

How To Install Apps on an Android TV Box

May 6, 2020



Installing an app to an Android TV box can be done a few ways with the Play Store method the most common.

The install file for Android programs is called APK which like EXE for Windows computers are the program needed to install an app.

The APK install file can be installed from any source.

4 Ways to Install Apps to an Android TV Box

- Google Play Store.
- Use an alternative app store such as Aptoide TV.
- Download the APK install file from a Website.
- Copy the APK install file to a Flash Drive.

The most common method to install apps to an Android TV box is to use the Google Play Store.

This is the same method as any Android smartphone. A Google account is needed to log in and search for apps that can be installed on demand.

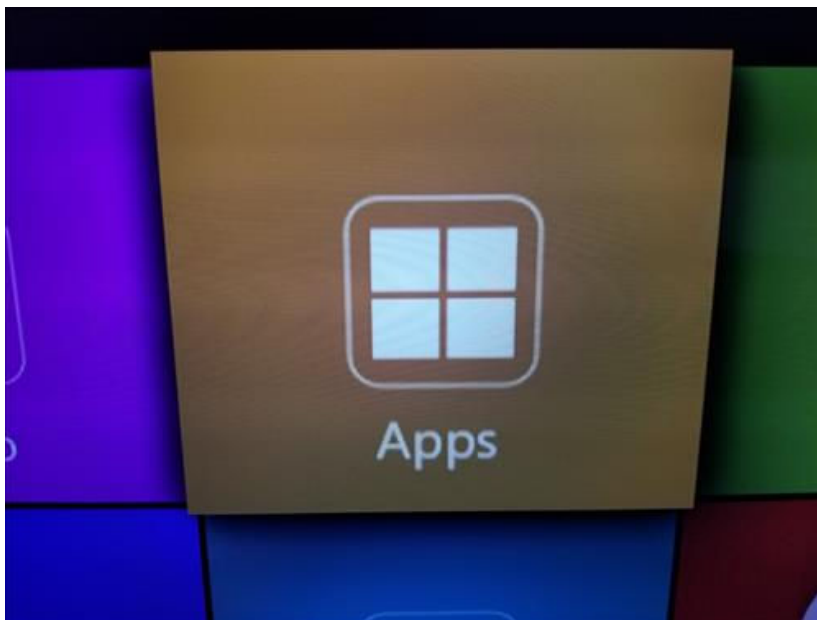
Another method is to use alternative app stores that often have apps the Google Play Store will not carry, such as movie apps.

The APK install file can also be download from a website and installed.

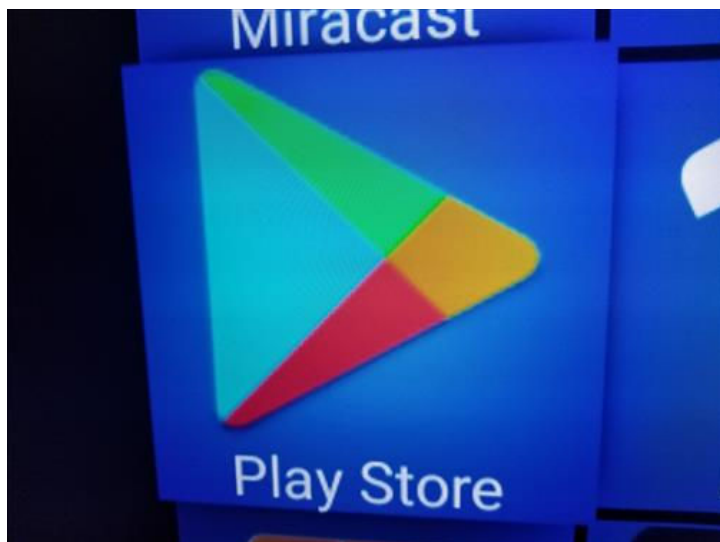
The last method is to download the APK install file to a flash drive and install from it.

How To Install Apps on an Android TV Box (Google Play Store)

1. Go to the **Apps section** on your Android TV box.

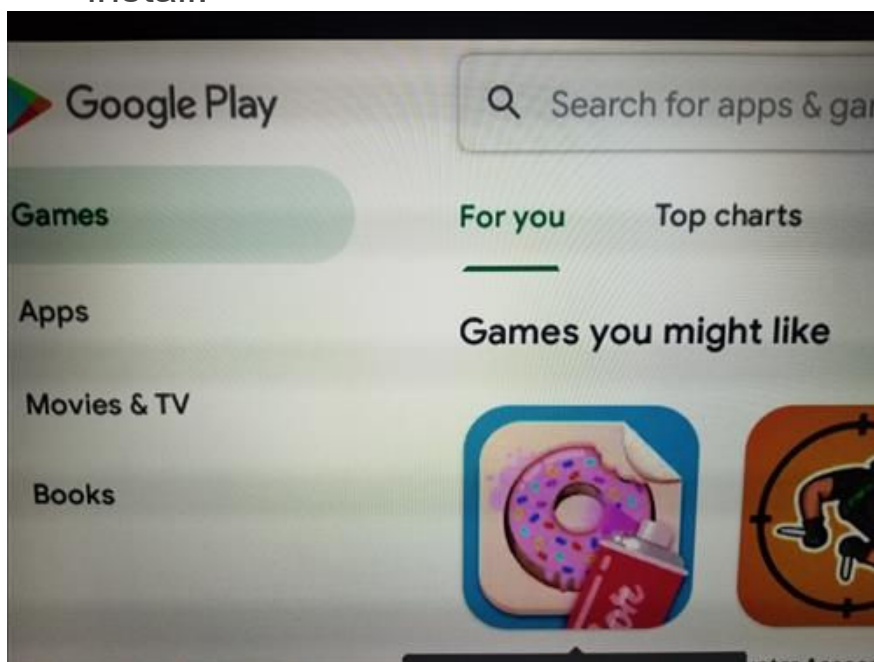


2. Find and select the **Play Store**



3. If you have a google account enter your details. If not a new account will be needed.

4. Once in the Play Store, you can Browse or Search for apps to install.



Summary

Installing apps to and Android TV box can be done with four main ways.

They can be installed from Google Play Store, websites, or downloaded and copied to a flash drive.

There are also alternative app stores that can be installed to download apps.

