



The Priori Data ASO Playbook

App Store Optimization, as told by the experts



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Introduction

Written by Rowan Emslie, Content & Community Manager @ [Priori Data](#)

Introduction

Why we put this together

Internally, we referred to this project as “Everything you wanted to know about App Store Optimization, but were too afraid to ask”.

ASO is new and fashionable. It is also plagued with a lot of nonsense (like SEO before it) written by people who don't have any idea what they're talking about.

Priori Data has more than 22,000 app publishers working with us as partners. We know the app market. We know the numbers behind it and we know the people who work in it.

We started reaching out to experts in ASO, people who could really tell you what to do, why you should do it and - crucially - what the limitations of ASO are. It isn't a magic bullet, but it can be incredibly powerful.

This guide is a collaboration of our own team of app market specialists and some of the top ASO experts in the field.

There's no need to look anywhere else.

About Priori Data

Priori Data is a Berlin based company that provides a powerful market intelligence platform to companies in the mobile app market.

Since 2013, Priori Data has consistently enabled its partners and clients to build long-term winning strategies with their apps, investments, and research engagements. Priori Data has best-in-class data that gives users the ability to track, benchmark, and research the performance of any relevant mobile app or publisher. For more information, please visit www.prioridata.com.

About Peggy Anne Salz

Peggy Anne Salz, named a Top 30 Mobile Marketing Influencer, is the chief analyst and founder of MobileGroove, a top 50 ranked destination providing analysis, custom research and strategic content marketing to the global mobile industry, and mentoring and consulting to tech startups.



The Terrible Truth About App Success Rates - And How ASO Can help

Written by Simon Singharaj, Director of Marketing @ [Priori Data](#)

The Terrible Truth About App Success Rates - And How ASO Can help

As the global app market enters a new phase of growth and innovation there's no escaping the 'Terrible Truth' about app marketing. Amid an avalanche of apps, search continues to dominate as the de facto way users will discover and download your app. Naturally, ASO is how you can level the playing field, ensuring your app surfaces in relevant searches and search results.

But standard ASO approaches alone, as [Peggy Anne Salz over at VentureBeat](#) pointed out, simply "won't cut it."

Being an app developer is starting to look a lot like being a brand in a supermarket. You want to get your app found as users stroll down the digital shelves of the app stores. But, like a consumer brand, you face a lot of tough competition from all the other offers in the aisle. To complicate matters the digital shelves of the app 'supermarkets' are stocked with too many apps across way too many categories.

Our own data shows that, in 2016, an average of 2,700 apps were released daily in the Google Play Store, compared with 1,800 in the Apple App Store.

In this 'supermarket' swamped by apps it's no wonder few people venture past the names they know best. Don't be

ashamed, that's absolutely natural. We don't want to take a chance with brand we don't know. When was the last time you ventured beyond choosing Nutella when looking for chocolate spread, or Kleenex when looking for tissues?

Supermarkets or app stores—it's the same. We tend to focus on top results and brands we know best. Everything else languishes "under the radar". As a result, apps with low brand awareness—apps that also don't show up high in the search results or rank high in the coveted list of "Featured Apps"—remain virtually invisible. That's what's known as the Discovery Dilemma.

Get discovered to make it big

This is not just a nightmare scenario for app publishers. It's the 'New Normal' of running an app business—period. At Priori Data we estimate only **1.8% of apps in Google Play Store** and **4.4% in Apple App Store** account for a whopping 90% of total app downloads globally. If we look at the money app developers are making, the picture gets worse with 90% of global revenue (Paid apps + In-App Purchases) generated by

The Terrible Truth About App Success Rates - And How ASO Can help

only a handful of apps—namely **0.06% in Google Play Store** and **0.15% in Apple App Store**.

How far you get with your app will ultimately depend on its commercial potential. But, no matter what your app offers or enables, visibility will always be the first hurdle you have to cross in order to play in the Big Leagues.

This is where ASO comes in—and why you need to master it.

ASO has many faces and facets

You may have seen it pop up in search results when you last googled “how to succeed with an App without spending any money?”, or you may have picked it up as a growth-hacking tip in Peggy’s latest masterclass over at VentureBeat. For our purposes we think of ASO as the process of optimizing every aspect of your app store visibility across every promotion space available in order to get your app in front of as many people as possible, thus solving the Discovery Dilemma and boosting downloads of your app.

Tackling the Top charts

Supermarkets have shelves and aisles—apps are sorted by category. There are 54 categories in the Google Play Store. The situation in the Apple App Store is not so straightforward with 42 categories further divided in two types: Games (also divided into subcategories) and Non-Games, commonly known as “Apps”.

Top Charts are ranked lists of apps organized by country, category, and device. They are also divided into three groups: Top Free, Top Paid, and Top Grossing. The charts are updated multiple times per day and give a great snapshot of who is winning “right now” in the app stores.

Top 10 Free Apps is a hard list to break into, especially in Google Play Store. Our data shows the weekly average number of apps reaching the top 10 in a given category is 1.74 for a Gaming category (1.67 for a Non-Gaming category).

For newcomer app developers this means that fewer than 2 spots in the Top 10 in each category are “reachable” every week. And, even if you do make the grade, your success will surely be short-lived—lasting just days or even hours depending on the country and the category—as the Top 10 list is in a constant state of flux.

The Terrible Truth About App Success Rates - And How ASO Can help

A deep-dive into the Top 100 charts, with the help of our data, reveals that only 6 new apps on average manage to break into the list every week.

If we consider that the digital shelves of the Google Play Store were stocked with an astounding 2 million apps in the course of 2016 then clearing this hurdle—let alone breaking into the top of the Top 100 list—is a tough and treacherous uphill battle for the vast majority of app publishers.

In the Apple App Store, the picture is slightly different.

We estimate that on average, 4 Gaming apps break the barrier and land in the list of Top 10 free apps every week, while 30 Non-Gaming apps break into the Top 100 list in the same period. It would appear that it's somewhat easier for app publishers to break into the top lists in the Apple App Store than it is to make their mark in Google Play. However, the jury is out on the forces and factors at work that account for this difference.

But there is agreement on one important point: Your app success is an outcome you can do a lot to influence in your favor.

Weekly Average New Jumpers in Category Top Charts		Top 10		Top 20		Top 50		Top 100	
		GP	iOS	GP	iOS	GP	iOS	GP	iOS
Top Free Apps	Games	1.74	3.80	2.29	6.19	3.73	14.16	6.01	28.94
	Apps	1.67	3.60	2.19	6.32	3.82	15.42	6.90	29.83
Top Grossing Apps	Games	1.44	4.34	1.84	6.52	3.26	11.66	5.41	16.91
	Apps	1.74	6.85	2.42	10.41	4.79	16.67	8.14	21.56
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That's where ASO, specifically keyword optimization, can give your app the biggest boost, ensuring users can discover it in relevant app store search results. It all starts with understanding how ranking for keywords can affect your category rankings.

