

Apple iOS 15: FaceTime coming to Android and Windows, Notifications get smarter and everything gets more shareable

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The pandemic appears to have had an impact on some of the biggest features coming soon to your iPhone.

On Monday, Apple kicked off its Worldwide Developers Conference with a virtual keynote detailing the changes coming soon to iOS 15, the mobile operating system powering the tech giant's signature smartphone.

The latest update, iOS 15, will launch this fall, coinciding with the arrival of a new iPhone typically unveiled in September.

Here's a breakdown of the five ways your iPhone experience will change with the launch of iOS 15.

FaceTime to get a facelift

Remember Zoom? Of course you do. It was likely your lifeline to staying in touch with friends, family and work colleagues.

Apple's video chat equivalent, FaceTime, is introducing several upgrades to help mirror that Zoom experience, including an option for users on Android and Windows smartphones to participate in calls through FaceTime links for sharing scheduled calls. So, no, it's not a FaceTime app for Android but better than nothing.

The app will also feature a grid view to see everyone on a FaceTime call and the ability to take calls in Portrait Mode, complete with blurred-out background. FaceTime will also add spatial audio and voice isolation so calls sound more natural and allow you to cut back on background noise.

The app will also include SharePlay, which lets you enjoy entertainment such as music or TV shows while on a video call. The feature will work with third-party apps including Disney+ and Hulu.

iPhone notifications get less annoying with Focus

Apple attempts to eliminate the clutter by tweaking how you can control notifications on your phone.

You'll receive notifications summaries that you can get in the morning or afternoon. The notifications are ordered by priority, utilizing on device intelligence to figure out which app alerts matter most.

The iPhone will soon get a Focus app to tailor which notifications you get at specific times of the day. For example, users can set modes such as personal, work, or fitness that will provide notifications on the apps you want and silence the others.

The Focus app also adds a message when someone tries to text you that notes you have "notifications silenced with Focus."

Your personal ID on your iPhone

Many iPhone owners likely have their Starbucks card, or banking debit cards on Apple Pay. Now, Apple wants you to add your driver's license.

The iPhone's Wallet app will soon support the ability to scan your state identification and add it to your phone. The feature will work in several participating states. Apple said they are working with the Transportation Security Administration to support using your digital state ID to get through checkpoints at airports.

Apple said it will also support adding digital house keys, hotel keys or corporate badges. The company is partnering with Hyatt Hotels to support digital hotel keys available on your iPhone or Apple Watch. They're also partnering with BMW on digital keys to start your car.

Convenient? Definitely. But losing your smartphone is going to feel a whole lot worse if it's also got your house keys, driver's license and car

keys inside.

Big changes for Weather and Maps

Two Apple apps get important upgrades. Let's start with Weather, where data and layouts will change based on the forecast, including graphics and animated backgrounds. For example, if it's raining, you'll see rain pouring in the background as you review the forecast. The app will also support full screen, high-resolution weather maps with details such as air quality and precipitation.

Maps will include custom designed landmarks and a nighttime mode with moonlit glow. Maps will also feature more detail such as the location of turn lanes and where crosswalks are spotted to help spot traffic conditions more easily and figure out the right lane to join.

Maps also gets transit upgrades, including the option to view directions on Apple Watch. You can also soon use augmented reality to point toward the right direction when exiting a transit station. The AR feature can capture images of nearby buildings, then provide visual directions on where to go.

Live Text lets you search words in images

One of the cooler features coming soon is Live Text, where users can highlight text within an image on Safari or your Photos app, then perform a search on the words to find relevant information. So, if you scan a sign of a business, the search will pull up details on the business such as contact information and location.

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