The much simpler way to keep track of everything

Hi, friends! Welcome to *Installer* No. 55, your guide to the best and *Verge*-iest stuff in the world. (If you're new here, welcome, get ready to ruin your phone's storage, and also you can read all the old editions at the *Installer* homepage.)

This week, I've been reading about **AI girlfriends** and **Bobbi Althoff** and **baseball pitchers**, watching ***Nobody Wants This*** (my favorite new show in forever) and the new **noodle-focused *Chef's Table*** (a long-standing fave), falling in love **with Coldplay** all over again, listening to **John Oliver talk journalism**, playing a lot of ***Alphaguess***, and painstakingly moving all my junk to my new blue **iPhone 16**. It's so pretty.

I also have for you a handy new way to track your stuff, a great app for posting to social media, a smart new way to manage your life on Apple devices, a new anime worth watching on Netflix, a new version of the best smart ring, and much more. Let's dig in.

(As always, the best part of *Installer* is your ideas and tips. What are you into right now? What should everyone else be playing/reading / watching / eating / 3D printing / building from Legos this week? Tell me everything: installer@theverge.com. And if you know someone else who might enjoy *Installer*, tell them to subscribe here.)

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franklin [&>a]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-white”>Screen share

I love when I ask someone to share their homescreen with us and realize I have absolutely no idea what it might look like. **Kyle Wiens**, the CEO of **iFixit**, was one of those people: he’s a tinkerer and a builder and an obvious tech fiend, so I thought he might have a million apps and widgets and everything customized just so. But he’s also a big believer in right to repair and keeping your gadgets working forever, so maybe he’d have, like, a BlackBerry from 2004 that was still somehow up and running?

Turns out, it was somewhere in the middle. Here’s Kyle’s homescreen, plus some info on the apps he uses and why:

The phone: I have a Pixel 6A, which eked through iFixit’s internal purchasing approval with a 5/10 on our repairability scorecard. Unlike the 5A, it doesn’t have a headphone jack, which is a daily frustration. I use my headphones so much! I’ve almost worn out the USB-C port from using it all day, every day, with a headphone adapter. A couple pins are worn out so USB cables only charge when inserted one direction right now. I need to open it up to fix it! Unfortunately, the USB port is soldered to the main board, making this either a main board swap or a microsoldering repair. The problem with swapping the main board, aside from the expense, is that you lose your data.

Repairability matters. Phones should last *at least* 10 years, but this phone is going to struggle to last five. Google has come a long way but still has a ways to go. Modularity is longevity.

And eSIMs work great now! This phone has a SIM card slot, which would serve me much better as a microSD expansion bay.

The wallpaper: First of all, dark mode for lyfe. I spend so much time looking at screens, the least they can do is not blast me with every pixel set to maximum white light output!

The wallpaper is the Pixel's Nature Swept, in orange. This seems like a pretty good simulacrum of what my future viewport on Mars will look like. Come on Elon, go faster! The next transfer window is only two years out.

The apps: Audible, Pocket Casts, Google Maps, Google Photos, Slack, Settings, Phone, Messages, Gmail, Opera, Google Calendar.

I'm addicted to audiobooks. I read 2–4 a week, on about 1.5x (faster for some readers, slower for others). Audible's app keeps getting buggier over time. It really feels like they're trying to drive their customers away. Using the app in a poor network area is quite frustrating – even when you've already got books downloaded, Amazon's DRM likes to phone home way too often. OpenAudible is quite good, and I'm pretty tempted to jump ship to a DRM-free alternative like Downpour.

The Google Podcasts app was great, and I'm sad they killed it – but that's what I get for relying on Google for something useful. Pocket Casts is a fantastic replacement. Relatedly, RIP Google Reader and Feedburner. With how good the text-to-voice tools are getting now, how great would that tool have been to autocreate a podcast from your RSS feed?

One of our right to repair coalition members just made **this synthetic podcast** from Aaron Perzanowski's seminal book on the topic. It's amazing! The "podcast" is very close to the source material, and I didn't notice any particular mistakes.

I also asked Kyle to share a few things he's into right now. Here's what he sent back:

I generally hate apps. But sometimes you need one, so let's talk apps!

- I spend a lot of time in low-reception environments. I understand why carrier execs who live in cities think 5G is a good idea, but a very large portion of the US still has zero cell phone coverage. I spend a lot of time calling via **Starlink Wi-Fi** rather than cell towers because I don’t have reception on any carrier at my house or the off-grid farm that I’m building.
- **MTB Project** has all the best trails, and a native app really is the best way to manage your location in an off-grid environment.
- And **onX**! It’s expensive, but I use it so much that it’s worth it. It works flawlessly without cell data, and while all its mapping sources are public, they merge the datasets in a super useful way. The hunting app, of all things, has property ownership data, which is amazing for real estate research. We used it to research the area around the Onion Bottom neighborhood in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the site of our new distribution center. It beats the pants off all the real estate-specific software like LandGlide. And hunters are super privacy-conscious, so I’m not worried about my tracks getting shared with the world like Strava does. My biggest beef is that they have three separate apps for offroading, hunting, and hiking. They don’t have a way to have all three kinds of trails in one place, which would be fantastic. Come on, guys!
- iFixit is working on our own app. Our new **FixHub soldering iron**, which Sean Hollister reviewed the other day, communicates via serial interface so it’s easier for hobbyists to tinker with it. WebSerial is a web standard, but unfortunately, it’s not supported on any mobile browsers yet. Our native app will bridge the gap until the mobile Safari and Chrome teams add WebSerial support.

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The “What’s on your desk” series is one of my favorite things we do here at *The Verge*, and I had the pleasure of **sharing my own desk this week**. If you’ve ever wondered about my setup, the gear I use, or where I’m sitting writing this very newsletter right now, this should have everything you need to know.

And if I could leave you with two thoughts, it’s these: you can never have too many charging cables; and actually, being a mess is just fine.

See you next week!

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