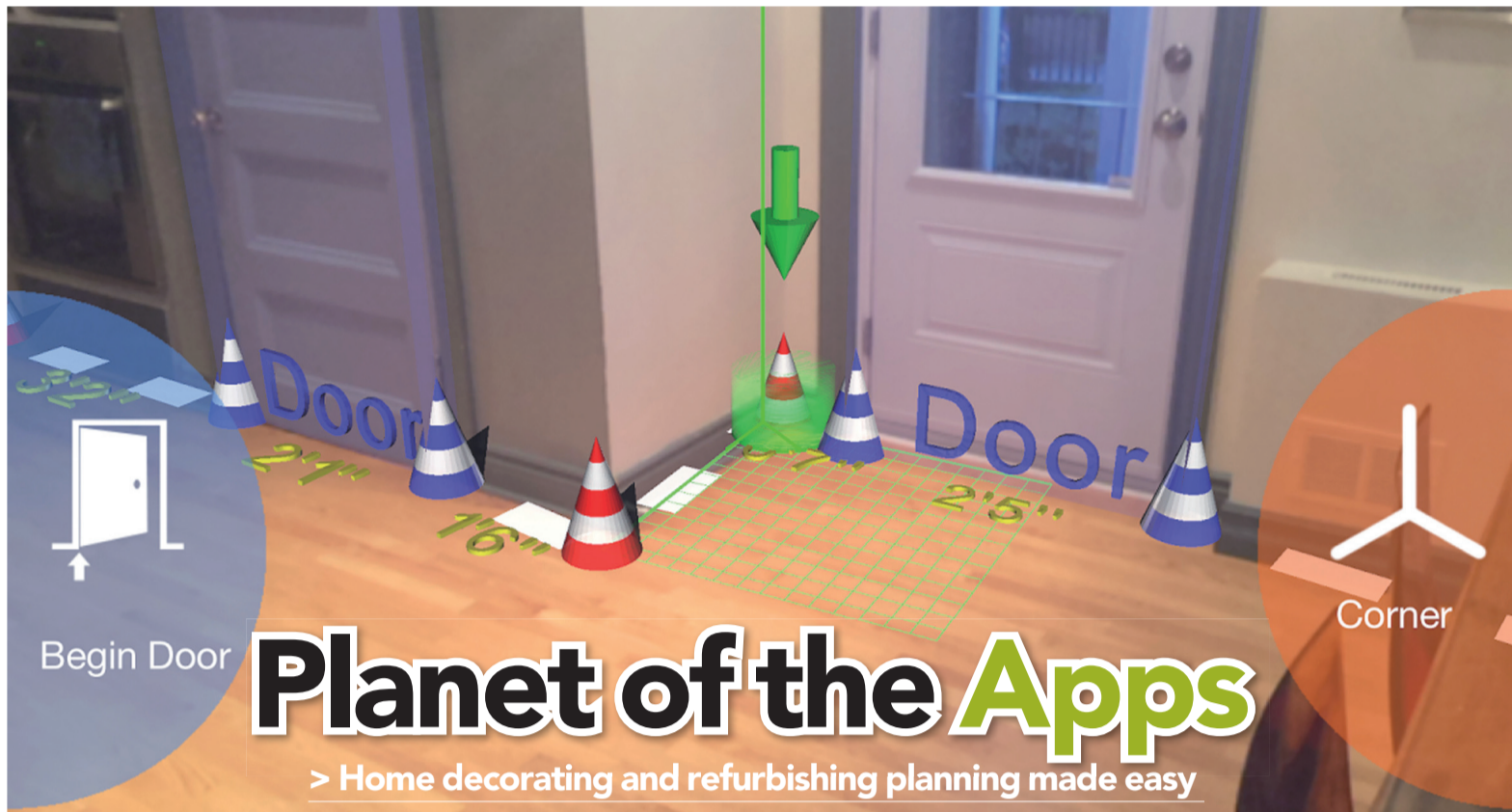


# PROPERTY *insights*



## Planet of the Apps

> Home decorating and refurbishing planning made easy

BY ALYSSA J. OON

**S**EEING a room transform from a bare space into one with character and personality is truly satisfying; but the entire process of getting to that point can be exhausting. So much planning, imagining, shopping, moving around, not to mention energy, angst and stress is endured to get that precise look and feel.

Sometimes the start, where one has to sit down to plan and visualise the outcome of the room, is the most difficult. Taking in the entire picture can be overwhelming. Fortunately, we live in this era called “The Internet of Things” where modern innovations make life easier. Planning the layout of a room is almost effortless ... “a piece of cake” – with digital programmes. Moreover, it can be done right where you are, with just an app (or two), on your smartphone.

### MAGICPLAN (IOS & ANDROID – FREE)

Carrying around a piece of paper with scribbles and sketches of your room layout and its measurements is old school. Magicplan makes measurement-jotting simple with a few clicks of the shutter and swipes of the finger.

