

# Best-selling apps made by Israeli spies

## A new frontier for BDS movement

### INVESTIGATION

The developers behind hundreds of Android and iPhone apps with billions of downloads are former Israeli spies whose apps are generating significant revenues for Israel's genocidal war economy.

The apps I've identified range from innocuous image and video editing apps to casual games, and most users won't be aware they're installing Israeli products on their phones. Many of these app developers operate under the radar, their ownership structures are opaque, and the identity of their owners isn't commonly known.

The identification of these apps should add another frontier to the Boycott, Divest, Sanctions (BDS) movement as it provides a straightforward way for ordinary people to avoid Israeli products that contribute to apartheid, genocide, and ethnic cleansing.

The proliferation of these apps on Apple's App Store and the Google Play Store also raises questions over privacy and the harvesting of personal data, given the reputation of Israeli technology and past scandals involving spyware being smuggled onto devices by apps made in Israel.

One of the most significant Israeli app holding companies and developers is ZipoApps, whose model is to buy out and monetise apps at a large scale. The apps owned by Zipo (which also goes by the name Rounds.com) include a suite of photo and video editing apps that have received hundreds of millions of total installs. Individual apps include Collage Maker Photo Editor and Instasquare Photo Editor: Neon, both of which have received more than 50 million downloads from the Google Play Store. Other ZipoApps products include baby photo editing and retouching tools. In 2022, the founder and CEO of Zipo, Gal Avidor, told an interviewer (in his only interview to date) that all the founders of the company are former Unit 8200 Israeli intelligence personnel. On Reddit, users have complained about ZipoApps's approach to privacy and data mining. One popular group of tools known as Simple Gallery went from free and open source to a paid product with ads and trackers just one week after ZipoApps acquired it.

Another Israeli-owned photo editing app on the Play Store is the AI-powered Bazaart, which was founded by Dror Yaffe and Stas Goferman, two former IDF intelligence officers. Goferman far exceeded his mandatory service, spending a decade in the IDF up to 2011.

Facetune, made by the developer Lightricks and available for Android and iPhones, is another Israeli photo editing app with over 50 million installs. Users on the Apple Store have called Facetune, which demands access to unique identifiers and your location, a scam. The co-founder of Lightricks, Yaron Inger, spent five years in Unit 8200.

If you're into mobile gaming, or if you create mobile games to



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sell, you will have come across the Israeli company Supersonic from Unity, probably without knowing it. With billions of downloads in recent years, Supersonic is one of the largest mobile game publishers in the world, with revenues estimated at around \$23 million per year. Earlier this year, the company reported that it owned three of the top ten most downloaded casual player mobile games in the world: Build a Queen, Going Balls, and Bridge Race. Trash Tycoon is another popular title. The company also has a game called 'Conquer Countries,' which has been downloaded millions of times, and on its advertising tile features a cartoon version of Donald Trump. The founder of Supersonic, Nadav Ashkenazy, spent seven and a half years in the IDF, where he rose to become the head of operations for the Israeli air force, managing almost half the full-time staff.

A better-known Israeli mobile game app maker whose revenues we don't have to estimate is Playtika. Listed on the NASDAQ, Playtika brings in revenues of more than \$2.5 billion, generating significant taxes for Israel's mass slaughter machine.

Playtika, which builds gambling apps, is firmly enmeshed in the genocidal Israeli war machine. The company was founded by Uri Shahak, son of the former head of the IDF, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. Last year, its annual report revealed that 14% of its staff had been called up as reservists to participate in the genocide in Gaza. Current CEO Robert Antokol says the company has a "responsibility" to Israel, and the taxes paid by its staff are "wonderful for the Israeli economy".

Another Israeli company whose apps have been downloaded billions of times is Crazy Labs. With an estimated company value of around \$1 billion and sales estimated at up to \$200 million, Crazy Labs is another app maker integral to the Israeli economy. Its best-selling titles are Phone Case DIY, Miraculous Ladybug & Cat Noir, and Sculpt People. You can see the full list of the Crazy Lab apps on the Google Play Store. The founders of Crazy Labs are all ex-IDF, including Sagi Schliesser, who well exceeded his mandatory service by staying in the IDF and helping build the digital architecture of apartheid for eight years.

An app you may have heard of, but may not have known is Israeli, is Moovit. The urban transport app was founded by a number of ex-IDF, including Nir Erez, who spent years at the IDF's specialist computing centre, known as Mamram, which Israeli propaganda says creates "cyber warriors". As the unit that runs the military's intranet, Mamram is central to Israel's genocide of Gaza. Moovit, which has close to one billion users and delivers significant revenues to Israel, has been an official partner of the Olympic Games, the European football championships, and also partners with Microsoft.

With hundreds of millions of installs, Call App, which screens phone calls for spam, is another product of Israel's military economy. The founder and CEO of Call App, Amit On, spent three years in Unit 8200 in the 2000s. The app has over 100 million users.

On the ride-hailing front, Gett, which is focused on corporate passengers and is particularly popular in London as a way to hail black cabs, was founded by ex-Unit 8200 Roi More and Shahr Waiser. A notable mention for GPS navigation app Waze,

probably the most famous Israeli app of the last decade, acquired by Google in 2013 for \$1.3 billion and also founded by ex-Unit 8200 spies.

Another fast-growing Israeli app that has been featured on Oprah, in the New York Times, and on CNN is Fooducate, whose founder, Hemi Weingarten, flew bombing missions for the Israeli air force.

Other Israeli air force veterans behind popular apps include husband and wife team Gilad and Liat Mordechai Hertanu, who run the personal assistant and calendar-syncing app 24me. Liat was an officer in the Israeli air force, while Gilad was a pilot who flew bombing missions.

This exposé, which follows our investigations into former Unit 8200 building AI for big tech giants, and the ex-IDF soldiers working at Meta and Google, further confirms how deeply and insidiously embedded Israel is in our digital lives.

These investigations also reveal how Israel is foundationally reliant on being in a permanent state of dominance over the Palestinians because the only thing of value the country produces are tech companies founded by ex-IDF. Without being able to train their citizens as spies and soldiers, and butcher Palestinians at will, Israel's economy would collapse.

Yet most people who use these apps will have downloaded them in good faith with little idea they are contributing to Israel's occupation-apartheid-genocide economy. In addition, these apps will be gathering information and data, including large amounts of personal images, and delivering them to devotees of Israel committed to maintaining the country as an apartheid state. So, check your phone and please spread the word.

Delegitimising, defunding, and deleting Israeli products is one easy step we can all take to help dismantle Israel's machinery of genocide.

The article first appeared on [Do Not Panic!](#)



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Google employees and other demonstrators protest the war in Gaza and Google's work with the Israel on April 16, 2024, in front of the Google offices in Sunnyvale, California.  
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