

# Newsletter 12 May 2021

## External Storage

### Introduction

Google is stepping up its campaign against external storage. I thought I had until August to stop using it, but on 14 April I received the message shown below. It seems to give a cut off date of 5 May, which is much earlier than I had anticipated.

### Message

Starting 5 May, you must let us know why your app requires broad storage access

We've detected that your app contains the `requestLegacyExternalStorage` flag in the manifest file of one or more of your app bundles or APKs.

Developers with apps on devices running Android 11+ must use scoped storage to give users better access control over their device storage. To release your app on Android 11 or newer after 5 May, you must either:

- Update your app to use more privacy-friendly best practices, such as the storage access framework or Media Store API
- Update your app to declare the All files access (`MANAGE_EXTERNAL_STORAGE`) permission in the manifest file, and complete the All files access permission declaration in Play Console from 5 May
- Remove the All files access permission from your app entirely

For apps targeting Android 11, the `requestLegacyExternalStorage` flag will be ignored. You must use the All files access permission to retain broad access.

Apps requesting access to the All files access permission without a permitted use will be removed from Google Play, and you won't be able to publish updates.

### Epilogue

I read the last sentence of the email again on 11 May, and realised that Google Play was **threatening to delete my app completely**. I had no choice but to upload the beta version of the app into production, minus the Files screen. I will have to cope with any fallout as it arrives.

## App Bundles

These are Google's replacement for APKs, which are the traditional way to package apps for delivery and installation. It is planning to ban APKs altogether on Google Play, and at some point it may no longer be possible to sideload them either.

## Dropbox Updates

Dropbox has announced changes to its API, which have to be implemented by 30 September. True to form, they made the announcement without any adequate documentation.