When installing any app be sure it is safe to install and not a rouge file that may contain malware.

How to Sideload Apps on Your Android TV Box

The Google Play Store may have millions of different apps, but it doesn't always have what I want.

Have you even tried to install an app and saw this message instead?



Your device isn't compatible with this version.

Or worse yet, have you ever gone looking for a specific app like Amazon Underground or MiXPlorer?

You won't find them the Google Play Store.

Especially when there's no good reason for it. That's one of the reasons I'm a big fan of using a [VPN for Android](#) to get around geofiltering.

But fear not, there are ways to get around Google's defenses.

To do that you're going to have to learn how to sideload Android apps.

What is sideloading?

First things first...just what is sideloading?

You've probably heard of uploading and downloading, so let us explain sideloading in the same way.

Think of where you're sitting right now, reading this post article on your computer, smartphone, tablet...whatever device you want. Now imagine that "the Cloud", or "the Internet" is sitting right above your head. It's like Eeyore gave you his personal little rain cloud and it's hovering right above your head. Except instead of rain, it's dispensing this article for you to read.

Anything you want to get from the Internet is a download, because that information is coming down to you. Likewise, any time you want to send something to the Internet, you're sending it up, so it's called an upload.

Makes sense, right?

Now take your TV box and put it right next to you on the table. You don't actually have to do this, but just imagine.

You have something that you want to get from the computer\tablet\smartphone to your TV box. That data isn't going up (upload) or down (download). It's going to a device on the same level as you. That is sideloading in a nutshell.

Why should you care? Or What files can you sideload?

The most common thing you'll want to do, and probably what led you here in the first place, is to sideload APK (Android aPlication packAge) files. As I said in the beginning, the Google Play Store puts restrictions on what apps you can see and download.

Personally, I'd like to decide for myself what I can and cannot put on my own device.

That's the power of sideloading. You can install almost anything because many of the filters and restrictions happen at the App Store level. Sideloading basically gives you the power to put whatever you want on your device.

You can:

- Sideload Android apps via apk or zip file
 - Apps that are restricted by device
 - Apps that are restricted by location (geofiltering)
 - Apps that just aren't in an app store at all
- Install the Amazon App Store, or another alternative app store
- Install custom firmware and ROMs
- Transfer movies or music directly from your PC

Sideloading is more important on TV boxes

For TV boxes, sideloading is especially important for two reasons.

App's Minimum Requirements

Apps are coded so to be compatible with certain hardware. It can look for that hardware by feature (2GB of RAM, screen resolution, etc.). Or it can look for specific device model numbers if the developer has a really good testing team. This is rare, but I've come across it on a few occasions.

Looking for specific hardware can be problematic. Android TV boxes have pretty much the same hardware as your smartphone or tablet, except for one important part.

The screen.

If the app you want to install depends on a certain screen resolution...actually if the app depends on *ANY* specific screen resolution, you're in trouble.

The Google Play Store will look at your TV box and decide that it doesn't meet the minimum requirements to run the app. No app for you.

The Google Play Services

What if your brand new device doesn't come with the Google Play Store at all?

This happens when the manufacturer or device are not certified by Google. This not only affects the Play Store, but other Google apps like YouTube, Gmail and Maps.

It's less common now than when TV boxes first hit the scene, but I still hear about people buying Android TV boxes that don't have the Google Play Store pre-installed.

If that happens, the user will have to sideload an alternative app store, or manually sideload every additional apps that they want.

A word about Security

It's not easy to get an app into the Google Play Store. Google checks every app for viruses and other malware before they're approved and available for download.

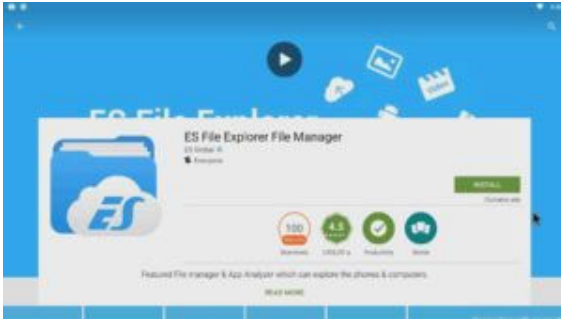
Make no mistake: **Sideloaded apps opens your system up to threats that normally might be caught before they get to you.** Every tutorial I've seen on how to sideload apps misses the important step on re-securing your device after you're done. So be sure to stick around to the end of the tutorial.

I highly recommend running some sort of virus protection on your device. Even if you only use a free version, it will still help to protect your device.

If you sideload apps, get virus protection. Period.

How to sideload apps

I'm going to take you through how to install Amazon Underground, Amazon's own app store.



1. Get a file manager

The first thing you need is some sort of file manager for your Android device. If you've already got one installed, you can skip ahead to step 2.

The most popular one, and my favorite, is ES File Explorer. If you don't have it installed, you can download it from the Google Play Store, or whatever app store came with your device.

I've never come across an Android TV box that didn't come pre-installed with either a file explorer or an app store. The manufacturers usually need one or the other to install their software.

Once you install it, open it up just to make sure that there aren't any additional setup steps.

2. Enable Unknown Sources

As I've said, by default Android will only allow you to install apps from the Google Play Store. Android considers anyplace else an "Unknown Source."

Enabling Unknown Sources is a setting found in the Security tab of your main Settings Screen. Depending on your device, it may look slightly

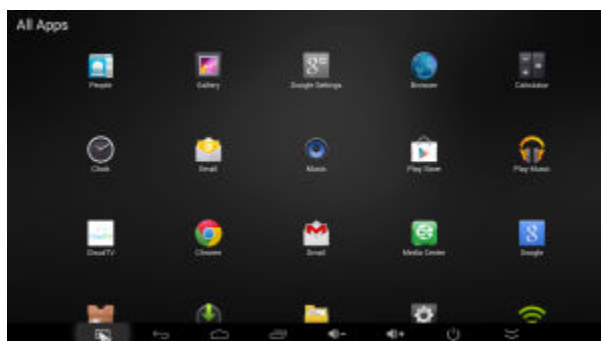
different, so I'll show you two ways to find it. Don't worry, you'll only need one of these.

a. Open Settings

This can be different for every launcher, unfortunately. Most companies will put a Settings icon on the main home page which looks like a set of mechanical gears like this one on the bottom row.

