



ChromelInfo Technologies



App Store Optimization: Demystified

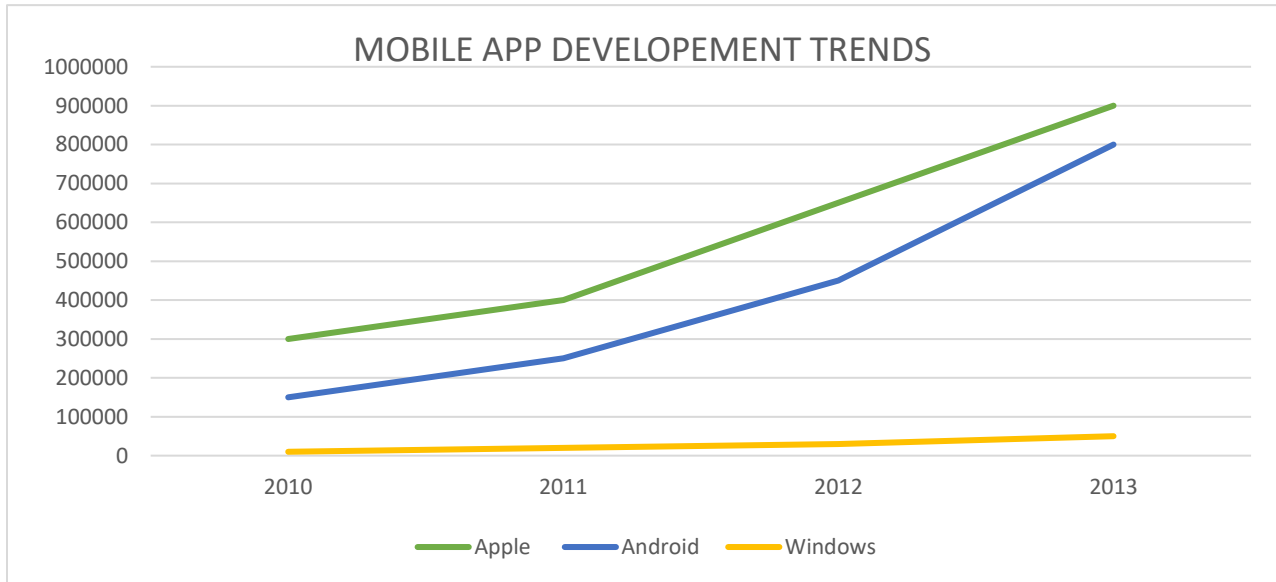


Insights from the App World

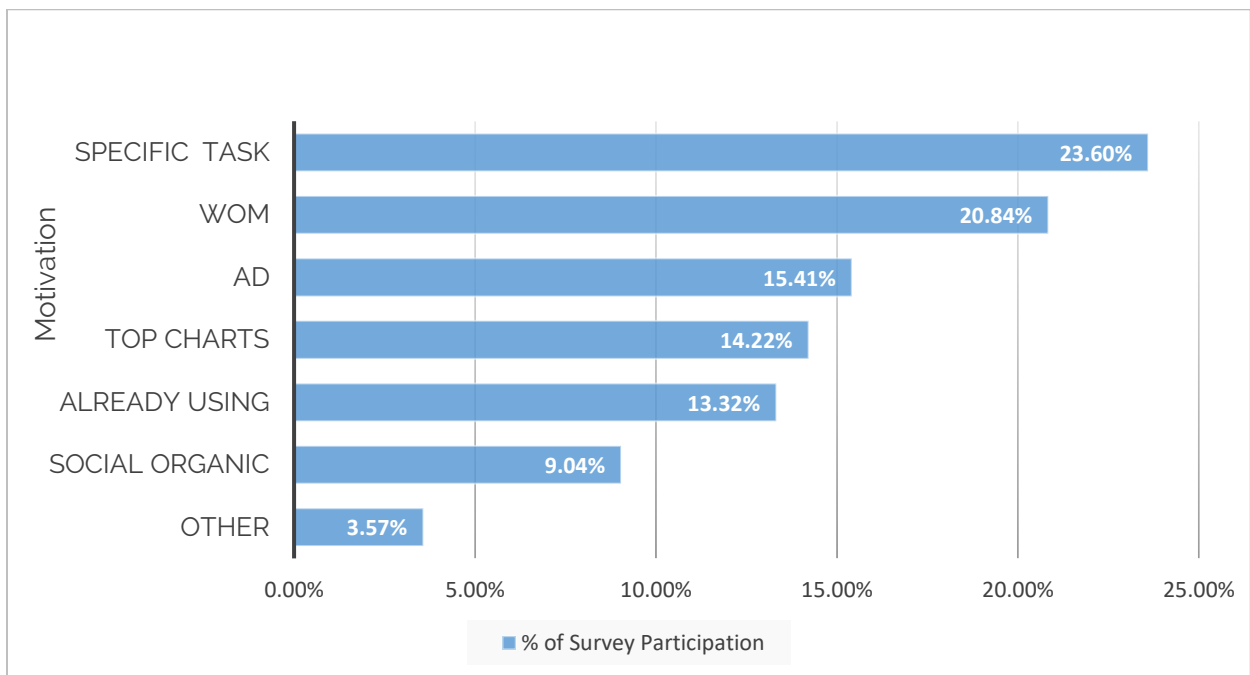


Mobile App Development Trends

With over 2 Million Mobile Apps today, standing out among competition is extremely challenging

