

Apple delays rollout of AI features in Europe

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Credit: Armand Valendez from Pexels

Apple on Friday said it would delay the rollout of its recently announced AI features in Europe because of "regulatory uncertainties" linked to the EU's new landmark legislation to curb the power of big tech.

Citing the European Union's Digital Markets Act (DMA), a

spokesperson for the iPhone-making juggernaut said "we do not believe that we will be able to roll out these features to our EU users this year."

Apple earlier this month unveiled "Apple Intelligence," its suite of AI features for its coveted devices as it looks to reassure users that it is not falling behind on the AI frenzy.

The announcement included a partnership with OpenAI that would make ChatGPT available to iPhone users on request.

Apple said the feature, as well as its iPhone Mirroring and SharePlay Screen Sharing enhancements, were put on hold over concern "that the interoperability requirements of the DMA could force us to compromise the integrity of our products in ways that risk user privacy and data security."

Apple Intelligence, which runs only on the company's in-house technology, will enable users to create their own emojis based on a description in everyday language, or to generate brief summaries of emails in the mailbox.

"We are committed to collaborating with the European Commission in an attempt to find a solution that would enable us to deliver these features to our EU customers without compromising their safety," the company added.

In an effort to instill fair competition in Europe, the DMA sets out a list of dos and don'ts for the specially designated internet gatekeepers that include Apple.

"The EU is an attractive market of 450 million potential users, and has always been open for business for any company that wants to provide services in the European internal market," an EU spokesperson said.

"Gatekeepers are welcome to offer their services in Europe, provided that they comply with our rules aimed at ensuring fair competition," the EU added.

The EU's competition supremo Margrethe Vestager on Tuesday warned that Apple was falling short in abiding by the DMA as the bloc carries out a probe over Apple's business practices.

"We have a number of Apple issues; I find them very serious. I was very surprised that we would have such suspicions of Apple being non-compliant," Vestager told CNBC.

Her comments came after the Financial Times reported that Apple was about to face charges in relation to the probe, citing people close to the probe.

The DMA empowers the European Commission to investigate, fine and impose structural remedies on non-compliant gatekeepers.

Penalties can reach up to 10 percent of global annual turnover, with repeat offenders facing up to 20 percent.

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