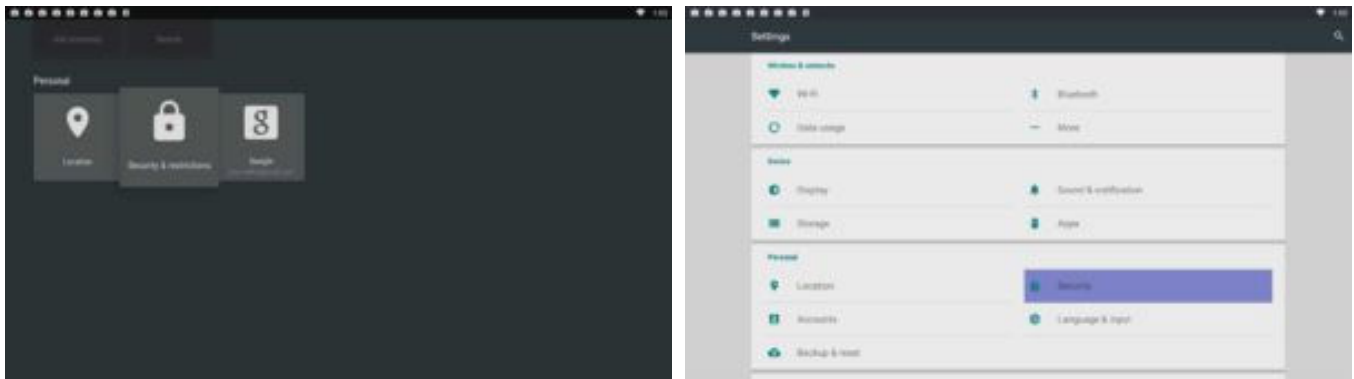


If you don't see an icon on the main page, go to the screen that shows all of your apps arranged in a row like this. Note: You may have two "Settings" icons on your page, as you see in this image below. You don't want the "Google Settings" on the top row. The one you're looking for is the gear shaped icon in the bottom row, second one from the right.

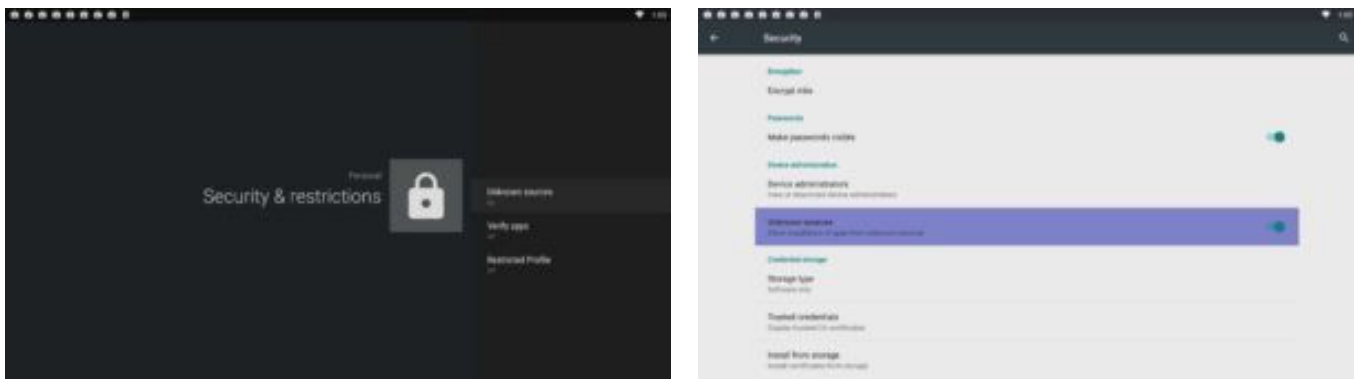


b. Go to Security options

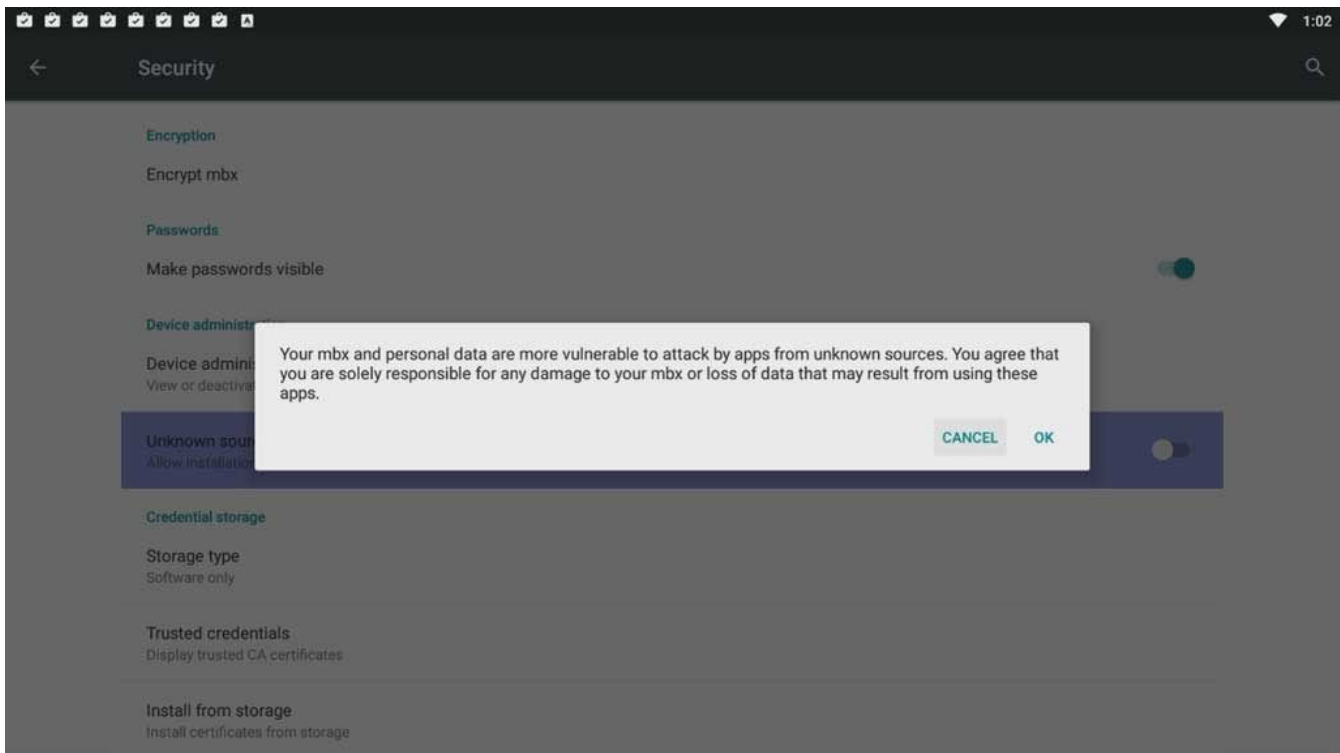
The Settings icon will take you to one of two screens, depending on the version of Android that you're running. The actual options are more or less the same, but the one we're looking for will be called "**Security & Restrictions**" or simply "**Security.**" Your screen should look like one of the following:



