Updates to Play Console for Android developer verification: A first look

August 2025

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Continuing to keep Android open and safe

Starting in September 2026, Android apps must be registered to a developer with a verified identity in order to be installed by users on certified Android devices.

This change will be first introduced in a few countries before continuing to roll out globally.

Android is introducing this additional layer of security to make installing apps safer for everyone, help reduce impersonation, and better protect users from malware and scams. Read more in the announcement blog post.

What this means for existing Google Play developers

If you distribute apps on Google Play and already have a Play Console account, you can complete all of the necessary steps to meet these requirements in Play Console, including for any apps that you distribute outside of Play.

For most Play developers, completing these new verifications in Play Console will be straightforward

You've likely already completed key steps in Play Console, and we'll automatically register most of your Play apps for you.

- **Identity verification**
  If you've completed Play Console's developer verification requirements, you'll have already completed this step.

- **Package name registration**
  In most cases, we'll automatically register your Play apps. You'll only need to take action in specific situations, such as if a package name has more installs outside of Play, than from Play.

You only need to create an Android Developer Console account if you **only** distribute Android apps outside of Google Play

If you want to distribute apps...	
Only on Google Play	Use your existing Play Console account
Both on and outside of Google Play	Use your existing Play Console account, where there will be a new option to register your non-Play apps and keys
Only outside of Google Play	Create an account in the new Android Developer Console

If you only distribute Android apps outside of Google Play, see this document to learn more, and for a first look at the new Android Developer Console

An overview of the Android developer verification experience in Play Console

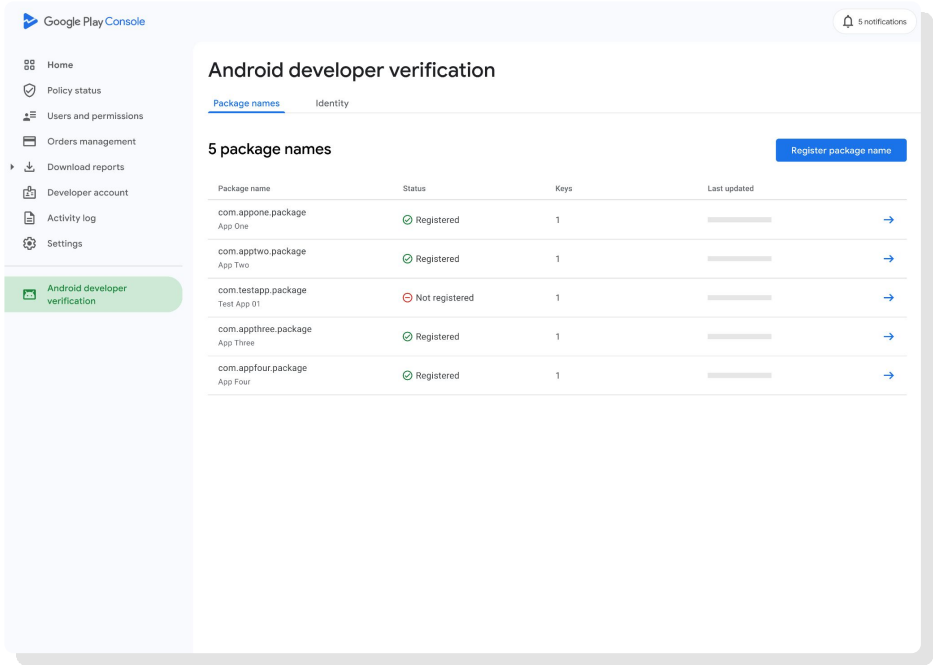
[Disclaimer] This is an early preview of the changes we're making to Play Console for Android developer verification, to help you to understand what's coming, and to prepare for the requirements. Some details may change.

