Android 14 beta adds the ability to use your phone as a webcam

The Android 14 QPR1 Beta 1 update released for Pixel devices on Wednesday enables an upcoming Android feature to use your phone as a webcam. The new webcam capability doesn't rely on third-party apps or software and instead requires physically connecting the phone to a laptop or desktop computer via a USB cable (seen via *XDA-Developers*).

The feature is located in the "Charging this device via USB" option that appears in the notification tray after the phone is connected. Swapping to the new "Webcam" option within the "Use USB for" section will then provide on-screen instructions to configure the webcam video feed, with options to zoom in / out and switch between the device's front and rear cameras.

The new webcam feature is currently supported on all of the Pixel devices capable of running the beta update except the Pixel Fold. Android beta updates are typically first released to Pixel devices, so it's likely that the webcam feature will eventually be available across Android phones from other brands when Android 14 is released to general availability.

There have been some third-party apps like EpocCam and DroidCam available for a while now that facilitate using your Android phone as a webcam, but this will be the first feature that's natively built into the Android platform. Cameras on modern phones tend to be far better than traditional webcams, especially those that are built into laptops, so this should provide a quick (and free) way to upgrade the quality of your streams or video feeds during meetings when Android 14 is

released in October.

The need for a cabled connection is a little disappointing, considering Apple’s Continuity Camera – which substitutes an iPhone’s camera for the webcam when taking calls on a MacBook – is completely wireless. But because Android’s webcam feature is built on the USB Video Class (UVC) standard, it should work across all systems without any restrictions – including Windows, Chromebook, Linux, and Mac.

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