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What you should know about Apple's AirTag

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Q: What do I do when my iPhone gives me a notification "Unknown Accessory Detected Near You" and it looks like something is following me around?

A: This message is most likely being generated by the 'Find My' app that was initially designed to help users locate devices that they may have lost or misplaced. It has since evolved into a warning system for unauthorized or unknown devices as well.

The introduction of Apple's AirTag, which is a small tracking device that can be attached to a keychain or backpack caused a lot of concern from privacy advocates for its nefarious stalking and tracking potential.

To help assure users that they could detect devices that aren't necessarily associated with their phones, Apple expanded the 'Find My' network capabilities to include notifications of unknown items near you.

AirTag notifications

The alert system is designed to notify you of an AirTag that is near you but separated from its owner and will specifically use AirTag in the notification.

To ensure that your iPhone or iPad can alert you to any unwanted tracking devices, you'll need to make sure you are running iOS 14.5 or later and make sure the following settings are in place:

Go to Settings > Privacy > Location Services, and turn Location Services on.

Go to Settings > Privacy > Location Services > System Services. Turn Find My iPhone on.

Go to Settings > Privacy > Location Services > System Services. Turn Significant Locations on to be notified when you arrive at a significant location, such as your home.

Go to the Find My app, tap the Me tab, and turn Item Safety Alerts on.

Make sure Bluetooth is turned on in order to detect items

Also, an AirTag that has been separated from its owner for a period of time (8 to 24 hours) is designed to start emitting a sound to help locate it.

Unknown accessory notifications

This more generic notification isn't likely an AirTag and can be caused by any number of popular accessories such as most newer AirPods models and since Apple opened up the network to non-Apple devices in April of 2021, a number of other products.

Most newer Beats wireless audio products also work on the 'Find My' network (Apple owns Beats), but other earbuds from companies such as Belkin can also generate the 'Unknown Accessory Detected Near You' notification.

Trackers from a company called Chipolo as well as e-bikes from VanMoof and soon to be available backpacks from Targus are all capable of being detected on the 'Find My' network.

Why is it following me?

If the 'Find My' notification shows that the unknown device seems to be moving with you, it's most likely someone that you are traveling with has one of the items, most likely earbuds of some sort, that was detected.

The 'First seen with you' timestamp may be helpful in determining the person that may have the device that's being detected

Depending upon the device, you may be able to tap the 'Learn About This Item' to figure out what it may be or tap on the 'Instructions to Disable item' to keep the item from tracking your location.

If it turns out to be something that isn't a cause for concern, you can pause the safety alerts to stop the notifications.

Ken Colburn

Columnist

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The Telegraph

Privacy comes first for Apple

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It is always about privacy-first for Apple, which the company has highlighted with the recent changes to AirTags, which was launched last year to help locate personal belongings. Then came reports of AirTags being used to track people without knowledge. What happened and what has changed?

AirTags are usually attached to items like car keys and bags. In case you don't find those items at any given point, visit the Find My app on the phone, select an item and hit 'Find'. The app will connect with the AirTag and the ultrawide chip will direct you to the tag. On the phone's screen an arrow will appear to point you in the direction of the AirTag (older iPhones can find AirTags using Bluetooth). As you approach, you will be able to hear the tracker beep.

It can also help find items that you may have accidentally dropped in, say, the park. AirTags work on the Find My network by emitting Bluetooth identifiers. And these identifiers are not reused, meaning when you travel with an AirTag from place to place, you are not re-identified. Further, Find My network is encrypted. The signals from the AirTag are carried forward but only your device can decode it. The network leverages the entire Apple base, so it offers a scale of almost a billion devices. All the information is end-to-end encrypted and not even Apple can see it.

The issue is being addressed

There have been reports of the device being used to track people by hiding it behind number plate of cars or inside the dashboard. To take care of the issue, Apple has announced some advancements coming to AirTag and the Find My network.

New privacy warnings during AirTag set-up: With an upcoming software update, every user setting up their AirTag for the first time will see a message that clearly states that AirTag is meant to track their own belongings, that using AirTag to track people without consent is a crime in many regions around the world.

Addressing alert issues for AirPods: Users have reported receiving an "Unknown Accessory Detected" alert. This alert will not display if an AirTag is detected near you — only AirPods (3rd generation), AirPods Pro, AirPods Max, or a third-party Find My network accessory. In the same software update, there is an update in the alert users receive to indicate that AirPods have been travelling with them instead of an "Unknown Accessory".

Precision Finding: This update will arrive later in the year. Precision Finding allows recipients of an unwanted tracking alert to locate an unknown AirTag with precision. iPhone 11, iPhone 12, and iPhone 13 users will be able to use Precision Finding to see the distance and direction to an unknown AirTag when it is in range. As an iPhone user moves, Precision Finding fuses input from the camera, ARKit, accelerometer, and gyroscope to guide them to the AirTag through a combination of sound, haptics, and visual feedback.

Tuning AirTag's sound: Currently, iOS users receiving an unwanted tracking alert can play a sound to help them find the unknown AirTag. The company will be adjusting the tone sequence to use more of the loudest tones to make an unknown AirTag more easily findable.

"What these unwanted tracking alerts are showing us is that Apple's system is working and, at the same time, raising awareness of this issue," said Renee Williams, executive director, National Center for Victims of Crime in the US.

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Fine-tune your phone list: Apple's iOS 15 and Google's Android 12 can be much more useful

665 words

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The Telegraph

ABPTEL

English

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Apple's iOS Contacts app and Google's free Contacts for Android include a card for your own details. It may seem odd, but the information you provide is helpful when working with your phone's assistant app or using auto-fill fields in the Safari and Chrome browsers. For example, specifying family relationships on your personal contact card helps Siri or the Google Assistant when you say, "Call Mom," although you will probably need to verbally confirm the relationship with the assistant.

To find your card on the iPhone, open the Contacts app. If you do not see it at the top of the list, tap the + icon to set it up. Select your card and tap Edit. Tap "add related name" and choose relationship labels for family members. In the Medical ID area, you can designate an emergency contact visible on your lock screen if you are incapacitated.

In Google's Contacts, tap your Google Account profile icon, select Contacts App Settings, choose Your Info and tap Edit Contact to fill in your details. On many Google Pixel models, you can designate emergency contacts in Google's free Personal Safety app or on the lock screens of other phones.

To create a contact on an iPhone or an Android phone, open the contacts app, tap the + button and fill in the fields.

A contact can be more than just a digital Rolodex card. You can add phonetic name-pronunciation guides, social media handles, images, short notes (like "vegetarian" or "Bengals fan"), birthdays; those dates are then added to your iPhone's optional birthdays calendar or Google's Calendar app.

To update a contact, select it and tap the Edit button in the top-right corner of the iPhone screen or the Edit Contact button in the lower-right corner on an Android phone. In the editing mode, add new details, like addresses for future travel directions. To add a profile picture, tap the photo icon and choose an image on your phone.

On the iPhone's contact-editing screen, you can assign a specific ringtone and text tone for that person. If you want to delete the contact, scroll to the bottom of the screen and tap Delete Contact.

In Google's Contacts on an Android phone, tap the three-dot More menu in the top-right corner of an open card to get to the options for assigning a specific ringtone, sharing or deleting the contact, and more.

Finding multiple entries for the same person? In iOS 15, you can link the contacts to hide the duplicates. Just open one of the entries and tap Edit. Scroll to and tap Link Contacts, select the other version and tap Link to unify the cards.

Google's Contacts includes a Merge & Fix command to clean up duplicates. Tap the Menu icon in the upper-left corner, choose Merge & Fix and follow along; the tool is also available for Google Contacts on the web, as is the ability to label contacts. If you prefer to merge contacts manually, tap the More menu in the upper-right corner and choose Select to pick the entries from the list. Tap the More menu again and choose Merge.

Now that your contacts have been updated, put them to work. For instance, you can add an iOS widget to your iPhone's home screen for quick access to your favourite folks. On many Android phones, you can save a contact shortcut to your home screen from Google's Contacts menu.

A card's share option makes it easy to text or email contact details to others. Tell your phone's assistant to open a specific contact so you can get to the one-tap shortcuts for making video calls, sending electronic cash and more. Or save time and just tell your assistant to start the call or message for you.

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Deep Dive

Apple is Berkshire's largest stock holding, but Buffett and Co. own a bigger share of these companies

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Berkshire Hathaway owned at least 10% of eight other companies' stock as of the end of 2021, according to a new filing

AFP via Getty Images This is 13F season — when investment companies report their holdings to the Securities and Exchange Commission. It's always instructive to look at Berkshire Hathaway's holdings to see if CEO Warren Buffett has been up to anything new, and of course to think about his favorite stock investments.

Berkshire Hathaway Inc. BRK.B is, of course, primarily a conglomerate of insurance companies, but also railroads, utilities and companies involved in power generation. Through its stock portfolio, Berkshire also has large investments in other industries, as you can see below.

The company's quarterly 13F listing its stock holdings as of Dec. 31 was filed with the SEC on Feb. 14. One change of note from the previous quarter was that Berkshire Hathaway [had bought shares](#) of Activision Blizzard Inc. ATVI before the video game developer agreed to be acquired by Microsoft Corp. MSFT on Jan. 18. This is [an all-cash deal valued at \\$68.7 billion](#), which will need to clear regulatory hurdles before completion.

Berkshire's Activision shares were worth \$975 million as of Dec. 31, which the Associated Press described as a "big stake." However, that was actually Berkshire's 24th largest stock holding as of the end of 2021. That's hardly enough to move the needle for Berkshire.

Buffett has been a long-term holder of Apple Inc. AAPL, and Berkshire's Apple shares were worth \$157.5 billion as of the end of 2021. But Berkshire's ownership stake in Apple was 5.41%. Within Berkshire's stock portfolio, the conglomerate had larger ownership percentages in 15 companies.

Two lists of Berkshire's largest stock holdings

First, here are the 20 companies for which Berkshire held at least 3% of common shares as of Dec 31:

Company	Ticker	Value of
Berkshire Hathaway's holdings - Dec. 31, 2021 (\$mil)		
Company market cap - Dec. 31, 2021 (\$mil)		
Berkshire ownership stake		
DaVita Inc.	DVA	\$4,106
		\$11,592
35.42%		
Kraft Heinz Co.	KHC	\$11,690
		\$43,943
26.60%		
Liberty Media Corp. Series A Liberty	SiriusXM LSXMA	\$1,028
		\$4,954
20.74%		
American Express Co.	AXP	\$24,804
		\$126,717
19.57%		
Liberty Media Corp. Series C Liberty	SiriusXM LSXMK	\$2,197
		\$11,451
19.19%		
Moody's Corp.	MCO	\$9,636
		\$72,609
13.27%		

Bank of America Corp.		BAC	\$44,939
12.34%	\$364,110		
VeriSign Inc.		VRSN	\$3,253
11.54%	\$28,194		
Coca-Cola Co.		KO	\$23,684
9.26%	\$255,787		
Store Capital Corp.		STOR	\$840
8.95%	\$9,380		
Bank of New York Mellon Corp.		BK	\$4,203
8.76%	\$47,964		
U.S. Bancorp		USB	\$7,101
8.53%	\$83,289		
RH		RH	\$974
8.46%	\$11,506		
Kroger Co.		KR	\$2,780
8.35%	\$33,278		
Globe Life Inc.		GL	\$595
6.29%	\$9,464		
Apple Inc.		AAPL	\$157,529
5.41%	\$2,913,284		
General Motors Co.		GM	\$3,518
4.13%	\$85,123		
StoneCo Ltd. Class A		STNE	\$180
4.07%	\$4,432		
Verizon Communications Inc.		VZ	\$8,253
3.78%	\$218,128		
Nu Holdings Ltd. Class A		NU	\$1,005
3.10%	\$32,440		

Sources: Berkshire Hathaway 13F filing on Feb. 14, 2022; FactSet
You can click on the tickers for more about each company.

Click [here](#) Tomi Kilgore's detailed guide to the wealth of information available for free on the MarketWatch quote page.

Here are Berkshire Hathaway's largest stock investments by market value as of the end of 2021 — 23 companies valued \$1 billion or more:

Company	Ticker	Value of
Berkshire Hathaway's holdings - Dec. 31, 2021 (\$mil)		Company market cap - Dec. 31, 2021 (\$mil)
Berkshire ownership stake		
Apple Inc.	AAPL	\$157,529
5.41%		\$2,913,284
Bank of America Corp.	BAC	\$44,939
12.34%		\$364,110
American Express Co.	AXP	\$24,804
19.57%		\$126,717
Coca-Cola Co.	KO	\$23,684
9.26%		\$255,787

Kraft Heinz Co.		KHC	\$11,690
26.60%	\$43,943		
Moody's Corp.		MCO	\$9,636
13.27%	\$72,609		
Verizon Communications Inc.		VZ	\$8,253
3.78%	\$218,128		
U. S. Bancorp		USB	\$7,101
8.53%	\$83,289		
Chevron Corp.		CVX	\$4,488
1.98%	\$226,214		
Bank of New York Mellon Corp.		BK	\$4,203
8.76%	\$47,964		
DaVita Inc.		DVA	\$4,106
35.42%	\$11,592		
General Motors Co.		GM	\$3,518
4.13%	\$85,123		
VeriSign Inc.		VRSN	\$3,253
11.54%	\$28,194		
Kroger Co.		KR	\$2,780
8.35%	\$33,278		
Charter Communications Inc. Class A		CHTR	\$2,496
2.22%	\$112,622		
Liberty Media Corp. Series C Liberty	SiriusXM	LSXMK	\$2,197
19.19%	\$11,451		
Snowflake Inc. Class A		SNOW	\$2,075
2.00%	\$103,759		
Visa Inc. Class A		V	\$1,798
0.50%	\$361,346		
Amazon.com Inc.		AMZN	\$1,778
0.11%	\$1,691,003		
Mastercard Incorporated Class A		MA	\$1,432
0.41%	\$350,232		
Aon Plc Class A		AON	\$1,321
2.00%	\$66,223		
Liberty Media Corp. Series A Liberty	SiriusXM	LSXMA	\$1,028
20.74%	\$4,954		
Nu Holdings Ltd. Class A		NU	\$1,005
3.10%	\$32,440		

Sources: Berkshire Hathaway 13F filing on Feb. 14, 2022; FactSet
Don't miss: [10 tech value stocks that at least 75% of analysts rate as a 'buy' right now](#)

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Daily

Apple Stock Is Beating the Rest of Big Tech. Why It's Outpacing Netflix, Microsoft, and Others.

By Jack Denton

761 words

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Barron's Online

BON

English

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While the Nasdaq Composite is having an ugly start to 2022, it can't blame its most influential component:

Apple.

With the technology sector making up around 50% of the index, the Nasdaq is a proxy for U.S.-listed tech. And it has fallen more than 11% this year, putting it [firmly in correction territory](#).

The Nasdaq is weighted by market capitalization, so moves among its largest constituents have the most influence. But it isn't a decline in the biggest of the tech giants that is leading the index downward.

Apple (ticker: AAPL)—the world's most valuable public company, with a [market capitalization approaching \\$3 trillion](#)—is the Nasdaq's largest component, and it was down less than 5% so far this year, as of Monday's close. That means Apple's relative outperformance has actually added buoyancy to the Nasdaq.

Apple shares were up 1.6%, at \$171.62, in recent trading. The Nasdaq Composite was up 2%.

There are a few major factors explaining why tech stocks at large have fallen so hard.

Chief among them is the fact that, facing historically high inflation, the Federal Reserve will [soon start raising interest rates](#) and tightening monetary policy. This has helped spur a rally in longer-duration bond yields; the yield on the benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury note was up above 2% again Tuesday, having crossed that key mark for the first time since 2019 last week. (Bond prices and yields move in the opposite direction.)

Higher bond yields tend to hurt tech stocks more than others. Since these companies typically rely on innovation and growth, their stock market valuations bank on the prospect of profits years in the future. Higher yields reduce the discounted present value of future cash, making lofty valuations in tech less palatable.

A look at the insides of the Nasdaq reveals a lot of red. Dozens of smaller companies have lost more than 60% so far this year, according to FactSet data. A number of really big ones, like Netflix (NFLX) and Facebook parent Meta Platforms (FB), are down around 35%.

Shifting business trends are playing a role as well.

Netflix, a key beneficiary of the Covid-19 pandemic as millions of housebound people spent more time streaming entertainment, [looks a bit less shiny](#) amid slower growth. Meta's [disastrous recent quarterly earnings](#) saw it lose more than a [quarter of its market capitalization](#) in one day as a result of headwinds to its advertising business and concern that users are fleeing its platforms.

By comparison, Apple looks like a winner. The iPhone maker's latest quarterly results showed sales and earnings well ahead of Wall Street's expectations. The [reaction was so good](#) that it buoyed stock-index futures for the next day.

Apple is now trading more like its peers in the Dow Jones Industrial Average, an index of 30 U.S. companies that make up the core of blue-chip stocks. Apple's year-to-date declines match far more closely with the Dow's 5.5% slip in 2022 than the Nasdaq's slide into correction.

And it is also outpacing most of its tech giant peers. While far from the fall from grace experienced by Netflix and Meta, Microsoft (MSFT), Alphabet (GOOGL), and Amazon.com (AMZN)—which round out the traditional Big Tech stocks—were down around 12%, 6%, and 7% so far this year, respectively.

Wall Street's outlook on Apple is, in turn, bright.

Analysts at investment bank Tigress reiterated their Strong Buy rating on Apple stock and raised their target price on the shares to \$210, implying some 25% upside.

"Strong product demand, new product introductions, and accelerating services revenue combined with a better supply chain are set to drive another year of record performance," the team at Tigress said.

The analysts cited Apple's record quarterly revenue driven as evidence of ongoing strong customer demand, with advancements into the payments space being a spot for growth.

"Apple's industry-leading position and strong brand equity, driven by its innovative ability and powerful cash generation, will continue to generate an increasing return on capital, driving the ongoing growth of economic profit and shareholder value creation," the Tigress analysts said. "We believe further upside in the shares exists."

Write to Jack Denton at jack.denton@dowjones.com

[Apple Stock Is Beating the Rest of Big Tech. Why It's Outpacing Netflix, Microsoft, and Others.](#)

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Press Release: Jamf and Google Cloud Partner to Provide Users with Advanced Security, Management and Employee Productivity

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Jamf and Google Cloud Partner to Provide Users with Advanced Security, Management and Employee Productivity

MINNEAPOLIS, Feb. 15, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Jamf (NASDAQ: JAMF), the standard in **Apple** Enterprise Management, today announced a new integration with Google Cloud's zero trust access solution, BeyondCorp Enterprise, bringing macOS compliance to **Apple** administrators using Jamf and Google Cloud. This collaboration supports and encourages employee choice initiatives, as it equips administrators with the ability to provide more security capabilities to users outside of their company's internal network perimeter. Through this partnership, customers can ensure that only trusted users from managed computers are appropriately accessing Google Workspace and other resources protected by Google Cloud's BeyondCorp Enterprise.

As a member of the BeyondCorp Alliance, Jamf provides another competitive advantage to organizations adopting employee choice programs and leveraging enterprise security solutions, without compromising the user experience. Combining the ecosystem management strengths of both companies, this integration is especially useful for organizations with Apple devices and Google Cloud infrastructure.

With many employees working remotely, it's important for admins to ensure users are protected and can access corporate resources from wherever they choose to work. Jamf provides admins with the ability to monitor the security status of company devices, ensuring the device and corporate information is protected. This new integration with BeyondCorp Enterprise offers admins the ability to leverage device signal information from Jamf to create and configure policies that provide secure access to corporate resources and protect sensitive information.

In addition, Jamf also integrates with Google Identity through a new workflow that provides IT admins an efficient way to create Mac accounts with a Google username and password. Recently, Jamf announced that through this integration, a user's cloud password is kept in sync with their Mac password, making it easy to access the resources they need to be productive with one set of credentials.

"With today's mobile workforce, organizations need to manage and secure company devices while providing end users with a seamless experience that powers them no matter where they are working from," said Nick Amundsen, senior vice president of strategy, Jamf. "These integrations with Google Cloud help Jamf customers advance security, management and employee productivity by giving end users the power to leverage both Jamf and Google Cloud to gain immediate and secure access to the resources and apps they need to be productive."

"As more organizations shift to work from anywhere models, businesses must adopt enhanced security measures to stay ahead of next generation threats," said Prashant Jain, Product Manager at Google Cloud. "Through our partnership with Jamf, we are actively addressing the need for increased security and access management to keep mobile workforces safe and are delivering on our zero trust security vision."

To learn more about the Jamf and Google partnership, visit: <https://www.jamf.com/integrations/google/>.

About Jamf

Jamf, the standard in Apple Enterprise Management, extends the legendary Apple experience people love to businesses, schools, and government organizations through its software and the world's largest online community of admins focused exclusively on Apple, Jamf Nation. To learn more, visit: www.jamf.com.

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Hindustan Times, business

Making Alexa learn Hindi: 'We built a rich vocabulary to understand context'

Vishal Mathur

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15 February 2022

Hindustan Times

HNTM

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India, Feb. 15 -- Four years is a long time. That is how long Amazon's Alexa has been in India for, and while not the first, it did bring voice-based virtual assistants into the reckoning for a much larger demographic of users. Something Google Assistant had managed to a limited extent because of the massive Android phone user base, but **Apple** Siri and Microsoft's now largely abandoned Cortana could not.

These assistants had considerable platforms - Siri gets **Apple**'s device ecosystem including iPhone, while Cortana was front and centre on millions of Windows PCs for years.

In an exclusive conversation with HT, Puneesh Kumar, who is country manager for Alexa, Amazon India, says there has been a 350% increase in active users in India over the last two years. "In 2021 particularly, the number of requests to Alexa grew by about 68%," he says. He shares more numbers. Every day, Alexa users demand 21.6 lakh songs, there are 1.7 lakh queries including about cricket, 8.6 lakh request within the Amazon Shopping app and 2.6 lakh smart home control commands sent out. That's every day.

The Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) and digital agency Isobar estimates released in 2021 indicate voice search queries are growing at 270% per year in India. In 2020, the Dentsu Aegis Network India's Recogn had released the Voice Technology in India report, which indicated users think Google Assistant is smart with replies, but Alexa is more reliable including with managing smart home devices.

Making space in classrooms

Things have gone much beyond music in the last four years in India. Education has seen ingenious uses of voice assistants. More so in smaller towns, where children don't always have access to the same tools and teaching quality, as in larger cities. Kumar talks about unique instances where Alexa was deployed in schools in India, in smaller towns. That got Amazon thinking. "We contemplated how can we use Alexa in schools in remote areas," says Kumar.

A schoolteacher in the Warud district of Maharashtra, Amol Bhuyar, bought an Echo smart speaker and then with the help of the school headmistress, gathered enough funds to make a mannequin inside which the Echo was installed. It ran on a power bank and connected to the internet using a mobile hotspot. The mannequin, dressed in jeans and a striped black and white T-shirt, stands a bit taller than most students.

The result - students developed fluency in English (the teacher had configured the Echo to listen and converse in English), something that may not have been easy otherwise. It opened a world of conversations about subjects including history, geography, general knowledge, and science.

"Interacting with Alexa in English was helping them improve their conversation skills. Many of these schools did not have an English teacher. This also increased in kids having more confidence in asking questions," says Kumar, talking about how Amazon worked with the Bastar District administration to add Echo smart speakers in classrooms in 40 schools in the tribal belt of Lohandiguda.

The example set by Bhuyar, the schoolteacher from Warud, was also implemented last year by a primary school in Cheriakkara in the Kasaragod district of Kerala. This mannequin is the same height as most children in the class and wears the school dress too - a smart green kurta with Chinese collar, and white trousers. Kumar says teachers often say children feel shy asking certain questions, but they don't hesitate asking Alexa about those matters. It's that feeling of friendship fostering, between technology and children.

India was one of Alexa's first global markets

The last four years have seen Alexa evolve tremendously, as a voice assistant, in the Indian context. "When we first launched Alexa in India, we had only launched in the US, UK and Germany. That too with English.

For us, it was all around smart control, smart speakers, nascent category, and early adopters," Kumar points out.

Amazon had a first-mover advantage in many respects. While Assistant was part of Android phones, it was only after Amazon's aggressive push with Alexa in 2018 and beyond, did Google react with the Nest smart speakers. Apple responded much later with Siri localisation for India.

Music remains a key element for voice assistants and early adoption. Most popular is kids' music (40% of total music requests every day), followed by devotional (25%), regional (15%) while Bollywood and international music make up the rest of the numbers.

While Google Assistant (and Apple Siri to a certain extent) still have larger recollection attached with phones, Amazon never had that limitation to conquer. Alexa in homes is more of a social tech experience, unlike a phone, for example, which is likely to be an individual device. Every member can interact with Alexa, in their own way, which is available in smart devices.

Four years on: Expanding multilingual prowess

India has driven the language evolution for Alexa. First was the understanding of English and Hindi, which we often revert to - this is something Amazon's data also indicates. "In the initial days, you had to go to settings, you had to change your language, whereas now everything is seamless," says Kumar, talking about Alexa's 'Hinglish' understanding skills.

How complicated was it to get Alexa to learn Hindi? "It was actually quite difficult. Because as we classify languages, Hindi comes in the form of a complex language," Kumar points out. The challenge was with artificial intelligence (AI) processing the language. Amazon used a skill called Cleo and asked customers to help teach Alexa the Hindi language - thousands of Echo users answered the call.

"How do you say, 'Weather kya hai'? Will you say, 'Taapmaan kya hai'? or 'Mausam kaisa hai'? With AI, Alexa started understanding that all of this means "what's the weather". We did support for Hindi and English by building a bilingual model," he points out. The deep neural networks and multi-dialect training improved Alexa's understanding of Hindi. "We also did build a rich vocabulary to understand context," Kumar adds.

Amazon's engineers found that unlike Latin script, Devanagari had the advantage of phonetically consistent representation of words. Translation was done for millions of pieces of content, including the music and video catalogue. "Our teams also worked on the cultural and sub-cultural context within Hindi, especially in Uttar Pradesh and other parts of India where Hindi is used more, just so that the context switching was much clearer," he says.

More than 60% of Alexa users in India have set it to the multilingual mode, rather than just English or Hindi, for example. Amazon gets thousands of requests made to Alexa everyday where people are saying "Alexa, mujhe joote dikhao" (Alexa, show me some shoes), "Mera samaan kahan hai?" (Alexa, where is my stuff?), even "What are the cashbacks on my bill" and "Meri car lock kardo" (lock my car). This is perhaps the best illustration of how Alexa's use cases have expanded, to include shopping, smart mobility, and digital payments.

False positives and negatives still worry scientists

The weakest link that voice assistants must deal with, is the often-limited patience level of the human in the equation. If you have interacted with Alexa, Siri, or Google Assistant, you may have noticed that often, they may not immediately understand certain words or names.

"The problem is, the word, phonetically can get misunderstood with other names that may be very similar sounding. We've tried a lot to look at false rejects and false accepts," admits Kumar. He says that from the standpoint of natural language understanding (NLU), they have been able to reduce false accepts and rejects by 25%.

Kumar believes that the more people use Alexa, the more training data they can work with. "With more people, we get millions and millions of interactions every week, and all of that is helping Alexa get smarter in understanding when people are probably not talking to her or not using a name or what they mean in a particular context," he says.

Privacy and voice assistants: Fears and controls

There is lingering concern about voice assistants, around the data they collect, how much of our conversations they hear and how our data is stored. Amazon has often talked about how privacy controls are available for users that allows them control over their voice history and data. There is now a hub in the

Privacy Settings in the Alexa app on your phone. The options include the ability to hear and delete voice recordings.

"You can set how long the voice recording should be stored, and you have a lot of control over what you can do with your own data," says Kumar. Echo devices also have manual microphone off button as well - this electronically disconnects the mic.

Alexa from the device standpoint: Undeniable advantage

Alexa, as an assistant, will only be as good as the device it is a part of. That is where the ecosystem gives it a big advantage. Apple's Siri is available on the iPhone, iPad, Mac and the HomePod smart speakers, for instance. Google Assistant still relies largely on the Android phone user base for numbers, with availability also on the Nest smart speaker line-up and Android TV.

For Alexa, the canvas is much wider. Echo line-up of smart speakers, Echo Show smart displays, Fire TV devices, the Amazon app on Android phones and a long list of third-party brands that have Alexa built-in and Works With Alexa labelling on certain products - these include laptops made by HP, TVs by OnePlus, Samsung and LG, smartwatches by Amazfit, Boat and Noise, audio products by Bang & Olufsen, Marshall and Bose as well as smart home products by Qubo (security cameras), Ecobee (smart switches) and Syska (smart plugs).

Amazon's sales data says the Fire TV Sticks and the Echo Dot are the best-selling in the category. "We've also seen an overlap of customers between Fire TV and Echo speakers. There are bundles, so people are buying Alexa device, but they are also getting a smart bulb. And now that they have got the smart bulb, they are trying to control it from different rooms or they are trying to build a smart home around it," observes Kumar.

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Business

How to avoid melting down like Facebook

650 words

15 February 2022

South China Morning Post

SCMP

B2

English

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What you learn from one industry can be relevant to a seemingly unrelated one. At US\$600 billion, Facebook's operating company, Meta, found itself single-handedly pushed out by **Apple**. At the last company earnings announcement, Meta foresaw a loss of US\$10 billion in revenue in 2022 due to **Apple**'s privacy change in iOS. Its share price promptly collapsed by more than 20 per cent and has yet to recover. But this is a lesson not only for chief executive Mark Zuckerberg. It also relates to other industries such as fashion.

At the heart of Meta's woes is its total dependence on **Apple** iOS. When **Apple** started asking users to let their apps track their visits and clicks elsewhere, only 27 per cent of users agreed. That means Facebook doesn't get as much behavioural data as it did in the past. Ad targeting has become less effective. As a result, the merchants advertise on Google, TikTok, Snapchat, Pinterest or directly on Amazon instead.

The vulnerability of Meta exposes the importance of direct access to end users. Google's search engine, for one, doesn't rely exclusively on iOS. It runs Android as an operating system and Chrome as a browser. It doesn't merely sit on top of iOS or Windows Explorer. Google's strategy is to control its own destiny. As for Amazon, it runs sponsored ads on its own website and relies mostly on direct shopper data or data from its Kindle and Alexa devices.

What we see here is two types of growth: shallow and deep. Zuckerberg is best known for his relentless pursuit of scale. He set up a growth team and drove it to come up with every feature possible to attract new users. Over time, executives at Facebook became used to acquiring new users indiscriminately. They failed to develop a deeper relationship with their users.

Meanwhile, Amazon has branched out to the AWS and Prime membership. Netflix has built up its own studio content. Google has evolved beyond a search engine. Microsoft Corp has turned software into subscription, going into cloud technology and games.

You see the same thing in the fashion industry. From Under Armour to H&M, everyone wants growth. You open more stores, give more discounts, buy more online ads and strike up another celebrity endorsement. Achieving shallow growth means spinning the existing wheels faster.

Alternatively, you can go deep with your customers. You can use 3D printing to work directly with professional footballers on boot design. You can install rotating art exhibits in your own retail stores, run workshops and give lectures and digitally led trial sessions.

Nike does all of these, going even further than an Apple Store. The top floor of the Nike House is only for members of NikePlus. The mobile app opens exclusive items, arranges for personalised products and even allows people to book private sessions with athletes. It's an immersive ecosystem that merges mobile and the physical. It's the pursuit of deep meaningful growth.

Nike has long resisted selling through Amazon. Amazon may offer the advantages of delivery speed and scale in reaching a wide audience, but partnering with it means losing control over how Nike is represented online. More fundamentally, working with Amazon would take away Nike's focus on getting products to consumers faster while still selling to them directly.

Strategy is destiny. The path towards direct-to-consumers and eliminating dependency on middlemen is long and tiresome. It takes a long view in the pursuit of deep growth. Apple didn't catch Facebook by surprise. Facebook simply chose the easy path for growth for too long.

Howard Yu is the LEGO chair professor of management and innovation at the IMD business school in Switzerland. Zuriati Balian is the data scientist intern at IMD's Centre for Future Readiness

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News

Are you using Zoom on your Mac? You should check your microphone settings after owners discovered app keeps on recording audio even when it's not in use

James Gordon For Dailymail.com

1,391 words

15 February 2022

03:38

Mail Online

DAMONL

English

Copyright 2022

* Mac owners who are using Zoom meetings say their computer's mic is on even when the app is not being used

* The issue seems to have begun after **Apple** released their latest operating system, OS Monterey

* Apple has now adjusted their system to display a visual alert if an application starts to use the microphone or camera

* An orange dot will appear if the mic is being used while a green dot will show if the camera is being accessed

Mac users who are using the Zoom video meetings app say the program is keeping their computer mic on even when not specifically using the application.

The glitch is relatively recent with users noticing something was amiss after the latest Apple operating system, macOS Monterey, was loaded onto computers.

The system now incorporates a visual notification to alert users when their mic or camera is being used.

An orange dot appears if the mic is being used while a green dot will show up in the menu bar if the camera is being accessed

On December 27, Zoom said they had updated the software to fix the problem stating version 5.9.1 (3506) 'resolved an issue regarding the microphone light indicator being triggered when not in a meeting', reports [The Register](#).

But the issue has not been fixed for everyone.

People writing in a Zoom community chat thread described how the issue was still occurring even after updating the app.

'Well, that most recent update seems to have made no obvious difference. I've just noticed the orange dot again, and when I quit Zoom, Timing.app told me that I'd apparently been on a 2 hour Zoom call.

'At this point, it looks like it's safest to only run Zoom while on active calls and keep it quit otherwise.'

Zoom was bedeviled by security issues early in 2020 after stay-at-home orders transformed the company's videoconferencing service from a niche product into a cultural phenomenon.

Almost overnight it became the go-to venue for business meetings, schools, social gatherings and, in a deadly global pandemic, funerals.

Even with some workers having returned to their offices, many people still use the tool as a videophone app.

It means that many users end up leaving the app running in the background even when not actively using it.

It is those users who have complained that Zoom seems to be keeping the microphone on constantly, despite not being on a call.

A spokesperson for Zoom commented on the problem which they say has fixed the issue and that there were no privacy concerns:

'The Zoom client for macOS 5.9.3, released on January 25, 2022, fixed a bug involving the failure to properly terminate the microphone use post-meeting. Zoom has determined that this bug did not result in audio data being transmitted back to Zoom's platform. As always, we recommend users make sure their Zoom client is updated to the latest version.'

Zoom has been the subject of privacy concerns in the past. During the pandemic the company installed a hidden web server on Macs to allow for automatic call handling.

Apple then decided to update their operating system to remove the hidden program.

Zoom is counting on many businesses to hold on to their videoconferencing subscriptions even despite offices having reopened so some employees can continue to work remotely part of the time

The company believes the success of videoconferencing during the pandemic will encourage companies to hold more meetings online instead of requiring employees to travel from different locations to convene in one physical location.

The stock was a pandemic winner, rising to a high of \$559. It currently trades at \$141 having lost 67% of its value over the past year.

Do you suffer from 'Zoom fatigue?' Stanford professor reveals four reasons including staring at yourself and a lack of mobility to explain why hours of video conferencing results in exhaustion

The coronavirus pandemic forced offices to close and meetings to move online that has created a new phenomenon known as 'Zoom fatigue'.

Named after the popular video chat platform, the term is used to describe the exhaustion that comes with participating in video conferences, whether it be on Zoom, Google Meet or another application.

A researcher from Stanford University has investigated this idea to determine reasons that could cause people to become exhausted while they are simply sitting in front of a computer.

Professor Jeremy Bailenson determined excessive amounts of eye contact, a drop in mobility, video chats increase cognitive load and constantly seeing yourself lead to 'Zoom fatigue'.

However, the expert has also provided solutions for each to help employees revive themselves while spending hours video chatting at least five days a week.

Bailenson stressed that his goal is not to vilify any particular videoconferencing platform – he appreciates and uses tools like Zoom regularly.

But he wants to highlight how current implementations of videoconferencing technologies are exhausting and to suggest interface changes, many of which are simple to implement.

'Videoconferencing is a good thing for remote communication, but just think about the medium – just because you can use video doesn't mean you have to,' Bailenson said.

The first reason was identified to be 'excessive amounts of close-up eye contact is highly intense'.

Video conferencing requires users to keep their eyes glued to screens for hours each day, which can be tiring.

During in-person meetings, the audience typically looks only at the individual speaking, but when events are held online we tend to look at everyone in the chat room and it seems as if everyone is staring at you.

'Social anxiety of public speaking is one of the biggest phobias that exists in our population,' Bailenson said.

'When you're standing up there and everybody's staring at you, that's a stressful experience.'

He continues to explain that when someone's face gets close to ours in real life, our brains process the action as an intense situation that leads to either mating or conflict.

'What's happening, in effect, when you're using Zoom for many, many hours is you're in this hyper-aroused state,' Bailenson said.

To combat intense, up-close eye contact he suggests reducing the size of the video chat window.

The second cause for Zoom fatigue is seeing yourself on the screen.

'In the real world, if somebody was following you around with a mirror constantly – so that while you were talking to people, making decisions, giving feedback, getting feedback – you were seeing yourself in a mirror, that would just be crazy. No one would ever consider that,' Bailenson added.

Bailenson cited studies showing that when you see a reflection of yourself, you are more critical of yourself.

Many of us are now seeing ourselves on video chats for many hours every day.

'It's taxing on us. It's stressful. And there's lots of research showing that there are negative emotional consequences to seeing yourself in a mirror,' he said.

To avoid staring at yourself, users can activate the 'hide self-view' button by right clicking on their own photo – everyone else can see you, but you cannot.

Since employees no longer have to walk to a conference room during meetings, many have experienced a decrease in mobility.

Bailenson has identified this as a trigger for Zoom fatigue and recommends setting up the camera farther away from the screen to allow yourself room to pace or walk around as if you would in a real world event.

And the final reason is 'cognitive load is much higher in video chats'.

Bailenson notes that in regular face-to-face interaction, nonverbal communication is quite natural and each of us naturally makes and interprets gestures and nonverbal cues subconsciously. But in video chats, we have to work harder to send and receive signals.

However, he suggests have an 'audio only' break by turning off the camera so you do not have to decipher nonverbal activity 'so that for a few minutes you are not smothered with gestures that are perceptually realistic but socially meaningless.'

Document DAMONL0020220212ei2c0005I



Washington Watch

These U.S. lawmakers rank as the biggest traders of hot stocks like [Apple](#), Tesla and GameStop

1,453 words

14 February 2022

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MarketWatch

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Republican Rep. Pat Fallon was the biggest trader of [Apple](#) in Congress, and Democratic Rep. Marie Newman was the biggest trader of Tesla

MarketWatch photo illustration/iStockphotoU.S. lawmakers traded an [estimated \\$355 million in individual stocks](#) last year, but which members of Congress bought and sold the hottest names?

The individual stocks whose tickers drew the most interest on MarketWatch in 2021 were GameStop GME and AMC Entertainment AMC — poster boys for the [meme-stocks phenomenon](#) — along with electric-car makers Tesla TSLA and NIO NIO, as well as Apple AAPL.

Alex Wong/Getty ImagesAt the top of the list of the biggest traders on Capitol Hill by dollar volume of these five stocks is Rep. Pat Fallon. The Texas Republican disclosed an estimated \$1.5 million in buys of Apple shares and an estimated \$1.6 million in sells of the tech giant's stock, according to an analysis from [2iQ Research's Capitol Trades](#), which values lawmakers' purchases and sales by using the midpoint of a transaction's declared range. The congressman's office didn't respond to a request for comment.

The table below, based on the Capitol Trades analysis of disclosure filings, shows the members of Congress who were the five biggest traders of Apple stock in 2021 — or had family members who made the trades.

Biggest traders of Apple stock in Congress in 2021

Lawmaker	Party	State	Rep. or sen.	Buy	Sell	Total amount
transacted	Buy/sell	ratio				
Fallon, Pat	R	TX	Rep.	\$1,475,000	\$1,580,500	\$3,055,500
	0.93					
Schrier, Kim	D	WA	Rep.	\$1,125,000	\$375,000	\$1,500,000
	3.00					
Khanna, Ro	D	CA	Rep.	\$629,500	\$264,000	\$893,500
	2.38					
Langevin, Jim	D	RI	Rep.	\$191,000	\$175,000	\$366,000
	1.09					
Suozzi, Tom	D	NY	Rep.	\$150,000	\$123,500	\$273,500
	1.21					

Source: Capitol Trades analysis of disclosures filed from early 2021 through mid-January 2022 covering stock trades made in 2021

Disclosures from Democratic Rep. Marie Newman of Illinois put her as the biggest trader on Capitol Hill in Elon Musk's Tesla, with an estimated \$383,000 in buys and \$375,000 in sells last year. The congresswoman's spokesman said the Tesla trading was part of a range of transactions made by Newman's husband.

Sarah Silbiger/Getty Images“As part of an overall college and retirement savings program as well as to help pay for the family's extensive health care costs, Congresswoman Newman's husband for years now has conducted the family's savings accounts to invest in a variety of companies based on public information. These trades are conducted solely by her husband and are regularly disclosed in alignment with the House's current policy,” Newman's spokesman said in a statement.

The table below shows the Washington, D.C., lawmakers who were the five biggest traders of Tesla shares in 2021 — or had family members who made the buys and sells.

Related:[Banning congressional spouses from stock trading would be 'unfair,' Democratic Rep. Khanna says](#)

Biggest traders of Tesla stock in Congress in 2021

Lawmaker	Party	State	Rep. or sen.	Buy	Sell	Total amount
transacted	Buy/sell	ratio				
Newman, Marie	D	IL	Rep.	\$383,000	\$375,000	\$758,000
1.02						
Khanna, Ro	D	CA	Rep.	\$129,500	\$16,000	\$145,500
8.09						
Suoizzi, Tom	D	NY	Rep.	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$150,000
1.00						
Garcia, Mike	R	CA	Rep.	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$130,000
1.00						
Crenshaw, Dan	R	TX	Rep.	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$48,000
1.00						

Source: Capitol Trades analysis of disclosures filed from early 2021 through mid-January 2022 covering stock trades made in 2021

Disclosures from Democratic Rep. Tom Suozzi of New York put him as the biggest trader in Chinese EV maker NIO, with an estimated \$32,500 in sales of it last year. The congressman's office didn't respond to a request for comment.

As shown in the table below, only one other lawmaker disclosed NIO trades.

Traders of NIO stock in Congress in 2021

Lawmaker	Party	State	Rep. or sen.	Buy	Sell
Total amount transacted	Buy/sell	ratio			
Suoizzi, Tom	D	NY	Rep.		\$
32,500.00	\$	32,500.00			
Sessions, Pete	R	TX	Rep.	\$	8,000.00
\$		8,000.00	-		

Source: Capitol Trades analysis of disclosures filed from early 2021 through mid-January 2022 covering stock trades made in 2021

Disclosures from GOP Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania put him as the biggest trader in video game retailer GameStop in 2021, with an estimated \$8,000 in buys and \$8,000 in sells last year. Toomey, who is [retiring from the Senate](#), said the trades were made by an adult son, adding that he would have suggested caution if his son had discussed them with him ahead of time.

Pool/Getty Images“These perfectly legal and non-controversial transactions were made by my adult son in his investment account that he controls exclusively,” the senator told MarketWatch in a statement. “He used only public information that was widely available at the time. The trades were made without my knowledge. I disclosed these trades in the ordinary, monthly disclosure of my, and my family’s, trading activities, as required by Senate rules. Had my son asked for my advice about these trades, I would have told him the same thing I said in numerous print and television interviews: that it’s a classic bubble that will end badly for most participants.”

As shown in the table below, only one other lawmaker disclosed GameStop trades.

Traders of GameStop stock in Congress in 2021

Lawmaker	Party	State	Rep. or sen.	Buy	Sell
Total amount transacted	Buy/sell	ratio			
Toomey, Pat	R	PA	Sen.	\$	8,000.00
8,000.00	\$	16,000.00	1		
Garcia, Mike	R	CA	Rep.	\$	8,000.00
\$		8,000.00	-		

Source: Capitol Trades analysis of disclosures filed from early 2021 through mid-January 2022 covering stock trades made in 2021

No members of Congress bought or sold shares of movie theater chain AMC Entertainment last year, according to Capitol Trades. Lawmakers in Washington, D.C., are required to file disclosures within 45 days for any transactions involving stocks and other securities due to 2012’s STOCK Act.

Apple's stock returned 35% in 2021, while Tesla gained 50% and NIO lost 35%. GameStop shares soared 688% last year, and AMC rocketed up 1,183%.

The trading action taking place in both the House and the Senate comes as some lawmakers have introduced [legislation that would ban congressional buying and selling](#) of individual stocks. Proponents of the ban say the trading of individual stocks by U.S. lawmakers can raise conflict of interest issues. Critics of such efforts say they're going too far, and that current laws already require regular disclosures and don't allow trading on inside information.

The spokesman for Newman, the Illinois Democrat who has disclosed sizeable trading activity by her husband, said the congresswoman "fully supports recently proposed legislation to limit and even ban members of Congress, their family members and senior congressional staff from trading stocks."

A spokeswoman for Toomey, the Pennsylvania Republican who disclosed GameStop trades by his son, said the senator has concerns about a potential ban on congressional stock trading.

"Senator Toomey believes that forbidding elected officials from participating in the stock market will discourage qualified individuals from entering public service," Toomey's spokeswoman told MarketWatch in a statement. "Moreover, he is not sure the American people want members of Congress deciding policy about the stock market without understanding how it works or what it is like to invest in stocks. That's like telling senators from an agricultural states that they can't own a farm if they want to serve in Congress. Would you really want a senator who has no experience in the agricultural industry drafting legislation on agriculture issues?"

The Toomey spokeswoman also said the senator "agrees that the public must have confidence its elected leaders are not using non-public information to personally profit," and that's why he voted for the STOCK Act, which "expressly clarified" that members of Congress are barred from insider trading. In addition, she said existing Senate Ethics Committee rules prohibit senators from "knowingly introducing or aiding the passage of legislation in order to further their own financial interests."

Now read: [Congress's crypto traders: The U.S. lawmakers who buy and sell digital currencies](#)

DataKind DC contributed to this report through a partnership with the National Press Foundation.

This report was first published on Feb. 3, 2022.

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Extras, IndyBest, Tech, Laptops & Tablets

Best tablet deals February 2022: The biggest discounts on **Apple**, Samsung and Microsoft devices

Alistair Charlton

1,057 words

14 February 2022

23:19

Independent Online

INDOP

English

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Big screen or small; iOS, Windows or Android, you don't want to miss these offers

For years now, tech firms like [Apple](#), [Microsoft](#) and [Samsung](#) have told us that the future of computing is tablets instead of [laptops](#).

These companies produce tablets with a broad range of screen sizes, features and prices. Some can be bought with detachable keyboards, others have convenient kickstands, and many work with digital styluses, for help in unleashing your inner artist.

Tablets are often lighter, thinner and generally more portable and convenient than a laptop, with a broader price range and smartphone-based operating systems to make them easy enough for anyone to use.

When thinking of [tablet](#) computers, it's easy to jump straight into the Apple Store and pick up an iPad. And while, yes, the iPad range is larger than ever, with prices stretching from just £479 for the iPad mini ([Apple.com](#)), all the way up to £2,149 for a fully-loaded 12.9in iPad pro ([Apple.com](#)), there are plenty of alternatives out there, too.

Companies like Lenovo, Samsung and Microsoft all offer a range of tablets to choose from. If you don't own any Apple devices, and aren't in the company's ecosystem, then looking at an alternative manufacturer can be a great idea – and potentially save you some money, too.

Read more:

* [10 best tablets from Apple, Android, Windows and more](#)

* [Apple iPad pro vs iPad air: Which tablet comes out on top?](#)

* [Best laptops 2022: High-performance devices for WFH](#)

* [7 best kids' tablets for learning, drawing and playing games](#)

The best tablet deals for January 2022 in the UK are:

* Apple iPad pro, 2021, 12.9in, 2TB: Was £1,999, now £1,796.90, [Amazon.co.uk](#)

* Apple iPad pro, 2021, 12.9in, 128GB: Was £999, now £956, [Currys.co.uk](#)

* Samsung Galaxy tab A8: Was £219, now £188, [Amazon.co.uk](#)

* Huawei matepad pro LTE: Was £549.99, now £399.99, [Huawei.com](#)

* Samsung Galaxy tab S7: Was £719, now £619, [Amazon.co.uk](#)

* Microsoft surface pro 7: Was £799, now £639, [Microsoft.com](#)

Apple iPad pro, 2021, 12.9in, 2TB: Was £1,999, now £1,796.90, [Amazon.co.uk](#)

Apple's 2021 iPad pro is one of the best tablets around, outperforming most laptops in the spec department. And right now you can there's more than £200 knocked off the price, which amounts to a 10 per cent discount. Smaller capacity variants are also discounted by 4 per cent if you don't need 2TB of space.

It's powered by the same M1 chip found in the MacBook pro, there's a new liquid retina XDR screen, a Thunderbolt port, Face ID and some new rear and front-facing cameras. "The new iPad is not only the fastest

and most powerful tablet you'll come across, but it also outdoes most laptops," our tester said in their [review of the device](#). "The pro has the best of everything Apple makes."

[Buy now](#)

Apple iPad pro, 2021, 12.9in, 128GB: Was £999, now £956, [Currys.co.uk](#)

There's a modest £43 off the 128GB version of the latest iPad pro at Currys, which should appeal to anyone not willing to shell out almost two grand for the 2TB model featured above. Similar savings can be found on the 256GB and 512GB models if you need some extra space, but we're big fans of spending less on on-device storage and more on cloud storage, especially if you've got fast wi-fi.

You can choose between a silver-grey or grey iPad pro at Currys. Both colourways offering slightly different discounts, so be sure to check out both before you add the tablet to your basket.

[Buy now](#)

Samsung Galaxy tab A8, 10.5in, 32GB: Was £219, now £188, [Amazon.co.uk](#)

The Galaxy tab A series is Samsung's range of budget-friendly tablets, and if you're simply after a portable screen so you can watch your YouTube videos in the bathtub we can't recommend them highly enough. The A8 is the latest in this series of affordable Android tablets, but it has quality where it counts. Samsung's saved money by skimping on storage and RAM (which you don't need for streaming) but focused on build quality, a long battery life, top security specs and proper stereo speakers.

[Buy now](#)

Huawei matepad pro LTE: Was £549.99, now £399.99, [Huawei.com](#)

The 4G version of Huawei's flagship tablet has dropped in price by £150. This is a stylish device with a premium design and a class-leading battery life. [Our reviewer](#) did note however, that it lacks some of the more useful apps you might find on the iPad pro. For everyday use and entertainment however, it's a brilliant piece of hardware with a luscious, high-resolution screen.

[Buy now](#)

Samsung Galaxy tab S7: Was £719, now £619, [Amazon.co.uk](#)

You can save £100 on this 11in display which packs a 4G connection so you can pop in a SIM card and connect to the internet wherever you are. There's also 128GB of storage, and with Samsung DeX on board you can turn the tablet into a fully-fledged computer by connecting it to a compatible display, keyboard and mouse.

[Read the full Samsung Galaxy tab S7 plus review](#)

[Buy now](#)

Microsoft Surface pro 7: Was £799, now £639, [Microsoft.com](#)

The Surface pro 7 has a large 12.3in display, is powered by a desktop-grade Intel Core i3 processor and runs Windows 11. A clever kickstand on the back flips out to hold the surface at various angles while you want to work or watch a video and, unlike many other tablets, the Microsoft Surface pro 7 has a range of ports for easily connecting USB-A and USB-C devices.

[Read our review of the Microsoft Surface pro 8](#)

[Buy now](#)

Voucher codes

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* [Apple discount codes](#)

* [Samsung discount codes](#)

* [Very discount codes](#)

Looking for more insight? Read our guide to the

[best tablets you can buy in 2022](#)

Document INDOP00020220208ei2800dw5

Northbaze Group AB: Northbaze Group announce MFi certification (Made for iPhone, iPod, iPad and Apple Watch)

540 words

14 February 2022

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Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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Bangkok, February 14, 2022 - Adiantes Company Limited, part of Northbaze

Group AB (Publ.) ("Adiantes") has successfully enrolled to the MFi program by Apple, giving the company necessary insight to technical specifications and resources enhancing its product offering for new and existing clients.

Adiantes, a company producing accessories within the premium leather segment for accessories brands globally has expanded its business rapidly since 2019. Following its 2022-2024 strategic roadmap named "Adiantes 2.0", the company is devoted to enhancing its service and product offering. By entering the MFi program and becoming an Apple MFi certified partner and manufacturer, the company will push the envelope on its innovation process and increase the value proposition to its customers.

Moreover, by being part of the MFi program, Adiantes will improve its capability to deliver Apple certified wired and wireless technologies that can be used in accessories with integrated MagSafe and Apple Watch charger modules.

Adiantes becomes only the second company in Thailand that has managed to achieve this certification. By being recognized as a MFi authorized manufacturer, Adiantes is further strengthening its presence as a global vendor of producing products within the mobile accessory market.

"With an estimated 1.5 billion active Apple devices globally, it's important to be able to offer accessories to our clients that are fully certified to be used in Apple's ecosystem. With this certification we have access to the full range of wireless- and wired technology that can be incorporated into the products we are producing. This is another very important milestone within our Adiantes 2.0 strategy and the continuation of a value focused process", says Mauro Beck, CEO Adiantes Company Limited.

Adiantes will incorporate the use of the membership now and will offer products to its customers on a rolling basis.

For further information, please contact:

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About Northbaze Group AB (Publ)

Northbaze Group was founded in 2006 and has over the years expanded its target to a business idea that is to develop innovative and functional products within the audio, IT and mobile accessories area to simplify and improve people's experience of mobile devices and bridge people's lives together with today's technology. By controlling manufacturing and working closely with the market, we can refine existing brands and

develop complementary brands to adapt to an ever-changing landscape and market needs for new smart solutions to simplify people's lives in a changing and increasingly technical world.

The vision is to create simplicity in people's increasingly technical lives by offering smart and functional audio products and IT accessories.

The shares in Northbaze Group (publ) are traded on the Nasdaq First North Growth Market. Certified Adviser is Partner Fondkommission AB with e-mail address info@partnerfk.se and telephone number +46 31 761 22 30.

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Report on Business

Apple threatens to pull out of Toronto condo megaproject

By GREG MCARTHUR, RACHELLE YOUNGLAI

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Apple Inc. has threatened to pull out of Sam Mizrahi's massive retail and condo project in downtown Toronto, dealing a blow to the development of the tallest residential building in the country.

The 85-storey skyscraper at Yonge and Bloor streets called The One is currently under construction, including a unique space designed to host **Apple's** flagship store, with its arresting glass architecture and soaring ceiling.

But the tech giant has told Mizrahi Developments it may exercise an option in the lease agreement that allegedly allows the retailer to exit without penalties if the developer misses certain deadlines, according to court documents filed by Mizrahi in Ontario's Superior Court of Justice on Oct. 5, 2021.

Mizrahi says it has not missed deadlines and Apple no longer has the option to terminate the lease. The developer is seeking a court order to stop the retailer from leaving. In its court submission, Mizrahi said it will "suffer irreparable harm from losing a world-class tenant that was intended to be an anchor tenant for a world-class property, which is a loss that cannot be compensated in damages."

A spokesman for Apple declined to comment. Mr. Mizrahi's development company and his lawyers did not respond to a request for comment. There have been no judgments issued in the case, and it's unclear whether the parties are close to resolving their differences out of court.

Getting Apple to establish its flagship Toronto store on the ground floor was a coup for Mr. Mizrahi. Apple stores are magnets for consumers and would have attracted throngs of people to the building and the neighbourhood.

The condo plans also include restaurants and a hotel, in addition to luxury condos and a multilevel penthouse. Although the project is being led by Mr. Mizrahi, a company controlled by Jenny Coco, the co-founder of troubled lender Bridging Finance Inc., is a 50-per-cent equity investor in The One.

Like other commercial real estate projects, The One has suffered from COVID-19 pandemic restrictions that slowed construction. As well, Mizrahi said it had to wait for Apple to choose a design for the storefront glass and had to deal with other delays out of its control, including a provincewide plumbers' strike in 2019.

During the lease negotiations, Mizrahi also signed an agreement with Apple and its architect Foster + Partners, a high-profile London-based firm that has worked on Apple's flagship stores in New York, Los Angeles, Milan and other major global cities. Foster + Partners did not respond to a request for comment.

Mizrahi said it exercised its right to delay the delivery of the space because of events out of its control, such as the pandemic and the plumber's strike. In December, 2020, it told Apple that it would push out the delivery of the space to Oct. 31, 2021.

Apple responded by saying it would exercise its rights to terminate the lease and provided a list of items it thought Mizrahi could not deliver.

Apple's "position flies in the face of the commercial and practical realities of the construction process for a project," such as the One, Mizrahi's court filing said.

The developer accused Apple of threatening an unlawful termination to extract more concessions. Mizrahi said the entire building has been designed and built to be specifically tailored to Apple's store.

The tech company's lease was for more than 15,000 square feet, including more than 9,000 square feet on the ground floor.

As part of the agreement, Mizrahi agreed to pay Apple's architect to cover the cost of designing the store, which as of mid-October amounted to \$6.24-million, Mizrahi said in its court submissions.

Apple's space is surrounded by seven layers of glass with no breaks. That was made up of 34 panels custom fabricated from integrated units at an average cost of \$400,000 a panel, in the signature and iconic style of flagship Apple stores around the world, Mizrahi stated in its court filings.

If Mizrahi cannot block Apple's departure, the developer will have to find another tenant for the space built for Apple. Michael Emory, a commercial real estate developer and chief executive officer of Allied REIT, said the location is prime real estate and Mizrahi would be able to find a replacement.

The One is near designer stores and museums – a luxury strip of Bloor Street some refer to as the Mink Mile. It is an area that usually teems with activity, given its location running west from the intersection of the city's two main subway lines. Like other stores and shopping centres, the street lost business and tenants from the pandemic's closures.

"It's almost the epicentre of Toronto. It's a fabulous corner, just outstanding," Mr. Emory said. "Bloor Street may have deteriorated a little bit in the last while, but it deteriorated from an incredibly high level, and I don't think Bloor Street is ever going to go into decline."

Jones Lang LaSalle Inc., a commercial real estate services firm, has found that retail vacancies on Bloor Street near the One are at the same level as prior to the pandemic. The situation has improved since summer of 2020, when many retailers were closing up shop.

"We have seen a substantial increase in leasing activity and tenant interest on Bloor Street," said JLL's senior vice-president of retail, Brandon Gorman, adding that retailers such as Alexander Wang and Rolex have recently signed leases.

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technology

I Used **Apple** AirTags, Tiles and a GPS Tracker to Watch My Husband's Every Move

By Kashmir Hill and Photographs By Todd Heisler

2,923 words

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In mid-January, my husband and I were having an argument. Our 1-year-old had just tested positive for Covid-19 and was occasionally grunting between breaths. I called urgent care and was told we should take her to the emergency room. But, because I had been up all night with her, I was too exhausted to drive.

"I'm worried," I told my husband. "I want you to take her to the hospital."

"Doctors always tell us to take the baby to the E.R. whenever we call about anything," he replied, exasperated. (This was true.) "She is fine. She is eating and playing and happy. This is not an emergency."

