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TAKE CONTROL OF

iOS 27 AND iPadOS 27

by GLENN FLEISHMAN

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Read Me First

Welcome to *Take Control of iOS 27 and iPadOS 27,* version 1.0, published in August 2026 by alt concepts. This book was written by Glenn Fleishman and edited by Joe Kissell.

This book covers the new features of iOS 27 and iPadOS 27, giving iPhone and iPad veterans a quick start with all the new features these operating systems have to offer.

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Siri AI and Apple Intelligence

Starting in iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 (as well as macOS 27 Golden Gate), Apple has leaned very heavily into so-called artificial intelligence to enhance the overall operating system experience and many apps. They rebranded Siri as Siri AI on devices with the minimum required hardware. (See Check Whether You Can Use Apple Intelligence.)

Because of this focus, Take Control publisher Joe Kissell and I have co-written a new book, *Take Control of Siri AI and Apple Intelligence*, to cover them in detail, as well as previous Apple Intelligence features that are unchanged or have matured. In this book, I give you an overview of how Siri AI and Apple Intelligence differ from iOS 26 and iPadOS 26 in Enjoy Smarter Devices; the separate title covers the subject with much greater detail.

Operating System Numbering

Apple began their current numbering system in 2025, with the releases of iOS, iPadOS, macOS, tvOS, and watchOS all with a base number of 26 for 2026. This continued in 2026 with the release of all operating systems numbered 27.

Before this, Apple incremented their operating systems differently depending on whether they were initial or subsequent releases. In rare places in this book, I mention that a change was made from an older version, and thus you will see an 8- or 9-number leap—say, from iOS 18 to 26 or 27—even though “26” is the very next version after “18.”

Introduction

Apple tends to release operating system changes as a two-beat sequence, like our heart going *LUB-dub*: The LUB beat is a major flex, like the introduction of Liquid Glass across all their operating systems in 2025. This year is a "dub," a building-or-rebuilding year, in which Apple largely tweaks the previous cycle and offers incremental improvements, though some may feel quite large.

The 2026 set of releases, numbered 27—like car models are numbered in fall for the following year—is a "dub." We see the rollout of the long-promised Siri upgrade, called Siri AI. Along with its improved performance, Siri AI and Apple Intelligence both extend much more deeply into apps and system functions across nearly all platforms. That's the flagship feature.

This includes significant improvements to on-device searching. When you use Spotlight in iOS 27 or iPadOS 27 on devices with Apple Intelligence support, the Spotlight field has changed from Search to Search or Ask. You can perform searches or ask Siri questions via the same entry field, which expands Spotlight's reach and Siri's scope.

I cover the big picture of Siri AI and iOS 27/iPadOS 27 Apple Intelligence changes in Enjoy Smarter Devices; specific app improvements can be found in Discover Other App Changes.

Note: Most of the details of Siri AI and Apple Intelligence are identical across platforms. Joe Kissell and I decided to put the in-depth coverage into the new book *Take Control of Siri AI and Apple Intelligence*. The book you're currently reading provides an overview of iOS 27- and iPadOS 27-specific changes.

Apple also offered four additional areas of focus:

- **Interface tweaks:** Apple devoted significant time during their Worldwide Developer Conference presentation in June 2026 to stepping way back from interface overreaches with the Liquid Glass

interface. Apple made a number of worthwhile improvements in macOS 27, but far fewer in iOS 27 and iPadOS 27. The key change is a Liquid Glass slider—also in macOS—that lets you choose a degree of translucency. In iOS 26.1/iPadOS 26.1, Apple added a binary choice of Clear (original flavor) and Tinted (somewhat less translucent). In iOS 27/iPadOS 27, that choice is now a slider.

The company also provided minor improvements to iPadOS 27, following the significant overhaul and improvements introduced in iPadOS 26, which were generally well received. See Discover the Mature Interface.

- **Child safety and Screen Time:** Nobody loves Screen Time, because it works erratically and doesn't always map to what parents want to limit. Apple has regrouped and reworked Screen Time to better allot time. Let's see if it works better, too! Child safety enhancements include intervening for gore and violence, and better oversight of new connections in FaceTime, Messages, and Phone. See Make Childhood Safer.

- **Accessibility:** A cornucopia of individual improvements in Accessibility adds up. Among them: on-device subtitles for any video across all platforms, developer access to FaceTime that will let sign language interpreters join a call, and greater use of Apple Intelligence to describe things in images and in Magnifier. See Examine Accessibility.

- **Communications:** While Apple didn't perform the same kind of huge overhaul to FaceTime, Messages, and Phone in iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 as they did in the previous releases, I've provided a one-stop shop for changes affecting those apps, as well as cellular and Wi-Fi. See Expand Communications.

Apple also discussed in the lead-up to the release of the new operating system how much faster everything would be, but a list of those promises doesn't help you get more familiar with iOS 27 and iPadOS 27! Because this book doesn't benchmark these sorts of changes, I can only say: you should be pleased.

I don't want to say everything else is miscellaneous, as there are hundreds—maybe thousands—of other changes. (You can find extensive rundowns.) Instead, let me say that Apple's extensive work means many apps and system features have been modified, matured, or enhanced, as you will see in the rest of the book.

iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 Quick Start

This brief book documents everything that's new in iOS 27 and iPadOS 27. However, if you'd like to jump to certain features and changes most relevant to you, here are some guideposts:

Understand Siri AI and Apple Intelligence:

- Get an overview of what Siri AI brings to your iPhone and iPad; see Let Siri AI Answer Your Questions.
- See where Apple Intelligence upgrades to apps affect the new operating systems; see Take Advantage of Apple Intelligence in Apps.

Learn about interface improvements:

- Liquid Glass can be more easily tuned to your preference; see Dial Down Liquid Glass.

Configure features to improve child safety:

- Tune Screen Time to fit your parenting style and children's needs; see Understand the New Screen Time.

Have your world described to you:

- Enable Accessibility features that explain what you're looking at; see Act on What You See.
- Dig into the Siri option in the updated Camera app; see Camera.

Find out more about other changes:

- Learn how Apple tweaks FaceTime, Messages, Phone, and cellular/Wi-Fi connections; see Expand Communications.
- Apple made small and large changes to numerous apps, particularly Camera, Safari, and Photos; see Discover Other App Changes.
- Wallet and Apple Pay get big upgrades; see Wallet and Apple Pay and Tap to Share.

Upgrade to iOS 27 or iPadOS 27

Upgrading your device should be a cinch. In this section, I explain how to avoid frustration by checking whether your iPhone or iPad can be upgraded to iOS 27 or iPadOS 27, and whether it supports Apple Intelligence. I advice you on making a backup first, then installing the software. Finally, I note some regional compatibility issues.

Check Your Device for Compatibility

iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 have minimum hardware requirements. You won't be able to upgrade any iPhone or iPad that isn't a supported model. There are further limitations to using Apple Intelligence, which requires certain processor features and applies only to a subset of iPhones and iPads that can install iOS 27 and iPadOS 27.

Tip: I created a site called Fruit Specs that you can use to check on compatibility and features by device model and other parameters.

Check Your iPhone for Compatibility

You can upgrade to iOS 27 on any of these iPhone series or models, the same as with iOS 26:

- iPhone 11 series or later
- iPhone XS series
- iPhone SE (2nd generation or later)

Tip: If you're not sure which iPhone model you have, go to Settings > General > About and check the Model Name entry.

Check Your iPad for Compatibility

iPadOS 27 will install on these models of iPads, with their minimum generation noted for each, the same list as with iPadOS 26:

- iPad Pro 12.9-inch (3rd generation and later)
- iPad Pro 11-inch (1st generation and later)
- iPad Air (3rd generation and later, including M2)
- iPad (8th generation and later)
- iPad mini (5th generation and later)

Tip: If you're not sure which generation your iPad is, look at Settings > General > About > Model Name.

Check Whether You Can Use Apple Intelligence

Your device must meet minimum hardware requirements to use Apple Intelligence, which is interleaved more thoroughly in apps and in the system in iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 than in previous releases. That includes the upgrade to Siri, now called Siri AI. See Enjoy Smarter Devices for more details. To use Apple Intelligence and Siri AI you need:

- An iPhone 15 Pro, iPhone 15 Pro Max, iPhone Air, or any iPhone 16 or 17 model
- An iPad mini from 2024 or later (A17 Pro)
- Any iPad with an M1 or later processor

Note: iPad models with an Apple silicon M-series chip are the 11-inch iPad Pro, 3rd generation and later; the 12.9-inch iPad Pro, 5th generation and later; and the iPad Air, 5th generation and later.

Throughout the book, I note when new features require Apple Intelligence—and thus a supported iPhone or iPad—such as Spatial Reframe

ing in Photos (see Regenerate Photos) or Call Context for surfacing relevant information when using the Phone app (see Phone).

Siri AI's most advanced on-device version, which includes improved dictation and an "expressive" custom Siri voice, has even higher minimum requirements. Those features are available only on:

- iPhone Air, iPhone 17 Pro, iPhone 17 Pro Max
- iPads with an M4 and later and 12 GB or more of unified memory, which excludes the 11-inch and 13-inch iPad Pro models with 256GB and 512GB RAM from 2024

Back Up Your Device

You don't want to upgrade without a backup from the last state of your iPhone or iPad on hand. You can create a fresh backup via iCloud or by connecting to a Mac or Windows PC.

Back Up with iCloud

Your easiest path to a backup is via iCloud. Not only is it faster and simpler, but Apple also provides better support for restoring to your device if needed.

If it's your first time making an iCloud backup, follow these steps:

1. Go to Settings > *Your Name* > iCloud > iCloud Backup.
2. Enable Back Up This *iPhone/iPad* or Back Up This iPad.
3. Tap Back Up Now.

Tip: If you aren't already making iCloud Backups, you should have at least as much available storage at iCloud+ as the size of your device's data set, excluding iCloud Photos. That may require upgrading your iCloud+ plan from, say, 200 GB to 2 TB. You can estimate what you space you need by looking at Settings > General > About > *iPad or iPhone* Storage.

If you already have iCloud Backup enabled, go to the iCloud Backup section and tap Back Up Now.

Your iPhone or iPad shows a Backing Up label and a Cancel Backup link while the backup is in progress. A bar shows an "Estimating time remaining" message until all changes are collected, at which time it shows a rough countdown and a progress bar.

When the backup is successfully completed, you see "Last success backup" with the current time or a moment ago. You can now proceed.

Back Up with a Mac

While iCloud might be best, you can also back your iPhone or iPad up using a Mac. Start by connecting your device with a USB to a Mac unless you've already enabled Wi-Fi syncing and prefer that method.

Tip: To enable Wi-Fi syncing, you first connect with USB. Then, after selecting the device in the Finder's sidebar, check the "Show this *Device* when on Wi-Fi" box in the General view and click Apply.

To back up to a Mac:

1. Click your device in Finder's sidebar.
2. You may be prompted to have each device trust each other with a Trust button. Click and/or tap Trust. Enter your iPhone or iPad passphrase, if required.
3. On the device's General tab in the Finder, select "Back up all of the data on your *Device* to this Mac."
4. Click Back Up Now.

Wait for the backup to complete before upgrading.

Tip: The General tab also shows the time of last iCloud backup for a connected device.

Back Up to a Windows PC

Apple offers the Apple Devices app for Windows, which enables backups as easy as those offered on a Mac. First, install Apple Devices before proceeding. Next, follow these steps:

1. Connect your iPhone or iPad to your PC with a USB cable.
2. Open Apple Devices.
3. You may be prompted to have each device trust each other with a Trust button. Click and/or tap Trust. Enter your iPhone or iPad passphrase, if required.
4. Select General in the lefthand sidebar in Apple Devices.
5. Select "Back up all of the data on your *Device* to this computer."
6. Click Back Up Now.

Wait for the backup to complete before upgrading.

Install the Upgrade

With a backup in hand, you can now install iOS 27 or iPadOS 27. Here's how:

1. Go to Settings > General > Software Update.
2. Tap either Install Now or Download and Install.

Note: You may be prompted to offload some apps if your device lacks enough storage to handle the upgrade. Offloading an app deletes the app, but not its data, from your device. After the update completes, the apps are reinstalled automatically.

It usually takes from about 10 to 30 minutes for your device to complete the steps necessary to verify, install, and restart. However, in case of delays or problems, you should plan on it taking up to a couple of hours.

Tip: The verification can take a considerable time when huge numbers of users are installing all at once, such as on release day. You may want to upgrade your devices in the evening or on a weekend.

Be sure to keep your iPhone or iPad plugged in while the upgrade is underway to avoid an interruption.

Warning! Your device may feel very hot to the touch, sometimes even uncomfortably so, during the installation and restore, as your iPhone or iPad works at full bore.

After the upgrade is complete, your device has restarted, and you've entered your passcode, the operating system walks you through a few screens describing major changes.

You may also be asked for preferences you chose before in previous upgrades, such as Light Mode, Dark Mode, or Automatic. During this process, you may also be asked to allow your device to send analytics to Apple and some reporting to third-party developers. I tend to allow Apple and disallow developers for privacy reasons.

When this process is done, you're ready to use iOS 27 or iPadOS 27.

Optimizing Search and Siri

After the upgrade is complete, you can't access all features until on a device with Apple Intelligence support until "optimization" is complete. This may take a serious amount of time. While underway, a message appears near the top of Settings (**Figure 1**). (During testing, this remained in place on a test phone with almost no personal data on it for over a day.)

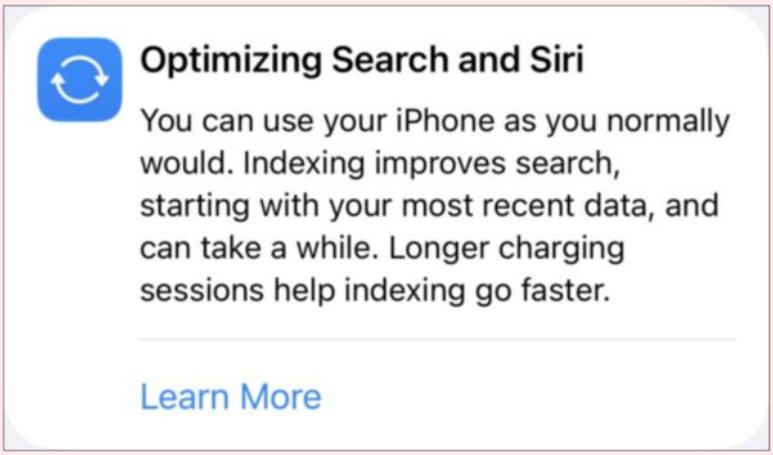


Figure 1: *Your iPhone or iPad lets you know while it's still working on indexing device data.*

See Enjoy Smarter Devices for more on search and Siri AI.

Look Up Regional Compatibility

Apple faces regulations in several countries and the European Union that have led the company to withhold certain features. Here's what we know:

- **European Union:** Siri AI will first appear in macOS and Apple Vision Pro. It's unclear when they will roll out to iPhone and iPad.
- **China:** Siri AI and new features in Apple Intelligence were originally slated to be delayed at launch in China (PRC), with Apple saying regulators need to review changes. However, news reports in mid-August 2026 indicated Apple had trained an AI model with a Chinese partner that would allow it to offer Apple Intelligence features in China at launch.

Enjoy Smarter Devices

Siri spent years seeming like it didn't quite fit the level of quality Apple aspires to. Worse, the company announced capabilities it wasn't able to release, and features that have disappointed. You can tell this wasn't just users carping: more than one head of the Siri effort has left the company altogether.

Apple Intelligence was more of a success, if limited. The company, making use of mostly on-device computation, focused their use of Apple Intelligence on specific tasks within apps or systemwide. I think many of these attempts were boring or unnecessary: generating custom emojis, Image Playground for slightly icky picture generation, and the global Writing Tools, which were worse than many previous generations of non-AI-based assistants.

The reboot has come, however. With Siri AI and Apple Intelligence in iOS 27 and iPadOS 27, Apple is resetting our expectations for Siri and adding Apple Intelligence features in many more apps. Those features are a mix of machine learning and large language models (LLMs), and some tie into off-device, data-center-based LLM assistance.

Learning by Rote Versus Guessing the Next Word

Machine learning typically refers to training an algorithm with a massive amount of data so that it can loosely pattern-match a result. In Photos, the loose searching you can do to find matches for people, places, buildings, and things relies on this. Likewise, voice transcription and Live Text are largely machine-learning-based.

LLMs, by contrast, use huge bodies of text and images to produce essentially sophisticated autocompletion. Given a set of words, what is the constellation of the next most likely one? Randomly selecting among those provides something that sounds like human writing. However, they are actually providing a statistical guess. Image generation is more complicated, but it relies on extracting features and then inserting them seamlessly, with the same degree of random guessing about which one to add.

In the operating system beta testing period, you need to request access to enable the new Siri features. Go to Settings > Siri and tap "Try the new Siri (beta)."

When Will Siri AI Leave Beta?

After being burned in the past, Apple has hedged on details around Siri AI, stating only that it will be available in beta form, and not specifying when that beta might end. This could mean that the beta version will ship in September 2026, the usual time of year for new operating systems, when iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 should be released. If that's the case—and I have no way of knowing—I expect the production release will appear before the end of 2026 with a 27.1 or 27.2 update given pressure on Apple to produce a better Siri.

