AppAcquire Research

ANNUAL MARKET OUTLOOK

Mobile Apps Market Outlook 2027

Spending, AI, subscriptions, store rules and what apps really sell for

$167bn

Consumer spending in apps in 2025, up 10%. Non-game apps out-earned games for the first time.

$200bn+

Projected app store consumer spending in 2027.

3.5–6×

Annual earnings that subscription apps with real retention sell for.

4.6%

Share of new subscription apps that reach $10,000 a month within two years.

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appacquire.com/reports/mobile-apps-market-outlook-2027

About this report

AppAcquire is a marketplace for buying and selling iOS and Android apps, with sales paid through Escrow.com. Every day we see what founders ask for their apps, what revenue they can prove, and what buyers are looking for. This report puts that view next to the biggest public datasets on the app economy: Sensor Tower, RevenueCat, Superwall, Adapty, Appfigures and Apple's own ecosystem study.

It does four things:

1. **Sets out where the market stands at the end of 2026**, using the latest primary figures, each linked to where it was published.
2. **Asks whether now is a good time to launch an app**, niche by niche, as the stores reject and remove apps in record numbers.
3. **Brings together what apps actually sell for and who buys them**, from published deal benchmarks to independent apps listed on AppAcquire, and what that means for buying an app instead of building one.
4. **Gives our outlook for 2027**: ten predictions, each tied to the evidence behind it. Our projections are labelled as projections.

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SENSOR TOWER

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Projected app store consumer spending in 2027.

APPACQUIRE PROJECTION

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Annual earnings that subscription apps with real retention sell for.

FE INTERNATIONAL

4.6%

Share of new subscription apps that reach $10,000 a month within two years.

REVENUECAT

Headline findings

1. **Consumers spent $167 billion in apps in 2025, up 10%, and for the first time more of it went to non-game apps than to games.** Non-game app revenue grew 21% in the year. *(Sensor Tower, State of Mobile 2026)*
2. **AppAcquire projection: app store consumer spending will pass $200 billion in 2027** if growth holds near 2025's 10% a year.
3. **Subscription apps with real retention sell for 3.5× to 6.0× annual earnings; ad-supported and utility apps for 1.8× to 3.5×.** App acquirers start at 3× to 5× EBITDA for apps more than two years old. *(FE International; RevenueCat acquirer interviews)*
4. **Small apps are listed for under two years of revenue.** The median app for sale on AppAcquire asks 1.9× annual revenue, and 78% ask less than $25,000. *(AppAcquire marketplace data, asking prices)*
5. **Buying beats building on the numbers.** A new subscription app has about a one-in-22 chance of reaching $10,000 a month within two years. An app that already earns can be bought for a few years of its earnings. *(RevenueCat; FE International; AppAcquire)*
6. **New apps face long odds.** Almost 15,000 new subscription apps now launch every month, seven times as many as in January 2022. Only 4.6% of them reach $10,000 in monthly revenue within two years. Apps launched before 2020 still earn 69% of subscription revenue. *(RevenueCat, State of Subscription Apps 2026)* The stores are also pushing back: **Apple rejected 23% of the 9.1 million submissions it reviewed in 2025 and removed 166,899 apps**, and Google blocked 1.75 million (Apple; Google).
7. **AI apps are the fastest-growing money in mobile.** Sensor Tower expects AI app in-app revenue to pass $4 billion in the first half of 2026 alone, up 36% on the half before. AI-powered subscription apps earn 41% more per payer but churn 30% faster. *(Sensor Tower; RevenueCat)*
8. **Weekly subscriptions now earn more than half of subscription app revenue (55.5% in 2025)**, up from 43.3% in 2023. Annual plans fell to 22.5%. *(Adapty)*
9. **An iPhone install earns nearly three times as much as an Android one.** Superwall measured $1.46 in net proceeds per iOS install against $0.52 on Android. Yet 63% of apps listed on AppAcquire include an Android version, against 45% with iOS. *(Superwall; AppAcquire)*
10. **Paying on the web beats the in-app sheet.** Web checkout earns 19% more revenue per paywall viewer and wins two out of three head-to-head tests against in-app purchase. 31% of apps earning $500,000+ a month already use it. *(Superwall, State of App Monetization 2026)*

1. The market at the end of 2026

$167bn was spent in apps in 2025, and for the first time more of it went to apps than to games.

Spending: $167 billion, and apps have overtaken games

Sensor Tower's State of Mobile 2026 report puts global in-app purchase revenue at **$167 billion in 2025, up 10% year on year**. The bigger story is the mix. **Non-game apps out-earned games for the first time**, with non-game revenue up 21% in a year and nearly three times what it was five years earlier. Sensor Tower credits generative AI services for much of the shift. Social media, streaming video and dating remain the largest non-game sources of revenue.

Superwall's State of App Monetization 2026 splits the same year by store: **$117.6 billion on the App Store and $49.2 billion on Google Play**. Seventy cents of every dollar consumers spend in apps is spent on an Apple device.

fig. 1

Seven in ten app dollars are spent on the App Store

Consumer spending by store, 2025. App Store $117.6bn, Google Play $49.2bn.



Source: Superwall, State of App Monetization 2026

People spent **5.3 trillion hours** in apps in 2025, according to Sensor Tower, and nearly 2.5 trillion of them in social media apps.

Apple's broader figure is far larger, because it counts everything apps sell, not just digital purchases. An Analysis Group study published by Apple in June 2026 puts the App Store ecosystem at **over $1.4 trillion in developer billings and sales in 2025**: $1.1 trillion of physical goods and services, $149 billion of digital goods

