# Mobile App Development Blog

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# How Often Should You Update Your App

Today's apps are never far from an update.

But with great power comes great responsibility. It's a phrase that rings true for app developers as well as superheroes.

With the ability to write updates for your app almost whenever you like, when should you? You need to send patches and bug fixes, of course.

But you also don't want to burden the user with tons of updates.

So, what's a keen developer to do?

You'll find the answer right here. The truth is, there are a few benchmarks you can use to determine the best time to update your app.

Find the one that makes the most sense for you, and you'll have zero problems pushing updates to your app at just the right time.

We'll cover those benchmarks in a minute. But first, why should you care about updating your app at the right time?

## Why app updates can make or break the user experience

A lot of beginning developers overlook the update feature of their app.

The thinking is that once the app is released, it'll be finished forever. But nothing could be further from the truth.

The reality is that apps must be updated on a regular basis to keep them fresh and functioning. Just like you wouldn't release an app with a known bug, updates keep your app secure and allow you to remove issues that come to your attention after your first release.

So, why not just push a new update out every day?

Because an overload of updates will fatigue your users. As much as users want to see fresh updates and features on their favorite apps, getting update notifications too frequently will get tiring.

## Message

There is a newer version of this app available

**Update**

Some updates can be planned ahead of time, such as new features, promotions to celebrate app milestones, and keeping compatible with the release of new operating systems.

Others you need to be prepared to make quickly, like the correction of glitches or reacting to fast trends in the market.
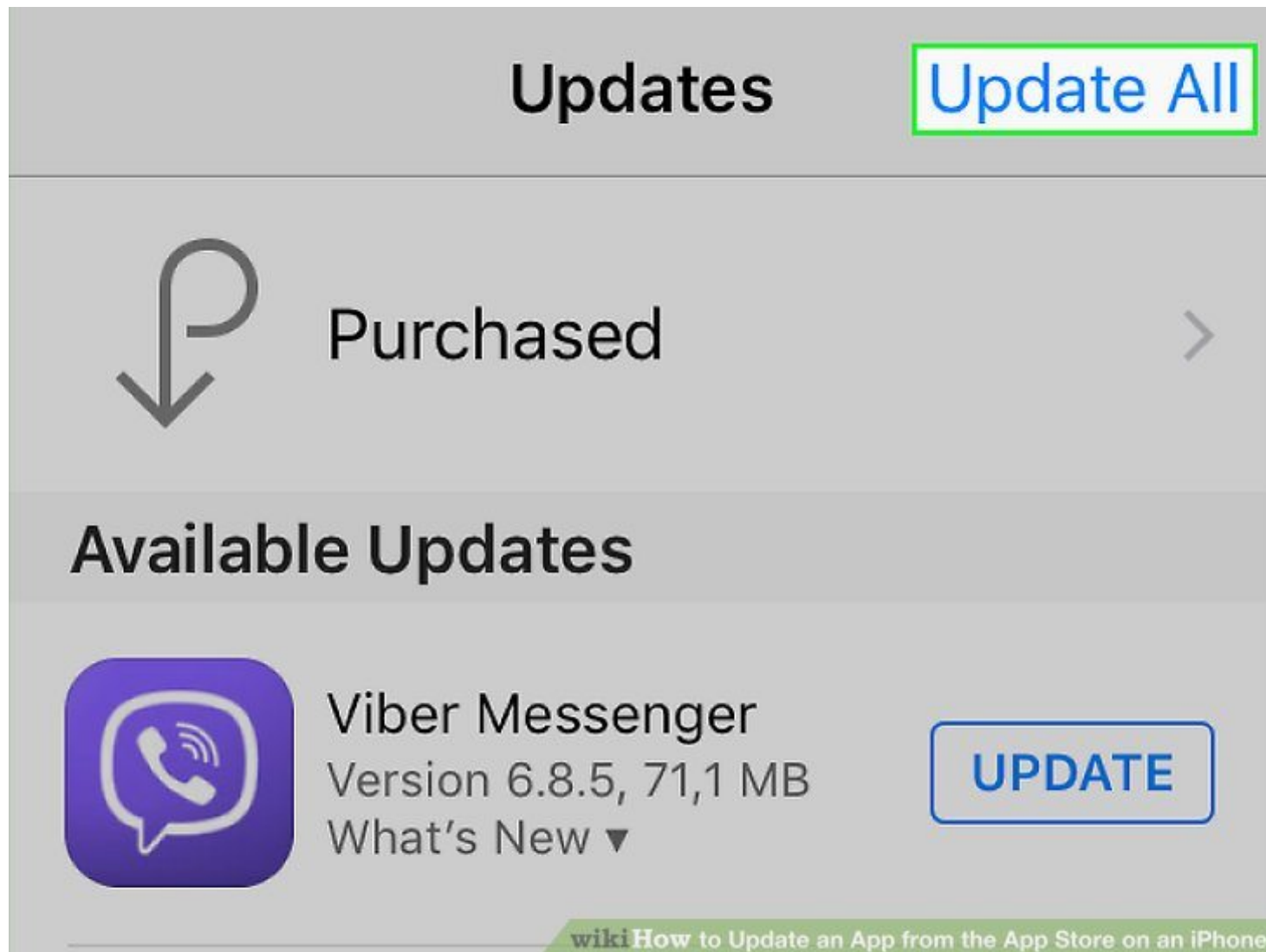
With that question answered, let's look at specific benchmarks and strategies you can use to plan your app updates.

