Mobile Application Development

Summary/Purpose

This policy provides guidelines on how an entity at the University can work with Information Technology and University Communications to publish a mobile app to the various mobile device platforms.

Additionally, this policy provides guidance for apps which are intended to be published separately (e.g. student projects, third-party distribution, etc.) but may contain references to The University of Mississippi or any of its trademarks.

Key elements of the policy

- Regular check-ins during development
- IT review before branding
- University Communications branding review
- Party sign-off before submission
- Clear indication to UMIT regarding desired timeline for deployment

- Guidelines for non-official apps

Summary of timelines

- UM unit must notify IT of its intent to publish an app, at least four weeks before desired launch date
- UM unit must ensure developer provides a submission ready (beta) test build to IT at least two weeks before desired launch date
- IT reserves two business days for review process

Introduction

The Office of Information Technology (IT) serves as steward for official University of Mississippi applications in the Amazon Appstore for Android, Apple iOS and Mac App Stores, Google Play store, and Windows Phone Store. University Communications (UC) serves as steward of the University of Mississippi brand and oversees the use of university symbols. Together both offices reserve the right to review application submissions for quality of workmanship, branding, and representative character.

All applications developed for publication as official University of Mississippi applications shall be subject to this review whether developed internally by IT, other university faculty or staff, externally by contracted agents, or by students either for work-study or academic projects. The UM school, department, or unit (hereafter referred to as "UM unit") seeking to publish the application is responsible for communication between the developer and the Office of Information Technology and University Communications. IT and UC must be notified at least four weeks and at least one test version of the application must be delivered at least two weeks prior to the intended application publication ("launch") date. IT, UC, the UM unit,

and the developer must agree to the application's quality before submission to the corresponding publisher(s) review process. Applications developed with regular review submissions to IT and UC in advance of the final release will be successful in meeting the requested deadline.

Ownership of the application

The UM unit is tasked with determining the ownership of the application source code and responsibility for maintenance. Generally this should rest with the original developer of the application. In some cases the developer provides the initial creation of the application transferring ownership and maintenance to the UM unit. In these cases IT shall not inherit these duties unless previously agreed upon e.g. by means of an IT Work Order.

Applications which have fallen out of maintenance may be removed from the respective app stores to protect the university brand. Applications which have programming, graphical, or logical errors (known colloquially as "bugs") may also be removed from the store(s) if the UM Unit is unable to procure a corrected version of the application in a timely manner. The specific time-period for such a removal is directly dependent upon the nature and severity of the bug(s) but the base-line period is 10 business days.

Management of source code

Although ownership of the application may rest with the developer or the UM unit, in order to facilitate testing and publication, IT may provide a source code repository ("git repo") for the purpose of transferring versions of the application source materials from the developer as well as feedback or revisions from IT. It is the developer's responsibility to maintain the source code utilizing the IT provided repo merely as a means of transmission.

For applications that will be transferred to the UM unit after completion, IT can also provide a repository for the safeguarding of the application source code in perpetuity. Such a repo would be configured for access by a responsible person within the UM unit. At such time as the code would be needed for further development, IT would provide the developer with access to the repository to "pull" the source code. The developer would be responsible for maintaining a separate repository for day-to-day development.

Testing process guidelines

During development and testing, prior to the final submission, the developer is responsible for delivering test application versions ("builds") to the UM unit for testing. The UM unit should work with the developer directly to address any quality concerns before signing off on a version suitable for publication. Such a test version should consist of a live application running locally on a device in control of the UM unit. Remote control demonstrations or "loaner" devices are not adequate for this final stage of testing.

Once the UM unit is satisfied with the quality of the application, the unit should request the developer provide a final testing build for IT and UC to evaluate. This build should be provided to IT at least two weeks before desired launch date. IT will have two (2) business days to perform the review. The disposition of this testing build is up to the developer; however the preferred form is an installable executable. For iOS devices, which require a cryptographically signed testing build, IT and UC will provide UDIDs for this purpose or the developer can provide a copy of the application source code via IT git repo in order for IT to produce a test build locally. It is the developer's responsibility to ensure this source code includes any external dependencies required for compilation.

Updates to existing applications will follow the same guidelines. If an update is a critical bug-fix, IT will work to facilitate prompt turn-around but reserves the requirement of two business days.

Submission process guidelines

When available, the developer must submit the finalized product to IT for submission to the various app stores. For Android applications this should be an APK compiled without debugging statements or extraneous logging. For iOS applications, which require a cryptographically signed distribution build, the developer is responsible for providing either: a) an Xcode archive signed with an IT provided developer identity or b) the application source code for IT to compile directly. If providing source code, the developer is requested to make use of a git repo provided by IT.

The UM unit is responsible for procuring all marketing items required for the particular store listing(s) to provide to IT and University Communications to create the app entry or entries. Details for the items required for each store are listed below; however the standard items include the following:

- Name of the application as appears in the store(s)
- Descriptive summary
- Representative screenshots
- Age-appropriateness or content rating selection

Non-official or third-party distributed applications

Applications which are not to distributed through official UM app store accounts (see links below) are still required to seek approval for use of University trademarks. Permission to use such branding elements must be requested from the Office of Licensing as directed in the "Permission Required to Use University Trademarks" policy found in the UM Policy Directory.

- Trademark policy:
  http://bit.ly/UMTrademarksPolicy

Links to official UM store listings:
- Apple App Store account:
  http://appstore.com/universityofmississippi
- Google Play Store account:
  https://bit.ly/OleMissGoogleApps
- Amazon Appstore account:
  https://bit.ly/OleMissAmazon