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WALMART
15 YEARS LATER
LAUNCHES ITS ANSWER TO AMAZON PRIME

HEALTH ALERT
APPLE & GOOGLE
BUILD TRACING TECH DIRECTLY INTO PHONES

Control Over Adverts

iOS 14 FEATURES WILL CHANGE THE BATTLEFIELD

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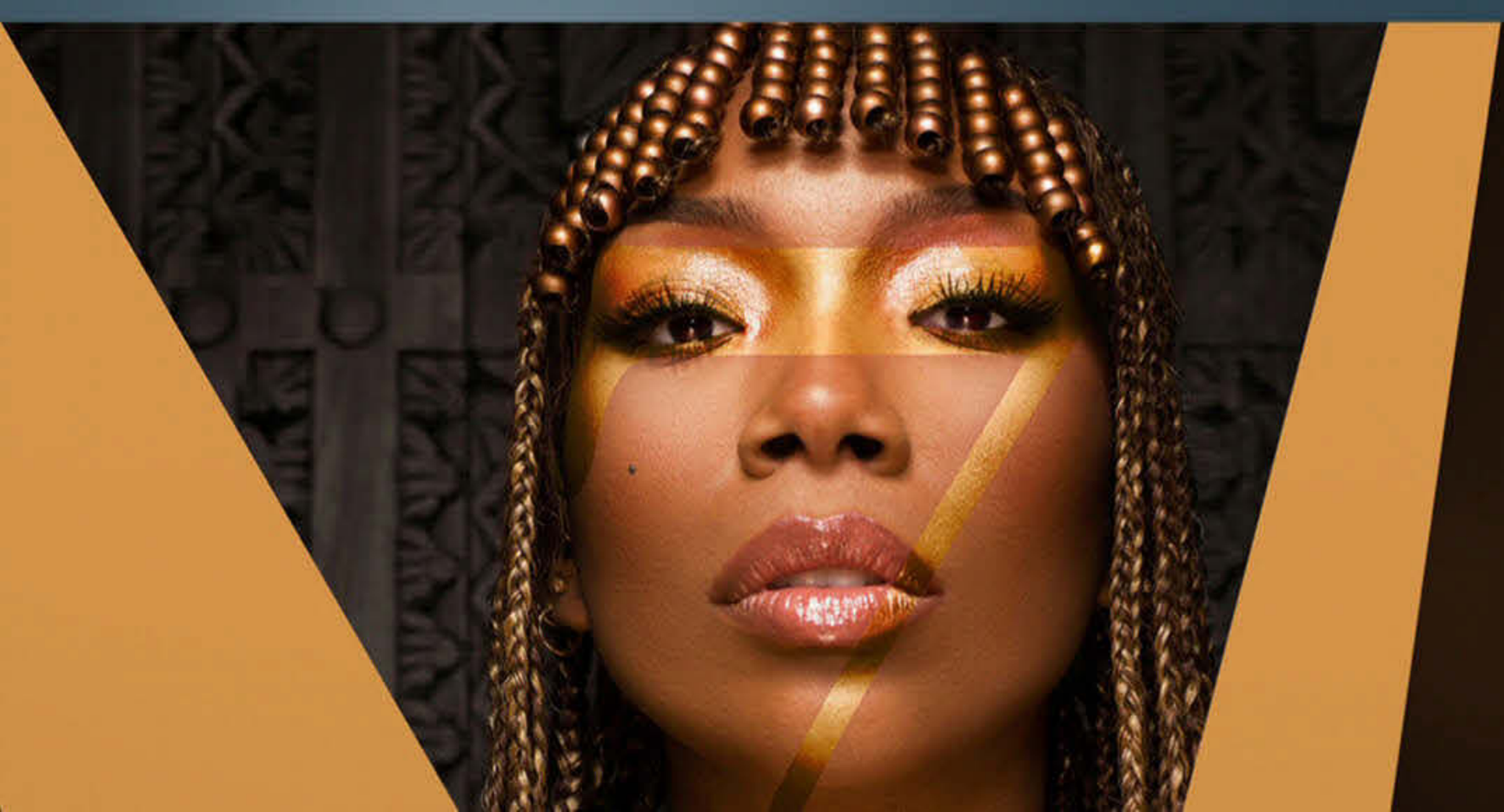

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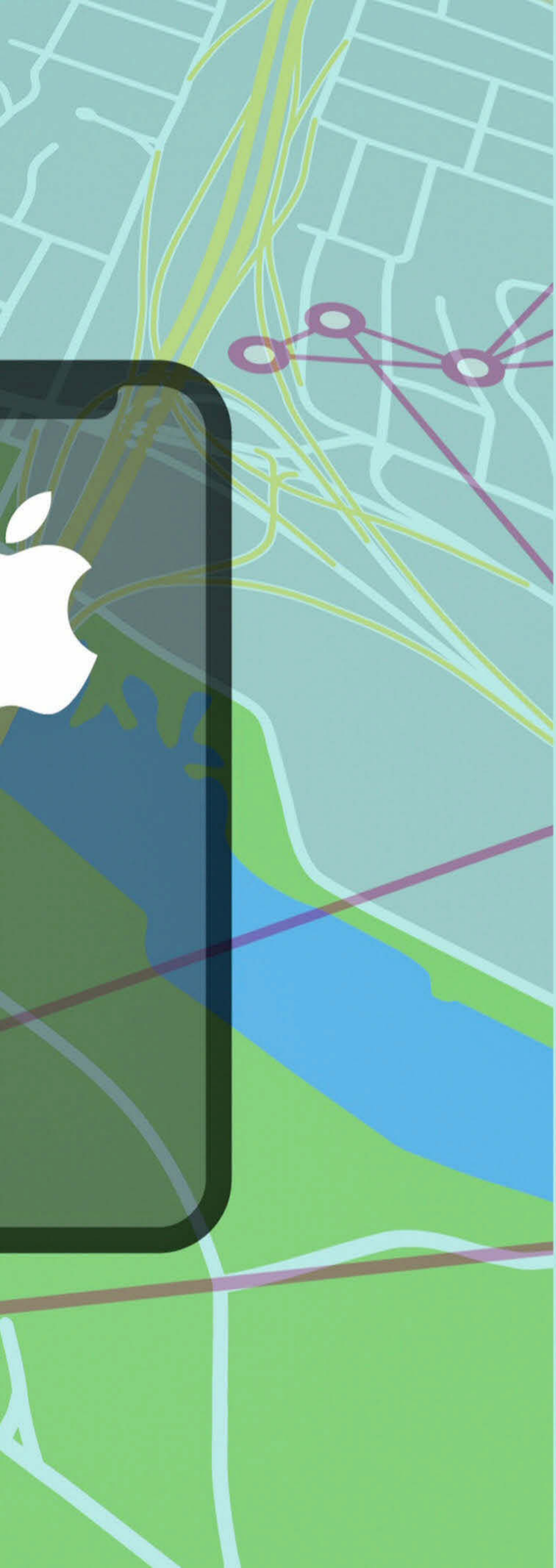

APPLE, GOOGLE BUILD VIRUS-TRACING TECH DIRECTLY INTO PHONES

Apple and Google are trying to get more U.S. states to adopt their phone-based approach for tracing and curbing the spread of the coronavirus by building more of the necessary technology directly into phone software.

That could make it much easier for people to get it on their phone even if their local public health agency hasn't built its own compatible app.

The tech giants launched the second phase of their "exposure notification" system, designed to automatically alert people if they might have been exposed to the coronavirus.

Until now, only a handful of U.S. states have built pandemic apps using the tech companies' framework, which has seen somewhat wider adoption in Europe and other parts of the world.

States must choose whether they want to enable the Apple-Google system. If they do, iPhone users in those states will automatically be able to opt into the system without having to download an app. They'll be prompted with a notification asking if they consent to running the system on their phones.

For people with Android phones, Google will automatically generate an Android app for public health agencies that phone users can then download.

The companies said they expect Maryland, Nevada, Virginia and Washington, D.C., to be the first in the U.S. to launch the new version of their tool. Virginia says nearly half a million residents have downloaded its app since the state in August became the first to launch a customized pandemic app using the Google-Apple framework.

But state officials have said their app doesn't work as well outside Virginia, although they expect a group of coordinating public health agencies to get a national server up and running before long so other states can join in.

The technology relies on Bluetooth wireless signals to determine whether an individual has spent time near anyone else who has tested positive for the virus. Both people in this scenario must be using the Google-Apple app. Instead of geographic location, the app relies on proximity. The companies say the app won't reveal personal information either to them or their public health agency.

Individuals who receive such proximity alerts will typically be offered testing and health advice to prevent potential future spread.

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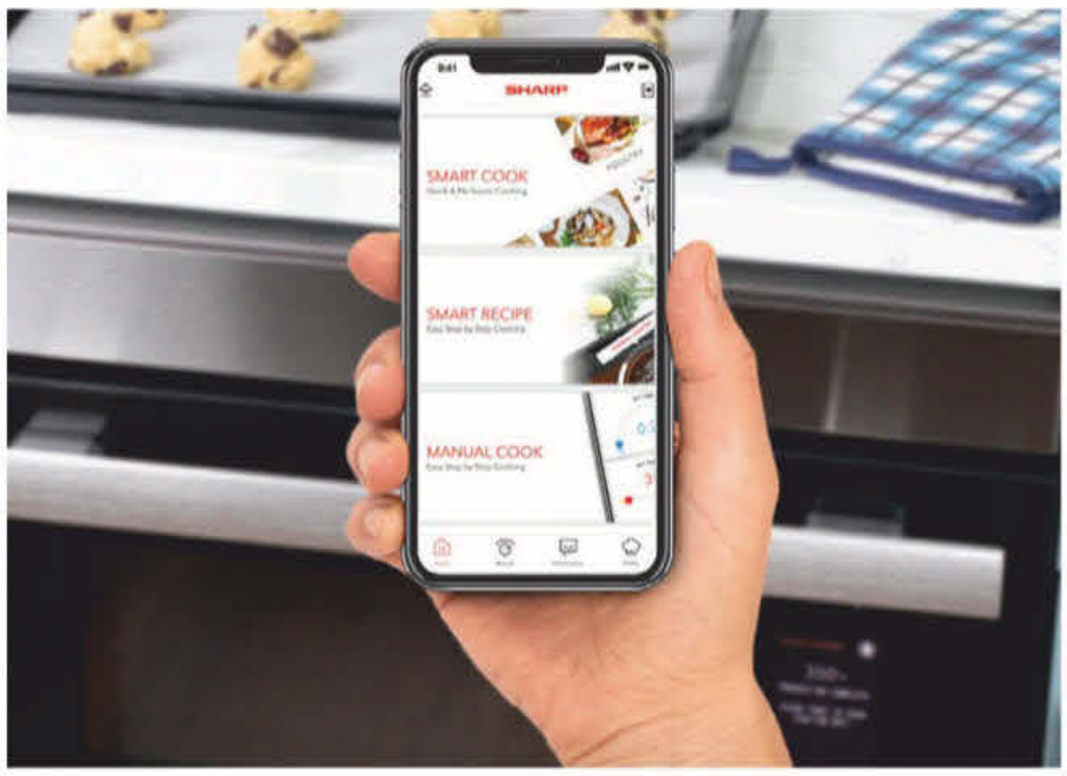

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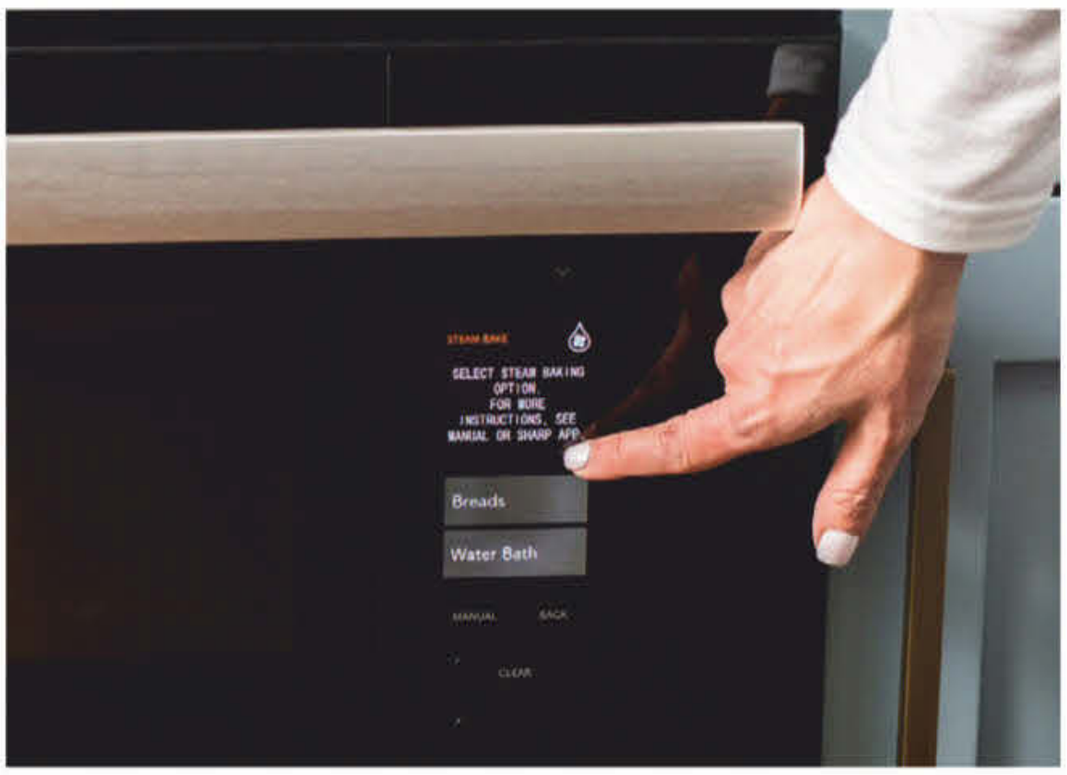

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Image: John Raoux

ELON MUSK WANTS YOU TO BUILD A BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACE

Elon Musk isn't content with electric cars, shooting people into orbit, populating Mars and building underground tunnels to solve traffic problems. He also wants to get inside your brain.