He eventually caved and set out for the hospital a half-hour away. Knowing he was already annoyed by me, I did not want to pepper him with questions about how it was going.

Instead, I turned to the location-monitoring devices that I had secretly stashed in our car a week earlier.

I put a quarter-sized Apple AirTag in a seat pocket; a flat, credit card-shaped Bluetooth tracker made by Tile in a dashboard pocket; and a hockey-puck-like GPS tracker from a company called LandAirSea in the glove compartment.

I realize I sound like the worst wife ever, so let me explain. It was for journalism.

Apple released chic, sleek AirTags early last year as a way to keep track of keys and purses. Given the company's history of introducing products — such as the original iPhone — that lead to mass adoption, AirTags could well lead consumers to location track everything all the time, so that nothing is ever lost again, ushering in a surveillance state with the cleanest of aesthetics.

But every new convenience comes with a price: In recent months, people have freaked out after finding AirTags hidden [in their bags and on their cars](#). They were scared about being stalked or followed by someone wanting to steal their vehicles. A Sports Illustrated model, Brooks Nader, said she [found one](#) in her coat pocket after visiting a Manhattan bar. All these people received warnings on their iPhones, a feature Apple had built into the AirTag system to help prevent unwanted tracking.

When my colleague and I [reported on this](#), experts we spoke with were of two minds about Apple's attempts to prevent nefarious use, with some saying the alerts were inadequate and others praising the company for unearthing a larger problem: widespread surreptitious tracking, usually done with devices that don't notify a person of their presence.

I decided to examine both claims by planting three AirTags, three Tiles, and a GPS tracker on my husband and his belongings to see how precisely they revealed his movements and which ones he discovered.

Some states, including New York, where we live, have [laws](#) criminalizing this sort of thing. Not wanting to break the law, or my husband's trust, I had asked him for permission.

It was not the first time I had subjected him to my brand of experimental reporting. I've been covering privacy for more than a decade, and have found that the best way to concretely explain the dystopian implications of new technologies is to immerse myself in them, guinea pig-style.

My husband has [lived on Bitcoin](#) with me, been spied on by [our "smart home,"](#) and watched me [give up the tech giants](#). (He would not give them up himself, saying, "I have a job," but he agreed to unplug our Amazon Echo.) He also happens to be a professional press freedom advocate, so I was fairly certain he'd be game.

"You can do it," he said. "But it'll be boring. We're in a pandemic. I never go anywhere."

Our lives are certainly less exciting these days. We see practically no one but each other or my in-laws. On top of a pandemic, it's winter here in the Northeast, so we're home most of the time. But my husband does occasionally leave the house, and I wanted to track him when he did.

When an editor proposed sending a photographer to surreptitiously follow him in person one day — to show visually the movements I was tracking digitally — a small part of me worried I might discover something I didn't want to know. A little privacy is good for any marriage.

'Is it in my shoe?'

Thirty minutes after my husband and youngest departed for the hospital, I opened an app linked to the most precise tracker in my arsenal, the \$30 LandAirSea device. To activate it costs extra, because it needs a cellular plan to relay where global positioning satellites have placed it. I chose the cheapest plan, \$19.95 monthly, to get location updates every three minutes; the most expensive plan, for updates every three seconds, was \$49.95.

The app has an "InstaFence" feature that can alert me when the car moves, and a "Playback" option to show where the car has been, so I could see the exact route on windy roads my husband had taken. I saw that he parked at 4:55 p.m., so I wasn't surprised when I got a text from him 12 minutes later reporting that they were in the waiting room.

The other trackers in the car — the \$34.99 Tile and \$29 AirTag — didn't work as well in real time out in the sparsely populated area where we live. The AirTag, designed to find keys left behind "[at the beach](#)," took an hour or so to reveal that the car was in the hospital parking lot. The Tile, intended to "[find misplaced things nearby and far away](#)," never realized it had moved from our garage. That's because these devices rely on Bluetooth technology.

Rather than communing with satellites circling the planet, they ping devices within 30 or so feet of them, such as the smartphone held by another person standing in line at the pharmacy. To help track down AirTags, Apple enlisted, per its [own description](#), "hundreds of millions of iPhones, iPads and Mac devices all over the world." That meant the AirTag's effectiveness skyrocketed the day my husband traveled to New York City, because he was surrounded by people carrying iPhones.

Yes, the internet of things — our things — is coming alive around us, digitally frisking us as we walk by to see if we're carrying anything of interest.

The day before his trip, when I knew he was far from the house, thanks to the car trackers, I sneaked into his office and hid an AirTag, a Tile and the GPS tracker in various pockets of his backpack. This felt incredibly invasive, and was the moment I felt most conflicted about the experiment.

It was a good thing I did, though, because he wound up switching coats that day, and not wearing the one I had originally loaded up with devices. When he got into Manhattan, the AirTag became my most powerful tracker, outperforming the GPS device, and allowing me to tell a photographer exactly where he was at all times.

The Tile tracker was not quite as well-informed. Its system is similar to Apple's but far fewer people have the Tile app on their phones than own Apple devices. Forty million Tiles have been sold, the company [said](#) last year.

Another key difference between Tile and AirTag is that if an iPhone detects an unknown AirTag continuously moving with it, the iPhone owner gets a notification, along with a map showing where the tracking started. (Android owners, meanwhile, have to download a [special app](#) to look for AirTags. Tile said it planned to release [a similar app](#) for people worried about unwanted tracking.)

Within two hours of my putting all the trackers in our car, my husband, who has an iPhone, got an alert about the AirTag, after running an errand.

The problem was that he couldn't find it. The alert said he could make the AirTag play a sound, but when he attempted to do so, his phone wouldn't connect to the device. This happened multiple times, and he started to get frustrated. "Is it in my shoe?" he asked me at one point, taking his blue Nike off and peering at it. "You have to tell me. I don't want to destroy my shoe looking for it."

The one time his iPhone connected to the AirTag in the car, so he could play the noise, it was so hard to tell where it was coming from that he gave up looking for it after five minutes.

The critics were right: Apple's safeguards against nefarious use weren't foolproof.

Apple itself has realized the inadequacy of its safeguards and [announced improvements](#) this week, including making the devices louder and telling AirTag users that tracking someone without consent is a crime.

My husband, of course, had agreed to this in principle, but didn't realize just how many devices I had planted on him. Of the seven trackers, he found only two: a Tile he felt in the breast pocket of his coat and an AirTag in his backpack when he was looking for something else. "It is impossible to find a device that makes no noise and gives no warning," he said, when I showed him the ones he missed.

Flying under the radar

Alyson Messenger, a lawyer in Los Angeles who works with survivors of domestic violence, said she knew of two women stalked by former partners with AirTags. She thinks other cases are "flying under the radar."

An abuser could also put spyware on a person's phone to track them, but that requires time, access and knowing their passcode. With these location-tracking devices, a person "just needs to get close enough to a victim or their property to place them," Ms. Messenger said. "It's insidious because the devices are so discreet and unnoticeable. We suspect it is happening and victims don't know."

The AirTag and Tile are marketed to find lost things, but LandAirSea describes the purpose of its GPS tracker somewhat differently. "The ultimate in discreet tracking," [its Amazon page](#) brags, where it is ranked as [the best selling](#) GPS tracker. "Keep track of movement in real-time with your very own private eye."

The first time I ordered a LandAirSea tracker on Amazon, the device for finding things, incredibly, got lost in the mail. I got a refund and reordered. When it did arrive, I opened its plain white box to find instructions for setting it up, but no information on the legal implications of using the device.

On the inside bottom of the box, there was a message designed to look handwritten: "We are a small family business so your review would mean the world to us!" Many of those online reviews explicitly discuss users' secretly tracking loved ones.

"If you're using this to find out if your spouse is cheating on you. Please have a mental health plan for the aftermath," someone named Jason wrote in a five-star Amazon review posted on New Year's Eve. "I bought this with the intent to find out where my wife was going after work every night and random 'me' days she was having. Turns out it was another guy."

A one-star review posted on the company's site a few months ago, by someone claiming to be 16, declared a GPS tracker secretly placed on his car by his father "too easy to find." "Your parents didn't track you, don't track us," the teen admonished.

'Too ripe for abuse?'

With my LandAirSea tracker updating me on my husband's every trip to the grocery store and detour to Dunkin' Donuts for a coffee, I wanted to talk to someone at the company about the product. Jared Zientz, the director of analytics there since 2020, told me that the Illinois-based LandAirSea was founded 26 years ago, originally to track airplanes.

I asked Mr. Zientz about how LandAirSea dealt with people using its devices for unwanted spying.

"It's certainly something that comes up," Mr. Zientz said. "People call in, and they're like, 'I found this on my car. What are you going to do about it?'"

The company, which sells about 15,000 devices per month, according to Mr. Zientz, tells these callers they should go to the police, because they will need a subpoena to determine who owns the device they discovered. He estimated that the company received approximately 30 subpoenas per year.

Mr. Zientz said many people arrive at these products after searching online for "spouse tracker," but that the company was trying to discourage this by marketing the device for "asset protection" and "fleet management." I asked Mr. Zientz why the company didn't have any messaging about the legality of its devices on its website or in its packaging.

"It's in our terms somewhere," he said. (He was referring to boilerplate language on the LandAirSea [website](#) forbidding using it for "any unlawful purpose.") "Each state has different laws so we can't even broadly say, 'this is illegal,' or whatever," he added.

Mr. Zientz said he had tried out Apple's AirTags, in part to see whether they might encroach on LandAirSea's business. "Me and my girlfriend both had them in our luggage," he said. Because they worked only with iPhones, he didn't see them as a threat. Since AirTags have come out, LandAirSea has actually sold more trackers, according to Mr. Zientz, a bump he attributed to an [uptick in car theft](#).

Asked for comment about my experiment, a Tile spokesman, Scott Coriell said, "Tile is designed to help people find their things, not for tracking people." He said using a Tile like this violates the terms of use and "can result in a permanent ban from Tile."

The day after I asked Apple for comment, the company released "[an update on AirTag and unwanted tracking](#)." "Unwanted tracking has long been a societal problem, and we took this concern seriously in the design of AirTag," Apple said in the statement.

There are certainly plenty of legitimate uses for this technology. Having a tracker in a teen's car, with their knowledge and consent, can provide peace of mind to a parent. Bluetooth trackers helped a family [keep a moving company honest](#) and located [a stolen car](#). But Albert Fox Cahn, the executive director of the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project, thinks the devices are "too ripe for abuse" to exist.

"No one should be able to buy a tool to track their loved ones this easily and this cheaply," Mr. Cahn said. There are already state laws against this, but Mr. Cahn said that prohibitions won't stop bad actors.

"Any time you build a product and use threat of prosecution to prevent misuse, that's a fig leaf, not a real deterrent," he said. Mr. Cahn thinks the devices shouldn't be available at all.

My husband was right

Within an hour of our daughter getting to the hospital, a nurse had checked her oxygen levels and declared them "really good."

The reason I was allowed to share this tale of marital strife is that my husband was correct: We did not need to take our toddler to the hospital. The doctor even said so after reviewing an X-ray of her lungs and declaring her fine. At 7:17 p.m., my husband texted that they were heading home. I watched their progress on my app.

He was also right about the tracking overall being pretty boring. There were no surprises about where he went. The biggest surprise to me was how nerve-racking it felt to surveil him, and how guilty I felt about what he didn't know, such as the photographer tailing him. It was a relief when it was over, and I let my husband read a draft of this article.

"For all the bad press the AirTags have gotten, and as flaky as the detection mechanisms were, at least I was consistently getting notifications they were following me," he said. "The privacy dangers of the other trackers were way worse."

Now that the article is done, I will stop paying \$20 a month for the LandAirSea tracker to report the car's minute-by-minute movements, but I think I'll leave the AirTag in it. It will make it easier to find the car in a vast parking lot.

"What!?" my husband said, reading this. "We are NOT keeping an AirTag in the car."

Audio produced by Kate Winslett.

Audio produced by Kate Winslett.

PHOTOS: To test three devices that can monitor locations, a reporter's husband agreed to have them stashed in their car and in his belongings to see how precisely they revealed his movements and which devices he discovered. A photographer also followed him, furtively. (BU1); The reporter's husband, above, did not realize he had three location trackers in his backpack and a photographer trailing him. Left, a screenshot of an app used with one of the trackers shows his location. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BU8)

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MINT, Technology

Apple iPhone 13 selling at just Rs.57,561. Know where and how before it ends

Livemint

515 words

13 February 2022

Mint

HNMIN

English

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New Delhi, Feb. 13 -- **Apple** iPhone 13 can be yours at just Rs.57,561 for the 128GB variant. This deal is live on the offline electronics retail major, Vijay Sales. **Apple** iPhone is usually priced at Rs.79,900 is being offered at a deal price of Rs.71,561 plus cash back of Flat 6000 on ICICI Bank Credit and Debit Cards, and Kotak and SBI Bank Debit Cards.

Additionally, if you wish to exchange your existing smartphone and if it carries a minimum exchange value of Rs.5,000, it will be topped by another Rs.3,000 at Vijay Sales, taking the total discount amount to Rs.22,339 and thus the effective price of the iPhone 13 is reduced to Rs.57,561.

Vijay Sales is offering deals and discounts on various Apple devices such as iPhone 13, iPhone 13 Pro, iPhone 12, and iPhone 11.

Apart from iPhones, Macbook Pro is also available on discount at Vijay Sales across the country. You can also shop online on the company's website. The sale will go on till February 14.

Vijay Sales 'Share the Love with Apple at Vijay Sales' campaign can avail the best deals on all Apple products across its 110+ retail outlets.

On Apple MacBooks, there are discounts being offered with effective pricing starting at Rs. 69,861 for MacBook Air with M1 chip and Rs. 95,942 for the MacBook Pro with M1 chip which includes cash back, exchange amount plus the exchange bonus.

It will be offering special pricing on the Series 7 watch, AirPods 3rd Gen, AirPods Pro with Magsafe charging, iPads, Watches & Home Pod Mini.

In the mobiles category, iPhone 13 starts from Rs. 66,263; iPhone 13 Pro starts from 1,09,852; iPhone 11 starts from Rs.44,152 and iPhone 12 starts from Rs.56,287.

In the laptop category, the MacBook Air with M1 chip starts at Rs. 77,861; MacBook Pro with M1 Chip starts at Rs. 1,03,942; and the MacBook Pro with Latest M1 Pro Chip starts at Rs. 1,77,104. Additionally, consumers going in for exchange can avail additional exchange bonus of Rs. 5000, if their old laptops carry a minimum exchange value of Rs. 3,000.

In the iPad category, effective price for iPad Air 4th Gen starts at Rs. 50,900.

In the wearables, the Apple Watch Series 7 starts at an effective price of Rs. 37,290; Apple Watch SE starts at an effective price of Rs. 27,900.

In the audio category, effective pricing for AirPods 2nd Gen will be Rs. 10,990; AirPods 3rd Gen will be Rs. 16,500; AirPods Pro will be Rs. 18,990, AirPods Pro with Magsafe charging will be Rs. 21,500.

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The Sunday Telegraph

News

Fighting for your money

Sally Hamilton

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Apple is being rotten over App Store gift card error Q My money has been locked in **Apple**'s App Store due to a mistake made when buying some gift vouchers. My friend owed me money so I suggested she buy me some **Apple** Store gift vouchers instead, as I wanted to buy my husband an **Apple** Watch.

Unfortunately, my friend bought App Store gift vouchers in error, which is different from the **Apple** Store. I didn't notice and redeemed them by following the instructions on the back of the card.

By the time I had realised that the credit was only for the App Store, it was too late. The credit was £470, which was the value of the watch. I am not an App Store user and, even if I was, I think it would take me years to spend the value on any apps I might want.

I contacted Apple and explained the situation, hoping it would see the obvious mistake. I was told that the company does offer cash-outs of vouchers in certain situations, but after Apple reviewed my case it told me it would not be refunding me. This doesn't seem fair. - BP, London

A Your problem caught my eye because I often find that my index finger hovers over the Apple Store icon on my iPhone when I'm actually looking for the App Store. The names are so similar and I can see why your friend got confused - and how you didn't notice the gift card error sooner.

The problem is the offerings from the two stores are like comparing apples and pears. Even so, I don't understand why Apple was so difficult about agreeing to a refund. The money was destined for its coffers either way, as you planned to purchase an Apple device with it.

I asked Apple to reconsider, and although it took a few weeks of to-ing and fro-ing between you and the company, it finally agreed to let you cash in the vouchers.

When we caught up recently I was pleased to hear the refund had finally landed in your bank account.

Disneyland Paris has sat on £1,700 refund for a year Q

For about 12 months we have been trying to get back £1,743 owed to us for a cancelled booking to Disneyland Paris. Our original booking was for March 2021, but had to be cancelled as the company told us that the site would be closed at least until April 2 2021. On Feb 16 we had the cancellation confirmed and were told the money would be returned within three weeks to the card we had originally paid with. We sent a reminder in April last year and we still have not received the money. I hope you can help.

- AP, Suffolk

A

Waiting a year for a refund is no joke and enough to test anyone's patience. Mary Poppins wouldn't approve. I decided it was time to get bossy with Disneyland Paris and demand it return your cash "spit spot".

The team went off to investigate what had gone wrong, as it was evident from the communications you had received that there was no doubt you were owed the money. It turned out that Disneyland had attempted to make the refund but the card you originally booked with had expired and so it was unable to return the cash.

This is not an unusual situation. With holidays booked and cancelled in their millions during the worst of the pandemic, this would have been a common occurrence.

Apparently, though, the team at Disneyland tried to contact you to arrange a different destination for your refund. You never got the calls.

After my intervention, Disneyland sent you an email in which you noticed that the company referred to the phone number it had been trying to contact you on - it had two missing digits. You weren't impressed by this and wondered why its repayment system was not more efficient.

However, you were reassured that just two days after I had contacted the company, it held up its hands, apologised to you for the lengthy delay, and organised the repayment to be paid direct to your bank.

In addition to sending the money owed, Disneyland offered you, "as an exceptional gesture of goodwill", two free nights at hotels at its Paris resort and unlimited access to its Disneyland Park and Walt Disney Studios Park, should you choose to visit. That should hopefully help the medicine go down. FedEx thinks I owe £600

Q

I have received a final notice from the courier firm FedEx for a debt of £600, which I have not incurred. It is possible the bill is associated with the purchase of an electric bike in 2019 that was delivered last year.

But I was never responsible for the delivery charges and I have pointed this out to the company in several emails.

I have tried calling FedEx's UK number many times, but even after an hour of waiting I have not been able to speak to anyone. Can you help? I am concerned that it will affect my credit score. - DG, Bury St Edmunds

A

It took me a couple of attempts to get a response from FedEx but when I did, the company obviously realised that there had been a mistake over your billing and swiftly called off the debt collectors - for which you were extremely grateful.

Send your questions Katie Morley is back from maternity leave and once again ready to fight for your rights. Email her: kminvestigates@telegraph.co.uk Or write to her: Katie Morley Investigates The Daily Telegraph 111 Buckingham Palace Road London SW1W 0DT Do not send original documents. Include an address, phone number and notes addressed to all organisations authorising them to talk to the Telegraph. For full terms visit telegraph.co.uk/go/consumerchampion.

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Amid reports of unwanted tracking, Apple to alert users of unknown AirTag near them sooner

FE Online

559 words

12 February 2022

Financial Express Online

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English

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Apple AirTag: **Apple** had launched its AirTag with the hopes of helping people locate their personal belongings. However, like most things, it began to be misused by fringe elements in the society and before anyone knew it, reports of stalking with the help of AirTags started emerging. Taking cognisance of the issue, Cupertino has said that it is working on improving the AirTag safeguards to be released later this year so that unwanted tracking using the device can be curbed.

Also read | **Apple** to launch 'rOS' this year? All you need to know about rumoured realityOS

In a statement, the tech giant said that it condemned any malicious use of AirTag, and added that it was working with law enforcement agencies to resolve all AirTag-related requests.

However, another important thing that Apple mentioned was that it was updating its algorithm so that any user was alerted more quickly in case they had an unwanted tracker on their person. Apart from that, users having iPhone 11, 12 and 13 models would also be able to detect the exact location of an AirTag when within range with the help of Precision Finding. This feature had earlier been available only to the owners of the AirTag.

Apple is also going to start simultaneously sending notifications to iPhones when an AirTag makes a sound alert the first time, something that does not currently happen. At the moment, if a user were to miss the AirTag ping, they would not likely have a notification on their iPhone or vice versa. However, with this new measure, Cupertino is hoping to salvage situations where the AirTag speaker might be tampered with, not allowing users to hear the first ping. Louder tones are also going to be emphasised by Apple for sound alerts, it said.

Moreover, in the upcoming software updates, users setting up a new AirTag would be shown a message warning against use of the device for unwanted tracking, as it is a crime, adding that the victims would be notified about the tracker upon detection. It would also warn that law enforcement agencies would be able to request identifying information on the owner of an AirTag. Further, the support documents would also be updated by the company to detail the events that might trigger an alert and also sharing what a user should do in case they receive an alert.

Many things are still not known in this regard, like the exact timeline about these features. At the moment, Cupertino has only said that they would be brought in later this year, but considering that it is only about mid-February right now, that leaves quite a lot of room for us to take a guess. Apart from that, the company has also not commented on how much earlier the alert would be sent to the victims, which is a key question since currently, they are alerted of an unknown AirTag sometime between eight to 24 hours of detection.

Nonetheless, the move is commendable on Apple's part since it has acknowledged the shortcomings of its device and is working on making it better so as to ensure that people are safer.

[Many things are still not known in this regard, like the exact timeline about these features.](#)

Document FIEXON0020220213ei2c00022

Apple to launch 'rOS' this year? All you need to know about rumoured realityOS

Bulbul Dhawan

549 words

12 February 2022

Financial Express Online

FIEXON

English

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Apple rOS: In case you think it is a typo, it is not! We might actually get to see **Apple**'s rOS sometime this year. Wait, let us give you a little context. Back in 2017, it had been reported that Cupertino was working on a new operating system called rOS, for 'realityOS'. Over the course of the years, when nothing changed, this rumour kind of faded away from the public eye. Now though, another report has surfaced and it suggests that rOS might actually make an appearance in 2022.

Also read | Sony's new AI-based Gran Turismo agent can beat top gamers

Now, in case you're wondering what rOS is for, here's what we know so far. Rumour mill has it that rOS is meant to power the upcoming AR/VR headset that Apple will release. A report by 9to5Mac has given us the latest hope about the rOS, and as per that, 'realityOS' has been referred to in the upload logs of App Store and in the open source dyld repo. Based on this, it seems like the AR/VR headset would have its own App Store for third-party developers to share apps around augmented reality and virtual reality.

Apple's AR/VR headset is a highly anticipated device. Well, to be honest, any device from Cupertino grabs public attention, but add the AR/VR factor to the tech giant's knack for the touch of perfection, and you've got something that everyone kind of awaits with bated breath. New details about the device have been shared by analyst Ming-Chi Kuo, according to whom the 96W power adapter used for the 14-inch MacBook Pro would be used for the headset as well. Moreover, a 4nm chip and a 5nm chip would lend processing capabilities to the device.

The rumours of the device have been running around for quite some time, but there is no official confirmation of any sort, which is frankly no surprise. Cupertino is known to keep things hush hush before it chooses to reveal its products officially, and it has also, in the past, spoken out against leaks and guesses about its products before they are released.

However, Kuo's research note to investors stating that it was likely that Cupertino would launch the gadget towards the end of 2022 with limited supplies is about as much of a confirmation as we can hope to get. He has noted, though, that even if the product is launched in 2022, the shipment is not likely to begin until the 2023 first quarter.

So far, what reports suggest is that the device would be equipped with a three-display configuration, using two Micro OLED displays and one AMOLED panel. It is also expected to weigh somewhere between 300 and 400 grams, with Kuo saying that the headset would be capable of delivering performance comparable with Cupertino's in-house M1 chipsets that have been fitted in its new MacBooks. Environment and gesture detection is also expected in the device with the help of advanced sensors.

[Over the course of the years, when nothing changed, this rumour kind of faded away from the public eye.](#)

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Money

Shop Best Buy's 24-hour flash sale for deep discounts on **Apple**, Samsung and LG

TJ Donegan; Amanda Tarlton; Jon Winkler; Elsie Boskamp; Reviewed

883 words

11 February 2022

USA Today Online

USATONL

English

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Get your hands on the latest and greatest tech right now by shopping markdowns on TVs, laptops, headphones and so much more. For a limited time, Best Buy is offering major price cuts across all categories so you can save big on tons of must-have electronics.

Get deals and shopping advice delivered straight to your phone. Sign up for text message alerts from the experts at Reviewed.

The tech retailer is currently hosting a 24-hour flash sale with incredible sitewide discounts through tonight, February 13. That means you can scoop huge savings on some of the hottest smart tech of the year. Better still, through Tuesday, March 2, you can shop markdowns on select home appliances during the Best Buy Presidents' Day appliance sale.

Samsung just dropped a new line of smartphones: Here's how to pre-order the new Galaxy S22 phones and S8 tablets—and get \$250 in Samsung Credit

Valentine's Day: Still shopping for your valentine? We've got deals on chocolates, flowers and so much more

Whether you're a music lover looking for headphones that offer a concert-like sound experience or you need a top-tier tablet to make working from home a little easier, Best Buy has you covered. Keep scrolling to shop all the best tech deals right now.

Shop the top deals at Best Buy's 24-hour flash sale

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Get the Microsoft 10.5-Inch Surface Go 2 for \$399.99 (Save \$150)

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Shop the Best Buy 24-hour flash sale.

There's more where this deal came from. Sign up for Reviewed's Perks and Rec newsletter and we'll keep 'em coming every Sunday through Friday.

The product experts at Reviewed have all your shopping needs covered. Follow Reviewed on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok or Flipboard for the latest deals, product reviews and more.

Prices were accurate at the time this article was published but may change over time.

This article originally appeared on Reviewed: Shop Best Buy's 24-hour flash sale for deep discounts on Apple, Samsung and LG

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Femail

The best Amazon deals to shop this weekend - save up to 57% off Shark vacuum cleaners, smart heating thermostats, [Apple AirPods](#) and other reviewer favourites

Emily Knott For Mailonline

748 words

11 February 2022

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Mail Online

DAMONL

English

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Products featured in this Mail Best article are independently selected by our shopping writers. If you make a purchase using links on this page, MailOnline may earn an affiliate commission.

There are thousands of items on sale at Amazon this weekend, where shoppers can save up to 57 per cent off popular home goods, electronics, beauty products, toys, and more.

Top deals include 47 per cent off this [Shark upright vacuum cleaner](#) with over 8,000 five-star reviews, and you can combat the energy price hike by installing a [Hive Thermostat](#) now on sale for less than £150.

Other popular, customer-loved items on sale include the top-rated [Kärcher WV Black Edition Window Vac](#) so that you can get squeaky clean windows and shower screens for less than £42.

There are also great savings on sweet treats, LEGO sets, electric toothbrushes and Apple AirPods.

Ahead we share the best Amazon deals you don't want to miss this weekend.

Now with a saving of £170, this upright vacuum cleaner, although a tad heavier than other models, delivers more power, picking up from deep within pile and transitions from carpets to hard floors efficiently.

You can also lift off the dust canister with a single click and move around wherever you like, which is useful when cleaning stairs and under furniture.

One impressive offer to consider is 40 per cent off the Echo Dot (4th generation). Now £29.99, the voice-controlled smart speaker with Alexa can be added to any room in your home, and with a simple command, you can ask for music, news, weather updates, and more.

You can also make calls and control compatible smart home devices, including lighting, home security, and heating.

The bestselling large Cadbury Dairy Milk 850g bar is now reduced to under £6 on Amazon. A popular gift choice for birthdays, thank yous, and Valentine's Day, it's the ultimate cocoa-fuelled treat for any chocolate lover. And there's plenty to go around too.

The Apple AirPods Pro with a MagSafe charging case (2021) are on sale with a saving of £50. The bestselling earbuds feature active noise-cancelling, adaptive EQ and customised silicone tips for a reduced price of £189.

This window vacuum cleaner from Karcher sucks up excess moisture whilst cleaning, leaving windows, tiles, mirrors and shower screens spotless and streak-free with minimal effort required.

The rechargeable handheld vac has a powerful lithium-ion battery lasting up to 35 minutes, cleaning 105m² in just one charge.[ct description](#)

Bulk buy Andrex Classic Clean Washlets and save 22 per cent. Now under £1 per pack, the lightly moistened toilet tissue with micellar water and fresh cotton fragrance will leave your behind squeaky clean.

This super-moisturising O'Keeffe's Working Hands Hand Cream is perfect for tackling dry and cracked hands that need some serious TLC.

The green pot is brimming with moisturising ingredients, including a high concentration of glycerin that helps draw in and trap moisture in the skin, which is necessary to heal.

Amazon has some great deals on popular LEGO sets, including a saving of £9.99 on this LEGO® Friends Heartlake City Organic Café (41444), which features a toy café with a kitchen, garden and a juice delivery bike.

With three brushing modes - sensitive, whitening and daily clean - Oral-B's Oral-B Pro 3 Electric Toothbrush leaves your teeth sparkling clean. The toothbrush also has a smart pressure sensor, long-lasting battery and is designed to remove more plaque than a manual toothbrush.

Today you can save 40 per cent off this Amazon Fire 7 tablet. With a front-facing camera, 16GB of storage and a long-lasting battery of up to seven hours, you'll be able to enjoy your favourite apps like BBC iPlayer, Netflix, TikTok, YouTube and more.

This intuitive thermostat pairs with the Hive app on your smartphone and is compatible with both Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant for hands-free control.

Control your heating when you're not home and see how much energy you're using each day, week and month.

This laser hair removal IPL machine promises to achieve long-lasting hair removal safely in your home.

Uniquely curved, intelligent attachments perfectly fit your curves and adapt the treatment programs for each body area.

Document DAMONL0020220211ei2b0040h

Femail

Nursing student, 21, whose Apple Watch told her she had a serious illness MONTHS before she had any idea she was sick shows how you can ensure your fitness tracker alerts you to health problems

Louise Allingham For Daily Mail Australia

813 words

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Mail Online

DAMONL

English

Copyright 2022

* An student has shared a hidden Apple Watch feature that detected her illness

* Lauren, 21, spent months suffering from symptoms like fatigue and weight gain

* The nursing student was diagnosed with a thyroid condition two weeks ago

* Her Apple Watch logged a dip in her oxygen consumption but didn't notify her

* Lauren said had she have known she could've saved months of illness and tests

An Australian nursing student has told of how a feature on her Apple Watch could have saved her months of symptoms like fatigue and heat sensitivity - and helped to diagnose her thyroid condition much quicker.

Lauren, a 21-year-old student from Sydney, said she recently discovered she had Thyroiditis - a swelling and inflammation of the gland - and found that her watch had picked up on a drop in her oxygen consumption months prior.

In a video on TikTok, she tells told other fitness tracker users to turn all their notifications on so they can be alerted of any concerning changes to their health.

'I would have realised something was going on had my apple watch alerted me of changes,' Lauren said in the clip.

'Instead of me waiting for the symptoms to get really bad, I could have gone to the doctor back in October when there was this dramatic drop in a matter of days and had it investigated then,' she explained pointing to a graph from the Health app on her phone.

The graph was calculated from data picked up by her watch that shows a significant dip in Lauren's oxygen consumption around the time she started to feel unwell.

'What you were looking at was my oxygen consumption and as you can see was dramatically dropped which means my cardiovascular system isn't working as well as it once was,' she said.

The university student spent months battling with fatigue, irregular heart rate, a 'serious' sensitivity to heat, weight gain, dry skin and irritability before getting a diagnosis a couple of weeks ago.

A neck ultrasound later showed she actually had half of her thyroid missing due to a rare congenital defect called Thyroid hemiagenesis; this then caused the thyroiditis to develop.

'I literally feel nauseous if I'm out in the sun for too long,' she said.

While Lauren said being notified of her sudden 'below average' oxygen levels could have saved her from months of illness and doctors visits she warned against using a watch for medical advice.

'Don't get me wrong your Apple Watch is definitely not something you should follow as medical advice but it can come in handy as a tool to prompt you to go get things investigated further,' she said.

Thyroiditis: What you should know

What is Thyroiditis?

Thyroiditis refers to a group of disorders that cause inflammation of the thyroid. Your thyroid is the gland located in the front of your neck below your Adam's apple.

The thyroid makes hormones that control your metabolism and affect how your body works.

Symptoms

There are several types of Thyroiditis with many possible symptoms but common ones include:

Weight loss

Nervousness, anxiety or irritability

Trouble sleeping

Rapid heart rate

Dry skin

Depression

Fatigue

Muscle weakness

Tremors - shaking hands and fingers

Unplanned weight gain

Constipation

Muscle aches

Treatment

Treatment for thyroiditis depends on your type and what symptoms you have.

If you have symptoms of hyperthyroidism, your doctor may prescribe a medicine called a beta blocker which helps to lower your heart rate and reduce tremors.

If you have symptoms of hypothyroidism, your doctor may prescribe thyroid hormone replacements which help to restore your body's hormone levels and get your metabolism back to normal.

It can take several tries to get the right dose of synthetic thyroid hormone. Your doctor may taper the dose of this drug over time as your symptoms improve.

Source: familydoctor.org

Her video quickly went viral and has racked up thousands of views and dozens of comments from people sharing their similar experiences.

'I got high heart rate notifications so I saw a doctor and he diagnosed me with Graves Disease and said my heart rate was so high I would've had a heart attack by the time I was 20 if I didn't have the watch!!! I'm only 17!!' one girl wrote.

'My apple watch helped me with getting diagnosed because my doctors just weren't taking me seriously,' said another.

'Yes so important! It is such a great thing to have the chart showing your constant heart rate too! Especially if your heart rate goes up at the doctors appt,' commented a third.

Document DAMONL0020220211ei2b003mp

The New York Times

Business/Financial Desk; SECTB

Apple Will Update AirTags After Stalking Complaints

By Kellen Browning

568 words

11 February 2022

The New York Times

NYTF

Late Edition - Final

5

English

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The \$29 devices have become a headache for the company.

Apple said on Thursday that it would make improvements to its AirTag devices to make it more difficult for people to use them to track others without their knowledge.

AirTags, tiny discs that Apple started selling for \$29 last year to help people keep track of items like keys, wallets and phones, have become a headache for the company. People have said on social media and in interviews that they have found the devices hidden on their cars and belongings, leading them to fear they were being stalked.

AirTags use Bluetooth technology to ping nearby Apple devices, which then report the last known location of the AirTag to whatever device is using it to track something. Apple said some built-in features, like beeping automatically and notifying iPhones that an AirTag is nearby, could help prevent abuse, but privacy experts and those who feared they had been stalked said the features were not enough because they do not easily help people who carry phones that use Google's Android software.

Law enforcement officials have warned that the devices could be used in attempts to steal cars. And women have said they have found AirTags hidden on their cars and in their possessions, and sometimes have called the police. One woman, Ashley Estrada, told The New York Times that she had recently received a notification that an AirTag had been tracking her for four hours across Los Angeles, and that she had eventually found the device lodged behind her car's license plate. "I felt so violated," Ms. Estrada said.

Apple's changes, which will be introduced this year, include the ability for someone who receives an alert that an AirTag is nearby to use his or her iPhone to find the AirTag through a "combination of sound, haptics and visual feedback."

Users' devices will display an alert when a nearby AirTag emits a sound, in case the sound cannot be heard, and people will have the option to make AirTag beeps louder so they can more easily find the tracking device. Apple said it would also improve its alert system so that iPhones tell people sooner that unknown AirTags may be traveling with them.

Eva Galperin, a cybersecurity director at the Electronic Frontier Foundation who studies so-called stalkerware, said that the changes were "improvements" but that Apple needed to take more steps to prevent abuse, such as working with Google to extend protection to Android phones.

Current fixes, such as an Android app that allows users to scan for AirTags, require people to proactively check rather than passively monitor whether they are being tracked.

"AirTag was designed to help people locate their personal belongings, not to track people or another person's property, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms any malicious use of our products," Apple said in a news release.

Apple added that it was aware of "reports of bad actors attempting to misuse AirTag for malicious or criminal purposes." The company said it had worked with safety groups and law enforcement officials to identify needed changes, but declined to comment beyond its statement.

People have said on social media that they have found AirTag devices hidden on their cars and belongings. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLOS JARAMILLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Document NYTF000020220211ei2b0003e

Apple's AirTag stalker alert will get faster and loud

584 words

11 February 2022

Deccan Herald

DECHER

English

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Soon after **Apple** launched the AirTag in 2021, some privacy activists voiced concern that the device can be misused for illegal stalking of a person. To that, **Apple** came up with value-added privacy-focused features that would curb spying.

Whenever an AirTag gets separated from the owner for too long, the latter will make sounds every eight hours or 24 hours, so that it makes itself known to the people around it and eventually get it returned to the owner.

Also, if the AirTag is traveling to faraway places with anybody else other than the owner, a notification gets displayed on the phone to make them known that an anonymous item is following them. They can even make it play a sound to locate it in the purse/wallet or in a vehicle. AirTag alert. DH Photo/KVN Rohit

It should be noted that every AirTag comes with a unique serial number and gets linked with a registered Apple ID during the setup process. In this way, AirTag will have the owner's details.

It should be noted that whenever the company gets a subpoena from a law agency, Apple has helped them to nab the person, who misused the AirTag to spy on a victim.

Going forward, Apple AirTag will be getting new features that will further help in improving user privacy security.

"Apple has been working closely with various safety groups and law enforcement agencies. Through our own evaluations and these discussions, we have identified even more ways we can update AirTag safety warnings and help guard against further unwanted tracking," Apple said.

Whenever a user sets up the AirTag for the first time, he/she will get a privacy warning that the accessory must not be used for illegal tracking of people.

Also, the new update, which is slated to be released soon, will ensure, Apple device owners will know if an unknown item is an AirPods or an AirTag or any third-party Find My network accessory. Currently, it displays 'Unknown Accessory' is traveling with them and this confuses the user.

Additionally, the new update will help owners of iPhone 11, iPhone 12, and iPhone 13 series handsets, be able to use Precision Finding to see the exact distance and direction to an unknown [AirTag](#) when it is in range.

Apple has also ensured that its unwanted tracking alert system will get improved so that it can notify users much faster than before, that an unknown AirTag or Find My network accessory may be traveling with them. Apple AirTag. Credit: DH Photo/KVN Rohit

The company also added that going forward, the tone of the AirTag will be at its loudest when playing the sound to locate it.

Furthermore, Apple has revised the official unwanted tracking support article on apple.com to help people understand the working of the AirTag and how they can prevent people stalking them using AirTags and other accessories.

"AirTag was designed to help people locate their personal belongings, not to track people or another person's property, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms any malicious use of our products. Unwanted tracking has long been a societal problem, and we took this concern seriously in the design of AirTag," Apple noted.

Must read | [Apple AirTag review: Fantastic smart tracker with privacy at the core](#)

Get the latest news on new launches, gadget reviews, apps, cybersecurity, and more on personal technology only on [DH Tech](#).

Document DECHER0020220211ei2b000jj

Samsung-smartphone market; Samsung outperformed by Apple in Q4 smartphone market: reports

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English

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Samsung outperformed by Apple in Q4 smartphone market: reports

By Woo Jae-yeon

SEOUL, Feb. 11 (Yonhap) -- Samsung Electronics Co. was outpaced by Apple Inc. in the fourth quarter in terms of global smartphone shipments, reports showed Friday.

Apple surpassed its South Korean rival to become the top smartphone maker in the three months ending in December, with a 22 percent market share versus Samsung's 18 percent, according to market analyst firms Strategy Analytics and Counterpoint Research.

By shipment, Samsung shipped 69 million phones in the October-December period, while Apple shipped 80 million units thanks to strong demand for the new iPhone 13 series, released in September, in China and other markets, Strategy Analytics said.

Counterpoint Research estimated the shipment figures slightly differently at Samsung's 67.2 million units versus Apple's 81.5 million units.

Global smartphone shipments decreased 3 percent in the fourth quarter from the year-ago period to total at 365 million units, Strategy Analytics said, due mainly to chip shortages and manufacturing disruptions by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data showed that Apple tends to perform better in the fourth quarter, helped by new iPhone launches that mostly happen in the second half of a year.

In the October-December period of 2019, Apple had an 18 percent market share, the same as Samsung's, and its share jumped to 21 percent versus Samsung's 16 percent in 2020.

For the full year, however, Samsung maintained the top spot with a 20 percent market share, followed by Apple at 16.8 percent. Smartphone shipments rebounded to 1.36 billion units last year, up 5 percent from the previous year when global smartphone shipments contracted 8 percent on-year.

The report forecast the global smartphone market will grow "a mild 3 percent" this year as "component shortages, price inflation and Covid uncertainty will continue to weigh on the smartphone market during the first half of 2022, before the situation eases in the second half due to Covid vaccines, interest rate rises by central banks, and less supply disruption at factories."

Despite upward pricing pressure amid rising inflation and raw material costs, Samsung kept the prices for its latest Galaxy premium smartphones unchanged to cater to a wider audience.

The 6.8-inch Galaxy S22 Ultra starts at US\$1,199.99 for the version of the phone with 8GB of RAM and 128GB of storage, while the 6.6-inch Galaxy S22 Plus starts at \$999.99 for the model with 8GB of RAM and 128GB of storage, and the 6.1-inch S22 starts at \$799.9.

The latest series has advanced night photography features, and the Galaxy S22 Ultra, in particular, comes with a built-in S Pen for the first time for a Galaxy phone, effectively succeeding the Galaxy Note line.

Samsung's flagship Galaxy series normally sold 35-40 million units, but the Galaxy S21 series, which was launched in January last year, was believed to have sold less than 30 million units.

"The sales of the Galaxy S22 series can outperform its predecessor if the Ultra model can lure the Galaxy Note users," Kim Kwang-soo, an analyst at eBEST Investment & Securities, said, adding that he forecast the

Galaxy S22 will sell 25-28 million units this year, more than the 23.7 million shipments of the Galaxy S21 in 2021.

jaeyeon.woo@yna.co.kr

(END)

Document YONH000020220211ei2b00565

AsiaWorld

Xiaomi founder Lei Jun vows to challenge **Apple** with sharpened focus on the global high-end smartphone market

821 words

11 February 2022

scmp.com

SCMCOM

English

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* Lei Jun described competition in the high-end smartphone arena as 'a war of life and death', which Xiaomi must overcome to continue growing

* The stakes are high for Xiaomi after **Apple** once again became the world's top smartphone vendor in the fourth quarter last year

Chinese tech giant [Xiaomi Corp](#) will ratchet up its challenge to [Apple](#) by focusing on the high-end segment of the global [smartphone](#) market, according to company founder and chief executive [Lei Jun](#), as the mainland's major handset makers rush to fill the void left by struggling [Huawei Technologies Co](#).

"[We aim to] fully benchmark against Apple in [terms of] product and experience, and become China's biggest high-end brand in the next three years," Lei said in a post on microblogging platform Weibo on Tuesday, as he reiterated the company's strategic goal to develop into [the world's largest smartphone vendor](#) in the same period.

Lei's post, published the same day the Beijing-based company's management had their first strategic meeting after the Lunar New Year break, described competition in the high-end smartphone arena as "a war of life and death", which Xiaomi must overcome to continue growing. He also repeated the firm's pledge to invest 100 billion yuan (US\$15.71 billion) in research and development over the next five years to help achieve its ambitions.

Do you have questions about the biggest topics and trends from around the world? Get the answers with [SCMP Knowledge](#), our new platform of curated content with explainers, FAQs, analyses and infographics brought to you by our award-winning team.

The stakes are high for Xiaomi after Apple unseated [Samsung Electronics](#) to become the world's top smartphone vendor in the fourth quarter last year, seizing a 22 per cent global market share on the back of strong demand for its [iPhone 13](#) line, according to a report published last month by Canalys. The independent analyst firm said Chinese Android smartphone vendors Xiaomi, [Oppo](#) and [Vivo](#) rounded out the global top five ranking last quarter.

In the second quarter last year, Xiaomi managed to become the world's second-largest smartphone vendor for the first time, ranking ahead of Apple and just behind Samsung, according to data from Canalys. It said Xiaomi's 17 per cent global market share that quarter was driven by increased smartphone shipments in South America, Africa and western Europe.

Xiaomi's quest to lead the global smartphone market [hit a speed bump in the third quarter last year](#), as sales slowed because of the [global semiconductor shortage](#) and weak demand in China's highly competitive handset market.

"For Xiaomi, the supply-side problems are relatively bigger than weaker demand [in China]," company president Wang Xiang said in a conference call with analysts in November. He indicated that the unstable supply of components makes it a challenge to plan production.

Apart from supply chain disruptions, Xiaomi faces a big challenge to attract more consumers by separating itself from the other major Chinese Android smartphone vendors, which are also targeting the same high-end handset segment, according to Will Wong, research manager with IDC's Asia-Pacific client devices group in Singapore.

"Focusing on the consumer experience is the right way for Xiaomi to achieve that goal," Wong said.

"Nevertheless, it will be interesting to see whether Xiaomi could achieve [its ambitions] not only with its products, but also through its [online and offline] channels."

In November, Xiaomi announced an ambitious retail infrastructure programme that will see it [roll out 20,000 new retail stores over the next three years](#) across China's countryside, the area which accounts for 70 per cent of the domestic smartphone market. It currently operates a network of more than 10,000 bricks-and-mortar stores across the country.

But if the past quarter is any indicator, Xiaomi, Oppo and Vivo already have their work cut out for them in mainland China – the world's largest smartphone market – where Apple recently achieved its highest ever domestic share at 23 per cent, according to data published by research firm Counterpoint in January.

Apple surpassed Vivo in the fourth quarter to become China's No 1 smartphone vendor after six years, according to Counterpoint. The last time Apple topped the market was during the peak of the iPhone 6 super cycle in 2015, months after its initial local release in October 2014.

"Apple rose to first place in China right after the iPhone 13 was released in September," Counterpoint analyst Zhang Mengmeng said in a report.

Competition between Xiaomi and the other major Chinese handset vendors has become more intense after Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker and [formerly China's biggest smartphone vendor](#), saw its operations [struggle because of US trade sanctions](#).

Document SCMCOM0020220211ei2b00001

Business

Australia central to Fortnite app fight

DAVID SWAN

542 words

11 February 2022

The Australian

AUSTRALIAN

Australian

18

English

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Australia is shaping as a crucial battleground for two of the world's most valuable companies, **Apple** and Google, which are embroiled in legal disputes with Fortnite maker Epic Games that could determine the future of in-app purchases, and how much power the tech giants can wield over their app stores.

On Friday the Federal Court ruled against Google, which was pursuing an application to have its Australian stoush with **Apple** permanently stayed amid a similar suit in California. Google was also ordered to pay Epic's costs.

Meanwhile Apple's own battle is set for later this year, with a six-week hearing in the High Court from November 28. In December the court denied Apple's final effort to have its fight with Epic heard in California, ruling there were "strong reasons" for the case to be heard in Australia.

Apple called the decision "radical" and "out of step with international law". The court actions date back to 2020, when Fortnite – one of the most popular video games globally – was kicked off Apple's and Google's app stores for circumventing their payment systems and in-app commissions.

Epic then filed antitrust suits in the US and Australia, alleging that the tech giants' 30 per cent commission was anti-competitive and monopolistic. Gamers have been unable to play Fortnite on their iPhones or Android smartphones for 18 months.

Meanwhile, Australia's competition watchdog last year, as part of its digital platforms inquiry, flagged potential regulation to deal with Apple and Google's app store duopoly, highlighting "significant concerns" with their market power.

"The ACCC is concerned with restrictions imposed by Apple and Google which mean developers have no choice but to use Apple and Google's own payment systems for any in-app purchases," ACCC chair Rod Sims said last year. He said the ACCC may recommend new laws to rein in Big Tech.

Amid the looming Australian court cases, new US legislation – which has won bipartisan support – was sent to the Senate floor on Friday, despite objections from Apple and Google, which argue they need control over their app stores for privacy and security.

That bill would bar Apple and Google from forcing developers to use their in-app payment systems. The tech giants would also not be able to prevent apps from telling consumers about other payment options.

Momentum for change is building globally. South Korea has adopted similar laws, recently amending its Telecommunication Business Act to force operators of app stores to allow third-party payments.

In November Epic chief Tim Sweeney spoke out in South Korea about his legal battles, describing them as "existential" for the technology industry.

"The road of tech was built on competition. Now Apple and Google have won the smartphone competition and are monopolising the platform.

"Google's fees prevent developers from passing on savings to the users," Mr Sweeney said.

"Apple locks a billion users to one store and deprives them of political rights. Apple must be stopped. We are seeing a new medium called the metaverse, the 3D social entertainment platform.

"Apple and Google are preventing other companies to come into the metaverse. "The current platform providers stop innovation."

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Features

HEADWIND, OR CAT 3 CYCLONE?

John Davidson

1,744 words

10 February 2022

The Australian Financial Review

AFNR

First

44

English

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Privacy **Apple's** flicking of a switch, costing Facebook billions, is just the start of data protection problems facing the company, now called Meta, writes John Davidson.

What do you call a software change that, with the flipping of a single bit of data, costs you \$US10 billion in lost revenues in a single year?

If you're Dave Wehner, the chief financial officer of Meta, an advertising-driven social media company formerly known as Facebook, which has just reported annual revenues of \$US118 billion, you call it a "headwind".

Briefing analysts about Meta's disastrous quarterly earnings report last week, Wehner discussed the impact of a change to Apple's privacy settings, where users have to opt in if they want their iPhone use to be tracked by applications such as Facebook and Instagram.

"We believe the impact of iOS [Apple's operating system for iPhones] overall is a headwind on our business in 2022," he said.

In April last year, Apple added a feature known as app tracking transparency, which requires users to consent to being tracked by a company outside of that company's app. Until Apple made that change, Facebook (as the company was then known) had routinely surveilled the activities of iPhone users, even when the users were using apps that had nothing to do with Facebook.

That data, gathered in vast quantities, was used to target digital advertising, which accounts for 98 per cent of Meta/Facebook's revenues.

With three out of four iPhone users opting not to be surveilled by Facebook and other apps when given the choice, losing access to even some of that data was an expensive problem.

"It's on the order of \$US10 billion, so it's a pretty significant headwind for our business," Wehner told the analysts.

But even with the addition of the word "significant", Wehner may be downplaying the impact that new privacy settings could have on the business of the biggest of the Big Tech giants, Meta and Google.

As privacy and advertising experts will tell you, changes to the rules about how data can be collected, and how it can be shared once it has been collected, represent more than a headwind for Meta and Google.

Apple's iOS change, just one of many proposed technology, legislative and regulatory changes around the world, is more like a squall presaging what looks likely to become a perfect storm.

"Data protection and limitations on the use of data is what's going to get Facebook," says Jason Kint, CEO of Digital Content Next, a US trade group representing digital publishers, and a vocal critic of Facebook.

Because of changes to the way Meta can collect data from people when they're not using Facebook, "they're going to have to find a way to grow the data they have, directly using their services".

"That's only going to get more challenging as more people don't want to use their services, especially the main Facebook app, which is losing favour with the younger market. Instagram has been a roaring success with the younger market, but the main blue Facebook app is significantly unpopular with that demographic," Kint says.

"So the headwinds they're talking about and the regulatory issues that are collapsing around them globally, they're only going to get worse.

"You've got the strongest privacy law in America rolling out next year, in California. You've got the restriction on trans-Atlantic data flow that's likely to get confirmed later this year. And then you've got general data protection regulation enforcement getting ratcheted up," he tells The Australian Financial Review.

Those trans-Atlantic restrictions alone represent a Category 3 cyclone for Meta.

They arise from a complaint made by a data privacy activist, Maximillian Schrems, who examined the 1222 pages of personal data Facebook had amassed about him, and complained to the Data Protection Commissioner of Ireland (where Facebook is based for tax purposes) that the data violated European data protection law.

In a 2020 case that has come to be known as "Schrems II", the European Court of Justice sided with Schrems' complaint, and found that US law didn't offer enough data protection safeguards to meet European standards, making it illegal for Facebook or any other company to gather data about European citizens and ship it back to the US for analysis and sale to advertisers. The full implications of the case have yet to filter through to the digital advertising industry, but in a filing with US Securities and Exchange Commission last week, Wehner says Meta might have to pull Facebook and Instagram out of Europe, if it can't use data about European citizens to serve up targeted advertising.

Meta officials later clarified that the company had no immediate plans to pull out of Europe, and said it was "closely monitoring" the effects of the Schrems II ruling.

Says Kint: "Put all that together with the limitations that Google and Apple are putting into their technology to prevent tracking by Facebook, and that's a pretty big headwind."

Brett Dawson, chief executive of media planning and buying agency Bohemia, says there's still plenty of ways Meta can continue to grow, despite Facebook's woes.

WhatsApp, Meta's chat application with more than 2 billion users globally, has yet to be fully exploited by Meta, and could feature in-app sales and merchandising similar to those in China's biggest chat app, WeChat.

Dawson says: "WhatsApp is now a multibillion-dollar ad business and only offers a fraction of the services that WeChat does. If [Meta] can establish and roll out a similar service set, then WhatsApp could be a huge revenue line."

Anyway, he says, Facebook's ad revenues still grew 37 per cent in 2021, despite the Apple headwind.

"Sure it came up short of market expectations, but it still pulled in a huge share of digital ad spend."

But what if something happens to shrink the digital advertising pie, so that even a huge share is not what it used to be?

What if a new world order emerges, driven in part by changes to data protection regulations and in part by technologies such as the blockchain and cryptocurrency, in which consumers are no longer strip-mined for demographic and behavioural clues that can be on-sold to advertisers, but rather are themselves paid for the participation in online communities?

That very possibility (and perhaps the hope of distancing himself from Facebook's toxic history of data privacy violations) is what led Facebook founder and CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, to rename the company Meta last October, after the "metaverse" that promises to turn the internet advertising paradigm on its head.

It's often imagined in terms of a virtual-reality landscape in which users interact with each other through 3D headsets and digital avatars, but it doesn't have to be like that, says Robby Wade, co-founder of ThisApp, an internet chat company that is hoping to use "web3" technologies such as NFTs and blockchains to compete with Meta's WhatsApp.

Wade is one of a new generation of entrepreneurs trying to return value to the creators of that value - the users themselves - rather than have it locked up in data warehouses and advertising deals.

In ThisApp, heavy users of the chat platform won't be exploited for advertising data. They'll be paid in tokens tied to the value of the platform, aligning their interests with that of the platform itself, he says.

It's a way of thinking which, if and when it becomes more widespread, can completely undermine the advertising business that now fuels the internet.

"If you think about how WhatsApp won the market, they did two things: they made the transition from paying 25 cents for a text message to it essentially being free to message all around the world; and they made calling free internationally," Wade says.

"Now we're moving into a world where users will be paid to use a particular platform."

At the heart of the metaverse and the web3 way of thinking, says Wade, is another concept that could one day represent the mother of all storms for companies such as Google and Facebook, which rely on capturing data from users, and keeping it to themselves.

Liquidity. The ability to leave a platform, and take all your stuff with you.

Wade says: "Web 3.0 is all about liquidity. If I want to exit a platform, can I exit? If I want to delete my data, can I delete it? If I want to take it elsewhere, can I move it?"

In the new world embodied by the metaverse, users will have digital wallets that represent them in the digital world, and that link to all their digital assets and data.

If the wallet leaves, all the data leaves, too, crippling a platform's ability to monetise a user through ongoing surveillance and advertising.

"Platforms will be like motherships that users can dock with, but the wallet will be your own little spaceship," he says.

The question facing Meta then, is: can it reshape its entire business model around that new way of thinking, and pay users to stay instead of selling them to advertisers?

Wade himself says Meta stands a chance of pulling off such a transformation.

"If you look at their purchases of WhatsApp and Instagram, Facebook is arguably the best M&A company of all time," he says. "If they keep buying great companies and expanding their business model, they can diversify away from advertising. But it will be difficult, and it's going to take time."

Chris Cooper, executive director of Reset Australia, which lobbies to limit the social damage done by Big Data platforms, isn't sure Meta should be given the opportunity to do in web3 what it does in Web 2.0, though.

"I'm worried they're looking for new ways to do surveillance and data exploitation in the metaverse, rather than looking at new ways of doing business," he says. "There's the risk they're just going to change the way data surveillance works and immerse us even further in the world of surveillance."

"I have grave concerns about what the Facebook metaverse would look like. In no world is Facebook the right company to be designing that." AFR

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Tech

Samsung after dark: Can the S22 Ultra beat Apple's best at night photography?

Mike Feibus

861 words

10 February 2022

USA Today Online

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English

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For a couple of years now, Samsung has leveraged massive 108-megapixel lenses in its high-end smartphone cameras to capture more photographic detail than market rival Apple. And now, with the release of the Galaxy S22 Ultra, America's second largest smartphone supplier contends that its latest flagship can also beat the top-of-the-line iPhone 13 Pro Max at its own game: with top-notch night photos and video.

That would be quite a feat. Because taking steps to jack up resolution, where Samsung already excels, invariably comes at the expense of low-light performance, which is Apple's strength.

Indeed, there's no way to skirt the tradeoffs of pixel physics. That said, most of what separates entry-level smartphones from top-of-the-line models in the nearly-\$80 billion U.S. smartphone market is photo and video quality. So if Samsung really has found a path around the high-res/low-light continuum, it will have a better shot convincing loyal iPhone buyers to take a S22 Ultra test drive.

We'll know soon enough, because the S22 Ultra comes available February 25.

NEW SAMSUNG GALAXY S22 OUT FEB. 25: Here's how to preorder one

The physics of choice

In order to pack more pixels into a lens, you either have to expand the sensor to accommodate the new graphic elements, or shrink the size of the pixels. If you grow the area, the lens won't fit into smartphones, which are already packed to the gills with batteries, displays, antennas, speakers and processors.

Unfortunately, smaller pixels don't capture as much light. To compensate for that, the shutter must stay open longer. Which means your subjects are more likely to move. And you are more likely to shake the camera. All of which can blur the picture.

For its part, Apple has decided that 12MP lenses achieve the right balance between detail and low-light performance. That's proven to be a reasonable compromise, as 12 megapixels offer enough resolution for many everyday shots – with sensors large enough to take sharper snapshots during twilight ballgames and evening backyard parties.

Each of the 108 megapixels in the S22 Ultra's primary camera, in fact, is less than half the size of the pixels in the iPhone 13 Pro Max's main 12MP lens.

READY TO DITCH YOUR IPHONE? How the new Samsung Galaxy S22 compares with iPhone 13

Breaking free

Even though you can't break the laws of physics, there are ways to mute its impact. And with the S22 Ultra, Samsung is deploying more hardware refinements and software techniques to take better pictures and videos at night.

"When you are taking a picture or video indoors under low light you will see a noticeable difference," Sungdae Joshua Cho, VP and head of camera R&D at Samsung, told me.

One technique Samsung implemented is called binning, which bundles three-by-three blocks of pixels into one. The nine-pixel group pools the light, which Samsung says results in sharp low-light 12MP pictures.

TALKING TECH NEWSLETTER: Sign up for our guide to the week's biggest tech news

Samsung brought pixel binning to market two years ago with the S20 Ultra, the first with a 108MP lens. The company improved the technique with last year's S21 Ultra, and again with the upcoming S22 Ultra.

