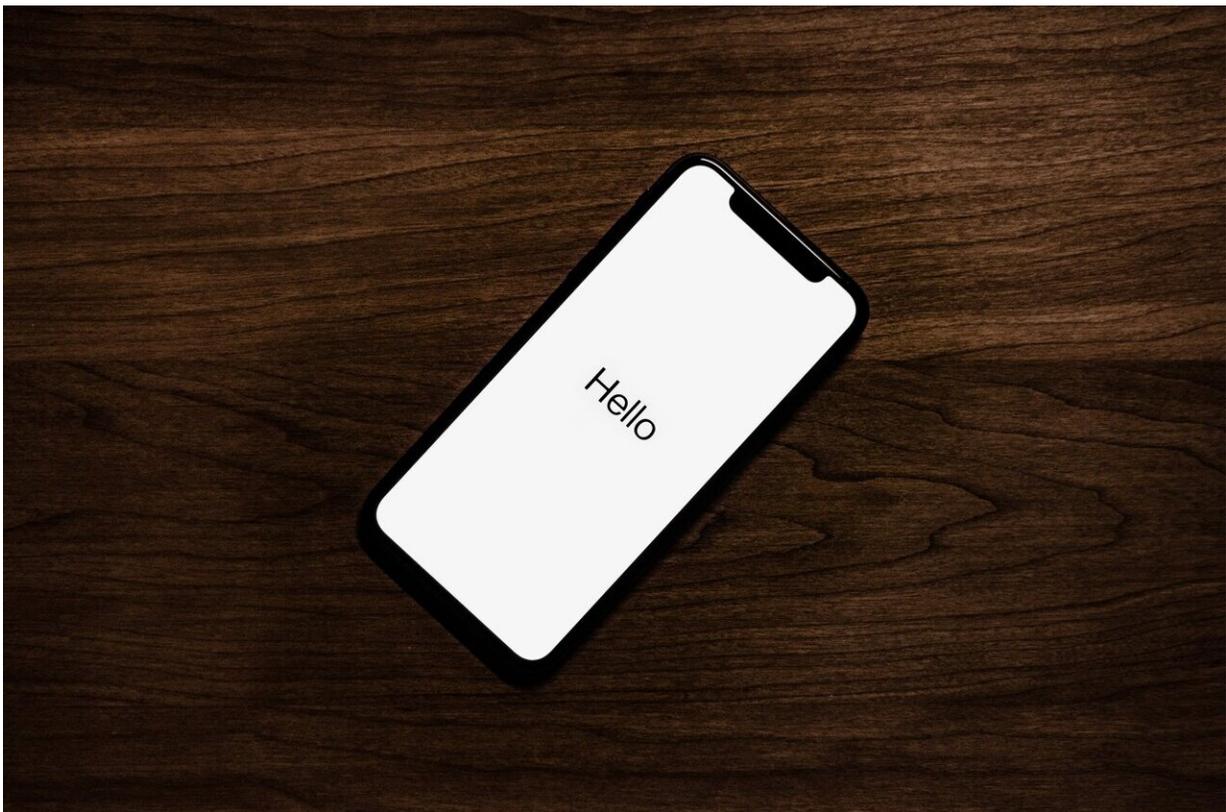


Apple iOS14: 5 features I really like—and one I'm not so crazy about

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

When Facebook warns that a change to Apple's upcoming mobile operating system will negatively affect how closely it will be able to track you on mobile phones, you know you're going to like iOS14.

It's the latest update to Apple's mobile operating system, a fall tradition that brings new features to the iPhone and iPad and a fresh coat of paint to older models as well.

Tuesday, Apple holds its annual product reveal in a virtual demo from its corporate campus in Cupertino, where it's expected to tout new versions of the iPad and Apple Watch, and to remind users about some of the [new features](#) coming to iOS14. (You can watch the presentations at [apple.com](#))

This year, Apple is putting privacy front and center with the new iOS, which traditionally Apple has released in the third week of September, (last year it was on Sept. 19). The iPhone release will be delayed until October, and Apple is expected to stage another event for the iPhone next month.

The privacy feature that Facebook has spoken out against informs users of when apps like the social network use data to "track you," or are "linked to you," by grabbing a hold of your financial and contact information, browsing history and location. Users will be asked for their permission to allow Facebook to do this, and it's because people would be expected to say no to this that Facebook was warned that it will take a financial hit when the feature is enabled.

Apple is delaying this feature until early 2021, to give developers like Facebook, Snapchat and others time to work out the kinks. But there are several other features coming sooner that are worth looking forward to. I downloaded the beta version of iOS14 last week and spent some time with it. Let me tell about what I found.

Android clones

For years, fans of Android smartphones have been able to customize

their home screens with a "widget" feature that let you decide if you wanted to see a big clock, the weather, news headlines and the like. Now, you can do that in iOS14, by swiping the [home screen](#) to the left and clicking the edit button to add to the experience. Even though it's a steal, it's a nice thing to have, just as Google's Translate app has always been a life saver when traveling internationally. Now, Apple adds its Translate feature into the operating system, via the new, pre-loaded Translate app or the Siri personal assistant. Ask a question like "How to do I say 'hello' in Japanese?" You get the answer and the ability to keep the conversation going.

App Library

If you're like me, you've got tons of apps all over your phone, so many you've lost track. In the past, Apple has offered the ability to create folders of your choosing. Apparently, Apple feels consumers weren't putting in the effort. Because this year, Apple introduces an automatic bundling of similar apps, with categories for entertainment, social, utilities, "reading," health and other, and they'll make them for you, whether you like it or not. This is good, in theory. But as it's automatic, you may not agree with the choices Apple has made. And there's no tool to alter the pickings. (However, you can still make folders the old-fashioned, manual way, too.)

Compact Calls

Before, you talked on the phone, and the black background of the call took over your screen. Now, in a move that will be especially helpful to people who talk on speaker, the call portion will take a small percentage of the screen, and you'll get to see more of your iPhone real estate.

Maps

Apple's Map app gets two new useful features this year. Cycling directions, which have been a staple of Google Maps for years, finally gets its due with Apple—although in the beta edition, it wasn't working for my local area. Secondly, Apple is offering "Guides" to cities like New York, San Francisco and London with tips on what to do when visiting—post-pandemic, of course. There will only be a handful of these in the beginning but will roll out to more cities in the coming months.

Siri

The personal assistant, which debuted in 2011, is smarter this year, per Apple, which specifically says that Siri has "over 20x more facts than just three years ago." In my tests, it was, indeed, chattier and smarter. Siri still has that annoying tendency to answer a query by saying, "Here's what I found on the Web," instead of answering you, but it happened less often this time around.

Start your car with iOS

This is arguably the most intriguing new feature of them all, the ability to use your iPhone to open your car and get your motor runnin'. But even though it's part of iOS14, don't get your hopes up. The feature works with only one manufacturer, BMW, on a series of models produced after July 2020. But it's definitely worth looking forward to.

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