Once you find the Security Settings, open that menu by clicking on it.



Here's where it could get confusing because I don't think the wording of the setting is very clear, at least on the image on the left. It simply says "Unknown Sources" and "On" or "Off." The image on the right is much clearer in what it's asking. But if you have any doubt, click on either and you should get a pop-up box that looks something like this:



“YOUR DEVICE AND PERSONAL DATA ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO ATTACK BY APPS FROM UNKNOWN SOURCES. YOU AGREE THAT YOU ARE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGE TO YOUR MBX OR LOSS OF DATA THAT MAY RESULT FROM USING THESE APPS.”

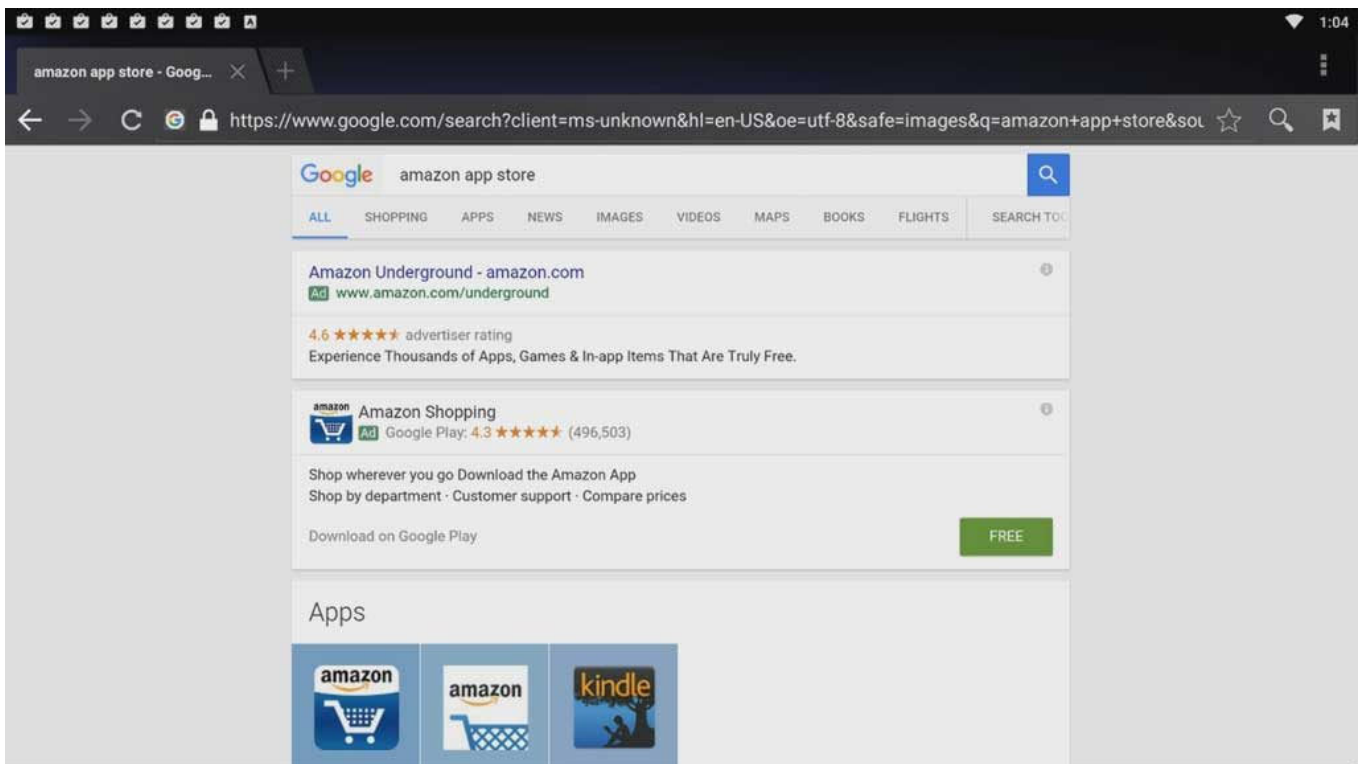
If you don't understand that warning that means you skipped past my [“A Word on Security...”](#) section above. You should definitely go back up and read it.

