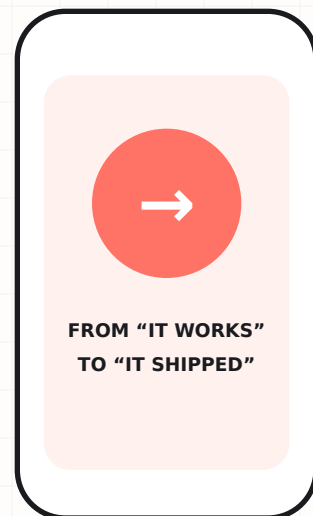


EM DESIGNS

VIBE CODED TO APP STORE

A Beginner's Field Guide

The simple guide I wish I had before shipping my first AI-built iPhone app.



WHAT THIS GUIDE DOES

Walks you through the Apple publishing journey in plain English, one step at a time. Every section tells you what the step means, what to do, and how to know you are finished.

START HERE

You built the app. What happens now?

Before anyone can download it, Apple basically needs answers to five simple questions.

1 WHO ARE YOU?

Who owns the app, and if people pay you, where should Apple send the money?

2 WHAT IS THIS APP?

What does it do, what should people see before downloading it, and who is it for?

3 CAN PEOPLE BUY SOMETHING?

If yes, what are they buying and how much does it cost?

4 DOES IT ACTUALLY WORK?

Can the unreleased app run on a real iPhone and complete the important flows?

5 IS IT READY FOR OTHER PEOPLE?

Can a new user and Apple's reviewer understand it, use it, and stay safe?

THE RULE FOR THIS GUIDE

Do one section at a time. Do the action. Check the green "You're done when" box. Then move on.

STEP 0

Join the Apple Developer Program

This is the first thing to do if you want to distribute an iPhone app through the App Store.

PLAIN ENGLISH

Apple Developer account: free account for developer resources.

Apple Developer Program: the paid membership that lets you distribute apps through the App Store and use TestFlight for distribution.

APPLE DEVELOPER PROGRAM

\$99 / year

Apple lists the annual membership at \$99 USD, or local currency where available.

CHOOSE HOW YOU ARE ENROLLING

Individual: apps are listed under your personal legal name.

Organization: apps are listed under the organization's legal entity name. Most organizations need a D-U-N-S Number; government entities are an exception.

DO THIS

- ☐ Go to Apple's enrollment page and sign in with the Apple Account you want to use.
- ☐ Choose Individual or Organization based on who will legally publish the app.
- ☐ Complete Apple's enrollment and pay the annual membership fee.
- ☐ Wait until the membership shows as active before expecting App Store Connect and TestFlight distribution features to work.

[Open Apple Developer Program enrollment](#)

DON'T MIX THESE UP

Creating a free Apple Developer account is not the same as joining the paid Apple Developer Program. The paid membership is what unlocks App Store distribution.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

Your Apple Developer Program membership is active, and you know whether Apple sees you as an Individual or an Organization.

BEFORE APP STORE CONNECT

Get your tiny launch kit ready

A few things are easier if you have them ready before you start filling out Apple's screens.

HAVE THESE READY

- ☐ A buildable app. This guide starts after the app exists.
- ☐ A privacy policy URL.
- ☐ A support URL with a real way to contact you.
- ☐ An iPhone for real-device testing.
- ☐ If your app requires login: a reviewer/demo account that will keep working during review.
- ☐ If your app charges money: the tax and banking information for the legal person or organization on your Apple Developer membership.

FOUR WORDS YOU NEED**APP STORE CONNECT**

Apple's site for your store page, payments, TestFlight, and review.

BUILD

One packaged copy of your app. New native code usually needs a new build.

TESTFLIGHT

Apple's app for installing and testing unreleased builds.

PRODUCT ID

The permanent internal name for something you sell in the app.

EXPO USERS

EAS Build and EAS Submit can run from Windows, Linux, or macOS. The iOS build happens in Expo's cloud, so this workflow does not require you to own a Mac.

STEP 1

Who does Apple think owns the app?

Your app name, brand name, and legal developer name can be different. Apple needs the legal developer first.

