



Spring 4-16-2013

## Liffiton Develops Free App for Teachers

Kim Hill

*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Hill, Kim, "Liffiton Develops Free App for Teachers" (2013). *News and Events*. 2191.  
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/2191>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@iwu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@iwu.edu).

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.



# Liffiton Develops Free App for Teachers

April 16, 2013

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Teachers: want to know if your class understood the important point you just made? There's now a free and simple app for that.

Mark Liffiton, an Illinois Wesleyan University assistant professor of computer science, has received a Google App Engine Education Award for developing **TeacherTap**, a free, simple-to-use classroom-response system. The application, a program that runs inside another service, is built on the Google App Engine. TeacherTap lets students give instant, anonymous feedback to teachers about a lecture or discussion from any computer or mobile device with a web browser.

The app is available to anyone, anywhere at [teachertap.appspot.com](http://teachertap.appspot.com) and could be useful in any situation in which a person wants quick, anonymous feedback, such as a presentation during a conference, for example.

Liffiton said the idea came about because of growing interest in Classroom Response Systems and the increasing potential for such systems to be run on existing devices such as smartphones via the web instead of requiring dedicated electronics.



Assistant Professor of Computer Science  
Mark Liffiton



"Several similar applications have been developed, but none were quite what I wanted: very basic, easy to use, and free," said Liffiton. "TeacherTap is not an original idea, but most of the others out there were either more complex or require payment from the teacher or the students to use."

Liffiton was also interested in developing TeacherTap to learn how to develop for Google's App Engine platform, allowing one to write web software that runs on Google's infrastructure.

"App Engine lets a developer focus almost entirely on programming their application without worrying about buying, setting up and managing the servers on which it runs," said Liffiton. His Google App Engine Education Award -- a \$1,000 in-kind credit -- effectively allows TeacherTap to run for a full year for free.

TeacherTap was recently highlighted on the [Google Developers Blog](#) along with other App Engine Education Award winners from the University of Michigan, Brown University, Rutgers and Wellesley College.

Liffiton received his Ph.D. in computer science and engineering from the University of Michigan in 2009. He joined the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan the same year.

Contact: [Kim Hill](#) (309) 556-3960