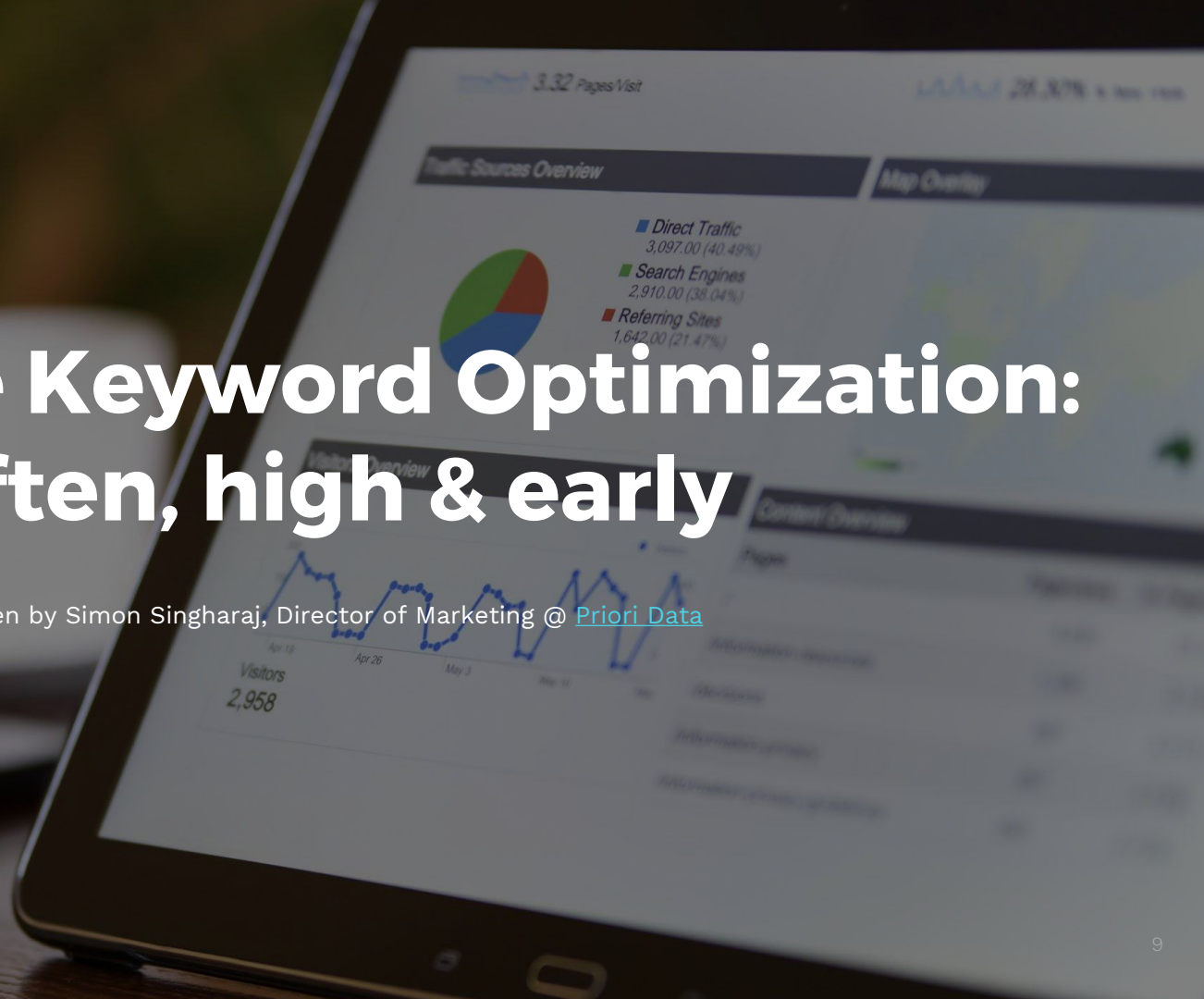
With ASO tools like our platform, app publishers will be able to accurately identify high-potential keywords, build their own keywords list, monitor their rankings over time and track their competitors performance.

Thanks to our download estimates and search rank data, we are able to assess the competition for a given keyword based on the size of the Top 10 apps ranked for this keyword—that is, the downloads generated by the apps ranked for a specific keyword in the last 30 days—and the weekly average number of newcomer apps entering the top 10 list.

Now you know *why* ASO is so important. Read on to figure out *how* to make it work for you.

App Store Keyword Optimization: Often, high & early

Written by Simon Singharaj, Director of Marketing @ [Priori Data](#)



App Store Keyword Optimization: Often, High and Early

In the previous section, we saw the terrible truth about app success rates and how tough it is to stand out in the app stores. More specifically, we saw how only a few new apps succeed in reaching a comfortable position in the ruthless top charts every week.

The good news is there are other places in the app stores for you to aim at. One of the most straightforward is the search results.

Search results are apps that appear when a given keyword is typed into the search bar on a user's device. It is the most intuitive way for a user to find an app in the app stores, and it is consistently viewed as the most important: according to Apple, **65% of downloads come from search queries.**

It's therefore critically important for your app to rank for relevant keywords.

Similar to search results in Google, you will need to rank well in order to be visible. As you can imagine, most people don't scroll very far in the search results, and you better be amongst the first results if you want to have a chance for the visitor to click on your app.

In order to understand the dynamics around search results and how you can improve your performance, we studied the keywords and search rankings of apps depending on their category rankings and/or age. With this, we built a data-driven argument for why keyword optimization is important for your apps.

App Store Keyword Optimization: Often, High and Early

Often: top apps rank for more keywords

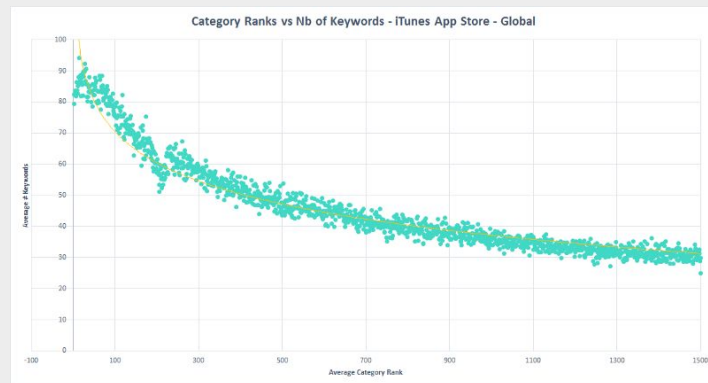
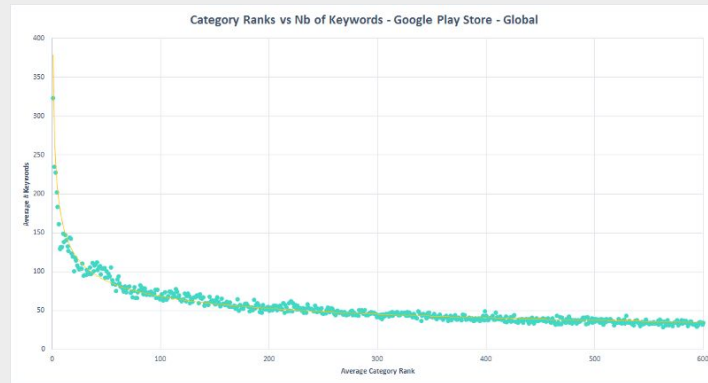
We first need to confirm that there is a strong correlation between category ranks and the number of keywords an app ranks for.

Our data confirms that top apps in their categories rank for more keywords than lower ranked apps. In Google Play, the top 10 apps within their categories rank for between 150 to 300 keywords in the search results, whereas apps with category rankings lower than chart position 50 ranked for fewer than 100 keywords in search results.

In the Apple App Store, the trend is less obvious than on Google Play, and, in general, apps rank for fewer keywords in search results as developers are only permitted to enter 100 characters in their keyword field. Nevertheless, we see a clear correlation between category rank position and number of ranking keywords.

Looking at these results, we can already draw a powerful initial conclusion:

- We know that category ranks are indicative of overall downloads, and
- We've just proven that ranking for multiple keywords in search results is correlated with high category ranks, so
- We can conclude that keyword optimization can be used to improve category rank positions over time.



Source: Priori Data, average between Nov 22nd & Nov 30th 2016

App Store Keyword Optimization: Often, High and Early

High: top apps command higher positions in keyword search results

Ranking in keyword results is about more than just quantity, it's also about quality, and by quality we mean the closer to position 1 the better!

To prove that keyword rank position was an important driver of top chart ranking, we studied keyword ranks across two segments of apps: apps ranking in the Category Top 1–10 vs. Category Top 11–50.

In Google Play, the Top 10 apps by category chart position also rank as the #1 search result for nearly twice as many keywords than apps ranking in category charts positions 11–50 (9.4 vs 5.6).

This ratio generally holds as we go down to search result position #20.

In the Apple App Store, despite the overall numbers being smaller, the comparison still holds, albeit with a different distribution, as there is a higher concentration of search result ranks between 4 and 5.

This analysis enforces our first conclusion that ranking for keywords is an important driver of downloads, but emphasizes that high positions are required. The further down an app slips in the keyword search results, the less likely that keyword will be a driver of a top chart position.

TOP 10 IN THEIR CATEGORY	Avg # Ranking Keywords	
Search Rankings	Google Play Store	iTunes App Store
#1	9.4	7.8
#2-3	9.8	9.2
#4-5	11.9	10.2
#6-10	14.9	9.4
#11-20	17.7	7.3
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TOP 11-50 IN THEIR CATEGORY	Avg # Ranking Keywords	
Search Rankings	Google Play Store	iTunes App Store
#1	5.6	4.5
#2-3	5.8	6
#4-5	6.7	6.8
#6-10	8.1	6.6
#11-20	9.6	5.5
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App Store Keyword Optimization: Often, High and Early

Early: younger apps should focus on less competitive keywords at launch, and then “level up” over time

So how can you rank in higher positions for keyword search results?

Aim for less competitive keywords, particularly at launch.