As I was working on this book and Joe Kissell was working on *Take Control of Golden Gate*, we realized that the vast majority of the new Siri AI and Apple Intelligence features were the same across macOS, iOS, and iPadOS (and, to a somewhat lesser extent, watchOS and visionOS). So, rather than each of us writing about all those features separately—and making readers who have multiple Apple devices slog through two versions of the same information—we've collaborated on a separate book that covers it all in one place: *Take Control of Siri AI and Apple Intelligence*.

Note: If you bought the book you're now reading from the Take Control Books website, it included *Take Control of Siri AI and Apple Intelligence* as a bundle!

That book explains not just the new features but everything Siri AI and Apple Intelligence can do. It's strictly for people whose devices run version 27 (or later) of the operating system, and it goes into detail about how the new Siri works and how you can use it in your day-to-day activities. It covers which Apple Intelligence services are available in various apps and how to go far beyond the basics.

For that reason, I want to spend a few pages reviewing what's new with Siri AI and Apple Intelligence for iOS 27 and iPadOS 27.

Let Siri AI Answer Your Questions

While Apple has rebranded Siri as “Siri AI” on supported devices and in their marketing, you won’t see that name on your devices. It’s still called Siri. But everything is affected by the availability of Apple Intelligence. Whenever you invoke Siri on an Apple Intelligence-supported device, you’re invoking Siri AI.

Instead of the glow around all four edges of your device in iOS 26/iPadOS 26, Siri in iOS 27/iPadOS 27 appears as an orb at the top of the screen (**Figure 2**). The design cleverly hides the non-screen areas in Dynamic Island on the many iPhone models with that carveout.



Figure 2: The Siri blob undulates, while hiding Dynamic Island.

You can bring up Siri (by default), as in previous releases, by saying “Siri” or “Hey Siri,” or by pressing and holding the side button. However, the change introduced in iOS 26 that let you double-tap the bottom of the screen is gone. Instead, you can swipe down on a Home screen to reveal the new combination of Spotlight and Siri: a field labeled Search or Ask. You can type into that field, or tap the Dictation icon and talk to Siri that way.

Siri now provides much more accurate and detailed answers than before, even reaching into other apps to provide more information. Ask it a question, and it parses the results instead of trying to squeeze them into a format it understands (**Figure 3**).

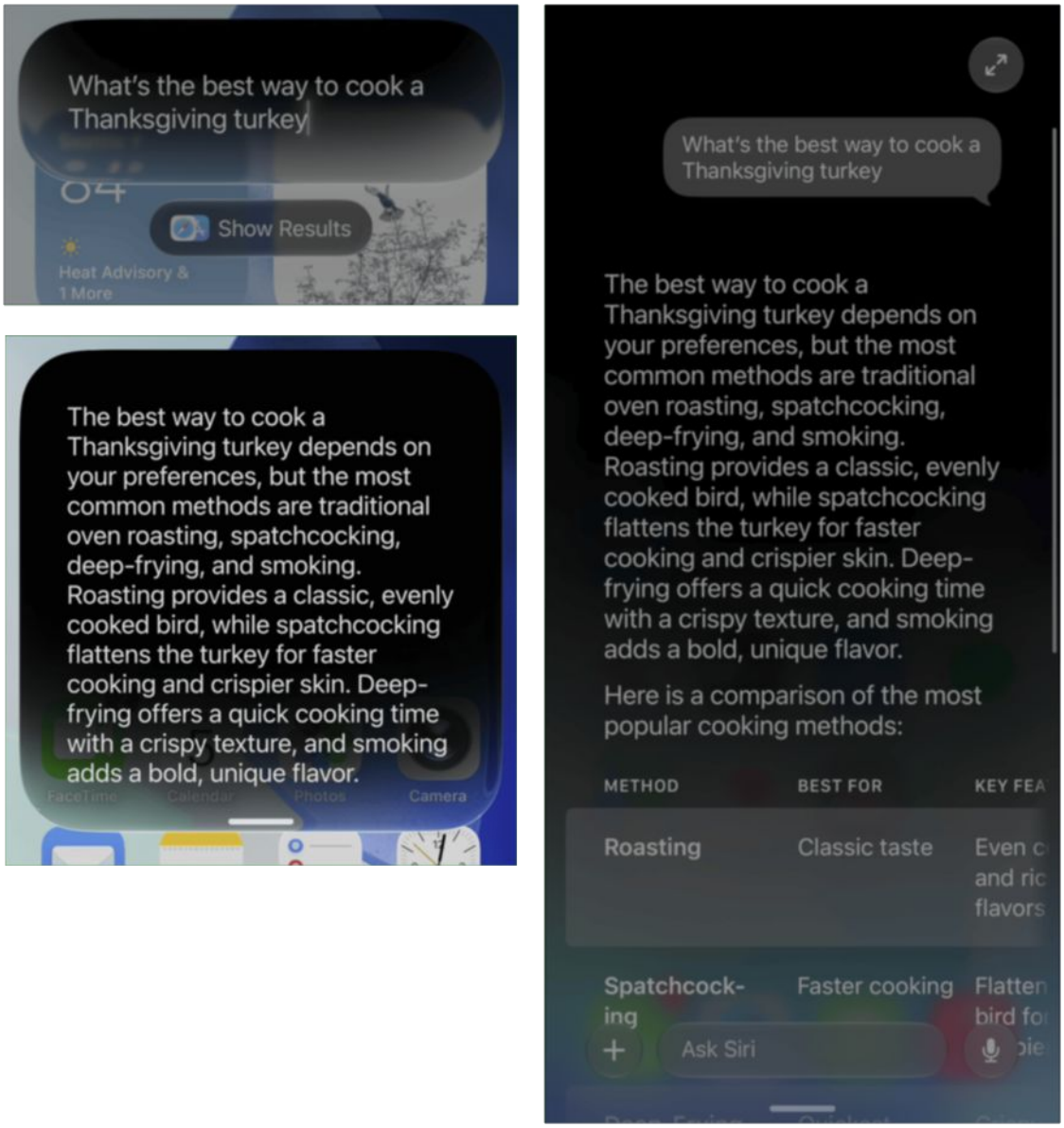


Figure 3: Ask Siri a question (upper left), and it presents you with a short answer that you can expand (lower left) to a longer, scrolling one (right) if there's more information to provide.

Here are the most significant things Siri AI can do that its predecessor Siri could not:

- **Use your data to produce better results or find things.** One of the biggest ongoing complaints about Siri is that for software that ostensibly had access to our email, messages, contacts, calendar entries, photos, and other private data while running entirely on our devices, it sure didn't know much about us. With Siri AI, you can ask, "Who did I have lunch with in 2013 in New Haven?" and it may be able to answer. (See Isn't This Invasive? below.)

- **Answer questions about what's on screen.** You could be looking at a webpage, reading a Wikipedia entry, having a conversation in Messages, or writing an email, and can ask Siri for more information about or to explain something that's visible.
- **Engage in a back-and-forth conversation.** Siri has become something more like a chatbot, though it's not quite as open-ended as the ones from Anthropic, Google, OpenAI, and others. However, it retains context and remembers aspects of conversations to provide better insight in the future.
- **Create a plan.** You might ask Siri to help you figure out the best sights to see in New York. Unlike chatbots that rely solely on synthesizing vast data stores, Siri can use your information, Apple's human-made travel guides, map data, and other information to produce something that could be much more useful.
- **Use a Siri app.** You can revisit Siri conversations using the Siri app, the first time Apple has offered that kind of interaction with Siri.

Isn't This Invasive?

Didn't we think one of the best things about Siri, and Apple's overall approach to data privacy, is that everything stayed on our devices and within our control? Or, if it were synced in the cloud, we had two tiers we could choose from to protect it, including end-to-end encryption (E2EE) for nearly everything?

Yes, and that remains the case. Siri AI performs as much processing as possible on your device. When it needs to tap into more or different AI models, it uses what Apple calls Private Cloud Compute, which includes servers under Apple's control and those that are part of Google Cloud. Apple says our "personal data is not stored nor made accessible to Apple or anyone else." (We discuss this in greater depth in *Take Control of Siri AI and Apple Intelligence*.)

Take Advantage of Apple Intelligence in Apps

In the iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 updates, Apple expanded the use of Apple Intelligence across more apps and added features to apps that already had some Apple Intelligence support. Apple Intelligence is designed to synthesize information, like creating summaries, as well as generate stuff, such as text or images. Some of the elements are distinctly more useful than others.

In this section, I'm going to give you the listiest of all lists of changes, because I address the individual improvements in the next three sections divided by communications (Expand Communications), apps (Discover Other App Changes), and system changes (Discover Other System Changes).

Here's where to look for Apple Intelligence in individual apps:

- **Calendar and Reminders:** Enter text that is more freeform in nature than rigidly structured in Calendar or Reminders, and the apps offer suggestions for structured data replacement.
- **Camera:** Visual Intelligence is integrated as a Siri option in Camera alongside Photo and Video. With Siri selected, pointing the camera at certain items, like food, a restaurant receipt, or an event's details, will result in a prompt you can tap. You can also tap the Siri button to analyze what's in the view.
- **Mail:** Mail offers suggestions as you type to insert information from other apps and libraries, such as photos, or to take action, like creating an entry in Notes.
- **Messages:** Messages makes a suggestion when it thinks it makes sense to insert something from another app, like a photo.
- **Notes:** After making a sketch with an Apple Pencil on an iPad in Notes, you can use Image Wand to make it photorealistic.

- **Passwords:** The Passwords app scans for weak or compromised passwords at websites that support Apple's method for automated password updates, then offers to fix those passwords for you.
- **Photos:** Photos improves its Clean Up feature to provide much better generative image replacement. It adds two new Apple Intelligence tools: Extend, to extend the borders of an image, and Reframe, which allows slightly changing the point of view and perspective of an image.
- **Phone:** While on a call, Phone may suggest contextually appropriate information, like a flight number when you call an airline.
- **Safari:** You can have Safari automatically organize tabs, bookmarks, and Reading Lists into a grouping within a tab group. Keep tabs (ha, ha) on changes to webpages with Notify Me, which lets you describe what you want to monitor and have it automatically checked at a recurring interval.
- **Shortcuts:** You can describe what you want via Siri AI in Shortcuts, and the app will attempt to write a shortcut for you.

Discover the Mature Interface

Few interface changes Apple has made have been more criticized than their introduction of Liquid Glass in their version 26 operating system releases; few have been more praised than bringing a full-featured windowing environment to iPadOS 26.

Apple has learned from both changes and added maturity to them. Liquid Glass can now be practically disabled—almost turned off with Reduce Transparency—while the iPad received many more minor changes that are welcome, but not critical.

Dial Down Liquid Glass

The introduction of Liquid Glass across Apple's 26 releases of their operating systems elicited a lot of responses. A whole lot. It's hard to know how hated this new interface approach was, but given how quickly Apple backed off from it, I would have to say a lot—particularly in iOS and iPadOS, where the translucency of Liquid Glass made it hard to find interface elements and read text.

Apple reacted by adding a feature in iOS 26.1/iPadOS 26.1 to reduce its impact by letting you switch between Clear, which was the original flavor of Liquid Glass, to Tinted, which reduced translucency by a fair amount, but not to zero.

In iOS 27/iPadOS 27, Apple switched up their approach, replacing the binary option with a slider from (now lowercase) clear to tinted, along with a preview of how it looks against interface elements.

If you want to go down to as close to zero Liquid Glass as possible, Reduce Transparency is still available, as described below.

Pick from More Clear to More Tinted

When you upgrade to iOS 27 or iPadOS 27, the last stages of the installation present a new screen that lets you choose to adjust Liquid Glass using a slider. If you don't make the adjustment at that moment, you can do so later, or change your initial choice. Go to Settings > Appearance > Liquid Glass.

This new screen offers a slider you can drag from the left edge, which Apple describes as "More Clear" (most Liquid Glass effect) across a range to the right: "More Tinted" (most opaque) (**Figure 4**). Apple makes it easy to visualize by providing a scrollable preview that shows Liquid Glass elements overlaid on a webpage with images and text.

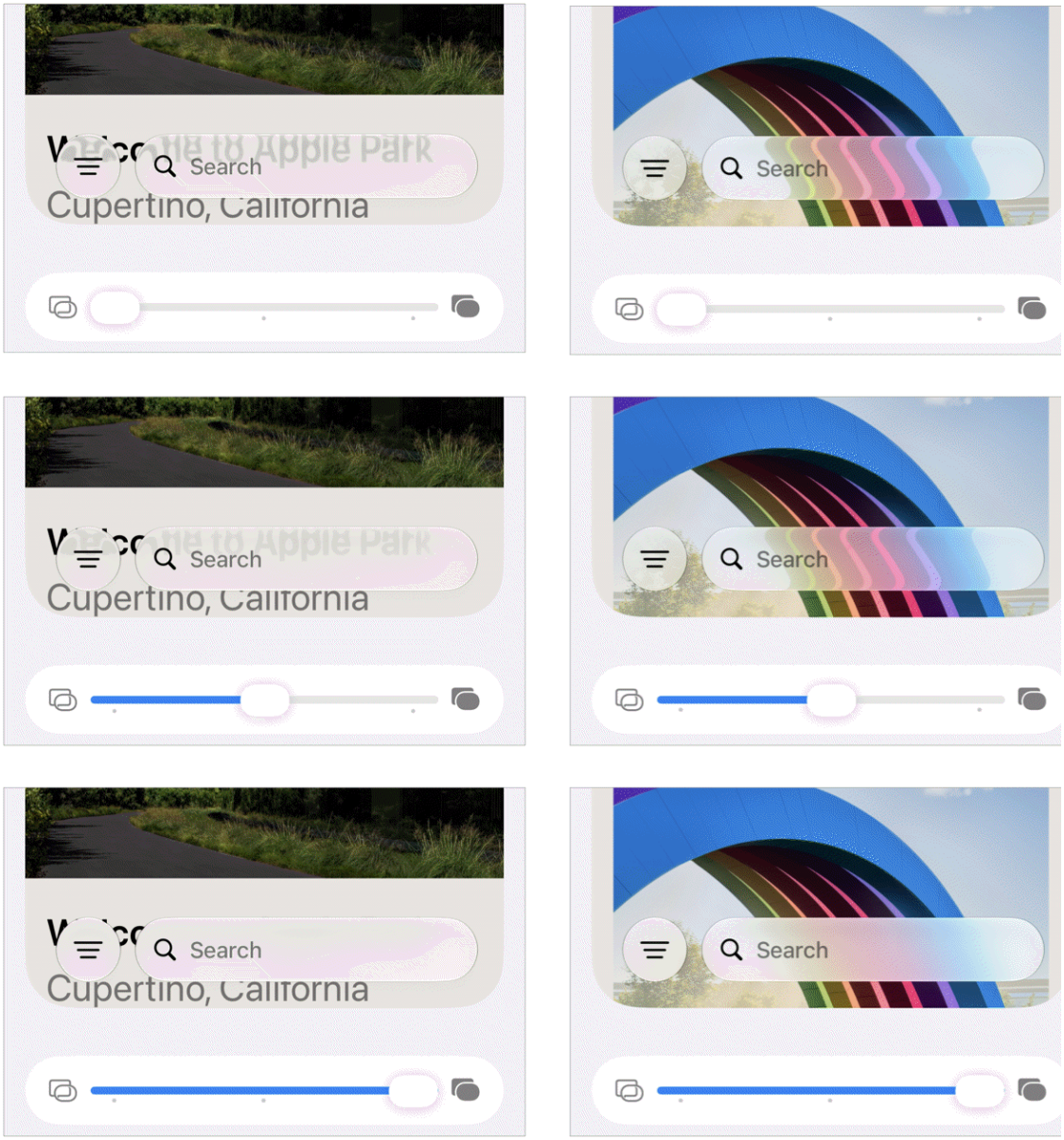


Figure 4: The Liquid Glass slider lets you figure out how much Liquid Glass you want in your interface: top to bottom in each column is More Clear, between More Clear and More Tinted, and More Tinted; at left, see interface elements over text, and, at right, over an image.

In **Figure 4**, you can see how Liquid Glass is reduced as we move from, top, to the More Clear setting, where you can hardly read—or even find—the button and field over text and an image; then to the midway point, where it's better, but still not ideal; to the bottom, where More Tinted provides enough contrast for legibility. To me, this image I created looks like what an interface designer would show an executive, expecting the executive to pick the bottom item in each

column. Apple's leadership didn't do that for 26.0. In 26.1, we got a binary choice; in 27, a range of choices.

Note: For the purposes of the screen captures in this book, I always have Liquid Glass set to the More Tinted (most opaque) setting. This provides you with the most clarity without distractions.

Note: You can't change the Liquid Glass intensity when either of the next two options is enabled. When you attempt to change the Liquid Glass setting, you're told that Reduce Transparency and Increase Contrast must be disabled. You can tap Turn Off.

Remove Even More Transparency

Apple separately offers two Accessibility settings that affected Liquid Glass in iOS 26 and iPadOS 26. In the 27 releases, only one of the two has any real impact:

- **Reduce Transparency:** Go to Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size and enable Reduce Transparency. This flattens Liquid Glass, removing transparency and providing an almost identical look to iOS 18/iPadOS 18 (**Figure 5**). The level of Liquid Glass you have enabled doesn't have an effect.