## 1. Update Monthly

Updating your app monthly provides a nice baseline you can use to time your updates.

This strikes a balance between updating an app often enough that it remains relevant, but leaving enough time in between that you don't annoy users with too many updates at a time.

On average, your app should be [updated at least once a month](#) and up to four times in a month to keep its features fresh.

Apps in the past were clunky and not used as frequently. Today's apps are more social, interactive, and integral in our daily life.

By [updating monthly](#), you are making sure that your app is up-to-date with market expectations. What might have passed as a great app in terms of features and functionality a year ago would be outdated now.

In some cases, even an app that had certain features a month ago might seem ancient now.

**amazon**
Amazon Cloud Drive...
Version 1.3.59, 9.3 MB
What's New ▼

**UPDATE**

## Updated June 18, 2013

Guitar! by Smule
Version 1.0.2, 48.9 MB
What's New ▼

**OPEN**

**YAHOO!**
Yahoo! Sports
Version 4.0.1, 15.7 MB
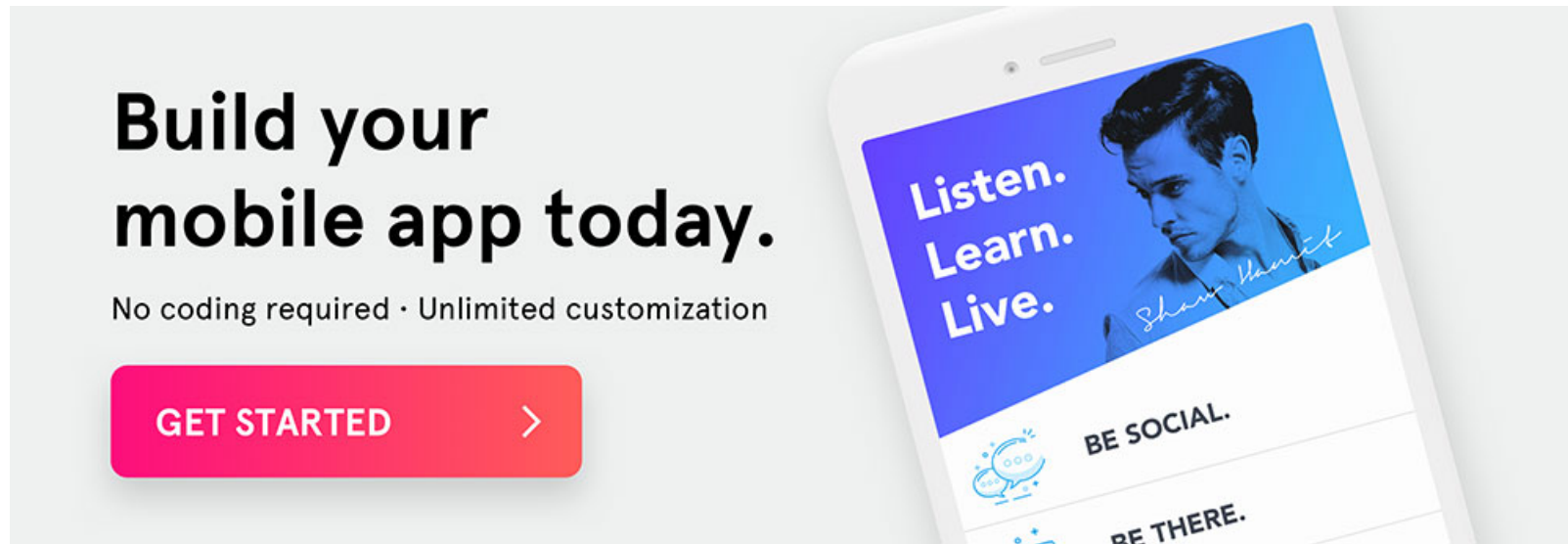What's New ▼

**OPEN**

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Because the app market is constantly evolving, the expectations for apps keep being bumped up higher and higher. Previous social messaging apps, for example, were considered decent if they could send messages and images.



Then certain apps added the ability to send GIFs, so this feature became a standard, and any messaging app that couldn't send GIFs was looked at as outdated and irrelevant.

The same thing happened with video calling and voice notes. Voice notes became the norm on messaging apps because they allow users to communicate long messages that they would rather not have to type out.

It wasn't a gimmick or a fad, but a feature that genuinely made the experience better.

When a new feature is added to the world of apps and takes off, it is no longer a bonus feature but becomes the standard that other apps have to live by because of the value it adds to the user's life.

