



APPFOLLOW

How to respond to **negative** app reviews

Manage your app store ratings and use feedback
to drive your brand forward



Table of content



Introduction	3
Why do users leave negative reviews?	4
How to benefit from bad reviews	6
How to turn 2 stars into 5 stars	7
How to respond to negative reviews on the Apple and Google Play store	8
Summary	14

Introduction

Negative reviews are often perceived as a sign of a bad app, but that's not always the case. Of course, if a user left a 1 star review, there's cause for concern — but it also shows a degree of engagement from your user, who hopes you fix your app. That means there's still hope of both the user returning, and being able to improve your product.

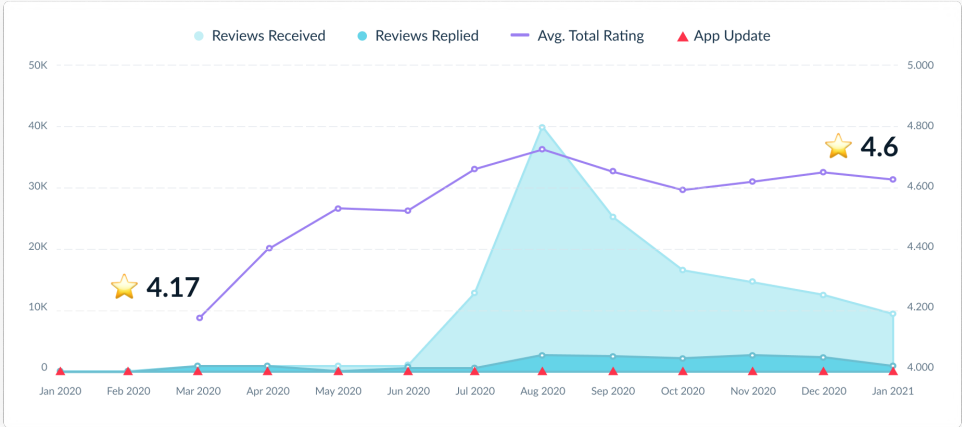
You might be asking why you need to pay attention to these reviews at all — don't you have enough metrics to keep track of already, between install, retention and monetization rates? But **app reviews are one of the key ways to drive installs and revenue** — and negative app reviews will directly affect your app rating.

According to [our study](#), apps with a rating of less than 4.5 ⭐ make them less discoverable in the app stores, meaning you could lose a ton of downloads.

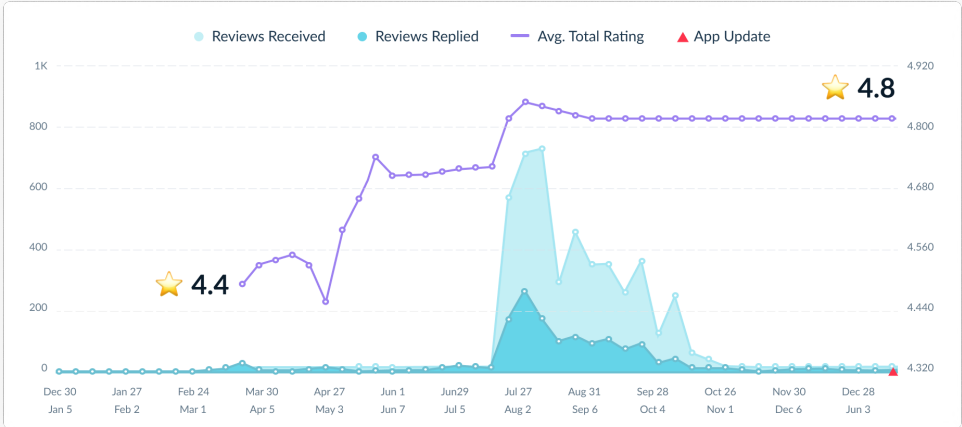
In this guide, we will take you through the reasons why negative reviews appear, how to respond to them so users will want to replace them with a positive rating, how to monetize them, and how to automate your review management process. You'll also hear from industry leaders on how they treat negative reviews, and how they're using them to build a better product.

