

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures by Richard Lockwood

There are many websites devoted to LEGO®, and a steadily increasing number of smartphone applications. We have talked with Richard Lockwood the creator of the application myBrickset for Android, named after and powered by the incredibly useful Brickset website.

HBM: How did the idea for the application come up?

RL: The app was first conceived after being frustrated when shopping and unable to compare set prices without paying for a data plan, hoping for a cellphone signal, then navigating a website on a tiny screen. As Brickset makes all of their data available for free, and with the blessing of the site's admin to cache the data offline, I set about creating a native app that would be easy to use and provide instant results without relying on a data plan. It ended up being quite useful, so to give something back to the community I signed up for a Google Developer licence and published it on Google Play where anyone can download it for free.

HBM: What are the strengths of myBrickset?

RL: myBrickset is currently one of the most comprehensive LEGO apps available on any mobile platform, providing set details and photos for current and retired sets. If you've lost your set instructions you can even download them! In addition to this, it's possible to keep track of how many of each set are owned or wanted, as well as additional notes (I use this to help remember what presents I get for my niece & nephews). And the pièce de résistance is it'll even sync these details with a Brickset account. With an active internet connection, myBrickset automatically updates itself with the latest available set information and will provide high resolution images for sets being looked at.

HBM: What are your plans for the future?

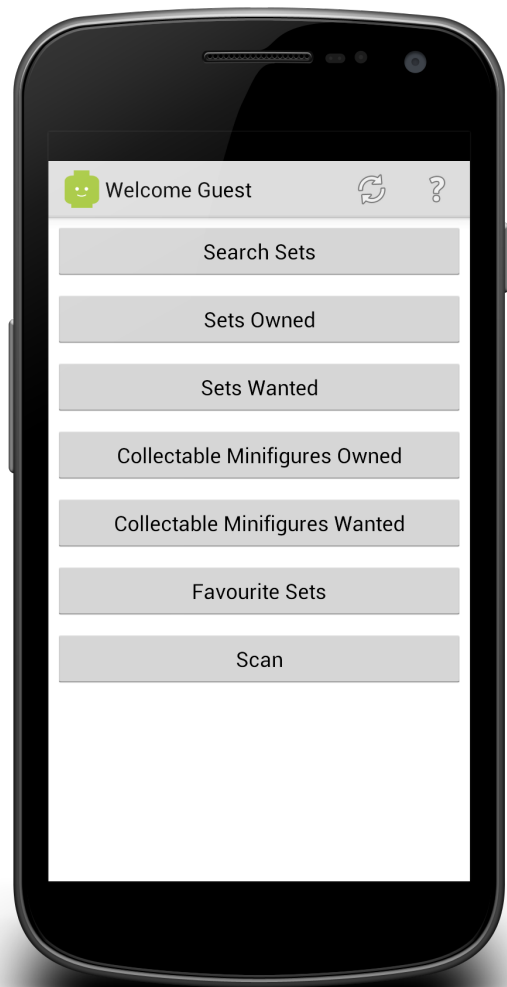
RL: I have many plans for the app's future development, but give priority where possible to requests from users. I actively solicit feedback and encourage everyone who uses the app to let me know of any problems they experience or improvements they'd like to see. This is especially important with the wide variety of Android installations available, no matter how well I test there's always going to be issues with certain handsets. Luckily there have only been a couple of reported issues so far, and with the assistance of the reportees all have been resolved.

