

Some iPhone Duo screens are already failing



People with broken \$2,000 iPhones say there's unusual physical resistance and sometimes even a clicking sound as the device closes. After that, the lines appear. Using CT scans of the phone, iFixit has shown that the point of failure starts below where the ribbon cable passes through the hinge. The width of the supporting hinge mechanism changes in that spot, suggesting a mechanical misalignment.

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The animation above shows iFixit's best guess at what's happening. The support bar in that narrowed section of the hinge may be getting stuck, preventing it from dropping far enough to accommodate the waterdrop bend in the OLED panel when the device closes. This creates stress on the display that ultimately damages the matrix. YouTuber CuriousHagi also zeroed in on that region, identifying a place where the

thinner link may be snapping during operation. He speculates the component is physically sticking to the support plate.

If this fiddly little hinge piece is the culprit, there's no way to prevent the OLED on an affected device from failing. It could happen after five minutes or five days, but continuous pressure on an OLED panel will eventually lead to permanent damage.

Same old fold

Apple has yet to acknowledge the issue, and it probably won't have anything to say until the problem is fully investigated. The scale is impossible to know—Apple sells a lot of devices, so even a low failure rate could see a flood of reports on social media. Adding moving parts to a phone will lead to at least some increase in hardware issues. Apple certainly wouldn't be the first device maker to have problems with its first foldable launch.

In 2019, Samsung released the original Galaxy Fold with a much more primitive hinge design. Even before launch, reviewers began seeing OLED damage after a few days of use. The issue in that case was a design with openings that allowed particulates to infiltrate the hinge, where they damaged the screen from underneath. Samsung delayed the release while it re-engineered the hinge.

Samsung's foldables have not been bulletproof by any means, but there have not been widespread reports of defects immediately after unboxing. Other makers of foldable phones move so few units that occasional defects may not make waves online. Apple is just lucky that way.

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