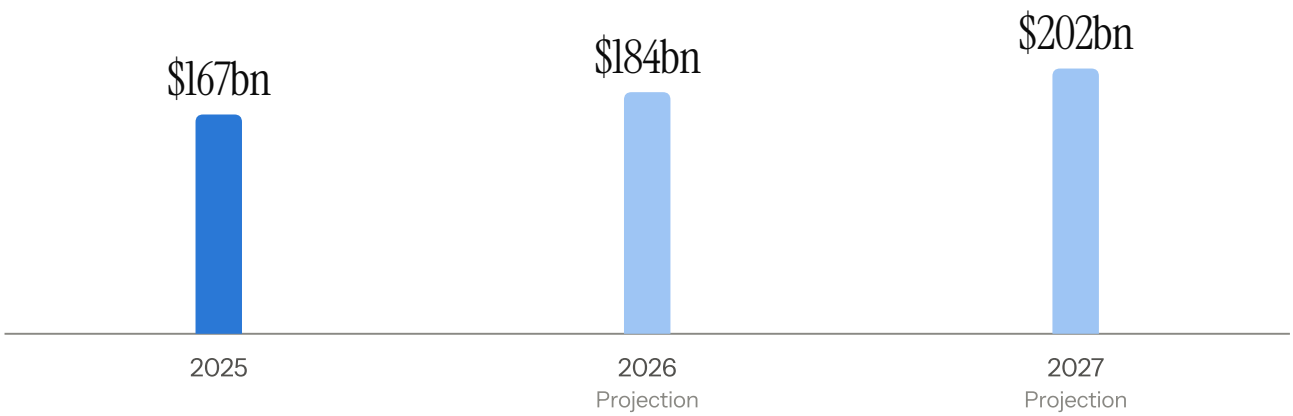
and services, and $151 billion of in-app advertising. Apple says no commission was paid on more than 90% of it. The study was commissioned by Apple, so read it as Apple's own account.

> **AppAcquire projection.** Global app store consumer spending grew 10% in 2025. If it keeps growing at about that rate, it reaches roughly $184 billion in 2026 and **passes $200 billion in 2027**. Two things could push it higher: AI subscriptions, which are growing several times faster than the market, and more developers sending payments to the web, which moves revenue out of store figures without the money leaving the app economy.

fig. 2

App store consumer spending passes $200 billion in 2027

Global in-app purchase revenue, US$ billions. 2026 and 2027 assume growth holds at 2025's 10%.



Source: Sensor Tower, State of Mobile 2026 (2025 actual); AppAcquire projection (2026, 2027)

AI: the new growth engine

Generative AI is now a real revenue line, not an experiment.

- Sensor Tower's State of AI 2026 report (June 2026) expects **AI app in-app revenue to pass $4 billion in the first half of 2026**, up 36% on the second half of 2025. It projects time spent in generative AI apps to reach **36 billion hours** in the first half of 2026, more than double the 17.2 billion hours a year earlier.
- **ChatGPT was the third-highest-grossing app in the world in 2025**, behind only TikTok and Google One (Sensor Tower). It reached 1 billion monthly active users in May 2026, three years after launch, faster than any mobile app before it.
- **The field is opening up.** Appfigures measured ChatGPT at $301 million of consumer spend in April 2026, but its lead over the other major chatbots combined fell from 18.5× in January 2025 to just over 2× by April 2026. Rivals combined have out-downloaded ChatGPT every month since September 2025. Claude's US revenue per user rose from under $0.50 in September 2025 to $2.76 in May 2026 (Sensor Tower).

fig. 3

ChatGPT's lead over rival chatbots fell from 18.5× to about 2×

ChatGPT consumer spend as a multiple of the other leading chatbot apps combined. April 2026: $301M against $138M.



Source: Appfigures, ChatGPT at 3, May 2026

- **AI lifts what apps earn across the store.** Apple says more than 40 of its top 100 apps now have consumer-facing AI features, and those apps grew billings four times faster than the rest of the top 100 in 2025.
- **AI is a monetisation premium with a retention cost.** RevenueCat's State of Subscription Apps 2026 finds AI-powered apps earn **41% more revenue per payer but churn 30% faster**.

> **AppAcquire projection.** Sensor Tower's first-half figure implies AI apps are earning at a rate of more than $8 billion a year in 2026. Even if growth halves from its current pace, **AI app in-app revenue will pass $10 billion in 2027**.

Supply: more apps than ever, fewer winners

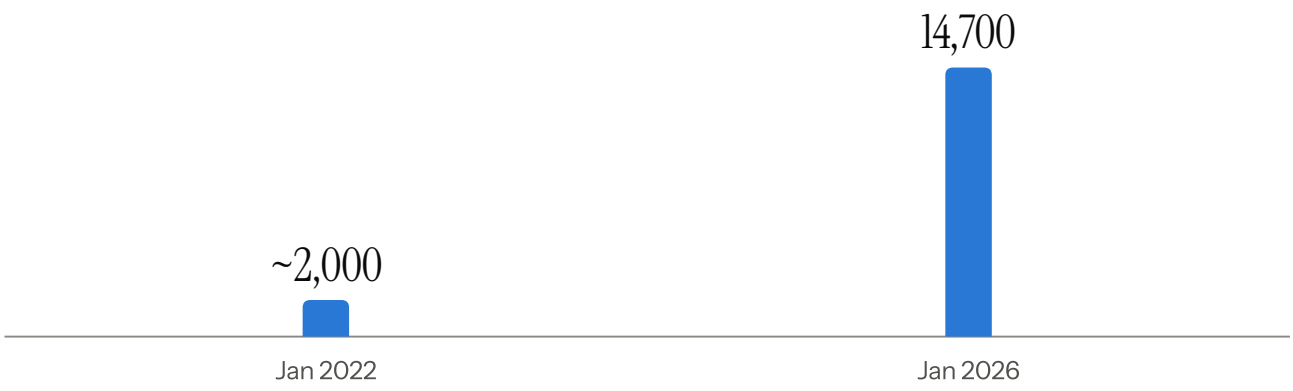
The cost of building an app has collapsed. AI coding tools mean a solo founder can ship in a weekend what took a team a quarter. The numbers show it.

- RevenueCat counts **almost 15,000 new subscription apps launching every month by January 2026**, up from about 2,000 in January 2022: **a sevenfold increase in four years**.
- **iOS now accounts for about 77% of new subscription app launches**, up from about 67% in 2023 (RevenueCat).
- 200,000+ apps now mention AI in their store descriptions (Sensor Tower).

fig. 4

Seven times as many subscription apps launch every month as in 2022

New subscription apps launched per month.



