University of
BRISTOL

Mobile Application Guidelines

For schools, departments and other organisational units who are interested in developing mobile applications (mobile apps).

Public Relations Office
www.bristol.ac.uk/web

Introduction

These guidelines are aimed at Faculties, Schools and other University units looking to provide a mobile application (mobile app) under the University of Bristol iTunes and Google Play stores.

Determining Need

Rationale

Mobile app development can be an expensive and time consuming process. It is advisable to carefully consider the reasons for developing any app before committing resources. A mobile app should meet a clearly identified need of a university audience.

Apps are intended to take advantage of specific functionalities of a mobile device, such as GPS or camera capabilities. Mobile users are often looking for specific information for just in time needs such as map locations or event times.

Apps shouldn't be developed to simply repurpose web page content. In this case a more practical and cost effective solution might be create a mobile-friendly website.

Further information:
7 Things you should know about mobile app development
http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/EST1102.pdf

Initial Consultation

It is advisable to contact the Public Relations Office **before** you develop or commission a mobile app that will use the University of Bristol branding.

We need to ensure that mobile apps support the University brand and are also compliant with copyright law, intellectual property regulations and other related University policies.

We can provide you with the right information early on in the process and also guide you through a checklist of items every mobile app needs before launch.

General Guidelines

Funding, management and support

Mobile apps must have a University sponsor responsible for funding, planning, project completion, quality review, promotion and long term oversight of the app.

Apps may be developed by third-party vendors or developers. App sponsors must have adequate funding for all aspects of the app development process and will be responsible for ongoing support.

Faculty, staff and students may develop apps that are not associated with the University or intended for University audiences. These apps must be published independently and cannot include University branding or implication of University ownership or endorsement. These apps will not be published in the University app channels. If you are in doubt, then please contact the Public Relations Office for advice.

Development platform
Consider carefully whether to use a platform-specific native code development kit or a multi-platform development environment based on HTML5 and web technology.

The choice of development tools, the target platforms and the type of application also depend on the development skills available to you.

Apps must meet acceptable industry technical standards and specific standards set by mobile app distributors:

Android
http://developer.android.com/

Apple
https://developer.apple.com/

Scope
Keep your mobile app as simple as possible. Focus on a single subject and avoid adding unrelated features. The app should be able to function without undue dependencies on other applications or systems.

Ensure that the purpose and benefits of the app are understandable. You should be able to describe the application in a short paragraph.

Accessibility
You will need to consider the needs of potential users with poor vision, hearing, manual dexterity and other impairments.

Currently there are no internationally accepted guidelines for mobile accessibility. However the BBC draft guidelines on mobile accessibility are a useful reference:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/internet/posts/Accessibility-Mobile-Apps

Data and Security Considerations
Confidential information on mobile devices could be a risk if the device falls into the wrong hands. Therefore precautions need to be taken to protect confidential data such as personal details; financial data; intellectual property; commercially sensitive information and any other information that might put the University's reputation at risk.

Confidential data must meet the requirements of the University's privacy policy and data-protection policy and be protected using industry best practices for secure collection of data.

Further information:

University of Bristol information security policies
http://www.bris.ac.uk/infosec/policies/docs/

JISC Legal guidelines on Security, Mobile Devices and Data Protection
http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/ManageContent/ViewDetail/ID/2326/Security-Mobile-Devices-and-Data-Protection.aspx

EDUCAUSE, 7 things you need to know about mobile security
https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/EST1101.pdf

Branding
The look-and-feel of the app should be as standard as much as possible depending on the platform for which it is being developed.

In acceptable customisable areas (such as the welcome screen or contact section) you should reflect the design elements of the University external website and incorporate the University visual Identity guidelines:
http://www.bris.ac.uk/visualidentity/

App development is part of the overall University Communications Strategy and all questions regarding branding and identity should be directed to the Public Relations Office.

Review
Once development has been completed the app must be presented to the Public Relations Office for quality assurance/technical review. The review will cover the following key criteria:

- security
- data integrity
- adherence to mobile application distributor guidelines and best practices
- adherence to University identity standards
- ongoing development and support strategy

Publication

Approved apps will be distributed centrally under the University of Bristol license
for each app store. All published apps are also llisted on the University's mobile promotion page:
http://www.bris.ac.uk/social-media/#mobile

Please note - if you are developing an iOS app, Apple has a review period before any app is approved and this should be factored into your app launch date.

If an app does not comply with University guidelines, the University can request that the app sponsor facilitate changes or remove the app from the approved list until the problem is resolved.

Find more advice and guidance about the University's web presence at
www.bristol.ac.uk/web