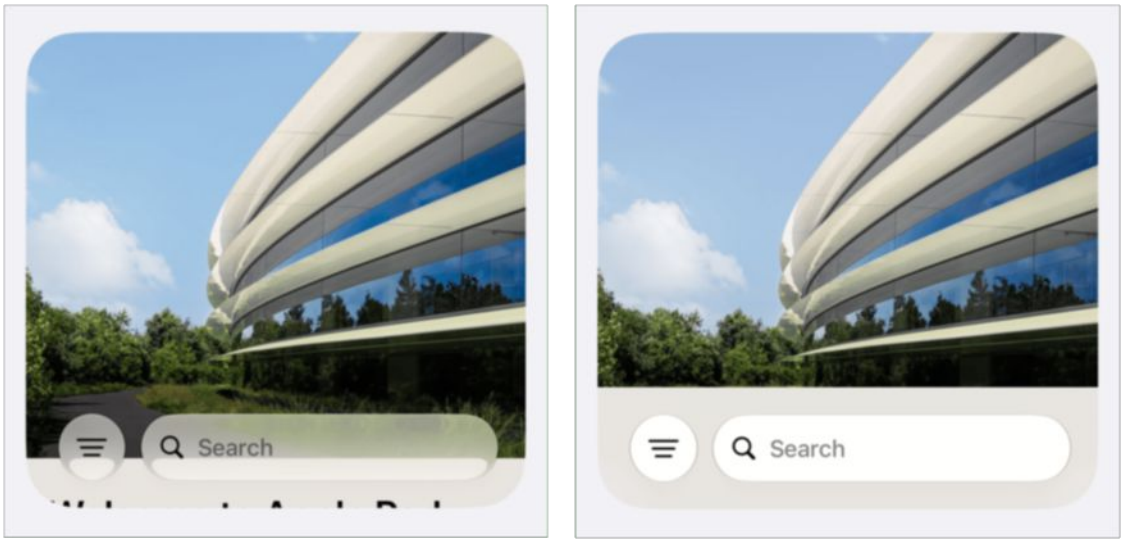


Figure 5: The Reduce Transparency flattens Liquid Glass: at left, Reduce Transparency is off; at right, on, making the button and field background a solid, fully opaque color.

- **Increase Contrast:** Use Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size > Increase Contrast to bump up the difference in tones. In iOS 27/iPadOS 27, the difference appears slight, where it was sharply distinct in the previous releases (**Figure 6**).

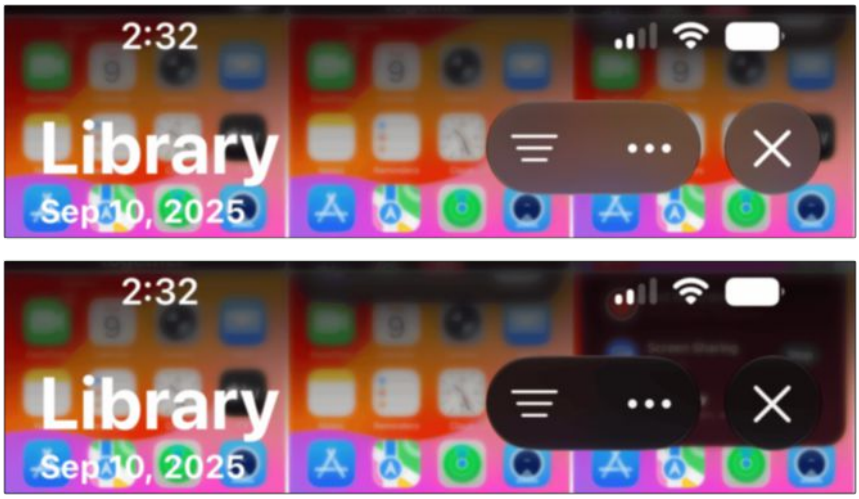


Figure 6: Increase Contrast (top, off; bottom, on) doesn't have as strong an effect in iOS 27/iPadOS 27.

Learn About Minor iPad Changes

Apple rethought the iPad interface with iPadOS 26, adding robust windowing and multitasking features that brought it much closer to a general-purpose computing system like macOS. However, it still retained its unique iPad nature, such as its heavy reliance on gestures.

iPadOS 27 builds on these improvements with refinements that help you use an iPad even more fully in the liminal space between tablet and computer.

Use Keyboard Automation Triggers

Apple previously didn't offer a way to trigger an automation when a keyboard was connected to or removed from an iPad. This frustrated some users, who interact with their iPad differently when a keyboard is connected—such as in a dock-style environment—and when they are using only the touch screen or an Apple Pencil.

Now, you can use Shortcuts to create automations based on whether a keyboard was connected, disconnected, or the keyboard connection state changed. This includes the “Set multitasking mode to” item. You might want to switch between Full Screen Apps and Windowed Apps when using your iPad without a keyboard. You’d have to set up two shortcuts: one would trigger when the keyboard was attached; the other when detached (**Figure 7**).

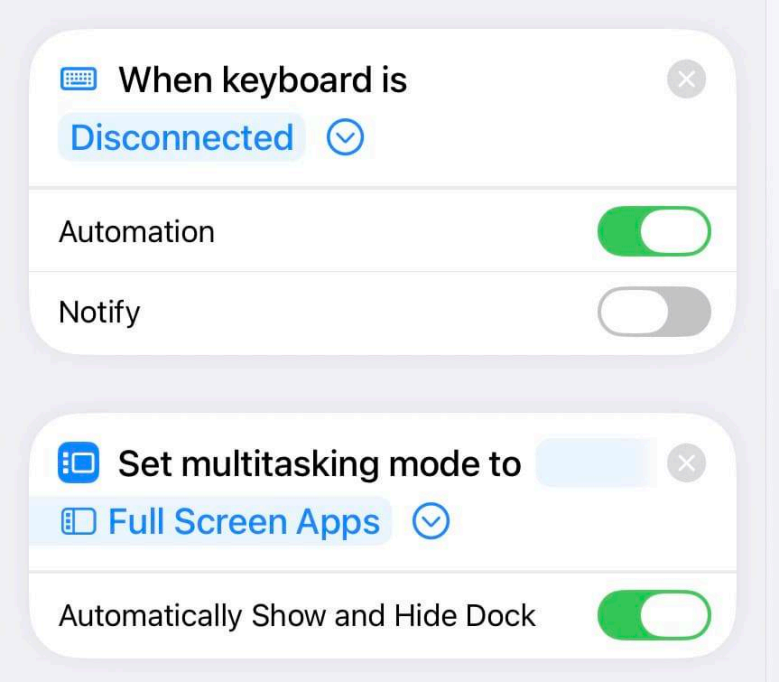


Figure 7: Use a shortcut to change behaviors when the keyboard is connected.

Relearn and Persist the Menu Bar

In iPadOS 26, the menu bar had to be triggered either by swiping down from the top of the display or by hovering with a pointing device, at which point it would appear. It then hid, after a short delay, when it wasn’t in use or being hovered over.

In iPadOS 27, the default behavior appears similar, but there are two significant changes:

- The app name always appears on the far-left side of the menu bar, at the upper-left corner of the screen.
- To unfurl the menu bar, tap or drag over the app name.

Along with that new behavior, you can also opt to have the menu bar remain in place, persistent at all times. Go to Settings > Multitasking & Gestures, then disable Automatically Show and Hide Menu Bar.

Perform Magic Tricks with Apple Pencil

Siri AI on iPads that support it can extract text from notes written freehand with an Apple Pencil. These are indexed, and thus searchable.

In the Notes app, you can use Image Wand to turn a sketch you make with an Apple Pencil into a photorealistic image with Apple Intelligence.

Resize iPhone Apps

iPadOS 27 fills a missing piece in Windowed Apps, the default setting that lets you resize app windows or use them in full-screen mode. iPhone apps that haven't been developed as universal apps for both iOS and iPadOS still floated in their own fixed-size window.

iPhone apps released for iOS 27 automatically gain the capability to be resized in iPadOS 27, just as they can work at different sizes on different iPhone models.

Make Childhood Safer

Over the last few years, Apple has released a number of features that parents can use for children that are aimed at reducing two categories of risk: use of apps parents disapprove of, activities parents want to discourage or limit, and spending money online; and exposure to unwanted contact, images, and videos, as well as preventing children from being able to make unfettered connections or send material to arbitrary people.

There have been bumps along the way. When Apple first introduced their more advanced child-safety features, they proposed invading people's phones to look for potentially illegal material in a way that would treat a billion customers as if they might be criminals. They revised the approach, not without even more criticism.

On the parental-restriction front, Screen Time was Apple's most direct foray into enabling guardians to shape children's digital access. But Screen Time is janky—there's no better word. It is sometimes hard to configure, it often fails, and kids can work around it even when they aren't intending to.

With iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 (and extending to other platforms), Apple tries to offer substantive fixes and improvements to both aspects of child safety and adult supervision.

Note: My children are, alas, both older than 18, and I'm unable to test these features directly.

Understand the New Screen Time

Screen Time was created to let parents and guardians set policies for children that were automatically enforced by Apple's operating systems. No matter what device a child used that was logged in to the same Apple Account, Screen Time restrictions would remain the same.

In practice, not so much, and it remains to be seen how well this Apple-described redesign will improve that consistency.

Note: Screen Time controls require that you set up a Child Account, which has to be part of Family Sharing. In the past, I know that parents have sometimes created regular accounts for their children or faked their birth dates to make them older out of frustration with Screen Time and other features that didn't work as described.

Use Setup Assistant

A new tool for parents helps guide them in choosing apps they want their children to have access to (**Figure 8**).



Figure 8: A setup assistant helps parents pick the approach they want and sets of apps to allow. (Image: Apple)

Work with Ask to Browse

Apple already offered an Ask to Buy option, which let a kid send a request to the account's owner in the Family Sharing group when they want to make an App Store purchase or download a free app. Ask to

Browse builds on that, requiring that child request access to any website they haven't previously been granted permission to use, or that a parent hadn't already added to a list of acceptable sites (**Figure 9**).



Figure 9: Ask to Browse lets (and requires) a child ask to expand the sites they can visit. (Image: Apple)

The request is sent via Messages to the adult owner of the Family Sharing group and any other adult designated as Parent/Guardian, as you can see in the figure above. The parent or guardian can then tap or click Decline or Approve.

Set Time Per Category

The previous Screen Time controls for setting how much time apps and other resources could be used were difficult to manage. The new ones, synced across all platforms, let a parent set Time Allowances, with separate settings for weekdays and weekends (**Figure 10**). Apple has a recommended maximum based on age that they developed in conjunction with child-development experts, they say.

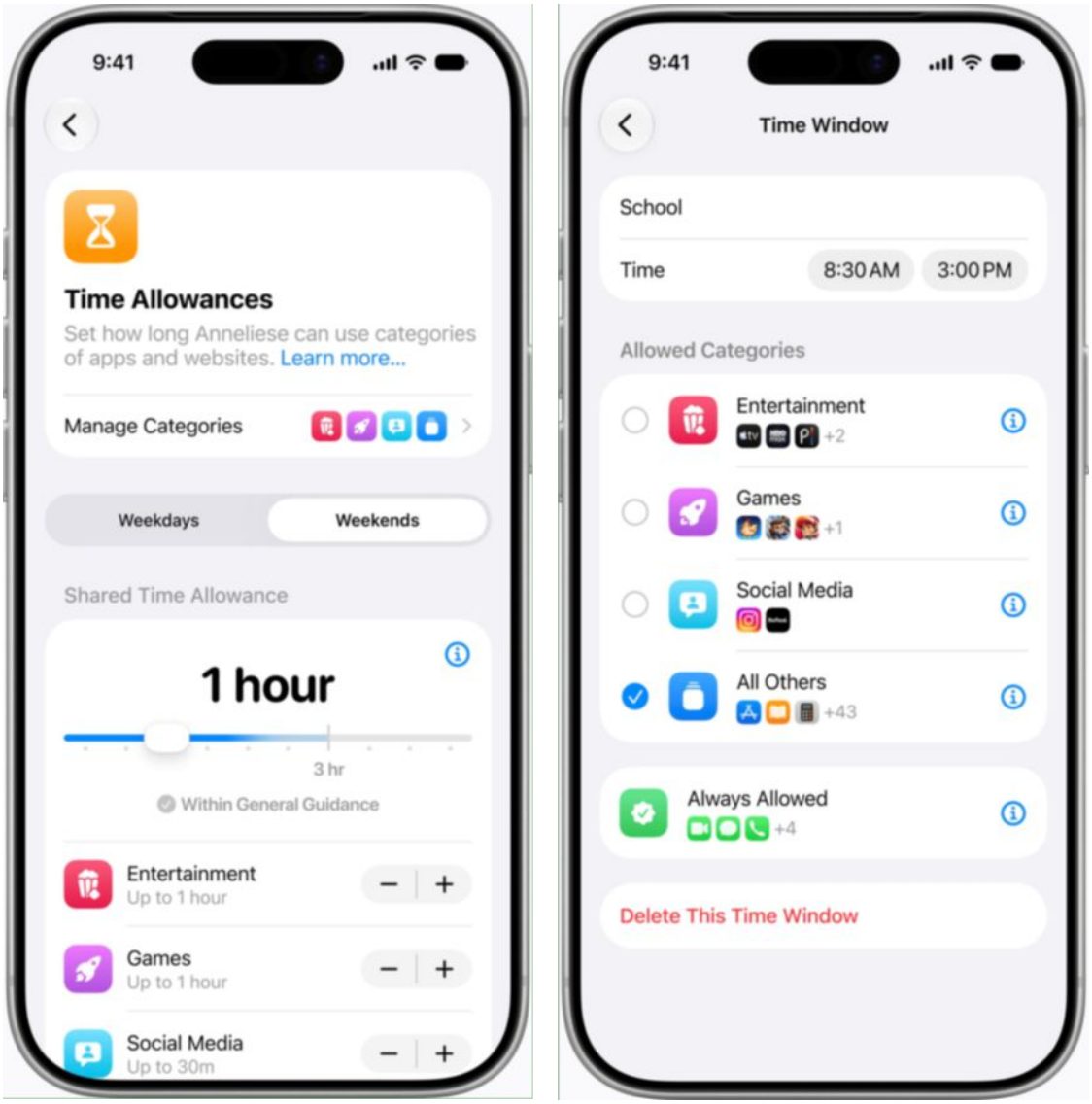


Figure 10: Time Allowances let a parent set an overall total and maximums by category, as well as further restrictions defined by ranges of time. (Image: Apple)

Time Allowances define the total screen time permitted per day, and then are divided up into maximum amounts by category: Entertainment, Games, Social Media, and All Others. Parents can further create time windows within the days during which some categories aren't available. Apple's example, shown in **Figure 10**, is to turn off the Entertainment, Games, and Social Media categories during school hours.

This overhauled approach also gives parents a sort of dashboard for each child. They can see current usage stats. That's also where a child's access can be paused—i.e., cut off entirely for the moment—or they can

be granted unlimited use for the rest of the day, or until a parent revokes that.

Blur Gore and Violence

Apple has gingerly expanded features in this category. In this set of releases, Apple has pushed forward just a single change. The Communication Safety feature, which is enabled by default for children 13–17, already blurs any image or video that appears to contain nudity, whether the child is receiving it or attempting to send it, across a range of Apple's communications apps, including Messages, AirDrop, and FaceTime video messages. The blurred image comes with a warning, offering guidance on seeking help. (For children under 13, they're also prompted to start a conversation with a parent or guardian.)

In the 27 series of releases, images and video that a screening algorithm determines contain gore or violence also trigger the blur filter and warning (**Figure 11**).

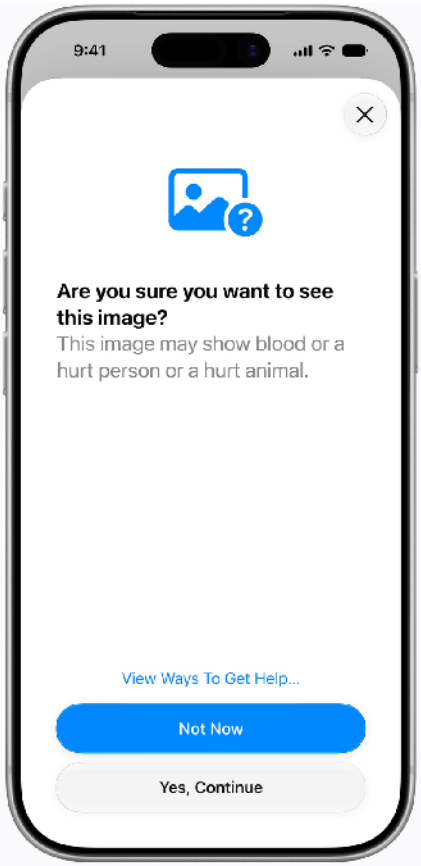


Figure 11: Apple tries to deflect children from seeing gore and violence without the precise intention to do so. (Image: Apple)

Examine Accessibility

Accessibility is a catch-all term for a large number of features, apps, and adjustments that Apple designs to improve access to kinds of things that may be harder for some people, whether due to motor limitations, eyesight or hearing, or the language they speak.

Many of these features can benefit a much larger group of people than any narrowly defined as “disabled”; automatic, high-quality captioning of video content is a great example, as is having a voice read text aloud from webpages or describe images.

Apple’s key accessibility features for iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 relate to describing things in a visual field, captioning, and understanding.

Act on What You See

Apple has offered three features independent of one another that have brought a lot to the table for accessibility for people with low vision or who are blind, as well as more generally:

- **VoiceOver:** Apple’s VoiceOver accessibility feature, added to iPhone in 2009 and iPad in 2010, describes what’s on screen, such as buttons, interface elements, and text.
- **Magnifier:** A Control Center item, Magnifier (from 2016 on iPhone and iPad) provides a toolbox full of options for your cameras—zoom, contrast, flashlight, capture, and more—which can make the tiny, low-contrast, and hard-to-see for whatever reason much easier to get a look at.
- **Visual Intelligence:** This camera-based feature requires Apple Intelligence and first appeared in 2024 (in iOS 18.2, for select models). Visual Intelligence lets an iPhone identify objects, buildings, and other things, read text aloud, and more.