Source: RevenueCat, State of Subscription Apps 2026

More launches have not meant more winners. Revenue is concentrating in older, established apps:

- **Apps launched before 2020 earn 69% of all subscription revenue.** Apps launched in 2025 or later earn just 3% (RevenueCat).
- **The top quarter of apps grew revenue 80% year on year; the bottom quarter shrank by 33%.** The median app grew 5.3% (RevenueCat).
- **Only 17.3% of apps reach $1,000 in monthly revenue within two years, and only 4.6% reach $10,000.** That is about one in 22 (RevenueCat).
- Superwall finds **66% of revenue-earning apps make less than $500 a month**, while apps earning $500,000+ a month take about half of all proceeds.
- Adapty's State of In-App Subscriptions 2026 puts the median subscription app at **$492 a month**, with 80.1% of new apps earning $10,000 or less in their first year.

fig. 5

Old apps earn the money: 69% of subscription revenue goes to apps launched before 2020

Share of subscription app revenue by the year the app launched.

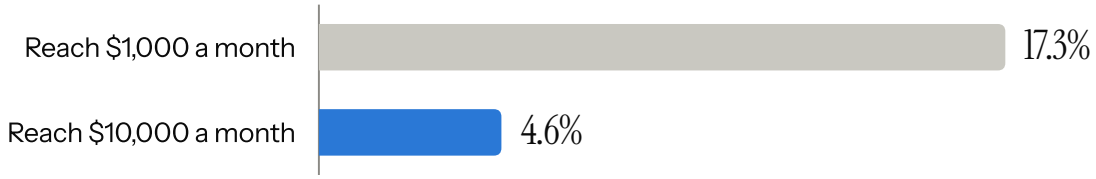


Source: RevenueCat, State of Subscription Apps 2026. 2020–2024 is the remainder.

fig. 6

One new app in 22 reaches $10,000 a month within two years

Share of new subscription apps reaching each level of monthly revenue within two years of launch.



Source: RevenueCat, State of Subscription Apps 2026

This is the economic case for buying instead of building. A new app's chance of reaching $10,000 a month is roughly one in 22. Apps with existing revenue, users and store history are on the market for under two years of revenue (Section 4).

2. How apps make money now

55.5% of subscription app revenue now comes from weekly plans, up from 43.3% two years earlier.

Weekly plans and hard paywalls are winning

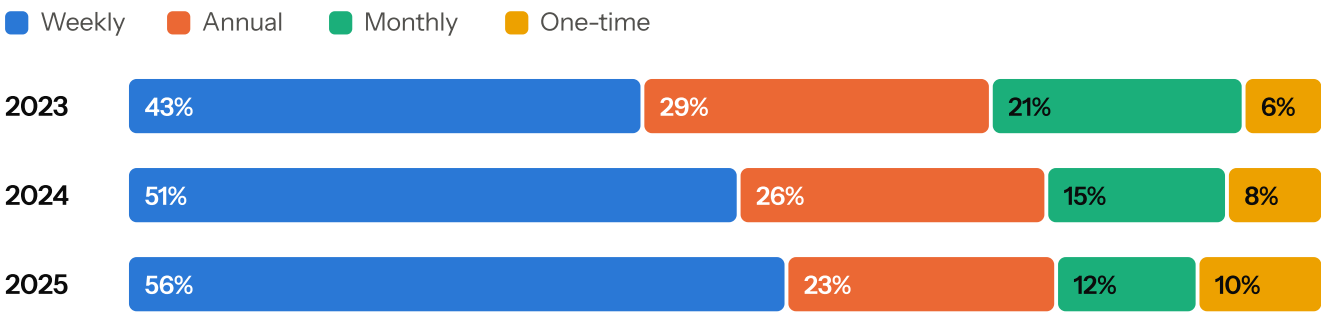
The way apps charge has changed fast.

- **Weekly plans earned 55.5% of subscription app revenue in 2025**, up from 51.5% in 2024 and 43.3% in 2023. Monthly plans fell from 21.1% to 11.7% over the same two years, and annual plans from 29.2% to 22.5% (Adapty).

fig. 7

Weekly plans now earn more than half of subscription revenue

Share of subscription app revenue by plan type.



Source: Adapty, State of In-App Subscriptions 2026

- Adapty puts the **global median price at $7.48 a week, $12.99 a month and $38.42 a year**. RevenueCat finds North American medians of $9.99 a month and $39.99 a year, with India and Southeast Asia priced at about 45–50% of that.
- **Hard paywalls convert five times better than freemium**: 10.7% of downloads pay against 2.1%, with nearly identical one-year retention (RevenueCat).

- **65% of apps earning $500 to $10,000 a month are pay-to-play**, falling to 33% of apps above $1 million a month, where freemium funnels have the scale to work (Superwall).

Trials: short trials dominate, longer trials convert

- Nearly half of all apps now use trials of four days or less. But **trials of 17 days or more convert 70% better than short trials (42.5% against 25.5%)** (RevenueCat).
- **55% of 3-day trial cancellations happen on the day the trial starts** (RevenueCat). Adapty finds 89.4% of trials start on the day of install.
- 63% of apps earning under $500 a month run 3-day trials. As apps grow past $10,000 a month, the median trial lengthens from 3 to 7 days. At $100,000–$500,000 a month, 7-day trials convert 35% against 29% for 3-day trials (Superwall).

What separates apps that grow

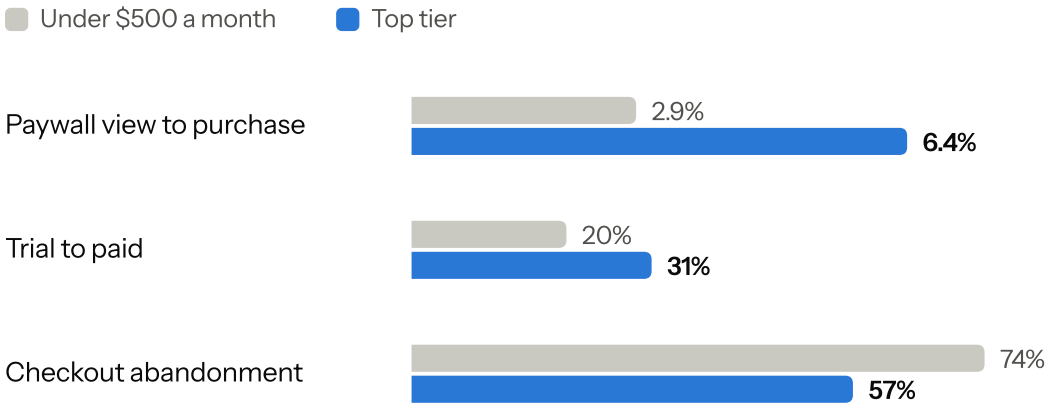
Superwall's data on 9,770 revenue-earning apps shows how differently the biggest apps operate:

- **Paywall conversion rises from 2.9% for apps under $500 a month to 6.4% at the top tier.** Checkout abandonment falls from 74% to 57%. Trial-to-paid rises from 20% to 31%.
- **Top apps charge more.** The median US annual price rises from $34.99 to $59.99 between the smallest and largest tiers.
- **Top apps test constantly**: about 72 paywall tests a year at $500,000 a month, against 1.4 a year under $500. Only 40% of tests beat the control, so volume matters.
- **About one app in four climbs a revenue tier within a year.** Going from $500 to $10,000 a month takes a median of three months for those that make it.

fig. 8

What the biggest apps do differently

Apps earning under $500 a month against the top revenue tier.