Cho said that the S22 Ultra includes other low-light performance improvements, including:

Larger pixel sensors – 23% larger to be exact – to soak in more light

Optical image stabilization hardware that can absorb 58% more shake than last year's model

A more sensitive sensor to help minimize smaller movements and vibrations

A new anti-flare lens glass to help produce clear, crisp pictures in both high- and low-light conditions

Twelve-bit HDR, which helps manage nighttime video lighting

An AI processor that is twice as powerful, which dramatically improves software performance.

The AI processor also helps improve the 100x digital zoom during daylight. The camera's fully-optical 10x zoom, a Samsung first, also contributes to better telephoto performance. For its part, Apple just increased its top-of-the-line optical zoom to 3x from 2.5x, with digital zoom expanding to 15x from 12x.

Each time you take a picture, Cho said, the camera is taking a dozen shots, and synthesizing them to produce the best picture. The number may sound impressive. But it actually synthesizes fewer simultaneous shots than the S21 Ultra because the improved AI inside the new model is able to do more with less.

"We've improved the algorithm so that it will be taking less pictures with faster processing," Cho said. "So the end result is better."

Better, yes. But good enough to beat the iPhone 13 Pro Max after dark? One thing's for sure: we'll be able to shed light on that in just a couple weeks.

This article originally appeared on USA TODAY: Samsung after dark: Can the S22 Ultra beat Apple's best at night photography?

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What is **Apple** hiring for in RTP?

By Zachery Eanes

News & Observer

737 words

10 February 2022

The News & Observer

RNOB

English

Distributed by The McClatchy Company

N&O Innovation and Technology Newsletter: February 11, 2022

Enjoying the newsletter? Subscribe to it here, and share with your friends and colleagues.

As I browsed through jobs boards in recent weeks, I noticed that Apple's first batches of Triangle-based jobs have begun to appear.

The dozens of postings are some of the first signs of the iPhone maker's looming arrival in the region. A vast majority of the new roles being posted are related to Apple Pay, a priority for the company at the moment.

But Apple is not the only tech giant on the hunt for talent in the Triangle.

Amazon, Google and Microsoft are all posting for jobs in Raleigh and Durham. Google and Microsoft both have new offices here (in downtown Durham and Morrisville respectively), and according to some of the job postings, Amazon is searching for office space here.

I took a look at what each of these companies is doing in the Triangle.

[read more here]

Philanthropy funds the Innovate Raleigh fellowship. Consider supporting philanthropy-funded journalism by going to www.newsobserver.com/donate

BidenOffshoreWind.JPGThis photo from Aug. 15, 2016, shows offshore wind turbines near Block Island, R.I. The Biden administration said it will hold its first offshore wind auction, offering nearly 500,000 acres off the coast of New York and New Jersey for wind energy projects that could produce enough electricity to power nearly 2 million homes.

Tech news from the Triangle

A Durham startup is trying to transform breast reconstruction surgery. [N&O]Starting July 1, NC faces a 10-year moratorium on offshore wind. That may not matter. [N&O]Apple to turn iPhones into payment terminals. [WSJ]At North Carolina's PTI, Boom Supersonic found an airport that acts like a business park. [N&O]In the black: ChannelAdvisor reports record revenue, a profit for 2021. [WRAL]RTP gene therapy firm StrideBio's new CEO is industry veteran with IPO experience. [TBJ]

Manoj George (1967-2022)

Manoj George, a stalwart of the Triangle's tech scene and the first chief financial officer of Red Hat, passed away earlier this month. He had pancreatic cancer, according to his obituary.

George was known locally for helping countless entrepreneurs and working at several tech firms. He was also known for creating one of the first SAAS subscription revenue models in the software industry, and guided Red Hat from a valuation of \$5M to \$5B.

Scot Wingo, the CEO of Spiffy, called George one of the "Founding Fathers and a true pillar" in the Triangle's tech community.

What I'm reading

The Real Reason America Doesn't Have Enough Truck Drivers. [NYT]Have we dropped all pretense of responsible gambling? [Jay Kang]A robot bought my seven-year-old car for more than I paid brand-new. [The

Verge]What the Winston-Salem fire says about environmental justice in North Carolina. [N&O]MoviePass is coming back. [The Verge]Zillow's Shuttered Home-Flipping Business Lost \$881 Million in 2021. [WSJ]Eileen Gu defends China's internet freedom. Her message is censored. [Protocol]With Starship assembled in Texas, attention turns to NASA's moon ambitions. [WaPo]

Other Triangle business

Would you be more likely to donate blood if you got paid? New Raleigh center thinks so. [N&O]Neighbors vow fight to save historic Seaboard Train Station from possible demolition. [N&O]As NC's bird flu outbreak grows, so does concern for poultry industry. [N&O]

Notable hirings

Chapel Hill cloud software company Cdata, which raised \$140M from investors last year, has hired Manish Patel as its chief product officer and Steven Close as Chief Information Security Officer. Patel joins from Tier1 Financial Solutions. Close previously served as a security executive at SolarWinds.

Let me know what you're seeing. Email me at zeanes@newsobserver.com. Tweet me @zeanes. Call me at 919-829-4516.

Zachery Eanes is the Innovate Raleigh reporter for The News & Observer and The Herald-Sun. He covers technology, startups and main street businesses, biotechnology, and education issues related to those areas.

This newsletter was produced with financial support from a coalition of partners led by Innovate Raleigh as part of an independent journalism fellowship program. The N&O maintains full editorial control of the work. Learn more; go to bit.ly/newsinnovate

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Technology

Tech

Twitter Profit Drops; Company Says [Apple](#) Impact Largely Avoided; Social-media company announces a \$4 billion share buyback, its first since a \$2 billion initiative in 2020

By Salvador Rodriguez

682 words

10 February 2022

20:35

The Wall Street Journal Online

WSJO

English

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Twitter Inc. on Thursday posted lower-than-expected profit as expenses climbed but said it largely dodged the impact of privacy changes that are hurting Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc.

Twitter also announced a \$4 billion stock buyback, its first since the company [announced a \\$2 billion program](#) in March 2020.

The social-media company said its daily user base rose 2.84% from its previous quarter to 217 million. Analysts polled by FactSet had expected the user count to rise to 218 million. Twitter posted net income of \$182 million, down from \$222 million a year earlier. Analysts were expecting \$290 million, according to FactSet.

Twitter's revenue rose to \$1.57 billion in the fourth quarter, up 22% from \$1.29 billion a year earlier. That was largely in line with the analysts' estimate of \$1.58 billion, according to FactSet.

Expenses in the quarter climbed to \$1.4 billion, an increase of 35% over the previous year. Total costs and expenses grew as a result of an increase in head count, higher sales-related expenses, infrastructure costs and increased marketing expenses, the company said.

Twitter stock advanced more than 1% early Thursday following the results.

[The company's results](#) come a week after Facebook parent Meta reported that ad-tracking changes introduced by Apple Inc. last year would cost the company [some \\$10 billion](#) this year. Meta's outlook caused shares to tumble, shaving more than \$300 billion from the company's market cap over the past week, and created significant volatility among others in the industry.

Snap Inc. shares initially fell sharply too, then soared in a single trading session after the company said the effects of Apple's changes were limited.

Twitter said the impact of Apple's changes on the company's revenue remained modest for it as well.

Some 85% of Twitter's ad revenue comes from brand ads, which are less affected by Apple's changes than direct-response ads, Twitter Chief Financial Officer Ned Segal said in an interview. These changes present Twitter with an opportunity rather than a risk, Mr. Segal said. "There's so much room in front of us," he said.

The company said Thursday that it will change the name of its Data Licensing and Other Revenue business segment to Subscription and Other Revenue starting with the first quarter of 2022. This move will reflect the [\\$1.05 billion sale](#) of the mobile-ad firm MoPub to AppLovin Corp., Twitter said in a letter to shareholders. That sale was announced in October, and it closed in early January, Mr. Segal said.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

What is most helpful or useful to you on Twitter? Join the conversation below.

That segment will include revenue from the company's Blue monthly subscription service, which launched last year. Twitter Blue offers subscribers access to exclusive and experimental features, including the ability [to use nonfungible tokens](#) as their profile pictures.

Blue is available to users in the U.S., Canada, New Zealand and Australia. While the company hasn't said how many subscribers the service has, Mr. Segal said the company is "really excited about what we're seeing so far."

Twitter has yet to see a real impact from inflation, but inflation could affect the company in a few different ways, Mr. Segal said. For example, the annual increases related to cost of living for employees are going to be higher this year than they have been in the past, he said. Additionally, inflation could affect how brands advertise and which goods and services they choose to advertise, Mr. Segal said.

"The results from Q4 speak for themselves that we're not yet seeing real impact from inflation in how our advertising and content partners show up on Twitter," Mr. Segal said.

Write to Salvador Rodriguez at salvador.rodriguez@wsj.com

[Twitter Profit Drops: Company Says Apple Impact Largely Avoided](#)

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The Washington Post

Technology

Every employee who leaves Apple becomes an 'associate'

By Reed Albergotti

1,050 words

10 February 2022

Washington Post.com

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English

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Inside Apple, your job classification can mean a lot. The difference between a "level 4" engineer and a "level 5," for instance, could mean a difference of hundreds of thousands of dollars in compensation. And those titles help determine how much Apple employees can make when they leave the company for another job. But there's a hitch.

In widely used databases that companies refer to for verification of job information, Apple changes the job title for every employee, whether they're a PhD in computer science or a product manager, to "associate," the company confirms.

Apple's approach is bizarre if not unique, experts in employment practices say, but until now has gone largely unnoticed by anybody but a handful of job applicants whose résumés conflict with official databases maintained by job verification services run by companies such as Equifax and LexisNexis.

The title "associate" is generally used to connote more junior roles. Entry-level retail workers, for instance, are often called associates. Law firms refer to recent law school hires in the same way, and in universities, associate professors are ranked below those with the title "professor."

The practice recently came to light when Cher Scarlett, a former Apple software engineer who raised concerns about alleged discrimination and misconduct at the company, filed a complaint to the Securities and Exchange Commission, alleging that when Apple changed her job title to "associate," it delayed the hiring process at a prospective employer by nearly a week, during which time the company rescinded the offer. Scarlett said the job verification service hired to vet her résumé was unable to resolve the discrepancy with Apple.

Apple spokesman Josh Rosenstock confirmed that, for years, Apple has changed the job titles of its former employees to "associate." Rosenstock declined to say why Apple does this or precisely when the practice began.

"We are and have always been deeply committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive workplace. We take all concerns seriously and we thoroughly investigate whenever a concern is raised and, out of respect for the privacy of any individuals involved, we do not discuss specific employee matters," he said.

Scarlett, a software engineer on Apple's security team, last year helped found the #AppleToo movement, which encourages employees at the company to speak out about workplace misconduct. In mostly anonymous testimonials, hundreds of employees have shared stories of what the group calls "persistent patterns of racism, sexism, inequity, discrimination, intimidation, suppression, coercion, abuse, unfair punishment and unchecked privilege." She left the company last year after she said she was intimidated and retaliated against.

On Sept. 1, Scarlett filed a charge with the National Labor Relations Board, alleging Apple's practices violate federal labor law. The case is being investigated. In October, Scarlett filed a whistleblower complaint with the SEC, accusing Apple of misleading investors when it issued a statement to shareholders asserting that it does not use concealment clauses in separation agreements or settlements with employees. Scarlett says Apple asked her to sign such a clause when she left the company.

Apple has declined to comment on her specific allegations or specific employee matters.

Some former employees, previously unaware of the title changes, criticized Apple for the practice. Janneke Parrish, another #AppleToo founder, who was fired by the company after criticizing it for alleged employment law violations, said that even if Apple changes the titles in the database for all its employees, it can have "devastating consequences" for some former employees where specific titles represent levels of technical

expertise. (Parrish has filed an NLRB complaint against Apple; she said she was told she was fired for deleting apps and files from a company phone during a company investigation, but she thinks it's because of her activism.)

"Doing this severely limits the ability for ex-Apple employees to verify past employment, especially if they left on bad terms. It essentially forces us to stay in Apple's good graces for those references as verification," she said.

Apple offers a phone number employers can call to verify titles of former Apple employees. A voice recording on that line directs callers to the web site for InVerify, an employment verification service provider owned by credit agency Equifax. When The Washington Post called InVerify's customer support number, a customer service representative said Apple is the only company he knew of that changes job titles of employees when they leave. Apple also changes titles for employees who have taken a leave of absence, the person said.

The representative said he gets a few calls a month from people trying to get the accurate job titles of former Apple employees. If the caller can provide the employee's full Social Security number, InVerify is able to look up the person's old payroll information and verify the job title that way.

Equifax did not respond to a request for comment.

But even people who verify job titles for a living can be stumped by the byzantine system for verifying accurate job titles for former Apple employees. Emails between Scarlett and Sterling, an employment verification firm hired by her would-be employer, show that employees at Sterling were confused when her title came back as "associate" when they checked Equifax's database, called the Work Number, in late January.

Unable to verify Scarlett's title, a recruiter from the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, which had offered her a job, emailed her asking if she could provide any references at Apple who might be able to independently verify her title. "I hope you are having a great day! Could you help me with the job title discrepancy with Apple?" the recruiter wrote in a message reviewed by The Post. "Could you provide me with a couple of references from Apple? I'll need to submit references from Apple confirming the job title." Scarlett provided the name of a human resources employee she had dealt with in the past.

"Irrespective of the reasons why they are doing it, this is a very bad and possibly unlawful practice," said Laurie Burgess, an employment law attorney who represents Parrish in her labor board case against Apple. "Seems to me that this action interferes with employees' reasonable future economic interests."

Document WPCOM00020220210ei2a001gv

News.UK

Apple commits to AirTag updates amid concerns over 'unwanted tracking'

Martyn Landi

543 words

11 February 2022

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Independent Online

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English

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The technology giant has confirmed it will roll out updates to help guard against unwanted tracking using the button-sized devices.

Apple has announced plans to update its AirTag tracking devices and the Find My network linked to it following concerns over the button-sized devices being used for unwanted tracking.

A number of reports in the US have previously claimed people have reported being tracked using AirTags without their consent, raising privacy concerns.

Apple said that, based on its own knowledge and discussions with law enforcement, incidents of AirTag misuse were rare but that "each instance is one too many".

In a statement, the company condemned any "malicious use of our products" in the "strongest possible terms" and has now published plans to update the devices and the Find My app used to locate them, including by adding new privacy warnings during set-up reminding users that tracking people without consent is a crime in many places.

AirTag was designed to help people locate their personal belongings, not to track people or another person's property, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms any malicious use of our products

Apple statement

The company also confirmed it has identified "additional improvements" it can make in helping law enforcement on AirTag-related requests.

In addition, Apple said it was looking into a new precision finding feature that would enable people to locate unknown AirTags with precision and tuning the sound of the unwanted tracking alert tone to make the device more easily findable.

"We've become aware that individuals can receive unwanted tracking alerts for benign reasons, such as when borrowing someone's keys with an AirTag attached, or when travelling in a car with a family member's [AirPods](#) left inside," the company said in a statement.

"We also have seen reports of bad actors attempting to misuse AirTag for malicious or criminal purposes."

It added: "AirTag was designed to help people locate their personal belongings, not to track people or another person's property, and we condemn in the strongest possible terms any malicious use of our products.

"Unwanted tracking has long been a societal problem, and we took this concern seriously in the design of AirTag.

"It's why the Find My network is built with privacy in mind, uses end-to-end encryption, and why we innovated with the first-ever proactive system to alert you of unwanted tracking.

"We hope this starts an industry trend for others to also provide these sorts of proactive warnings in their products."

AirTags were launched in April 2021 as a new means of helping users keep track of personal items such as keys, wallets and bags by attaching an AirTag to them and locating them if lost through the Find My app.

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Tech

Tesla's chief designer says [Apple's](#) iPhone and car are 'nothing to look forward to'

Adam Smith

608 words

10 February 2022

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Independent Online

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English

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[Apple](#) products are 'just a slight refinement on the same thing' and 'inspirationally ... hard to get super motivated by' said Franz von Holzhausen

[Tesla's](#) design chief Franz von Holzhausen has said that any car being built by [Apple](#) is "nothing to look forward to".

The designer, who is responsible for the designs of the Tesla Model S, 3, X, and Y as well as the [Cybertruck](#), made the comments in a podcast with Spike Feresten of [Spike's Car Radio](#).

The sad part about Apple products now is like there's nothing to look forward to", Mr Holzhausen said.

"I feel like it's just a continuation. It's just a slight refinement on the same thing. Inspirationally, it's been hard to get super motivated by what they're doing."

Mr Holzhausen also criticised Apple's main wearable, the Apple Watch, saying that he wears it "just because of the fitness thing side to it. Otherwise I haven't really found much purpose to it, other than the fitness part."

Apple did not respond to a request for comment from The Independent before time of publication.

Tesla chief executive Elon Musk has taken shots at the smartphone giant on numerous occasions, including making the claim that Apple is a "[Tesla graveyard](#)" -[alleging that the tech giant was hiring former staff that could not make it within Tesla](#).

"We always jokingly call Apple the 'Tesla Graveyard.' If you don't make it at Tesla, you go work at Apple. I'm not kidding," Mr Musk said in 2015.

Last year, it was also reported that [Mr Musk tried to sell Tesla to Apple in 2017, but Apple head Tim Cook "refused" to meet with him](#).

"During the darkest days of the Model 3 program, I reached out to Tim Cook to discuss the possibility of Apple acquiring Tesla (for 1/10 of our current value). He refused to take the meeting," tweeted Mr Musk.

In a book by Wall Street Journal reporter Tim Higgins, it was also claimed that [Elon Musk demanded to become Apple's chief executive](#) in a 2016 phone call, "according to a former aide who heard (Musk's) retelling of the exchange." However, Mr Musk has denied this. "Cook & I have never spoken or written to each other ever", he tweeted.

Cook & I have never spoken or written to each other ever.

There was a point where I requested to meet with Cook to talk about Apple buying Tesla. There were no conditions of acquisition proposed whatsoever.

He refused to meet. Tesla was worth about 6% of today's value.

— Elon Musk (@elonmusk) [July 30, 2021](#)

Apple's car, which has been [rumoured for years and could launch in 2024](#), is still kept under tight wraps but there has been speculation about what the vehicle could look like from patents Apple has submitted.

It is thought that the [Apple Car could have Siri integration, a customisable driver dashboard, and "adaptive doors"](#). While patents do not guarantee that a feature will be included, they are a clear indication of the types of technology that a company is researching.

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Sport

SUPER BOWL LVI - RAMS vs. BENGALS; SUNDAY · INGLEWOOD, CALIF. · SOFI STADIUM; TIME: 6:30 P.M. · TV: NBC · LINE: RAMS -4.5 · O/U: 48.5 Apple watch Ex-Giants CB emerges a key part of Super defense

Brian Costello

625 words

10 February 2022

New York Post

NYPO

Sports+Late City Final

55

English

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Eli Apple reflected on his NFL career, now in its sixth year, on Wednesday.

"It's been a long journey with trials and tribulations, learning the game and just putting that work in to get to where I'm at now," Apple said.

Where he is now is in the Super Bowl with the Bengals, his fourth team. The Giants selected Apple in the first round of the 2016 draft out of Ohio State hoping he would get them to the Super Bowl. But the cornerback had a tumultuous 2 ½ years in New York filled with struggles on and off the field. His second season ended with him being suspended for arguing with a coach, and teammate Landon Collins calling him "a cancer."

The Giants brought him back in 2018 with new coach Pat Shurmur but traded him in the middle of that season to the Saints. Apple, now 26, looks back at his time with the Giants as an education.

"It was a learning experience," Apple said Wednesday. "We had great times and some things happened after that. It was a lot to learn from. It was fun, though. I met a lot of great people, a lot of great teammates. I enjoyed it."

He will see one of those former teammates Sunday, in the biggest game of his life. Apple said Odell Beckham Jr. was the first Giants teammate to contact him when he was drafted in 2016. Apple likely will get the chance to cover Beckham, now a Rams receiver, in Super Bowl LVI.

"Me and O have a pretty good relationship," Apple said. "He really taught me what I could expect my first day going up against him as a rookie. He really helped mold me and helped my confidence a lot. Even off the field, he's a great guy and always was somebody I could talk to."

Apple said he and Beckham have stayed in touch.

"He's somebody I love, somebody I definitely, truly appreciate everything he's done," Apple said. "But now we're about to compete. I can't wait for that."

The Bengals signed Apple in March after he spent one season with the Panthers that was largely lost to injury. Bengals defensive coordinator Lou Anarumo knew Apple from his one year as Giants defensive backs coach in 2018.

Apple started 15 games for the Bengals in the regular season and had two interceptions. In the postseason, he has made several huge plays. He deflected Ryan Tannehill's pass in the divisional round, which led to the interception that set up the game-winning field goal. Then, in the AFC Championship game he made a fourth-down tackle on Tyreek Hill before halftime that proved to be pivotal.

"The growth - personally, professionally, however you want to look at it - in Eli Apple from April to today is staggering," Bengals secondary coach Robert Livingston said. "That's a huge credit to him, to what he has done off the field and on the field. I just couldn't be more proud of him."

"If you play this game, you've got to be resilient," Apple said. "Everything is not going to go your way. You're going to go through ups and downs. That's the wonderful thing about this sport. You're able to go through that and still come out and put your best foot forward and learn from those mistakes. That's what I'm doing."

brian.costello@nypost.com

Eli Apple.

Document NYPO000020220210ei2a0001i

The Washington Post

A-Section

Samsung seeks a bite out of Apple

Chris Velazco

1,234 words

10 February 2022

The Washington Post

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English

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The numbers don't lie: If you - or someone you know - bought a tablet over the last few years, it was probably an iPad. **Apple** is far and away the biggest name in tablets, which leads to an obvious question: Where are all the great Android tablets?

They're closer than you might think.

This week, Samsung officially revealed its first wave of shiny gadgets for 2022, including a trio of new Galaxy S22 smartphones. But for the first time in over a year, Samsung is taking a big swing at the tablet market, too.

Enter the Galaxy Tab S8 Ultra, a tablet with a screen so large that it would feel downright comical if it wasn't so thin. That size comes at a cost, too: \$1,099 for the S8 Ultra, though Samsung also announced two smaller, less-expensive S8 tablets at the same time. And if Samsung and Google (Samsung's tablets run on Google's Android operating system) get their way, these devices will herald a new wave of Android tablets that could appeal to people in ways older models couldn't.

Size matters

The Galaxy Tab S8 Ultra is the kind of machine that seems tailor-made to pose a question: Do you really need a proper PC to do all the things you need? If all you really do is watch movies, jump around on Zoom calls and poke around in a Web browser, then no, probably not.

A tablet this pricey and this ostentatious runs the risk of feeling like overkill for many of those same tasks, but Samsung says that's exactly what some of its most vocal tablet fans wanted.

Consider, once again, how big this thing is. The Tab S8 Ultra packs a 14.6-inch screen - that's larger than the one in Apple's biggest iPad Pro - into a frame that's a little thinner than its rival. (That said, the S8 Ultra is also 0.1 lbs. heavier than the iPad Pro, and every ounce counts when we're talking about a device you're meant to hold.)

Hassan Anjum, director of product management for Samsung Electronics America's New Computing team, said that 90 percent of the people who bought its last big tablet actually wanted an even bigger screen - something closer to the 15-inch displays found on many laptops. That's not just good news for people who want to see more things at once; it also means more room to display zoomed-in text if your eyes are, like mine, not what they used to be.

That design does, however, mean the Tab S8 Ultra is plain and unpleasant to use for some things. Sure, movies look gorgeous on it, and there's plenty of room to take notes with the included S Pen. (Meanwhile, Apple's analogous Pencil costs at least \$99 extra.) But holding it vertically and trying to read a news article honestly feels a little silly - it's so long that you can't help but wonder if it will eventually topple out of your hands.

For people who want a more manageable tablet, Samsung has two smaller models that use the same speedy Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 Gen 1 processor. The standard \$699 Tab S8 is the most portable, with its 11-inch screen, while the \$899 Tab S8 Plus model comes with a 12.4-inch display.

In typical Samsung fashion, though, not all of these tablets will share the same features when they go on sale later this month. The enormous S8 Ultra is the only tablet of the three with two front-facing cameras, making it the best choice for people who spend ages on video calls. If you want a tablet you can connect to a 5G network for working on the go, the middle child that is the Tab S8 Plus is, for some reason, your only option.

And if you've run into trouble with in-display fingerprint sensors in the past, only the smallest Tab S8 puts a sensor in the power button.

Blurring the line between tablet and PC

Beyond Zoom calls and bingeing movies, Samsung's new Tab S8s further insist on blurring the line between tablet and PC. Notes you scribble with the S Pen can automatically sync to a companion app for Windows PCs, and Samsung says you'll be able to use a Tab S8 as a wireless, external monitor for certain, compatible computers.

If you're an Apple person, these features will probably sound familiar - they've been hallmarks of the tight connection between the company's products. But if there's one area where Samsung's tablets have an edge over Apple's iPads, it's their ability to act like a proper laptop when needed.

When you connect a keyboard and a mouse to an iPad Pro, the software doesn't change much. Apple has added multitasking features over the years to make this kind of work more palatable, but make no mistake - you're still working on a tablet. But for the last few years, some of Samsung's flashier tablets came equipped with software that, with just a bit of fiddling, gave you the same kind of desktop look you're already used to.

That feature, called DeX, returns in Samsung's new models, and runs a lot better than it used to. You can resize windows for more apps than before and can hook up another screen in case one wasn't enough.

As an ersatz laptop, Samsung comes out on top, but iPads have historically felt like better general-use tablets. And that's because one of the biggest knocks against Android tablets was that many of their apps were just stretched-out versions of what you'd see on a smartphone.

Samsung's Anjum says the company is "working very close with Google" on talking to app creators about optimizing their software for bigger screens, which - speaking as an owner of Android tablets - hasn't always felt like a priority. But even that is beginning to change.

Google, which has made its own generally well-received Pixel smartphones since 2016, hasn't produced an Android tablet since the tail end of the Obama administration. (It did make a tablet using the same software you'd find on a Chromebook in 2018, but it wasn't very good.)

But in a recent job listing, the company revealed it was on the hunt for engineers that could help deliver on its vision, one in which "the future of computing is shifting toward more powerful and capable tablets." Among the people it appears to have tapped is Rich Miner, one of the original creators of the Android software who now serves as Google's chief technical officer for Android tablets. What's more, Google has been openly testing an updated version of its mobile software - Android 12L - specifically for tablets.

None of this is definitive proof that Samsung - which was responsible for just under 16 percent of all tablets shipped last year - or anyone else will unseat Apple from the top of the market. But it does mean you can expect to see smarter, more sophisticated competition before long. And that means every company clamoring for your money is going to have to try even harder.

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GADGETS NEWS

Explained: All the key heart-related features of Apple Watch

1,157 words

10 February 2022

The Times of India

TOI

English

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There's a reason why the Apple Watch continues to be a market leader for so many years. Back in 2015 when Apple launched its first smartwatch, there was some amount of scepticism. However, Apple has year on year made the Watch an excellent smartwatch for iPhone users with health and fitness features. With the Apple Watch, one can measure bloody oxygen levels, track sleep, take an ECG and much more. While other smartwatches also offer similar features, the Apple experience is more refined and well-integrated. Apple Watch has many features that are cardio-related. Here we explain some of the key heart features that Apple Watch brings aboard: Apple Watch heart-related features The Heart Rate app on your Apple Watch alerts you to high or low heart rates and irregular heart rhythms. If your heart rate remains above or below a chosen beats per minute (BPM), your Apple Watch can notify you.

These notifications are available only on Apple Watch Series 1 or later for ages 13 and up. Here's how you can turn on heart rate notifications on the Heart Rate app on your Apple Watch. On your iPhone, open the Apple Watch app. Tap the My Watch tab, then tap Heart. Tap High Heart Rate, then choose a BPM. Tap Low Heart Rate, then choose a BPM. Irregular rhythm notifications Apple Watch has an irregular rhythm notification feature that will occasionally look at your heartbeat to check for an irregular rhythm that might be suggestive of atrial fibrillation (AFib). How to enable irregular rhythm notifications Make sure that the software on your iPhone and Apple Watch is up to date. On your iPhone, open the Health app. Tap the Browse tab, then go to Heart > Irregular Rhythm Notifications. Once enabled, you can turn irregular rhythm notifications on or off in the Apple Watch app on your iPhone: Open the Apple Watch app, tap the My Watch tab, then go to Heart > Irregular Rhythm. What if you receive an irregular rhythm alert? Apple says that if you receive a notification, the irregular rhythm notification feature on your Apple Watch identified an irregular rhythm suggestive of AFib and confirmed it with multiple readings. If you have not been diagnosed with AFib by a physician, you should talk to your doctor. How do irregular rhythm notifications work The irregular rhythm notification feature on your Apple Watch will occasionally look at your heartbeat to check for an irregular rhythm that may be AFib. This usually happens when you're still to ensure a more accurate reading. Depending on how active you are, the number of readings collected each day and the time between these readings will vary. What is AFib AFib is a type of irregular heart rhythm. AFib occurs when the heart beats in an irregular pattern. It's a common form of irregular heart rhythm where the upper chambers of the heartbeat out of sync with the lower chambers. Irregularities in heart rhythm become more common as people get older. Some individuals with AFib don't experience any symptoms. Others experience symptoms that could include rapid heartbeat, palpitations, fatigue, or shortness of breath. AFib can be temporary or persistent, and people with AFib often live healthy, active lives. AFib episodes can be prevented through regular physical activity, eating a heart-healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, and treating other medical conditions that could worsen AFib. If left untreated, AFib can lead to heart failure or blood clots that may lead to stroke. AFib can be managed with a doctor's care and medication, and early diagnosis and treatment can prevent such complications. ECG feature on Apple Watch With Watch Series 4, Apple introduced the ECG feature on its smartwatch. The ECG feature truly was a significant moment in the Apple Watch history as it was a huge breakthrough and showed that health and fitness were truly a priority for the company. What is an ECG An electrocardiogram (also called an ECG or EKG) is a test that records the timing and strength of the electrical signals that make the heartbeat. By looking at an ECG, a doctor can gain insights about your heart rhythm and look for irregularities. How to use the ECG app The ECG app can record your heartbeat and rhythm using the electrical heart sensor on Apple Watch Series 4, Series 5, Series 6, or Series 7 and then check the recording for atrial fibrillation (AFib), a form of irregular rhythm. The ECG app records an electrocardiogram which represents the electrical pulses that make your heartbeat. The ECG app checks these pulses to get your heart rate and see if the upper and lower chambers of your heart are in rhythm. If they're out of rhythm, that could be AFib. How to install and set up the ECG app The ECG app is installed during the ECG app setup in the Health app. Follow these steps to set up the ECG app: • Open the Health app on your iPhone. • Follow the onscreen steps. If you don't see a prompt to set up, tap the Browse tab, then tap Heart > Electrocardiograms (ECG) > Set Up ECG App. • After you complete set up, open the ECG app to take an ECG. How to take an ECG You can take an ECG at any time when you're feeling symptoms such as a rapid or skipped heartbeat, when you have other general concerns about your heart health, or when you receive an irregular rhythm notification. Make sure that your Apple Watch is snug and on the wrist that you selected in the Apple Watch app. To check, open the Apple

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Watch app, tap the My Watch tab, then go to General > Watch Orientation. Open the ECG app on your Apple Watch. Rest your arms on a table or in your lap. With the hand opposite your watch, hold your finger on the Digital Crown. You don't need to press the Digital Crown during the session. Wait. The recording takes 30 seconds. At the end of the recording, you will receive a classification, then you can tap Add Symptoms and choose your symptoms. Tap Save to note any symptoms, then tap Done. Key things to remember Apple categorically states that the Apple Watch cannot detect heart attacks. If you ever experience chest pain, pressure, tightness, or what you think is a heart attack, call emergency services immediately. The irregular rhythm notification feature on Apple Watch is not constantly looking for AFib. This means it cannot detect all instances of AFib, and people with AFib may not get a notification. If you're not feeling well, you should talk to your doctor even if you don't get a notification. Symptoms such as a rapid, pounding, or fluttering heartbeat, dizziness, or fainting, can indicate a serious condition. Do not change your medication without talking to your doctor.

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Tech

Apple AirPods Pro are currently on sale at Amazon for \$174, the lowest price we've seen this year

Jon Winkler; Reviewed

525 words

9 February 2022

USA Today Online

USATONL

English

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With Valentine's Day just around the corner, there are plenty of other ways to show your love for your special someone than flowers and chocolate. One is by picking up the **Apple** AirPods Pro, one of the most popular headphones on the market and one of the best we've ever tried. If you're worried these earbuds might be more costly than a bouquet of roses, Amazon has them for a lovely price cut.

Get deals and shopping advice delivered straight to your phone. Sign up for text message alerts from the experts at Reviewed.

The latest model of the new AirPods with MagSafe, which generally retails between \$200 and \$230 for previous models, is now available for 30% off at \$174.98. Not only is this the best price on the web right now, it's also the lowest price we've seen for these buds since Black Friday last year.

Samsung Unpacked: Pre-order Samsung's new Galaxy S22 phones and S8 tablets—and get \$250 in Samsung Credit

Valentine's Day: Shopping for your valentine? We've got deals on chocolates and so much more.

In our testing, the previous model of the AirPods Pro earned a place on our list of the best wireless headphones, as well as our ranking of the best headphones overall, for their great battery life, incredible noise cancellation and comfortable fit for most ears. The Pros connect to devices easily and the included silicone ear tips come in multiple sizes to fine-tune your preferred fit.

The AirPods Pro also have Active Noise Cancellation, which registers environmental noise around you and automatically dampens it, making them an excellent companion for both traveling and working from home. (If you plan on taking your earbuds on the go, you may want to consider Apple's AppleCare+ for headphones—while it doesn't cover loss, AppleCare+ does provide repair or replacement for \$29.)

Presidents' Day: Shop the best deals on mattresses, appliances and everything in between ahead of the holiday.

When it comes to wireless earbuds, the Apple AirPods Pro are hard to beat. Just be quick: We've seen this one sell out a few times now—before getting reposted at a higher price.

Get the Apple AirPods Pro at Amazon for \$174.98 (save \$74.02).

There's more where this deal came from. Sign up for Reviewed's Perks and Rec newsletter and we'll keep 'em coming every Sunday through Friday.

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Prices were accurate at the time this article was published but may change over time.

This article originally appeared on Reviewed: Apple AirPods Pro are currently on sale at Amazon for \$174, the lowest price we've seen this year

Document USATONL020220209ei29000pe



Money

Ready to ditch your **Apple** for an Android? How new Samsung Galaxy S22 compares with iPhone 13

Brett Molina

703 words

9 February 2022

USA Today Online

USATONL

English

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In a green bubble (Android) versus blue bubble (iPhone) world, where do you come down? Well, if you're an iPhone evangelist, Samsung's newest smartphone line might just burst your bubble.

On Wednesday, Samsung introduced its Galaxy S22 line, which is available for preorder now and will launch on Feb. 25 through various carriers and retailers.

There are three options: a standard Galaxy S22, the S22+ which boasts a larger screen, and the S22 Ultra with an even bigger screen and the S-pen stylus.

The phones start at \$799.99, and offer up to 1 terabyte of storage if you opt for the Galaxy S22 Ultra.

Last fall, Apple rolled out the iPhone 13, iPhone 13 Pro with an upgraded camera, and the iPhone 13 Pro Max with bigger screen. They also launched the smaller but more affordable iPhone 13 Mini.

So how do the Galaxy S22 and iPhone 13 compare? Let's break it down:

PLAY WORDLE? This is the best starting word to use to play Wordle, according to a math expert

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Samsung Galaxy S22 or iPhone 13

Both feature a 6.1-inch screen. Samsung says its screen uses Vision Booster tech to not only adjust the brightness based on lighting but color contrast for an ideal view. Samsung also claims its screens can deliver more brightness.

The iPhone 13 has a two-camera system with ultrawide and wide lenses. The S22 has three, adding the telephoto lens. The Galaxy S22 features Auto Framing, which can focus on up to 10 people at once when capturing video. The iPhone 13 has Cinematic Mode, which can adapt its focus based on the focal point of a video.

A battery life comparison between the two is a bit murky. Both offer wireless charging. Apple says iPhone 13 can charge up to 50% in 30 minutes and can get up to 19 hours of video playback, and 75 hours of audio playback. Samsung is more vague, only noting under normal usage, the battery will last a full day.

A subtle but nice touch on S22 is the front-facing camera is under the display, so there's no notch, unlike the iPhone 13. In terms of size, they're nearly identical, give or take a couple of millimeters.

Samsung Galaxy S22+ or iPhone 13 Pro

Here's where the comparisons get interesting. While the iPhone 13 Pro sticks with the same screen size as the standard, the S22+ goes bigger with a 6.6-inch screen. Of course, with the bigger screen, expect the S22+ to be larger too.

However, the iPhone 13 Pro does add the telephoto lens. If you want more storage, Apple has the edge here. You can get up to 1 terabyte right out of the box with iPhone 13 Pro, while the S22+ only goes to 256 GB.

Samsung Galaxy Ultra or iPhone 13 Pro Max

The Ultra's screen is a tad bigger than the Pro Max – 6.8 inches versus 6.7 inches respectively – but they are very similar in size overall.

The Ultra provides a bump in storage, going toward a max of 1 terabyte, just like the Pro Max. It also boasts a four-camera system, adding a second telephoto lens.

The big camera feature on the Ultra is "space zoom," which allows for up to 100x zoom on pictures. The iPhone 13 Pro Max (and the 13 Pro, too) offer macro photography, so you can get really detailed close-up shots of an object.

The Ultra also comes equipped with the S-pen, its stylus which opens up the option to use the smartphone like Samsung's classic Note phones.

Pricewise, though, Apple has a slight advantage. The Pro Max at \$1,099 is \$100 less than the Galaxy Ultra.

Follow Brett Molina on Twitter: [@brettmolina23](https://twitter.com/brettmolina23).

This article originally appeared on USA TODAY: Ready to ditch your Apple for an Android? How new Samsung Galaxy S22 compares with iPhone 13

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The Washington Post

National-Politics

SEC looking into Apple's use of nondisclosure agreements, whistleblower says

By Cristiano LimaAaron Schaffer

1,820 words

9 February 2022

Washington Post.com

WPCOM

English

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Happy Wednesday! Today I'm grateful to know I wasn't the only one who grew up with some misguided musical ambitions. Below: Lawmakers want YouTube to take action on suicide videos, and pro-China Twitter accounts tried to dilute the power of a critical hashtag.

SEC looking into Apple's use of nondisclosure agreements, whistleblower saysThe Securities and Exchange Commission is looking into Apple's use of nondisclosure agreements (NDAs), including whether the tech giant misled investors on the matter, according to a whistleblower contacted by the agency and documents reviewed by The Technology 202.

Cher Scarlett, a former Apple employee who last year filed an SEC complaint alleging the company made false statements to the agency about its policies on NDAs, said in an interview Monday that the SEC contacted her in late January to inquire about her allegations.

It's unclear whether the agency has opened a formal investigation into Apple's statements and its rules on NDAs, or what the full scope of any inquiry may be. "The SEC does not comment on the existence or nonexistence of a possible investigation," SEC spokesperson Cory Jarvis said.

But it's the first indication that federal regulators are digging deeper into Apple's policies on NDAs, which the company said it doesn't allow — a fact that workers like Scarlett have disputed.

Scarlett, who as an Apple employee criticized what she described as a culture of discrimination at the company, in October filed an SEC complaint claiming the tech giant sought to bar her from speaking out about issues at the company as part of a settlement agreement.

Documents reviewed by The Technology 202 show that a staff attorney from the SEC's enforcement division reached out to Scarlett regarding an unspecified "investigation" last month. Scarlett said the communication led to multiple discussions about her complaint against Apple.

"They have been investigating this, I don't know for how long, but they did tell me it's going to take a while," said Scarlett, who added that she is cooperating with the agency.

Apple spokesman Josh Rosenstock said the company has not been contacted by the SEC and is not aware of an investigation. Rosenstock added in a statement, "Every employee has the right to discuss their wages, hours and working conditions and this is included in our business conduct policy."

Apple is also applying protections afforded under California's Silenced No More Act "across the US, regardless of where employees work," Rosenstock said. The state law, which bars companies from using nondisclosure agreements to prohibit employees from speaking out about discrimination, only applies to workers based in California.

NDAs, nondisparagement agreements and other concealment clauses have drawn added scrutiny amid waves of employee activism across Silicon Valley workforces.

And they have become a major battleground for workers, organizers and advocates as they push to hold major tech companies accountable for how they treat their employees, particularly those from marginalized or underrepresented backgrounds.

And Apple, in particular, is facing mounting pressure from shareholders and state leaders to disclose more about its policies around NDAs, which workers' rights advocates say serve to silence employees who may be discriminated against or abused.

Shareholders submitted a proposal last year urging Apple to prepare a public report analyzing risks to the company "associated with its use of concealment clauses in the context of harassment, discrimination and other unlawful acts."

Apple pushed back, telling the SEC in October that it had "already substantially implemented the underlying concerns and objectives of the proposal." Apple said its policy "is to not use such clauses," known as concealment clauses.

But the SEC in December rejected Apple's bid to exclude the proposal, which is now poised to be taken up at the company's next annual shareholder meeting in March.

Launching formal investigations gives the SEC added power to seek documents and information from companies, according to Sean McKessy, a partner at the Phillips & Cohen law firm who led the SEC's Office of the Whistleblower until 2016.

"When a formal order is issued and a specific investigation is opened ... that means that the full powers of the commission are now available for an investigation, which means their subpoena power is included," he said.

He added that due to the agency's "sparse" resources, "it's nearly impossible to think of a scenario where the staff would go to the point of opening up an investigation, [contacting] somebody ... unless they were serious about it, unless it was an active investigation."

State leaders called on the SEC to investigate whether Apple misled the agency and its investors by claiming its policy is not to use concealment clauses.

"Multiple news reports have stated that whistleblower documents demonstrate Apple uses the very concealment clauses it repeatedly claimed it does not use," they wrote, as The Technology 202 reported Monday.

Pinterest whistleblower Ifeoma Ozoma, who helped organize the letter, told me Sunday that there "at the very least should be an investigation and, in my personal opinion, should be fines levied against the company for using a formal process to lie to a federal agency."

Our top tabs

Lawmakers want YouTube to take down suicide videosAmid spiking teen suicide rates, Rep. Susan Wild (D-Pa.) is calling on YouTube to take down videos explaining how to die by suicide, Tatum Hunter reports for The Technology 202. "Let this serve as notice that we will not stop this fight until the videos come down," Wild said Tuesday during a Zoom webinar, flanked by clinicians and mental health advocates.

Wild and two dozen other lawmakers sent a letter to YouTube, which is owned by Google parent company Alphabet, in 2020 asking it to remove the videos, display suicide help resources more prominently, add pop-ups directing visitors to resources or add lengthy introductions to the videos, which include titles like "How to Tie a Noose" and "Painless Ways to Commit Suicide."

YouTube said it will look into the videos, Wild said. In meetings, YouTube lobbyists also suggested it's hard to know whether the videos contribute directly to teen suicides, she said. The company has yet to remove the videos or add more prominent warnings, she said.

"Content promoting suicide or self-harm is not allowed on YouTube, and our policies prohibit videos with instructions on committing suicide, including by using a noose," YouTube spokesperson Ivy Choi said.

Emergency room visits for suspected suicide attempts by teens began to rise at the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic, a study by the CDC found. A year later, in February and March 2021, those visits had increased 50.6 percent for girls and 4 percent for boys compared with the same period in 2019. Most childhood suicides occur by hanging or suffocation in the child's bedroom, according to a 2021 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"We know they are in a fragile state. We know that the circumstances of the pandemic have not been ideal for anybody's mental health," Wild said. "Why are we going to allow something that facilitates or enables people to be able to reach out and figure out a way to end their lives?"

Facebook Oversight Board wants company to revamp doxing rulesThe board said Facebook shouldn't let its users share people's home addresses even when the information is publicly available, Reuters's Elizabeth Culliford reports. The company's rules say people shouldn't share "personally identifiable information about yourself or others," but may allow posts when the information is considered "publicly available" through news reports or some public records.

"The board said Meta should remove this exemption and should ensure exceptions for newsworthy content should be consistently applied," Culliford writes. "It also said [Facebook parent] Meta should allow external images of private residences when the property is the focus of the news story, though not for organizing protests against the resident." The company has 60 days to respond publicly.

Pro-China Twitter accounts diluted power of hashtag critical of Olympics Researchers say the accounts' use of the hashtag #GenocideGames appeared to be designed to make it harder for activists to mobilize around the hashtag during the Winter Olympics in Beijing, the Wall Street Journal's Georgia Wells and Liza Lin report. At least five U.S. lawmakers have used the hashtag to criticize China, which is accused of detaining and trying to "reeducate" more than 1 million Uyghurs in the northwest Xinjiang region.

"The Chinese propaganda apparatus has been very focused on defending their image regarding the treatment of the Uyghur, while also promoting the Olympics," Clemson University professor Darren Linvill told the Journal. "This hashtag is at the nexus of those two things." A Twitter spokeswoman told the outlet that it had taken action on some of the tweets because of rule violations. They said the tweets were part of a China-backed network the company first identified in December.

Rant and rave

Twitter reacted viscerally to videos created by Heather Morgan, who prosecutors accused of trying to launder \$4.5 billion in bitcoin with her husband, Ilya Lichtenstein. Alabama Power's Ike Pigott:

Poet, writer, critic and editor Rebecca Hazelton:

The Atlantic Council Digital Forensic Research Lab's Jared Holt:

Inside the industry

Microsoft and Sony are buying up the video game world. The FTC could stop them. (Shannon Liao and Nathan Grayson)

Apple to turn iPhones into payment terminals in fintech push (Reuters)

After months of complaint by Elon Musk, Biden acknowledges Tesla (Reuters)

Trending

Feds arrest married couple, seize \$3.6 billion in hacked bitcoin funds (Devlin Barrett)

Daybook

The Senate Agriculture Committee holds a hearing on digital assets Wednesday at 10 a.m.

The Senate Commerce Committee holds a nomination hearing for Gigi Sohn, Biden's nominee for FCC commissioner, on Wednesday at 10 a.m.

FTC Chair Lina Khan delivers a lecture on competition Wednesday at 8 p.m.

Twitter holds a call to discuss its earnings Thursday at 8 a.m.

The Senate Judiciary Committee is expected to discuss the EARN IT Act at a meeting Thursday at 9 a.m. The bill, which would remove social media sites' liability protections when users share child pornography, has come under fire from encryption and privacy advocates.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Rohit Chopra discusses consumer protection in the era of Big Tech at a Washington Post Live event Thursday at 10 a.m.

Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-Del.) speaks at an ITI and Bridge for Innovation event on technology equity and opportunity on Monday at 1 p.m.

Before you log off

That's all for today — thank you so much for joining us! Make sure to tell others to subscribe to The Technology 202 here. Get in touch with tips, feedback or greetings on Twitter or email.

Document WPCOM00020220209ei29002xq

The New York Times

The Arts/Cultural Desk; SECTC
Streaming Their Way To the Oscars

By Brooks Barnes and Nicole Sperling
1,059 words
9 February 2022
The New York Times
NYTF
Late Edition - Final
1

English

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Netflix has two films in the running for a best picture Oscar: "The Power of the Dog," with 12 nominations, and "Don't Look Up," with four.

In a year when Hollywood largely failed to jump-start theatrical moviegoing, streaming services solidified their hold on viewers. And on Tuesday, Oscar voters rewarded Netflix, **Apple** TV+ and Amazon films with nearly 40 Oscar nominations -- 27 for Netflix alone, with Jane Campion's western "The Power of the Dog" recognized in an impressive 12 categories, including best picture.

Campion became the first woman in the 94-year history of the Academy Awards to receive two directing nominations. (Her first was for "The Piano" in 1994.) Another Netflix film, the divisive climate-change satire "Don't Look Up," will also compete for moviedom's top prize. ABC will broadcast the Oscars on March 27.

"We set out to build a great film studio by empowering great filmmakers to tell great stories, and I'm proud that we're doing it across many areas with our film teams, including animation, international films and documentaries," Scott Stuber, Netflix's film chief, said by phone, noting that Netflix received more nominations than any other company for the third year in a row.

Apple TV+ made significant inroads with Oscar voters, with "CODA," a romantic drama about the only hearing member of a deaf family, giving the tech giant its first best picture nomination. "CODA" also received nominations for Troy Kotsur's supporting performance and Sian Heder's adapted screenplay. Another Apple TV+ movie, "The Tragedy of Macbeth," was recognized for lead acting (Denzel Washington), cinematography and production design.

"The Power of the Dog," "Don't Look Up" and "CODA" were joined in the best picture category by two movies that were released simultaneously on HBO Max and in theaters ("Dune" and "King Richard," both from Warner Bros.); four traditional movies that were box office duds ("Belfast," "West Side Story," "Licorice Pizza," "Nightmare Alley"); and the little-seen but critically beloved Japanese film "Drive My Car."

"Dune," directed by Denis Villeneuve, received 10 nominations in total. It was the second-most-nominated film behind "The Power of the Dog" -- although, in a shock, Villeneuve did not receive a nod for best director. Instead, in another sign of an evolving movie academy, which has tried to become less of a club for white men by expanding its overseas membership, voters recognized Ryusuke Hamaguchi for "Drive My Car," an introspective drama about a widowed theater director and the young woman who drives him to rehearsals.

Steven Spielberg ("West Side Story"), Kenneth Branagh ("Belfast") and Paul Thomas Anderson ("Licorice Pizza") rounded out the directing field. Notably, all three pushed for exclusive theatrical runs for their movies.

No streaming service has ever won a best picture Oscar; despite inroads, the traditional studios have fended them off. (Last year's winner, "Nomadland" from Searchlight Pictures, was mostly seen on Hulu, but only because most theaters were closed.) But streaming companies are now in the dominant position, in part because the pandemic accelerated a consumer shift away from theaters, at least where highbrow films are concerned. The economics of streaming also make it easier to spend freely in pursuit of Oscars.

One heavily campaigned film, Amazon Prime Video's "Being the Ricardos," received three nominations, with Javier Bardem and Nicole Kidman among the lead acting nominees and -- in a surprise -- J.K. Simmons recognized for his role as the "I Love Lucy" actor William Frawley. (In total, streaming services accounted for 12 of the 20 acting slots.)

Still, the academy's 9,500 voters showed that campaigning only goes so far. "Being the Ricardos" failed to land among the 10 best picture nominees; Aaron Sorkin, its writer-director, was also snubbed. In contrast, an

independent distributor with limited campaign funds, Neon, found success with the Afghan refugee story "Flee," which garnered nominations for best international film, animated film and documentary. A tiny comedic drama, also from Neon, "The Worst Person in the World," drew nods in the international and original screenplay categories.

"Streaming has carved its place," said Stephen Gilula, who retired as co-chairman of Searchlight Pictures last year. ("Nightmare Alley" got its start under his reign.) "But they haven't shown that you can buy awards yet."

Consensus in Hollywood about who and what would get nominated was unusually slow to build in recent months, perhaps because the diminished Golden Globes went off the air and the Critics Choice Awards was pushed back to March because of the Omicron variant. But the movie capital was immediately aflutter over some perceived snubs.

Awards prognosticators had expected Lady Gaga to be among the best actress nominees, for instance, for her gonzo performance in "House of Gucci." Nominations instead went to Kristen Stewart ("Spencer"), Jessica Chastain ("The Eyes of Tammy Faye"), Olivia Colman ("The Lost Daughter"), Penélope Cruz ("Parallel Mothers") and Kidman.

In the documentary feature category, "The Rescue," from the previous Oscar winners Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin ("Free Solo"), was notably left out.

Exterior, clockwise from top, best film nominees: "The Power of the Dog"; "Licorice Pizza"; "Dune"; "King Richard"; "Drive My Car"; "Nightmare Alley"; "West Side Story"; "Belfast." Center, from top: "Don't Look Up"; "CODA." (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETFLIX; MELINDA SUE GORDON/MGM; CHIABELLA JAMES/WARNER BROS.; CHIABELLA JAMES/WARNER BROS.; JANUS FILMS; KERRY HAYES/SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES; NIKO TAVERNISE/20TH CENTURY STUDIOS; ROB YOUNG SON/FOCUS FEATURES; CENTER, FROM TOP, NIKO TAVERNISE/NETFLIX; APPLE TV+) (C1); Above, Nicole Kidman as Lucille Ball and Javier Bardem as Desi Arnaz in "Being the Ricardos"; they were both among the lead acting nominees. Left from top, the best actress nominees Penélope Cruz in "Parallel Mothers"; and Kristen Stewart in "Spencer. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GLEN WILSON/AMAZON, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS; IGLESIAS MÁS/SONY PICTURES CLASSICS; PABLO LARRAÍN/NEON) (C4-C5); Above from top, Denzel Washington, up for best actor for "The Tragedy of Macbeth"; Troy Kotsur, with Marlee Matlin, was nominated for supporting actor in "CODA"; Aunjanue Ellis, up for supporting actress in "King Richard," as is Kirsten Dunst, shown with Jesse Plemons in "The Power of the Dog." (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALISON ROSA/A24; APPLE TV+; WARNER BROS.; KIRSTY GRIFFIN/NETFLIX) (C5)

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AMERICAN BANKER

What Apple's pact with Stripe means for the point of sale

John Adams

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Apple's long-anticipated foray into contactless payment acceptance will soon go live with Stripe as an initial distribution partner, dramatically expanding the market for downloadable checkout technology.

The new system, which the Cupertino, California tech giant announced Tuesday, will allow consumers to make payments by tapping a contactless card or mobile wallet against a merchant's iPhone. The merchant would still require a payment acceptance app of some kind, but would no longer need a plug-in or Bluetooth card reader.

Apple is working with Stripe on its initial rollout, and could partner with more merchant acquirers and payment facilitators rather than strike deals directly with merchants, but that might not always be the case. [Apple Pay](#), which launched in 2014, originally needed consumers to provide their own payment cards before the tech giant added its own [Apple Card](#) as an option in 2019 in partnership with Goldman Sachs.

Apple's long-term goals for this technology are still unclear, said Don Apgar, director of the merchant services practice at Mercator Advisory Group in Indianapolis.

"If we believe that Apple will stay the course with a similar strategy as what they have employed for Apple Pay, it doesn't want to be in financial services and will allow existing banks and other providers of merchant accounts to link to its card acceptance technology," Apgar said. "If we believe that Apple is considering a massive strategy shift that brings them into business financial services, then they could be gearing up to make a run at Square and others."

Apple could see more value in being a partner to merchant acquirers and terminal makers than in trying to displace them, said Rick Oglesby, president of AZ Payments Group in Phoenix.

"Apple's more likely to partner with, and tax, existing merchant service providers more than launch an aggressive strategy of displacing them," Oglesby said.

Stripe is the first announced merchant service provider to support Tap to Pay on iPhone, enabling the service for business customers and the Shopify Point of Sale app this spring. Tap to Pay on iPhone will also be supported for third parties' software development kits in an pending iOS software beta. The technology works on the iPhone XS series of devices, released in 2018, and newer models.

Apple's release only mentioned iPhones, though the technology could theoretically be applied to other Apple devices. The iPad, for example, could serve as an in-store payment terminal, according to [9to5mac](#), a blog that follows Apple. The 2022 line of iPads is expected to be announced in March or April, consistent with Apple's yearly upgrade cycle.

Apple did not provide comment from an executive by deadline. Stripe referred questions to Apple's press release from Apple and social media posts from founders [John Collison](#) and [Patrick Collison](#).

Apple does not appear to be acting as a direct merchant acquirer, with Stripe playing that role in the initial deployment. "In collaboration with payment platforms, app developers and payment networks, we're making it easier than ever for businesses of all sizes, from solopreneurs to large retailers, to seamlessly accept contactless payments," said Jennifer Bailey, vice president of Apple Pay and Apple Wallet, in a release.

Apple Pay has about 507 million users globally, and controls about 92% of the U.S. mobile wallet payments market, according to [Statista](#). Apple reports 90% of merchants in the U.S. accept Apple Pay (though one of the largest merchants, Walmart, does not). And Stripe works with millions of merchants globally.

"This increases accessibility and therefore could expand the number of merchants accepting card payments," said Jordan McKee, principal analyst for digital payments at S&P Global Market Intelligence in Bethesda, Maryland.

"What's unclear is if Apple is charging processors like Stripe a per-transaction fee for each payment enabled by Tap to Pay on iPhone, akin to the fee card issuers must pay for Apple Pay transactions," McKee said. "It is quite plausible that it is."

For Apple, this launch is in part intended to increase utilization of Apple Pay, McKee said, adding Stripe, which has largely built its business by enabling merchants to tap e-commerce sales, could move deeper into card-present commerce in stores.

"While other processor partnerships are likely to be announced in the future, Stripe benefits from a first-mover advantage, which could allow it to win business away from Square and PayPal in the near term," McKee said.

Apple has been developing contactless acceptance technology for at least the past two years. Its launch of Tap to Pay on iPhone has been rumored for weeks, and Apple in 2020 [acquired Mobeewave](#), a Montreal-based company that builds technology that turns iPhones into point of sale devices.

"Apple's announcement is a confirmation that we're not crazy to be working on payment software," said Sam Shawki, CEO of MagicCube, which has been working to deploy contactless technology for merchants over the past several years. Apple's Tap to Pay on iPhone can exist alongside traditional point of sale terminals but could also become a primary payment acceptance method, boosting other contactless options at the same time, Shawki said.

While Apple devices aren't universally used and may be too expensive for merchants in some markets, the Apple announcement creates more momentum for "downloadable" payment acceptance from Android or other operating systems.

"This means cloud-based tech is coming for payments," said Shawki. "People like to say this announcement is about Apple versus Square. But it's really about software versus hardware."

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Global Times

World's largest iPhone factory in China steps up recruitment prior to new product launch

Zhang Dan and Yin Yeping

542 words

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The new **Apple** store in Sanlitun, Chaoyang district in Beijing Photo: cnsphoto

The world's largest iPhone factory, operated by Foxconn Technology Group in Zhengzhou, Central China's Henan Province, is on the race to hire at least 20,000 workers prior to the release of new **Apple** products and as demand for iPhones and iPads remains robust in China and overseas.

A recruiting manager from the Foxconn plant in Zhengzhou told the Global Times on Tuesday that the company is offering 7,000-8,000 yuan (\$1,100-\$ 1,257) in referral bonuses to workers, if the factory hires candidates amid the new round of recruitment after the Spring Festival.

The demand for new labor has always been strong after the holidays as plants ramp up efforts to complete orders, said the manager who asked to remain anonymous. "Last year, the referral bonus was up to 10,000 yuan," he noted.

Currently, the labor shortage is quite large and about 20,000 workers are needed on a weekly basis, he said. The iDPBG group, a major section for producing iPhones, lacks labor.

According to Foxconn's recruitment website, plants in Langfang in North China's Hebei, Shenzhen in South China's Guangdong and Taiyuan in North China's Shanxi are all stepping up recruitment efforts.

The week-long Spring Festival holidays meant that many factories in China took a break, but not Foxconn's plant in Zhengzhou. Nearly 100,000 workers stayed put due to COVID-19 flare-ups at the start of 2022, according to Foxconn on February 2.

In addition to salary and overtime pay, workers who stayed put in the factory could get a maximum of 3,000 yuan as an extra bonus during the Spring Festival holidays.

