

DSA Transparency Report

App Store

October 2023

In accordance with Articles 15, 24 and 42 of the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA), this transparency report provides information on orders and notices of illegal content received by the App Store and content moderation that the App Store has undertaken on its own initiative.¹ This first report covers the reporting period between 27 August 2023 and 27 September 2023. Subsequent reports will cover successive six-month periods.

Section 1: Orders Received from EU Member States²

This section covers orders issued by EU Member States' judicial or administrative authorities to act against illegal content in accordance with Article 9 of the DSA. These orders can be submitted through Content Reports (ContentReports.apple.com) — the App Store notice and action mechanism developed in compliance with Article 16 — as well as through existing communication channels.³ The section also covers orders issued by EU Member States' judicial or administrative authorities to provide information as defined by Article 10 of the DSA.

Total number of EU Member State orders to act against illegal content: 1

Table 1.1: EU Member State orders to act against illegal content categorised by the EU Member State issuing the order

	Count of EU Member State orders
Hungary	1

Table 1.2: EU Member State orders to act against illegal content categorised by type of illegal content concerned

	Count of EU Member State orders
Provides or facilitates an illegal service	1

EU Member State orders to act against illegal content — median time to confirm receipt: 0 days⁴

EU Member State orders to act against illegal content — median time to give effect to the order: 5 days

Total number of EU Member State orders to provide information: 8

Table 1.3: EU Member State orders to provide information categorised by the EU Member State issuing the order

	Count of EU Member State orders
France	3
Germany	1
Hungary	1
Italy	1
Netherlands	1
Sweden	1

EU Member State orders to provide information — median time to confirm receipt: 0 days

EU Member State orders to provide information — median time to give effect to the order: 3 days

Section 2: Notices Received Through Notice and Action Mechanism

The App Store notice and action mechanism in accordance with Article 16 is available at [ContentReports.apple.com](https://contentreports.apple.com) or through the [Report a Problem tool](#) and can be accessed by any individual or entity with an EU IP address.

Total number of notices: 615

Table 2.1: Notices categorised by type of alleged illegal content concerned⁵

	Count of notices
Violates intellectual property rights ⁶	547
Violates consumer protection or privacy law	19
Provides or facilitates an illegal service	17
Child sexual abuse material	8
Violates advertising law	4
Illegal hate speech	3
Incites terrorism or violence	0
Other	17

Notices submitted by trusted flaggers: 0⁷

Notices processed using automated means: 0

Total number of notices on which the App Store took an action: 14⁸

- Action taken on the basis of the law: 0
- Action taken on the basis of terms and conditions: 14⁹

Median time to take action: 8 days

Section 3: App Store–Initiated Content Moderation

The App Store moderates three types of content for compliance with applicable law and terms and conditions: live apps that are published on the App Store, ads that are live on the App Store,¹⁰ and user ratings and reviews and public developer responses (both before and after publication).

Content moderation relating to published apps

Before they're published on the App Store — that is, before becoming subject to any content moderation decisions — all apps and app updates are subject to two levels of ex ante review by the App Review team (App Review): automated review and human review. After apps are published, the App Store continues to monitor them and can and does take action, including app takedowns, if it identifies apps that do not comply with applicable law, with the [App Store Review Guidelines](#) or with other applicable terms and conditions — namely the [Apple Developer Agreement](#) or the [Apple Developer Program License Agreement](#) (DPLA). The App Store may also take action if alerted to concerns about an app by third parties, including via Report a Problem or Content Reports.

Automated tools are used to assist App Review specialists in their ongoing monitoring of apps published on

the App Store. This includes automated tools that detect malware or bait-and-switch apps that change their functionality after approval by App Review. It also includes automated tools that scan user reviews of published apps to identify concerns raised by consumers that may indicate that apps contain content incompatible with applicable law or terms and conditions. These tools are continually trained and enhanced to address new and emerging threats and to factor in learning from human-based decision-making. Any apps flagged as potentially problematic by these automated tools are escalated to human App Review specialists. These specialists then determine whether the apps violate App Store terms and conditions and, if so, what action to take — for example, app removal. No such actions are taken solely on the basis of automated tools.

