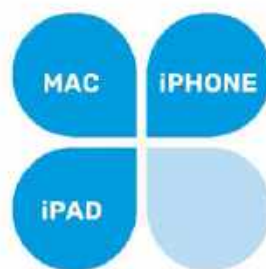


Mac | Life



JUNE 2023 NO.207

MAKE YOUR **MAC** *NEW AGAIN!*

- Power-up Finder
- Organize apps & windows
- Reclaim drive space
- Get a speed boost



Microsoft's free rival email app beats **Apple Mail**

Why it's time to join the **AI revolution!**

8 ways to a better iPhone Home Screen



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A NEW MAC|LIFE APP!



LAST MONTH WE launched a brand-new app for *Mac|Life* readers, which coincides rather neatly with the switch to a digital-only format. The new app looks really great, and it makes it easier to navigate and read your issues. There's also an RSS feed that means you can check out the latest news from one of our sister Apple brands, iMore. Not only that, but the iOS/iPadOS app also works natively in macOS, but only on Apple silicon Macs. In the newsletter that I sent out at the end of last month, I explained in detail how the app works on a Mac, and that there are some quirks to the user experience, mainly

down to it being an app designed to work with a touch screen.

I also realized in that same newsletter there were a few things I neglected to clarify. First of these is exactly which app to download from the Mac App Store. Unfortunately, it's come to my attention that some readers have been unwittingly downloading a German version of the magazine (*Mac Life | Magazine*, as it's listed on the Mac App Store), which isn't made by us. Unless you *Deutsche sprechen*, the one you want is actually listed as *Mac|Life Magazine*. I appreciate this is all terribly confusing, and I'm sorry for not making it clear in the first place. To avoid any further confusion, I've done what I should have initially, and provided a link to the app you need, so here it is in shortened bit.ly format: https://bit.ly/maclife_mag. Fingers crossed this enables everyone to download the right app to read the magazine on their Mac.

On that note, I've had a few people ask me what they can do if they don't have an Apple silicon Mac. The answer is: *PocketMags*. This will work on any Mac (or indeed, any device), and will allow you to access and read your *Mac|Life* subscription here, rather than through the official *Mac|Life* app.

Have you downloaded the new app yet? What do you think? And have you tried using it on an Apple silicon Mac? I'm very interested to know your findings, so feel free to feed back to the usual address: letters@maclife.com. ■

Nick

NICK ODANTZIS, Editor
Twitter: @maclife

THE TEAM



Andrew Cottle
Art Editor

We've another art specialist in town this issue, Andy is now feeling ready for summer after laying out the "Tech for the great outdoors" feature (p52).



Rachel Terzian
Production Editor

Rachel enjoys personalizing her iPhone (p61) not just for the aesthetics, but for easy access to all the apps, info, and settings she uses daily.



Ian Osborne
Contributor

Ian's a cover star this issue: he's got tips to make your Mac new again (p12), and he's tested a new gadget to enable Wi-Fi in your backyard (p68).

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START

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF APPLE

Final Cut Pro and Logic Pro for iPad

Pro video and music apps come to iPad

BY ALEX SUMMERSBY

APPLE HAS UNEXPECTEDLY introduced iPad versions of Final Cut Pro and Logic Pro. Both apps will each be available on a subscription basis through the App Store for \$4.99 per month or \$49 per year, with a one-month free trial. Final Cut Pro will run on iPads with M1 chip or newer, and Logic Pro on iPads with A12 Bionic chip or newer. Both require iPadOS 16.4.

Final Cut Pro for iPad introduces a powerful set of tools for video creators to record, edit, finish, and share, all from one portable device. A new jog wheel makes the editing process easier than ever and enables users to navigate the Magnetic Timeline, move clips, and make fast frame-accurate edits with just the tap of a finger.

With Live Drawing, users can draw



Work with over 100 instruments and effects plugins.



Capture, edit, and publish from a single device while in the field.

and write directly on top of video content using Apple Pencil. On iPad Pro models with M2 chips, Apple Pencil hover enables you to quickly skim and preview footage without ever touching the screen. Add a Magic Keyboard or Smart Keyboard Folio to utilize key commands. Creators can view and edit stunning HDR video — taking advantage of the Liquid Retina XDR display on the 12.9-inch iPad Pro — and apply color grades with accuracy using Reference Mode.

LOGIC PRO FOR IPAD

Logic Pro for iPad combines the power of Apple's pro music creation suite with the portability of iPad, with a complete collection of advanced tools for songwriting, beat making, recording, editing, and mixing.

With Multi-Touch gestures, music creators can play software instruments and interact naturally with controls, as well as navigate complex projects with pinch-to-zoom

and swipe-to-scroll. Plug-in Tiles put the most useful controls at the creator's fingertips, making it easy to quickly shape sounds.

There's an all-new sound browser with dynamic filtering, and with Multi-Touch, creators can play instruments using a variety of play surfaces. Logic Pro on iPad comes with a massive collection of realistic-sounding instruments and powerful synths including Sample Alchemy — a new sample manipulation instrument that can transform any audio sample with the tap of a finger.

A full-featured mixer — complete with channel strips, volume faders, pan controls, plug-ins, sends, and precise automation — gives users everything they need to create a professional mix entirely on iPad. The app supports roundtrip capabilities, making it easy to move projects between iPad and Logic Pro for Mac (10.7.8 and macOS 12.3 or newer).

> Messaging changes

From your Apple Watch, no. On Windows, yes

FACEBOOK'S PARENT COMPANY, Meta, has

announced that Facebook Messenger will no longer be available as an app for Apple Watch. However, you'll still be able to get Facebook Messenger notifications on your Watch when it's paired — you just won't be able to reply from your wrist.

Other Watch apps that have been discontinued include Twitter, Instagram, and Slack. Apple has been promoting the fitness and health features of Apple Watch rather than standalone apps, but it is not clear whether this is a cause or an effect of messaging and other apps being discontinued. Commentator Mark Gurman says an iPhone-like app-centric experience "doesn't always make sense on a watch."



Separately, Microsoft has released software that enables Windows 11 users to send and receive messages and calls via an iPhone. "Phone Link for iOS will offer basic iOS support for calls, messages, and access to contacts," Microsoft said.

Your Windows device won't directly connect to any Apple online services, just connect to your iPhone over Bluetooth. This is in contrast to the Apple Music and Apple TV software for Windows. Also, Windows 11 Photos has support for iCloud Photos built-in.

Phone Link for iOS has been described as the latest software release from Microsoft to make it easier for Windows users to own an iPhone — or possibly, to put it the other way around, to persuade iPhone fans that they don't need to abandon Windows.

News in brief

A bite of the Apple

> STEVE JOBS IN HIS OWN WORDS

The online Steve Jobs Archive has released a curated collection of the late Apple CEO's speeches, interviews and correspondence, available for free at <https://stevejobsarchive.com/book> to read online or download for your e-reader, as well as on Apple Books.

Featuring an introduction by Laurene Powell Jobs, *Make Something Wonderful* offers an unparalleled window into how one of the world's most creative entrepreneurs approached his life and work. In these pages, Steve shares his perspective on his childhood, on launching and being pushed out of Apple, on his time with Pixar and NeXT, and on his ultimate return to the company that started it all.

> New security updates

DID YOU RECEIVE an unfamiliar security alert urging you to update your iPhone, iPad, or Mac immediately? Not everyone did, but this wasn't a fake. It was Apple's first use of Rapid Security Response, a new type of software update designed to deliver important security improvements between the usual software updates — for example, improvements to Safari, the WebKit framework stack, or other critical system libraries. Rapid Security Response may also be used to mitigate

some security issues more quickly, such as issues that may have been exploited or reported to exist in the wild.

New Rapid Security Responses will be delivered only for the latest version of iOS, iPadOS, and macOS — beginning with iOS 16.4.1, iPadOS 16.4.1, and macOS 13.3.1. By default, devices will allow Rapid Security Responses to be applied automatically and, if necessary, will prompt you to restart the device. Find out more at <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT201224>.

Make Something Wonderful
Steve Jobs in his own words



MacLife
INVESTIGATES

AI

The pros & cons

AI gadgets are here and they're only going to get more powerful. The question is: are Apple and the public ready for them? **CHARLOTTE HENRY**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an increasingly prominent topic in today's technology landscape. With its ability to learn, adapt, and make decisions autonomously, AI has the potential to revolutionize various aspects of our lives. From business and healthcare to education and entertainment, AI is already playing a significant role in shaping the future. In this article, we'll explore the basics of AI, its applications, and its potential impact on the world we live in. Whether you're a tech enthusiast or just curious about the latest advancements in the field, this article will provide

you with a comprehensive overview of AI and its potential to transform our lives.

THE POWER OF CHATGPT

Confession: your author did not write the previous paragraph. Instead, it was generated, in mere seconds, by text-based AI tool ChatGPT. It correctly identified that in recent months AI has taken a giant leap forward as multiple major tech companies have accelerated their work in the field and made their tools public. ChatGPT comes from research and development firm OpenAI (<https://openai.com>), whose next-gen AI tool, GPT-4, promises to be

even more powerful. And OpenAI has recently partnered with Microsoft to provide the AI behind its search engine Bing. Not wanting to be left out, Google is also jumping on the AI bandwagon with Google Bard. Plus, there are image-generating services such as OpenAI's Dall-E and Dall-E 2, and the independent Midjourney, which are also growing in popularity. Extraordinarily, these latest AI tools are "generative" as well as responsive i.e. their algorithms can be used to make something new, raising questions about the power of human creativity.

Robert Scoble is a tech blogger and futurist who is deeply involved in the



AI space. He told us that “we’re in a period of massive change for human beings. This is a tool that most people haven’t even scratched the surface of. This is a very deep tool that answers any questions human beings have.”

Thanks to the image-creating tools, he thinks that “we’re heading towards a holodeck, right? Five years from now you’re going to be wearing a pair of glasses, you’re going to be able to talk to a 3D environment and have that environment do anything.”

APPLE AND AI

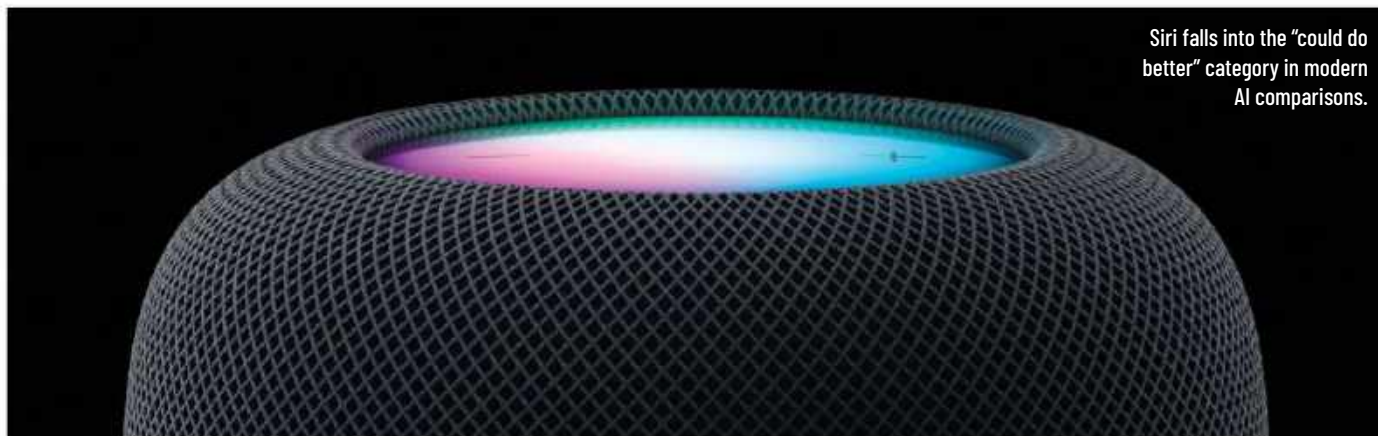
We know Apple is interested in AR/VR headsets, and we might even finally see them at WWDC 2023, but what

else is the company doing in this rapidly developing space? ChatGPT informs us: “Apple has been actively involved in the development of AI technologies for many years. The company has a dedicated AI research team, and its products, including Siri, use AI to provide intelligent, personalized experiences for users. In recent years, Apple has also made significant investments in machine learning and computer vision, which have enabled it to offer features such as facial recognition and augmented reality experiences in its devices. Additionally, Apple has made several high-profile acquisitions of AI startups to bolster its capabilities in

areas such as natural language processing and computer vision. Overall, Apple’s role in the AI space is significant, and the company continues to explore new applications and advancements in this rapidly evolving field.”

All information generated via AI needs to be checked, of course, but it is hard to disagree with much of the above. Apple is interested in the AI field, even if we’ve not yet seen things as high-profile as some of the aforementioned services.

Indeed, in February 2023 Apple acquired WaveOne, a company building AI algorithms that help compress video. In typical fashion, ▶



Siri falls into the “could do better” category in modern AI comparisons.

There was little fanfare, and no confirmation from Apple itself, but WaveOne’s outgoing VP of Sales wrote on LinkedIn that the firm had “finalized the sale of the company to Apple. We started our journey at WaveOne, realizing that machine learning/deep learning video technology could potentially change the world. Apple saw this potential and took the opportunity to add it to their technology portfolio.” Outlets like TechCrunch also noticed that some WaveOne staff had moved into relevant divisions at Apple.

LAGGING BEHIND?

This was far from Apple’s first intervention into this space. For years

SHOULD WE LET MACHINES FLOOD OUR INFORMATION CHANNELS WITH UNTRUTH?

it had been acquiring AI companies and the shopping spree is unlikely to stop any time soon. But let’s go right back to the start. Siri is something we take for granted now, but it was one of Apple’s earliest forays into AI. It has not had a major overhaul since its launch in 2011 though, and now lags far behind the capabilities of other tools that have emerged since. As

Filipe Espósito noted in a March 2023 piece for 9to5Mac:

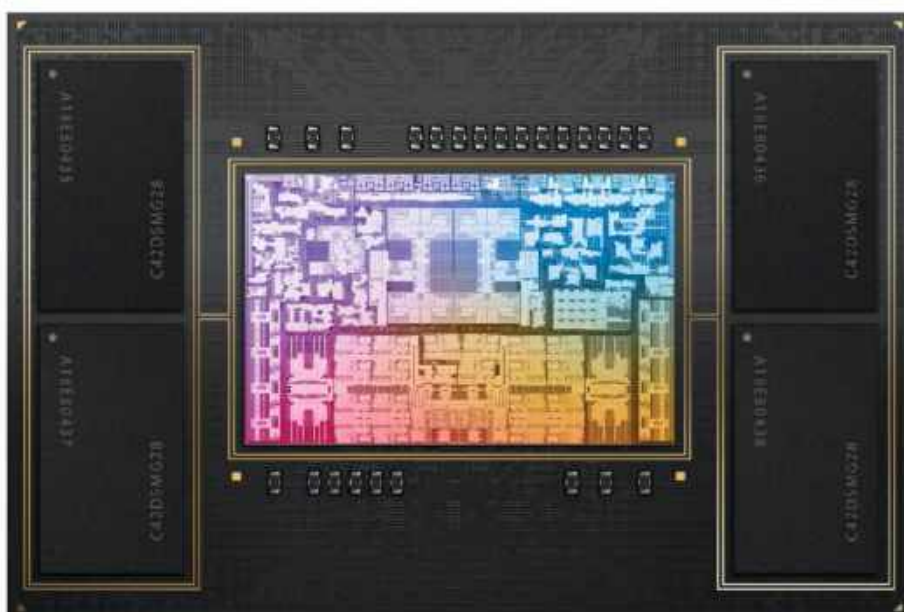
“For that time, Siri’s capabilities were quite impressive, although limited. Siri could show you the weather, set a timer, search the web, call someone, play a song, or create a reminder. All based on voice commands. Apple always said that this was just the beginning. But it turns out that Siri never reached its full potential.”

Scoble agrees. “I think Apple, on one side, is in trouble. They don’t have OpenAI. But on the other hand, they have \$250 billion so they can buy their way in at any point... If you look at it today, Siri sucks.” He explains that there could be more from Apple in the future. “They built a lot of AI in their chips that has not yet been turned on. They built a new kind of mesh network that’s in 15 devices in my house that is not yet turned on.”

Scoble feels that Apple “are behind right now”. He adds that while Google is similarly trailing OpenAI, eventually it “should win all contests in AI because they have the most data and because it has the biggest AI team.”

LEGALITY FEARS

While the rapid development of evermore powerful AI models is exciting, there are some who have concerns over problems ranging from potential job losses to privacy issues. In April, Italy’s data-protection authority banned ChatGPT and opened an investigation into OpenAI “with immediate effect”. In the UK, Stephen



Apple’s M chips incorporate the Neural Engine for better voice recognition and image processing.

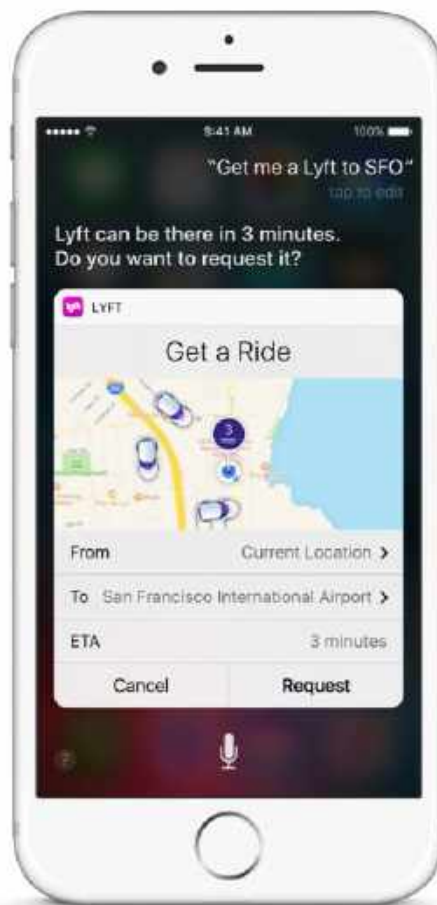
Almond, executive director, Regulatory Risk at the Information Commissioner’s Office, wrote in a blog post: “Organizations developing or using generative AI should be considering their data protection obligations from the outset, taking a data protection by design and by default approach.” He added, “this isn’t optional — if you’re processing personal data, it’s the law.”

These are not the only regulatory bodies that have raised concerns. Ursula Pahl, deputy director general of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) has warned:

“For all the benefits AI can bring to our society, we are currently not protected enough from the harm it can cause people. In only a few months, we have seen a massive take-up of ChatGPT and this is only the beginning.”

MISINFORMATION CONCERN

Another major issue is misinformation. Scoble gives the example that he asked ChatGPT for food recommendations at a restaurant during a trip to Texas. Two items it suggested did not feature on the menu. Now, this might seem a harmless example, but that is not always the case. For example, AI tools were used to create pictures of Donald Trump in handcuffs, days before his



With technological advancements in this field happening rapidly, things are moving on fast from apps using machine learning.

appearance in a New York City courtroom. Very dangerous in a volatile political environment.

Andreas Rindler, managing director at BCG Platinion, part of the giant Boston Consulting Group, commented: “As generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and Bard continue to make waves, it’s natural to ask tough questions. We’ve seen the havoc

misinformation and bias can wreak in AI technology, so we can’t just assume these tools are inherently ethical and safe. But it would be hasty to call for a blanket suspension, what’s really needed is a responsible and ethical approach that permeates every aspect of our society.”

That, though, is exactly what Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak and others have done. Along with tech leaders and academics, he signed a letter calling for a six-month pause on AI development. The document said that “AI systems with human-competitive intelligence can pose profound risks to society and humanity... we must ask ourselves: should we let machines flood our information channels with propaganda and untruth?”

EMBRACE CHANGE?

Scoble acknowledges the risk, but is also more stoic. He urges people to verify anything their digital devices tell or show them, but believes many of the objections stem from the fact that “people don’t like change”. He foresees that major disruption will occur over the next 10 to 15 years. “This is the human imperative now. You have to change. There’s no option anymore... you cannot stay in your old mindset.” AI is here and it’s only going to get more powerful. We had better get used to it. ■

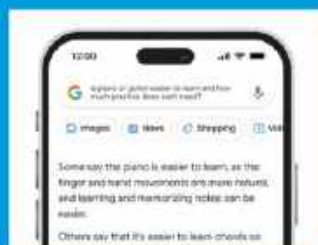
>>> Key AI tools

If you want tech to do the work for you, there are now plenty of options



ChatGPT

From OpenAI, this is the current leader in text-based AI. Enter written prompts, get extensive answers, then respond to refine the replies.



Google Bard

Another text-based tool, Google Bard currently lags behind ChatGPT but is set to get more refined and powerful as time goes on.



Dall-E

Input text prompts and the model creates any kind of image back, which can then be downloaded. It is extremely easy to use.



Midjourney

An image-generating tool that is similar in principle to Dall-E, although you’ll need to be a member of the Discord community to use it.

> THE SHIFT

MATT BOLTON thinks the Mac has become boring when it comes to software, but maybe that's just the arc of the universe



PERHAPS I AM in the minority, but it's been a long time since I was excited about anything happening with Apple's software on the Mac. Hardware, sure: the M-series chips have obviously been a seismic event, and the miniLED screens on the new MacBook Pros are gorgeous. But even the M-series chips didn't enable new software that thrills me. The biggest change made possible there was having iOS apps on the Mac, and this didn't exactly get me jumping on the couch, Tom Cruise-style.

I've written in these pages in the past that I think Apple has failed to build on what it could be doing with a modern-day iLife suite — a dedicated podcasting app, a simplified HyperCard-like app

creation tool, a version of iMovie that includes more effects as people get more creatively savvy — but I can understand why that wouldn't be a priority. The point of iLife was to make the new era of digital media look easy on a Mac, but now there are web-based tools that can do so much of what I'm talking about. Apple could do it better in a lot of ways, but whereas once iLife was like Prometheus handing the power of the pro digital media gods to humanity, now we'd probably just shrug and point out that we've been using a slightly colder and smaller fire for years, and we're kind of settled into all the weird quirks of how it works now, thanks.

It's not just that Apple isn't giving us big and flashy new apps.

It's been a long time since Apple announced a change that got me excited that working on my Mac was about to



Remember what it was like before Quick Look? To find a file you had to open loads... from a spinning hard drive! Nightmarish.

But again, I'm not sure I really blame Apple. At this point, we're all so set in our ways on how we want computers to work. I can tell you that fans of Windows are up in arms every time Microsoft tries to make changes to the OS for the better, and it's not like users of Windows are famed for loving it as is. We've just reached a point where there are fewer and fewer efficiencies to be found, and every attempt to add more runs the risk of breaking old ones.

Once we reached a certain amount of computing power and memory, we started hitting diminishing returns — the machine wasn't the bottleneck anymore. This happens in other areas too. Attempts to change the fundamental designs of cars are met with disdain; there are people who will never read an ebook because it isn't made of paper. Maybe Apple is working on amazing ideas that will push Macs forward, or maybe future macOS updates will be boring because, over time, people become boring.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE APPLE ANNOUNCED A CHANGE THAT GOT ME EXCITED



Bless Apple for trying to improve multitasking again, but if it ain't broke, don't rearrange it in a bizarre new way.

become faster. Apple has introduced a lot of quality-of-life changes, no question — mainly around security and privacy. But I remember the introduction of Quick Look, of tagging files, of Stacks in the Dock... all things that made me go "Ooooh, that's gonna save me some time," probably while narrowing my eyes in satisfaction. While I did narrow my eyes when Stage Manager was announced, it was only a result of my brow furrowing in confusion.

>>> Matt is Managing Editor at Future's flagship technology website TechRadar and has been charting changes at Apple since his student days. He's skeptical of tech industry hyperbole, but still gets warm and fuzzy on hearing "one more thing."

LETTER OF THE MONTH

I believe that a significant improvement for your magazine, and your readers, would be being able to translate the text like we can do when reading other digital titles. Reading an article that's a bit too technical? Simply convert it to the language you would like — French in my case — and voilà! Anyone that does not speak English can fully read any text in the magazine! This would be great for us and for you. In addition, this allows the reader to copy part of the text to insert in a note or email.

On another equally important subject: are you still planning an index or search engine for *MacLife*? It is not available yet. I couldn't find the edition you last promised to your readers, but I do remember you mentioning it.

