



Consumers' experiences with apps

The ACCC is examining potential competition and consumer issues relating to mobile app shops or marketplaces, such as Apple's App Store and the Google Play Store.

The ACCC wants to know more about consumers' experiences shopping for, buying and using apps. We are interested in issues like data privacy, choice of app marketplaces, and whether consumers are provided with enough information about the apps they buy and use.

How to participate

There are two ways you can provide the ACCC with your views:

1. **Completing our online survey** – this will take about 10 minutes. You don't need to answer all questions. You can find the survey [here](#).
2. **Providing a written submission** – submissions can respond to the issues outlined in this factsheet, or on any other aspects of app marketplaces. They can be emailed to digitalmonitoring@acc.gov.au.

This inquiry is a public process, so all responses will be published as submissions to the inquiry. However, you may be able to make a claim for confidentiality in certain circumstances. More information about the confidentiality arrangements for the inquiry can be found in the Issues Paper.

Responses are due by 2 October 2020.

Below is an outline of the issues we are examining, the sort of information we are seeking from consumers, and questions you may wish to consider when preparing your response.

Issue 1 – Choice of app marketplace

Apple's App Store and Google's Play Store are by far the most popular places for people to source apps. Devices often come with specific app marketplaces available by default, often linked to the operating system on the device (eg: Apple's iOS or Google's Android).

We are interested in your reasons for choosing one app marketplace over another, or whether you swap between app marketplaces, or use more than one. An example may be using Google Play Store on your phone, and Apple App Store for your tablet.

We are also interested in whether you access apps through other avenues, besides the major app shops, such as by using other app marketplaces or by directly downloading apps.

Questions to consider:

Do you use Apple App Store or Google Play Store, or another app marketplace to get your apps? Do you use more than one?

Do you use different app marketplaces on different devices (eg: Google on your phone, Apple on your tablet)?

Have you considered/would you consider switching from Apple to Google, or vice versa? Why/why not?

Have you downloaded an app directly, rather than going through an app? What was your experience?

Issue 2 – Collection and use of consumer data

When consumers buy and use apps, their data is often collected. This can be used to help the app to provide personalised services, such as with fitness or banking apps, but also for purposes like research and development of other apps or products, and for targeting advertising.

The amount and types of information collected can vary from app to app. Sometimes consumers are given the choice to refuse to provide some information without losing the ability to use the app, but in other cases an app will not work unless the user agrees for that data to be collected.

We are interested in whether you believe you have been given enough information about the amount of data collected when you download or use an app, and how much control you feel you have over what data is collected.

Questions to consider:

Do you care about what data is collected and who it is going to?

Do you generally feel like you know what data is being collected? Do you know who gets that data?

Do you consider that you are given enough information from app marketplaces and the app provider regarding the collection of data, and who gets it?

Are you happy with the level you are able to restrict this data collection?

Issue 3 – Availability of other information about apps

In addition to information about the amount of your data that is collected by an app, we are also interested in how well informed you feel about an app before you download it, especially about its quality and what costs may be associated with it.

Questions to consider:

How often do you read reviews before choosing an app?

How much weight do you put on an app marketplace's 'ranking' of an app in deciding whether to get it? How much do you rely on the user reviews for an app?

Do you consider that you get sufficient and clear information from app marketplaces regarding the cost of apps (including in-app purchases) you are looking to download?

Have you ever inadvertently signed up for purchases within an app? If you have care of a child, has your child ever inadvertently signed you up for purchases in an app?

Issue 3 – Scams and feedback systems

App marketplaces play an important role in acting as 'gatekeepers', by limiting the numbers of scam or otherwise harmful apps available to consumers.

We are interested in your experience with apps that you found concerning, and whether you have been the target of a scam through an app. We would also like to know about your experiences with reporting these apps, or other issues, to app marketplaces.

Questions to consider:

Have you found or downloaded an app that you consider had a misleading name or description, and/or was a scam app?

Have you ever made a complaint or reported an app to an app marketplace? Who did you report it to? Were you happy with the outcome of the complaint?

Have you ever sought a refund for an app (or a purchase in an app) from an app marketplace? Were you happy with the outcome?

More information

[March 2021 report into app marketplaces Issues Paper](#)