Features like this are changing the environment of every app genre, and updates can help you stay on top of the most recent trends.
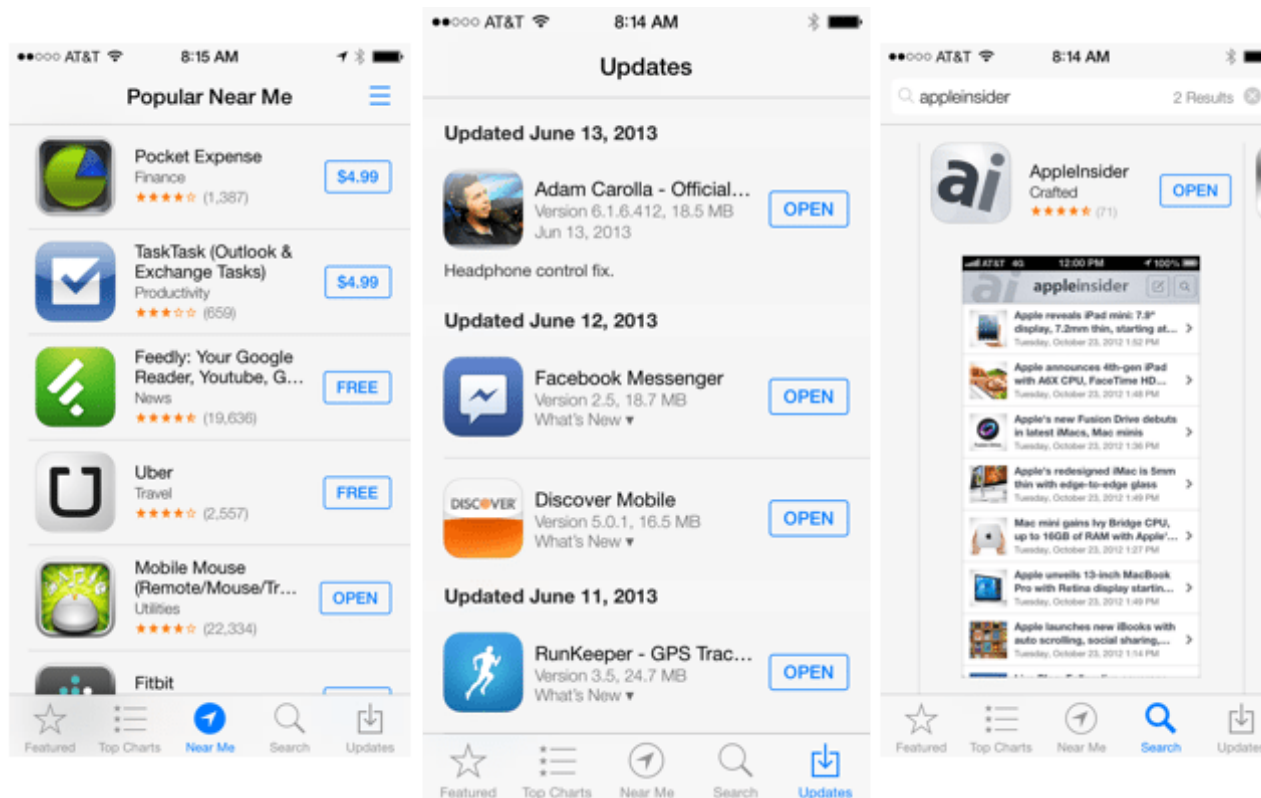
## 2. Update For Each User Experience Change

Basing updates on the continuous improvement of your users' experience in the app will keep you relevant. No amount of marketing can beat an app that actually improves the users' everyday lives.

There are few things users dislike more than haphazardly created apps. Users often feel the developers aren't putting effort into or trying to solve a specific problem with their creation.

Apps like this hardly ever retain their audiences, and more often than not, get forgotten in no time. Without updates, there's no way to ensure an optimal user experience.

By frequently updating your app, you not only keep it relevant and up to date, but show your users that you genuinely care about their experience and want to improve it.
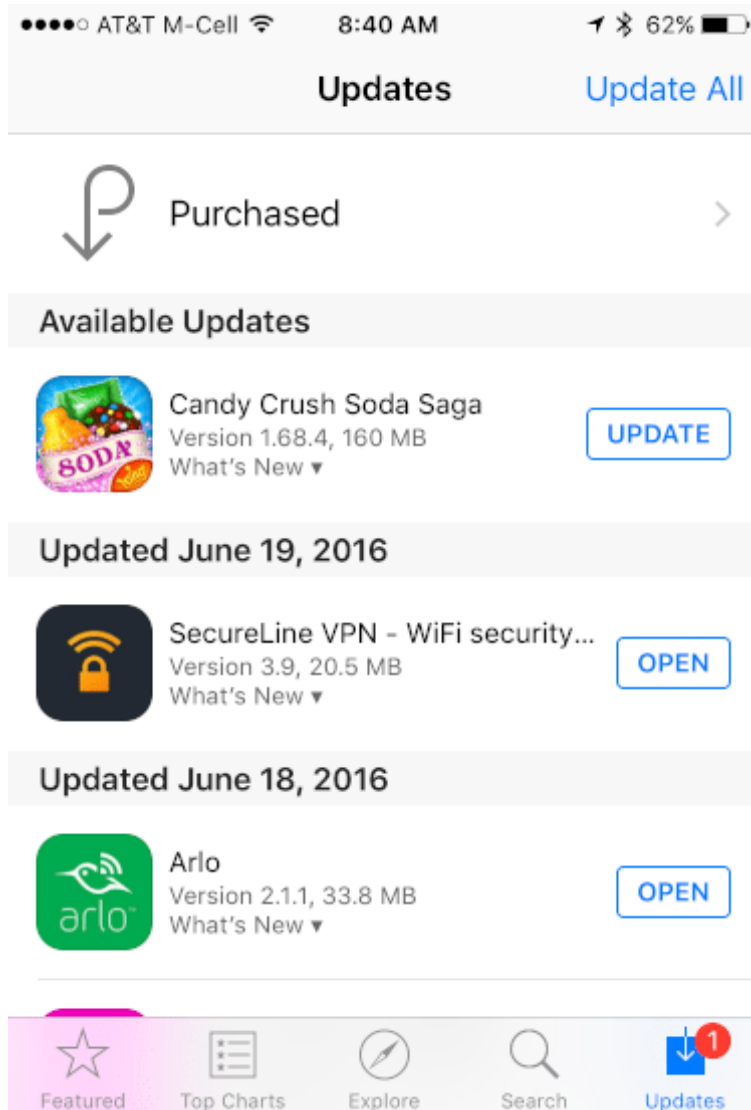
An example of an app that offers consistent updates that are valuable to its users is Instagram. From its inception up until now, the app has evolved.