Responding to app reviews helped [Kakao Games Europe](#) increase their app rating and gain more visibility

Avg. total rating for Android app 🎮



Avg. total rating for iOS app 📱



Why do users leave negative reviews?

The answer is pretty simple: users leave negative reviews when they're not happy with your product. That might have been because of a bad experience in the app itself or the service, or related to a new update — but whatever happened, it's now your job to fix it. There are 4 main reasons why 1-2 star reviews spike:

1. A bad experience with the service

Say you have a delivery app and one of the restaurants made a mistake with the order. Or maybe you run an e-scooter app and a user didn't find any scooters or they all were broken. These things happen all the time, but leaves users feeling dissatisfied and damages brand perception.

UPDATED

Uber Eats

★☆☆☆☆

Ian4256

★☆☆☆☆

Amazing horrible drivers and customer service

I have lost count how many times drivers have ignored me after reading messages and just kept my food along with Uber eats customer service who is just as useless. Nobody knows where to park even after instructions and barely anyone speaks English which drives me nuts because you can't select a driver who does. I hope that Grubhub gets better around here because I'm tired of wasting time and money on a horrible business.

March 12, 2020

Incompetent drivers most the time To start off most don't speak English so they can't take directions where to go. They like to do laps and not answer messages from you and then they click "delivered" on their end and just keep the food. So you get to wait over an hour for nothing then call Grubhub and hope they don't hire the same type of drivers who are useless at something as simple as delivering food.

This review has 2 changes – Show history

Report a concern

Reply via console

Note

Find user

Translate

Tweet

Mail

⌵

Add Tag...

Popular tags: Problem restaurants Spam Feature request Bug

Food

Long review

Semantic Analysis tags:

Negative

UI Issues

Developer from App Store Console replied on March 13, 2020 at 06:42:

Hi there, we're sorry to hear about the trouble with the delivery-partner that order was marked delivered but you didn't receive it. To look into this further, please contact our support team with the incident at help.uber.com/eaters and we'll take it up from there.

Update Reply

Outdated

2. Not spotting problems in time

Some positive reviews of 4-5 stars contain complaints too — if ignored, they can easily turn into a much bigger problem. These reviews are easy to find with the “became worse” filter, and are relatively easy to prevent from appearing.

terryvs12

February 23, 2021 at 23:14

★★★★☆

Great app with some down sides

The app is well laid out and it's very easy to find what you're looking for, it's after purchasing your item that the tracking of your purchase can be a bit hit and miss. Postage and delivery time's can take months not days or weeks but months. Plan for your purchase to arrive at least 8-12 weeks after your date of purchase.

Translate

terryvs12

March 13, 2021 at 00:45

★★★★☆ -1★

Great app with some down sides

The app is well laid out and it's very easy to find what you're looking for, it's after purchasing your item that the tracking of your purchase can be a bit hit and miss. Postage and delivery time's can take months not days or weeks but months. Plan for your purchase to arrive at least 10 -14 weeks after your date of purchase.

Translate

terryvs12

March 30, 2021 at 01:06

★★★★☆ -1★

Ok app with a lot down sides

The app is reasonably well laid out and it's somewhat easy to find what you're looking for, it's after purchasing your item that the tracking of your purchase can be a bit hit and miss. Postage and delivery time's can take months, not days or weeks but months. Plan for your purchase to arrive at least 10 -14 weeks after your date of purchase. Garbage service and long wait times for delivery, spend your money elsewhere.

