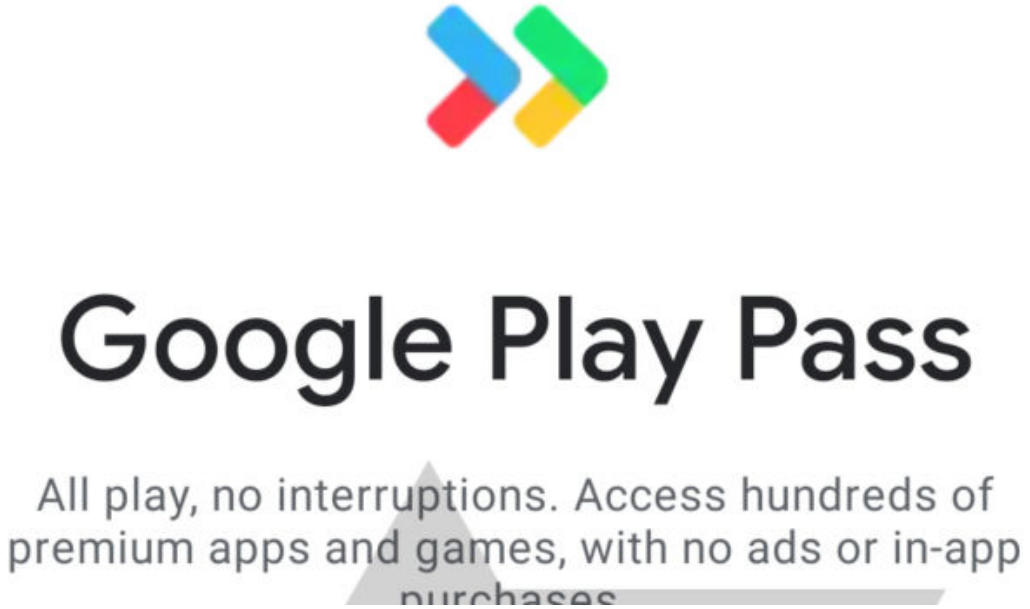
Google confirms “Play Pass” subscription service for Android apps



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Google is testing a new “Play Pass” subscription service for the Google Play Store. The company confirmed testing of the new service to Android Police, after the site was sent screenshots of the subscription service by a user.

Screenshots show the service would have users sign up right inside the Play Store, allowing them to pay a monthly fee for access to “Hundreds of premium apps and games.” The promo mentions “no purchases, no ads, and in-app purchases unlocked” for “a curated catalog spanning puzzle games to premium music apps and everything in between.”

The purchase screen shows a $4.99 a month price with a 10-day free trial of the service. Developers will apparently get paid based on usage, as the screenshots mention Google will track "Play Pass app and game usage to determine how much developers earn."

Apps that are part of the service will get a Play Pass badge in some sections of the Play Store. The screenshots also show a "Play this game for free with Google Play Pass" promo right below the buy button on participating apps. There's no hard list of participants yet, but the screenshots show icons for *Stardew Valley, Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic, Monument Valley, Limbo,* and more.

Apple is also launching a game subscription service called "Apple Arcade" sometime this fall. Apple's service is only for games (Google is including some apps), but Apple's game selection will have some amount of exclusivity to Apple Arcade. An Android subscription service faces two challenges, one is that Android users are not willing to spend as much on apps and games as iOS users. iOS users, somehow, still manage to outspend Google Play users overall, even though there are way, way more Google Play users. The other issue is that Android apps are generally not as a polished or well-supported as their iOS counterparts. (These two things are probably related!)

For now Play Pass is just in testing, and there's no word on a final rollout. The price could change, or Google could need more time to negotiate with developers. It looks like whoever this user is actually has access to it though, so maybe we'll see it launch sometime soon.

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