Microsoft’s new Xbox mobile gaming store is launching in July

Microsoft has been talking about plans for an Xbox mobile gaming store for a couple of years now, and the company now plans to launch it in July. Speaking at the Bloomberg Technology Summit earlier today, Xbox president Sarah Bond revealed the launch date and how Microsoft is going to avoid Apple’s strict App Store rules.

“We’re going to start by bringing our own first-party portfolio to [the Xbox mobile store], so you’re going to see games like *Candy Crush* show up in that experience, games like *Minecraft,”* says Bond. “We’re going to start on the web, and we’re doing that because that really allows us to have it be an experience that’s accessible across all devices, all countries, no matter what and independent of the policies of closed ecosystem stores.”

The store will be focused on first-party mobile games from Microsoft’s various studios, which include huge hits like *Call of Duty: Mobile* and *Candy Crush Saga*. Bond says the company will extend this to partners at some point in the future, too.

While games will naturally be part of the store, it sounds like the key parts of the Xbox experience will also be available. Bond argues there isn’t a gaming platform and store experience that “goes truly across devices — where who you are, your library, your identity, your rewards travel with you versus being locked to a single ecosystem.” So Microsoft is trying to build that with its Xbox mobile store.

Microsoft had also been building this store in anticipation of companies like Apple and Google being forced to open up their mobile app stores, but it’s clear the software giant isn’t willing to wait on the Digital Markets Act to shake out in Europe or any potential action in the US.

A web-only mobile store will be challenging to pull off, and it’s not immediately clear how Microsoft will position this as an alternative to these mobile games already existing on rival app stores. Bond says Microsoft will “extend” beyond the web, hinting that it could eventually launch a true rival to Google and Apple’s mobile app stores at some point soon.

Microsoft first hinted at a “next-generation store” in early 2022, just a month after the company announced its Activision Blizzard acquisition. “We want to be in a position to offer Xbox and content from both us and our third-party partners across any screen where somebody would want to play,” said Microsoft Gaming CEO Phil Spencer in an interview with the *Financial Times* last year. “Today, we can’t do that on mobile devices but we want to build towards a world that we think will be coming where those devices are opened up.”

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