



PROTOCOL FOR APP REVIEWS

Protocol for App reviews.

1- Aim.

We have designed a protocol for testing applications to ensure transparency and credibility for our sponsors and readers, and to maintain consistency across our reviews.

The aim of our review is not to judge or recommend but to use the app and thoroughly evaluate all its features. This allows end users to make informed decisions based on their specific situations at any given time and place.

We will conduct a comprehensive review of the app, focusing on both security and usability, and then publish an article detailing our findings. Additionally, we will assess the app from a business standpoint.

- Does it add value to your organisation?
- Does it increase reach to your audience?
- Is it friction-less for users to adopt?

1- Lists of features.

- **We have generic lists for:**

1. Communication apps
2. Websites and blogs
3. Operating systems
4. Hardware

- **Communication Apps:** These include sending text (email or chat), images, videos, VoIP meetings, video conferencing, and file sharing.
- **Comprehensive Review:** We go through the entire checklist, even if a feature doesn't seem relevant. This allows our readers to compare reviews side by side easily.
- **Flexible Feature Addition:** We add features as we encounter the need to integrate them into our list, without following a specific order.
- **Feature List Purpose:** The feature list ensures we don't overlook any aspects. Consequently, some features may be contradictory, such as between privacy and usability, and some may be irrelevant.

2- Protocol.

To ensure an unbiased and thorough review all apps are tested:

- **Real-Time Usage:** We use the application on real projects.
- **Geographically Diverse Teams:** We involve team members located in different countries, including those where governments attempt to block internet access, to see how the application handles such issues.
- **Ethical Hacking:** If possible, we include a certified ethical hacker (white hat) in the team to examine the code, attempt to intercept communications, and test device security.
- **Device and OS Diversity:** We test the application on various devices and operating systems. For desktop testing, we use Linux and Windows at a minimum, and macOS if possible. For portable devices, we test on Android and iOS at a minimum, and also try AOSP and Linux. We also check if the application is available on alternative app stores like APKPure and F-Droid, in addition to Google Play and the Apple Store.
- **Testing Duration:** The testing period lasts a minimum of two weeks, with an average of four weeks.
- **Peer Review:** The article is peer-reviewed by other team members and then sent to the app developers for final review.

3- Milestones, Goals.

In order to make it easier for contributors to understand how we are going to use the funds, we've set milestones, called "goals" on the Open Collective platform. The standard list of milestones goes as this:

1. **Threat Model Definition:** Define a threat model scenario to benchmark the app against.
2. **Specification Sheet:** Define end-user needs based on the threat model. Develop a specifications sheet outlining features to be reviewed.
3. **Team Assembly:** Assemble a team of skilled end users from various countries to assess the app internationally based on the threat model scenario.
4. **Week 1 Comprehensive App Review:** Conduct a detailed review of each app feature. Draft the article in English.
5. **Week 2 Comprehensive App Review:** Continue detailed feature reviews. Draft the article in English.
6. **Week 3 Comprehensive App Review:** Further review of all app features. Draft the article in English.
7. **Week 4 Comprehensive App Review:** Finalize feature reviews. Draft the article in English.
8. **Ethical Hacker Assessment:** Engage a certified ethical hacker (white-hat) to test app vulnerabilities.
9. **Article Finalization:** Based on the ethical hacker's report, finalize and submit the article to app developers for review and updates.
10. **Translation:** Translate the article into various languages, reflecting covered countries (e.g., French, Estonian, Spanish, Portuguese). Share articles with sponsors in all languages.
11. **Publishing:** Distribute articles to sponsors in all languages under the Copyright European Union Public License, version 1.2 (EUPL-1.2). Publish on our websites three months later.