I am an avid reader of your magazine. I always look forward to reading it every month.

PIERRE DENAULT, MONTRÉAL



Hi (and bonjour!) Pierre — thanks for getting in contact.

Unfortunately as our magazine is a PDF, we don't have the ability to change the language of the magazine. The only way we would be able to do that would be to build the magazine from scratch

in the language of our choosing! That being said, there is the option of viewing issues with the text reader function within the app, so at present our development team is looking at the idea of being able to convert text within the app. It's not possible now, but it might be in a future release of the app.

As to the index — yes you can already search for things within the app. If you go to the “My Library” tab, there's a search function to the left. Here you can search through issues you've already purchased (sadly, this doesn't work for issues you haven't purchased).

Image rights: Getty.

then when I see an article or two I'm interested in. That being said, when I read in the April issue that you will soon stop the printed version, I was left with a dilemma. While I understand your reasoning, I was wondering what would happen to non-subscribers like me. Will you also allow us the option of accessing individual digital issues as needed/wanted? Or will I have to say goodbye? **MIKE**

There's good news here Mike — yes, you definitely can purchase ad hoc. There's an option to buy magazines individually either within the *MacLife* app, or via our own magazine site Magazines Direct. Depending on how many issues a year you read, you might find it better value for money to purchase a year's digital subscription.

Another way

I had to respond to Brian Wallace's letter in the spring issue about having the 24 most frequently used apps show up automatically on the first page of his Home Screen.

You were right about just biting the bullet and doing it manually, but there's one very important thing that I think makes a world of difference. I take the icons for those apps and put them in alphabetical order. This way I pretty much have a logical idea of where they are... or should be.

KEITH E GATLING

Good to hear from you (again!) Keith. This is a great idea — it's not something we've tried before, but if it works for you then it must be worth a look.

Digital memento

I have a big task. I am a 91-year-old with four kids. They've asked me to record interesting pieces of my life. Can I dictate and record on my iMac? If so, can I do it with FaceTime? How would I transfer files to a CD disc or other device to make a duplicate for each child?

JACK ROEHM

What a privilege! In answer to your question: yes, you can record a FaceTime video,

and it's easy. There's no option within FaceTime itself, but the Mac has a native screen recorder which can be quickly accessed. When you're in FaceTime get to it by using the shortcut Shift + CMD + 5. From the Options menu, choose the location to record to, and the mic to use.

Then, select Record Selected Portion, drag the corners of the highlighted window to suit the FaceTime

app, and then hit the Record button. We'd advise copying the file onto a USB thumb drive (several times, in this instance), or uploading to the cloud and giving your children access to them.

Occasional reader

I love your magazine but I'm not a subscriber, mainly because I don't have time to read every issue. However, when I'm at a news stand, I do purchase an issue now and

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MacLife

MAKE YOUR MAC NEW AGAIN

Your Mac is a powerful beast, but there are many ways to enhance its performance even further. With our guide, you can eke out every ounce of power

WRITTEN BY IAN OSBORNE

ARE YOU CONFIDENT that your Mac is running to its maximum efficiency? Is it still the powerhouse of modern computing it was when you first bought it, or has it gradually been cluttered with duplicates, space-hogging data, and endless media? If your Mac's internal drive is groaning under the weight of endless files, it's likely to run slower as there's less space to use as virtual memory. So it's always wise to keep tabs on what you have on your

machine, and declutter it regularly to make sure you're not storing stuff you don't need.

And are you using its time-saving and organization features to the fullest? The Mac has all manner of features to help you keep on top of your work, with some great tools for the Finder and awesome ways of keeping control of the Desktop. There are some excellent apps available for cleaning your Mac's storage and organizing files too.

Over the next 12 pages, we show you how to cut down on the clutter by identifying duplicates and large, forgotten files, and moving media such as TV shows, movies and music to external drives. We also show you how to get more from your Mac's often overlooked features, such as Smart Folders, Mission Control, Stage Manager and more, as well as third-party tools for keeping your Mac in shape. ■



It's clean-up time

Decluttering your Mac is one of the easiest ways to speed things up — here's how

Housekeeping apps: good or bad?

Some Mac owners swear by clean-up and maintenance apps such as CleanMyMac X and MacKeeper, while others have their doubts. Those in favor argue they're great for emptying caches of unwanted system junk, freeing memory, and more. Others say these apps are unnecessary, and perhaps even harmful if used incorrectly. And the same is true of us here at *MacLife*; while some of the team are fans of apps such as CleanMyMac X, others won't go near them. Only you can decide what's right for you.

SHOULD YOUR MAC be groaning under the strain of unused files, duplicated data and other detritus, a clear-out and spruce up can work wonders. Here you'll discover some of the most common slowdowns and how to fix them, and what you can do about duplicates and unused apps with some handy third-party options.

When you're hunting for duplicate files, it's a good idea to limit searches to your Mac's Applications and Users folders. You shouldn't delete anything — even duplicates — from

the System or Library folders unless you really know what you're doing.

First of all, let's look at how you can identify large and redundant files with DaisyDisk (\$9.99, <https://daisydiskapp.com>). This powerful and popular app can quickly scan your Mac to find large files, categorizing them according to type, while purging "hidden space" (that is, the difference between the total used disk space and the total of all files available for scanning). Then we'll explore some of the other tools you can use — including the macOS Finder. ■

QUICK LOOK Identify space hogs with DaisyDisk



A THE FOLDER TREE
The folder tree identifies which folder or drive you're currently analyzing. You can click on one in the line to open it.

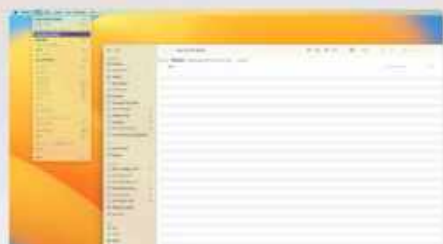
B THE DISK MAP
This graphic is a visual representation of the files stored on the drive you're looking at. Hover over one to identify it.

C INDIVIDUAL FILES
Each segment in the wheel represents a different file. Its size shows the actual file's size, which is detailed on the right.

D BREAKDOWN
This list breaks down the information of the drive or folder currently being analyzed. Click on a category to view it.

E COLLECTED FILES
Drag files here for deletion, then click Delete to erase those files. Also, click here for a list of files currently collected.

HOW TO Clear space with Finder



1 Open a Smart Folder
Click on the desktop to make sure you're in the Finder. Click on File in the toolbar and select New Smart Folder. A Finder window opens. Make it large so you can clearly see the Path Bar, which will get filled in along the bottom.



2 Select file type
Click on the "+" in the top-right corner of the new Smart Folder window. A customizable rule appears. From the first menu option, choose Kind. Then from the second, choose Any, and select the file type you want to check.



3 Check duplicates
List view (see View menu) makes it easy to spot duplicates. Click on a file to see its location in the Path Bar along the foot of the window. Before you delete a file, make sure that you're not destroying a backup copy.

HOW TO Clean up with Gemini 2



1 Gemini 2 in action
Available from \$19.95/year, Gemini 2 (<https://macpaw.com/gemini>) is great for finding duplicate files. Launch the app, click the large "+" and choose a suggested folder to scan, or click the Custom Folder button to navigate to a location of your choice.



2 Scan for duplicates
When you've chosen the areas you want to check, click the green button in the app window to scan for duplicates. Give Gemini 2 the permissions it requests, and the scan is carried out. The folder map may take a while.



3 Eliminate them
When it's finished, Gemini 2 shows you an overview of the duplicated files on your Mac. From here, you can either carry out a Smart Cleanup, or review them by hand. Check the ones you're happy to delete and click Remove.

HOW TO Declutter with dupeGuru



1 The dupeGuru app
Free, open-source app dupeGuru (<https://dupeguru.voltaicideas.net>) is designed to find duplicate files. Download and launch it, then click the "+" (bottom left of the window) and add directories you wish to search for duplicates.



2 Search options
Choose a Standard search, or look specifically for Music or Pictures. You can choose how to identify duplicates using the menu. Under the State column, you can set the search to reference only or excluded for a directory.



3 Scan and remove
When you're ready, click Scan. Give dupeGuru the necessary permissions, and wait for the scan to complete. It might take quite a while. When it's done, you can review and remove any duplicated files from your Mac.



MacPaw's excellent CleanMyMac X (<https://macpaw.com>) can carry out, and in some cases automate, many of the tasks suggested in this guide.

A deeper declutter

Take things further when giving your Mac a much-needed tidy



Stay up to date

One of the best ways to make sure your Mac performs at its best is to keep its operating system and apps up to date. Click the Apple menu; if there's a number next to App Store, you have updates. The MacUpdater app is great for identifying apps bought or downloaded from outside the Mac App Store that need updating (<https://corecode.io/macupdater>).

WHEN YOU'VE FIXED and removed the most obvious slowdowns and clutter, it's time for a deeper clean. Here we explore some other steps you can take, such as off-loading your Desktop and Documents folders to your iCloud Drive, saving valuable space on your computer's local drive.

Removing leftovers from deleted apps is also a good idea. If the app comes with an uninstaller, this is easy; simply run the uninstaller and the app is deleted, along with all its component parts. If this isn't the case, you might need a useful third-party app such as Nektony App Cleaner & Uninstaller, CCleaner, Hazel or CleanMyMac X.

macOS Ventura supports a huge range of languages, but how many do you actually use? If you want to save a little storage space, you can remove those that don't interest you. Likewise, universal binary applications that can run on both Intel or Apple silicon Macs carry code for both processor families, when your Mac only needs one. You can safely remove the other. Look out too for tips on removing GarageBand sounds you don't use.

Keeping the lid on unwanted spam emails is another way of maintaining max productivity. No one likes ploughing through endless unrequested mailing list circulars. On these pages, we show you how to keep incoming junk emails to a minimum. ■

Spotlight preferences

Spotlight searches are great for finding things on your Mac, and they can be greatly sped up by tweaking a few settings. Click the Apple icon in the menu bar, then select System Settings (Ventura) or System Preferences (Monterey or earlier). Find Siri & Spotlight, and scroll the right-hand pane up until you reach the section labeled "Search results". Here you will find a list of things Spotlight can

search. They're all checked by default, but you can uncheck items you'd rather Spotlight didn't search. When you're finished, click the Spotlight Privacy button at the bottom. In the pop-up window, you can exclude drives and folders from Spotlight searches. This is very useful if you clone your drives as an extra backup; there's no need for Spotlight to search these.



You can speed up your Spotlight searches by tweaking its settings.

HOW TO Remove unwanted apps, files and tools



1 Uninstall apps

There are a number of options out there for uninstalling apps. We're using FIPLAB Ltd's Delete Apps (from the Mac App Store) because it's free. Identify your Application and User folders as instructed to proceed.



2 Check the list

Every app on your Mac is listed. The menu sets how they're presented. Find every app you want to clean uninstall and click their checkboxes. The Details buttons show what data is deleted if the app is removed.



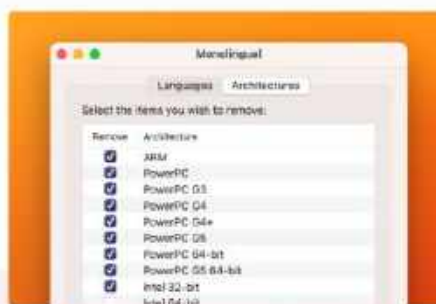
3 Create some space

Click Next, and make a new Time Machine backup as instructed if you wish. The apps you chose to remove are uninstalled, along with all their component pieces. The final screen shows how much space you've freed.



4 Unnecessary language

Monolingual (<https://ingmarstein.github.io/Monolingual>) can delete unwanted languages. Make sure you don't delete ones required by installed apps. Select languages you want to remove, then click the Remove button.



5 Remove app code

Click the Architectures tab, and you can similarly remove application code your computer doesn't need. Use this application with care, and only remove languages and architectures you're absolutely sure you don't need.



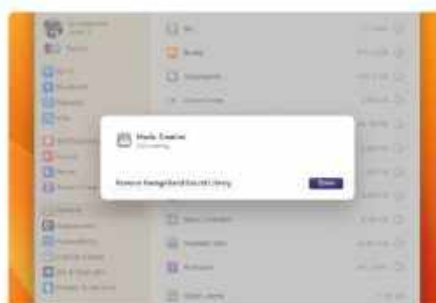
6 Move data to iCloud

To move your Desktop files and Documents folders to iCloud Drive, head to Apple menu > System Settings/Preferences. Click Apple ID > iCloud > iCloud Drive. Select Options. Check the box next to Desktop & Documents Folders.



7 Stop spam

In the Mail app, click the Mail menu in the top bar and open the Settings. Click Junk Mail in the toolbar, and set up your filter. Under the Blocked tab, you can add email addresses and phone numbers to your blocked list.



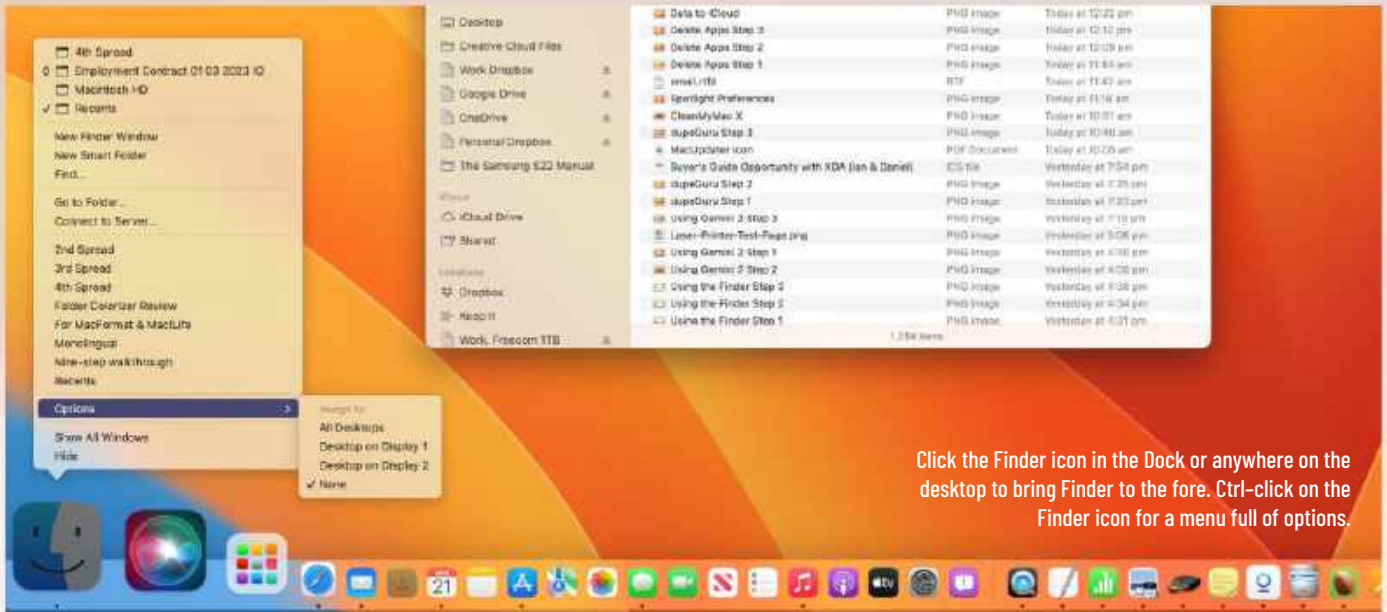
8 GarageBand sounds

If you want to delete GarageBand's sound library, go to the Apple menu and open About This Mac. Click More Info > Storage Settings, then the "i" next to Music Creation. Then click "Remove GarageBand Sound Library".



9 Website notifications

If you no longer want to receive notifications from a website, open Safari, then under the Safari menu, select Settings. Click Websites in the toolbar and Notifications in the sidebar, then turn them off for any websites you choose.



Power up the Finder

Mastering the Finder is one of the best ways to improve efficiency on your Mac

WHEN YOUR MAC is clutter-free, you can optimize the way you use it. Finder is the utility that underpins everything. It's the Finder that lets you launch apps, use the Mac's desktop, and arrange files and data into folders. It opens automatically, and is always on when you're using Mac apps. Click on a Finder window and you can change how your files and folders are displayed using the window's Toolbar icons and the View menu found in the Finder's menu bar. Also in View, you can Hide or Show the Preview, Toolbar, Sidebar, Tab Bar, Status Bar, Path Bar and more. Give them a go — experiment and see how you like it. You can use the search field in a Finder window to look for files, and tag them with the Tag menu. ■

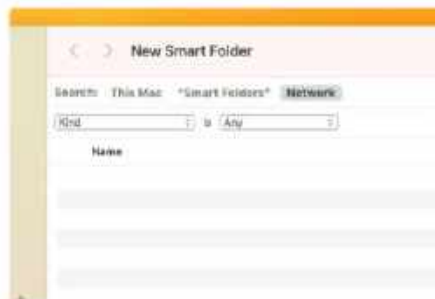
Keyboard shortcuts

There are some great Finder keyboard shortcuts that work across the Mac interface, as well as in most apps. Cmd+C copies highlighted text, Cmd+X cuts it and Cmd+V pastes it into a new location. Use Cmd+N for a new document or window, and Cmd+P for printing. Hold Cmd and tap the "+" or "-" keys to zoom in or out of a document or window. For a more comprehensive list of keyboard shortcuts, check out Apple's support page at <https://apple.co/3n2Guad>.

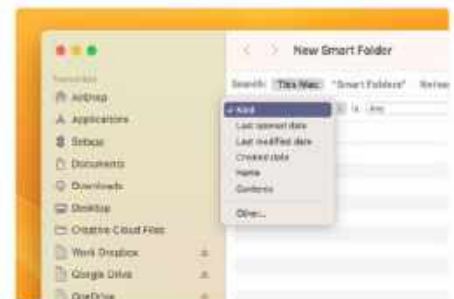
HOW TO Find files faster with Smart Folders



1 Open a Smart Folder
One of the best ways to keep files close to hand is to use Smart Folders that you can park right in the sidebar. To open a new one, in the Finder, click the File menu in the menu bar and select New Smart Folder.

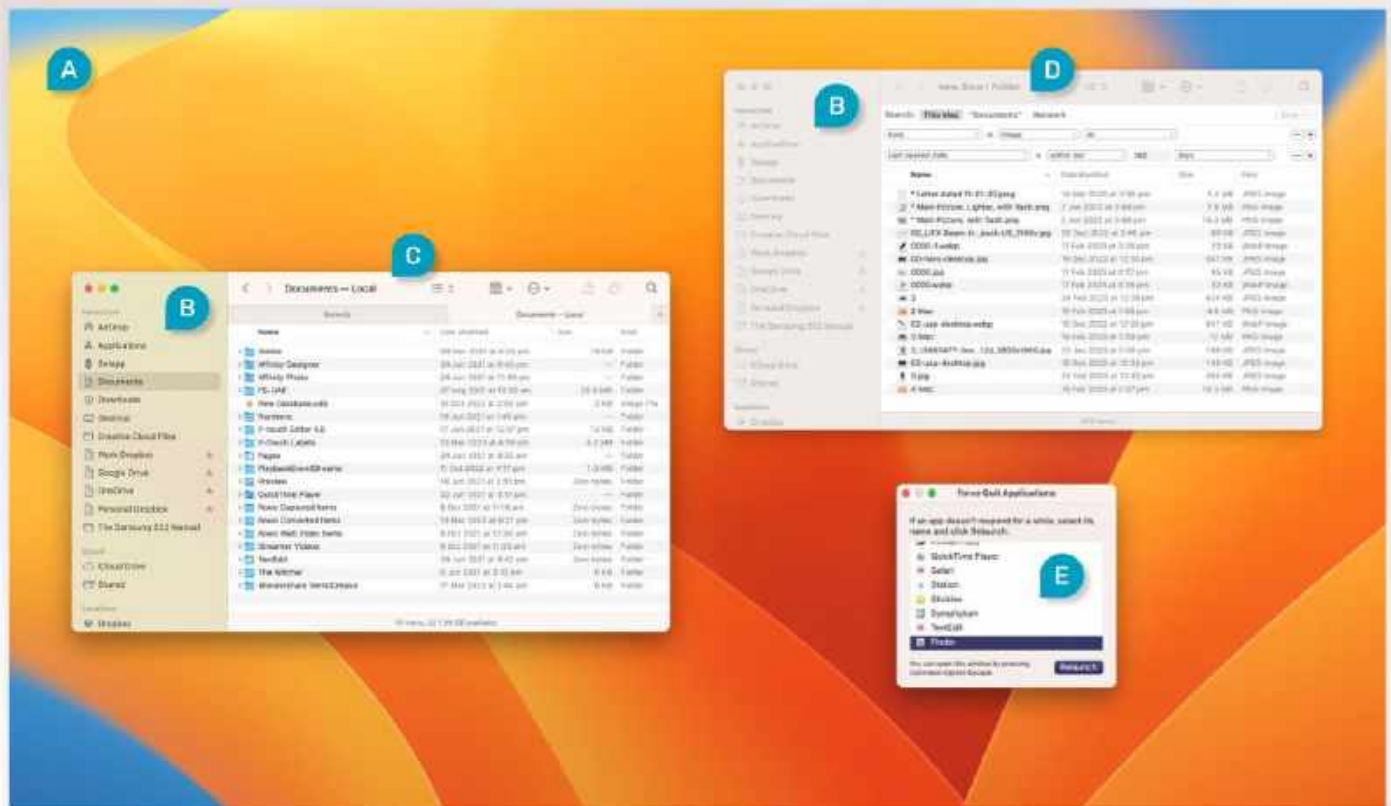


2 Search where?
Smart Folders collate files from all over your Mac, without removing them from their original location. You can limit where the Smart Folder will look for files by clicking one of the options found in the Search row shown here.



3 Add a condition
Use the menus here to add various conditions. The first one restricts files by kind, last opened date, name, contents and more. What the second pull-down offers depends on what you chose using the first menu.

QUICK LOOK Working with Finder



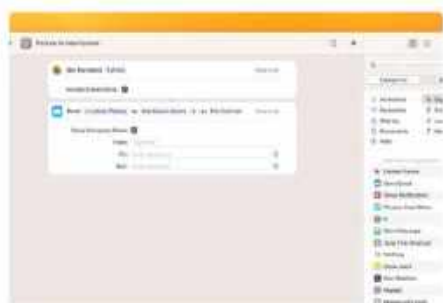
A ACCESS FINDER
Click anywhere on the desktop that isn't covered by an app or a window to bring the Finder to the front.

B THE SIDEBAR
Each Finder window has its own sidebar, from where you can easily access various folders and drives on your Mac.

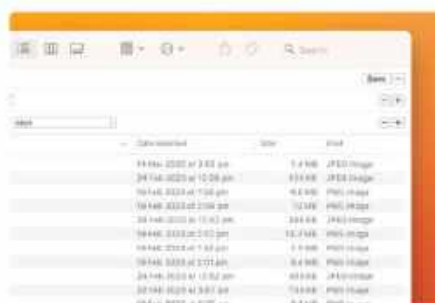
C FINDER TABS
Finder tabs work similarly to those in Safari. Click a tab to open it in the window. You can press **Cmd+T** to create a new tab.

D SMART FOLDERS
Open a Smart Folder (see the walkthrough below) from Finder's **File** menu and you can set up rules to restrict what it shows.

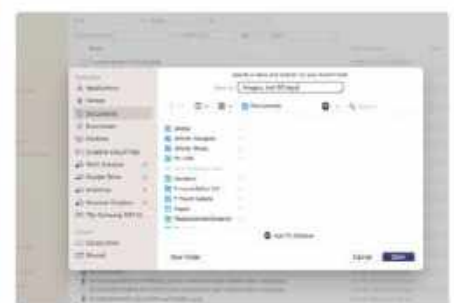
E FORCE RELAUNCH
If Finder crashes, go to the **Apple** menu and select **Force Quit**. Click on **Finder** from the options, then choose the **Relaunch** button.