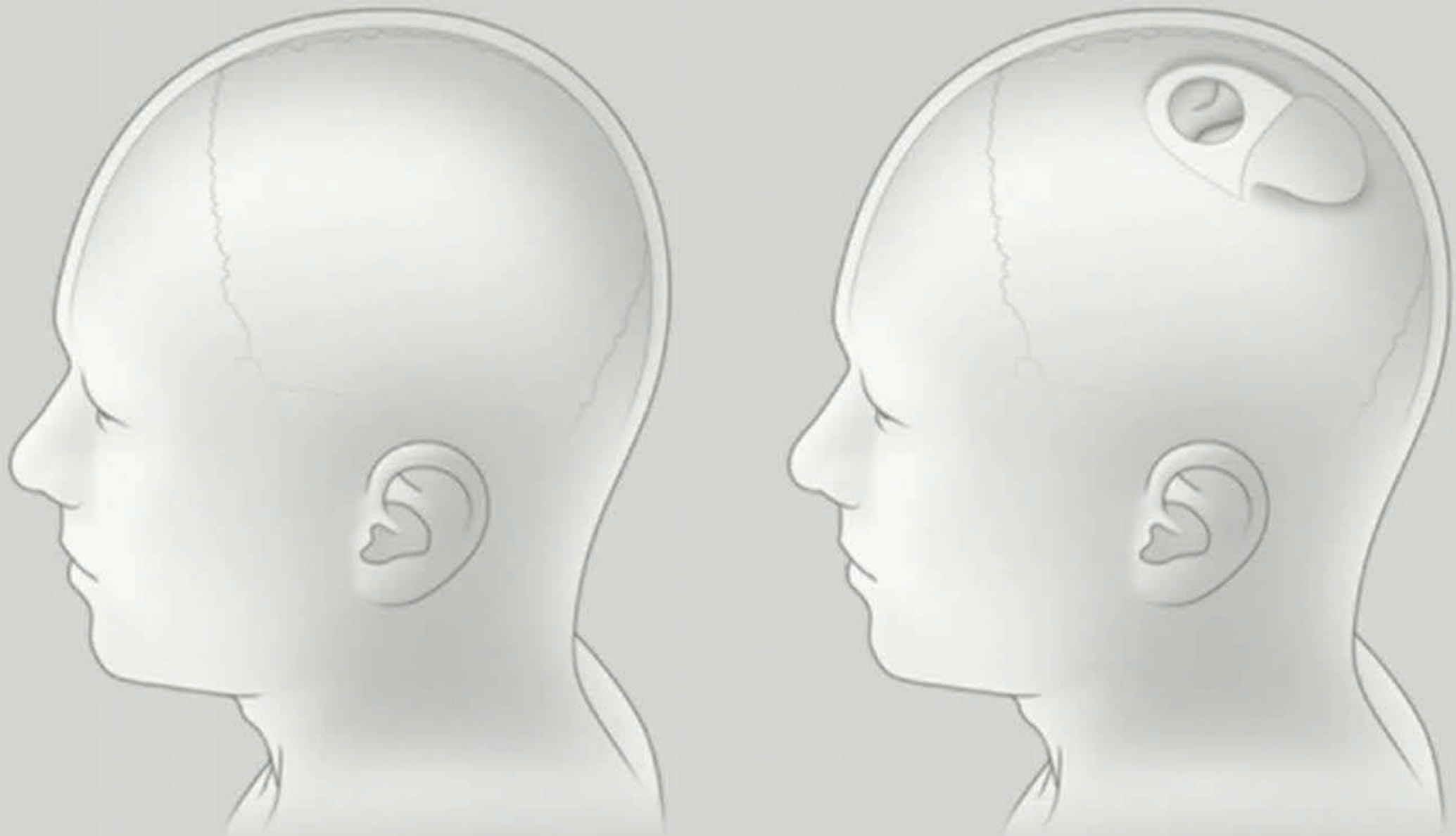
His startup, Neuralink, wants to one day implant computer chips inside the human brain. The goal is to develop implants that can treat neural disorders — and that may one day be powerful enough to put humanity on a more even footing with possible future superintelligent computers.

Not that it's anywhere close to that yet.

In a video demonstration last Friday explicitly aimed at recruiting new employees, Musk showed off a prototype of the device. About the size of a large coin, it's designed to be implanted in a person's skull. Ultra-thin wires hanging form the device would go directly into the brain. An earlier version of the device would have been placed behind an ear like a hearing aid.

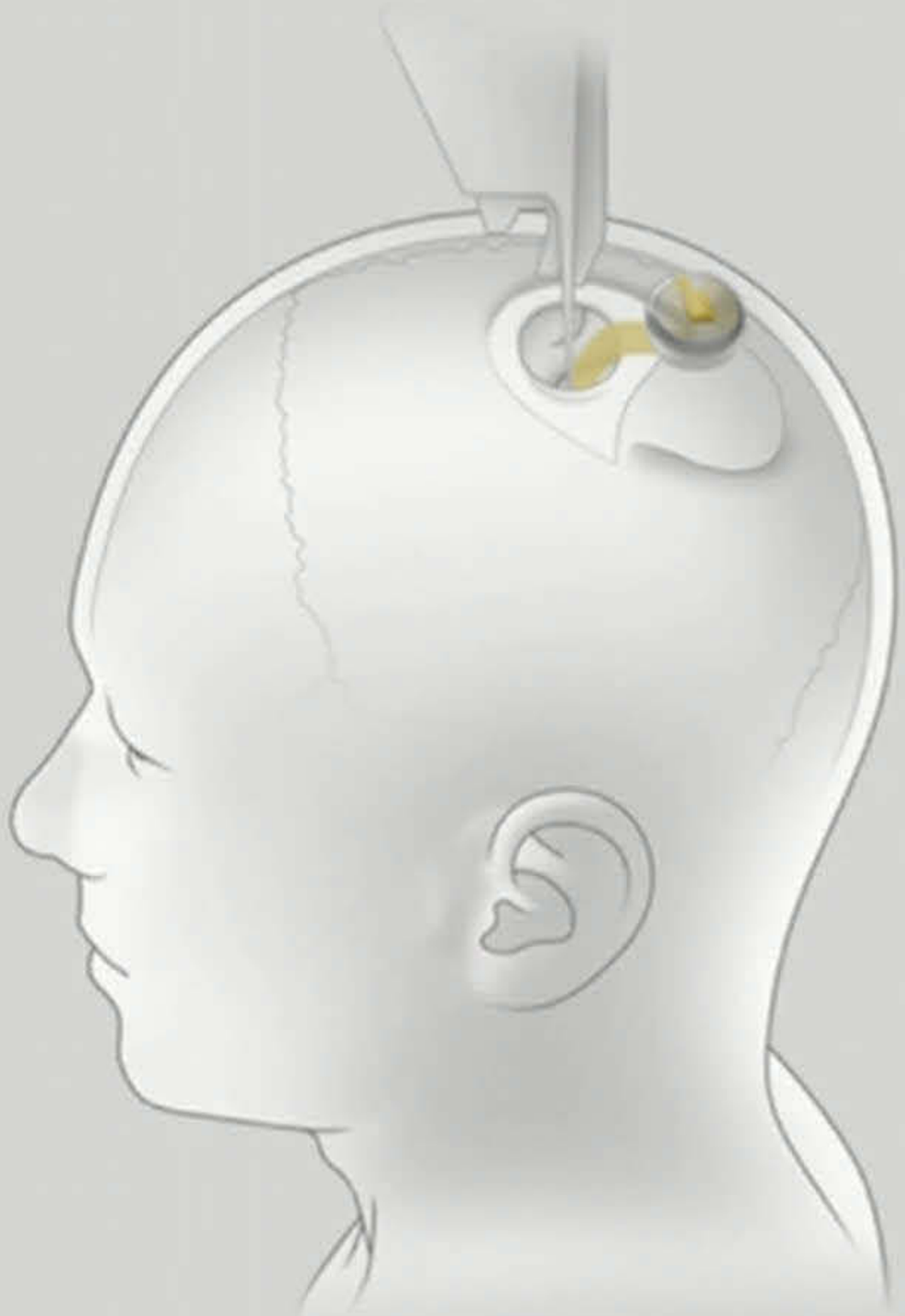
But the startup is far from a having commercial product, which would involve complex human trials and FDA approval among many other things. Friday's demonstration featured three pigs. One, named Gertrude, had a Neuralink implant.

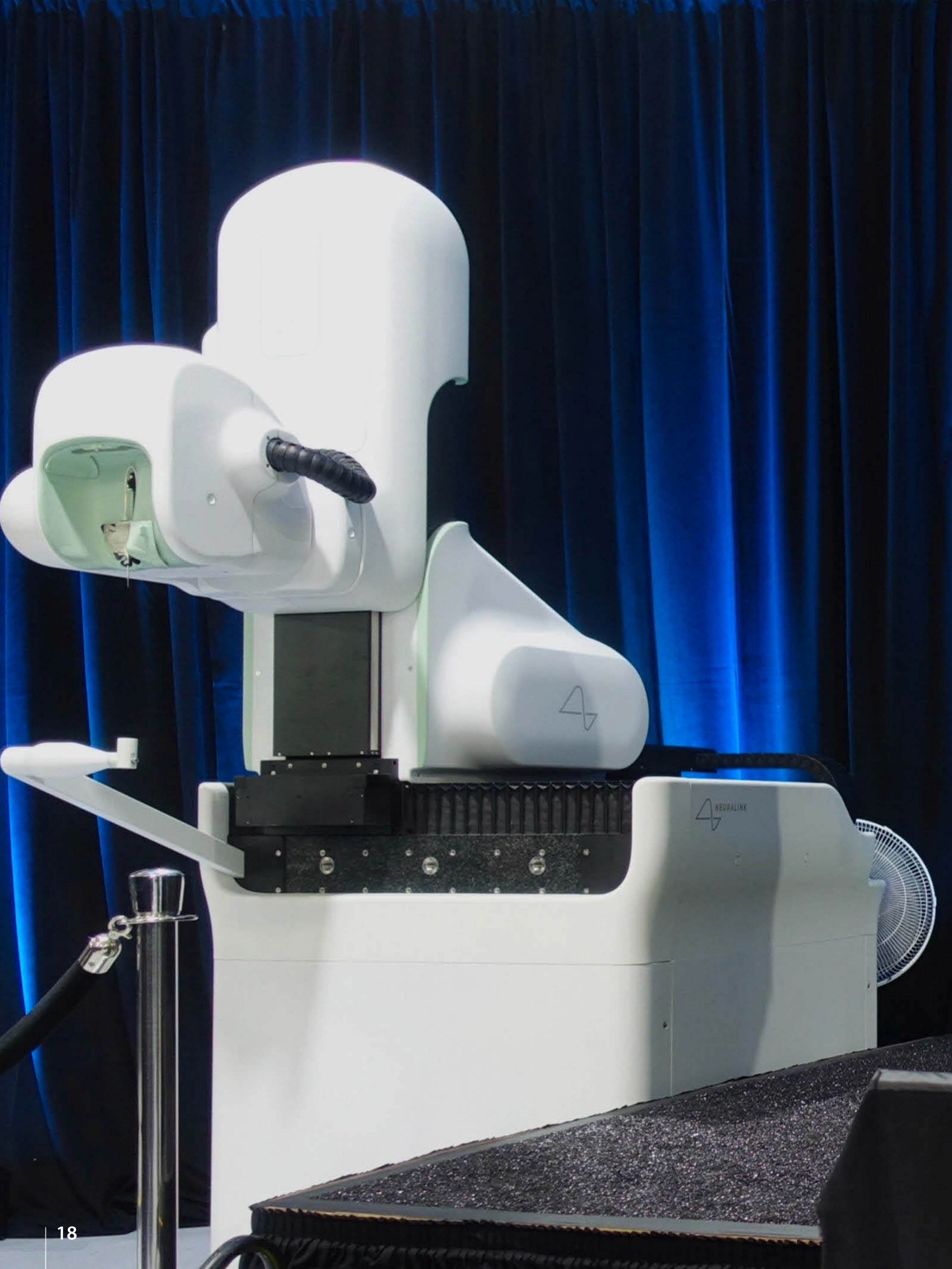
Musk, a founder of both the electric car company Tesla Motors and the private space-exploration firm SpaceX, has become an outspoken doomsayer about the threat artificial intelligence might one day pose to the human race. Continued growth in AI cognitive capabilities, he and like-minded critics suggest, could lead to machines that can outthink and outmaneuver humans with whom they might have little in common. The proposed solution? Link computers to our brains so we can keep up.



