Android: Google message to developers is about dark themes

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Google has seen the light—and the light is to warm up developers to using dark themes.

Why? The dark themes increase battery time of our smartphones. This

was conveyed at Google's Android Dev Summit this month. Google recognizes the value of dark themes in Android apps. The move to encourage dark themes in Android apps was strengthened by a graph comparing the battery drains and gains associated with different colors

XDA Developers listed some of Google's findings: Brightness affects power usage, and battery life in a mostly linear fashion; even with max brightness, a dark theme can cut battery use by up to 63% on AMOLED displays; pixel color value can affect power usage, "with white being the most power-hungry color."

Chris Burns in *SlashGear* commented about the findings. "The first and most obvious piece of information Google shared was on screen brightness and power. This should be fairly obvious – more brightness means quicker power draw. They discovered that it's not always perfectly linear – but it's so close to linear that it might as well have been a straight line, one for one."

After all, research can now quantify the battery savings involved with darker interfaces, so why not?

After all? Said a number of tech writers: Duh. We knew that.

Chris Welch in *The Verge*: "We've known for a long time that dark mode/night mode apps can prolong battery life on smartphones with OLED screens...the individual pixels have to do less work on dark areas of the screen."

Antonio Villas-Boas in *Business Insider*: "Dark mode is an option that changes the overall color theme of an operating system or app to the color black. It's long been associated with better battery life on devices, especially mobile devices."

Writers reflecting on Google's stances toward dark themes were making note of it as an option. Vaidyanathan Subramaniam in *Notebookcheck*: "Hopefully, this means future Android versions will have an option for a native OS-level Dark [Mode](link)."

Arol Wright in *XDA Developers* made the point that Google's courtship with dark themes was not entirely out of the blue (forgive the color reference) as steps in that direction have already been marked. "Google has recently started introducing dark modes on several of their apps, most notably including Messages and YouTube, a move that has been applauded by many power users and regular consumers alike. Now, they seem to be actively advocating for developers to introduce dark modes on their apps, too."

Meanwhile, "It's good to remember that dark theme won't suit everyone," wrote Fazeel Ashraf in *TechEngage*, which nonetheless is one more reason to champion the idea of options. "Having white text on black background isn't everyone's cup of tea...Still, giving users an option to [choose](link) from never hurt anybody."

Reader comments on Google's epiphany over [battery](link) life and theme preferences were more emotional, that it was about time they said something. "You are over 10 years too late. Your team of brainiacs finally came to the same result myself and millions of others have arrived at when android dropped?" was one such reader comment on *XDA Developers*.

So what comes next? Arol Wright in *XDA Developers* had an answer. "Given Google's new stance on this topic, we should get to see more dark Google apps in the coming months—and maybe, finally, a full-fledged system-wide dark mode for Android which applies everywhere." Wright's advice was that "If you're a [developer](link), then it would be a good idea to work on a dark mode for your app, at least as a toggle.

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