Today, Apple made changes to its app review process to save face with devs

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- Here’s where developers can request changes to App Store review guidelines.
  Samuel Axon
- At the top of the page, developers select this option from a number of others, since this is a general contact form for the review team.
  Samuel Axon
- From there, developers pick the specific part of the app guidelines they want to provide feedback on.
  Samuel Axon

As promised back in July, Apple has today made some notable changes to the app review and feedback process used by developers of apps for the tech giant’s operating systems.

Apple posted a message today to one of its developer portals saying that, moving forward, its app review team will no longer hold up important bug-fix updates to already-published apps when those apps are locked up in a dispute over guidelines unrelated to the bug fix. However, “You’ll instead be able to address guideline violations in your next submission.”

The impetus for this change appears to have been the public fight between storied app developer Basecamp and Apple over Basecamp's recently launched email app Hey. Basecamp claimed then that Apple held up an important bug-fix update amidst a back-and-forth between the two companies over how Hey handled in-app purchases.

This change not only ensures that developers will be able to squash bugs that are affecting users even if there's an ongoing disagreement with Cupertino but also that Apple will get a little less bad press for doing what it did during the Hey controversy.

Additionally, Apple has created a new feedback-form option in which members of its developer program can "suggest changes" to its app review guidelines. Here's the full text of Apple's note to developers today:

> *The App Store is dedicated to providing a great experience for everyone. To continue offering a safe place for users to download apps and helping you successfully develop apps that are secure, high-quality, reliable, and respectful of user privacy, we've updated the app review process as announced at WWDC20. For apps that are already on the App Store, bug fixes will no longer be delayed over guideline violations except for those related to legal issues. You'll instead be able to address guideline violations in your next submission. And now, in addition to appealing decisions about whether an app violates guidelines, you can* ***suggest changes to the guidelines****. We also encourage you to submit your App Store and Apple development platform suggestions so we can continue to improve experiences for the developer community.*

The link goes to the same "Contact the App Review Team" page developers use to inquire about the status of an app or appeal a rejection, but it now includes a dropdown option labeled "suggest a guideline change." From there, developers can pick

a specific guideline to challenge—like 3.1.1 In-App Purchase, for example—and type in suggestions.

That said, Apple has not said how it might act on this feedback, only that it's accepting it. In all likelihood, the company—which is under considerable pressure from shareholders to make up for slowing iPhone sales with services revenue—will probably not change its rules about in-app purchases or much else just because some developers gave that feedback. We'll have to wait and see what, if any, developments transpire from here.

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