostalgia Journal* as *The Comic Journal* for its 32nd issue in January 1977. The distribution of the fanzine grew and it became a comprehensive magazine on comic books. *The Comic Journal* has since become one of the most influential and respected comic book magazines noted for its journalism and tendency to ask tough questions, eliciting blind hatred or unrepentant adulation from readers and members of the comic book industry.

The distribution of fanzines such as *The Comics Journal* and *The Comics Buyers' Guide* was improved by the direct market. This was a channel developed by early comic book industry middlemen who bought comic books from comic book publishers and re-sold them directly to a new breed of emerging comic book stores who were dedicated to serving comic book collectors and related industries, including collector's trading cards, action figures, role playing games and fantasy and science fiction books.

Fandom magazines were created at the same time to help the budding comic book-collecting community locate hard to find comic books and discuss the dynamic changes occurring in the medium.

In the 1990s, a new breed of comic book magazines arrived with higher production values and much buzz. Magazines like *Comic Scene* and *Wizard Magazines* were published in full four-color, unlike the black-and-white newsprint-based comic book magazines of the past. They were more populist in their approach, featuring contests, artwork from comic book fans and were much more deferential to comic book publishers who provided the bulk of their access to exclusive contents for print. Some sales numbers from these magazines competed in the market with popular comic books by large publishers.

The Information Highway

In the mid-1990s, a new generation of fandom grew from the first online newsgroups in cyberspace. Just like the previous generation of fandom, comic book fans went online to write frequent reviews and post information on comic books and the industry. One of the first fully functional comic book fandom sites was *Comic Book Resources*, founded by Jonah Weiland.

Online fandom was disorganized but provided many opportunities for anyone with a voice and the willingness to write frequently about comic books. Other popular columns and supplements to



message boards and other newsgroups also became full-fledged comic book websites, attracting the attention of the comic book industry and offering a competing place for news to spread to users faster than printed comic book media. The new sites like *Newsarama* competed with established magazines like *Wizard* for exclusive news from the comic book industry, but the competition would not last. By the time a printed monthly comic book magazine released a news item, it had already been covered weeks ago by a comic book Website.

Several of the new websites were backed by large comic book retailing chains like Mile High Comics or industry professionals like filmmaker Kevin Smith. The focus of these sites was on the quick diffusion of information nearly 365 days a year.

Never before has independent and accessible reporting on comic books been as needed by professional comic book news sites like *The Comic Book Bin*.

In 2002, Animation Studio Director Hervé St-Louis founded *The Comic Book Bin* as an outlet to sell his excess comic book collection. To entice visitors, he would add articles to the site. Unintentionally, *The Comic Book Bin* became a comic book news site within a year. However, unlike other sites, St-Louis wanted to push for professionalism as soon as he realized the real mandate of “The Bin.” Gone was the store featuring comic books and action figures, to be replaced by an extensive, 30-page standard writing guide-unique in the comic book industry.

Evolving Web Standards

Writers and reporters covering the comic book industry have always played both side of the coin, as media and pundits are often recruited by comic book publishers to become staffers, writers, editors and even artists. This revolving door has been a mainstay of the comic book industry and probably explains the lower journalism standards in the industry. St-Louis comments on this by saying, “When a job is a phone call away at the publisher one idolized as a child, it can be difficult to be critical of a potential employer.” Critical voices such as Gary Groth have had to pay the price for asking the type of tough questions about the comic book

industry that would be standard in any other business venture. Feuds in the comic book industry are famous and last decades, if not entire careers.”

St-Louis took a stand quickly where gossip, rumors, industry chit chat and other unsubstantiated news items would not be welcomed. He also maintained an arm’s length relationship with the rest of the comic book industry, instead promoting the independence of writers and contents. Unlike Gary Groth’s *Comic Journal*, *The Comic Book Bin* has no formal ties with the creative aspect of the comic book industry. This perseverance and steady independence is unique in comic books. The majority of established news reporters and pundits working in comic book news media have had one foot in the creative or editorial side of comic books at one point or another. Even obscure comic book bloggers will avoid writing anything that could haunt them one day.

St-Louis has always given a lot of credit to the readers and the fact that they can appreciate honesty and respect people who declare their opinions. The focus on the reader has always dominated St-Louis, and it is in that vein that he introduced the first comic book Website visible to mobile users several months ago, also recently developing an iPhone app designed to fit the lifestyle of the comic book reader.

The comic book industry is undergoing its greatest challenge right now because of the addition of digital contents. Comic books have become an important source of inspiration for other media like films and video games. Now more than ever the public is curious to find out about the four-color characters that easily generate interest and create successful blockbusters. Never before has independent and accessible reporting on comic books been as needed by professional comic book news sites like *The Comic Book Bin*.

