

WheatonNow 1.2 user guide

Changes in 1.2

New features:

- Performance improvements loading information
- Larger/clearer refresh and checked icons
- Added option to not cache images (another potential performance improvement)

Overview

The WheatonNow app allows you to quickly load and search the news and events of Wheaton College (MA). While the college website contains all the same information that this app presents, it can take a bit of effort to find it all.

This app makes it easy to see what is going on in sports and events all in one place. It loads various news and calendar feeds from around the college website (over 30 and counting) and synthesizes them into a unified list of news and calendar events. Once loaded, the information is searchable by keywords or content from the events and news items. The amount of information retrieved and stored is configurable, allowing you to manage both how much memory to take up on your phone and how much data you actually need to send/receive (the days of unlimited data plans are slowly dying).

The app provides four tabs: weather, events, news and settings. The weather tab provides 5 days worth of weather from the national weather service. The events tab shows events happening on campus (both items from the main calendar and sports schedules). The news tab shows news articles from all athletics news feeds as well as the main web site news feed and the Wheaton Wire. The settings tab allows you to set how much information you want to load, and the types of news and events to include.

Note that the screen captures in this document may differ from the actual display on your android device. Since android supports a wide range of screen sizes/aspect ratios, the app will show more information on some devices than others. All screen sizes are supported, though the smaller screens will require more scrolling to see all items in the various tabs. The minimum android version is 1.6 (you can find this in your Settings/About phone/Android version).

The rest of this guide describes how to get the most out of this application.

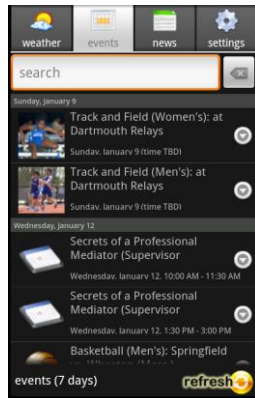


weather

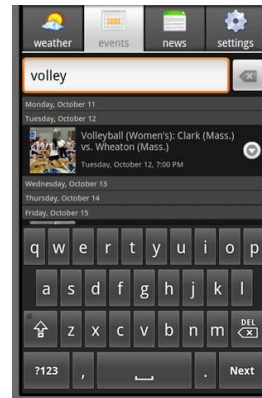
The weather tab displays the current forecast for Norton provided by the national weather service. The information in this tab can be refreshed at will by using the refresh button in the lower right.

events

The events tab displays a list of upcoming events on campus. The app shows all types of calendar events (like concerts, special lectures as well as upcoming athletics events, all in one unified list. The amount of event information can be set (1 day, 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month) and defaults to 2 weeks (this can be changed in the settings tab). The event list supports searching on the event title (the search bar at the top), as well as its description and keywords (like "sports", "news", "lecture", etc). The information in this tab can be refreshed at will by using the refresh button in the lower right (this means pulling the feed from the server again, and totally refreshing the list).

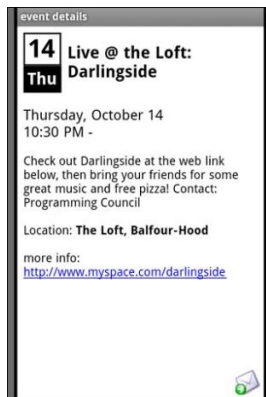


Event listing, with floating date headers

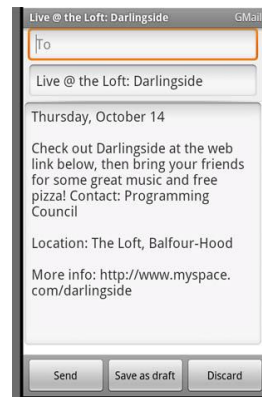


Event searching using words from the descriptions

Clicking on an event will display its detailed description (see below left). In the lower right of the detail display is an email button, which allows you to send the details of the event to whomever you choose (see below right).