The popularity of the iPhone 13 has contributed to the hot production at Foxconn plants.

According to statistics by Canalys, smartphone shipments of Apple hit 21.5 million units in China in the fourth quarter of 2021 - the first time for the US tech brand to retake the top sales spot in the Chinese market since 2015.

"Apple saw unprecedented iPhone performance in the Chinese mainland, with aggressive pricing for its flagship devices keeping the value proposition strong. Apple's supply chain is starting to recover, but it was still forced to cut production in the fourth quarter amid shortages of key components and could not make enough iPhones to meet demand," Canalys analyst Sanyam Chaurasia said on the company's website.

In addition to iPhones, Chinese online shops also saw tight supplies of iPads. Beijing Business Today reported on Monday that there were no inventories of the iPad mini and iPad Pro (11-inch) on JD.com, a major Chinese e-commerce platform.

Apple is targeting a date on or near March 8 to release a new 5G iPhone with low costs and an updated iPad, making 2022 a great potential for a record-setting year for product launches, Bloomberg reported, citing sources.

TrendForce told the Global Times it expected that Apple will produce about 243 million iPhones in 2022, up 5.4 percent compared with 2021.

Document GLOTNE0020220209ei290000x

Data privacy: Why Meta, Google may have a tough time toeing Apple's line

by Manoj Nair Business Editor

1,260 words

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Gulf News (Dubai)

GLFNWS

English

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Dubai: Are you a web surfer and frequent social media user who has no issues with passing on your precious consumer data? Or, are you the sort who will not let any tech giant - and marketing company - use that info to get to know your preferences better?

More UAE users - and those elsewhere - are starting to think about ring-fencing their data, dismissing outright the cookie usage requests that pop up each time you get into a new site. If so, they will play their part in empowering Apple in their ongoing privacy battle with Meta (formerly Facebook) in how user data must be shared.

"Apple has often been described as a pro-consumer privacy company," said Alex Malouf, Board Member at the advertising and marketing industry grouping PRCA MENA. "With Android, the operating system is from Google, which in itself is the world's largest advertising platform.

"You can be certain that there are Android users who are also concerned about privacy and do not want to be targeted by ads - just like those who own an Apple iPhone. Overall, the online ad industry does have to address the issue of transparency with consumers."

Meta last week got a taste of how consumer sentiments are changing, and that of advertisers along with them. The stock had the biggest single-day meltdown in history as investors got spooked about drop in Facebook user numbers. Meta said that Apple's stricter privacy policy had also played its part.

No easy switch for tech giants

That should not necessarily mean changes these tech giants will be completely reworking their own data use policy. "We are seeing this issue play out again in Europe, with reports that Meta may pull out from Europe if it can no longer exchange data from European users with the US," said Malouf. "What can companies whose entire business model is designed around targeting billions of online users with advertising do?"

Sure, Meta/Facebook has tightened up their data policies. The laissez-faire policy of passing on user data to all available bidders is no longer indulged in. Yet, do consumers have full power over their data protection?

"A survey by Ding GPI shows 45 per cent of users in the UAE and 37 per cent in Saudi Arabia are concerned about data collection," said Amit Raj at the media consultancy Binary. "Meta/Facebook has always been fighting battles well in the past, and, despite everything, they had advertisers' confidence.

"Now, at one end, Tiktok has been attracting young adults away from FB, and on the other, Apple's ATT data protection policy limits advertisers from targeting based on audience interest or ID. This two-way throttle on FB has it falling on stock exchanges and among advertisers."

UAE adds muscle to data protection

In December, the UAE embedded more rights to its 'Personal Data Protection Law', which among other things, sets:

- The controls for the processing of personal data and the general obligations of companies that have personal data to secure it and maintain its confidentiality and privacy. It prohibits the processing of personal data without the consent of its owner, except for some cases in which the processing is necessary to protect a public interest or to carry out any of the legal procedures and rights.
- The law gives the owner of the data the right to request for corrections of inaccurate personal data and to restrict or stop the processing of his personal data.

Incidentally, this is the first federal law to be drafted in partnership with major technology companies in the private sector. It came into force on January 2.

Use all means available

Tomasz Wisniewski, Director of Research and Education at Axiory Intelligence, is insistent that while laws do their part, consumers must do a lot more at their end. "When an online service is free, you're not the customer - You're the product," he said. "Almost every single company that would like to sell us something would like to know more about us first."

"There is only a handful of companies or institutions, which actually value our privacy and are opposing the whole data harvesting process. Apple raising the bar in this matter is definitely a step forward, but can it be copied by other vendors? I don't think so."

"There is a conflict of interest there, although Google was following the Apple movement with increasing the data privacy on Android. Google, like Facebook, would also like to know as much about you as possible. What you watch on YouTube or what are you looking for on Chrome browser, that information is priceless and I don't think it'll be easy to say goodbye to it that easily."

"I don't think that any major peer will go beyond what Apple did. The Blackberry days are way over."

Will advertisers force the privacy?

In the past, for various reasons, advertisers and brands have decided they are quitting social media, but they are very much the minority.

Satish Mayya of BPG Group has his doubts whether advertiser pressure can work. "There is no doubt that Meta - Facebook and Instagram combined - is one important part of any client's media mix today," he said. "A brand cannot afford to miss out on where users are. However, what makes a campaign successful is communication. Since the space is so cluttered, a brand needs to stand out to grab user attention."

"Users have more power over data sharing options. Look at it another way, Facebook will have a little less control on what they used to get from each user. However this shift in data privacy is not yet made aware to the wider public."

"For instance, the way India - the second largest country in internet users - regulate user privacy differently than the US. So, this is an evolving event."

"I am hopeful that with the rise of Web 3.0, users will have more control and it will be a much user-oriented environment."

That and a few prods like the Meta stock meltdown of last week should convince more tech companies to change, faster.

QUOTES

User privacy will play a major role in the coming days. This doesn't mean brands will miss out on reaching users - if done correctly users are more likely to engage

-Satish Mayya of BPG Group

Apple's response has been understandable and they want to offer consumers the ability to opt out of being monitored. The same conversations have been had over the use of cookies. The days of ad companies targeting consumers everywhere on the web are over

-Alex Malouf of PRCA MENA

What you watch on YouTube or what are you looking for on Chrome browser, that information is priceless and I don't think it'll be easy to say goodbye to it that easily

-Tomasz Wisniewski of Axiory Intelligence

A survey conducted last year showed 92% of UAE businesses do not strictly apply consumer data protection policies. This will change as the federal law was released at the beginning of this year and the UAE Data Office will act as a national data regulator

-Amit Raj of binary

We believe every organization should be striving to match up to the raised standards of data protection and that it will serve as an opportunity for vendors to introduce new ways to offer similar protection to their audience

-Pramod Sharda, CEO, IceWarp India and Middle East.

Analysis: Making Indonesia 4.0 and needs for structural reform

1,333 words

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The Jakarta Post

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English

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Teguh Yudo Wicaksono, Mandiri, Jakarta

In 2012, Timothy D. Cook, the CEO of **Apple**, made an announcement that **Apple** would open a new factory and make Mac computers in the United States, making it the first company to produce US-made computers after years of its products being assembled in China.

A few months later in 2013, the new factory opened in Austin, Texas and began producing the top line of Macintosh computers. But then, the company encountered a seemingly simple issue, which turned out to have significant consequences -- Apple struggled to get enough screws for its Macs.

The news, written by Jack Nicas in the New York Times, highlighted that moving a factory was not as simple as we generally thought. In China, Apple could get supplies from manufacturers producing large quantities of custom screws at short notice.

The screw shortage in the US turned out to be a serious problem that led Apple to postpone sales of its computers.

The second story comes from home. At the end of 2021, Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan

announced he was raising the minimum wage by 5.1 percent, higher than the original increase of 0.38 percent.

Responding to this, businesses planned relocating their factories to Central Java -- a province perceived to have a lower minimum wage. It is less clear whether they actually moved, but a report by the Indonesian Employers Association (Apindo) claimed that around 150 companies, mostly footwear and textile factories, relocated factories to Central Java because of the minimum wage.

The two tales tell the same story about the dynamics of the manufacturing world. Manufacturers come and go. Some decline and set, while others move to survive and thrive. But those two stories have different endings.

Apple, despite labeling its products as being designed in California, the US, remains assembling the bulk of its products in China. Meanwhile, we may see more and more textile factories leave the western part of Java to Central or East Java.

Why do some factories or firms find it easy to move while others stay? Economics give some clues: factories are built close to the market, people or resources. But these days some industries depend heavily on the web of networks connecting multiple factors. Tech companies, such as Apple, rely on the overall supporting ecosystem.

For Apple, it has found no country that can match China's combination of scale, skills, infrastructure and cost for producing the necessary materials. This may not be the case for labor-intensive industries such as textiles.

These stories also provide a glimpse of the future of supply chains and employment as well. Even long before COVID-19, Apple had a plan for reducing its dependency on China's suppliers.

Yet its hunt for new production centers has not materialized on a large scale. This makes the case that despite the supply chain disruption caused by COVID-19, we may not see a large reset of supply chains.

However, retrenchment on global supply chains would have dire implications for employment. We have seen that the pandemic-induced shortages of critical supplies have reinforced calls in developed countries for reshoring production -- moving supply chains back to developed countries.

But we seem to forget that global value chains (GVCs) have been at the center of global prosperity. As GVCs expand, many poor countries increase their participations in global trade. This has been the engine of growth for the East Asia region. Reshoring would mean less job creation in developing countries.

These facts about tech manufacturers offer lessons for Indonesia, which aspires to boost Industry 4.0.

Indeed, digitalization has been one of the major issues raised as part of Indonesia's Group of 20 presidency. So far conversations about tech companies generally are limited to fintech or commerce. Perhaps, this can be attributed to their potential that is relatively easy to assess.

A widely quoted estimate suggests that the digital economy is worth around US\$70 billion, of which e-commerce is around \$53 billion according to Google, Temasek, Bain in 2021. Still, Industry 4.0 should move beyond e-commerce.

From the plan laid out by the government for Industry 4.0, some industries are destined to be the drivers of Industry 4.0, comprising food and beverage, automotive, textiles and apparel (including footwear), chemical and electronics. These industries cover 60 percent of manufacturing output, contribute to 65 percent of exports and employ around 60 percent of manufacturing workers. These are critical industries for Indonesia's development.

The plan of Industry 4.0 -- known as "Making Indonesia 4.0" -- require a profound transformation in which firms discover, innovate, distribute and produce goods and services by leveraging new upcoming digital technologies. There are some challenges though. Many Indonesian firms, around 64 percent, continue to perform basic tasks and lack innovation.

Meanwhile only 6 percent of firms have adopted advanced technology such as machine learning, according to a study by Aswicahyono and Rafitrandi in 2020. Low technological adoption among firms leads to lower demand for digital skills, with no potential for skill upgrading.

Making Indonesia 4.0 then, calls for significant structural reform. The government's plan to expand digital infrastructure as part of Industry 4.0 is welcome.

Yet we need to address some critical issues that, although not directly related to digitalization, have a substantial impact on the future of Industry 4.0 in Indonesia.

First, as businesses across the globe rethink their supply chain strategies, it is a good opportunity for us to identify the factors behind low competitiveness and remove them.

For example, the food and beverage industry, one of five industries destined to be the key to Industry 4.0, is among the most heavily regulated industries.

Import restrictions on food ingredients such as salt or sugar hit hit micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) hard as they do not have access to affordable inputs, according to Aswicahyono and Rafitrandi in 2020. Without low-cost inputs, these MSMEs cannot enter international markets competitively.

Second, Indonesia needs digital talent. Hence, opening labor markets for digital talent would benefit Indonesia's economy. Recent data from LinkedIn and the World Bank suggest that between 2017 and 2019, Indonesia retained talent at around 2.51 per 10,000 people.

This is far lower than Singapore, which attracts around 18 per 10,000 people. Singapore has also successfully attracted around 459 talents per 10,000 with skills in artificial intelligence.

Singapore is also the most attractive country in the region for skills in mobile applications and human computer interactions -- the critical skills for the future of digital technologies.

Meanwhile, the top skill gained in Indonesia remains analytical reasoning -- a rather basic, despite being important, talent. Thus, Indonesia is in dire needs of attracting talent with future digital skills. Allowing mobility for high-skill talent would close the digital skill gap.

Third, Indonesia requires reliable and efficient services that supports key industries. Countries closely integrated into global value chain and thus becoming top exporters are always countries with reliable and efficient services.

Critical services such as logistics, transportation, telecommunication, and financial services are critical for international trade. Digitalization in these sectors, particularly logistics, has improved their efficiency. This is the major driver of growing Indonesia e-commerce. To expand further, Indonesia needs to extend beyond digital technologies in these services.

Finally, we need data that help us to assess better the size and potential of Industry 4.0 and the digital economy.

Up until now, data collected by Statistics Indonesia (BPS) have not changed much over the past 20 years. Take for example data collection for the National Social and Economic Survey or Manufacturing Survey that continue to collect the same information they have for the past 20 years.

Thus, we need to establish measures that incorporate the progress of technological adoption. This allows us to better monitor and lay out better policies for promoting technological development in Indonesia.

Head of Mandiri Institute

Document JKPOST0020220208ei2900008

Science

iPhone SE 3 could launch next MONTH: Apple is hosting a Spring event where it will unveil a new budget 5G smartphone, report claims

Sam Tonkin For Mailonline

886 words

8 February 2022

22:45

Mail Online

DAMONL

English

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* **Apple's** iPhone SE 3 could launch at **Apple's** rumoured Spring event on March 8

* Reports suggest new version of mid-range smartphone will have 5G capabilities

* It is understood the model will have a faster processor and an improved camera

* But it is unlikely to feature a radical new design. No pricing details are available

Apple's iPhone SE 3 could launch as early as next month, reports suggest, with the new budget smartphone set to come with 5G capabilities.

It is understood the model, which was last updated two years ago when the tech giant released a long-awaited follow-up to its original SE, will have a faster processor and an improved camera.

But it is unlikely to feature a radical new design, meaning the classic iPhone 'Home' button will not be phased out completely.

The current iPhone SE uses a Home button similar to that of 2017's iPhone 8.

IPHONE SE 2 SPECS

Display: 4.7-inch Retina HD display with True Tone

Cost: From £419 (£399)

Ships: April 24

Cameras: Single 12MP rear-facing

Powered by: A13 Bionic chip

Memory: 64GB, 128GB or 256GB

Colours: Black, white and red

Waterproof rating: Up to 1 metre (just over 3 feet) for 30 minutes

Apple could unveil the new iPhone SE model at its rumoured Spring event 'on or about' March 8, according to [Bloomberg's Mark Gurman](#).

No price details have yet been mooted, nor has there been any mention as to how Apple might deal with the increased battery drain associated with 5G, considering the SE has a smaller battery by today's standards.

Gurman cites sources familiar with Apple's plans and suggests that four major announcements are expected at the event.

One of the rumours is that the iPad Air will get an update, with a faster processor and 5G capabilities.

No mention has been made of any changes to the tablet's design, but as it had a major revamp with the iPad Air 4's unveiling in 2020, the device may not look too dissimilar to its predecessor.

Price-wise, the iPad Air 4 costs £579 (\$599 in the US) for a model with 64GB of storage, with prices going up for more storage, so the iPad Air 5 is likely to cost in the same region as this.

There is also a suggestion that Apple might introduce a new Apple Silicon Mac in March, perhaps a high-end Mac mini with the M1 Pro or M1 Max chips seen in recent MacBook Pro models.

Lastly, Gurman hints that iOS 15.4 could be released by the middle of next month, potentially allowing users to authenticate with Face ID while wearing face masks.

It will also introduce the long-delayed Universal Control feature, which was initially planned for the first release of iOS 15 last year.

iOS 15.3 did not introduce any major new features.

Apple unveiled its current version of the iPhone SE in the midst of the coronavirus crisis, giving customers access to many of the Phone 11's high-end features for a fraction of the price.

Like its predecessor, which launched in March 2016, the second-generation iPhone SE has a 4.7-inch screen and physical Home button with TouchID fingerprint reader.

However, it was upgraded with an A13 Bionic chip and has a single 12-megapixel camera system on the rear.

The iPhone SE 2020 comes in three colours — black, white and red — and is priced from £389 (\$399 in the US).

iOS 15.4 BRINGS 37 NEW EMOJI TO IPHONES INCLUDING 'PREGNANT MAN'

From a pregnant man to a biting lip, the 37 new emojis coming to iPhones have finally been revealed.

Apple's own designs for the new emojis are already available in a beta test of iOS 15.4 software update released on Thursday, prior to its full release in the spring.

The Unicode Consortium officially signed off candidates for the next emoji release, version 14.0, in September 2021.

But companies including Apple, Google and Microsoft apply stylised versions of the consortium's designs to their own operating systems. Here are Apple's:

- Melting Face
- Face with Open Eyes and Hand Over Mouth
- Face with Peeking Eye
- Saluting Face
- Dotted Line Face
- Face with Diagonal Mouth
- Face Holding Back Tears
- Rightwards Hand
- Leftwards Hand
- Palm Down Hand
- Palm Up Hand
- Hand with Index Finger and Thumb Crossed
- Index Pointing at the Viewer
- Heart Hands
- Biting Lip
- Person with Crown
- Identification Card

- Heavy Equals Sign
- Pregnant Man
- Pregnant Person
- Troll
- Coral
- Lotus
- Empty Nest
- Nest with Eggs
- Beans
- Pouring Liquid
- Jar
- Playground Slide
- Wheel
- Ring Buoy
- Hamsa
- Mirror Ball
- Low Battery
- Crutch
- X-Ray
- Bubbles

37 emoji make up 'Unicode Version 14.0' and can all be viewed on the [dedicated page](#) on Emojipedia's website.

Emoji Version 14.0, which features the 37 emoji and the numerous variations, [are also listed](#).

'The distinction between Unicode 14.0 and Emoji 14.0 is that the latter includes sequences where two or more code points can be combined to display a single emoji,' said Keith Broni at Emojipedia.

Document DAMONL0020220208ei280076e



Apple will let merchants accept in-person payments with only an iPhone

511 words

8 February 2022

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MarketWatch

MRKWC

English

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Offering seems 'additive rather than competitive' for existing payments players like Square-parent Block, says analyst

AppleApple Inc. is diving deeper into the world of payment technology with plans to allow merchants to accept contactless payments using just their iPhones.

The company announced Tuesday a new feature through which merchants will be able to use their phones as payment-acceptance devices without tacking on additional hardware. The feature will be compatible with various contactless payment methods including Apple Pay, tap-enabled credit and debit cards, and "other digital wallets," according to a press release.

Privately held Stripe will be the first to partner with Apple AAPL on the program. It will roll out the Tap to Pay on iPhone offering to its merchant customers, "including the Shopify Point of Sale app," during the spring, per the release. Apple plans to add other platforms and apps as the year goes on.

To use the feature, consumers can hold their iPhone near a participating merchant's iPhone, which enables the devices to transact through near-field communication (NFC) technology. The technology will also work with contactless credit or debit cards.

The consumer-electronics giant has already waded into payments with its Apple Pay mobile wallet that allows people to make purchases online and at contactless terminals that accept the payment type. It also offers Apple Cash, which lets users send money to friends.

It's become increasingly easy for merchants to accept card-based payments thanks to hardware from Block Inc.'s SQ Square and others that smaller merchants can plug into their existing phones or tablets or use on a standalone basis. Apple's new offering will make it so merchants can take payments without getting extra hardware, but at least one analyst doubted it would shake up the established ecosystem.

Barclays analyst Ramsey El-Assal wrote Tuesday that Apple's offering seems "additive rather than competitive" since the company mentioned that it planned to work with existing payment platforms.

"This should put to rest investor fears that [Apple] will roll out a competing payments solution," he wrote.

Block shares are off about 1.1% in Tuesday's session, while Apple's are ahead 1.5%.

As for Square-parent Block, El-Assal also wasn't concerned about the fact that Apple's release specifically called out Stripe and Shopify Inc. SHOP

"Separately, while today's press release names a handful of Square competitors who will be first adopters of AAPL's product, we note these companies already have in-market hardware, and we do not expect the inclusion of [Apple's] Tap to Pay (which, to be clear, we think Square could also enable) will have a material impact on current competitive dynamics.

See more: [Threat to Square from a potential Apple iPhone payments capacity is 'overblown,' analysts say](#)

Apple's stock has run up 15.8% over the past three months, while Block shares have tumbled 57.0% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average DJIA has eased 2.9%.

Document MRKWC00020220208ei28002mh

Tech

How an **Apple** Watch and a coach in my ear got me running again

David Phelan

1,402 words

8 February 2022

20:27

Independent Online

INDOP

English

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As lockdowns end and the home exercise boom loses some energy, can **Apple**'s Fitness+ and its 'Time To Run' feature keep us moving?

Reader, I'm running. I'm testing out the latest addition to **Apple** Fitness+, the subscription service based on the **Apple Watch** and usable across other **Apple** devices. The new feature is called Time to Run, and it works with just the **Apple** Watch and a pair of Bluetooth headphones such as AirPods.

It's an audio running experience, with a trainer guiding you through their run, in this case across London, from Shakespeare's Globe through Trafalgar Square and ending in a London pub, The Harp. The coach, Cory Wharton-Malcolm, offers a running tip and then leaves you to run to a motivating soundtrack, chiming in with more tips between songs. I'm currently crossing Millennium Bridge or, as everyone still calls it, the Wobbly Bridge.

Apple Fitness+ has been going for a little over a year now and the pace of development has been frenetic.

I've been a subscriber since day one, and it's changed my relationship to fitness. There are more than 2,000 video workouts, all slickly produced and designed to be accessible to all levels. There are three trainers in each workout, so that if you're new (or just feeling tired) you can opt for the modified version offered by the trainer on the left.

You can watch these videos on the iPhone, iPad or, through Apple TV, on a big-screen TV. The clever feature, whether you're doing yoga, core training, HIIT, dance or whatever, is that your heart rate, measured live from the Apple Watch on your wrist, is onscreen, so you can see how hard you're working out.

Jay Blahnik is Apple's Vice-President of Fitness Technologies. He is charismatic, energetic and utterly passionate about Apple's commitment to health and fitness. He spoke to me about Fitness+, which launched just over a year ago.

"I think the thing for us with Fitness+ is that our goal is to always make whatever it is you want to do, a little easier to do. That could mean making it more accessible or friendlier. It could be about being able to do it in the privacy of your own home or having access to just 10 minutes of yoga rather than having to commit to 60 or 90 minutes in the studio because of a time constraint. It could be about seeing yourself in the trainers, different shapes, and sizes and body types."

I'll be honest with you, running really isn't my thing. I used to dread Friday afternoons at school when, rain or shine, Cross-Country Running was on the timetable. Oh, how I dreaded it. My best friend Paul and I worked out there was a spot that the run passed twice. We stopped, chatted and whiled away the time for 15 minutes until the group caught up with us on the second pass and joined, politely, at the back. We were never caught.

Even so, and despite my knees' protests, I'm quite enjoying this run. Cory is a lively, energetic coach, without being overbearing and his narration is good. He's created an acronym, LONDONER, with a tip beginning with each letter dropped in between songs. The playlist, because this is London, is exclusively from British artists, from Florence and the Machine to Elton John, via The Beatles and Ed Sheeran. As The Beatles Here Comes the Sun starts to play, the sun comes out. I'm guessing this is coincidence rather than part of the Time to Run service, although with Apple, you never know.

Time to Run was in Apple's thoughts even as it created Time to Walk. If you haven't tried this, it's a delightful experience. It also only involves your Apple Watch, headphones and you. You're out on a walk and in your ear you hear the voice of the guest, who's walking at the same time, which gives a compelling and intimate feel to it. The guests have so far included Jane Fonda, Anthony Joshua, Shawn Mendes and Prince William, and they tell three stories that are meaningful to them, and pick three favourite songs. It's a bit like an even

more personal version of Desert Island Discs because there's the same confessional element, but it's just you and the guest with nobody in between.

One neat detail as you run: each workout tells you when you've hit the halfway point, so if you want to finish the run at your front door, it's time to head home about now.

Blahnik is passionate about the Fitness+ audience, and while he won't give figures of how many are signed up, he hints that the emphatic growth of the video content is a strong clue that a lot of people are doing it.

"The most important metric has always been to make something great that can meet people where they're at, that can change the way they might look at health and fitness, make it more accessible, make it more diverse, create a space that felt safe to maybe try some things they hadn't tried before and get more people moving in all the ways that they should be."

I'm on the home stretch now and Corey's latest item in the acronym is E for Energise. We've gone past Buckingham Palace and as each landmark is reached, a photo, taken by Cory, pops up on the Apple Watch display. Which is good for making you feel like you're part of the exercise even if you're running in a different city, or on a treadmill, say.

Inclusivity is a big part of the Apple Fitness+ mantra. This means that there are plenty of sessions geared exclusively to beginners, as well as workouts specifically for older people and for pregnant women. This is great, but I still yearn for the service to come up with more advanced workouts as well, yoga sessions with postures that might not suit those new to the practice, for instance. Apple's thought is that people repeat a favourite session as often as trying a new one, and that they can cater for fitness diehards through longer sessions. As Blahnik tells me, "One of our philosophies is always to create workouts that are easy to make easy and easy to make hard."

Now we're out of lockdown, it'll be interesting to see if Fitness+ remains popular. Will people go back to the gym (where, of course, you can still use the service while you're on the treadmill or cycle, for instance) and will Fitness+ retreat to home use, or when out for a walk or run?

Speaking of which, Cory has congratulated me that I've done my run (and he didn't even know exactly how much of an achievement it was for me) and I've come to a sweaty and stumbling stop. But my exhaustion is tempered by smugness and a real sense of triumph.

Blahnik sums the service up like this: "Our goal in Fitness+ is to make taking care of your fitness and wellbeing more inspiring, more accessible and easier to fit into your life."

Time to Run works for all of these, and the roughly half-hour structure is effective. Will I do it again? Well, maybe, but I feel the options of Time to Walk, Yoga, Pilates and Core training will lure me in sooner and more often. Still, I've done a 35-minute outdoor run, which is one more than I'd ever expected. I mean, I could just run home again, couldn't I? No, wait, there's a cab.

Read More

[Apple Watch 7 pre-order: How to buy the new smartwatch in the UK](#)

[Apple introduces new version of Watch with complete redesign](#)

[iPhone 13 -live: UK contract deals and prices for Apple, EE and O2](#)

[Apple Maps hides Tim Cook's house behind a giant digital wall](#)

[Grindr disappears from App Store in China](#)

[Apple to allow secret apps on the App Store](#)

Document INDOP00020220208ei2800ayi

***Apple Empowers Businesses to Accept Contactless Payments Through Tap to Pay on iPhone**

974 words

8 February 2022

20:30

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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8 Feb 2022 10:00 ET *Apple to Introduce Tap to Pay on iPhone >AAPL

8 Feb 2022 10:01 ET Press Release: Apple empowers businesses to accept contactless payments through Tap to Pay on iPhone

Apple empowers businesses to accept contactless payments through Tap to Pay on iPhone

Later this year, US merchants will be able to accept Apple Pay and other contactless payments simply by using iPhone and a partner-enabled iOS app

CUPERTINO, Calif. --(BUSINESS WIRE)--February 08, 2022--

Apple(R) today announced plans to introduce Tap to Pay on iPhone(R). The new capability will empower millions of merchants across the US, from small businesses to large retailers, to use their iPhone to seamlessly and securely accept Apple Pay(R), contactless credit and debit cards, and other digital wallets through a simple tap to their iPhone -- no additional hardware or payment terminals needed. Tap to Pay on iPhone will be available for payment platforms and app developers to integrate into their iOS apps and offer as a payment option to their business customers. Stripe will be the first payment platform to offer Tap to Pay on iPhone to their business customers, including the Shopify Point of Sale app this spring. Additional payment platforms and apps will follow later this year.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220208005350/en/>

Tap to Pay on iPhone enables businesses to seamlessly and securely accept Apple Pay, contactless credit and debit cards, and other digital wallets through a simple tap to their iPhone. (Photo: Business Wire)

"As more consumers are tapping to pay with digital wallets and credit cards, Tap to Pay on iPhone will provide businesses with a secure, private, and easy way to accept contactless payments and unlock new checkout experiences using the power, security and convenience of iPhone," said Jennifer Bailey, Apple's vice president of Apple Pay and Apple Wallet. "In collaboration with payment platforms, app developers, and payment networks, we're making it easier than ever for businesses of all sizes -- from solopreneurs to large retailers-- to seamlessly accept contactless payments and continue to grow their business."

Once Tap to Pay on iPhone becomes available, merchants will be able to unlock contactless payment acceptance through a supporting iOS app on an iPhone XS or later device. At checkout, the merchant will simply prompt the customer to hold their iPhone or Apple Watch(R) to pay with Apple Pay, their contactless credit or debit card, or other digital wallet near the merchant's iPhone, and the payment will be securely completed using NFC technology. No additional hardware is needed to accept contactless payments through Tap to Pay on iPhone, so businesses can accept payments from wherever they do business. Apple Pay is already accepted at more than 90 percent of US retailers, and with this new capability, virtually every business, big or small, will be able to allow their customers to Tap to Pay on iPhone at checkout. Tap to Pay on iPhone will also roll out to Apple Store(R) locations in the US later this year.

Privacy is fundamental in the design and development across all of Apple's payment features. With Tap to Pay on iPhone, customers' payment data is protected by the same technology that makes Apple Pay private and secure. All transactions made using Tap to Pay on iPhone are encrypted and processed using the Secure Element, and as with Apple Pay, Apple doesn't know what is being purchased or who is buying it.

Apple will work closely with leading payment platforms and app developers across the payments and commerce industry to offer Tap to Pay on iPhone to millions of merchants in the US. Tap to Pay on iPhone complements and enhances the robust suite of payment and commerce tools that payment platforms and app developers provide to their merchant customers to help them run and grow their businesses. Tap to Pay on

iPhone will work with credit and debit cards from leading payment networks, including American Express, Discover, Mastercard, and Visa.

"Whether you're a salesperson at an internet-first retailer or an individual entrepreneur, you can soon accept contactless payments on a device that's already in your pocket: your iPhone," said Billy Alvarado, Stripe's chief business officer. "With Tap to Pay on iPhone, millions of businesses using Stripe can enhance their in-person commerce experience by offering their customers a fast and secure checkout."

Tap to Pay on iPhone will be available to participating payment platforms and their app developer partners to leverage in their software developer kits (SDKs) in an upcoming iOS software beta.

Apple revolutionized personal technology with the introduction of the Macintosh in 1984. Today, Apple leads the world in innovation with iPhone, iPad, Mac, Apple Watch, and Apple TV. Apple's five software platforms -- iOS, iPadOS, macOS, watchOS, and tvOS -- provide seamless experiences across all Apple devices and empower people with breakthrough services including the App Store, Apple Music, Apple Pay, and iCloud. Apple's more than 100,000 employees are dedicated to making the best products on earth, and to leaving the world better than we found it.

NOTE TO EDITORS: For additional information visit Apple Newsroom (www.apple.com/newsroom), or call Apple's Media Helpline at (408) 974-2042.

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Shopping

Amazon Presidents' Day sales 2022: What you can shop right now

Heath Owens - Good Housekeeping

862 words

8 February 2022

Houston Chronicle: Web Edition

HOCHWB

English

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Believe it or not, we are already one month into 2022. While that reality is still sinking in for most of us, savvy shoppers and e-commerce behemoth Amazon alike are already setting their sights to Presidents' Day—a.k.a. the most underrated shopping holiday of the year.

This year Presidents' Day falls on Monday, February 21st, and albeit ahead of schedule, the deals are already rolling in. While there are sure to be even bigger savings announced later this month, so many reliable Presidents' Day sale staples are already discounted on Amazon—think **Apple** AirPods, Instant Pots, air fryers, bedding and TVs.

This is only the beginning, so be sure to bookmark this page and check back regularly for the best Presidents' Day deals on Amazon. If you're on the lookout for new appliances, furniture, electronics or household staples like those listed above, February is one of the best months of the year for you to save big.

The Best Early Amazon Presidents' Day Deals

The Best Amazon Presidents' Day Apple Deals

- * Take 25% off the classic Apple AirPods.
- * Take 21% off the new Apple AirPods Pro.
- * Take \$100 off the 2020 Apple iMac 27-inch desktop computer with retina 5K display.
- * Take \$100 off the Apple AirPods Max noise canceling headphones.
- * Take \$100 off the 2021 13-inch iPad Pro with 128GB of storage.
- * Take \$50 off the 2020 Apple MacBook Air 13-inch laptop.
- * Take \$50 off the Apple Watch Series 7 with GPS.
- * Take \$30 off the Apple Watch SE with GPS.

The Best Amazon Presidents' Day Cookware and Kitchen Appliance Deals

- * Save on Lodge Cast Iron cookware: take 40% off the 5-piece cast iron cookware bundle which includes two skillets, a griddle, and a Dutch oven with lid; 39% off the standalone 10-inch skillet; and 30% off enamel Dutch oven are also discounted right now.
- * Save on Ninja products: Take 23% off the Ninja AF101 4-quart Air Fryer; 22% off the Ninja Foodi 5-in-1 Indoor Grill with air fry, roast, bake, and dehydrate functions; 20% off the Ninja Mega Kitchen System blender and food processor; and 17% off the Ninja SP101 Digital Countertop Oven.
- * Take 38% off Le Creuset's enameled cast iron 7.5-quart chef's oven with glass lid.
- * Take 23% off the Anova Nano sous vide precision cooker.
- * Take 20% (\$200!) off the Philips 3200 Series Fully Automatic Espresso Machine, featuring LatteGo, an automatic and instant milk frother.

The Best Amazon Presidents' Day Home and Furniture Deals

- * Save on Christopher Knight Home Furnishings: 22% off a 4-piece outdoor sofa set, 45% off the Hoyt wood end table, 36% off the Abitha faux wood coffee table, 26% off the Juliana storage ottoman, and more.
- * Take 45% off the best-selling towel set on Amazon, American Soft Linen's set of 6 bath towels.

* Take 40% off the Zinus Shalini upholstered platform bed. It is one of the most popular beds on Amazon with almost 34,000 5-star reviews.

* Take 35% off the stylish yet practical Hbada task chair for your home workspace.

* Take 32% off the Bissell Air220 smart air purifier.

* Take \$30 off the Bissell CrossWeave floor and area rug wet-dry vacuum cleaner.

* Save on iRobot cleaning devices like the best-selling Roomba 694 Vacuum and the Braava Jet M6 Robot Mop.

The Best Amazon Presidents' Day Mattress and Bedding Deals

* Save on Tuft & Needle mattresses: Take 20% off best-selling original Tuft & Needle Adaptive Foam Mattress, 20% off the Tuft & Needle Mint Extra Cooling Adaptive Foam Mattress, and more.

* Take 47% off the highly-rated ZonLi weighted blanket, which boasts 25,000 reviews.

* Take 47% off down-alternative Himoon Bed Pillows.

* Take 35% off Utopia Bedding's duvet comforter with 60,000+ 5-star reviews.

* Take 31% off the already super-affordable Mellanni sheet set, aka the internet's favorite sheets.

The Best Amazon Presidents' Day Technology Deals

* Save on Beats by Dr. Dre headphones and earbuds: take 40% off Beats Studio3 over-ear headphones, 33% off Beats Solo3 over-ear headphones, and 20% off Powerbeats Pro.

* Save up to \$700 off LG OLED 4K smart TV with Alexa built-in.

* Save \$100 off the FitBit Sense Advanced smartwatch.

* Take 30% off the Amazon Fire TV 4K UHD smart TV.

* Take 23% off JBL Charge 4 waterproof portable Bluetooth speakers.

The Best Amazon Presidents' Day Travel Deals

* Take 34% off the best-selling Samsonite Winfield 3-piece luggage set.

* Take 29% off this travel backpack, which has nearly 46,000 5-star reviews.

* Take 27% off this highly-rated international AC outlet adapter for any upcoming international travel.

* Take 22% off the BAGSMART toiletry travel bag.

More Presidents' Day Savings

* The Best Overall Presidents' Day Sales of 2022

* The Best Presidents' Day Appliance Deals of 2022

* The Best Presidents' Day Mattress Sales

* The Best Presidents' Day Apple Deals

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Document HOCHWB0020220208ei2800036

Shopping
The best Apple devices that are on sale for Presidents Day 2022

Heath Owens - Good Housekeeping

525 words

8 February 2022

Houston Chronicle: Web Edition

HOCHWB

English

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Good news alert: If you didn't snag the Apple gadget you were eyeing during holiday sales events, or (even worse) Santa didn't check it off your wish list, the next best chance to save big on Apple products is upon us. Presidents Day —a.k.a. the most underrated shopping holiday of the year — is coming up in a few short weeks on Monday, February 21.

While Apple doesn't usually run a Presidents Day promotion of their own, that doesn't stop some of the internet's biggest retailers from joining in the fun. Weeks ahead of schedule, Amazon and Walmart are already offering major discounts on some of the most popular Apple products like AirPods, Apple Watches, iPads and even the almost-never discounted MacBook Pro and MacBook Air laptops. And this is only the beginning!

That being said, we'll be sleuthing the internet over the next few weeks to keep this up-to-date with the latest and greatest savings. If you see something you like we'd recommend snagging it now versus waiting for further discounts, because Apple products tend to fly out of stock once the prices are slashed. Below, all the best early Apple Presidents Day deals you can shop right now.

Early Apple Presidents Day Deals

Presidents Day Deals on AirPods

- * Take 37% off the classic Apple AirPods.
- * Take 28% off the new Apple AirPods Pro.
- * Take \$100 off the Apple AirPods Max noise canceling headphones.

Presidents Day Deals on Apple Watch

- * Take \$90 off the Apple Watch Series 3 with GPS.
- * Take \$50 off the PRODUCT(RED) Apple Watch Series 6 with GPS.
- * Take
- * Take \$30 off the Apple Watch SE with GPS.
- * Take \$20 off the Apple Watch Series 7 with GPS.

Presidents Day Deals on MacBooks + iPads

- * Take \$100 off the 2020 MacBook Air laptop.
- * Take \$100 off the 2020 MacBook Pro laptop.
- * Take \$100 off the 2020 Apple iMac desktop computer with retina 5K display.
- * Take \$210 off the 2020 10.2-inch iPad with 32GB of storage.
- * Take \$50 off the 2021 iPad Mini with cellular connection capabilities and 64GB of storage.
- * Take \$30 off the 2020 10.9-inch iPad Air with 64GB of storage.

More Apple Presidents Day Deals

- * Save on Beats by Dr. Dre headphones and earbuds: take 40% off Beats Studio3 over-ear headphones, and 20% off Powerbeats Pro, classic Powerbeats, and Beats Solo3.

- * Save on Apple TV: \$100 off Apple TV 4K with 64GB of storage, \$10 off Apple TV 4K with 32GB of storage.
- * Save on Apple Pencil: \$20 off the 2nd Generation Apple Pencil and \$15 off the original Apple Pencil.
- * Take \$70 off Apple Magic Keyboard for iPad Pro and iPad Air.

All Presidents Day Savings

- * The Best Presidents Day Sales of 2022
- * The Best Presidents Day Appliance Deals of 2022
- * The Best Presidents Day Deals on Amazon

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Document HOCHWB0020220208ei280003d

ES Money, Mobile Phones
Best iPhone 13 Pro Max Deals February 2022

Mark Hooson
834 words
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Evening Standard Online
NSO NL
English

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If you want **Apple's** biggest and best for your next smartphone, here's everything you need to know about the iPhone 13 Pro Max and the best deals currently available.

Pay nothing upfront

If you'd like to get your hands on the iPhone 13 Pro Max without paying an upfront fee, there are a few deals to choose from.

Three will give you a 128GB iPhone 13 Pro Max with no limits on calls or texts, plus a huge 100GB data allowance for £59 a month over 24 months. However, pay just a few pounds more each month (£62) and you can get no limits on calls, texts or data from Vodafone.

* See more:

[Latest Vodafone iPhone 13 Pro Max Deals](#)

You can knock a few pounds per month off your bill by locking in for 36 months, but the savings may be too small for you to justify the long tie-in. For example, Sky offers a 128GB iPhone 13 Pro Max for nothing upfront and £43 a month. Calls and texts are unlimited, but data is capped at 2GB per month.

* See more: [Latest Sky Mobile iPhone 13 Pro Max Deals](#)

Remember that in 36 months' time from now, Apple could be onto the iPhone 15 or beyond. If you like to have the latest handsets, it may not be a good idea to sign up for such a long contract.

Pay something upfront

Paying an amount upfront for a handset can help to bring down your monthly bill.

For example, give Three £89 upfront and it'll give you a 128GB iPhone Pro Max with no monthly limits on calls, texts or data for £25 in the first six months and then £50 a month for the contract's remaining 18 months.

* See more: [Latest Three iPhone 13 Pro Max Deals](#)

Alternatively, if you'd prefer simpler billing and perhaps don't need such generous data allowances, iD Mobile will give you a 128GB iPhone 13 Pro Max for £49 upfront and £55.99 per month for 24 months. For that you'll get unlimited calls and texts plus 20GB of data.

* See more: [Latest iD Mobile iPhone 13 Pro Max Deals](#)

What's new with the iPhone 13 Pro Max?

If you're not an aficionado, you might struggle to tell the difference between the iPhone 13 Pro Max and its predecessor, the iPhone 12 Pro Max -but plenty has been changed and upgraded from one generation of the handset to the next.

The dimensions of the device are almost identical, but the notch that houses the front camera array on the top of the display has been shrunk down by 20% for the iPhone 13 Pro Max, freeing up more of its 6.7" OLED screen.

The display has a resolution of 2,778 x 1,284 and a pixel density of 458 pixels per inch. What's new is that the panel is 28% brighter than its predecessor's, and it refreshes at a higher 120Hz for smoother animations.

The biggest improvement that the iPhone 13 Pro Max brings is in its processing power. The new Pro Max runs on Apple's new A15 Bionic chipset, which consists of a six-core CPU and a four-core GPU. Apple says it makes its phones 50% faster than the competition's, with 30% faster graphics.

A15 Bionic enables a new video mode too. Cinematic Mode mimics a technique that's been used for decades in motion pictures and automatically switches focus between subjects and objects in the background and foreground as they move in the frame. It creates a cinematic effect that makes your clips look professional.

The chipset also improves battery life by optimising power consumption. The iPhone 13 Pro Max battery can last up to 2.5 hours longer than the iPhone 12 Pro Max's from a single charge.

Photography has been upgraded with new lens hardware and software improvements made possible by the A15 Bionic processor.

The handset's main wide angle lens now has a f/1.5 aperture, compared to the iPhone 12 Pro Max's f/1.8 aperture. This means it captures more light and produces more true-to-life images. Similarly, the phone's ultrawide lens has been upgraded from an aperture of f/2.4 to f/1.8, and optical zoom has gone up from 2.5x to 3x.

Just like the iPhone 12 Pro Max, the iPhone 13 Pro Max comes with 6GB of RAM and a choice of either 128GB, 256GB, 512GB or 1TB of storage.

Buy the phone directly from Apple and you'll pay £1,049 (128GB), £1,149 (256GB), £1,349 (512GB) or £1,549 (1TB).

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Document NSONL00020220208ei2800362

ES Money, Mobile Phones

Best **Apple** iPhone 13 Pro deals February 2022

Mark Hooson

934 words

8 February 2022

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The new iPhone 13 range is the third generation where **Apple** has included a 'Pro' variation amongst its offering of handsets.

As with its iPhone 11 and 12 predecessors, the iPhone 13 Pro sits in the range with a premium spec and includes features that command a higher price compared with the base version of the [iPhone 13](#).

If you want to get your hands on an iPhone 13 Pro, here's a run down of the latest deals, plus a look at the handset's key features and how Apple justifies that higher asking price.

Pay nothing upfront

If you're a user who'd rather not pay anything upfront for the new smartphone, network provider Three is offering a 128GB iPhone 13 Pro on a 24-month contract for £55 a month. That comes with unlimited calls and texts, plus 100GB of data.

* See more:

[Latest Three iPhone 13 Pro Deals](#)

Adding to the competition in this sphere, rival provider Vodafone is offering an identical deal.

Again with no upfront costs, but aimed at customers who don't want to worry about usage limits and can stretch to £60 a month over 24 months, O2 is offering a 128GB iPhone 13 Pro with no limits on calls, texts or data.

* See more: [Latest O2 iPhone 13 Pro Deals](#)

For the same, no-limits deal, Three charges £85 a month, while Tesco Mobile comes in at a more competitive £71.99 a month.

* See more: [Latest Tesco Mobile iPhone 13 Pro Deals](#)

Upfront options

For £79 upfront, Vodafone is offering customers a 128GB iPhone 13 Pro for £47 per month. That's for a 24 month contract, including unlimited calls and texts plus 100GB of data.

* See more: [Latest Vodafone iPhone 13 Pro Deals](#)

Meanwhile, if you can stretch to £99 upfront, iD Mobile is offering the same handset with unlimited calls and texts alongside 20GB of data for £46.00. Again, a 24-month contract applies.

* See more: [Latest iD Mobile iPhone 13 Pro Deals](#)

Pay Three £44 upfront and you'll get the handset with unlimited calls, texts and 100GB of data for £51 per month on a 24 month contract.

* See more: [Latest Three iPhone 13 Pro Deals](#)

This is a good compromise when you take into account the upfront cost, monthly cost and monthly data allowances. For a similar upfront amount, this time it's £45, Vodafone offers the same deal.

Again, if you'd prefer not to have to think about data limits, iD Mobile offers unlimited calls, texts and data for £52.99 per month when you fork out £49 upfront and sign up for a 24-month contract.

Alternatively, Vodafone imposes no limits when you pay £29 upfront and then £54 a month over 24 months. Three also offers a no limits deal, but charges users £44 upfront.

iPhone 13 Pro -what's new?

In the hand, it's difficult to tell apart the new iPhone 13 Pro from its predecessors in the 11 and 12 ranges. Internally, however, the latest handset comes with a slew of new technology and features.

The tell-tale signs of the newer model are its smaller notch housing the front camera array, a less prominent bump on the back of the handset where the camera lenses sit and the fact that it's a hair thicker than its predecessor.

The latest Pro's display has the same dimensions as its predecessor, but the new screen is brighter and refreshes at up to 120Hz resulting in far smoother animations. By comparison, the [iPhone 12 Pro](#) only refreshed at up to 60Hz.

One of the biggest changes to the latest Pro is in terms of processing power. The iPhone 13 range introduces the A15 Bionic chip. The six-core CPU and four-core GPU setup is said to be 50% faster than the competition's, with 30% faster graphics.

Capacity and camera

In terms of memory, both the 12 Pro and the 13 Pro have 6GB of RAM but the latter has now doubled the storage capacity.

While the iPhone 12 Pro started at 64GB and went up to 512GB, the iPhone 13 Pro starts at 128GB and extends to 1TB.

The camera set up on the iPhone 13 Pro is largely the same as on the iPhone 12 Pro, but its wide-angle lenses have larger apertures to allow in more light, resulting in sharper images.

The A15 Bionic chipset also gives the cameras an optimisation boost that enable two new features: Cinematic Mode and macro photography.

Hooray for Hollywood

The former gives videos a Hollywood feel by automatically switching focus from objects and subjects in the frame. It mimics 'rack focus' you'll be used to seeing in movies.

Macro photography, meanwhile, allows for extreme close-ups of objects as though you were looking at them with a microscope.

Another big improvement is in battery life. Apple claims you'll get 90 minutes more use out of a single charge of the iPhone 13 Pro compared with the iPhone 12 Pro.

Finally, the iPhone 13 Pro costs £949 when you buy it directly from Apple. By comparison, the iPhone 12 Pro cost £999 at launch. That works out to £50 less for the iPhone 13 Pro's additional memory, improved performance and new features.

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Document NSONL00020220208ei280035z

ES Money, Mobile Phones

Best **Apple** iPhone 13 mini deals February 2022

Mark Hooson

870 words

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The iPhone 13 mini is the smallest version in **Apple**'s latest quartet of handsets. But in terms of tech and new features, it still packs a very decent punch.

Here are the latest deals -including the best pay-monthly plans -that you can get with the iPhone 13 mini. Plus a look at what makes this latest miniature iPhone tick.

Pay nothing upfront

For users looking to swerve upfront payments, network provider Three offers a 128GB iPhone 13 mini at £41 a month for a 24-month period. The deal comes with unlimited calls and texts plus 100GB a month.

* See more:

[Latest Three iPhone 13 mini Deals](#)

Vodafone isn't far behind, offering the same basic deal but for £43 a month instead.

For the same outlay, O2 offers this version of the handset plus the same allowances for calls and texts, but this time with a lower, 60GB data cap.

* See more: [Latest O2 iPhone 13 mini Deals](#)

If data usage is important to you, Three offers unlimited data, messages and calls for £44. Again, that's with nothing to pay upfront.

If you're with Vodafone and want to sidestep data caps, then you'll have to pay an extra £2 a month on top.

* See more: [Latest Vodafone iPhone 13 mini Deals](#)

Upfront options

Pay iD Mobile £79 upfront and you'll get a 128GB iPhone 13 mini with no limits on calls, texts or data for £35.99 a month on a 24-month contract. Vodafone has a similar deal, but it costs marginally more at £38 per month.

Opt to pay just £29 upfront with iD Mobile and you can have an iPhone 13 mini with unlimited calls, texts and data for £38.99 a month on a 24-month contract. Alternatively, pay Vodafone's £39 upfront fee and the same handset and allowances can be yours for £40 a month.

* See more: [Latest iD Mobile iPhone 13 mini Deals](#)

If you don't need unlimited data, iD Mobile offers a £35.99 per month tariff with 20GB of data when you pay £29 upfront, or £36.99 per month for 50GB of data assuming the same upfront payment.

Three will give you 100GB of data, unlimited calls and texts plus the iPhone 13 mini 128GB for £38 upfront, plus £38 a month over two years. For the same handset and allowances, Vodafone has a deal for £15 upfront and then £39 a month.

* See more: [Latest Sky Mobile iPhone 13 mini Deals](#)

What's new with the iPhone 13 mini?

Apple's iPhone 13 mini is an overall improvement on its predecessors in several ways.

The device's basic footprint is more or less unchanged, save for the odd gram and millimetre, so the size and screen are much the same as before.

Apple's latest iteration, however, comprises a more powerful chipset (the A15 Bionic processor), improved battery life and increased screen brightness.

While the camera set-up is the same as the iPhone 12 mini, Apple has added new image stabilisation technology to improve the quality of your snaps.

The A15 Bionic processor, which is also found in the larger [iPhone 13](#), [iPhone 13 Pro](#) and iPhone 13 Pro Max models is Apple's latest bit of computing kit.

It claims the six-core CPU and four-core GPU of the A15 makes it 50% more powerful than the competition's, including 30% faster graphics.

Longer battery life

Apple also credits the chipset for the iPhone 13 mini's extended battery life. From a single charge it now offers 1.5 hours' more use compared with the iPhone 12 mini.

Both the 12 and 13 have a 5.4" Super Retina XDR display with a resolution of 2,340 x 1,080 and a pixel density of 476 pixels per inch (PPI). The latter is capable of 28% higher maximum brightness, which can come in handy on a particularly sunny day.

The iPhone 13 mini's front camera still sits within a black bar at the top of the screen often referred to as the 'notch'. This feature is now about 20% smaller compared with the iPhone 12 mini's.

There are new camera features too, such as Cinematic Mode, which mimics Hollywood's 'rack-focus' effect -switching focus between subjects and objects in the frame automatically.

The iPhone13 mini's Ceramic Shield protects against scratches and scuffs and its oleophobic coating reduces fingerprints on the display. There's the option for 5G connectivity, plus an IP68 rating for water and dust resistance, which means the handset will still work after being submerged in up to 1.5m of fresh water for up to 30 minutes.

Finally, Apple's latest miniature handset represents slightly better value than its predecessor. The iPhone 13 mini has started off life at £679 for the 128GB model compared with £699 when the iPhone 12 mini launched last year.

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Document NSONL00020220208ei2800360

ES Money, Mobile Phones
Best iPhone 12 deals February 2022

Emma Lunn
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We've come a long way since **Apple** launched the first iPhone in 2007. Since then, the tech giant has announced new models of the iconic handset every year.

iPhones make up a significant part of the tech landscape with **Apple** devotees ready and willing to trade-up their handset every time a new model comes out. The latest iPhone incarnation features what **Apple** fans have all been waiting for: 5G.

We've taken a look at the new iPhone 12 to see what it offers (a lot) and where it comes up slightly short compared with rivals. You can click on the boxes below to see how you can get your hands on the best iPhone 12 deals.

iPhone 12 -the details

iPhone addicts have four iPhone 12 models to choose from: iPhone 12 mini, iPhone 12, iPhone 12 Pro, and iPhone 12 Pro Max.

For the purposes of this feature we'll focus on the base handset, the iPhone 12. This features a 6.1" Ceramic Shield screen with a 2532 x 1170 resolution, pixel density of 460 pixels per inch, and a Super Retina XDR display. The iPhone 12 comes with either 64, 128 or 256GB of internal memory, 4GB RAM, dual SIM, Bluetooth, NFC, and wireless charging.

The iPhone 12 is thinner and lighter than the iPhone 11. Working within the device is the iOS14 operating system and A14 Bionic processor. Its IP68 rating means the phone can be immersed in 6m of water for up to 30 minutes.

Caught on camera

For photography, the iPhone 12 camera system still consists of three lenses, but it has had a substantial upgrade. The main camera has a wider, brighter aperture and a new seven-element lens arrangement. But it's the phone's ability to capture 10-bit Dolby Vision video footage, enabling cinema-grade videos to be captured, edited, and shared from your handset, that is really eye-catching.

Another feature that's new on the iPhone 12 is the MagSafe connector on the rear of the handset. MagSafe is a mounting and charging system for all models of iPhone 12.

As well as offering faster charging, this magnetic connection tech enables you to attach accessories to your phone, such as a charger or a case, and you can also tell what's been connected through a special chip. MagSafe looks likely to open up a new ecosystem of iPhone accessories such as camera mounts and games controllers.

The iPhone 12 comes in six colours: white, black, blue, green, purple and red. The red version is technically called (PRODUCT) RED due to Apple's partnership with the brand Product Red, which raises funds to fight HIV/AIDS. However, every red iPhone 12 purchased donates cash to combat Covid-19.

Apple's first 5G phone

Arguably, the most newsworthy addition to the latest iPhone is that all the handsets in the iPhone 12 range are 5G-ready.

5G is the next generation of wireless technology, and it's a game changer. UK mobile networks have been rolling out their 5G networks for the past couple of years and we're now starting to see more 5G-enabled handsets on the market to take advantage of much wider coverage.

To use 5G on the iPhone 12, you'll need a 5G mobile tariff and to live in a 5G-enabled area. Currently, 5G coverage is mainly limited to major towns and cities although reception varies from area to area. Different networks have coverage in different locations, so bear this mind when you're researching the best iPhone 12 deals.

How to compare iPhone 12 deals

There are loads of iPhone 12 deals to choose from. Do your homework, as it's important to find the right tariff for your needs.

Some networks, such as Sky and Tesco Mobile, offer 36-month contracts. O2 (which earlier this year announced a merger with Virgin Media) also offers 36-month device plans combined with flexible airtime tariffs.

You can calculate the total cost of a mobile phone deal by multiplying the monthly cost by the number of months, adding on the upfront fee, and subtracting any cashback amount. This will give you the total contract cost to compare with other contracts of the same length.

Face facts

Fancy as the iPhone 12 is, it lacks certain features. For example, there's no fingerprint recognition option for starters. Balancing that, it does have Face ID which is widely regarded as quicker and more convenient, but just as secure.

But Face ID doesn't work well with a face mask, so you might be better off with a phone which recognises your fingerprint if you're still taking Covid precautions.

Apple has never enabled users to expand iPhone storage with a microSD card on any of its phones and the iPhone 12 is no exception. This means you need to assess in advance how much built-in storage you need, as well as how much you can afford. The 64GB iPhone 12 is cheapest at £799, the 128GB model costs £849, and the 256GB device £949.

All iPhone 12 models have screen refresh rates of 60Hz – half the refresh rate of 120Hz offered by the Samsung Galaxy S20 and the OnePlus Nord – and somewhat disappointing for Apple fans who were expecting more.

Finally, there's no charger in the box but dedicated Apple fans will probably already have one (or several!) at home.

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ES Money, Mobile Phones

Apple iPhone 12 Pro Max: what deals are available in February 2022?

Rachel Wait

1,012 words

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Out of the four new iPhone 12 models released in autumn 2020, the iPhone 12 Pro Max is the biggest and heaviest option. It has a long battery life, advanced camera performance and is also the most expensive in the range.

So, if you're itching to get your hands on one, what type of deal should you go for? We take a look at the best options...

iPhone 12 Pro Max tech and specs

The iPhone 12 Pro Max is Apple's premium smartphone, offering all of its latest technology and highest specs.

Its Super Retina XDR display is a 6.7" OLED panel with a pixel density of 458 pixels per inch (PPI) and a refresh rate of 60Hz. All told, it produces a very crisp image, if not quite as smooth as some of its 120Hz Android counterparts.

Each of its four camera lenses (three on the back, one on the front) take pictures at 12 megapixel (MP) resolution. This looks meagre when compared to the 108MP and 50MP lenses from Samsung and others, but it's what Apple's software does with those megapixels that count - producing photographs to rival any other manufacturer's.

LiDAR scanning technology also boosts night time shots and helps to add depth to your photographs. In terms of video, the handset allows you to shoot in 4K ultra-HD resolution in up to 60 frames per second (FPS).

The brains of the handset is Apple A14 Bionic chipset, a six-core set-up featuring two 3.1 GHz Firestorm cores and four 1.8 GHz Icestorm cores. The Pro Max comes with 6GB of RAM and a choice of either 128GB, 256GB or 512GB internal memory.

Speaking of choices, the phone is available in silver, graphite, gold or Pacific Blue. Every version has an IP68 rating for water and dust resistance, which means it'll survive being submerged in up to 6m of water for 30 minutes.

Its battery is a 3687 mAh cell that you can quick-charge to 50% in 30 minutes. Wireless charging is also available via Apple's MagSafe accessories.

Pay upfront and get a SIM-only deal

At around £1,099, the iPhone 12 Pro Max does not come cheap. It pays to research your options carefully.

One of the most cost-effective ways to pay for a new handset is to buy the phone outright and take advantage of a SIM-only deal.

If you don't have enough savings to pay for the handset upfront, or you'd rather not use them, you can save money by spreading the cost with a 0% purchase credit card.

This type of plastic will enable you to buy the handset upfront and then pay off the amount spent in monthly instalments, with zero interest added. Interest-free offers typically last several months, but it's important to calculate exactly how much you'll need to repay each month in order to clear your balance before the 0% deal ends.

For example, if you spend £1,099 buying the handset and your credit card offers 0% for 20 months, you'll need to make a monthly payment of £55 to ensure you've paid back the full amount owed before the 0% window ends and interest kicks in (£1,099 divided by 20).

Note that you may get a cheaper deal on your handset if you have an existing iPhone to trade in.

Once you've bought your handset, you'll need to hunt out the most appropriate SIM-only deal. This will give you a monthly allowance of calls, texts and data for a set price and often works out to be good value for money.