With each new update, more helpful features are released that improve the experience. Because of the quality of these updates, users actively look forward to them because they know that the experience is only going to get better.

In the competition for the best app, regularly updating your app with thoughtful new features shows your users that you are genuinely concerned about their needs and are actively trying to make it better.

Every move you make as a developer should be centered on making the app the best it can be for the users and a tool that adds value to their lives.

If your app users derive genuine value from your app and find it constantly evolving to suit their needs, they not only will look forward to your app updates, but they will be less likely to migrate to competing apps.

## 3. Update Based on User Feedback

As you develop your app, seek out user feedback.

Read user reviews on the App Store, ask users to rate your app on the app itself, or encourage responses via email.
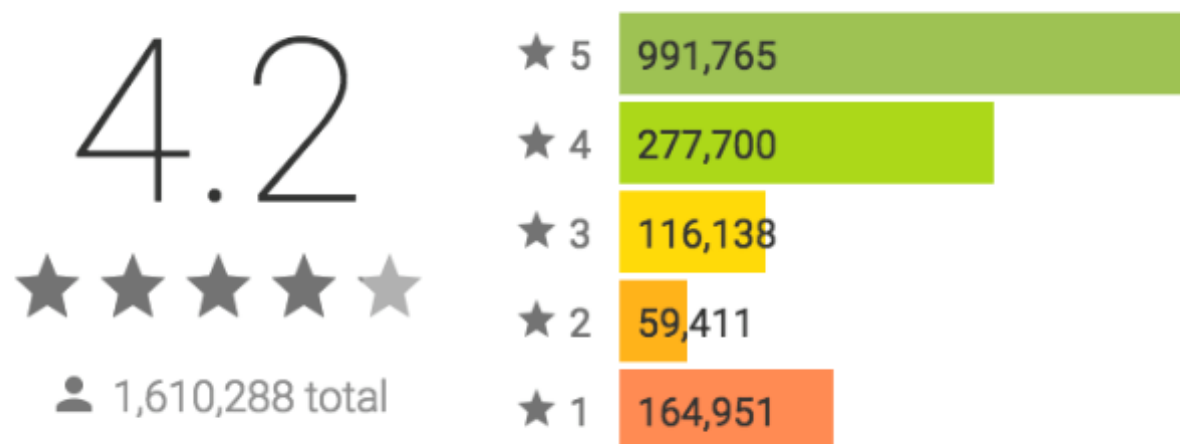
Additionally, you can look at user comments on apps similar to yours to gauge the response to a potential new feature before you release it.

This ensures that you will be adding well-received features to your app, rather than jumping on empty fads.

By monitoring customer ratings and responses to similar apps' features, you can understand what features those customers are most fond of and those that you should consider adding to your own app.

In all situations, user feedback, whether from your own users or those on other apps, is a valuable source for you to use prior to developing and launching new features.

## REVIEWS

4.2

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

👤 1,610,288 total

| | |
|---|---|
| ★ 5 | 991,765 |
| ★ 4 | 277,700 |
| ★ 3 | 116,138 |
| ★ 2 | 59,411 |
| ★ 1 | 164,951 |

In addition, look out for complaints about your app. Even though the app would have been tested before release, there are bound to be some glitches and errors that will slip through the cracks.