To define a competitive keyword, we developed a Competitive Score (1–100), which is calculated by looking at the size of the apps (by downloads) which rank in the top 10 search results, as well as looking at the number of new apps that make it into a top 10 search result position over a given week. In general, a keyword that is populated by bigger apps at the top, with less week-to-week turnover in the top 10 positions, means a more competitive keyword.

To determine the best practice by app age, we isolated two types of apps:

1. Young Apps: Top 100 apps in their category (US) younger than 3 months
2. Old Apps: Top 100 apps in their category (US) older than 1 year

We then gathered keywords for which Young and Old Apps rank in the top 10 of search results.

Finally, we compared the distribution of those keywords by Competitive Score and identified a common behavior according to the age of the app (see the results on the next page).

App Store Keyword Optimization: Often, High and Early

Young Apps can achieve a top 100 category position by focusing on low-to-mid level competitive keywords (57% have a Competitive Score between 0 and 60).

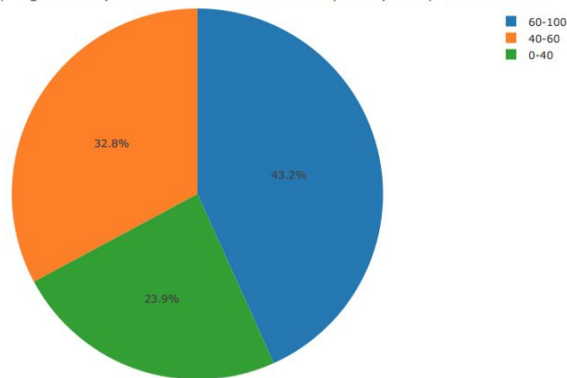
Old Apps tend to rank high for high competitive keywords (71% rank for keywords with a Competitive Score greater than 60), indicating that apps which are successful in sustaining a top 100 category ranking have been able to “level-up” the competitiveness of their keywords over time.

If ranking for keywords is important, high search rank positions are preferred, and young apps can reach a top 100 category ranking with less competitive keywords, the smart path for a young app is to focus on targeting 0–60 level competitive scores at launch.

Conclusion

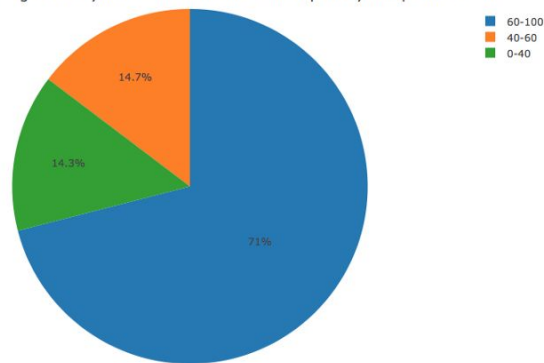
The data is clear: top apps succeed at keyword optimization, and if your goal is a sustained Top 100 category ranking, a thoughtful keyword strategy is a must-have. Our advice is to focus on Often, High, and Early.

Young Apps | Avg % of Keywords with Search Rank in Top 10 by Competitive Score



Top 100 apps in their category, younger than 3 months

Old Apps | Avg % of Keywords with Search Rank in Top 10 by Competitive Score



Top 100 apps in their category, older than 1 year



How Do ASO Tools Actually Work?

Written by Patrik Winkler, Product Manager @ [Priori Data](#)

How Do ASO Tools Actually Work?

So far, you've heard a lot about why App Store Optimization (ASO) is so important. But how does it all work? What quantifiable data is available for you to make strategic and tactical ASO decisions? You want to get your app in front of the people who are within your target group - how do all those ASO tools out there help you do that?

There are 3 ways for you to get your app in front of a user's eye within the app stores.

1. Being featured
2. Ranking in the top charts
3. Being found via app store searches

Especially when starting out there is a high chance that the main way your target users find you is via c).

Just as websites can generate more organic hits through SEO, apps can become more popular with ASO. ASO can be further split into Keyword Optimization and Creative ASO.

Keyword Optimization is helping you get discovered and more traffic to your app page in the app stores. Creative ASO helps you convert users once being on your app page.

For this section, we will focus on Keyword Optimization.

How does it all work?

A user searches for a search term in the app store and finds some results for the specific search. You want to make sure you are using the right keywords for your target group, so you appear when they are searching for something you think you can solve best.

Apple App Store

For Apple, your toolkit is pretty straight forward, the following things play into if you are ranking for a search or not:

- App name, 50 characters (counts the most, so put keywords here, if not focused on brand)
- iTunes connect keyword field, 100 characters (words split via [comma], preferable use single keywords)
- App publisher name
- In-app purchases

How Do ASO Tools Actually Work?

Google Play Store

Here, the game is a bit different:

- App name, 30 characters (put most important keywords here)
- App description (repeat keywords 3-4x, +/- 10 keywords in the description, keyword phrases preferable)
- App publisher name

The main difference between those two is that Google is a bit more secretive about what plays into it and how you need to work out your description. Additionally, for Google it seems that retention and ratings & reviews play a role for the algorithm as well.

Generally, keep in mind that the individual app stores have a vested interest to show the user of their app store a result which satisfies them. If a user searches for “writing app” and always downloads Evernote, based on the conversions of Evernote for the keyword “writing app”, Evernote will rank higher than apps that convert less for the keyword.

Darwin’s law, kinda.

So, how do you decide which keywords you want to rank for?

There are **four dimensions** you need to understand to work that out: search popularity, competition, relevancy, and rank. Let’s take a look at each of those in detail.

1. Search Popularity

What is it?

Search Popularity (as Apple calls it) is the amount of **search volume a keyword generates**, so how much traffic it gets compared to others.

Why is it important?

When picking a keyword, it is up for you to decide how important it is, if there is a lot of traffic to it. My guess is, however, that you wouldn’t mind having the chance to get more people to download your app.

How do you measure it?

[With the introduction of Search Ads](#), Apple started providing the actual Search Popularity of every keyword for English speaking countries. This index is ranging from 5-100. So, you

How Do ASO Tools Actually Work?

don't get the exact amount of traffic, which makes it tough for the tracking nerds, but what you still can find out is a volume comparison. Keyword A has a Search Popularity of 56 vs Keyword B has a Search Popularity of 75.

This number is provided for English speaking countries by Apple and calculated on proprietary sources by ASO tools.

Google, having started out as a search engine, has played this game for a while and offers an index for mobile search volume which provides you with an actual search volume. This search volume is based on search queries from Google Search and Google Play. This means that search queries from iOS devices also count into that. Moreover, this index is a global number which Priori Data allocated to specific countries based on our estimated country download shares.

While some others argue whether this number is inflated, it still shows search volume and interest of users for a keyword & the behavior of users which you can leverage to pick a keyword based on comparison search volume. For simplicity reasons, we transfer this number into the same index as Apple: Search Popularity, 5-100.

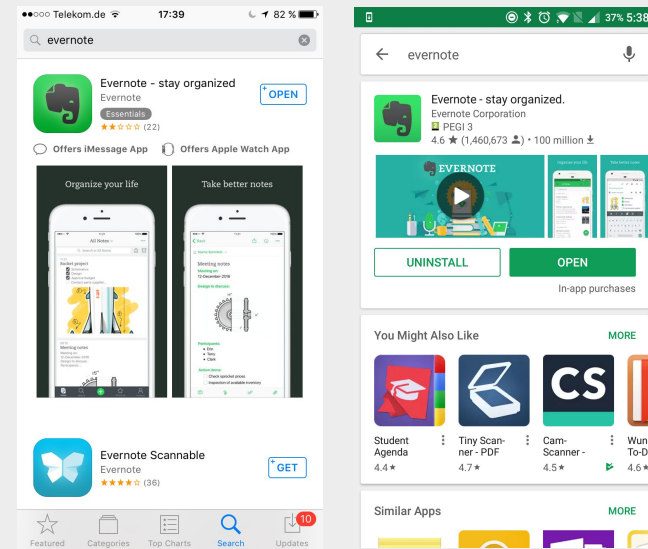
2. Competition

What is it?

A keyword doesn't exist in a vacuum. Even though Apple gives you a 7 days boost when you start using a keyword, you still need to know how difficult it is to rank for that keyword.

Why is it important?

Let's take a look at a search result:



How Do ASO Tools Actually Work?

As you can see, the space is quite limited. Within the top charts, you will increase organic downloads when ranking in the top 20. For Keyword Optimization and search results, experts say you need to be in the top 10 and sometimes even in the top 3-5 to see any effect.

With the introduction of Search Ads the space is even more limited.