What's more, many SIM-only deals operate on a 30-day rolling basis, giving you the opportunity to chop or change your plan without penalty. Alternatively, you can choose between 12-month and 24-month plans.

You can compare a full range of SIM-only deals via [this link](#).

Spread the cost by paying monthly

Another option is to choose a 'pay monthly' contract, where the cost of the handset, plus a specified amount of data, texts and minutes are all packaged up for a fixed monthly payment.

If you decide to go down this route, you'll need to consider how long you're happy to tie in for. Most pay monthly contracts are typically between 12 and 24 months, but many iPhone 12 deals require you to lock in for as long as 36 months. Longer contracts usually offer more competitive prices, but less flexibility.

Should you need to get out of your contract early, you'll need to pay a penalty which can be the equivalent of the amount you would have paid had the contract continued. Be sure to factor this in before you apply.

You can compare a full range of monthly contract deals [here](#).

How do the costs compare?

On average you're looking to pay around £50 a month with a pay-monthly contract over the course of three years, which works out to be £1,800 in total.

SIM-only deals for example, can start from as little as £7 a month. If you were to pay this amount for three years, the total cost would be £252. Adding on, say, £1,099 for the handset, the overall cost would come to £1,351.

Even with a SIM-only deal of £20 a month, your total cost over three years would still be cheaper at £1,819 – plus your data allowance would be significantly higher and you wouldn't be locked into a lengthy contract.

This means that buying a handset outright and using a SIM-only deal generally works out to be the cheapest option. But this will partly depend on how much data you require and how long you're happy to be tied in for, so always run several comparisons to be sure.

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The Sydney Morning Herald

Business

Not such a bad thing if Facebook blow-up makes investors wary

Stephen Bartholomeusz

987 words

8 February 2022

The Sydney Morning Herald

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Those wild gyrations in markets late last week have enlarged the question marks over some long-standing convictions investors have had about the dominant technology giants.

The first was a view that all the big tech companies have similar attributes. Throughout the pandemic, share prices of the big tech companies - Facebook (now Meta Platforms), **Apple**, Amazon, Netflix, Google et al - have broadly moved in unison, or at least in the same direction.

From the onset of the pandemic in 2020 until their share prices peaked last November, the share prices of the "FAANG" companies, as that group is known, were up about 200 per cent as lockdowns and incentives to stay at home sparked a massive growth in online activity.

The second was a belief that network effects and scale made the tech giants almost invulnerable and guaranteed growth -- the more people who used them, the more others were inclined to join the platforms, generating ever-increasing scale and revenues. To use Warren Buffett's lexicon, companies such as Facebook, Apple, Google and Amazon were seen to have deep "moats".

That led to growth, almost in perpetuity, being factored into the companies' share prices.

Late last year, FAANG stocks were trading on an average price-earnings multiple of about 42 times. Without any earnings growth, it would take 42 years for investors to get their money back, so investors were capitalising many, many years of very strong and unbroken earnings growth into those share prices.

When Facebook's share price imploded last Thursday in New York, shedding more than \$US230 billion (\$325 billion) of market capitalisation, it shattered a number of those myths.

The fact that Amazon's market value rose on Friday by almost as much as Facebook's had fallen on Thursday after it posted a very strong financial result highlighted that not all big tech companies are the same. The increase in Amazon's value was the biggest single-day gain in history; Facebook's loss the largest once-day loss in history.

Facebook's share price plunge was due to not just a poor financial result but its first fall in active user numbers its near 20 years of existence.

By itself, that would have raised a major query over Facebook's ability to maintain its dominance of social media - it cited competition from TikTok and others for the fall - but it was worsened by its disclosure that Apple's new privacy rules, which allow users to opt out of ad-tracking, would cost it \$US10 billion.

The network effects of Facebook's ever-growing (until now) user base had compounded into its revenue base as its users traded, willingly and knowingly -- or otherwise -- their privacy for access to the platform. Now both the user and revenue base have shrunk, raising the prospect that the network effects could work in reverse.

Facebook's experience undermines the notion that the network effects that powered its growth would ensure continuing and unchallengeable dominance and self-fuelling growth.

It also underscores a market truism that when a high-multiple company falters, the simple arithmetic of a shift to a lower multiple means it gets smashed.

Facebook isn't unique. The first-mover advantages that powered Netflix's rise and enabled it to invest in content at a rate far beyond its initial competitors has been undermined by the number and nature of competitors (including big Hollywood studios) who have crowded the streaming market.

The end of the pandemic surge in consumption of streaming services has added to Netflix's challenge of continuing to grow its subscriber base at the rates at which it had in the past.

Even Amazon, with a more diverse portfolio of businesses than Facebook, is facing competition from retailers responding to the change in consumers' buying habits and the threat that Amazon poses to their business models and existence. Other big tech companies are targeting its lucrative cloud services.

Thus the Facebook experience says that the moats around big tech aren't as deep or as protective as investors - and regulators - had thought and that their indefinite growth can't be taken for granted or priced into their shares.

That's particularly the case when, unlike the past two years - indeed for more than a decade -- interest rates are rising and financial system liquidity is likely to shrink.

When interest rates rise, so does the discount rate used to calculate the present value of companies' expected future cashflows. If rates are rising and those expectations are being downgraded, implosions in share prices such as the one that overwhelmed Facebook shares last Thursday are inevitable.

Higher rates and the start of a shrinking of the vast pools of liquidity that have been sloshing around the global financial system since the global financial crisis should also mean that the historically dizzy multiples on which shares have traded since 2008 should revert to something closer to historical norms.

At about 24 times earnings, the US may be below the 30-plus multiple a year ago but, while rates are likely to remain relatively low even if there are four or five rate rises in the US this year, and liquidity is likely to remain relatively plentiful by past standards for some years to come, that price-earnings ratio is still well above its mid-teens historical average.

The big techs have provided an elevated floor under markets throughout the pandemic but the experiences of Facebook, Netflix, PayPal and others is underscoring the differences between them and the acute vulnerability of their share prices to any development, internally or externally, that might threaten the investment thesis of consistent, superior and unchallengeable growth out into the distant future.

That makes the market potentially more volatile and riskier and ought to force investors to be more discriminating. That's not necessarily a bad development.

Document SMHH000020220207ei2800020

Corporate: Tech: Spotify's podcasting woes about to get worse

By Assif Shameen

2,054 words

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The Edge Malaysia (Weekly)

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If you are a music fan, you probably have the Spotify app on your smartphone. Stockholm-based Spotify Technology SA is the world's most popular music streaming service ahead of iPhone maker **Apple** Inc's **Apple** Music, e-commerce giant Amazon.com's Amazon Music and Google's YouTube Music. Over the past two weeks or so, Spotify has faced an existential threat in the form of a boycott by the musicians and artists it needs on its platform to survive. On Feb 2, Spotify reported that while it grew its user base and revenues in the last quarter, its growth is slowing. Wall Street wasn't amused and the music streaming firm's stock was hammered by more than 10%, wiping out nearly US\$4 billion (RM16.7 billion) in market value. Spotify shares are down over 56% from their peak a year ago.

The hammering on Wall Street comes just as the music streaming pioneer is facing an identity crisis. Is it merely a platform to distribute recorded music and podcasts, or is it really a media company in disguise? And if it is indeed a media firm, why doesn't it police its own content creators and stop them from spreading lies about Covid-19, vaccines, climate change and other toxic commentary? How Spotify wiggles out of the current crisis will determine whether it can carve a profitable future for itself. If it doesn't, it might eventually need to tie up with another tech firm to stay afloat.

Spotify, which debuted on Nasdaq through a direct listing rather than an initial public offering or IPO four years ago, has never been profitable because it is in a fiercely competitive market and is head-to-head with Apple Music and Amazon Music. Spotify, which pioneered music streaming, pipped Apple in music because it had a superior user interface that appealed to a younger audience. Through slick marketing, like discounted plans, lower prices in smaller markets, tie-ups with telcos and internet access providers around the world, and its ability to wring concessions from music firms such as Sony, Universal Music Group and Warner Music whom it pays about half of what Apple, Amazon.com and Alphabet Inc's YouTube pay for the same music, Spotify built a formidable market share lead over its rivals.

Last week, Spotify reported that it had 180 million paying subscribers on its music streaming service and 226 million subscribers on its free service at the end of 2021. Closest rival Apple hasn't published an update on its total music subscribers in two years but analysts estimate it now has about 100 million paid streaming music subscribers. Spotify has an average revenue per paid subscriber of just under US\$5 a month. Analysts estimate that Apple's average revenue per music subscriber is slightly more than twice that of Spotify. However, Spotify also makes money from advertising, which makes up about 14% of revenues while subscriptions account for around 86% of total revenues. Apple Music does not carry any ads and does not have a free music service tier.

The Covid-19 pandemic drove digital media consumption to new heights, while traditional media stagnated. American adults spent more time on smartphones accessing digital music and podcasts and less time on devices like radio and linear television as well as other traditional media like newspapers and magazines. Music streaming was a key beneficiary of the pandemic's digital boom.

US\$100 million purchase

Spotify's latest woes emanate from its forays into podcasting. In 2020, at the height of the pandemic, it purchased the exclusive rights to YouTube podcaster Joe Rogan for an eye-popping US\$100 million. (Spotify also has a US\$25 million deal with Prince Harry and Meghan Markle for podcasts). The Joe Rogan Experience is now the No 1 podcast on Spotify's network.

What is Spotify getting for that kind of money? How does a music streaming company ever make any return on betting US\$100 million on a podcaster? Spotify needed to diversify its revenue base away from its traditional dependence on a low-margin, commodity music streaming service to differentiated content like podcasting. That's a tried and trusted model. Video streaming giant Netflix, which started out as a DVD distributor and pivoted to streaming old movies and TV serials, lost boatloads of money until it realised that viewers were actually willing to pay for premium differentiated content. That led to a hard pivot to Netflix

producing its own TV serials, movies, documentaries and other original content. This year, the video streaming pioneer will spend a whopping US\$19 billion on original content, up from US\$17 billion last year.

Let me put this in a proper context: Film and TV production firms are forecast to spend over US\$100 billion this year on new content as they rush to produce more shows and films to feed the ever-growing video streaming services, according to MoffettNathanson, a Wall Street research firm. Netflix's monthly subscription fees have risen from US\$4.99 in 2008 to US\$15.49 in the US. Netflix, which carries no advertising, now has 222 million subscribers worldwide, though subscriber growth has slowed since last year.

Video streaming is, however, very different from music streaming. Netflix can make its own movies and TV shows because movies are a team effort. Stars like Taylor Swift and Ed Sheeran, Drake and Adele would rather make their own music and put it on a distribution platform like Spotify than sign a billion dollar deal with a streaming service. Being a market share leader in low-margin music distribution is different from being a profitable platform.

In 2019, a year after its listing, Spotify pivoted to podcasts as a way to differentiate its content from Apple and Amazon. It paid US\$230 million to buy podcasting firm Gimlet Media and nearly US\$200 million for another podcast producer, The Ringer. It has since bought other smaller podcast producers. Spotify now has 3.6 million podcasts on its platform and user engagement is growing 20% year on year. It still remains the No 2 player in podcasts behind Apple even though it leads the iPhone maker in music streaming.

So far, all the money Spotify has thrown on podcasts hasn't helped put it on a clear pathway to profitability. The global podcasting market was worth US\$11.46 billion in 2020 and is forecast to grow at over 30% per year over the next five years. That includes all the money in the podcast economy — creating podcasts, subscriptions and advertising. At least 35% of Americans listened to at least one podcast over the past year. The podcast advertising market in North America alone was worth over US\$1 billion last year and estimated to exceed US\$1.3 billion this year. Analysts expect podcast advertising revenues in North America to grow 25% annually over the next five years. Both Apple and Spotify now have a premium subscription-based podcast service, though most of their podcasts are still free to download.

In late December, Spotify's star podcaster hosted a show with Dr Robert Malone, a virologist who touts himself as one of the architects of mRNA, a type of vaccine that uses a copy of a molecule called messenger RNA to produce an immune response. Malone had been banned from Twitter for promoting Covid-19 and vaccine misinformation, and had been making the rounds on conservative media like Fox News undermining the efficacy of vaccines. Among other things, he said young healthy adults did not need vaccines and he was critical of masks. Rogan did not correct his guest. Indeed, he helped him fan conspiracy theories and lies. As word of Rogan's podcast spread, musicians such as Neil Young, whose songs include Heart of Gold and Harvest Moon, and Joni Mitchell who sang Amelia and A Case of You, urged Spotify to pull their music. Half a dozen other musicians followed in calling for the removal of their songs from Spotify.

Controversial Rogan

Who is Rogan and how did he become one of the most powerful people in America? He is a former comedian who built a strong fan base and parlayed it for one of the earliest podcasts over a decade ago, getting a first-mover advantage. Long before Spotify came calling, Rogan had the biggest following in America for a podcaster. In September 2018, electric vehicle pioneer Tesla Inc's CEO Elon Musk famously smoked marijuana on one of his YouTube podcasts. But it isn't just right-wing libertarian types or eccentric billionaires whom he has interviewed in his podcasts over the years. Left-wing senator Bernie Sanders was on his show three years ago.

Rogan still calls himself "a comedian who is just asking questions" rather than a journalist interviewing well-known figures on his podcasts. But he is nothing if not controversial. Indeed, controversy is a key part of Brand Rogan. The more controversial he is, the more listeners he brings to the Spotify platform and the more money he and Spotify make from new subscribers and advertisers. Over the years, he has been accused of providing a megaphone for a range of right-wing figures and conspiracy theorists and spreading misinformation of all sorts, more recently on Covid-19 and vaccines.

Here is the thing: Rogan does not need Spotify or the US\$100 million that music streaming service is giving him. As a controversial broadcaster with a huge fan base, he could join former President Donald Trump's new social media platform Truth Social, which is expected to launch over the next few weeks, and command twice as much. Trump Media and Technology Group, which is merging with a SPAC, or special purpose acquisition company, called Digital World Acquisition Corp (DWAC) in a reverse takeover, is recruiting people whose audience and reach could help relaunch the former president's return to the White House. DWAC, which raised US\$300 million in a blank cheque listing last year, has seen its stock soar from US\$10 to US\$80 even though the merger hasn't gone through. Spotify, for its part, can't afford to lose Rogan because without him, or someone as famous and controversial like him, its advertising platform just won't work.

Spotify waited nearly two weeks before it stepped in to mollify its angry users and musicians on its platform. It said that it will force podcasters to adhere to its rules. Ironically, until now, Spotify's podcasters have been unaware that there were rules. Any company that is paying US\$100 million to a podcaster, even one that claims it is a merely a platform rather than a media company, has the responsibility to fact check all its podcasters as well as their guests and reprimand anyone who claims young adults do not need vaccines or that a pandemic like Covid can be cured by taking Ivermectin, an anti-parasitic drug.

If the Rogan controversy has revealed anything, it is that Spotify's Achilles heel are the musicians whose music it distributes and who control its fate. "There's no doubt that the last several weeks have presented a number of learning opportunities," Spotify CEO Daniel Ek said last week. "We believe we have a critical role to play in supporting creator expression while balancing it with the safety of our users." But Rogan's podcast has put the spotlight squarely on Spotify. The music streaming giant needs to be more of an editor than a mere platform. That means hiring people who listen to every word that is uttered on the 3.6 million podcasts in its library before the next musicians' boycott begins or the next lawsuit is filed. It also means taking responsibility for all the content that its podcasters produce. That will cost money and distract management's attention from the more immediate task of finding a sustainable path to profits. It will also make advertisers think twice before putting an ad on a platform that hosts podcasters like Rogan and his ilk. Spotify clearly has its work cut out.

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News

Fact check: Apple has patent for smart rings, not location-tracking wedding bands

Chiara Vercellone

930 words

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USA Today Online

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English

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The claim: **Apple** is developing a smart marriage ring that shares the wearer's location with their partner

Apple is always developing new gadgets, from a fall-detection sensor in its smartwatch to tags that can be attached to your keys to avoid losing them.

Social media users seem to believe the company is working on another unique product: smart wedding rings that can track one's location and share it with their partner.

"Apple is working and developing smart marriage rings, which connect with the couple and allow you to know everything about the spouse's trajectory and the places he or those (sic) visited," reads text over an image of the purported rings shared Jan. 31 on Instagram.

The post received over 20,000 likes in three days. The caption details other functions of the purported ring.

"If it's deleted or locked it reports off on the other ring, so the other person will know if it's been turned off!" it reads.

Follow us on Facebook! Like our page to get updates throughout the day on our latest debunks

But there's no evidence any such product is in development. It appears the narrative first appeared years ago on a satire website.

The concept of a smart ring, however, isn't so far-fetched – Apple has had a patent for one since 2019.

USA TODAY reached out to the Instagram user who posted the image for comment.

'iDo' ring originated on website called 'Faking News'

The Instagram post states the smart ring has been called "iDo," playing on Apple's characteristic use of the letter "i" before a device's name.

The earliest reference USA TODAY could find online of the purported "iDo" ring is an article published in September 2016.

Fact check: No plans for fourth stimulus check, contrary to claims on social media

The website, Faking News, no longer exists. But an archived version of the article shows a disclaimer stating the "content of this website is a work of fiction."

"Readers are advised not to confuse the 'news reports' of Faking News as being genuine and true," the disclaimer reads.

The claim appears to have regained traction online when a news outlet from Nigeria wrote about the ring in January. The post, which doesn't cite any sources, uses language that's almost identical to what Faking News wrote in 2016.

It's an example of "stolen satire," in which made-up claims published and labeled as satire are reposted in a way that makes them appear to be legitimate news. As a result, readers of the second-generation post are misled, as was the case here.

USA TODAY reached out to Apple for comment.

Apple has patent for smart ring

Even though there's no evidence Apple has developed location-tracking wedding bands, the company has been filing patent applications for a smart ring for almost a decade.

One patent application filed in 2015 was for a "wearable electronic ring computing device." The Patent and Trademark Office granted the patent in October 2019.

A more recent patent application, which was filed by Apple in April 2020 and is still under consideration, is described as a continuation of the previous patent.

Fact check: Viral rumors spread misinformation about Spotify removals

Neither application mentions any of the uses described in the Instagram post, such as sharing one's location with a partner.

Ring wearers could use the product to access their devices with finger motions, the 2020 document explains. For example, the ring could use a motion sensor to detect when the user is writing. The ring could then transfer that writing to another electronic device, according to the summary of the patent.

Apple wrote in its application that the ring could increase the "effectiveness, efficiency and user satisfaction" with other devices.

Fact check: Image shows African children suffering from polio, not injured in vaccine trials

"For example, the ring computing device is more portable than a mouse, doesn't require a computer, doesn't require eye contact with the touch screen, ... reduces the inefficiencies of mode switching by not requiring a user to move his or her hand off a keyboard to move a mouse or touchpad," the patent says.

The ring may also be capable of receiving messages or images on a touchscreen, according to the document.

Our rating: False

We rate the claim that Apple is developing a smart marriage ring that shares the wearer's location with their partner FALSE, based on our research. The claim stems from a satire website. Apple has been filing patent applications for a smart ring since at least 2015. However, the device descriptions don't mention any of the uses mentioned in the Instagram post.

Our fact-check sources:

Faking News, Sept. 3, 2016, Apple to launch smart engagement ring in September

9 News Nigeria, Jan. 29, Apple develops smart ring for couples to trace each other

Google Patents, accessed Feb. 3, Devices, methods, and user interfaces for a wearable electronic ring computing device

US Patent & Trademark Office, July 30, 2020, Devices, Methods, and Graphical User Interfaces for a Wearable Electronic Ring Computing Device

Thank you for supporting our journalism. You can subscribe to our print edition, ad-free app or electronic newspaper replica [here](#).

Our fact-check work is supported in part by a grant from Facebook.

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Technology

Meta rivalry with **Apple** inflamed as Facebook parent company share price plummets

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Zuckerberg blames 'headwinds' from **Apple**'s new iOS and changes in privacy for the record drop in value

Mark Zuckerberg blamed "headwinds" this week after investors wiped about \$220bn off Meta's market value. One of the biggest blows came from longtime rival **Apple**.

Apple has long marketed itself as a champion of privacy, explicitly positioning itself in opposition to Facebook. Tensions between the two giants escalated with the release of Apple's new operating system, which Meta feared would hamper its revenue model.

On Thursday those fears came true as Meta's share price [fell](#) 26% in what could be the largest single-day wipeout in market value for a US company.

Meta blamed increasing competition for the dismal forecast, as well as privacy changes instituted by Apple last year.

The impact of Apple's changes could be "in the order of \$10bn" this year, the company said. The updates hurt advertisers' ability to target ads to potential customers and measure the effectiveness of ads.

"We believe the impact of iOS overall is a headwind on our business in 2022," Dave Wehner, Meta's chief financial officer, said during the company's earnings call on Wednesday.

Apple's privacy changes allow users to prevent apps from tracking their online activity for advertising purposes. Now, iPhone users can optout from unwanted tracking, and a [majority](#) have chosen to do so.

Yet the changes didn't hit other large tech companies that hard – or at all. Snap on Thursday said its advertising business bounced back from the effects of the changes faster than it expected, and shares of the company skyrocketed 50% as it provided a first quarter outlook that surpassed analyst estimates.

Amazon reported ad revenue of \$9.7bn for the fourth quarter, up 32% from last year, and \$31bn for the year, revealing an ad business larger than that of Google's YouTube. Analyst Benedict Evans on Twitter said that made Amazon's ad revenue similar in size to the entire global newspaper industry, and Statista put global newspaper annual ad spending at \$29.5bn.

An Amazon official told reporters that brands' ability to reach consumers across its ad properties was "largely unchanged" after Apple's changes.

Pinterest, too, reported growth in the fourth quarter, despite Apple's changes. Although its user base shrunk, the photo-sharing platform has focused on scaling its advertising model, which the market rewarded. The platform beat out analysts' predictions, sending company shares up more than 25% on Thursday.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Apple CEO Tim Cook have feuded for months over Apple's changes. "The issues have been different over the years," Ari Lightman, a professor of digital media and marketing at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College, previously told [the Guardian](#), "but consumer privacy is always at the heart of it, and with this update, Facebook could be in trouble."

Already in 2014, Cook warned that users should be "worried" about apps that collect user data. Four years later, he took a jab at the Facebook and Cambridge Analytica scandal, saying that he "wouldn't be in this situation" in the first place.

Kari Paul contributed to this report.

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The Washington Post

National-Politics

State officials urge SEC to probe if Apple misled investors on nondisclosure rules

By Cristiano LimaAaron Schaffer

1,828 words

7 February 2022

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English

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Happy Monday! I'm sure many of you are glued to the Winter Olympics, but as a Brazilian American, I usually have more to root for during the Summer Games. Below: Why a federal tech agency isn't using facial recognition technology, and inside the Amazon unionization fight in Bessemer, Ala. But first:

State officials urge the SEC to probe whether Apple misled investors on nondisclosure rulesA group of state treasurers is calling on the Securities and Exchange Commission to investigate whether Apple misled its investors and the agency about its use of nondisclosure agreements, which advocates say have long been used to silence mistreated workers.

In a letter to SEC Chairman Gary Gensler, eight Democratic state treasurers questioned the veracity of Apple's recent statement to the commission that its policy "is to not use such clauses," known as concealment clauses.

"Multiple news reports have stated that whistleblower documents demonstrate Apple uses the very concealment clauses it repeatedly claimed it does not use," they wrote last week in the letter, shared exclusively with The Technology 202.

Pinterest whistleblower Ifeoma Ozoma, who helped organize the letter, told me Sunday that there "at the very least should be an investigation and, in my personal opinion, should be fines levied against the company for using a formal process to lie to a federal agency."

The missive heightens scrutiny of Apple's treatment of its workforce ahead of an upcoming vote at its annual shareholders meeting that could require the tech giant to disclose any use of nondisclosure agreements (NDAs) to its investors.

In December, the SEC rejected Apple's bid to exclude the proposal, which called on the company to prepare a public report to evaluate any risks "associated with its use of concealment clauses in the context of harassment, discrimination and other unlawful acts." Apple argued in a letter to the agency that it had "already substantially implemented the underlying concerns and objectives of the proposal." But workers have disputed the claims, and the SEC dismissed the company's assessment.

Now, the state treasurers are calling for the SEC to step in and determine "whether or not Apple misled the Commission and investors about this matter." The letter is signed by treasurers from Rhode Island, California, Delaware, Iowa, Illinois, Washington, Colorado and Kansas.

Spokespeople for Apple and the SEC declined to comment on the letter.

Ozoma, who has advocated for greater worker protections against NDAs, said Apple has "straight out lied" to federal regulators and investors.

Pinterest last year struck a \$50 million settlement with Rhode Island State Treasurer Seth Magaziner stemming from allegations brought to light by Ozoma and fellow former employee Aeric Shimizu Banks that they faced racism and discrimination at the company.

"The use of concealment clauses to silence employees who are victims of harassment or discrimination is not only unfair to those who are directly impacted, but also puts shareholders at risk by enabling poor workplace culture and making it difficult to attract and retain talent," Magaziner said Sunday of his latest effort to put pressure on Apple.

Since then, Ozoma has become a top advocate in pushing for state and federal officials to take a harder stance against concealment clauses, including NDAs, non-disparagement agreements and forced arbitration clauses. But their progress has been hard fought.

Ozoma and other advocates notched a major win in September when California signed into law the "Silenced No More Act," which bans companies from enforcing NDAs in cases of discrimination. But the protections are limited to California-based workers, and Ozoma said federal movement on the issue has been slow.

"California was obviously the most important state that we could pass a bill like this. ... But it's not the only state where these [tech] companies have workers, especially now with a pandemic and so much of the workforce being distributed and remote," she said.

That's part of why Ozoma and state officials are hoping the SEC will take a more active role on the issue. In their letter, state treasurers urged the commission to follow California's lead and recommend that companies extend those protections "beyond California's workers."

Ozoma, for her part, said she's not advocating for the SEC to craft new federal rules requiring companies to implement those guardrails — a job she said should be left to Congress.

"I personally, as a student of government and as a policy professional my entire career, believe that rules should come first from the legislature," she said. Plus, she added, it would be more meaningful if the companies decided to take those steps proactively, rather than being forced to by the government.

"I do believe that the most meaningful step that a company can take is voluntarily doing this," she said.

Our top tabs

U.S. government's tech agency rejected facial recognition technologyThe General Services Administration, which oversees federal offices and technology, says it won't use the technology on its secure log-in service, Login.gov, because too many problems exist. The GSA's opposition to the technology underscores a wider tension within the federal government over face-scanning technology, which the Internal Revenue Service last year awarded an \$86 million contract for, Drew Harwell reports.

Privacy advocates have blasted the IRS's planned rollout of contractor ID.me's technology, which would require taxpayers to scan their faces in order for them to access their tax records online.

"The contract stirred a firestorm because facial recognition systems are unregulated in the U.S. and have been shown in federal tests to work less accurately for people with darker skin," Drew writes. "Members of Congress and privacy advocates have also voiced concern that the systems could undermine Americans' privacy rights or unfairly disadvantage people without access to a smartphone, laptop camera or the Internet."

IRS officials told members of Congress that they're considering another identity verification option that wouldn't use facial recognition, according to a Treasury Department official and two other people who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. They didn't specify the alternative during a Friday briefing to senators, two people familiar with the discussions said.

Organizers face uphill battle in Amazon's Alabama union fightThe National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) on Friday mailed ballots to Amazon workers, who have seven weeks to vote on whether the company's Bessemer, Ala., warehouse should unionize. The election is seen as a critical opportunity to unionize Amazon, the country's second-largest private employer, but warehouse workers in Bessemer are divided, Rachel Lerman reports.

"Interviews with more than a dozen current and former workers ... suggest that organizers face another uphill battle in a place where working at the BHM1 Amazon warehouse is still considered one of the best jobs in town, with a starting wage of more than \$15," Rachel writes. "While some workers are weary of automated performance measures and near-constant monitoring, others are happy to have a job that offers competitive pay and perks such as health-care coverage and help paying for college tuition."

It's the second unionization vote in Bessemer, where the NLRB found that Amazon had improperly interfered in the first election. Amazon workers overwhelmingly voted to reject unionization the first time around.

Amazon continues to push against unionization at the warehouse, where it is holding mandatory classes during work hours to tell workers that the union may not result in raises, Rachel reports. Amazon spokeswoman Barbara Agrait said the company offers competitive pay and benefits and that it is employees' choice to join the union. (Amazon founder Jeff Bezos owns The Post).

White House science and technology leader apologized to his staffEric Lander, who leads the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, apologized in an email for speaking to his colleagues in a "disrespectful and demeaning way," Politico's Alex Thompson reports. In his email, Lander noted that some staffers had been "asked about this," an apparent reference to a Politico investigation of how Lander has treated staff, Thompson writes.

"It's my responsibility to set a respectful tone for our community. It's clear that I have not lived up to this responsibility," Lander wrote. "This is not only wrong, but also inconsistent with our Safe and Respectful Workplace Policy. It is never acceptable for me to speak that way. I am deeply sorry for my conduct. I especially want to apologize to those of you who I treated poorly or were present at the time." The White House did not respond to a request for comment from Politico.

Rant and rave

Twitter is testing a new feature "making it easier" to send a direct message to the author of a tweet you want to reply to. Twitter users don't seem to think it's a particularly good idea. Sky News's Sharon Marris:

Hull Live's Susie Beever:

Twitter responded to some of the criticism:

Inside the industry

70 episodes of Joe Rogan's podcast removed from Spotify amid controversy over racial slur (Annabelle Timsit)

Facebook parent Meta rethinks election ads ban ahead of 2022 midterms (Bloomberg)

Facebook-owner Meta says it will pay new \$2 million UK fine (Reuters)

Workforce report

Google Fiber workers in Kansas City face union-busting efforts ahead of vote to organize (CNBC)

Competition watch

Amazon, other potential suitors explore Peloton deal (Wall Street Journal)

Daybook

Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen discusses social media's impact on teenagers' mental health at a Georgetown University School of Medicine and School of Nursing & Health Studies event Monday at 3 p.m.

Three FCC commissioners, including chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel, lawmakers and others speak at the 2022 INCOMPAS Policy Summit on Tuesday.

Tim Wu, a special assistant to President Biden, discusses antitrust and its effects on workers at a New America event on Tuesday at 3 p.m.

The Senate Agriculture Committee holds a hearing on digital assets on Wednesday at 10 a.m.

The Senate Commerce Committee holds a nomination hearing for Gigi Sohn, Biden's nominee for FCC commissioner, on Wednesday at 10 a.m.

FTC Chair Lina Khan delivers a lecture on competition on Wednesday at 8 p.m.

The Senate Judiciary Committee is expected to discuss the EARN IT Act at a meeting Thursday at 9 a.m. The bill, which would remove social media sites' liability protections when users share child pornography, has come under fire from encryption and privacy advocates.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau director Rohit Chopra discusses consumer protection in the era of Big Tech at a Washington Post Live event Thursday at 10 a.m.

Before you log off

That's all for today — thank you so much for joining us! Make sure to tell others to subscribe to The Technology 202 here. Get in touch with tips, feedback or greetings on Twitter or email.

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MarketWatch First Take

\$1.4 trillion? Big Tech's pandemic year produces mind-boggling financial results

1,418 words

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MarketWatch

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Amazon, **Apple**, Facebook, Google and Microsoft collectively increased their profit more than 55% in 2021 from a base that was already a record, while sales grew 27% to a total that would make the companies a top-15 world economy

MarketWatch photo illustration/iStockphotoBig Tech headed into 2021 with more than nine months of pandemic experience, but were still surprised by the extent of supply-chain disruptions, labor shortages and rising prices.

Despite these challenges, their financial performance has been staggering: Google parent Alphabet Inc. GOOGL GOOG , Amazon.com Inc. AMZN, Apple Inc. AAPL, Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc. FB and Microsoft Corp. MSFT individually and collectively put up record profit and revenue all around in 2021.

Collectively, the companies topped \$1.4 trillion in revenue — which would rank 13th in gross domestic product as a nation, just behind Brazil and ahead of Australia, according to World Bank figures — and they generated \$320 billion in profit based on Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

For some context on that profit figure: Apple, the most valuable company in U.S. history thanks to a series of amazing profits, took 37 years as a public company — 1980 through 2017 — to collect that much profit in total. Yet the iPhone manufacturer contributed the largest portion of 2021's technology sector profit, topping \$100 billion for the first time, a figure that itself eclipses the total profit Apple collected in its first three decades on the market.

Make no mistake, this is not normal. These five companies accounted for 17.8% of the S&P 500 index company profit in the first nine months of the year, according to Dow Jones Market Data, and grew their profit more than 55% from already-record earnings in 2020. Individually, some companies saw mind-boggling profit growth last year. Alphabet, for instance, made as much profit in 2021, \$76 billion, as it had in 2020 and 2019 combined —and both of those years contained record profit for the search giant at the time.

One way to see how out of line this was from a historical perspective is to look at the companies' net margins — only Facebook saw net margins decline in 2021 from the previous year, one of the reasons its stock has been hammered after reporting fourth-quarter earnings last week, including the biggest one-day market-capitalization decline in history. Apple and Alphabet saw huge spikes to record net margins in 2021, while Microsoft enjoyed its largest net margins since the dot-com boom went bust in 2001 and Amazon posted its biggest margin since 2004.

Those gains are expected to have an outsize effect on the S&P 500 index SPX as companies in the index collectively head for the highest net profit margin on record. In total, with nine months of reported results and a combination of reported fourth-quarter results and analysts' estimates, S&P 500 index companies are expected to produce a net profit margin in 2021 of 12.21%. That would blow away previous numbers, which have largely been in single digits and topped out previously at 10.75%, according to Dow Jones Market Data.

Which S&P 500 sector has the widest profit margin ? The Information Technology sector, which is expected to jump from margins of roughly 19.5% in each of the past two years to 23.27% in 2021 and have the largest margin of any of the 11 S&P 500 sectors. Apple and Microsoft reside in that sector, while Facebook and Google are expected to push the Communication Services sector's margins from 12.22% in 2020 to 16.08% in 2021.

While Big Tech's annual sales growth of 27% is half of the sales-growth percentage, it is still nothing to sneeze at, if anyone would even think about sneezing at \$1.4 trillion in annual revenue. Three of the five companies produced more than a quarter-trillion dollars in sales on their own in 2021, and Amazon came in near half a trillion, with \$469.82 billion. That is more than Facebook's total sales in its entire history.

But what about 2022?

While the financial performance of 2021 (and 2020, and 2019) were tremendous for Big Tech, the only thing Wall Street wants to know is if it will continue. And there are some worthwhile questions about that, even as the bulls continue to insist there is nothing but further gains ahead.

"The robust prints from tech titans Amazon, Apple, Alphabet, Microsoft, AMD, and Qualcomm QCOM are starting to paint a clear growth story for the tech space in 2022 that we believe is very important for the Street going forward," Dan Ives, a Wedbush Securities analyst, wrote in a note to clients on Friday.

But it's feasible that the year 2021 could see peak growth for Big Tech. Right now, analysts expect that Facebook and Amazon will see declining profit this year, and growth rates are expected to slow dramatically across the board.

The outlook for the first quarter, as expected, was relatively weak, especially for [Facebook, which lost a record \\$232 billion in market cap on Thursday after it warned of a whole host of "headwinds,"](#) including competition from TikTok, the impact from Apple's privacy changes on its advertising revenue, and overall macroeconomic constraints on advertising spending.

Read also: [Meta CFO cries wolf again with bleak outlook](#)

Only one of the Big Tech companies, Microsoft, [provided a strong outlook for the first calendar quarter](#), and none of the companies provided a full annual outlook for 2022 as much doubt remains about the effects of the current storm of inflation, supply-chain disruptions, and labor shortages.

[Apple gave a fudgy forecast](#) that did not include any numbers, saying that its first calendar quarter of 2022 would see "solid growth" on a year-over-year basis. Analysts are looking for Apple to see about \$93.6 billion in revenue in its fiscal second quarter, ending in March, for year-over-year growth of about 5%.

For more: [Apple reports a parade of sales records as earnings top \\$30 billion for the first time](#)

While Facebook struggled mightily with the changes in Apple's iOS platform, which let iPhone users opt out of tracking by advertisers, Google has been able to circumvent those issues. [Alphabet also rallied after the company announced a major 20-to-1 stock split](#), which will lower its stock price for retail investors, and make its stock potentially a Dow Jones Industrial Average DJIA component.

More from Therese: [Google is finally splitting its stock; will Amazon and a Dow invite be next?](#)

[Alphabet's YouTube business, however, was slightly disappointing to some analysts](#), who viewed it as also seeing increased competition from TikTok. And Google executives avoided any kind of forecast in their earnings reports and conference calls.

Other companies are signaling the end of the work-from-home pandemic boom in tech sector sales, after big earnings misses from Netflix Inc. NFLX and Peloton Interactive Inc. PTON. Life is slowly going back to normal as in person businesses have reopened, such as movie theatres and gyms, and as the Omicron wave of coronavirus dies down and spring arrives, it is likely we will see more people leave the digital lives they have relied on for the past two years for the physical world around them.

Nobody knows what is on the other side of the pandemic whose effects have obviously pushed consumers and businesses toward online services, cloud software and refreshed hardware, but there is no way to assuredly know that those gains will continue. It just as logical to assume that the huge gains of the past two years were pulled forward from the years ahead of us, which would then potentially be bleaker than currently expected. And regulators, who were already circling the companies after seeing their power, money and influence grow in recent years, are sure to keep the heat on.

Ives said that while he believes valuation multiples in tech will continue to compress as the Federal Reserve raises interest rates this year, he believes Wall Street is currently underestimating potential growth. But after the growth we just saw, it's hard to believe the encore will top it, especially with antitrust concerns piling up. Then again, Big Tech is already doing things that seem impossible, so maybe they can continue to defy the odds.

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Investors Reassess As Glow Of Tech Fades --- Index that tracks stocks such as Meta, Apple, Amazon and Netflix is down 10%

By Gunjan Banerji

971 words

7 February 2022

The Wall Street Journal

J

A1

English

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Investors are reconsidering how they trade big technology stocks, focusing after a wild week on sifting for firms deemed most likely to thrive as interest rates rise.

Gone, several investors said, are the days in which the stocks logged a simultaneous ascent and attracted crowds of fans. Some have become victims of rising interest rates, changing consumer tastes and stretched valuations. Those that have fallen short of high investor expectations have paid dearly in the market.

For the past three years, Facebook-parent Meta Platforms Inc., Apple Inc., Amazon.com Inc., Netflix Inc. and Google-parent Alphabet Inc. recorded big, simultaneous gains. So far in 2022, all five have fallen.

The NYSE FANG+ Index, which tracks those popular stocks alongside a handful of others, has declined 10% this year, underperforming the broader market. Some stocks in the group, like Netflix and Meta, are off at least 38% from their highs. The S&P 500, in contrast, is down 6.2% from its record.

"As a group, it was very strong over the past 10+ years," said Amy Kong, chief investment officer of Barrett Asset Management. "At this juncture, you are starting to see some cracks."

One of the biggest ruptures came after Meta's disappointing earnings report when investors shaved more than \$230 billion off the social-media giant's market value, the biggest-ever loss for a U.S. company in a single session.

Ms. Kong said she holds shares of Meta and other tech giants but has looked for opportunities to unload shares of the Facebook parent. She has remained optimistic on other tech heavyweights and encouraged by some of the other earnings reports.

Instead of the blockbuster growth recorded in years prior, some tech executives are warning of a slowdown. Meta cautioned people were spending less time on its more-lucrative services, and it expects revenue growth to slow. Netflix executives said the streaming-video company would add fewer subscribers this quarter than many had expected.

Netflix shares dropped 22% in the following session, their biggest one-day fall since 2012. The recent declines are a sharp shift from their big gains during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, when, like Facebook, the shares soared as a beneficiary of the stay-at-home trade.

Earnings season isn't the only factor spurring turbulence in tech stocks. The sector has been roiled since the beginning of the year, as many investors have prepared for the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates and positioned for other corners of the market to flourish.

That has pushed bond yields to the highest level since 2019 and led investors to flee the tech sector in particular. Higher yields can make these stocks less attractive because they reduce the value that investors place on their future earnings.

In the coming days, investors will be parsing quarterly reports from tech companies like Twitter Inc. and Uber Technologies Inc. for signs of slowing growth.

"You are starting to see that, as a group, maybe that momentum is subsiding to a degree," Ms. Kong said. But, she added, "this group is ever-evolving."

In recent years, other acronyms have emerged to capture the hottest stocks of the moment, like Nvidia Corp. and Microsoft Corp. Those shares helped propel the S&P 500 last year, contributing to more of its roughly 29% return than Amazon and Netflix, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices. Some investors even dispute Netflix's place among the heavyweights.

This year, Netflix and Facebook have lost around 30% each. Amazon shares remain down 5.4% even after Friday's giant gains. Apple and Alphabet have lost 2.9% and 1.1%, respectively, outperforming the broader market.

There are signs individual investors are pivoting to other trades and buying the dips in some of the tech stocks.

Over the past week, several of the tech heavyweights have rebounded. The NYSE FANG+ index added 3.1%, and the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite outperformed the S&P 500.

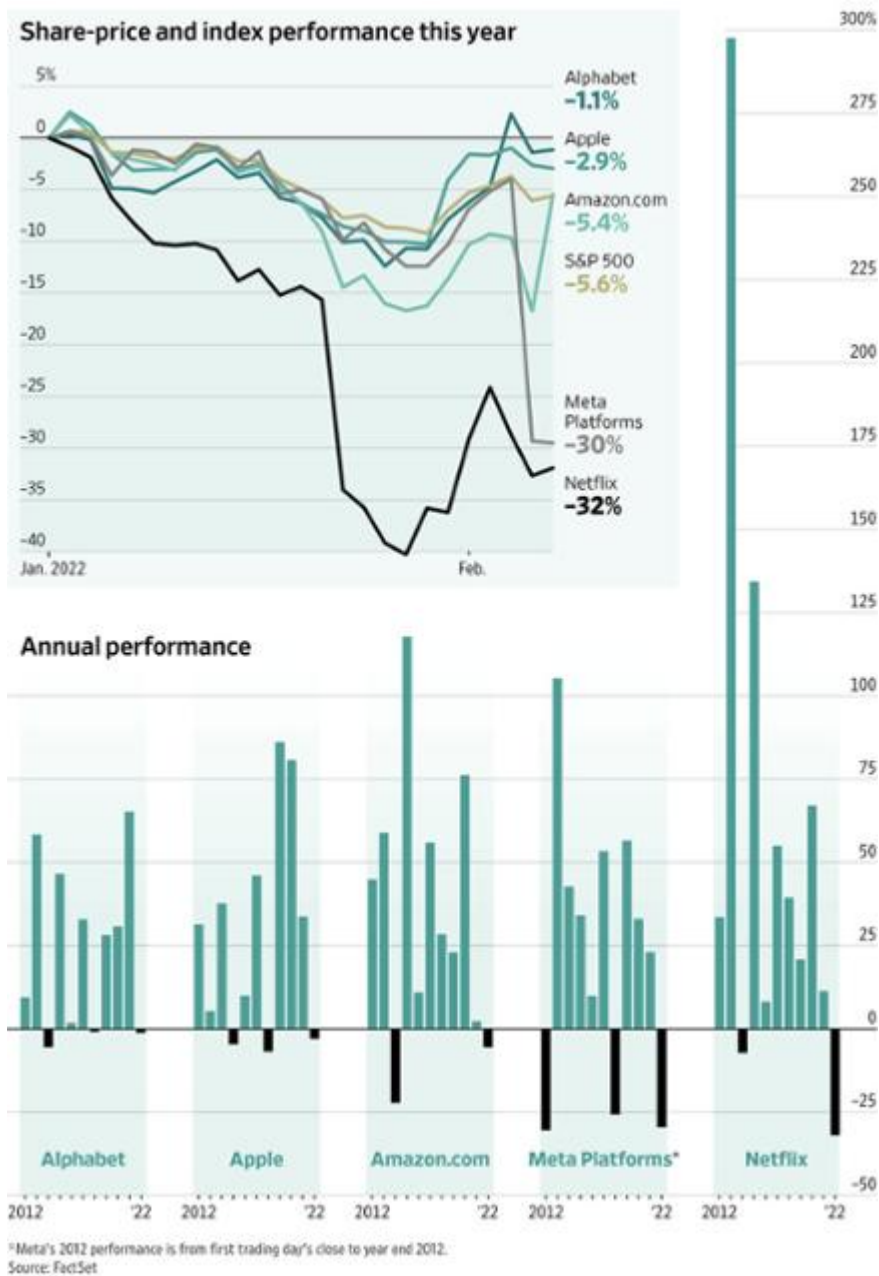
By one measure, Tesla Inc., Advanced Micro Devices Inc. and Nvidia recently recorded the biggest net inflows among individual investors than at any point since September 2020. Investors have favored that trio over stocks like Meta, Amazon, Microsoft and Alphabet, according to Vanda Research.

"You can't just throw a dart at the wall at a tech name and it's going to do really, really well," said Daniel Morgan, a senior portfolio manager at Synovus Trust Co., which owns shares of the tech heavyweights. "The mentality has changed significantly. It used to be, just buy FAANG."

"Well, half the FAANG stocks aren't doing very well," Mr. Morgan said.

Defenders of a modified FAANG strategy, which includes Microsoft alongside Meta, Amazon, Apple, Netflix and Alphabet, point out that holding all six stocks at market weightings this year would have cushioned some of the blow that tech investors have suffered. The market-weighted portfolio is down 8.1% this year, compared with a roughly 10% decline in the Nasdaq Composite and a 13% drop in an equal-weighted portfolio of those six stocks, according to Dow Jones Market Data.

The relative strength of the market-weighted portfolio in part reflects the stronger performance this year of some of the largest stocks in the basket, Apple, Alphabet and Amazon. Amazon's strong results Thursday -- when it said its profit nearly doubled in the holiday period -- led to a 14% pop in the stock Friday that helped send the broader market higher to end the week. The move added \$191 billion in market value, making it almost as dramatic as Facebook's decline a day prior.



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MINT, Technology

Amazon Smartphone and TV Upgrade Days is live. Buy iPhone 12 at discount and more

Livemint

854 words

7 February 2022

Mint

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English

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New Delhi, Feb. 7 -- Amazon has announced the smartphone and TV upgrade days bringing together a host of deals and offers on a range of the latest smartphones, accessories and TVs and also to engage buyers on Valentine's Day which is a week ahead. Customers can enjoy up to 10% off on smartphones, televisions, and smartphone accessories from brands including OnePlus, Xiaomi, Samsung, **Apple**, Vivo and Oppo amongst others. Smartphone and TV Upgrade Days will be live till February 11.

The latest Xiaomi flagship series, Redmi Note series, OnePlus 9 series, iQOO smartphones, Samsung M12, Samsung M21, M32 5G, M52 5G, Tecno Spark 8 Series, Oppo A15s, iPhone 12; and Smart TVs like Redmi TVs (32 inch, 43 inch TVs), Sony TVs, Samsung Crystal TVs and OnePlus TVs will be available with exciting bank offers.

Customers can enjoy a 10% instant discount up to Rs.1500 using Bank of Baroda Credit Cards or EMI payments. They can also avail of exchange offers and convenient No-Cost EMI for up to 12 months on their favourite smartphones & TVs.

Prime Members can avail of savings of up to Rs.2,000 with Advantage Just for Prime, which includes benefits like 6-month free screen replacement and an additional 3 month No Cost EMI on HDFC Bank Debit and Credit Cards.

Here are some of the smartphones, accessories and TV's with offers:

Xiaomi Smartphones and TVs

Xiaomi smartphones like Redmi Note 11T will be available starting Rs.16,999, Redmi Note 10T will be available starting Rs.14,999 and Redmi 9A Sport at Rs.7,299 during the Upgrade Days. Customers can also get additional bank discounts and exchange offers. Get Mi 11 X starting Rs.27,999; Xiaomi 11 Lite NE 5G starting at Rs.26,999; Xiaomi 11T Pro at Rs.39,999 and Mi 11 X Pro starting Rs.36,999 with additional bank offers and no cost EMI options.

Also get the Redmi TV 32 inch for Rs.15,999 and Redmi TV 43 inch for Rs.24,999.

OnePlus offers on Smartphones & Televisions

OnePlus Nord CE and OnePlus Nord 2 will be available starting Rs.24,999 and Rs.29,999 respectively with additional bank offers. OnePlus 9, OnePlus 9RT and OnePlus 9 Pro will be available starting Rs.54,999, Rs.42,999 and Rs.64,999 respectively.

Customers can also get up to Rs.4,000 off on Axis bank cards with exchange offers and no cost EMI. The OnePlus TV Y series starts at Rs.16,499 and the U series UHD TVs starting at Rs.40,999. Customers can also avail additional bank discounts of up to Rs.3,000 on select bank cards and up to 9 months no-cost EMI.

Samsung Smartphones and TVs

Samsung Galaxy M12 is for Rs.10,499; Samsung Galaxy M21 for Rs.12,999; Samsung Galaxy M32 for Rs.14,999; Samsung Galaxy M32 5G for Rs.16,999 and Samsung Galaxy M52 5G for Rs.24,999.

Samsung S20 FE 5G will also be available for Rs.38,240 after discounts. The Samsung 4K Crystal UHD TV series starts at Rs.37,990. The purchase will be more affordable with additional Rs.1,500 discounts and up to 18 months no- cost EMI.

Apple iPhones

Get iPhone 12 with amazing features like Advanced Dual Camera, A14 Bionic Chip, Super Retina XDR Display starting Rs.54,999. Also get up to Rs.1,750 off on select bank cards.

Sony Televisions

The Sony Bravia range will be available starting at Rs.28,990. Get 30% off on premium Sony 50-inch 4K UHD Google TV will be available for as low as Rs.75,990.

iQOO Smartphones

The iQOO Z3, iQOO 7 and iQOO Z5 will be available starting Rs.17,990, Rs.31,990 and Rs.23,990 respectively.

Oppo Smartphone

OPPO A15s will be available starting Rs.13,490. Also get up to Rs.1,349 off on select bank cards and 1500 off with Amazon Coupon while purchasing.

Amazon Basics TVs

Get up to 40% off on the Amazon Basics 43 and 50 inch 4K Ultra HD TVs starting at just Rs. 30,999. The Amazon basics TVs come with Fire TV built in.

Tecno Smartphones

The newly launched Tecno Pop 5 will be available for Rs.6,700 and Tecno Spart 8T and Tecno Spark 8 Pro starting Rs.9,799 and Rs.10,999 respectively.

Realme Smartphones

The Realme Narzo 50i and Realme Narzo 50A are selling at Rs.7,499 and Rs.11,499 respectively. Also get up to Rs.750 on Bank of Baroda bank cards.

Jabra Earbuds

Jabra Elite 3 and Jabra Elite 4 Active are available for Rs.5,499 and Rs.9,999 with deals on select bank cards.

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ANALYSIS-Trump's Truth Social app, self-proclaimed foe of Big Tech, needs Apple and Google to survive

932 words

7 February 2022

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Reuters News

LBA

English

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Feb 7 (Reuters) - With just weeks to go before an expected launch, Donald Trump's new media venture is trying to strike a delicate balance with its app: giving Trump's base the freedom to express themselves, without running afoul of Apple and Google's app store policies.

The launch of Truth Social

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/former-us-president-donald-trump-launches-new-social-media-platform-2021-10-21> comes a year after the former U.S. president was banned from Facebook

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/facebook-suspends-former-us-president-trumps-account-two-years-2021-06-04>, Twitter and YouTube. It will be a major test of whether Trump Media & Technology Group (TMTG) and other tech companies that describe themselves as champions of free speech can scale alongside the Silicon Valley gatekeepers that conservatives have accused of squelching free expression.

TMTG has pledged to deliver an "engaging and censorship-free experience" on its Truth Social app, appealing to a base that feels its views around such hot-button topics in American life as vaccines and the outcome of the 2020 presidential election have been scrubbed from mainstream tech platforms.

Yet Trump's tech team must erect guard rails to ensure Truth Social does not get kicked out of the app stores run by Apple Inc and Alphabet Inc's Google - a fate that befell popular conservative app Parler in the wake of the Jan. 6, 2021, riots

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/democracy-under-siege-an-hour-by-hour-look-assault-us-capitol-2022-01-04> in the U.S. Capitol. Without these stores, there is no easy way for most smartphone users to download the app.

The risk of such "de-platforming" is a top priority for TMTG Chief Executive Devin Nunes, a former Republican congressman, as his team builds the app, according to two people with knowledge of the matter. Recognizing that the app will be a major target for hackers from day one, Nunes wants to have cyber talent at the "nation-state level," one of the people said. Nunes has said publicly that the company's goal is to launch its Truth Social app by the end of March.

A spokesperson for TMTG did not respond to a request for comment.

TMTG remains shrouded in secrecy and is regarded with skepticism by some in tech and media circles. Two conservative media executives pointed to the venture's apparent failure to launch a beta service in November, as planned, and cited the lack of known involvement by high-profile media, tech or political players - other than Nunes - as evidence it may be more bluster than substance.

"No one has approached me or my team," said one conservative media insider. "Trump has always been a bit of (his) own island."

CONTENT MODERATION

TMTG's mission of standing up to Big Tech is limited by its reliance on Google and Apple, which operate app stores that dominate the smartphone market. TMTG is working with Hive, a San Francisco-based company that does AI-based content moderation, to flag sexually explicit content, hate speech, bullying and violent content. That partnership is driven in part by TMTG's desire for the Truth Social app to remain in the Apple App and Google Play stores, according to a person familiar with the venture.

Truth Social will need robust content moderation in the form of both automated detection and in-person teams, as well as a way for users to report offensive posts, said David Thiel, the big data architect and chief technology officer of the Stanford Internet Observatory.

"Where it is going to become difficult is if they get into a situation like with Parler, where they have such a degree of hate speech that the hosting service and potentially the App Store starts to take notice," he said.

The Truth Social app will be subject to Apple's App Store rules that require developers to offer a way for users to report offensive content and provide "timely responses." The rules also bar content that "encourages violence" or "depictions that encourage illegal or reckless use of weapons and dangerous objects."

As of Feb. 4, TMTG had 12 job openings listed on the company website, for technical roles such as a developer to be part of the Android team and an iOS engineer. Salaries range from \$80,000 to \$220,000, according to the postings, which beckon candidates to work for a "well-funded," "remote-first" and "conservative-leaning" startup. A requirement for the iOS engineer role is "knowledge of Apple's Human Interface Guidelines and App Store Review Guidelines (which are more like rules)." One posting describes the ideal candidate as someone who "enjoy(s) companies that are scrappy and able to do more with less."

Among other positions, the company is seeking to hire at least one developer with experience with Elixir, a back-end programming language, according to a job posting.

In a Jan. 13 interview with radio host Ray Appleton, Nunes said the Palm Beach, Florida-based company will be looking for a more "permanent" location – favoring states like Florida, Tennessee and Texas over Silicon Valley. In the company's early months, some tech talent has been working in the Atlanta area, according to two people with knowledge of the matter.

(Reporting by Julia Love in San Francisco and Helen Coster in New York Editing by Kenneth Li and Matthew Lewis)

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technology

A Change by **Apple** Is Tormenting Internet Companies, Especially Meta

By Kate Conger and Brian X. Chen

1,368 words

7 February 2022

International New York Times

INHT

English

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Meta's stock prices plunged after the company reported that **Apple**'s privacy features would cost it billions this year. It's not the only tech giant to take a hit.

Apple's vision of a more private web is not necessarily a more profitable one for internet companies that depend on advertising revenue.

That lesson was clear on Wednesday in an [earnings report from Meta](#), the company that Mark Zuckerberg founded as Facebook. Meta said that privacy features introduced by Apple last year could cost Mr. Zuckerberg's company \$10 billion in lost sales this year.

The news, along with increased spending as Meta tries to focus on the new idea of a metaverse, dropped Meta's stock price more than 26 percent on Thursday morning. Mr. Zuckerberg said Wednesday that Apple's changes and new privacy regulations in Europe represented "a clear trend where less data is available to deliver personalized ads."

Meta's warning and its cratering stock price were reminders that even among tech giants, Apple holds extraordinary sway because of its control of the iPhone. And the tech industry received a clear notice that a long-planned shift in [how people's information may be used online](#) was having a dramatic impact on Madison Avenue and internet companies that have spent years building businesses around selling ads.

"People can't really be targeted the way they were before," said Eric Seufert, a media strategist and author of [Mobile Dev Memo](#), a blog about mobile advertising. "That breaks the model. It's not just an inconvenience that can be fixed with a couple of tweaks. It requires rebuilding the foundation of the business."

Other internet companies that depend on ads felt the tremors, too. But smaller outfits appear to have been more nimble than Meta in their response to Apple's changes.

Shares in Snap, which reported its fourth-quarter results on Thursday afternoon, fell about 17 percent earlier in the day. But prices bounced back in after-hours trading after the company said it made its first profit. The share prices of Twitter and Pinterest also dropped after Meta's earnings report, but recovered in after-hours trading Thursday after Pinterest also reported better-than-expected earnings.

Apple's changes have far-reaching repercussions that may hurt consumers' wallets, Mr. Seufert said, though consumers are overwhelmingly choosing not to be tracked. While Meta and other big media companies have developed new methods to target people with ads, some smaller brands, whose ads can no longer reach new customers, have found a different solution to the problem: raise prices.

Apple made significant changes to the privacy settings of its mobile operating system last year, allowing iPhone users to [choose whether advertisers could track them](#). Since Apple introduced the feature, a vast majority of iPhone users have opted to block tracking.

Only 24 percent of iPhone users around the world have consented to being tracked by advertisers, according to [data](#) published in December by the analytics company Flurry. That means that a broad swath of iPhone users are evading the personal tracking preferred by advertisers.

It has been a dismaying shift for advertisers, which have for years tracked people online in order to determine how many sales their clients were making. Advertisers also rely on tracking to resurface products that consumers have viewed but not yet purchased, reminding them that it might be time to buy. But for privacy activists, the change is a welcome check against surveillance that puts power back into the hands of everyday technology users.

"We believe the impact of iOS overall is a headwind on our business in 2022," said Dave Wehner, Meta's chief financial officer, during a call with analysts on Wednesday. "It's on the order of \$10 billion, so it's a pretty significant headwind for our business."

Google has also made moves that disrupt the advertising industry. Last month, it announced a proposal for how Chrome, the world's most widely used web browser, might eventually [eliminate traditional tracking mechanisms](#) for serving ads. It introduced a new system, Topics, which would inform advertisers of a user's areas of interest — such as "fitness" or "autos and vehicles" — based on the last three weeks of the user's web browsing history.

Meta's estimated loss because of these limits is comparable to what the company is losing on the metaverse. Meta said its pivot to the [metaverse](#) — which could in theory help it step away from Apple's influence — was eating into its profit. The company views the metaverse as the next generation of the internet, in which people will share virtual experiences. It lost more than [\\$10 billion](#) in 2021 as it built the virtual reality goggles and smart glasses that will make it possible for users to access the metaverse.

Although Meta said revenue rose 20 percent in the three months ending in December, to \$33.7 billion, compared with the same period a year earlier, the company's quarterly profits fell 8 percent, to \$10.3 billion.

Mr. Wehner added that Apple's iOS changes buoyed the ad business of Google, which is not dependent on Apple for advertising data.

