6

COMPUTER SOFTWARE

**iOS 12 review: Apple's new iPhone software will make you use your phone better – and less**[[1]](#footnote-1)

Apple’s new iPhone software, iOS 12, arrives today. It's an update fixed with little tweaks, minor improvements, and subtle changes. But more importantly it's probably the first time that Apple has released an update that it hopes will stop you using your phone.

Everything is calculated to leave you looking at and prodding your phone less than you did before. When it notices that you tend to do something specific at a certain time, it will automatically find a way to take on that work itself, as a shortcut. And when it notices that you're spending too much time on your phone, it can nag you to stop browsing around or shut off your access entirely.

When you use your phone, of course, it will be a more rewarding experience than ever before. FaceTime updates make video chat far more fun than it has ever been, and the augmented reality tools provide Apple's perfect and trademark combination of joy and utility.

One of the most talked-about features is Memoji, which takes the Animoji from last year's iPhone X update, which allowed you control emoji with your face, and allows you to design whatever character you want and then stick it on top of your real face while you're on the phone. It's a complicated feature, and one that is hardly going to change your life, but it's an indication that not all of the joy and whimsy has escaped from this update.

The fact remains however that this is an update mostly about getting rid of the less worthwhile bits, and the parts of the experience that traditionally sit between the home screen and getting to where you want to be.

Apple doesn't want you to stop using your phone, of course. But it appears to be aiming to make the time you do spend with it as happy and efficient as possible, concentrating on the quality of the attention it commands rather than the sheer quantity of it.

It's not the first time Apple has opted for stability over spectacle with a new iOS update. In 2015, it unleashed iOS 9 – which brought a host of changes that were worthwhile precisely because they are so exciting. And it probably won't be the first: all of the recent updates have focused on improvements as much as innovations. iOS is now a mature platform; part of growing up is becoming more boring, but more reliable.

This time around, that improvement to your iPhone comes in two ways: better and less. Apple wants everything you do to be quicker – and, when that's done, it wants your phone to go back into your pocket more quickly, too.

**A Using your phone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Every year, both Apple and its fans have been troubled by a dastardly phenomenon that's come to be known simply as "iPhone slow". This, undoubtedly, is the year of iPhone fast.

There is the simple version of that speed: the software has been tuned up throughout. Performance has been vastly improved, especially on the kinds of older models that have fallen victim to Apple updates in the past. This would be a worthy – though perhaps boring – update in itself.

But it is just the beginning of that speed. It comes in much more innovative, exciting ways too.

Something radical has been quietly happening to the underpinnings of iOS this year. Apple has been changing what it actually means to use an app, all under the banner of "shortcuts".

In their most simple form, shortcuts are just quick ways of getting somewhere on your phone. If someone rings you and you don't pick up, it'll offer a quick notification to ring back; if you tend to always order a particular coffee from a particular spot at a time particular time, it'll notice and set up a way to do that for you.

But in their complex form they are more like an entire new kind of operating system. You can create complex and varied shortcuts of your own, programmed and triggered in custom ways. You might choose that when your phone hears "home time", for instance, it texts your family your ETA, pulls up directions back to your house, sets the oven to start heating up, and plays a radio station for your return drive. All in one seamless little swipe.

This is possible because Apple has gradually been splitting apart what an app actually is. No longer is it just the button on your home screen: there are the extensions that pop up when you go to share something, for instance, allowing you to drop an attachment into any app, or the widgets that appear on the home screen. Some of the most important apps don't actually get opened much at all.

Shortcuts is the latest chapter in that work, and perhaps the most exciting of all. It means that the entire iPhone becomes programmable, ripping apart apps into their various useful parts, and allowing you to combine them in one efficient way.

In the coming days apps will all be updated to make the most of it. That will just be the beginning: once iOS and its apps have changed, the entire way you use your phone might alter too.

There is one thing that is decidedly not faster; one bizarre decision that Apple made that can only be explained by presuming they wanted to slow you down. That's the strange decision to move the option to attach a photo to one of your messages into the long roll of different apps, rather than putting it there all of the time. I initially thought it was the kind of thing that you would get used to, but it's not really.

**B Using your phone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

But when all that is done, and you are finished with your phone, Apple hopes it'll head back into your pocket. And it will try to do that with something somewhere between shame and encouragement.

The chief feature intended for this is Screen Time. That tool collects information about how you use your phone – which apps you use, for how long, how often you pick up your phone and how many notifications it receives – and lays it out in the kind of helpful, infographic-infused design that is familiar from the Health app.

Whether it actually works to keep your phone in your pocket will be entirely dependent on you, of course. (You might not even want it to, in which case it can be turned off.) But it borrows from the Health app in more than just the design: having that information is helpful and powerful in itself, even if it doesn't immediately lead you to change your behaviour.

The second useful way that Apple has stopped your phone bugging you quite so much is the changes to notifications. Apple seems aware that they are both blessing and curse – useful ways of keeping up with what's going on that often serve to pull you into your phone when you don't want to. That has been fixed.

Apple will bundle up notifications into particular groups that are themed around apps, for instance, which allows you to get through them more quickly. If you haven't picked up your phone for a while and wake it up to receive 50 notifications from Twitter, for instance, you can dismiss them all in one go and get on with your day.

And from there you can dismiss them in the future, too. If you're fed up with the updates from a certain app you can turn notifications of entirely, or do so "quietly", meaning they won't intrude into your life so much.

This article has been dapted from: iOS12 review: Griffin. Andrew. Apple’s new iPhone software will make you use your phone better – and less. In: *Independent.com.uk* [online]. [cit. 19.09.2018]. Dostupné z: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/features/ios-12-review-iphone-update-latest-software-download-apple-features-a8541711.html>

1. Adapted from: iOS12 review: Griffin. Andrew. Apple’s new iPhone software will make you use your phone better – and less. In: *Independent.com.uk* [online]. [cit. 19.09.2018]. Dostupné z: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/features/ios-12-review-iphone-update-latest-software-download-apple-features-a8541711.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)