How do you measure it?

ASO tools have different approaches to give you an indication for competition. Either they show you the **likelihood** of ranking in the top 10, or how **how difficult** it is for you to rank in the top 10.

I can't confirm what others are using to calculate this metric. Here at Priori Data we look at two factors.

1. **The size of the apps ranking for the keyword** - if Facebook and Instagram are on top, you will have a hard time kicking them off from there.
2. **The fluctuation of the apps in the top 10** - if we see that the apps ranking in the top 10 change often, there is no established player yet for that keyword.

You will have a fair chance of collecting installs from that keyword (again depending on how much traffic is coming to the keyword).

The Competition Score is ranked from 1-100. 1 equals really low competition and 100 means very high competition.

3. Relevancy

What is it?

Ok, so now you have the popularity for a keyword and how competitive a keyword is. This is already a great way for picking keywords. But the crucial part is that you rank for keywords that will actually convert to installs. And not only installs, but hopefully engaged users.

To achieve this, you need to find out, how your target group is searching for you/how they describe your app.

Why is it important?

Google says that over 50% of searches are branded searches. That means, that half of the searches are basically shortcuts to download an apps. The other 50% are users scanning through and exploring what apps are there for a specific

How Do ASO Tools Actually Work?

topic. Let's say you have a note taking app. You might choose to rank for “writing app” because of high traffic and ok competition score, but it likely makes more sense to go for a bit less traffic and pick “note taking”. (You never need to have “app” as a keyword, just like “free”). Through that keyword you should have fairly more qualified traffic than via “writing” as a keyword.

Results for “writing”	Results for “note taking”
SEARCH POPULARITY ?	SEARCH POPULARITY ?
46	40
COMPETITIVE SCORE ?	COMPETITIVE SCORE ?
62	48

How do you measure it?

How relevant a keyword is is a bit of magic, a bit of creativity on your side, and a bit of blackbox algorithm by the app stores. Considering that no one expects you (and hopefully your users) to know what you exactly do, it is hard to give you an index for how relevant a keyword is for you.

What you can do though is to look at what keywords are most used within your category, or what keywords your competitors are using and how many of your direct competitors are using it.



The screenshot shows the Bear app analysis interface. At the top, there's a header with the app name 'Bear', category 'Shiny Frog', and other details like 'Productivity' and 'Free + IAP'. Below the header, there's a table with columns: KEYWORDS, SEARCH POPULARITY, COMPETITION, RANK, and a 'Track' button for each row. The table lists various keywords related to note-taking and productivity, such as 'bear', 'bear notes', 'write - notes & writing', 'docx', 'draw notes', 'html viewer', 'stylus notes', 'good notes', 'html editor', 'write & edit pdf', 'free pdf editor', 'handwriting notes', 'pdf notes', 'notes for ipad pro', 'ipad pro notes', 'pdf editor for ipad', 'anime stickers', 'twriter - note taking, writing app', 'free writing apps', 'html', and 'good notes free'.

KEYWORDS	SEARCH POPULARITY	COMPETITION	RANK	Track
bear				Track
bear notes				Track
write - notes & writing				Track
docx				Track
draw notes				Track
html viewer				Track
stylus notes				Track
good notes				Track
html editor				Track
write & edit pdf				Track
free pdf editor				Track
handwriting notes				Track
pdf notes				Track
notes for ipad pro				Track
ipad pro notes				Track
pdf editor for ipad				Track
anime stickers				Track
twriter - note taking, writing app				Track
free writing apps				Track
html				Track
good notes free				Track

How Do ASO Tools Actually Work?

4. Rank

What is it?

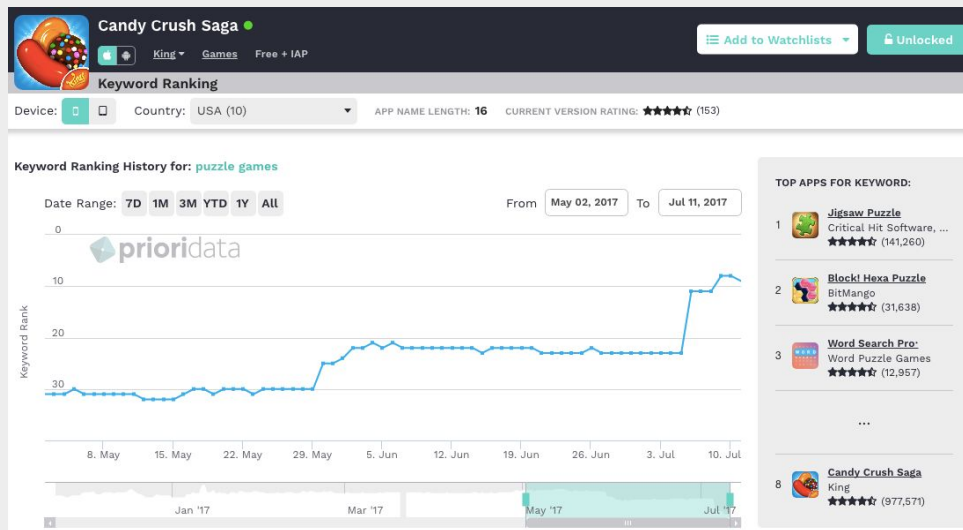
Search Popularity, Competition Score, and Relevancy, they all lead to one thing - ideally - you ranking high for a keyword. Track your keyword ranking via an ASO tool to see how you are ranking over time and if anything changes.

Why is it important?

Some tools provide you with a list of all keywords you are already ranking for (and your competitors), so you know where you currently stand. With that knowledge and knowing which keywords you are currently using, you can evaluate which keywords to drop and which keywords to keep, because you are ranking high and the search volume is what you desire to have.

How do you measure it?


A rank is a fixed number without any estimates and directly pulled from the App Stores. So depending on what position you have for any keyword, this will be the position shown in the ASO tool.



How Do ASO Tools Actually Work?

Keyword Optimization naturally comes with a lot of experimentation. So, when you try a new keyword, you want to see how high you rank for it and if you want to keep the keyword. There are also cases, where you realize you are ranking for a keyword that you don't even use yet. Exchanging another one and bringing that one in, will likely help you rank even higher for it.

Additionally, the app stores are constantly improving their search algorithms. Hence, your ranking for a keyword might suddenly change. Because of that you want to keep a close eye on the keywords you are currently ranking for to spot any developments, positively or negatively.



Using Apple Search Ads To Choose High-Volume, High-Value Keywords

Written by [Moritz Daan](#), Partner & Co-Founder @ [Phiture](#)

Using Apple Search Ads To Choose High-Volume, High-Value Keywords

When Search Ads launched, commentators [feared](#) dramatically negative effects on organic search. Whilst that is true, the real value of Apple Search Ads for ASO is the visibility it gives into relevant keywords and what users – specifically app users – are really searching for in the stores when they want cool apps.

As I wrote on the [ASO Monthly](#) at the time: “If one thing is clear, it’s that search ads are good news for data-driven ASO as it forces Apple to give out more data.”

Put another way, Apple Search Ads can help your ASO – if you know how to use it to your advantage.

Over at Phiture we keep trying to crack the code on exactly this, tapping the data Apple exposed to develop a new way to identify high-volume, high-relevancy keywords.

Today, it’s a key component of our [Mobile Growth Stack](#) and a key area where extra focus and effort can greatly increase your competitive edge in ASO – even if you are on a tight budget.

Using Apple Search Ads To Choose High-Volume, High-Value Keywords

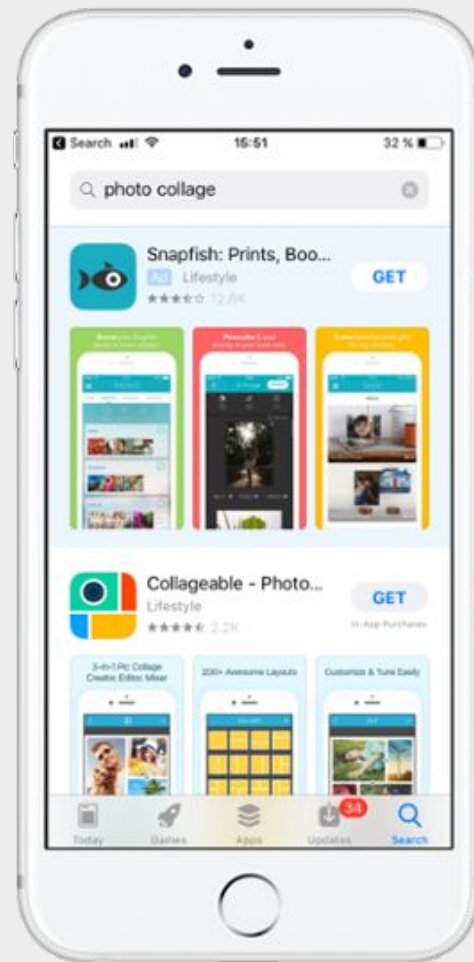
What are Apple Search Ads

In practice, Apple Search Ads – which are currently only available for targeting of English speakers in the U.S. -- exist to give app publishers paid access to the top spot in app store search results.

