

iOS app submission guidelines

How to increase the chance of getting your app approved by Apple

Background

Layar has a lot of experience building apps on top of the LayarSDK and submitting them to the Apple App Store. We have had lots of apps approved by Apple but also found that in some cases, Apple may reject an app. There are two reasons that were mentioned by the Apple Review team when apps got rejected:

"2.12: Apps that are not very useful, are simply web sites bundled as apps, or do not provide any lasting entertainment value may be rejected"

"11.16: Apps may enable additional approved features or functionality when used in combination with specific approved physical products (such as a toy) as long as the additional features and functionality are either completely dependent on such hardware (for example an app that is used to control a telescope) or also available through the app without the physical products, such as by way of reward for achievement or by In App Purchase"

The following paragraphs will give you some tips in order to help you avoid having your apps rejected by the Apple Review team.

Please note that Layar cannot help you more than by giving the advice in this document to get your app approved. The app submission process is your sole responsibility and Layar does not have any responsibility in that process.

Functionality provided by the app

Your app should provide more than just the scanning functionality wrapped in a branded but further empty shell. The most simple app that you can make with the Layar SDK is a wrapper app that directly launches the 'scan view', with nothing else. When scanning the sample page you provide to the Apple reviewers, the only thing they see is a button going to a website. So basically the functionality of the app is to open a website. This is not a very strong user experience and Apple may reject the app based on 2.12.

Here are some things you could add to your app to make this argument less tangible:

- Do not start the app in the scan/AR view. Make sure that when users open the app the first time, they get a good understanding of what they can do with the app, e.g. by introducing them to the concept of scanning and seeing augmented reality.

- Tell the users *what* they can scan: Make sure they understand that they cannot scan just any object or page out there, but need to have *your* printed materials in front of them. Tell them where they can find these printed materials.
- Make it easy for users to actually try it out even if they don't have the printed materials: Give them a link to a website where they can see some example pages to try it out.
- There are many ways in which you can use the Layar SDK to give users a more lasting experience than just a one-time scan: Scanning might only be a small part of your app. For example your app might allow users to create a shopping list by scanning specific packaging, or they might be able to collect extra information each time they scan a product. In such cases, you won't have to worry much about clause 2.12.
- With the new Layar SDK v8.0, you can add a lot of features to your app based on *what* users scan (like for example our "Recent content" section in the Layar app). Scanning can become a game, e.g. unlock something if you've found all pages that have special content.

Your app should also make clear why the content viewed in augmented reality only makes sense in the context of the printed material, rather than stand-alone. Again, if all your app does is let users scan the pages of a brochure to get to know more about a company, that content may just as well be shown directly in the app, without the need to scan the brochure. Apple will come with article 11.16 and reject your app. Here are some things you can do to avoid this argument:

- Let the user view the content without the printed material after he has viewed it in AR (like we do in the Layar app with recent content).
- Have unique content that really doesn't make sense without the printed material, e.g. a page of a textbook where a multiple choice test can be taken and the app is used for the user to check his responses (clicking on a response will play a sound for example); or a textbook where the information provided by the app is *complementary* (e.g. instruction videos on how to solve the puzzle in the book)
- Have an app that is useful already without the AR part. If the Layar SDK is just an extra addition on top of an existing app that you had in the App Store previously, of course there isn't much risk of rejection.

What to mention when submitting the app

When you create the metadata in iTunesConnect for submitting please make sure that you add the following information:

- In the app description that will appear in the App Store, tell your users that the app only works together with the printed material, if that is the case. Explain which printed material and where it can be found.
- In the review notes for the Apple Review team only, you should explain in detail what the printed material will be, where it can be found and how it will be changed or updated over time. For example if your app is a companion app for a weekly magazine, make sure you say so and explain that every week users will be able to find new and exciting content.
- Also you should include in the review notes links to as many augmented pages as possible, so that the Apple Review team can actually see it work. Have your first issue or a trial issue of your magazine already fully augmented with the Layar Creator for example. Tip: You can find the direct link of your reference images by right-clicking on your reference image in the Layar Creator editor and opening them in a new tab or window.

What to do if your app gets rejected?

Well... That can happen. Always take that into account with your timing: Don't submit your app one week before an important deadline. First, Apple review might take longer than a week. Second, if your app gets rejected, you won't have time anymore to appeal.

Apple will always explain why they reject the app. If that explanation refers back to articles 2.12 or 11.16, try an appeal:

- The link to the form to submit an appeal is included in the Resolution Centre. Don't respond directly to the review team, directly submit an appeal.
- In your appeal, explain in details why your app is depending on the printed materials and why it doesn't make sense for users to access the content without those printed materials (to counter 11.16)
- In your appeal, explain that the experience is more than just scanning, and that users will find rich content and experiences *after* they scanned a page. Explain that the content will be more than just the few examples sent to the Apple Review team and that users will be able to experience a big range of functions (to counter 2.12).

Below you can find a sample text of an appeal we have submitted previously, which was successful in convincing the Apple Review Board:

*The application has been designed to be a companion app to magazines, newspapers and brochures for clients and customers of XYZ. The users of this app will be asked to download and use the app **after they already have** the materials with them. So, it is intended that all use cases of the app start with, and continue, with the user having the target pages to scan already available.*

In this sense, the user already has the content to be scanned available outside the app, and the first action that is expected - and advertised within the app, as well as via calls-to-action on the pages themselves - is to Scan. By scanning the materials customers get access to any type of content of which the publisher think it will add value to readers of their newspapers, magazines and brochures such as:

Static print comes to life with videos and 3D models right on top of a magazine, for example this advertisement - this example can be scanned: [URL here]

Provide direct background information and a call-to-action about a service, for example this brochure - this example can be scanned: [URL here]

Explain to clients and customers what XYZ is about - this example can be scanned with the app: [URL here]

As to the concern that it only scans Augmented Reality triggers (2.12). Scanning the triggers is just a starting point to get to the Augmented Reality experience. The Augmented Reality experience itself is not limited to the examples and could include all types of content and call-to-actions. Some of the XYZ clients will be offering extra offers and discounts to customers using our app to view the interactive media. These additional offers would only be available to those who use our app.

Wait until your appeal has been reviewed before re-submitting your app. If your appeal is approved, Apple will send you an email asking you to re-submit your app. If it gets rejected again, you should consider some slight modifications to your app:

- Take a good look and the first-time use flow of your app. Is it clear for users what they can scan and where they can find it?
- Revisit the examples you gave: Is the content really special and related to the printed material?
- A small additional feature may make all the difference: For example, in an app that's related to an event, you could add a button to view the program of the event for users who don't have anything to scan. That kind of change is usually enough for Apple to approve your app.

When re-submitting a modified version of your app, make sure you explain in detail the modifications you made compared to your previous version in the special Review comments for the Apple Review team. Don't just assume they know about the first rejection and the discussion you've had with the Review Board. Someone else might be reviewing your app this time round. So explicitly quote some of the arguments Apple used to reject your app and tell them what you did to address those issues.

That's it! You now have all the ingredients to make a great app that will surf through the Apple Review process :) Good luck!