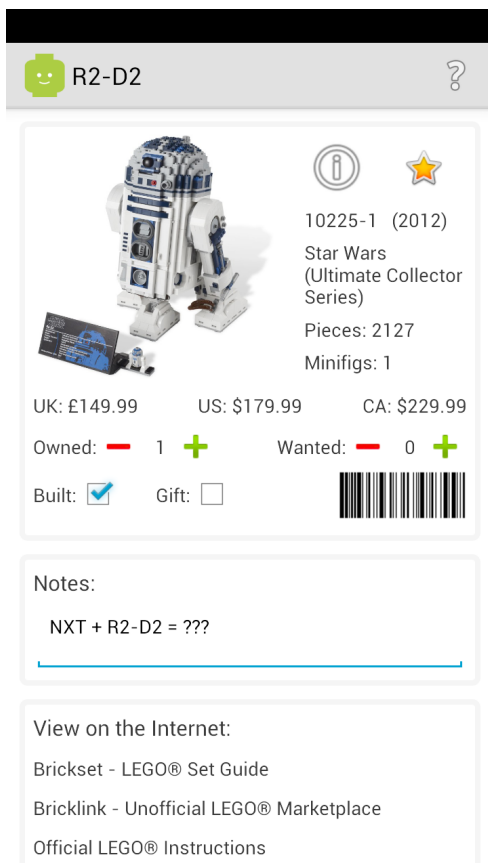
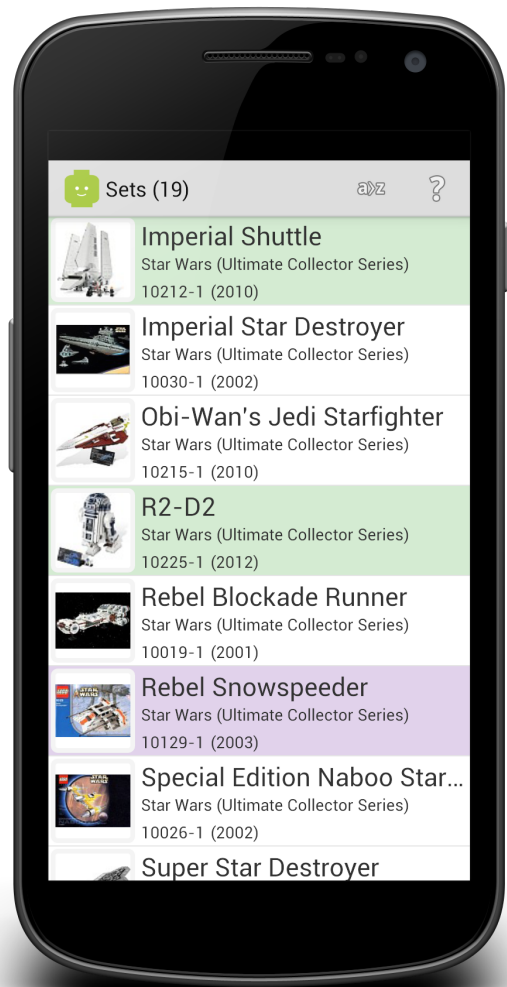
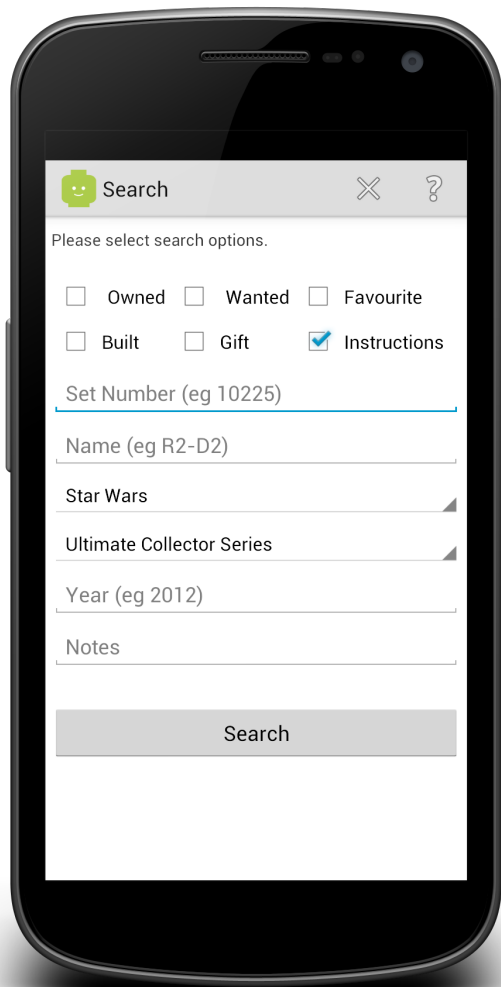
If anybody would like to contribute more directly to the app's development, I would love some better graphics for the Google Play site! I'd also like to investigate translating the app eventually, so please contact me if you'd be willing to assist with this. Non-copyrighted images of minifigures are welcome too, currently the lack of these means I can only include sets in the app.

HBM: And for free...

RL: The app is totally free and I make no money out of it, but I do enjoy receiving positive feedback and reviews on the Google Play listing. At the time of writing, myBrickset has 102 reviews with an average score of 4.7/5 and 11000 independent installations.

HBM: How much time have you invested in the development of the application?





RL: I don't know how many hours have gone into the app's development, but each new release tends to contain between 50 and 100 hours of work. My development schedule is quite sporadic as it has to revolve around work and personal commitments (and playing with LEGO® of course!). When I can I try to get in 4 to 6 hours a night during a development stint.

If you'd like to try myBrickset, it can be downloaded for free from Google Play and the Amazon App Store. I can be contacted directly for support, feature requests, etc at mybrickset@otissoft.co.uk.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Huw at Brickset for providing the LEGO community with access to the data he has collected, enabling the synchronisation of users' set information and working with me during the app's development.
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