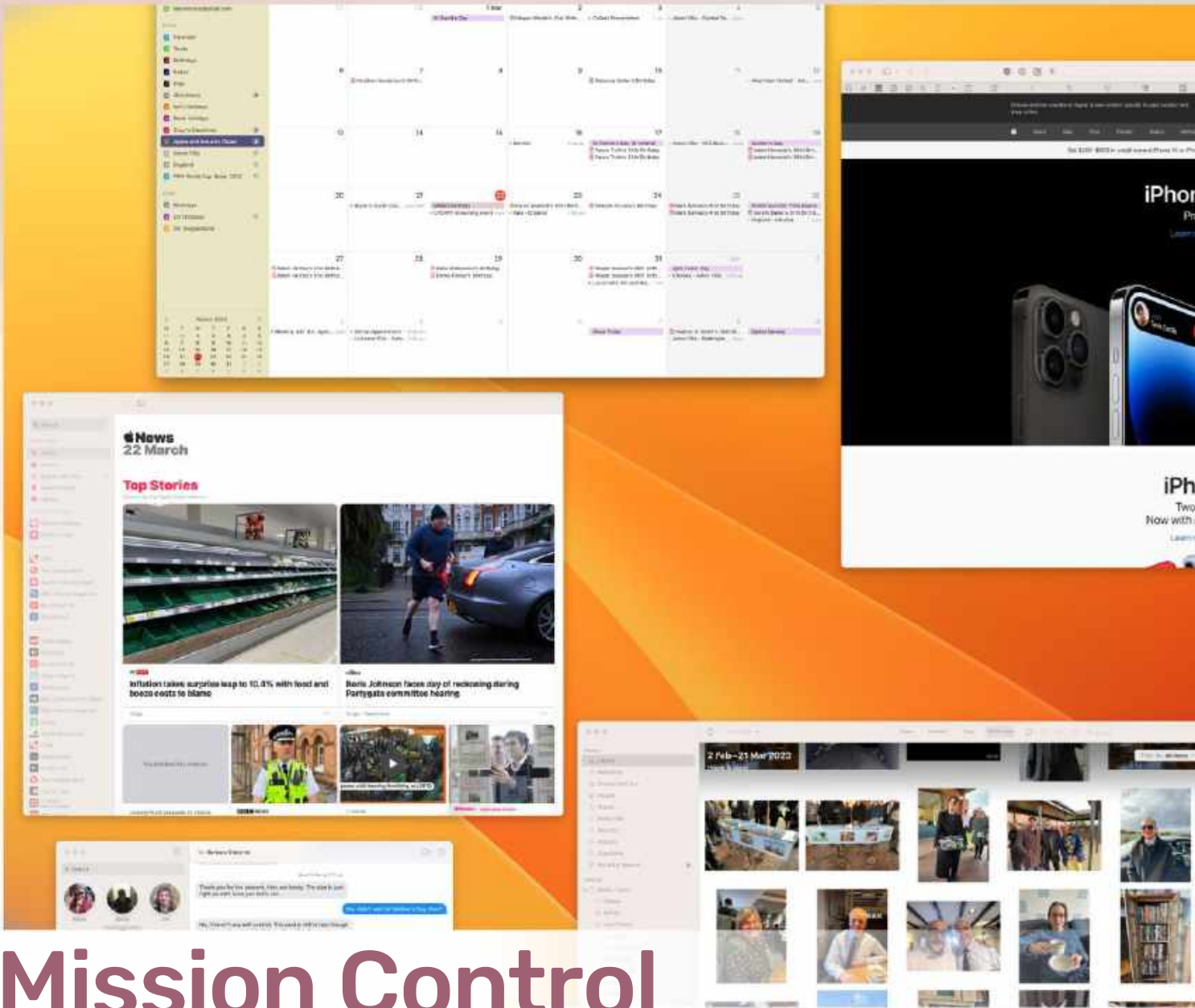
4 Date or file name
Search by date or file name and you have a text field to complete too. For example, if you search by file name, you add the name you're looking for, and set whether the file should match it, contain it, and more.



5 More conditions
Use the "+" buttons here to add further conditions, or the "-" buttons to remove them. Here we first set the folder to look for pictures, and then to further restrict the listing to those opened in the last 30 days.



6 Save a Smart Folder
To save a Smart Folder, click the **Save** button in the top-right corner. You can then give it a name and location, and add it to the Sidebar if you wish. A Smart Folder is constantly updated with files matching its conditions.



Mission Control & Stage Manager

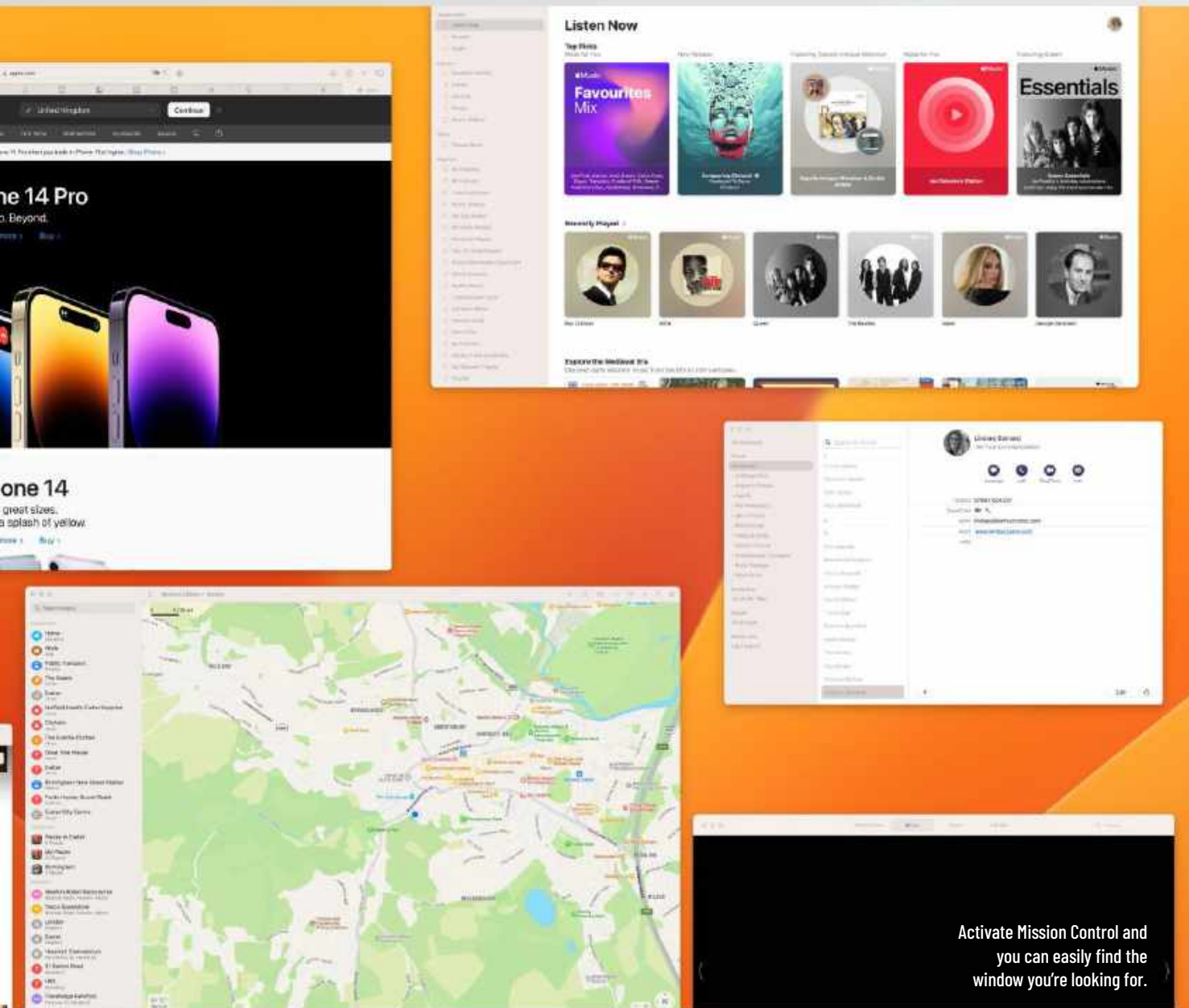
macOS has some great tools for taking control of your desktop spaces

M ISSION CONTROL GIVES an excellent bird’s-eye view of what’s open on your Desktop, including those in full-screen or Split View. Click on the window you want to use and Mission Control closes, with the chosen app on top and active. It’s great for when you have lots of overlapping windows open at once. To activate Mission Control, swipe up with three or four fingers on your trackpad, double-tap with two fingers on a Magic Mouse, or press F3 on your keyboard.

With Mission Control open, you can add another desktop, or space. Move the pointer to the Spaces bar at the top of the screen, and it expands. Now every Desktop currently available to you is shown. You can add a new Desktop with the “+” on the right-hand side of the Spaces bar, and delete one by hovering over it and clicking the “X” in its corner. Click on a Desktop to switch to it, or with Mission Control closed, move between Desktops by swiping left and right with three or four fingers on a trackpad or with two fingers on a Magic Mouse. Alternatively,

press **Ctrl+[right arrow]** or **Ctrl+[left arrow]** on your keyboard.

Stage Manager is a new way to organize your Desktop, introduced with Ventura. It’s designed to keep the app you’re working with front and center, with other apps in the left-hand side of the screen, clearing up the rest of your desktop. To turn it on click the icon in Control Center (a rectangle with three dots to the left). To switch apps, click on one in the left menu; you can also adjust the size and position of apps; and you can even group apps that appear in the centre. ■



HOW TO Master multiple desktops



1 Add desktops

To create a new Desktop, open Mission Control and drag the pointer to the Spaces bar at top of the screen. Click on the “+” to add a new Desktop. You can add up to 16 different Desktop spaces, switching between them as needed.



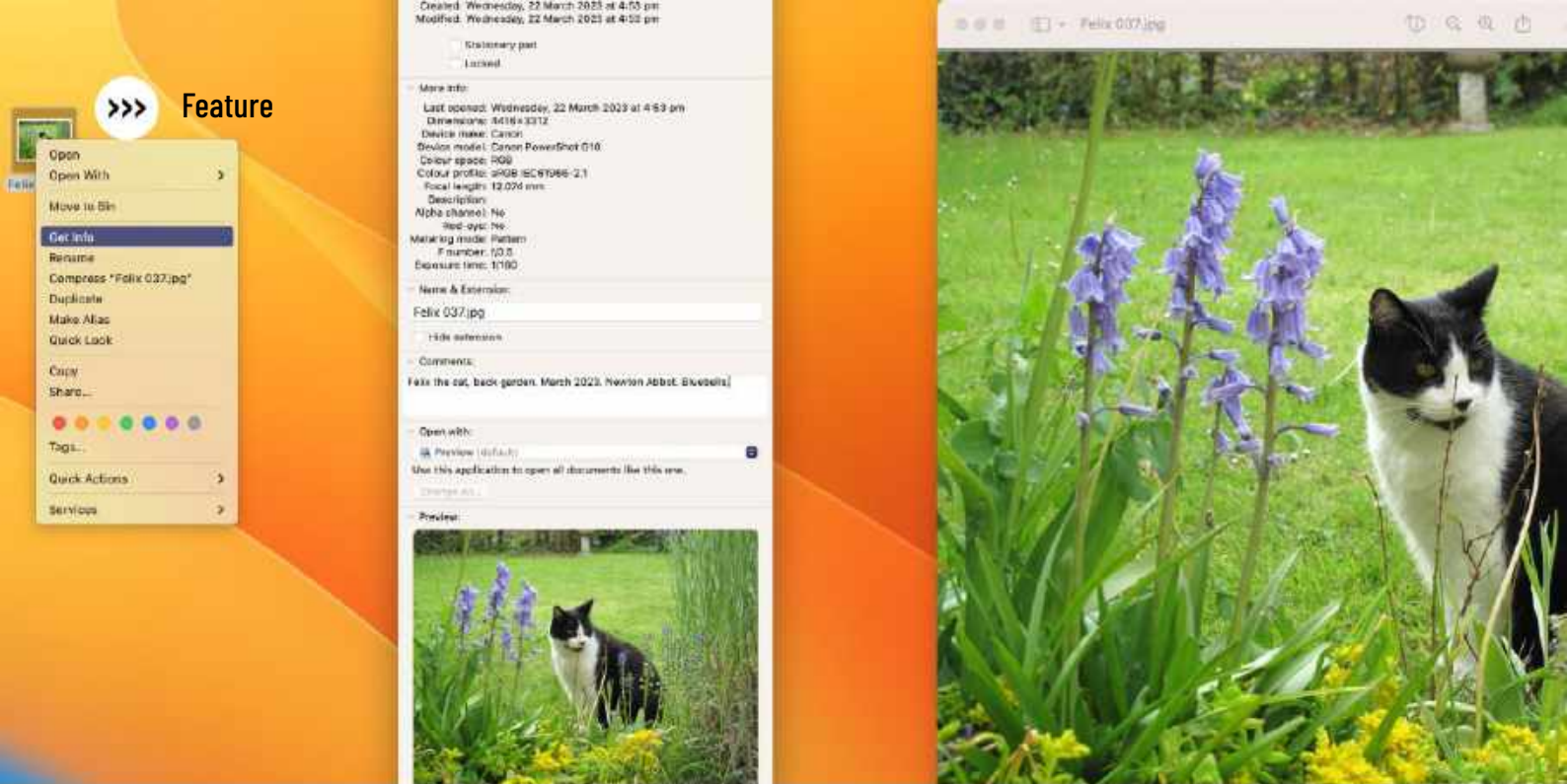
2 Moving apps

You can move an app to a different Desktop by simply dragging it from the current Desktop (open in Mission Control) to the Desktop you want to move it to using the Spaces bar. It’s great for keeping yourself organized.



3 Full-screen apps

Apps that are open in full-screen mode are shown as desktops in the Spaces bar. To add a second app to a full-screen app, displaying them in Split View, drag it onto the app shown in full-screen in the Spaces bar.



Be a master of organization!

Bringing a little structural discipline to your Mac will boost your productivity

NOW WE'VE CLEANED out the clutter from your Mac and mastered the Finder's organizational features, it's time to make sure your files and folders are managed efficiently. For example, if you get back from a wedding with two dozen photos of anonymously named images (such as "image001.jpg"), why not replace the generic "image" with something meaningful like "Mike and Sue's Wedding"? There are

plenty of apps that let you change file names in batches, such as Renamer, Hazel, DropIt and more. You could also set up a routine in Shortcuts, which is included with recent versions of macOS.

As well as giving your files a more readily identifiable name, you can also add notes to the metadata of individual files and folders. Just click on the file or folder in question and press **Cmd+I**, or **Ctrl-click** on it and select **Get Info** from the pop-up window. You can

then add notes in the Comments section, which can be identified by Finder and Spotlight searches.

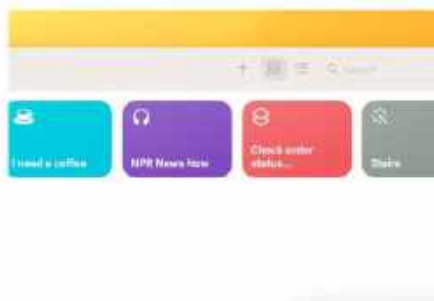
Adding Finder Tags using the toolbar icon groups data with a similar tag; just click one of the colored tags in a Finder sidebar and all items you tagged with that color are shown. Finally, Desktop Stacks can do much to tidy up files and folders that sit on your Desktop. Click on the Desktop, then in the View menu, choose **Use Stacks** to activate it. ■

HOW TO Manage your files with Shortcuts for Mac



1 Open Shortcuts

Shortcuts is a scripting app that's available on the Mac, iOS devices, iPads and Apple Watch. It's used to create macros for executing specified tasks, and is found in the Applications folder or the Launchpad's Other folder.



2 Add your own

The next screen shows starter shortcuts and those you've already built or downloaded. Click the "+" in the toolbar to start building a new shortcut. A new window opens. You can type a title for it at the top.



3 Building shortcuts

Here we're taking the last photo (or screenshot) opened and sending it to *MacLife*. In the Sidebar, click **Apps** and choose the **Photos** app. From the options that appear, add **Get Latest Photos** and click **Include Screenshots**.



Top 5 Organizer apps

There are some great third-party apps that can power up the way you organize and find files on your Mac. Here we take a look at some of the best.



Alfred 5

> Free
> www.alfredapp.com
Alfred powers up Finder, with hotkeys, keywords, text expansion and more. The app is free, but with the paid-for Powerpack, you can build workflows that cut down on repetitive tasks. It's a great productivity tool.

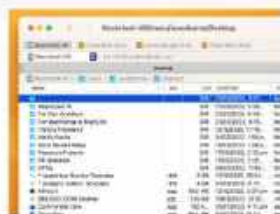


Path Finder

> \$29.95/year
> www.cocoatech.io
Path Finder integrates with a number of cloud services such as Dropbox, iCloud, Google Drive and more, and its Dual Pane View makes it easy to copy or move files from one place to another.

Control file associations

Do certain files open in the wrong app, such as PDFs opening in Preview rather than Acrobat? What you need to do is master file associations. Ctrl-click on a file and select Get Info, or click on it and press Cmd+I. In the info window that appears, use the "Open with" menu to choose which app that file should open in. If you wish, you can click on the Change All button to make all files of that type open in that app.



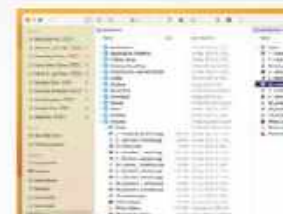
Commander One

> From \$29.99
> <https://mac.eltima.com>
An awesome Finder replacement, Commander One offers dual pane windows and hotkeys for any action. You can show hidden files, manage multiple folders at once, unlimited tabs, view computers on your network and many more productivity-boosting features.



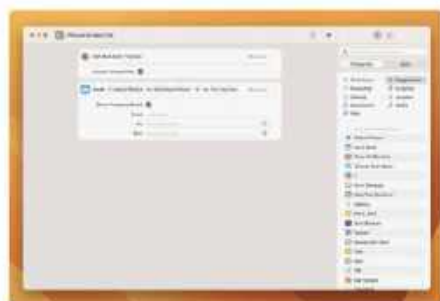
HoudahSpot 6

> \$34
> www.houdah.com
Find files fast by building a search with added conditions. Start with a simple search, then refine it with further clauses that narrow down and improve your results. You can exclude folders and set up search templates too.



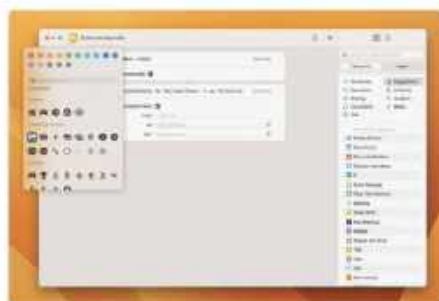
ForkLift 3

> From \$19.95
> <https://binarynights.com>
This dual-pane file manager and file transfer client enables you to connect to cloud services and remote connections, sync folders, batch rename files, preview files, quick-open favorites and more.



4 More actions

Having identified the picture we're sending, we can now add a second action, Send Email from the Categories section. After adding the details, this short Shortcut is complete. Click the Play icon in the toolbar to test it.



5 Customize icon

You can customize the icon shown at the top of the window, next to the shortcut name. Click on it, and select a color from the circles at the top of the pop-up window, then scroll down and choose a symbol for the icon.



6 Shortcuts gallery

As well as designing your own shortcuts, you can choose ready-made ones from the Gallery. In the app window, click Gallery in the sidebar, and click the "+" sign on a shortcut to save it. You can edit Gallery shortcuts too.

Get moving

Use external drives for space-hogging files

AFTER ALL YOUR best clean-up and organizational efforts, if your Mac still feels a little wheezy, one solution could be to move some of the biggest space hogs onto an external drive. This frees up space on your boot drive for the Mac to use as virtual memory, speeding it up and benefiting greatly when you have multiple applications open at once.

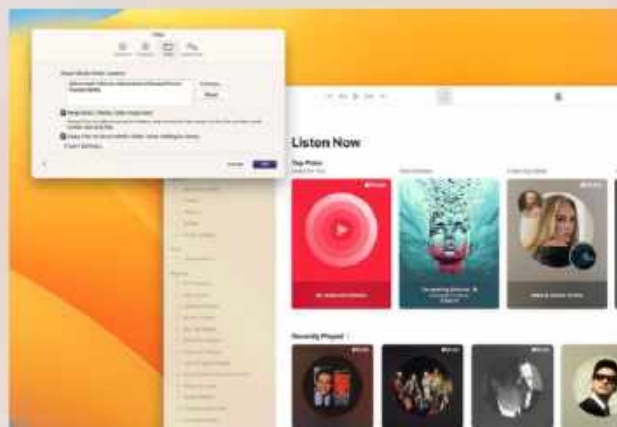
If you have a lot of documents on your Mac, consider moving them to a cloud storage service such as iCloud or Dropbox. Not only does this save local drive space by not having them stored on your Mac, you can access and edit them from any computer or mobile device with an internet connection.

But the biggest space hogs on your Mac are likely to be your media libraries, namely

those associated with the Music, TV and Photos apps. Naturally, you can move these to the cloud too if you wish; for example, if you subscribe to Apple Music you can keep your tunes in the cloud. In Photos, open Settings from the Photos menu, and in the iCloud tab, make sure iCloud Photos is checked and Optimize Mac Storage is chosen. For the TV app, turn Automatic Downloads off in the

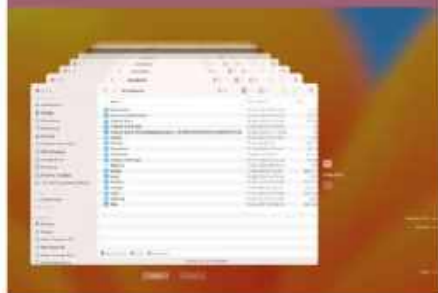
You can move media libraries such as Music to an external drive.

app's Settings and stream instead of downloading. If you prefer to move your Photos, TV and Music libraries to a local external drive (make sure you have a Time Machine backup in case things go awry), follow our walkthrough on the page opposite. You can use a similar technique with large or rarely used files too. ■



Remember your Time Machine backups!

When moving your libraries from your hard drive to your external drive, make sure you have a Time Machine backup before you start. You can then fall back on it if something goes wrong. A word of warning: never keep your media and your Time Machine backups on the same drive. If you do and the drive fails, you've lost both your files and your backups. Use a separate drive for Time Machine, and nothing else.



Top 5 External drives

An external drive is a hard drive or solid-state drive (SSD) that plugs into your Mac. A desktop drive requires its own power supply; a portable drive is powered by the data cable. A NAS (Network Attached Storage) drive is connected to your router, and accessed through your network. Make sure your external drive is formatted for the Mac first – APFS or Mac OS Extended (Journaled) format.



Seagate One Touch SSD 2TB

> \$149.99

> www.seagate.com

With speeds of up to 1,030MB/s, this is a speedy drive. It can store high-def videos and play them without lag. It comes with USB-C and USB-A cables.



WD Elements Desktop Hard Drive 10TB

> \$249.99

> www.westerndigital.com

Desktop hard drives need to be plugged in but offer a greater capacity. This one holds a huge amount of data for your money.



SanDisk Pro G-Drive ArmorATD 5TB

> \$179.99

> www.westerndigital.com

This G-Drive ArmorATD offers a decent capacity for a portable drive. It has an anodized aluminum enclosure, plus an easy-to-grip protective bumper.



Synology NAS Drive DS220J 8TB

> \$399.97

> www.synology.com

This two-bay NAS drive comes with two 4TB hard drives pre-installed. Stream your media libraries to any computer or mobile device on your network, or even over the internet.

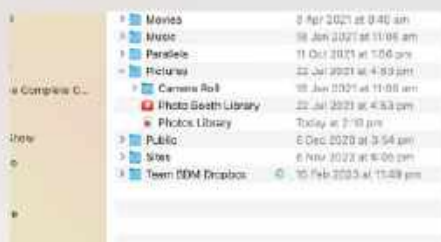


ORICO 5 Bay External Hard Drive Enclosure

> \$229.99 > www.orico.cc

For greater flexibility, why not buy a multi-drive enclosure and add your own hard drives? This five-bay device can take drives of up to 16TB in size, giving a total capacity of 80TB.

HOW TO Move your Photos library



1 Locate in Finder

First, quit the Photos app. In Finder, find your Photos library; if you haven't moved it, click Go in the menu bar and select Home. You should find the Photos library in the Pictures folder in the Finder window that opens up.

