

Helping software  
monetizers clean  
up and thrive



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# Meet Andy

This is Andy. He's a software monetizer. He's been building apps for a while, and it's been a wild ride.

This is the story of why he's still in business.



# Andy's app

A few years ago, Andy built the world's greatest app. It was clever and cool, and solved a big pain point.

Both of his customers loved his app.

He was going broke.

Andy learned the hard way that very few apps sell themselves.



# Learning the ropes

Andy researched and discovered there were alternative ways to monetize his app.

He learned about advertising and pay per install.

There were many companies willing to pay him to install his app... how cool was that?





# What Andy tried

Sometimes he was a publisher, and he ran his ad campaigns, and other apps and offers paid him commissions to install alongside his app.

Other times he was an advertiser, and he paid others to get installed.

Both ways worked, and his customer base grew.

Soon Andy was making money. Not too much, but enough that he was willing to experiment and make more.

He decided to learn more about the business of internet marketing.



# Andy the businessman

Soon Andy was juggling monthly spend and thinking about LTV, trying to find the perfect mix of the most customers with the highest conversions.

But slowly his vocabulary changed. Instead of “customers” and “value”, he used words like “installs” and “conversions”.

As long as his app offered value, he was safe. Wasn't he?



# Living the dream

Andy's app had many installs. His conversion rates were decent, and he had low returns.

Andy hired like crazy to get even more distribution. He upgraded his office space and gave his employees fun toys to play with.

Life was awesome. Until the bad guys showed up.



# Ruthless competition

Copycat competitors appeared

- When Andy published, they outbid his search terms, paid more for ads, and charged less for this product.
- When he advertised, they outbid him on PPI

How could this be? He realized his competitors had higher conversions and lower product costs.

And so Andy joined the race to the bottom and met even more bad guys.





# Bad decisions

Andy was desperate: he had a business built on volume. Was he supposed to give up? Never!

If you can't beat them, join them. So Andy got aggressive. He tried:

- Injector-based ad platforms
- Unmonitored affiliate networks
- Evasive installers
- High-commission call centers
- Scary ads
- Aggressive upsell language in the app

By this point, Andy's customers had become targets.



# Welcome to security

And then one fine day, Andy found out that there were companies who hated his app so much they blocked it, popped up warnings when it installed, and removed it.

Andy discovered the power of the security industry.

Andy was offended. He was as clean as everybody else, wasn't he? And besides, the AVs were just as bad, and the platforms were protecting their own search.



# Knives in a gunfight

So Andy fought back. He:

- Hired lawyers who sent cease & desist letters.
- Changed his product name
- Rolled to new certificates
- Switched to an installer who guaranteed no detections.

Andy saw some bumps in his business, but not for long.



# App Jail

It only got worse:

- His payment processor dropped him because of high returns.
- His ad network stopped taking his calls.
- The flags multiplied and the AVs wouldn't talk to him.

Andy was running out of options.

Andy was in app jail, and had no clue how to get out.





# Many of us have been working on Andy's problem for three years

- 2014: Microsoft pushes for a new approach
  - Formation meetings in Israel, Florida, Canterbury
- 2015-2016: Clean Software Alliance picks up steam
  - Summits in Vegas, NYC, Prague, California
  - Publish software and advertising guidelines
- 2016-2017: AppEsteem certifies apps
  - Published broad app cert requirements
  - Defined monitoring for apps, landing pages, and better world network partners
  - Agreed that CSA will provide oversight
  - Launched Detector campaign



# What AppEsteem offers

## Certify your apps

- Requirements are tough, and cover the entire supply chain
- We and our compliance partners can help you get there

## Monitor and defend your apps

- Get fast, actionable feedback from security partners
- Help you monitor partner abuse

## Fight your unfair competitors

- Call out deceptive apps (Deceptors)
- Drive AV
- Fight security partner hypocrisy

## Make it pay for you to be clean

- Better World Network gives you access, reduces costs



<https://customer.appesteem.com/Home/AppCertReqs>

# Finally some hope

A way out of app jail? Andy couldn't believe it. He had a lot of questions.

- Would he have a target on his back?
- Could he afford the hit on conversions?
- Was this extortion?
- Was it too good to be true?

He talked to others who joined AppEsteem, and decided to take the plunge and go clean.



# The requirements

At first, AppEsteem's requirements seemed daunting.

Then Andy realized that they boiled down into just three things he needed to do for his customers:

- Keep them informed and in control
- Prevent unpleasant surprises
- Never let them feel cheated when they pay

Andy instructed his team to make it happen, even though he was more than a little scared.





# Certified, baby!

It took a few rounds and a lot of learning, but one fine day Andy's company was validated and his app was certified by AppEsteem.

Most of the security partners cleared their flags, and the remaining ones gave actionable feedback on what else needed fixing.

Andy knew exactly what he had to do to rebuild his customer-focused, clean business.



**ACCEPTED**

# And best of all...

Andy's customers loved his app.

- His chargebacks and returns plummeted
- His renewals skyrocketed
- His business became sustainable and predictable.

Andy was proud of his app and told everyone what he learned.





Don't wait for app jail.  
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