Source: Superwall, State of App Monetization 2026 (9,770 revenue-earning apps)

For buyers, this is the playbook. Many apps on the market have never run a paywall test, use a default trial, and have never priced by region. That is upside a new owner can capture quickly.

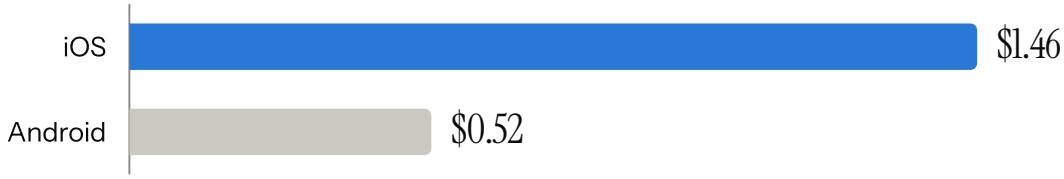
Android: more users, less money per install

Superwall measures **$1.46 in net proceeds per iOS install against $0.52 on Android**: an Android install earns 39 cents for every iOS dollar. RevenueCat adds that **nearly a third of Google Play subscription cancellations are involuntary billing failures**, more than double the App Store rate of 14%.

fig. 9

An iPhone install earns almost three times an Android one

Net proceeds per install, US$, last 12 months.



Source: Superwall, State of App Monetization 2026

3. Is now a good time to launch an app?

23% of app submissions were rejected by Apple in 2025: 2.1 million of the 9.1 million it reviewed.

Yes, but not with a generic app. Building an app has never been cheaper, so the stores are flooded with near-identical ones, and Apple and Google are rejecting and removing apps in record numbers. Whether now is a good time depends almost entirely on the niche.

The stores are pushing back

- **Apple reviewed 9.1 million app submissions in 2025 and rejected 2.09 million**, including more than 1.2 million new apps and nearly 800,000 updates. More than 371,000 submissions were rejected for copying other apps, spam or misleading users, and more than 443,000 for privacy violations (Apple, App Store Transparency Report 2025; Apple Newsroom, May 2026).
- **Apple removed 166,899 apps from the App Store in 2025**: 90,608 for fraud and 72,271 in what it calls an ongoing cleanup of outdated apps. Of 26,305 appeals against removal, 423 apps were restored. Apple also terminated 193,035 developer accounts and rejected more than 138,000 developer enrolments.
- **Google prevented more than 1.75 million policy-violating apps from being published on Google Play in 2025** and banned more than 80,000 developer accounts (Google, February 2026). Developer verification is opening to all developers, and new personal developer accounts must run a closed test with at least 12 testers for 14 days before they can publish (Google Play Console Help).
- Developers on Apple's Developer Forums report a steady stream of Guideline 4.3 "spam" rejections for apps they say are original, often with little explanation. The rule targets template apps and near-duplicates. With AI tools making a copy of any app a weekend's work, a me-too app is now more likely to be rejected than simply ignored.

Where the stores are most crowded

The App Store had **2,899,116 live apps on 24 November 2026, and 134,402 new apps were published in October alone**; Google Play had 2,730,150 and 116,960 (42matters, App Store; 42matters, Google Play). **63% of App Store apps have never received a single rating.**

Putting Apple's removals next to the number of live apps in each category shows where the crowding, and the clean-up, is worst:

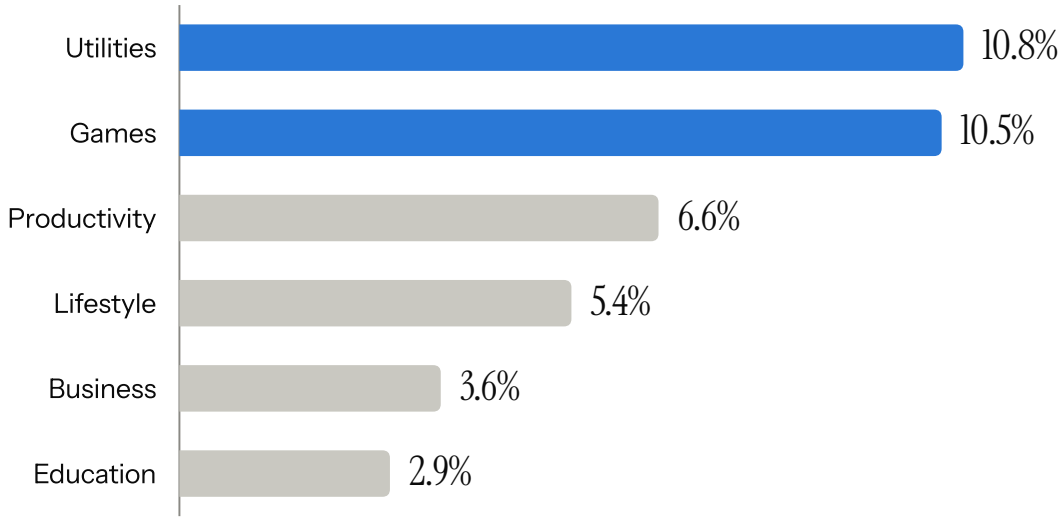
Category	Live App Store apps	Removed in 2025	Removed as a share of live apps
Utilities	293,122	31,594	10.8%
Games	289,667	30,429	10.5%
Productivity	198,072	13,116	6.6%
Lifestyle	243,739	13,166	5.4%
Business	303,534	10,984	3.6%
Education	291,044	8,440	2.9%

Live apps: 42matters, 24 November 2026. Removals: Apple App Store Transparency Report 2025. The share is AppAcquire's calculation and compares removals during 2025 with apps live in November 2026, so read it as a guide to relative churn, not an exact rate.

fig. 10

Apple removed one utility app and one game for every ten still live

Apps removed from the App Store in 2025 as a share of live apps in each category.



