

Apple Adding Battery Monitor, Performance Controls to iOS 11.3

By: [Wayne Rash](#) | January 25, 2018 - eWeek

NEWS ANALYSIS: The next major update to Apple's iOS mobile operating system will contain features demanded by users, notably a battery monitor and performance control feature.



Frustrated users who found that their iPhones and iPads had been slowed down by Apple are about to get some relief. In an unusual action for a point release update to a mobile operating system, the company announced details on iOS 11.3, set to be released in the spring.

The new features include the much-demanded battery and performance monitor app that will show battery health, recommend service if it's needed, and show whether the power management system has slowed down the device to prevent unexpected

shutdowns. The battery monitoring app will also allow users to shut down battery management to return their device to full speed, but with the risk of shutdowns.

Apple released the details of the battery management feature along with a number of other features in an unusual move, apparently aimed at stemming complaints about the company's lack of transparency when the issue of the iPhone performance throttling was first discovered. Apple quickly admitted that it had indeed slowed down older iPhones and iPads, apologized, and said that it would give that control to users.

Developers are getting a beta version of iOS 11.3 now, so that they have time to make sure their products will be compatible with the new software. What's unusual is that Apple is announcing the details so far in advance.

There's more to the new version of iOS than just battery controls, of course. Apple says it's enhancing augmented reality features in the OS with an upgrade of ARKit to 1.5, which will provide better use of real-world objects and greater flexibility. AR is showing considerable promise in a number of areas such as in training applications where employees can see what appear to be real items in a virtualized environment.

In a somewhat controversial move, Apple is adding a new health records feature to iOS Health app. This will allow users to download their electronic medical records to their mobile device for safekeeping and for portability. This could mean, for example, that if you have a health emergency while away from home, you could still provide the medical staff with the details of your current medical situation along with current prescriptions and other health information.

Privacy advocates have questioned the wisdom of putting such sensitive records on a mobile device, but in this case they're protected either by facial or fingerprint recognition, so they should be reasonably

safe. It's also worth noting that Apple isn't forcing users to install their health records on their phones, they're just making the capability available.

Business Chat is apparently Apple's way of catching up with a new social media practice that's been on the rise in which companies use Facebook Messenger to communicate with customers and others, especially for things like customer service. This in turn is a move beyond communicating with customer service via Twitter, which has proven to be the fastest possible connection when customers are having a problem and need support.

With Business Chat, iPhone and iPad users will have a direct pipeline to the customer support desks of some businesses. The launch partners include Hilton Hotels, Discover financial services, Lowes home improvement and Wells Fargo. I noticed that no airlines have signed up for this capability, which somehow isn't surprising. The Business Chat will take place in the Messages app, which is where users are already getting text messages.

Another feature that will be present in iOS 11.3 is Advanced Mobile Location, which allows first responders to locate someone within a few inches using a combination of WiFi, cellular signals and GPS. This feature, pioneered by Google, has been credited with saving hundreds of lives since its introduction. Unfortunately, while Apple is supporting it, first responders in the U.S. aren't. This feature may save your life in Europe, but in the U.S. you'll have to hope you can tell operators the address or hope they can see you wave.

Notably absent from the announcement for iOS 11.3 is any mention of major security improvements. This may be because iOS 11.2.5, which was sent out the same day that iOS 11.3 was announced, contained a number of major security features, including fixes for the processor vulnerabilities known as Meltdown and Spectre.

Apple had sent out some preliminary fixes to the speculative execution and related vulnerabilities in early January, 2018, but the later very large security update on January 23 contained what was apparently the full fix to the BIOS and firmware. Apple also updated its other devices including Macintosh computers, the Apple Watch and Apple TV.

The level of detail included in the announcement for iOS 11.3 is noteworthy in itself. While Apple hasn't offered any explanation, it would appear that recent complaints by customers about a lack of transparency in how it updates and modifies the performance of customers' devices prompted the company to be more open about its plans.

It may also be part of a trend. Note that Microsoft has been reliably open about its plans for Windows recently, allowing users to preview new features under development through its Windows Insider program.

If that's the case, it's a useful trend. The openness by Microsoft hasn't hurt that company, and the growing transparency is unlikely to hurt Apple. In fact, it may help both companies by allowing their customers to plan and by making sure they know what's going on with the devices they have paid good money for.

original article:

http://www.eweek.com/mobile/apple-adding-battery-monitor-performance-controls-to-ios-11.3?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EWK_NL_WHN_20180129_STR4L1&dni=437535041&rni=140770117