App Review supports all official EU Member State languages (see Table 3.1). Each specialist receives language- and region-specific training that covers cultural and sensitivity issues as they relate to enforcing the App Store Review Guidelines. Specialists also participate in regular discussions on new issues or trends that arise in their particular regions.

All App Review specialists charged with the continuing review of apps published on the App Store receive comprehensive training when they join the App Review team. This training is supplemented by ongoing training to ensure that specialists remain informed of new and emerging threats and issues. They have access to senior App Review specialists for guidance and can escalate issues internally, including to the App Review Board.

Content moderation relating to published ads

Before they're published on the App Store, ads are reviewed to ensure that they comply with [Apple Search Ads Advertising Policies](#). The App Store will also moderate ads after they're published if it becomes aware that they're in breach of the Apple Search Ads Advertising Policies.

Some automated tools are used to assist with moderating ads, but final decisions regarding content moderation are taken by humans.

Personnel charged with moderating published Apple Search Ads content receive comprehensive training when they join the team. This training is supplemented by ongoing training to ensure that personnel remain informed of new and emerging threats and issues.

Content moderation relating to user ratings and reviews as well as developer responses

Customers provide ratings and reviews on the App Store to give feedback on their experience with an app and to help others decide which apps they'd like to try. App developers can respond to user reviews regarding their apps. Some submitted ratings and reviews aren't published on the App Store because automated tools are applied before they're published to prevent reviews or responses that contain certain types of content — such as spam, fake reviews or profanity — from ever being published on the App Store. Nonetheless, we include these ratings and reviews in the relevant tables that follow.

All user ratings and reviews must comply with the Submissions Guidelines in the [Apple Media Services \(AMS\) Terms and Conditions](#). Ratings and reviews that do not comply with these terms and conditions can be removed from the App Store. All developer responses must comply with the Developer Code of Conduct in the App Store Review Guidelines, as well as with the DPLA. Responses that do not comply can also be removed from the App Store.

We use a combination of automated and human review to moderate this content. Any reviews that may violate the law or App Store terms and conditions are evaluated by human moderators. Automated tools are used to flag reviews with potential concerns for human moderators to consider; but because decisions are taken by human reviewers rather than by automated means, considerations of the accuracy or error rate of such automated tools do not apply. Human reviewers sometimes detect or are alerted by developers and customers

to published reviews that contain new patterns of illegal content or content that doesn't comply with the AMS Terms and Conditions. In these circumstances, human reviewers may run automated queries to detect other published reviews that contain such content.

The personnel responsible for moderating user ratings and reviews and developer responses both before and after publication on the App Store receive comprehensive training at onboarding. This training is supplemented by ongoing training to ensure that personnel remain informed of new and emerging threats and issues.

Total number of human resources dedicated to content moderation: 607

Table 3.1: Human resources dedicated to content moderation categorised by supported language¹¹

In accordance with Article 42(2)(a) of the DSA, the App Store must specify the human resources that it dedicates to content moderation, broken down by each official language of the EU Member States. The App Store does not maintain separate content moderation teams per EU Member State language, so it has detailed the number of content moderation human resources broken down by proficiency in EU Member State languages.

