Guide to Launching In-App Events and Promotional Content on the App Store and Google Play

The App Store and Google Play offer a variety of tools to increase app visibility and drive conversions.

In this article, I'll talk about working with In-App Events and Promotional Content, as well as the differences between these promotional methods.

What Are Events and Their Role in ASO?

App Store Optimization or [ASO](#) for short encompasses a wide range of activities aimed at:
- Increasing app visibility and conversion rate of installs;
- reaching as many new users as possible;
- improving app performance in general.

In 2021, as part of the iOS 15 update, Apple introduced a new feature - **in-app events (IAE)**. It allows developers to promote temporary events within their apps directly on the App Store.

Following Apple, in 2022, Google released a similar feature for Android applications - **Promotional content (formerly known as LiveOps)**.

Being a part of the overall ASO strategy, in-app events and promotional content have a key role in optimization.

Improved App Visibility

In-App Events and Promotional Content help increase app visibility by appearing in search results—where the App Store indexes the Name and Description fields—and can also attract the attention of Apple or Google editors. Being featured in selections provides additional exposure and helps acquire new users.

The apps featured by editors are displayed on specific tabs:
- Today, Games, and Apps in the App Store;
- Games and Events on Google Play.

Increased User Engagement

In-app events and promotional content provide an additional opportunity to engage with users. They can be used to promote a variety of topics: from competitions and tournaments to premieres and major updates. In addition to attracting new users, they re-engage existing users, as well as those who have not used the app in a while or have already deleted it.

Increase Conversion Rates

Events are often timed to coincide with seasonal events or important content within the app, which easily attracts users' attention. Their placement can positively affect the [conversion rate (CR)](#). Since one of the display locations is search results, many users see the event banner instead of the app screenshots.

Attractive and colorful graphics in this context can motivate users to install the app.

Increase in Income

Promotions and special offers can drive in-app purchases, thereby increasing revenue. Time-limited offers create a sense of urgency, which can lead to a significant increase in sales.

Improving the User Experience

Regular communication and updates about events within the app enhance the overall user experience.
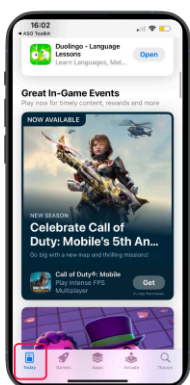
In-App Events in the Apple App Store

Apple promotes In-App Events (IAE) through several channels within the App Store, providing apps with additional visibility.
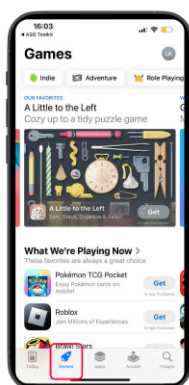
Locations of In-App Events (IAE) in the App Store

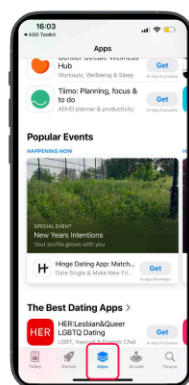Users can view the events in the following locations:
- On the Product Page;
- in the search results;
- on the Today Tab;
- in editorial selections and recommendations on the Apps and Games tabs.
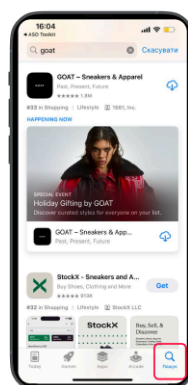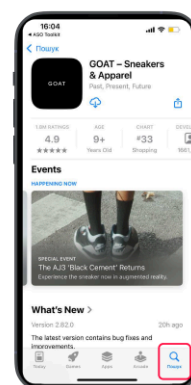

Today Tab   Games   Apps   Search Results   Product Page

In-app events in the App Store are displayed as a banner with a short text - Name and Description. By default, users see a horizontal banner or video, and when they click on it, the orientation switches to portrait.

Note 1: Descriptions for vertical and horizontal banners may differ. A short description, with a maximum length of 50 characters, is used for horizontal banners, while a longer description, up to 120 characters, is displayed with the vertical banner.

Note 2: Keywords from the Name and Short Description fields are indexed in the App Store search results.