With iOS 27 and iPadOS 27, Apple has brought aspects of Visual Intelligence into the VoiceOver and Magnifier contexts.

You can use VoiceOver and enable a sub-feature that used to live only in Magnifier, called Live Recognition, to read aloud or provide a summary, details, or analysis of what it sees. You can set Live Recognition features at Settings > Accessibility > Live Recognition, though the features aren't available unless you have VoiceOver enabled.

In Magnifier, if the Ask button isn't present, go to Magnifier > Settings > Ask Magnifier > Show in Control Panel. Tap Ask, which triggers Live Recognition as well. For example, point it at a bill and ask it what the bill's total is (**Figure 12**).

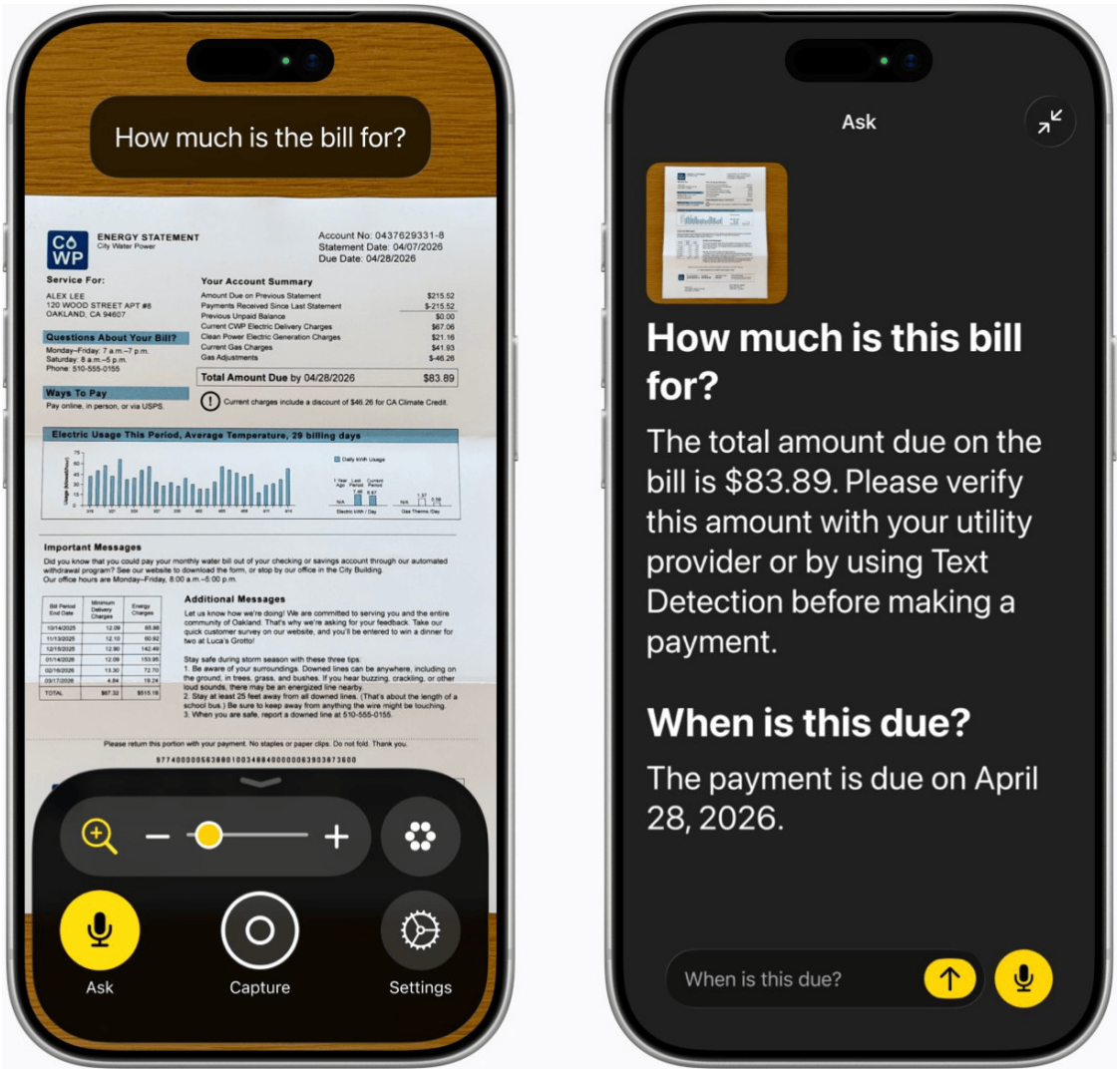


Figure 12: Live Recognition can tell you details about a bill you point at (here, using Magnifier). (Image: Apple)

Where's the Action, Apple?

Apple said in their accessibility preview press release in May 2026, before the June 2026 announcement of iOS 27 and iPadOS 27, "With updates to Live Recognition, VoiceOver users can press the Action button on iPhone to quickly ask a question about what's in the camera viewfinder and get a detailed response." They also wrote, "Magnifier also works with the Action button so users can quickly ask questions and get answers."

These options for the Action button haven't appeared so far in the series of beta releases. I'll update this information if and when the Action button function appears for VoiceOver or Magnifier.

Simplify Reading with Accessibility Reader

Accessibility Reader was introduced to parse any text on screen, simplify its appearance, and read it aloud. In the update, Apple has added a number of important improvements:

- **Stripping out inessential components:** Accessibility Reader acts like a beefed-up version of Reader in Safari, removing ads, headers, footers, navigational elements, and other material that isn't part of the actual webpage or app view content.
- **Formatting clean-up:** While removing unnecessary parts, the reader also structures what remains into more easily readable elements, like headers, lists, and image captions (**Figure 13**).

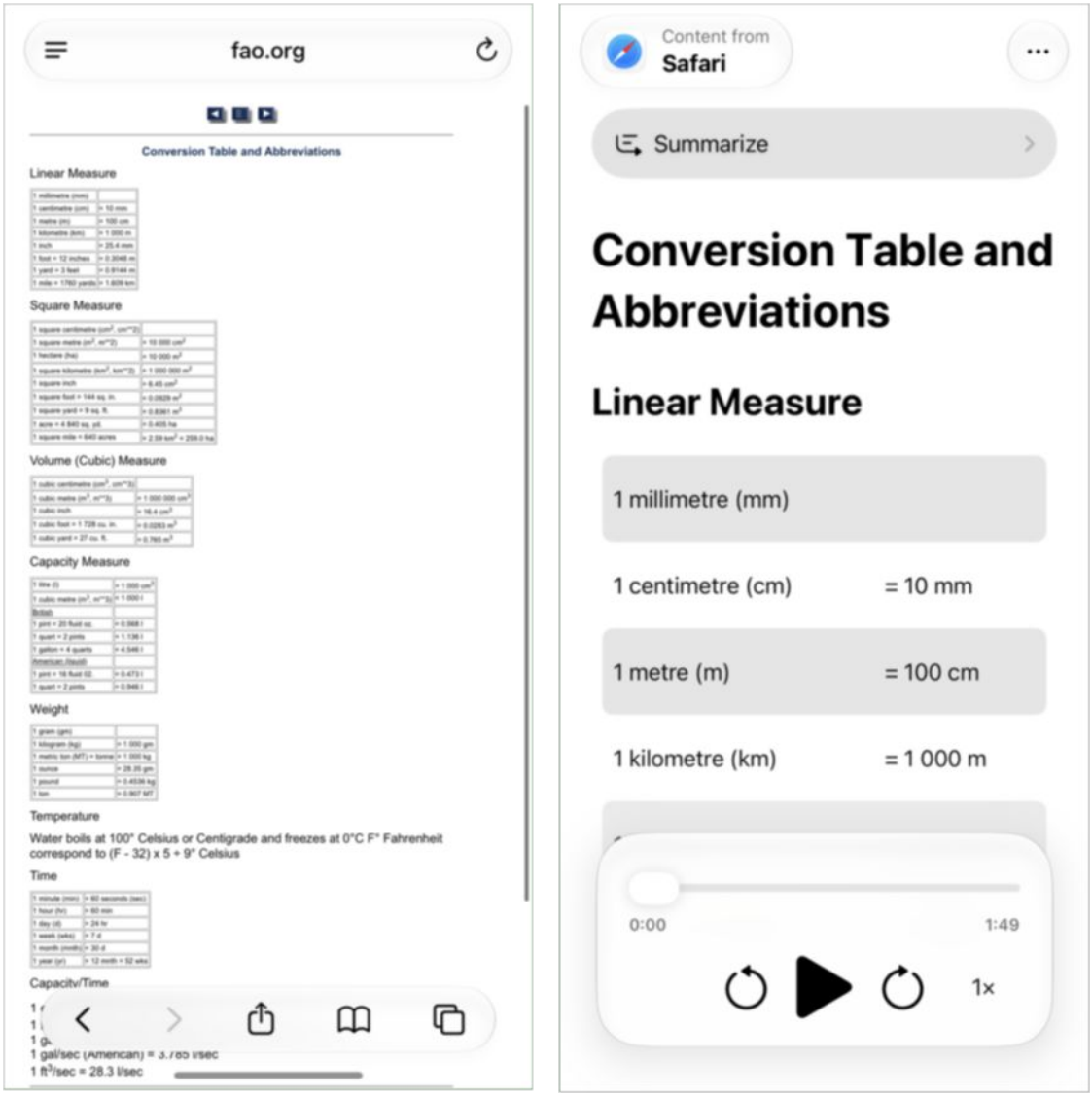


Figure 13: Accessibility Reader strips down text to the essentials, but adds structured formatting to improve legibility and the flow of spoken text.

- **Use via any App:** Accessibility Reader used to require a shortcut trigger. Now, you can use the share menu in any app to open content in the reader.
- **More nuanced content interpretation:** The reader used to strip tables and images that appeared inline. Those now show up.
- **Summaries:** Apple Intelligence can summarize what you're reading.
- **Translation:** There's no need to switch to another app or use a pop-up option. Accessibility Reader can translate supported languages into other supported languages.

Read Captions

Your iPhone and iPad now generate captions from any uncaptioned video you're watching in Photos and other supported apps (**Figure 14**). (This isn't related to tvOS or TV app captioning.) If captions already exist, you can have them automatically translated between supported languages.

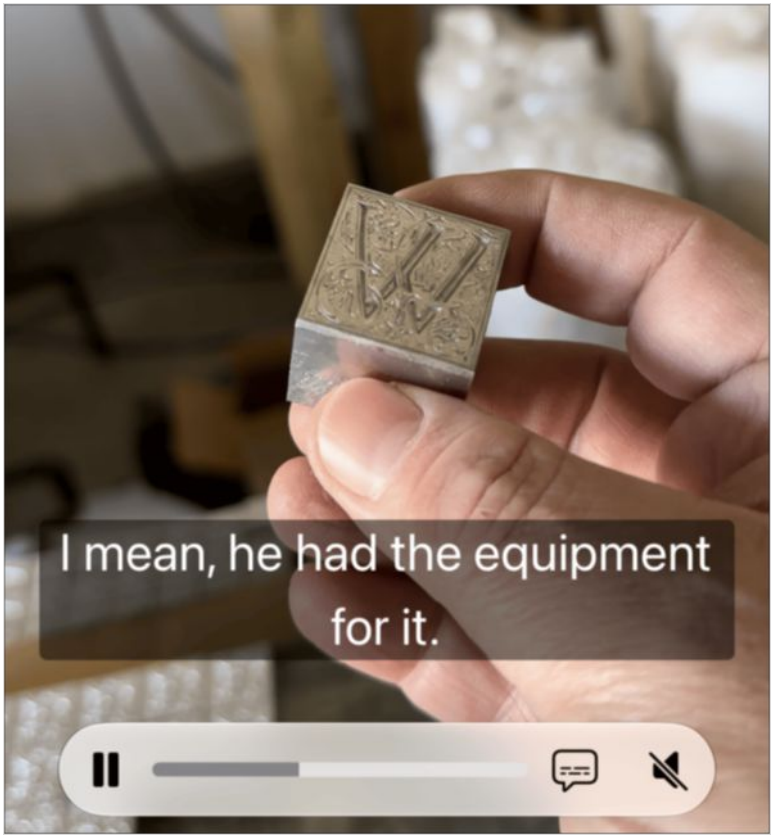


Figure 14: This random video in my Photo library from years ago showed captions the moment I pressed play, and anywhere I scrubbed through the video.

Control the Interface by Voice

You can speak naturally to control the iOS and iPad interface on devices with Apple Intelligence in the new releases, upgrading the existing Voice Control feature.

You can say something like “tap the purple folder” or “say what you see,” which is another way to describe things visually. Go to Settings > Accessibility > Voice Control to modify options.

Magnifier now supports spoken commands (“zoom in,” “turn on flashlight”). Tap the Ask button to use these commands.

Expand Communications

Following significant overhauls to their three communications apps in iOS 26, iPadOS 26, and macOS 26—FaceTime, Messages, and Phone—Apple has relaxed a bit with changes in the 27 series of releases. Here's what you should pay attention to.

Note: To recap: in the 26 series of releases, Apple revamped how favorites appear in FaceTime and Phone, making both apps more consistent with each other, and extended the Phone app to the iPad and Mac.

I'm including cellular and Wi-Fi improvements in this roundup, since they are an obviously necessary part of our ability to use real-time (and semi-asynchronous) communications apps.

FaceTime

After many, many years of FaceTime supporting a single camera view on iPhone, you can now use the front and back cameras simultaneously. The proviso? You need an iPhone 17, iPhone 17 Pro, iPhone 17 Pro Max, or iPhone Air and iOS 27. The other person or people can see your dual-camera feed only if they have iOS 27, iPadOS 27, or macOS 27. (This builds off the dual-capture mode in the Camera app on those models introduced in iOS 26.)

To use the dual-camera mode, in an active FaceTime session (or before someone has joined), tap the Flip Camera  icon in the inset selfie view. This shows both cameras by default. You can then do something to change that.

Messages

Messages received a tune-up, not an overhaul. Most change are related to RCS, the industry-supported messaging protocol that Google uses in Android. The changes are:

- Outgoing messages show a send indicator so you can see progress on slower networks or with larger files.
- When you're sending large photos or videos in a conversation that uses RCS (with Android users), this no longer slows down the typing part of the conversation.
- Reply threading now works with RCS messages.
- RCS messages also support a wider range of tapbacks and reactions.

Note: Apple added support for end-to-end encryption over RCS between their ecosystem and Google's as a beta release in iOS 26.5.

The only update related to Apple Intelligence so far is that Messages makes a suggestion when it thinks inserting a photo, adding something to Reminders, creating a note, sharing your location, or other actions are contextually appropriate. I haven't been able to get it to trigger such an alert in testing.

Phone

Apple Intelligence brings Call Context to the Phone app: during a call, Phone offers information from other apps that seems contextually appropriate, like a reservation number or a flight number when you're calling an airline.

Wi-Fi Improvements

Apple tried to tune up a key issue years ago with a feature they called Wi-Fi Assist: when you had a weak signal, there might be a better,

higher-speed cellular connection available instead. Your device would then tap into the cell signal while the Wi-Fi signal was poor.

While Wi-Fi Assist helped, it didn't solve the common problem you are certainly familiar with, when your iPhone won't unclasp its Wi-Fi grasp as you walk out of one space—like your home or office—and there's still a tendril of signal left.

Apple rebranded the feature as Connectivity Assist, and if you had Wi-Fi Assist enabled—it was by default—you'll find the new feature already turned on in Settings > Wi-Fi (**Figure 15**).

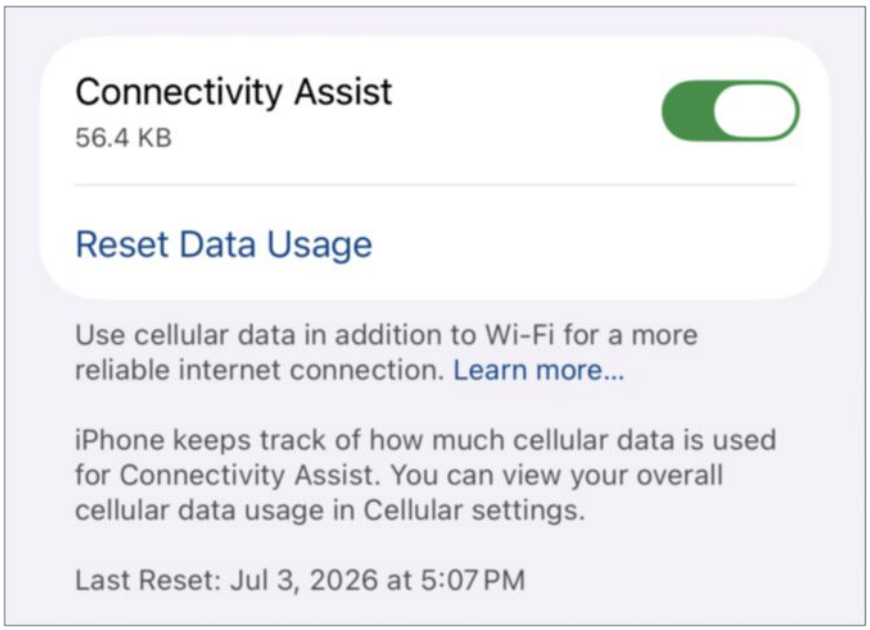


Figure 15: Connectivity Assist should make internet connectivity more seamless at the edges of Wi-Fi reception.

