

What to expect from WWDC 2020: OS updates, ARM Macs, and more

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- The Steve Jobs auditorium on Apple's campus.
- The surface-level waiting area has a minimalist design with slight accents, like many Apple products and retail spaces.
- You can see the now-famous spaceship campus through the window.
- The elevator from the surface-level waiting area to the basement-level theater spins as it ascends or descends.
- If you don't want to take the elevator, two identical stairwells are positioned symmetrically in the space.

Samuel Axon

- Once you've descended, Steve Jobs' name adorns the theater.

Samuel Axon

By all accounts, tech enthusiasts are in for a red letter day this Monday. Apple will kick off its annual Worldwide Developers Conference with a keynote at 10am PT/1pm ET. Apple execs will take the stage to announce major new updates to the company's various software platforms, and maybe more.

It's going to be an unusual event this year. For the first

time in WWDC's history, it will be held entirely online, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Apple will stream sessions by video, and will give registered developers Zoom-call-like training and help sessions to replace the sessions that are normally offered on-site.

In a way, it could be a welcome democratization of WWDC, a conference that most Apple platform developers from around the world can't afford to attend in person. Apple has long offered videos of its sessions on-demand through its developer portal, but there will nonetheless be some firsts for the virtual attendees this year.

We'll be liveblogging the event on Monday and covering all the news, of course. Here's what we expect to see at the event, from new OS features to hardware launches to that long-rumored ARM transition for Macs.

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iOS (or iPhoneOS) 14 and iPadOS 14

We probably know a lot more about iOS 14 than we usually do about a new version of the iPhone's software before WWDC. That's because pre-release builds of iOS 14 apparently leaked in part or in full to 9to5Mac. Frankly, *so much* leaked that we don't have room to summarize all of it here. And there's surely still plenty that didn't leak.

Apple introduced sort-of-Android-like home screen widgets in iPadOS (they're not as robust as Android's widgets, but they're something at least) and we could see those come to the iPhone. Some of the leaks indicate that Apple will introduce an all-apps view similar in function to the Apple Watch home screen, and that view will have sorting options or allow users to easily see which apps have unread notifications.

Below: Photos of Dark Mode, one of the biggest recent design

changes to iOS 13, from our 2019 iOS 13 review.

- Here's the Control Center in Dark Mode.

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- Using Haptic or 3D Touch on the brightness slider brings up this view, which has the toggle for Dark Mode.

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- You can also swap in the Settings app, or make it automatic.

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- In wallpaper settings, you can also set Dark Mode to dim the wallpaper. (It's off by default.)

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- This is the homescreen in Dark Mode with wallpaper dimming disabled.

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- And here it is with wallpaper dimming enabled.

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- These are some widgets in Dark Mode.

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- The Settings app in Dark Mode.

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- Maps in Dark Mode.

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- Reminders in Dark Mode.

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- We've got two images from Mail here. To start, this is a Mail folder.

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- And here's an email.

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- Now for Photos. This is the For You tab.

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- And here we're browsing an album.

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- Messages looks very dark, especially on an OLED iPhone.

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- This is Safari in iOS 13 Dark Mode, with Ars Technica's dark mode!

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- Calendar in Dark Mode.

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- The TV app in Dark Mode.

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- Also, podcasts.

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- And then there's Stocks.

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- News has the same white-on-black look as Books' nighttime reading mode. But individual stories may be black text on a white background, depending on the publisher's styling.

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- Notes in Dark Mode.

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- The Health app looks particularly different.

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- The App Store in Dark Mode.

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- The Clock app.

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- And finally, here's Find My.

Samuel Axon

There have been reports that Apple plans to do something users have been asking for since the App Store first launched: change the default system apps for things like email and web browsing. That would obviously be very welcome, but we'll believe it when we see it. We don't want to get our hopes up, after all.

More leaks claim the new iPhone and iPad software will have a feature called "Clips," which would allow users to scan a QR

Code or maybe perform some other action to get nominally functional images of apps that haven't been installed yet, offering some basic features from those apps. Android introduced a couple versions of this idea a while back, for its part.

Messages is almost always a focus in new iOS updates, and it looks like we'll see that again this year. Users will reportedly be able to @ mention each other in group chats, like on Slack, Facebook, or Twitter. Additionally, users could gain the ability to mark messages as unread to return to them later. It also seems like Apple is considering adding the ability to undo sending a message you decide you shouldn't have sent, though it will let the person on the other end know that some omission occurred.

The leaks also say Apple will introduce a new fitness app that will include workout regimens and videos, as well as an augmented reality app. Details on the AR app are light, though.

One of the most incredible rumors is that Apple could introduce a version of Xcode that runs on the iPad Pro. This one came from a Twitter leaker, not the iOS 14 pre-release build leaks. If you're a developer and you know how all this works under the hood, you'll probably agree that seems like a stretch unless it's a stripped-down version of the Mac app missing some key features. But stranger things have happened, we suppose, and the lack of iPad versions of big apps like this is something we've repeatedly knocked iPadOS and the new iPads on, so it's worth mentioning.

After iOS 12 and iOS 13 saw some pretty serious bugs at launch, Apple made some changes to how it tests software internally. The hope is that iOS 14 will be more stable at launch. Apple has said for a couple recent iOS updates that it wanted to focus on stability in that update and then make sweeping feature introductions in the *next* one, but those

stability-oriented updates ended up not being as stable as expected, so that seems to be the narrative once again with iOS 14.

This isn't from as credible a source as some of other reports, but it makes a lot of sense: a leaker said just this week that Apple will drop the "iOS" name and go back to "iPhoneOS" so it fits neatly with macOS and iPadOS.

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