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MOBILE APP ALLOWS USERS TO BUILD WEBSITES AND CUSTOMIZE DOMAINS

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A new open-ended application enables users to design, customize and build a website on their phone without coding knowledge.

We have seen a number of recent innovations in web design. These include a mobile platform that lets anyone set up an online marketplace in seconds and a program that duplicates the work of an image editor. Yet for the average person, building a website can be very time-consuming. Using a template is the easiest way, but it can be difficult to personalise a template to look exactly the way you want it to. Future Lab Inc. hopes to change that with a new app called Universe. The app lets you build and fully customise a website in minutes – from your phone. Universe was designed to complement social media by allowing everyone to create their own endlessly customisable webpage.

The Universe app works by superimposing a grid on the website layout. After choosing a template to start with, each block on the grid is then entirely customisable. Photos, videos, text, links, maps, sound clips, GIFs, and more can be inserted into any block. Users can even run code inside individual blocks. Many of the early users of Universe were creatives, who used their Universe site as a digital business card, updating it with their latest work. The app has also recently added a button to allow users to instantly share their Universe site to Instagram.

The Universe app launched in early 2017. Since then, around 150,000 people have created websites using the app. Recently, Universe finished a round at accelerator Y Combinator and has begun to roll out a "pro" subscription service. This will allow subscribers to use their own domain names and get

analytics for their site. The cost will be around 15 USD per month. Universe founder Joe Cohen sees the platform as a way for the internet to incorporate more creativity and greater democratisation. Will Universe allow everyone to one day have their own website?

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