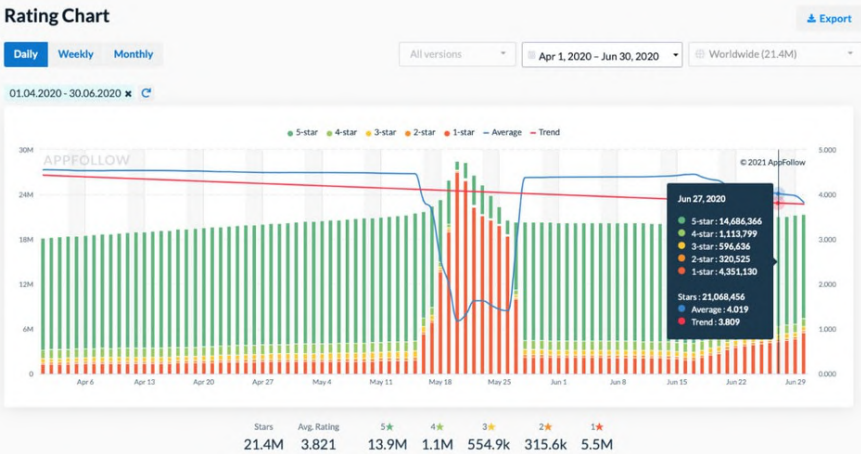
Translate

3. A bad experience in the app

In this case, we’re talking about anything related to bugs, login problems, unrealistically hard levels in games, or complaints about a new design. This one is your fault, but luckily can be fixed much faster than the first reason.

4. A spam and fake reviewers attack

You’ve had the bad luck of being attacked by spammers. Your competitors might even have purchased a bunch of fake reviewers to leave negative messages and lower your app rating. Luckily, these bad boys can simply be reported to the app store and removed.



*It is always important to remember that reviews – good or bad – are the most insightful pieces of information that can **help a company improve**. We do our best to respond and collect information for 100% of any and all negative submitted reviews, and we provide a response to every single negative review.*

While we have pre-drafted macros that help us respond to certain issues, we still have support specialists draft a direct response that addresses their pain point. This is a best practice we have as it not only ensures that the user knows we’re listening to them and taking their feedback seriously, but it also ensures a high developer response rate.



Vahe Khumaryan,
Team Lead at User Success Team **PicsArt**

To benefit from negative reviews, you’ll need to squeeze every single bit of information out of them and create a strategy to respond to them. Let’s see how you can do just that.

How to benefit from bad reviews

It's easy to get disheartened by negative reviews, but the most successful apps are often the ones that use negative reviews to drive their product forward. In fact, these app reviews can actually be beneficial for your business.

- 01 Firstly, they are an important source of feedback for improving your app. By gathering all those comments on feature requests or bugs, you're gaining invaluable first-hand user feedback to make your app better.
- 02 Secondly, you can also look into your competitors' negative reviews to find out what users don't like in their apps, and adjust your roadmap accordingly.
- 03 Thirdly, there is a chance that your QA team might miss some bugs or issues in the service, so your users can help and point that out.

*Fixing these issues will help you retain users and sometimes even bring them back. And **more users** equals **more revenue** for you.*



Besides, when replying to negative reviews and fixing the mentioned problems, you're appealing to your potential users. Potential customers scrolling through app reviews will naturally build a higher level of trust in an app that replies to all reviews — positive or negative.

How to turn 2 stars into 5 stars

Managing negative reviews is pretty simple, although you won't convince your users to update their poor review immediately. The main thing to keep in mind is that you have to address every negative review — **always respond, and try to be as quick as possible**. If you don't have a dedicated team who can cover that, you can easily delegate it to review management automation tools such as AppFollow.

Here is a simple workflow to follow when working with negative feedback:

- 01** First, start monitoring negative reviews so you are alerted when they appear.
- 02** Respond to them promptly and reassure users you're looking into the problem.
- 03** Gather the issues mentioned and send them to your dev team for a fix.
- 04** Once the issue is fixed, come back to your users and let them know what's been done. Make sure to also ask them to update their review.

Now, let's get into the details of each step.

How to respond to **negative reviews** on the App Store and Google Play

Now that we know the reason why negative reviews are important and why they appear, let's talk about how to respond to them. At the end of this guide, you'll also find specific templates for which you can use.