Snap, the maker of the Snapchat app and the augmented reality glasses Spectacles, said during its third-quarter earnings report in October that Apple's privacy changes were having an unexpected impact on its business. But the company is adapting, Snap said in its fourth-quarter earnings report on Thursday, and the biggest impacts from Apple's change may be behind it.

"We are making solid progress," said Jeremi Gorman, Snap's chief business officer. The company offers its own measurement tools to advertisers to gauge the impact of their ads, and those tools are now used by more than 75 percent of its direct-response advertisers, Ms. Gorman said.

In its earnings report, Snap said that it had exceeded analyst expectations for revenue and user growth. In the last three months of 2021, Snap's revenue was \$1.3 billion, a 42 percent increase from the same period a year ago. Daily active users grew to 319 million, a 20 percent increase. The company profit was \$22.5 million.

Snap's share price rebounded after the news, shooting up more than 50 percent in after-hours trading on Thursday.

In the last three months of the year, Pinterest's revenue increased to \$847 million, up 20 percent from the same period a year ago, the company said on Thursday. Its profit was \$175 million, a 16 percent drop from 2020. Pinterest's share price was up 29 percent in after-hours trading.

In the past, Twitter has said that Apple's privacy push caused minimal disruptions to its business because much of its advertising came from brand awareness campaigns and large events, like the Olympics, rather than targeted advertising. Twitter is set to report its fourth-quarter earnings on Feb. 10.

But Apple, which reported its [fourth-quarter earnings](#) last week, indicated that privacy was profitable. Despite supply chain disruptions, Apple said that sales of iPhones totaled \$71.6 billion, up 9 percent from a year earlier. The smartphone maker reported an 11 percent increase in revenue and a 20 percent jump in profit.

Apple has made privacy a key part of its marketing for the iPhone and other products, giving customers the ability to opt out of tracking and providing steps to make tracking more difficult in its browser, Safari. But Apple has continued to allow apps like Facebook to [track users in aggregate](#), as long as they do not seek to personally identify users.

Last year, Timothy D. Cook, Apple's chief executive, making his company's message clear, said that the advertising industry had become an ecosystem of "trackers and hucksters just looking to make a quick buck."

Erin Griffith contributed reporting.

Erin Griffith contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Meta said that privacy features introduced by Apple last year could cost Mark Zuckerberg's company \$10 billion in lost sales this year. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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Giant Pension Sold Apple, Intel, and Qualcomm Stock. Here's What It Bought. -- Barrons.com

617 words

6 February 2022

17:30

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

English

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Ed Lin

One of the world's largest public pensions by assets made major changes in its investments in large-cap tech stocks as 2021 came to a close.

PGGM of Zeist, Netherlands, cut investments in Apple (ticker AAPL), Intel (INTC), and Qualcomm (QCOM) stock in the fourth quarter, and initiated a position in Nvidia (NVDA) stock, according to a form it filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

PGGM, which managed \$327 billion in assets as of Dec. 31., didn't comment directly on the stock trades. "PGGM has a passive strategy for listed equities, so we don't have a specific view on specific companies," it said in a statement.

The pension sold 1.1 million Apple shares to end 2021 with 3.6 million shares of the iPhone maker. The stock rose 34% in 2021, topping the 27% rise in the S&P 500 index. So far this year, shares are down 3% while the index is down 5.6%.

Near the end of December, Apple's market capitalization approached \$3 trillion, but it didn't cross that mark until early January. One analyst saw a path for the company's market cap to hit \$4 trillion. Apple reported a strong fiscal first quarter at the end of January. "Demand for Apple products and services is materially outpacing supply and when the supply chain normalizes then Apple's sales and margins will only accelerate higher, in our view," a Citi analyst noted.

Intel stock hasn't had the upward trajectory that Apple's has had. The embattled chip giant saw shares gain 3.4% in 2021; so far this year, shares have dropped 6.8%.

Last year, analysts covering Intel had a skeptical take after the company's spending climbed under new CEO Patrick Gelsinger, who told us in July the company could "triple, quadruple" in value. Gelsinger was among Intel insiders who bought up stock on the open market in October.

Late last year, though, PGGM was selling Intel stock, shedding 205,000 shares to cut its holdings to 1.3 million shares.

The pension also sold 223,317 Qualcomm shares to end the year with 509,533 shares of the maker of wireless chips and technology. Like Intel, Qualcomm underperformed the S&P 500 in 2021, rising 20%. So far this year, Qualcomm shares have dropped 1.9%.

In January, CEO Cristiano Amon told us he was bullish on Qualcomm's long-term outlook. The company is a play on multiple emerging trends, including connected cars, the metaverse, edge computing, wireless fiber, and next-generation laptops. Earnings, reported last week, were strong, but investors weren't impressed at first.

Unlike the other two chip makers, Nvidia had a boffo 2021, with shares rocketing 125%. So far this year, Nvidia stock has dropped 17%, one of the more-bruised names as the tech sector was socked in a January market slump.

Particular to Nvidia, the company's deal to acquire microprocessor design house Arm Holdings from SoftBank Group (SFTBY) now seems to have foundered. Other potential Arm buyers including Intel and Qualcomm don't look likely to clear regulatory hurdles.

Inside Scoop is a regular Barron's feature covering stock transactions by corporate executives and board members -- so-called insiders -- as well as large shareholders, politicians, and other prominent figures. Due to their insider status, these investors are required to disclose stock trades with the Securities and Exchange Commission or other regulatory groups.

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Write to Ed Lin at edward.lin@barrons.com and follow [@BarronsEdLin](https://twitter.com/BarronsEdLin).

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

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Business

Knitting startup out to 'unravel' Apple in App Store fight

Lauren Rosenblatt; Seattle Times business reporter

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6 February 2022

The Seattle Times

SETL

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English

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A Seattle-based startup is turning its knitting needles against Apple.

Knitrino, maker of an app by the same name that helps knitters navigate tricky projects and find unique patterns, recently signed on to support Epic Games, the North Carolina-based game and software developer behind Fortnite, in its lawsuit alleging Apple is violating antitrust laws and has a monopoly on the app ecosystem.

The two tech companies have been locked in a legal battle since Epic tried to skirt Apple's tightly regulated App Store and direct customers to make purchases on Epic's own website, instead of through Apple's in-app payment system.

Epic says Apple is using anticompetitive practices on its App Store, while Apple argues its policies are necessary to maintain the store and protect the privacy and security of consumers.

Knitrino says Apple has too much control.

After a back and forth argument with Apple to get its knitting app on the store — and a realization that there weren't many options if they didn't make it on the digital marketplace — Knitrino signed on in support of Epic. Attorneys for Knitrino filed a legal brief in January alleging Apple's policies drive up consumer costs, restrict innovation and reduce consumer choice.

"The knitters should get to decide," said Andrea Cull, co-founder of Knitrino and a knitter herself. "The fact that Apple can say your waiting customers can't have this, and there was nowhere else to go. To think you spent two years building something for it to never see the light of day."

Cull and her sister Alison Yates launched Knitrino in November 2020 as a platform to help knitters go digital. They bill the app as the Google Maps for knitters by providing step by step information to users about their project, from how to videos for a particular type of stitch to the ability to match charts to your yarn colors.

The app is free to customers and features new knitting patterns for sale at \$10-\$17 each.

After two years of traveling to knitting shows, chatting with potential customers and potential designers and developing the software, Knitrino applied to list its product on both the Google Play store and Apple's App Store.

Google approved the app within hours. Apple sent the sisters a rejection, arguing it couldn't sell both physical and digital goods through its in-app payment system, according to Yates and Cull.

After the first rejection, Knitrino made some technical changes and tried again. For the next several days, the founders went back and forth with Apple — making changes, reapplying and receiving what seemed like irrelevant portions of Apple's policies pasted back in response.

Knitrino appealed Apple's decision to its own review board. It was rejected in 19 minutes.

"The feeling that we had when we were going through this was like hitting a wall, but not being able to see the wall," Yates said. "I don't know how tall this wall is. I don't know if I can walk a few miles that way and get around it. We were just feeling around in the dark."

"When they are the approver and the appeals court, if they say no, we can't go to a different App Store to get to our customers," she continued.

Apple could not be reached to comment on the specifics of the Knitrino case.

It says over 40% of apps that are rejected are denied due to app completeness, or things like not having fully functional URLs or placeholder text still taking space on the app. Apps can also be rejected because of technical bugs, broken links, substandard user interface, submitting a product that could mislead users or failing to offer users lasting value, according to a lengthy list on Apple's website.

On average, Apple says it reviews 50% of app submissions in 24 hours and 90% in 48 hours.

Knitrino did later get Apple's approval, though the sisters aren't clear what led to the reversed decision.

The app is now available on Apple's store — and has more than 20,000 downloads across Google and Apple's stores — but Yates and Cull said the experience left them wanting to help make changes to how Apple works with app developers.

It signed an amicus brief in support of Epic in November 2021 and joined a growing group of supporters submitting their own friend of the court briefs in January, including Microsoft, several economics and business professors and a coalition of 35 states. Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson signed on to the effort.

Knitrino signed its name alongside the Consumer Federation of America, Chicago-based software company Basecamp and Match Group, the Dallas-based online dating company that includes match.com.

Epic's appeal is being heard in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. This court's decision is likely the "end of the line" for the Epic versus Apple lawsuit, said Margaret MacLean, a partner at Lowey Dannenberg, the law firm that handled the amicus brief that featured Knitrino.

The court will hear oral arguments sometime this spring or summer and a decision will likely come out this year, MacLean said.

At Knitrino, the sisters began selling "Unravel Apple" stickers, a partial back-up plan if their support of Epic leads to retaliation against their business.

"We invested everything in this, and for Apple to wield the kind of power where they can say whether or not we can go into business, for something so arbitrary," Yates said.

"For us, we're in the App Store, so we really only have things to lose. But in terms of the world as a whole, I'd love to have an alternative."

Celebrity investors bet big on Seattle startup making sustainable toilet paper

A Seattle-based startup is drawing A-list investors with a new take on an old product: toilet paper.

Cloud Paper announced Thursday that its recent \$5 million funding round drew investment from Bezos Expeditions, the personal investment company of Jeff Bezos, as well as backing from firms linked to actors Ashton Kutcher, Robert Downey Jr. and Gwyneth Paltrow. Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson has also supported the fledgling TP maker, as has Wilson's wife, musician and fashion model Ciara.

So why are celebrities flocking to a sector dominated by a handful of bathroom behemoths? Sustainability, as pitched by Cloud Paper.

The company's paper is bamboo-based, and made without tree pulp. Founded in 2019, Cloud Paper says it has sold 3 million rolls of paper towels and toilet paper, and, by the company's math, saved 10,000 trees in 2021 alone.

"Cloud Paper is on a mission to transform the paper products industry to switch to tree-free products," Kutcher, whose investment firm SOUNDWaves is backing the company, said in a statement. "We want to be part of that mission and further cement our position in this space as Cloud Paper expands into retail and pursues an aggressive [commercial] strategy, alongside growing their [direct-to-consumer] offering."

Cloud Paper was founded by ex-Uber and Convoy employees aiming to develop sustainable paper products. The company started selling its toilet paper in mid-2020 as coronavirus pandemic hoarding made it a hot commodity.

The \$5 million funding round will allow the brand to make significant investments in its supply chain, product development and recruitment, a company spokesperson said in a statement. Cloud Paper plans to launch new products and enter new distribution channels to reach individual households and businesses, including restaurants, hotels and stadiums.

The funding round comes after a year that, according to the company, saw the startup increase deliveries by 930% and increase revenues eightfold.

"Over this past year, we've seen and heard how much the environment means to our customers, and saving it through a small paper product switch is an easy way to make sustainability feel attainable for everyone," Ryan Fritsch, co-founder of Cloud Paper, said in a statement.

Cloud Paper declined to share revenue numbers.

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Sisters Andrea Cull, left, and Alison Yates launched Knitrino in 2020 as a platform to help knitters go digital.
Mandy Lundy

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Global tech giants urged to contribute more in Korea

1,166 words

6 February 2022

Korea Times

KORTIM

English

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Apple is criticized for paying less corporate tax than in other countries

By Baek Byung-yeul

Apple, Google, Netflix, Meta and other tech giants doing business here have been criticized for shifting most of their profits abroad, paying less corporate taxes and spending a minimum to fulfill their social responsibility activities, according to industry analysts and experts Friday.

These multinational companies earn trillions of won in Korea every year, but they pay ridiculously small taxes based on the fact they don't have manufacturing facilities or computing servers operating here, they said.

According to a report unveiled by independent lawmaker Yang Jung-suk on Feb. 2, Apple paid only a quarter of the corporate tax rate to Korea compared to its overall payment rate, by raising the price of goods sold to lower its operating profit.

Her report is based on an analysis of Apple's report submitted to the New York Stock Exchange in 2021 and an audit report on Apple Korea the same year. She is a member of the National Assembly's Science, ITC, Broadcasting and Communication Committee.

'Apple's global operating profit margin reached 29.8 percent in 2021, 18.6 times higher than that of Korea, which was 1.6 percent,' Yang said. The Korean branch's ratio of operating profit to net sales is significantly lower than those of Apple's other regions – 34.8 percent in the Americas, 36.4 percent in Europe, 41.7 percent in China, 44.9 percent in Japan and 37.2 percent in Asia-Pacific.

The lawmaker argued this was possible because its Korean branch paid more than it should for bringing in products from its Singapore unit.

Due to the low operating margin, Apple paid a significantly lower corporate tax in Korea in 2021 than it did in other countries. 'Last year, Apple Korea's corporate tax payment was 62.8 billion won, or 0.9 percent of its total sales of 7.1 trillion won, while Apple paid \$14.527 billion in taxes worldwide, or 4 percent of total sales,' she said.

Yang also urged Apple and the government to come up with prompt measures. "The company needs to adjust its operating profit ratio to a level similar to China, Japan and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region that are in a similar environment to the Korean market," she said.

Apple was unavailable for comment on Yang's statement.

Apple is not the only one that pays less corporate tax. Google, Netflix, Meta and other global tech firms have paid less than 10 billion won in corporate taxes here on the basis that there are no computing servers or production bases in Korea. In 2020, Google Korea paid 9.7 billion won while Korean IT giants Naver and Kakao paid 463.3 billion won and 82.7 billion won respectively. Meta also paid 3.5 billion won and Netflix paid 2.2 billion won.

A company official, who works for a foreign-affiliated company that operates manufacturing facilities here, said foreign companies that pay less taxes because they do not have production facilities in Korea could introduce a problem of 'reverse discrimination' against other foreign-affiliated firms operating manufacturing facilities here.

'I think it is right that even foreign companies should contribute to Korean society and pay taxes as much as paying to other overseas branches as long as they are doing business well here. Many of the people working for foreign-affiliated firms do not appreciate Apple's behavior in Korea. It doesn't make sense either not to be able to fulfill corporate social responsibility while making huge amounts of money,' the official said on condition of anonymity.

'In the case of companies that operate production facilities in Korea, there are many things to pay attention to, such as newly changing government regulations and relationships between employees. In particular, with the enforcement of the industrial accident law, we should pay more attention to safety regulations. However, this is a responsibility that we have to follow while doing business here, so we are willing to follow it.'

Michael Fritzell, a Singapore-based analyst at Asian Century Stocks, said Apple paying less corporate tax can be explained by its tax-planning strategy that minimizes tax burden. He also pointed out that Korea has a higher corporate tax rate of 25 percent than Singapore with 17 percent.

'I would assume that companies do everything they can to minimize taxes. They have an incentive to minimize the profits of their Korean subsidiary given that Singapore has a lower corporate tax rate. There could also be currency considerations at play here – perhaps Apple wanted to minimize its build-up of Korean won, for whatever reason,' the analyst said.

'Corporations are often actively minimizing their taxes, by placing their headquarters in Ireland, Switzerland or other tax havens. And I would imagine that they push the boundaries when it comes to transfer pricing, and sometimes step over those boundaries as well.'

Asked if the National Tax Service (NTS) has ever looked into allegations that Apple tries to pay less tax in Korea, a chief spokesman of the agency said, 'We cannot answer issues related to certain companies due to confidentiality provisions.'

However, an expert in taxation pointed out that such criticism that overseas-based companies are trying to avoid taxes paid to Korea should be approached carefully because how much corporate tax each region pays is determined by the business strategy of each company.

'It should not be considered that foreign companies are evading taxes in Korea. In the case of Apple, it had to pay the price of the products to its Singapore branch, but just because the cost was too high, it cannot be said that it was intended to avoid taxation,' said Jeong Seung-yeong, a taxation professor at Changwon National University.

'If the transaction between Apple's Korean branch and Singapore branch was a normal one within a legal framework, it cannot be considered wrong. Conversely, it should be noted that such criticism can be raised to Korean companies. Samsung Electronics, a global tech firm born in Korea, also does business targeting the global market and does not plan a strategy by looking at only certain markets.'

Saving taxes by lowering operating profit ratio as Apple Korea does is one of the ways global companies reduce their tax burden. But, such practices are not expected to remain in effect past this year as taxing the digital economy, led by the OECD, was endorsed by 136 countries in 2021.

Starting 2023, firms with global sales of over 20 billion euros and profit rate above 10 percent are supposed to pay 25 percent of profit margins above 10 percent in countries where their businesses are based.

The NTS is also taking action against digital taxes. On Jan. 26, the agency said it plans to legislate laws and systems necessary for the application of digital taxes.

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Los Angeles Times

Main News; Business Desk

BUSINESS; Another day in court on Caltech patents; Apple and Broadcom will get a new trial on damages after a Wi-Fi verdict is vacated.

Susan Decker

Decker writes for Bloomberg.

552 words

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Home Edition

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Apple Inc. and Broadcom Inc. will get a new trial on damages in an infringement case over Caltech patents on Wi-Fi technology, after a U.S. appeals court vacated a \$1.1-billion verdict the school won in 2020.

A two-tier award of damages of \$270.2 million against Broadcom and \$837.8 million against **Apple** that involved different royalty rates from each company is "legally unsupportable," the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington ruled.

The January 2020 verdict was one of the largest jury awards in a patent case in U.S. history.

The court also affirmed the jury finding that Apple and Broadcom infringed two CalTech patents, but ordered a new trial of infringement on a third patent. One of the three judges on the panel said he would have thrown the whole case out, believing none of the patents were infringed.

The case was remanded to a court in Los Angeles for a new trial on infringement of one patent and to determine how much Broadcom and Apple should pay.

Caltech said it was pleased that the validity of the patents and part of the infringement findings were upheld.

"This is recognition of Caltech's inventions in the field of data communications, which are now widely used in Wi-Fi products because they significantly improve the quality, bandwidth, and range of wireless data transmission," the school said in a statement Friday.

"We are confident that the value of the patents will be fully recognized at the damages retrial."

Officials with Broadcom and Apple didn't respond to queries seeking comment.

The high damage award was based in large part on the broad range of Apple products that were accused of using the university's inventions for wireless data transmissions.

The case targeted Broadcom chips and any Apple smartphone, tablet or computer that has one.

Caltech argued that it would have negotiated two licenses -- one with Broadcom for chips that weren't sold to Apple, and then with Apple for the devices that included Broadcom chips "at a vastly different royalty rate," according to the opinion.

"The mere fact that Broadcom and Apple are separate infringers alone does not support treating the same chips differently at different stages in the supply chain and does not justify submitting such a two-tier damage theory to the jury," the Federal Circuit ruled.

"In the absence of a compelling showing otherwise, a higher royalty is not available for the same device at a different point in the supply chain," according to the court.

In an unrelated case involving patent claims against Apple, a different three-judge Federal Circuit panel ordered a new trial on damages in an \$85.23-million verdict won by Quarterhill Inc.'s Wi-Lan over a way to allocate bandwidth in wireless communications.

The court ruled that Wi-Lan's damages expert used a "flawed" methodology that was "untethered to the facts of this case," but also that the trial court erred in ruling that Apple iPhones with Intel Corp. chips had a perpetual license to the Wi-Lan patent.

Stock in news

Why the Meta meltdown burnishes appeal of TCS, Infosys

Ashok Bhattacharjee

852 words

6 February 2022

The Economic Times

ECTIM

English

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Superlatives create headlines. And the intervening night of Thursday and Friday was as superlative as they come. Tata Consultancy Services vanished – statistically, that is. Investors lost the equivalent of India's technology powerhouse as more than \$220 billion evaporated in a matter of hours in the biggest single-stock slump in US corporate history. Meta Platforms Inc., the parent of Facebook, had a meltdown. Thursday night's 26%-plus decline in Meta's share price seemed to faithfully track the declining trend in tech-heavy Nasdaq in an eerie throwback to the start of the millennium. It is not surprising to see the 11-plus percentage point decline in the Nasdaq in 2022—a year likely standing out for steep rate increases. Respective stock weightings show that the Nasdaq is tilted in favour of consumer technology – much of it in the womb of the future. **Apple Inc.**

accounts for about 12 percentage points weighting, and the stock has held its own, losing barely 4% this year and contributing about half a percentage point to the index's overall shrinkage. Brakes on the future But others haven't been as lucky. Tesla Inc. has lost 22.5% so far. With a weight of 4.4% on the Nasdaq, the EV powerhouse has contributed about 0.9 percentage point to the decline of the index. Amazon.com Inc., with a 6.9% weighting, has shed 17% so far, making up more than 1.15 percentage points of the benchmark's slide. Microsoft Corp., with a weighting of about 10%, has lost about 8.5% so far, contributing about 0.85 percentage point to the decline. And after Thursday's spectacular meltdown, Meta Platforms has lost 29% for the year. With a weighting of about 5%, the stock has contributed about 1.45 percentage points to the decline in the index. In summary, these five stocks – Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Meta Platforms and Tesla – have contributed about 42% to Nasdaq's decline, with Apple and Microsoft cushioning bigger falls in purely consumer-facing or futuristic technology. Netflix Inc, for instance, has contributed about half a percentage point to the gauge's decline despite a weighting barely an eighth of Apple's. The bespoke streaming platform's stock has shrunk about a third, and despite only a 1.6% weight on the index, the impact of the Netflix decline is about half a percentage point. Time To Log Out? Such a swift reversal in the fortunes of technology stocks stateside has raised a big question mark on the fate of Indian outsourcing behemoths – and their stock valuations. India's technology and services outsourcing sector makes up about a tenth of the country's gross domestic product – and more than a quarter of India's top 15 listed firms by value. Just TCS, Infosys, HCL Technologies and Wipro are together more valuable than all of India's public sector banks – and all the listed automakers and steelmakers. Therefore, a meltdown reminiscent of the dotcom bust definitely prompts questions about the immediate stock prospects of India's Big Four. Buy On Dips Odds are short they will be battered. Rather, they are conviction buy-on-dips candidates. "Aggregate revenue for Top-5 IT services firms grew by 5.2% (constant currency), the highest in five years, despite a seasonally weak quarter," Jefferies said Friday in a review of the three months to December. "Revenue growth was broad-based across verticals, driven primarily by retail, communication and manufacturing... Revenue growth for Infosys, HCLT, TCS and TechM was ahead of expectations at 4-7.6%." The brokerage has either 'hold' or 'buy' ratings on Indian outsourcing pureplays – and the reasons aren't far to see. The global scenario does bring back memories from the turn in the millennium, but those memories are rather sweet for Indian companies. As Y2K 20 years ago helped establish the credentials of Indian technology from Tokyo to Toronto, digitisation globally is expected to bolster revenues and profitability of Indian technology powerhouses that have scale few on the planet can match. "With commentary from companies across key verticals highlighting the importance of digital transformation spending, the demand outlook looks strong," Jefferies said. That dovetails neatly into the shifting investment theme in favour of value – and clear revenue visibility – in the global money hubs of New York, London and Tokyo. As central banks in the OECD row back on accommodative monetary policies and money becomes less abundant, the risk-off trade favours those themes that offer medium- to long-term revenue visibility and sustainable competitive advantage that can't be replicated easily. Raamdeo Agrawal, one of India's best-known long-term wealth creators, wrote on ET's pages after the Union Budget 2022-23 that technology remains one of his favourite picks, regardless of the domestic macro situation. "Budget or no budget, I remain very bullish on Indian IT," Agrawal wrote. "Global digitisation is like yet another Y2K moment for the sector." Over the past three decades, he has rarely erred.

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Hindustan Times, Business_V2

Apple sales get off to a flying start in India

Abhijit Ahaskar

573 words

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English

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new delhi, Feb. 5 -- **Apple** Inc. appears to be on firm footing to continue its run of robust India sales after record growth in 2021 with iPhone shipments outpacing the overall smartphone market this year, boosted by local manufacturing and demand for premium phones, market researchers said.

"We are estimating 25% shipment growth for **Apple**. The overall smartphone market is expected to grow by 14%. So, **Apple** will grow faster than the market in 2022," said Tarun Pathak, research director at Counterpoint Research.

Apple's smartphone market share doubled in the past year, with the company shipping about 6 million iPhones in India, the highest ever, even as overall smartphone shipments rose 11%, according to Counterpoint analysts who expect Apple to "have another record year in India".

After struggling for years to sell its expensive imported models, local manufacturing of relatively cheaper models has helped Apple cut prices and boost demand in India. However, the top-end iPhones are still way costlier in India than in other countries because of high import tax, putting it beyond the reach of all but wealthy Indians. Easy availability of financing has also helped sales of its pricey phones.

Apple has leveraged its local manufacturing to offer discounts to consumers, especially during the festive season sales, Prachir Singh, senior research analyst at Counterpoint, said, enumerating the reasons for the growth.

According to Counterpoint Research, iPhone shipments rose 34% during the December quarter, when significant festive season sales took place in India.

Shipments refer to the number of smartphones sent by companies to distributors and wholesalers. Though the shipment number closely reflects the number of units sold, it may not hold true for all smartphone models. Singh added that the premium segment was the driving factor for overall growth and will remain so in 2022. "Apple has covered the premium segment in a holistic manner and has a model for each segment--be it premium, mid-premium or affordable premium. In 2022, Apple will launch a new model in the iPhone SE series, and iPhone 12 will be sold at the price of the iPhone 11. As a result, shipments of iPhone 11 will decline," Singh added.

The fact that iPhone 12 is 5G ready also makes it more appealing than the iPhone 11 and earlier models. According to Singh, the government has also announced that 5G will be auctioned this year, making iPhone 12 a compelling option in the premium segment. Market researcher Canalys recently predicted that India would see upward momentum in the adoption of technologies that are future-proof, and consumers will prefer devices that are ready when 5G services roll out. That said, Counterpoint analysts do not expect the rise in shipment sales to translate into any significant increase in market share.

Apple's market share had almost doubled in 2021 to 4%. Counterpoint's Singh said Apple's overall market share in India is expected to improve, but only marginally. Navkendar Singh, research director at IDC India, also believes Apple will replicate last year's success in 2022. However, he explained that the growth in shipments would not change Apple's market position any time soon.

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WSJ

Meta dives 26pc as **Apple's** advertising privacy policy hits sales

Meghan Bobrowsky

730 words

5 February 2022

The Australian

AUSTRALIAN

Australian

30

English

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Facebook's parent company has served up a stark sign of how **Apple's** new ad privacy policy is roiling the digital advertising world.

Meta Platforms closed down more than 26 per cent in Thursday trading – a \$US230bn-plus (\$322bn) loss in market capitalisation – after CFO David Wehner on Wednesday said the company expected the **Apple** policy to cost it more than \$US10bn in lost sales for 2022, equivalent to about 8 per cent of its total revenue last year.

"It's a pretty significant headwind," Mr Wehner said on a call with analysts. Apple introduced the changes last April, altering its iPhone software to require apps to ask users whether they want to be tracked. The move limited the ability to gather data through apps that are used to target digital ads and drove advertisers to alter spending patterns. Meta had said previously that the Apple move was hurting its ad business, but it hadn't given an estimate of how much.

Meta "was impacted significantly and it's going to be a continuous problem", said Daniel Newman, an analyst at Futurum Research.

Meta raised other concerns for investors with its earnings, including the loss of about a million daily users globally in the last quarter, and its sales outlook for the current quarter fell short of Wall Street expectations. The company expects expenses to jump around \$US20bn or more this year as it pursues CEO Mark Zuckerberg's bet on the metaverse, the online virtual world some see as the next evolution of the internet.

Booming digital ad spending has been a boon for Mr Zuckerberg's company. Facebook, as the company was known before its renaming last year to Meta, enjoyed years of strong revenue driven in significant part by its ability to track the behaviour of users of apps and websites and enable advertisers to deliver highly targeted ads based on that information. The Apple policy change disrupted that ability, with a large majority of users, according to some measurements, opting not to be tracked. Meta says that policy has made ad targeting more difficult and measuring the impact of placements harder.

Apple's move has had reach beyond social media companies. Video game company Zynga, which specialises in smartphone games like Words With Friends and has its own advertising platform, suffered an earnings hit from the new Apple policy that led its shares to drop sharply last year. The company ended up selling itself to Take-Two Interactive Software for \$US11bn last month.

While there clearly is an impact from Apple's policy, Brian Wieser, GroupM's president of business intelligence, said the impact on Meta might not be as great as the company's executives have suggested.

"I'm sceptical that it's as bad as they're conveying," he said. The digital ad business remains healthy, he said, pointing to Google parent Alphabet's strong earnings this week, seemingly largely unaffected by the policy changes.

Twitter, in its most recent earnings report in October, said it expected to be largely unaffected by the Apple policy because it isn't as reliant on targeted digital ads as some of its rivals.

Unity Software, a provider of video game development tools and advertising services, hadn't been affected by Apple's privacy rules because it relied on data that tracked players' in-game behaviour as opposed to information affected by changes in the iPhone software, CEO John Riccitiello said in an interview.

Mr Wehner said Apple's policy treated Google differently, suggesting the difference might reflect a longstanding business relationship between the two companies. "We believe Google's search ad business could have benefited relative to services like ours that face a different set of restrictions from Apple and given that Apple continues to take billions of dollars a year from Google search ads, the incentive clearly sits for this

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policy discrepancy to continue.” Google’s flagship search-ad business relies on search terms customers input to reveal what they are interested in, rather than on data collected from app and web tracking. Google said its search and advertising revenue rose 36 per cent and topped \$US43bn in the most recent quarter, led by strength in retail-related ad spending, with YouTube advertising up 25 per cent from the year-earlier period.

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The Washington Post

Technology

Apple avoided the Washington techlash for years. Now it's at the center of the bull's eye.

By Cat Zakrzewski

1,309 words

4 February 2022

Washington Post.com

WPCOM

English

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In 2018, as Facebook faced heat over the Cambridge Analytica data privacy scandal, reporters pressed **Apple** CEO Tim Cook on how he would deal with the crisis if he were Mark Zuckerberg, the social network's chief executive.

"I wouldn't be in this situation," he replied, during a town hall event hosted by MSNBC.

The comment highlighted the stark distance between Apple and the controversies enveloping its Silicon Valley peers. With a business largely focused on selling phones, computers and tablets, Apple positioned itself as the privacy-friendly tech titan in an industry increasingly fueled by targeted advertising. As social media companies became mired in partisan battles over content moderation, Cook stayed above the fray and was one of the few Silicon Valley CEOs to maintain positive relations with the Trump White House.

But in 2022, the most valuable company in U.S. history finds itself in a dramatically different position in Washington as policymakers and regulators have largely shifted their attention to addressing allegations of anti-competitive behavior in the tech industry. As Congress and the Biden administration scrutinize allegations that Apple wields its power as operator of the App Store to the disadvantage of smaller developers, the company's regulatory threats are piling up.

On Thursday, The Senate Judiciary Committee advanced legislation that would force Apple and Google to allow people to download apps outside of their stores, and allow them to install alternative stores. The bill, called the Open Markets Act, had overwhelming bipartisan support, passing on a 20-to-2 vote.

Last month, the same committee advanced legislation that would ban large tech companies from promoting their own products over those of competitors — which could have a significant impact on Apple's growing software and services business.

Apple has marshaled the goodwill it built in Washington on privacy and security to bat back the competition push. The company sent a seven-page letter Wednesday to the top lawmakers on the Judiciary Committee, arguing the app store bill would harm consumers' privacy and security. In the letter, viewed by The Washington Post, the company bashed the data collection practices of "large social media platforms."

"We are deeply concerned that the legislation, unless amended, would make it easier for big social media platforms to avoid the pro-consumer practices of Apple's App Store, and allow them to continue business as usual," wrote Timothy Powderly, senior director of government affairs for the Americas at Apple.

The letter came the same day that Meta, the parent company of Facebook, reported the iPhone maker's new privacy policies that limit data collection through apps are causing significant headwinds for its business. Meta CFO David Wehner estimated on the company's earnings call that the change could cost the company \$10 billion in 2022.

During less than two hours of debate on the legislation, the committee adopted an amendment to address some of the privacy concerns that the tech industry and some members of Congress voiced.

Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla, both California Democrats, raised concerns about the legislation. Feinstein said she worried that the scope of the bill was too limited, targeting only a handful of tech giants. Padilla said he strongly supported the goals of the bill, but warned of unintended consequences on user privacy and hate speech.

But both Democrats ultimately voted to support the legislation. The only dissent in the room came from Sen. John Cornyn (R-Tex.), who argued multiple Senate Judiciary antitrust subcommittee hearings were not enough without a full Judiciary Committee airing. Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), who voted by proxy, changed his vote to a no following the session, after he was initially recorded as supporting the bill due to a staff error.

Apple's political fortunes in Washington have deteriorated over the past three years, as lawmakers from both parties have increased their scrutiny of the company. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) in 2019 told The Post that Apple should be broken up along with Facebook, Google and Amazon, as she sought to make tech companies' power a key issue in the 2020 presidential primary. That same year, the House Judiciary Committee launched a bipartisan investigation into whether Apple and other tech giants used their broad power to squash competition and hurt consumers. Lawmakers subsequently heard from numerous developers who argued the company's alleged bullying practices injured their comparatively smaller businesses.

In the fallout of the Jan. 6 attacks, Apple suspended the pro-Trump website from the App Store, due to concerns that it could contribute to violence, and faced backlash from conservatives over the decision.

Apple's situation has become so dire in Washington that Cook in January became personally involved. He spoke to lawmakers on the committee, including Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.), to raise concerns about the impact the bills could have on user privacy and security. The company's proxies in Washington are making similar arguments. The App Association, a coalition of developers funded by Apple and other large companies, sent a letter on Monday to lawmakers warning that the app store legislation would "diminish privacy and security protections." Adam Kovacevich, the CEO and founder of the Chamber of Progress, an industry coalition which counts Apple as a partner, said in an interview that the current App Store policies allow Apple to curate apps in a way that encourages greater privacy, security and child safety protections.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), one of the bipartisan sponsors of the app store legislation, said the bill now includes protections for privacy and against malware.

"These tech giants' self-serving appeals to privacy and security fall apart on even passing scrutiny," he said in a statement to The Post. "These companies relentlessly use consumer information to make money, without regard for consumer privacy."

He noted some security experts have pushed back on these claims. Bruce Schneier, a prominent security technologist, wrote a letter to the Judiciary Committee, calling some of the security concerns raised by Apple and Google "unfounded." He noted that the bill could lead to the rise of new app stores, that might have stronger security provisions than Apple.

"It's simply not true that this legislation puts user privacy and security at risk," he wrote in the Monday letter.

A June 2021 Post review of the App Store found that nearly 2 percent of the 1,000 highest-grossing apps there are scams, costing consumers an estimated \$48 million during the time they were available. Apple removed two-thirds of the 18 apps that The Post flagged to the company.

Apple's regulatory threats aren't limited to Congress; it faces litigation from Fortnite maker Epic over its App Store rules. A California judge found that Epic failed to prove its case that Apple is a monopolist, though she did require the company to allow developers to "steer" customers to alternative payment processing services. A bipartisan group of 35 state attorneys general recently filed a brief siding with Epic in its appeal, writing that the company's conduct "has harmed and is harming mobile app developers and millions of citizens." The Justice Department also filed a brief siding with neither company that criticized the judge's ruling for committing "several legal errors that could imperil effective antitrust enforcement, especially in the digital economy."

Policymakers abroad have also considered similar measures to curtail Apple and Google's grip on the app stores. South Korean lawmakers last year passed a law to force the companies to offer alternative payment systems on their app stores.

Apple's opponents celebrated Thursday's vote to advance similar legislation in the United States as a "historic step" toward restoring competition online.

Document WPCOM00020220203ei2300235

Business

iPhone screen maker, Li Ning-backed blank-cheque company file for Hong Kong IPOs, betting on rebound in demand for new listings

786 words

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SCMCOM

English

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* A blank cheque company backed by gymnast-turned-sportswear entrepreneur Li Ning has filed for a Hong Kong listing

* **Apple** supplier Biel Crystal has refiled its Hong Kong listing application after first attempt lapsed last year

Biel Crystal, the world's largest maker of smartphone screens, is among a host of companies betting that [demand for initial public offerings](#) will improve after a dismal January that saw just a handful of deals.

The glassmaker that counts Apple among its customers is one of several firms that applied for a Hong Kong listing just before the Lunar New Year holiday.

It submitted a second IPO filing after its [earlier application](#) last summer had lapsed. Back then, Biel's founder Yeung Kin-man said the company was targeting around [US\\$2 billion](#).

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Meanwhile, Trinity Acquisition Holdings, a special purpose acquisition company (SPAC) co-sponsored by Li Ning, a former Chinese Olympic gymnast and chairman of his eponymous sportswear company – which already trades on the Hong Kong bourse – filed for a share sale earlier this week.

These new filings came after investors' appetite for IPOs globally was tempered by [paltry stock market performances](#) in January. The Hang Seng Index gained just 1.7 per cent last month. In the US, the Nasdaq Composite had its worst month in two years as the tech-heavy index lost 9.5 per cent.

Just four companies raised a combined US\$747.9 million in Hong Kong in a month that stood in sharp contrast to January 2021, when 15 deals raised US\$7.6 billion, according to data from Refinitiv.

Back then, Tencent-owned short video platform [Kuaishou Tech](#) pulled off the world's third-biggest IPO, raising US\$6.2 billion in Hong Kong as valuations for tech stocks hit a feverish high.

The impact on Chinese internet companies' fundraising plans of an intense regulatory clampdown on the sector will continue to weigh on the performance of Hong Kong equities, according to Alicia Garcia Herrero, chief economist, Asia-Pacific, at Natixis CIB.

"Although IPO activities have flourished thanks to Chinese tech firms [departing from the US](#), the sector as a whole is still facing tough headwinds from regulations, such as tougher antitrust rules ... and stricter data control," she wrote in a recent research note in January.

Facing less policy uncertainties, issuers that are outside China's internet sector have now come to the fore in applying to raise capital.

Biel's net profit for the six months ended September 2021 rose 11 per cent to HK\$2.1 billion from HK\$1.9 billion in the same period a year ago, data from its preliminary filing shows.

JPMorgan, HSBC and CICC are the joint sponsors of the deal. It plans to use the net proceeds to expand production capacity and develop new business.

Trinity Acquisition is one-third owned by Li Ning, with the rest of the company's shares held by two private equity firms, LionRock and Astrapto. JPMorgan and Credit Suisse are joint sponsors of its fundraising deal.

It gave no further details of its share sale plans in a heavily-redacted filing, saying only that it plans to acquire businesses in the consumer lifestyle sector with the proceeds raised. Hong Kong will only allow large SPACs that raise at least HK\$1 billion (US\$128 million) to list on its main board, the highest requirement among all exchanges.

These listing applications will take several months before they can proceed to the marketing stage.

Some IPO offerings already under way are lowering their valuations in the face of softer-than-expected demand from investors.

Huitongda, the commerce platform targeting merchants and suppliers in China's lower-tier cities, kicked off its Hong Kong public offering on Monday at a much lower target than it had initially planned.

The company, which is 19.1 per cent owned by a unit of Alibaba Group Holding, is seeking to raise a maximum of just US\$318 million, [lower than its initial target](#) of at least US\$500 million. Alibaba Group Holding owns the South China Morning Post.

Huitongda is selling 51.6 million shares in a price range of HK\$48 to HK\$43 each. The retail offering will end on February 10.

Its debut on the main board, under the stock code "9878", is scheduled for February 18.

Document SCMCOM0020220204ei24000ba

Apple's New Ad Policy Stings Facebook

By Meghan Bobrowsky

899 words

4 February 2022

The Wall Street Journal

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English

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Facebook's parent company served up a stark sign of how **Apple** Inc.'s new ad-privacy policy is roiling the social-media company's digital-advertising world.

Meta Platforms Inc. closed down more than 26% Thursday -- a \$232 billion loss in market capitalization -- after Chief Financial Officer David Wehner on Wednesday said the company expects the **Apple** policy to cost it more than \$10 billion in lost sales for 2022, or equivalent to about 8% of its total revenue last year.

"It's a pretty significant headwind," Mr. Wehner said on a call with analysts.

The share decline represented the biggest one-day retreat in value in U.S. history.

Rival social-media platform Snap Inc. retreated 24% Thursday along with Meta amid the concerns over the effect of Apple's policy on the online ad market. Snap cheered investors after the closing bell with its first-ever quarterly profit. The company also signaled progress in navigating the Apple policy changes. The stock rallied 55% in after-hours trading.

Apple introduced the changes last April, altering its iPhone software to require apps to ask users whether they want to be tracked. The move limited the ability to gather data through apps used to target digital ads and drove advertisers to alter spending patterns. Meta had said previously that the Apple move was hurting its ad business, but it hadn't given an estimate for how much.

Meta "was impacted significantly and it's going to be a continuous problem," Daniel Newman, a principal analyst at Futurum Research, said.

Meta raised other concerns for investors with its earnings, including losing about a million daily users globally in the last quarter, and its sales outlook for the current quarter fell short of Wall Street expectations. The company expects expenses to jump around \$20 billion or more this year as it pursues Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg's bet on the metaverse, the online virtual world some see as the next evolution of the internet.

Booming digital ad spending has been a boon for Mr. Zuckerberg's company. Facebook, as the company was known before its renaming last year to Meta, enjoyed years of strong revenue driven in significant part by its ability to track the behavior of users of apps and websites and enable advertisers to deliver highly targeted ads based on that information.

The Apple policy change disrupted that ability, with a large majority of users, according to some measurements, opting not to be tracked. Meta says that policy has made ad targeting more difficult and measuring the impact of placements harder.

Apple's move has had reach beyond social-media companies. Videogame company Zynga Inc., which specializes in smartphone games like "Words With Friends" and has its own advertising platform, suffered an earnings hit from the new Apple policy that led its shares to drop sharply last year.

The company ended up selling itself to Take-Two Interactive Software Inc. for \$11 billion last month.

While there clearly is an impact from Apple's policy, Brian Wieser, GroupM's president of business intelligence, said the impact on Meta might not be as great as the company's executives have suggested. "I'm skeptical that it's as bad as they're conveying," he said.

The digital ad business remains healthy, he said, pointing to Google parent Alphabet Inc.'s strong earnings this week seemingly largely unaffected by the policy changes.

Twitter Inc., in its most recent earnings report in October, said it expected to be largely unaffected by the Apple policy because it doesn't rely on targeted digital ads as some of its rivals.

Unity Software Inc., a provider of videogame development tools and advertising services, hasn't been affected by Apple's privacy rules because it relies on data that track players' in-game behavior as opposed to information affected by changes in the iPhone software, the company's CEO, John Riccitiello, said.

Snap on Thursday posted a net profit of \$22.6 million for the most recent quarter after sales advanced 42% to \$1.3 billion from a year earlier, beating Wall Street expectations. The company's chief financial officer, Derek Andersen, said elements of the company's advertising business "began to recover from the impact of the iOS platform changes quicker than we anticipated."

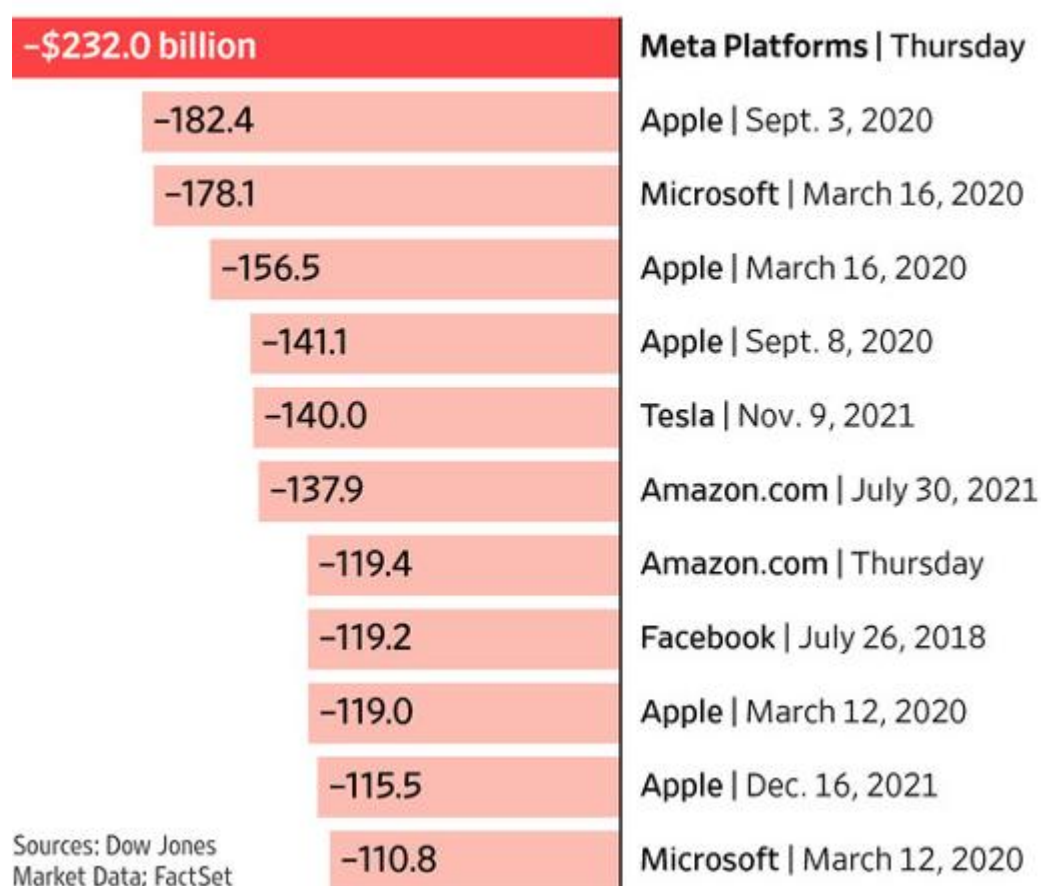
Mr. Wehner said Apple's policy treats Google differently, suggesting that the difference might reflect a longstanding business relationship between the two companies. "We believe Google's search ad business could have benefited relative to services like ours that face a different set of restrictions from Apple and given that Apple continues to take billions of dollars a year from Google search ads, the incentive clearly sits for this policy discrepancy to continue," he said.

Google's flagship search-ad business relies on search terms customers input to reveal what they are interested in, rather than on data collected from app and web tracking.

Apple didn't respond to a request for comment. Google declined to comment.

Sheryl Sandberg, Meta's chief operating officer, said on Wednesday's earnings call that the company was working on ways to measure the impact of the ads it sells and to find ways to show relevant ads without collecting personalized data. "That's going to take us time."

Largest single-day declines by U.S. companies in market value



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The Washington Post

National-Politics

Senators aren't swayed by Apple's security arguments

By Joseph MarksAaron Schaffer

1,815 words

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Welcome to The Cybersecurity 202! I, for one, am very pleased that the "Betty Whiteout" snowplow will soon be clearing roads in southern Minnesota. Here are details from the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Below: The U.S. government accused Russia of launching a disinformation campaign to create a pretext for invading Ukraine, and cyberattacks are hitting oil facilities in Europe.

Apple struck out on this round of the antitrust fightApple insists an antitrust bill that would force it to give up tight control over which apps iPhone users can download could have devastating consequences for cybersecurity.

But some cyber practitioners are skeptical – and senators aren't backing down.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 20 to 2 yesterday to approve a bill that would force Apple and Google to allow customers to load competing app stores onto their phones. In so doing, they bucked Apple's warnings that the change would raise the chances of customers downloading apps loaded with malicious software that could steal their personal information, as Cat Zakrzewski reports.

If the bill becomes law, it would mark one of the biggest moves in the past decade to rein in the power of tech giants. And as Big Tech firms push back against a wave of such antitrust reforms, cybersecurity is increasingly part of the battle space.

In addition to the app store measure, tech firms are fighting against a proposal to bar them from privileging their own products against rivals — a reform they say could advantage companies from adversary nations that would run roughshod over U.S. citizens' security and privacy.

The argument: Apple has argued in a series of documents that the company goes to extreme lengths to vet the security and privacy protections of apps in its app store — vetting that other companies can't be trusted to do nearly so thoroughly.

The company said in a June 2021 presentation that a staff of roughly 500 security experts reviews 100,000 new apps and updates each week.

The company has rejected more than 1 million apps and an equal number of updates that weren't up to snuff, it said.

Industry groups backed by big tech have generally supported Apple's claims. Consumer and digital rights advocates have accused the tech giant of using security arguments to support its bottom line.

Apple strictly bars outside apps from being downloaded to iPhones — a system known as "sideloading." Google allows outside apps on smartphones that run its Android operating system but pop-ups warn consumers the apps haven't been vetted for security.

Some cyber experts are don't buy Apple's claims.

Noted security technologist and Harvard University lecturer Bruce Schneier called Apple's claims "self-interested, oversimplified, and dishonest," in a letter to the Judiciary Committee.

Alternate app stores could offer equal or better security than what Apple offers he said. If people do download malicious apps from outside Apple's ecosystem, the company could still take security measures that prevent those apps from doing harm, he said.

Apple's arguments also ignore a key fact — that many iPhone users who currently want to download apps that aren't approved by Apple simply jailbreak their phones, Jake Williams, a former NSA cyber pro, told me.

That process of removing the phone's software restrictions results in far less security, said Williams, who's a security analyst at the SANS Institute.

For non-jailbroken phones, there are definite security advantages to Apple having full control over its app ecosystem, Williams told me. But he believes the security advantage is not so great that it outweighs the advantage to consumers of having more app store options, Williams said.

More from Williams:

Members of Congress appeared open to Apple's concerns, although they ultimately voted for the antitrust bill.

The bills sponsors, Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), addressed some of Apple's concerns. They added language stating that platforms can remove apps they can prove are malicious or fraudulent and provide information about the risks of downloading third-party apps.

But they pushed back on going further, defeating an amendment from Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) that would have allowed platforms to bar any apps they say "raise significant cybersecurity risks or otherwise harm users."

According to Cornyn, the amendment's aim was to "say that you're not required to open your product to competition by something that will actually unload malware onto your device."

But Blumenthal argued it would effectively give Apple and other app store providers free rein to block apps for competitive reasons and claim it was about cybersecurity.

"Anyone, whether it's Apple or Google wanting to defeat a claim here would simply say, 'oh, cybersecurity risk' and there would be no real protections," he said.

Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) also expressed some reservations about the measure but voted to move it forward. There's a similar House bill but it's not clear when the bill might be debated by the full House or Senate.

The keys

The U.S. government accused Russia of prepping a disinformation campaign to justify Ukraine invasionThe plan centered on a phony video that would appear to show an attack against Russian-speaking people or Russian territory by Ukrainian forces, Ellen Nakashima, Shane Harris, Ashley Parker and John Hudson report.

"We believe that Russia would produce a very graphic propaganda video, which would include corpses and actors that would be depicting mourners and images of destroyed locations, as well as military equipment at the hands of Ukraine or the West, even to the point where some of this equipment would be made to look like it was Western supplied," Defense Department press secretary John Kirby said. Such a disinformation operation would be "right out of their playbook," Kirby said.

The Kremlin dismissed the accusation.

The Biden administration and U.K. government have accused Russia of planning operations to destabilize Ukraine, like launching a "false flag" attack and blaming it on Kyiv or installing a Russia-friendly government in Ukraine. They haven't released the underlying evidence behind the claims.

Cyberattacks hit oil terminals across EuropeMore than a dozen oil storing terminals have been hit, including 11 in Germany, S&P Global's Rowan Staden-Coats and Eklavya Gupte report. Many tankers have been rerouted because loading and unloading at the terminals is largely automated.

Some of the disruptions came after terminal operator SEA-invest said "several" of its terminals were hit in a Jan. 30 cyberattack. The company operates terminals across Belgium and northwest Europe.

The attacks expose vulnerabilities in European energy infrastructure as the continent prepares for potential cyberattacks amid a feared Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Germany has also been hit, with "some German oil terminals and storage sites ... continuing to operate at limited capacity following a Jan. 29 cyberattack targeting energy company Mabanaft Group and storage company Oiltanking Group," Staden-Coats and Gupte write. "These incidents have affected the supply of some oil products in Germany, Europe's biggest oil consumer, especially in the key port of Hamburg."

The hackers who hit the German companies appear to be related to the DarkSide ransomware gang, which is best known for attacking Colonial Pipeline last year, Emsisoft's Brett Callow told Bloomberg News's Ryan Gallagher.

European cybersecurity officials don't think the cyberattacks across Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany are connected, the Record's Adam Janofsky reports. But they're still investigating.

Hacking revelations could delay corruption trial of Israel's former leader Israeli police acknowledged to the State Prosecutor's Office that they hacked a phone belonging to Shlomo Filber, a key witness in the corruption case against former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Haaretz's Netael Bandel reports.

Now, Netanyahu's lawyers have asked the court to order the government to hand over information that the police got through spyware. Filber is set to testify in two weeks, and a court on Monday will probably have to decide whether to pause the trial until police and prosecutors can explain the extent to which phone hacking was used, the Times of Israel reports.

Israeli police have claimed that investigators were never actually given the hacked data, the outlet reports. Israeli police said they would continue to "cooperate fully and transparently" with the Israeli attorney general's investigators who are examining police spyware use.

In other Israel news: The country is reportedly freezing exports of some cyber products and is not renewing expiring export licenses for some products to countries in the Middle East, the Times of Israel reports. Israeli media reports didn't mention whether exports of NSO Group spyware would be affected by the move, the outlet reports.

Global cyberspace

Iran's national TV stream hacked for the second time in a week (The Record)

Hacking team tied to Russia targeted 'western government entity' in Ukraine -researchers (Reuters)

European governments targeted by Chinese hackers with a Zimbra webmail zero-day (The Record)

Students express outrage online after university admissions body hack (Thai Enquirer)

Iran accused of sowing Israel discontent with fake Jewish Facebook group (BBC News)

Government scan

Clearview: Glasses with facial recognition are here—and the Air Force is buying (Thomas Brewster)

Cyber insecurity

How phishers are slinking their links into LinkedIn (Krebs on Security)

Ransomware wants you to like and subscribe, or else (Motherboard)

Hill happenings

Biden nominee Raskin vows Fed will monitor climate risk, not dictate lending (Reuters)

National security watch

The International Institute for Strategic Studies has proposed a new model for assessing the maturity of military cyber forces.

On the move

The Department of Homeland Security has announced the members of a new Cyber Safety Review Board, which will investigate major cybersecurity incidents. The group's first mission will be to analyze what led to the widespread log4j vulnerability. The outside members of the board include:

Google senior director for security engineering Heather Adkins

Silverado Policy Accelerator chairman Dmitri Alperovitch

Luta Security CEO Katie Moussouris

Verizon Threat Research Advisory Center managing director Chris Novak

Center for Internet Security Senior Vice President Tony Sager

Microsoft Digital Crimes Unit assistant general counsel Kemba Walden

Palo Alto Networks Unit 42 Senior Vice President Wendi Whitmore

Daybook

Yevheniya Kravchuk, the deputy chairwoman of the Ukrainian Parliament's humanitarian and information policy committee, discusses Russian disinformation at a Transatlantic Task Force on Ukraine event on Tuesday at 10 a.m.

The Securities and Exchange Commission is set to consider new cybersecurity rules for investment advisers and companies at a meeting on Wednesday at 10 a.m.

INSF and WCAPS host an event on challenges and opportunities for Black women in the intelligence community on Thursday at 11 a.m.

Secure log off

I also liked second-place finisher Ctrl Salt Delete. Thanks for reading. See you Monday.

Document WPCOM00020220204ei24002bd



Life

The importance of good design, from the Eames chair to Apple's iPhone, on display in Red Dot Institute's Hong Kong show

1,070 words

4 February 2022

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SCMCOM

English

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* 'Red Dot Exhibition: The Essence of Design – Creating Value' showcases the importance of good design, which 'should be as simple as possible', says Peter Zec

* The Red Dot Institute founder says designs that stand the test of time 'are not fancy, but very simple' – the Coca-Cola bottle, the Eames chair, Apple's iPhone

What can a brand do to gain market share when competing with dozens of similar products? Answer: think like Coca-Cola.

Two hundred years ago, explains Peter Zec, founder of the Red Dot Institute, soft drinks were packaged in the same standard glass bottle, differentiated only by their label. The [Coca-Cola Company](#) had the idea of creating a unique shape so distinctive that consumers would instantly recognise it, even by touch, in the dark.

The resulting contour form – inspired by the cocoa bean – became one of the icons of 20th century design.

Do you have questions about the biggest topics and trends from around the world? Get the answers with [SCMP Knowledge](#), our new platform of curated content with explainers, FAQs, analyses and infographics brought to you by our award-winning team.

The Coke bottle is one of the classics featured, alongside the works of emerging local talent, in the Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI) and Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE)'s first exhibition for 2022, "Red Dot Exhibition: The Essence of Design – Creating Value".

Conceived in collaboration with Red Dot Institute, the research organisation affiliated with the design industry's prestigious Red Dot Design Award, the exhibition showcases the importance of good design, and how it affects not only the aesthetic, cultural and social aspects of a company's offering, but also its profitability.

Having overseen design competitions since 1991 – and the [Red Dot Award since 2000](#) – Zec has witnessed many changes, especially the innovations enabled by technology. These days, there are even categories for drones and smart-home products.

While we need as much technology as necessary, he says, good design "should be as simple as possible". "I think designers are doing well if they try to make our life better by creating easy-to-use products," he says.

Speaking from Germany, Zec explains what he calls "the magic of simplicity".

"When you go through the history of design you will see all those successful products that still remain today are not fancy, but very simple," he says. "The product should be seductive to use so that we would like it and want it for a lifetime."

For example?

"I'm sitting here in my office chair designed by Ray & Charles Eames in 1956, and this chair is perfect," Zec continues. "You still see this chair all around us today. It is so simple, and easy to produce."

Another all-time personal favourite is his Tizio desk lamp by Richard Sapper, a design first created in 1972 for Italian manufacturer Artemide.

Both of these classics met a need of their time: designed for comfort, the Eames Lounge Chair is one of the early examples of ergonomics in the workplace; while Sapper's Tizio lamp, with its long swivel arm, solved the problem of directing task lighting on a messy desk, without having to move any of the clutter.

Might we now see a raft of [pandemic-response designs](#) emerging? Zec doesn't think so.

"Design is not just related to technological advancement but also to developments and events in society," he says. "That means of course that the pandemic will have an impact, but not in terms of furniture – it will likely take the form of touchless surfaces, remote controls, and medical equipment inventions.

"This new kind of (post-pandemic) life will affect design, and designers will reflect that."

In judging international design awards, standards are global, Zec points out. There is no difference between Chinese and Western products because everybody has to meet certain criteria.

"But when it comes to our daily lives – furniture or interior design – I'd say China is on its way to developing its own style, and Chinese designers are trying to be different in this way," he says.