Even a tiny error can lead to a comment that becomes featured on the App Store, so keep a close eye on your reviews and fix problems as quickly as possible.
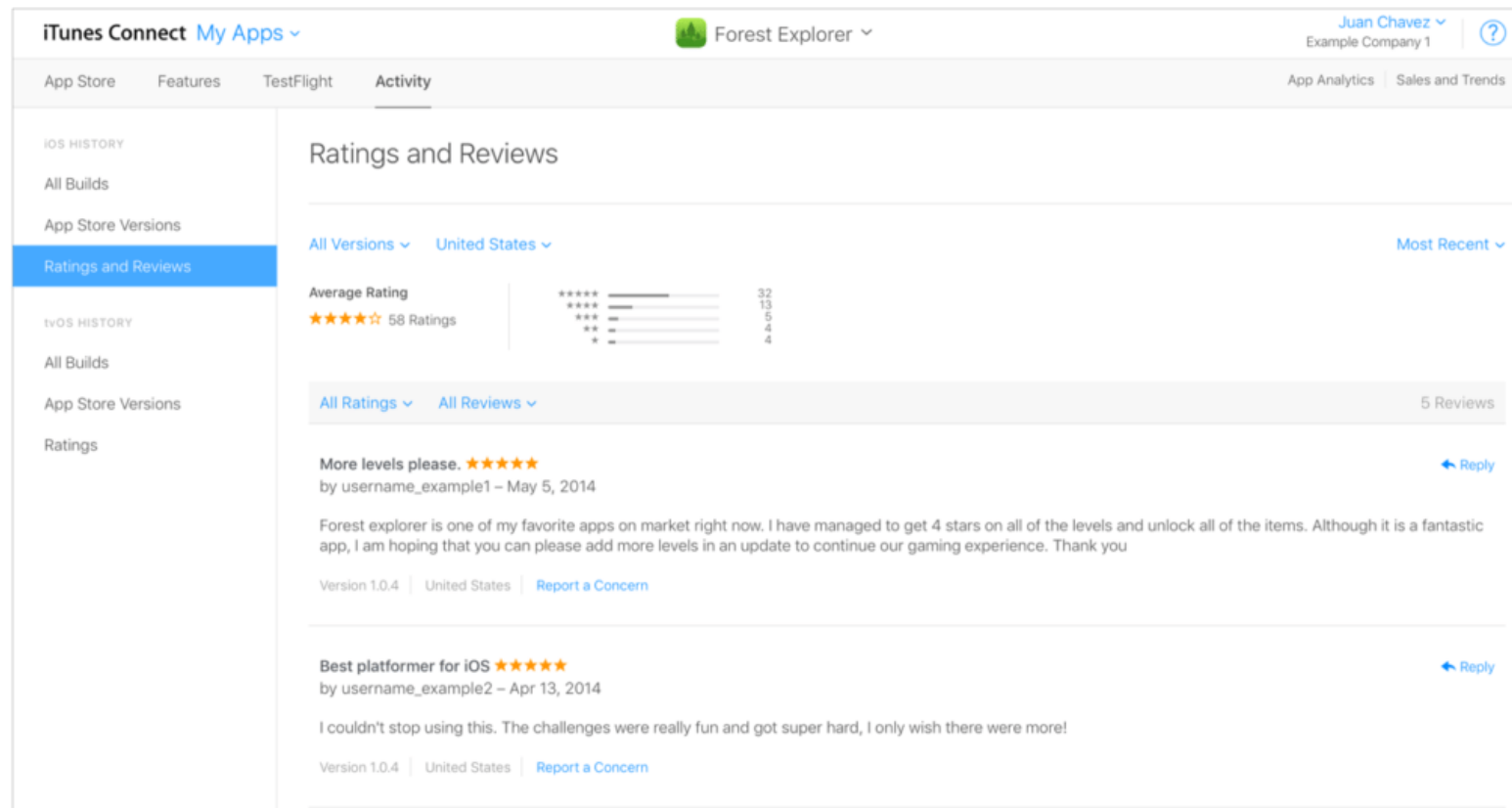
No app is perfect, but by resolving complaints as soon as they are brought up, you'll build up trust in your user base.

Many companies have spent fortunes trying to "humanize" themselves and demonstrate their interest in their customers' opinions.

In reality, showing that you care about your users doesn't require a huge PR campaign. It comes comes in the form of listening to and responding to your customers' feedback.

Since you're already monitoring feedback, connect with your customers by responding to their comments on your page in the App Store.

When you look at the typical feedback pages of various apps, you will immediately see a difference. Some are filled with user comments, complaints, and suggestions, and others have the addition of responses from the developers.



When you respond, reviewers immediately know their feedback is being considered when they get an actual response.

A way to further the conversation is to include the fact that the new update was based on user feedback. This acts as a public declaration that you take user feedback into account.

Another opportunity to interact with your users in the development process is to list potential new features in a poll on your app's website or on the app itself and let users vote on what feature they would most like to see.

t fosters a sense of community and will help you understand what new features are most pressing and which can be put on the back burner.