Musk urged coders, engineers and especially people with experience having "shipped" (that is, actually created) a product to apply. "You don't need to have brain experience," he said, adding that this is something that can be learned on the job.

Hooking a brain up directly to electronics is not new. Doctors implant electrodes in brains to deliver stimulation for treating such conditions as Parkinson's disease, epilepsy and chronic pain. In experiments, implanted sensors have let paralyzed people use brain signals to operate computers and move robotic arms. In 2016, researchers reported that a man regained some movement in his own hand with a brain implant.




NEURALINK

But Musk's proposal goes beyond this. Neuralink wants to build on those existing medical treatments as well as one day work on surgeries that could improve cognitive functioning, according to a Wall Street Journal article on the company's launch.

While there are endless, outlandish applications to brain-computer interfaces — gaming, or as someone on Twitter asked Musk, summoning your Tesla — Neuralink wants to first use the device with people who have severe spinal cord injury to help them talk, type and move using their brain waves.

"I am confident that long term it would be possible to restore someone's full-body motion," said Musk, who's also famously said that he wants to "die on Mars, just not on impact."

Neuralink is not the only company working on artificial intelligence for the brain. Entrepreneur Bryan Johnson, who sold his previous payments startup Braintree to PayPal for $800 million, started Kernel, a company working on "advanced neural interfaces" to treat disease and extend cognition, in 2016. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is also interested in the space. Facebook bought CTRL-labs, a startup developing non-invasive neural interfaces, in 2019 and folded it into Facebook's Reality Labs, whose goal is to "fundamentally transform the way we interact with devices."

That might be an easier sell than the Neuralink device, which would require recipients to agree to have the device implanted in their brain, possibly by a robot surgeon. Neuralink did not respond to requests for comment.

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UBER TO REQUIRE THAT PASSENGERS PROVIDE FACE-MASK SELFIES

Mask slackers will now have to provide photographic proof they're wearing a face covering before boarding an Uber.

The San Francisco-based company unveiled a new policy Tuesday stipulating that if a driver reports to Uber that a rider wasn't wearing a mask, the rider will have to provide Uber with a selfie with one strapped on the next time they summon a car on the world's largest ride-hailing service.

The mask verification rule expands upon a similar requirement that Uber imposed on its drivers in May to help reassure passengers worried about being exposed to the novel coronavirus that has upended society. Now, Uber believes it's time to help make its drivers feel safer, too.

The requirement will roll out in the U.S. and Canada later this month before coming to other parts of the world.

The additional safety measures are part of Uber's ongoing efforts to rebuild a service that has seen ridership plunge this year. People have been seeking to minimize the chances of becoming sick and and also have had fewer reasons to go anywhere, with offices, bars, restaurants and nightclubs closed through much of the U.S. and other parts of the world.

The adverse conditions caused the number of trips on Uber during its most recent quarter to plunge by 56% from the previous year.

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SAMSUNG TOUTS $2,000 FOLDABLE PHONE AS A 'VIP' EXPERIENCE

Samsung's second attempt at a foldable smartphone will come with a $2,000 price tag and a few elite perks aimed at affluent consumers still able to afford the finer things in life during tough times.

The phone, dubbed the Z Fold2, will include a VIP package that will provide access to fancy restaurants and golf clubs to supplement the device's multipurpose design.

When folded up, the device looks like most other phones. But when its interior 7.6-inch screen is opened up along its side hinges, it is quickly transformed into the equivalent of a mini-tablet.

"It's definitely a luxury device," said Drew Blackard, Samsung's vice president of mobile product management in the U.S.

Samsung provided a glimpse of the Z Fold2 last month while unveiling other new phones that cost at least $1,000, but waited until this week to provide details about how much it will cost and when it will be in stores. Anyone willing to pay the Z Fold2's lofty price will be able to place an order online. It will be available in stores Sept. 18.

That will give the Z Fold2 a slight jump on Apple's next wave of iPhones. Those are expected to be released in October, a few weeks later than usual because of supply problems lingering from overseas factories that shut down during the early stages of the pandemic.

The Z Fold2 is supposed to be sturdier than last year's inaugural model. That initial foldable device proved to be far more fragile than Samsung had hoped, even after delaying its release by several months in an effort to fix issues noticed by people who received review models. Even with this year's improvements, the Z Fold2 will require special care that Samsung will explain in instructions accompanying the device.

The South Korean technology giant is hoping the versatility will infuse some excitement in a smartphone market that hasn't seen many breakthroughs aside from better cameras and other minor tweaks. The lull in innovation has caused more people to hold on to their existing phones for longer periods, dampening sales for Samsung, Apple and other manufacturers.

The new phone will also be equipped with the technology required to work on new ultrafast wireless networks known as 5G that are rolling out. That's another advantage over older phones that Samsung believes will prod more people to consider splurging on a new device.

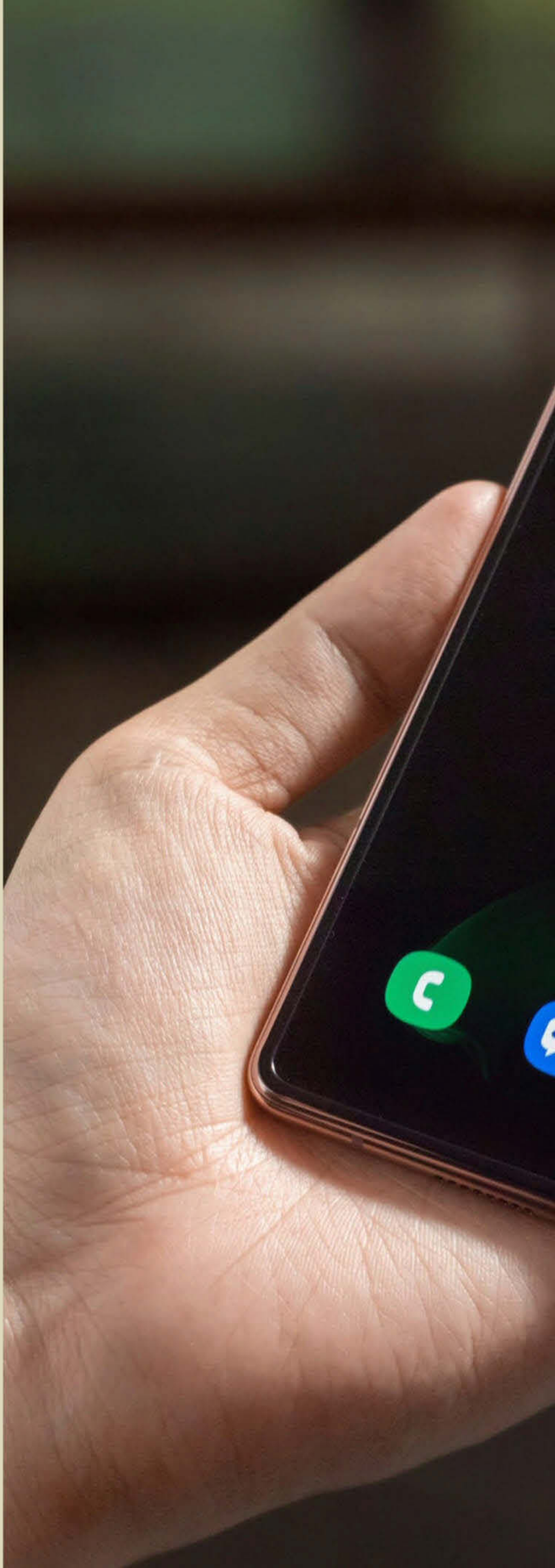

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Image: Jeff Chiu

Blackard cites another reason new phones are likely to draw interest: Even as more people work from home on laptop and desktop computers, they also have been using their mobile devices more frequently. In some cases, the usage is up by 50%, he said, based on the data that Samsung.

Even so, Blackard conceded that the Z Fold2 is likely to have limited appeal at a time when the recession has caused the U.S. unemployment rate to soar and is forcing millions of households to pinch pennies just to pay the monthly rent or mortgage.

In an effort to reach all ends of the market, Samsung recently introduced a 5G phone, the Galaxy A51, that sells for $500.

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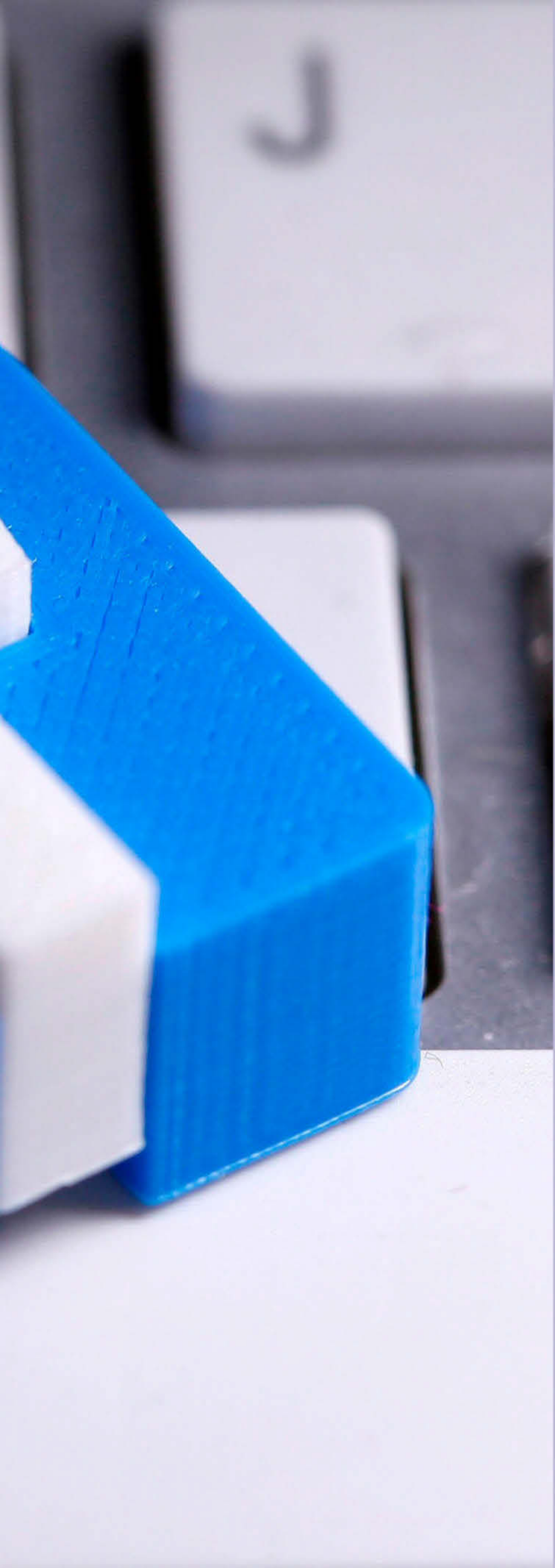

FACEBOOK: APPLE PRIVACY CHANGES WILL MUCK UP ONLINE ADS

Facebook is pushing back on new Apple privacy rules for its mobile devices — and putting app developers in the middle.

