

Review: Apple's iOS 7's hidden gems

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Apple Inc.'s iOS 7 is a big change - and worth downloading.

The free mobile [operating software](#) for the iPhone and the iPad comes with a bright new look and a whole lot of major new features, but there are also several hidden features you might not have noticed or heard of.

Here are our favorites.

-Focus photos using volume button: In iOS 7, you can now press on the iPhone's volume down button to quickly focus the camera and take a picture. Hold down on either volume buttons and it'll quickly shoot a burst of photos.

-Block people from calling, messaging you: Tired of constantly hearing from your ex? You can block him or her on iOS 7. Go to your [phone application](#), find the contact, scroll to the bottom and tap "Block This Caller." This will keep you from getting the person's calls, messages and FaceTime requests. You can also block someone who's not in your contacts if they've recently called or texted you. And if you ever want to call or message the person you've blocked, you'll still be able to do it.

-Message time stamps: One of the most annoying things about previous versions of iOS is that you couldn't see a time stamp for each text message you sent or received. The Messages [app](#) would show you a time stamp for some but not all messages. That's been fixed. Inside a conversation in the Messages app, you can now [swipe](#) left to see a time stamp for every message.

-Easy-to-find private browsing in Safari: Private browsing in Safari was already a feature in iOS, but before now, you had to go into the Settings app to turn it on. In iOS 7, you can tap on the bookmarks icon within the Safari app to turn it on; it's the second icon from the left on the bottom bar. Private browsing enables you to surf the Web without storing your history.

-See (and turn off) your frequent locations: In iOS 7, your device will track the locations you frequent. You can see those locations in a map in the Settings app. Open the app, go to "Privacy," then "Location Services," then scroll down to "System Services." On the next page, tap on "Frequent Locations." Once there you can toggle off "Frequent Locations" to keep your phone from tracking you. Or you can tap on your history to see a neat map of the places you visit most.

-Turn off apps: Turning off an app in iOS 7 is different from how it was done in previous versions. To do it, double-tap the home button to be taken to the multitask screen. There, find the app you want to close and swipe it upward until it is moved off screen. The app is now off.

-Hidden device search: Before, you could quickly search your gadget for contacts, songs or documents by swiping left on the home screen. That's now gone and has been replaced by a different gesture. To find search, you'll instead have to tap the middle of the home screen and swipe downward.

-Search Twitter and pictures with Siri: You can quickly see what someone is tweeting by asking Siri, "What is (person's name) saying?" Siri will then pull up that account's most recent tweets. Additionally, you can also do an image search using Siri. Simply say, "Show me pictures of (item you're searching for)" and Siri will quickly pull up images.

-Bubble level tool: Need to see whether the table you're constructing is balanced? There's now a bubble level tool within the Compass app. To access it, open the app and swipe to the left.

-Change the way your phone vibrates: If you don't like how your iPhone vibrates when you get a call or [text message](#), you can now change that. Go to your Settings app, then "Sounds." Tap whichever notification you want to edit, and then tap "Vibration." At the bottom, you'll see "Create New

Vibration." Tap that and you can start creating your own vibration.

-Change the way Siri pronounces a word: If you don't like the way Siri is saying a certain word or name, you can try to change it by telling her, "That's not how you pronounce that." Siri will then ask you the proper way and listen to how you say it. Afterward, she'll present you with three ways she can say it, and you can choose the one you like. But I say "try to change" because when I tried, it didn't fix the way she said my friend's name.

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