3. Download the file you want to sideload

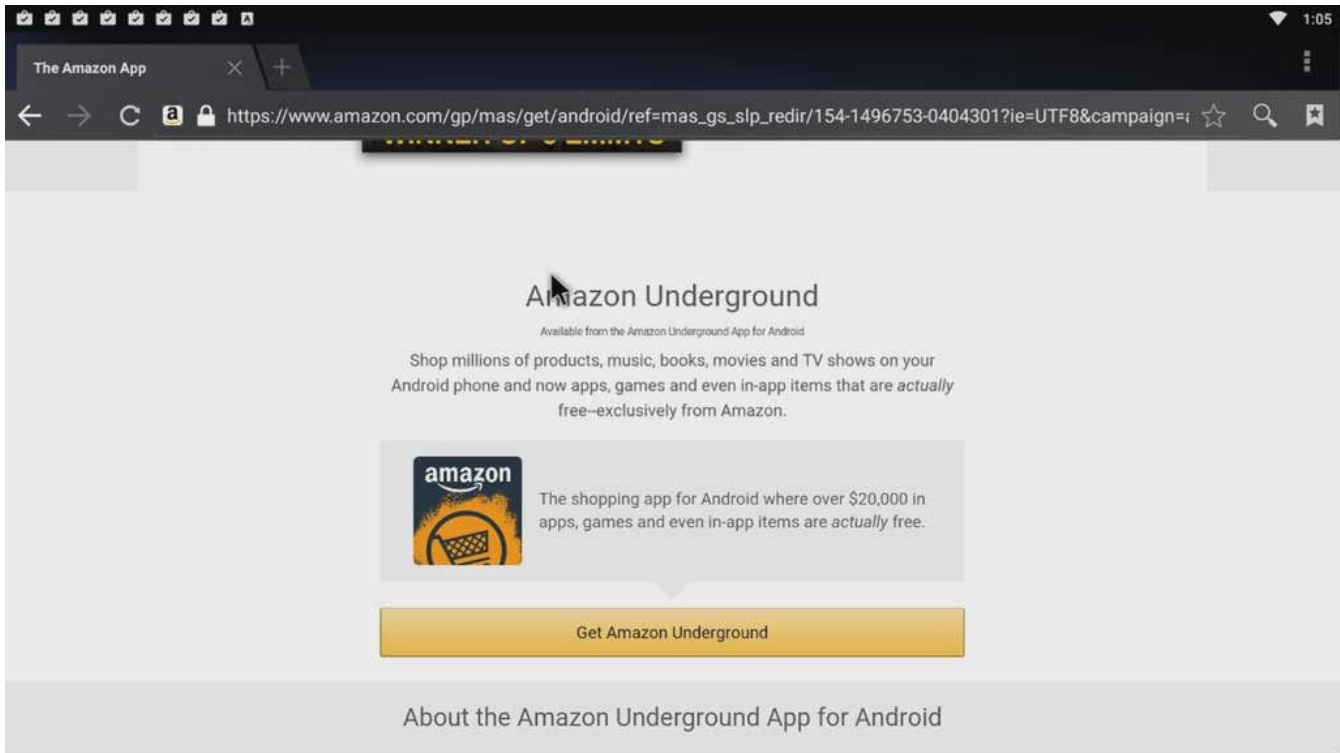
Sideloaded was initially used to describe transferring a file from one device to another, but the term has expanded since then. Nowadays we call any type of installation where we are bypassing the normal procedure as “sideloading.” In this case, we are bypassing the Google Play Store.

You have a couple of options for how to get the file. If you can download it on the same device that you're going to install it on later, you'll end up saving a lot of time.

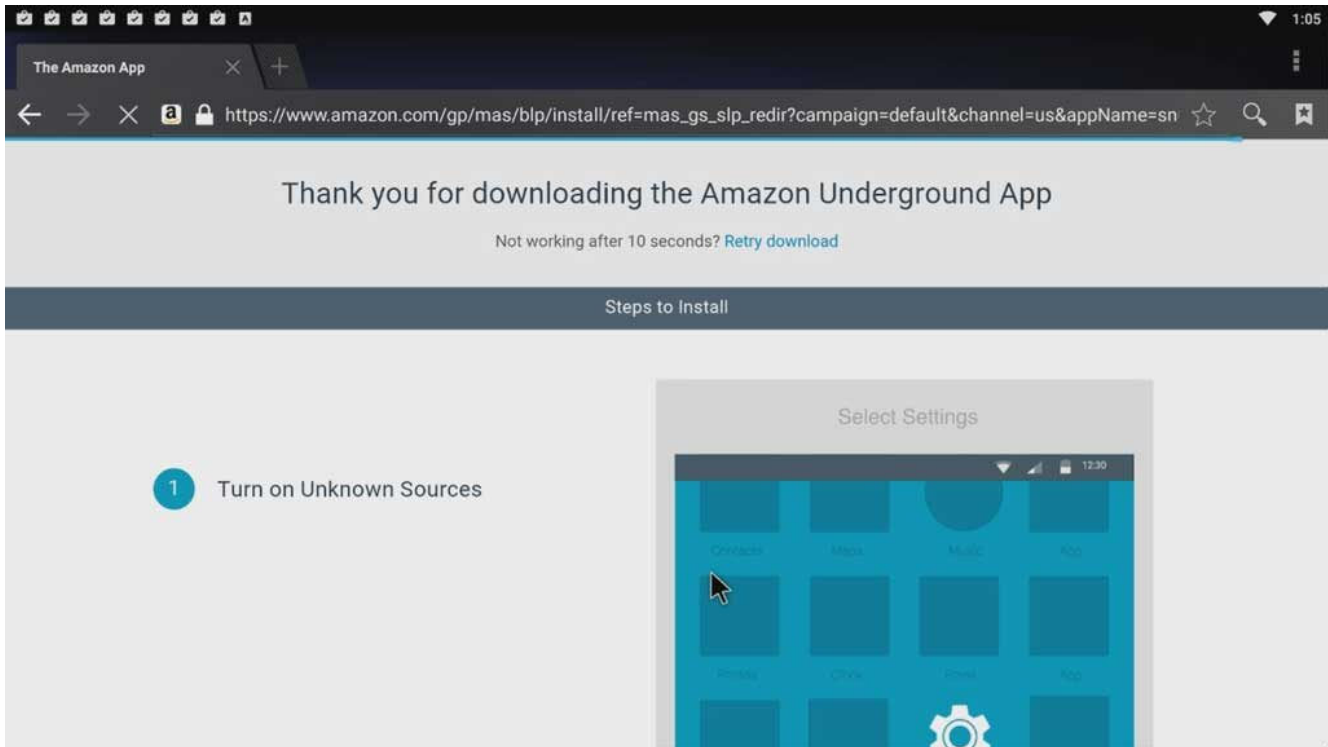
In our example, remember we are installing Amazon Underground. To download it to your device, go to [Amazon.com\underground](https://www.amazon.com/underground) or you can just do a Google search for "Amazon app store."



