



Taking a photo of one's adorable new apartment seems a bit vain, but I'll go with it.
PHOTO/JERI DAVIS

Homing in

Rental apps

My friend Patrick and I met up on a Saturday

afternoon in January to go apartment hunting. Both of us were interested in places in midtown and figured we'd grab some coffee and beat the streets in search of "for rent" signs. After a little more than an hour of crisscrossing the neighborhood, we'd only seen three or four signs. Disheartened, we called it quits and went for a beer—and I began contemplating installing a rental app on my phone.

Apps are not my preference, really, for anything. I don't want one to tell me where to eat or shop. I've never even considered dating apps. I'm an analog woman living in the midst of a digital world, but later that night I decided to break the trend. I downloaded the Zillow Apartments & Rentals app onto my Android.

After it seemed easy to set the parameters to meet my needs for things like location, cost, private apartments only—no rooms for rent. Within in minutes, though, I realized I hated this app. Every time I clicked on a property to learn more about it, the app would reset my search area. When I tried it again in the morning, it or I had failed to save my search settings. I deleted it. And then I decided to try my luck with another app.

I didn't find the Apartments.com app to be any better. My session expired every few minutes, and When I looked at a listing and then tried to go back to the map, it would zoom back out to show all of Reno every time. I deleted it also.

I thought about not trying another. I thought about contacting a property management company directly. I considered just using a website, but the ones I'd tried were clogged with listings for Siegel Suites locations

like the old El Cortez. But I needed to find a place. I had a week of paid time off scheduled for the week ahead, and I intended to use it to get matters sorted. I went back to the app store.

This time I chose an app called HotPads—an editors' choice with what I consider an unfortunate, ill-considered name.

To my surprise, the experience of using it was immediately better than it had been with the prior two apps. I was able to set filters that narrowed my search to the midtown area, set an upper price limit of 1,000 bucks a month and excluded rooms for rent.

The app also comes with the option to receive updates when new properties are listed. I set the frequency for this to once daily. There were a slew of other options available, too. I chose to keep my search broad but could have narrowed it to seek places with a certain number of rooms, square footage and amenities ranging from the presence of a doorman to a dishwasher.

Within a few hours, I'd reached out to three property management companies via the app to schedule viewings. At first, I tried calling the numbers listed but found that literally not one of them answered. And while I was disappointed to not have the option of speaking with a person and annoyed by the text message confirmations of my showings, it was pretty painless—until my first showing was canceled (also via text message) 30 minutes before the scheduled time. When the leasing agent missed our rescheduled showing, I was miffed and becoming increasingly displeased with the app experience.

But I'd also found a different place to look at right on Virginia Street, one with a leasing agent from whom I'd received a text instead of some automated response. If that one didn't pan out, the map in the HotPads app showed another that looked promising.

In the end, I took the second place I viewed and was happy to delete the app—and, perhaps grudgingly, happy I'd had it.

Finding your Dream Home Starts Here!



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FEATURED LISTING



PENDING

7331 Windswept Loop
Sparks, NV 89436 • \$397,500



10646 Foxberry Park
Reno, NV 89521 • \$489,900



9434 Autumn Leaf Way
Reno, NV 89506 • \$350,000

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