Types of In-App Events

Events are launched to attract attention, highlight a new feature, or simply generate excitement around an app. During the launch, Apple allows you to choose one of seven categories (badges) for the event.

1. **Challenges** are time-limited activities that encourage users to reach a goal before the end of the event. For example, completing an exercise goal in a fitness app or finishing a certain number of levels in a game.
2. **Competition** is an activity where users compete with each other for a higher rank or for a specific award.
3. **Live Event** - events that occur in real time and are available to all users of the app.
4. **Major Update** is the announcement of significant updates, new features, content, or improvements to the user experience. These events do not include minor updates or bug fixes.
5. **New Season** - the introduction of unique content or storylines based on existing material. For example, thematic content in a game or a new season of a popular show.
6. **Premiere** is the premiere of new content.
7. **Special Event** - time-limited events that don't fit into any of the categories above. They can encompass a variety of activities or user experiences, but should always offer something new to users, such as content, opportunities, products, or levels.

Events do not include discounts, sales, and promotions, or frequently repeated activities such as daily challenges. These are against Apple's policies and will be rejected during review.

Guide to Launching In-App Events (IAE)

Up to five events can be placed in the App Store at the same time. They can be launched quickly in a few steps:

1. In App Store Connect, go to the Growth & Marketing section and select the In-App Events tab to **create a new event**. At this stage, give the event a generic name that will not be visible to users - it will only appear in the App Store Connect.

Create In-App Event

Reference Name ?

Winter Holidays

49

Cancel   Create

2. In the window that opens, **enter the text metadata** that will be visible to users and indexed in the App Store:

- Name - the name should reflect the essence of the IAE, be written in uppercase and, if possible, contain relevant keywords, up to 30 characters long.
- **Short Description** - a short description of up to 50 characters that is displayed on the banner.
- **Long description** (up to 120 characters). Provide additional information about the event. This will be revealed when users click on the card, displayed as a horizontal banner.

3. **Upload creatives** in horizontal and vertical formats. These can be either a static banner or a video of up to 30 seconds. Creatives should be visually appealing, as they directly affect your conversion rate to installs. For users who view the event in search results, the banner serves as the app's business card, replacing the usual screenshots.

   How optimizing graphics in an app can dramatically change its success in the market: Shkaf case study. How Graphics Increased Conversion Rates by 16% and Organic Installs by 400%.

4. **Select** an event **category** (event badge) - one of the **categories** described above. Apple considers these categories when curating selections for the Today, Apps, and Games tabs.

Winter Holidays

Save   Add for Review

Event Information

English (U.K.) ⌄ ?

Enter the information about your event below.

Name

Christmas Challenge

11

Short Description

Complete this event before Christmas comes!

7

Event Card Image or Video ?

🖼 horizontal1.jpg   Reset

Long Description

Christmas Challenge is the last event of the season: complete it before it's too late and get amazing prizes

12

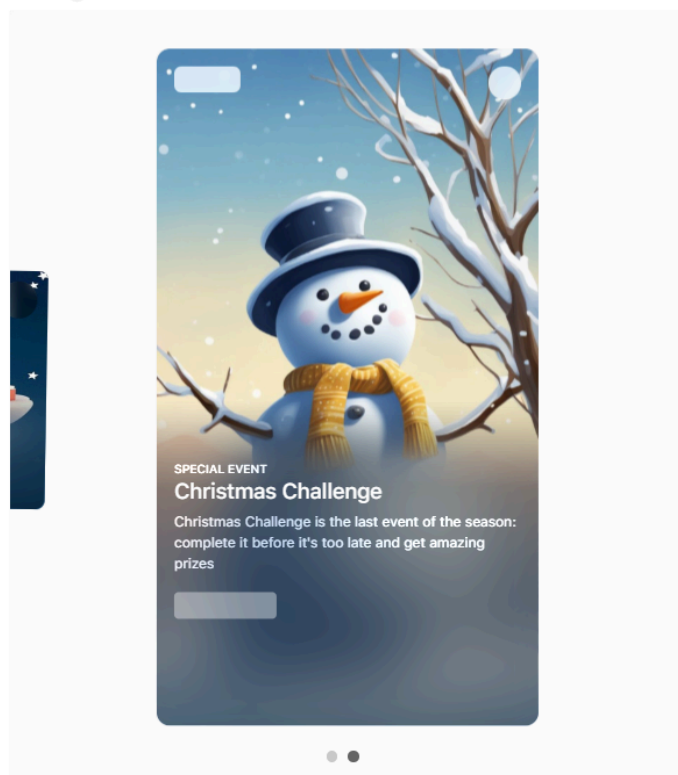**Event Details Page Image or Video** ?