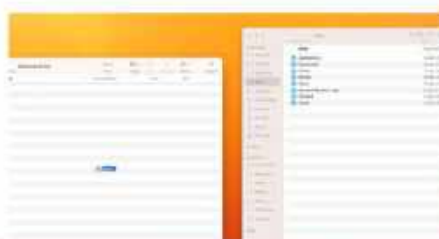
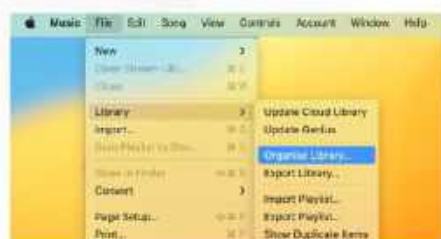
2 Move your library

Drag the Photos library out of its current location to your external storage device. When it's finished moving, double-click to open it from its current location. You can now delete the original Photos library to save space.

3 iCloud Photos

If you use iCloud Photos, quit Photos and open it while holding the Option key. From the next window, you can designate the new library on the external drive as your system library. Check the path to make sure it's the right one.

HOW TO Move your Music library



1 Consolidate library

Open Music. In Music's File menu, go to Library > Organize Library. A window opens. Check the box labeled "Consolidate files". Click OK. This copies all the music files on your Mac to your library, leaving the originals alone.

2 Drag across

Quit Music. In Finder, select Go > Home from the menu bar. In the window that opens, you'll find the Music Library folder inside the Music folder. Drag the Music Library folder to your external drive, and click Authenticate if prompted.

3 Redirect app

Open the Music app while holding down the Option key. You're invited to Choose Music Library; click Choose Library. Highlight the file "Music Library.musclibrary" on your external drive. Click Choose, give it a name and click Save.

HOW TO Move your TV library



1 Transfer libraries

You can have more than one media library for Apple TV. As explained earlier, open your Home folder. Find TV Library in the Movies folder, and transfer it to the external drive. You can delete the original, now or later on.

2 Choose library

Quit the TV app if it's open. Reopen the TV app while holding down the Option key. A window will pop up asking you to Choose Library, Create Library or Quit. Click the Choose Library option and a new window appears.

3 Configure the settings

Navigate to the TV Library on your external drive, click on it and click the Choose button. To configure settings for a library, open that library in the TV app and then choose TV > Settings. You can switch libraries here too.

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CREATE

HOW TO DO ANYTHING ON YOUR MAC, iPhone & iPad

Create Apple Music playlists

Enjoy top-quality tunes wherever you go by building your own soundtrack

REQUIRES

macOS 13 or later, Apple Music or iTunes Match sub (optional)

YOU WILL LEARN

How to create and customize playlists in Apple Music for Mac

IT WILL TAKE

20 minutes



IF YOU'VE EVER made a mixtape or mix CD for a friend or significant other, then you'll know how to create playlists — carefully curated compilations of favorite tracks that you can't wait to share.

Playlists on Mac have existed since before the first version of iTunes in 2001 and, although they've been somewhat eclipsed by streaming audio and AI-generated “stations” on Apple Music, they still have a part to play. That's because playlists are easy to create and fun to dream up, and with Smart Playlists you can even get the Music app for Mac to do the heavy lifting for you — by applying rules that can automatically include some tracks (those you've “loved”,

say) while excluding others (those you've “disliked”). Plus you can save playlists and sync them across your devices, share them as stations on Apple Music and, yes, even in 2023, burn them to disc so you can share them old-school.

Follow our tutorial's quick and easy steps to find out how. **ROB MEAD-GREEN**



Learn how to build a Smart Playlist based on a selection of chosen criteria.

HOW TO Get started with Apple Music playlists



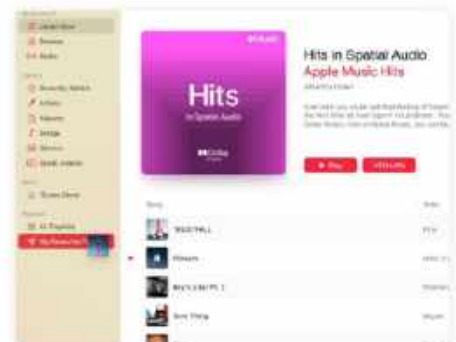
1 Your first playlist

Open the Music app and choose File > New > Playlist (Cmd+N) from the menu bar. You'll see a new, empty playlist with its name highlighted in pink. Start typing to enter your chosen name. Press Return to save the name you've entered.



2 Start adding tracks

Your playlist is still empty, so click an option from the sidebar (Browse, say) then scroll to the song in the right-hand pane you want to add. Ctrl-click the song to see its contextual menu. There, choose Add to Playlist then your playlist's name.



3 Now keep going

With your first track added, you can now add more. Either use the method described in step 2, or simply drag and drop the name of the track you want to add from the right-hand pane onto the playlist name in the Music app sidebar.



4 Change playlist order
Once you've finished adding tracks to a playlist, you can change its running order. Select your playlist in the sidebar to see its tracklisting. Click a track, then drag and drop it higher or lower in the list to move it to a new playlist position.



5 Go further
Any playlists you create using steps 1–4 involve a fair amount of curation. So let's get the Music app to do some of the work. Choose File > New Smart Playlist (Opt+Cmd+N). A Smart Playlist dialog will open, enabling you to add custom rules.



6 Set some rules
Make sure that "Match for the following rule" is checked. Below that is your first rule, which is split into three sections. Click the left-hand section (Artist) to reveal the full list of rules-based options. Choose Media Kind here.



7 Add more criteria
Click the second section ("contains") and again choose from the list of options that appears. Choose "is". The third section should now show Music. Click it to reveal more options – Music Video, for example. Let's stick with Music.



8 Add more rules
The rule we've set ensures our playlist only contains media types that have been classed as Music. Click the "+" button to the right of the rule to add a second rule. Repeat steps 6 and 7, only this time choose different criteria.



9 Could you be Loved?
For the second rule, choose Love from the first section, "is" from the second, and Loved from the third. Ensure "Live updating" is checked. Now any songs you choose to "love" in future will be automatically added to the playlist.



10 Add playlist limits
If you have "loved" hundreds of tracks, you could find your playlist ends up being rather long. To change that, ensure "Limit to" is checked, then choose from the list of options in each of the first, second and third sections here.



11 Save. Remix. Remove
Once you're done, click OK to save your playlist and give it a name as in step 1. To change the rules for your playlist click Edit Rules at the playlist's top. To remove a playlist, Ctrl-click it in the sidebar and choose "Delete from Library".



12 Burn baby burn?
If you subscribe to Apple Music or iTunes Match your playlist should sync across your devices. To burn a playlist to CD, click the "..." to the right of the playlist, choose "Burn Playlist to Disc" and tweak your settings in the dialog that appears.



PART 1 of 3

What's new in Affinity Photo 2

Put the app's tools through their paces to create eye-catching images

REQUIRES

Affinity Photo 2 (\$69.99)

YOU WILL LEARN

How to use masks, creatively displace text, and perform non-destructive Raw edits

IT WILL TAKE

15 minutes



AFFINITY PHOTO 2 lets you process Raw format files, edit images in layers and push pixels around to change reality! If you're familiar with Adobe Photoshop then Affinity Photo 2 will be easy to adapt to, and a great bonus is that you don't need to pay a monthly subscription.

Affinity Photo 2 features a collection of new features, updated tools and interface tweaks that help this photo-editing app remain a viable alternative to Photoshop. One of the most useful new features is

non-destructive Raw editing. This enables you to tweak the colors and tones of a Raw file even after it has become part of a layered document. The new Compound Masks feature lets you add and subtract multiple layer masks to take even more control of what's revealed and what's hidden on a corresponding layer.

We'll walk you through some of the app's key new features. Then, in part 2 of this series (available next issue), we'll dig deeper into Affinity Photo 2's non-destructive editing abilities. **GEORGE CAIRNS**

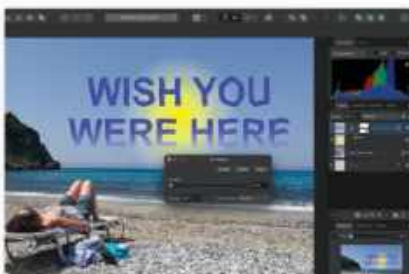
HOW TO Make non-destructive Raw edits



1

Process Raw file

Choose File > Open. Browse to a Raw format file such as a .dng file captured by a Pro iPhone. This opens the image in the Develop Persona. After boosting Vibrance and Clarity, set Output to Raw Layer (Embedded).



2

Work with layers

Click Develop. This takes the edited Raw file into the Photo Persona. Here you can edit the image using adjustment layers, filters, masks and text. If you need to re-edit the original Raw file double-click on its layer.



3

Back to Develop

We're now back in the Develop Persona, where we can use the Shadows/Highlights panel to reveal more detail on the island without nasty noise. We can then click Develop and carry on editing our layered document.

HOW TO Explore the Live Hue Range mask



1 Make it mono
Open a shot with a colorful subject. Go to Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Black & White. This desaturates the entire shot. You can then adjust the color sliders to lighten or darken grayscale tones of specific colors.



2 Add live mask
Go to Layers > New Live Mask Layer > Hue Range. The mask initially reveals all of the colors originally desaturated by the adjustment layer. Drag inside the ring to change the range of the B&W adjustment layer.



3 Click the picker
To work more quickly, select the Picker button then click to sample the colors you want to reveal. Drag control points on the Hue ring to fine-tune which colors remain while desaturating the rest of the shot.

HOW TO Use the Live Displace filter



1 Type some text
Use the Artistic Text tool to type a title onto a new layer. The Text tool creates vector-based text that we can edit any time, even after we creatively displace it with the filter (hence the term "non-destructive").



2 Displace it
Go to Layer > New Live Filter Layer > Distort > Displace. The new Live Displace panel appears. Set Load Method to Red/Green offset. Click "Load Map from Layers Beneath". Increase the Strength slider to distort the text.

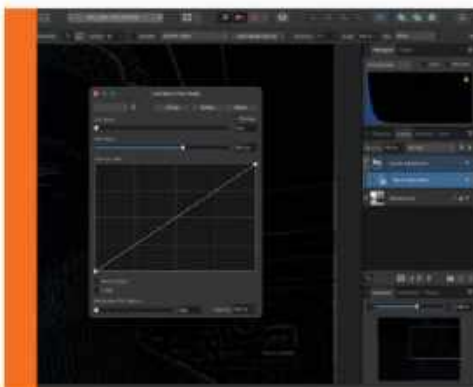


3 Fine-tune the text
You are now free to rotate and reposition the text to see how it becomes creatively displaced by the pixels on the layers below. You can edit the text's spelling and adjust the displacement strength at any time.

> LIVE BAND-PASS MASK

Give key areas extra emphasis

A subtle way to emphasize key areas in a portrait (such as eyes) is to use the new Live Band-Pass mask. Add a Levels adjustment layer. Drag the Black level slider to 80% to darken the shot. Go to Layer > New Live Mask Layer > Band-Pass. Check Mask Preview and zoom in to a grayscale version of the image. Drag the Low Band slider left to include finer edge details such as eyelashes. Drag the High Band slider right to add flatter tones. Turn off Mask Preview to see how the masked Levels adjustment layer emphasizes details such as eyes and hair.





Get started with Ulysses

This brilliant writing app could be the only word wrangler you'll ever need

REQUIRES

Ulysses app (from \$5.99/month), macOS 11 or later

YOU WILL LEARN

How to use Ulysses' simple but powerful writing and editing tools

IT WILL TAKE

15 minutes



GENERALLY SPEAKING, THERE are two kinds of Mac writers. There are people who love Ulysses, and there are people who just haven't tried it yet. We're in the former camp; many of the contributions for this very magazine have been written in Ulysses.

Ulysses is fast, and it's easy to organize and search your writing. It's available for iPhone and iPad and, most importantly, it's easy to export your documents to pretty much anything; blogs, Word, PDF, ebooks, emails and more.

Ulysses uses Markdown, a fast and finger-friendly way of formatting and organizing documents that makes it an absolute breeze to repackage the same content in a variety of formats. Everything is stored in plain text, so the system requirements are tiny, backups are instant and everything happens without delay.

As we'll discover, the app is also incredibly customizable both in terms of how it looks and the documents it creates. **CARRIE MARSHALL**

HOW TO Utilize Ulysses' excellent writing tools



1 A new document

The best way to get started is to create a new document, so press Cmd+N. Now you can type; use Cmd with the "+" or "-" keys as you zoom in or out. The panel at the right, the Inspector, shows key statistics that update as you write.



2 Add some style

Ulysses adds links and formatting via Markdown markup, and you can see the available options by clicking on Markup in the menu bar. There are keyboard shortcuts for common ones such as Strong (bold) or italics.



3 Input headings

You can use headings and subheadings to organize your document. Using Opt+3 to put a single hash before a line makes it Heading 1; two hashes makes it Heading 2 and so on. Ulysses will change those lines accordingly.



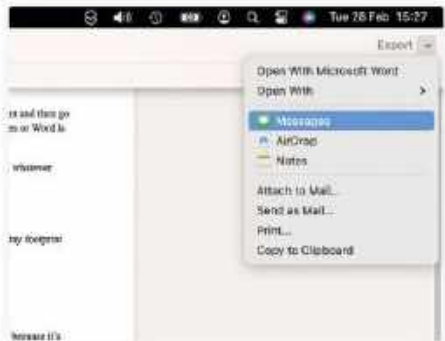
4 Move around the doc
In the Inspector panel, click on the middle “list” icon; you’ll see the Outline view shown here. This shows headings and subheadings; clicking on any of them will take you to that part of the document. It’s great for dissertations and reports.



5 Export the document
When you’re finished, click the Share icon (top right), and you’ll see the Export screen. There are two options – the top line, where it says DOCX, enables you to choose the file type; the line below, the particular template.



6 Change the format
Let’s try PDF and then one of the styles: Business. The layout and fonts change, and there are tons of templates to choose from – reports, screenplays, academic documents – and you can download more from <https://ulysses.app>.



7 Share your stuff
Tap on the Export menu to see multiple choices – Open With Word, share via Messages, AirDrop, and so on. Attach To Mail creates an email with the document attached; Send as Mail puts your document in the message body.



8 Organize everything
Click View > Library to display your document library. You can organize documents into groups and subgroups, and drag docs appropriately. You can create different projects, for example for work and personal documents.



9 Switch your view
You can show or hide the Library and other panels by moving into Typewriter Mode, or by flipping into Editor Focus, which hides everything but the doc you’re working on. Full Screen view is particularly good on laptops.



10 Embrace the dark
Ulysses supports Dark Mode, but you can combine light and dark. Choose View > Appearance > Dark to make the Library and other panels dark, but don’t select View > Dark Theme so the editing window remains black on white.



11 Get more advanced
Ulysses isn’t just for text. You can add Word or Pages-style tables, insert images, add footnotes, embed video and use comments that can be accessed by other Ulysses users. You can also insert code and code blocks, lists and more.



12 Change Everything
In Settings > Markup, you’ll find templates that change how Ulysses color-codes your docs. Some are high contrast, others are designed for coders, and still others just look nice. There are more available on the Ulysses website.

Master Focus Filters across your devices

How to customize with Focus to enhance your productivity



REQUIRES

macOS 13 or later, or iOS/iPadOS 15 or later

YOU WILL LEARN

How Focus can streamline your day

IT WILL TAKE

15 minutes



FOCUS MODES IN macOS Ventura, iOS 16, iPadOS 16 and watchOS 9 are like a super-powered Do Not Disturb that enables you to customize your devices for specific times, places or tasks.

For example, you can create a Work Focus that only lets specific people contact you, or a Fitness Focus that blocks notifications from when you arrive at the gym until you leave, or an Evening Focus that turns off your work email so the boss can't annoy you at night. And as we'll discover, you can even change your phone's Lock Screen and Home Screen on a per-Focus basis with different colors, a variety of backgrounds and even different widgets.

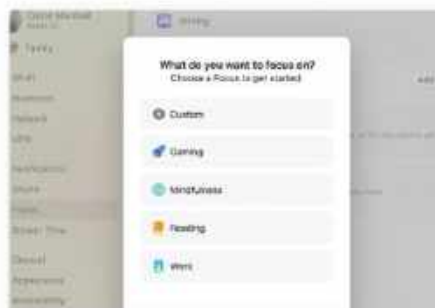
In this tutorial, we'll find out how to create, change and use Focus modes on your Mac and on your iPhone to make your life easier. If you choose to sync Focus modes across devices, your Focus modes will appear on your iPad, Apple Watch and any other Macs that use the same iCloud account.

CARRIE MARSHALL

HOW TO Use Apple's handy Focus feature



1 Find your Focus
Focus lives in Settings on Mac, iPhone or iPad. We'll start on Mac. As you can see, there are already three Focus modes available. Let's create a new one. We'll also enable the Share Across Devices toggle so our Focus modes are shared.



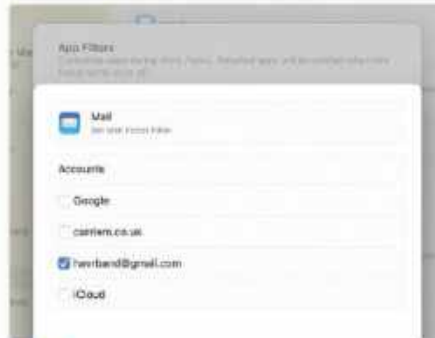
2 Choose your type
What kind of Focus would you like? Apple has some suggestions for you, but if none of them suit then you can click on Custom and make your own with your choice of title, icon and color. We'll stick with the Work option for our new focus.



3 Make the rules
As you'll see, there are several sections where we can allow notifications from specific people and/or specific apps, set a schedule, and even change how some apps behave. Let's start with the "Set a Schedule" options.



4 Pick a trigger
 You can set your Focus mode to switch on at a particular time, or use Location Services to switch it on or off when you arrive at or leave a location. And you can also choose to activate it when you open a specific app.



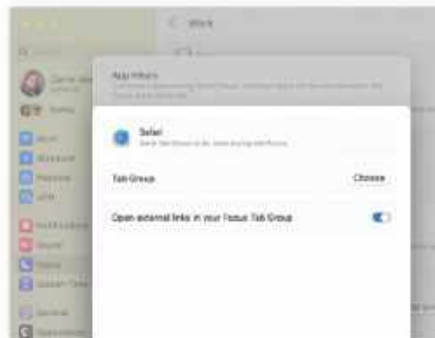
5 Filter your email
 Some apps, such as Mail, enable you to use Focus Filters – so, for example, here we're telling Mail that there's only one email account we want to use in Work mode. This makes it easy to separate your personal and work emails.



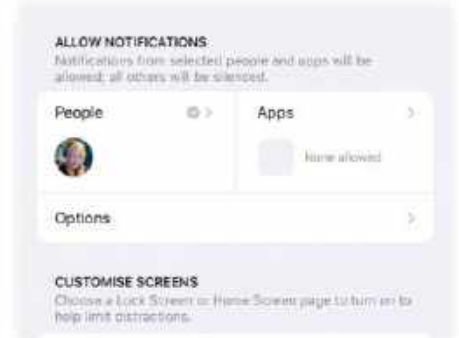
6 Don't filter friends
 You can set a Messages filter that will only show messages from specific people; oddly it doesn't let you specify who from the Focus Filter screen. Enable the filter and then add the appropriate people in the Allow Notifications section.



7 Clear your Calendar
 You can tell Calendar, and some third-party apps, to focus on a specific calendar or calendars when your chosen Focus mode is selected – so you can see the family calendar in a Personal Focus and your work one in a Work Focus.



8 Sort your Safari
 You can even tell your device which Tab Group to open when a particular Focus mode is activated. That's really useful if you tend to visit or refer to the same websites every day, or if you have a morning routine you like to stick to.



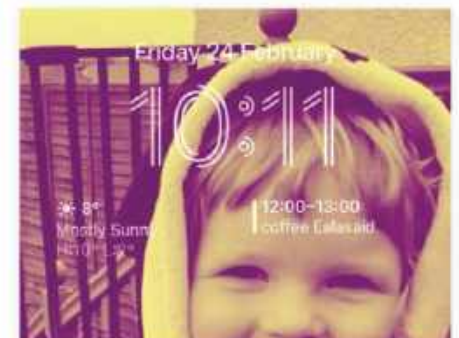
9 Edit your iPhone
 When you share Focus modes, you can do additional things on your iPhone. Go into Settings > Focus and you should now see the Focus mode you created. Tap on it and you'll see the screen here. We're going to choose a Lock Screen.



10 Select a design
 You'll now see a selection of Home Screen designs that you can choose for this Focus mode. For example, we've got a very empty dark one for our Driving Focus and a much more colourful one for our Personal Focus.



11 Add your Widgets
 Each Focus's Home Screen can have its own font, color and image settings, and you can also choose the widgets you want to appear in your Focus mode – for example, a Driving Focus might have maps and weather widgets.



12 Save your screen
 Once you're happy with your design and your widgets, just tap on Done to save your Home Screen. The screen and widgets you've selected will now appear automatically whenever that particular Focus mode is activated.



Look sharp on every video

Get ready for your close-up with Hand Mirror for Mac

REQUIRES

Hand Mirror (free, offers IAPs), macOS 12 or later

YOU WILL LEARN

How to preview your video feed on your Mac using Hand Mirror

IT WILL TAKE

5 minutes



WITH THE ADVENT of the COVID-19 pandemic, we found ourselves doing a lot more video calls than we were used to.

Suddenly, the prospect of appearing in front of friends and colleagues with wild hair and strange clothing choices became all too real. Video calls aren't going away but, fortunately, there's an app that enables you to check you're still looking great before joining a call.

It's called Hand Mirror, and it's free to download. When installed, it places an icon

in your menu bar that, when clicked, opens a small window that previews your video feed. That lets you make sure everything is in order before you make that important sales pitch.

For \$4.99, Hand Mirror unlocks a slate of extras, including custom window shapes and positions, more app icons, and a handy tool that opens the preview whenever you click the MacBook's notch. It's not necessary to shell out to enjoy Hand Mirror, but we'll cover its paid-for extras in this tutorial.

ALEX BLAKE

HOW TO Set up Hand Mirror



GENIUS TIP

Click Settings > General and tick the "Open Hand Mirror at Login" checkbox to ensure you never forget to launch the app before a video call.

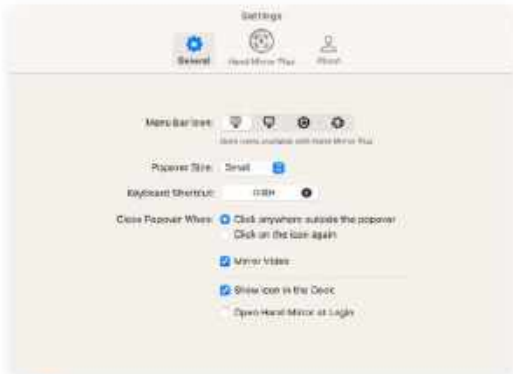


1 Preview the output

Once you've installed Hand Mirror, click its menu bar icon for a quick preview of your video output. This can be done whether or not your video app is open. Click "..." in the top-right corner to change the camera source.

2 Select popover size

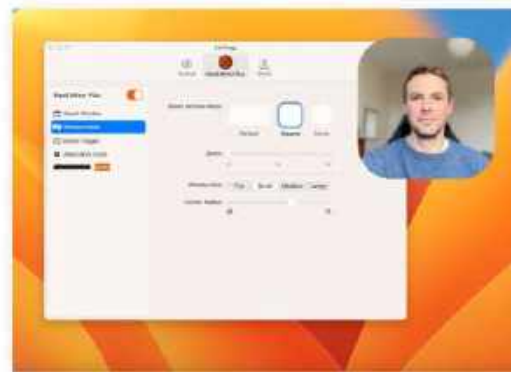
Open the preview popover and click "...", followed by Settings > General. Here, you can pick a new icon from one of four choices, or set the popover's size to small, medium, or large. You can also toggle Mirror Video.



3 Create a shortcut
 In the General settings, click Record Shortcut to create a keyboard shortcut that will launch the Hand Mirror popover. Below, select an option next to Close Popover When to decide how the window is hidden from view.



4 Open a Smart Window
 The in-app purchase unlocks extra tools. Click Settings > Hand Mirror Plus > Smart Window. Under Window Type, click Smart Window. Choose a screen position or click "Manual position" to move it where you want.



