

Apple might delay next big iPhone launch due to coronavirus, report says

The tech giant typically launches new iPhones in the fall. But the coronavirus may force it to change plans.

The coronavirus pandemic has already forced major events such as the SXSW music and tech festival and the Olympics to be canceled or delayed. Now -- if a new media report turns out to be accurate -- Apple may wait a little longer to launch its next iPhone.



The new iPhone, expected to be unveiled in the fall, may be delayed, according to a report in Nikkei, which cites anonymous sources with "direct knowledge" of Apple's internal discussions. Apple still may face supply chain issues, due to China's earlier aggressive shutdowns to combat the virus, the sources said. Also, Apple is concerned that people may not be as excited to upgrade their phones in the middle of a pandemic.

Apple didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Whether Apple does ultimately delay its iPhone or not, the possible move indicates how much the coronavirus continues to impact businesses, in addition to people's daily lives. Apple's most important product is the iPhone, which accounts for about half the company's revenues and a big chunk of its profit as well. Apple's annual cadence of new iPhone releases in the fall has allowed the company to offer new technologies and take on rivals. It's also pushed rivals such as Samsung to offer new technologies of their own, putting pressure on Apple to step up its game too.

This year, however, the tech industry will grapple with supply chain disruptions from China's virus containment efforts, and a slowing economy across the globe as a result of lockdowns and sickness concerns.

Worries about people's slowing spending habits have already pushed the movie industry to delay big blockbusters, like the next James Bond film, and in some cases to test offering people the chance to rent newly released movies online for a little more than the cost of a theater ticket.

Whether tech companies will similarly choose to delay product launches, or change how they do business to adapt, remains to be seen.

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