APP NAME ≠ BRAND NAME ≠ LEGAL DEVELOPER

Apple needs to know which person or legal organization is publishing the app. That name comes from your Apple Developer Program membership, not from whatever your app happens to be called.

DO THIS

- ☐ Open your Apple Developer membership details.
- ☐ Find whether the membership is Individual or Organization.
- ☐ Write down the exact legal name Apple shows. You will use this as your reference point when business, tax, or review screens ask who the developer is.

MY REAL-LIFE CONFUSION

My app, brand, LLC, and Apple membership did not all use the same name. The useful move was to stop guessing and check the legal entity on the developer membership.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

You know whether Apple sees you as an Individual or Organization, and you know the exact legal developer name.

STEP 2

If your app charges money, set up Apple to pay you

Free app with no in-app purchases? You can skip the paid-app setup and keep going.

Paid Apps lives here**Agreements**

TYPE	COUNTRIES OR REGIONS	EFFECTIVE DATE	STATUS
Paid Apps Agreement	All Countries or Regions View	[account specific dates hidden]	Processing
Free Apps Agreement	All Countries or Regions View		Active

DO THIS

- ☐ In App Store Connect, open Business.
- ☐ Accept the Paid Apps Agreement.
- ☐ Complete the tax information Apple requests.
- ☐ Add your banking information.
- ☐ Finish any business/contact details Apple still marks as required.

MY MISTAKE

I saw “Pending” and assumed signing the agreement meant I was done. It did not. I had to look for the other required information on the page.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

- ☒ The Paid Apps setup has no missing required information. Tax information is submitted, and banking is submitted or processing.

STEP 3

Build the page people see before they download

Think of this as your app's store shelf. A stranger should understand what the app is before tapping Download.



Name + subtitle

English (U.S.) ?

Name ?

Women Who Build 15

Subtitle ?

30

NAME + SUBTITLE

Your app name and the short line under it. Apple currently allows up to 30 characters for each.

DESCRIPTION + KEYWORDS

Explain what the app does, then add search keywords that accurately describe it.

SCREENSHOTS

Show what a real person will actually see and do.

PRICE + AVAILABILITY

Choose where the app is offered and whether the app itself is free or paid.

MY ONE-CHARACTER LESSON

"Women Who Build: Launch Tracker" was too long for the app-name field. Splitting the idea between Name and Subtitle solved it and read better. Apple will also ask for required details such as category, version/copyright, and support information.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

The required store-page details are filled in, and a stranger can understand what the app is, what it does, what it looks like, and where it is available.

STEP 4

Tell Apple what happens inside the app

Apple wants the store page to match the real product, including privacy, age rating, and what users can do.
DO THIS

- ☐ Add a working Privacy Policy URL.
- ☐ Tell Apple what data the app collects, including data collected by third-party tools.
- ☐ Complete the age-rating questions based on what the app actually allows.
- ☐ Choose the correct category and complete required version details such as copyright.
- ☐ Add a Support URL with a real way for someone to contact you.

Answer what your app really does

Step 1: Features Step 2 Step 3 Step 4 Step 5 Step 6 Step 7

Select whether your app has certain in-app controls, which can be used to limit the content in your app, and capabilities.

	NO	YES
In-App Controls		
Parental Controls ⓘ Settings or tools that allow parents/guardians to monitor, manage or restrict a child's access to in-app content or features that may not be suitable.	☒	☐
Age Assurance ⓘ Mechanism to confirm an individual's age meets the age requirement for accessing specific content or services.	☒	☐
Capabilities		
Unrestricted Web Access ⓘ Users can navigate to any webpage within the app or freely browse the web.	☐	☒
User-Generated Content ⓘ Includes the broad distribution of content created by users as a component of the app's intended user experience.	☐	☒
Redistribution ⓘ Redistribution, amplification, or interaction with user-generated content through a social feed or similar discovery method that visibly spreads content to many users.	☐	☒

Cancel Next

SIMPLE RULE

Do not answer what sounds better. Answer what the app really does. The store page, privacy answers, age rating, and support information should all describe the same product.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

- ☒ Your privacy answers, age-rating answers, support link, and public store copy all match the actual app.

STEP 5

If people can buy something, tell Apple exactly what

If the app is completely free, skip this section.

