

WWDC 2017: Everything important Apple announced at its big event

HomePod, iOS 11, a new iPad Pro and more.

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Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Apple's annual Worldwide Developers Conference kicked off in San Jose, Calif. with a product keynote.

Apple unveiled new versions of its iOS, macOS and watchOS platforms, a connected home speaker device called the HomePod — shipping in December — and a new iPad Pro tablet.

Here's everything important Apple announced today, in roughly chronological order.

tvOS

Apple only had one thing to say about tvOS: The Apple TV is getting a big new content source, as [Amazon Prime Video is coming soon](#) to Apple TV and [Apple's newish TV app](#). Apple CEO Tim Cook promised more updates around tvOS later this year.

watchOS 4

Apple announced a new version of watchOS, the software that powers the Apple Watch. It's not nearly as big of a change as last year's watchOS 3, but there are a few interesting new features.

A new Siri-powered watch face uses machine learning to customize its content in real time throughout the day, including reminders, traffic information, upcoming meetings, news, smart home controls, etc., when they're supposed to be most relevant.

New fitness features include smarter workout controls, more prompts to set goals, and two-way workout data exchange with certain gym equipment, via partnerships with major manufacturers. You'll also be able to use the watch face as a flashlight or blinking light during runs — a neat safety touch.

The Apple Watch will also be able to better connect with other hardware gadgets, such as continuous glucose monitors, via Bluetooth. We'll be looking for more about this when Apple unveils this year's new Watch hardware, expected in the fall.

macOS High Sierra

Apple isn't doing a major macOS update this year — instead, the company has spent the year “perfecting it,” Apple SVP Craig Federighi said. This includes updates to Safari, including autoplay video blocking and “intelligent tracking prevention” to cut back at ad trackers; better Photos editing and organization; a faster new behind-the-scenes file system; a stronger updated graphics engine that supports VR development; and support for the Unity and Unreal gaming engines (which drew a round of applause from the developer audience).

This seems like the right move: The Mac isn't hurting for new features as much as efficiency and power. The free update will ship this fall, with a beta program starting soon.

New Macs, including the iMac Pro

The summer updates: Apple's iMac is getting a nicer display, faster processors and graphics performance — suitable for VR content creation — more memory capacity, and some new ports. The MacBook and MacBook Pro are getting faster chips and drives. The MacBook Air is getting a faster chip. And the 13-inch MacBook Pro is getting a lower entry-level price.

Apple also showed off a sneak peek at a new, high-performance version of the iMac — a 27-inch, darker gray iMac Pro, with up to 18 processor cores — that's shipping in December. Starting at \$4999, this is designed for Pro users, including those waiting while [Apple resuscitates its Mac Pro desktop](#). Tim Cook called it “pretty badass.”

iOS 11 including AR Kit and iPad-specific features

Apple saved its most important platform, which powers the iPhone and iPad, for last.

iMessages will now synchronize better between devices, and will free up storage space by offloading things like old photo messages to the cloud.

Apple Pay will now support person-to-person payments via iMessage, using a new “Apple Pay Cash” card.

Siri will translate queries into other languages, including French, Spanish and Chinese; will support more third-party apps via the SiriKit developers kit that Apple released last year; and will have more context for proactive suggestions. It will also start “reading” the text on your screen so you can do things like spell complicated words you’ve just looked at — like Reykjavik — more easily.

The camera will use more efficient algorithms and file formats for photos and videos, which means they’ll take up less space than before. (Apple seems to be moving beyond JPEG as the default for photos, which could raise some compatibility questions — more research to be done here.) Slick new tricks are on the way for Live Photos.

The lock screen and Notifications window — the two places you interact with notifications — are merging into one. The Apple Maps app will have more detailed airport maps for a selection of airports.

There's a smart new "do not disturb while driving" safety mode, which will silence notifications, show a blank screen on your phone, and auto-reply with an "I'm driving!" message while you're driving.

Apple's HomeKit service will now support multi-room home speakers from several major manufacturers, and a new AirPlay 2 feature will make it easier to play music and audio to other devices.

Apple Music is getting more social — Apple must really miss Ping! — and Apple is making it easier for developers to embed Apple Music into other apps and services. Apple is redesigning the App Store for the first time, and it looks a lot like Apple Music — big promo art, a tab for games, and more visibility into in-app purchases. App developers will also get some new features, including "phased releases" that will make it easier to launch major new updates.

iPad-specific features in iOS 11 — long overdue! — include a new dock for apps, a new multi-app view for multitasking, drag-and-drop support and a new Files app. It's also easier to mark up screenshots and documents

with the Apple Pencil stylus. And iOS will try to understand your handwriting in the Notes app so you can search the text.

Apple also has some big new tools for developers, including AR Kit for augmented-reality apps, which Apple is calling the “largest AR platform in the world.” (Facebook and Google have also recently touted AR platforms.) It will also offer new machine learning and natural language capabilities, including things like face tracking and photo recognition.

Worth noting: While Apple is launching AR Kit this year, it’s not announcing AR features built directly into its own camera app yet.

iOS 11 will ship this fall, with a public beta starting this month.

iPad Pro 10.5-inch

Apple unveiled a new 10.5-inch version of the iPad Pro, its tablet for professional users. It has thinner borders around its edges, but still has a home button, and will support a full-width keyboard cover.

It features a better display with richer color and a new feature called ProMotion, which updates its content up to

120 times per second — making it feel smoother and more responsive. (This is particularly helpful when using the Pencil.) It's also faster and will come with twice the standard amount of memory — 64 GB.

The 10.5-inch iPad Pro will start at \$649, and will start shipping next week.

HomePod: Apple's new Siri speaker

Apple is taking aim at Sonos and the Amazon Echo with HomePod, a new “breakthrough home speaker” that it will start selling in December in white and space gray for \$349.

Small but supposedly powerful, the speaker will sense the shape of your room and customize audio for its surroundings (and can be paired with a second HomePod for greater effect).

A “Musicologist” feature will respond to “Hey, Siri,” play from your Apple Music account, and answer questions about the music it's playing. It will also handle other Siri queries, such as weather, news, messages, podcasts, stocks, controlling smart home devices via HomeKit, etc.

This is a big entry into the home for Apple — a company that notably decided not to ship a TV set. There's plenty to unpack here.

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