🖼 vertical1.jpg   Reset

Badge ?

Special Event   ⌄

Country or Region Availability

(GMT +2) Kyiv ⌄

Availability

All countries or regions selected Edit

Preview ?

SPECIAL EVENT
Christmas Challenge
Christmas Challenge is the last event of the season: complete it before it's too late and get amazing prizes

5. **Select the countries** where the event will be available. This step is crucial if your event is localized or targeted to a specific region.

6. **Please provide additional information:**
   - **duration** (maximum 31 days) - if your event announces something, it can be published 14 days before it begins;
   - **deep link** - add a link that will take users to the event within your app. If a deep link is not available, use a universal link to the app in the App Store or any other link - it will take the user to the home page inside the app;
   - **priority** - by default, events are displayed in chronological order, with the earliest event shown first. Events with a high priority will be displayed before events with a normal priority;
   - **in-app purchases** - indicate whether the event includes in-app purchases;
   - **Target** - choose your target audience: new users, those who have installed the app but haven't opened it in a while, or your current active users. You can also target all users at once.

7. Once all the fields are filled in, **save the changes and submit them for review**, which usually takes up to 48 hours.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of In-App Events (IAE)

Statistics for each launched event can be found in the App Analytics section of App Store Connect.

In-App Events						
NAME	PUBLISH DATE	START DATE	END DATE ⌄	EVENT IMPRESSIONS	TOTAL DOWNLOADS	APP OPENS
Event name	Jan 28	Jan 28	Feb 28	13.8K	29	88

Important: don't worry if you notice a decrease in the number of app impressions after the launch. This is because some impressions are tracked separately in the event analytics.

Key performance indicators include:

- **Event Impressions** - the number of **impressions** in the App Store;
- **Total Downloads** - the number of app installs after viewing the IAE card;

Important: for event analytics to be available, the event must generate first-time downloads from at least five unique Apple IDs.

- **App opens** - the number of clicks on the Open button on the event card;
- **Event Interactions** - the total number of user interactions with the event, including both downloads and clicks on the Open button.

Even though event analytics may not always be available, they are an effective way to draw users' attention to events and seasonal updates within the app, ultimately increasing conversion.

Promotional Content on Google Play

Now, let me explain what promotional content includes and where users can see it.

What is Promotional Content and Where is it Displayed?

Promotional content on Google Play includes:
- events and content within the app;
- significant updates;
- special offers and discounts that allow developers to interact with users outside the app.

The goal of promotional content is to attract users, encourage them to open or install the app, and take advantage of special offers for new users.

Promotional content signals to Google that you are investing in your app, thereby increasing its chances of being featured in editorial selections.

Promotional content is displayed in different sections of Google Play:

- On the Games tab;

- on the Events tab;
- in the search results;
- on the application page.

