Symbian Signed For Passive Content

What is classed as passive content?

In the context of Symbian Signed, 'Passive Content' is classed as a SIS file that does not contain any executable components. Typical passive content includes

- themes
- ebooks (e.g. pdb files)
- data (e.g. maps).

Please see the separate article on Symbian Signed for Flash Lite Applications

What are the benefits of signing passive content?

Once content is packaged up as SIS file the installer treats it as an application for installation. If you try to install unsigned content onto a phone the phone may give an application source untrusted message.

The message may vary depending on the user interface and the way the phone manufacturer configures the phone. This warning can undermine user confidence in the application, which discourages users from downloading content files and provides a less pleasant user experience. One of the benefits of using Symbian Signed for content developers is that when the SIS file installs on the device, the application will not give an 'application source untrusted' warning to the customer. Market channel owners (such as network operators, phone manufacturers and download distribution sites) are concerned about the end user experience. From their perspective it is better that the application is signed and some channels such as Preminet mandate this. It is up to the channel to define their policy on whether content must be Symbian Signed or not.

How do I get my content files signed?

To get content Symbian Signed you should follow the standard Symbian Signed process. Express Signed is the best option for Passive Content submissions.

Note that it may be worth contacting the test houses directly as they can offer discounts for testing larger bundles of applications or content. The cost of signing content files is substantially lower than signing applications that contain executable files.

Are the test criteria and testing process different for 'Passive Content' files?

Most of the test cases will not be applicable as there will be no executables contained in the content files. You should state that your submission is passive content when you make your submission, and should your application be selected for audit, only the relevant tests will be run.

Symbian Signed does not evaluate the quality or nature of the content as this area is very subjective and can vary between locales; for example content that is acceptable in one territory may be unacceptable in another. As a result evaluation of the suitability of content for a channel is beyond the scope of the Symbian Signed tests.

To ensure that the submitted content SIS files are 'Passive Content' the test houses run a tool provided by Symbian. This scans the SIS file APIs and file extensions within the SIS file to confirm that the SIS file is 'Passive Content' rather than an active application that requires further testing. If the SIS file passes, the application can be Symbian Signed. It is then submitted by the test house to be Symbian Signed. TC trust Center charge for each signing instance and the cost of this signing is passed on to the test house. The test house costs for testing the content vary and it is advisable to contact the test houses directly to negotiate bulk signing discounts.

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