

COLUMNS

## Tips for app store optimization

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ASO, or app store optimization, is the process of creating and adjusting an App Store or Google Play listing for long-term, organic success.

The concept of ASO has caught fire recently due in no small part to the massive volume of applications clogging the app stores: nearly 3 million apps are available on the Apple App Store and Google Play apiece. Successful optimization can put your app on top for a long time to come.

Why ASO?

Apple itself recently touted that more than 65 percent of app downloads come from searches made in the App Store. That is bigger than all the television ads, Facebook promotions and burst campaigns out there, making search officially the strongest way to boost your app.

With an optimized listing, your app will be more likely to appear in relevant searches, capitalizing on the intent of users each time they search in the store.

Tailoring your optimizations

When optimizing your app, it is important to consider the platform on which you will be launch.

Apple and Google each have their own unique process for indexing your app. That means you will need to play to the strengths of each platform to successfully optimize for both.

Optimizing on the App Store

Apple's App Store is the easiest platform to optimize for in many ways.

An app listing for the App Store consists of two key parts: Your app's title and your app's keywords. Only your title will be visible to the public, but both the title and the keywords have great influence on which terms you will rank for in search.

Words from your title and your keyword bank can be combined to build phrases.

For example, if your app is called "Fun Game" and you have the word "Free" in your keyword bank, you could pick up

ranking for the phrase "Fun Free Game."

By looking over your title and keywords, as well as reading your description and playing around with your app, Apple will determine for which terms and phrases your app is relevant. That makes targeting the proper keywords in your title, keyword bank and description extremely important.

#### Optimizing on Google Play

Like Apple, Google also has a title field. Unlike Apple, Google restricts the title to 30 short characters. That means you will not be able to add too many key terms in your title.

Also, unlike Apple, Google has no keyword bank into which you can type manually targeted keywords.

Instead, Google uses the words in your title, long description and short description to determine for which terms your app is relevant.

The short description is a small, 80-character description of your app that will appear to users on mobile as they search.

Google places great weight on your title and short description when it decides your ranking, so it would be wise to use highly searched, relevant words and phrases here.

The same is true of your long description.

If you can use high-volume, trending terms in your description in a natural way, you might find yourself picking up a lot of new rankings.

#### Converting users

ASO places heavy emphasis on the data behind your app. You always want to use the most relevant, trending terms as your keywords.

However, not all the action happens behind the scenes.

After all, a user still needs to like the look of your app to download, and that means optimizing your icon and screenshots as well.

Creative optimization is incredibly important in ASO.

An app can have great keywords, a solid title and a captivating description. But with an ugly icon and screenshots, it may never gain the traction it needs for success.

Again, it is important to take into account the differences between Apple and Google when you optimize your creatives.

For example, Apple's search results display two screenshots for each app, making your first two screenshots or your first screenshot and your preview video, if you have one vital for converting users.

Google, on the other hand, does not display screenshots in search results. Instead, your icon will be the only creative item featured in the results.

Take these differences into account when you set up your listing for each store.

WITH THAT, you have got a solid foothold for optimizing your app with both Apple and Google.

Each platform has its own unique challenges. But a successful optimization could be the first step towards scaling nearly 3 million competitors on each app store.

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