I know how aggravating it is, because my house Wi-Fi barely reaches where we park our cars out front on the street. Whenever I try to pull up Maps for directions, I have to turn off Wi-Fi most days. Connectivity Assist promises to solve that precise issue.

Also in both iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 is an AirDrop speed up. Apple says AirDrop transfers could be as much as five times faster.

Discover Other App Changes

Beyond the big changes, many apps in iOS 27 and iPadOS 27 received smaller tweaks or modest new features. This chapter covers those miscellaneous changes.

Calendar

Apple Intelligence lets you type more naturally when you create a calendar event. Apple Intelligence can infer and suggest certain details as you type. This entry style also works with Reminders.

It's not the kind of natural entry you might expect from a chatbot, where you could say something like, "I'd like you to schedule an appointment for me to have lunch with Karen on Thursday at noon at Oxbow." Rather, you still have to use slightly more stilted language, such as "Lunch with Betty on Thursday at 1 PM at Oxbow" (**Figure 16**). It's still easier!

As you type, the parts that Apple Intelligence recognizes light up red to indicate a match or gray if you need to tap it to make a choice. For instance, in **Figure 16**, "Oxbow" appears in gray because it wasn't sure which I meant. When I tapped it, I could select the correct restaurant from a list.

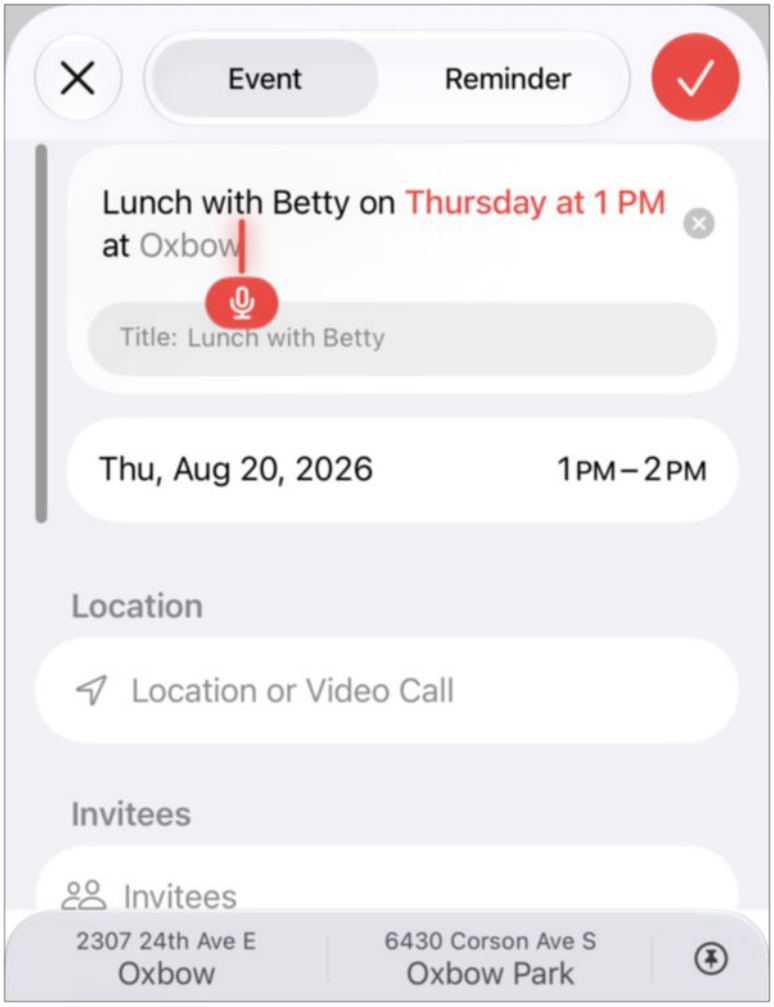


Figure 16: A little structure is still helpful when using the new Calendar (and Reminders) item creation entry.

Camera

With Visual Intelligence making more inroads into iPhones and iPad with Apple Intelligence, you would expect it to be front and center in Camera—and it is. A new Siri option appears in the Camera app alongside Video and Photo. Open Camera and slide to select Siri, or tap the Siri Camera button.

Note: This is the first iPad release to support Visual Intelligence.

Just as with the previous version of Visual Intelligence, you tap the Siri button to trigger analysis. It shows an animation of scanning across the

image. It then identifies the primary element. You can also circle items with your finger or an Apple Pencil to highlight them.

However, in iOS 27 and iPadOS 27, just pointing at something that Siri recognizes as in a certain category causes Camera to present a yellow button, similar to how Camera can decode URLs or offer to authenticate via passkey if you point it at an appropriate QR Code (**Figure 17**).

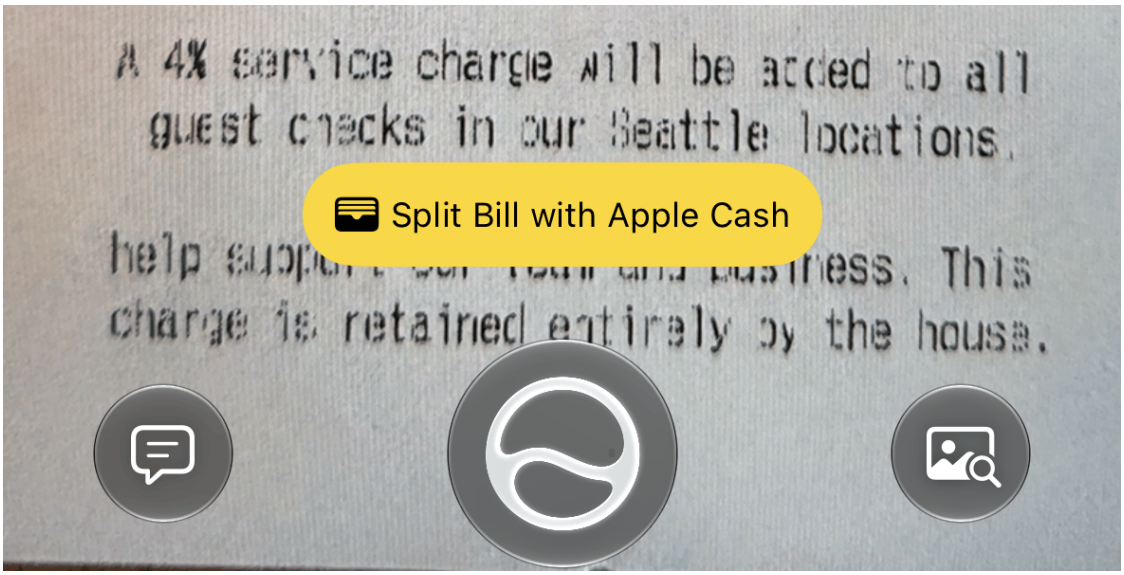


Figure 17: Siri recognized a bill, so it offers the Split Bill with Apple Cash button.

Some of the actions include:

- **Split bill:** It can identify a receipt, offer to let you split the bill, then parse all the line items, while also dividing up tax and tip proportionately (**Figure 18**). Perhaps a little too on-message, you can split a bill only if you have Apple Cash enabled, and can pay only via Apple Cash. I guess Apple doesn't want to turn Siri into a general bill-split calculator. (This leaves folks out who aren't in the United States, like Take Control publisher Joe Kissell.) Further, it doesn't help other people pay their share!

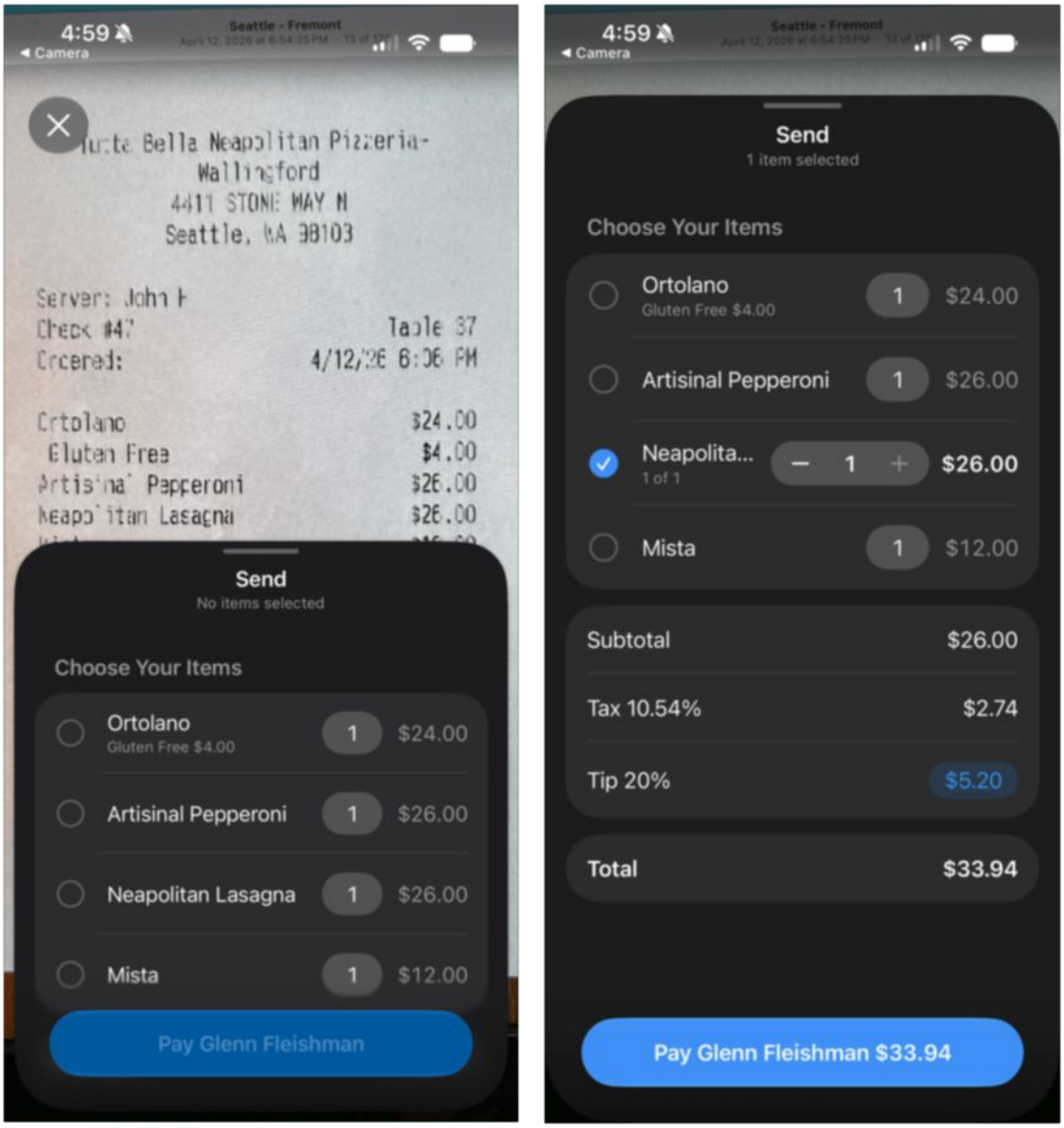


Figure 18: Siri parses a bill and lets you pay someone just your share. It doesn't let you help other people figure out their share!

- **Nutritional information:** In my initial testing, it is quite broad. You don't get a nutritional label, for instance, as on packaged food (**Figure 19**).

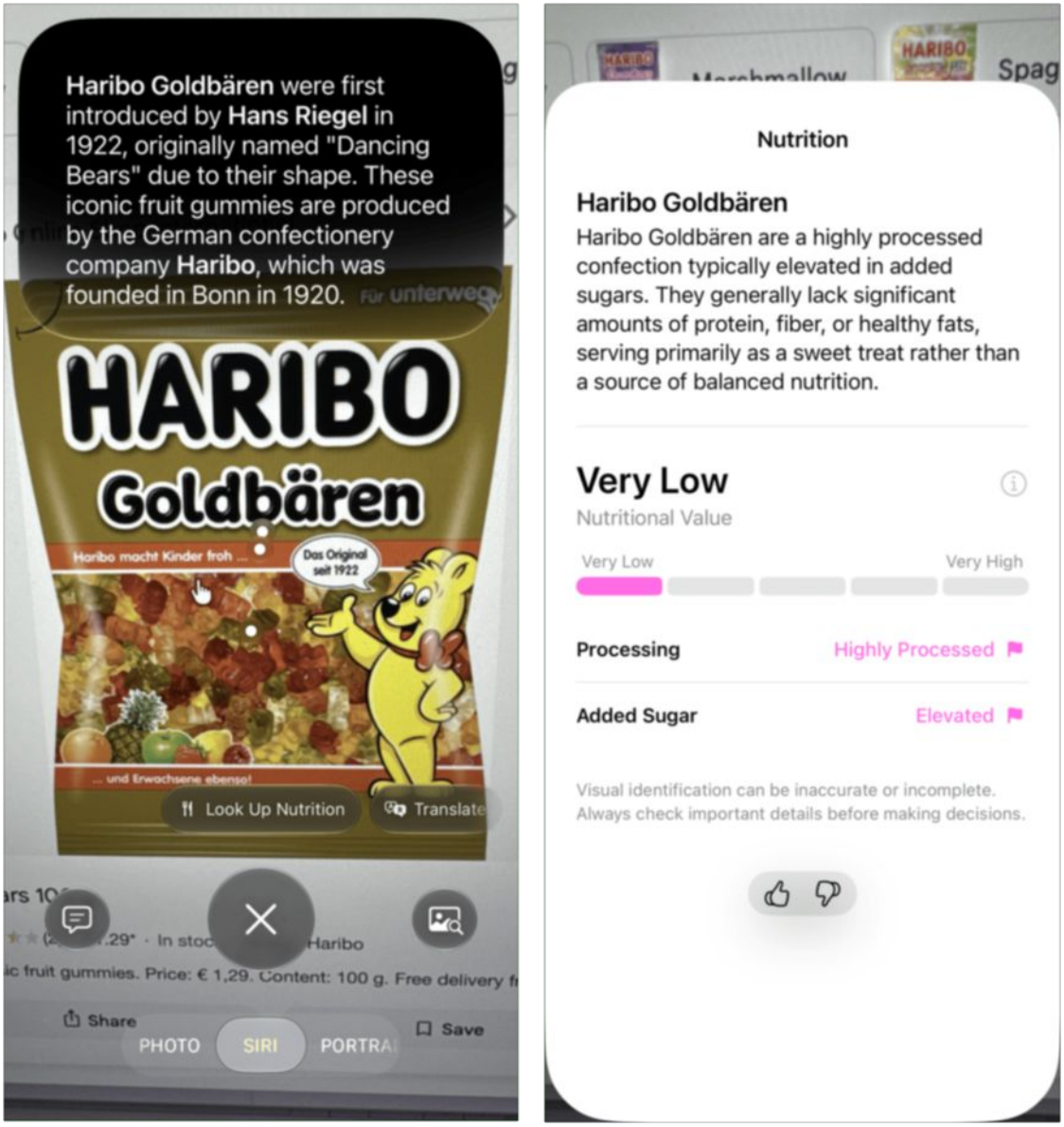


Figure 19: Get vague nutritional information about a product that you point Siri at.

- **Add a card:** Point at a membership or other kind of card that Wallet understands, and Siri offers to add it to Wallet.
- **Parse a business card:** It recognizes business cards and can structure data extracted from them to insert into Contacts (**Figure 20**).

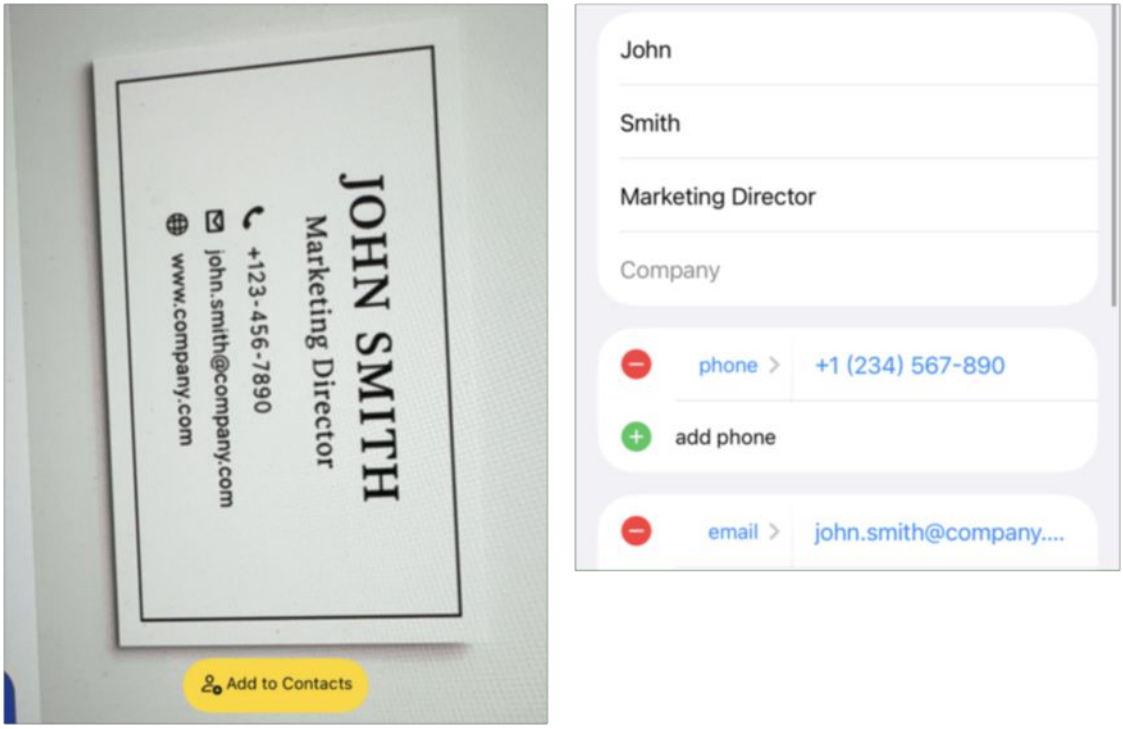


Figure 20: Point at a business card, tap Add to Contacts, and years of past drudgery seem like a dream.

