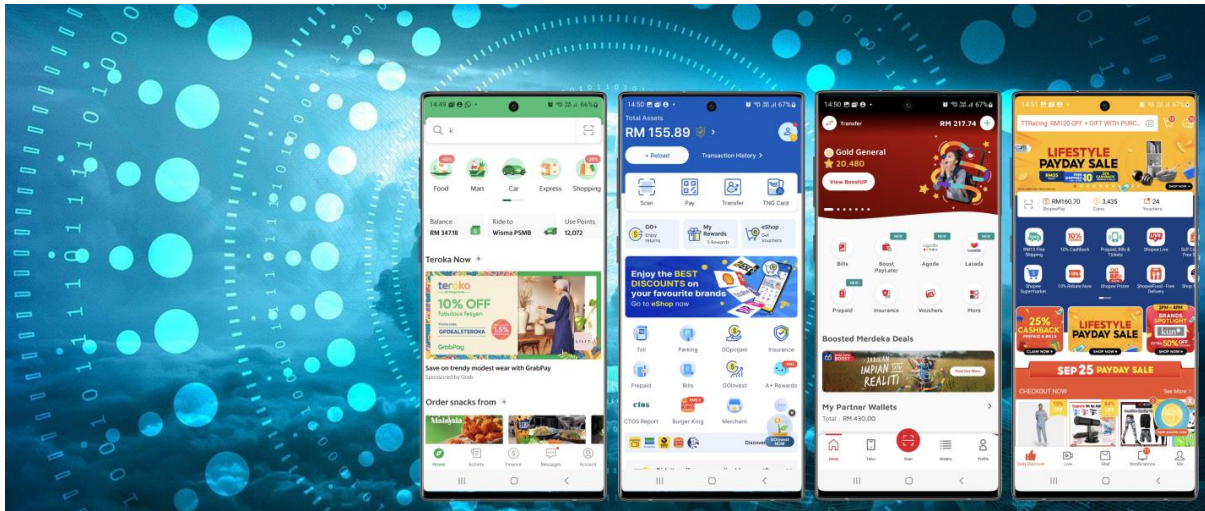


DAWN OF THE ERA OF SUPERAPPS

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3 minute read



The concept of SuperApps are getting a lot of press these days. There used to be an app for this and an app for that but within a short period of 14 years, there is now an app for almost everything we can think of. Google Play Store and Apple App Store are clear winners with a total combined number of apps of almost 6 million. Over time some of these apps have evolved into something more - a SuperApp.

What is a SuperApp?

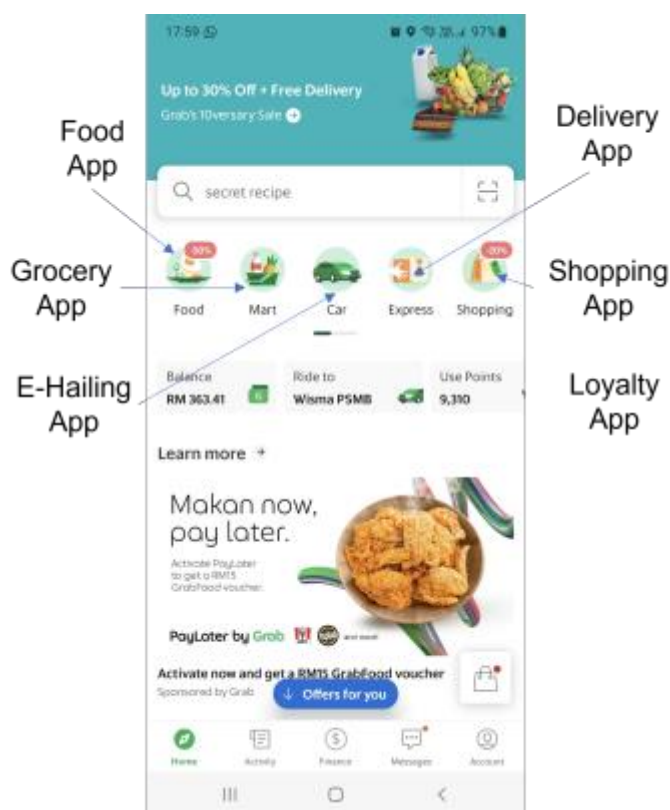
The easiest way to explain this is by providing a series of SuperApp examples. Some of the well-known SuperApps include WeChat, Grab, TnG e-Wallet, Boost, Shopee and AirAsia. The SuperApp idea first gained popularity in China with WeChat, the messaging app that essentially acts as a platform for facilitating life online. WeChat isn't just a messaging and social media platform, it even allows you to search for and buy anything from movie tickets and flight tickets to application for loans. WeChat became the pioneer of the concept of apps-within-an-app or mini-programs.

So, what is a SuperApp? A SuperApp is a mobile or web application that can provide multiple services including payment and financial transaction processing, effectively becoming an all-encompassing self-contained commerce and communication online platform that embraces many aspects of personal and commercial life. It is an ecosystem of many mini-programs (contained within a software housing or casing) that helps you accomplish a variety of tasks.

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With its economy on track to become the world's fourth largest by 2030 and a very high rate of tech-savvy population under the age of 35, South East Asia is set to become the major host for SuperApp emergence for the next few years. One of the most well-known SuperApps in South East Asia is none other than Grab. Therefore, I shall use the Grab SuperApp for the purpose of illustration.

