

Policy flaws pour cold water on local mobile app industry

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Published at 10:05 pm February 8th, 2020



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Education, religion, health and entertainment apps are the most popular ones among the locally developed apps

Lack of need-based applications, absence of proper content policies, one-off investment and slow internet connectivity are hindering the expected growth of local mobile app market, market players have said.

Although a huge number of mobile apps are developed and downloaded every day, people often shy from using them in their everyday life for their poor usability and lack of proper market communication, they say.

Education, religion, health and entertainment apps are the most popular ones among the locally developed apps.

According to the US-based tech rating firm Clutch.co, currently there are 541 local mobile app developer firms in the country, serving both government and private sector clients.

In many cases, foreign app firms are engaged with local app technology firms as technology partners or co-investors.

Google Play Store, bKash, MyGP, ringID, Robi, Nagad and iflix are some of the local mobile apps that are growing fast keeping pace with their popularity. Around 10 million of their apps have so far been downloaded.

Mossaddique Ahsan, managing director of one of the leading app firms, Beyond ITL, finds the dropout rate of local app users strikingly high for multiple reasons, including lack of initiatives on their parts in market research to improve and develop.

“One of the major reasons is the clients’ unwillingness for research on developing apps to cater to their targeted clients. That is why you will see a huge number of unused downloaded apps,” he told Dhaka Tribune.

Mossaddique points out that a popular app sometimes cannot sustain its market demand due mainly to its inadequate content materials.

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So, he puts emphasis on a proper content policy for the mobile app industry.

Business Development Officer Nurul Amin of TOP of Stack, another leading app firm, says most of the clients invest in developing apps rather than maintenance and tech upgradation.

“The trend demotivates a huge number of users. Companies of such apps spend very less to upgrade their applications, ignoring users’ feedback,” he said.

According to him, the cost of developing an app in the country ranges between Tk50,000 and Tk10 lakh.

“It depends on demand and features of the apps,” said Amin.

Industry insiders say the app market is also facing challenges as majority of the mobile phone users in the country are now using feature phones, instead of smart phones.

As per the latest data of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), the total number of feature phones and smart phones was 2.5 crore and 29.67 lakh respectively in 2019.

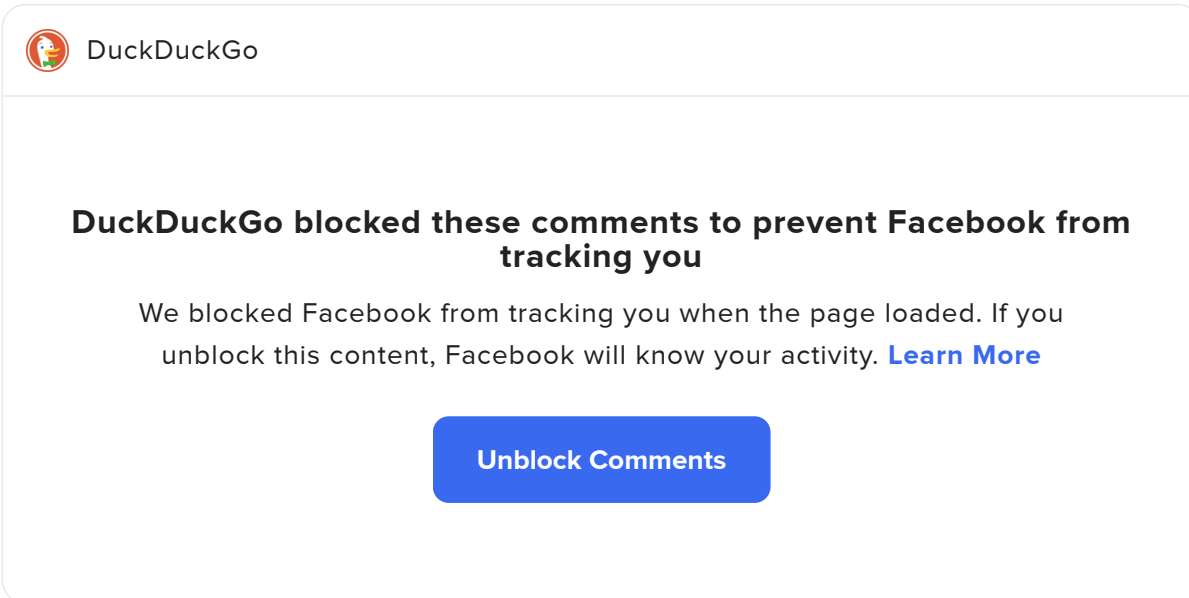
“As the 4G internet technology is not available everywhere in the country, the internet penetration is low. The areas where 4G is available also experience poor network. Once a proper internet eco system is in place, the rest of the issues will be solved automatically,” said Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) President Syed Almas Kabir.

He says the low penetration of smart phones is also a barrier.

A BTRC report released last February showed that all three private mobile operators failed to maintain the required 4G (fourth generation) speed of 7Mbps.

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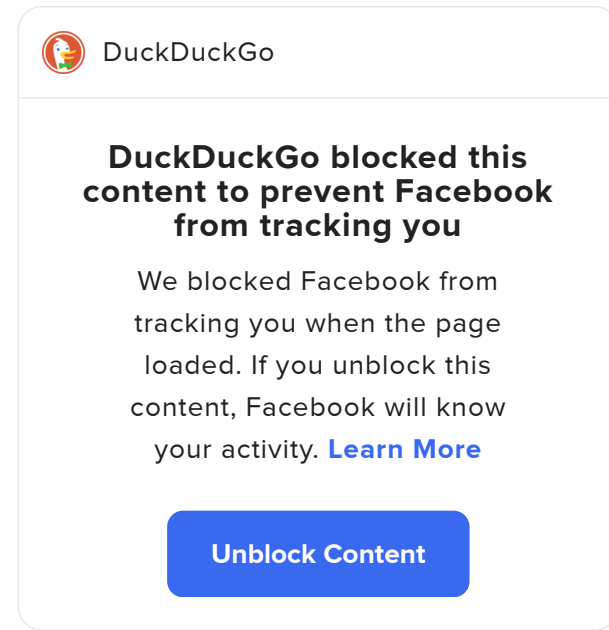


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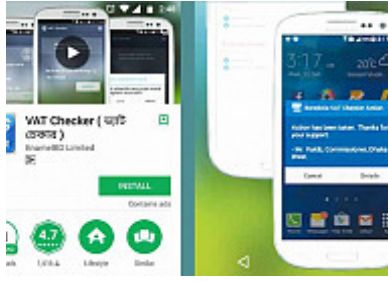
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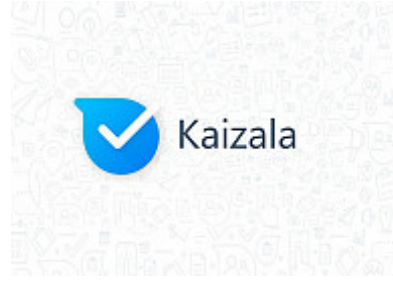
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