Apple will soon require apps to ask users for permission to collect data on what devices they are using and to let ads follow them around on the internet. The social network said that those rules could reduce what apps can earn by advertising through Facebook's audience network.

Facebook said it expects "less impact" on its own advertising revenue than on the ad-supported businesses that rely on its audience network to promote their apps. The audience network allows Facebook and Instagram advertisers to place their ads elsewhere on the internet.

Apple says the latest version of its mobile operating system, iOS 14, is designed to protect people's privacy. It will require apps to ask users for permission to collect and share data using a unique code that identifies their iPhones and iPads. The update is due later this fall.

Facebook said that because of this change, it will no longer collect the identifier for advertisers on its own apps for iOS 14 devices. It is also asking businesses to create new ad accounts dedicated solely to running ads for apps for iOS 14 users in order to comply with Apple's new rules.

Facebook's stock jumped more than 5% on the news. Wedbush analyst Michael Pachter said the market sees Apple's new rule as likely to shift demand toward Facebook's own targeting system.

"Advertisers are more likely to go with what they know works, which is Facebook targeting," he said.

Pachter said investors clearly think that the competing ad networks run by the likes of Snap and Twitter are going to be put at a disadvantage while titans like Google and Facebook charge ahead.

Currently, if an iPhone user looks at an item on the Amazon app, then looks it up on the

Best Buy app, advertisers know that someone is shopping around. So they could deliver a promotion to that user, Pachter said. Once iOS 14 is released, that won't be possible unless users opt in.

"That's going to limit their ability to track a lot of people," he said.

But Facebook will continue to be able to track people through its own systems, which are separate from Apple's device identifiers.

In Facebook's second-quarter earnings call last month, finance chief Dave Wehner said the company is "still trying to understand what these changes will look like and how they will impact us and the rest of the industry. But the very least, it's going to make it harder for app developers and others to grow using ads on Facebook and elsewhere."

He also called targeted ads "a lifeline for small businesses, especially in a time of COVID."

Apple, on the other hand, said it is intent on giving people more choice over how they want to be tracked by companies on the internet — and the ability to say no if they don't.

David Chavern, CEO of the news-publisher trade group News Media Alliance, said the change is "more annoying than material." But he added that it could still cost publishers money by making ads on their apps less valuable to advertisers.

"The annoying part comes from the loss of revenue at a time when all revenue is important, and the unilateral nature of Apple's decision," he said. "They decide and the rest of the world just has to adapt."

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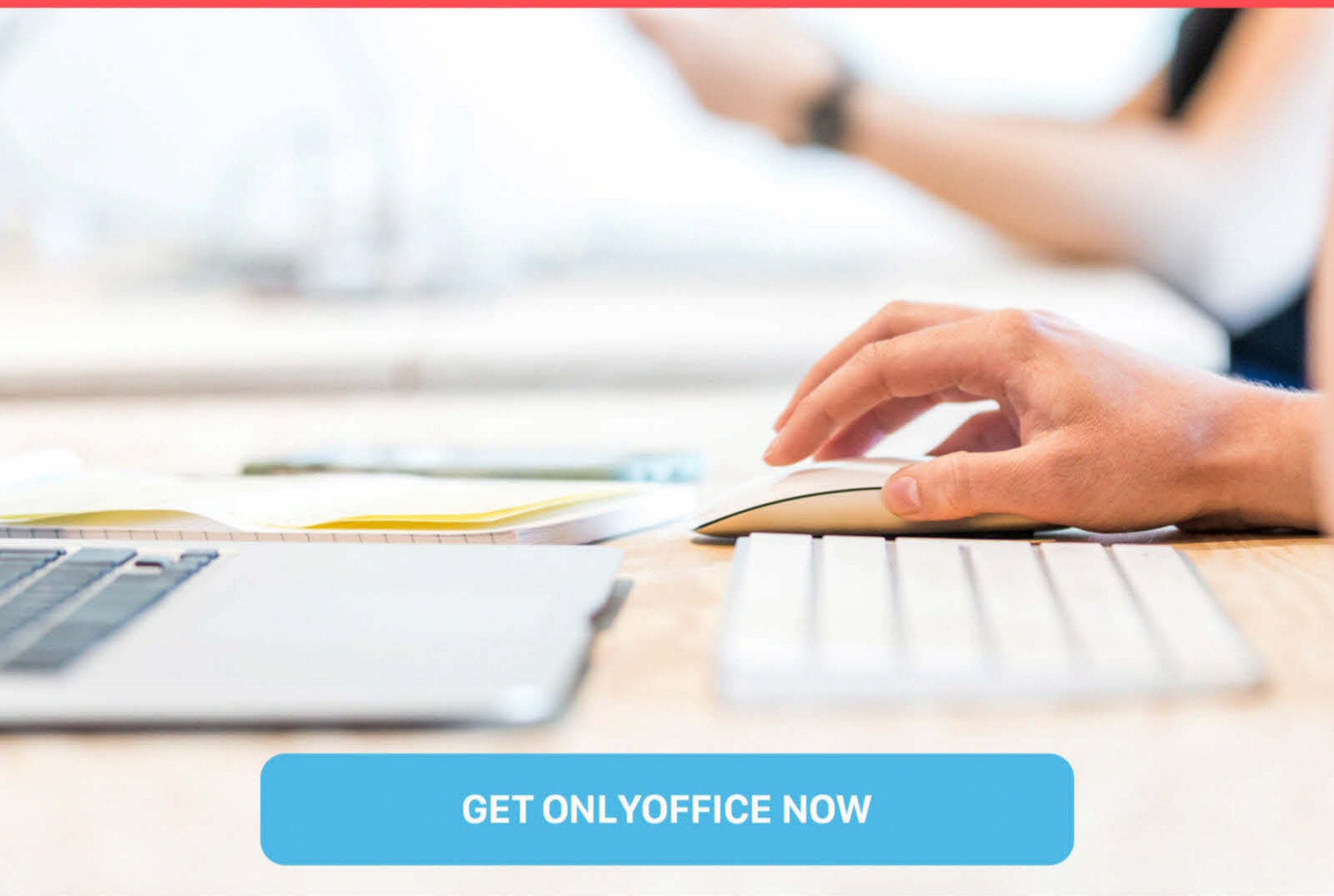

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CONTROL OVER ADVERTS:

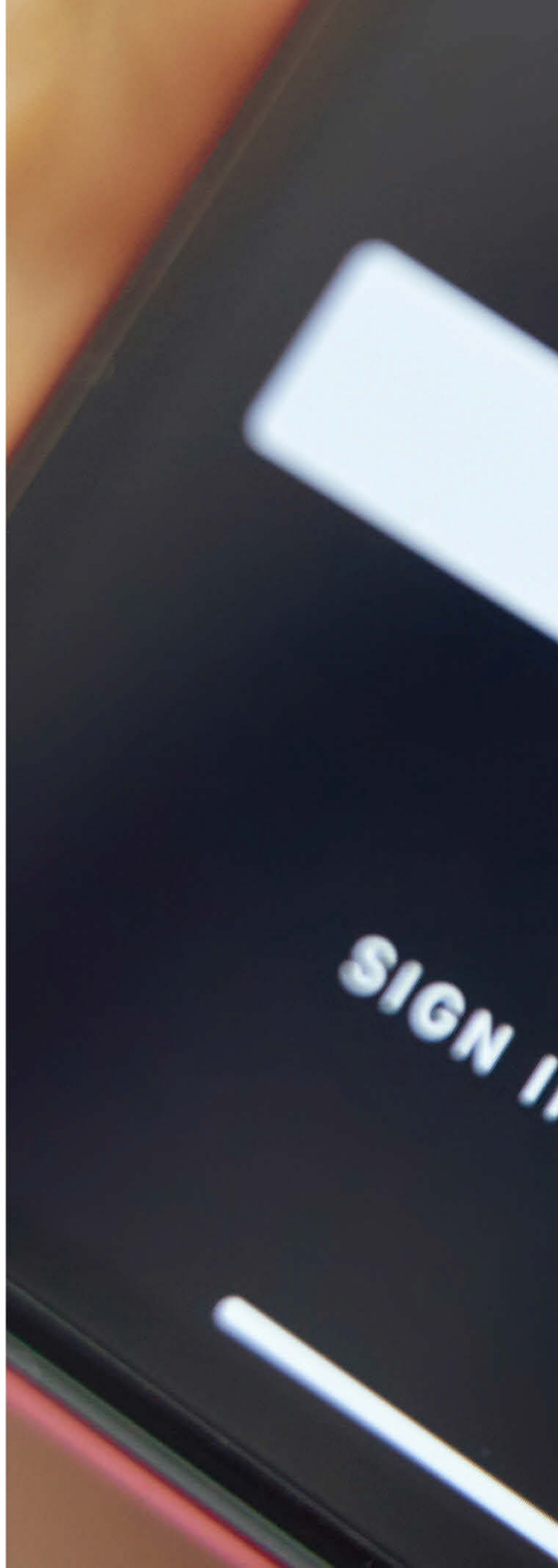
iOS 14 FEATURES WILL CHANGE THE BATTLEFIELD

With the release of iOS 14 just around the corner, advertising giants are quaking in their boots, concerned that the Cupertino company's upcoming changes will put the breaks on their success. Apple has made it clear: consumers should be in control over their data, and in a few weeks' time, a real revolution will begin in the world of digital advertising…

OVERHAULING PRIVACY ON iOS 14

Though this year's iOS update may not feature all of the bells and whistles we've come to expect from Apple, many under-the-hood changes will transform the way we use our phones and tablets. Apple has, in recent years, begun flying the flag for privacy, standing tall and proud in a world where Google dominates the smartphone game. Last year, the firm introduced a number of changes to location tracking, Safari privacy, as well as the Sign In With Apple feature, designed to dissuade users from depending on Facebook or Google when logging into a third-party platform. And although Apple's already doing a great job, iOS 14 takes things up a gear, introducing substantial changes to our security.

Some of the most immediate changes come inside of our favorite applications. Now, when an app like Facebook or TikTok tries to access our microphone or copy our clipboard, we'll receive a dot in the status bar - amber for microphone, green for camera. These recording lights keep us in control and **help us understand what apps are doing behind the scenes**. Location-tracking is also more difficult for companies - in iOS 14, apps must ask users for permission to access their whereabouts, and



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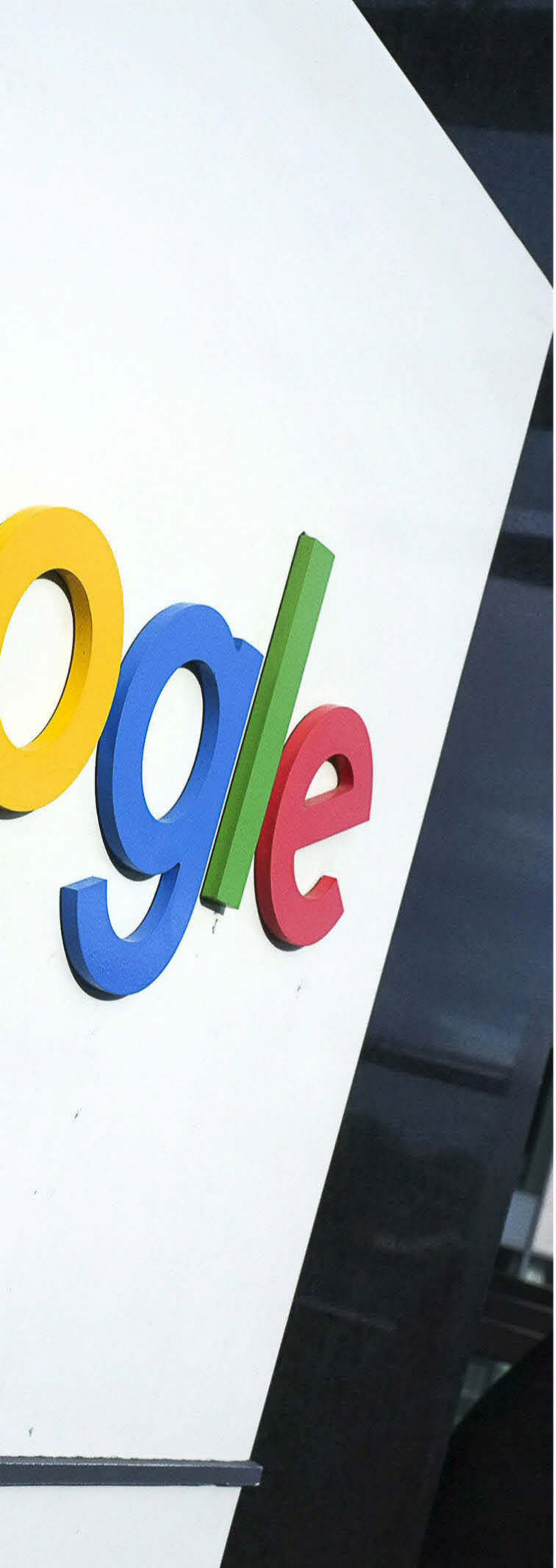

users can choose between sharing a Precise or General location, and each is customizable on an app-by-app basis for greater control and privacy. What's more, permission must be granted every time you use the app. Access to Photos will no longer be granted unless users explicitly say 'Yes', and it's **possible to share just a couple of photographs with an app to protect your privacy**.