*For our app store reviews, we use AppFollow to retrieve all reviews and pull them into our customer support software. We use this cross-SaaS solution so we can leverage the best features of each platform. As a result, our team responds to nearly **700 app store reviews a day**. We have two dedicated support specialists for app store reviews alone.*



Vahe Khumaryan, **Team Lead at User Success Team** **PicsArt**

Address users by their name

Always address users by their name or username, which will make you sound warmer and more sincere. Try to also respond to your users in the language they left the review in, or if that's not possible, at least say "hi" in their language and then use English. This will help rebuild some brand trust and indicate to the user that their complaints are being taken seriously.

Apologise and thank them for their review

First of all, apologise for the bad experience your app has caused.

Altezza02

★☆☆☆☆

Broken Fix your app it does not work have the time and you can't delete anything like if you don't want that item it freezes up the whole app I have to constantly close all the way out and come back in its jank man

Report a Concern

Reply via Console

Note

Find user

Translate

Tweet

Mail

#

+ Add Tag...

Popular tags: Food Long review Problem restaurants Spam

Semantic Analysis tags:

Negative

App Freeze

Doesn't Work

Developer from App Store Console replied on March 31, 2021 at 20:13:

Hello Altezza02, Thank you for taking the time to provide us feedback about your experience. We are sorry to hear that your experience didn't go as planned. Please contact our care department at if we can assist you any further. Thank you.

Edit Reply

Ask for more details

Most reviews are either short, with no real valuable information, or they mention a problem that can't be dealt with through a response in the store (like monetization or refund issues). In this case, you'll need to ask your users to send more details to your support email. Remember that in the App Store, you can add any email addresses to the response body but in Google Play you can only include support emails.

zkzbmotherchicken

★☆☆☆☆

Bug There are bug at chapter 3 story 6..i cant continue to okay

Report a Concern

Reply via Console

Note

Find user

Translate

Tweet

Mail

#

+ Add Tag...

Popular tags: Localization Quest Winter 2021 Monetization Feature request Update v4.3

Semantic Analysis tags:

Negative

Doesn't Work

Developer from App Store Console replied on March 9, 2021 at 22:35:

Hello! We would love to address any issues you have experienced with the game. Please write in to our Support through our web portal or email us at with a screenshot of your loading screen.

Edit Reply

Review checking/responding is important, especially when a new app version is in phased release. So, any increase in negative reviews or an unknown issue in that period could be crucial for the health of the release. That's why we pay extra attention at those times and consider it one of the steps for increasing the version rollout.

Overall, we classify negative reviews depending on the context. If we have a direct reply that we could give over the review, we do that. For the issues where we need further information, we basically direct them to the support channels before they get frustrated.

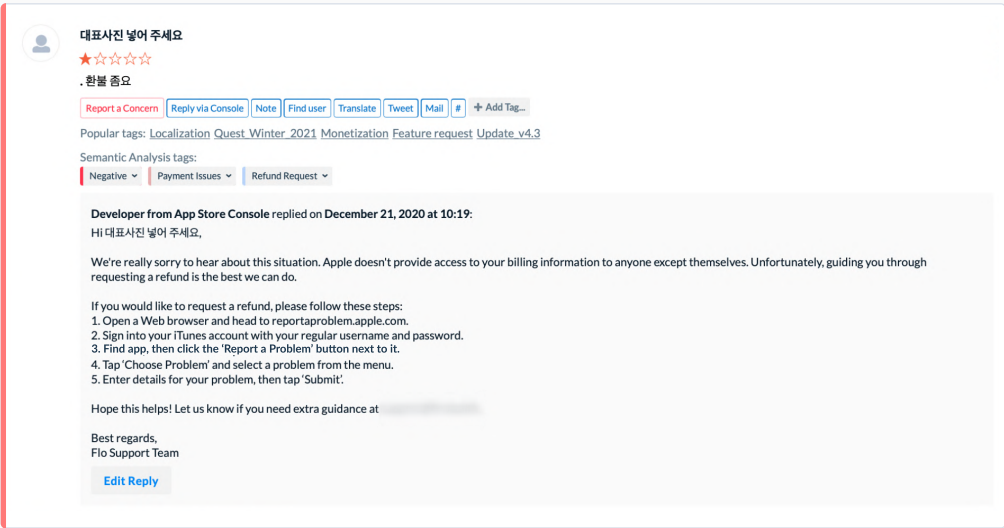


Rasim Torun,
Customer Support Manager



Send them instructions on how to solve the problem

If the mentioned problem is something that happens often, or isn't a problem at all but rather a difficulty in doing a certain task in-app, we recommend creating a Help Center article on the issue. You can then simply add this link whenever the issue reappears. Know that Google Play allows links only to FAQ articles, whereas Apple accepts any links. In both cases, keep them short, as they'll be clickable.