- **Import multiple calendar events:** It does just that!

Clock

It took this long for Apple to let you set the volume of alarms and timers hitting zero seconds separately from your ringtone volume. Go to Settings > Sounds & Haptics and, under Alarms and Timers, disable Match Ringtone Volume (**Figure 21**).

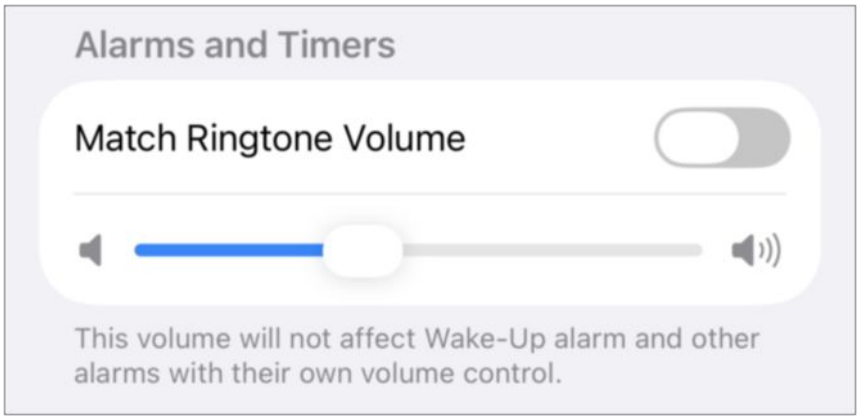


Figure 21: Set a separate volume for alarms and timers.

Find My

The native Find My app on all platforms has two changes related to duration or availability when you share your location with other people:

- Previously, you could share your location for an hour, until the end of the day, or indefinitely. Now you can set a custom period of time (**Figure 22**).

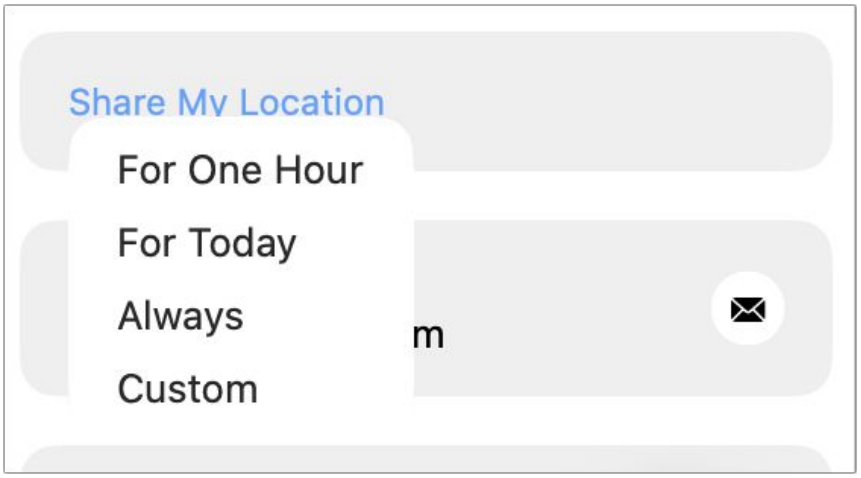


Figure 22: Set a custom period of time to share your location.

- If you're sharing your location with someone, you can hide your location from your end until the next morning (at 4 A.M., and they're not notified (**Figure 23**). They're also not told when you resume sharing, or "unhide" your location. They simply see you with a "location unavailable" label.

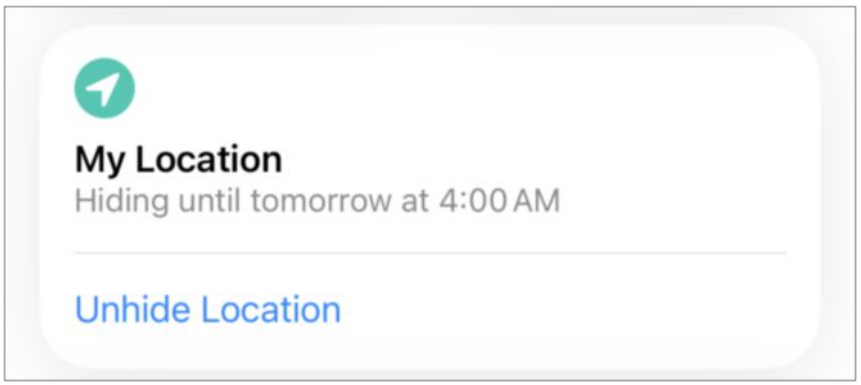


Figure 23: When you've paused location sharing to someone else, you can tap Unhide Location to resume silently.

Note: This is widely seen as another tool for people facing family or intimate-partner abuse to hide their whereabouts without an abuser knowing.

Tip: See my updated book *Take Control of Find My and AirTags* for more details on these features, the new unified watchOS app, and a lot more.

Health and Fitness

The big news in the Health app for iPhone is that, if you have periods, Cycle Tracking supports perimenopause and menopause by notifying you when it identifies patterns consistent with perimenopause.

Other changes worth noting include:

- Health now has a Browse button (instead of a search icon), which better identifies what the action is. The design has changed from a list to a series of small color-coded cards.
- iPhones now support GymKit, which was available only on Apple Watch before this. You can now pair an iPhone directly with supported treadmills, bikes, and other gym equipment.

Home

The Home app now supports 4K resolution video for live streaming and recording from cameras designed for HomeKit Secure Video and with any tier of iCloud+ and that, of course, have 4K output. (Apple still uses the HomeKit name there, even though the concept has been renamed Apple Home.)

If you have more than one camera, Home used to require awkward navigation among them. Now, you can see the previews in the main Home view, but tapping any camera brings up an aggregated view with a unified set of detected events (**Figure 24**).

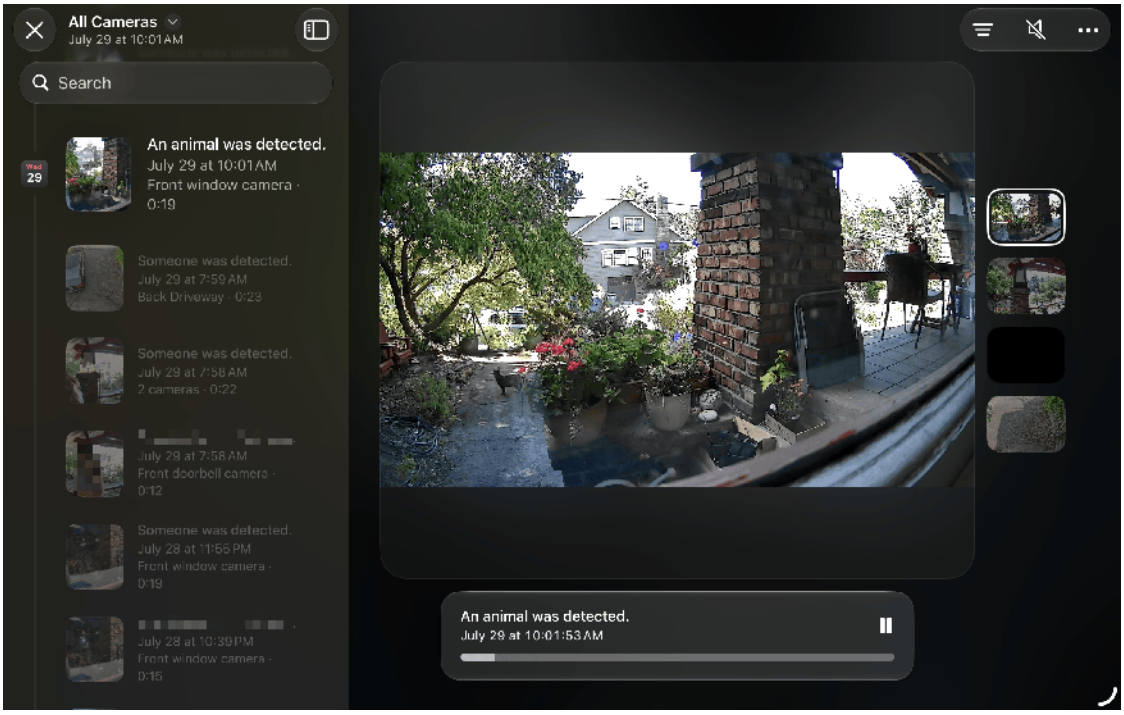


Figure 24: A unified camera view improves access to the panopticon you've created around your home.

With Apple Intelligence, Home reduces the amount of "attention noise" that motion-detecting cameras can generate. Home will combine related activity notifications to prevent a series of motion events from resulting in a constant stream of alerts. It can also stitch together video from multiple cameras, allow natural-language searches for recorded events, and provide summaries you can read without watching the video.

Note: To use Apple Intelligence features, you must subscribe to the 2 TB iCloud+ plan or higher. Your home hub must be a HomePod (2nd generation or later), HomePod mini, or Apple TV updated to the latest release, such as tvOS 27. The Home app and Home accessories must have access to location services.

Maps

Apple says Maps has an "enhanced Flyover" experience. This translates to less weird-looking landscape and building interpolation from satellite and street-level data when you look at cities using Maps's 3D perspectives.

Maps also adds Local Lists, which are ostensibly algorithmically generated guides to local areas based on aggregated searches. Apple uses the word "trending" a couple of times in describing this feature, so it's unclear if it's just search-related—which gives zero insight into the quality of a restaurant or an experience—or factors in other data.

Mail

While you're typing away in a message in Mail, it may offer suggestions on devices with Apple Intelligence to take action in another app or using your data stored in other apps, such as adding a calendar entry, a note, a map, a photo, and so forth.

Notes

You can use Image Wand to turn a sketch into a photorealistic image with Apple Intelligence for people who like that sort of thing.

Passwords

Passwords can use Apple Intelligence to update "weak and compromised" passwords—in some cases. The proviso is that a site that Passwords has evaluated as requiring a new password must support a pathway for automated password updates. It's unclear how many do.

You can use this feature by opening Passwords and tapping the Security group. If any passwords in the category qualify, the app shows a banner that reads Automatically Fix *X* Passwords. You can then follow prompts for Passwords to attempt its automatic updating.

Note: I don't currently have passwords that meet this bad-quality test, so I'll provide more detail when Apple releases more information.

Photos

Apple has improved Photos in major and minor ways: improved and expanded AI-based editing tools, better results and metadata access, upgrades to iCloud Shared Album, and the ability to extract video frames. Let's start with the marquee features, which require Apple Intelligence.

Regenerate Photos

Apple introduced Clean Up in iOS 18.1/iPadOS 18.1 to the dismay of people who preferred a previous, non-Apple Intelligence-based approach to fixing images. In iOS 27 and iPadOS 27, Clean Up gets a glow-up and is joined by two other tools. These are found in Photos when you tap the Edit icon, then the Tools icon (**Figure 25**).

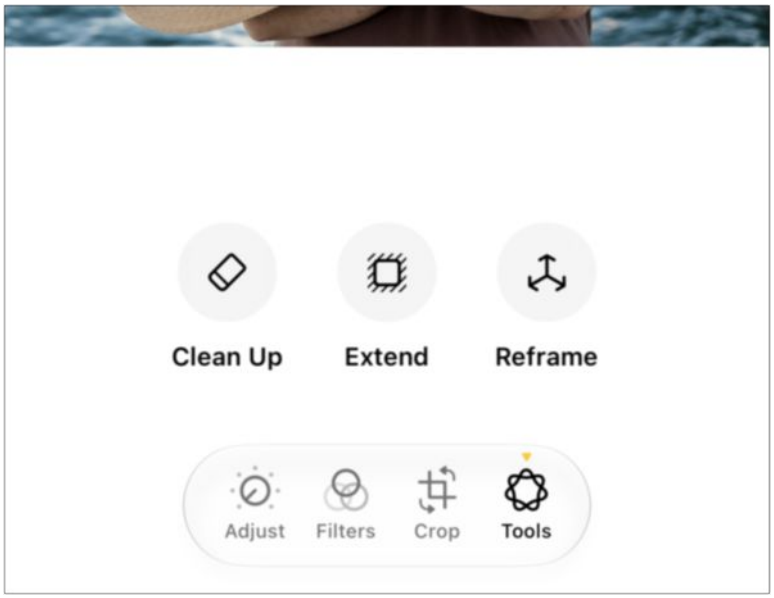


Figure 25: The Tools selection beneath a photo when you're in the editing mode shows Clean Up, Extend, and Reframe.

Warning! Remember that all of these tools create new imagery based on existing data, so you're inventing parts of an image. Consider how you feel about that and whether people you might share images with have concerns, too.

The new Clean Up is designed to perform better background image generation than the previous version (**Figure 26**). Auto is the default mode, which chooses the appropriate amount of performance. You can also manually choose Fast or High Quality.

Extend and Reframe are new options. Extend will be familiar to people who have used Photoshop and other apps that let you crop outward from an existing image, with generative material filling the new areas. This can be handy when cropping something and you're right up to the edge, or when you want to rotate an image and not have the empty areas be blank.

The Reframe tool—called Spatial Reframing in marketing—is absolutely trippy, letting you pan, zoom, and rotate to have Apple Intelligence generate a new perspective. Results can be good or peculiar.



Figure 26: Top, the original photo in all its glory. Center, background dock, Apple Watch, and some wattle removed with Clean Up. Bottom, image extended and reframed. (Image: Jeff Carlson)

Organization and Metadata

It took many years, but you can finally apply keywords to media in the Photos app on an iPhone and iPad. Huzzah? (Keywords are a useful way to link images for searching and organization.) However, you can still only apply keywords to items one at a time, as opposed to singly or in selections of two or more on a Mac. To add keywords, tap the info ⓘ button, then tap Add Keywords.

When you make a selection by tapping the Select button in the upper-right corner of any multiple-item view in Photos, a new Show Selected button appears at the bottom. Tap it, and it reveals just the items you chose. You can adjust the selection or view the images and videos in a carousel. Tap Deselect All to remove the current selection.

Apple adds two new albums in Collections > Utilities. Captured My Me contains images or videos you created using any iPhone or iPad, such as via the Camera app or by taking a screenshot. The Identity Documents album uses machine learning (not Apple Intelligence) to collect scans or photos of personally identifying documents. (Identity Documents hasn't yet appeared for me in iOS.)

You're Missing a Star

Apple had said you would be able to rate photos and videos on a 1-to-5 scale, typical of other photo-management apps, but this was coming to Apple's ecosystem for the first time. This would add nuance to the existing favorite option, which is either on or off. However, it hasn't appeared in the beta releases so far.

Shared Albums

Apple hasn't shaken up iCloud Shared Albums in several years, and it has notable omissions, such as the ability to share higher-resolution versions.

In iOS 27/iPadOS 27 (and on macOS 27 and at iCloud.com), you have access to several new features. However, you must first upgrade an album: select the album in Collections > Shared Albums, tap the More

button, then tap Upgraded Shared Album. This may take some time—minutes or longer—depending on the size of the items in the library and your internet connection.

After upgrading, you have access to the following:

- Full-resolution photos and videos are now supported across all common formats.
- You can filter by photos or videos. Tap the Filter icon, then tap Media Types.
- There's a Create Shared Album option for any existing album. Tap the More ••• button, then tap Create Shared Album.
- Albums can be set to expire after 30 days, but only when created. After creating a Shared Album from an existing album or by tapping the Add + icon in the Collections > Shared Albums view, enable Make Album Temporary.
- You can create an upload link that allows anyone—not just people with access to the album—to upload images. With the album selected, tap the Share icon, tap "Only invited people can join," and choose Anyone with the Link (**Figure 27**). (This is similar to other kinds of sharing across iOS 27/iPadOS 27).

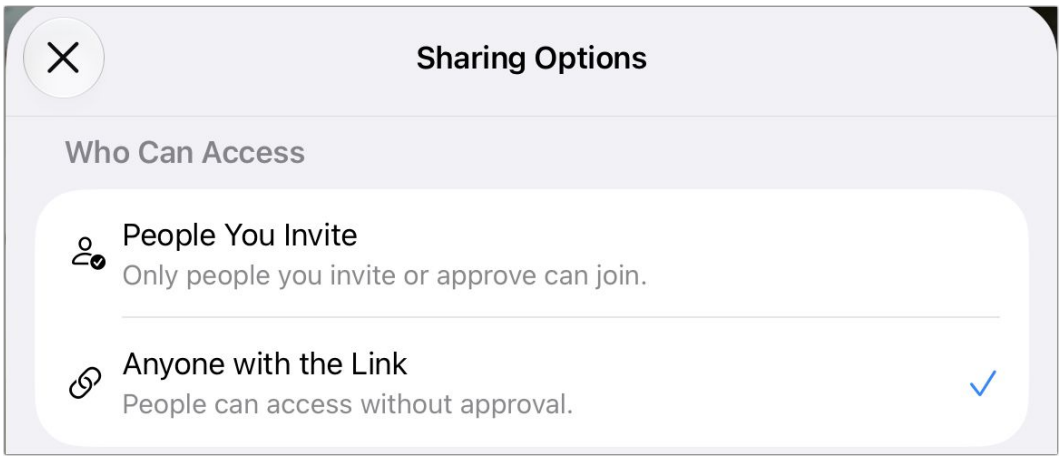


Figure 27: You can let anyone contribute to a Shared Album using the new link option.