Play Console will be updated to fully support Android developer verification

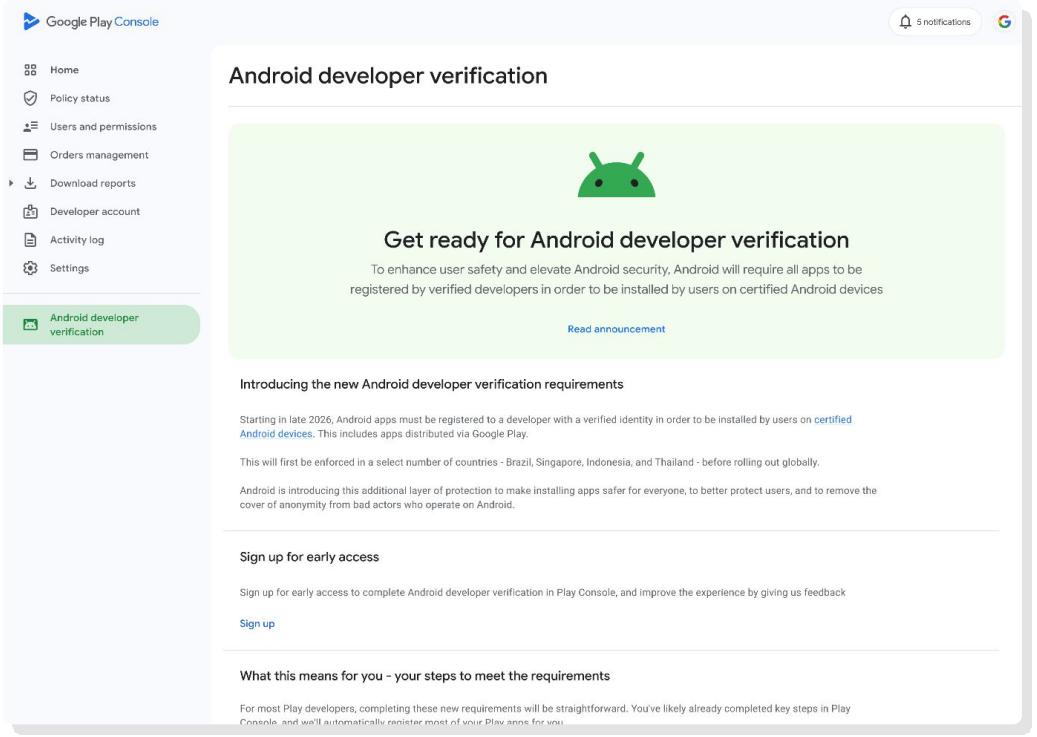
A new **Android developer verification** page will be available in Play Console

This is where you'll be able to:

- register your app's package names, check the registration status of your package names, and add additional keys
- confirm your Android developer identity details



Ahead of March 2026 general availability for the developer verification process, it will serve as a home for you to see key information and dates



Step 1/3:

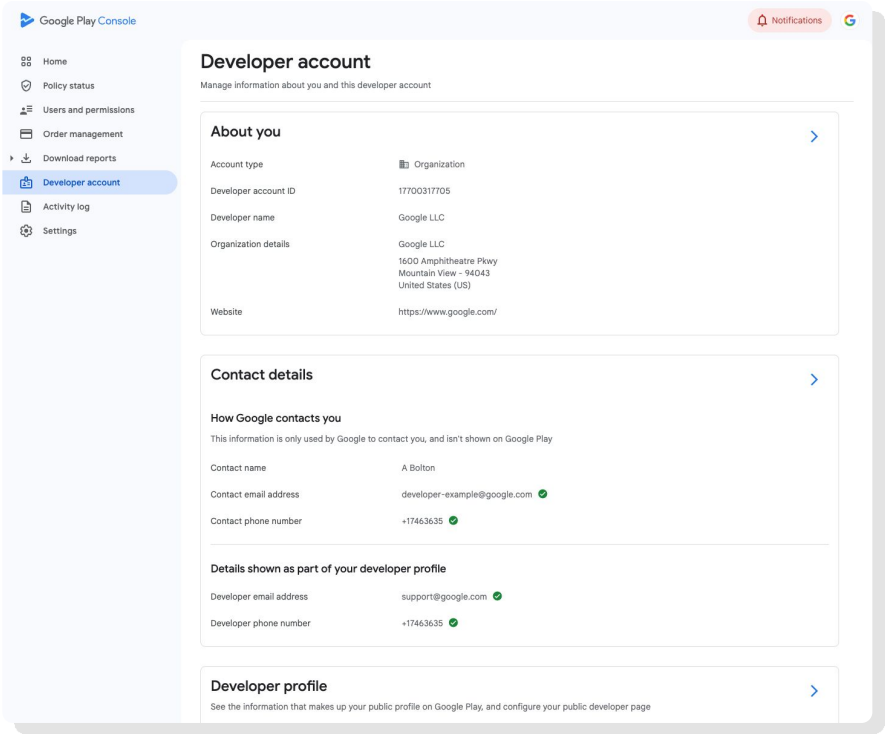
Verifying your identity information

Most existing Play developers have already completed this step. We'll also make it easy for new Play developers by automatically using the information they provide as part of creating a Play Console account.

Existing Play developers

Nearly all existing Google Play developers have already completed the identity verifications necessary to meet the new Android developer verification requirements, as part of complying with the updated Play Console requirements policy.

Developers that have not completed these verifications will be required to do so before they are able to register package names.

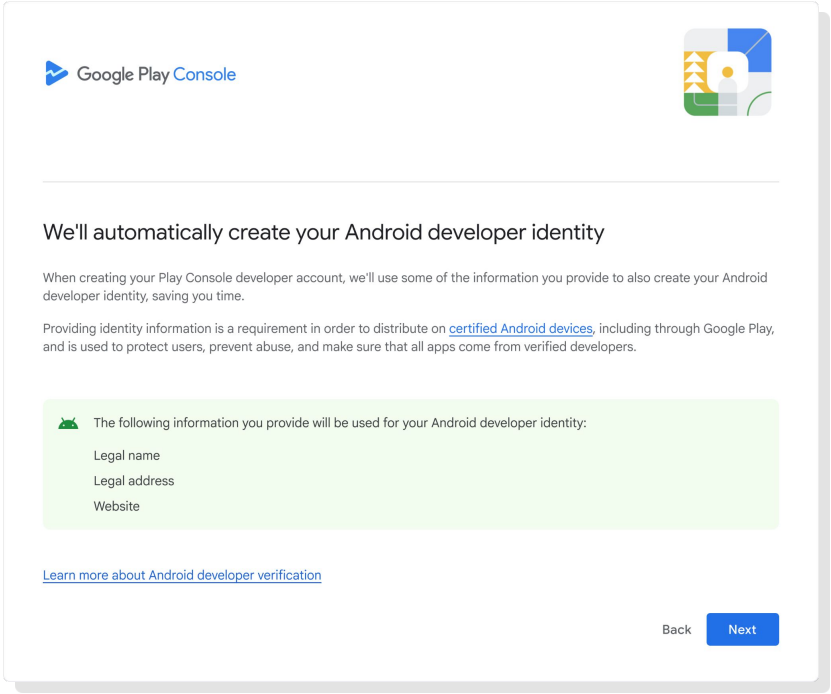


New Play developers

All new Play developers must already complete developer identity verifications before they can publish apps on Google Play.

They provide and verify this information during the Play Console account registration process, which you can read more about in the Play Console Help Center.

We're updating the Play Console account registration process so that your Android developer identity will automatically be created using the information you provide and verify.



Step 2/3:

Registering package names for your Play apps

The process for registering your Play apps is different, depending on whether you're registering a brand new package name that is not previously known to Android, or a known package name

Existing Play apps

We'll automatically register package names for most existing Play apps

To meet the Android developer verification requirements, all Android apps must be registered to a developer with a verified identity, including apps distributed via Google Play.

To simplify meeting these requirements for Google Play developers, we'll automatically register package names for most Play apps using existing information that we have. We expect to be able to register up to 98% of all Play apps this way.