Update your response once the issue is fixed

Brands usually mention bug fixes in their update notes; users rarely read them. That's why it's essential you update your users individually that their issue has been resolved.

Hans Slagter August 5, 2020

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

Messaging system broken by "connection lost" loop, severely hampering usability of the app given the high reliance of many properties on messages, especially during covid19 restrictions.

[Translate](#)

Developer replied on August 14, 2020 at 11:39

Hi there, the bug has been fixed in the latest version 23.6. We recommend you to update your app and let us know how it went with a new review. Wish you a smooth experience again!

[Translate](#)

Hans Slagter August 20, 2020 at 08:33

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ +2★

Very practical when underway in many parts of the world. With the latest update the "connection lost" issue in the messaging system seems to have been resolved.

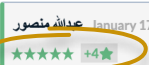
[Translate](#)

Nudge users to update their review and rating

Next, you should also politely nudge users to update their review. A sample response could look like: “Thanks for letting us know about the bug. It is now fixed. We would appreciate it if you updated your review. Thanks for helping make our app better!” Never offer a reward in return — this goes against app stores policy. It may not always work out, but if you don’t ask, you won’t know.



Developer replied on July 28, 2020 at 06:41
Hi there, thanks for your kind words. It's great to hear you had a good experience with our App. We did, however, notice that you rated us with (1 or 2) stars which doesn't really match your positive message. If you feel the star rating indeed doesn't match your experience, you can simply change this by editing your rating



Developer replied on July 28, 2020 at 06:41
Hi there, thanks for your kind words. It's great to hear you had a good experience with our App. We did, however, notice that you rated us with (1 or 2) stars which doesn't really match your positive message. If you feel the star rating indeed doesn't match your experience, you can simply change this by editing your rating.