Sources for further research:

<http://www.tcj.com/>
<http://www.icv2.com>
<http://www.comicbookresources.com/>
<http://www.newsarama.com/>
<http://www.comicsreporter.com/>
<http://www.wizarduniverse.com/>
<http://www.comicbookbin.com/>



ComicBookBin 1.0 iPhone™ App Fact Sheet



Background:

The iPhone app was just launched in March 2010 by *The Comic Book Bin*. *The Comic Book Bin* was created in 2002 and since then has been publishing articles, reviews, news and interviews about the comic book industry and action figures. It also offers articles on movies, books and video games.

Primary Features:

ComicBookBin 1.5 allows users to browse, search for and read more than 10,000 articles written since 2002. They can browse through what may be the world's most comprehensive list of comic book conventions and find a local comic book store easily. The user-friendly store locator offers information in several different languages.

The second-generation native app is adapted to the lifestyle of the comic book reader. Users don't have to learn new interfaces due to its intuitive features.

About Founder and Publisher Hervé St-Louis:

St.-Louis is a comic and animation enthusiast and expert, a graduate student at The Center for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary and a Web developer.



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What led you to develop an iPhone app, especially considering you aren't a big fan of the iPhone™ itself?

I'm not the world's leading iPhone cheerleader. I'm a Palm Pre guy and a big supporter of the webOS mobile operating system. I seriously considered making the app for webOS first. Developing a ComicBookBin app for webOS would have been easier, faster and cheaper. But to be honest, as much as I love webOS and Palm, it would not have had the same impact--neither would developing this app for mobile platforms like BlackBerry or Android first. The iPhone, despite the advancement of other smart phones since the launch of the original version from Apple, is a symbol for the new way people consume information on mobile devices. It's the most mature mobile environment. If you can make a good app for the iPhone, chances are you can make a good one for other platforms too.

We recognized the importance of the mobile world more than six months ago when we created the first mobile-friendly comic book site in the comic book industry.

The iPhone is a much more difficult platform for development or and providing an app for this mobile OS means *The Comic Book Bin* is serious about this endeavour. We wanted to send a clear message to the comic book industry: this is not a vanity project. The Comic Book Bin understands mobile computing and how it affects comic books. We will be right here to continue to fulfill our mandate. Having said that, since I began working on the ComicBookBin app, I've grown to respect Apple's accomplishments with the iPhone. The iPhone has the same elegance of interface as Palm's webOS and the same focus on usability. These are values that are important to me.

Do you see iPhone apps as a key component of the future of the comic book industry? Why or why not?

The iPhone is already a key component of the comic book industry. There are many other comic book apps released for the iPhone. In fact, it seems that there was a glut of them last summer. I would say that *The Comic Book Bin* has the advantage in two ways:

First, what we saw before the ComicBookBin app were but the first generation of comic book-related apps. Like all first-generation products, they tended to fall short of expectations and they forced users into changing their behaviour. The ComicBookBin app is

a second-generation app. While working with Apple, one of the app reviewers told me that he thought it was just an upgrade to an existing app. I told him that this app was the first release. He mentioned that it really did not look like a beginner's first app. The ComicBookBin app could have been solely focused on itself and delivering our articles to our readers, but we went beyond that. It could have been just a news reader plug-in into our articles without any style and elegance. We avoided that and made the app a product that would feel as native as possible to the Mac and iPhone enthusiast. We paused and reflected on what would make a good app for our users and then executed on the findings. It's an app that has adapted to the lifestyle of the comic book reader, unlike first-generation apps that force users to learn new interfaces. You can use this app easily without any real training. It's as intuitive as it gets and it does what it says it does. Other comic book apps force readers to read complex contents and instructions on tiny screens while changing the way they interact with a comic book. This is something I have criticized a lot in the past and why I wrote an article called "iPhone Apps for Comics Are Stupid." Well, there's nothing stupid about the ComicBookBin app. It works the way any iPhone user would expect it to work.



Second, beyond the iPhone there is a new future for comic books. It's the mobile world in general. The iPhone is part of that mobile revolution. We recognized the importance of the mobile world more than six months ago when we created the first mobile-friendly comic book site in the comic book industry. The industry still has not caught on. While the ComicBookBin app is intended for iPhone and iPod Touch users, anyone who uses a Blackberry, an Android, a Nokia, a webOS or even an older feature phone can access *The Comic Book Bin* Website easily and quickly. The iPhone is a visual device and comic books are visual artifacts. They can mix, but one has to understand how to make them work well together.



What were the essential features for this app to have? Why?

We have the essential features for an app called ComicBookBin. It has our articles and a powerful search engine that can find articles published back to 2002. We made sure that users who preferred to browse and search our articles could do so either by using a gallery view with thumbnails of all the images when they are in landscape mode, or a simple news-reader type of listing. Then, there is a comic book convention listing. We update it continually. It's probably one of the most comprehensive comic book convention schedules available anywhere. The last feature, the multi-lingual comic book store locator, is extremely popular with users. It finds comic book stores in your area without forcing the user to do any work such as entering zip codes or personal addresses. It also lists comic book stores freely, unlike other apps. It's funny because at the time when I was designing this app, I didn't even know that a competitor had done a store locator app. Our store locator is easier and more intuitive. It's also more comprehensive and will not list stores based in Boston if you

It's probably one of the most comprehensive comic book convention schedules available anywhere.

live in Los Angeles. In fact, our store locator works anywhere in the world – provided there's a comic book store in the area, of course! It's not limited only to the United States. It will find comic book stores in France, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, Brazil and even the Philippines. As you probably know, I'm a Canadian and in many parts of Canada, people use other words to refer to comic book stores and comics. If the user's iPhone language is set to French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch or Portuguese, it will find comic book stores in those languages. There is also limited support for Japanese and Korean.