SUBSCRIPTION GROUP
The folder that holds subscription choices.

SUBSCRIPTION
The actual thing someone buys, like Monthly.

PRICE + WORDS
How much it costs and what the customer sees.

Group + subscription

Prepare for Submission

Add for Review

You can create a subscription after you create a subscription group. All subscriptions must be a part of a group. Users can only subscribe to one subscription in a group at a time, but can change to another subscription in the same group. If they do, you'll still receive 85% of the proceeds in the second year (after tax, if applicable). [Learn More](#)

ⓘ Your first subscription group must be submitted with a new app version. [Learn More](#)

Subscriptions +

Edit

Arrange your subscriptions in descending order, starting with the option that offers the highest level of service. You can add more than one subscription to each level. This order will determine your subscription's upgrade and downgrade options. [Learn more about subscription upgrades and downgrades.](#)

LEVEL	REFERENCE NAME	PRODUCT ID	DURATION	STATUS
1	App plan monthly	[internal product ID hidden]	1 month	Prepare for Submission

Localization

YOU WILL USUALLY FILL IN

- ☐ A reference name and permanent Product ID.
- ☐ The subscription duration and price.
- ☐ The display name and short description the customer will see.
- ☐ Where the subscription is available.
- ☐ A review screenshot that shows the purchase screen.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

✓

The subscription exists, has a price and customer-facing information, and is ready to be added to review.

STEP 6

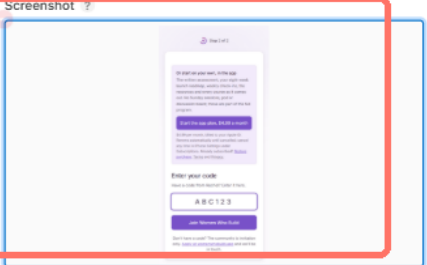
Show Apple the real purchase screen

The review screenshot is for Apple's reviewer. It should show where the person sees what they are about to buy.

Show the real purchase screen

Review information

Screenshot ?



Review Notes (Optional) ?

4000

WHAT THIS SCREENSHOT IS

A reviewer-facing picture that shows the item or service being offered inside the app. It is not a marketing homepage or a promotional banner.

SIZE RULE THAT IS ACTUALLY USEFUL

Use one of Apple's documented supported screenshot sizes for your app. 1242 × 2688 worked for mine, but it is not the only valid iPhone size.

MY MISTAKE

I uploaded the wrong image because my Desktop was full of similar files. Now I give related screenshots a common filename tag so they are easy to filter.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN



Apple accepts the review screenshot, and it clearly shows the purchase the reviewer needs to test.

STEP 7

Get the unreleased app onto your phone

Before you can test the real experience, you need an iPhone build that Apple can install through TestFlight.

1

BUILD**BUILD**

```
eas build --platform ios
```

Creates the iPhone build in Expo's cloud.

2

SUBMIT**SUBMIT**

```
eas submit --platform ios
```

Uploads the finished build to App Store Connect.

3

TESTFLIGHT

4

PHONE**Check the build number****> Build Uploads****Version 1.0.0**

BUILD ▾	STATUS	GROUPS	INVITES	INSTALLS	SESSIONS	CRASHES	FEEDBACK
 3	 Ready to Submit Expires in 90 days	group	-	-	-	-	
 2	 Ready to Submit Expires in 90 days		-	-	-	-	

THE MENTAL MODEL

Build and Submit are two different actions. Finishing the build does not magically put it in TestFlight.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

The build appears in TestFlight and you can install it on your iPhone.

STEP 8

Make sure you are testing the right build

A fix can be correct in the code and still look broken if your phone is running an older build.

BUILD 6

HAS THE FIX

This is the version you meant to test.

BUILD 5

ON YOUR PHONE

This is yesterday's version.

DO THIS BEFORE DEBUGGING

- ☐ Open TestFlight on the iPhone.
- ☐ Look at the build number for the app.
- ☐ Compare it with the build number that contains your fix.
- ☐ Install the newer build if they do not match.

MY MISTAKE

I tested a button after it had already been fixed. The fix was in a newer build, but my phone still had the older one installed.