Games Home   Store Listing Page   Events Tab   Search Results
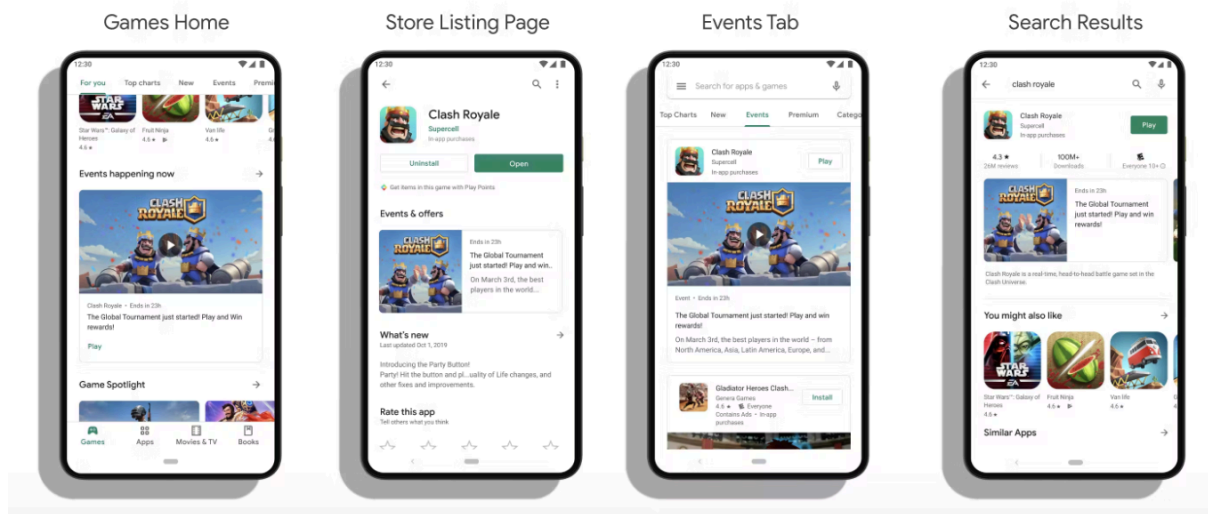
Types of Promotional Content

When launching promotional content, it is important to determine the correct category. Incorrect classification may result in Google limiting its visibility.

Below are the main categories available on Google Play.

1. **Events** are time-limited events that take place within the app. There are several types of events:
- *Challenges* - users compete with each other for awards, a place in the ranking, or must complete a certain task to receive a reward;
- *real-time events* - broadcasts, streams, or webinars;
- seasonal events or events and promotions dedicated to holidays.

2. **Major updates** - presentations and announcements of major updates, which include the introduction of new features or a substantial amount of new content.
3. **Offers** - various discounts and promotions for in-app purchases, bonuses, and additional rewards for users.
4. **Pre-registration announcements** - informing pre-registered users about:
- New content in the app;
- a demo version of the app - providing early access for registered users;
- stages of app development;
- the date of the official release.

Guide to launching promotional content

To launch an event, the app must meet a number of requirements.

Entry Threshold

1. MAU (Monthly Active Users) over the past 28 days has remained above 1.6 million on all days for the past three months. The number of active installations is at least 1.6 million.
2. MAU (Monthly Active Users) over the past 28 days has remained above two million throughout the past month. The number of active installations is at least two million.
3. User spending was at least $40,000 in each of the past three calendar months, or at least $50,000 in the most recent calendar month.

Category

Promotional content is not available for the following app categories:

- Casino
- Finance
- Medicine
- Raising children

In the Business, Dating, News, and Tools categories, the feature is only available for certain subcategories.

If the app meets these criteria, promotional content will be automatically available in the Play Console.

