

RIP (again): Google Glass will no longer be sold

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- A woman uses Google Glass Enterprise Edition in a marketing image for the product.
- This is the safety glasses version of Google Glass Enterprise Edition, as seen in the previous image.
- Here's the non-safety-glass version.

This week, Google announced that it has stopped selling Google Glass Enterprise Edition, marking another end-of-life for the Glass product that was originally meant to start an augmented reality revolution.

First launched to a limited audience back in 2013, Glass was supposed to be a revolutionary new computing platform. The headset offered users a head-up display and a built-in camera, allowing them to see a small amount of information and capture images of their environment.

While some tech enthusiasts took to it, it was also widely mocked for its geeky appearance, limited functionality, and potential role in violating the privacy of people around the user. The criticism was so fierce that the term "Glasshole" was sometimes used to describe people who wore it.

The initial version, which had mainstream consumer ambitions,

was discontinued in 2015. Two years later, Google announced Google Glass Enterprise Edition with a scaled-back ambition of selling the device for narrow uses in industries like medicine and construction. An updated version called Google Glass Enterprise Edition 2 was announced in 2019, and that's the one that was discontinued this week.

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Sales ceased on March 15, and support ends on September 15, Google says. No further software updates are planned, but the end-of-support date is the deadline after which Google will no longer replace damaged devices. Glass headsets in the wild will still work after September 15, though, should businesses plan to continue using them.

Google hasn't announced any plans to re-launch the Google Glass brand after this, but the company is known to be working on other kinds of AR glasses for potential future release.

Google acquired smart glasses-maker North in 2020, and it has since been working on an AR wearable internally codenamed Project Iris, which was said in reports last year to resemble ski goggles.

Competitors Apple and Meta have also been working on AR glasses with an eye toward a consumer release sometime in the future, but limitations in both optical and battery technology make it likely that they're still a ways off from mass-market adoption.

Nonetheless, a few current and upcoming VR headsets (potentially including the long-rumored, long-delayed Apple headset that supposedly will finally launch this year) have cameras and passthrough capabilities that can enable some AR-like features.

All that is to say that augmented reality is still a long way off from being a ubiquitous consumer product. But given this second end-of-life for Google Glass and Microsoft's recent

layoffs in its mixed-reality division, even enterprise adoption is not moving at a pace that some in the industry hoped for or predicted—at least not yet.

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