

Apple Pulls So-Called 'Gay Cure' iPhone App

In the face of an online petition and hundreds of complaints, Apple on Tuesday night pulled an iPhone application widely known in secular circles as the "gay cure" app.

Exodus International, a Christian ministry that works to help people struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction break free, launched the app last month. Apple initially approved the app, which provided mobile access to information available on the ministry's Web site.

"We are extremely disappointed to learn of Apple's decision to deny equal representation in the public square," says Alan Chambers, president of Exodus International. "Discrimination of thought and belief obstructs essential dialogue and authentic diversity."

The drama started when Truth Wins Out, a non-profit group on a mission to fight anti-gay religious extremism, targeted the app. Truth Wins Out launched an online petition at to persuade Apple to remove the application from its App Store. The petition saw more than 150,000 digital signatures in just two days.

"Apple made a wise and responsible decision to dump an offensive app that demonized gay and lesbian people," says Wayne Besen, executive director of Truth Wins Out. "The real winners today are LGBT youth who are safer and less at risk for receiving Exodus' malice and misinformation."

Apple told Exodus International's Web developer that the company deemed the app "offensive to large groups of people" and therefore removed it. Now, Exodus is encouraging people to contact Apple and ask them to recognize the diversity of beliefs within its customer base.

Chambers notes that Apple provides hundreds of apps specific to the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) community and has made the Gay Christian Network's podcasts available on its iTunes store.

"Ultimately, this issue comes down to what we, as a culture, believe about equality and the freedom to express our beliefs," says Chambers. "It is our hope that Apple will reconsider its decision and allow our organization to be part of the ongoing conversation about the challenging issues many face today."

This isn't the first time Apple has caved in to pressure to remove Christian-oriented apps. In November, Apple removed the application submitted by The Manhattan Declaration, a group of Christian leaders who support biblical teaching on marriage, as a result of pressure from gay activist groups.

Apple could not immediately be reached for comment, but the iPhone-maker did publicly acknowledge in news reports that it pulled the app because it "violates developer guidelines by being offensive to large groups of people."