

A Beginners Guide to

App Store Optimization

How to optimize your mobile apps to rank higher in app store rankings.



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App Store Optimization

App Store Optimization or ASO is the process of improving visibility of mobile apps to rank higher in app store searches. It is similar in principle to conventional search engine optimization, and you could do a lot of simple things to improve your mobile apps rankings.

The fundamental goal of successful ASO is to drive more traffic to your app detail page and in turn drive more downloads.

“For the average app, search actually makes up the vast majority of installs.”

- Ankit Jain, Head of Search at Google Play



How are Apps Ranked ?

While no one knows for sure what signals do the app stores consider while ranking the apps, there are a few ranking factors that seem to have a major influence on the app store rankings.

1. **App Reviews and Ratings** - The number and quality of reviews and comments are a very important indicator. It is necessary to listen to your users and improve the app using the feedback.
2. **Downloads** - The number of downloads is very clear indicator of apps popularity. Increase in number of downloads will help your app climb the app store charts.
3. **Long Installs** - If your users install and keep your app for a long time , it is an indicator of good quality of your app.
4. **Uninstalls** - If users uninstall the app soon after downloading or there is an increase in uninstalls after a recent update, it will adversely impact rankings.
5. **Social Signals** - App Stores also consider social significance your app, like the number of likes on facebook. Google regularly uses plus ones to recommend apps to users.



Optimizing for App Store Search

AppStore Searches are the most popular way of discovering and installing new apps.

While creating your app detail page you should take care of the following:

App Title

- Since most of the users search for new apps directly, you should select title carefully and have high traffic keywords in your app title.
- We also need to make sure that our app name does not closely resemble a popular app. The app stores often autocorrect wrong queries and the searches would go towards the popular apps.

App Description

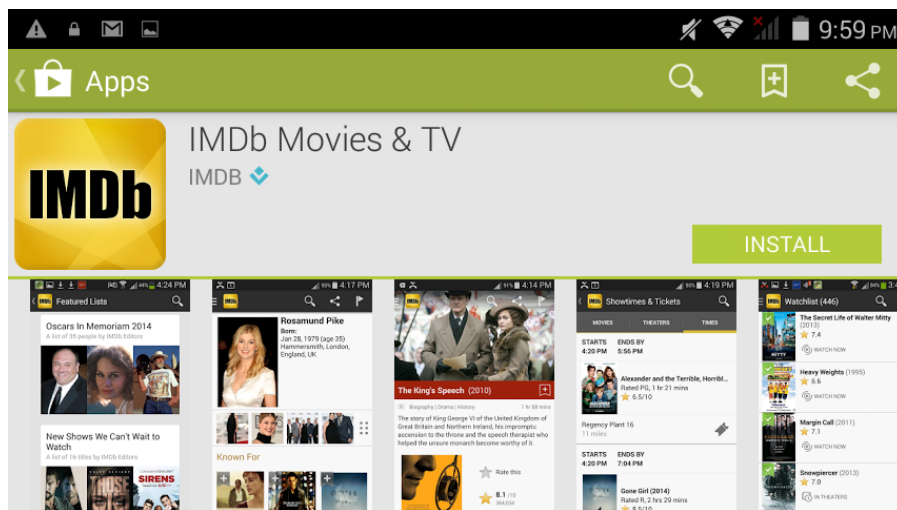
- App Description should focus on getting the message out in first few lines. This will make sure that users on phone with smaller screens would get to see the main marketing message as soon as they see your app detail page.
- The copy of app description should clearly explain what your app does.
- You could also add short testimonial from your users in the description. For example, if your app was covered by TechCrunch, it would be good to add it to the description.

App Screenshots

The app store users have millions of apps to download from, and it is very difficult to get discovered. It is also very likely that there are tens or even hundreds of apps providing similar functionality as your app.