Where privacy on iOS 14 really comes into its own, however, is with advertising tracking. Apple made some big changes in iOS 13, making it harder for companies like Facebook to use its "pixels" to track users around the web. In iOS 14, apps and websites must ask for permission before viewing personal information such as location. And on top of password monitoring to alert users to hijacked passwords, Apple has introduced new technologies to prevent cross-site tracking and cookies on Safari. That's in addition to a new "Privacy Report" feature available on each and every website, **offering a 'nutrition-label' style look into websites, the data they've already collected on you, and what you can do to stop it**.

For firms such as Facebook and Google, **which last year reported ad revenues of $69 billion** and **$41 billion (across Google, business services, and YouTube advertisements)** respectively, this comes as a big change. The harder it is to create a profile of a user and track them around the web, the less effective advertising is going to be, and the less brands will pay to be featured on third-party sites in the form of banners and videos.

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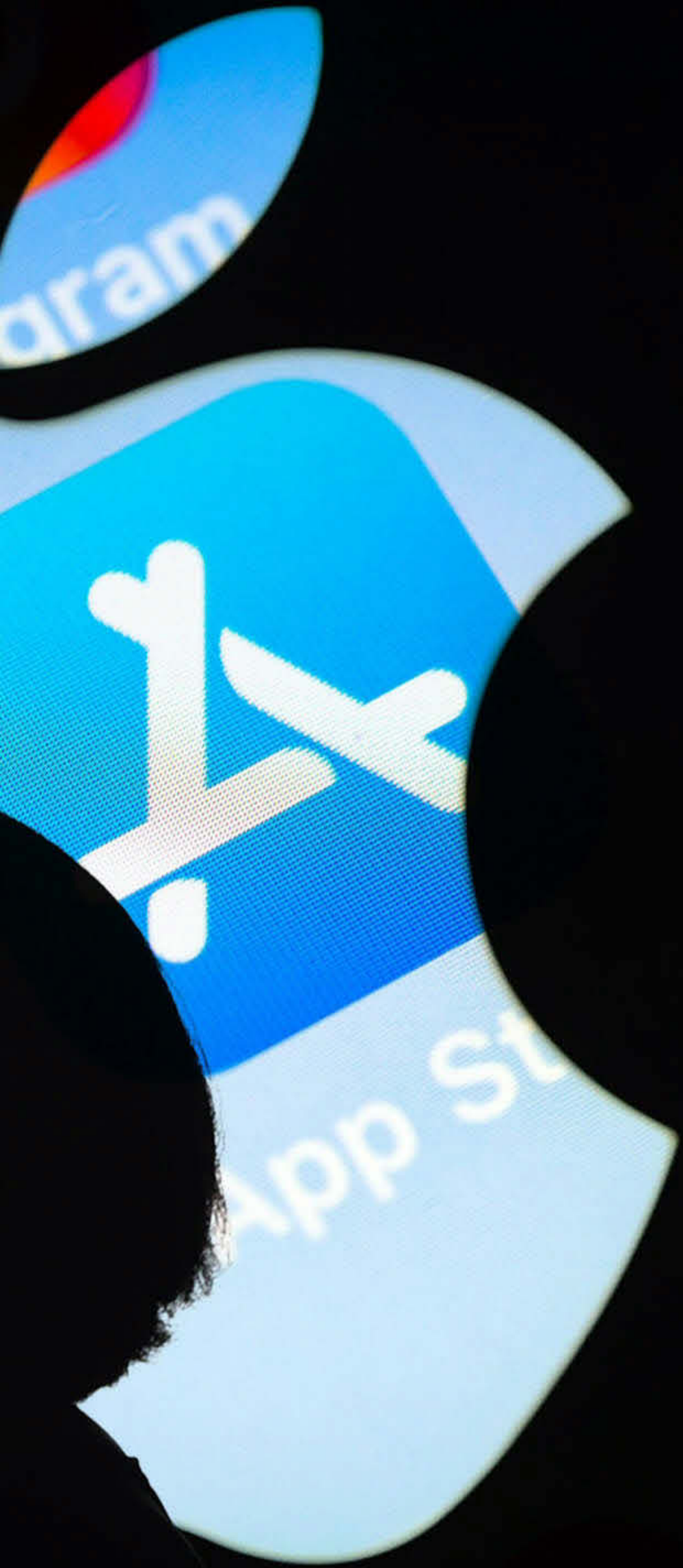
BACKLASH FROM FACEBOOK

And that's where the drama begins. As we edge closer to the release of iOS 14, Facebook has begun warning its advertisers and developers that changes to the operating system will impact their ability to track users' activity across the entire Internet and app ecosystem, making it tougher to serve relevant and targeted ads to users on Facebook and third-party apps. As Apple will require all app developers to notify users if they're collecting unique device codes (known as IDFAs, or ID for Advertisers), Facebook and other advertisers will no longer be able to collate the "shared knowledge" they've gathered about a user across multiple websites and platforms. Apps typically share these IDFAs to place more targeted advertisements inside of apps and websites, increasing revenues, and serving customers.

Of course, not all of this technology is bad. Consumers would much rather see an advert for something that's relevant to them than something they'd never buy. And thus Apple is not eliminating IDFAs - just making them harder to be shared by multiple organizations. As such, Facebook itself should still be able to collect data about users on the Facebook app and Messenger app, but they won't be able to share that data with other advertisers, which currently forms the backbone of its mobile marketing business. Facebook says that the changes make IDFAs "useless," and as a result, Facebook will stop collecting users' IDFA from iOS 14. Speaking of its frustrations, **Facebook told developers in a recent blog post:** "Despite our best efforts, [the changes] may render Audience Network so ineffective on iOS 14 that it may not make sense

to offer it on iOS 14 in the future. Our ability to deliver targeted ads on iOS 14 will be limited... as a result, some iOS 14 users may not see any ads from Audience Network, while others may still see ads from us, but they'll be less relevant." Ultimately, less advertising means lower revenues for Facebook, adding that because of "advertisers' reduced ability to accurately target and measure their campaigns," they should expect lower views on their advertisements, thus lower revenue.

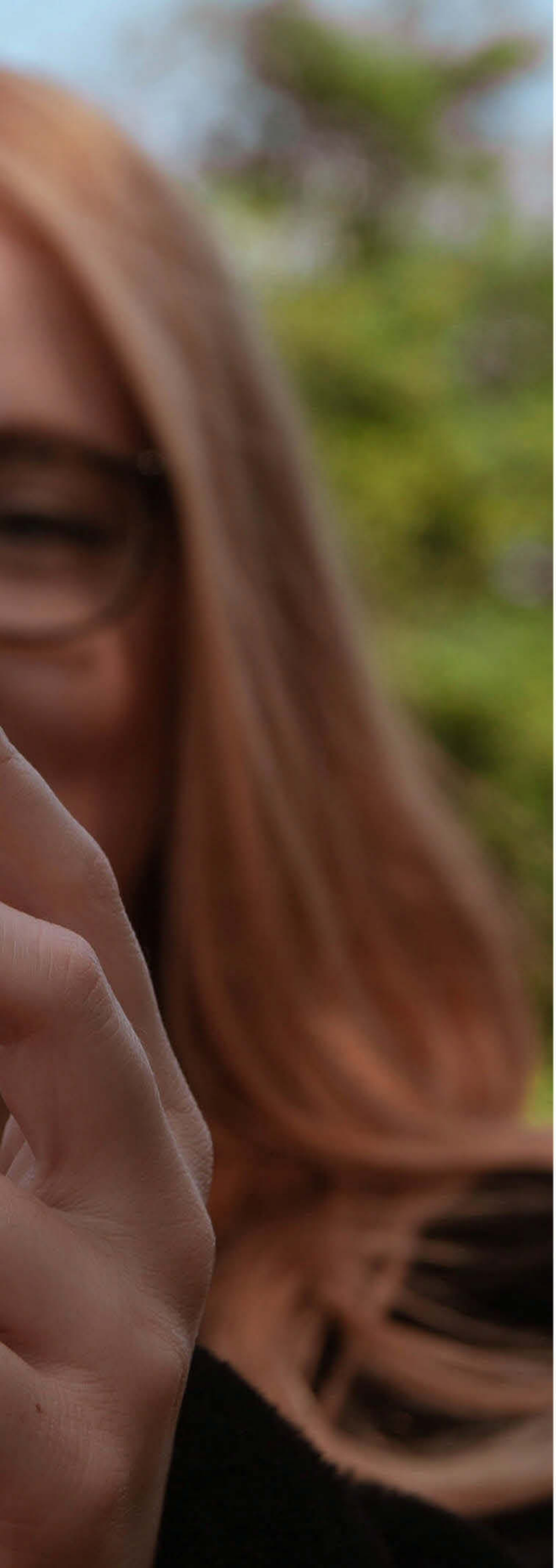
A spokesperson for Facebook said that the upcoming changes would have a "far-reaching impact on the developer ecosystem," recognizing that many app developers, publishers, and small businesses depend on advertising revenue to both power their growth and for revenue generation. The organization said that it was unhappy Apple had announced the changes before first consulting with Facebook and other advertisers, adding: "We believe that industry consultation is critical for changes to platform policies." Apple has faced



some tough criticism in recent months, from the United States' government to Epic Games, but the changes to users' privacy in iOS 14 has been universally praised by the public and the press. Indeed, it will ultimately impact the back pockets of advertisers, but the multi-billion dollar organizations should be able to innovate and find new ways to appeal to consumers.

Facebook is right, though, in saying that users won't opt-in to having their data tracked if they are given the option - something Apple is adding to iOS 14. Such opt-in pop-ups will ultimately harm Facebook's Audience Network business, but it's hard to say whether this is a good thing or a bad thing for consumers just yet. In the past, Facebook has been under fire on more than one occasion for the way it handles user data and privacy. From settling a $5 billion case with the Federal Trade Commission to the infamous Cambridge Analytica scandal and now the **proposed joining-together of Facebook apps like Instagram, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp in an attempt to**

Image: Leon Seibert



prevent government intervention, Facebook's reputation is certainly far from stellar. Back in 2013, the company **purchased an advertising service called Atlas Solutions from Microsoft for $100 million**, and said that it represented an opportunity for marketers and agencies to get a view of performance on multiple channels. This has since grown to become the behemoth known today as Facebook Ads, and although the billion-dollar organization has helped businesses reach customers, it's come at the price of consumer trust and privacy.

THE FUTURE OF ADVERTISING

Although Apple's iOS 14 privacy changes have been welcomed by many, it's advertisers and businesses that are likely to suffer the most. One journalist says that the **"feature spells trouble for advertising agencies and promises to end an era of personalized ads"** and **another says that Apple has single-handedly created an "apocalypse,"** but it's not just Apple that's changing the way brands control data. Google shocked the world back in January when **it confirmed it was planning to phase out cookies by 2022**, designed to offer consumers a "more private web." But as Google owns one of the world's biggest advertising businesses, some say that its decision to change the rules on ad tracking in Chrome is unethical, making it tough for competitors to stand a chance.

Whatever your position in the upcoming changes to advertising tracking, it's clear that Apple is changing the way consumers think about their data and privacy. For a short while, many became entrapped in the services offered by companies like Facebook, accepting

that they'd need to hand over every ounce of privacy in order to benefit from free services like instant messaging and search engines. But tides are turning and with consumers now given more choice than ever before (the rise of TikTok proves that Facebook's dominance can be challenged, whilst DuckDuckGo's growth signals that Google itself isn't invincible), technology companies are now putting privacy first. Apple flies the flag for consumers, and **many privacy-focused advertising campaigns have allowed it to be at the front**, but we cannot forget brands such as Mozilla for playing a role, too. With technology more intertwined in our everyday lives than ever before, it's now impossible to enter a room without seeing an internet-connected device. From our TVs and smartphones to fitness trackers and smart speakers, everything we own is now online.