Notice the apps at the bottom of the screen? You would *think* that the app would be listed there. But you'd be wrong. Those are only the apps that are available for download through...you guessed it...Google Play. The link we want is the one at the top: [Amazon.com\underground](https://www.amazon.com/underground)

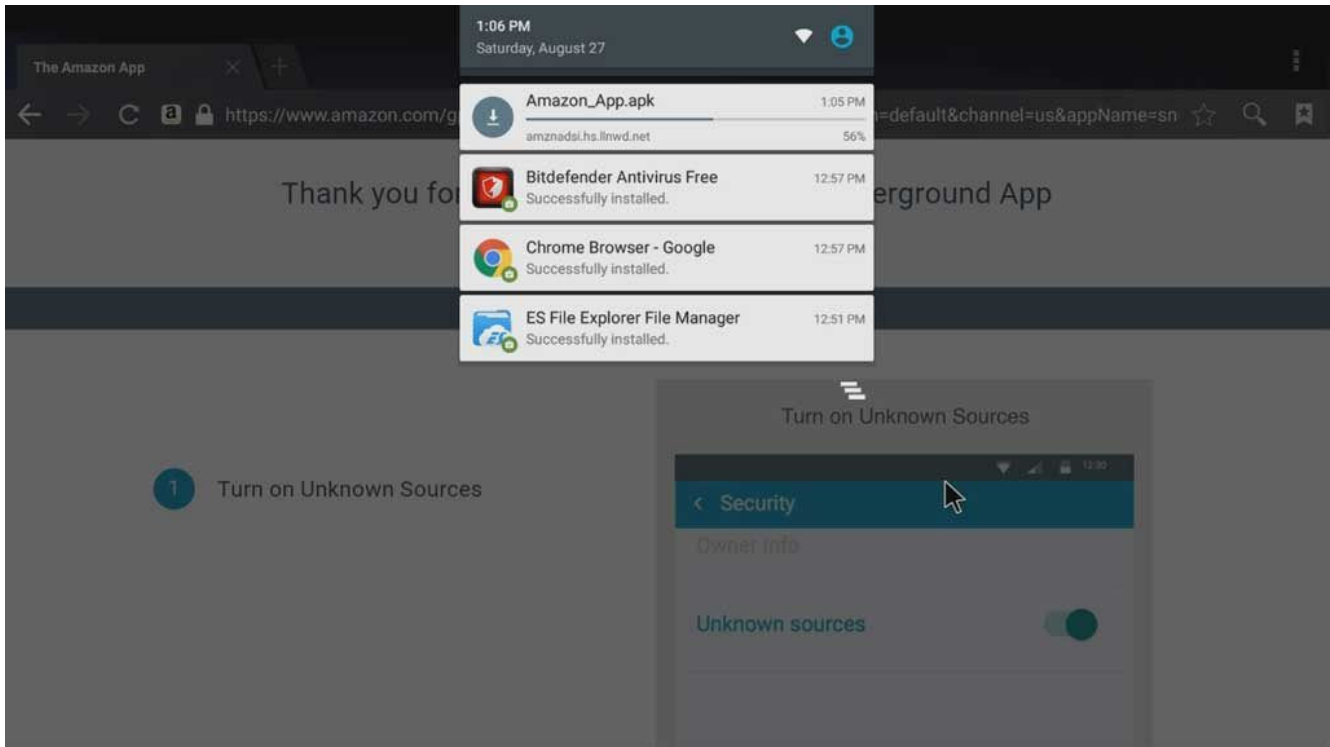


Amazon changes up this page often, but no matter what they do to the top part of the page, there will always be a button or link that looks something like the “Get Amazon Underground” button above. Click on that to begin the download process.

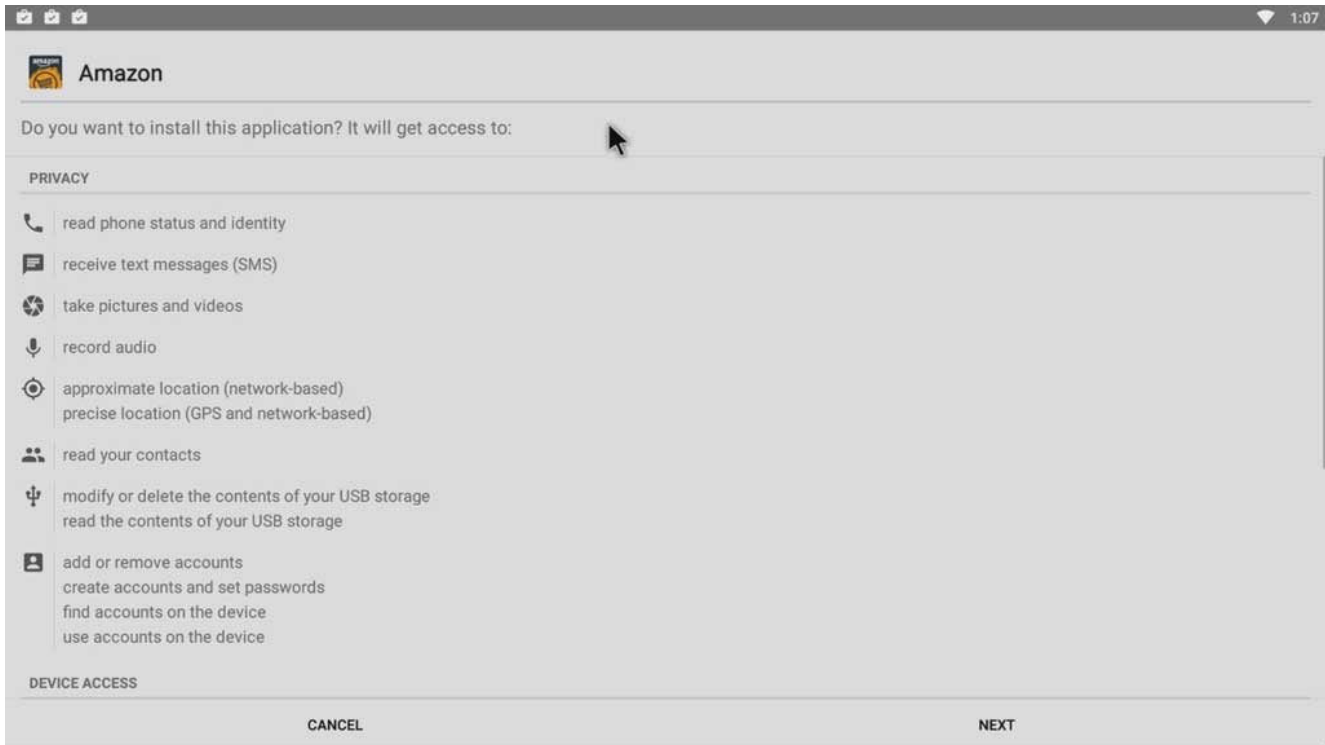


They give you a very brief set of instructions on how to sideload apps from unknown sources, but neglect to mention anything about the security risks involved. While disappointing, it's not very surprising. In order to install anything from Amazon Underground the Unknown Sources setting would have to remain on.