You can also apply the polling method to existing features you're considering removing. It helps to not only show the users that you care about them but also helps you determine what to get rid of to make room for something better.
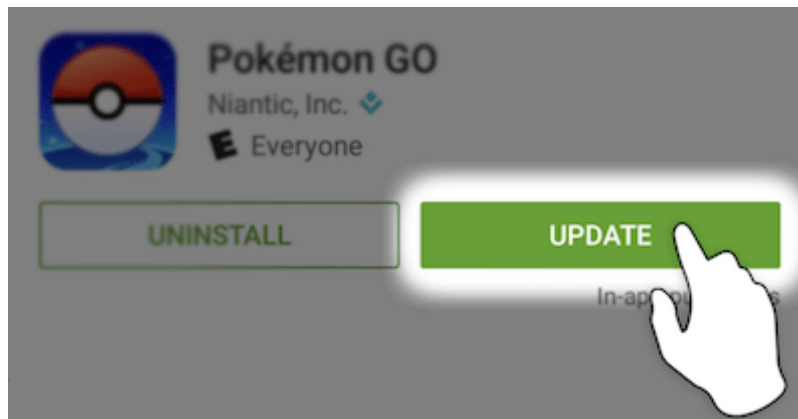
## 4. Update According to Milestones

If you're struggling to find a concrete point in time to release an update, one foolproof way to schedule is by going along with app milestones such as launch anniversaries.

Milestone releases are similar to a brick-and-mortar store doing a remodel to celebrate the anniversary of its grand opening. These updates can rejuvenate your app users and create more engagement.

It often happens that users download an app and then forget to use it over time. When you schedule a new update around a milestone, you remind users that the app exists in the first place and also welcome them back with new features that drive interaction.

By setting yourself up to make [updates around these milestones](#), it forces you to continually keep your app fresh and up to date with the latest trends.
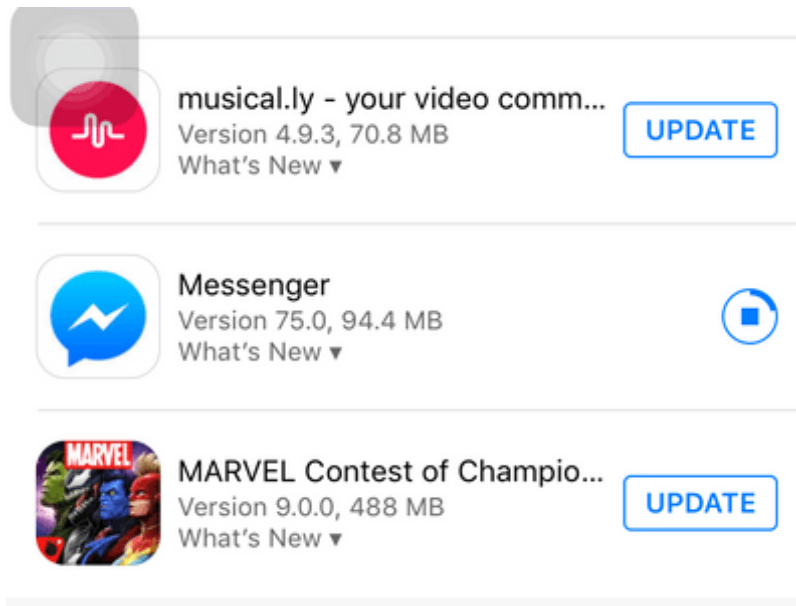


Milestones are also a good opportunity to launch promotions, like a discount on in-app purchases.

Another reason for regularly scheduled updates is also to draw in new users.

Before releasing your update, create as much discussion as possible around the [upcoming updates and milestones](#). This engagement with the users provides a sense of anticipation for

the new features.



Further, updates spaced out across milestones give you the opportunity to compare larger-scale changes. Look for trends in feature requests, and use that data to guide your future updates.

You can also follow the milestones of the software development. An update to the Android or iOS software means a careful review of your features to make sure everything works as expected.

Most developers know they'll need to review the new software and push out updates to patch any bugs or issues that crop up with the updated OS.

You can do the same, using the platform's update cycle as your own.

## 5. Update as the Market Condition Changes

One of the most exciting things about the app world is that it is always changing and improving.

Looking at some of the earliest apps and even apps from just a few years ago, the amount of growth and change that has occurred since that time is remarkable.

While milestones and OS updates are valuable guideposts to use in determining when to release an update, no tool is more powerful than the market itself.

Even without the previously mentioned factors, the mere fact that the market is so fast paced should compel any developer to update his or her app regularly.

## Facebook

### By Facebook, Inc.

Essentials

Open iTunes to buy and download apps.

### Description

Keeping up with friends is faster than ever.
• See what friends are up to
• Share updates, photos and videos

Facebook, Inc. Web Site ▸    Facebook Support ▸    Application License Agreement ▸          ...More

### What's New in Version 38.0

Thanks for using Facebook! To make our app better for you, we bring updates to the App Store every 2 weeks. You can update the app automatically (without checking back here) by going to Settings > iTunes & App Store > Automatic Downloads and turning on Updates.

Every update of our Facebook app includes improvements for speed and reliability. As other new features become available, we'll highlight those for you in the app.

View in iTunes

➕ This app is designed for both iPhone and iPad

Free

You've learned now that updating your app isn't a suggestion but a requirement to stay relevant in the market.

As discussed previously, one of the best places to look for market information is by reading the feedback sections in the app store for both your app and similar apps to find out what works, what doesn't, and new features that the public wants.

As a rule, every app developer should always be on the lookout for new trends and developments in the app world.

Seizing opportunities to improving your app is a continuous process that follows along with changes and developments in the market.

For example, a few years ago, some apps began taking advantage of Black Friday and Cyber Monday to improve sales. This has now become the norm and any app that isn't tapping into this opportunity in any way is missing out.