There's an old saying that, if a service is free, you are the product. In most cases, it's your data that's the product. We all know **data is now one of the most valuable commodities** and that, when used properly, it can save us time, money, and make us more productive. But companies have increasingly been stepping over the line in an attempt to increase their profits and appease shareholders. In order for us to trust technology giants for another ten years, we need to have confidence that they're looking after us. Apple and some others are realizing that, by breaking down the barriers and valuing privacy, we'll pay more for our devices, subscribe to more of their services, and become loyal in ways we've never been before. As Apple ventures further into offerings like streaming and fitness, that loyalty should pay dividends.

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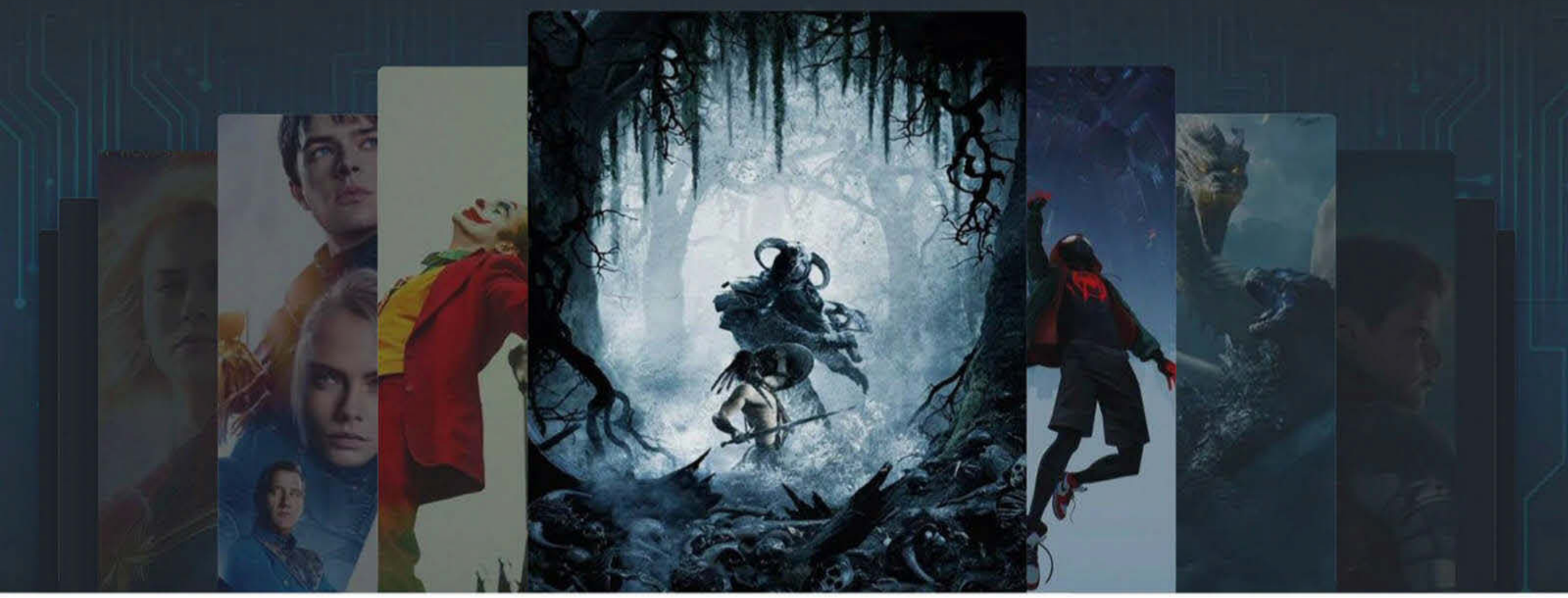

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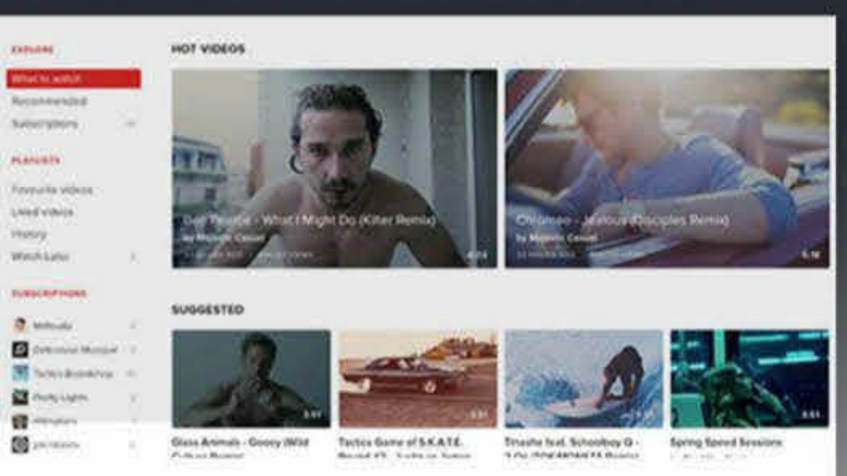

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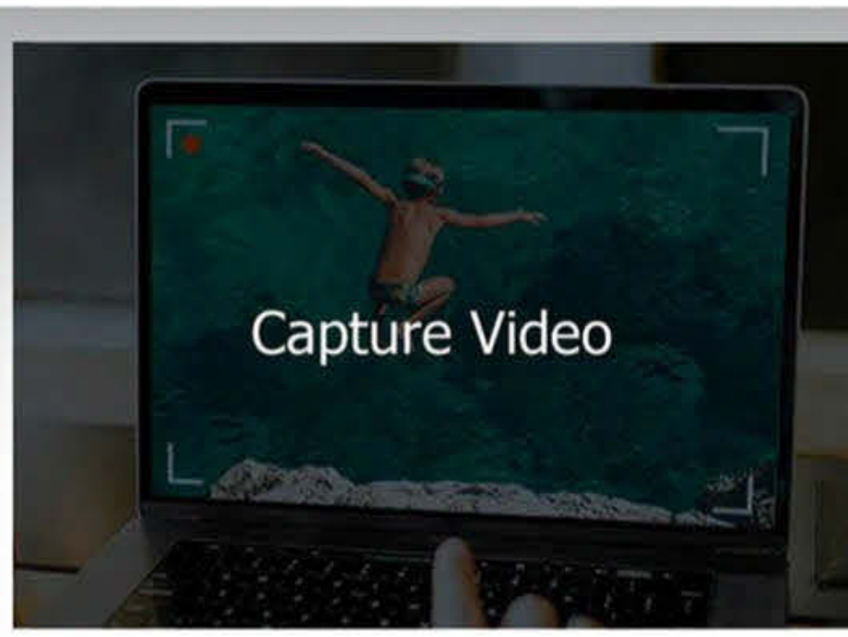

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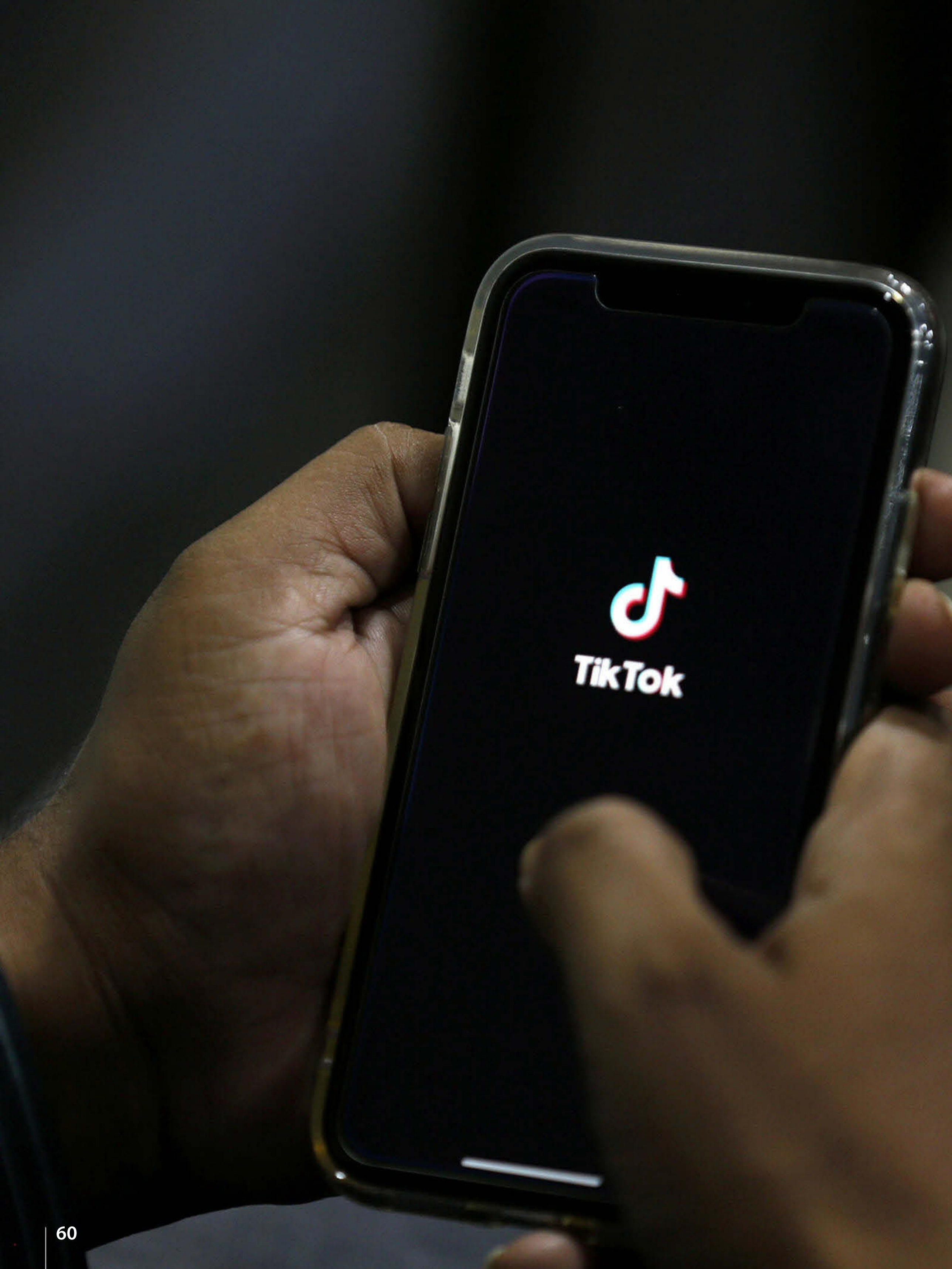

TikTok

WHAT DOES WALMART SEE IN TIKTOK? MILLIONS OF YOUNG SHOPPERS

Walmart may be the world's largest retailer but it has mostly failed in its efforts to break Amazon's online dominance.

Could TikTok, a fast-growing 3-year-old app filled with goofy videos, be the answer?

TikTok's U.S. business appears up for grabs, with the Trump administration trying to force a sale, claiming national-security risks due to its Chinese owner, ByteDance. TikTok denies it is a risk and is suing to stop the administration from a threatened ban.

Others have reportedly emerged, but the only confirmed suitors are Walmart, teaming with tech giant Microsoft.

The big-box retailer has given only a vague rationale for why it would want TikTok, but it appears to boil down to its vast audience of young people.

TikTok's e-commerce business is small today but it says it has 100 million users in the U.S. — incredibly, nearly a third of the country. Many are young, the type of shopper increasingly difficult to reach via traditional media and advertising.

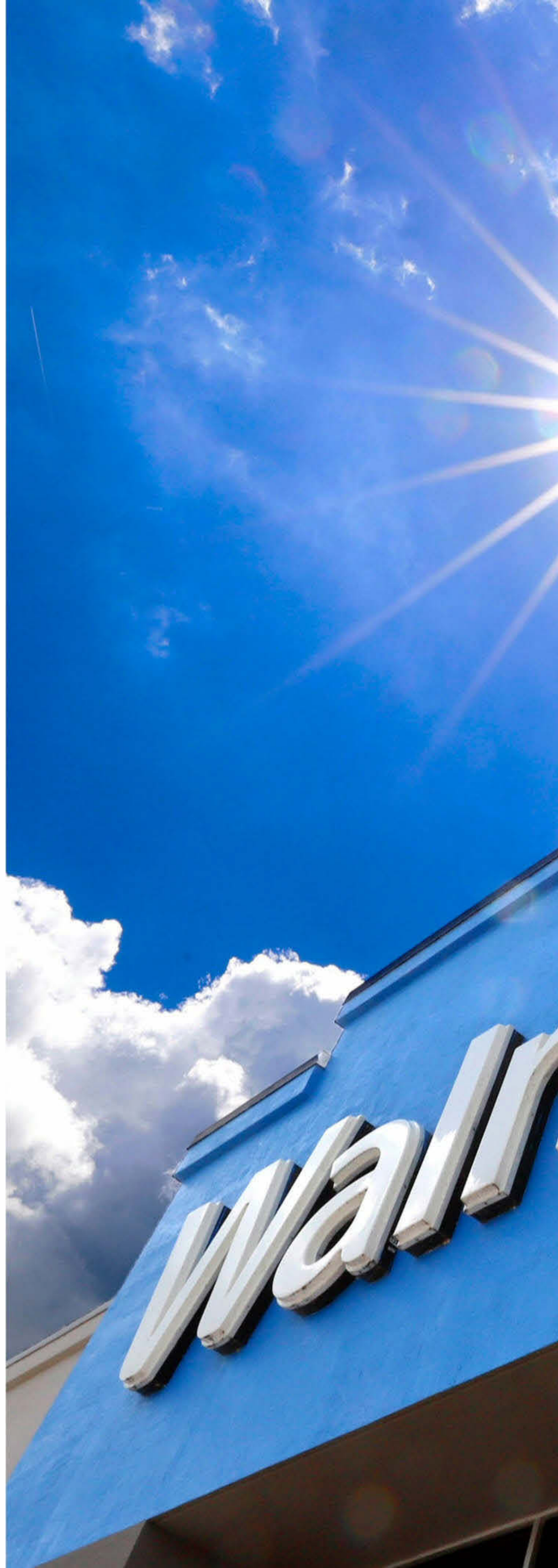
"The future customer of Walmart or Amazon — that's what TikTok offers," said Amit Shah, chief strategy officer of VTEX, which creates online marketplaces for brands.

Walmart declined to comment. TikTok did not respond to questions about its U.S. e-commerce business or online-shopping strategies baked into Douyin, a sister service to TikTok available in China.

Walmart's online sales have been growing tremendously, nearly doubling in the last quarter, with much of that growth coming during the coronavirus outbreak from people buying groceries online and then picking them up at the store. But the Bentonville, Arkansas, behemoth is still a distant second to Amazon, estimated to take in just 6% of all online sales in the U.S. this year, compared to Amazon's 38%, according to market research firm eMarketer.

To try and catch up, it has bought several small online clothing brands, only to sell them again a couple of years later. And it recently shut down **Jet.com**, just four years after buying it for $3 billion.

But analysts are optimistic about TikTok's potential for helping Walmart crack the online shopping nut. They see Walmart using its logistics and fulfillment dominance, with Microsoft's help on the tech end, to make use of an app that stars random people and keeps people glued to their phone screens.



mart

Walmart could make TikTok into an extension of its sales machine, helping advertisers, creators and others sell products. TikTok users swiping through and buying as part of their experience on the app might not even know of a Walmart connection.

"That's pretty powerful," said RBC analyst Alex Zukin. It would also help generate data on what shoppers want and do, valuable information for retailers and advertisers.

Instagram, owned by Facebook, has also increasingly become a digital mall. It lets users shop and pay on the app without needing to go to a retailer's website. Facebook sees TikTok as a major competitor.

In TikTok's U.S. app today, some influencers and brands have links posted in their profiles that users can click on and buy things. Some advertisers post links in short videos that crop up in between creators' videos. Disney Plus, for example, had a TikTok video ad that let users sign up for the streaming service.

Maybe Walmart could get a cut of revenue from sales made through TikTok, said Lindsay Finneran-Gingras of Hill+Knowlton Strategies, who works with brands on their digital strategies. Instagram charges retailers a fee if a shopper uses Instagram's checkout tools. The fee is waived for the rest of 2020, however.

Walmart could also use TikTok to promote key sellers from its online marketplace, which it's trying to develop to rival Amazon, said KeyBanc analysts.

"The lines are blurring between traditional shopping, digital shopping and social media," said UBS analyst Michael Lasser, in a research note. Walmart "needs more exposure to this trend."

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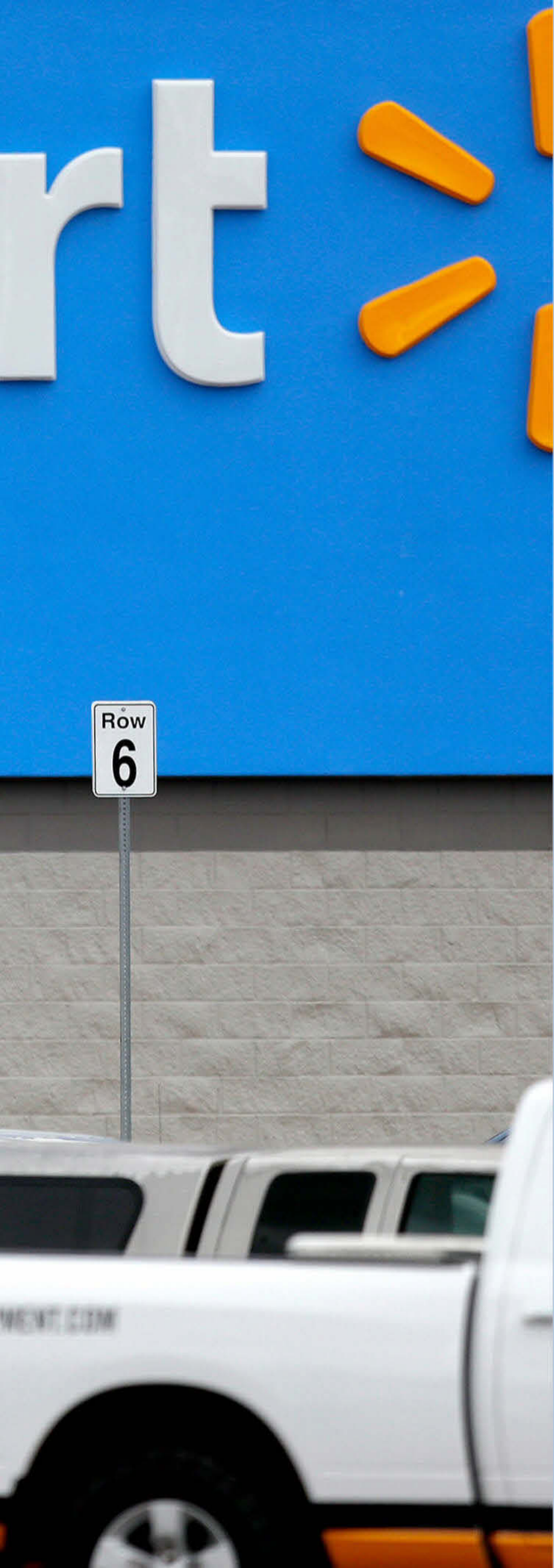

15 YEARS LATER, WALMART TO LAUNCH ITS ANSWER TO AMAZON PRIME

Walmart is launching a new membership service that it hopes can compete with Amazon Prime.

Called Walmart+, it will cost $98 a year, or $12.95 a month, and give members same-day delivery on 160,000 items, a fuel discount at certain gas stations and a chance to check out at Walmart stores without having to wait at a register.

Walmart has a long way to go to catch up with Amazon Prime. Launched in 2005, Prime has more than 150 million members worldwide who pay $119 a year, or $12.99 a month, for faster shipping and other perks, such as discounts at Amazon's Whole Foods supermarkets and access to its video streaming site.

Walmart's online sales are growing rapidly, especially during the pandemic, when more people have turned to the company to order groceries online and pick them up at a store.

Reusable
shopping bag
Walmart
Save money. Live better.
Walmart
Save money. Live better.

But the world's biggest retailer is still a distant second online to Amazon. Walmart is expected to take 6% of all online sales in the U.S. this year, compared to Amazon's 38%, according to market research firm eMarketer.

Last week, Walmart emerged as a possible suitor for the U.S. business of TikTok, the fast-growing video app with more than 100 million users. Analysts have said the bid with tech company Microsoft could be a way for Walmart to grow its online shopping business and connect with millions of young shoppers.

Janey Whiteside, Walmart's chief customer officer, said it wasn't launching Walmart+ to compete with any other shopping membership.

"We're launching it to meet the needs of our customers," she said. "And it really was designed to make their busy lives easier."

Walmart+ members will still have to spend at least $35 online to qualify for free same-day delivery. Items are delivered from stores, which typically costs as much as $9.95 for non-members. The 160,000 items that qualify include groceries, toys, electronics and household items, such as toilet paper and soap.

Members will get a discount of up to 5 cents a gallon at Murphy gas stations or at the 2,000 Walmart locations that have gas pumps. The company said it's working to add more gas-station chains to its list.

At its stores, members can unlock an app to scan items as they shop and pay without having to stop at a cashier.

The Bentonville, Arkansas-based company said Walmart+ will launch Sept. 15.

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amazon

AMAZON WINS FAA APPROVAL TO DELIVER PACKAGES BY DRONE

Getting an Amazon package delivered from the sky is closer to becoming a reality.

The Federal Aviation Administration said this week it had granted Amazon approval to deliver packages by drones.

Amazon said that the approval is an "important step," but added that it is still testing and flying the drones. It did not say when it expected drones to make deliveries to shoppers.

The online shopping giant has been working on drone delivery for years, but it has been slowed by regulatory hurdles. Back in December 2013, Amazon CEO and founder Jeff Bezos said in a TV interview that drones would be flying to customer's homes within five years.

Last year, Amazon unveiled self-piloting drones that are fully electric, can carry 5 pounds of goods and are designed to deliver items in 30 minutes by dropping them in a backyard. At the time, an Amazon executive said deliveries to shoppers would be happening "within months," but more than 14 months have passed since then.

Seattle-based Amazon is the third drone delivery service to win flight approval, the FAA said. Delivery company UPS and a company owned by search giant Google won approval last year.

Prime Air

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELAND

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION PLANS EXPANDED USE OF PERSONAL DATA

The Trump administration announced plans to expand the collection of personal "biometric" information by the agency in charge of immigration enforcement, raising concerns about civil liberties and data protection.

In a statement, the Department of Homeland Security said it would soon issue a formal proposal for a new regulation for expanding "the authorities and methods" for collecting biometrics, which are physical characteristics such as fingerprints used to identify individuals.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection, a component of DHS, already collects biometric data, including iris scans, from people captured trying to enter the country without legal authority.

DHS said in a written statement that the new rule would authorize new techniques, including voice and facial recognition to verify people's identity.

The agency did not release the proposed regulation or provide details. BuzzFeed News, which obtained a draft of the policy, reported that it included a provision for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which is also a component of DHS, to collect biometric data from non-citizens legally working and living in the U.S. or seeking to do so.

It would also require U.S. citizens sponsoring relatives to come to the country to provide biometric data, including in some cases their DNA, if it was needed to verify someone's identity.

"This is a remarkable expansion of surveillance, especially the idea that immigrants could be called in at any point to give these biometrics," said Sarah Pierce, an analyst with the Migration Policy Institute.

It typically takes several months for a new regulation to take effect after a public comment period. This measure is likely to prompt legal challenges, as have most immigration measures introduced under President Donald Trump.

Acting Deputy DHS Secretary Ken Cuccinelli characterized the new regulation in a written statement as a way to improve the verification of people's identities and modernize operations.

11
Currency and

"Leveraging readily available technology to verify the identity of an individual we are screening is responsible governing," Cuccinelli said. "The collection of biometric information also guards against identity theft and thwarts fraudsters who are not who they claim to be."

DHS is charged with enforcing the strict immigration enforcement policies that have been a hallmark of the Trump administration. But the agency is also in charge Citizenship and Immigration Services, which is responsible for enabling people to legally live and work in the United States.

A lawyer with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a privacy rights watchdog, said there's no justification for expanding biometric data collection, and no clear rules for how long the information can be retained, how it can be used, and whether it can be shared with foreign governments or other agencies.

