YouTube is giving Premium subscribers higher-quality video than everyone else



YouTube's introducing an "enhanced" 1080p HD video quality for Premium subscribers — but it's only available on iOS for now, with the option coming to web soon. According to YouTube, the new 1080p Premium option is "an enhanced bitrate version of 1080p" that's supposed to make things look crisper, particularly with videos heavy on detail and motion.

If this all sounds familiar, it's because YouTube started testing this feature earlier this year and had some worried that the company would nerf the existing 1080p option for nonsubscribers. Fortunately, the standard 1080p option isn't going anywhere, not even for Premium members.

You'll still get to use the standard 1080p option on videos (even the ones with 1080p Premium). Not *all* videos will have the 1080p Premium option, either, as YouTube says you won't see it on videos uploaded at resolutions higher or lower than 1080p, Shorts, or in livestreams.

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Although I don’t have YouTube Premium, I’m curious to know how big of a difference there really is between 1080p and 1080p Premium. As my former colleague Mitchell Clark pointed out at the time of the test, a lot of things go into making videos look good, but an enhanced bitrate should, in theory, make them look better, as it stuffs more information per pixel.

Along with this perk, YouTube revealed a handful of other features coming to Premium, including the ability for users on iOS to watch videos with friends and family members using FaceTime via SharePlay. The platform already offers a similar feature on Android, as it lets subscribers use Google Meet to co-watch videos with other people, whether they pay for Premium or not.

There’s also a handy new Premium feature that lets you pick up where you left off on videos across Android, iOS, and the platform’s desktop site. This seems especially helpful if you’re watching something on your phone and want to blow it up on a bigger screen, like your laptop. But it also just sounds nice to be able to continue watching something on the go if you started watching it on your computer, and vice versa.

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Additionally, YouTube’s expanding its Premium queuing feature to phones and tablets, which lets you create a list of videos that you want to watch next. It’s also rolling out the smart downloads feature it started testing last year. This automatically adds recommended videos to your library while you’re connected to Wi-Fi, allowing you to view them when you’re offline. While this sounds helpful when you’re on a

plane or traveling with no service and forget to download videos in advance, it seems like it could be a bit of a storage hog if you don’t disable it.

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