You'll need to manually register apps that couldn't be registered automatically

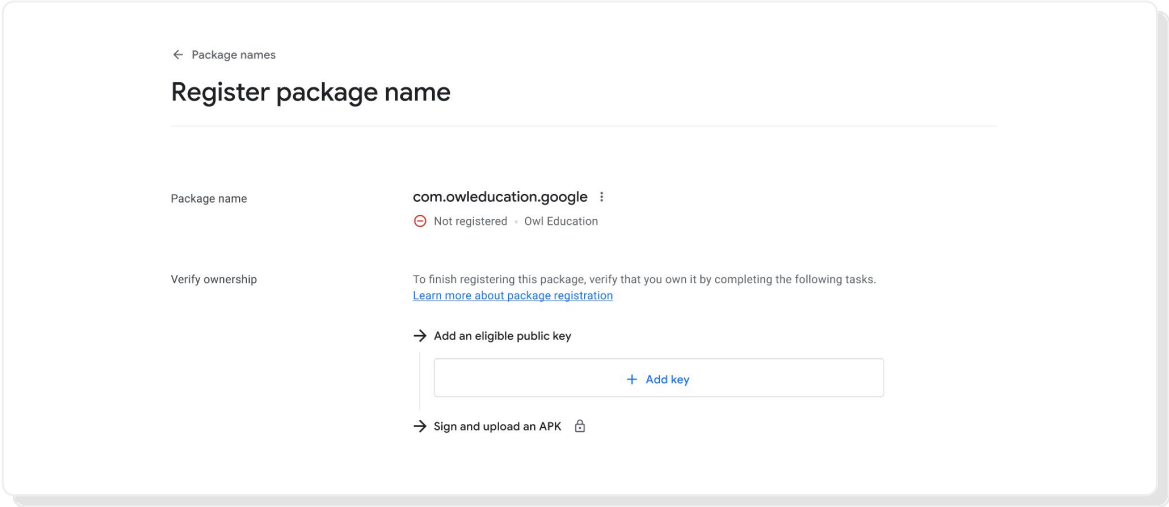
In the ~2% of cases where a package name can't be registered, you'll need to complete a manual step to verify your ownership of the app's private signing key. Apps that require manual registration include those that have been suspended due to policy enforcement, and apps where the known key is not eligible for registration without a special request (for instance, if the package name is primarily distributed on Android devices signed with a more prevalent key unknown to Play).

In March 2026, Play Console will be updated to clearly communicate the package name registration status of each of your Play apps. If an app's package name could not be automatically registered, you'll be guided to register it in Play Console, on the new Android developer verification page.

This involves completing a manual step to verify your ownership of the app's private signing key

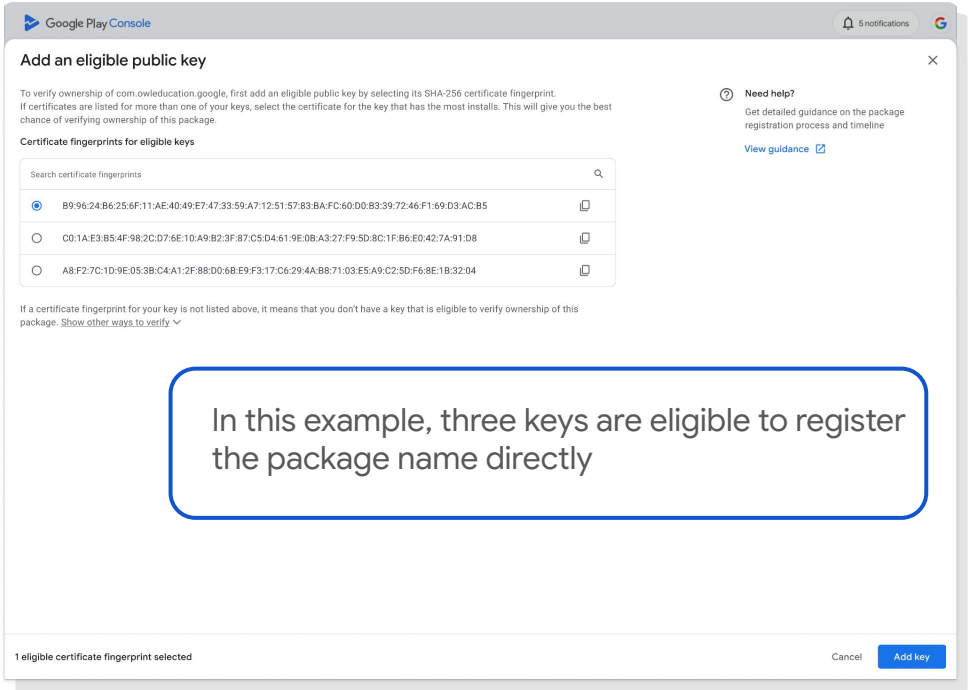
For each of your Play apps that require manual registration, a draft package name will be created for you