In the technological area, he continues, Hong Kong and mainland Chinese designers are closing the gap, creating products "which are very competitive worldwide", like the multi Red Dot Award-winning smartphones from [Chinese brand Xiaomi](#).

The HKDI exhibits are grouped into sections that highlight an essential aspect in successful design, such as the Value of Form (the Coca-Cola bottle being one example), and the Value of Colour, as shown by Nivea's adherence to same blue packaging for more than a century, despite changes to the logo and brand identity of its skin care range.

Other sections of the exhibition showcase iconic products known for their design [from companies such as Kärcher, Dyson, [Apple](#), Kartell, Lenovo and Grohe].

Highlighting local talent is work by HKDI graduates who have won the Red Dot Best of the Best Award: Design Concept. These are Yuen Sek, a set of modern Chinese tableware designed by Alvin Liu Shing-kai, and Tri Cane, a mobility aid by Jordan Lau Tsz-chun.

For every designer and company, Becoming a Bestseller is surely a nut all would like to crack. This category of the exhibition reflects on the history of design, and how products such as the Sony Walkman have changed people's lives through groundbreaking yet simple design.

What's the secret?

Take Apple, offers Zec. The tech behemoth, the most valuable brand in the world in 2021 with an estimated worth of about US\$263.4 billion, didn't invent the smartphone – it just made it easier to use. The iPhone's finger-friendly tap screen was genius; never mind that it cost a bomb compared to others on the market.

In a business sense, says Zec, that exemplifies the true value of design.

"If people will line up to buy your product, regardless of the price," he says, "then you know you have a bestseller."

"Red Dot Exhibition: The Essence of Design – Creating Value" runs until April 10 2022 online, and may be viewed in person until that time as soon as pandemic-related restrictions are lifted, at d-mart, Hong Kong Design Institute, 3 King Ling Road, Tseung Kwan O, New Territories. Tel: 3928 2000.

Document SCMCOM0020220204ei240008z

Lifestyle

Woman discovers she's being catfished after texting android phone user who wore an **Apple watch in his photos**

Amber Raiken

744 words

4 February 2022

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Independent Online

INDOP

English

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'That is the most impressive detective work I've seen yet' one viewer writes in the comments

A woman discovered a man on a dating app was a [catfish](#), as he was wearing an **Apple** watch, which can only work for people who have an iPhone. However, he had been texting her with an android phone.

In [a TikTok video](#) posted on January 31, Jocelyn, @jjustjocelyn, explained how she matched with a guy on the dating app [Bumble](#). And as noted on [Bumble's website](#), "women always make the first move" and have to initiate the conversation within 24 hours or the match expires.

So, after messaging him and chatting on the app, the man asked Jocelyn to get dinner sometime. He offered to go sometime that week, and she then gave him her number.

Jocelyn, who has an iPhone, noticed that when this man reached out to her, his texts were "green," meaning he had an android phone.

"So this is the guy that I matched with," she said, including a photo of him in the video. "What is he wearing? An Apple watch."

As noted by [Apple](#), in order to use an Apple watch, "you need an iPhone 6s or later." However, Jocelyn emphasised that his green texts were proof that he didn't have an iPhone.

The TikTok user then did an image search on Google of some of the man's photos from the dating app.

"And what do we have here, an Instagram model from New York," Jocelyn explained, showing an Instagram account with the name Ron. The account had posted one of the pictures from the profile Jocelyn matched with.

Jocelyn said that she lived in Ontario, so she couldn't have matched with Ron. She also shared that the guy from Bumble was going by the name "Myles."

"Thankfully I hardly spoke to this guy and invested zero per cent of my time," she added.

When filming this clip, she was also yet to have told the man that she knew he was catfishing her and asked her viewers if she should.

The video has over 686,000 views, so far, with TikTok users in the comments applauding Jocelyn for noticing the Apple watch in the photos.

"That is an impressive observation," one viewer wrote, while another one said: "That is the most impressive detective work I've seen yet!! Love your work."

Other viewers noted how scary it can be to be catfished like this, especially on [dating apps](#).

"Wow! That's so dangerous!" one comment reads. "That's for this story, I just got bumble so I will be more attentive!"

Bumble's TikTok account also commented on this video and said: "We're so sorry to hear about this! We've found the member and permanently removed them."

In a [follow-up video](#), Joceyln shared an update, noting that he asked her how her day went and set a time to go to dinner. Shen then sent him a text asking where they were going.

"I think once he nails down a place, I'm going to then send a screenshot and be like: 'so are you gonna show up or this guy?' And then send the Instagram [of Ron]," she said.

[In another video](#), Jocelyn revealed that the man never responded to her last message about asking where to meet.

"I'm thinking maybe he saw the TikToks," she said. She also acknowledged that his Bumble account has been removed.

Although she doesn't know why he didn't respond, Jocelyn had her suspicions.

"I'm sure there are a multitude of reasons why he's not replying," she said. "Probably because I'm not playing along. He's looking for some attention, and I'm just wanting to set up dinner, it's not really fun for him."

The Independent has reached out to Jocelyn for a comment.

Read More

[8 dating red flags you need to look out for](#)

[Woman shares 'red flag' texts from man she met on dating app: 'He sounds insufferable'](#)

['Put down the cupcakes': Woman reveals body-shaming messages from Tinder match](#)

[Price of Pret's monthly coffee subscription rises by £5](#)

[US planning to deploy robot dogs to patrol southern border with Mexico](#)

[Prince Harry says that he needs 'to meditate every single day'](#)

Document INDOP00020220203ei2300hfu

App-Store Bill Passed By Senate Committee -- WSJ

By Ryan Tracy

1,053 words

4 February 2022

13:03

Dow Jones Institutional News

DJDN

A4

English

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WASHINGTON--A Senate panel advanced bipartisan legislation Thursday that would limit the ability of **Apple** Inc. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google to impose rules and fees on developers using their consumer-app stores.

The vote by the Senate Judiciary Committee with strong support from Democrats and Republicans sends the bill to the Senate floor, and came over the objections of **Apple** and Google which say they need to control content on their app stores to ensure the security and privacy of users.

It was a win for app developers, content creators and others who say Apple's App Store and Google Play limit innovation through their fees and controls.

"We've got a couple of companies that are really wielding undue market power," said Sen. Mike Lee (R., Utah), a conservative who has expressed skepticism about legislation imposing new government regulations. On Thursday, he voted "yes."

Central to lawmakers' concerns are transaction fees as high as 30% charged by app stores when consumers make in-app purchases or buy subscriptions. Technology companies, content creators, and others say this raises their costs, holding back their ability to launch new products or expand their businesses.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D., Conn.) likened Apple and Google to railroad monopolies who own the means for other companies to get their products to market.

"Consumers, if you are watching, you pay more because of the monopolist rent fee that is charged to you as a result of their monopolistic power," he said.

Sen. John Cornyn (R., Tex.), who voted "no" Thursday, suggested the fees were fair compensation for the platform the companies provide.

"I hope we're not, by focusing on these specific cases, suggesting that somehow there is something wrong with creating a new product that has value to consumers and making a profit and creating jobs," Mr. Cornyn said.

The bill was initially approved 21-1. After the vote, Sen. Thom Tillis (R., N.C.) asked to change his vote to "no", a committee spokeswoman said.

The bill seeks to bar the app-store owners from forcing developers to use the owners' in-app payment systems. The owners also couldn't prevent apps from telling consumers about other payment options.

It also would ban app-store owners from "unreasonably" favoring their own apps in search results, and from using app developers' nonpublic business information to compete with them.

At the same time, the bill seeks to create exceptions for actions necessary to protect user privacy, security or safety or to prevent spam or fraud.

An Apple representative declined to comment on the Senate vote. Apple has privately warned the committee that the bill would enable so-called sideloading, where consumers could add apps to their device without going through the Apple App Store.

This would allow app developers "to evade Apple's privacy and security protections by distributing apps without critical privacy and security checks," said Timothy Powderly, an Apple senior director of government affairs, in a letter viewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Apple's critics have questioned such claims, noting that the company's MacBook laptops allow sideloading. Apple has countered that the size of the iPhone platform makes it a more lucrative potential target for hackers.

Google has raised similar privacy and security concerns, while noting that unlike Apple, the Android operating system allows sideloading. Both companies also questioned that the bill doesn't apply to other content distribution systems, such as gaming platforms.

"This bill could destroy many consumer benefits that current payment systems provide and distort competition by exempting gaming platforms, which amounts to Congress trying to artificially pick winners and losers in a highly competitive marketplace," said a statement from Mark Isakowitz, a Google vice president of government affairs and public policy.

Those concerns were echoed by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.). The bill doesn't target any company by name but applies to app stores with more than 50 million U.S. users. Supporters say Google and Apple are the primary targets.

"If we're concerned here with the use of apps and how they are downloaded and paid for, it would seem to make sense to have the policy affect all companies that manage app stores of any reasonable size. This bill does not do that," Ms. Feinstein said.

Ms. Feinstein, who nonetheless voted in favor of the bill, praised changes to the bill adopted Thursday that were designed to address concerns about the bill's impact on security and consumer privacy. One provision seeks to allow app stores to require apps to get users' consent before collecting and sharing their data.

The bill has support from a number of technology companies who would stand to see a boost in revenue if the bill became law. Twenty tech CEOs, including the Spotify Technology SA CEO Daniel Elk and Epic Games Inc. CEO Tim Sweeney, signed a letter to the Senate panel this week saying the bill would help improve competition.

"Today, mobile app marketplace gatekeepers use a vice-like grip to control developers and impose terms and conditions that undermine competition, throttle innovation, limit consumer choice, and lead to higher prices," the letter said.

The bill is one of several threats to the companies' app-store businesses. Several U.S. states have considered similar legislation, while South Korea has adopted a law forcing app stores to allow alternative payment systems.

State attorneys general have sued Google, accusing it of diminishing competition on the Android operating system. Google is fighting the suit. Apple has battled back a lawsuit from Epic on similar grounds.

The same Senate panel last month advanced another bill forbidding the largest tech platforms from favoring their own products and services over those of competitors. The vote on that bill was 16-6, with several senators who voted "yes" raising concerns they wanted to see addressed before a final vote.

Senators' debate on the app-store bill Thursday was less contentious.

Write to Ryan Tracy at ryan.tracy@wsj.com

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(END) Dow Jones Newswires

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Ads Propel Snap to First Quarterly Profit -- WSJ

528 words

4 February 2022

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Dow Jones Institutional News

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English

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Platform says it finds workarounds to **Apple** privacy rules; stock soars after wild ride

By Meghan Bobrowsky

Snap Inc. posted its first quarterly profit and signaled it is adjusting to disruptions in the digital-advertising market caused by Apple Inc. privacy policy changes that are affecting Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc.

Snap on Thursday posted a net profit of \$22.6 million in the most recent quarter after sales advanced 42% to \$1.3 billion from the year-ago period, beating Wall Street expectations.

The social-media company's shares were hit hard in trading ahead of the numbers after Meta on Wednesday said it would suffer a \$10 billion revenue loss this year from the software changes Apple made to ad tracking through its iOS software.

Shares in Snap rallied after the earnings release, advancing more than 50% in after-hours trading. That followed a 24% drop on Thursday, as technology stocks sold off broadly on some disappointing earnings.

Snap Chief Financial Officer Derek Andersen said elements of the company's advertising business "began to recover from the impact of the iOS platform changes quicker than we anticipated."

The Apple software changes, introduced last spring, require apps to ask users whether they want to be tracked. Many users have opted out, making it more difficult for advertisers to target their ads at specific groups and receive feedback about how their targeted ads are doing, riling elements of the digital ad market.

Companies like Snap and Meta have begun to pursue workarounds to satisfy their advertiser customers.

Snap said it is developing tools to help advertisers address the problems posed by Apple's changes. "We are pleased with the early progress," said Jeremi Gorman, Snap's chief business officer, adding it would take some time to fully adjust.

Tom Johnson, global chief digital officer at media-services company WPP Mindshare Worldwide, said, "Snap seems to be faring better than its larger rivals who are more exposed to the same pressures."

The digital-advertising market broadly has been hot. Google parent Alphabet Inc. this week posted strong sales growth, propelled by its dominance in online search, video and internet ad sales. Microsoft Corp., which sells ads on LinkedIn, its Bing search engine and some other products, said the ad market was strong and would advance further this year when it reported quarterly earnings last week.

Snap, in its results, forecast sales of up to \$1.08 billion for the current quarter, beating average analyst expectations, according to a survey by FactSet.

Snap also reported a 20% year-over-year increase in daily active users for its Snapchat app that is popular with teens and young adults, many abroad. Meta lost about a million users globally in the quarter and stagnated in the U.S. and Canada.

Write to Meghan Bobrowsky at Meghan.Bobrowsky@wsj.com

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(END) Dow Jones Newswires

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GADGETS NEWS

Explained: Apple's privacy feature and why it's costing Facebook billions of dollars

616 words

4 February 2022

The Times of India

TOI

English

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Facebook announced its quarterly results and it was reported that this is the first time the social media platform's users didn't grow. If that wasn't a blow enough, the company's CFO revealed that a feature introduced by Apple is set to cost the social media giant about \$10 billion in 2022. The feature — not new but was introduced last year — is called App Tracking Transparency (ATT). Here we explain what is ATT and how it's costing Facebook billions of dollars. What is App Tracking Transparency? Apple first showcased the feature in 2020 at WWDC, its annual developer conference. There were many sceptics and Apple did give developers — including Facebook — time to understand and get used to the idea. The feature was rolled out last year and what it does is that it gives more control to iPhone users on whether or not they want to be tracked by advertisers online across apps. Apple says that it's the user and not the developer who should decide what data they get or share.

App Tracking Transparency allows you to choose whether an app can track your activity across other companies' apps and websites for the purposes of advertising or sharing with data brokers. "If you see a request to track your activity, you can tap Allow or Ask App Not to Track. You can still use the full capabilities of the app, regardless of whether you allow the app to track your activity", explains Apple. What is Facebook's 'problem' with Apple and ATT? Most apps use something called IDFA or Identifiers for Advertisers. What IDFA does is that it uses random identifiers to deliver customised advertising. Like you would've searched for "vacation in the hills" and you suddenly see ads related to hotels in the hills or other weekend getaways on the internet. It's IDFA that delivers advertising to users and revenue to apps. It's the data that Facebook and others use and it's a rather common business model. Facebook says that IDFA helps it understand and now how the ad campaigns have done. It also helps a lot of small developers in generating revenue as it remains their biggest source of income. Apple argues that it is giving users the choice — if they want apps to track them then they are welcome to do so. "We believe users should have the choice over the data that is being collected about them and how it's used. Facebook can continue to track users across apps and websites as before, App Tracking Transparency in iOS 14 will just require that they ask for your permission first," Apple CEO Tim Cook said about the feature in December 2020. How's Facebook losing money because of this? Targeted ads is a big source of revenue for Facebook and ATT stops that considerably. A report by Financial Times last year revealed that 90% of its revenue from Facebook comes from targeted ads. The report also noted that 80% of iPhone users opted to not be tracked by many apps, including Facebook, Snap and others. That means a huge loss of revenue and just because of one big change Apple brought to iPhones. A report by CNBC quotes Sheryl Sandberg, COO, Meta, where she said that the iOS changes are diminishing the accuracy of Facebook's ads, driving up prices based on an outcome like a sale or download. She also said that small businesses are being hurt by Apple more — which is something Facebook has been arguing about since the time ATT was announced.

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Document TOI0000020220204ei240006e

Femail

Dating detective! Canadian woman figures out that her Bumble match was catfishing her after spotting an **APPLE WATCH in photos he sent using an **ANDROID** phone**

Carly Stern For Dailymail.com

811 words

4 February 2022

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Mail Online

DAMONL

English

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* In a viral TikTok video, Jocelyn, 29, said she recently matched with a 'cute' 29-year-old man named Myles on Bumble

* When they moved their conversation to text messages, she noticed his messages were green - the color iPhone users see for non-iPhone users

* She found that suspicious, because one of the photos on his profile showed him wearing an Apple Watch

* Jocelyn did a reverse image search on Google with Myles' profile picture to see if he was really who he claimed to be

* The photos turned out to belong to a man named Ron who lives in New York

* Jocelyn planned to call him out for catfishing her, but he stopped responding to her messages and his account was suspended

An Ontario woman is being applauded for her incredible 'detective work' after she realized she was being catfished on a dating app — simply by noticing the man's Apple Watch.

Jocelyn, 29, explained [on TikTok](#) that she recently matched with a 'cute' 29-year-old man named Myles on Bumble, and soon had moved the conversation to text messages to set up a date.

But when Jocelyn, an iPhone user, noticed that Myles' texts were green — the color Apple designates for non-iPhone users — she grew suspicious.

She quickly referred back to his profile, where he was pictured wearing an Apple Watch — and used that as a starting point into digging into the man's real identity.

'Welcome back to another episode of, Could dating be any more fun?' Jocelyn began.

She said that when she matched with Myles, she was 'into it' and found him good-looking, so she sent him a message.

'I don't really give him too much information about myself. I've definitely chatted with people too long on the app in the past, so I'm like, I'm not doing that this time.

'He says we should get dinner sometime, and I'm like, "Great," because I don't want to talk in the app, I want to meet in person and see if I even like him.

'I say yes to having dinner. He says maybe some time this week. I say sure, sounds good to me, and I give him my number and say text me when and where.

'He texts me pretty quickly being like, "Hey, it's so-and-so," she continues.

But right away she notices that his incoming text message is green — meaning it's coming from an Android, not an iPhone, because iPhone messages appear as blue to other iPhone users.

Jocelyn doesn't have anything against Android phones, but the green text was suspicious — because Myles' photos indicated that he was an Apple user.

On TikTok, she shared an image from his profile, which shows a man wearing an Apple watch.

'So I do a reverse image search of some of the pictures he used on his profile, and what do we have here? An Instagram model from New York!' she says, showing the profile for a Brooklyn man named Ron

'I live in Ontario, so math's not mathing. The guy I matched with is pretending to be somebody named Myles — not Ron, the actual guy who's in the picture.

'Thankfully, I hardly spoke to this guy and invested zero percent of my time, and have not even told him yet that I know that he's catfishing me.

In a followup video, Jocelyn went on to share how their text message conversation continued, with her suggesting Friday night for dinner.

'Once he nails down a place, I'm gonna then send a screenshot and be like, "So are you gonna show up or this guy?" and then send the Instagram,' she said, adding that she also reported his profile on Bumble.

But in a final update, Jocelyn said that Myles never replied to her last message.

'I'm thinking he may have seen the TikTok,' she said, adding: 'If he's looking for attention and I'm just wanting to set up dinner, it's not really fun for him.'

Jocelyn's story has gone viral, with her original video being viewed over 634,000 times.

One commenter even claimed that she matched with Myles as well and had a similar story.

Others are just incredibly impressed with how she discovered his secret.

'This is the most impressive detective work I've seen yet!!!' wrote one commenter, while another said MTV's Catfish would be proud.

'The detective work here is 10/10. The speed in which you exposed him!!' said another.

Bumble has chimed in as well, assuring Jocelyn that they have permanently removed the man's account.

Document DAMONL0020220203ei23007vf

News

Apple builds 'invisible wall' on its Maps to hide CEO Tim Cook's house after he was targeted by an 'armed' stalker, 45, who drove her Porsche from Virginia to California to find him

Isabella Nikolic For Mailonline

698 words

3 February 2022

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Mail Online

DAMONL

English

Copyright 2022

* Mr Cook's £2.5million home in California has now been pixelated on Maps apps

* Julia Lee Choi, 45, from McLean, began tweeting about Mr Cook, 61, on Halloween in 2020 under the name Julia Lee Cook

* She calls him her husband and 'my bed man'. In her first tweet she wrote: 'My bed MAN! My bathroom MAN! My kitchen MAN! My Cleaning MAN! My Husband! My MAN is Tim Cook ! My kids Daddy!'

* Choi has now been served with a restraining order which prevents her from travelling within 200 yards of Mr Cook or any other Apple employees, going to any Apple property or Mr Cook's home

Apple has built an 'invisible wall' on its Maps app to hide CEO Tim Cook's house after he was targeted by an 'armed' stalker who drove 2,800 miles from Virginia to California to find him.

Mr Cook's £2.5million home in California has now been pixelated on both Apple Maps and Google Maps.

Julia Lee Choi, 45, from McLean, began tweeting about Mr Cook, 61, on Halloween in 2020 under the name Julia Lee Cook.

She calls him her husband and 'my bed man'. In her first tweet she wrote: 'My bed MAN! My bathroom MAN! My kitchen MAN! My Cleaning MAN! My Husband! My MAN is Tim Cook ! My kids Daddy!'

Choi has now been served with a restraining order which prevents her from travelling within 200 yards of Mr Cook or any other Apple employees, going to any Apple property or Mr Cook's home.

She is also not allowed to own a gun.

Choi has previously taken issue with the CEO of Google, Sundar Pichai. She tweeted: 'While we two of us reached our love final decision, and in progress, Sandra Pichia, CEO of Google insisting to interrupt Cook's love and tried to hurt me several times.

'Julia Lee Cook totally understand my husband's past and relationships with unexpected parties.'

In another tweet, she declared: 'My husband, I am not cleaning, cooking, or I am just waiting for my husband! My heart is tingling.'

She emailed Cook approximately 200 times from October to November 2020, sending him messages which included photos of what appear to be loaded handguns, according to documents.

Court documents said the emails demonstrated 'a significant escalation in tone.'

Some of the messages, described by Cook's attorney as 'threatening and highly disturbing,' were sexual in nature.

One of the messages reportedly read: 'What you have done is criminal defense, murdered.'

Cook's lawyers state, in their [petition](#) for the restraining order, that on November 3, 2020, she emailed him a photo of a package of ammunition: the following day, she wrote: 'I warned and told you stop trying to kill me. You made me to buy this instead of going for Christmas. I will NEVER forgive forget you.'

In September 2021, Choi allegedly sent Cook an email telling him that she is 'applying [to be] your roommate.'

According to the restraining order, she drove from Northern Virginia to California twice within two months in a Porsche Macan; the second time, in October 2021, she showed up at Cook's home and told security officials that she wanted to speak to Cook.

She remained on the property until police arrived on the scene, and said she 'could be violent'.

Choi appeared to have rented an Airbnb in San Jose for some time.

On December 18, 2021 she emailed him and said: 'we do not have to meet. give me 500 millions cash. then I will forget and forgive all better listen to me.'

Afterward, she allegedly continued sending Cook concerning tweets and emails, with one threatening to burn Cook's home.

The request for a restraining order was filed Thursday and granted Friday, as first reported in [Mercury News](#).

Apple believes that the woman is still in the South Bay and could possibly be armed.

A hearing is scheduled for March 29.

Document DAMONL0020220202ei22003h5



The Ratings Game

Facebook owner Meta loses record \$232 billion in market value after 'saying the quiet part out loud'

1,066 words

4 February 2022

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MarketWatch

MRKWC

English

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Facebook parent warns of pressure from TikTok's rise, **Apple's** privacy changes in 'one of the roughest Meta conference calls in years'

Associated PressShares of Facebook parent Meta Platforms Inc. tanked Thursday after the social-media company fell short with its quarterly outlook and outlined a laundry list of business pressures—from the rise of TikTok, to privacy changes made by **Apple Inc.**, to macroeconomic constraints on ad spending.

The stock plummeted 26% in Thursday trading to log its worst single-day percentage decline on record.

Meta's FB stock plunge shaved \$232 billion off the company's market value, which was the largest single-day decline in market value on record for any U.S. company, according to Dow Jones Market Data. That loss of market value is larger than the entire market values of Netflix Inc. NFLX, Advanced Micro Devices Inc. AMD and AT&T Inc. T, among others.

See more: [Facebook stands to shed more than \\$200 billion in market value after rough earnings report](#)

Meta's report and commentary prompted tough questions about the future of the main Facebook platform, which has been losing appeal with younger users but still has an attractive financial profile.

"It's not a major surprise that core blue is maturing and TikTok is gaining traction among the younger demographic – but following what was one of the roughest Meta conference calls in years, we think investors may start to question whether team Zuckerberg can salvage any growth out of FB, or whether the asset that represents ~2/3rds of revenue is in secular decline mode," Barclays analyst Ross Sandler wrote.

He rates Facebook's stock at overweight but cut his price target to \$335 from \$420.

Meta also highlighted privacy-related changes from Apple AAPL, which the company implied may not be impacting all digital-ad players equally. While the changes require that apps obtain users' permission before tracking their activity across apps and sites, Apple doesn't require such prompts for its Safari browser, on which Alphabet Inc.'s GOOGGOOGL Google pays to be the default search engine.

"What that means is that search ads could have access to far more third-party data for measurement and optimization purposes than app-based ad platforms like ours," Chief Financial Officer David Wehner said on the earnings call.

This discussion was among the "more intriguing" parts of Apple's earnings call, according to BMO Capital Markets analyst Daniel Salmon, who downgraded Meta's stock to market perform from outperform following the report, while lowering his price target to \$290 from \$425.

Opinion: [Meta CFO cries 'wolf' again with bleak Facebook outlook — but he may be right this time](#)

Apple's ownership of its platform and partnership with Google are "definitely true, but 'saying the quiet part out loud' likely also piles onto to investors' competitive anxieties near-term," Salmon wrote.

While Meta's commentary spooked investors, Salmon suggested that there may have been another audience paying attention to the earnings call.

"The silver lining: Meta put a lot onto the public record tonight that pushes back against the antitrust narrative, with comments on TikTok directly addressing the FTC's argument that FB has a dominant position in social networking," he said in his note to clients.

J.P. Morgan's Doug Anmuth was also worried about the impact to Meta from Apple's privacy changes and iOS operating system. The company pegged the potential 2022 negative impact at \$10 billion on the earnings call, with Wehner calling it "a pretty significant headwind" for Meta's business.

"Through 4Q, we were optimistic that FB was making tangible progress in recovering lost signal stemming from the iOS ad changes," Anmuth wrote. "However, we believe management's tone around iOS impact has deteriorated, and what was once described as 'manageable' now appears to be a \$10B revenue headwind in 2022."

Another issue for Meta is that it's seeing traction with Reels, a video format similar to what TikTok delivers, but the company doesn't make as much money when users browse the Reels section as it does when users spend time on their main feeds or watching ephemeral "stories" content.

Reels helps Meta keep users engaged, but the risk of its growth in the near term is that these users will be spending less time looking at other types of content that Meta more easily "monetizes."

Anmuth noted that Meta faced a similar dynamic years back as "stories" gained popularity.

"But that took at least a few quarters to work through, & FB was also growing faster then w/lower overall penetration," he wrote. "Beyond 1Q, we expect growth to decelerate further in 2Q against tougher comps, before re-accelerating in 2H22."

Elsewhere, many bullish analysts were willing to keep the faith following the report.

"While we anticipate a multi-quarter path to recovery amid what we view as one of the more challenging operating environments FB has encountered since its IPO, we view FB's challenges as ultimately surmountable—tactical mitigations, social commerce, regulatory intervention, and the Metaverse should blunt upstream platform risk," wrote Wells Fargo analyst Steven Cahall.

He cut his price target to \$350 from \$415 but kept an overweight rating on Meta shares.

Bernstein's Mark Shmulik keyed in on Meta's light revenue outlook for the first quarter, which came up about \$2 billion shy of the consensus view at the midpoint.

"Whether you like the company or not, Meta built a reputation of continuous execution and was expected to follow the strong prints of Apple, Microsoft MSFT, and Google," he noted, but the company instead delivered an outlook that "feels like a hangover from the digital ad party of the past 18 months."

Still, Shmulik saw value in Meta shares.

"We get that the story may be too hard for investors to get behind given the lack of buying at these depressed prices, and fixes/answers to these questions take time," he wrote. "But we continue to believe in the company, and the value investor in us can't help but look at this price and believe that the risk/reward remains one-sided and we would be buying the stock here."

He has an outperform rating on the stock but reduced his price target to \$350 from \$400.

Document MRKWC00020220203ei23001md

UPDATE 2-Snap recovers from Apple privacy changes, shares surge 50%

533 words

4 February 2022

03:43

Reuters News

LBA

English

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(Adds background, updates share movement)

By Sheila Dang

Feb 3 (Reuters) - Snap Inc on Thursday said its advertising business bounced back from the effects of Apple Inc's privacy changes faster than it expected, and shares of the company skyrocketed 50% as it provided a first quarter outlook that surpassed analyst estimates.

The results were good news for a tech sector hammered since yesterday on gloomy outlooks and concern that Apple's privacy updates, which were introduced last year and allow users to prevent apps from tracking their online activity for advertising purposes, would hurt ad revenue.

Snap forecast first-quarter revenue between \$1.03 billion to \$1.08 billion, and daily active users to be between 328 million to 330 million. The guidance for both metrics surpassed analyst estimates, according to IBES data from Refinitiv.

Digital pinboard company Pinterest Inc also reported higher-than-expected revenue on Thursday and its shares rose 20%.

The earnings reports from both Snap and Pinterest contrast with that of Facebook owner Meta Platforms Inc, whose shares fell 26%

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/meta-platforms-frankfurt-listed-shares-drop-tepid-forecast-2022-02-03> on Thursday in what could be the largest single-day wipeout in market value for a U.S. company, a day after it said the impact

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/facebook-owner-meta-fcasts-q1-revenue-below-estimates-2022-02-02> from Apple's privacy changes could be "in the order of \$10 billion" this year.

Meta said the Apple updates hurt advertisers' ability to target ads to potential customers and measure the effectiveness of ads.

A large portion of Snap's advertisers began using new ad measurement tools by the end of the fourth quarter, and parts of Snap's advertising business began to recover from the Apple changes "quicker than we anticipated," said Snap Chief Financial Officer Derek Andersen, in prepared remarks released ahead of the earnings call with analysts.

However, global supply chain disruptions and labor shortages hurt advertising demand from consumer packaged goods and restaurant brands, he added.

Snap's revenue for the fourth quarter ended Dec. 31 was \$1.3 billion, an increase of 42% from the prior-year quarter. The figure beat analyst expectations of \$1.2 billion, according to IBES data from Refinitiv.

Daily active users on Snapchat rose 20% year-over-year to 319 million, beating consensus estimates of 316.5 million.

Snap still has a long runway for growth compared to larger tech rivals. It has developed a strategy <https://www.reuters.com/technology/snap-plays-up-augmented-reality-latin-america-asia-expansion-2022-01-21> to attract new users across Latin America, Europe and Asia. Meta reported Wednesday that Facebook has 2.91 billion monthly users globally, which showed no growth compared with the previous quarter.

Snap also reported its first quarter of positive net income since its initial public offering, with earnings of \$22.5 million in the fourth quarter, compared with a net loss of \$113 million in the prior-year quarter. (Reporting by Sheila Dang in Dallas; Editing by Bernard Orr)

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What's Worth Streaming

Why Peacock, [Apple](#) and HBO Max are streaming must-haves for February 2022 — but Netflix is not

3,822 words

3 February 2022

23:20

MarketWatch

MRKWC

English

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Price hike and programming slump make Netflix less appealing, while rivals offer Winter Olympics and a stronger slate of new shows

AFP via Getty ImagesIt's time to seriously start asking yourself whether Netflix is worth it.

With prices for its most popular plan [jumping by \\$1.50](#) in February, Netflix is suddenly the most expensive major streaming service — more than even HBO Max. The problem is, after an end-of-the-year programming surge, Netflix is in reloading mode, and doesn't have a lot to offer in terms of new shows.

In the big picture, that \$1.50 difference may not matter all that much to budgets, but in terms of perception, it sure feels like Netflix subscribers are paying more for less. (At least until its content firehose returns later this year.) For some, this could be a good point to bail — at least for a month or two. In fact, for February we're recommending three services for a very budget-friendly \$25 — and Netflix is not among them.

Each month, this column rates the major streaming services as a “play,” “pause” or “stop,” similar to investment analysts' traditional ratings of buy, hold and sell, and picks the best content to help you make your monthly decisions.

As we've [previously mentioned](#), consumers can take full advantage of cord-cutting though a churn-and-return strategy — that's adding and dropping streaming services each month — and all it takes is good planning. Keep in mind that a billing cycle starts when you sign up, not necessarily at the beginning of a month. Also keep an eye out for lower-priced tiers, limited-time discounts, free trials and cost-saving bundles. There are a lot of offers out there, but the deals don't last forever.

Here's a look at what's coming to the various streaming services in February 2022, and what's really worth the monthly subscription fee.

Peacock (free basic level, Premium for \$4.99 a month with ads, or \$9.99 a month with no ads)

Comcast CMCSA recently revealed Peacock had [just 9 million paid subscribers](#) as of the end of the fourth quarter. It should pick up a few more — at least temporarily — in February, thanks largely to the Winter Olympics.

NBCUniversal's Summer Olympics streaming rollout was an absolute mess, spread out across Peacock and the NBCOlympics.com, with confusing schedules and some events not available on replay for a day or more after the fact. But NBC promises the Winter Olympics from Beijing will be much more streamlined and simple, with Peacock the one-stop shop with live streaming of every event (though 13 hours ahead of Eastern time) and replays available on-demand immediately after events end.

Read: [How to watch and stream the 2022 Winter Olympics from Beijing](#)

Geopolitical and COVID concerns aside, the Winter Olympics are always fun to watch, and Peacock should be a must-have for cord-cutters this month.

Keep in mind that while the Opening Ceremony is Feb. 4, some events actually start Feb. 2. And while all the major events will still air on NBC and its cable siblings USA and CNBC, they will NOT be available on Peacock's free tier. So if you want to stream the Olympics, you're gonna have to pay.

The good news is, for \$5, that's not a bad deal. For starters, you also get a little thing called Super Bowl LVI (Feb. 13) as the Cincinnati Bengals take on the L.A. Rams — again, only available on the paid tiers — and a full slate of sports, including English Premier League soccer, rugby, college hockey, IndyCar racing and PGA Tour golf.

There's plenty of non-sports programming to check out too, including "Bel-Air" (Feb. 13), which reimagines the classic '90s sitcom "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" as a prestige drama. Jabari Banks plays the Will Smith role, as he makes a complicated journey from the streets of West Philadelphia to the gated mansions of Southern California. It's a bizarre concept that looks interesting enough that it just might work.

Peacock also has ["Marry Me"](#) (Feb. 11) streaming the same day it hits movie theaters. The throwback rom-com stars Jennifer Lopez as an mega-famous pop singer who decides to marry a random guy — Owen Wilson — after discovering her rock-star fiancé has been having an affair. You can probably guess the rest of the plot, but it might be cute enough.

Also worth checking out: ["Vigil,"](#) a crackling, six-episode British murder mystery set on a submarine that quietly dropped in December (it's very good, with a cast of "oh-I-recognize-them!" actors); the excellent football docuseries "Joe Montana: Cool Under Pressure" that debuted in January; and a library of shows that include "Yellowstone," "Dr. Death," "Downton Abbey," "Cheers" and last year's musical comedies "Girls5Eva" and "We Are Lady Parts."

Who's Peacock for? If you like network and basic-cable TV, a good movie lineup and don't mind ads, the free version of Peacock is great. And if you have a Comcast or Cox cable subscription, you likely have free access to the Premium tier (with ads). The paid tiers are generally unnecessary, except for soccer fans or one-offs like the Olympics.

Play, pause or stop? Play. The Winter Olympics alone (assuming they go off without a hitch) should make a subscription worthwhile. And there are some solid, under-the-radar shows to explore too.

Apple TV+ (\$4.99 a month)

Apple's AAPL newest series has to be an inside joke about the tech giant's notoriously NDA-heavy work environment. "Severance" (Feb. 18) stars Adam Scott as a worker who agrees to a surgical procedure for a complete work-life split — where he can't remember his home life when he's at work, and can't remember his work life when at home. Things go awry and he's left to unravel a big mystery. John Turturro, Christopher Walken and Patricia Arquette co-star, and the trailer shows promise, in a very dystopian, "Black Mirror" sort of way. There are nine episodes, with two dropping on the premiere date and additional ones coming every Friday.

Apple rolls out another big name with the eight-episode thriller ["Suspicion"](#) (Feb. 4), featuring Uma Thurman as a CEO whose son is kidnapped from a New York City hotel, leading to a cat-and-mouse game with four seemingly ordinary British citizens who were at the scene and fall under — you guessed it — suspicion. As with "Severance," two episodes will drop at first, then one a week, every Friday.

There's also the movie ["The Sky Is Everywhere"](#) (Feb. 11), a musical drama based up on Jandy Nelson's YA novel, about a high school girl (played by Grace Kaufman) coping with her sister's death and a budding romance, set amid Northern California's majestic redwoods; the four-part documentary "Lincoln's Dilemma" (Feb. 18), narrated by Jeffrey Wright and about President Abraham Lincoln's complex journey to end slavery; new episodes every week of the genre-bending comedy/murder mystery ["The Afterparty,"](#) which somehow succeeds at telling its story from eight different perspectives among its all-star cast; and new episodes every week of M. Night Shyamalan's psychological thriller "Servant."

Who's Apple TV+ for? It offers a little something for everyone, but not necessarily enough for anyone — though it's getting there.

Play, pause or stop? Play. There's not a lot of new stuff, but what there is is good — or at least should be good. And at just \$5, it's worth the risk. Even if they're all busts, there's library stuff like "For All Mankind," "Swagger," "Mythic Quest," "Acapulco," "CODA" and "Dickinson" to dig into.

HBO Max (\$14.99 a month without ads, or \$9.99 with ads)

After a jam-packed January, February is significantly slower for AT&T's T HBO Max. Yet there's still more than enough to make a subscription worthwhile.

In addition to new, weekly episodes of "The Gilded Age," Julian Fellowes' new historical drama (dare we call it a "Downton Abbey" prequel?), there are new eps leading up to the season finales of the "Sex and the City" reboot "And Just Like That..." (Feb. 3), "Peacemaker" (Feb. 17), "Euphoria," "The Righteous Gemstones" and "Somebody Somewhere" (all Feb. 27).

Meanwhile, the sci-fi series ["Raised by Wolves"](#) (Feb. 3) returns for its second season. Executive produced by Ridley Scott, the series follows two android "parents" raising six human children on a mysterious planet. Season 1 had big ideas and gorgeous special effects, but ended up being too cold and dense for its own

good. It's admirable when shows take big swings, even if they don't work out, so maybe there's hope for an improvement in Season 2.

A pair of Earth-bound thrillers look much more watchable: Zoë Kravitz stars in the "Rear Window"-esque movie ["KIMI"](#) (Feb. 10) as an agoraphobic tech worker (basically a Siri or Alexa transcriber) who gets caught up in a murder conspiracy that she accidentally overhears. Stephen Soderbergh directed the film, which is set amid the COVID-19 pandemic. There's also the four-part British miniseries "The Girl Before" (Feb. 10), a psychological thriller starring Gugu Mbatha-Raw ("Loki," "The Morning Show") as a tenant who finds that her new dream home may be more of a nightmare.

Stephen and Ayesha Curry have a new celebrity-couples game show, "About Last Night" (Feb. 10); the Peabody- and Emmy-winning satirical news show "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver" (Feb. 20) returns for its ninth season; and the most recent season of the demented animated hit "Rick & Morty" (Feb. 5), which first aired on Adult Swim last fall, will finally be available to stream. For streaming stragglers, there's also the spectacular and moving post-apocalyptic miniseries "Station Eleven," which ended in January; the fifth and final season of the Italian mob epic "Gomorrah," which dropped Jan. 27; and the brilliantly bonkers final season of "Search Party," which landed Jan. 7.

For more: [Here's everything coming to HBO Max in February 2022 — and what's leaving](#)

Max is also adding recent movies such as "Free Guy" (Feb. 23), last summer's hit action-comedy starring Ryan Reynolds, and director Wes Anderson's whimsical anthology comedy "The French Dispatch" (Feb. 25), along with a ton of older movies, including "Chinatown," "Network," and "The Untouchables" (all Feb. 1).

Who's HBO Max for? HBO fans and movie lovers.

Play, pause or stop? Play. Though February's lineup isn't as strong as in past months, it's still pretty darn good. (One could argue it's worth it for the ridiculously entertaining "Peacemaker" and "Last Week Tonight" alone.) In terms of quality, HBO Max is still the streaming leader, by a long shot, and thanks to Netflix's latest price hike, its cost is less intimidating than it used to be.

Amazon Prime Video (\$12.99 a month)

UPDATE: [Amazon is raising the price of Prime](#), to \$14.99 a month. The new price will apply to renewals that take place after March 25, and new subscriptions as of Feb. 18.

Amazon's AMZN Prime Video has a pair of very big names coming in February.

One is more literal: ["Reacher"](#) (Feb. 4), the long-awaited series adaptation of the popular character from Lee Child's series of novels. Alan Ritchson plays Jack Reacher, a giant of a man who has a very particular set of skills and can't help but get involved in dealing out justice where it's needed. The first season has Reacher, a former military policeman-turned-drifter getting arrested for a murder he didn't commit, and forced to unravel a deadly conspiracy to prove his innocence. The fight-filled action series has potential, in a dumb-but-fun sort of way, and will drop all eight episodes at once.

Later in the month, Amazon's most prestigious current series, the Emmy-winning comedy "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" (Feb. 18) returns for its fourth season (Season 3 came out way back in 2019!), with Midge (Rachel Brosnahan) honing her comedy act in 1960, but facing growing rifts as her drive to succeed alienates friends and family. Two episodes will drop every Friday over the course of four weeks.

Prime Video also has an appealing-looking rom-com, ["I Want You Back"](#) (Feb. 11), starring Jenny Slate and Charlie Day as newly dumped strangers who bond over trying to sabotage their exes; ["Book of Love"](#) (Feb. 4), a rom-com about an English author (Sam Claflin) on a book tour in Mexico; and ["Phat Tuesdays"](#) (Feb. 4), a three-episode docuseries about influential Black comedian Guy Torry.

Complete list: [Here's what's coming to Amazon's Prime Video in February 2022](#)

There are also a ton of library shows to explore, including last year's fantasy hit "The Wheel of Time," the misanthropic comedy series "Loudermilk" and the I'm-not-crying-you're-crying autism dramedy "As We See It."

Who's Amazon Prime Video for? Movie lovers, TV-series fans who value quality over quantity.

Play, pause or stop? Pause and think it over. Though light on new shows, Prime Video's lineup looks solid this month, although its relatively high price may make consumers think twice.

Hulu (\$6.99 a month or \$12.99 with no ads)

It feels almost embarrassing to say out loud, but Hulu's upcoming miniseries "Pam & Tommy" (Feb. 2) looks like it might actually be very good.

Yes, another one of the more sordid episodes of the '90s is being revisited, with Lily James ("Downton Abbey") and Sebastian Stan ("Falcon and the Winter Soldier") starring as Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee, and Seth Rogen and Nick Offerman as the pair who steal their sex tape and scheme a get-rich-quick plan to show it to the world through the fledgling internet. The blend of nostalgia, scandal, drama and utter ridiculousness (Jason Mantzoukas plays the voice of Tommy's [talking, animatronic penis](#), for example) could make this extremely bingeable.

It's fairly slow going for Hulu aside from that. Kat Dennings returns for Season 2 of the original comedy ["Dollface"](#) (Feb. 11). If that doesn't ring a bell, it may be because Season 1 premiered way back in 2019. There's also Season 5 of "Rick & Morty" (Feb. 5); the Season 5 premiere of FX's underrated '80s drug drama ["Snowfall"](#) (Feb. 24), with kingpin Franklin Saint and his family at the peak of their power, only to face a renewed threat from the government and the police; and the premiere of Season 21(!) of NBC's iconic "Law & Order" (Feb. 25), revived after being canceled in 2010, with Sam Waterston and Anthony Anderson returning and joined by Jeffrey Donovan ("Burn Notice") and Hugh Dancy ("Hannibal"). Note that new eps of "Snowfall" and "Law & Order" will stream the day after they originally air on TV.

For more: [Here's what's coming to Hulu in February 2022 — and what's leaving](#)

There are also a pair of pretty decent recent movies — Guillermo del Toro's noirish thriller ["Nightmare Alley"](#) (Feb. 1), and Matthew Vaughn's action prequel ["The King's Man"](#) (Feb. 18) — and the Hulu original ["No Exit"](#) (Feb. 25), a suspense/thriller about a group of strangers stranded together in a blizzard.

Who's Hulu for? TV lovers. There's a deep library for those who want older TV series, and next-day streaming for many current network and cable shows.

Play, pause or stop? Pause and think it over. As with Prime Video, Hulu doesn't have a ton of new stuff on the way, but what there is looks promising. One point in its favor: Hulu's basic tier is half the price of Amazon.

Netflix (\$9.99 a month for basic, \$15.49 standard or \$19.99 premium)

As light on new programming as Netflix NFLX was in January, February isn't much better. And it'll cost you more.

February's lineup is noticeably more sparse than what subscribers saw toward the end of last year. The big new release is "Inventing Anna" (Feb. 11), a limited series from hitmaking producer Shonda Rhimes ("Bridgerton," "Grey's Anatomy"). Emmy-winner Julia Garner ("Ozark") stars as "Anna Delvey," an Instagram-famous fraudster who convinced New York's elite that she was a German heiress, in this ripped-from-the-headlines miniseries. Rhimes seems like the perfect creative force for this soapy, scandalous real-life story, and it should be Netflix's brightest offering of the month.

Other potential hits include ["Vikings: Valhalla"](#) (Feb. 25), a spinoff series of History Channel's popular, grimy and bloody "Vikings," set 100 years after that series; a new season of the addictive dating series ["Love Is Blind"](#) (Feb. 11, with new eps every week); and the improv comedy/mystery series ["Murderville"](#) (Feb. 3), starring Will Arnett and celebrity guests. There's also a reboot of the classic horror movie ["Texas Chainsaw Massacre"](#) (Feb. 18); Part 4 of Matt Groening's animated fantasy series ["Disenchanted"](#) (Feb. 9); and ["Jeen-yuhs: A Kanye Trilogy"](#) (Feb. 16), a three-part docuseries about Kanye West.

UPDATE: One late-breaking addition of note: ["Ali Wong: Don Wong"](#) (Feb. 14), in which the popular comedian talks about the challenges of monogamy, among other things, in her third Netflix standup special.

See more: [Here's what's coming to Netflix in February 2022 — and what's leaving](#)

And in the "don't bother" category, the plodding and unfunny Steve Carrell sitcom "Space Force" (Feb. 18) returns for a second season that nobody asked for.

Who's Netflix for? Fans of buzz-worthy original shows and movies.

Play, pause or stop? Stop. Shocking, right? But for once, it's safe to drop Netflix and not feel like you're missing out on much. "Inventing Anna" should be good, but it can always be binged sometime down the road. Considering Netflix is now the most expensive major streaming service, the value is just not there this month. Looking ahead, March — with the return of "Bridgerton" — should offer more bang for the buck.

Disney+ (\$7.99 a month)

It's a slow month for Disney DIS too, and if your kids can live without it for a while, February is an excellent time to save some money and cancel your subscription. (Don't worry, you can pick it up again in time for Oscar Isaac's ["Moon Knight"](#) at the end of March.)

UPDATE: Disney+ made a late addition to its lineup: its first South Korean original series, ["Snowdrop"](#) (Feb. 9), starring Jung Hae-In, the late [Kim Mi-soo](#) and featuring K-Pop star Jisoo of Blackpink. The 16-episode romantic melodrama takes place during the political upheaval of 1987, and ran into controversy in South Korea over [claims it distorted and trivialized history](#).

The only other new series is a revival of ["The Proud Family: Louder and Prouder"](#) (Feb. 23), a diverse, animated, family/coming-of-age comedy that ended its original run in 2005. Also on tap: the season finale of the disappointing "Star Wars" spinoff series "The Book of Boba Fett" (Feb. 9), and "Free Guy" (Feb. 23), last year's hit action-comedy movie starring Ryan Reynolds.

Who's Disney+ for? Families with kids, and hardcore "Star Wars" and Marvel fans. For those not in those groups, Disney's library can be lacking.

Play, pause or stop? Stop. Despite a fairly deep library, there's not enough new programming to justify paying for this month.

Paramount+ (\$4.99 a month with ads but not live CBS, \$5.99 a month with ads, \$9.99 without ads)

Myriad "Star Trek" shows are the backbone of Paramount+, and that'll be in evidence in February, as ["Star Trek: Discovery"](#) (Feb. 10) returns with six new episodes after a new year's hiatus. The new eps will drop every week, with Sonequa Martin-Green starring as Captain Michael Burnham in the prequel that takes place in the pre-Kirk era.

There are also new episodes every week of the cheesy yet addictive "Yellowstone" prequel "1883," which will conclude its first season Feb. 26; as well as ["Big Nate"](#) (Feb. 17), a new animated series about a middle-school kid, based on the popular comic strip and children's books; and the CBS News docuseries "Wasteland" (Feb. 24), which tackles the impact of garbage and waste on America's waterways.

And just in time for Valentine's Day, there's the supernatural (and super sappy) romance movie ["The In-Between"](#) (Feb. 11), starring Joey King and Kyle Allen as a teen couple who even death can't keep apart.

On the sports front, Paramount+ has a loaded schedule featuring NCAA basketball, PGA Tour golf, CONCACAF soccer qualifiers and UEFA Champion's League matches.

Who's Paramount+ for? Gen X cord-cutters who miss live sports and familiar ViacomCBS VIAC broadcast and cable shows.

Play, pause or stop? Stop. Unless you need it for live sports or your "Star Trek" fix, there's just not enough there to make it worth your while.

Discovery+ (\$4.99 a month, \$6.99 ad-free)

Discovery+ has more of the usual in February. Which is to say: Plenty of perfectly watchable but disposable shows, with none particularly worth paying for.

The best of the bunch look like "Secrets of the Salisbury Poisonings" (Feb. 17), the true story of a double agent living in England and the botched Russian plot to kill him with a nerve agent; "90 Day Journey" (Feb. 4), which repackages "90 Day" couples' stories from multiple shows into a single storyline; "Magnolia Table with Joanna Gaines" (Feb. 4), as the Waco-based lifestyle influencer shares her favorite recipes; and "Puppy Bowl Presents: The Winter Games" (Feb. 3) and "Puppy Bowl Presents: Puppy Mania" (Feb. 12), in which...puppies!

Who's Discovery+ for? Cord cutters who miss their unscripted TV or who are really, really into "90 Day Fiancée."

Play, pause or stop? Stop. Sorry. Discovery+ is still fantastic for background TV. But there's not much that's essential viewing. It's really only a good option for those who are HGTV/Food Network/TLC superfans who've cut the cord completely — if you still have cable or get Discovery DISCA channels through a live-streaming service like YouTube TV or Hulu Live, it's just not necessary. (Besides, many of its cable shows are also available on Hulu.)

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Unity Software Has No Apple Overhang -- Market Talk

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1609 ET - Unity Software, which provides advertising services mainly for mobile games, hasn't been negatively impacted by Apple's privacy rules because it relies on data that tracks players' in-game behavior as opposed to players' general attributes like age, location and gender, company's CEO, John Riccitiello, tells the WSJ. "We look at how they play games, not who they are," he says. For the holiday quarter, Unity on says revenue for its Operate Solutions business, which largely comprises its ad-network business, grew 45% to \$194.6M. Unity shares up 8% in extended trading. (Sarah.Needleman@wsj.com; @saraheneedleman)

1608 ET - Unity Software says in 4Q it grew its top line but widened its loss. Revenue climbed 43% to \$315.9M, exceeding the high end of guidance. Loss from operations was \$144.8M, or 46% of revenue, compared to loss from operations of \$80.8M, or 37% of revenue, in 4Q of 2020. For all of 2021, Unity said revenue rose 44% to \$1.1B and that its loss from operations was \$531.7M, or 48% of revenue, compared to loss from operations of \$274.8M, or 36% of revenue, in 2020. The San Francisco-based company, which went public in September 2020, provides tools for creating interactive, real-time 3D content including mobile games in addition to running an mobile-app advertising network. Looking ahead, Unity expects both Q1 and 2022 full-year revenue to grow between 34% and 36%. Unity shares up 10% in extended trading.(sarah.needleman@wsj.com; @saraheneedleman)

1605 ET - US stocks fall, led by a plunge in Facebook shares. The social media company sinks 26% as profit fell by more than expected and as it issued a downbeat outlook. Spotify slips 17% after it said it wouldn't provide annual guidance. Amazon falls 7.8% ahead of its scheduled earnings report after the market closes. T-Mobile gains 10% on an earnings beat. Initial claims for jobless benefits fall to 238,000 ahead of tomorrow's payrolls data. The euro rallies following signals from the ECB that there could be a rate increase this year. The Dow declines 1.5% to 35111, the S&P 500 slips 2.4% to 4477 and the Nasdaq drops 3.7% to 13878--its worst decline since September 2020. (jonathan.vuocolo@wsj.com; @jonvuocolo)

1439 ET - Amazon workers are amping up their efforts to unionize. A group of workers in New York filed for a union election at a second company warehouse in Staten Island, New York, the National Labor Relations Board says. In order for an election to move forward, the group would have to show they received at least 30% of support via signatures from workers at the facility. The group, which calls itself Amazon Labor Union, has already won approval to hold a union election at a different Amazon facility in Staten Island. The date for that election has not yet been determined. Organizers are aiming to unionize four Staten Island facilities. (sebastian.herrera@wsj.com; @SebasAHerrera)

1430 ET - Median compensation for finance chiefs at big US companies last year increased 16% from a year earlier, to \$4.9M, lifted by a sharp rise in annual bonuses, according to an analysis of early proxy filings from Mercer, a benefits advisory firm. Bonus pay for chief financial officers increased 36% at the median, to \$1.2M, according to Mercer. Stronger annual bonuses also boosted median compensation for chief executives, Mercer said. The analysis of CFO compensation included 43 companies with fiscal years that end between June 30 and Oct. 31 that filed their proxy reports as of Jan. 31. (kristin.broughton@wsj.com; @kcbroughton)

1400 ET - TPC Group, a Houston-based supplier and service provider to the chemical and petroleum industries, says it had signed a forbearance agreement with a group of roughly 85% of the company's creditors after it missed an interest payment due to them earlier this week. Additionally, it announced that the forbearing creditors agreed to provide the company \$52M of additional liquidity in exchange for new senior debt coming due in 2024. The proceeds are earmarked to support TPC's operations. The company has two rated secured bonds worth around \$1B and is owned by two private equity firms, First Reserve Corp. and SK Capital. (alexander.saeedy@wsj.com; @ajsaeedy)

1338 ET - US home-price growth, which has been in the double digits since summer 2020, is expected to slow to an annual rate of 7% by the end of 2022, according to a Redfin forecast. Home sales are expected to remain relatively flat throughout the year, due to the ongoing shortage of homes for sale. Redfin economists expect the 30-year fixed mortgage rate to continue to rise steadily to 3.9% over the course of the year. "Even though the price of homebuying has never been higher, demand is only getting stronger," said Redfin. "By

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this summer, higher prices and rates may cause buyers to pull back from the market." The estimated monthly mortgage payment for a typical home for sale jumped 23% year over year to an all-time high of \$1,877. (chris.wack@wsj.com)

1333 ET - The total value of US homes jumped 19% over the past year to a record \$38.6 trillion in December, from \$32.6 trillion in December 2020, according to Redfin. In both dollar and percentage terms, that's the largest annual gain seen during any December since at least 2001. Home prices have skyrocketed during the pandemic as low mortgage rates, remote work and a soaring stock market have fueled a swell in homebuyer demand amid an ongoing housing shortage. December marked the 17th-straight month of double-digit price gains, while the number of homes for sale sunk to a record low. Homebuyers have flocked to Sun Belt states during the pandemic as remote work has allowed them to prioritize affordability over proximity to the office. (chris.wack@wsj.com)

1254 ET - During the Covid-19 pandemic, investors started getting used to quarterly earnings results that blew past analysts' forecasts as an economic recovery proceeded faster than many had feared. Now--though results are still coming in better than expected--those surprises aren't packing the same punch. So far in the 4Q earnings season, profits are beating Wall Street forecasts by just over 5% on average, Wells Fargo writes, surveying companies with investment-grade credit. That's still shiny compared with the 3.7% prepandemic average, but nowhere near the 17% beats that were typical in previous pandemic-era earnings seasons. "These trends suggest that the period of outsized earnings beats fueled by stronger-than-expected recovery from the Covid epidemic is ending," Wells Fargo writes. The S&P 500 is down about 3.3% since its Jan. 13 close, the approximate start of the current earnings season. (matt.grossman@wsj.com; @mattgrossman)

1242 ET - Wall Street's expectations for US growth this year have marched downward since the calendar turned, Mizuho Chief Economist Steven Ricchiuto notes. Much of that trend stems from evolving views of how tightening monetary and fiscal policy will effect the path of output. "There is a risk an overzealous Fed could cause the economy to dip below trend and result in a hard landing," Ricchiuto writes. "This downside risk is related to a number of other important constraints on the economy beyond those imposed by fiscal and monetary policy." Inflation's ongoing effects on household purchasing power are one further factor that pose a risk. "Should the Fed validate market expectations of policy tightening, the economy is more likely to dip in to a growth recession than achieve a soft landing." (matt.grossman@wsj.com; @mattgrossman)

1239 ET - The rates for shipping bulk grains over the ocean have been on the decline in the past three weeks, the USDA says. In its latest weekly Grain Transportation Report, it says as of January 27 the rate for shipping a metric ton of grain from the US Gulf to Japan was \$62.50 per ton--down 11% from earlier this month. "The dip in the ocean rates reflects the typical seasonal dip in vessel demand amid various holidays," says the USDA. The USDA reports that 37 grain vessels were loaded in the Gulf for the week ended January 27, unchanged from the same time last year. However, over the next 10 days, 52 vessels are expected to be loaded, down 20% from the same timeframe last year. (kirk.maltais@wsj.com; @kirkmaltais)

1227 ET - After seeing the emergence of the Omicron variant dent earnings in its latest quarter, Tinder parent company Match Group could be poised to benefit from pent-up demand for dating, analysts at Bank of America say. They say the stock is among their top picks for 2022 as they see the company benefiting from people eventually returning to the dating scene, "as vaccination rollouts continue and more markets reopen." The company could also roll out new monetization methods in the year ahead and boost margins if Apple is pressured into cutting App Store fees, the analysts say. BofA drops the target price to \$168 from \$178. Match Group is currently trading around \$113 a share, off 4% after gaining around 5% Wednesday. (Will.Feuer@wsj.com)

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Facebook Feels \$10 Billion Sting From **Apple's** Privacy Push -- WSJ

By Meghan Bobrowsky

1,789 words

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Facebook's parent company served up the starkest sign yet of how **Apple** Inc.'s new ad-privacy policy is roiling the digital-advertising world.

Discussing Meta Platforms Inc.'s quarterly earnings and its outlook for the current year that shocked investors, Chief Financial Officer Dave Wehner on Wednesday said the company expects the **Apple** policy to cost it more than \$10 billion in lost sales for 2022. That is equivalent to about 8% of its total revenue last year.

"It's a pretty significant headwind," Mr. Wehner said on a call with analysts.

Apple introduced the changes last April, altering its iPhone software to require apps to ask users whether they want to be tracked. The move seriously limited the ability to gather data through apps that is used to target digital ads and drove advertisers to alter spending patterns. Meta had said previously that the Apple move was hurting its ad business, but hadn't given an estimate for how much.

Meta "was impacted significantly and it's going to be a continuous problem," Daniel Newman, a principal analyst at Futurum Research, said Wednesday.