Source: Apple, App Store Transparency Report 2025 (removals); 42matters, 24 Nov 2026 (live apps); AppAcquire calculation

Utilities and games are the most crowded and the most cleared out: Apple removed about one app for every ten still live. They are also the categories where template and copycat apps are cheapest to make. Business and education apps are just as numerous but are removed at a third of the rate, because they tend to serve a specific user with a specific job.

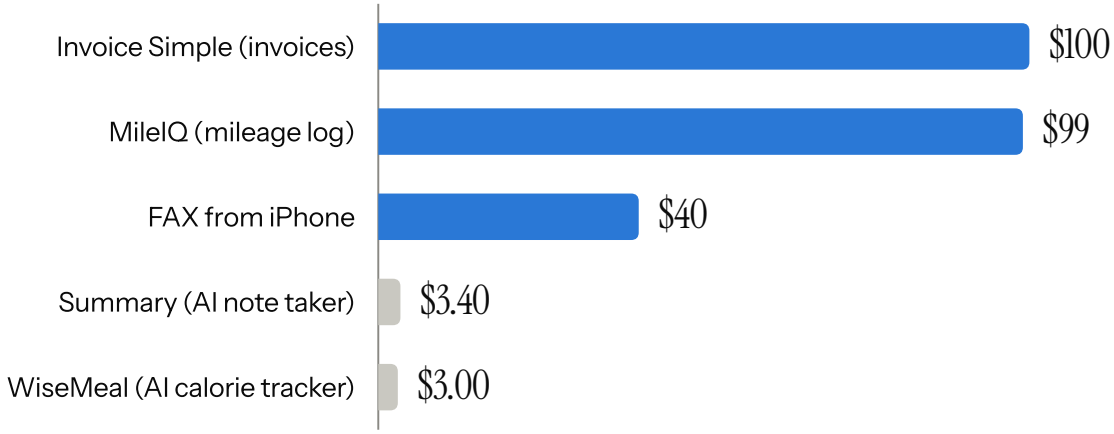
Niche beats novelty

What an app earns from each new user varies more by niche than by anything else. AppKittie's revenue and download estimates for individual iOS apps show the gap (AppKittie, October 2026):

fig. ll

Niche work apps earn up to 30 times more per download than popular AI apps

Estimated monthly revenue for every new monthly download, worldwide iOS, 30 days to 22 Oct 2026.



Source: AppKittie estimates, October 2026; AppAcquire calculation (revenue ÷ downloads)

Apps that do one job for working people, such as invoices, mileage logs or sending a fax, earn **$40 to $100 a month for every new monthly download**. Popular AI apps for consumers, such as note takers and calorie trackers, earn **$3 to $4**. The ratio includes revenue from existing subscribers, so it is not lifetime value, but it shows how much more a narrow, professional niche pays than a crowded consumer one.

The verdict

Now is a good time to launch an app that:

- **serves a narrow audience you can reach**, such as one trade, one exam or one hobby, rather than everyone;
- **does a job people already pay to get done**, ideally for work;
- **is original enough to pass review**, not a template, a wrapper around someone else's AI model or a copy of a chart-topper;

- **has room to test its paywall and pricing**, because the apps that grow test far more often (Section 2).

It is a poor time to launch a generic utility, a simple game or an AI wrapper. They face the most competition, the highest removal rates and the lowest revenue per user. For founders who want an app in a crowded category, buying one that has already passed review, has ratings and has revenue avoids the hardest part of launching (Section 4).

4. What apps sell for

3.5–6× annual earnings is what subscription apps with real retention sell for. Ad-supported and utility apps sell for 1.8–3.5×.

App sales are private, and most prices are never disclosed. No one publishes closed-sale multiples for mobile apps alone: marketplaces report figures for SaaS or for online businesses in general, and advisers report bands from their own deals. This section puts the best published evidence together, from the largest disclosed acquisitions down to the apps founders list for a few thousand dollars.