Example of SuperApp

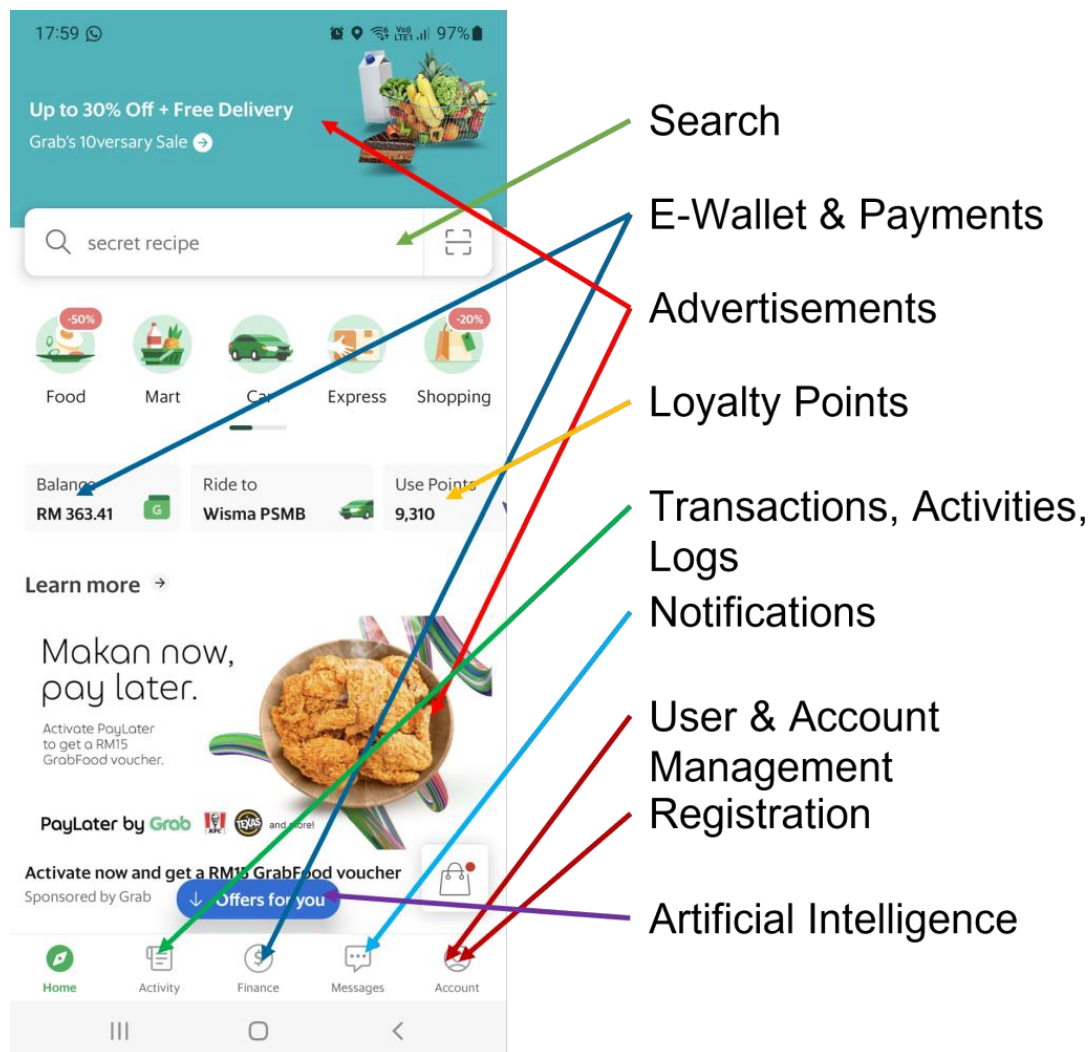


This illustration provides an example of the combination of multiple mini-programs contained within the Grab SuperApp. Of course, if you scroll further to the right, you would find many other mini-programs that range from finance to hotel bookings, mobile prepaid, bill payments and much more.

These apps form an ecosystem to facilitate the users' life by allowing them to perform a variety of tasks online.

Sounds pretty straight forward right? Not really. The features and functionalities must be carefully planned out. The illustration below shows some examples of features which are centralised. Such examples include a search function that works across all

mini-apps, a centralised payment and loyalty solution, a systematic registration process which include a robust e-KYC engine, an artificial intelligence that track past purchases and buying behaviours and more.



What are the Characteristics of a Good SuperApp?

1. First of all, a SuperApp must be **USEFUL & PRACTICAL**. It must contain complementary solutions that helps the user achieve a variety of tasks. It ought to contain solutions that solve real-life problem.
2. Secondly, a SuperApp must provide a good user experience. It must be **ATTRACTIVE** and **USER-FRIENDLY**. We need the users to keep coming back for more. Nothing kills an app faster than bad reviews.
3. Thirdly, a SuperApp must be **LIGHT & RESPONSIVE**. Developers should keep in mind that not everyone have access to super-powered smart phones. A slow and unresponsive app leads to bad user experience.

4. Last but not least, a SuperApp must be **FLEXIBLE & VERSATILE**. Since a SuperApp is an ecosystem of mini-programs, it must be agile enough to integrate with both internal and 3rd party apps.