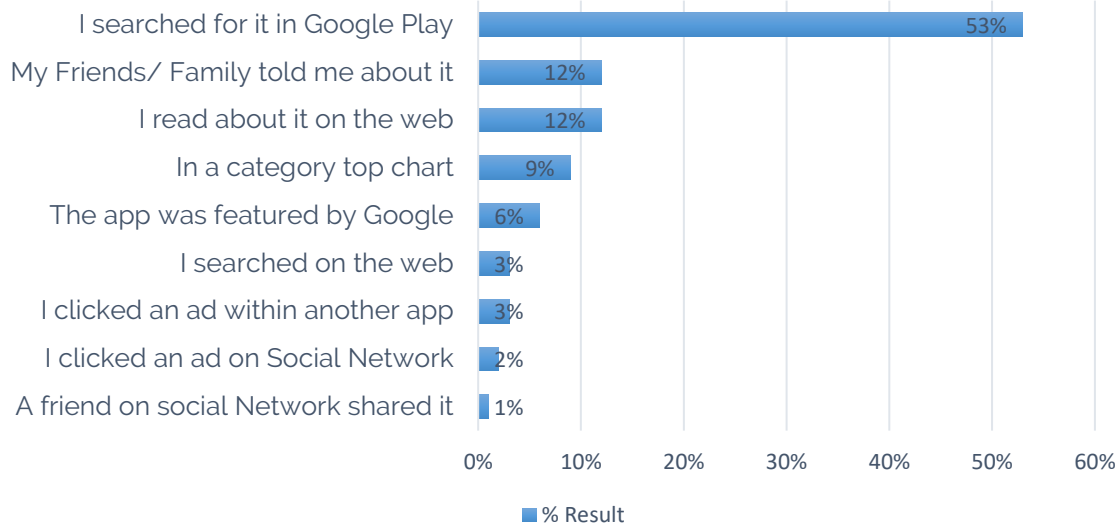


Motivation for App Downloads

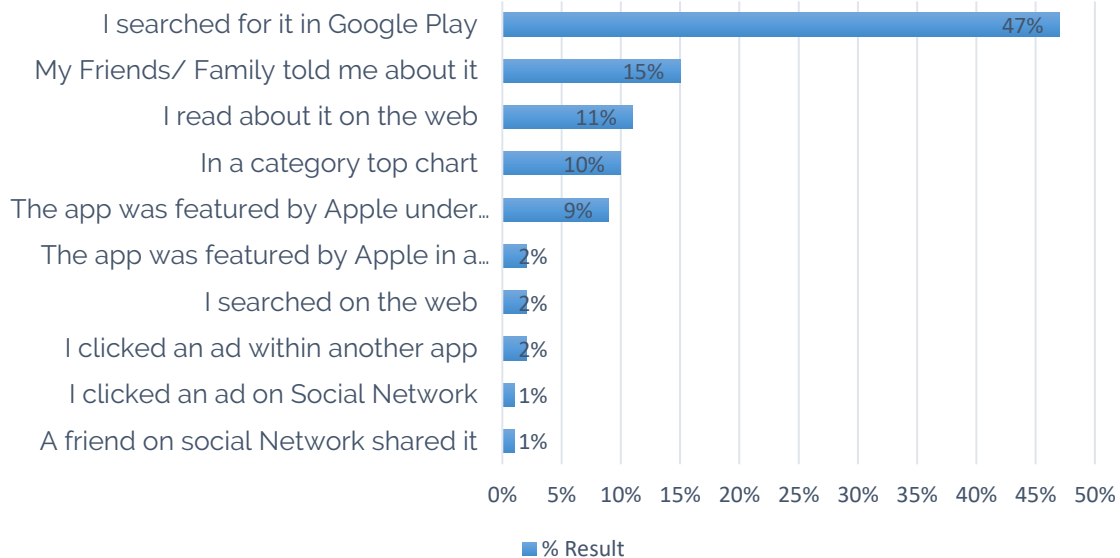


How are the users discovering app?

