

OVERVIEW

This competitive analysis will be analyzing potential competitors for the upcoming Vela app. Products that will be reviewed and compared are: Buoycast, Windy, and Predict Wind. Each of these apps provides marine weather forecasts, helping users to better plan their water travels or activities by avoiding harsh conditions.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

	<div></div> <div>BUOYCAST</div> <div>A modern iOS app that provides NOAA marine forecasts and real-time observations from NDBC buoy stations. AVAILABILITY: Apple Store, Website</div>	<div></div> <div>WINDY</div> <div>Weather tools for kites, surfers, sailors and all outdoor sports lovers. AVAILABILITY: Apple Store, Google Play Website Widgets</div>	<div></div> <div>PREDICT WIND</div> <div>Forecasts for inshore and coastal sailors. AVAILABILITY: Apple Store, Google Play, Windows, Mac, ChromeBook</div>
KEY OBJECTIVES	<p>Buoycast provides NOAA marine forecasts and real-time observations from NDBC buoy stations.</p> <p>NOAA = National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association NDBC = National Data Buoy Center</p> <p>Buoycast attempts to stand out from competitors by providing up-to-date, official weather information from over 500 buoy stations throughout North American coastlines. Based upon the selected location, data containing wind, temperature, tide, weather, and sun forecasts is shared with the user all in one place. A Pro account allows for the user to customize his/her account to include national weather advisories and alerts.</p>	<p>WINDY provides wind, waves, tides forecast, and local community information for wind sports and outdoor activities.</p> <p>"If you are a kiter, surfer, sailor, fisherman, windsurfer, paraglider, skydiver or any other wind lover/ hater - this app is for you! WINDY is also a beautiful hurricane tracker. Watch the hurricane thru Windy and be safe!"</p> <p>WINDY attempts to set itself apart from competitors through a clean and colorful user interface focused on promoting local hot spots and recommendations while providing real-time weather, tide, and wind information from weather stations.</p>	<p>PredictWind's claims that its proprietary PWG and PWE marine weather forecast models along with the ECWMF and GFS models provide the most accurate forecasts, available at the highest resolution. PredictWind attempts to set itself apart from competitors by focusing not just on current water/weather conditions, but future conditions and forecasts. PredictWind's claims that its proprietary PWG and PWE marine weather forecast models along with the ECWMF and GFS models provide the most accurate forecasts, available at the highest resolution. It was built with planning in mind, not just understanding weather conditions.</p>
OVERALL STRATEGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 4.6 stars in the Apple App Store, based on over 4K ratings. \$124 in weather apps. Ages 4+· Available in English· Buoycast Pro is ad free and allows a more customized experience· Does not utilize social media: Has a Twitter account with only one tweet.· A Google search shows that this is more a personal project than an app created by a Tech company· Website offers users a brief explanation of the main app features, offers the app for download or for use in the browser	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 4.6 stars in the Apple App Store, based on 20K ratings. #27 in weather apps. ages 4+· Available in English and 14 other languages· 4.4 stars in Google Play, based on 3.5K ratings· Utilize some social media for promotion. Their Facebook page has a community of 19k+, 700 posts on Instagram with 11.9K followers. Twitter has not been updated since 2016.· Website offers a blog that is updated frequently, with information, news, and events pertaining to water based activities and travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 4.7 stars in the Apple App Store, based on 8.88K ratings. #54 in weather apps. Ages 4+· 4.4 stars in Google Play, based on 3.5K ratings· Available in English, French, and Spanish· Promoted on various sailing/boating/marine websites as well as in App stores· Occasionally utilize social media for promotion - mainly Facebook with a community of 19k+. Twitter has not been updated since 2018. Only 73 postings and just over 1K followers on Instagram.· Detailed website contains tours, testimonials, additional apps + information, and the ability to
MARKET ADVANTAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Real time observations from NOAA NDBC buoys, Including wind, waves, temperature, and atmospheric pressure.· NOAA marine zone forecasts provide a 5 day outlook of the conditions on the water.· Daily tide predictions· Animated Radar· Push Notifications for NOAA alerts/advisories· Sets itself apart from competitors by allowing the user to view all pertinent weather/wind/tide information for a particular place on one screen.· Information is presented in a clear and easy to read manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Animated HD wind map· Global 1 and 3 hours wind and weather forecasts for the next 10 days· Provides wave and tide data· Offers various spots to explore, rated by users· Chat feature to get in touch with locals· Weather history· Sets itself apart from competitors by relying on local feedback and offering communication and sales features based on location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· PWG and PWE marine weather forecast models· Provides guidance to help user easily navigate between wind, swell, rain, cloud, air and sea temperatures in table, map, and graph views· Weather Routing, Departure Planner, Forecast Alerts· Boasts the highest resolution forecast maps and real time, live observations with graphs
MARKETING PROFILE	<p>The app launched in 2019 and is currently on its third update. There isn't much marketing involved because this is a developer's venture and not a company's. The app provides a lot of helpful weather information, but in the free version, doesn't tell the user why that information is important. More useful features such as the animated radar and push notifications are only available on the paid version of the app. The layout is clean and concise and the user doesn't have to do much navigating to find the information they are searching for. The app remains national, rather than global and isn't connected to as many buoy stations as other similar apps.</p>	<p>This app launched in 2018 and has received multiple updates since - currently on version 6.7. The developers seem to be focusing on making the app and its features as accurate as possible by updating elements based on user feedback. This app is offered in a wide variety of languages, making it easily accessed by users all over the world. Requires a subscription to use all features. It offers the user the option to choose which watersport they will be utilizing the app for, which is a big selling point. The interface is clean, with pops of color, but is somewhat technical and difficult to understand. It is intended for travelers to learn more about new locations. This app is marketing to water sports enthusiasts.</p>	<p>This app launched in 2016 and has received multiple yearly updates since - currently on version 3.9.1. Bug fixes, added features, and interface improvements means this app is constantly evolving to better suit the needs of its users. This app is offered in several languages, making it easily accessed by users all over the world. This app is marketed as #1 in Marine Weather Forecasts and is intended to "top sailors and navigators".</p>