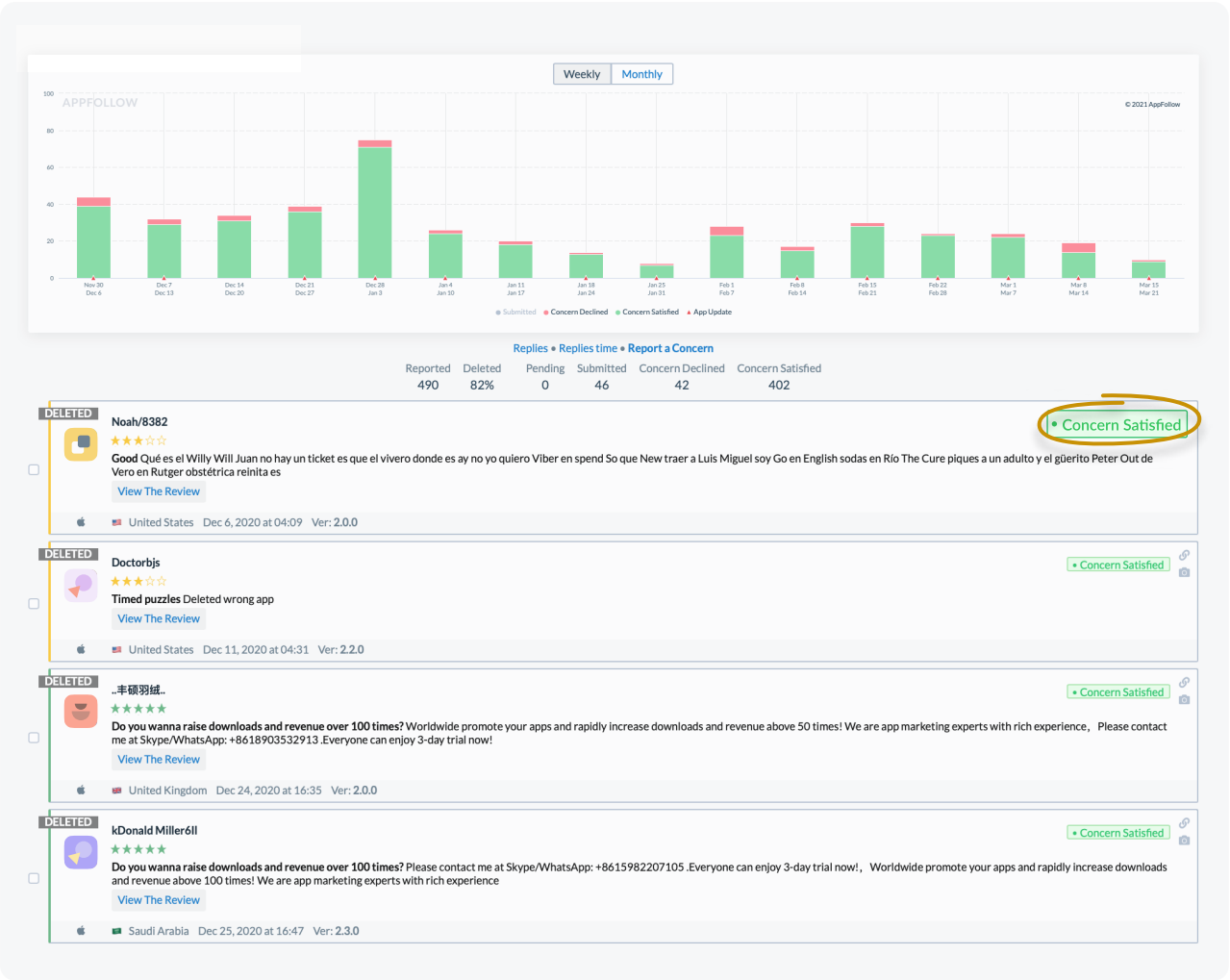


Once reviews are pulled into our cross-SaaS platforms, our customer support software (eg. Zendesk, Freshworks, etc.) begins automated routing and tagging. Issues are then sent to the relevant team member and specialist for response. We have very specific tools, guidelines and macros for handling support tickets.

However, macros — aka “canned responses” — are only helpful for speeding up the process. We have several experienced customer support specialists who control for quality and accuracy of responses and work to still engage and interact thoughtfully with users.



Vahe Khumaryan,
Team Lead at User Success Team **PicsArt**



Report spam, offensive, and off-topic reviews

If you see empty, aggressive or spammy reviews, simply report them. There is no need to spend precious time trying to respond to these users, as they won't be updated. Our guide on [how to remove fake and inappropriate reviews](#) has a detailed explanation on how to do that.

Summary

Negative reviews are a valuable source of user feedback that can help you improve your product and help increase your customer loyalty. However if you don't work with them and make a wrong move, negative reviews will drop your app rating, visibility in app stores, and also ruin your reputation.

To prevent that just follow our suggestion. In order to get you started right, check out our [list of response templates](#), based on the market leaders' best practices.

We hope that you've found this guide helpful, and that you're now fully equipped to deal with negative reviews and use them to drive your business forward.

Any questions or interested
in hearing how AppFollow
can help simplify your review
management process?

Try AppFollow for free

APPFOLLOW

AppFollow is an app management platform for app monitoring, ASO, and review management. The platform enables you to keep track of app performance, enhance the conversion to install rate, boost your app rankings, streamline your work with users and automate daily routine.

With AppFollow, you will be able to keep up-to-date with the trends for your own app as well as get a bird's eye view on your competition.

AppFollow's Review Management Tools help 70,000 teams worldwide to save time and resources and automate work with user reviews.

AppFollow integrates with over 30 services like Zendesk, Salesforce, Zapier, Slack to enable seamless customer and community support from the tools that you already use.

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