If a new feature becomes popular in your app niche, it is up to you to revise your app and make sure that the feature is added as soon as possible.



The market is moving too fast to keep a stagnant app alive.

# Conclusion

A delay in updating an app could be disastrous in the long run for a developer, as the app might lose current users or alienate those who would have downloaded it.

Before you launch an app, you must take updates into consideration and work with a design that allows you to make changes very easily, preferably from your dashboard.

By planning ahead, you'll save time and money.

Whether you intend to make spontaneous changes based on market trends, scheduled updates, or both, it is important to have a plan in mind.

Establish responsibility for app updates, and ensure you can finish them regularly. Having a plan is critical to keeping your app fresh and safe as you continue to make improvements.
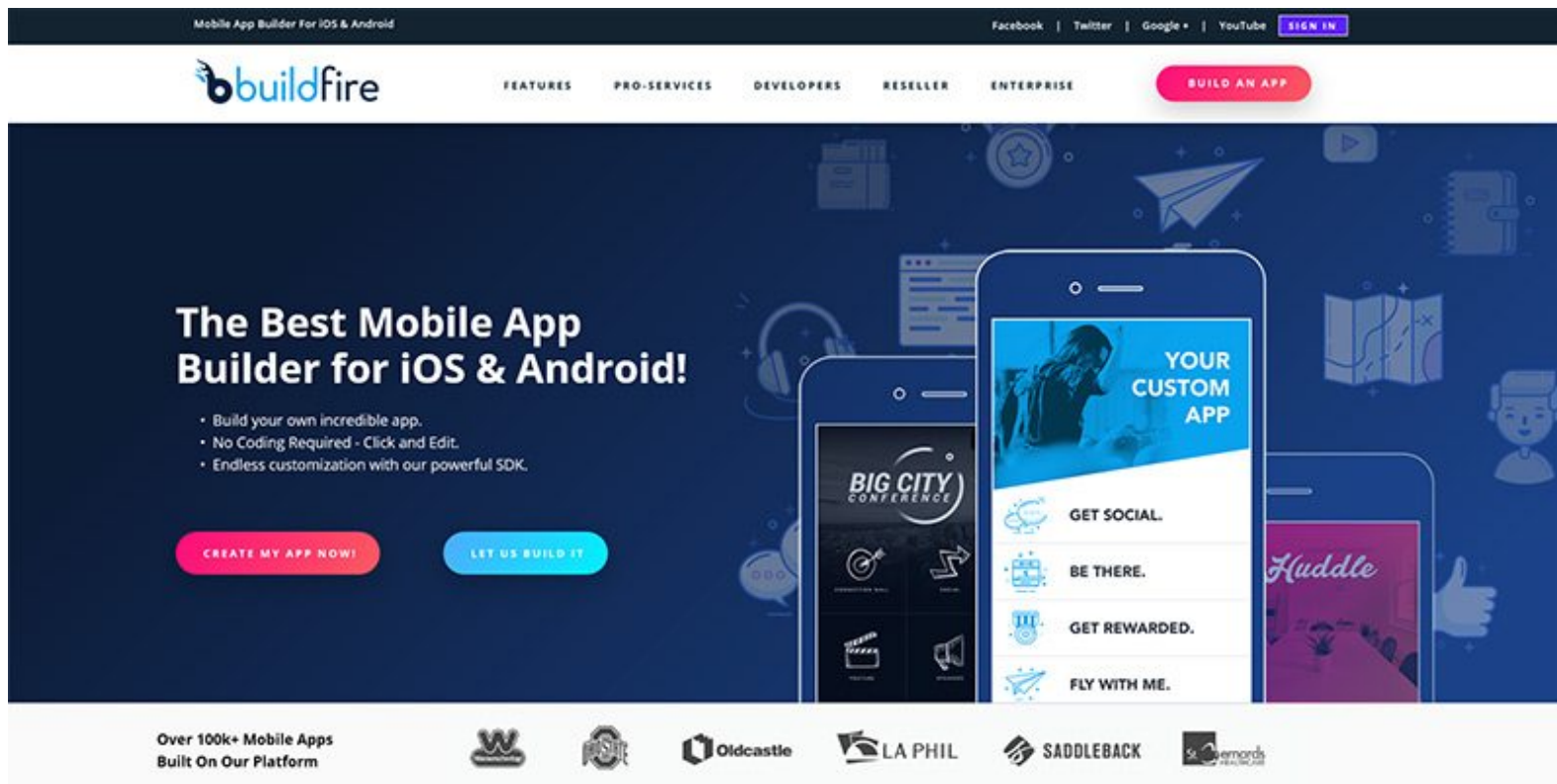
Considering the speed at which the market evolves, there is no time for long, complicated processes in order to make app updates. You should be able to make changes from the comfort of your dashboard or control panel.

Have a simple system for your development team to send out updates and systematize the process.