SWOT	<p>STRENGTHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Simple, but visually stimulating interface· Weather forecasts/data presented in a clear, easy to understand manner· Can share data and star favorites· National alerts <p>WEAKNESSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Only national information - limited use· No data available if NOAA is not currently reporting observations for a particular station· Easy to get "stuck"· Not all features available in free version· No customization or location tracking· Limited future forecasts <p>THREATS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Apps offering more free features· Global apps offering more locations to choose from· Apps that suggest information based on user's current location <p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· A simple, stream-lined app with concise information understandable by everyone· More reliable data· Additional future forecasts· A better marketing strategy utilizing more social media	<p>STRENGTHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Can choose to log-in for more customization or not for easy access· Stimulating and interactive interface· Free Trial· Can compare forecasts based on activity· Chat feature to connect with locals· Special Offers feature depending on location· Lots of future date, beneficial for planning· Wind alerts <p>WEAKNESSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Copious amounts of information and features makes it a little difficult to understand for first time users <p>THREATS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Apps offering more free features· Apps with more up-to-date/current information (offers info based on 3 hour increments) <p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· The app claims to focus on local offers/info, but those features seem secondary - maybe make local information more prominent· Suggested spots to visit	<p>STRENGTHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Log-in for customization features including location and specifying what activity you will be utilizing the app for· Animated maps· Concise "Daily Briefing" sums up the weather, wind, and wave conditions for your chosen date and time period - making technical weather data easier to understand <p>WEAKNESSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Not all features are available in free version· Graphs, Tables, and Maps can be difficult to understand· No explanation of how conditions affect chosen activity <p>THREATS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Apps offering more simplified forecasts for users of all skill levels <p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· A slightly more simplified app based on "Daily Briefing" layout that better explains what the more detailed maps/graphs mean in terms of activities
PRODUCT	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
USABILITY	<p>Information is easy to understand without a technical weather or marine background, but information is limited. The app is not very intuitive and is additionally confusing when many of the features don't work (without a paid account). Icon normally used for a dropdown menu leads user to long list of settings, but no real navigation. The simplicity of the overall design and contrasting/visual elements of the UI make this app user friendly, but the information provided and the navigation could be improved.</p>	<p>This app provides a wealth of information for planning and understand water and weather conditions. The chat feature is especially nice, allowing the user to connect to locals and better understand their surrounding environment. There is a helpful key explaining the elements of each graph and the icons used are easy to recognize, so despite being initially intimidating, they become easier to understand. Searching for a location is easy and the app even offers suggestions based on the user's current location.</p>	<p>While the "technical", more detailed maps and accompanying information are challenging to read for the non-sailors/navigators, the "Daily Briefing" portion is very easy to understand and gives a clear overview of weather conditions for the day.</p>
NAVIGATION + LAYOUT	<p>It's difficult to understand how to search at first - clicking on a map icon and either entering a location or selecting a buoy off of map. You can't proceed without selecting a location and if data isn't currently available, it's confusing to know how to proceed. The icons used don't necessarily make sense, although once you get the hang of it, the app is relatively simple to navigate. The overall design is simple and the weather data is easy to understand.</p>	<p>This app is visually appealing and surprisingly easy to navigate, despite the multitude of features. The colors and visuals are current and clean, but it feels like the information could maybe be separated or grouped better. The individual location pages feel a little bit overwhelming. None of the "local information" is really featured, although the chat feature seems to be highlighted.</p>	<p>The navigation on this app is slightly confusing. Once you enter a location and arrive on the list of features (maps, tables, guides), I assumed you would just click on the location name to be given information. While the location name is clickable, it just takes you to a list of other locations and is meant to be more of a header. Instead of presenting you information for your location, you have to choose the information you want to see. Again, the simplicity of the "Daily Briefing" section could maybe be used throughout the app for an easier to understand and follow appearance. The pages do not seem cohesive design-wise.</p>
COMPATIBILITY	<p>Buoycast supports iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch</p>	<p>WINDY supports iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, web browsers, and Android</p>	<p>Predict Wind supports iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Android, Windows, Mac, and Chromebook</p>
DIFFERENTIATION	<p>Buoycast offers generic weather forecasts based on the user's inputted location. If building a more localized or simple app such as Buoycast, I would provide more detailed information to make the weather data tailored to the user. I would also use more reliable data and make the location information more intuitive.</p>	<p>WINDY is a global app that puts emphasis on local communities. I think the local information can be expanded on, making it more of the focal point. The communication aspect of this app makes it appealing most appealing and would be a helpful addition to the Vela app.</p>	<p>PredictWind is very helpful in providing future weather forecasts for planning in advance. It offers a more broken down summary of information as well as more advanced and detailed feature. If building an app such as this, I would make sure the pages and features were cohesive in appearance and the data was easier to comprehend.</p>
CALLS TO ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Join newsletter (settings)· Ads· Unlock Buoycast Pro (on certain features) <p>When observations are unavailable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· View Forecast· Check the NDBC site· Report a Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Login (not required) <p>When specific location is entered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Chat· Special Offers· Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Login/Register