By default, Apple Search Ads also help app publishers automate keyword matching with the top search terms and results that Apple sees from users and how they search. This feature is also known as Search Match. Whilst still in it's infancy, Search Match can use app metadata, info from other apps in the category, as well as other search data to determine which search phrases will trigger an ad to appear alongside organic search results.

Apple Search Ads are all about helping publishers with the combination of the right keywords and the right bid to ensure their ad is the one shown to searchers.

Turn the model on its head, and you can use Apple Search Ads to find popular and relevant search terms for your app.



Using Apple Search Ads To Choose High-Volume, High-Value Keywords

Getting Started

Trial and error has taught a tough lesson: people search differently for apps on the Web than they do on the app store. This is why Apple Search Ads are a great source of intel as they give insight into how people really search for apps.

Finding the best keywords for an app is a holistic process that takes search term popularity, competition, conversion rate, search trends and other factors into account. At Phiture we've developed a methodology for this, called the [Keyword Optimization Cycle](#), and it revolves around building a big backlog of keywords and then targeting the right ones. Let's walk through the process step-by-step.

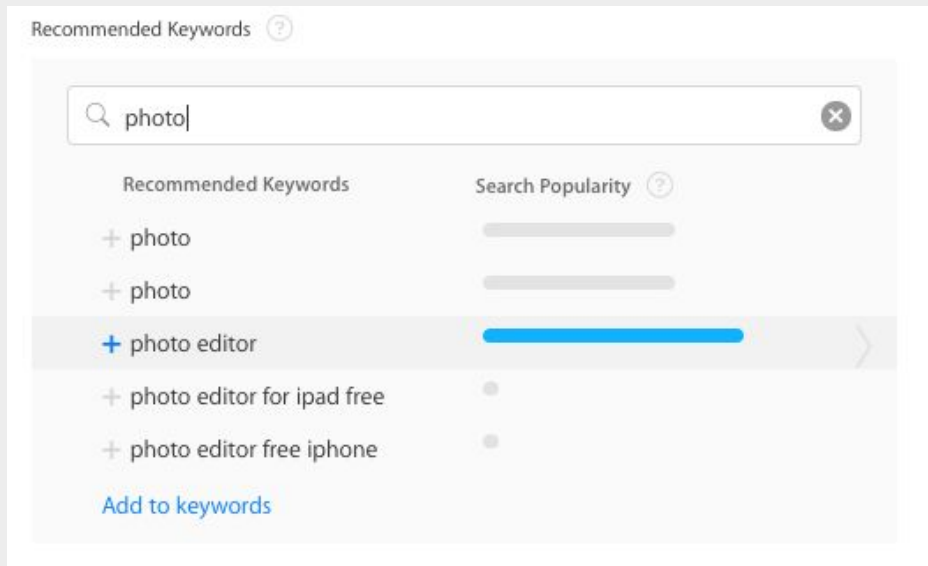
The Keyword Optimization Cycle is a model developed by [Pablo Penny](#) from Phiture.



Using Apple Search Ads To Choose High-Volume, High-Value Keywords

#1 Research: Compiling your search backlog

The first step is to research what keywords your users might potentially find you with and placing them into a keyword backlog. Already in this stage of keyword research, you can leverage Apple Search Ads can help you as they offer recommended keywords that might be relevant to your app. However, other discovery methods such as using the Google Keyword Planner tool or an ASO tool like Priori Data, are more suited for this type of keyword research.



Search Ads offers recommended keywords and displays search popularity.

Using Apple Search Ads To Choose High-Volume, High-Value Keywords

#2 Prioritize your keyword backlog

The more interesting application of Apple Search Ads is that they shed a light on search popularity of search terms within the stores. The Search Popularity that Apple returns, ranges between 5-100. As Apple doesn't return anything below 5, we start out by basically ignoring all search terms that equal 5.

Now that you have compiled a list of all the search terms that actually bring in volume, you need to put yourself in the position of a person searching for your app. The more relevant the keyword is to your app, the more likely you'll be able to rank and convert those searches into actual users. So we ask ourselves if someone searching for that search term is actually helped with our client's app. But this isn't a random exercise. For each high volume search term we decide on a relevancy score. The more relevant the keyword is, the higher the relevancy score we give it. If we have search ads (Apple Search Ads or Google Adwords) data on this keyword, we use those conversion rates as indicator of relevance for the search term.

	A	B	C	D
1	Phiture	Setting up a solid keyword strategy © Phiture.com 2017		
2	Step 1: Research			
3	Step	To do:	Search terms	Status
4	1.0	Search backlog Import as many potentially relevant search terms into your keyword backlog (guidance: 50 minimum, 500 ideal)	103	Done
5	1.1	Discovery tool from Google Play Auto-suggestions You can add more relevant discovery terms to step 1.0 by using this tool which provides auto-suggestions from Google Play		Nothing to do
6				
7	Step 2: Prioritize			
8	2.0	Import volume data Track the search terms in your ASO tool for Apple English speaking markets, and download/export the tracked search terms. Then copy paste the excel file into tab "Step 2: Volume Data"	1346	Done
9	2.1	Set relevancy Terms have been filtered for by Search volume > 5 (as Apple doesn't return lower than 5, 5 basically could be 0). Strip irrelevant search terms and score the most relevant search terms high	37	Done
10	2.1	Star your most relevant, high volume search terms Star between 2-10 search terms that you want to optimize for and report on	4	Done
11				
12	Step 3: Target			
13	Optimizing keywords for the App Store		Keywords	Status
14	3.0	Keyword breakdown for App Store We start by breaking down all the search terms into individual keywords and count how much 'score' they get based on the aggregated scores of the search terms it appears in. Remember: those scores are a multiplier from <i>volume x relevancy</i> .	48	Nothing to do
15	3.1	Select keywords Time to select those keywords for the US & Global markets. If you wish, use Spanish from MX to target more English keywords in the US.	43	Done
16	Optimizing search terms for the Play Store			
17	Optimize for Google Play Use our Google Play Spreadsheet for optimizing your keywords from the tab "Tracking".			Unknown
18				
19	Step 4: Measure			
20	4.0	Tracking Optimizing begins with tracking. Remove all keywords that you tracked under step 2.0 and start with a clean slate. If your ASO tool offers a starring feature, star the ones you want to focus on.	70	Unknown

At Phiture we use an extensive form for our keyword backlog, but you can also keep it really simple in a couple of columns.

Using Apple Search Ads To Choose High-Volume, High-Value Keywords

#3 Target your keywords

Having developed a backlog of prioritized keywords interesting to an app, these should be inserted into the app metadata in order for them to be targeted in the search. Both the Google Play and the App Store search algorithms treat the title as the heaviest weighted piece of metadata. Any search term inserted into the title provides a higher chance for ranking for it. While the App Store with the iOS11 update will only allow for titles with 30 characters in length, the Google Play Store currently allows 50. Having the brand name in the title is useful, due to brand recognition and higher ranking for that search term. Adding a combination of highly-relevant high-volume search terms into the title can help achieving a high ranking and thus increasing visibility. However, the title should also make sense, look appealing and make the product recognizable to the user to add to the user experience. The Audible app for instance adds its brand name as well as high volume search terms such as “audio books” and “podcasts” to its App Store title.

#4 Measure

The last but most important stage of keyword optimization cycle is to measure the impact. Leading indicators such as visibility scores and keyword rankings help identify whether or not the new update was a success, but ultimately you will want to see and calculate an organic uplift attributable to the update.

Follow this approach to leverage Apple Search Ads for the keywords that can really make a difference for your app. The smart placement of high volume search terms that draw on real user behavior is sure-fire way to close the loop to vastly optimize your app store presence and get your app in the hands of more users.

A Masterclass in App Store Videos

Written by [Sylvain Gauchet](#), Co-Founder @ [Apptamin](#)

A Masterclass in App Store Videos

In the context of an app store listing (or search results for iOS 11), video is the best thing next to trying your app. It might actually be even better, since you control the experience and can both educate users and show them what's unique about your product.