With a little regular work, you can keep your app on a continuous cycle of improvement.
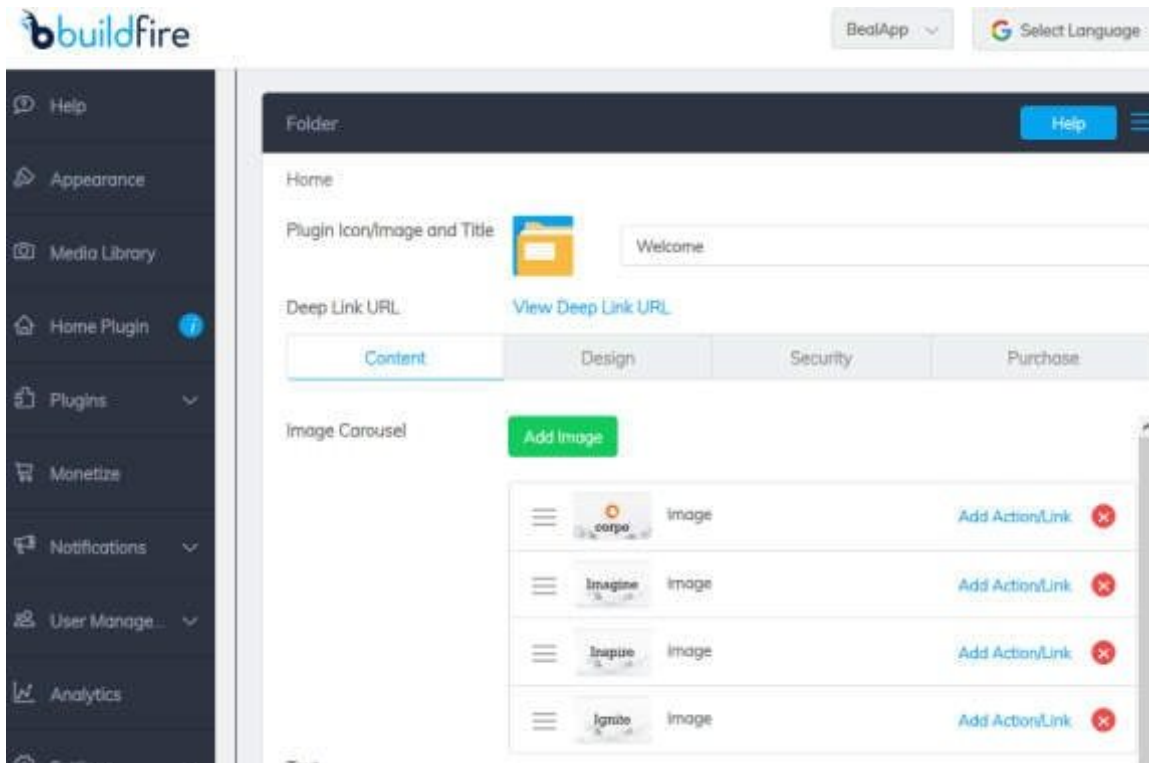
## Buildfire

This is where Buildfire comes in. Buildfire prides itself on making not only simplifying the development process, but the update process as well.

All Buildfire users have access to a dashboard to easily create updates and changes. This means saying goodbye to complicated, difficult processes in order to finish app updates and get them released.

The intuitive dashboard makes the process of updating apps as simple as possible.

Ease of accessibility is the future of app design, and with Buildfire you will always be in control of your app updates, whenever you create them.

## Ian Blair

BuildFire Co-Founder. I'm a digital marketer by trade and an entrepreneur at heart. I'm here to help businesses go mobile and build apps more efficiently than before.

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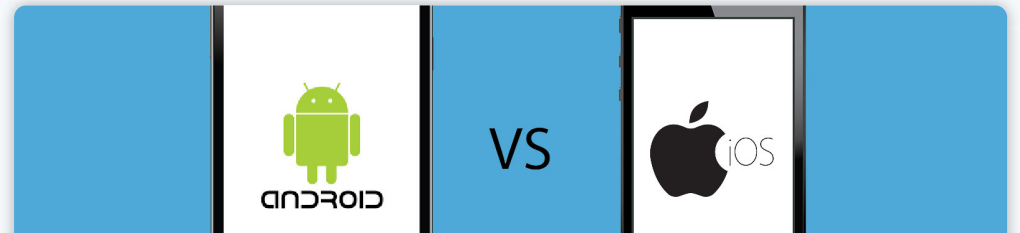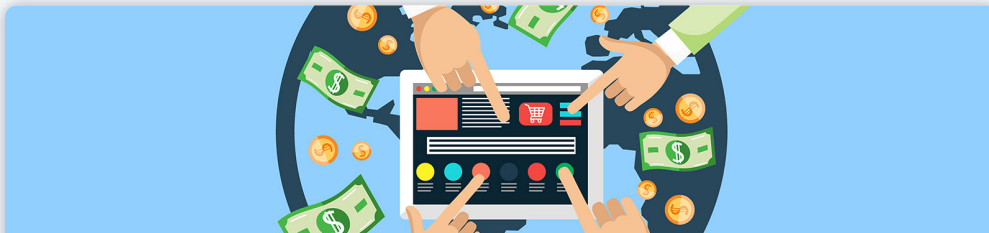
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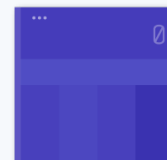Terms

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