Pocket Casts changes subscription plans after user backlash



Pocket Casts is making a change to its recently announced subscription plans after a backlash from users who were angry about losing access to apps they'd previously paid for.

The company is now giving free lifetime access to Pocket Casts Plus, its premium subscription service, to anyone that paid for the service's web or desktop apps before the pricing changes. These apps were previously available to purchase and use via a one-off fee of $9, but now require a paid subscription of $0.99 a month or $10 a year to use.

Prior to Tuesday, Pocket Casts proudly touted its subscription-free offering. "No monthly subscriptions or freemium hoo-ha," one of its promotional messages read, "We'll ask you for $9. Just once." However, it seems the reality of running an ongoing cloud-based service has now caught up with the company.

“We know many of you feel we missed the mark”
When it first announced the changes, Pocket Casts had offered users three years of access to the premium subscription service if they’d paid for these apps under the old purchase model. However, users were angry that their lifetime access had been changed into a three year subscription overnight. “Yup, what I thought to be my lifetime pocketcasts web purchase just turned into a three year rental. Exactly what I wanted,” read a heavily-upvoted Reddit comment.

In his blog post, Pocket Casts CEO Owen Grover notes that the company is trying to make this change “as soon as we can.” When I checked my own Windows 10 Pocket Casts app, it seems that the change has already taken effect. My own account is now listed as having lifetime membership of the premium service.

Outside of the changes in access to its web and desktop apps, Grover doesn’t mention rollbacks to any of its other initiatives, which include making its mobile apps completely free, and offering 10GB of cloud storage to let you upload your own audio and video content with the premium service.

It might not be hoo-ha, but Pocket Casts is definitely a freemium service now.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/9/19/20873611/pocket-casts-plus-premium-web-desktop-apps-changes-rollback