How to Create Promotional Content in Google Play Console

1. Go to Grow Users - Store Presence - Promotional Content section. Click the Create event button.
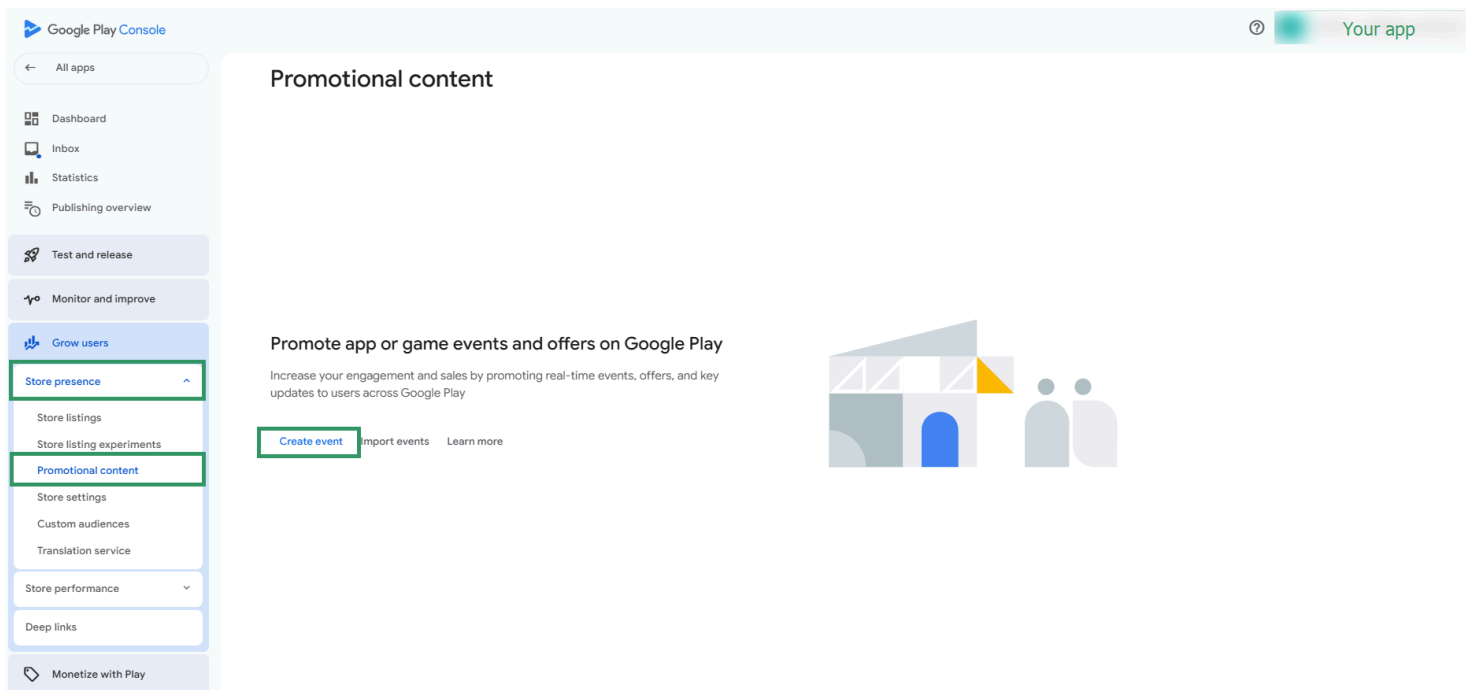
2. 2. Fill in the following information:

- **Event name** - a name of up to 80 characters that will be displayed only in the Play Console;
- **type and subtype**;
- **countries/regions** where the event will be displayed;
- **duration** - specify the start and end date and time of the event, with a maximum duration of 4 weeks.
- **preview** - mark the option to display the event before the scheduled start date if you want registered users to be notified when the event begins.

Note: preview is not available for Offer events.

3. Select **the target audience** for the event:

- All or potential users;
- Specific (based on the user's or buyer's region) or customized audience.
    4. Add a **diplink** if you have one.
    5. Fill in **the event metadata** that will be visible to all users for all required locales:
- tagline - the event name, up to 80 characters, that reflects its essence;
- description - a detailed overview of the event, not duplicating information from the tagline field, up to 500 characters;
- graphics - primary image and square image;
- video is optional, but recommended;
    5. Click the **Submit event** button to publish it to Google Play.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Promotional Content

In the Play Console, reports are available that display the app's effectiveness and results for the selected period.

The reports provide summarized data in two areas:

1. App Statistics:
● Installs - the number of installs;
● Crashes - the number of failures and errors;
● Ratings and user ratings;
● Subscriptions - completed subscriptions.

2. User Acquisition:
● Retained installers - engaged users;
● Buyers - users who made a purchase in the app within seven days of installing the app.
● Subscribers - users who have subscribed to a plan.

To view a summary of active events, go to the Promotional Content page. For detailed reports, visit the Promotional Content Reports page in the Grow > Store performance section.

On the Promotional Content Reports page, you can customize your reports and assess how different types of Google Play users interacted with your promotional content. To analyze the results for multiple events, Play Console allows you to download statistics for all past events starting from August 1, 2022.

Conclusion

1. In-App Events and Promotional Content are essential tools for mobile marketing. They help to:
● attract new users and retain existing ones;
● increase user engagement;
● stimulate in-app purchases;
● influence the growth of your conversion rate to installs;
● increase the visibility of the app by indexing keywords or obtaining a feed.
2. To achieve maximum effect, events should feature high-quality content creativity.
3. Analyze which types of events your audience engages with most and incorporate them into your marketing strategy.