A Day Without Business – Charlie Monroe
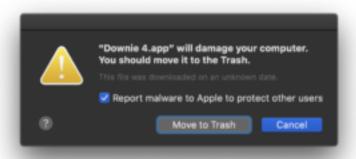
by Charlie Monroe

4-5 minutes

On Aug 4, 2020 I woke up to a slightly different world – I had lost my business as it seemed. Full inbox of reports of my apps not launching (crashing on launch) and after not too long I found out that when I sign into my Apple developer account I can no longer see that I would be enrolled into Apple's developer program – au contraire – it shows a button for me to enroll, which I tried clicking, but only got a message that I can't do that.

After more investigation, I found out that the distribution certificates were revoked – evidently by Apple as no one else has access to them and I was sound asleep when all this happened. Each macOS app these days needs to be codesigned using an Apple-issued certificate so that the app will flawlessly work on all computers. When Apple revokes the certificate, it's generally a remove kill-switch for the apps.

I got really frightened as all of sudden, no user was able to use my apps anymore. Though interestingly, I was still able to connect to my App Store account and my apps were there and working. Anyway, there is (to my knowledge) no hotline for developers that you can call. As it was 7AM (all times are CET), Apple's contact form only showed the option to send them an email – so I did. At 9AM with my teeth grinding, I went for the phone option where you leave a number and

they call you back. Didn't.

At this point you no longer know whether you have a business or not. Should I quickly go and apply for a job? Or should I try to found another company and distribute the apps under it? What should I do? The most damaging to me is the message shown to user:

This is the message macOS shows to all users who try to launch my app. That it will damage their computer with a checkbox to report malware enabled. Average user immediately goes nuts. I fully understand that the entire idea here is that Apple can remotely kill malware and to keep the user on the safe side, but can't they differentiate between individual cases? Can't they add revocation reason and in case they just revoke the developer's certificate for non-malware reasons show something along the lines "This app needs an update from the developer, please contact the developer."

I really find the above borderlining on slander.

On top of it, I lived in fear of what's coming next. Imagine coming to work, all your stuff in a box on your desk, no one telling you why, but tells you to hang around and hope. This is really hard emotionally and very stressful.

Fortunately, possibly thanks to the traction the story got and all the support from everyone I got (for which I am infinitely grateful), after almost 24 hours after 10PM, I got my account re-instated. ~~Without a~~

~~word from Apple. No "hey sorry, an intern tripped over a wire and unplugged a server", or something similar. Nothing. No apology (which I now want printed on Tim Cook's ass with Phil Schiller kissing it). No offer to compensate for the lost income or the lost time as I will now need to recompile, resign, redistribute everything. Nothing. Nada.~~ Edit: Apple has called and apologized for the complications. The issue was caused by my account being erroneously flagged by automated processes

as malicious and was put on hold.

What to do next?

I am really sorry for all inconvenience this has caused to my users. I fully understand that many of you use my apps on daily basis and they are in your everyday workflow. I really wish I could have gotten you up and running sooner, but it's still honestly sooner than I thought.

You will need to redownload your copies of Downie, Permute, Eon and UctoX from my [website (https://software.charliemonroe.net/)](https://software.charliemonroe.net/) and Setapp users will get updated copies via Setapp.

Older versions (Permute 2 and Downie 3) are available on their respective websites under the FAQ section – you can access it by clicking on FAQ button on the right side of your screen.

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