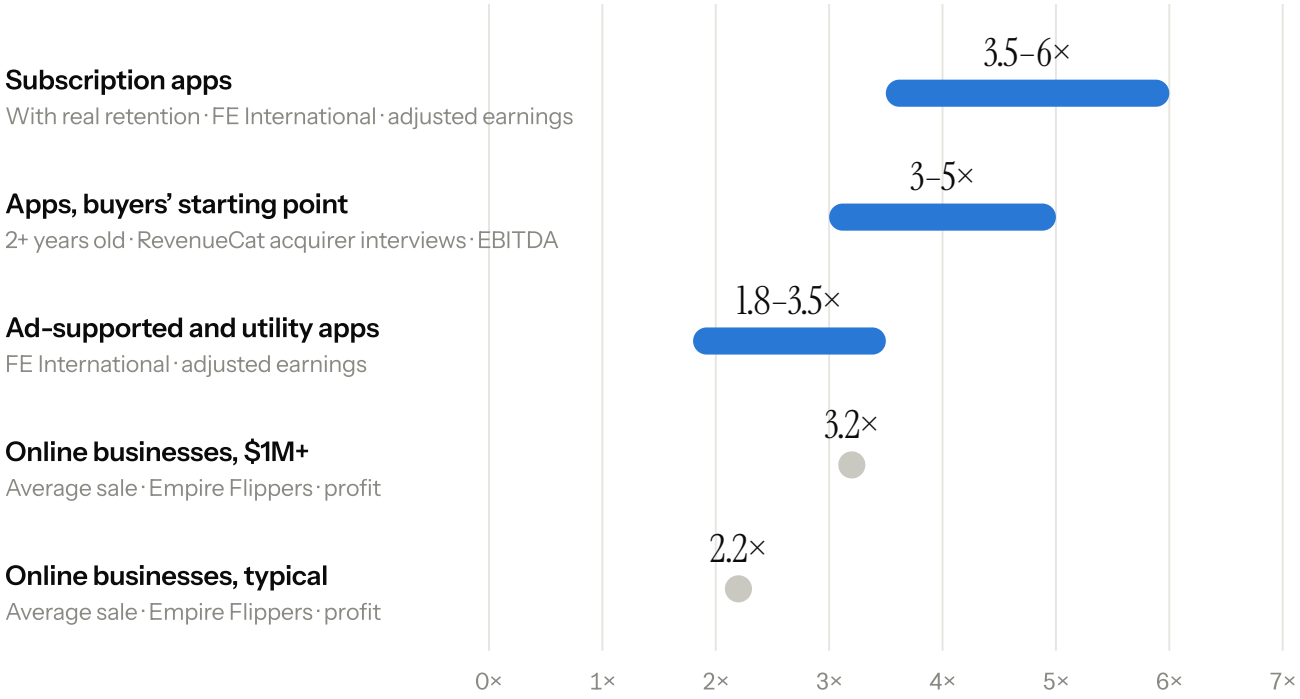
Closed deals: two to six times earnings

- **FE International**, drawing on more than 1,500 closed technology deals, puts **subscription apps with genuine retention at 3.5× to 6.0× adjusted earnings**, and **ad-supported and single-platform utility apps at 1.8× to 3.5×** (FE International, September 2026). Under about $5 million, adjusted earnings means seller's discretionary earnings; above it, EBITDA.
- **App acquirers start at 3× to 5× EBITDA** for an app that is more than two years old and keeps subscribers for four months or more, according to RevenueCat's interviews with ten active app buyers. Two in three of those buyers pay in cash, often half up front (RevenueCat, December 2025).
- **Online businesses in general sell for an average 2.2× annual profit, rising to 3.2× above $1 million**, and close at an average 86% of their asking price, according to Empire Flippers' trailing-twelve-month figures (Empire Flippers scoreboard). Its figures cover all online businesses, not only apps.

fig. 12

Apps sell for roughly two to six times earnings

Published sale multiples of annual earnings or profit. Each source measures earnings slightly differently: see the notes under each bar.



Source: FE International (Sept 2026, 1,500+ closed deals); RevenueCat interviews with 10 app acquirers (Dec 2025); Empire Flippers scoreboard (trailing 12 months, Nov 2026)

The pattern is consistent across sources: **recurring revenue, retention and size earn higher multiples.** A subscription app with loyal subscribers sells for up to twice the multiple of an ad-supported utility, and larger businesses sell for more per dollar of profit than small ones.

The top end: outliers, for scale

EHVM Capital's database of app acquisitions lists 179 deals since 2012 (EHVM Capital, updated 30 August 2026). The largest are businesses built around an app, and they are outliers: almost no app sale looks like these.

Year	App	Buyer	Deal value
2025	ForeFlight and OzRunways (pilot apps)	Thoma Bravo	$10.55bn
2025	Upbit (Dunamu, crypto trading app)	Naver	$10.0bn
2025	Deliveroo (food delivery app)	DoorDash	$3.85bn

Source: EHVM Capital. Deal values as disclosed; these deals do not disclose revenue or profit, so multiples are not available.

Where revenue is disclosed, the multiples show what buyers pay for recurring revenue. Dotdigital's March 2026 purchase of Alia was about **3.75× annual recurring revenue at close**, rising toward 7.5× if an earnout is met (FE International).

Small apps: what founders ask on AppAcquire

At the other end of the market are the independent apps that make up most app sales. Our data covers every active listing on AppAcquire on 24 November 2026: **167 iOS and Android apps for sale**. These are asking prices, not sale prices, and AppAcquire's own completed sales are too few to publish multiples from yet. Read them as a signal of where small-app pricing starts, not where it settles. Live figures are updated hourly at appacquire.com/market.

Measure	Value
Apps for sale	167
Median asking price	$6,900
Median monthly revenue (apps reporting revenue, n=103)	$40
New listings in the last 30 days	33
Listings including an Android app	105 (63%)
Listings including an iOS app	75 (45%)

167

Apps for sale on AppAcquire on 24 November 2026.

APPACQUIRE

$6,900

Median asking price.

APPACQUIRE

78%

Share of apps for sale asking less than $25,000.

APPACQUIRE

1.9×

Median asking price as a multiple of annual revenue.

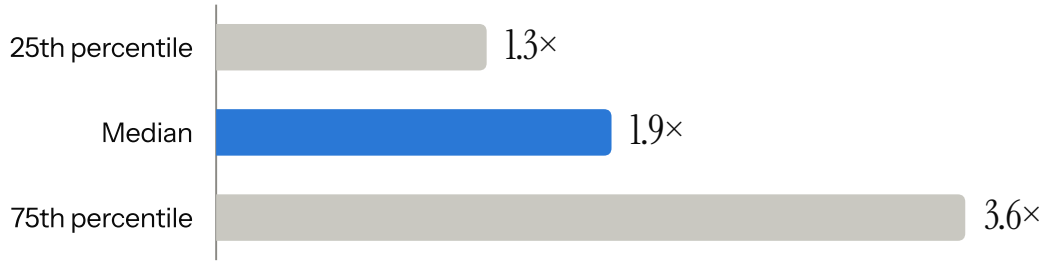
APPACQUIRE

For the 42 listings earning at least $100 a month, we divided the asking price by annual revenue (monthly revenue × 12).

fig. 13

Small apps on AppAcquire ask a median 1.9× annual revenue

Asking prices, not sale prices, as a multiple of annual revenue. Listings earning $100+ a month.



Source: AppAcquire marketplace data, 24 November 2026 (42 listings with revenue)

Small apps are listed for under two years of revenue. The median listing asks 1.9× annual revenue, and a quarter ask less than 1.3×. That is a revenue multiple, not an earnings one, but most of these apps are run by one person with few costs beyond store fees, so the gap between revenue and earnings is small. Small apps are priced at the bottom of, or below, the ranges reported for closed deals, which fits the size pattern above.