5 Work with multiple monitors
 There are other options here. If you have two or more displays, you can choose which the popover appears on. You can also decide whether it should stay on top of other windows at all times.

6 Choose shape and zoom
 Click Window Mask. You can make the popover a rectangle, square or circle. The latter two have predefined window sizes. The square's corner radius can be tweaked, and all options let you configure the zoom level.



7 Trigger the notch
 If you're using a recent MacBook, you can use the notch to launch Hand Mirror's popover. Click Notch Trigger in the sidebar and enable it using the toggle. Now just click your MacBook's notch and the popover will appear.

8 Discover extra app icons
 The app's free version has a choice of four app icons, but Hand Mirror Plus has many more. You can change the menu bar icon as well as the Dock icon. Additionally, you can show or hide the app icon in the Dock.



JARGON BUSTER

From 2021 onwards, Apple slimmed the display bezels around the camera in its MacBook laptops. The resulting cut-out is called the notch.

GENIUS TIP

In Hand Mirror Plus's Window Mask settings, the Default mask is the only option that lets you resize the popover to any size and shape.





Create



Aim for the stars

Track the planets and learn the constellations with Night Sky 11

REQUIRES

Night Sky, iOS 14 or later, iPadOS 14 or later

YOU WILL LEARN

How to identify objects in the night sky using your iPhone or iPad

IT WILL TAKE

10 minutes



STARTING A STARGAZING

hobby from scratch can feel like tackling a truly unfathomable mystery. With so many celestial objects vying for your attention, identifying what's what across the endless expanse of space is often far from easy.

But that's not so with Night Sky installed on your iPhone or iPad. This brilliant app uses augmented reality (AR) to bring the sky to life. Just point your device's camera into the night air and the app overlays a map of

the stars, letting you pick out all manner of objects — both natural and man-made — floating in the heavens above.

In fact, the app is so loaded with tools that there's not enough space to cover them all here. We've covered the best features, but it's worth exploring the app yourself to see what else it offers. You get a bunch of features included for free, but a Night Sky+ subscription (\$5.99 a month) unlocks even more. We'll cover both free and paid tools in this tutorial. **ALEX BLAKE**

HOW TO Become a master stargazer



1 See the night sky

Open the app and start moving your device around. Night Sky will overlay constellations, satellites, planets and more. Tap an object for more info; tap Directions to be pointed back to your selection if you move away.



2 Layer it up

Tap the layers button on the right to toggle which items Night Sky shows. You can remove everything except the constellations, for example, if you want to teach someone the star patterns without distractions.

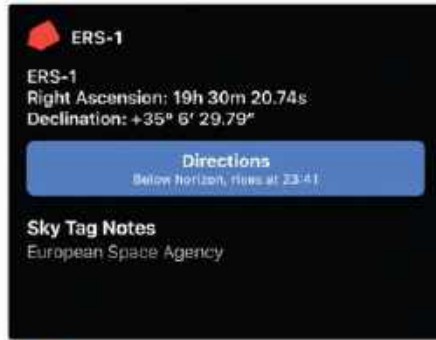


3 Colored overlays

Tap the ring button below the layers icon to add different colored overlays to the night sky. This lets you see infrared light, microwaves, radio waves, and much more. There are eight overlay options to choose from.



4 Astrophotography
 Pull up the bottom menu, then scroll down to Astrophotography and tap it. The left-hand menu lets you toggle photo/video mode, tweak focus and exposure, highlight star trails, and more. Tap the shutter to take a photo.



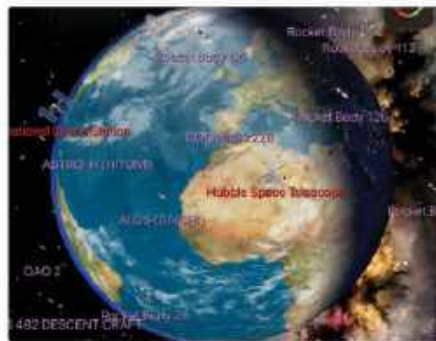
5 Sky Tags
 Sky Tags let you save things for later. Tap and hold an object on-screen, then tap a color. You can add a name, notes, and photos to the tag, plus change its category and icon. Free accounts are limited to two Sky Tags.



6 Editors' picks
 Go back to the menu and tap "Tours from our Editors". Pick an option and follow the on-screen prompts to locate various objects in the sky. Each item is accompanied by useful information and fascinating facts.



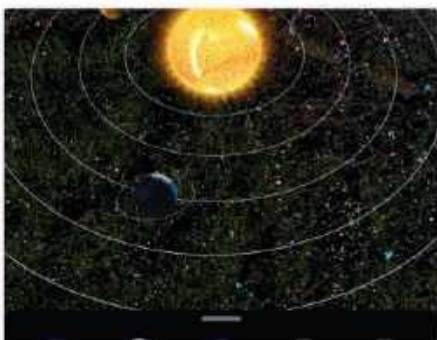
7 Connected Stargazing
 Swipe up for a menu of paid-for features. The first one is Connected Stargazing, which lets you manually tag objects in the sky to create a tour, then enjoy it with your friends using FaceTime's SharePlay.



8 Follow satellites
 Under the Plus menu, tap Earth Live Satellites. This shows all the satellites orbiting our planet – rotate the globe to see more. Well-known objects such as the International Space Station and Hubble Space Telescope are highlighted in red.



9 Live Sky Tour
 Tap Live Sky Tour. Unlike the editors' tours, live tours are based on your time and location. Each tour points you towards various celestial bodies, with info on each one. You can pick from short, medium, or long tours.



10 Grand Orrery
 Scroll the premium menu and tap AR Grand Orrery. This puts an AR model of the solar system in your home. Drag two fingers to move it or pinch to scale it. You can show or hide stars, planetary paths, satellites and more.



11 Planetary Portals
 Go back and tap AR Planetary Portals. Point your camera in front of you and tap to confirm, then pick a star or planet from the list. The portal will now appear. Walk towards it to see the sky from that object's surface.



12 Find the aurora
 Finally, go back and tap Aurora Forecast to find the best places to see the northern lights. Move the map to view hotspots (coverage is highlighted in purple) or tap a location in the list to move directly to it.



Do more with HomePod

Discover how to tweak its settings, access hidden features and more

REQUIRES

A HomePod (second-gen) or HomePod mini, iOS/iPadOS 15

YOU WILL LEARN

How to do more with your HomePod mini or HomePod using your iPhone or iPad

IT WILL TAKE

30 minutes



GENIUS TIP

You can also use your Apple TV box to control your HomePod and display artwork and lyrics for the currently playing HomePod track.



THE HOMEPOD (SECOND-GEN)

is not only a great-sounding speaker, but an incredibly smart one, thanks to built-in Siri and support for smart home protocols such as HomeKit, Thread and Matter.

The latest HomePod and HomePod mini can even take on some smart home duties themselves as both have built-in temperature and humidity sensors, enabling you to keep tabs on the health of your home. Both also include sound recognition, which enables them to alert you via your iPhone, iPad or Apple Watch should any of your home smoke or carbon monoxide alarms get triggered, which could prove invaluable.

Plus, the intelligent speakers can act as home hubs for other devices via HomeKit, enabling you to control all kinds of smart home devices from your iPhone, iPad, Mac, Apple Watch or Apple TV.

Since it's not always obvious what the second-gen HomePod and HomePod mini can do, we're going to take a deeper dive here to help you make the most of both.

HOMeward BOUND

The best place to start is the Home app on your iPhone or iPad. Tap to select your HomePod mini or HomePod from its listing under Home > Home > Speakers & TVs, and you'll be taken to that device's options screen where you can set alarms, create automations and tweak various settings, including Siri. This is the place you also head to for updating your HomePod's software.

Let's take a look... **ROB MEAD-GREEN**



HomePod and HomePod mini contain temperature and humidity sensors, plus sound recognition – handy for those times when a smoke or carbon monoxide alarm goes off.

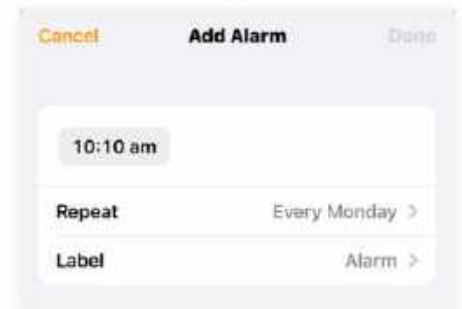
HOW TO Make the most of your HomePod



1 HomePod options
Once you've selected your HomePod in the Home app, you'll see this screen, which enables you to view and control the currently playing track (if any), or choose from any recent albums or playlists you've been listening to.



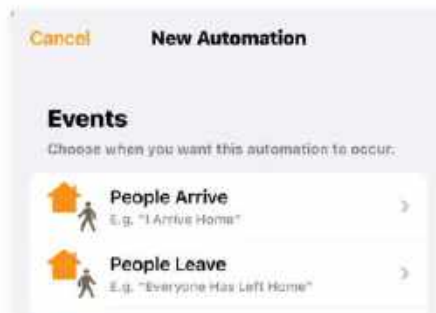
2 Check alarms and timers
Scroll down to the Alarms and Timers sections to view any alarms you have set or any timers you have running. Use the On/Off sliders to toggle any existing alarms on or off. Tap New to add one.



3 Set a new alarm
Next, tap the clock at the top to choose an alarm time, then Repeat to choose when you'd like the alarm to be repeated (e.g. Every Monday). Next, choose an alarm sound — either Play Tone or Play Media. Let's choose Play Media.



4 Choose alarm sound
Tap Choose Media to either select a track from Apple Music or to choose from a range of ambient sounds, including Fireplace, Forest, Night and Ocean. To do that tap Ambient Sounds, select a sound, then tap Done.



5 More options
Return to the HomePod options screen, then scroll down to Automations. Here, you can choose options like having the HomePod start up when you get home or switch off when you leave. Tap Add Automation to add one.



6 Set an automation
On the Add Automations screen are four options. Let's tap People Leave. On the next screen you can choose Anyone Leaves, The Last Person Leaves, plus a Location/Time. Tap Time for "During the day", "At night", or a specific time.



7 Customize Siri
Head back to the HomePod options screen then go to the Siri section. Here you can choose whether or not your HomePod listens for "Hey Siri" among other options. To have Siri recognize your voice, switch Personal Requests to On.



8 Use the Intercom
A fun option in HomePod settings is Intercom. Ensure it's switched on, then go back to the Home app home screen. Tap the sound wave at the top-right to open the Intercom. This lets you send a voice message to others in your home.



9 Reset your HomePod
If your HomePod stops responding, head back to the main HomePod options screen, then scroll to the bottom and tap Reset HomePod. Alternative instructions for resetting your HomePod can be found at <https://apple.co/3nJMQfl>.



Switch views on Apple Watch

Watch faces aren't the only way you can customize your Apple Watch

REQUIRES

An Apple Watch with watchOS 6 or later

YOU WILL LEARN

How to customize your Apple Watch

IT WILL TAKE

10 minutes



GENIUS TIP

Use your iPhone's Shortcuts app to create custom automations for your Apple Watch. We use Shortcuts to change our Watch face at specific times.



WATCHES ARE AMONG the most personal devices we own, and that means every Apple Watch owner will want something a little different. watchOS's Watch faces and Complications enable you to create all kinds of great combinations, with Apple's own designs supplemented by Complications from Apple and third-party apps, but that's not all you can customize. You can also change the way your Apple Watch displays your apps, how it responds to your movements, and what it does when you're no longer interacting with an app.

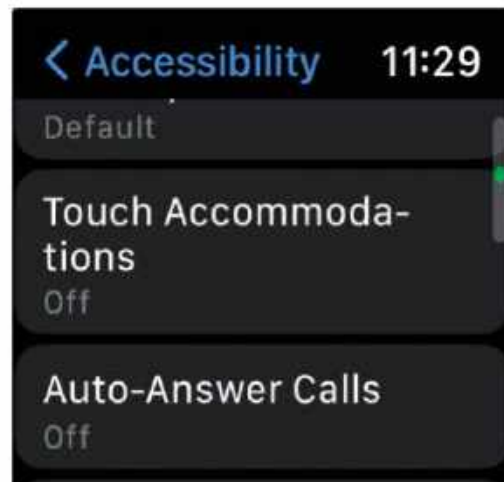
Here, you'll discover how to change the layout of your App View, and how to swap the Grid View for an easier-to-navigate List View. You'll also discover how to tweak the Dock for quick access to your most important apps, how to make your Apple Watch display easier to read, and even ways to change how it wakes up.

NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE

We've also included some Accessibility features, which you can also use to change the way your Watch looks and works. If you have vision or mobility issues there's even

more to discover in Settings > Accessibility than we've covered here.

Not all of the customization is available for every Watch — for example, you can disable Always On mode in Settings, but only if you have the Apple Watch Series 5 or later, as previous Watches didn't have Always On displays — but the core features here apply to every model running watchOS 6 or later. **CARRIE MARSHALL**



In addition to the customization features in this tutorial, check out the extensive options in Settings > Accessibility.

HOW TO Personalize your Apple Watch behavior



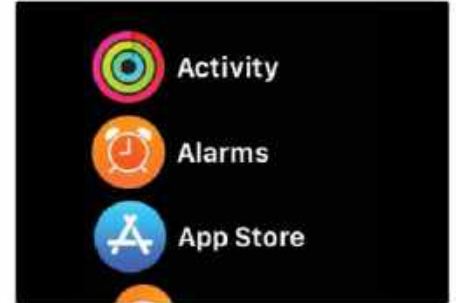
1 See your apps

By default, pressing the Digital Crown will take you to this screen. Each icon here is an app, and as you'd expect tapping the icon will then launch that app. Turn the Digital Crown to zoom in and out for a better view.



2 Move them around

If you long-press an app icon, you'll see a screen with three options: Grid View (the view you already have), List View, and Edit Apps. Select Edit Apps and you can slide the icons around to reorder them or remove some altogether.



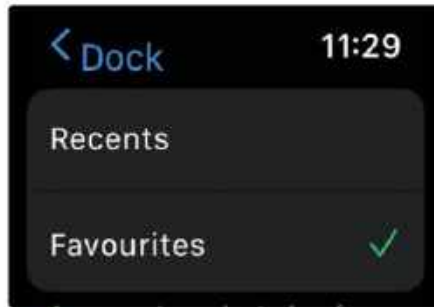
3 Navigate the list

If you find the Grid View hard to decipher because of similar-looking app icons, long-press and choose List View. This provides a simple alphabetical list, which you move between by swiping up and down or turning the Digital Crown.



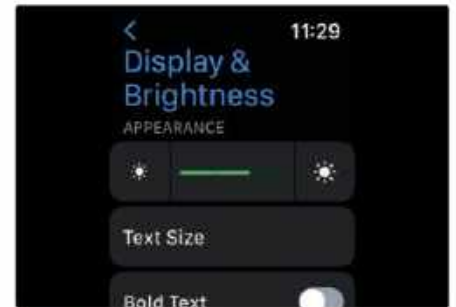
4 Use the Dock

Press the side button (the long button below the Digital Crown) and you'll be taken to the Dock, which is a scrollable selection of recently opened apps. Simply scroll to the one you want and tap it to open that app on your Apple Watch.



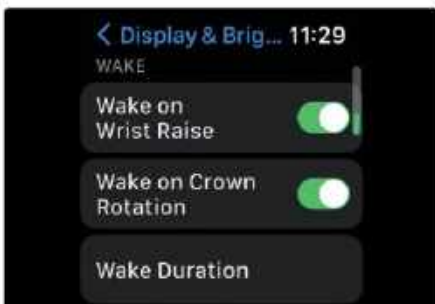
5 Swap the Dock

If you'd rather see the same list of apps in the Dock every time, go to Settings > Dock, and tap Favorites instead of Recents. You'll need to use the Watch app on your iPhone to mark specific apps as favorites.



6 Adjust everything

In Settings > Display & Brightness, you can make more important changes to how your Apple Watch looks, including the brightness of the display, the default text size, and using bold text to make text in lists and apps easier to read.



7 Change the behavior

In the same part of Settings, you can adjust how your Watch wakes up. If you don't want it to wake when you raise your wrist or rotate the Digital Crown, turn those options off. You can also specify how long your Watch should wake for.



8 Turn back the clock

In Settings you can change how your Apple Watch behaves in apps; by default, it will return to the Watch Face after two minutes of inactivity, but you can change that to an hour. You can also specify per-app settings.



9 Explore Accessibility

As you'd expect from Apple, there are lots of good accessibility options in your Apple Watch settings, with visual options including improved on-screen contrast, reduced color, and reduced motion in apps and menus.

VR headsets

With rumors of Apple entering the arena, we explore current VR technology



YOU WILL LEARN

How VR headsets work, and how Apple's rumored offering might compare to what's already available

THE RUMORS SUGGEST THAT IT WILL BE A HIGH-END HEADSET AIMED AT PROFESSIONAL USERS



KEY FACT

Augmented reality (AR) — sometimes referred to as mixed reality (MR) — isn't the same as true VR. Rather than creating an entire 3D virtual world, AR/MR glasses or headsets superimpose computer graphics over the real world that you see all around you. That's already possible using games like *Pokémon Go*, which displays cute little critters on your iPhone screen, rather than an expensive headset.



IT'S BEEN MORE than a decade since Apple launched the first iPad back in 2010, and although Apple has introduced new products since then, such as the HomePod and Apple Watch, many people are waiting eagerly for “the next big thing” that will take the company into entirely new territory. A few years ago the rumor mill was eagerly looking forward to an Apple Car, but the zeitgeist has now moved on and there's an absolute frenzy of speculation about a new virtual reality (VR) headset that will take Apple into the brave new world(s) of the metaverse for the first time.

The rumors are flying so thick and fast that it's hard to keep up. A couple of years ago, there was talk of Apple Glass: high-tech spectacles, similar to the ill-fated Google Glass. Then, as the entire tech industry went crazy for the metaverse, the attention focused on a fully fledged virtual reality (VR) headset that would be capable of depicting immersive virtual worlds with slick 3D graphics. Along the way there have also been rumors that Apple was opting for a simpler augmented reality (AR) or mixed reality (MR) headset.

But, amidst all these swirling rumors, there does seem to be a consensus emerging. There are more and more reports of Apple preparing to launch a VR headset that will be called the Reality Pro, and it's likely to be announced at Apple's Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC) in June. The “Pro” bit is important, as it seems that Apple's first attempt at a VR headset may cost as much as \$3,000, and will very much be aimed at professional users, such as game developers, architects and engineers, who need the ability to work in 3D virtual environments. So, while we wait for the latest batch of rumors, here's an overview of the current state of VR technology and what we might expect from Apple.

INTO THE APPLE-VERSE

We all know what a VR headset is supposed to look like — a bulky, wrap-around device that straps onto your head and completely covers your eyes. The front part of the headset generally houses a pair of high-resolution screens — one for each eye — to create a virtual world that fills your entire field of view. These VR headsets currently fall into two main categories: those that



> TAKING BACK CONTROL

A VR headset can show you all sorts of amazing virtual worlds, but that's not much use if you're simply a passive observer — like watching a 3D movie in the cinema. You also need some way of interacting with the virtual world around you, whether you're a doctor practicing a new surgical procedure, an engineer designing a car — or just striking your enemy with a sword in the latest VR games.

A key technology here is called “tracking”, as it uses cameras and

other sensors to follow the movement of your hands and body while you're moving around in your 3D world. Some headsets have cameras built into them for tracking, while others use external sensors, such as the Base Stations used by Valve's Index, which have to be placed in the room around you.

All VR headsets also need some sort of controller that will allow you to interact with the virtual world around you.

Apple seems to be tackling this challenge in a number of different ways. It's known that Apple has applied for patents for devices such as VR “gloves”, but a recent rumor suggests a simpler option, with the ability to use the Apple Pencil as a kind of pointing device within VR apps and games.



have to be connected to a powerful PC or games console, and those that can act as standalone devices that have their own processor for running apps and games.

Sony's new PSVR 2 (from \$549.99) is designed specifically for its PlayStation 5 consoles. The headset doesn't work on its own, so you'll need to own a PS5 in order to run your VR games and then use a simple cable to connect the headset to the console. Sony claims that the PSVR 2 provides “4K video”, but it's actually 2K per eye, with two screens that provide 2,000 x 2,040 resolution for each eye.

The Valve Index — a VR kit by the developers behind the Steam store and *Half-Life* games — works in a similar fashion, but instead relies on a powerful PC for running Windows games. The Index is very much aimed at hardcore gamers, and costs a hefty \$999 for a complete kit with a headset, handheld controllers, and base station control hub. It uses lower resolution screens — 1,440 x 1,600 for each eye — but, like many high-end gaming monitors, the screens have a 120Hz refresh rate that helps to reduce eye strain and provide smoother movement for 3D graphics.

GETTING META

The other approach to immersive gaming is to use a standalone VR headset that is capable of running games and apps on its own, without being connected to a console or PC. That's the approach taken by the recently released Meta Quest 2, developed

by Facebook parent company, Meta. The Quest 2 is one of the most affordable VR headsets, costing \$399. It uses two screens that each have 1,832 x 1,920 resolution, but the Quest 2 is also powered by a Qualcomm Snapdragon processor — the sort that is used in many Android smartphones and tablets — so it can run games and apps on its own without needing a PC or games console (although, there's an optional Link cable that allows you to connect the Quest 2 to a PC so that you can run Windows games if you want to).

Meta also makes a “Pro” version of its headset, which costs \$999, and there are other companies, including Hewlett-Packard with its Reverb headset, that now make high-end alternatives for professional users working in fields such as engineering and architecture.

As mentioned, the rumors surrounding Apple's Reality Pro headset suggest that this will also be a high-end headset aimed — initially at least — at professional users. It also looks likely that Apple's headset will be powered by an M2 processor and a new operating system called xrOS (extended reality OS), that has the ability to switch between VR and AR modes. The only thing that the rumors seem to agree on is that the headset will be announced sometime in 2023, so it won't be long before we find out if Apple can pull off yet another game-changing technological innovation.

CLIFF JOSEPH



KEY FACT

Most keen Apple watchers agree that Apple is working on an expensive headset called Reality Pro, that will be aimed at professional users. However, there are also reports of VR health and fitness apps being developed at Apple too. That's quite likely, given Apple's focus on fitness with the Apple Watch, so it could mean that there's a more affordable headset in the works for the rest of us as well.



Changing Background Items

WHEN DID YOU last check the .plist files in the LaunchAgents and LaunchDaemons folders in your Mac's main Library folder? Most of us leave them well alone, although some are old and few have clear excuses for being there. One of Ventura's less publicized changes

gives visibility and control to them in the list of Background Items in the Login Items settings. Not only should this improve stability, but in the long run it should also prevent malware from persisting in the background by abusing those .plist files. The goal is for those files to be kept within

each app, where they will be protected by its signature, and safe from tampering by unwanted visitors. Achieving that will take time, though, as developers will need to update their apps in order to take advantage of this new scheme, and make them more self-contained.

