

Windows 11's limited iMessage integration has publicly launched

Enlarge / A promotional screenshot for the feature provided by Microsoft when it was announced in February.

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Today, Microsoft said it is beginning to roll out support for iMessage in Windows 11 via the Phone Link app—with some major limitations.

Microsoft previously announced this feature as part of other planned Windows updates that it revealed in February, including AI built into the search bar and the addition of tabs functionality to the Notepad app. Phone Link for iPhone users was available in an early preview to Windows Insiders, but today marks the beginning of the public rollout.

Phone Link has been around for a long time, but it previously only worked with Android phones. Now it also works with iPhones, but the feature set is comparatively limited. The basics are more or less here, though—iPhone users can use their Windows PCs to make and take calls, read and respond to text messages, see notifications, and access their iOS contacts list.

Unfortunately, they won't be able to participate in group messaging conversations, nor will they be able to send or receive images or videos. Further, the Phone Link features

that are supported will only work while the phone is continually connected to the PC wirelessly via Bluetooth.

Even though the implementation here is more limited than most users would like, it's a small step forward for integrating iPhones and Windows PCs—something many people will surely be happy to see. By the numbers, the iPhone is much more popular than the Mac, and there are many people who use a Windows laptop or desktop but also use an iPhone on the go. Sure, Apple has offered apps like iCloud for Windows to handle things like bookmark syncing and the like, but it never felt as natural as it should, given how many people are in this situation.

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Apple has guarded its iMessage platform fiercely, such that iMessage's biggest downside for many users compared to alternatives is that you just need an Apple device to use it. Now you still need to own one, but you can at least use your Windows PC to engage with iMessage on a basic level.

Microsoft says this feature will roll out to users' PCs over the next few weeks. Some people will have access today, but others will have to wait. Phone Link for iPhone will require iOS 14 or later and Windows 11—not Windows 7, 8, or 10. It also doesn't work with iPads.

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