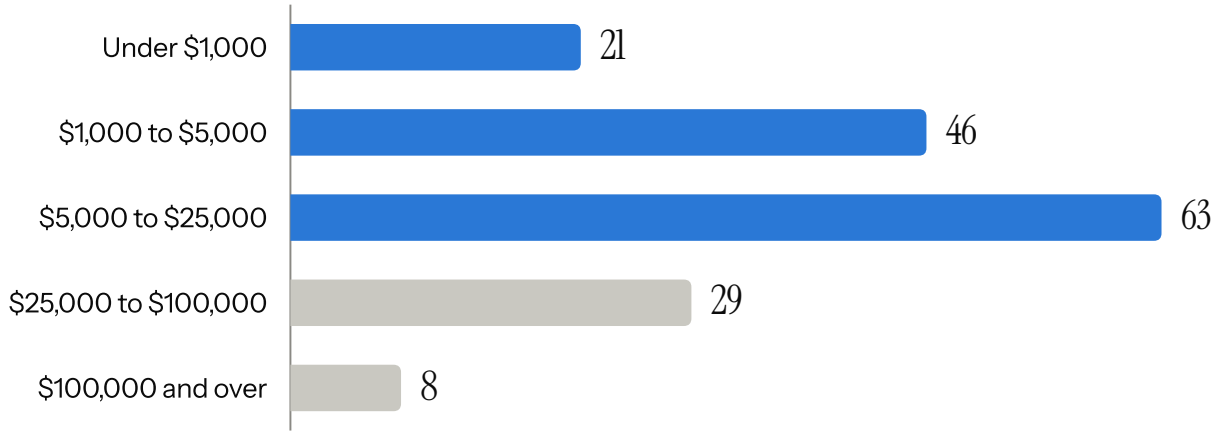
Most apps for sale are small

Asking price	Listings	Share
Under $1,000	21	13%
$1,000 to $5,000	46	28%
$5,000 to $25,000	63	38%
$25,000 to $100,000	29	17%
$100,000 and over	8	5%

fig. 14

78% of apps for sale ask less than $25,000

AppAcquire listings by asking price. Median asking price $6,900.



Source: AppAcquire marketplace data, 24 November 2026 (167 listings)

78% of apps for sale ask less than $25,000. The median app reporting revenue earns $40 a month: well below Adapty's $492 median for all subscription apps. The market for independent apps is mostly a market for early-stage products, sold by founders who have moved on to the next thing. This is also why the app acquisition market is growing: the sevenfold rise in launches since 2022 is producing a steady supply of apps whose founders would rather sell than shut down.

By category

Category	Listings	Median asking price	Median monthly revenue (apps reporting)
Productivity	42	$5,450	$29 (28)
Lifestyle	30	$9,905	$158 (17)
Entertainment	22	$10,000	$22 (15)
Health	17	$5,000	$158 (10)
Games	16	$5,700	$20 (12)
Education	14	$2,375	$23 (6)
Finance	8	$5,750	$64 (5)

Productivity is the largest category for sale, but Lifestyle and Health apps earn the most per listing, with median revenue of $158 a month. Categories with fewer than eight listings are left out here because their medians move too much with each new listing; they are on the live market page.

Android supply, iOS money

63% of apps listed on AppAcquire include an Android version and 45% include iOS (some are both). Yet an iOS install earns nearly three times as much (Superwall), and 70% of consumer spending is on the App Store. Buyers who can port a proven Android app to iOS, or fix its billing failures, are buying upside the seller has not priced in.

The missing data: app exits

The biggest gap in this report is the one nobody fills: **there is no public dataset of mobile app sale prices with the revenue and earnings behind them.** Marketplaces publish figures for SaaS or for online businesses in general, advisers publish bands from their own deal books, and the largest acquisitions rarely disclose the numbers needed to calculate a multiple. AppAcquire is building an open database of app exits to close that gap, and will publish it alongside future editions of this report.

5. Rules of the road: store policy and payments

19% more revenue per paywall viewer comes from web checkout than from the in-app purchase sheet.

The biggest change to app economics in 2025–2026 did not come from consumers. It came from the courts.

- **In the US, developers can now link to outside payment pages from their iOS apps.** Following the *Epic Games v. Apple* injunction, upheld in large part by the Ninth Circuit in December 2025, Apple currently charges no commission on purchases made through external links. Whether Apple may charge any commission on those purchases is still being argued: Apple has asked the US Supreme Court to overturn the contempt finding over its proposed 27% fee, and Epic filed its response in November 2026 (9to5Mac).
- **Developers are using it.** Superwall finds web checkout earns **19% more revenue per paywall viewer** and wins **67% of head-to-head tests** against in-app purchase. Adoption runs from 1.1% of apps earning $500–$10,000 a month to **31% of apps earning $500,000+**.
- **In the EU**, the Digital Markets Act continues to require alternative distribution and payment options, and Apple reports ongoing investigations in its 2026 filings.

What this means for app values: an app that already takes payment on the web keeps more of each dollar, and owns its customer relationship. Expect buyers to pay more for apps with working web checkout, and for "store fee exposure" to become a standard line in due diligence.

6. Who is buying apps

2× revenue within 12 to 18 months is what app buyers report after acquisitions under $500,000.

The buyers of mobile apps are not tech giants. They are app studios and acquisition companies set up to buy working apps, improve their monetisation and run them as a portfolio. RevenueCat interviewed ten of them, including AppNation, Leadtech Group, Mode Mobile, Quiet, Nova Sphere, Reflective Apps, LOYAL and Kodeon, and found that buyers have **doubled revenue within 12 to 18 months on acquisitions under $500,000** (RevenueCat, December 2025).

Three specialist app buyers show how the market works:

Buyer	What it buys	What it publishes
BlueThrone	iOS and Android apps with revenue, organic rankings and a large user base	A portfolio of 100 million downloads, 40 million monthly users and $20 million in annual recurring revenue. Offers a direct exit or a partnership, with a valuation within 10 days.
Jedy Apps	Android utilities, photo and video, and lifestyle apps, and whole developer portfolios, monetised by ads, subscriptions or in-app purchases	Firm cash offers, "from submission to payday in as little as 7 days".
Applace	Subscription apps	A Singapore studio that builds, markets and acquires subscription apps, aiming for "quick payback and high liquidity".

Sources: BlueThrone, Jedy Apps, Applace and Applace on LinkedIn, read November 2026.

What these buyers look for, from RevenueCat's interviews:

- **Age and retention.** Valuations start at **3× to 5× EBITDA** for apps more than two years old with four or more months of subscriber retention. One buyer calls 60% to 70% annual subscription retention "a decent range".

