Google Play celebrates first birthday

March 7 2013

Chris Yerga, of Google, introduces some of the features of Google Play on June 27, 2012. Google Play has turned a year old and the Android-focused rival to Apple's iTunes celebrated with deals on books, games, music, movies and apps.

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The launch of Google Play on March 6 of last year marked the rebirth of Android Market, a virtual store devoted to content for smartphones or tablets powered by the Google-backed software.

Google Play now boasts millions of e-books and songs along with more than 700,000 apps.

"Google Play has grown rapidly in the last year," vice president of digital content Jamie Rosenberg said in a blog post.

"We've partnered with all the major music companies, movie studios and publishers to bring you the music, movies, TV shows, books and magazines you love."

Apple has consistently been a priority for developers, who prioritize crafting mini-programs for iPhones, iPads, or iPod Touch devices before turning their attention to Android gadgets.

Not only do the legions of Apple device owners make an alluring market for developers, the company's tight control of operating software creates an environment in which apps can be made to run across devices.

Smartphone and tablet makers get Android free of charge and individualize the operating system for devices, leaving developers facing a "fragmented" market requiring many versions of the same app.

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Citation: Google Play celebrates first birthday (2013, March 7) retrieved 24 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2013-03-google-celebrates-birthday.html

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