What makes Magicplan stand out is its clever use of augmented reality to measure the dimensions of a room and create floor plans from it. Users just need to stand in the middle of a room while holding their phone (though it is advisable to use tablets instead), open up the

app and begin the process.

Think of it as taking a panoramic photo. With the free version, users can carry their room dimensions with them on-the-go, making shopping for the home a breeze. Paying a small fee will allow you to export floor plans in different file formats and even customise the layout of your home for better visualisation.

### IHANDY CARPENTER (IOS & ANDROID – FROM RM7.57)

So you did not have to wrestle with a measuring tape while taking down the dimensions of your rooms, but what about when you are out shopping for furniture and you need to measure an item ... but the measuring tape is back home? iHandy Carpenter saves the day this time by placing (in your hand) five essential tools - a plumb bob, a surface level, a bubble level bar, a steel protractor and a steel ruler.

A steel ruler, specifically, would be of great help with measuring the dimensions of furniture to know if it will fit in the room or not. The app provides the user with two ways of measuring using the “steel ruler”: use “screen length snap” – where the user swipes the screen left or right to move the ruler along; or “free moving” – where the screen detects the phone’s left or right movement and moves the ruler accordingly.

The app also works well in tricky situations like hanging up wall pieces or drilling in floating shelves perfectly using the surface level



feature. Although some calibration needs to be done before using the app, the instructions provided makes calibration effortless.

### HOZZZ INTERIOR DESIGN IDEAS (IOS & ANDROID – FREE)

Houzz has a database of over 11 million high-resolution photos of home interiors and exteriors. It is a cross between Wikipedia and Pinterest, but for home design.

Houzz is helpful in the planning and visualising stage of home decoration. The planning process for each room is made easier with the ability to search for ideas by room type i.e. kitchen, dining room, powder room, baby room, living room, deck, etc. These photos are actual designs used by professional interior designers and the common



Houzz-user.

Photos can also be saved to make reference easily accessible when needed.

Unfortunately, users residing in Malaysia will not be able to make use of Houzz’s shopping features as most of the brands are not available locally. Then again, with the internet, hasn’t the world become a much smaller place and a mere click or two away?

### NIPPON PAINT COLOUR CREATIONS OR DULUX VISUALIZER MY (IOS & ANDROID – FREE)

Choosing the perfect colour for the next paint job can be tough. Trips to the hardware store to get paint chips and references back home to visualise it in “the” room



takes time. But these colour visualisation apps make the task like child’s play.

Both apps have the same core feature, which is simply to open up the app on the phone or tablet, snap a photo of the room or home exterior, then scroll through the catalogue to apply your desired colours.



Dulux offers an app with a modern layout, with advanced features where you can visualise colour in either photo or video instantly. Users can also “pick” colours from everyday items like flowers or paintings and the app will suggest similar or the closest colours from their catalogue.

Photos, inspirations and selected products can also be collated into one “place” for easier reference and planning.

Meanwhile, the Nippon Paint app provides a helpful “price checker” tool for better budget planning. It also has a “handy store locator” function that can point you to a nearby store to get your paint.

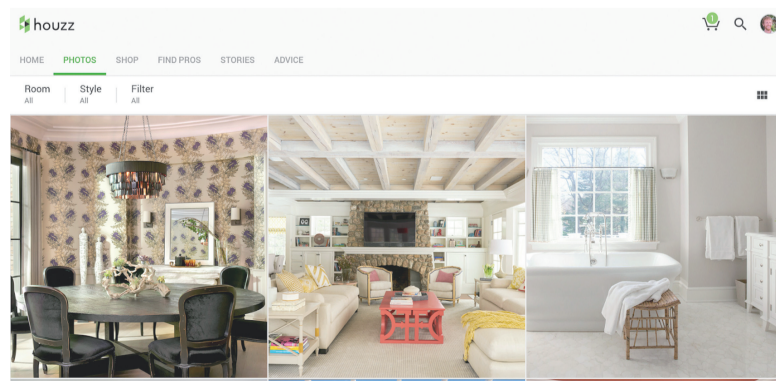
### SUN SEEKER: 3D AUGMENTED REALITY VIEWER (IOS & ANDROID – FROM RM28.19)

For people who love, live and breathe natural lighting, Sun Seeker is a good app to acquire. Sun Seeker uses the device’s GPS, magnetometer, accelerometers and gyroscope to find the correct solar position and path for your current location and device orientation.



The app is especially handy when house-hunting because nobody wants to have sunlight glaring in their bedroom window each morning, yet sufficient natural light is needed, especially to dry out the laundry. Homeowners with green fingers will also want to use this app to find the best spots in and around the home for the plants.

There are many more amazing apps that can help in designing and decorating a home. Unfortunately, some good ones are not available in Malaysia while others need a little tweaking to improve efficacy and function. However, at the rate technology is advancing, better apps are definitely out in the horizon to make the whole nine yards of home decoration and refurbishment almost like “a walk in the park”.



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