There are [two main types of users](#) visiting the app stores: the ones that make their decisions based on the first impression (“decisive visitors” as StoreMaven calls them) and the ones that are going to look at many elements of your app store listing before they make their decision (“exploring visitors”).

Having an impressive video will help you with the second type, and can't really hurt you with the first one:

1. Decisive visitors will see a play button above the feature graphic on the Play Store, and might just look at the graphic without opening the video. On iOS (post iOS 11), the autoplaying video will most likely capture their attention (because of the moving images) and they'll watch a couple of seconds.
2. Exploring visitors will have the option to understand why your app is unique on a much deeper level by watching your promo video (Play Store) or your App Preview (App Store).

As of June 1st 2017, here are the percentages of the top 50 apps with a video on their app store listing on the App Store and Play Store.

	iOS	Android
Top 50 Paid	64%	54%
Top 50 Free	18%	26%
Top 50 Grossing	38%	70%

Source: US App Store & US Google Play Store

A Masterclass in App Store Videos

Of course, you want to test and experiment to determine what kind of uplift using video could bring to your conversion rate. Based on 120M sessions of their testing tools, StoreMaven estimates that the uplift can go up to 20-35% and that users watching the video are 3 times more likely to install. We'll need to observe the consequences of the iOS 11 changes (especially for games where landscape App Previews could be starting to look very much like game trailers or video ads to attract consumers).

On the Play Store, we've seen several clients increase their conversion rate. This promo video, for example, increased conversion rates by 15%.



How to make a good app store video

You'll see in the following section that there are some differences between the videos on the App Store and the Google Play Store.

But there are also some common best practices and pitfalls.

- **Check the competition** - look at what other apps in your category are doing and get inspiration.
- **Start strong** - whether the video autoplays (like it will with iOS 11) or not the first few seconds are critical to engage users.
- **Don't try to show everything** - keep things relatively short. Your app might have many features and benefits but you need to stay focused on the main value proposition.
- **Optimize for silence** - a lot of users have the sound muted or on low volume, so make sure people can understand the message even with the sound off. Short captions, easily readable help (even more important and encouraged by Apple for App Previews post-iOS11)!

- **Display relevant content** - don't overwhelm users with too much but make sure you put them in the shoes of an active and engaged users so they grasp the full potential of your app or game.
- **Be mindful of the expert syndrome** - some users are just discovering your app, and maybe even the app's concept. Make sure a potential user can understand, even if he's a novice.
- **Optimize for small screens** - you don't have a choice on iOS since App Previews are mostly based on captured footage, but on the Play Store make sure everything shows well on a small screen!
- **Don't forget the call to action** - it might be obvious, but make sure to include a call to action in the video to tell viewers what you want them to do ("Download today", "Play now", etc.).

A Masterclass in App Store Videos

Top 7 differences between App Store Videos and Play Store Videos

There are some quite fundamental differences between App Previews (videos used on the iOS App Store and the tvOS App Store) and Promo videos (videos used on the Google Play Store).

Here are the top 7 ones.

A note on localization: the ability to display a localized video used to be one major differences between the two stores. It could not be done on iOS (with the same App Preview displayed to all users) but possible on Google Play Store. With iOS 11, developers are able to localize each App Preview and decide of their presence and order.

	App Previews (iOS App Store videos)	Promo videos (Google Play Store video)
1. Format	Device specific. Full resolution list here (in the section “App Preview Resolutions”). iOS 11: up to 3 App Previews possible	YouTube video. 1920x1080 recommended.
2. Guidelines	Approval needed, with pretty strict/limiting guidelines .	No approval needed, loose guidelines . Android badge and devices largely preferred by Apple.
3. Placement & Display	Pre-iOS 11: play button overlayed on poster frame, acting as the 1st screenshot. Post-iOS 11: autoplay, muted, looped. 1st App Previews autoplays in both search results and app store listing.	Play button overlayed on feature graphic, opening the YouTube video. Not displayed in search results.
4. Length	Up to 30 seconds	No limit
5. Update	Requires an app update	Can be changed at any time
6. Testing	No way to A/B test without third party tools	Can be tested with Google Play Store listing experiments
7. Video stats	No stats available	YouTube Analytics

A Masterclass in App Store Videos

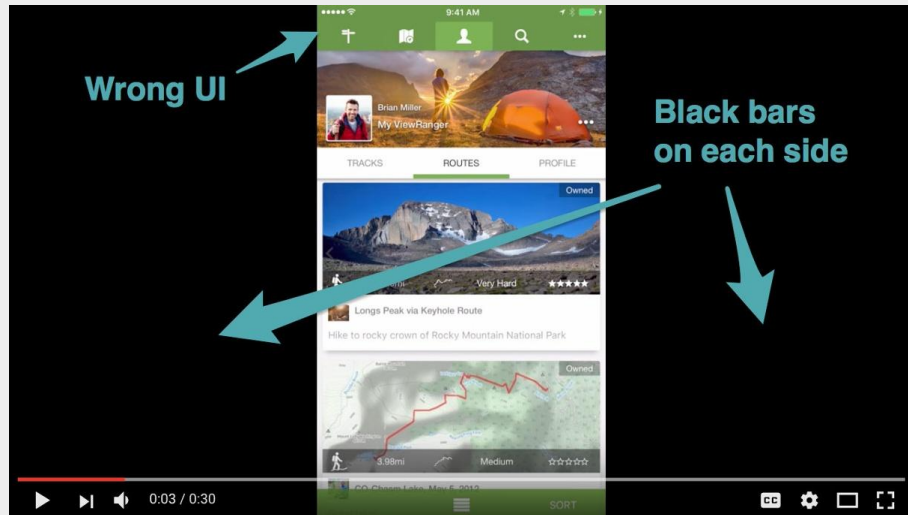
Format

Because App Previews are device specific, they should follow the app's orientation. A portrait app will have a vertical video (9:16), a landscape app a horizontal video (16:9).

Promo videos on the Play Store are all in landscape (16:9) since they are YouTube videos.

This is a big difference because you will have to make two different videos, which will not be interchangeable for a portrait app. If you were to use an iOS App Preview for a portrait app on the Google Play Store, you will not only end up with the wrong UI (iOS instead of Android) but also big black bars on each side.

You also can't use your Google Play Store promo video on the iOS App Store because it won't be approved by Apple (Apple's guidelines specify that you need to show the iOS app).



An iOS App Preview displayed on YouTube

A Masterclass in App Store Videos

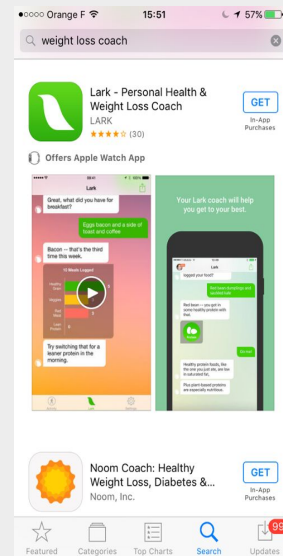
Placement and Display

iOS App Store

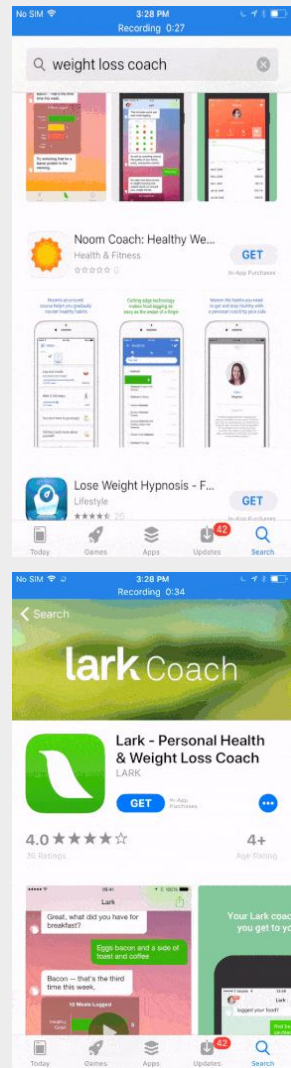
Pre-iOS 11, the poster frame (with the play button for the video) is displayed in the search results along with one screenshot. On the app listing, the poster frame acts as the first screenshot as well.