But I'll go more into my recommendations at the end of this tutorial.



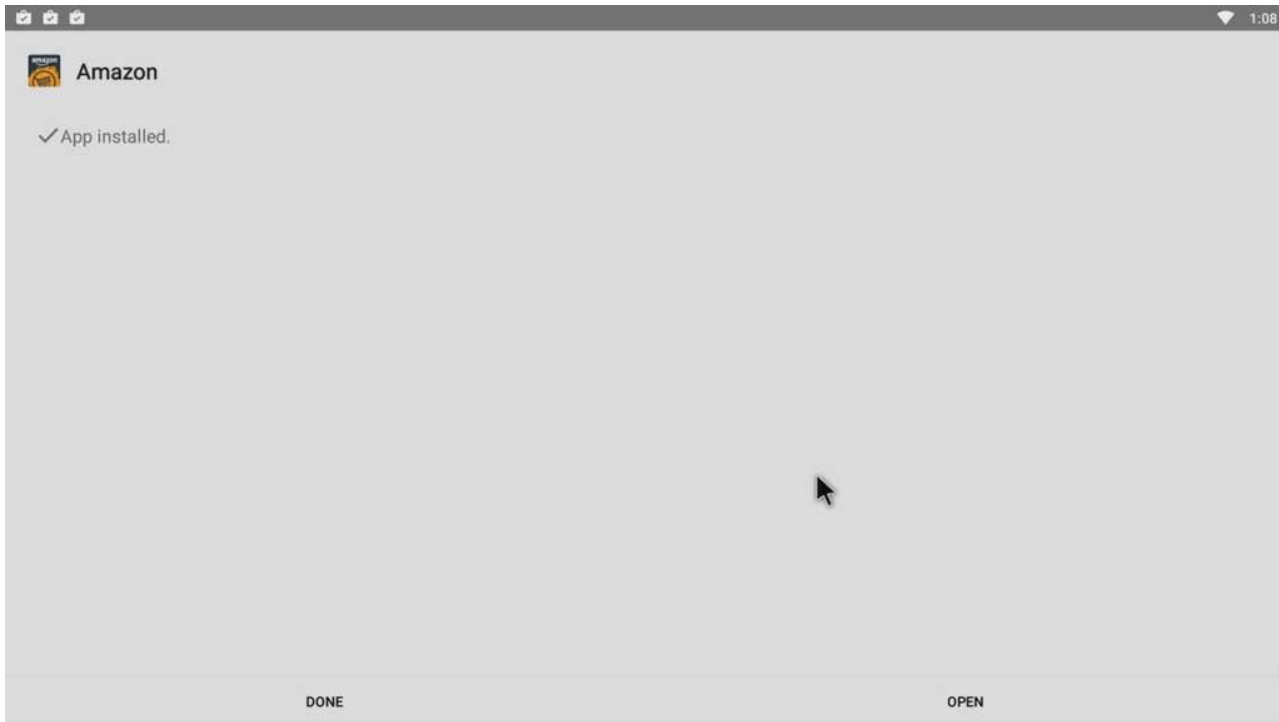
If you were wondering why you installed ES File Explorer first, then here is your answer. Once the file is downloaded, you can open it right from the notification window, as shown above, or through ES File Explorer separately. Either way, having a file manager installed will allow you to open the .apk file directly.



Once you click on the .apk file, you'll be taken to an installation window. This may look different depending on the file you're installing, but will usually detail what permissions it is asking for access to.

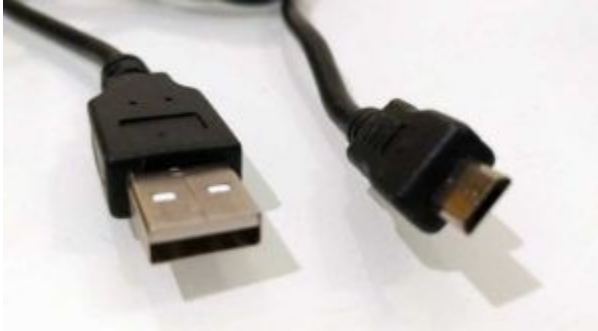
Remember to make sure that the permissions match the app. For example, if you're installing a photo editor, you should be a little worried if it's asking for permissions to send and receive text messages.

Once the setup process is complete, you'll get a simple message saying the app is installed and you'll have the option to open it.



4. Other methods to sideload Android apps

If you can't download the file directly on the device that you want to install it, then the process becomes a bit more involved.



The Cable Method

What you'll want to do is hook up your TV box directly to your PC or Mac using a micro-USB to full-size USB cable like the one below. Usually your TV box will come with one of these in the box. If not, they're fairly inexpensive and can be picked up at Amazon or any local electronics store. A decent quality cable shouldn't be more than around \$5.

If you're using your PC, Windows will recognize your TV box as any other external device like a flash drive or external hard drive. You'll be able to navigate through the directory and save your files wherever you like.

A word of caution: Be careful what touch. Changes you make here can cause your Android TV box to become unstable or crash. I highly recommend only putting files in the Download folder or any folders that you have created personally.