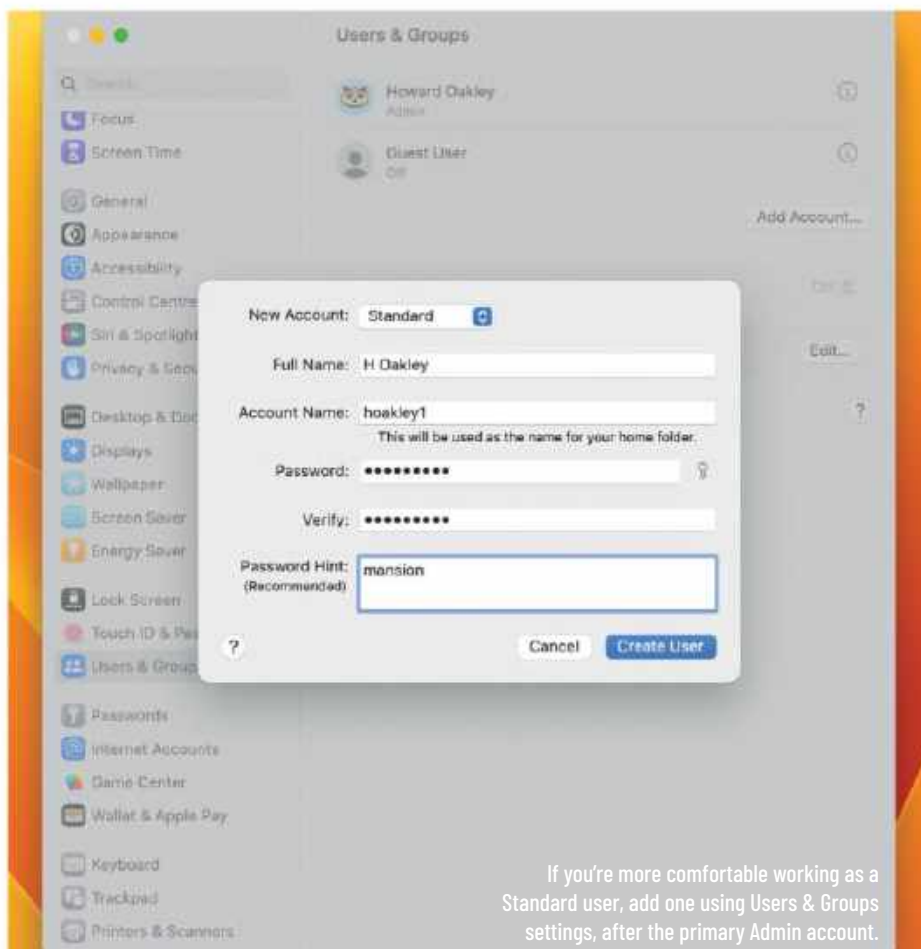
> Should I be a Standard or Admin user?

When I get my M2 Mac, should I use it as its Admin user, or create a separate Standard account?

You can work fully in either type of account. Differences between them are in privileges; users with Admin accounts can do almost everything, although for some actions like changing the main Library folder, and upgrading macOS, they're prompted to enter their password. They can also create and remove user accounts. Standard users can install apps, but for actions requiring higher privileges they need to enter an Admin user's name and password.

Some find this protected environment more comfortable, as it can prevent errors. Whether it's any more secure depends on your behavior, and how often you have to enter an Admin user's details. If that's frequent, it could become automatic, and the Standard user's protections may vanish. If you rely on being a Standard user to protect from phishing or malware, then you could drop your guard, and succumb to an attack for your Admin user's name and password after all.

Apple supports Standard users, but doesn't explicitly recommend that you should normally work as a Standard user. So the choice is yours, and depends on which you're happy with.



If you're more comfortable working as a Standard user, add one using Users & Groups settings, after the primary Admin account.

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> Standard or Advanced Data Protection?

Should I enable iCloud's new Advanced Data Protection?

For most this comes down to whether its additional protection is useful, whether you want Apple to be able to recover your data should you lose access to your iCloud account, and how difficult it'll be to switch all your Apple devices and Macs to this new service.

With the standard protection offered by iCloud and iCloud+, all the more private data is already fully protected using end-to-end encryption. This includes your Keychain with all your passwords, health data, cards and payment information. Advanced Data Protection adds backups, Photos, Notes, the contents of your iCloud Drive, and some other categories. The big difference here is that Apple holds the encryption keys for those unless you opt for this additional protection.

The benefit in Apple keeping your keys is that, should you lose access to your account, it can recover the data for you. With end-to-end encryption in the advanced option, only you have those keys, and you'd need to recover data using a contact or personal recovery key, or a device passcode.

The major obstacle for most users is that Advanced Data Protection is all or nothing; if you still have devices or Macs running iOS or iPadOS 16.1 or earlier, or macOS 13.0 or earlier, then you won't be able to convert your account to the advanced version. Even if that device hasn't been active for years, if it's still listed among those against your Apple ID, conversion will fail. Apple's detailed information is at <https://apple.co/3Igl0fR>.



Switch to Advanced Data Protection only if you need its benefits and all your devices are compatible.

Quick-fire questions & answers

HOW TO ENSURE APPS AND SITES AREN'T TRACKING ME?

To check which apps are allowed to track, look in Settings > Privacy & Security > Tracking. Preventing websites from tracking requires you to use either a VPN service, or an iCloud+ account with Settings > Apple ID > iCloud > Private Relay turned on.

HOW TO USE A DVORAK KEYBOARD ON MY IPHONE?

Most keyboards offer a choice of several different layouts in Settings > General > Keyboard > Keyboards > [keyboard name], which might well include Dvorak, French AZERTY and central European QWERTZ in addition to the standard QWERTY. These are most helpful when you normally work in a different language with its own non-QWERTY layout.





Peripherals

Solving your tech conundrums for a fully functional workspace

Quick-fire questions & answers

HOW TO USE MY iMAC 5K 2017 AS AN EXTERNAL DISPLAY?

Your iMac is too recent to be run as a target display (see <https://apple.co/41l6Z9j>). The only way to use it as a display is through AirPlay Display in Monterey and later, which probably isn't what you had in mind.

WHAT DO I NEED TO USE MY IPHONE AS A WEBCAM?

Your host Mac must be running Ventura and signed in to the same Apple ID with two-factor authentication (2FA). Your iPhone must be an XR or more recent (2018 or later) running iOS 16, and close to your Mac. A mount isn't required. Both need Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, and not sharing mobile data or internet. (Check out our tutorial last issue, #206.)



> Checking NAS backups

I'm just setting up a new NAS with mirrored hard disks to store my backups in APFS. How often should I check its integrity?

Network Attached Storage (NAS) systems use file systems different from HFS+ and APFS as used by Macs. To store Time Machine backups on a NAS, macOS creates a virtual file system inside a sparse bundle, a structured set of files storing the virtual disk in a great many "band" files. To the Mac connected to that share, the sparse bundle looks just like a disk, in this case formatted in APFS.

Using HFS+ in the past, these sparse bundles have normally functioned well until they suffer errors in their file system, when they may suddenly stop working. Failure has been associated with very large numbers of "band" files, often more than 100,000. Time Machine has therefore improved its creation

and management to reduce the risk of failure in APFS backup storage inside sparse bundles, setting their size to keep the number of band files under control, and well within safe limits.

Each time that Time Machine mounts a sparse bundle ready to back up to it, it's checked thoroughly to ensure it's healthy. This is just as well, as attempts to repair damaged sparse bundles seldom succeed, and once broken they can't even be mounted to recover their contents. If you're storing a backup sparse bundle on hard drives, it's wise to mirror them for safety. But you shouldn't have to perform additional integrity checks of their sparse bundle, as that's done by macOS.





When display problems strike, check the connecting cable first, swapping it for a known good one before trying anything else.

> Display waking up a mess

Why does the LG UltraFine display connected to my M1 MacBook Pro 16-inch wake up in a mess, set in a non-standard resolution, and with the Dock halfway up the screen?

There are plenty of reports of similar problems with early releases of macOS 13 (Ventura), but before accepting that as the cause, you should check that the cable you're using is good, and that there's no problem with your Mac's hardware.

One test is to run hardware diagnostics from Recovery mode. Start your Mac up while holding the Power button until it announces that it's loading Startup Options. Once that has

loaded, press and hold the Cmd+D keys until your Mac restarts and shows the Diagnostics Loader, then follow the instructions.

In some cases, it may be worth making an appointment at your nearest Apple store for them to run their more extensive tests. If your MacBook Pro is healthy and the cable is good, keep up with Ventura's updates in the hope that Apple will release a fix for this.

Quick-fire questions & answers

APFS OR HFS+ FOR A MEDIA LIBRARY ON A HARD DRIVE?

APFS still results in progressive fragmentation reducing performance of hard drives. If your library grows slowly this may not be noticeable, otherwise HFS+ is still better when possible.

CAN I USE A SECURITY KEY FOR TOUCH ID?

No. Security key support added to Ventura 13.2 only lets you use them as part of two-factor authentication (2FA) for your Apple ID to iCloud. Touch ID requires built-in key support, and on Apple silicon with an Apple keyboard.

> Thunderbolt direct or via a hub?

I rely on two fast Thunderbolt 3 SSDs for streaming large media files.

Do I need to connect them directly to my Mac, or could they go through a Thunderbolt 4 hub?

A good hub like Satechi's Slim Hub (see our review in #205) spares a port on your Mac, but could also limit the performance of those two SSDs if your Mac needs to access both simultaneously. With the hub connected to your Mac, total throughput to all drives connected to the hub at any time is restricted to the maximum for a single Thunderbolt port, and can't in practice exceed 3GB/sec. When reading from both drives

simultaneously, that limits their individual read speed to 1.5GB/sec.

Although unpredictable, some otherwise fast SSDs can show more limited write speeds than you would expect. But when accessed one at a time, using a good Thunderbolt 4 hub should have no significant impact on their performance. The only way to assess this is to try it, as your Mac is unlikely to be accessing both SSDs at the same time, and performance with

a good hub should be fine. When connected to a notebook powered from a mains supply, most hubs like Satechi's also support pass-through charging of your Mac that could save you another of its ports.



Total data throughput to SSDs connected to a Thunderbolt 4 hub can't exceed the 3GB/sec of a single Thunderbolt port.



macOS

Shine a spotlight on the solutions to your most irritating Mac problems

> Break a macOS update loop

When trying to update to macOS 13.2, each time my Mac finishes preparing the update, it loops back and downloads it again. How can I install it?

First, try restarting your Mac then looking for the update again in System Settings > General > Software Update. If it still won't install correctly, start your Mac up in safe mode. On an Intel Mac, restart it with the Shift key held; on an Apple silicon model, start it up with the Power key held until it's loading Startup Options, then select its disk, hold the Shift key and click on the Continue in Safe Mode button.

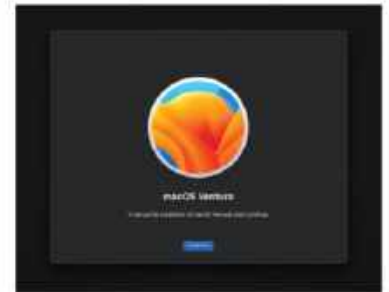
If that still fails to resolve the issues, you'll have to resort to ensuring that

you've got full recent backups, and instead start up in recovery mode and reinstall macOS there.

If all else fails, ensure you've got a full recent backup and reinstall macOS in Recovery mode.



Start up Apple silicon Macs in safe mode through Recovery; select the disk, hold Shift and click on the button.



> Annoying Background Item notifications

When I start up my iMac running macOS 13 (Ventura), I'm notified about loads of Background Items that are already installed. How can I stop that?

These are now managed in Login Items in the General section of System Settings, but once set up shouldn't cause repeated notifications on startup. The lower of the two lists shown there includes everything apart from macOS components that can be run in the background, some of which may appear puzzling.

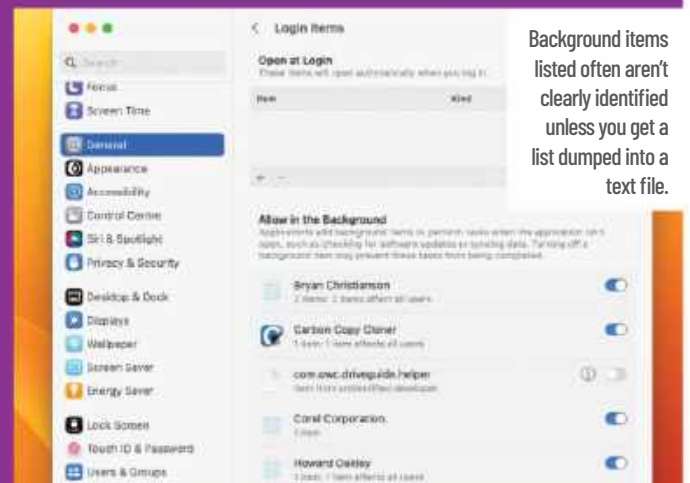
This problem should at least ease with the update to Ventura 13.3. Any that continue after that are probably the result of old software that needs to be updated or removed. If you can't identify the culprit from info in the list shown in System Settings, you can get clues with the Terminal command:

```
sudo sftool dumpbtm > ~/Documents/btmdump.text
```

and entering your admin password. That writes an exhaustive list with fuller details to the file btmdump.text in your Documents folder.

Within that dump every Background Item is listed by user; the more important of those are the first, with an identity of -2, and 501, the primary admin user.

Entries give details of the .plist, location of the software being run, and good clues as to which app or software they're associated with, so you can remove the remains of old apps and update others.



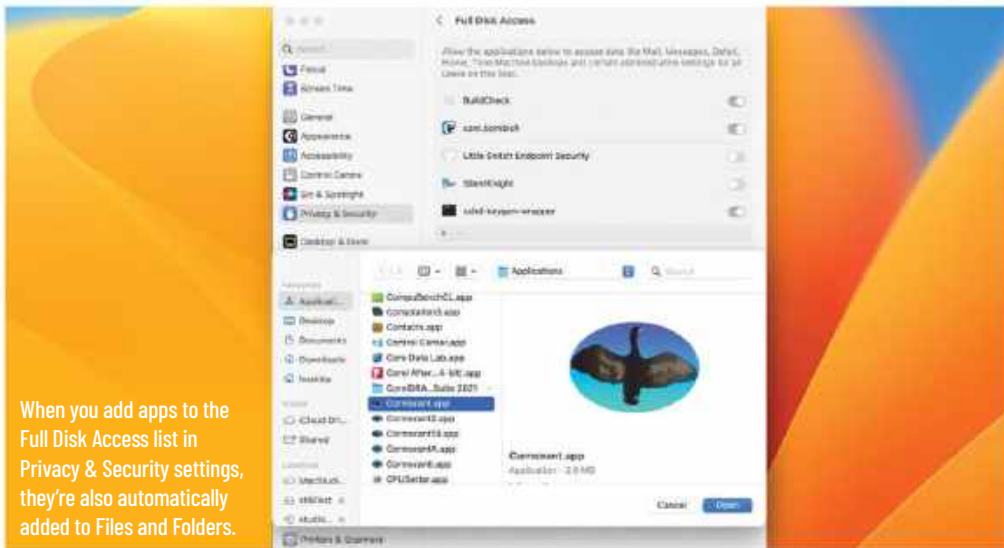
Background items listed often aren't clearly identified unless you get a list dumped into a text file.

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When you add apps to the Full Disk Access list in Privacy & Security settings, they're also automatically added to Files and Folders.

> Broken privacy settings

When logging in, I am repeatedly asked for permission to add existing privacy settings, like Full Disk Access. How do I get the settings to stick?

These problems aren't common and can be hard to resolve. First ensure macOS is fully updated, preferably to the current release of Ventura, then make a note of which apps and settings you're being asked to restore. If these are confined to a couple of apps, uninstall them and install their latest versions afresh.

Persisting problems should take you to those entries in the categories shown in Privacy & Security settings, or the Privacy pane in Security & Privacy in System Preferences. For each affected app, enable Full Disk Access, then select it and click "-" to remove it from the list. Restart your Mac, open those settings again and click "+" to add each of those apps back to the list, and ensure

they're enabled too. They should also appear in the Files and Folders list, confirming they have access. If needed, you can reset the privacy databases altogether, using the `tccutil` command tool in Terminal, but that will blow away all your existing privacy settings, apart from those for Location Services. The command to use is:

```
sudo tccutil reset All
```

then enter your admin user password. A few seconds later, check through the categories apart from Location Services and manually remove any remaining. If problems recur after that, some recommend deleting the privacy database, but without knowing the cause, you could have to keep repeating that.

Quick-fire questions & answers

HOW TO STOP THE LOG USING SPACE ON MY MAC'S SSD?

The log can't be disabled, and is maintained so that its files occupy a steady 1.5GB on the Data volume of the active boot volume group. It shouldn't grow much beyond that, and its turnover is insignificant in wear on your Mac's SSD.

ARE THERE THIRD-PARTY DISK REPAIR TOOLS FOR APFS?

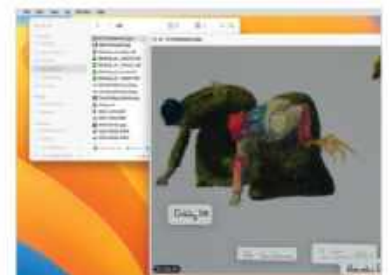
There are currently no third-party tools, other than some for low-level recovery. Version 5.3 of Alsoft's DiskWarrior now runs on both Intel and Apple silicon models, and can repair and maintain HFS+ volumes, not APFS.

HOW TO STOP STAGE MANAGER FROM STALLING ON HELP?

Stage Manager can stop responding when you click the yellow minimize button of a Help or similar window on an Apple silicon Mac. This is a bug, and the best way to recover is to disable Stage Manager in the menu bar, close the Help window, and re-enable Stage Manager.

HOW TO EXTRACT TEXT FROM AN IMAGE QUICKLY?

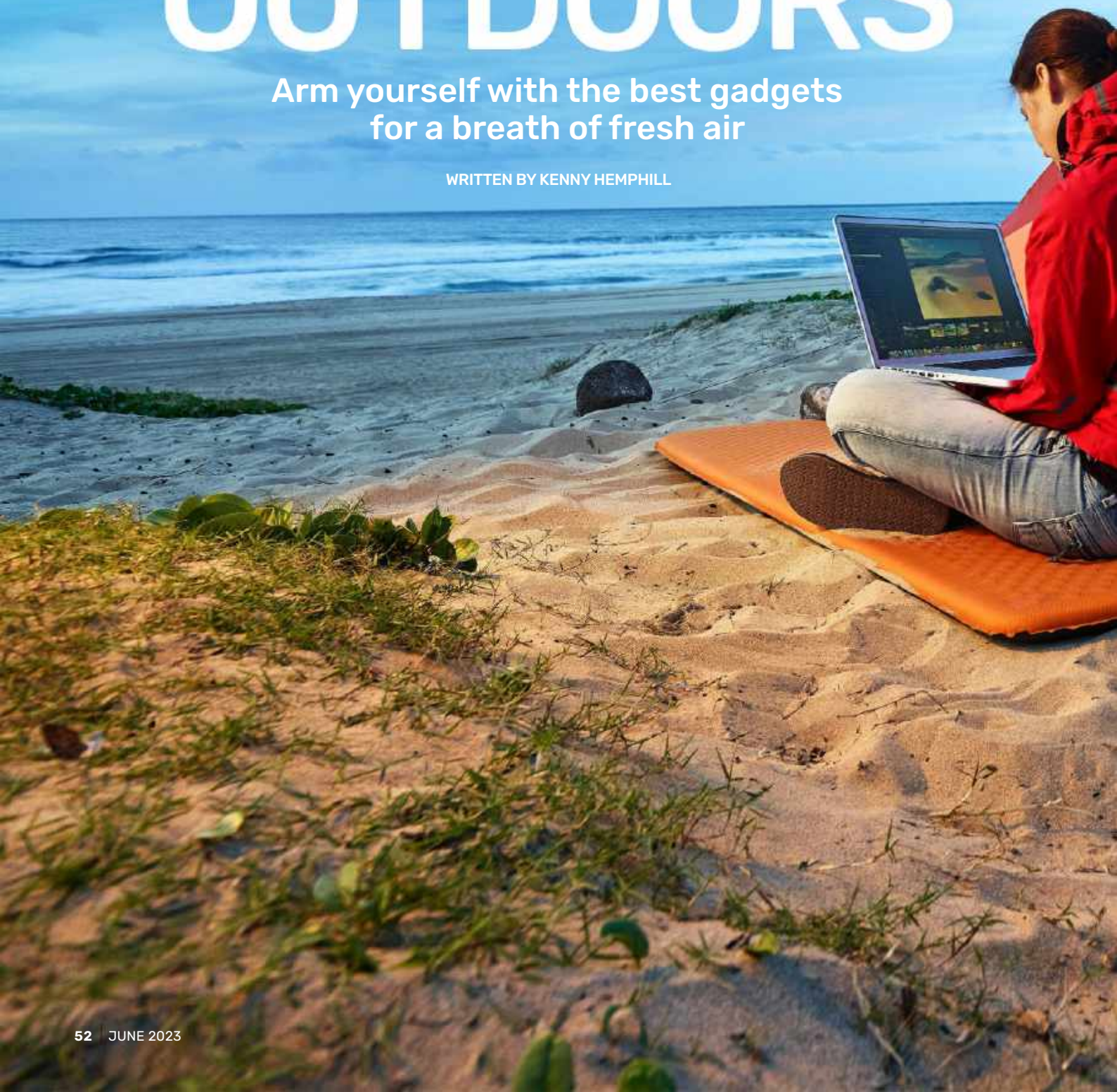
macOS Ventura supports extraction of text from images with Live Text in apps like Safari and Preview, as well as QuickLook previews. Select the image in the Finder and press the Space bar for a preview. When the text icon appears at the lower right of the preview, click it to select all recognized text.



TECH FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Arm yourself with the best gadgets
for a breath of fresh air

WRITTEN BY KENNY HEMPHILL





Spring has sprung, and it's that time of year when many of us start to think about summer and the great outdoors. Warmer weather, longer days, and stunning scenery draw us from the confines of our homes into the fresh air. For some of us, that means time spent in the yard growing plants and veg, or just enjoying the space. For others, it means hitting the road and

exploring, or even adventuring to a far-flung land. Whatever your preference for spending time outside, there's a gadget or ten that will make the experience more fun, more relaxing, and safer too. It may be a projector so you can create your own outdoor movie theater in the backyard, a robotic lawn mower so you can put your feet up rather than throw your back out, or a bag to keep all that gear safe while you travel.

We've focused on the latest gear and on tech you can use with your Apple device. But we've also included a few gadgets that don't plug in to your Mac, or have an accompanying app for your iPhone or iPad, just because they're great pieces of technology that are either fun, useful or both. So, whether you want to relax at home, or hit a mountain bike trail, here's a roundup of the best gear to take with you outside.

Backyard

The top tech for growing, guarding and grilling

Even if it's only a modest concrete square in your backyard, if you're lucky enough to have a bit of outside space, you'll know that in the warmer months this can become an extra room, albeit one without a roof. If you have a bigger footprint to deal with, you'll need to nurture it. And when the sun is shining, you can enjoy some outdoor dining.

The gadgets featured here will help your garden grow, ensure you enjoy it to its full potential, and keep you and your property safe from unwanted attention. Whether you want to entertain friends and family and show off your culinary skills, chill out with a good movie, or keep watch on both the weather and your house, you'll find the right tech here to do it.



1 Weber Spirit SX-315
 > \$869
 > www.weber.com
 Weber makes every type of barbecue imaginable. But this one gets our vote because it has a digital display that shows you the current temperature and a countdown timer. There's also a convenient app that alerts you when your food is ready.



2 Meater Plus
 > \$99.95
 > <https://store-us.meater.com>
 This wireless thermometer measures both the temperature of your food and the ambient temperature. It connects to an iPhone app via Bluetooth and will tell you how long your BBQ meat has left before it's ready.



3 JBL Charge 5
 > \$179.95
 > www.jbl.com
 A great Bluetooth speaker for the outdoors. Waterproof and dust-proof to IP67, the JBL Charge 5 also has 20 hours of playing time and you can pair two for stereo sound. Better still, it doubles as a power bank.



4 Philips Calla Outdoor bollard
 > \$129.99
 > www.philips-hue.com
 This bollard lamp can glow white or you can pick from any one of 16 million colors. It's weather-proof to IP65 and you can control it from your Apple device using HomeKit.



5 BenQ GS50
 > \$749
 > www.benq.com
 This portable 1080p DLP projector has its own stereo Bluetooth speaker and subwoofer. It's also drop-proof and splash-proof and you can hook it up to your MacBook via HDMI or USB-C, or stream to it over Wi-Fi, for an outdoor theater experience.



6 Eve Aqua
> \$149.95

> www.evehome.com

This smart irrigation device will make sure your lawn is watered automatically. Just hook it up and set a schedule for it to run; or, thanks to its HomeKit compatibility, you can connect the Aqua to your HomePod or Apple TV for watering your lawn when you're away from home.

7 Moft iPad Stand & Case
> \$59.99

> www.moft.us

If you're taking your iPad into the yard, you'll need a way of propping it up while you work, read, or watch a movie. This Moft case with its built-in, adjustable stand does just that and offers three modes, including "Floating" mode ideal for multitasking.

8 Husqvarna Automower 115H (4G)
> \$699.99

> www.husqvarna.com

Keep your yard neat with this robotic lawn mower that covers up to 0.4 acres and can be controlled via an iOS app. Set a schedule and program some start points, then relax and let the mower do the rest.