Post-iOS 11, the 1st App Preview autoplays in mute and is looped in the search results along with 2 screenshots. On the app listing, the App Previews (up to 3) are displayed first and before the screenshots. Each App Preview autoplays once it's put in focus (i.e the 2nd App Preview autoplays when you swipe to see it).

App Previews
autoplay in the
search results of iOS
11

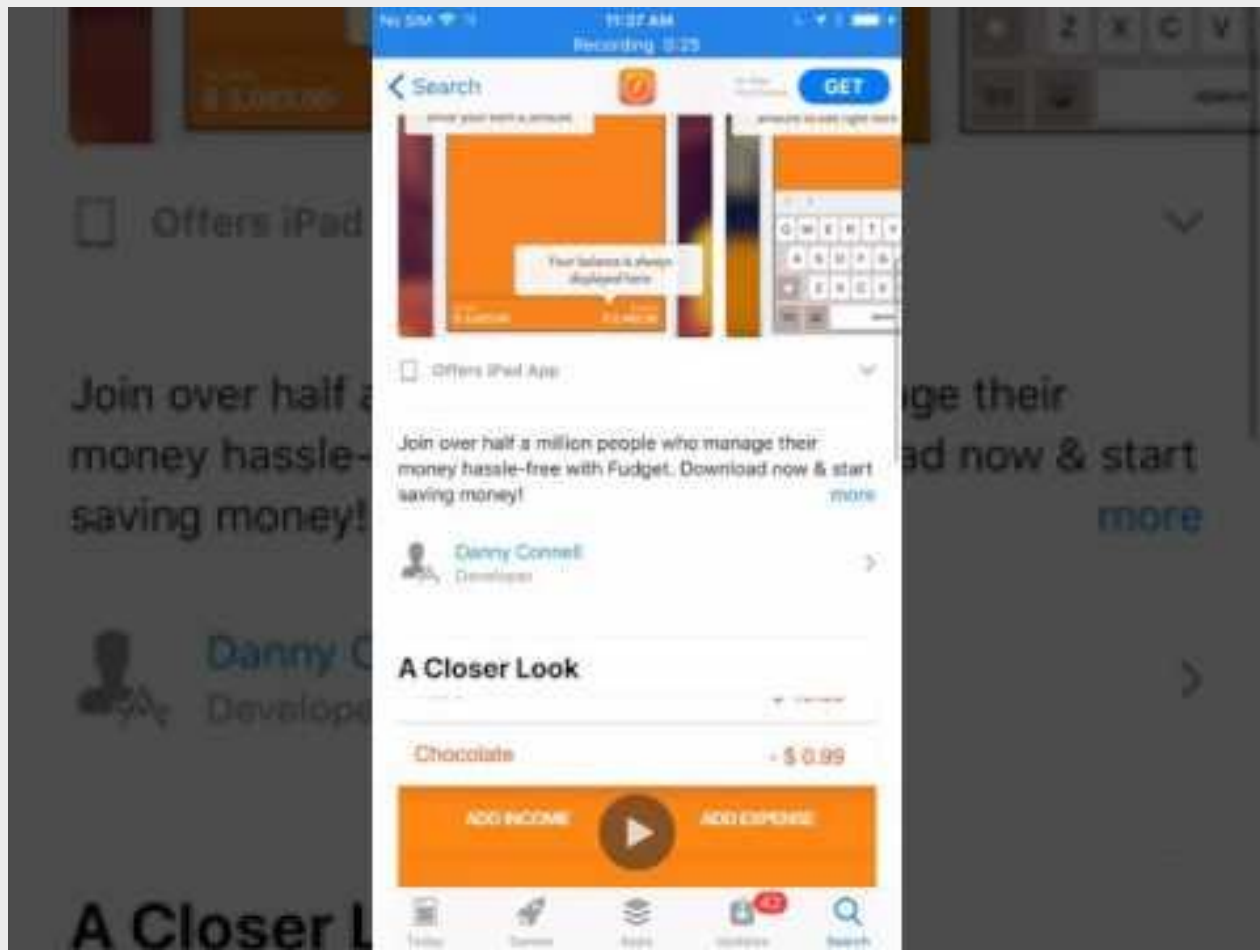


Pre-iOS 11, you need to
tap the play button to
watch the App Preview



A Masterclass in App Store Videos

Apple might still be testing out some things though, because for some apps, the App Previews do not display with the screenshots but in a section down below called “A Closer Look”.

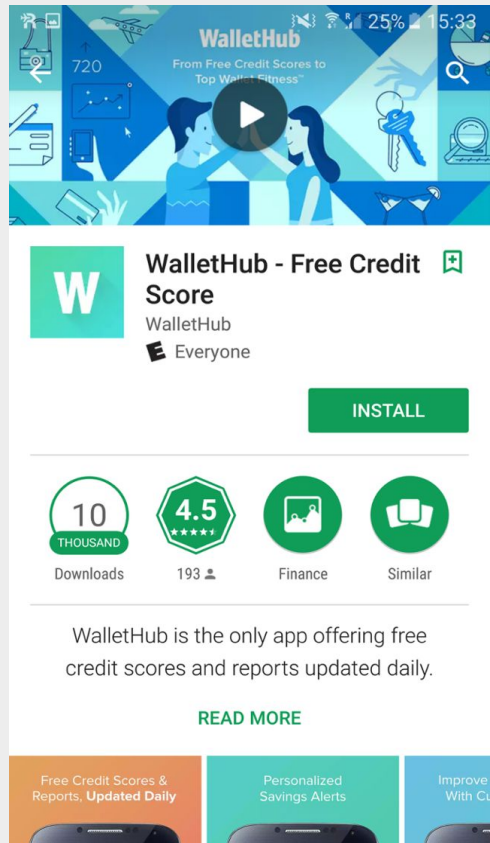
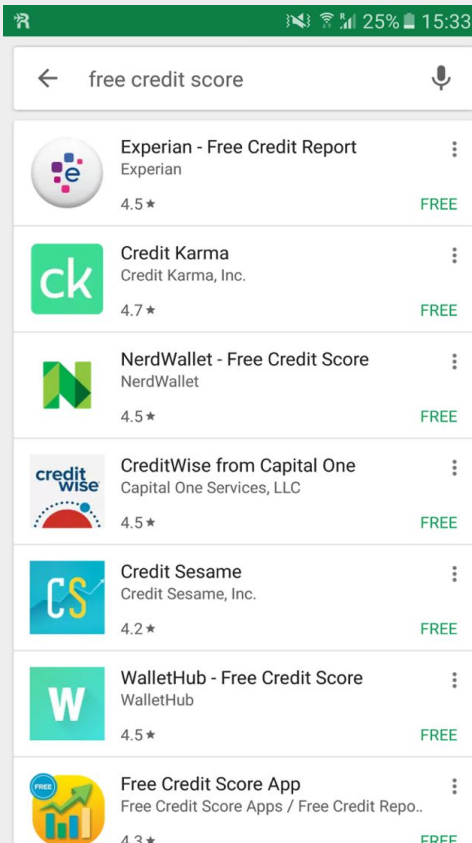


A Masterclass in App Store Videos

Google Play Store

On the Google Play Store, apart from a couple of layout tests from Google (or some “brand searches”), the feature graphic and the video are not displayed in the search results. Nor any screenshot for that matter.

On the app listing, the play button is placed above the feature graphic which is the first visual asset situated at the top. Once users tap the play button, the YouTube video is played.



A Masterclass in App Store Videos

Testing

iOS App Store

iTunes Connect does not let you test an app store listing with video vs. no video or split test different versions of a video.

The only way to measure the impact of video is a before/after technique: keeping marketing efforts as constant as possible and comparing results 1 or 2 weeks before and 1 to 2 weeks after.

Using third party tools like Splitmetrics, StoreMaven or Testnet you can get much more insights: those tools “recreate” the app store listings on a page, and then you drive paid traffic there.

Google Play Store

Thanks to Google Play Store listing experiments, you can A/B test video (split test, really - up to 4 variants). It's quite easy to set up, and by checking YouTube analytics you'll also be able to get insights on viewer's behavior (view duration, when people stop watching the video, etc.).

Conclusion

Video is a powerful medium to promote your app, and app store videos done right can positively impact your conversion rate. And make all your acquisition efforts more effective.

There are some common best practices in creating videos for the iOS App Store and the Google Play Store, but also some major differences that you need to know to optimize your videos' impact.

With [the recent iOS 11 announcement](#), it will be really interesting to see how the mobile industry reacts and if video becomes even more mainstream than it currently is.