- A recent activity log lets you see changes made to the album, including emoji reactions. (This doesn't yet appear to be in place.)

Other Photos Additions

Three other changes, two new and one set of improvements, may be of interest.

You can extract a frame from a paused video to save as an image. Tap the More ••• button and choose Save Video Frame.

Photos often decides to pause syncing to iCloud to avoid draining the battery, even when the battery is quite full. You can now go to Settings > Apps > Photos > Sync Immediately and choose For Today. This prioritizes syncing instead of preserving battery life for the remainder of the calendar day (**Figure 28**). If Low Power Mode or Low Data Mode are enabled, Photos will still pause until those modes are turned off, such as by recharging the phone for the former.

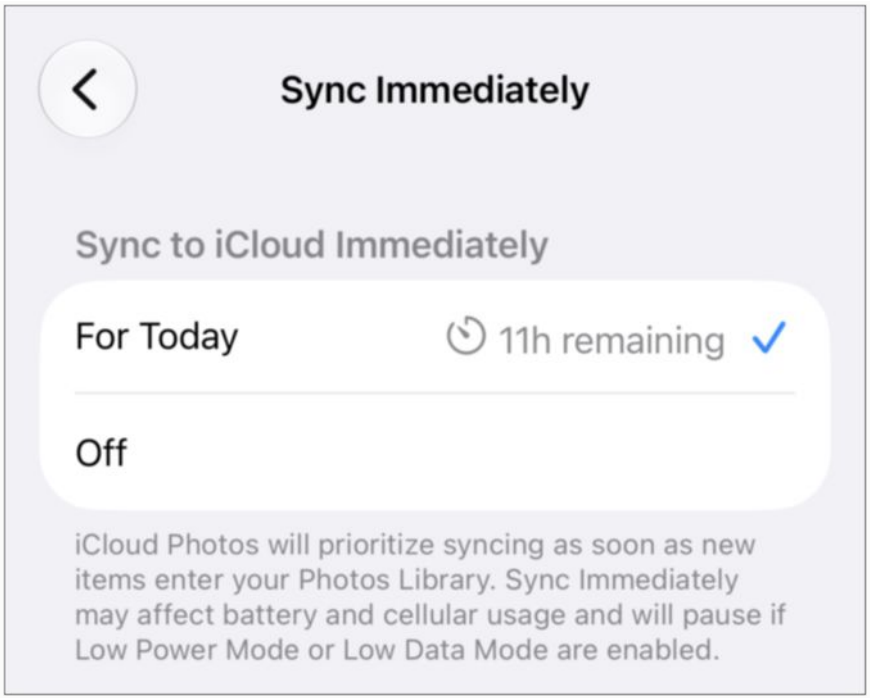


Figure 28: Sync to iCloud Immediately suspends some, but not all, battery-related pauses.

Slideshows can now be built from any album or even a selection of media, rather than relying on memories.

Podcasts

If you navigate to a podcast's view of all of its episodes by tapping the podcast and then tapping Episodes, you can now search against the title and show notes of all listed episodes.

Note: This doesn't search transcripts, which Podcasts generates for some shows. It searches only the per-episode notes published in the podcast feed.

Reminders

As with Calendar, on devices with Apple Intelligence, you can type loosely—if not using completely natural language—and Reminders will suggest or fill in task-related elements.

Reminders actions now appear in Shortcuts, too, so you can create and delete groups, manage lists, and create sections.

Safari

You'd think by this point there wasn't much left to add to Safari. And you would be correct, to the extent that Apple's new features are all about extending the utility of a browser, rather than making changes to viewing webpages.

Organize Tabs Automatically

With Apple Intelligence, Safari can suggest how to organize tabs, bookmarks, and Reading Lists by topic. Start with a tab group, and tap the Tab Overview button. Now tap the Filter button and choose Organize Tabs > Automatically Create Topics (**Figure 29**). Safari now sorts related things together into a new, unnamed kind of grouping that appears within a tab group.

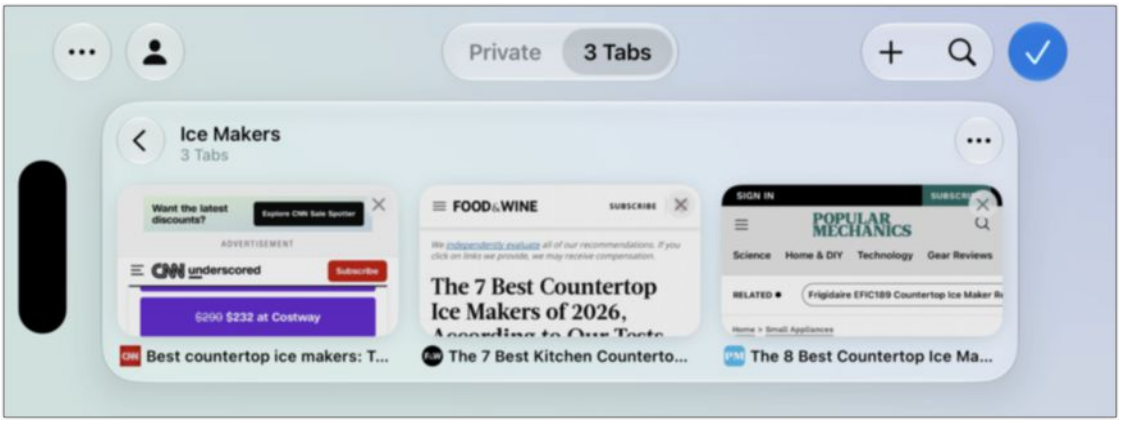


Figure 29: Researching ice makers, Safari automatically created an Ice Makers grouping.

Check for Webpage Changes

We often wonder if something has changed on a page. Third-party services will offer to watch pages for us and send notifications. That requires the overhead of creating an account, copying a URL, and maybe paying a subscription fee. The Notify Me feature added to Safari automates that task with an interesting twist.

On any page, tap the Page Info ☰ icon and choose Notify Me. Here's the interesting part: You write in plain language what you want Safari to check for, then tap Next (**Figure 30**). Safari will check daily by default. You can tap Edit while creating the notification or afterward to switch to hourly, weekly, or monthly, and set the time of day.

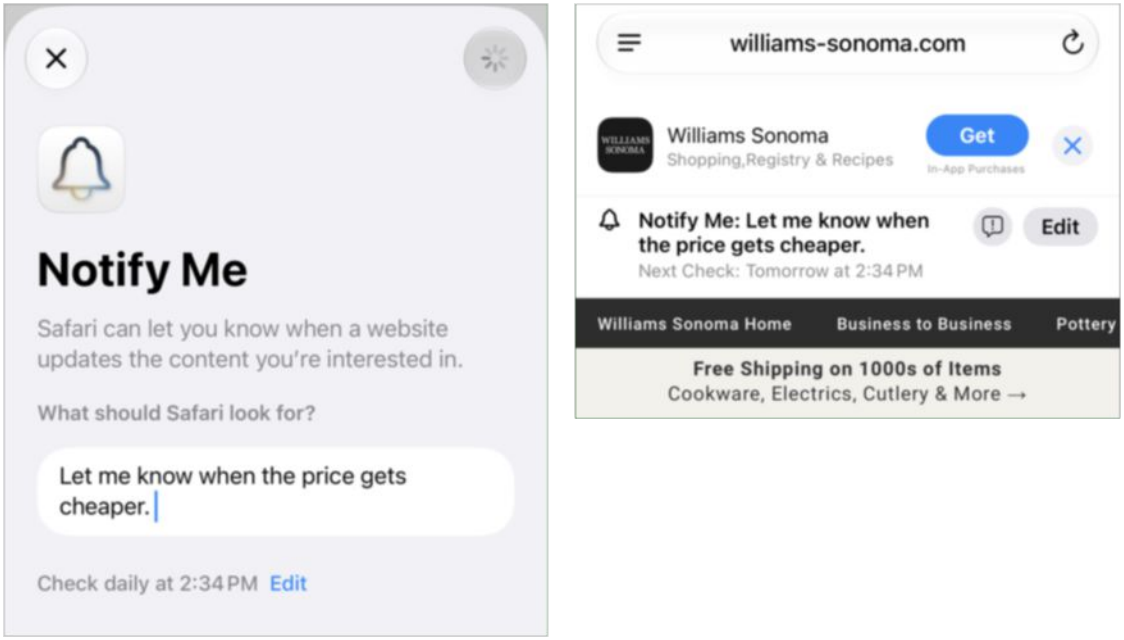


Figure 30: Tell Notify Me what you want it to monitor (left); when you visit a watched page, you can see what's being tracked.

Manage these notifications via Settings > Apps > Safari > Notify Me. Delete a Notify Me by tapping the Edit link on the tracked page and tapping Delete and confirming, or via the Settings link.

Describe an Extension

Apple wants to make it easier for us to get things done, and, along with describing shortcuts, you can next tell Safari to create an extension for you by just talking through what you want (**Figure 31**). That sounds remarkable, and the proof will be in the making: we'll find out how well it can carry out extension creation, and how rapidly Apple can improve it.

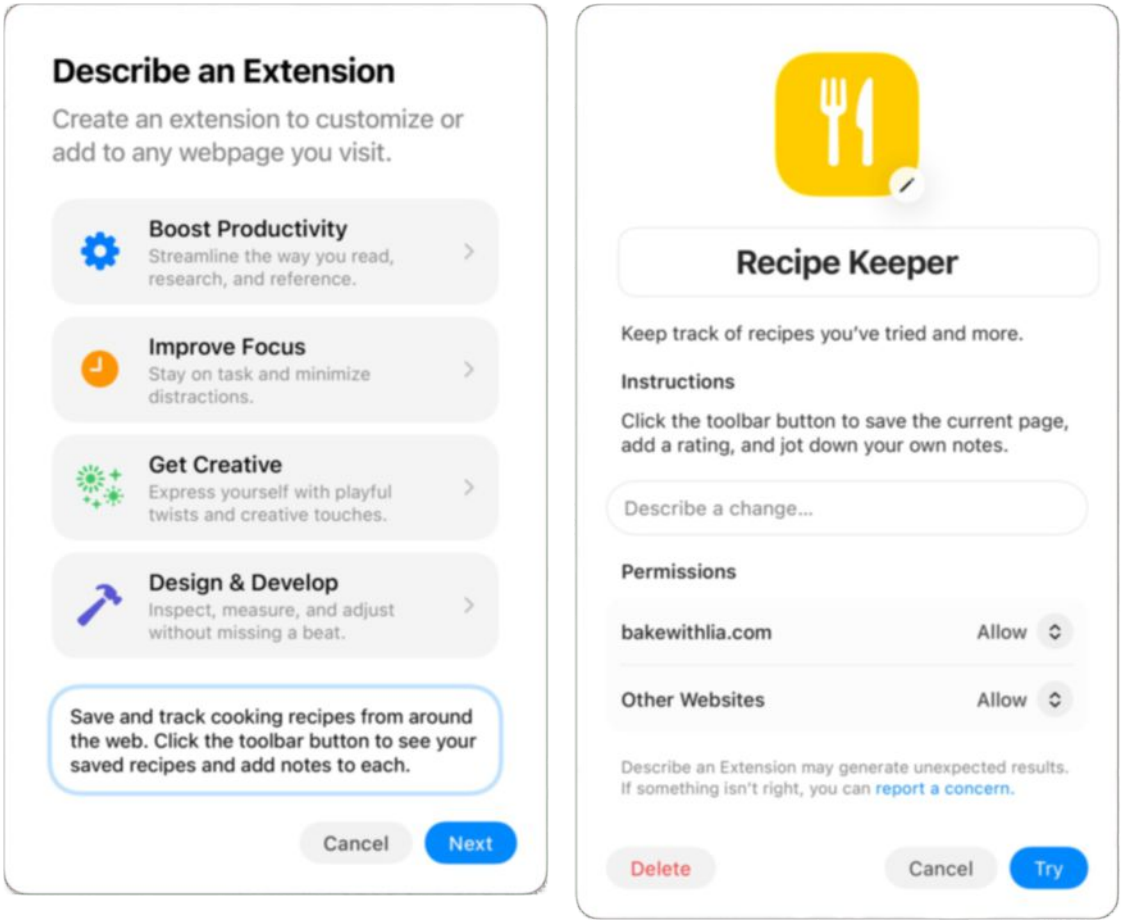


Figure 31: Tell Safari what you want (left), and it will try to build an extension that does just that (right). (Images: Apple)

Shortcuts

Apple Intelligence lets Shortcuts parse a description of a shortcut and create one for you (**Figure 32**). This is a huge leap forward, as shortcuts can be quite useful, but very fiddly to put together, even for people experienced with making them.

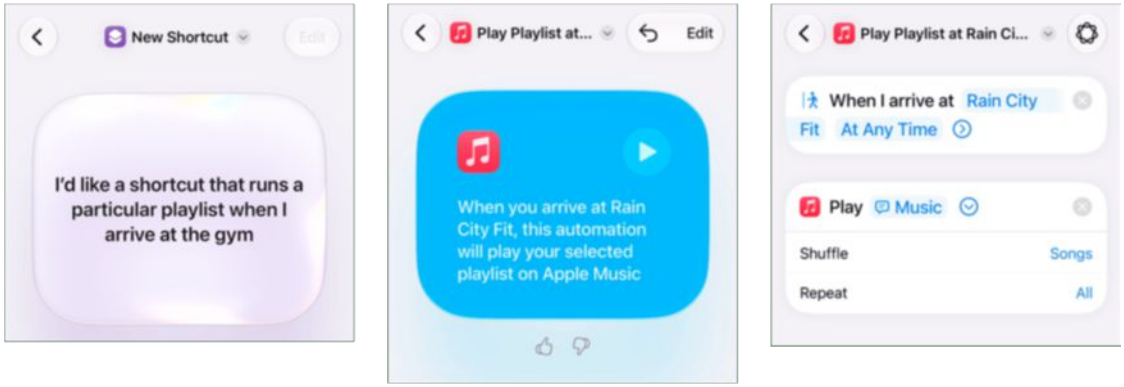


Figure 32: Tell Shortcuts what you want to do it and writes the sequence for you.

Because it relies on natural-language processing, the accuracy with which your particular requests are translated into a series of Shortcuts steps will be the real test of efficacy!

Wallet

Wallet bulges with the addition of even more features to an already stuffed portfolio.

You can create entries for cards, membership cards, and other kinds of barcode/QR code-related proofs of entry or membership from scratch, a task formerly available only for third-party apps and websites.

Tap the Add icon in Wallet, then tap Create a Pass (**Figure 33**). You're guided through a few steps, one of which lets you scan the existing card, so that Wallet can pull in its number, barcode, or QR code. You can fill out details that aren't present on the card or captured by Wallet (**Figure 34**).

Note: If you're fascinated by all the things Wallet can do, which is many, take a gander at *Take Control of Apple Wallet*. I'll be updating it later in 2026 with the new features described here.

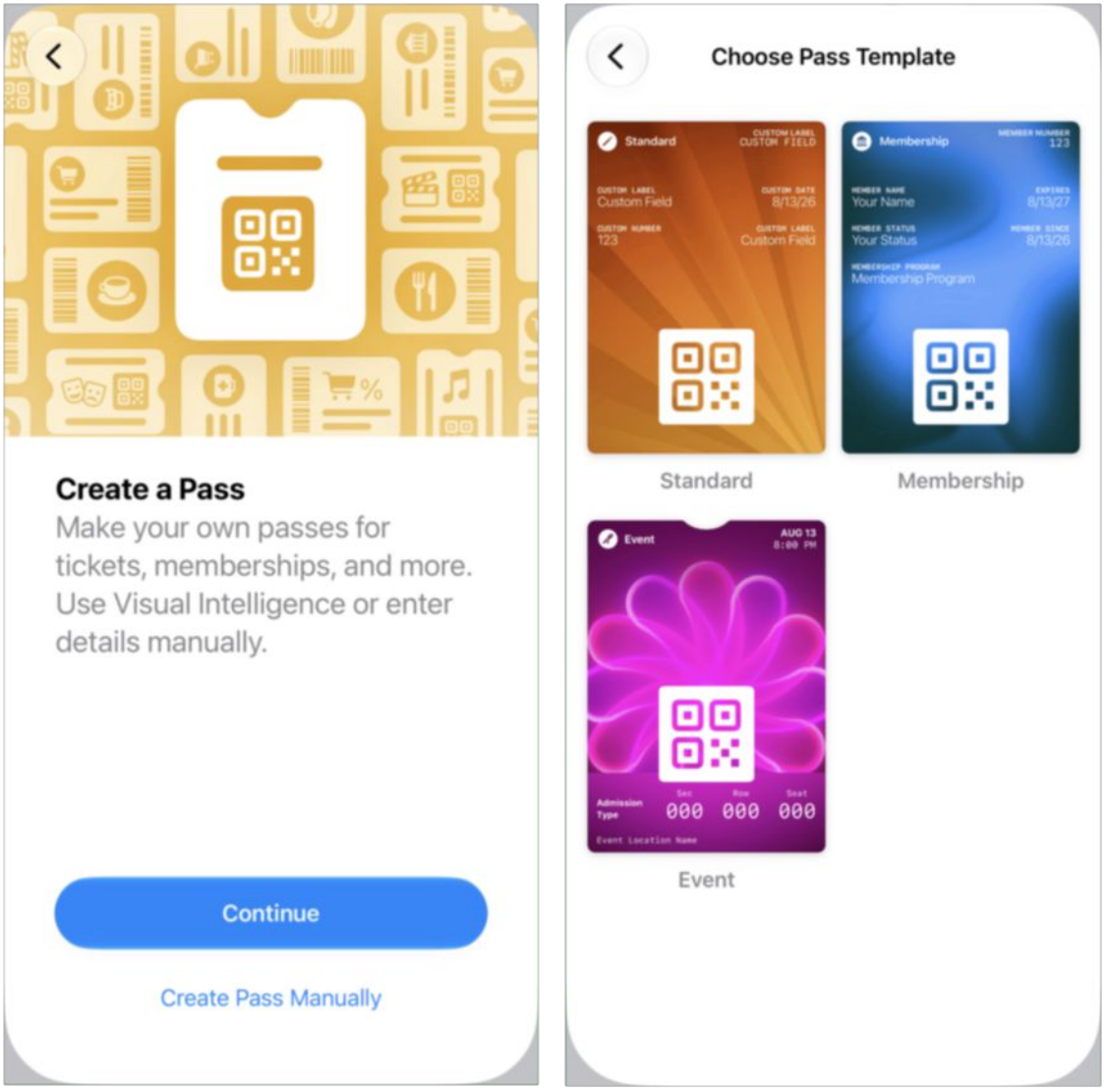


Figure 33: Wallet can create a card entry when you scan physical membership and loyalty cards.