The guidance was part of a quarterly report that raised multiple concerns for investors and sent Meta's shares plunging more than 20% in after-hours trading -- the equivalent of a \$175 billion-plus loss in market capitalization. Meta also reported losing about a million daily users globally in the last quarter, and its sales outlook for the current quarter fell short of Wall Street expectations. The company expects expenses to jump around \$20 billion or more this year as it pursues Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg's bet on the metaverse, the online virtual world some see as the next evolution of the internet.

The gloomy outlook also tainted investor sentiment on other ad-focused companies. Snap Inc., which suffered a 20% share decline when it previously said it expected a revenue hit from the Apple move, declined after Meta's report on Wednesday. Snap is expected to provide more insight on how its business has been affected when it reports quarterly results after the bell Thursday. The stock was down more than 17% in premarket trading.

Booming digital ad spending has been a boon for Mr. Zuckerberg's company. Facebook, as the company was known before its renaming last year to Meta, enjoyed years of strong revenue driven in significant part by its ability to track the behavior of users of apps and websites and enable advertisers to deliver highly targeted ads based on that information. The Apple policy change disrupted that ability, with a large majority of users, according to some measurements, opting not to be tracked. Meta says that policy has made ad targeting more difficult and measuring the impact of placements harder.

Apple's move has had reach beyond social-media companies. Videogame company Zynga Inc., which specializes in smartphone games like Words With Friends and has its own advertising platform, suffered an earnings hit from the new Apple policy that led its shares to drop sharply last year. The company ended up selling itself to Take-Two Interactive Software Inc. for \$11 billion last month.

While there clearly is an impact from Apple's policy, Brian Wieser, GroupM's president of business intelligence, said the impact on Meta might not be as great as the company's executives have suggested. "I'm skeptical that it's as bad as they're conveying," he said. The digital ad business remains healthy, he said, pointing to Google parent Alphabet Inc.'s strong earnings this week seemingly largely unaffected by the policy changes.

Twitter, in its most recent earnings report in October, said it expected to be largely unaffected by the Apple policy because it isn't as reliant on targeted digital ads as some of its rivals.

Meta's CFO, Mr. Wehner, said Apple's policy treats Google differently, suggesting that the difference might reflect a longstanding business relationship between the two companies. "We believe Google's search ad business could have benefited relative to services like ours that face a different set of restrictions from Apple and given that Apple continues to take billions of dollars a year from Google search ads, the incentive clearly sits for this policy discrepancy to continue."

Google's flagship search-ad business relies on search terms customers input to reveal what they are interested in, rather than on data collected from app and web tracking.

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

Google said its search and advertising revenue rose 36% and topped \$43 billion in the most recent quarter, led by strength in retail-related ad spending, with YouTube advertising up 25% from the year-earlier period. The company didn't address the Apple situation but previously said the changes to user tracking had a modest impact on YouTube revenue.

Sheryl Sandberg, Meta's chief operating officer, said on Wednesday's earnings call that the company was working on ways to measure the impact of the ads it sells and to find ways to show relevant ads without collecting personalized data. "That's going to take us time."

Write to Meghan Bobrowsky at Meghan.Bobrowsky@wsj.com

3 Feb 2022 09:44 ET Facebook Feels \$10 Billion Sting From Apple's Privacy Push--Update -- WSJ

By Meghan Bobrowsky

Facebook's parent company served up the starkest sign yet of how Apple Inc.'s new ad-privacy policy is roiling the digital-advertising world.

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"It's a pretty significant headwind," Mr. Wehner said on a call with analysts.

Apple introduced the changes last April, altering its iPhone software to require apps to ask users whether they want to be tracked. The move seriously limited the ability to gather data through apps that is used to target digital ads and drove advertisers to alter spending patterns. Meta had said previously that the Apple move was hurting its ad business, but hadn't given an estimate for how much.

Meta "was impacted significantly and it's going to be a continuous problem," Daniel Newman, a principal analyst at Futurum Research, said Wednesday.

The guidance was part of a quarterly report that raised multiple concerns for investors and sent Meta's shares plunging more than 20% in after-hours trading -- the equivalent of a \$175 billion-plus loss in market capitalization. Meta also reported losing about a million daily users globally in the last quarter, and its sales outlook for the current quarter fell short of Wall Street expectations. The company expects expenses to jump around \$20 billion or more this year as it pursues Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg's bet on the metaverse, the online virtual world some see as the next evolution of the internet.

The gloomy outlook also tainted investor sentiment on other ad-focused companies. Snap Inc., which suffered a 20% share decline when it previously said it expected a revenue hit from the Apple move, declined after Meta's report on Wednesday. Snap traded more than 18% lower early Thursday. It is expected to provide more insight on how its business has been affected when it reports quarterly results after the closing bell.

Booming digital ad spending has been a boon for Mr. Zuckerberg's company. Facebook, as the company was known before its renaming last year to Meta, enjoyed years of strong revenue driven in significant part by its ability to track the behavior of users of apps and websites and enable advertisers to deliver highly targeted ads based on that information. The Apple policy change disrupted that ability, with a large majority of users, according to some measurements, opting not to be tracked. Meta says that policy has made ad targeting more difficult and measuring the impact of placements harder.

Apple's move has had reach beyond social-media companies. Videogame company Zynga Inc., which specializes in smartphone games like Words With Friends and has its own advertising platform, suffered an earnings hit from the new Apple policy that led its shares to drop sharply last year. The company ended up selling itself to Take-Two Interactive Software Inc. for \$11 billion last month.

While there clearly is an impact from Apple's policy, Brian Wieser, GroupM's president of business intelligence, said the impact on Meta might not be as great as the company's executives have suggested. "I'm skeptical that it's as bad as they're conveying," he said. The digital ad business remains healthy, he said, pointing to Google parent Alphabet Inc.'s strong earnings this week seemingly largely unaffected by the policy changes.

Twitter, in its most recent earnings report in October, said it expected to be largely unaffected by the Apple policy because it isn't as reliant on targeted digital ads as some of its rivals.

Meta's CFO, Mr. Wehner, said Apple's policy treats Google differently, suggesting that the difference might reflect a longstanding business relationship between the two companies. "We believe Google's search ad business could have benefited relative to services like ours that face a different set of restrictions from Apple and given that Apple continues to take billions of dollars a year from Google search ads, the incentive clearly sits for this policy discrepancy to continue."

Google's flagship search-ad business relies on search terms customers input to reveal what they are interested in, rather than on data collected from app and web tracking.

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

Google said its search and advertising revenue rose 36% and topped \$43 billion in the most recent quarter, led by strength in retail-related ad spending, with YouTube advertising up 25% from the year-earlier period. The company didn't address the Apple situation but previously said the changes to user tracking had a modest impact on YouTube revenue.

Sheryl Sandberg, Meta's chief operating officer, said on Wednesday's earnings call that the company was working on ways to measure the impact of the ads it sells and to find ways to show relevant ads without collecting personalized data. "That's going to take us time."

Write to Meghan Bobrowsky at Meghan.Bobrowsky@wsj.com

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FAANG Stocks Are Losing Their Glamor, Liberum Says -- Market Talk

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3 February 2022

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Dow Jones Institutional News

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English

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1041 ET - The major U.S. tech stocks known collectively as FAANG are losing their attractions, Liberum Capital says. The raw annual return of Facebook, Amazon, **Apple**, Netflix and Google before they got the acronym in 2013 was about 33%, the brokerage says. Since then, it has declined to 31%, or 27% excluding the Covid period, Liberum says. "That's not so bad, it seems," Liberum analyst Joachim Klement says. Still, the annual four-factor "alpha" of the shares versus the stock market, corrected for market risk, size, value and momentum, has declined from about 23% a year before 2013 to 7%, he says. "That implies that, going forward, there is no reason to believe FAANG stocks will outperform the U.S. market," Klement says. (philip.waller@wsj.com)

1019 ET - Eli Lilly is delaying the completion of its application for US regulatory approval of an experimental Alzheimer's disease drug, donanemab, citing a recent proposal by the federal Medicare agency to restrict payments for such drugs. Lilly started its application in October, and initially expected to finish it by the end of March. But the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in January said it planned to only cover such drugs for people in clinical trials, including an Alzheimer's drug from Biogen. Lilly executives say the CMS decision, if finalized, would "effectively negate" an FDA approval, and will limit access to its drug. The company is taking more time to gather data for its FDA application, and still plans to finish the application this year. For more, see <https://on.wsj.com/3omkuol>. Lilly falls 3.2% to \$242.90. (peter.loftus@wsj.com; @Loftus)

1018 ET - Qualcomm's strong results driven by its position in the Chinese Android handset market and wider shift to higher end 5G smartphones suggest the company could deliver early on a cornerstone earnings commitment, Evercore ISI recons. "QCOM's FY24 EPS guide of \$12 appears to be on track to come in almost 2 years early," analyst C.J. Muse says following Wednesday's numbers from the mobile-phone chip giant. Qualcomm shares are down 2.8% in early trading on a day tech stocks broadly are weighed down by Meta Platform's disappointing results Wednesday. (robert.wall@wsj.com)

1018 ET - Fed governor nominee Phillip Jefferson says in his confirmation hearing that inflation is too high and monetary policy will struggle to deal with the supply-driven part of the problem. That said, Jefferson says before the Senate, "the directive is clear. The Fed must take steps to bring inflation back in line with its target." (michael.derby@wsj.com)

1008 ET - Yum Brands, the University of Louisville and Howard University say they launched a fellowship to advance underrepresented people of color and women MBA students interested in the franchise restaurant industry. Ten second-year MBA students from the two universities were selected to participate in the five-month fellowship where two participants will have the opportunity to become future franchisees of Yum. The participants -- six MBA students from Howard University and four from the University of Louisville -- receive scholarships, extensive education on the franchise business model and mentorship from Yum franchisees. Sessions will allow students to learn from Yum executives and franchisees and restaurant operators, as well as interacting with brand franchise recruiters. (michael.dabaie@wsj.com)

1003 ET - Strong demand across the board for its seed and crop protection products are helping Corteva raise prices on its products to offset higher costs due to inflation, CEO Chuck Magro says on a call with analysts. "The supply challenges are real ... The pricing increases is offsetting the higher cost," he says. "There's a lot of industries out there that were not able to do that. I think growers need the products, they need the technology. And certainly, from a pricing execution perspective, I think we've demonstrated that we can move prices to cover costs and grow margins." (patrick.thomas@wsj.com)

0950 ET - New orders for heavy-duty commercial trucks remained weak in January as supply-chain problems kept order backlogs extended through 2022. Market forecaster ACT Research estimates that 21,300 trucks were ordered in North America during January, down 50% from last year and down 7% from December. Analysts say truck manufacturers have been limiting orders in recent months to keep the backlog from expanding further when truck production is constrained. JP Morgan notes that customers' approach to the market is to "wait-and-see until visibility around pricing and supply chain improves." (robert.tita@wsj.com; @bob_tita)

0949 ET - Sony Group says in its Q3 FY2021 report, released Wednesday, that launching games on multiple platforms -- and not just its own PlayStation system -- presents "a major growth opportunity" for the company. It also says its PlayStation Studios unit aims to launch more than 10 live-services games by 2025 in collaboration with Bungie, the game studio it is in the process of buying. "Through this acquisition, we intend to acquire new users and increase engagement on platforms other than PlayStation, which will enable us to significantly advance our long-term growth strategy of further expanding the ecosystem of our game business," Sony Group says. (sarah.needleman@wsj.com; @saraheneedleman)

0943 ET - Santander's short-term outlook seems well supported, Jefferies analysts say following an earnings call with company management. The Spanish bank on Wednesday reported 2021 results and said its revenue momentum should benefit from higher interest rates this year, while low expected provisions for 2022 should support profits. Santander also continues to see opportunities to simplify its U.S. business and get greater synergies there, and plans to share more details on its strategy in the country next quarter, Jefferies notes. Despite inflationary pressures, the bank is committed to its EUR1 billion cost-reduction target in Europe--U.K. is the one area where the pace of cost cutting seems to have slowed, Jefferies says. (cristina.roca@wsj.com; @_cristinaroca)

0942 ET - More farmers in the US are expected to shift their planting plans from corn to soybeans this year, says Chuck Magro, CEO of seed maker Corteva, on a call with analysts. Magro, who took over the top job at Corteva in November, says because fertilizer prices remain high, growers may be inclined to rotate into beans, which are less fertilizer intensive compared with corn. The switch to soybeans also supports the use of the Delaware company's weed-killer product Enlist. "This provides further support for systems like Enlist, where customer demand and industry-wide penetration remains strong and we anticipate it will grow to at least 40% of total U.S. soybean acres in 2022," Magro says. (patrick.thomas@wsj.com)

0938 ET - Activision Blizzard reports 4Q earnings after the bell and analysts are bracing for possible rare miss on guidance. The company's outlook is for \$2.8B in net bookings and \$1.29 in earnings per share, which analysts say might be hard to beat because they think the latest Call of Duty game underperformed. Further, they say recent turmoil within Activision's employee ranks may have contributed to gamers avoiding the company's properties. Analysts at MKM Partners estimate that revenue for the company's Activision Publishing and Blizzard Entertainment units declined 13% and 11%, respectively, but that revenue for its King unit grew 16%. (sarah.needleman@wsj.com; @saraheneedleman)

0936 ET - Intellia Therapeutics' deal to buy private biotechnology company Rewrite Therapeutics for up to \$200M gets a thumbs up from Truist analysts, who say the acquisition should continue to position Intellia as a leader in the genome-editing field. Intellia says it's paying \$45M upfront and up to an additional \$155M based on milestones for Rewrite, which has developed new tools for genome editing that Intellia says are highly complementary to its existing CRISPR/Cas9 and base editing technologies. Truist calls the deal "highly positive" and reiterates its buy rating on Intellia shares. (colin.kellaher@wsj.com)

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Exclusive-iPhone flaw exploited by second Israeli spy firm-sources

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Reuters News

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A flaw in **Apple's** software exploited by Israeli surveillance firm NSO Group to break into iPhones in 2021 was simultaneously abused by a competing company, according to five people familiar with the matter.

QuaDream, the sources said, is a smaller and lower profile Israeli firm that also develops smartphone hacking tools intended for government clients.

The two rival businesses gained the same ability last year to remotely break into iPhones, according to the five sources, meaning that both firms could compromise Apple phones without an owner needing to open a malicious link. That two firms employed the same sophisticated hacking technique – known as a “zero-click” – shows that phones are more vulnerable to powerful digital spying tools than the industry will admit, one expert said.

"People want to believe they're secure, and phone companies want you to believe they're secure. What we've learned is, they're not," said Dave Aitel, a partner at Cordyceps Systems, a cybersecurity firm.

Experts analyzing intrusions engineered by NSO Group and QuaDream since last year believe the two companies used very similar software exploits, known as ForcedEntry, to hijack iPhones.

An exploit is computer code designed to leverage a set of specific software vulnerabilities, giving a hacker unauthorized access to data.

The analysts believed NSO and QuaDream's exploits were similar because they leveraged many of the same vulnerabilities hidden deep inside Apple's instant messaging platform and used a comparable approach to plant malicious software on targeted devices, according to three of the sources.

Bill Marczak, a security researcher with digital watchdog Citizen Lab who has been studying both companies' hacking tools, told Reuters that QuaDream's zero-click capability seemed "on par" with NSO's.

Reuters made repeated attempts to reach QuaDream for comment, sending messages to executives and business partners. A Reuters journalist last week visited QuaDream's office, in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ramat Gan, but no one answered the door. Israeli lawyer Vibeke Dank, whose email was listed on QuaDream's corporate registration form, also did not return repeated messages.

An Apple spokesman declined to comment on QuaDream or say what if any action they planned to take with regard to the company.

ForcedEntry is viewed as "one of the most technically sophisticated exploits" ever captured by security researchers.

So similar were the two versions of ForcedEntry that when Apple fixed the underlying flaws in September 2021 it rendered both NSO and QuaDream's spy software ineffective, according to two people familiar with the matter.

In a written statement, an NSO spokeswoman said the company "did not cooperate" with QuaDream but that "the cyber intelligence industry continues to grow rapidly globally."

Apple sued NSO Group over ForcedEntry in November, claiming that NSO had violated Apple's user terms and services agreement. The case is still in its early stages.

In its lawsuit, Apple said that it "continuously and successfully fends off a variety of hacking attempts." NSO has denied any wrongdoing.

Spyware companies have long argued they sell high-powered technology to help governments thwart national security threats. But human rights groups and journalists have repeatedly documented the use of spyware to attack civil society, undermine political opposition, and interfere with elections.

Apple notified thousands of ForcedEntry targets in November, making elected officials, journalists, and human rights workers around the world realize they had been placed under surveillance.

In Uganda, for example, NSO's ForcedEntry was used to spy on U.S. diplomats, Reuters reported .

In addition to the Apple lawsuit, Meta's WhatsApp is also litigating over the alleged abuse of its platform. In November, NSO was put on a trade blacklist by the U.S. Commerce Department over human rights concerns.

Unlike NSO, QuaDREAM has kept a lower profile despite serving some of the same government clients. The company has no website touting its business and employees have been told to keep any reference to their employer off social media, according to a person familiar with the company.

REIGN

QuaDREAM was founded in 2016 by Ilan Dabelstein, a former Israeli military official, and by two former NSO employees, Guy Geva and Nimrod Reznik, according to Israeli corporate records and two people familiar with the business. Reuters could not reach the three executives for comment.

Like NSO's Pegasus spyware, QuaDREAM's flagship product - called REIGN - could take control of a smartphone, scooping up instant messages from services such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Signal, as well as emails, photos, texts and contacts, according to two product brochures from 2019 and 2020 which were reviewed by Reuters.

REIGN's "Premium Collection" capabilities included the "real time call recordings", "camera activation - front and back" and "microphone activation", one brochure said.

Prices appeared to vary. One QuaDREAM system, which would have given customers the ability to launch 50 smartphone break-ins per year, was being offered for \$2.2 million exclusive of maintenance costs, according to the 2019 brochure. Two people familiar with the software's sales said the price for REIGN was typically higher.

Over the years, QuaDREAM and NSO Group employed some of the same engineering talent, according to three people familiar with the matter. Two of those sources said the companies did not collaborate on their iPhone hacks, coming up with their own ways to take advantage of vulnerabilities.

Several of QuaDREAM's buyers have also overlapped with NSO's, four of the sources said, including Saudi Arabia and Mexico - both of whom have been accused of misusing spy software to target political opponents.

One of QuaDREAM's first clients was the Singaporean government, two of the sources said, and documentation reviewed by Reuters shows the company's surveillance technology was pitched to the Indonesian government as well. Reuters couldn't determine if Indonesia became a client.

Mexican, Singaporean, Indonesian and Saudi officials did not return messages seeking comment about QuaDREAM.

(Reporting by Christopher Bing and Raphael Satter in Washington. Joseph Menn in San Francisco, Nir Elias in Ramat Gan, Israel, Dan Williams in Jerusalem, and Michele Kambas in Nicosia, Cyprus contributed reporting. Editing by Chris Sanders and Edward Tobin)

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World

World news in brief

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World

Apple Maps hides CEO's house behind giant digital wall

Apple Maps has placed a reality distortion field around the home of Tim Cook after the CEO was granted a restraining order against a stalker. The four-bedroom condo in Palo Alto, California, is now blurred in the map app's Look Around feature, as well as the vehicles parked on the street outside. The update, first spotted by Apple news site Cult of Mac, follows revelations about an alleged stalker who claimed to be Mr Cook's wife. Court documents filed in Santa Clara County described how a 45-year-old woman sent the tech billionaire pictures of guns, bullets and computers, and was caught trespassing on his property. Apple described the woman's behaviour as "erratic, threatening, and bizarre" in its application for the restraining order, which was granted last week.

The Apple CEO's house appears to be the only one in his neighbourhood that has been hidden in this way, consequently making it easier to actually find. The obscuring of the address fits with a phenomenon known as the Streisand Effect, whereby attempts to hide or censor information has the opposite impact of unintentionally drawing attention to it. The term was coined in 2005 after the singer Barbra Streisand sued a photographer for violation of privacy when an aerial picture of her seaside property was included in a public collection of images documenting coastal erosion in California. Before the lawsuit, the image of Ms Streisand's home had only been downloaded six times, according to court documents, two of which were by the singer's lawyers. The case was eventually dismissed but the publicity it attracted saw more than 420,000 people visit the website in order to see the image of Ms Streisand's home.

Power cable collapse at market in DRC kills 25 people

At least 25 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo have died after a high-tension power cable snapped and fell on houses and a market in the outskirts of the capital Kinshasa. "A high-voltage electric cable fell on several houses in the Matadi-Kibala district and in the market, several people died on the spot," Kinshasa's police chief Sylvano Kasongo said.

Unverified videos from the market shared online showed people wailing around several bodies lying in puddles of water where they had fallen, with fresh produce scattered around them. The majority of the victims were female market traders, according to local media reports. "The cable snapped and the live end of it fell into a ditch that was filled with water after morning rain," Charles Mbutamuntu, spokesman for the Kinshasa provincial government, told AFP news agency. An investigation into the incident has been launched.

At least six killed in failed coup in Guinea-Bissau

Four assailants and two members of the presidential guard were among at least six people killed in a failed attempt to overthrow Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embalo, state radio said yesterday, as residents of the capital cautiously returned to daily life. Mr Embalo had announced on Tuesday night that the situation was under control after gunfire rang out for more than five hours near a government compound where he was holding a cabinet meeting.

The west African country, which has a population of about 2 million, has now seen 10 coups or attempted coups since gaining independence from Portugal in 1974. Only one democratically elected president has completed a full term. It remains unclear who was behind the attack, which Mr Embalo said was not only a failed coup but an assassination attempt.

In a video, the president suggested that not all units of the army were involved but that the attackers may have been linked to the drug trade. Guinea-Bissau is known as a major transit point for Latin American

cocaine headed for Europe, contributing to its perpetual instability. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) commission president Jean-Claude Kassi Brou said the army was responsible, adding in a Twitter post yesterday: "I welcome the failure of the military coup attempt in Guinea-Bissau, which was an attack on democracy and the people".

Cannabis-induced psychosis drives man to cut off own penis

A 23-year-old Thai man who got into a cannabis-induced psychosis "completely amputated" his own penis using scissors, doctors said. The man inflicted life-altering injury upon himself after he smoked 2g of marijuana, which is equivalent to six joints, in two bong. Two hours after smoking up, the man had a painful erection with "severe persistent sharp pain" in his penis. He developed paranoia when his glans started to look distorted, and decided to cut off his penile skin several times before amputating it completely with a pair of scissors.

The man was taken to hospital after the bleeding did not stop for two hours where the doctors said the injury left him with a remaining penile stump of 2cm in length, without the skin and a 5cm laceration in his scrotum. The incident was revealed in a medical case report by the doctors who treated him in Thailand's Chiang Mai University in the Journal of Medical Case Reports. The doctors at the hospital tried to reconstruct the penis but it was deemed to be "dirty and fragile" after it was contaminated with ants.

The harrowing case study was revealed as Thailand became the first Asian country last week to decriminalise recreational cannabis for personal use. This will allow Thai people to grow cannabis plants at home for personal use after notifying their local government. The study said there have been around 100 cases of male genital self-mutilation driven by substance-induced psychosis over the past two decades. However, they noted that penis amputation during cannabis-induced psychosis "has rarely been reported".

Legendary Italian actor Monica Vitti dies, aged 90

Italian actor Monica Vitti, best known for her roles in films by director Michelangelo Antonioni, including *L'Avventura* (1960), *Red Desert* (1964), *L'Eclisse* (1962) and *La Notte* (1961), has died, aged 90. Vitti's death was announced by writer, director and politician Walter Veltroni on behalf of Vitti's partner, Roberto Russo, with whom she had been since 1973. They married in 2000. The film star, who shot to fame in the 1960s, had been battling Alzheimer's disease for two decades.

After her string of films with Antonioni, she made a move to comedies and regularly worked with Mario Monicelli. This was in part due to the dissolution of her relationship with the Italian filmmaker. She also worked with international directors Ettore Scola (*The Pizza Triangle*, 1970) and Luis Bunuel (*The Phantom of the Liberty*, 1974). Her co-stars over the years included Alain Delon, Michael Caine, Terence Stamp, Richard Harris and Dirk Bogarde.

Vitti made her last public appearance in 2002 while attending the French premiere of the stage musical *Notre-Dame de Paris*. Russo revealed in 2018 that he was looking after Vitti at their home in Rome with the assistance of a caregiver. Throughout her career, she won five David di Donatello Awards for Best Actress, seven Italian Golden Globes for Best Actress and the Venice Film Festival Career Golden Lion Award.

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Meta shares sink 20% as Facebook loses daily users for the first time

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Reuters News

LBA

English

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(Reuters) - Facebook owner Meta Platforms Inc's shares plunged more than 20% late on Wednesday after the social media company posted a weaker-than-expected forecast, blaming **Apple's** privacy changes and increased competition for users from rivals like TikTok.

Facebook's global daily active users declined from the previous quarter for the first time, to 1.929 billion from 1.930 billion.

Meta said it faced hits from Apple Inc's privacy changes to its operating system, which have made it harder for brands to target and measure their ads on Facebook and Instagram. It also cited macroeconomic issues like supply-chain disruptions.

The 18-year-old tech giant, which also faces pressure from platforms like TikTok and Google's YouTube, said it expected slowing revenue growth in the coming quarter due to increased competition for users' time and a shift of engagement toward such features as its short video offering Reels, which generate less revenue.

Facebook reported 2.91 billion monthly active users in the fourth quarter, showing no growth compared with the previous quarter.

The after-hours slump in Meta shares vaporized \$200 billion of its market value, while peers Twitter Inc, Snap Inc and Pinterest Inc lost another \$15 billion in value.

Shares of Alphabet Inc, which posted record quarterly sales that topped expectations on Tuesday, were down nearly 2%.

Meta, owner of the second-largest digital ad platform in the world after Google, had previously warned its advertising business faced "significant uncertainty" in the fourth quarter.

Meta's chief financial officer, Dave Wehner, told analysts on a conference call that the impact of Apple's privacy changes could be "in the order of \$10 billion" for 2022.

Apple's changes to its operating software give users the choice to prevent apps from tracking their online activity for ads, making it harder for advertisers that rely on data to develop new products and know their market.

Meta forecast first-quarter revenue in the range of \$27 billion to \$29 billion. Analysts were expecting \$30.15 billion, according to IBES data from Refinitiv.

"It's clear that there are many big roadblocks ahead as Meta faces tough new competition for ad revenue such as TikTok, and as it contends with ongoing ad targeting and measurement challenges from Apple's iOS changes," said Insider Intelligence analyst Debra Aho Williamson.

The company's total revenue, the bulk of which comes from ad sales, rose to \$33.67 billion in the fourth quarter from \$28.07 billion a year earlier, beating analysts' estimates of \$33.40 billion, according to IBES data from Refinitiv.

"I'm encouraged by the progress we made this past year in a number of important growth areas like Reels, commerce, and virtual reality, and we'll continue investing in these and other key priorities in 2022 as we work towards building the metaverse," CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in the earnings release.

In Meta's earnings call, he said competition for users was one factor impacting the business, mentioning short video app TikTok by name and emphasizing Meta's commitment to providing services for young adults.

Net loss from Meta's Reality Labs, the company's augmented and virtual reality business, was \$10.2 billion for the full year 2021, compared with a \$6.6 billion loss the previous year. It was the first time the company had broken out this segment in its results.

Zuckerberg had previously warned that the company's investment in this area would reduce 2021 operating profit by \$10 billion and would not be profitable "any time in the near future."

Reality Labs posted revenue of about \$2.3 billion in 2021. The company has not made public the sales numbers for its virtual reality Quest headsets.

The company said on Wednesday it would this year change its stock ticker to "META," the latest step in its rebrand to focus on the metaverse, a futuristic idea of virtual environments where users can work, socialize and play. Meta did not comment on the price of a deal with Roundhill Investments, which said in January it would stop using the symbol for its Roundhill Ball Metaverse ETF.

The tech giant, which changed its name in October to reflect its metaverse aims, is betting the metaverse will be the successor to the mobile internet.

"Investors looking at Meta are starting to realize that buying their stock is no longer mostly an investment into their ad platform," said Flynn Zaiger, CEO of social media agency Online Optimism. "Investing in Meta now looks more like a commitment that you believe that the metaverse will replace much of the internet consumers' experience today."

Meta's rebrand comes at a time of increasing scrutiny from lawmakers and regulators over allegations of anticompetitive conduct and over the impacts of how it handles harmful or misleading content across its Facebook and Instagram platforms.

(Reporting by Nivedita Balu in Bengaluru and Elizabeth Culliford in New York; Additional reporting by Noel Randewich in Oakland, Calif., and Sheila Dang in Dallas; Editing by Anil D'Silva, Peter Henderson, Matthew Lewis and Leslie Adler)

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Editorial

Google shouldn't know where you are if you don't want

The Seattle Times editorial board

534 words

2 February 2022

The Seattle Times

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English

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Amazon, **Apple**, Facebook and Google. For most of us, not a day goes by without interacting with one of their products or services. In 2022, whether we want to or not, Big Tech is a part of our lives.

With that dominance growing, it is up to the government to remain vigilant against these corporations abusing their power.

A good example of that watchdog role are the recent lawsuits by four state attorneys general, including Washington AG Bob Ferguson, against Google for violating user privacy.

The bipartisan group — which also includes the District of Columbia, Indiana and Texas — alleges that Google employs deceptive practices, making it “nearly impossible” for users to avoid sharing their location data.

The tech giant uses that information to target ads, denying consumers the ability to choose, and to track sensitive location data to make a profit, Ferguson said in a statement.

“Google kept tracking individuals' location data even after consumers told the corporation to stop,” he said. “This is not only dishonest — it's unlawful.”

The company promised users that if they turned off location history, any place they visited would no longer be stored, but according to the lawsuit, even when consumers opted out of location tracking through that setting, Google recorded their whereabouts via other means.

That discrepancy was first noted in 2018 by The Associated Press, which found that while Google is generally open about asking permission to use location information, some Google apps automatically stored time-stamped location data without asking.

The AP discovered that location was used by weather updates on Android phones or stored by simply opening the Google Maps app. Even some searches unrelated to location, such as “chocolate chip cookies,” would pinpoint the user's precise latitude and longitude.

That's a complete disregard for privacy — and a violation of the Washington State Consumer Protection Act — all so that Google can sell you some Chips Ahoy.

This is not the first lawsuit against Google that Washington is a part of, nor has Google been the sole target. Big Tech is now facing a host of legal challenges from bipartisan coalitions of state attorneys general, as well as increased scrutiny by the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission. It's about time.

For too long, little to no regulation was the default setting for the internet's development and growth. This allowed for innovation to flourish through the rise and fall of tech players big and small, but today's undisputed dominance of a few companies — and their monopolistic power to stifle competition — show that is no longer the case.

Litigation is an important part of keeping these companies' worst impulses in check, but strong action by regulators, as well as legislation from Congress, is also needed. Big Tech can — and does — play a positive role in our lives, but we must be able to dictate the terms for the good of all.

The Seattle Times editorial board members are editorial page editor Kate Riley, Frank A. Blethen, Luis Carrasco, Alex Fryer, Jennifer Hemmingsen, Mark Higgins, Derrick Nunnally and William K. Blethen (emeritus).

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Personal Technology: **Apple** AirTags Can Track You -- WSJ

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Dow Jones Institutional News

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Here are some tips on what to do when devices that help find lost items are used in nefarious ways

By Dalvin Brown

Apple Inc.'s AirTags help you find your lost keys or bag. They can also be used in ways that spark privacy and safety concerns -- such as stalking or other surveillance. Those concerns prompted Apple to publish an AirTag safety guide last week.

You can detect unwanted AirTag tracking. It's easier if you use Apple devices, but in a rare move, the company also built a detection app for Android.

When AirTags went on sale in April 2021, the bottle-cap-size Bluetooth devices promised to give iPhone users a way to locate their personal items, much like the Tile trackers that have been on the market for years. You can attach AirTags to your purse or keys. Later, if you need to, you can fire up your iPhone, and track the items to their precise location within seconds.

Our colleague Joanna Stern reviewed AirTags when they came out. She said they worked better than competing devices at finding everything from a misplaced work ID to a lost pet -- but she warned they could easily be used to pinpoint humans.

In December, the West Seneca, N.Y., police department said it received two reports that AirTags were "believed to have been placed on unsuspecting owner's vehicles." Police in Iowa confirmed reports of similar incidents. In January, a person in Pennsylvania reported a suspicious AirTag notification to police after possibly being followed home from a movie theater.

Unwanted tracking isn't unique to AirTags; other trackers could be used in a similar way. But AirTags' pinpoint accuracy -- and their high-profile maker -- have put them in the spotlight.

iPhone alerts have been key to revealing covert tracking. Apple's devices automatically pop up notifications if unknown AirTags have been in their vicinity over time. For Android users, Apple introduced a Tracker Detect app in December to sniff out nearby AirTags.

With iPhones, rogue AirTag detection is turned on by default in the Find My app.

"That's a big benefit," said Asymco analyst Horace Dediu, who follows Apple. "On Android, those are not defaults. If users are not proactive, they might be under more of a threat."

An AirTag emits a chime 8 to 24 hours after being separated from its owner. People who have neither a compatible Apple product nor an Android device with the Tracker Detect app might be made aware of the presence of an AirTag this way.

Apple declined to comment on the severity of AirTag snooping, or the scope of its response. The company's AirTag safety guide (which also covers other Find My accessories) answers some questions about it. Here's what else you should know:

How do AirTags work?

AirTags are lightweight, with a glossy white surface and a silver underside. They use low-power Bluetooth to report their whereabouts. They don't have built-in GPS, but communicate with nearby iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch and Mac devices in the Find My network, which do have GPS and other ways to identify location.

If you have an AirTag connected to a newer iPhone, you can take advantage of more accurate tracking provided by the U1 ultra-wideband chip in both devices.

AirTags also have a built-in speaker. Not only do they ring when separated from their owner, but the owner can trigger the ring through the Find My app.

How accurate is AirTag tracking?

It can be very precise. If you have an AirTag and an iPhone 11 or newer model, you can tap into Precision Finding to pinpoint an AirTag's exact location. Ultra-wideband lets you track your AirTag down to the centimeter, and on-screen arrows point the way. Precision Finding can even tell you if something is on a different floor. (You can't use the feature with unknown AirTags, but bad actors could use it to track you with theirs.)

For direct tracking, your AirTag must be within Bluetooth range of your device (a few hundred feet). If the tag is far away from you, it reports its location through the Find My network, and is typically accurate to the street address, Apple said.

Do AirTags work for pets?

Apple doesn't market AirTags as pet trackers, but they are water-resistant, and nothing is stopping you from attaching one to your dog's collar. To mark an AirTag as lost, go to the Find My app and look for the item. Tap the item's name and under Lost Mode, tap Enable. You can then add a message to be displayed for the person who finds it.

How do I know if an AirTag is following me?

For iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch users, Apple built in anti-stalking features to discourage tracking people without their knowledge. Apple's Find My network could notify your smartphone if an AirTag not registered to you is moving with you over time. The notification would say, "Item Detected Near You."

The time it takes to trigger one of those alerts depends on where you are, where you've been and how long an AirTag has been following you. If the network detects an unknown AirTag traveling with you and arriving at your home, you could get an immediate notification saying "AirTag Found Moving With You." If the AirTag belongs to someone in your Family Sharing group, the owner's name would appear in the alert.

The automatic notifications only work on smartphones and iPods running iOS 14.5 or later and iPads running iPadOS 14.5 or later. If you don't want to get pinged, you can turn those Item Safety Alerts off in the Find My app.

What if I don't have an Apple device?

The Tracker Detect app for Android lets you scan for nearby AirTags. If one is in your vicinity for more than 10 minutes, and the app picks it up, you can make it play a chime for easier locating. The hitch -- and it's a big one -- is you have to look for AirTags manually. The app doesn't run in the background to automatically search and notify you, as iPhones do.

AirTags also play a chime somewhere between eight and 24 hours after being separated from their registered owner.

I found a lost AirTag. Now what?

If you hear an AirTag chime or find a lost item with an AirTag attached, you can use any Apple or Android device with NFC technology -- found in most recent smartphones -- to help return it.

Hold your smartphone near the white side of the AirTag until a notification appears on your phone. It should provide information about the AirTag. If its owner marked it as lost, you'll be able to view the contact information.

If you found the AirTag in your possessions, and it doesn't show as lost, you should disable it and contact law enforcement.

How do I disable an AirTag?

If you get an AirTag alert on your iPhone, you can disable it to stop sharing its location. On the notification, tap Instructions and follow the on-screen prompt: You press the silver side of the AirTag and twist it counterclockwise, then take off the cover to remove the battery. The AirTag can no longer be tracked.

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Write to Dalvin Brown at dalvin.brown@wsj.com

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Apple brings heart month activity challenge

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Deccan Herald

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For the past couple of years, the world is ravaged by a once-in-a-century pandemic Covid-19 outbreak. Though the advancement of technology made things easier to work and study online, the passive lifestyle and stress-induced diseases such as diabetes, blood pressure become a bane to millions of people.

It's high time, people shift focus to physical fitness for a healthier and long happy life. Technology major **Apple**, which makes the most intelligent smartwatches in the industry has started a new heart month activity challenge for **Apple** device owners. Also, this February, the company will highlight rich resources on improving cardio health across its services such as Fitness+, the App Store, the **Apple** TV app, **Apple** Podcasts, and **Apple** Books.

"We're strong believers at Apple that if you can empower people with information about their health, you can change the trajectory of their well-being," said Jeff Williams, Apple's chief operating officer.

"Keeping your heart healthy requires a holistic approach — something we've focused on since the first generation of Apple Watch with the inclusion of activity and workout apps, in addition to heart rate. Today, people of all ages can use our products and services to learn more about staying healthy, work toward their personal goals, and have a lot of fun along the way," Williams added.

Starting with the Apple Watch, users will see a new activity challenge on February 14 and will have to complete the 30 minutes Exercise ring to earn a special badge.

Also, the App Store will highlight some of the best cardio health-centric apps such as HeartWatch (Tantsissa), Gentler Streak (Gentler Stories), and Zones (Flask) that can help Apple Watch users track their heart rate metrics, and other health vitals.

Even Books and Apple TV services will be offering good collections of heart health-related titles, movies, and TV series throughout February. Heart-related titles on the Books app. Credit: Apple

Furthermore, Fitness+, which is available in select global markets will also highlight exercises to the customers that can help improve their cardio health.

In the US, the company revealed a preliminary analysis of activity data shared from the Apple Heart and Movement Study. The research work was carried out by experts at Brigham and Women's Hospital, in collaboration with the American Heart Association and Apple.

The study showed participants (across all genders and age groups) with above-average cardio fitness levels averaged more than 200 minutes of activity per week, while those with high cardio fitness averaged more than 300 minutes of activity per week.

In the near future, Apple has plans to partner with more research institutes including Heartline Study and University Health Network's Heart Failure Study to explore ways to improve heart health using Apple Watch.

In collaboration with the American Heart Association and Brigham and Women's Hospital, the Apple Heart and Movement Study explores the link between physical activity and heart health. Credit: Apple

In a related development, Apple is offering additional extra savings in select countries on Apple Watch trade-ins, but only in February. Apple Watches come with advanced ECG (electrocardiogram) to detect AFib, irregular heart rhythm in addition to Fall Detection, which is the gold standard in the smart wearable industry and has saved thousands of lives around the world. It also come with features to track women health, sleep pattern, cardio fitness, respiratory rate, activity monitoring, wellness apps and many more.

Must read | [Apple Watch: Here's how to reach your fitness resolution goals this year](#)

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Meaningful updates for the iPhone and iPad are coming your way

855 words

2 February 2022

The Telegraph

ABPTEL

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Apple has once again proved that sending out updates — meaningful ones — at regular intervals can make a difference to user experience, something Android has failed to learn after all these years. In fact, the company's bottom line received a major push during the Christmas shopping season despite constraints arising from a global shortage of microchips.

Apple CEO Tim Cook had warned in October that global chip shortages could affect manufacturing of most **Apple** products but last week, the company announced a very successful quarter in an earnings call with investors. While reporting its first quarter earnings of 2022, the company said it had made an all-time record revenue of \$123.9bn, 11 per cent up from last year.

Cook pointed out the strong demand for the iPhone 13 line-up while other models have also done well in various markets. "We had several of the top-selling models in various markets, including the top 5 in the U.S. and Australia, the top 4 in Urban China, 2 of the top 3 in the UK, 3 of the top 4 in France and Germany and 4 of the top 6 in Japan. And certainly, based on some external data that I've seen, it does seem to say that we are gaining share as well."

Though he didn't specifically mention details about India numbers, a recent report says that Apple has ruled the ultra-premium smartphone segment in India with over a 70 per cent market share while the iPhone 12 and the iPhone 11 series boosted the company's market share in India during the festive sales.

Not only has the company made sacks full of money during the holiday season, the company managed to add 150 million more active devices. Cook has revealed that Apple now has 1.8 billion active devices, which is up from the 1.65 billion Apple reported a year ago, 1.5 billion active devices in January 2020 and 1.4 billion active devices in January 2019.

If the trend of Apple adding 150 million new active devices over the last year continues, it means the Cupertino HQed company needs an increase of 50 million this year to hit growth of 200 million devices, reaching a milestone of a two billion strong installed base. An improving supply chain should ensure that the company expects a record March quarter.

Google revealed last year that there are now over three billion active Android devices that have access to the Google Play Store.

Helping Apple grow every year are fresh line-ups as well as constant updates, enough of which are there on iOS 15.4. The first available public beta is available for you to test. A warning before you install beta software — it may not be a stable release, so the final experience may differ. If that doesn't bother you then it's best you try the beta rollout after backing up your device's data. Also available are new features in the developer beta releases of macOS Monterey 12.3 and iPadOS 15.4.

iPadOS 15.4 and macOS Monterey 12.3 allow the long-awaited and much-talked-about feature that allow you use a single cursor and keyboard to control the iPads and Macs that are signed into your iCloud account. Move your cursor from your Mac to your iPad, type on your Mac and watch the words show up on your iPad, or even drag and drop content from one Mac to another. To make it work, devices must be signed in to iCloud with the same Apple ID, Handoff must be turned on, and the devices must be within 30 feet of each other. Universal Control requires no set-up and uses Continuity so all you need to do is sign into your Apple ID on all of your devices.

During the early days of the pandemic, unlocking the phone each time while wearing the mask required you to punch in your passcode. Then Apple Watch users were given an option to unlock phone even while wearing sunglasses or a face mask. The new release of iOS 15.4 includes a new addition of support for Face ID. The feature will be limited to iPhone 12 and later (to recognise a user with a mask on, the phone needs to use the advancements in the TrueDepth camera system). The new option is designed to use the area around your eyes for authentication purposes but a full-face recognition remains the most accurate way to unlock. Since Face ID with a mask utilises less biometric information than Face ID with full-face recognition, there

could be circumstances when a user is not as easily recognised as when their full face is visible. In that instance, a user may need to enter their passcode.

Soon after its release, iPhone 13 Pro users noticed that some third-party apps were not displaying all animations at the full 120Hz ProMotion refresh rate. The bug has been fixed with the iOS 15.4 update.

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Hindustan Times, business

Big Tech made more money than ever despite chip shortage

Vishal Mathur

717 words

1 February 2022

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HNTM

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India, Feb. 1 -- The depressive sentiment driven by chip shortage and supply chain constraints hasn't really held back **Apple**, Microsoft, Samsung, Intel and Tesla from clocking record numbers for the quarter. These companies ended the year on a high - the highlights being **Apple** recording its best ever quarter and Tesla almost delivering the promised 1 million vehicles for the year.

Apple reported that Q1 2022 (this is for the December 2021 quarter) was the biggest quarter for the company in terms of revenue. That's \$123.9 billion in revenue and \$34.6 billion profit. Incidentally, this was the first full quarter for the **Apple** iPhone 13 series on the shelves, and the iPhone business raked in \$71.63 billion, that is up 9 percent over the same quarter in 2020.

The iPad line-up was hit more than others by supply chain issues even as the Macs (up 25% YOY), services (up 24%) and wearables (up 13%) more than made up.

Samsung reported 76.57 trillion won (around \$63.6 billion) in revenue and 13.87 trillion won (around \$11.5 billion) profit for the three-month period, a revenue record for the Korean tech giant, in any quarter. In fact, the 279.6 trillion won (around \$232.4 billion) revenue for the year was also a record.

Samsung's 24% YOY revenue uptick has come on the back of robust sales for premium smartphones, TVs and appliances. These numbers come ahead of the expected launch of the Samsung Galaxy S22 flagship phone series this month.

Microsoft's Q2 2022 results indicate Windows, Surface computing devices, Xbox gaming consoles, Office and cloud services have all recorded revenue spikes. Windows revenue from OEMs (the Windows 11 licenses for new PCs) was up 25% - Gartner indicates that 340 million PCs were shipped in 2021, while IDC indicates 348.8 million units were shipped.

Even though Microsoft was tempering expectations for the Surface line-up, the revenue increased 8% over the same quarter the year before. Xbox consoles, worst hit by the chip shortage, still recorded 4% higher revenue.

Intel has reported its highest quarterly and annual revenue, despite being hit significantly by the chip shortage for large parts of 2021. The quarterly revenue is \$19.5 billion while Intel ends the year with \$74.7 billion in revenue. That said, profits were down - 21% (\$4.6 billion) and 5% (\$19.9 billion) quarterly and yearly.

Intel has launched the 12th generation Intel Core processors for PCs and announced an investment of more than \$20 billion in two new chip factories in the US. The increased demand for Intel's Internet of Things Group (IOTG) and Mobileye (car tech) businesses should provide a platform once the supply chain strain eases.

Tesla's Q4 earnings mean that it is the second successive year of the auto company remaining in the black. Tesla ended the quarter with a \$2.3 billion profit, which is significantly higher than \$270 million from the same quarter in 2020. The annual profit of \$5.5 billion (this is up from \$721 million in 2020) comes from the \$17.7 billion clocked in revenue.

Tesla says they manufactured 305,840 vehicles in the quarter, which is 70% more than the same period the year before. Tesla promised 1 million vehicle deliveries in 2021 - fell just short with 936,172 vehicles delivered to buyers.

Netflix remains the outlier in this. The streaming giant added 8.28 million paid subscribers globally in Q4, but that's just not fast enough. This number is shy of the 8.5 million subscribers Netflix added in the same period a year before. The outlook isn't very bright either.

They are forecasting 2.5 million new subscribers in the first three months of 2022, which will be far lesser than the 3.98 million Netflix added as paid subscribers in the first three months of 2021. Competition from Apple TV+, Disney+, Hulu, HBO Max and newer services like Peacock, are hurting.

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GADGETS NEWS

Explained: What is Ultra Wideband and how it works on iPhone, other devices

556 words

1 February 2022

The Times of India

TOI

English

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Back in 2019, **Apple** introduced a U1 chip with the iPhone 11 that got UWB or Ultra Wideband technology mainstream. Since then **Apple** has incorporated UWB in AirTags, **Apple** Watch and the HomePod mini. Not just **Apple** but other companies too use UWB in their devices. Here we explain all you need to know about Ultra Wideband technology. What is Ultra Wideband technology? Think of Bluetooth and Wi-Fi. They are short-range wireless communication protocols that work through radio waves. Ultra Wideband is a similar communication protocol but it operates at very high frequencies. UWB is useful in capturing spatial and directional data. So if you have a smartphone or smartwatch that is closer to another UWB device, it calculates the time of flight (ToF) between the devices. How is UWB different from other wireless tech? UWB — like Bluetooth and Wi-Fi — is about wireless connectivity. However, UWB has better positioning capabilities and the radio frequency security is also better.

What UWB does is that it sends and receives data packets and adds an extra layer of security as well which makes it more secure. UWB gives more accurate and precise location tracking and the range it provides is much better than other wireless technology. Ultra Wideband technology and **Apple** was one of the first movers with UWB and its U1 chip. The **Apple** devices that use UWB are iPhone 11 series, iPhone 12 series, iPhone 13 series, AirTags, **Apple** Watch Series 6 and HomePod mini. What UWB and U1 chip do in **Apple** devices is that it offers precision location tracking. It's handy not just to find lost devices but also makes AirDrop better and faster. An iPhone with UWB will know which other iPhone or **Apple** Watch is closest to it. The AirTag is another device that uses the U1 chip and using a system called Precision Finding, it helps locate the tracking devices. Samsung's use of UWB technology and the devices it works on Samsung too incorporates UWB in its devices. Available in premium Galaxy S20 and S21 series of smartphones, Samsung describes UWB as "a continuously scanning radar that can precisely lock onto an object, discover its location and communicate with it." Cars are equipped with UWB these days and Samsung phones can be used as digital keys as well. Samsung too has a tracking device called Galaxy SmartTag that uses UWB for precise location tracking. What's the future use of UWB and how it can be leveraged Samsung says that for any organisation involved in manufacturing, UWB could be an essential part of digitising production and logistics. "UWB could help seamlessly digitise warehouses, shop floors and process chains, stabilising internal processes and optimising productivity," says Samsung in a post on its website. Google has added UWB support to Android 12 which gives other companies to use the technology in their smartphones. However, it is not a tech that could come to budget phones as of now. **Apple** will continue to use it has been reported that UWB could be a part of Mac devices as well. Other companies too will make a play for it and we may see the use of UWB grow in the next few years.

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Science

Forget facial recognition! Apple AirPods could soon identify you based on the shape of your EAR CANAL, patent suggests

Jonathan Chadwick For Mailonline

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English

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* **Apple** describes a new biometric device to the US Patent and Trademark Office

* They would use ultrasonic signals reflected against the walls of a user's ear canal

* Conventional wireless headphones that connect to a person's smartphone typically allow use by an unauthorised person

Apple's AirPods could soon verify a user's identity based on the inside of their ear, which could stop them from being used by thieves.

The tech giant has filed a patent for an in-ear biometric device that uses ultrasonic signals reflected against the walls of a user's ear canal.

Such technology would prevent lost AirPods from being used by anyone other than the owner if they get misplaced or stolen.

Currently, AirPods and other headphones pose a security risk because anyone can wear them to give Siri commands or even access private information.

WHAT ARE BIOMETRICS?

Biometrics are any metrics related to human features.

The most common examples of a biometric recognition system is the iPhone's fingerprint and facial recognition technology.

Every time you unlock a smartphone screen with a facial recognition, ask Siri for a weather update, or log in to your online bank account using your fingerprint, you're using biometrics.

As an emerging technology, biometric systems can add great convenience by replacing passwords and helping law enforcement catch criminals.

Source: Norton

The new patent, granted by the US Patent and Trademark Office and listed on January 27, was first noticed by [Patently Apple](#).

Although Apple files many patents that haven't made it to market, the tech giant says this patent 'relates generally to user identification and, more specifically, to user identification using headphones'.

However, AirPods aren't specifically mentioned in the patent, suggesting the product could come under a different name.

It would act as a new form of biometrics, just like facial recognition and fingerprint detection are already used to unlock smartphones.

Apple admits conventional wireless headphones that connect to a person's smartphone typically allow use by an unauthorised person.

'Conventional systems do not address whether the user wearing the headphones is authorised to interact with personal features of the device, such as receiving messages from the device,' [the patent](#) reads.

'As a result, conventional systems may risk releasing personal information from an associated device to unauthorized wearers of corresponding headphones.'

'Accordingly, improved systems for user identification using headphones is desired.'

NEW APPLE PATENTS SUGGEST THE FIRM IS BUILDING A DRONE

New patents awarded to Apple in 2021 suggest it may be working on a drone.

They describe small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that pair with wireless controllers.

The images in the patents depict a small drone with four rotors, a common design for small UAVs.

Apple, however, initially filed the patents in Singapore 'to keep the projects a secret, reported 9to5Mac.

Read more: New Apple patents suggest the firm is building a drone

If the technology comes to market, the device would emit ultrasonic sound waves – those outside the range of human hearing.

Variations in the surface of the user's ear canal may cause the ultrasonic signal to reflect off the skin surface and generate an echo with a unique signature that is associated with the user and no-one else.

'For example, a user having a larger ear canal may result in an echo having a longer reverberation time than a user having a smaller ear canal,' Apple says in the patent.

As an alternative to using ultrasonic waves, Apple may create headphones that detect a person's gait – the way they walk, the patent also suggests.

'The gait information may include, for example, information regarding a user's walking and/or running characteristics, such as characteristics related to steps, pace, stride, and the like,' Apple says.

Currently, Apple's flagship headphone product is the wireless third-generation AirPods, released last October and priced at £169 (\$179).

The new AirPods are water and sweat resistant and boast a six-hour battery life – nearly 40 minutes longer than its predecessor – and a charging case providing up to 30 hours of power.

Apple also still offers the wired EarPods, which are significantly cheaper, priced at £19.

According to another recently-filed Apple patent, the firm is working on an iPhone that has a glass display going all the way around.

Dubbed 'a single slab of glass', the patent shows a device with displays on both its front and back, as well as touchscreen buttons on its curved glass edges.

Fitting the back of an iPhone with a 360-degree glass display could potentially more than double the display size, without changing the shape or size of the device.

Apple could also be launching its long-rumoured augmented reality (AR) headset in 2022, analyst Ming-Chi Kuo has claimed.

APPLE WILL FINALLY LAUNCH ITS AR HEADSET IN 2022, RESPECTED LEAKER CLAIMS

Apple could launch its augmented reality headset in 2022, a Hong Kong-based leaker has said.

The headset will be released in the fourth quarter of the year and contain two processors, one 'with the same computing power level as the Mac', said Ming-Chi Kuo in a research note as viewed by MacRumors.

This processor will be 'similar' to M1, Apple's own in-house-designed computer chip, currently used in its Macintosh computers and iPad Pro tablets.

The second, lower-end processor, meanwhile, will manage the 'sensor-related aspects' of the headset. Computing power of this sensor will be 'significantly higher' than that of the iPhone, however.

Kuo also said the headset will be able to support virtual reality (VR) as well as AR, thanks to a pair of 4K Micro OLED displays from Sony.

AR layers computer-generated images on top of an existing reality – Pokémon Go being a famous example – while VR is wholly virtual.

Kuo, an analyst at TF International Securities in Hong Kong, is known for garnering information on Apple's plans from his contacts within the company's Asian supply chain.

However, Kuo predicted in June that the will launch in spring 2022, so it seems the timeframe has been pushed back – and could be pushed back again.

In October 2021, Kuo said Apple's upcoming headset will also be wireless and use Wi-Fi 6E, the newest version of Wi-Fi, allowing it faster speeds and a higher number of connections.

It's possible the Apple headset will still likely have to connect to an iPhone or Mac computer, but that a future iteration of the device may not.

According to another recent report from Digitimes, citing supply chain sources, the product will cost as much \$2,000 (£1,500).

The upcoming headset would likely not be aimed at consumers, but instead be geared towards developers and business customers, this report alleged.

A more consumer focused AR product, known as Apple Glass, would be released until 2023 at the earliest and would look more like a conventional pair of spectacles, it added.

A 2019 report from [The Information](#) collaborates the suggestion that Apple is working on two AR/VR products.

Apple Glass would present a digital display on the lenses to complement surrounding environments, such as arrows to help consumers find their destination in cities.

Making Apple Glasses look more like normal glasses instead of a more chunky headset could make them more appealing to the consumer market.

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Cars

Will going electric spark a boom in white cars thanks to the 'Apple effect'? Grey is still British buyers' top colour... unless it's a Tesla

Rob Hull For Thisismoney.co.uk

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* Grey was officially the nation's most popular new-car colour last year

* It's the fourth consecutive year grey has topped the charts followed by black

* Tesla Model 3 - the UK's second best-selling car in 2021 - was most ordered white

* 'Apple effect' could be at play with buyers matching tech-laden EVs with gadgets

Grey was British buyer's favourite new car colour for a fourth straight year in 2021 - unless they were purchasing a Tesla.

And the boom in Tesla sales hints that white could start becoming more popular - in line with the 'Apple effect', with drivers matching their tech-laden electric cars with their gadgets.

Almost a quarter (24.8 per cent) of new cars bought last year were grey, extending its lead at the top of the sales charts, official figures released by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders confirmed this morning.

However, it wasn't the pick of colours for Tesla fans; the Model 3, which was the UK's second most-bought new motor in 2021, was most commonly delivered in white.

During a year of pandemic-related disruptions impacting total new car registrations, 408,155 grey cars were sold, up 2.8 per cent, the figures show.

Black, which had previously been the most popular car paint in Britain from 2009 to 2012, was chosen by more than one in five (20.5 per cent) of motor buyers, while white was in third place with 17.2 per cent.

It means more than three in five (62.5 per cent) of all new cars entering the road are monochrome shades.

Demand for blue motors rose by 1.4 per cent - the first growth in demand in five years - ahead of red and silver.

A total of 1.6 million new cars were registered in the UK last year, as the global shortage of semiconductors and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic affected sales.

Why grey is so popular

Consumer preference for grey, which comes in many varying shades, can be attributed to a wide range of reasons, according to the SMMT.

Firstly, it can be a sleek and deeper tone than other shades and is also well-suited to black trims and darker wheels and offers an attractive compromise between the also-popular black and white.

However, the biggest driving factor is grey's wider resale appeal than bright colours, so a potentially 'safer' choice, especially as it reduces the visibility of dirt more than the other shades.

That represented a 1 per cent increase on 2020 but was 28.7 per cent behind sales in the pre-pandemic year of 2019.

Commenting on the car colour data, SMMT chief executive Mike Hawes said: '2021 was anything but normal, but British drivers stuck to their familiar favourites of grey, black and white cars.'

'But while last year's new cars might share the same shades as previous years, under the bonnet there has been a real shift, with one in six buyers choosing to go green.'

And it is this shift to greener models that could spark increased popularity in white cars.

The Tesla Model 3, which was out-sold only by Vauxhall's Corsa in Britain in 2021, was most commonly ordered in white, with customers choosing it over shades of black, silver, blue and red.

This hints at the previously noted 'Apple effect', where people buy items that match the colour of their phones, laptops, smartwatches and tablets.

And white has form with UK car buyers, it was the most-chosen vehicle colour from 2013 to 2016.

Experts said the rise in demand for white was also bolstered by the fact most manufacturers offer white as a no-cost colour option for their new vehicles.

However, the growth in popularity has since seen white paint come at an extra cost, while less-desirable blues and reds are offered at no additional charge.

White was also the most-common colour for new Vauxhall Corsas, which adds fuel to the claims that its rise to the top of the UK sales charts in 2021 was significantly boosted by demand from businesses.

'With car registrations still low compared to pre- pandemic, helping even more drivers move to greener cars – whatever the actual colour – has never been more important,' Hawes added.

'Incentives are helping move the market and should continue, but the speed of this shift to electric must be matched by an acceleration in the pace of charging infrastructure investment.

'Drivers should expect to be able to recharge irrespective of wherever they live, work or visit.'

Niche colours: Gold, yellow and turquoise accelerate

At the niche end of the colour palette, gold, yellow and turquoise were the fastest growing colours for new cars in 2021.

Gold more than tripling its appeal (up 231.8 per cent), yellow was up by a third (31.3 per cent) and turquoise grew by a fifth (19.2 per cent).

However, together these colours accounted for less than 1 per cent of new cars entering the market.

Records show that Bedfordshire was the county where you were most likely to see a new pink car last year with 66 registrations.

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