Start by selecting **Add key**



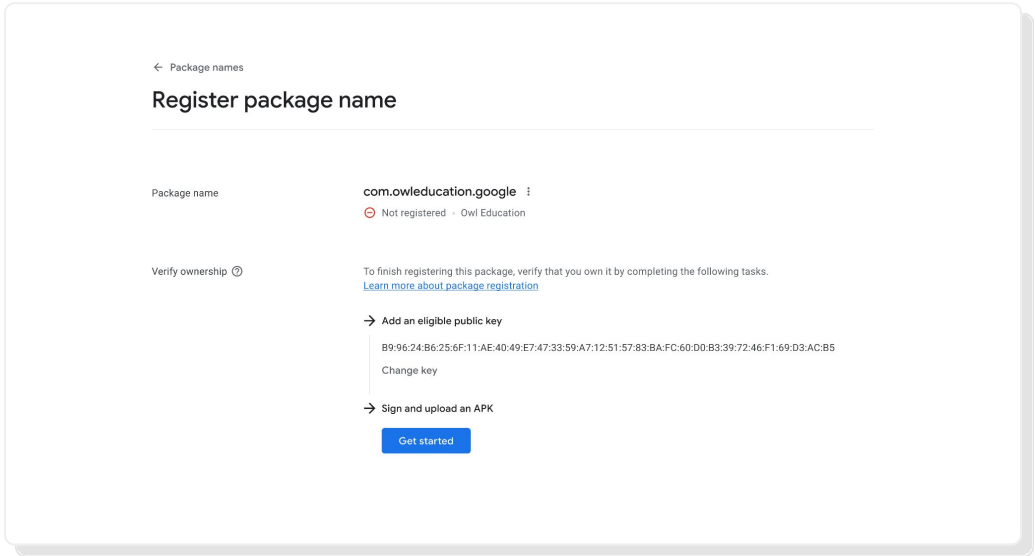
You'll then select your app's public certificate

In most cases, you'll see your app's public certificate fingerprint in the list of eligible keys. Just select it, and then select **Add key**.



Once you've added a public key, it's added to your draft package name

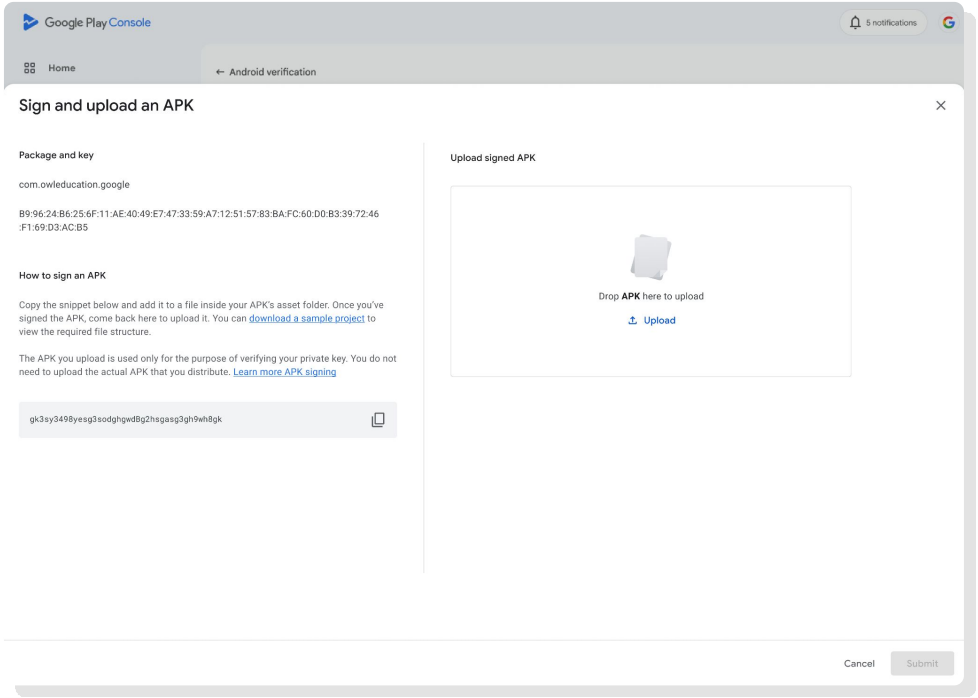
To finish verifying ownership of your package name, you now need to sign and upload an APK