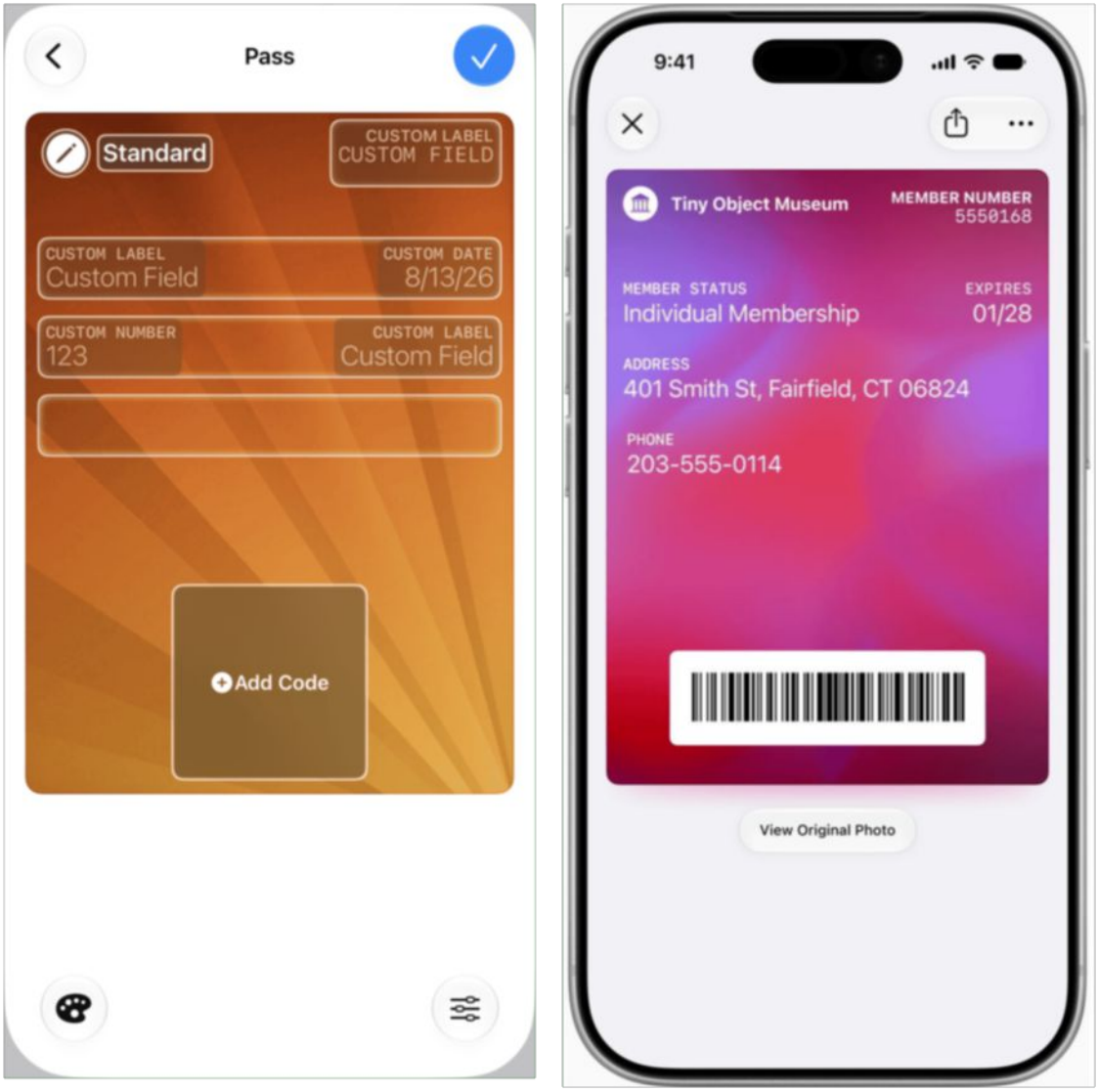


Figure 34: You can fill in fields and tap to add the code for a card (left). A completed pass looks a little generic, but also has everything required (right; image: Apple).

As you can see in the figures above, a “poster”-style card display used for passes now extends to membership cards, gift cards, and loyalty/reward cards. This new display allows up to two tappable actions.

In unrelated updates, Wallet now shows trip details and other real-time updates to hotel keys at hotels that support these new options.

Finally, a new Preauthorized Payments section in Wallet gives you a one-stop insight into what you’ve allowed other companies to charge you for. Apple describes this as “subscriptions and auto-reloads to installment loan repayments, recurring billing, and deferred payments” among other preauthorizations.

Discover Other System Changes

Apple also made one systemwide change so far that I can tell you about, with big updates to Apple Pay and point-of-sale payments.

Apple Pay and Tap to Share

After many years of mostly unchanged experiences, Apple offers a blowout with iOS 27 and iPadOS 27.

The updated Apple Pay checkout sheet lets you change your payment card directly without canceling, exiting, and starting over (**Figure 35**, left). It will also show information like available rewards, debit card balance, and alternative payment options. These changes are noted as coming "this fall," while "later this year" you'll be able to add funds to a debit card during a checkout session without exiting, or within Wallet.

Apple now allows merchants to let you pay with a third-party browser using Apple Pay with a scannable code and an iPhone as the glue. Start the payment in a third-party browser, choose Apple Pay, and the merchant's site will display a code that can be scanned by an iPhone to authorize Apple Pay (**Figure 35**, right).

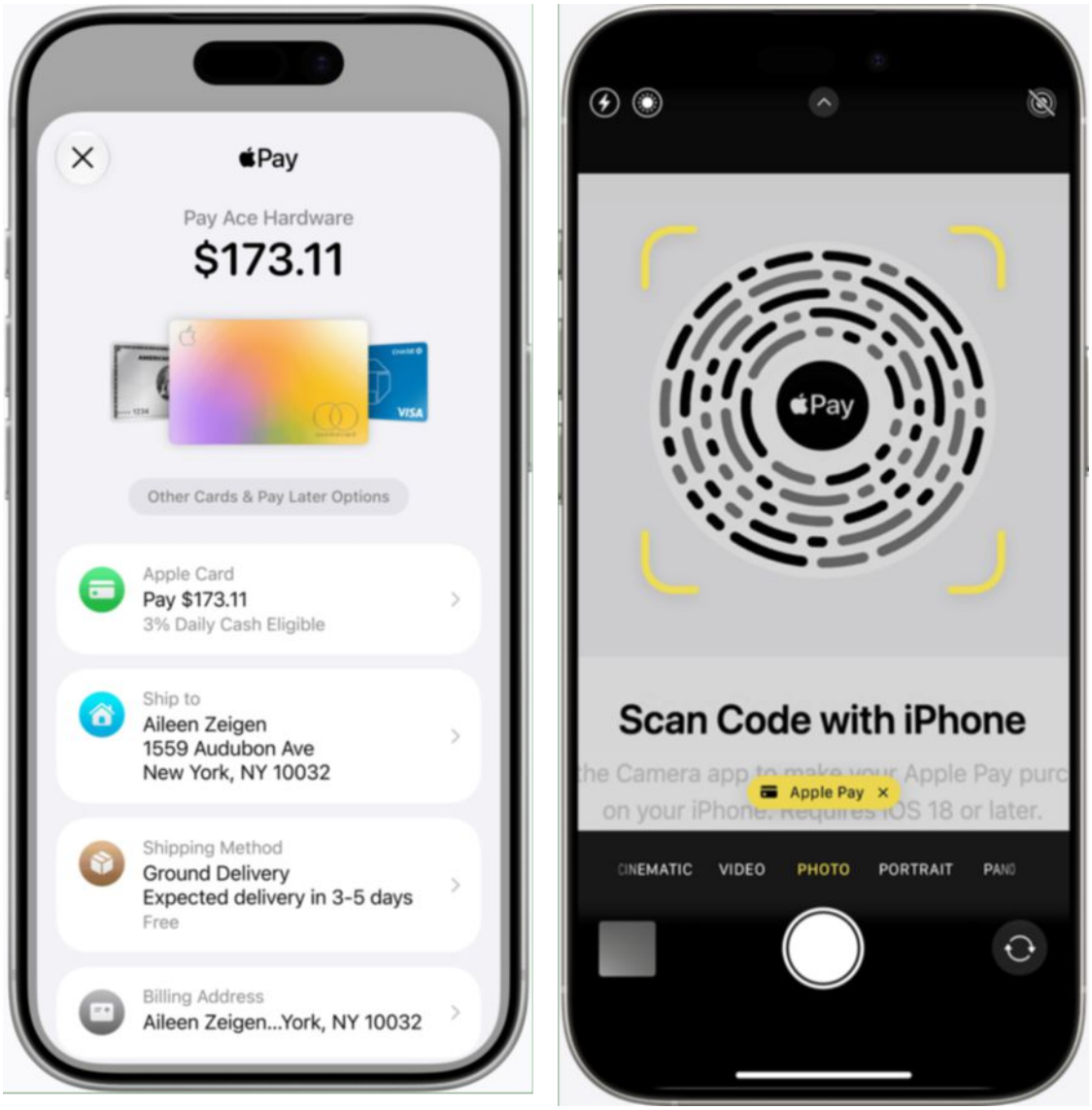


Figure 35: A revamped Apple Pay process allows changing your payment card within the sheet (left). Merchants can let you pay with Apple Pay even when you're not using Safari (right). (Images: Apple)

Entirely new is Tap to Share with merchants at the point of sale, such as in a store or at a fair. This makes in-person Apple Pay more akin to Apple Pay in Safari. Tap to Share lets an entire set of interactions occur before you pay. You start by approving a connection with a merchant's iPhone that has a supported payment app. (Ostensibly, this may encompass not just companies like Square and Stripe, but in-house developer apps for retailers like Old Navy or Lowe's.)

Once you begin, you can choose what you share with the business—like contact details, a shipping address, or your email (**Figure 36**, left). This also means you don't have to state this information aloud or rely

on the merchant typing it in correctly! A merchant can offer to sign you up for a membership or loyalty program. You can use a pass from the merchant, or they can issue one, related to discounts, credits, or other transaction-related purposes (**Figure 36**, right). Finally, you see the full cart as a digital receipt before completing payment with Apple Pay.

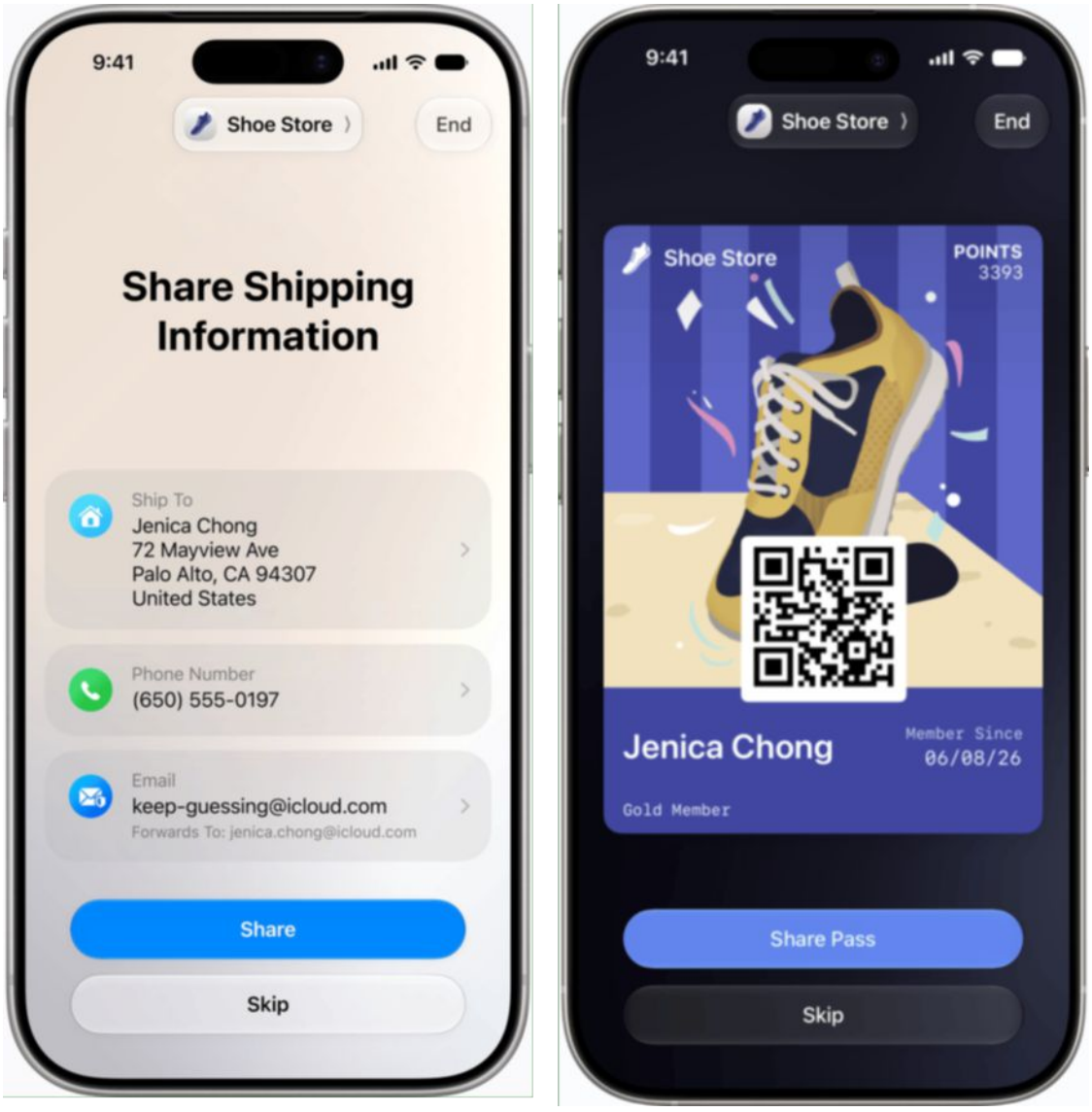


Figure 36: With Tap to Share, you can control what you send across a point-of-sale transaction (left). You can use a pass, such as for rewards or a discount, during the process (right). (Images: Apple)

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Take Control Books Executive Editor Glenn Fleishman never stops writing about technology and its implications. He's in his third decade of writing for publications as varied as *The Atlantic*, *Fast Company*, *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, *Macworld*, TidBITS, and many others. In 2012, he was a two-game champion on Jeopardy!

You can find Glenn on Mastodon (@glennf@zeppelin.flights) and Bluesky (@glennf.com). Reach him by email at glenn@glennf.com.

Shameless Plug

I've written several books in the last few years that are mostly *not* about computers:

- *Six Centuries of Type & Printing* (reprint, 2025) is a brisk yet thorough look at the technological development that has taken us from Gutenberg (and even before) to the present day.
- *How Comics Are Made* (2025) traces the history of newspaper comics in North America from 1896 to the present, looking at the path from a cartoonist's hand to the printed page.
- *Flong Time, No See* (2026) and *Not To Put Too Fine a Point on It* (reprint, 2026) are collections of researched articles about type, language, history, and printing.
- *That One Matt Bors Comic* (2026) is a look at a single panel of a comic strip that became a widely used remixed meme.

About the Publisher

alt concepts, publisher of Take Control Books, is operated by Joe Kissell and Morgen Jahnke, who acquired the ebook series from TidBITS Publishing Inc.'s owners, Adam and Tonya Engst, in 2017. Joe brings his decades of experience as author of more than 60 books on tech topics (including many popular Take Control titles) to his role as Publisher. Morgen's professional background is in development work for nonprofit organizations, and she employs those skills as Director of Marketing and Publicity. Joe and Morgen live in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, with their two children.

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