Dropbox

I haven't tried this method personally, but I've had a reader tell me that you can use Dropbox instead of a USB cable to transfer a file from your PC to your TV box. He outlined the steps here:

- Download the Android app on your PC

- Upload the file to Dropbox from your PC
- On your TV box, open the Dropbox app
- Download the file to your Download folder
- Open the ES File Explorer and navigate to the Download folder
- Open the app to install it

Final steps to secure your system

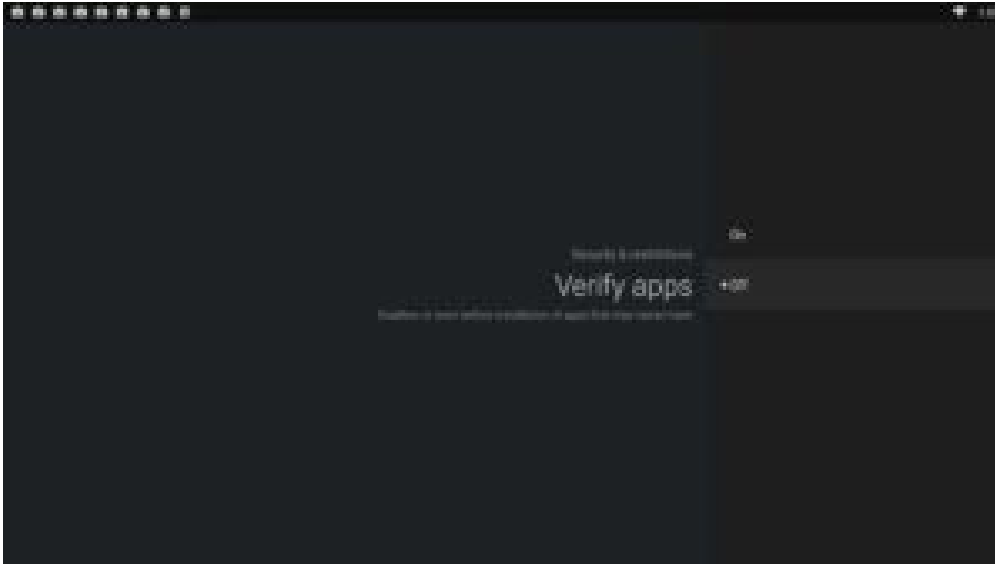
As I've said before, when you turn on the option to install apps from unknown sources, you are removing a layer of security from your device.

I highly recommend to only enable this setting when you are installing an app and turn it back off immediately after you're done.

Obviously, that won't work for everyone. By default, every app on Amazon Underground is technically from "unknown sources." Anytime you want to install a new app from there, you would have to enable Unknown Sources again.

Most people aren't going to put up with the hassle.

So what can you do?

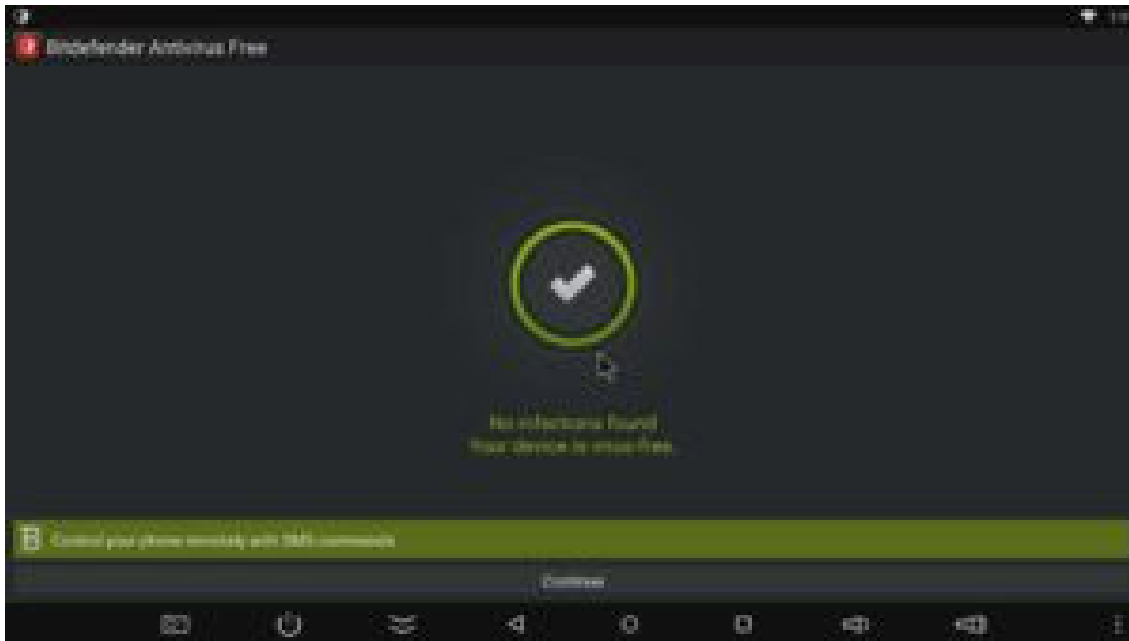


App Verification

Google has a setting called **App Verification**. You'll find this in the Security section of the **Settings** page.

If you enable it, it will allow Google to regularly check your device activity for security problems, and prevent or warn about potential harm. That is a nice way of saying that your device will monitor you and take some basic steps to make sure you don't break anything too badly.

Many people will dismiss it as being too intrusive, but I believe that you can't ever have too much security for your devices.



Virus Protection

You need to take steps to [keep your device safe from malware and Android viruses](#). One of the easiest and most effective ways you can do that is to install some sort of virus protection on your device.

Seriously. If you have a PC, chances are your anti-virus program has a service which will also protect your mobile devices. If not, there are plenty of free options out there as well.

Personally, I use **BitDefender** to keep both my PC and smartphone safe. Even the free version (shown to the left) gives me piece of mind that something is watching out for any malware that might infect my system.

Conclusion

There's a whole world of apps out there besides what we're used to seeing on the Google Play Store. Hopefully this tutorial will help you go out and see what you can find.

DOJIMEIPTV.NET LIST OF RECOMMENDED IPTV MEDIA APPS FOR ANDROID TV BOX

OTT XCIPTV Player

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nathnetwork.xciptv>

WHMCS Smarters Pro

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nst.iptvsmarterstvbox&hl=en>

GSE SMART IPTV (available for Apple Devices too on Apple App Store)

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.gsetech.smartiptv&hl=en_SG

Simple IPTV

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.burakkal.simpleiptv&hl=en_SG

TiviMate IPTV Player

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ar.tvplayer.tv&hl=en_SG

IPTV Player for Apple Devices

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.xbmc.kodi&hl=en_SG