Apple updates Pages, Keynote, and Numbers with new text-styling features

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Today, Apple released Pages 8.1, Numbers 6.1, and Keynote 9.1 for Mac, and the company also updated the accompanying apps on iOS. This is a small features update for the iWork suite, but some of the additions give functionality users have been requesting for a while.

For example, you can now create a link from text in one sheet to another sheet in your Numbers spreadsheet document, and the same goes for linking from one document to another in Pages. In Keynote, you can now place objects in-line so they move with text dynamically as expected, and you can edit master slides while collaborating with another user.

All three applications have new text styling options—notably, the ability to apply a gradient to text. It's easy enough to fill text with a two-color gradient, but more colors are supported from the "Advanced Gradient Fill" menu option. In Pages, you can apply new outline styles, and filling text with images is also possible across all three apps.

Apple has updated its support documents for tracking updates

to each app with a longer list of features added—see the links above. Numbers has “greatly improved accuracy using the enhanced 128-bit calculation engine,” and “using face detection, subjects in photos are intelligently positioned in placeholders and objects” in each program (this is just a small example of Apple’s recent machine-learning focus in the productivity suite). There are a handful of iOS-specific updates, too.

iWork is available for free to iOS and macOS users, and this update is available now for both operating systems. It’s arguably not as powerful in some ways as Microsoft Office, and it’s certainly not as widely used in organizations as that program or Google Docs. But the iWork suite has its fans. Some of them will probably be happy with a few of these new features, but there’s a little ways to go to compete with Office, especially when it comes to collaboration features.

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