With peer group benchmarks, Apple undercuts third-party app analytics tools

Enlarge / The peer group benchmarks dashboard within Apple’s analytics suite.

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Apple has introduced a new way for developers for platforms like the iPhone to track their apps’ performance. It’s a new dashboard called peer group benchmarks that shows percentile data on how an app compares in certain metrics to other similar apps.

The new dashboard will appear within App Analytics, a tool that is already offered as part of App Store Connect. This is Apple’s portal for a suite of services that developers can use to manage their apps across the tech giant’s various app stores.

The metrics tracked in the dashboard include conversion rate, proceeds per paying user, crash rate, and retention—all of which are displayed in weekly intervals. Apple automatically sorts an app into a peer group based on three criteria, according to a developer support document the company has published.

First off, the app is sorted with other apps that are listed

in the same App Store category.

Within that, it is also sorted with other apps with a similar business model. Apple’s defined business models for this purpose are free, freemium, paid, paymium, and subscriptions.

Freemium apps are those that are free to download but which have in-app purchases; premium apps are those that are sold for an upfront cost; and paymium apps have both an upfront purchase price and in-app purchases. Subscription apps are apps that earn 50 percent or more of their revenue from auto-renewable subscriptions.

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Finally, apps are compared against others with a similar download volume; Apple sorts apps into low, medium, or high download volume groups based on how many downloads each app has compared to other similar ones based on the other criteria listed above, but it hasn’t gotten more specific about the math there.

By no means did Apple invent this concept of peer group benchmarks; these sorts of comparisons have long been available in premium third-party analytics services sold to app developers.

Unlike those services, though, developers won’t have to pay more than Apple’s annual developer account fee to access this data. The dashboard is arguably not as robust as what you’d get from a rival, granted, but it’s likely a welcome feature for small and growing developers in particular, as they may not have the revenue to justify paying for one of the pricier services. Further, Apple’s peer group benchmarks, in theory, might represent the totality of all apps in the App Store, whereas third-party solutions might deal with less comprehensive data sets.

Apple claims that data surfaced to other developers for comparison is anonymized; only aggregated data will be seen,

so developers won’t be able to see exactly how a specific competitor is performing.

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