	Count of dedicated human resources
English	607
Spanish	42
Portuguese	34
German	32
French	29
Italian	22
Swedish	14
Danish	13
Polish	10
Slovak	10
Dutch	9
Bulgarian	8
Czech	8
Greek	8
Croatian	7
Hungarian	6
Romanian	6
Estonian	5
Finnish	5
Slovenian	5
Maltese	4
Latvian	3
Lithuanian	3
Irish	2

Total number of content moderation measures taken: 1,000,804

Number of content moderation measures taken detected solely using automated means: 221,255¹²

Table 3.2: Content moderation measures taken categorised by type of restriction applied

	Count of content moderation measures taken
Accounts terminated ¹³	512,914
Ratings or reviews removed ¹⁴	480,719
Apps removed ¹⁵	7,129
Apps restricted ¹⁶	27
Ads removed	10
Accounts restricted ¹⁷	5

Table 3.3: Content moderation measures taken categorised by type of illegal content or violation of terms and conditions

	Count of content moderation measures taken
AMS Terms Section K — Prohibited Use of Service	993,429
App Store Review Guideline 4.0 — Design ¹⁸	5,456
Apple DPLA Section 3.2(f) — Fraud	1,756
App Store Review Guideline 4.3 — Spam	38
App Store Review Guideline 5.6.3 — Discovery Fraud	27
App Store Review Guideline 3 — Business	21
App Store Review Guideline 4.1 — Copycats	14
App Store Review Guideline 2.3.1 — Accurate Metadata	9
App Store Review Guideline 5.6 — Developer Code of Conduct	9
App Store Review Guideline 2.1 — App Completeness	5
App Store Review Guideline 1.1 — Objectionable Content	5
Advertising Policies 3.4 — Adult Content	4
App Store Review Guideline 3.1.2 — Subscriptions	4
App Store Review Guideline 3.1.1 — In-App Purchases	3
App Store Review Guideline 5 — Legal	3
App Store Review Guideline 5.2.3 — Intellectual Property — Audio/Video Downloading	3
Advertising Policies 4.2 — Sensitive Content or Imagery	2
App Store Review Guideline 2.3 — Accurate Metadata	2
App Store Review Guideline 4.2 — Minimum Functionality	2
App Store Review Guideline 4.8 — Sign in with Apple	2
Advertising Policies 1 — Advertiser Responsibilities	1
Advertising Policies 3.5 — Controlled Substances	1
Advertising Policies 4.4 — Real Money Gambling	1
Advertising Policies 4.6 — Dating Services/Match Making	1
App Store Review Guideline 2.3.7 — Accurate Metadata	1
App Store Review Guideline 2.5.18 — Software Requirements	1
App Store Review Guideline 3.2.2 — Unacceptable Business Model	1
App Store Review Guideline 5.1.1 — Data Collection and Storage	1
App Store Review Guideline 5.2.1 — Intellectual Property — Generally	1
App Store Review Guideline 5.2.2 — Intellectual Property — Third-Party Sites/Services	1

Section 4: Complaints¹⁹

Total complaints received: 147

Median time to take decisions: 11 days

Table 4.1: Complaints received categorised by the basis for the complaint²⁰

	Count of complaints received
Procedural complaints	0
Substantive complaints on the illegality or incompatibility	147
Restriction imposed is not diligent, objective, or proportionate	0

Table 4.2: Complaints received categorised by decision taken

	Count of complaints received
Decision upheld	53
Decision reversed	34
Decision pending	60

Section 5: Out-of-Court Disputes

Number of disputes submitted to out-of-court dispute settlement bodies referred to in Article 21: 0²¹

Section 6: Suspensions for Misuse of the Service

DSA Article 23(1) provides for the suspension of users who “frequently provide manifestly illegal content.” DSA Article 23(2) provides for the suspension of users who “frequently submit notices or complaints that are manifestly unfounded.”

Under its existing content moderation practices, and in accordance with its terms and conditions, the App Store will terminate — rather than merely suspend — the accounts of any user or developer who frequently provides manifestly illegal content in the form of apps, user reviews of published apps or other forms of illegal content. The App Store may suspend or terminate users who frequently submit Content Reports notices or related complaints that are manifestly unfounded.