Where U.S. Android (Google Play) users found the last app they downloaded



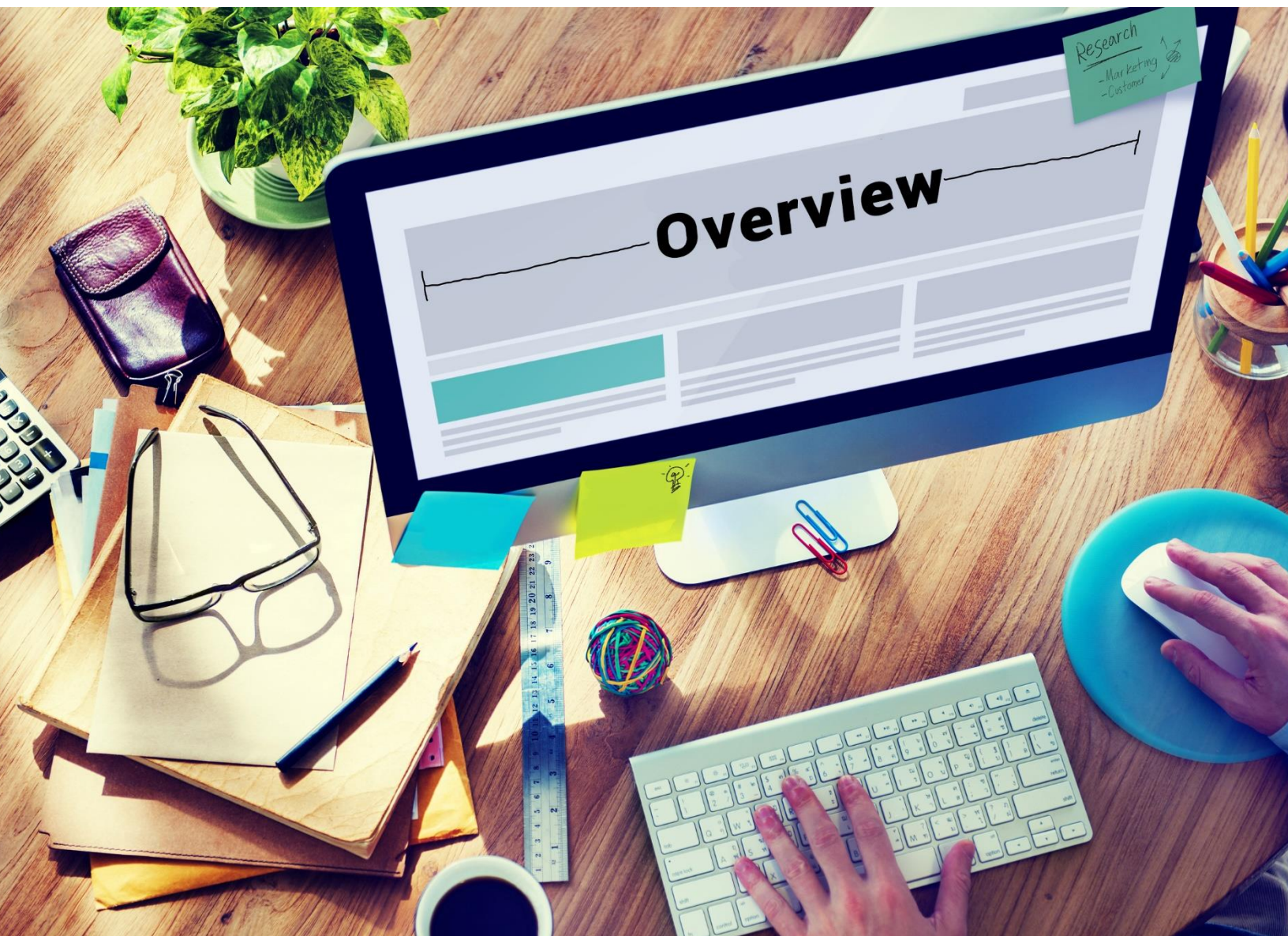
Where U.S. iPhone users found the last app they downloaded



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Overview of the ASO Process



What is it?



ASO is the process of creating content, such as App Title, Description, Screenshots, Promo Videos which helps you get more organic downloads. By creating content for App Stores your chances of ranking higher in organic search increases against "keywords" that your potential customers use in app search. This content also influences the user's decision to download an app once he has discovered it via search.

ASO Elements

In order to optimize your app's search rankings, it is necessary to understand the algorithms that run the search store.

The goal of any app market is to suggest its users the very best app based on

1. What does the app developer say about the app? (aka On-Page Factors)
2. What the early users of the app think about it? (aka Off-Page Factors)

On Page Factor

As is evident from the name, on-page factors include every piece of visual and textual information that you provide to the app store for your listing. These are factors that you can control and iterate to improve with time.

Just like the On-Page factors, the major stores hold off page factors in varying relevance. We've categorized a few keys off page factors based on their relevance score below –

On Page Factor	App Store Relevance	Google Play Relevance
App Name	High	High
App Description	Low	High
App Keywords	High	Low
App Category	Medium	Low
Developer Name	High	High

Off Page Factor

Off Page factors are hints about the quality of your app that the stores pick up based on your users' action. Although we recommend starting with On Page factors optimization, you should not neglect Off-Page factors. You can impact your score on these factors by improving your app continuously.

Just like the On-Page factors, the major stores hold off page factors in varying relevance. We've categorized a few keys off page factors based on their relevance score below –

Off Page Factors	Google Play	App Store
Total Downloads	High	High
Download Speed	High	High
Website to App Downloads	High	Low
Click through Rate	Medium	High
Uninstall Rate	Medium	Medium
Ratings & Reviews	Medium	Medium
Social Media Ranking	High (Majorly G+ popularity)	Low

Your score against many of these factors can be influenced by your promotion budget and app improvements. Traditionally these factors are difficult to influence and you should target them later.

Note: You've to keep up with the updates in the algorithms. App store are always trying to improve their search function.

What benefits can you get?

According to a Mobile Development HQ survey, nearly 50% of users discovered the last app they downloaded, via organic search.

Another research by Native X concluded that, 82% of users never browse past the 25th app in a search result and 60% of all organic downloads is spread across top 3 recommendations.

As a majority of all users prefer organic suggestions, ASO becomes extremely relevant and a pocket friendly way of gaining traction. As things are today, app marketers who choose to neglect ASO risk

- Never getting thousands of organic downloads
- Never topping the Top charts
- Never being featured on app stores (this can be " the make or break moment" for many apps)

We recommend app entrepreneurs look at ASO as an investment to get more revenues. Ideally, the process of your app store optimization should begin three months prior to your launch. It is not too late even if your app is already in stores or about to.

In the next few sections, you'll discover tips and examples to

- Help you list higher in organic search for specific keywords
 - a. Understanding your Market
 - b. Choosing Right Keyword & Category
 - c. App Name & Title
- Entice users to install your app
 - a. App Description
 - b. Apps Icon & Screen Shots
 - c. Ratings, Reviews and Localisation



App Store Optimization : A Two Part Process

PART 1 Get Discovered



Know Your Market

Performing detailed competitive market study is the very thing to do in the ASO process. It is a time taking process and hence should begin months before your launch day. You'd also revisit this research to look for new players in the market. Keeping an eye on your competitors can help you stay ahead.

You'd need to figure answers to the following in this study –

1. Who're your Top 3-5 competitors?
2. How do users talk about your competitors?
3. How do your competitors make money?

1. Identifying Top 3-5 Competitors

Before you begin to identify your competitors, you should ideally have documented your idea of an app, its value proposition and keywords to describe your app.

At times, it can be a challenge to zero in on top 3-5 competitors. We approach the task in the following steps -

Step 1: Make a rough list of around 50 apps that app store suggests by putting in the keywords. Browsing the web with the same keywords can also reveal probable competitors.

Step 2: Evaluate each of apps for features that are like your planned app.

Step 3: Shortlist 10 apps which have similar features and that rank in top 5 of organic suggestions for your keywords

Step 4: Now zero in on top 5 competitors based on the user ratings for each of the app. You don't need to put in all the high rated apps. Chances are a few that have poor ratings and are otherwise appear similar will provide you insights into what users don't appreciate.

You may also want to check out tools like [Appnique](#) to assist you in researching about your competitors.

2. How do users talk about your competitors?

Reading app reviews for your competitors can reveal a treasure of information about what works and what doesn't. Don't try to hurry this process and make a list of features that users love and hate.

It is worthwhile to also note the keywords which appear in user feedbacks. Often users request new features, which can be very valuable information for you.

At this stage, also look for categories that your top competitors are present in. This is an important decision you'll make before launch. We share insights to choose the best category for your app later in this paper.

3. How do your competitors make money?

There are many ways to monetize a mobile app- In App Ads, In App Purchases, Freemium, Subscription and sponsorships. Choosing the right revenue model for you can be very tricky. Your app must not ask for a sale in a way, that disrupts the user experience.

When you're researching you competitors, look for following insights

1. How prominent is the advertising in the app?
2. Do the ads disrupt the user experience?
3. When does the app ask for a purchase?
4. Are there in app purchases available? How often are users compelled to make the purchase?
5. Is there a subscription or a freemium set of features?
6. What is value proposition which makes the app worthy enough of its charges?

The image displays four app store listings for dating applications, arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each listing includes the app's icon, name, developer, category (highlighted in orange), rating, number of downloads, and an 'Install' button. The apps are:

- OkCupid Dating**: Developer okcupid.com, Category Dating, Rating 4.5 stars, 242,348 downloads.
- Tinder**: Developer Tinder, Category Lifestyle, Rating 4.5 stars, 1,919,237 downloads.
- Free Dating Choice of Love**: Developer Choice of Love, Category Dating, Rating 4.5 stars, 24,716 downloads.
- Flirt, Chat & Dating JAUMO**: Developer Jaumo, Category Social, Rating 4.5 stars, 512,690 downloads.

(Notice that the top 4 suggestions for the keyword "Dating" has apps across 3 different categories – Dating, Lifestyle, Social. Each of them deploys In App purchases model to make money)

Choosing Right Keywords & Category

1. Selecting Category

You need to start by selecting a category, or two in case of iOS, for your mobile app. Both Google and Apple have elaborate descriptions of each category. These should help you identify the right category for your business. While the selection is straightforward, you might want to weigh in the relative competition in each category. Sensor Tower's Leaderboard can help you here. You can also work with a list of competing apps, and run a quick search on the store to see which categories they are using. You can use a list from [PCMag](#), [App Annie](#) or [App Picker](#), if you don't already have one.

Keywords are single-handedly the most important element of App Search Optimization. Just like plain old SEO, keywords play an important role to show your app in relevant search results and help you reach the audience you are targeting.

Based on length, there are two types of keywords:

Types of Keyword	Pros	Cons
Singular word / short keyword	More people search for these keywords. Ranking in top 3 in keywords like Dating, Fitness, Taxi can drive a huge amount of traffic to your page	Since these keywords receive large interest from users, these keywords are also the most competed ones. Besides, most of the keywords are not very specific and offer little targeting
Multi-word / Long tail keyword	People who type in more than one keyword are usually looking for something specific. Since there are fewer people searching these words, competition is also less	Although long tail keywords bring highly targeted users onto your app page, the numbers aren't usually high and you need a higher number of long-tail keywords to achieve your total app downloads target

2. Selecting Keyword

You need to select the right keywords, since both app store and play store only offer you a limited space to write keywords and description. Start by populating as many keywords as you feel are relevant to your mobile app. You can do this by brainstorming with your team, asking friends and family, studying competitors' apps, or crowdsourcing ideas on twitter. Once you have a list of keywords, you then need to filter them based on their relevance, relative competition and search traffic. To make it easy, and more rational, you can use the Keyword Efficiency Index (KEI).

$$KEI = \frac{(\text{Number of Searches})^2}{\text{Competition}}$$

3. Store-specific Dynamics

Lastly, there are store-specific dynamics that you need to take care of, while selecting your keywords. We have compiled them together in the table below:

App Store (iOS)	Play Store (Android)
The number of total characters in all your keywords combined, needs to be less than 100 characters	You're given 4000 characters to describe the application in natural language that your users can read and understand.
Do not include empty spaces, or phrases. Make the best use of the 100-character limit	Don't keyword-stuff this. Consider it like headline and sub-headline on your website's homepage
Free is not a keyword. If your app is free, Apple recognizes it and gives you the brownie points you're looking for. Adding it is a waste.	Mentioning your main keywords about 5 times gets you the best results.

App Name and Title

You have a better chance to drive downloads and spread the word about your application by naming your app well. These 5 tips can help you come up with the right name, or evaluate the options at hand.

Tips

1. Run a quick search on the name, and common misspelling to check there is not a similar app on the store already
2. Keep it easy to pronounce, spell and remember.
3. You can use the name to describe what is it, that your app does. Or use it to paint a visual image in your user's minds.
4. Words that rhyme make your name memorable.
5. Check if the social media handles and the domain name is available.

Now, let's add some perspective to the tips above. Consider the following examples:

1. Evernote

The name is simple and hence easy to remember. Further, it describes that the app helps you keep your notes intact, forever. This is also what we call, a two-part name like

- Tweetbot, that schedules your tweets,
- MathFrendzy, a popular learning app for kids or
- T-Notebook, a training notebook for fitness enthusiasts.

2. WhatsApp

This is a word-play on the popular phrase, "What's up", which we use daily to check on our friends. Pretty apt for a messenger app, isn't it? You can intentionally misspell a name like WhatsApp, like a couple of apps that we built –

- News Meister (news app, play on the word news master)
- Keychn (Recipe app, play on the word Kitchen)

When you have the app name figured out, use the keywords from the previous step to come up with a good title for the app. Consider, for example, that WhatsApp uses "WhatsApp Messenger" as its title, or OkCupid uses "OkCupid Dating". Here are a few more examples:

1. **Prisma:** Free Photo Editor, Art Filters Pic Effects
2. **Friendly** – One App for Facebook and Messenger
3. **Twine** – The 1st Intellectual Flirting and Dating App
4. **Fitso Running & Fitness**
5. **Ola cabs** - Book a taxi with one touch.

There's a popular myth in the app world where gurus might suggest that you change your title often, to take advantage of the high-ranking searches at the time. Our friends at Kissmetrics suggest why that is a bad practice.

PART 2 Drive Users to Downloads



App Description

User sees your app description for the first time after clicking on your app icon, listed in the search results. In the Playstore, the description can also help your app get discovered as Google indexes the description to decide how your app ranks in the search results. Apple? Not so much. Anyway, the app description is important from the marketing stand point.

We recommend the Wrap-App technique to write your app description. Thanks to our friends, over at Localize Direct. Wrap-App technique involves 3 steps:

1. Think about your app

and answer these four questions

- a. What does your app do?
- b. What problem does it solve?
- c. What is unique about your app
- d. Why would someone download your app rather than anything else?

Think from the point of view of the user and note the eye-catching features in your app. Seek a fresh perspective from your friends and family by sharing your app with them. Observe how they use the app.

2. Size up competition and search behavior

Read the description for the competing apps. Download them, and match the experience to the description. Consider important keywords that you might want to include in the description. You can use Google Trends or Keyword Planner to come up with.

3. Write the short and long description

Draw in users with an attractive, brief and persuasive opening statement. Most of the users view your app page on their mobile screen and you have limited real estate before the user clicks on "See More". App Store gives you 255 characters, while Play Store offers just 80. Once you have convinced the user up front, you have 4000 characters on both the stores to convince the user to hit the "Get it" button.

Some tips to come up with the right description:

- Keep it simple, stupid. Don't use Jargon, cut out words that don't mean a thing and talk straight to the point. A hack – remove any word ending with -ly.
- Focus on what's in it for the user. Write about the value users get, not the feature that your developer built.
- Consider the text layout. Organize the information with bullets, sub-headings and separators. Use white spaces. Write sentences with varying lengths.
- Include customer testimonials and awards. Link out to your social media pages and website.

Once you're done with the description, you can compare it with descriptions for top 100 free and paid apps and add finishing touches. Use the raw data compiled by Neville. You'll find a link to the sheet in the sources section at the end of the white paper.

App Icons & Screen Shots

The bulk of the "Downloading Decision" comes from your app icon and promotional images. They simply occupy more real estate on a user's mobile screen, than just the description.

Your app screenshots need to grab the attention of your users and convince them to download the app. With screenshots, you should try and answer these 3 questions for your user:

- Can this app do what I want?
- Does this app have an acceptable level of quality?
- Is this app worth my time?

The answers to these questions will help you identify the app screens you will like to capture. We suggest keeping the screenshots in line with your app description to maintain consistency. Also, check for image guidelines by Apple and Google, for the respective stores. In order to take screenshots, you can use one of the 3 options below:

Your Device, MAC and QuickTime	Using X Code	Using Snapshot
The best way to take accurate screenshots. Apple also updates the status bar automatically to show time, full battery, network signal and wi-fi icons.	Apple advises against it, suggesting to take the screenshots on the target device and not a simulator.	A GitHub project that automates the process of navigation in your app, including when to take the screenshots.
Change the device language to create localized screenshots.	Localized results can be produced by simply changing the device language.	Can create screenshots in 20 languages, across 6 devices with 5 screenshots each.

Rating, Reviews & App Localization

Just like objections in any sales process, your users have questions before they start downloading your app. Ratings and reviews help your users enormously, to find answers to these questions. Encourage detailed and genuine reviews from your existing users, friends and family.

Some Benefits of high ratings and rich reviews are:

- If your app has received high ratings, people who don't believe in your app yet can seek comfort in the fact that other people have used, and liked your app. The social proof helps you convert these skeptics.
- Reviews also help you in App Store Optimization. Play Store indexes your reviews and reviews that are rich in your keywords, help you rank higher for the search term
- Reviews are helpful not only to the user, but also to your product development team. Most reviews are left by people at the extremes, people who absolutely love your app, or ones who absolutely hate it. While the lovers mention the feature that they like and help you use it to draw in more users, haters can actually spell out the features that need attention from your product development team.

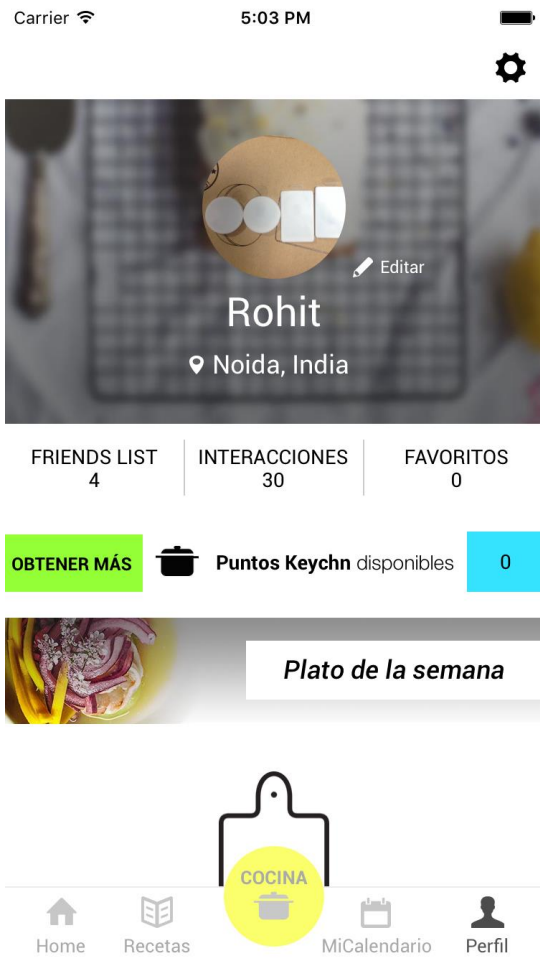
Here are a few tips and tricks to improve the ratings and reviews for your mobile app.

- Tips
 - ✓ Seek help from friends & family to seed reviews. People are more likely to leave review when they see others doing it.
 - ✓ Collect e-mails for your users and send out an e-mail with every feature update. Encourage subscribers to review the latest feature. You can also use tools like TestFlight and Google's Alpha / Beta Testing to invite users to test the new feature and leave reviews
 - ✓ Ensure that you are offering awesome support to the users. Make it easy for the users to contact you within the app, and on e-mails.
 - ✓ Every mobile application has its own superfans and haters. You can use your fan mails to populate reviews. On the other hand, personally reach out to people who leave negative reviews and convert them into positive ones by addressing their issues promptly.
 - ✓ Prompt reviews within the app after every successful transaction. The transaction could mean a purchase on a grocery app or a successful ride completed on an Uber-like app
 - ✓ Reach out to professional app reviewers and industry influencers. Use give aways and incentivize them to leave reviews on the app page, and mention you in their blog posts or social media handles.

Localization plays an important role if your app serves a global audience. Common languages, by the number of mobile app users include Spanish (for latin american countries), French, Arabic (for the middle east) and Hindi (for android users in India).

A simple way to localize your app is to create translated versions of your app's metadata that includes the name, title, description and keywords. If you can invest more time, also consider localizing your

screenshots. Localizing the city landmarks for an Uber-like app, or currency symbols can translate into significantly higher conversion rates from app page views to installs.



To Measure is To Know

It is very important to measure the performance of your efforts in ASO. Simply track your total organic downloads to judge if you're doing well.

Organic Downloads = Total Downloads – Paid Downloads

Similar to SEO for websites, improving search engine visibility on app stores requires continuous attention and iterations. A disciplined approach to understanding the factors which determine your app's rankings and implementing best practices to improve can get significant results.

About ChromeInfotech

ChromeInfotech is India's leading Mobile App Development Company serving clients internationally from US, Europe, Middle East and Australia. We deliver apps with exceptional design and functionality, while keeping focus on business ROI.

We excel in assisting startups with disruptive ideas and enterprises looking to innovate their businesses with mobile-first technology. We are practitioners of AGILE development and can help you build your Uber for X business, in as early as 90 days.

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