TEST PURCHASES

Purchases made through TestFlight use Apple's test environment, so they do not charge real money.

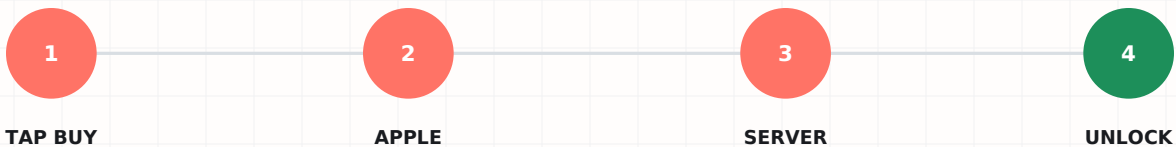
YOU'RE DONE WHEN

- ☒ The build number on your phone matches the build you actually want to test.

STEP 9

Do not stop when Apple says “purchase successful”

A payment can work while your own app still fails to unlock the thing the person bought.

**TEST ALL OF THESE**

- ☐ The Buy button causes something visible to happen.
- ☐ Apple’s purchase sheet appears.
- ☐ The test transaction completes.
- ☐ The correct account gets the access it paid for.
- ☐ Closing and reopening the app keeps the correct access.
- ☐ Your server can identify the buyer and later renewal, cancellation, or refund events.

THE BIG LESSON

“Apple took the money” and “my product granted access” are two different systems. Test both.

YOU’RE DONE WHEN

- ☒ A test user can buy, get the correct access, close the app, reopen it, and still have the correct access.

STEP 10

Can a brand-new person understand the app?

You know how your app works because you built it. A new user does not.

WHAT IS THIS?

Can they tell what the app is for?

WHAT DO I DO FIRST?

Can they see the first useful action?

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Can they understand the path without you explaining it?

A SIMPLE ONBOARDING TEST

Hand the app to someone who has never seen it. Do not coach them. Watch where they hesitate, tap the wrong thing, or ask what a screen means.

WHAT I ADDED TO MY APP

- ☐ A short intro that says what the product is.
- ☐ Five stage screens that teach the path one tap at a time.
- ☐ A payoff screen that shows what the person is working toward.

REAL-LIFE LESSON

A working app can still be confusing. First-use clarity is part of shipping, not decoration.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

- ☒ A new person can open the app and understand what it is, what to do first, and what happens next.

STEP 11

Two things a prototype can forget

A real product has responsibilities that a quick prototype can ignore.

IF USERS CREATE ACCOUNTS

Apple expects account deletion inside the app.

The user should be able to start deleting the account without emailing you first.

Check:

- ☐ Delete option is easy to find
- ☐ The request covers the account and personal data you are not required to keep
- ☐ You tested the full deletion path

IF USERS POST OR MESSAGE

Community features need safety tools.

Apple's current guideline expects ways to handle abusive or objectionable content.

Remember:

- ☐ Filter objectionable material
- ☐ Let users report content
- ☐ Let users block abusive users
- ☐ Publish contact information

WHY THIS MATTERS

These are not “nice later” features if they apply to your app. They are part of making the product safe and review-ready.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN



If your app creates accounts, account deletion works. If your app has community content, the required safety tools are present.

STEP 12

Give the reviewer a key and a tiny map

Apple's reviewer does not know your product. If the app requires sign-in, give them a demo account that works.

DEMO LOGIN

A working reviewer username and password that are not your personal login.

REVIEW CONTACT

A current name, phone number, and email Apple can use during review.

REVIEW NOTES

Short directions for anything that is not obvious.

DO A REHEARSAL

- ☐ Log out of your own account.
- ☐ Use only the reviewer username and password you entered in App Store Connect.
- ☐ Confirm the App Review contact name, phone number, and email are current.
- ☐ Walk through the important screens.
- ☐ Try the purchase flow the way the reviewer will.
- ☐ Fix anything that requires secret knowledge or your personal account.

MY SMALL MISTAKE

The reviewer password got tangled with my own for a few minutes. Testing the exact credentials before submission prevents that kind of silly delay.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

- ☒ Someone who knows nothing about the app can sign in, test the important features, and Apple has current contact information if the reviewer needs help.