Total number of suspensions for provision of manifestly illegal content: 0

Total number of suspensions for submission of manifestly unfounded notices: 0

Total number of suspensions for submission of manifestly unfounded complaints: 0

Section 7: App Store Recipients of the Service

Table 7.1: Average monthly recipients of the App Store categorised by EU Member State

	Count of monthly recipients of the App Store
Austria	3 million
Belgium	4 million
Bulgaria	Under 1 million
Croatia	Under 1 million
Cyprus	Under 1 million

Czechia	2 million
Denmark	4 million
Estonia	Under 1 million
Finland	2 million
France	24 million
Germany	28 million
Greece	2 million
Hungary	2 million
Ireland	2 million
Italy	14 million
Latvia	Under 1 million
Lithuania	Under 1 million
Luxembourg	Under 1 million
Malta	Under 1 million
Netherlands	8 million
Poland	5 million
Portugal	2 million
Romania	2 million
Slovakia	Under 1 million
Slovenia	Under 1 million
Spain	11 million
Sweden	6 million

1. Data in the report comes from EU Member State storefronts only.
2. For the purposes of this report, an “order” is a valid request from a Member State judicial or administrative authority in accordance with specific mandatory powers under the laws of the Member State in question, seeking production of information relating to the use of App Store services by one or more specific recipients of the service, or requiring action to be taken in respect of specific items of illegal content, regardless of whether it constitutes an order legally binding on Apple Distribution International Limited. This reporting is without prejudice to the legal position of Apple Distribution International Limited with regard to the binding nature of any such order, under applicable law.
3. For more information on accessing the Content Reports portal, please see Section 2.
4. All lengths of time are listed in calendar days.
5. This table displays the category of illegal content selected by the notifier. The selected category may not accurately reflect the content concerned.
6. Intellectual property rights notices are generally settled by the rights’ claimants themselves without requiring an action from the App Store.
7. Under DSA Article 22(5), the European Commission will publish in a publicly available database information regarding entities awarded the status of trusted flaggers by the Digital Services Coordinators; these Digital Services Coordinators are designated by the EU Member States in accordance with DSA Article 22(2). To date, no such information has been published.
8. For more information on the content moderation actions that the App Store takes, see Table 3.2. Some actions on reported notices may not be included in these figures because they were pending at the time that data was collected. Additionally, some notices are not related to the reporting of illegal content and are therefore not actionable.
9. The App Store terms and conditions — including the App Store Review Guidelines, the Apple Developer Program License Agreement (DPLA) and Apple Media Services (AMS) Terms and Conditions — prohibit illegal content on the App Store, as well as the use of the App Store for illegal purposes. As such, this

figure may include actions taken against content that might also be incompatible with applicable laws.

10. Apple Search Ads is a separate business from the App Store, and it's included in this report because its business involves selling advertising media on the App Store.
11. Table 3.1 lists human resources who are proficient in multiple languages under each applicable language.
12. This category includes ratings and reviews detected and removed solely through automated means.
13. This category includes terminations of App Store developers, AMS customers and Apple Search Ads advertisers.
14. This category includes ratings and reviews removed before and after publication.
15. This category includes apps that were live on the App Store when the developer account was terminated.
16. This category includes apps that were suppressed on App Store charts and in App Store search. It also includes apps blocked from being transferred to other developers.
17. This category includes user accounts that are restricted from leaving ratings or reviews on the App Store.
18. This removal is the result of ongoing cleanup for outdated apps.
19. The App Store has multiple complaint-handling systems from which data is included in this section. These systems cover complaints related to Content Reports notices, review removals, App Review Board (ARB) cases, platform-to-business (P2B) cases and advertisement restrictions. For more information on redress options, please see apple.com/legal/dsa/en/redress-options.html.
20. The App Store will seek to provide users filing complaints with additional flexibility to select a basis for complaint for future reports.
21. In accordance with Article 21(8) of the DSA, the European Commission will publish a list of certified out-of-court dispute settlement bodies certified by Digital Services Coordinators under DSA Article 21(3). To date, no such list has been published.