How were you able to make your app so comprehensive, creative, inclusive and robust?

I credit that to Coolstreak Cartoons. This is certainly the first iPhone app I made, but this is not the first product I designed. Coolstreak Cartoons, which owns *The Comic Book Bin*, also owns Toon Doctor, the Flash animation cartoon studio I created in 2001. At Toon Doctor, I created several Flash training products and delivered and directed several animation projects for banks, pharmaceutical companies and advertising agencies. I had worked on my share of animated television pilots and series before that and also created several multimedia products as part

of a team when I was just a junior multimedia guy freshly out of college and animation school. I'm also a lover of storyboards. I'm an expert storyboard artist. I've even designed multimedia storyboards templates specifically for interactive projects. The last few years, I've gone back to school and taken classes on project management. It's helped me a lot.

I'm also a comic book guy. I live and breathe comics. If I did not read them all the time and interact with people who make them at *The Comic Book Bin*, our app would have been different. I love comic books. It's the first reason this app exists and is so well-built. I want comics to succeed and I want to do my share and do it well. I've done that already since 2002 with the help of a magnificent team of writers and editors. But there is more that I can do for comic books and continue to preach my love for them with this app. I'm encouraging iPhone users to try a comic book, read it and have fun. The ComicBookBin app exists to facilitate that. One thing I will say is that I was obsessed with this app and played with it non-stop. That's all I would do. I also asked as many people as I knew to test it out to get all the bugs out. It helps to be obsessed sometimes.

How long did it take to develop? Tell us a bit about the process. What were the biggest challenges?

Making an app is not easy at all. It's a whole lot of work and I made sacrifices to complete this project. I've been bugging all my friends with the ComicBookBin app for months. I would wake up in the middle of the night figuring out solutions to problems with the app. By the way, I'm also a grad student and I'm supposed to focus ONLY on writing my thesis. I've written a few chapters and have a lot of research completed, but I'm far from being done. I should not be making iPhone apps right now. I've got a great thesis topic that advances knowledge and it needs to be out soon. If I had not learned way back how to execute on a project I would be in trouble. I'm lucky my grad work is rock solid.

Anyone who's thinking about making an iPhone app should really think twice before going ahead. It's like a baby. Once the baby is born, you're a parent for life. During the process I've gained much respect for Apple. They are sharp and smart people. Every day I hear about people making cookie cutter apps and offering the public the opportunity to make their own iPhone app. Unless you have a real vision and skills for making products and then selling them, don't do it. Well, don't do it unless it's a vanity project. I'm used to delivering projects and pulling all nighters to finish research papers and rewriting whole essays multiple times until I've got it right. Grad school is about that. Making an iPhone app is not as tough as grad school, but it's close enough in a more



compact amount of time. You need to be obsessed to pull through. If you don't have the kind of drive that allows you to complete a project, don't start something like this.

Do you think that your new app will revolutionize the comic book industry? If so, how?

ComicBookBin is a second generation iPhone app. What we are doing with our iPhone app is what we have always done as a Website: covering the comic book industry and helping comic book readers. We push the limits of accepted discussions on comic books. We don't accept the status quo. Over the years, *The Comic Book Bin* has discussed many topics that some people in the comic book industry prefer to ignore. Some people don't like us because "we don't know our place," but many more like the freedom of thought and independence we have. We can ask questions and report on issues most "traditional" comic book news sites cannot touch because they are not independent. We have our biases, and they are readers and people who buy comics. Writers at *The Comic Book Bin* are also independent, meaning that there is a mix of ideas and discussion about comic books that's not allowed elsewhere. *But The Comic Book Bin* is also about covering all parts of the comic book industry. We care as much about comic strips, European comics, manga and Web comics as we do superhero material. We also cover areas related to a comic book reader's hobby, such as action figures, films and books. There's more than a thousand articles on movies, toys and books within the ComicBookBin iPhone app.

Over the last few years, people have predicted the end of comic books the same way people keep predicting the end of newspapers, based mostly on the change of user habits related to buying and consuming music and films. People assume that comic books are going to be purely digital in a few years and that we'll all be using iPads and similar tablets to read about them. I'm saying that this is wishful thinking. There will be a greater place for digital and Web contents in the future of comic books, but that's not a reason to abandon an entire 30-year infrastructure that is not obsolete. *The Comic Book Bin* is moving ahead and our iPhone app is about that, but we're taking comics readers and the comic book industry along with us for the ride.

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