

Apple pulls 'gay cure' app from iTunes

March 23 2011, by Glenn Chapman



A group that advocates "curing" gays of same-sex attractions said Wednesday that its iPhone application had been yanked from Apple's online iTunes shop.

A group that advocates "curing" gays of same-sex attractions said Wednesday that its iPhone application had been yanked from Apple's online iTunes shop.

"We are extremely disappointed to learn of Apple's decision to deny equal representation in the public square," Exodus International president Alan Chambers said in a release.

Exodus described itself as a global Christian ministry "helping those struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction to live a life congruent with biblical teaching."

Its free iPhone program linked users to Exodus information including

videos, podcasts, a Twitter feed, and the group's page at social networking service Facebook.

"We removed the Exodus International app from the App Store because it violated our developer guidelines by being offensive to large groups of people," Apple spokesman Tom Neumayr told AFP.

Apple removed the software from the App Store late Tuesday, according to Neumayr.

Apple was under pressure to yank the so-called "gay cure" application from its iTunes shop for software for iPhone, iPad, and iPod devices.

As of Wednesday, more than 150,000 people had electronically signed an online petition at a change.org website calling for Apple to dump the Exodus application.

"This app is a slap in the face to Apple's customer base and serves as a platform to spread misinformation and blatant anti-gay bigotry," said Truth Wins Out (TWO) executive director Wayne Besen.

"It is particularly troublesome because the app focuses on exploiting the fears of desperate and vulnerable gay and lesbian youth."

Truth Wins Out is an organization founded to debunk what it sees as a harmful myth that homosexuality is something that can be cured and produce "ex-gays."

"Apple made a wise and responsible decision to dump an offensive app that demonized gay and lesbian people," Besen said.

Exodus advocates freeing oneself from homosexuality through religion and has publicly condemned the campaign to remove its application

from iTunes as an assault on free speech and an improper spin on the application's purpose.

"This is not a question of free speech, but of stopping a virulently anti-gay organization from peddling false speech at the expense of vulnerable LGBT youth," said TWO spokesman John Becker, referring to young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

"We are grateful that Exodus has lost at least one platform with which to disperse its dangerous message."

Chambers charged that Exodus has been denied a presence at an App Store that features programs tailored for the gay community as well as podcasts from a Gay Christian Network.

"Ultimately, this issue comes down to what we, as a culture, believe about equality and the freedom to express our beliefs," Chambers said.

"It is our hope that Apple will reconsider its decision."

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