How to get featured in the App Store

Written by [Steve Young](#) Founder & CEO @ [AppMasters.co](#)

How to get featured in the App Store

Getting your app featured by Apple is one of the best ways to drive traffic and potentially converting into hundreds of thousands of downloads.

Besides the obvious download metrics, getting featured also gives you press leverage and credibility.

Best of all - it's entirely free.

It's the holy grail for app publishers. That means a myriad of other apps in your space are trying to get featured too. Here's a guide to how to cut through the noise.

Step 1: Figure out what Apple wants

The first thing to realise is that there is no secret algorithm determining how people get featured. There is a team in charge of it - App Store Managers decide if your apps gets featured or not.

That means you need to keep Apple in mind when you build your app.

There are two things that Apple cares about most and that's Apple and their end-users. Apps that are designed knowing this have a better chance of getting featured.

Use the [Apple Developer Resources page](#) to be up to date with their latest updates, features and products. The more compatible your app is with iOS in general and their latest updates in particular greatly increases your chances of getting noticed.

Users only want to use really great products. If you don't think your app is quite ready, don't push it to be featured. You don't want App Store Managers to associate your company with unfinished apps.

Avoid that by soft launching your app first.

How to get featured in the App Store

Big companies try to target small communities during their soft launch and try to garner as much information as possible: customer feedback, UI and platform reviews, and even the game's monetization processes.

If you copy this strategy, not only will you have more information to strengthen your application but it makes you look like a major publisher.

With this groundwork in place, you are ready to start reaching out to App Store Managers.



How to get featured in the App Store

Step 2: Reaching out

This is your big moment to pitch your app!

I have to reiterate - getting an app featured is really hard. Perseverance will play a big part in whether or not you are successful. Keep at it and don't get easily discouraged!

Before you send out any emails, make sure you have a tracker installed that can let you know how many opens and clicks your email has had.

When you're seeing a lot of opens it is a good sign you'll get featured. If they like your app then they'll pass your email around the different App Store Managers. So keep an eye on those metrics.

Who to reach out to

Finding the right contacts doesn't have to be too complicated. You either use the central contact or you go aggressive and reach out to individual App Store Managers.

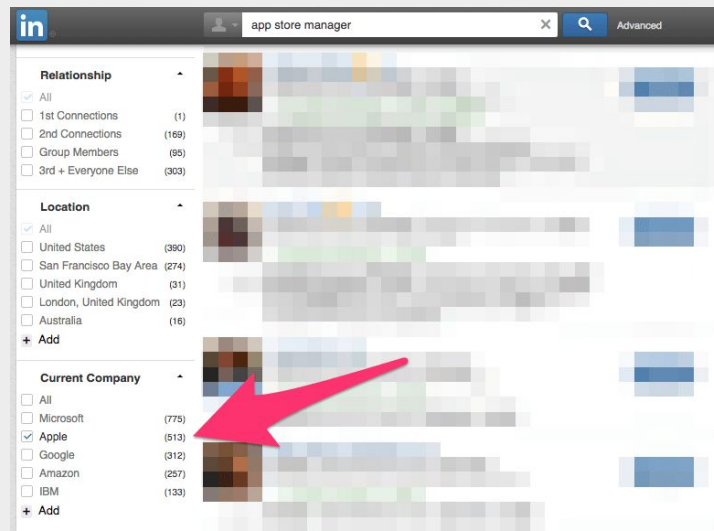
Because Apple wants to funnel all applications to appstorepromotion@apple.com, we no longer use this method of cold emailing App Store Managers, but be aware

that this option is out there for you to use.

To do that you:

1. Search for "app store manager" in LinkedIn
2. Filter by company: Apple
3. Filter by your region
4. Use [an extension like Email Hunter](#) to gather email addresses

The 3rd step is critical - App Store Managers outside of the US are less swamped with feature requests.



How to get featured in the App Store

How to write a great pitch email

The email you send has to be both very convincing and very short.

Remember to make use of any killer stats or reviews you gathered during your soft launch. And make sure you flag those brand new Apple features you have integrated.

Here are some other tips:

- **Include your App ID:** This sounds very basic, but you'd be amazed what people leave out. Find this in the App Information page of your iTunes Connect.
- **Have a Video:** Make it really easy for the reviewer to take a quick look at your app to see if it's worthy of a feature. The quality of your video will be used to judge the quality of your app.
- **Leverage Social Proof:** Have any of your past apps been featured? Tell them!
- **Ask for Feedback:** There is a saying that you get money when you ask for advice, and you get advice when you ask for money. That applies here.

- **Keep it short:** Each point only needs to be a sentence. A sentence on social proof, a sentence on why the app's different, and a video. It should be between four and six sentences in total.

When to write your email

You have two options. Either three weeks before launch or after the app has gained a little traction.

The benefits of pitching three weeks before launch are that it gives the App Store Managers plenty of time to schedule your feature slot and it allows you some flexibility to make amendments and improvements.

We often advise our clients to do this.

Publishers can also have success pitching their app after the launch. Has your app gone viral? Do you have incredible engagement figures? Did you get featured on a huge mailing list? Use that.

Apps that have shown they can gather users are very likely to get picked up by App Store Managers. This is a riskier strategy, of course, because very few apps go viral (at least without being featured in the App Store).

How to get featured in the App Store

Step 3: What to do after feature

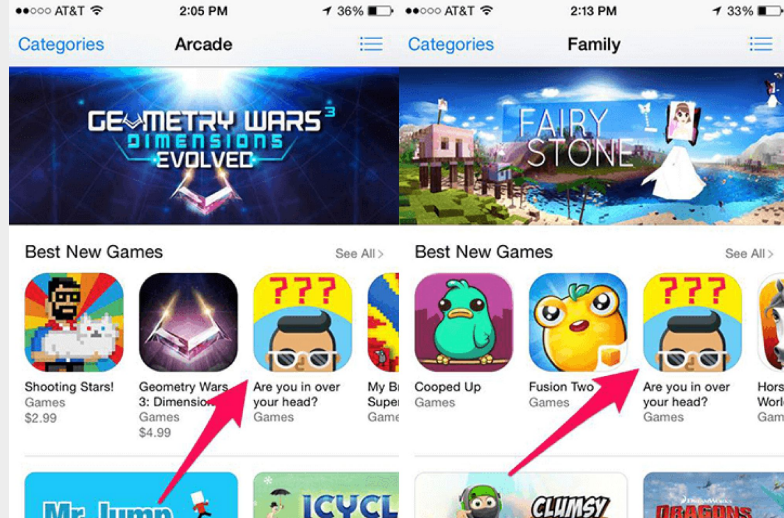
An App Store Manager replies and lets you know you will feature (after filling out a few forms). Well done! This is what you've been working so hard for.

Please note: You might not get featured on the main page but that doesn't mean you've failed. Keep an eye on your app's categories - make sure you don't miss your big moment.

Now what?

Being featured boosts organic downloads, but it also gives you ammunition to send to journalists and tech bloggers. All journalists covering the mobile market want to know about the hottest new app - now you have some great proof that your app is it.

Don't let that feature tag go to waste, boost it with timely articles and watch your downloads soar.



Conclusion

With these techniques, we have gotten eight clients featured on the Apple App Store. If you can apply them then you will have a great chance of getting featured too.

BUT, keep in mind that you shouldn't rely solely on Apple Feature as it's highly unpredictable. There are thousands of new apps released every week, all of them vying to get ahold of a coveted feature spot. Be sure to get other means of hitting those target metrics without getting featured; otherwise, you're doomed to fail.

Getting featured should send you to new heights, not keep you afloat.

Conclusion

Written by Rowan Emslie, Content & Community Manager @ [Priori Data](#)

Conclusion

Well, that was quite a ride.

ASO is one of those topics that people can get obsessed with - it definitely happened to us for a while - but, if you follow the lessons and techniques of this Playbook, it shouldn't take up all your time.

Figure out a plan, work on it, improve your execution, and make sure you stay up to date on changes in the app stores.

If you cover that, you'll be a long way ahead of your competitors already.

If you manage to produce incredible videos or even get featured, your organic installs will go through the roof.

We'll see you in the top charts!

A special note for app publishers

You need better app market data to grow your company, but you can't pay for app market data until your company grows.

It's the app publisher equivalent of the 'need a job to get experience, need experience to get a job' meme.

So we figured out a way around this: if you share your app store data with us, we'll give you 12 months of free access to our platform. App market data for free. For a year.

That would normally cost \$2,400.

[Interested? Let us know.](#)

P.S. Can I ask you a favor? If you like this offer, please share it with your developer friends.