To finish verifying ownership of your package name, sign an APK with your private key, and upload it

Play Console will provide you with a snippet which you need to copy and add to an APK's asset folder. You'll then need to sign the APK, and upload it in Play Console. We'll provide a sample project so you can see the required file structure.

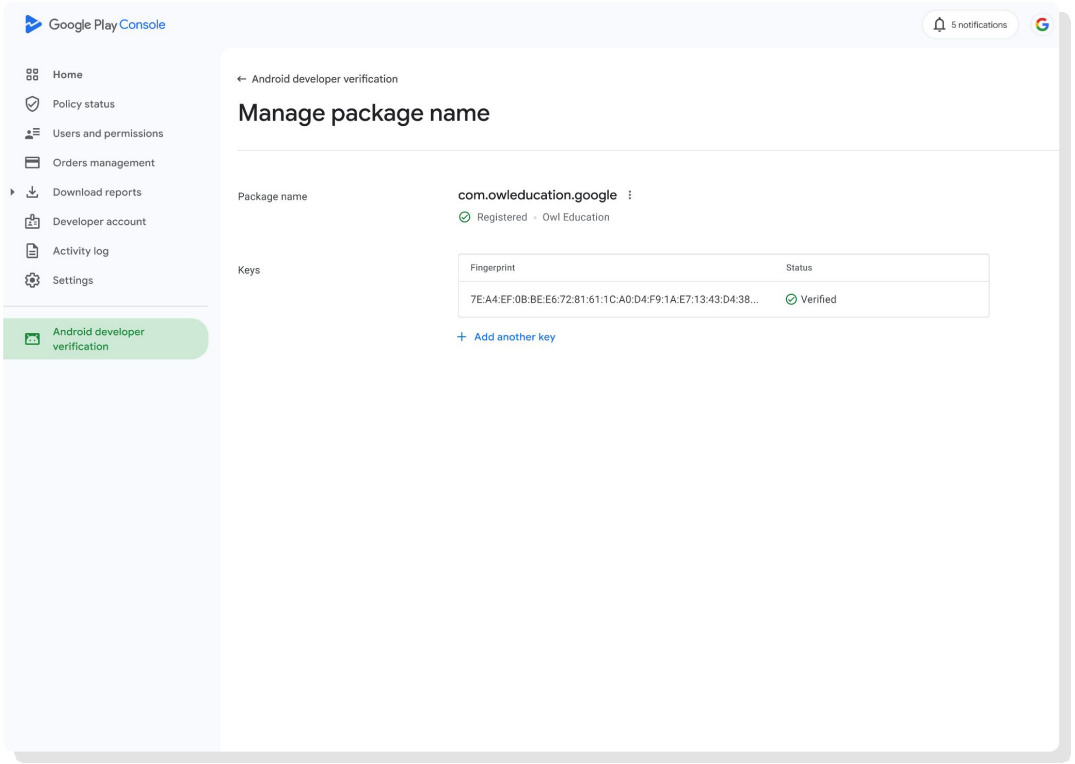
This APK is used only for the purpose of verifying ownership, and you won't need to upload the actual APK that you distribute.



Android will check and register your ownership of the package name

You'll receive an email once your package name has been successfully registered, and Play Console will communicate the registration status of your package name and keys.

If you have have more than one key for your package name, you'll be able to add more at this point.



A note about eligible keys

In more complex scenarios, an app may use multiple signing keys, or a package name may be used by multiple developers. In these cases, the keys that can be used for registration are determined by a set of rules designed to minimize package name duplication:

Priority for majority key holder: The developer whose signing key accounts for over 50% of total known installs has priority for registration. All other developers will be required to submit a request to use the package name.

