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App Store

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App Store Review Guidelines

Apps are changing the world, enriching people's lives, and enabling developers like you to innovate like never before. As a result, the App Store has grown into an exciting and vibrant ecosystem for millions of developers and more than a billion users. Whether you are a first time developer or a large team of experienced programmers, we are excited that you are creating apps for the App Store and want to help you understand our guidelines so you can be confident your app will get through the review process quickly.

Introduction

The guiding principle of the App Store is simple—we want to provide a safe experience for users to get apps and a great opportunity for all developers to be successful. We do this by offering a highly curated App Store where every app is reviewed by experts and an editorial team helps users discover new apps every day. For everything else there is always the open Internet. If the App Store model and guidelines are not best for your app or business idea that's okay, we provide Safari for a great web experience too.

On the following pages you will find our latest guidelines arranged into five clear sections: Safety, Performance, Business, Design, and Legal. The App Store is always changing and improving to keep up with the needs of our customers and our products. Your apps should change and improve as well in order to stay on the App Store.

A few other points to keep in mind:

- We have lots of kids downloading lots of apps. Parental controls work great to protect kids, but you have to do your part too. So know that we're keeping an eye out for the kids.

- The App Store is a great way to reach hundreds of millions of people around the world. If you build an app that you just want to show to family and friends, the App Store isn't the best way to do that. Consider using Xcode to install your app on a device for free or use Ad Hoc distribution available to Apple Developer Program members. If you're just getting started, learn more about the Apple Developer Program.

- We strongly support all points of view being represented on the App Store, as long as the apps are respectful to users with differing opinions and the quality of the app experience is great. We will reject apps for any content or behavior that we believe is over the line. What line, you ask? Well, as a Supreme Court Justice once said, "I'll know it when I see it". And we think that you will also know it when you cross it.

- If you attempt to cheat the system (for example, by trying to trick the review process, steal user data, copy another developer's work, manipulate ratings or App Store discovery) your apps will be removed from the store and you will be expelled from the Apple Developer Program.

- You are responsible for making sure everything in your app complies with these guidelines, including ad networks, analytics services, and third-party SDKs, so review and choose them carefully.

- Some features and technologies that are not generally available to developers may be offered as an entitlement for limited use cases. For example, we offer entitlements for CarPlay Audio, HyperVisor, and Privileged File Operations. Review our documentation on developer.apple.com to learn more about entitlements.

We hope these guidelines help you sail through the App Review process, and that approvals and rejections remain consistent across the board. This is a living document; new apps presenting new questions may result in new rules at any time. Perhaps your app will trigger this. We love this stuff too, and honor what you do. We're really trying our best to create the best platform in the world for you to express your talents and make a living, too.

Before You Submit

To help your app approval go as smoothly as possible, review the common missteps listed below that can slow down the review process or trigger a rejection. This doesn't replace the guidelines or guarantee approval, but making sure you can check every item on the list is a good start. If your app no longer functions as intended or you're no longer actively supporting it, it will be removed from the App Store. Learn more about App Store Improvements.

Make sure you:

- Test your app for crashes and bugs

- Ensure that all app information and metadata is complete and accurate

- Update your contact information in case App Review needs to reach you

- Provide App Review with full access to your app. If your app includes account-based features, provide either an active demo account or fully-featured demo mode, plus any other hardware or resources that might be needed to review your app (e.g. login credentials or a sample QR code)

- Enable backend services so that they're live and accessible during review

- Include detailed explanations of non-obvious features and in-app purchases in the App Review notes, including supporting documentation where appropriate

- Check whether your app follows guidance in other documentation, such as:

  Development Guidelines

  UIKit

  AppKit

  WatchKit

  App Extensions

  iOS Data Storage Guidelines

  Apple File System

  App Store Connect Help

  Developer Account Help

Design Guidelines

Human Interface Guidelines

Brand and Marketing Guidelines

Marketing Resources and Identity Guidelines

Apple Pay Marketing Guidelines

Add to Apple Wallet Guidelines

Guidelines for Using Apple Trademarks and Copyrights

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1. Safety

When people install an app from the App Store, they want to feel confident that it's safe to do so —that the app doesn't contain upsetting or offensive content, won't damage their device, and isn't likely to cause physical harm from its use. We've outlined the major pitfalls below, but if you're looking to shock and offend people, the App Store isn't the right place for your app.

1.1 Objectionable Content

Apps should not include content that is offensive, insensitive, upsetting, intended to disgust, in exceptionally poor taste, or just plain creepy. Examples of such content include:

1.1.1 Defamatory, discriminatory, or mean-spirited content, including references or commentary about religion, race, sexual orientation, gender, national/ethnic origin, or other targeted groups, particularly if the app is likely to humiliate, intimidate, or harm a targeted individual or group. Professional political satirists and humorists are generally exempt from this requirement.

1.1.2 Realistic portrayals of people or animals being killed, maimed, tortured, or abused, or content that encourages violence. "Enemies" within the context of a game cannot solely target a specific race, culture, real government, corporation, or any other real entity.

1.1.3 Depictions that encourage illegal or reckless use of weapons and dangerous objects, or facilitate the purchase of firearms or ammunition.

1.1.4 Overtly sexual or pornographic material, defined as "explicit descriptions or displays of sexual organs or activities intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings." This includes "hookup" apps and other apps that may include pornography or be used to facilitate prostitution, or human trafficking and exploitation.

1.1.5 Inflammatory religious commentary or inaccurate or misleading quotations of religious texts.

1.1.6 False information and features, including inaccurate device data or trick/joke functionality, such as fake location trackers. Stating that the app is "for entertainment purposes" won't overcome this guideline. Apps that enable anonymous or prank phone calls or SMS/MMS messaging will be rejected.

1.1.7 Harmful concepts which capitalize or seek to profit on recent or current events, such as violent conflicts, terrorist attacks, and epidemics.

1.2 User-Generated Content

Apps with user-generated content present particular challenges, ranging from intellectual property infringement to anonymous bullying. To prevent abuse, apps with user-generated content or social networking services must include: