

How The App Store Accountability Act Helps Small App Developers



The App Store Accountability Act **makes app stores responsible for verifying ages and obtaining parental consent instead of individual app developers. This provides a simple, ecosystem-wide, privacy-protective, and cost-effective way to ensure kids are safe online** without creating new burdens for small developers.

To do this, the App Store Accountability Act leverages existing infrastructure within app stores, **allowing app developers to focus on creating quality experiences** without the need to build complex compliance systems. This promotes a safer and more consistent online environment for minors while supporting innovation and growth within the developer community.

Why This Law Is Needed

Whether you agree with online age verification or not, state legislatures are moving full steam ahead with several current and emerging laws across the US that now require app developers to know the age of their users and whether or not minor users have parental consent to use their services. New laws are also being discussed in Congress that could affect the ways developers interact with underage users, once again requiring app developers to know the age of their users in order to be compliant.

The App Store Accountability Act would ensure that **app stores** leverage their existing infrastructure to provide developers with this necessary age and consent information in order to comply with state-by-state laws regarding user privacy, child safety, and transparency.

What This Would Mean for Small App Developers

Simple, Standardized Process: App stores will handle age verification and parental consent — NOT the app developers. They will then be required to share a simple age and consent signal with app developers.

No Additional Complex Compliance Requirements: App developers will not need to verify age or parental consent themselves, so they will not be required to collect, store, and secure large amounts of sensitive user data if they lack the infrastructure to do so safely.

Minimal Costs: App stores already take 15% - 30% of developers' profits to cover safety and compliance costs. It's reasonable to assume this fee would include complying with these laws – especially when app stores already offer nearly identical mechanisms for parents to approve their children's app store purchases.

Reduced Liability: Since app stores will be responsible for verifying age and consent, smaller and newer app developers with less resources will be spared from steep liability costs associated with enforcement and litigation.

Frequently Asked Questions by Small App Developers

Question: What would app developers need to do under the App Store Accountability Act?

Answer: App developers must ensure their app disclosures—such as content, age ratings, and data practices—are accurate and kept up to date. If significant changes occur within an app, developers must notify the app store. Developers would also be responsible for receiving the age signal from the app store, which indicates whether a user is a minor or an adult.

If an app is intended for adults, developers can set age restrictions to limit access to users over 18, reducing compliance burdens related to laws protecting minors. However, if an app is available to minors, developers must verify from the signal that parental consent has been obtained allowing a minor to agree to the app's terms of service. Additionally, developers must ensure that any existing safety settings based on a user's age are set and legal requirements for underage users are met.

Question: What do app store fees cover?

Answer: Apple and Google say their 15% - 30% in-app payment (IAP) fees are meant to pay for services it provides to developers and consumers. Parents already share their child's age when setting up their Apple or Google accounts during device setup – it makes sense to use those existing systems, not complicated, time-intensive new ones.

From the [Apple App Store](#): “If you're the family organizer or a guardian, you can create an Apple Account for your child. To verify that you're an adult, you might need a credit card. On your iPhone, you can also verify with a driver's license or state ID added to Wallet where available.”

[Google Play's website](#) explains how parents can already manage their child's apps, with or without setting up purchase approvals: “When you use Family Link to manage your child's Google Account, you can choose to limit the apps your child can use on certain devices.”



Question: Why does app store age verification and parental consent matter?

Answer: The App Store Accountability Act entrusts app stores with age verification, allowing developers to stay focused on building and maintaining great apps instead of costly technology and compliance systems that verify age and familial relationships. By utilizing data that is typically already available, app stores can establish a secure, practical, and user-friendly framework for age verification, enhancing trust and privacy while prioritizing user safety. **The App Store Accountability Act guarantees small app developers a level playing field for determining age and providing appropriate experiences.**