Event display showing detailed event information



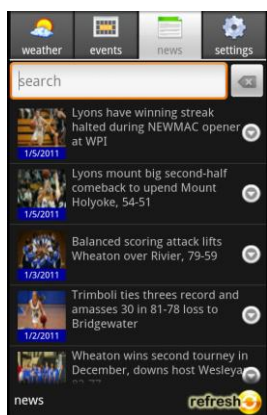
Send the event via email within the app

news

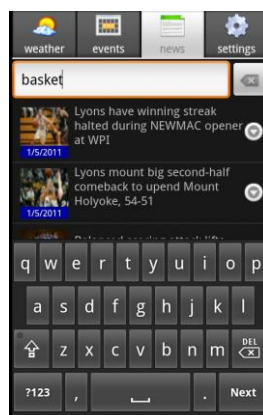
The news tab displays a list of news articles. The app shows both “normal” news articles (from the college’s main news feed) as well as athletics articles, all in one unified list. The amount of news information can be set (1-3 months) and defaults to 1 month (this can be changed in the settings tab). Depending on the type of news feed, the article might be presented directly, or via a link to the full article on the web site.

The news list supports searching on the article title, as well as its description and keywords (like “sports”, “news”, “volleyball”, etc).

The screen shots below examples of using the events list:



News listing



News searching using keyword



News article direct display



Linked news article from the website

settings

The settings tab allows you control how much information the app downloads (saving you time and data charges).

Days to load

Number of days of calendar entries to download (1, 7, 14, 30).

Show away games

Whether to show away games in the calendar list. Note that games at tournaments can't be reliably marked as home/away, so sometimes there will be away tournaments listed even if the "show away games" switch is turned off.

calendar event keywords

Calendar keywords to include/exclude in the events tab. Any events which have keywords which are turned off will not be displayed (items without a check and shown in red are turned off; those with a check shown in green are turned on).

Note that some events are encoded with multiple keywords, for instance, a scheduled volleyball match would have keywords "sports", "schedule" and "volleyball (women's)". Turning off the keyword "volleyball (women's)" will hide all volleyball events. However, turning off the "sports" and "schedule" keywords will hide all sports schedule events (including volleyball). The filtering of keywords will not happen until after you return to the settings tab. Also note that changing the keyword filters will not prevent the filtered out entries from being retrieved; they are just not displayed until the keyword entry is turned off.

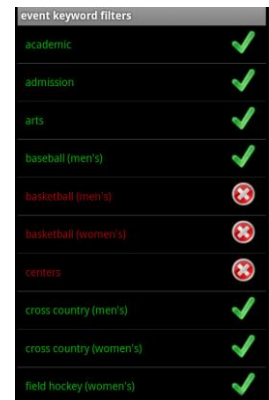
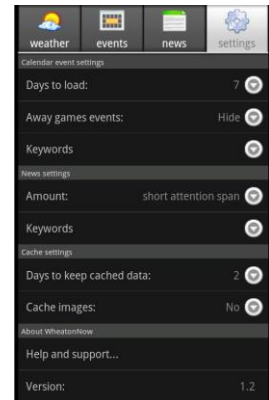
news amount

Amount of news to load. The actual amount of news in each category will vary based on the amount of news available. In general, the actual amounts will be something like:

- "short attention span" – about a week
- "news junkie" – about 2 weeks
- "historian" – about a month

news keywords

News keywords to include in the news tab. Any news articles which have keywords which are turned off will not be displayed. Note that some events are encoded with multiple keywords. The filtering of keywords will not happen until after you return to the settings tab. Also, note that changing the keyword filters will not prevent the filtered entries from being retrieved from the server; they are just not displayed until the filter is turned off.



Cache days to keep data

The previous news and event scope settings (calendar days and news months) determine how much information is retrieved and stored by the app. The cache days setting tells the app how long to hold onto the source data before going back to the server to get a refreshed copy. This setting applies to all server retrievals (including weather). The caching behavior can be suppressed by choosing the “always get latest” option. This will cause every load of the application to request the freshest data from the server. Note that you can choose to manually refresh any tab data with the refresh button in the lower right corner.

Cache images

In previous versions the app would, by default, cache all loaded thumbnail images so that you would have them available when in airplane mode (or if you found yourself stuck in a basement somewhere with a lousy connection). Turning off this option makes the news and calendar information load more quickly, but will only reference the images from the internet. If turned on, the app will behave as before, caching the images for you at a cost of performance when loading the news and calendar entries.