9 S300 eufyCam (3C)
> \$469.99

> <https://us.eufy.com>

This two-camera 4K security system comes with a base station and its own local storage, so there's no monthly subscription for storing footage. Its battery lasts six months and it has spotlights and facial recognition technology.



On the road

The ultimate kit list for hitting the highways

Whether your preferred mode of transport is a car, RV or a bicycle, there are gadgets that will help you travel lightly and still be able to do everything you want when you get to your destination. If you're going somewhere remote, you'll need a means of powering your gear, and you'll want to rest assured that your kit is secure while you're away from it.

If you need to work while you're on the move, an extra monitor and a hub to connect accessories to your MacBook may come in useful. And, of course, you'll need somewhere to stash all your tech and be able to carry it with you. Here's the best gear for hitting the road this summer.



1 EcoFlow River 2 Max Portable Power Station

> \$469

> <https://us.ecoflow.com>

If your adventure is taking you off-grid, you'll need to take your own power supply. This one has up to 512Wh, which is plenty to charge your iPhone or MacBook and power a blow-dryer, coffee machine, or even a guitar amplifier.



2 Peak Design Universal Bar Mount

> \$49.95

> www.peakdesign.com

Strap this iPhone mount to your bicycle or motorcycle and use it with Peak Design's iPhone case to keep your iPhone secure and visible. The magnetic lock means there's no risk of it falling off while you ride.



3 Thinkware Dashcam F200 Pro

> \$139.99

> www.thinkware.com

This 1080p dashboard camera has night vision and a time-lapse mode, and connects via Wi-Fi to an app on your iPhone. There's a parking mode and the optional GPS antenna enables it to warn you of speed cameras, too.



4 Mosiso MacBook Air case

> \$15.99

> www.imosiso.com

This protective hard shell case comes in multiple colors and, as well as protecting your MacBook Air from scratches and chips, includes a keyboard cover, screen protector and a separate bag for storing your mouse and earphones.



5 Nulock Bluetooth Lock

> From \$35

> <https://nuvending.com>

This Bluetooth lock can be used to lock up a motorcycle, bicycle, or even a gate. It can be locked and unlocked via the iOS app, and has a tamper alarm to deter thieves that triggers if someone tries to break or disassemble it.



6 **Asus ZenScreen MB16AHG portable monitor**

> \$279

> www.asus.com

This 15.6-inch portable monitor from Asus weighs just 2lbs and gives your Mac more screen real estate. Its crisp 1920x1080 IPS display boasts a 144Hz refresh rate, and it features 2x USB-C ports for easy connectivity.

7 **Jabra Elite 7 Active**

> \$179.99

> www.jabra.com

These Bluetooth 5.2 earbuds are specially designed to fit snugly in your ear so they stay in while you're working out. You can listen for up to eight hours and active noise cancellation enables you to shut out the outside world.

8 **Chrome Industries Citizen Messenger Bag**

> \$160

> <https://bit.ly/3B8G71L>

Perfect for commuting, this bag has a quick-release buckle (with bottle opener). It's water-resistant, has wet/dry compartments, reflective straps, and lots of pockets.

9 **Satechi Pro Hub Max**

> \$99.99

> <https://satechi.net>

Connecting to both Thunderbolt ports on the side of your MacBook, this Satechi hub supports the full 40Gbps from each port, supports 96W charging, and has an SD and microSD card slots as well as multiple ports. A simple plug-and-play setup.

Vacations and excursions

Get away from it all... apart from your all-important tech

We all have different ideas when it comes to going on vacation or taking a trip somewhere. For some of us it means lying on a beach with a good book. For others, it's a non-stop, adrenaline-fueled adventure.

Regardless of what you like to do, there are some types of gear that you shouldn't be without. A good bag, for example. And a pair of noise-canceling headphones to drown out the background noise on a flight or train journey. A powerbank wouldn't go amiss either. If you're going camping in the wild, a small stove is essential. And if you're the adventurous type, an action cam is a must. Here's our selection of the tech that checks those outdoor boxes.



1 Campstove 2+
> \$149.95

> www.bioliteenergy.com
Fill this camping stove with twigs and sticks and when you start the fire, not only will you keep warm, but the clever stove will capture the heat, charge its 3,200mAh battery, and charge your iPhone from a USB slot.



2 OtterBox Fre Series for MagSafe

> \$99.95
> www.otterbox.com
This iPhone 14 case offers enhanced drop protection, a screen protector, port covers, and is waterproof for up to an hour at 2m (6.6ft) deep. It also has MagSafe magnets and is made from 50 per cent recycled plastic.



3 Peak Design Field Pouch V2

> \$49.95
> www.peakdesign.com
With two functions in one, roll down the top of the Field Pouch and it's small enough to throw in a backpack. Or, unroll it and use it with its strap as a sling bag. Inside there are pouches and zip pockets, and enough space for a camera.



4 DJI Mini 3

> \$559
> www.dji.com
DJI's Mini 3 is the latest addition to its drone fleet. It's ultra-lightweight at just 8.7oz, offers 38 minutes of flying time, and can shoot 4K and 30fps. Its f1.7 aperture, 1/1.3in CMOS sensor and HDR enable you to capture eye-popping video.



5 Osprey Ozone Laptop Backpack 28L

> \$170
> www.osprey.com
This lightweight backpack has a sleeve that will fit a 16-inch MacBook Pro, a separate compartment for cables and other gear, and a smaller pocket for your iPhone. It also comes with a Travel Sentry ID tag.

6 Bose QuietComfort 45

> \$329

> www.bose.com

If you prefer over-the-ear headphones to earbuds, these active-noise-canceling cans from Bose are hard to beat. You get 22 hours of listening on one charge, adjustable EQ, and can connect two devices simultaneously.



7 Mophie Powerstation XL

> \$59.95

> www.zagg.com

Powerbank expert Mophie's latest charger has one 20W USB-C port and two USB-A ports, powered by a 20,000mAh battery. It can charge three devices simultaneously, delivering a combined output of 15W.



8 GoPro Hero11 Black

> \$424.98

> <https://gopro.com>

The latest Hero shoots 5.3K video at 60fps and can capture stills at 27 megapixels. It's waterproof to 33 feet and features GoPro's HyperSmooth stabilization. At the price listed here, you also get a year's GoPro subscription.



9 DJI Osmo Mobile 6

> \$159

> www.dji.com


DJI's latest gimbal features three-axis stabilization, an extension rod and a tripod. A press of a button in the handle flips your iPhone from landscape to portrait, or control its rotation with a joystick.

THE BEST APPS FOR OUTDOORS

What3Words

> Free


> <https://what3words.com>

 It's a simple but brilliant idea. Split the world into 3m (9.8ft) square zones and identify each with a three-word key. The app allows you to see which zone you're in, even if you're offline, navigate, and add an address to a photo.

AllTrails

> \$35.99


> www.alltrails.com

 Whether you're hiking, cycling, or walking your dog, AllTrails allows you to discover trails to suit your activity. You can download offline maps to navigate to your destination confidently, get live route details, log your activities to share later with friends, and much more.

Weather

> Free


> <https://apps.apple.com>

 It's wise to check the weather forecast before heading outdoors, and Apple's Weather app is packed with useful data, such as an hourly forecast, localised rain prediction, and a UV index, so you know when it's time to apply the sun screen.

Komoot

> Free (with IAPs)

> www.komoot.com

 Komoot does a lot more than just help you plan hiking, cycling or mountain biking trips. It enables you to create and share guides, including photos. And, in turn, allows you to be inspired by other people's guides.



The source for tech buying advice

techradar.com

Thursday 9 February

14:51

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CUSTOMIZING YOUR HOME SCREEN

Give your iPhone a whole new look – we show you how

WRITTEN BY ALEX BLAKE

Who needs defaults? One of the best things about iOS is how much customization it offers over how your Home Screen and Lock Screen look and feel. Your iPhone's built-in features go way beyond simply changing your wallpaper and calling it a day. Take a look under the hood and you'll find that iOS lets you personalize far more than you thought was possible.

For example, in iOS 16 you can place small widgets on your iPhone's Lock Screen that show

your activity rings, upcoming reminders, and much more. There are toggles to change Lock Screen fonts, wallpaper colors, gradients and effects, and even add wallpapers that sparkle with beautiful animated effects or show the weather in real time.

That's not all. You can also create custom Home Screens and Lock Screens that activate when you launch a specific Focus mode, saving you the time and hassle of manually setting everything up each

time. There are oodles of options available, enabling you to create a theme that's tailor-made to your specific requirements and personal to you.

To get all this to work, just ensure your iPhone is compatible. Home Screen widgets require iOS 14 or later, while Focus mode needs iOS 15. For Lock Screen widgets, it's iOS 16. (Note: the depth effect described on pages 62 and 63 requires an iPhone XR or later.) Let's dive in.

Personalize your Home Screen

Design a Home Screen that works perfectly for you

A **Adjusting your Home** and Lock Screens is easy: just tap and hold on your Lock Screen then tap Customize. Next, tap either Lock Screen or Home Screen and you'll see various options, from adding new widgets to applying gradient effects.

You can use different wallpapers when your iPhone is locked and unlocked, tweak everything from fonts to colors, and much more. We'll show you how it's all done.



You can link your Home Screen and Lock Screen or customize them separately.

A

WIDGETS

Widgets live at the top of your Lock Screen. Tap one to replace or edit it.

B

MOVE OR SCALE

You can move or rescale the wallpaper by pinching your fingers together or apart.

C

SWIPE FOR EFFECTS

Swipe left or right or tap the dots to apply a color effect to your wallpaper.

D

CHANGE IT UP

Change your wallpaper or apply a depth effect by tapping the buttons in the bottom corners.



HOW TO Add Lock Screen widgets



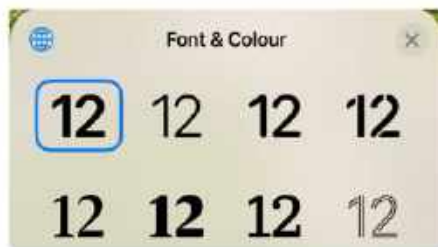
1 Add a new screen
Tap and hold your Lock Screen and add a new screen by scrolling all the way to the right, then tapping "+" below Add New. Choose a Lock Screen style – there are screens with photos, colors, emoji and more – and tap it to begin.



2 Date widget
Tap the date at the top to open a widget list. You can scroll through any app that supports widgets below. Apple's Weather app can display the weather at your location, moon cycles, wind speeds and more, for instance.



3 Secondary widgets
Below the time is an area for smaller widgets. Tap a widget (or tap Add Widgets if the area is empty), then tap an option to add it to the Lock Screen. You can drag widgets to this area or rearrange them into a new order.

HOW TO Change up the font**1** Fonts and colors

When editing a Lock Screen, tap the time to alter the font it uses. There are eight fonts to choose from, plus various colors. Font changes only apply to the time widget, but color tweaks affect every widget's text.

**2** Digit scripts

In the font and color menu, tap the globe icon. This lets you choose a different display script for the time on your Lock Screen. At the time of writing, the choices were Arabic, Arabic Indic, or Devanagari numerals.

**3** Theme fonts

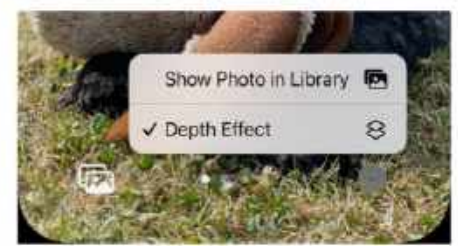
Some Lock Screen themes change the font and the overlay effect at the same time when you swipe left or right. These pre-made combinations are handy, but you can still change each font individually by tapping the time.

HOW TO Use animations and photos**1** Switch themes

Touch and hold your Lock Screen to see your existing screens. Changing your theme is as simple as swiping between them and tapping a new choice. Or you can swipe up and tap the trash can icon to delete a theme entirely.

**2** Animated wallpapers

Touch and hold your Lock Screen to add a new screen. The wallpaper gallery contains a few interactive options. Tap Weather to see an animated view of your forecast, or tap Astronomy to see the moon or your location on Earth.

**3** Depth effects

After adding a photo wallpaper, tap the "..." icon (bottom right) to add a depth effect. This places a subject in front of the time (you might need to remove widgets first). You can also swipe left or right to apply colorful effects.

HOW TO Tweak the Home Screen**1** Change the photo

Touch and hold the Lock Screen and tap Customize > Home Screen. You'll see a preview of the Home Screen, along with options at the bottom. Tap Photo if you want to choose a different wallpaper than the one used on your Lock Screen.

**2** Color or gradient

Now tap Done, tap Customize again, then tap your Home Screen. At the bottom, tap either Color or Gradient, then tap the "+" to change the hue. You can pick from 18 options and tweak each one's tint using the slider.

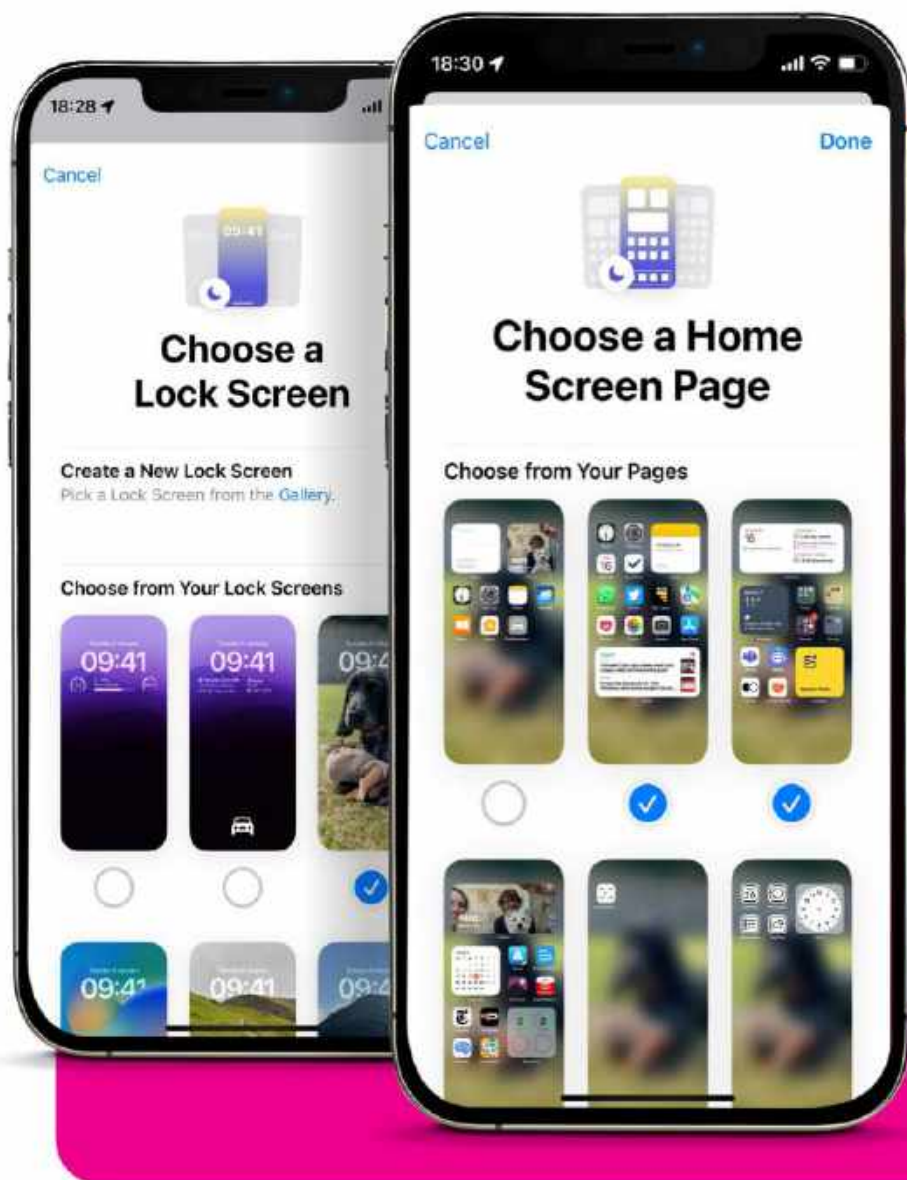
**3** Pair wallpapers

On the same screen, tap Pair to match the Home Screen background to the Lock Screen one. If they are paired, you can tap Blur to cloud the wallpaper. This could help your Home Screen apps and widgets stand out a bit more.

Focus modes & widget stacks

Cut out distractions with these handy tools

Not everyone knows that you can link a Home Screen or Lock Screen to one of iOS's Focus modes, but it's a powerful feature. It means you can create custom screens that contain just what you need to focus and, in the case of Sleep and Driving modes, have them apply themselves automatically without you having to lift a finger. Pair them with a few judicious widget stacks and you'll be ready to go.



HOW TO Use Focus modes from the Lock Screen



1 Pick a Focus mode
You can link a Lock Screen to a Focus mode so the former can enable the latter (or vice versa). First, open Settings and tap Focus, then create a Focus mode. Alternatively, you might want to just use one of the default modes.



2 Create a link
Touch and hold the Lock Screen and tap Focus. A pop-up will appear with your Focus modes listed. Tap one to link it to your chosen Lock Screen; this Focus mode will now start whenever the selected Lock Screen is active.



3 Add some widgets
You can add widgets that will be helpful for your chosen Focus mode, such as a Google Maps widget showing estimated arrival times in Driving mode, or a Calendar widget with the day's events in your work Focus mode.

HOW TO Hide Home Screen apps and pages



1 Customize Screens

In the Settings app, tap Focus and pick a Focus mode. You'll see a Customize Screens section. The left image here lets you adjust the Lock Screen in Focus Mode, while the right image is for an Apple Watch (if available).



2 Hide some pages

Tap the middle option to tweak your Home Screen while the chosen Focus mode is active. Tap the pages you want to show and a tick appears below them. Any pages not selected will be hidden when your device is in this Focus mode.



3 Add new pages

Some Focus modes let you add new pages with suggested apps/widgets. Tap a page, then Edit Apps to change what appears. Tap Add to create the page. Tap Options if you want to hide notification badges on Home Screen apps.

HOW TO Create multi-layered widget stacks



1 Widget stacks

If you hide Home Screen pages in a Focus mode, you can still access your favorite widgets using widget stacks. These let you scroll between apps within a single widget, and are great for saving space and reducing clutter.



2 Merge two widgets

Touch and hold your unlocked iPhone's background, then tap the "+" (top left). Add two widgets to your Home Screen. You can drop the second widget on to the first one (providing they're the same size) to create a widget stack.



3 Keep customizing

You can swipe up or down on the widget to scroll through the app widgets it contains. Add as many widgets to the stack as you like. Note that iOS also has a Smart Stack widget filled with widgets from apps you regularly use.



Create custom app icons with Shortcuts

First, save an iOS icon pack to your iPhone — there are plenty of free or paid-for options online. Now open Shortcuts and tap the "+" button, then tap Add Action > Scripting > Open App. Tap App and pick the app you want to open. Now tap the Share icon, tap Add to Home Screen and give the shortcut a name. Tap the icon and press Choose Photo and pick an icon from your library. Finally, tap Add, then Done.



Rotate the frame counterclockwise and the built-in privacy shutter closes.

Razer Kiyo Pro Ultra

A 4K camera with a huge catch

\$299.99 From www.razer.com

Features 4K resolution at 30Hz, 1080p resolution at 60Hz, autofocus, 82-degree field of view, 8.3MP output, 1/1.2-inch Sony Starvis 2 sensor, f/1.7 aperture lens, privacy cover, built-in privacy shutter, USB-C to USB-A cable

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Razer Kiyo Pro Ultra offers great video output, but you'll need a workaround to get it.

- ▶ Performs well in low light
- ▶ Very low default resolution
- ▶ Razer software not macOS compatible
- ▶ Extremely expensive

WEAK ■■■

NOW THAT CONTINUITY Camera lets you use your iPhone as a Mac camera, does spending \$300 on a webcam like Razer's Kiyo Pro Ultra make sense in the current climate?

When you're well-lit from the front, the camera juggles light and dark well. With a light behind you it isn't quite so impressive, but it still produces a pretty well-balanced picture. Low lighting is its real strong point, though, and it'll keep you bright and clear with minimal grain even with the lights off.

However, there's a major problem. Despite being capable of 4K footage, the Kiyo Pro Ultra defaults to a measly 640 x 480 pixel resolution. Worse, Razer's Synapse app doesn't work with macOS, and it's used to bump up that puny resolution, the field of view, and more.

Third-party apps can increase the pixel count, and your best bet here is Camo Studio, which lets you adjust both resolution and frame rate (although you'll need to pay to get anything higher than 720p). Apps like FaceTime and Zoom lack resolution options. Video-recording apps like OBS can get 4K footage from Razer's cam, but they're not really built for video calls. You can change the resolution using Synapse on a Windows PC and the settings will carry across to macOS. We tried the camera on a PC and the 4K footage was

excellent, and our resolution settings did indeed persist on macOS. But doing things this way is not an option for everyone.

That all makes the Kiyo Pro Ultra a very hard sell. It's a shame, because the hardware inside is very good. Its output is close to matching Continuity Camera using an iPhone 12 Pro in all manner of lighting conditions, although the iPhone was a little less washed out and had a wider viewing angle (your mileage will vary based on the iPhone you're using).

A FATALLY FLAWED PRODUCT

Right now, recommending the Razer Kiyo Pro Ultra is tough. You'll need Camo Studio or a Windows PC to unlock its 4K resolution, which isn't ideal. It's a real letdown considering how solid the webcam is and how impressive the footage is once it's adjusted. But if you just have a Mac or don't want to pay for Camo Studio, the Kiyo Pro Ultra won't be right for you.

In the meantime, try Continuity Camera. Provided you have a compatible iPhone, it doesn't require any additional purchases, and the footage it outputs is almost second to none. Or try a webcam like the Anker PowerConf C300. Either way, think twice about spending \$300 here until Razer updates Synapse to work on macOS. **ALEX BLAKE**



DESPITE
OFFERING
4K, THE
KIYO PRO
ULTRA DEFAULTS
TO A MEASLY
640 X 480 PIXEL
RESOLUTION

The webcam can pan, tilt, and be mounted on a table or tripod.



You can set up the Deco X50 indoors or outdoors.

TP-Link Deco X50-Outdoor Router

Bring Wi-Fi to your next cookout

\$149.99 From www.tp-link.com

Features AX3000 dual-band Wi-Fi, Wi-Fi 6 compatible, IP65 waterproof and dustproof, PoE/AC Power Supply, 2 x Gigabit WAN/LAN Ethernet ports, covers up to 2,500 ft squared

THE BOTTOM LINE

A decent enough device, but if you spend a little more on a tri-band option you can get better.

- Indoor or outdoor
- Create a Wi-Fi mesh
- Works with all ISPs
- Only dual band

GOOD ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

DO YOU NEED Wi-Fi all the way at the bottom of your backyard? With this neat weatherproof device, you can have it. It's designed to be used indoors or out, and can be mounted on a post or screwed into a wall instead of sitting on a shelf or table if you wish. Download the Deco app to incorporate it into your current Wi-Fi network using its Access Point Mode, or use it as a replacement for the router you got from your Internet Service Provider (ISP). It's compatible with TP-Link's other Deco wireless products, so you can create a Wi-Fi mesh, with several access points eliminating dead spots around the house. The X50 Outdoor has parental controls (subscription required) and management features, but if you use it in Access Point Mode these are disabled.

The main advantage of Wi-Fi 6 is it can handle far more simultaneous connections without loss of performance. According to TP-Link, Deco X50 can handle over 150 connections efficiently, without any of them slowing down. Given the way we use the internet these days, with high-definition

streaming services, IP camera streaming, online video gaming, smart home devices and more, as well as going online with computers, smartphones and tablets, this is definitely an advantage. It's dual band, with 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz channels, and we're promised combined speeds of up to 3,000 Mbps (574 Mbps on 2.4 GHz and 2,402 Mbps on 5 GHz).

