

iOS 14 is an opportunity for Apple to open up to the world

Allowing changes to the default application is a small but significant improvement.

You can love your iPhone, and you hate it. We all know the device has the perfect hardware, runs an Apple-focused operating system, and applications from third-party developers are of high quality. But users hate the iPhone because of the invisible barriers Apple has created, making daily use of the device face many limitations. You cannot change the default web browser; every time you click on an email address, you're forced to use iOS's pretty bad email application; and because of strict Apple restrictions, customization and app features on iOS are not as complete and comfortable as Android.

Recent rumors suggest that Apple is considering removing some of the aforementioned limitations in iOS 14. This upcoming operating system update could be an ideal opportunity for Apple to "open up" to the world, In the context of regulators in the US and Europe are starting to ask questions surrounding Apple controlling its mobile platform.



According to Bloomberg reported yesterday, Apple is currently considering allowing applications such as Chrome or Gmail to be allowed to become the default applications in iOS 14. That's a relatively small change, but will bring a major impact on with app developers looking to compete with Apple's built-in apps. Windows, Android, and macOS all allow users to set third-party apps as default, but iOS has remained the exception for more than a decade. During that time, developers around the world created more powerful email managers, integrating seamlessly into fully functional calendar applications, viewable on existing mobile browsers. with the

ability to synchronize across many non-Apple platforms. On iOS, users are still forced to use Apple-developed apps, often with far less functionality.

Why now?

iOS 14 is the perfect time to loosen application restrictions, as regulators in Europe and the United States are ruthlessly scrutinizing Apple's mobile platform and influence. The EU is said to be preparing to launch an antitrust investigation against Apple after Spotify filed a petition alleging that Apple favored the "genuine" music service by imposing restrictions on the companies. competitor service. Spotify also disagreed with Apple's demands, that iPhone users had to purchase the app through its App Store, and then earn developers a commission of up to 30%.

Apple's criticism of Spotify shows exactly the difficulties that third-party developers face when competing with iPhone manufacturers on a platform where it rules and can replace them. exchange them in a flash. Developers looking to avoid the fees Apple charges from in-app transactions are prohibited from letting their customers know where, and how, to buy things they sell outside the App Store. . This means that applications such as Netflix, without enabling in-app purchase, allow customers to subscribe to subscriptions, are not allowed to give links to their websites, or even is telling users who need to visit netflix.com to register.

Apple is facing similar petitions related to the above 30% commission, and the US Supreme Court last year decided that the company would face an antitrust case on the App. Store.



However, Apple is not only being "soi" for "eating thick". Tile, a Bluetooth tracking device company, recently spoke at an antitrust hearing before Congress that Apple is looking to catch potential rivals on its own platform. Accordingly, Apple is said to be about to launch a competing product with Tile's Bluetooth tracking card, and Tile's vice president Kirsten Daru has accused Apple of using iOS to favor its own interests.

" Apple is acting as a gatekeeper for applications and technology in a way that favors their own interests," Daru said. " You may be the best team, but you are playing against another team that owns the stadium itself, the ball, and the whole tournament, and you can change the rules when they want to."

Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Democratic presidential candidate, is also concerned about how Apple controls the App Store and believes that the company should not both run the App Store and distribute apps on it. " *Only one or two,*" she said. " *Either they run the platform, or they join the store. They shouldn't do both at the same time.*"

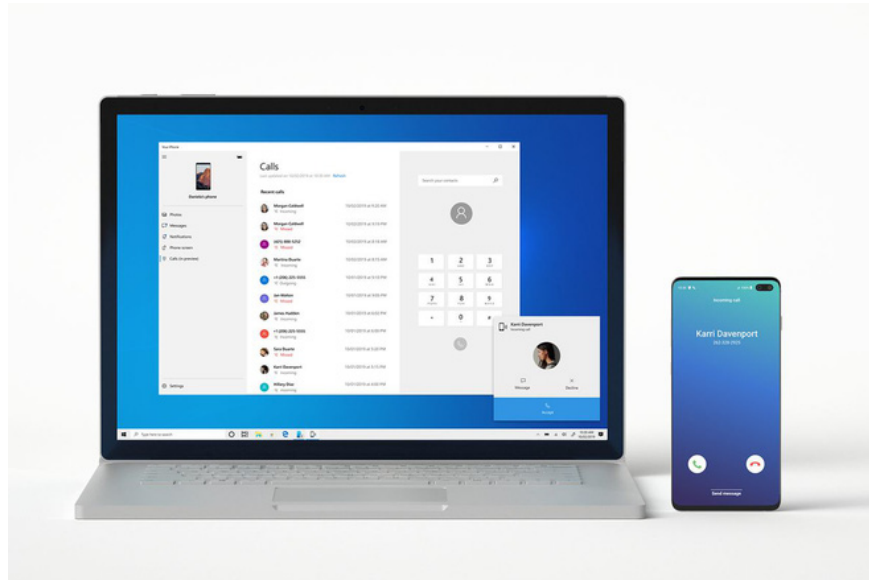
Annoying bans from Apple

Apple's reluctance to allow iPhone users to set their favorite apps as the default has caused a discomfort, forcing developers to find ways to deal with it. Apps like Outlook allow you to set Google Maps and Chrome as the default to open maps and web links, and other applications like YouTube open links directly in Chrome if you have this browser installed. Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Twitter, and other applications register their links in iOS as an Apple approved solution to solve the problem of not being able to change default apps. Immediately when you click on the link associated with these applications in other applications, you will be redirected to the iOS app "genuine" if they are already installed. But you can't put those links to open in third-party Twitter apps, or other alternatives.