- **Organic traffic.** Preferred mixes run from 50/50 organic and paid to 80/20, though at least one buyer runs mostly paid traffic.
- **Cash.** Two in three buyers pay cash; the rest mix cash with equity or earnouts, often paying half up front.
- **Fit.** Buyers pay more when an app fits what they already do well. AppNation says it is "willing to stretch valuations" when its strengths can quickly improve revenue.

RevenueCat's own data explains why buyers favour established apps: **69% of subscription revenue goes to apps launched before 2020**, and **the top quarter of apps grew 80% last year while the bottom quarter shrank 33%**. Scale and staying power, not novelty, earn the money.

The same logic applies at every size. For an individual buyer or small studio, a $10,000 app with $400 a month of proven revenue, stable reviews and an untested paywall is a better starting point than a blank Xcode project with a one-in-22 chance of reaching $10,000 a month.

7. Outlook 2027: ten predictions

10 predictions for 2027, each tied to the number that will prove it right or wrong.

These are AppAcquire's views, based on the evidence above. Each is labelled with what would prove it right.

1. App store spending passes $200 billion. Growth near 2025's 10% a year carries consumer spending past $200 billion in 2027. Non-game apps widen their lead over games. *Measure: Sensor Tower's State of Mobile 2028.*

2. AI app in-app revenue passes $10 billion. From a run rate above $8 billion in 2026, AI apps pass $10 billion in 2027 even if their growth halves. ChatGPT stays the largest, but its share keeps falling as rivals close the gap. *Measure: Sensor Tower and Appfigures 2027 AI reports.*

3. Launches keep rising; the share of new apps that succeed keeps falling. AI coding tools push monthly subscription app launches well past 15,000. The proportion reaching $10,000 a month within two years falls below RevenueCat's current 4.6%. *Measure: RevenueCat State of Subscription Apps 2027.*

4. More founders sell than shut down. With more apps than ever and fewer winners, selling a small app becomes the normal exit for indie founders. We expect listings on AppAcquire to grow faster than app launches. *Measure: AppAcquire quarterly market data.*

5. Untapped monetisation becomes the heart of app valuations. Superwall's data shows how far small apps sit from the top tier on paywall conversion, pricing and testing. Buyers will increasingly value apps on what a better paywall, regional pricing and web checkout could add, not just on today's revenue, and the best-prepared sellers will show that upside themselves. *Measure: sale multiples in AppAcquire's app exits database.*

6. Web checkout goes mainstream for mid-size apps. Already used by 31% of apps at $500,000+ a month, web checkout spreads to apps earning $10,000–$100,000 a month. Apps without it start to be valued lower. *Measure: Superwall web checkout adoption by tier.*

7. Weekly plans pass 60% of subscription revenue. Weekly plans rose from 43% to 56% of subscription revenue in two years. Short commitments suit AI apps, whose users churn faster. *Measure: Adapty State of In-App Subscriptions 2027.*

8. AI churn becomes the defining problem for AI apps. A 41% revenue-per-payer premium with 30% faster churn is fragile. The AI apps that win in 2027 will be those that cut churn, through annual plans with real discounts, habit-forming features and specialised use cases rather than general chat. *Measure: RevenueCat AI churn and retention figures.*

9. Android-to-iOS arbitrage becomes a buyer strategy. Android apps make up most of the small-app supply, but iOS earns nearly three times more per install. Buyers who port proven Android apps to iOS capture value sellers have not priced in. *Measure: iOS share of AppAcquire listings and sales.*

10. App studios move down-market. App studios such as BlueThrone, AppNation and Leadtech Group already buy apps to grow them. In 2027, more small studios and individual operators will apply the same model to apps worth $10,000 to $1 million: buy established apps, fix the paywall, raise prices, cut costs. *Measure: buyer requests and completed sales on AppAcquire.*

8. What this means

For founders and sellers. If your app has stopped growing, selling is likely worth more than you think, and certainly more than shutting it down. Subscription apps with real retention sell for 3.5× to 6× earnings, so a well-run app with loyal subscribers is a real asset to a buyer. Apps with clean transfers, working web checkout and documented growth tests command the strongest prices.

For buyers and investors. Small independent apps are listed for under two years of revenue, at or below the bottom of the ranges reported for closed app deals. Most have never had a dedicated paywall test, regional pricing or a web checkout. The playbook from Superwall's top tier (more tests, higher prices, longer trials, web payments) is the upside.

For the industry. The app economy is getting bigger and more concentrated at the same time. Making it easier for apps to change hands keeps good products alive when their founders move on, and puts them with owners who can grow them.

Methodology and sources

AppAcquire marketplace data. All active listings on AppAcquire on 24 November 2026 (167 apps). Sold and removed listings are excluded. Prices are sellers' asking prices in US dollars. Revenue multiples are asking price divided by annual revenue (monthly revenue × 12), for apps reporting at least $100 a month in revenue; multiples above 100× are excluded as noise. 42 listings met that threshold. The middle half is the 25th to 75th percentile. Years to earn back the price assumes revenue stays flat and ignores running costs. Live figures: appacquire.com/market.

Sale-price benchmarks. Closed-deal multiples come from FE International (bands from more than 1,500 closed technology deals, on adjusted earnings), RevenueCat's interviews with ten app acquirers (EBITDA) and Empire Flippers' trailing-twelve-month averages (net profit, all online businesses). Large deal values come from EHVM Capital's apps M&A database. These sources measure earnings differently, so their ranges show orders of magnitude, not like-for-like comparisons.

AppAcquire projections. Our 2027 spending projection applies 2025's 10% growth rate to Sensor Tower's 2025 total of $167 billion for two years ($167bn × 1.1 × 1.1 ≈ $202bn). Our AI projection doubles Sensor Tower's projected first-half 2026 AI app revenue (over $4 billion) for a 2026 run rate above $8 billion, then applies growth of 25% for 2027. That is well under half the current pace: 36% growth from one half-year to the next works out at about 85% a year. These are our estimates, not figures from those organisations.

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Third-party figures are those organisations' estimates, reported as published. Each organisation measures differently, so figures from different sources should not be added together.

About AppAcquire

AppAcquire is a marketplace for buying and selling iOS and Android apps. Sellers can verify revenue through RevenueCat, Stripe, App Store Connect, Google Play and other sources, and every sale is paid through Escrow.com, with AppAcquire charging 1.5% to each side. Live market data is published hourly at appacquire.com/market.

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