

Apple event to focus on new iPhones, Apple TV and Siri

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In this Sept. 9, 2014 file photo, Apple CEO Tim Cook speaks during an announcement of new products in Cupertino, Calif. At an event Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2015 in San Francisco, the iconic tech company is expected to show off new iPhones and new ways to use its voice-activated digital assistant Siri—perhaps to control TVs and other appliances. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File)

Hey, Siri, what does Apple have in store for us this week?

Along with new iPhones, the iconic tech company is expected to show off a new Apple TV system and a bigger role in the home for Siri, its voice-activated digital assistant.

After a series of high-profile Apple launches over the past year—super-sized iPhones, a digital wallet, a sleek smartwatch—analysts say this week's news might not seem as dramatic. But the event could reveal more about the company's strategy and its aspirations to be an indispensable part of daily life.

"Apple's master plan is to be ubiquitous," said Jordan Edelson of [software](#) firm Appetizer Mobile, explaining why Apple is increasingly designing its iPhone and Siri to interact with cars, televisions and "smart" home systems.

It isn't a sure bet: Apple rivals like Google, Samsung and Microsoft are building their own technology for Internet-connected cars and homes.

While the company has been coy, here's what analysts and others expect at Apple's event Wednesday in San Francisco:

NEW IPHONES

Apple sold a record 183 million iPhones in the nine months since releasing the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus, which have bigger screens than earlier models. That has allowed the company to remain highly profitable, even as Samsung and other phone makers struggle.

Based on the iPhone's usual two-year product cycle, industry experts expect this year's models will be the same size with more subtle refinements, such as a faster processor, higher-resolution cameras and

new exterior colors.

One likely addition is "Force Touch," which uses screen sensors to discern between a light tap and extended finger pressure to trigger different functions. This arrived on Apple's smartwatch and some laptops this spring.

Some analysts question whether these features will inspire the same type of consumer demand that propelled last year's iPhone success story. But research firm Kantar Worldpanel says a substantial number of iPhone owners are still using older, smaller models, which makes them likely candidates to upgrade.

APPLE TV

Apple is expected to unveil a redesigned Apple TV set-top box with new capabilities for apps and games, plus recognition of Siri voice commands to search for shows and retrieve weather forecasts and sports scores. The current model is a few years old and does little beyond playing video and music.

Analysts say the new TV box is part of Apple's broader strategy to carve out a bigger role in the home. For instance, the new Apple TV could serve as a hub for Siri to control lamps, thermostats and other "smart" appliances, using Apple's HomeKit technology.

It could also set the stage for Apple to later introduce a streaming video service aimed at competing with Netflix and other Internet entertainment services.

SMARTER SIRI

Even without an Apple TV, new iPhone software will make it easier to set up automated homes, including having lights turn on and window shades go up when you tell Siri on the phone, "Time to wake up."

With the new software for iPhones and iPads, Siri can also offer recommendations, such as nearby restaurants, before you even ask. It might even launch apps for you, based on your past habits, when you attach headphones or connect to a Bluetooth speaker in a car. Siri will also offer to add calendar and contact entries based on your incoming email—something Google already does with its competing services.

New iPhones will come with this new software, known as iOS 9. Apple also plans to release it as a free update for existing iPhones and iPads, likely next week.

WHAT ELSE?

After major software updates over the past two years, the new software for iPhones and iPads is mostly about refinements, including a different font, a new way to scroll through photos and behind-the-scenes tweaks to improve battery life.

But there will be a few new features beyond a smarter Siri. For instance, major cities will get transit directions, addressing a major shortcoming with Apple Maps. In some cities, including New York and London, Apple sent teams to map out subway exits and entrances. That way, users getting to the subway are guided to the closest entrance, while those getting off are told which exit signs to look for.

Apple is also expected to unveil a larger iPad for business users, but probably not until at least October. Existing iPads can get the software update when it comes out for the iPhone. With it, iPad users will also be able to run two apps side by side, or have video running in a small window within the main screen. It's a feature Samsung phones and tablets already have.

Mac computers will get their own software update, but not until after the new iPhones are out.

Unknown is whether Apple will update its Apple Watch software now or in a few months.

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