Despite these solutions, users are often "blocked" by Safari whenever they open links that their friends or family send via iMessage or WhatsApp. And webmail links are pushed to the built-in email application in iOS - something no one wants to use. Siri is also the default app, and is the only virtual assistant you can activate using your voice from the lock screen. Alexa, Google Assistant, and Cortana are all limited to only being allowed to operate within their own applications.

If Apple really loosened the rules for default apps, the overall experience on iOS would improve in a lot of ways - but that depends on how far the company goes. The restrictions Apple places on applications are much more complex, not just around the limits of default apps, and are often related to important security needs. Chrome, Edge, Firefox, Brave, and other browsers all have to use Safari's WebKit-based engine when running on iOS, because Apple doesn't allow rival rendering engines to work on its platform. Thanks to this, Apple can control the security and how web content is built on its devices in every application. Third-party applications are also limited in how they interact with iMessage messages and phone calls.

These limits improve iOS security in many ways, by restricting potentially malicious code from running freely, and preventing applications from sending out SMS messages in their name. user. But that also led to eliminating competition and minimizing the choice of iPhone users. Microsoft's Your Phone app lets you map and fully control an Android device from a Windows computer, and can even send and receive messages, make calls. The same app on iOS is virtually useless, because none of the aforementioned features works!



Microsoft's Your Phone app

Another way that Apple can take to "open the door" is to change the App Store policy. Google, Nvidia, and Microsoft are all facing challenges in implementing cloud game streaming services on iOS. It took nearly a year for Apple to approve Valve's Steam Link application to the App Store, though it mostly streamed games from PC to phone. Apple initially rejected Steam Link due to a "*business conflict*", and it is likely that the reason for this application is that it allows iOS users to access the Steam app store within the control ecosystem. Apple's tight. Microsoft is currently testing the xCloud beta service within the limited frameworks of the App Store policy and says it has had to restrict some of the app's features to itself.

In the past, Apple has relaxed some of the strict rules in iOS, showing how the company's operating system will change in the future. Apple created CallKit to allow VoIP applications like WhatsApp, Skype, Messenger, and others to integrate more deeply into the iOS caller. Users can now make and receive calls through WhatsApp, which looks like regular iPhone calls, even appearing in the device's call history list.

Apple has loosened the rules regarding third-party keyboard apps on iOS 3, and even now its Messages app is able to use its built-in QuickType feature to separate SMS codes. to other applications. This helps reduce the time wasted when you need other applications to retrieve SMS codes, but if Apple is willing to further relax the limits in the Messages app, they can allow competitors to create So the real alternatives to iMessage on iPhone, fully support the new RCS standard.

Playground is not fair

Third-party app developers have been accusing Apple of stealing ideas in their apps for years, then putting those ideas on iOS and macOS. Apple has been developing features like Bitmoji, Moment, IFTTT, Google Photos, Houseparty, AR measurement apps, and more. It was even given a nickname, "Sherlocking," which originated from features it equipped with a desktop search engine called Sherlock in 2002, but actually existed on an application before. quite popular 3rd party name Watson.

Recently, Blix, developer of email management application BlueMail, claimed that Apple stole its anonymous email login feature, then abolished the Blix application on the iPhone by limiting its appearance in the Search results and kick this app out of the macOS App Store. Blix is currently suing Apple and urging other developers to speak out against what they call Apple's *"unfair business tactics ."*

Sometimes, Apple-developed alternatives come soon after the company has shut down third-party apps. Apple used to control time spent on iOS devices just as it began to take down third-party apps that provide similar functionality. Apple then halted the action, but anyone looking at it knew what was happening.

Apple also faces doubts that the restrictions it places on its platform don't always apply to its own applications. Recently, Apple began demolishing apps that take advantage of the location and Bluetooth features of iOS 13 by issuing warnings that many third-party apps are using location data of users in the background. While this feature is designed to protect privacy, Apple does not make similar notices aimed at its own applications, such as Find My.

Those pop-up alerts are annoying, because you have to keep pressing the "Always Allow" button every few days, even though telling iOS you want the app to always have access to data. place. Google has put a similar limit on Android applications, but its own applications are not immune from being affected.

Apple also "bends" its own rules elsewhere in iOS when using push notifications to promote Apple Music, Apple TV Plus, or even its Carpool Karaoke show. Apple's regulations emphasize that push notifications are *"not intended for advertising, promotion, or direct marketing purposes"*.

The recommendations from the developers certainly shook Apple, and iOS 14 could be an opportunity for the company to cool down the pressures it is facing from its managers, while at the same time. can improve the overall experience on iPhone and iPad for consumers. If in September, when holding the iPhone in your hand, you can use your favorite email applications, browsers . a little more freely, it will be a small change but it is worth welcoming. welcomes in the effort to open Apple's "walls".

Reference: TheVerge

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