In our tests, it performed admirably in a variety of different conditions. Even when playing an Xbox game, streaming movies to two different televisions and connecting several household gadgets, there was no lag on any of the devices. Of course, speeds and bandwidth could be improved further by using a tri-band device instead of this dual-band router, but that would prove more expensive. If you're looking for a household family router or an outdoor access point for when you host a cookout, it won't let you down. If you're a small business owner who needs to support a large number of simultaneous connections all demanding a high degree of bandwidth, it's probably not for you. **IAN OSBORNE**

Return to Monkey Island

Misadventure on the high seas

\$24.99 From www.returntomonkeyisland.com

Needs macOS 10.13 or later



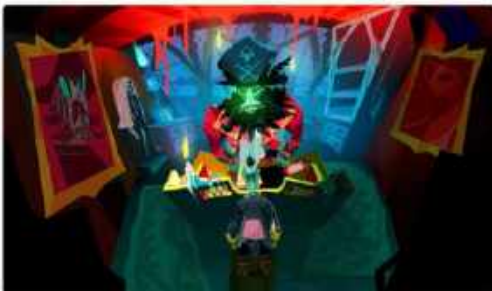
THE MONKEY ISLAND games have earned their place in the video game hall of excellence, but it's been over a decade since the last release. Can *Return to Monkey Island* also be a return to past glories?

Help hapless hero Guybrush Threepwood as he launches an undercover mission to finally discover the secret of Monkey Island amid friends and foes new and old. Doing so is no easy feat with Méléé Island under new management, and the new pirate leaders have little interest in helping Guybrush. Instead, he needs to sneak aboard a ship captained by his nemesis LeChuck and convince the crew to take him to the island where it all began.

WAS THAT A TALKING SKULL?

Despite its modern release, *Return to Monkey Island* retains many hallmarks of the classic point-and-click games of yore. There are items to combine into unlikely new tools, characters to charm, and clues to be found. It's a real throwback.

It also bears the signature LucasArts graphical style, with gaudy colors and exaggerated features on every person, building and object. Unlike some of the later games in the series, *Return to Monkey Island* is cast in 2D, taking the old-school platformer visual style and reimagining it



As you'd expect, Guybrush must face off against his arch nemesis LeChuck.



in beautiful high resolution. It looks great on a large iMac or external monitor.

Beware, though, the heavy emphasis on the "click" part of "point-and-click", which means there's an awful lot of back and forth. You'll frequently be tasked with locating an item, only to find it's immediately rendered useless and must be replaced by something found in the location you just vacated. Much of the story feels like an extended fetch quest, which wears a little thin after a while.

It's also not particularly challenging, even on the Hard setting. There's not much of the crazy, creative thinking that infused LucasArts classic *Day of the Tentacle* to such wonderful effect, and most puzzles can be beaten without much head scratching.

Still, *Return to Monkey Island* is an enjoyable romp, whether you love the original games or have never even heard of them. It's not quite an instant classic, but it's a great way for a salty sea dog to while away the hours. **ALEX BLAKE**

There are plenty of familiar faces from past *Monkey Island* games.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A great adventure for point-and-click fans.

- 🎮 Classic pirate fun
- 🎭 Great humor
- 🎨 Beautiful graphics
- 🚫 Too much fetching

GREAT ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



The audio roller is a pleasant surprise on such an affordable keyboard.

JLab GO

A portable keyboard that won't break the bank

\$20 From www.jlab.com

Features Audio control dial, connects to three devices, switches between three key layouts, 2x AAA and 2.4GHz dongle included, 11.24 x 0.96 x 5.13 in

THE BOTTOM LINE

A budget keyboard with a few handy extras, the JLab GO isn't going to dethrone the Magic Keyboard any time soon.

Lightweight and portable

Handy volume dial

Loud to type on

Feels a bit cheap

SOLID ■■■■

TYPING ON THE JLab GO is decent for a \$20 keyboard. It's not in the same league as Apple's Magic Keyboard, but it's not a million miles away either. Keys are not too firm to press, and the arrow keys are in an inverted T shape, which makes them easier to find by touch than on Apple's equivalent.

It's also an impressively lightweight device, and its slimline profile aids its portability, meaning you'll have no trouble slipping it into a bag if you need to work on the go. The downside to its portable nature is that it feels a little flimsy. Place it down on a hard surface and you'll hear its rear battery cover rattle, while typing a touch too firmly emits a slight vibration from the board. It doesn't feel like it's about to fall apart, but Apple's Magic Keyboard definitely feels sturdier.

JLab's keyboard is also much louder than the Magic Keyboard, especially if you're a rapid typist. Some of the keys near the edges are narrower than usual, so you might find yourself making the odd mistake here and

there as you miss the key you're aiming for. That said, Apple's offering costs a hefty \$99, five times as much as the JLab GO, but for your outlay you do get a better, quieter typing experience than JLab's keyboard. But if all you need is a budget board when you're on the go, the GO may scratch that itch.

The JLab GO also has an unexpected party trick: an audio control located in the top-right corner. We didn't expect this on a \$20 keyboard, and it works well and is a handy addition to the device. It's a feature borne of necessity, since JLab has replaced the volume up/down keys on the function row with a few new keys: a calculator shortcut button, plus a screenshot key (which works like pressing Cmd+Shift+4). Annoyingly, the calculator key doesn't work on macOS, and the function keys are quite small.

That aside, the JLab GO is a contender if you want a budget keyboard that won't weigh you down on your travels. Just don't expect it to feel like a million bucks. **ALEX BLAKE**



Audio Pro C5 MkII

A stylish wireless bookshelf speaker

\$299 From www.audiopro.com

Features AirPlay 2, Home app compatibility, Bluetooth, RCA inputs, Dimensions: 5.1 x 9.8 x 5.9in

IN A SEA of smart speakers, Audio Pro's C5 MkII leans very much on the "speaker" side of things. Although it has some software control it does not feature a microphone or any kind of digital assistant, so it's really nothing like a HomePod, for example. Compact but very well built, the C5 MkII is designed to be somewhat portable with its leather carrying handle, though it needs to run off wall power so is really meant only for indoor use. Around the back you'll find a bass port as well as RCA inputs and a subwoofer output should you wish to connect a turntable or some bass extension, respectively.

In addition to the physical inputs the speaker has Bluetooth 4.2 and of course Wi-Fi, supporting AirPlay 2, Google Cast and multiroom operation. There's a companion app you can use to get set up, though in our case it failed repeatedly to complete the process. Luckily you can also use Apple Home or Google Home to connect it to your Wi-Fi and after we did this, Audio Pro's Connect app did then seem to recognize the speaker.

As noted there's no assistant running on the speaker, so everything is done via your smartphone where you can set up shortcuts to a range of streaming services, and up to six of these can be assigned to the shortcut buttons. There's also transport controls, volume, and input select buttons here. The app allows you control of basic EQ as well as managing multiple speakers, and Spotify and Tidal Connect are supported.

The front-firing 4-inch woofer is powered by a 25W amp and the two tweeters have 8W each. Frequency response is 50Hz - 20kHz, which means there isn't a huge amount of bass at the lowest end. That aside the soundstage is fairly punchy, doing a decent job with a mixture of genres and sounding warm and clear. The app definitely needs a revamp, and competition is fierce, with the Sonos Era 100 offering a lot more software features for \$50 less than this speaker retails for. **HOLLIN JONES**

Solidly built, the speaker uses dual tweeters, a woofer and rear bass port.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A solid wireless speaker, but faces increasing competition from smarter rivals.

- 👍 Excellent design and build
- 👍 Warm, pleasing sound
- 👎 App needs improving
- 👎 Pricy for a non-smart speaker

GOOD ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



Microsoft Outlook

Can Apple learn from Microsoft?

Free (with IAPs) From <https://outlook.com>

Needs macOS 11.0 or later; Intel or Apple silicon Mac

MICROSOFT RECENTLY TRIED to carve inroads into Apple's world by making its Outlook for Mac email client free instead of requiring a Microsoft 365 subscription. But is it actually worth using?

When you first open Outlook, you'll notice it's a pleasant app to look at. Your inbox is neatly organized, there are plenty of customization options, and Microsoft has included a few helpful extras for managing your mail (and your time).

On the left is a sidebar with your accounts and sub-folders. To the right of that is your inbox, with Focused and Other tabs at the top. The former shows your most important messages, while the latter

contains things like newsletters and offers.

That's about it for Outlook's smart inbox filtering, and it won't sort things like receipts or tickets into separate folders. Still, it has plenty of modern conveniences, like follow-up reminders, undo send and scheduled messages — although the last two are limited to paid Microsoft 365 or free Outlook.com accounts.

As you mouse over a message in your list of emails, you'll see options to flag, pin or trash it, and you can adjust which options appear when you hover. Click an email thread and it expands to show each message as a separate item in a list, making finding an email easy.

Most of Outlook's main window is taken up by a pane

Outlook is an attractive app with a plethora of neat features.

The built-in calendar is a welcome addition.

for the selected message, while to the right of that is a pop-out sidebar containing Outlook tips and your upcoming events, giving you a rapid view of your day's tasks.

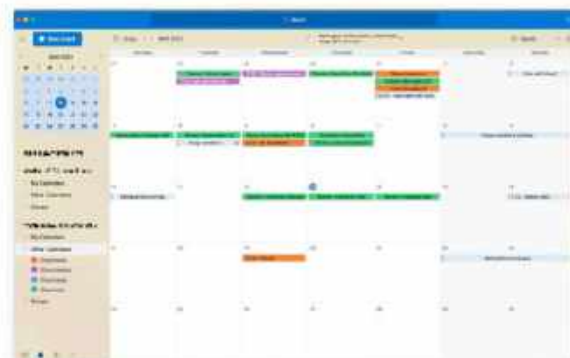
SHOULD YOU DITCH MAIL?

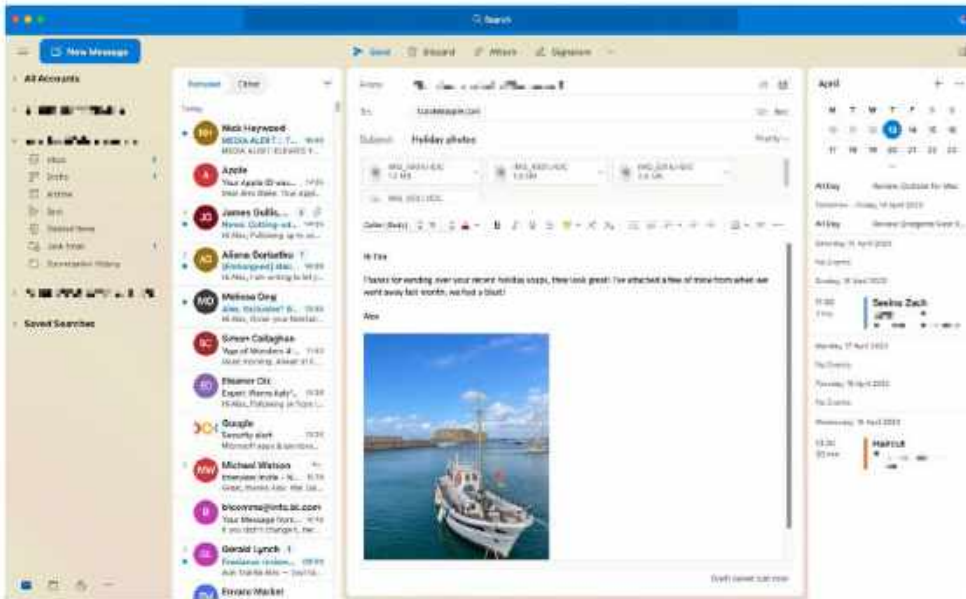
In many places, Outlook feels better optimized than Apple's Mail. Senders are given colored icons or profile pictures, helping to distinguish messages at a glance. If you haven't selected an email, the message window is blank, protecting your privacy (Mail is hit-and-miss with this). And Mail lacks a sidebar for calendar events entirely.

Outlook integrates other tools, including contacts, to-do lists and notes, and its useful calendar expands into a full-app view. Unfortunately, Outlook can't natively import your iCloud calendars. You can do it via a workaround (see the boxout on the right), but this won't let you edit your iCloud events in Outlook.

Microsoft's app is highly customizable and provides a ton of control without overwhelming you with choice. Most options are found in the app's settings menu rather than cluttering the interface. You can change your inbox layout, calendar appearance, notifications, and more.

The trade-off for removing Outlook's upfront cost is the introduction of ads in the free





Outlook's settings allow tons of fine-grained customization.

otherwise excellent email app. Outlook's incorporation of calendars and tasks makes it a central hub for organizing your day, and with so many customization options on-hand, it's easy to make it work for you. Say it quietly, but maybe it's time to switch away from Apple Mail. **ALEX BLAKE**

version. We're not sure how we feel about Microsoft's implementation. On the one hand, ads are stashed away in the Other tab of your inbox, so you won't see your screen plastered in flashing, full-color adverts. If you prefer to use the Focused tab then you likely won't see ads at all.

But Microsoft has designed its adverts to look like genuine emails that sit at the top of your

inbox. They even have a blue dot that suggests they're real unread messages. There is a small "Ad" marker on each one, but you could easily miss it. While we're glad the adverts are not distracting, Microsoft has made them so stealthy as to feel almost sneaky.

If you've already got a Microsoft 365 account, you won't get these ads, and they're the main blemish on an

The right-hand sidebar provides a quick view of calendar events.

THE BOTTOM LINE

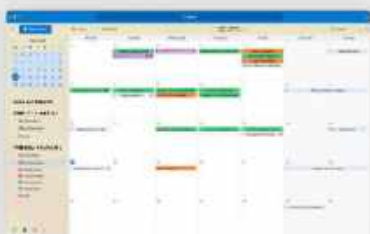
Outlook is an impressive email client that serves as your one-stop productivity shop.

- Serious challenger to Apple's Mail
- Now free to use
- Well-organized user interface
- iCloud calendar sync issues

EXCELLENT ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

APPTIPS

How to import your iCloud calendars



Select the square icon in the bottom-left to view your calendars. Outlook can import calendars linked to third-party email accounts, but needs a workaround for iCloud calendars (since it doesn't support CalDAV and CardDAV).



Go to www.icloud.com and find your calendar. Click the sharing info button next to a calendar, then click Public Calendar and copy the URL. You can import this into Outlook (although you can't edit iCloud calendar entries).



Sign in to your Outlook account on the web, click Calendars in the sidebar, then click Add calendar > Subscribe from web, paste the URL copied from iCloud, then click Import. Your iCloud calendar should now appear in Outlook.



Charge up to three devices at once, wirelessly with the included 40W PSU.

Belkin BoostCharge Pro 3-in-1 Wireless Charging Pad

Elegant and powerful wireless charging

\$149.99 From www.belkin.com

Features MagSafe for iPhones, adjustable Apple Watch puck height, charge at up to 15W (iPhone 12, 13 and 14); 7.5W (iPhone 8–11), Apple Watch fast charging (7, 8 and Ultra models)

THE BOTTOM LINE

A slick and powerful wireless charger with fast charging support for recent devices.

- Elegant solution for Apple devices
- Fast charging support
- Accommodates different Watches
- You pay a price for the convenience

EXCELLENT ■■■■■

CARRYING MULTIPLE CHARGERS and cables can get tiresome, but Belkin's 3-in-1 charging pad is designed to make your life easier if you own a recent iPhone, AirPods or Apple Watch, and preferably all three to really get the best value out of your purchase. Compact but very well built, it comes in black or white finishes and with a 40W power supply which plugs into the underside neatly. In terms of its size, the pad is easy enough to carry around while traveling, or will sit unobtrusively on a desk.

There are three sections, one for each device — a sensible approach which Apple tried to overcomplicate with its now-abandoned AirPower charger. The phone section will charge any wireless charging-compatible phone meaning an iPhone 8 or later, and is MagSafe compatible for iPhones 12 and later. It's also compatible with MagSafe cases so you won't have to remove them.

You can place compatible AirPods cases or indeed other wireless-charging earbud cases onto the central section, and the Apple Watch

section comes with a magnetic puck that can sit flat or vertically for use in Nightstand mode. Underneath the Watch section is a dial that lets you adjust the height of the puck to accommodate different sizes of Watch, which is a nice touch.

Using our test of an iPhone 11, AirPods Pro 2 and an Apple Watch 4 charging at the same time from empty, we found that after 30 minutes the charges were 32/35/29%, after an hour 66/73/70%, and after 1h30m all devices were fully charged. With Pro or Pro Max models you could add a little time to the iPhone charges, but with a 12, 13 or 14 you'd also benefit from fast charging. Overall then, it's a great way to keep your devices topped up or indeed get a quick recharge if your phone or Watch supports it. It's arguably a little pricey so you'll benefit the most if you have all three devices, and a USB-C power output would have been nice, but it's a much more neat and elegant solution than using multiple chargers, and portable to boot. **HOLLIN JONES**

Matter: A Better Reading App

Taking a new look at the read-later app

Free; \$7.99 (premium monthly); \$59.99 (premium annual); \$149.99 (premium 3 years) From <https://getmatter.com>

Needs iOS 15.0 or later, iPadOS 15.0 or later



READ-LATER APPS

are hardly thin on the ground.

Instapaper, GoodLinks, Pocket, and Safari's in-built Reading List option are the current leaders, but Matter takes a new, different approach.

Available as an app for iOS and iPadOS and an extension for Safari and other browsers on the Mac, Matter uses Apple's ubiquitous Share icon to save an article. It appears in the Matter app in your queue, from where you can read it. It's generally a more comfortable read than on the web page; no tedious pop-ups, annoying adverts or intrusive links to other articles. Relevant photographs are usually retained, though they're sometimes missed. Where this happens, you can tap an icon and return to the article on its



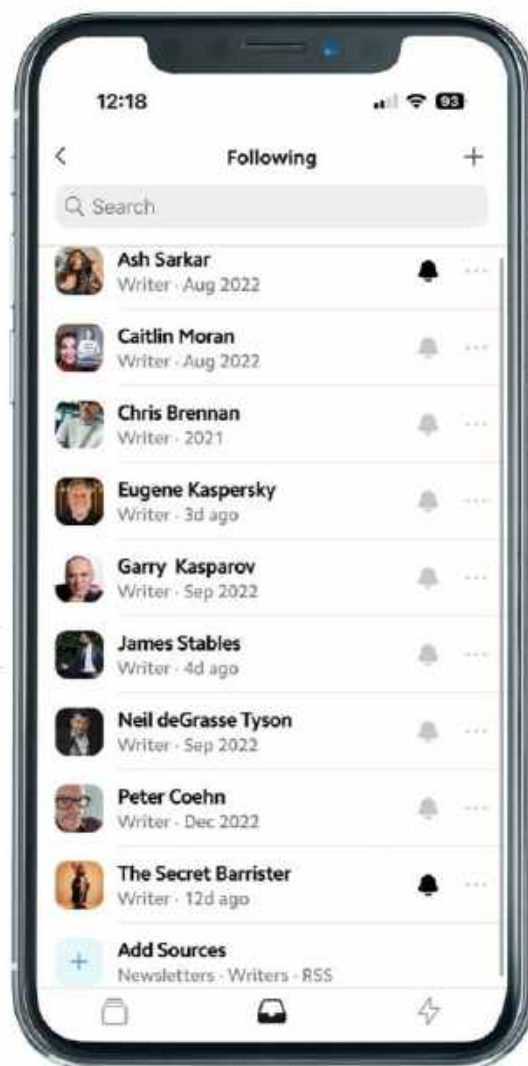
You can customize the appearance of the Matter app to suit your needs.

website. There's also no problem saving articles from behind a paywall either, as long as you've subscribed to the site in question.

Organize your saved pieces with tags, sync with your other devices to the furthest point read, and have a piece read to you by a natural-sounding audio player. You can also save YouTube videos, and export articles as PDFs. Save the first post in a Twitter thread and the entire thread is sent to your queue. Pay for a monthly or yearly subscription and you can highlight text, make notes, add RSS feeds and even send an article to your Amazon Kindle.

But saving articles is only half the story. Matter is also its own social network. Go premium and you can follow writers, having their work delivered to your inbox. Follow your friends and you can see what they've been reading and vice versa, including notes and highlights, though you can read privately without sharing too.

Apart from a few minor interface nitpicks which will surely be sorted over time, our only real complaint here is the price. Matter offers a generous



Follow writers drawn from your Twitter account, RSS feeds and elsewhere.

free version, but if you want the Premium features, the subscription is really rather expensive. It's arguably the best read-later app available for Apple devices, but use the free version for a month or two before deciding whether to splash out on the Premium features. **IAN OSBORNE**

THE BOTTOM LINE

A novel, exciting and capable read-later app, but how many subscriptions can one wallet take?

➤ Articles easier to read in Matter

➤ Useful social features

➤ Audio features are great
















➤ Subscription is expensive
















GREAT ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Best of the best

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THUNDERBOLT DOCK	CalDigit Thunderbolt Station 4	caldigit.com	\$379.99	#199
KEYBOARD	NuPhy Air75 Wireless Mechanical	nuphy.com	\$109.95	#189
PORTABLE PRINTER	Epson WorkForce WF-110W	epson.com	\$299.99	#185
PORTABLE HDD	Toshiba Canvio Flex 2TB	storage.toshiba.com	\$79.99	#197
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WIRELESS CHARGER	Belkin BoostCharge Pro Portable	belkin.com	\$59.99	#197
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SECURITY CAMERA	EufyCam 2C (two-pack kit)	eufylife.com	\$239.99	#171
SMART SPEAKER	HomePod mini	apple.com	\$99	#176
OVER-EAR HEADPHONES	Sony WH-1000XM5	sony.com	\$399.99	#197
AIRPLAY SOUNDBAR	Sonos Beam	sonos.com	\$449	#187
WEBCAM	AnkerWork B600 Video Bar	ankerwork.com	\$219.99	#191
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PORTABLE DAC	iFi Go Blu	ifi-audio.com	\$199	#189
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IPHONE GAME CONTROLLER	Razer Kishi v2	razer.com	\$99.99	#203

> iOS/iPadOS APPS				
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TO DO (PRODUCTIVITY)	 Things 3	culturedcode.com	\$9.99	#194
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EMAIL	 Spark	sparkmailapp.com	Free	#190
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VIDEO EDITOR	 LumaFusion 3.0	luma-touch.com	\$29.99 (IAPs)	#186
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SHOPPING	 Grocery 3	smartgrocery.app	Free	#198
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> macOS APPS				
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next month



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Something gone wrong? Or just not working how you want? With our directory of solutions, your Apple device will be good to go in no time



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With Apple software increasingly consolidating, is the iPad ready to be a true workhorse? Let's find out

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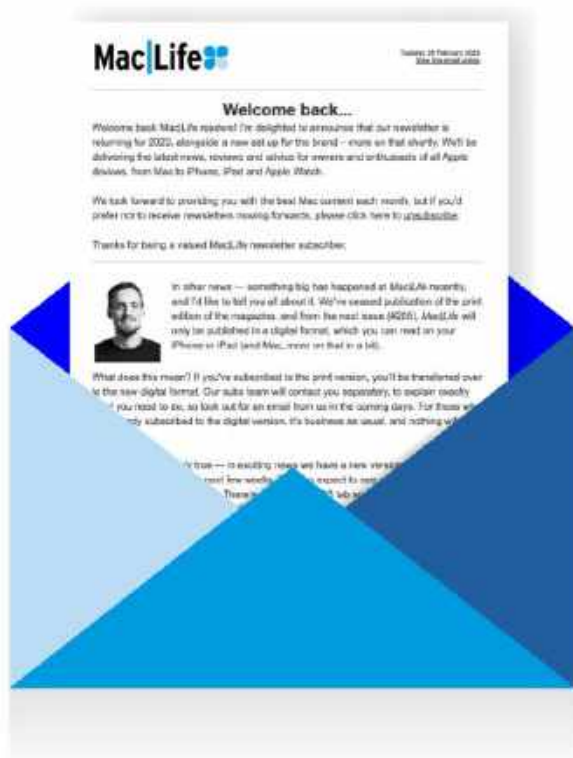
MACLIFE (ISSN 1835-4010) is published 13 times a year, monthly plus a Spring issue following the April issue, by Future US, LLC, 130 West 42nd Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10036, USA
Website: www.futureus.com

Subscriptions do not include newsstand specials.
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PAPER LOVES TREES

U.S. forests, which provide wood for making paper, paper-based packaging and many other products, have been growing by over 1,200 NFL football fields every day!

Source: According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's 2020 Global Forest Resources Assessment, U.S. forest area expanded by an average of 605,000 acres per year between 1990 and 2020. An NFL football field is 1.32 acres in size.



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