Eligibility for keys with 50+ installs: If no single key has over 50% of installs, then all keys with 50 or more installs can be used to register the package name. Developers with keys with fewer than 50 installs will be required to submit a request to use the package name.

Eligibility for keys under 50 installs: If no keys meet the 50-install threshold, all known keys can be used for registration on a first-come, first-served basis. As soon as one developer registers the package name, other developers would need to submit a request to use the package name.

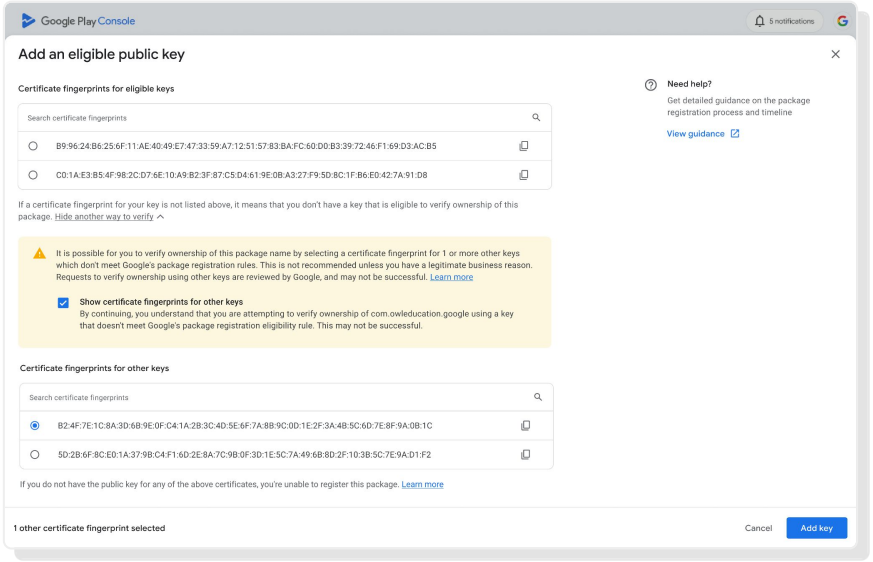
Remember, Play apps will be automatically registered ahead of the launch in March 2026 where the signing key is eligible to register the package name, according to the rules above.

For example, in this scenario, your signing key is not eligible to register the package name

In this scenario (shown on the right), your signing key has fewer than 50 installs, but another developer outside of Google Play has keys with over 50 installs.

Another example would be where your key has a few hundred installs, but another developer using the same package name outside of Play has a key with thousands of installs, making them the majority key holder.

In both of these cases, you'd be required to submit a request to use the package name. Unless you have a legitimate reason to share the package name, we recommend adopting a new one.



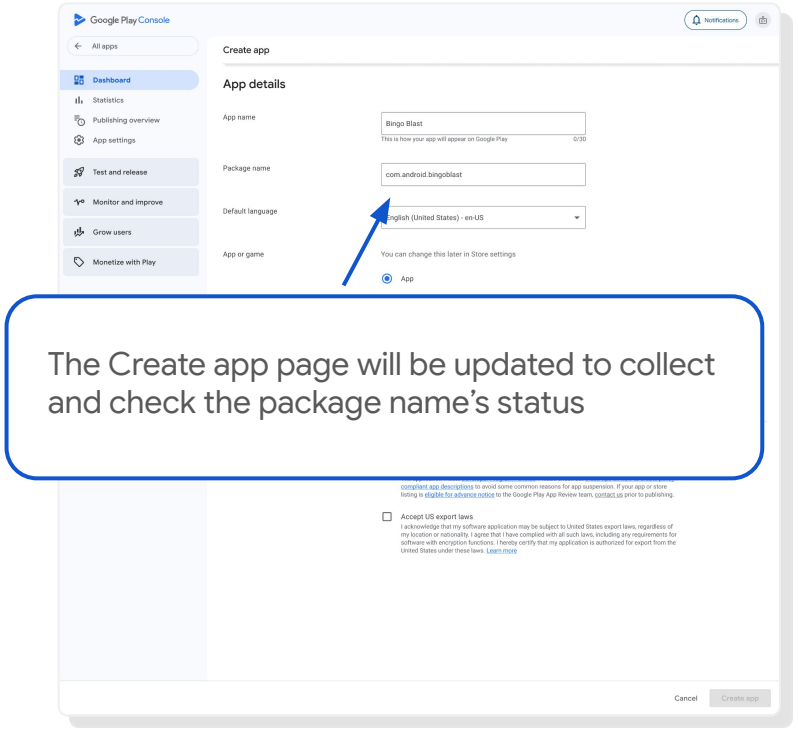
New Play apps

The Play Console's 'Create app' flow will be updated to automatically register package names for new apps