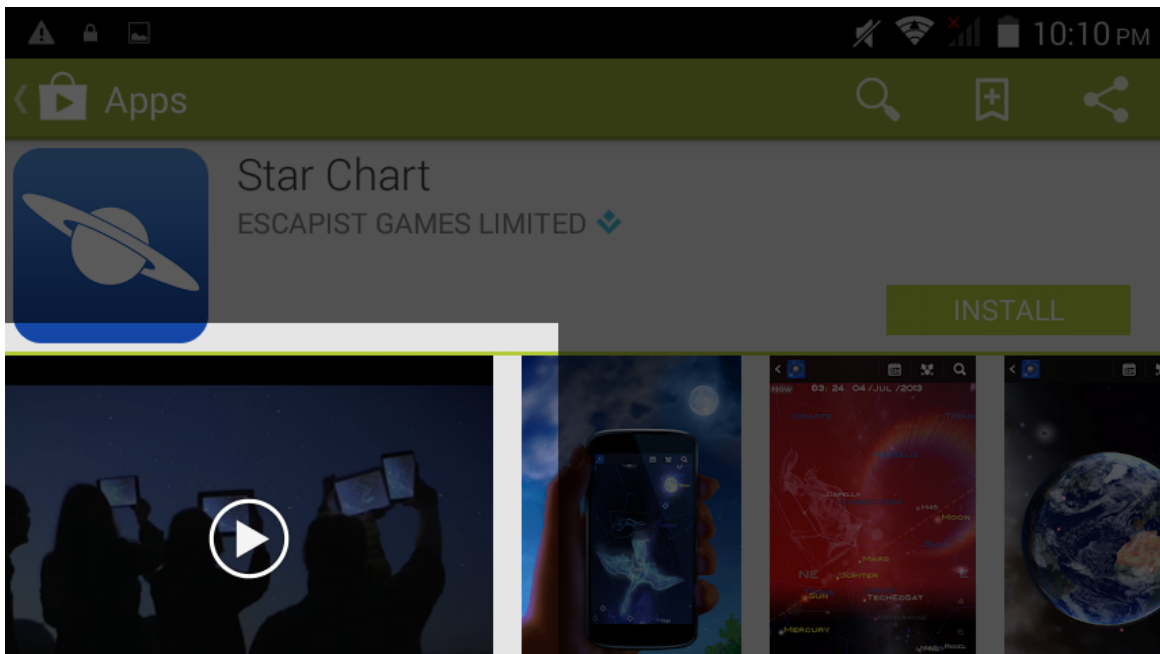
It is thus imperative that we try to convert a user who is seeing our app detail page.

Screenshots and App Icon



- Screenshots are a way to show the user what the experience is going to be like.
- You need to make sure that screenshots closely resemble what your user will see once he installs the apps.
- It is also important that your app has a stellar icon
- You need to strictly follow app store guidelines for screenshots and upload high resolution images.

App Videos

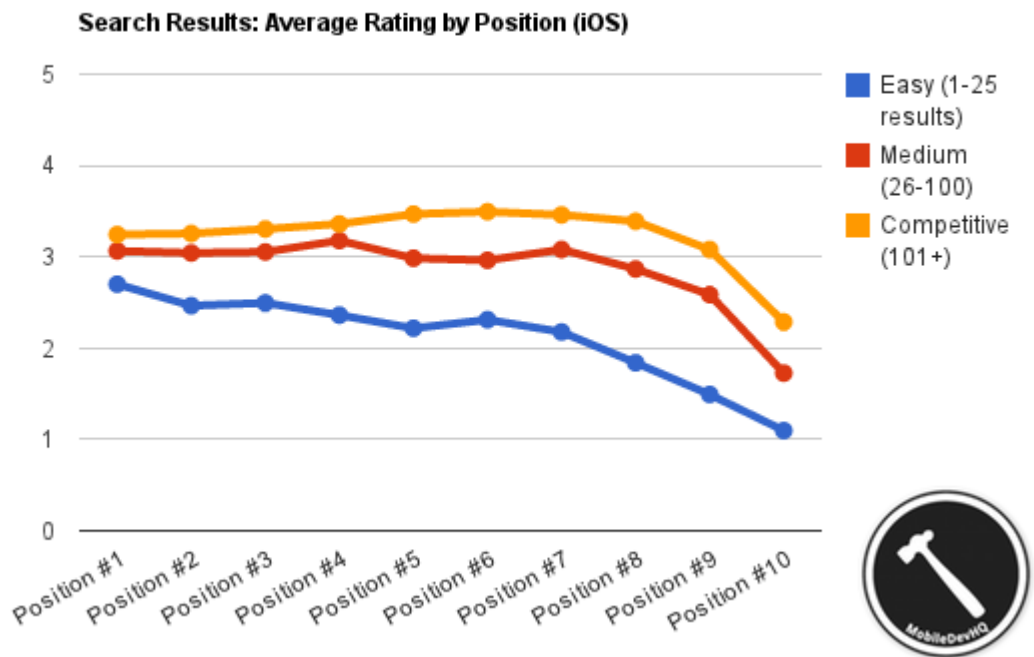


Use Video Previews

- Video Previews give you a chance to take your app detail page to the next level.
- You need to make sure that you highlight the distinct features of your app in the video(Ex: Avoid spending too much time showing the login screen)
- Tell the user how to interact with your app, what is fun about your app.
- If your app has sound effects, make sure you include them in the preview video



Reviews and Ratings



Search and Ratings from MobileDevHQ:

This chart shows clearly shows the correlation between search rankings and ratings. Better the rankings of an app, it will rank higher in the app store.

You can read more on [MobileDevHQs blog here](#)



Feedback from Reviews and Ratings

App Store Reviews and Ratings are the most important factor when the user decides to download your app or not.

