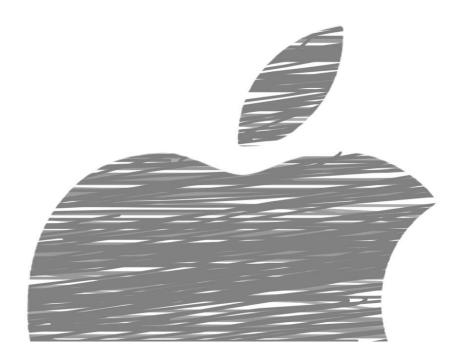# Apple WWDC 2019: iTunes is yesterday; today's all about swifter new iOS features

June 4 2019, by Jefferson Graham, Usa Today

Credit: CC0 Public Domain

When word leaked over the weekend that Apple was planning to shut down iTunes in the next version of its desktop software, there was an outcry and talk of an end of an era.

That era actually ended quite some time ago. Remember when iPhones

were tied to the desktop for updates? Now, most of us just back everything up wirelessly.

So when Apple confirmed Monday that its next desktop operating system upgrade would split up iTunes into three separate apps, for music, TV shows and movies and podcasts, it seemed like an afterthought.

"It's a rounding error," something that should have been done a long time ago, says Gene Munster, an analyst and investor with Loup Ventures, who added that iTunes "had gotten way too big."

We live in a mobile world. We listen to music on our phones and have no need to manage our collections since most of us stream songs from the cloud now, whether on a subscription service like Spotify or Apple's Music or via free radio from the likes of Pandora or TuneIn.

The focus at Apple's Worldwide Developer Conference on Monday was on the future. A new, rebuilt operating system for the iPhone that makes the device quicker and more useful. Apple put a final nail in the coffin of the iPad being less useful than a computer by finally, after nine years, allowing consumers to insert USB flash drives and move files back and forth. Now the tablet can truly be a PC replacement.

Along the way, Apple introduced what it says is the "world's most powerful" Mac computer and monitor (cost: only $11,000), and new (free) watch faces for the Apple Watch.

But since the iPhone is the world's most popular consumer device, used by over 1.5 billion people, it's the iOS update that will get the most attention when it's released in the fall.

What we like

Speed

Apple says launching and signing into apps will be a quicker experience, which is great, but even better is a new tool that will reduce download sizes for apps. There are still millions of iPhones in the world that max out at 16 gigabyte and many people run out of room with a 32 GB phone as well. So anything Apple can do to help consumers manage their ever-growing media collection without being forced to download 500 megabyte and higher apps is a good thing. "The speed issue feels like a first-world 'who cares' problem, but consumers notice speed and latency even if they don't articulate it well." says Julie Ask, an analyst with Forrester Research.

Instant sign-on

Many apps and websites offer us the ability to bypass registering with them, and instead sign in with Facebook and Google, which has a big drawback. Those sites track your every move. Apple is launching an alternative, one it says won't track us and, in fact, will let us sign in anonymously via FaceID. This sounds great. But as someone who has moved back to Touch ID because of the many, many times FaceID didn't recognize me, let's hope this sign-in approach actually works. Also, readers should know that Apple faces a long, hard row to hoe in getting websites and apps to sign on to this. Facebook and Google have been at this game for over a decade, so it will take some time for Apple to get traction here.

Messages

One of my biggest gripes with iMessages is getting texts from phone numbers that aren't associated with a name because I never put them into my Contacts. Who is 408-555-1212, and why are they texting me anyway? Now, Apple promises to change that, and "automatically share

a user's name and photo, or customized Memoji or Animoji," for identification. Thank you, Apple!

What we're skeptical about

Maps

Google Maps is the gold standard of mapping, and Apple Maps has long been, well, not everyone's first choice. As Lynette Luna, an analyst with GlobalData Technology noted on Twitter, Apple Maps "has brought me on some wild goose chases lately." Now, Apple says it has spent the last year driving 4 million miles to "rebuild the base map from the ground up," and that the redesigned app will have way more information with "better pedestrian data, more precise addresses and more detailed landcover."

Still, this isn't the first time Apple has told us about a more competitive Maps app. One interesting tidbit from Apple's announcement. It says its mapping is as useful, while also "protecting user privacy," which, of course, is a dig at Google, which tracks our every move.

Siri

The personal assistant promises a new, easier-to-understand voice, Apple says, but in the demo Monday, it wasn't exactly night and day. And besides, the bigger complaint about Siri is that it doesn't understand us. From the lack of attention given to Siri at WWDC (about five minutes out of a two-hour-plus presentation), it sounds like Siri is still on the backburner for Apple, as Amazon and Google continue to invest massive resources (new things we can do) for Alexa and the Google Assistant.

(To be fair, Apple did announce one other welcome Siri feature, but you'll need the $159 AirPod Bluetooth accessory to make it work. Siri

will read aloud your incoming text messages and send your replies.)

The iOS 13 software is traditionally released a few days before the release of the new iPhone. Apple will also offer iOS 13 as a beta release in July.

The new iOS will be available on phones going back to the iPhone 6S, which was first released in 2015.

Finally, for those who still use iTunes to sync and backup their iPhones and iPads, here's how it will work in macOS Catalina, the new Mac operating system.

Backup, restore, sync and transfer documents will be done by connecting the device to the computer and performing these functions via new tools in the Finder. And Windows users, iTunes will remain on your computers, and nothing will change—at least for now.

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