When you create a new app in the Google Play Console after the launch of Android developer verification in March 2026, the Play Console will automatically register it to your developer account.

If the package name has never been seen on Android before, it will be registered as part of creating your app. This is because all new Play apps use Play app signing, with Google managing your app's signing keys.

If you have already used the package name—for off-Play distribution or if the app was installed on a certified Android device prior to creating the app on Google Play—you will be required to prove ownership of the private key that was used to sign your app, in the same way that you prove ownership for Play apps that can't be automatically registered.



Step 3:

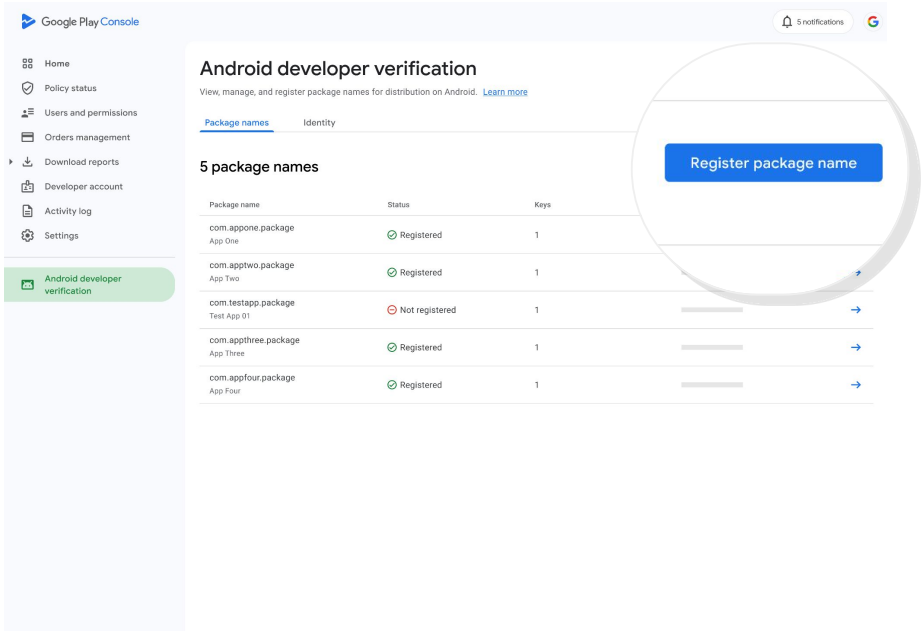
Registering package names for apps that you distribute outside of Play

You can register package names for any apps that you distribute outside of Play, directly in Play Console

For brand new package names that you want to register, you'll simply provide the package name, and the public certificate.

For apps that you already distribute outside of Play which have a single signing key, you'll need to select your public fingerprint certificate, and complete the required proof of ownership.

For package names with multiple keys, potentially used by different developers, eligibility for registration is determined by the package name registration rules. The process for registering is the same as proving ownership for Play apps that can't be automatically registered.



It will also be straightforward to register any brand new package names for apps that you distribute outside of Play in the future

You'll simply provide the package name and your public key, by entering its SHA-256 certificate fingerprint

Get early access to Android developer verification in Play Console

If you're an existing Play developer, you can sign up for early access in Play Console here

Have a question or feedback about Android developer verification in Play Console?

Share it here and we'll review all submissions and update our resources to include answers to common questions.

Thank you for taking the time to step through this guide. We hope it was helpful in giving a first look at the upcoming Android developer verification requirements and experience in Play Console.

Thank you for your continued efforts to make the Android ecosystem safer for users.