STEP 13

Now hand Apple the whole package

Think of the review submission like one folder. Put the pieces Apple needs to judge together before you press Submit for Review.

YOUR REVIEW PACKAGE**APP VERSION**

The build you want Apple to review.

SUBSCRIPTION GROUP

If this is the first subscription group.

SUBSCRIPTION

The actual subscription being reviewed.

REVIEWER ACCESS

Demo login and review notes.

IMPORTANT FOR A FIRST SUBSCRIPTION

Apple currently requires the first subscription of a type to be reviewed with a new app version. Add the subscription for review and include the app version and subscription group in the same draft submission.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

The app version and every purchase item Apple needs to review appear together in the draft submission, and the reviewer login works.

STEP 14

If Apple says yes. If Apple says no.

Approval and rejection both have a next step.

IF APPROVED

1. Check the release setting.
If you chose manual release, the status becomes Pending Developer Release.
2. Click Release This Version when ready.
Apple says a manual release can take up to 24 hours to appear publicly.
3. Download the real public app.
Then do one real production purchase and make sure access works.

IF REJECTED

1. Read Apple's message first.
Look for the guideline and any screenshot or explanation.
2. Fix that specific issue.
Do not change random things because you are guessing.
3. Reply or resubmit.
If the app itself changed, upload a new build. If only metadata changed, you may be able to reuse the build.

THE POINT

A rejection is feedback about a specific submission. Treat it like a bug report: read it, fix the named problem, and resubmit.

YOU'RE DONE WHEN

You know whether the next action is release, fix metadata, fix the app, reply to App Review, or resubmit.

STEP 15

Do one real production check

A sandbox purchase proves the test system works. After launch, prove the real system works with real money and a real App Store download.

**REAL DOWNLOAD****REAL PURCHASE****SERVER SEES IT****ACCESS WORKS**

CHECK

- ☐ Apple charged the real payment method.
- ☐ Your server recorded the purchase.
- ☐ The correct account unlocked.
- ☐ The subscription status matches what Apple says.
- ☐ Temporary test-only shortcuts are removed or disabled.
- ☐ You watch the first real users for errors, reviews, purchases, cancellations, and confusion.

THE FINISH LINE

Vibe coding got you to “the app works.” Shipping is everything between “it works” and “a real customer can download it, pay, and get what they bought.”

YOU'RE DONE WHEN



A real customer can download the public app, complete the real purchase, and receive the correct access.

FINAL CHECKLIST

The beginner shipping checklist

Do one pass as yourself, one pass as a brand-new user, and one pass pretending you are App Review.

BEFORE APP STORE CONNECT

- ☐ Apple Developer Program membership is active
- ☐ Individual or Organization status is understood
- ☐ Privacy Policy URL is ready
- ☐ Support URL is ready
- ☐ Reviewer/demo account is ready if login is required

STORE + SELLING

- ☐ Paid Apps setup completed if app charges money
- ☐ App name and subtitle fit
- ☐ Description, keywords, category, and copyright are complete
- ☐ Store screenshots are uploaded
- ☐ Price and availability are set
- ☐ Privacy and age-rating answers match the app
- ☐ Support URL works and includes contact info
- ☐ Subscription/IAP information is complete
- ☐ Review screenshot shows the real purchase screen

TEST + REVIEW

- ☐ Correct build is installed in TestFlight
- ☐ Login works
- ☐ Purchase sheet appears
- ☐ Correct access unlocks and persists
- ☐ Account deletion works if accounts can be created
- ☐ UGC safety tools exist if community features exist
- ☐ Reviewer credentials work
- ☐ App Review contact information is current
- ☐ Review notes explain anything non-obvious

SUBMIT + LAUNCH

- ☐ App version is in the review package
- ☐ First subscription/group is included when required
- ☐ Submission is sent for review
- ☐ If approved, release the version when ready
- ☐ Do one real production purchase
- ☐ Remove test-only shortcuts
- ☐ Watch first-user errors and feedback

OFFICIAL PAGES TO CHECK WHEN APPLE CHANGES SOMETHING

- [Apple Developer Program enrollment](#)
- [App Review Guidelines](#)
- [App Store Connect Help](#)
- [Expo EAS Submit for iOS](#)