It is therefore very important that we think carefully about getting better reviews, high ratings and avoid negative reviews.

Getting Reviews

- Ask your users to Rate your App. Include this call to action on your site, marketing material, blogs etc.
- Build an unobtrusive area in your app where the user can go and rate your app. This should not come in the way of the user while using the app.
- Many app developers still use pop up notifications to ask the users to rate the app. [We would suggest to avoid this.](#)

Using Reviews to your advantage

- Make sure that you periodically check the new reviews, especially the negative ones.
- Find out what the users find negative in your app and fix them in upcoming releases.
- Reviews are a good way to find specific problems with your app.
For Example :

Your app might not be working well on certain devices

Your app might not have a great experience in certain locations



Social Signals

As it happens with conventional SEO, social media plays an important role in app store optimization as well.

Google Play Store actively uses +1s to recommend apps to users.

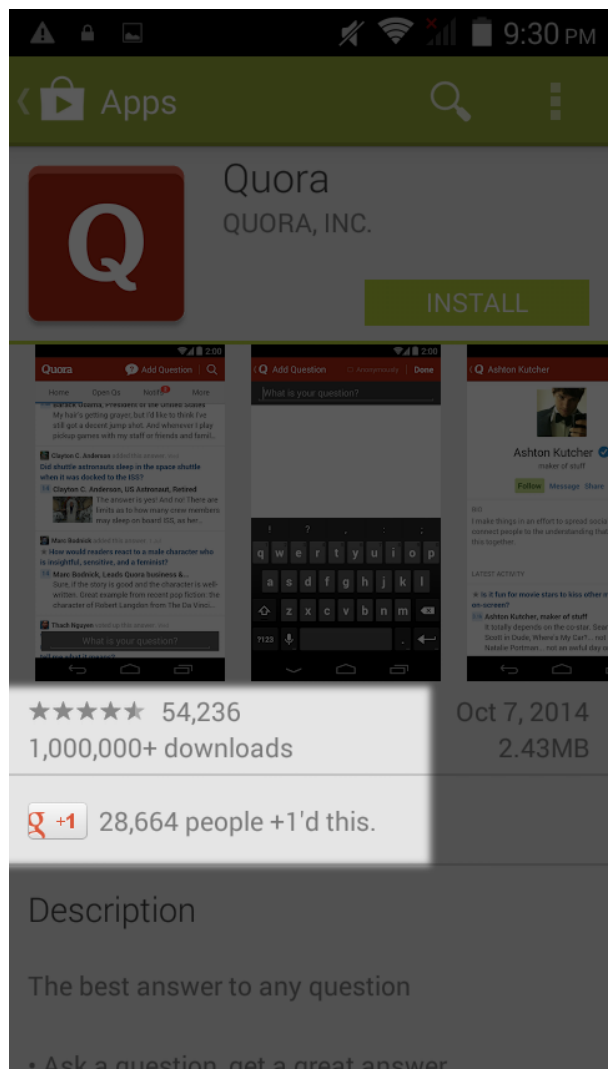
Google +1

While Developing for Android , Google Plus becomes extremely important.

Google Play Store uses the number of plus ones to show recommendations to users.

Your app would rank higher for a user, if her friends have plus oned your app.

Google also provides a native Plus One button which can be integrated in your app so that users can plus one without leaving the app.





Targeting Right Users

Every app has a certain audience that it would appeal to most. It is very important to figure that out early on and focus on targeting those users.

Filters on Google Play

When a user searches or browses for apps to download on Google Play, the results are filtered based on which applications are compatible with the device. For example, if an app requires a camera, Google Play would not show the app to devices that do not have a camera. This *filtering* helps developers manage the distribution of their apps and helps ensure the best possible experience for users.

[Read more about filters here](#)

Localize Your App

App Stores provide developers with a world wide audience. Localizing your app would unlock new markets for you and help in user acquisition..

However, even though app localization is simple and straightforward, it still requires some work. You need to make sure that your app is designed from the ground up to support localization.

[Read more about localization here](#)



A few more things

Smaller App Size(.apks)

The user has limited space on his phone. Your app has a greater chance of getting uninstalled if your app is bloated. You need to make sure that app is as lean as possible.

Designed for Tablets

More and more users are using tablets as their primary device . Making your app responsive so that it looks great even on tablets would help a lot in increasing the adoption of your app.

Alternate App Stores

With Android you have the option of listing your apps on a number of popular alternate app stores other than the official Play Store. Alternative app stores can be a viable distribution channel for your apps.

Here are a few popular alternative App Stores:

- [Amazon App Store](#)
- [SlideMe](#)
- [Samsung Galaxy Apps](#)
- [GetJar](#)
- [Opera Mobile Store](#)

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