Google to Apple: 'It's time' to fix text messages between iPhones and Android smartphones

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Google is again sending a message to Apple: Fix the text messaging issues between Android devices and iPhones.

For years, consumers have voiced their annoyance over the handling of text messages on smartphones between the top two messaging platforms: Apple's proprietary iMessage and Google's Messages app, which uses Rich Communications Services (RCS).

Both platforms supercharge regular text messages—allowing for features like higher quality images, read receipts, text effects, enhanced security, reactions and other benefits. But because the platforms aren't compatible, text messages between iPhones and Androids revert to regular, outdated text messages.

This lack of interoperability leads to a major annoyance, for some. Texts from Android devices to iPhones show up in a green bubble on an iPhone while iPhone to iPhone messages arrive in blue bubbles (standard texts show up in light gray on both platforms).

Messages between Android and Apple phones are turned into SMS (Short Message Service) and MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) texts, which Google charges are "out-of-date technologies from the 90s and 00s." As a result, images sent in messages between Android and iPhones are compressed, Google says, and users can't tell if see if messages have been received and read. Google has claimed this distinction leads to "peer pressure and bullying" in favor of iMessages and iPhones.

Google is going on the offensive again with a website encouraging Apple to adopt RCS so the messaging systems interoperate.

"It's not about the color of the bubbles. It's the blurry videos, broken group chats, missing read receipts and typing indicators, no texting over

Wi-Fi, and more," Google's site declares. "These problems exist because Apple refuses to adopt modern texting standards when people with iPhones and Android phones text each other."

When Google's "Apple should fix what's broken" website went live Tuesday, tech news site Business Insider wrote how "Some users have long lamented the green message bubbles that come with cross-device messaging, as well as poor-quality compressed videos, the lack of read receipts, and other headaches."

If Apple would adopt RCS instead, Google says, messages between Android and Apple smartphones would look better and would be encrypted.

Apple did not return U.S. TODAY'S request for comment about Google's campaign. But in the past, the company has found some faults with RCS, citing how it does not deliver full end-to-end encryption.

This isn't a new campaign for Google. In May, at the tech giant's I/O conference Android product-management vice president Sameer Samat touted how Android had 500 million-plus RCS users and poked the competition: "We hope every mobile operating system gets the message and upgrades to RCS."

However, Apple didn't bite. The next month at its own WWDC conference, Apple did not mention RCS and announced new features for its messaging platform including options to recall or edit recently-sent messages.

Apple could increase interoperability between Android and iOS devices, but it may not be in the company's best interests, CNET senior editor Mike Sorrentino said in a column. "Apple often touts its control over iOS as a selling point for consumers, and shifting away from iMessage

could jeopardize that."

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