

State of Mobile App Pain Points 2026

What 136,898 App Store and Google Play reviews reveal about what to build. The reviews are overwhelmingly negative: 52.2 percent are 1-star, and the top complaints (crashes, ads, pricing, missing basics) are all self-inflicted. Reliability and fairness beat features. Here is the data.

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136,898

App Store & Google Play reviews

7,758

apps analyzed

33,228

documented pain points

12,777

requested feature gaps

This report is built on observed complaint data, not surveys: 136,898 real mobile app reviews across 7,758 apps, distilled by AI (7,756 analyses) into deduplicated pain points and feature gaps. It is one slice of BigIdeasDB's broader library of 1M+ user complaints. Across this dataset, 52.2 percent of reviews are 1-star and 67 percent are 1 or 2 stars.

The score distribution: apps are failing at the basics

Star Rating	Reviews	Share
1 star	71,521	52.2%
2 stars	20,234	14.8%
3 stars	7,746	5.7%
4 stars	8,365	6.1%
5 stars	29,032	21.2%

1-star reviews outnumber 5-star reviews more than two to one, and the 3-star middle has all but collapsed. Sentiment is bimodal: users either love an app or actively resent it.

What mobile app users complain about most

Clustering all 33,228 extracted pain points into themes. The top four are self-inflicted choices a builder controls.

Pain-Point Theme	Documented Mentions
Crashes, bugs & freezes	4,797
Intrusive ads	3,819
Pricing & billing complaints	3,475
Missing features & limitations	2,599
Login & account access	1,857
Sync, backup & data loss	1,707
Poor customer support	1,476
Confusing UI & usability	1,335
Slow performance & battery drain	686
Notification problems	465

The most-complained-about app categories

Ranked by review volume, with average rating and 1-star share. Limited to categories with at least 1,500 reviews.

Category	Reviews	Avg Rating /5	1-Star Share
Health & Fitness	8,687	2.73	40.7%
Productivity	7,305	2.88	36.9%
Lifestyle	4,795	2.48	48.9%
Business	3,915	2.16	57.8%
Utilities	3,332	2.16	56.2%
Finance	3,167	2.20	56.7%
Games	2,904	2.10	54.1%
Music	2,799	2.46	46.0%
Travel	2,680	2.25	56.4%
Education	2,656	2.36	48.3%
Entertainment	2,593	1.94	61.5%
Photo & Video	2,492	1.94	60.9%

The worst-rated categories (systemic gaps)

Categories failing systemically. Average ratings below 2.3 with more than half the reviews at a single star are the most attractive for a new, reliable entrant.

Category	Avg Rating /5	1-Star Share
Entertainment	1.94	61.5%
Photo & Video	1.94	60.9%
Sports	1.99	59.5%
News	2.04	56.4%
Games	2.10	54.1%
Business	2.16	57.8%
Utilities	2.16	56.2%
Finance	2.20	56.7%
Travel	2.25	56.4%
Education	2.36	48.3%

The features users beg for

Clustering the 12,777 documented feature requests. Practical, not flashy.

Requested Feature Theme	Documented Requests
Customization & personalization	905
Search, filtering & organization	807
Flexible pricing & payment	673
Sync, backup & data portability	661
Reporting & analytics	591
Integrations	507
Notifications & reminders	364
Collaboration & sharing	214
Offline mode	182

What users actually say

Real 1-star reviews, anonymized to platform only.

"App has been frozen, not working for two weeks. Every time an update is made, it freezes the app for a long period of time."

Google Play review

"I heavily rely on the sleepcasts and it keeps crashing. Very frustrating when it's an expensive app."

Google Play review

"Notifications don't work on most of my tasks. About 2/3 of the time I set a task reminder I do not get a notification. I've verified notifications are enabled."

Google Play review

"Deleting a session should not be a premium feature. I was going to buy premium but decided against it after discovering this detail. How greedy can y'all be."

Google Play review

"Can not login even though credentials and passwords are correct. Same credentials successfully log in on the website. But the app does not login."

Google Play review

How to use this to build an app people want

Win on reliability first. Crashes and failed syncs are the number-one theme. A boringly stable app in a crashy category is an immediate differentiator. **Monetize without resentment:** an honest free tier and no paywalls on basic actions buy goodwill competitors have burned. **Enter a hated category, not an empty one:** Business, Utilities, Finance, Entertainment, and Photo and Video combine high volume with sub-2.3 ratings. **Validate before you build:** read the actual reviews behind a theme; if dozens of users describe the same failure, you have found your MVP.

Methodology

All figures are queried directly from BigIdeasDB's production database in June 2026. The dataset is 136,898 Apple App Store and Google Play reviews across 7,758 apps, part of a broader library of 1M+ user complaints. Each app was run through an AI analysis (7,756 total) that extracted 33,228 pain points and 12,777 feature gaps, each tied to verbatim review text. Category ratings and 1-star shares are computed by joining each review to its app and aggregating by genre, limited to categories with at least 1,500 reviews. Themes are grouped by clustering the extracted labels. Quotes are real 1-star review excerpts, anonymized to platform only, with no app names, user names, or identifying information. Figures are rounded for readability.

Explore the reviews behind every number. Search 1M+ complaints at bigideasdb.com