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June 4, 2014, 7:40 a.m. EDT

How to get Apple iOS 8 features right now
Consumers don't have to wait for the software upgrade this fall

6 Comments

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By **Quentin Fottrell**

Bloomberg
Craig Federighi, vice president of software engineering at Apple Inc., delivers a keynote address during the Apple World Wide Developers Conference in San Francisco on June 2, 2014.

Nobody needs to invent an app for déjà vu. On Monday, when Apple (NASDAQ:AAPL)   CEO Tim Cook unveiled the new iOS 8 software due out this fall, many developers were shocked by the sheer number of features the company appears to have "borrowed" — as one rival delicately put it — from their developers.

In the absence of revolutionary new products like the iPad, iPhone or even iPod, Cook is focusing on improving the software experience, experts say. "Apple is playing catch-up," says Rick Singer, CEO of GreatApps.com. The decision to stream Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference led many customers and developers to suspect the launch of a new device. That didn't happen. Instead, Apple unveiled a series of upgrades to improve Apple software on its existing suite of products. "I haven't seen anything that really knocks my socks off and I've used an iPhone for five years," Singer adds.

To be fair, there's a gold rush among all major software providers and it's hard to

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Apple's big reveal at WWDC

A new operating system called Yosemite, iOS 8 for the iPhone and iPad are just a few things Apple had in store at WWDC. Photo: Getty Images.

always say who came up with what first, says Aram Sinnreich, media professor at Rutgers University. "They're basically converging on the same space, and they're always borrowing features and design tweaks from one another," he says. Apple's iOS 8 is mostly an incremental upgrade, he says, and Cook is prepping design and functionality for an operating system that will eventually work across all devices: Mobile, wearable, living room, car and laptop and desktop. (Apple did not respond to a request for comment.)

Apple has a major advantage over the small army of apps and Android devices. Consumers can get them all in one place and don't have to download multiple apps to enjoy the features of Apple's iOS 8. Apple is looking forward to a day when people need fewer apps cluttering their screens, says e-commerce consultant Bryan Eisenberg. Convenience of platform rules. "Ultimately, people are lazy and would rather get 80% functionality than open up another app," he says. As technology evolves, however, Singer says Apple is determined to strive toward 100% functionality, even if such a thing doesn't exist.

[Also see: New from Apple: the combative Tim Cook](#)

Many of the bells and whistles Cook (and his colleagues) highlighted in Apple's presentation are already available elsewhere. Here's where you can find them:

Smart home

Apple unveiled HomeKit for iOS 8, which would allow makers of "smart home" devices like thermostats and locks to connect to Apple's mobile device. But last January, Google (NASDAQ:GOOG) acquired home automation startup Nest, whose products include an energy-efficient thermostat and a two-in-one smoke/carbon dioxide detector, which can be controlled by smartphone. "This gave Google the foot in the door for the home automation market," Singer says. It isn't without hiccups: Last month, the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) recalled 440,000 Nest smoke and CO2 detectors over reported false alarms.

Chat and text

Cook is appealing to teenagers and young adults with a host of new features for iMessage that are rampant on messaging apps. WhatsApp CEO Jan Koum sent this pointed tweet: "very flattering to see Apple 'borrow' numerous WhatsApp features into iMessage in iOS 8 #innovation." Presumably, the hashtag was ironic. Why? Apple added video, location-based data and audio to the iMessage app, which already exist on WhatsApp, and other messaging apps popular with teenagers like Viber and Kik. Apple will also introduce a self-destruct button for messages, made popular by Snapchat.
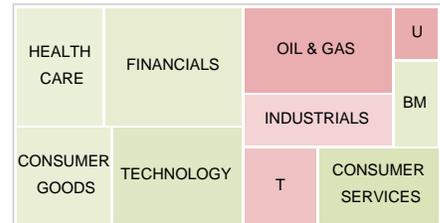
Android functionality

Google's Android operating system already does much of what iOS 8 is promising to deliver. Like Android, Apple will introduce predictive words above its keyboard. Apple will allow other third-party software keyboards to access its famously-closed ecosystem. Also available on Android and coming soon to an Apple device near you: Video previews on apps for sale in the Apple Store; a function to respond to pop-ups without opening the app; third party widgets — mini-apps like stock market tickers and calendar notifications; and the ability for iCloud to support whatever file type you like.

Braille keyboard

Apple's new Braille keyboard will join apps like VB Reader (free on all platforms), which uses vibrations, Braille Writer ($1.99 on all platforms), essentially a Braille/text translator for someone who doesn't know how to use Braille but wants to share Braille with someone with impaired sight through email, and Braillist (free on iOS), which uses audio. Apple didn't specify exactly how its own Braille keyboard will work, but having a keyboard integrated into an iPhone that works with maps, iMessage and other functions would clearly be a huge advantage to blind iPhone users, Singer says.

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10 yr fixed	3.2%			
30 yr fixed refi	4.2%			
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Health and fitness

Apple's HealthKit also enters a crowded market. Existing rivals include apps to check heart rate (AliveCor, a $199 portable heart monitor that interacts with your iPhone or Android phone) and sleep patterns (Sleep Cycle; 99 cents on iPhone and Zeo Sleep Manager Mobile; free for iOS and Android). Apple didn't linger on the plans for HealthKit, but did indicate that those plans are ambitious: For those who are too proud to admit a problem, HealthKit aims to reach out to doctors if the user's data suggest that there's something wrong. ■

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> **vn trader**   4 minutes ago
>
> **@Winston Staten** This is not a game changer. This is just upgrade...
>
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SOJ Thumper   9 hours ago

Where to get Apple iOS 8 features right now ??

Simple.......UPGRADE to an Android phone and dump the overpriced iPhone!

2 👤👤 Like   Reply

Tim Strongvelter   15 hours ago

Typical clickbait so common today. Say something bad about a popular or well-liked
company and wait for the page views to roll in. Disgusting.

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Sandy Dole   16 hours ago

Everything was available before iPhone was launched. Yet it was not in one place,
not in an orderly fashion, not easily usable and in a very crude form (remember
Blackberry, Google phones). Apple haters always make the argument: Android has

everything. Apple is just catching up.

Folks, Android is a stolen product and a can of worms (malware).

Google and Samsung have not only stolen iPhone features, look and feel, they have been stealing Apple rumors. Samsung has already come up with watch and band? and Health-Kit? So when Apple comes up with iWatch that has everything right, some people are going to say, "See Apple is catching up ... stealing others ideas."

There is not one feature in Android ecosystem that is not the result of the following thinking: "Apple is going to do this, so let us do this first though it would be patchwork but let us first do it."

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