Windows 11 will be able to sideload Android apps

According to an engineer at Microsoft, Windows 11 users will have the ability to sideload Android apps onto the operating system, which looks like an answer to one of the biggest questions we had when Microsoft announced it was bringing Android apps to Windows 11 via the Amazon Appstore (via *Android Police*). This means that once Windows 11 launches, you won't just have to stick to the apps that Amazon makes available, but it does raise some new questions about how running Android apps on Windows will work.

For example, it's unclear what the process for running or installing a sideloaded app will be. Chrome OS technically has the ability to run sideloaded apps, too, but the process isn't exactly easy, as it involves enabling Linux and doing some command line work. We asked Microsoft for details about what running Android apps from outside the Amazon Appstore would be like, and it provided us with the following statement:

> *Customers will be able to discover Android apps on the Microsoft Store and acquire them through the Amazon Appstore. We'll have more to share at a later date.*

Sideloading apps solves the app availability problem, but it raises concerns of its own

It's possible that the desire for sideloading apps onto Windows wouldn't be as strong had Microsoft included Google's Play Store instead of Amazon's Appstore. While having any app store will obviously grant Windows users access to many programs that they couldn't previously run on their computers, Amazon's has some notable omissions from its catalog. If a

Windows user wanted to run the Android version of Snapchat or Apple Music, they wouldn’t be able to get them from Amazon.

While sideloading apps helps solve this problem, it does raise concerns of its own. The first is the question of where users will obtain those apps: while there aren’t likely to be piracy concerns with free apps like Snapchat, the ability to load an APK could allow people to get paid apps for free from less-than-legal repositories.

There’s also the question of safety and whether Windows will have the ability to scan sideloaded apps for potentially malicious behavior, a feature that Google builds into Android already.

While it’s clear that there’s still a lot that Microsoft hasn’t covered about what running Android apps on Windows 11’s will actually be like (though the technical details it’s revealed are fascinating), it’s still good to have confirmation from someone at Microsoft that the selection of Android apps won’t just be limited to what’s on Amazon’s Appstore.

Hopefully Microsoft will start sharing more details on exactly how Android apps will work soon so it can get feedback from both Windows users and Android developers before the feature becomes available for everyone, likely later this year.

Updated June 25th 9:15PM ET: *Added statement from Microsoft.*

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