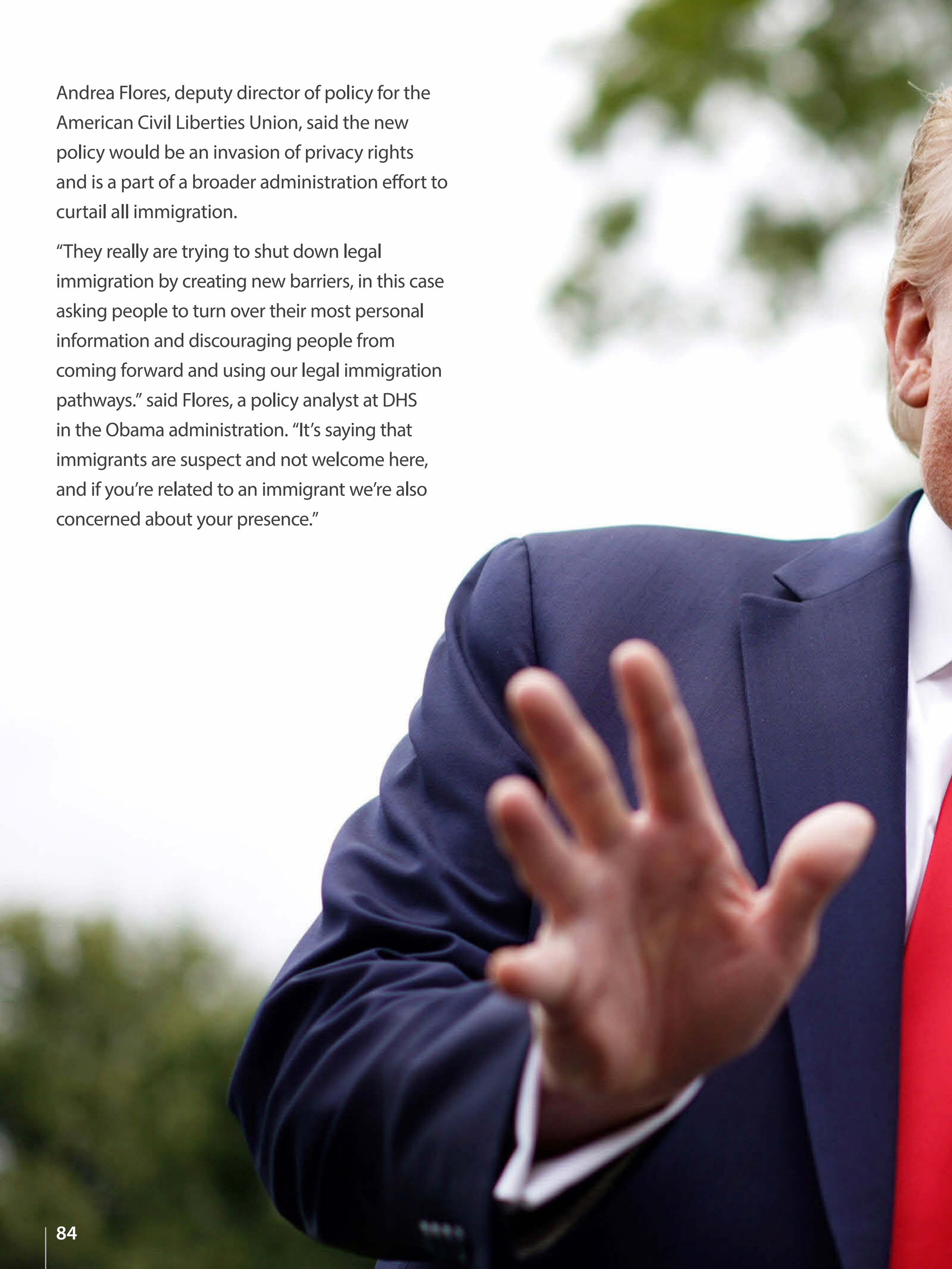
"There doesn't really seem to be any indication that this will help with combating fraud or anything like that," said EFF staff attorney Saira Hussain. "Rather, it's about making it so the government can engage in dragnet surveillance of immigrant communities by being able to access some of their most unique and sensitive biometric information."

There are also concerns about protecting the data. CBP said last year that photos of travelers and their license plates at a border crossing were compromised in a cyber attack on a government contractor.

"The more data you collect and the more sensitive it is the more that opens up the government to potential data breaches," Hussain said.

Andrea Flores, deputy director of policy for the American Civil Liberties Union, said the new policy would be an invasion of privacy rights and is a part of a broader administration effort to curtail all immigration.

"They really are trying to shut down legal immigration by creating new barriers, in this case asking people to turn over their most personal information and discouraging people from coming forward and using our legal immigration pathways." said Flores, a policy analyst at DHS in the Obama administration. "It's saying that immigrants are suspect and not welcome here, and if you're related to an immigrant we're also concerned about your presence."



THIRD VIRUS VACCINE REACHES MAJOR HURDLE: FINAL US TESTING

A handful of the dozens of experimental COVID-19 vaccines in human testing have reached the last and biggest hurdle — looking for the needed proof that they really work as a U.S. advisory panel suggested this week a way to ration the first limited doses once a vaccine wins approval.

AstraZeneca announced its vaccine candidate has entered the final testing stage in the U.S. The Cambridge, England-based company said the study will involve up to 30,000 adults from various racial, ethnic and geographic groups.

Two other vaccine candidates began final testing this summer in tens of thousands of

people in the U.S. One was created by the National Institutes of Health and manufactured by Moderna Inc., and the other developed by Pfizer Inc. and Germany's BioNTech.

"To have just one vaccine enter the final stage of trials eight months after discovering a virus would be a remarkable achievement; to have three at that point with more on the way is extraordinary," Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said in a statement.

NIH Director Francis Collins tweeted that his agency "is supporting several vaccine trials since more than one may be needed. We have all hands on deck."

AstraZeneca said development of the vaccine, known as AZD1222, is moving ahead globally with late-stage trials in the U.K., Brazil and South Africa. Further trials are planned in Japan and Russia. The potential vaccine was invented by the University of Oxford and an associated company, Vaccitech.

Meanwhile, a U.S. advisory panel released a draft plan for how to ration the first doses of vaccine. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine proposed giving the first vaccine doses — initial supplies are expected to be limited to up to 15 million people — to high-risk health care workers and first responders.

Next, older residents of nursing homes and other crowded facilities and people of all ages with health conditions that put them at significant danger would be given priority. In following waves of vaccination, teachers, other school staff, workers in essential industries, and people living in homeless shelters, group homes,

prisons and other facilities would get the shots.

Healthy children, young adults and everyone else would not get the first vaccinations, but would be able to get them once supplies increase.

The panel of experts described "a moral imperative" to lessen the heavy disease burden of COVID-19 on Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and suggested state and local authorities could target vulnerable neighborhoods using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The National Academies will solicit public comments on the plan.

There's a good reason so many COVID-19 vaccines are in development.

"The first vaccines that come out are probably not going to be the best vaccines," Dr. Nicole Lurie, who helped lead pandemic planning under the Obama administration, said at a University of Minnesota vaccine symposium.

There's no guarantee that any of the leading candidates will pan out — and the bar is higher than for COVID-19 treatments, because these vaccines will be given to healthy people. Final testing, experts stress, must be in large numbers of people to know if they're safe enough for mass vaccinations.

They're made in a wide variety of ways, each with pros and cons. One problem: Most of the leading candidates are being tested with two doses, which lengthens the time required to get an answer — and, if one works, to fully vaccinate people.

Another: They're all shots. Vaccine experts are closely watching development of some nasal-

HOUSE
AstraZeneca
ACADEMY HOUSE

spray alternatives that just might begin the first step of human testing later this year — late to the race, but possibly advantageous against a virus that sneaks into the airways.

For now, here's a scorecard of vaccines that already have begun or are getting close to final-stage tests:

GENETIC CODE VACCINES

The Moderna and Pfizer candidates began Phase 3 testing in late July.

Neither uses the actual coronavirus. Instead, they're made with the genetic code for the aptly named "spike" protein that coats the surface of the coronavirus. Inject the vaccine containing that code, called mRNA, and the body's cells will make some harmless spike protein — just enough for the immune system to respond, priming it to react if it later encounters the real virus.

These mRNA vaccines are easier and faster to make than traditional vaccines, but it's a new and unproven technology.

TROJAN HORSE VACCINES

Britain's Oxford University and AstraZeneca are making what scientists call a "viral vector" vaccine but a good analogy is the Trojan horse. The shots are made with a harmless virus — a cold virus that normally infects chimpanzees — that carries the spike protein's genetic material into the body. Once again, the body produces some spike protein and primes the immune system, but it, too, is a fairly new technology.

Two possible competitors are made with different human cold viruses.

Shots made by Johnson & Johnson began initial human studies in late July. The company plans to begin Phase 3 testing in September in as many as 60,000 people in the U.S. and elsewhere.

China's government authorized emergency use of CanSino Biologics' adenovirus shots in the military ahead of any final testing.

'KILLED' VACCINES

Making vaccines by growing a disease-causing virus and then killing it is a tried-and-true approach — it's the way Jonas Salk's famed polio shots were made. China has three so-called "inactivated" vaccine candidates against COVID-19 made this way.

Sinovac has final studies of its candidate underway in Brazil and Indonesia. Competitor SinoPharm has announced plans for final testing in some other countries.

Safely brewing and then killing the virus takes longer than newer technologies. But inactivated vaccines give the body a sneak peek at the germ itself rather than just that single spike protein.

PROTEIN VACCINES

Novavax makes "protein subunit" vaccines, growing harmless copies of the coronavirus spike protein in the laboratory and packaging them into virus-sized nanoparticles.

There are protein-based vaccines against other diseases, so it's not as novel a technology as some of its competitors. But it only recently finished its first-step study; the U.S. government's Operation Warp Speed aims for advanced testing later in the fall.

DISCARD AFTER USE

BILL & TED FACE THE MUSIC Official Trailer #1 (2020)

by Dean Parisot
Genre: Comedy
Released: 2020
Price: $24.99

★★★★½
178 Ratings

Rotten **Tomatoes**
CERTIFIED FRESH
81%

Movies & TV Shows

Bill & Ted Face The Music

The time-travelling duo Bill (Alex Winter) and Ted (Keanu Reeves) are visited by Kelly (Kristen Schaal), a messenger from the future who warns them that they have just 78 minutes to create a song that will save all life on the planet and in the universe.

FIVE FACTS:

1. The previous two films in the Bill & Ted trilogy were 1989's Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure and 1991's Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey.

2. In all three films, Winter and Reeves have played the eponymous stars.

3. In Face the Music, William Sadler also reprises his role as the Grim Reaper from Bogus Journey.

4. The late stand-up comedian George Carlin appears again as Rufus – a character he played in the previous two Bill & Ted films – through the use of archival footage.

5. Ed Solomon, who co-wrote the script, has reported that Face the Music struggled to find financing because **many potential funders wanted a Bill & Ted reboot rather than a direct sequel**.

Keanu Reeves, Alex Winter Talk About 'Bill And Ted Face The Music' | TODAY

The Washington Journal
WILD
STALLIONS

Hard Kill

Billionaire tech CEO Donovan Chalmers (Bruce Willis) tasks a group of mercenaries – including the team's leader, security expert Derek Miller (Jesse Metcalfe) – with protecting a dangerous piece of technology, but both Chalmers and Miller soon face very personal challenges.

FIVE FACTS:

1. Filming of Hard Kill began in the Ohio city of Cincinnati in January 2020, only about two months before the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic.

2. According to several local news sources, producer Randall Emmett commented: "We love shooting in Cincinnati. The city is so welcoming, and the film office is one of the best in the country."

3. The production notes report that **the movie was shot in just 10 days**.

4. Metcalfe is best known for portraying hunky gardener John Rowland on the soap opera Desperate Housewives, which originally aired from 2004 to 2012.

5. Hard Kill has been poorly received by critics, with Common Sense Media's Jeffrey M Anderson lambasting the film's "**clunky dialogue, lazy exposition, stiff acting [and] wobbly camerawork**".

by Matt Eskandari
Genre: Action & Adventure
Released: 2020
Price: $12.99

★★★★★
45 Ratings

Rotten **Tomatoes**
CERTIFIED FRESH
00%

Hard Kill Trailer #1 (2020) | Movieclips Trailers

Jesse Metcalfe on his New Film with Bruce Willis 'Hard Kill'

Genre: Pop
Released: Aug 28, 2020
12 Songs
Price: $9.99

1.131 Ratings

Katy Perry - Daisies

Music

Smile

Katy Perry

Arriving three years after Perry's somewhat coldly-received electropop studio release Witness, the "I Kissed a Girl" singer's sixth studio album Smile finds her in a more optimistic mood. The artist's recent self-help drive shows through in the music's life-affirming lyrics.

FIVE FACTS:

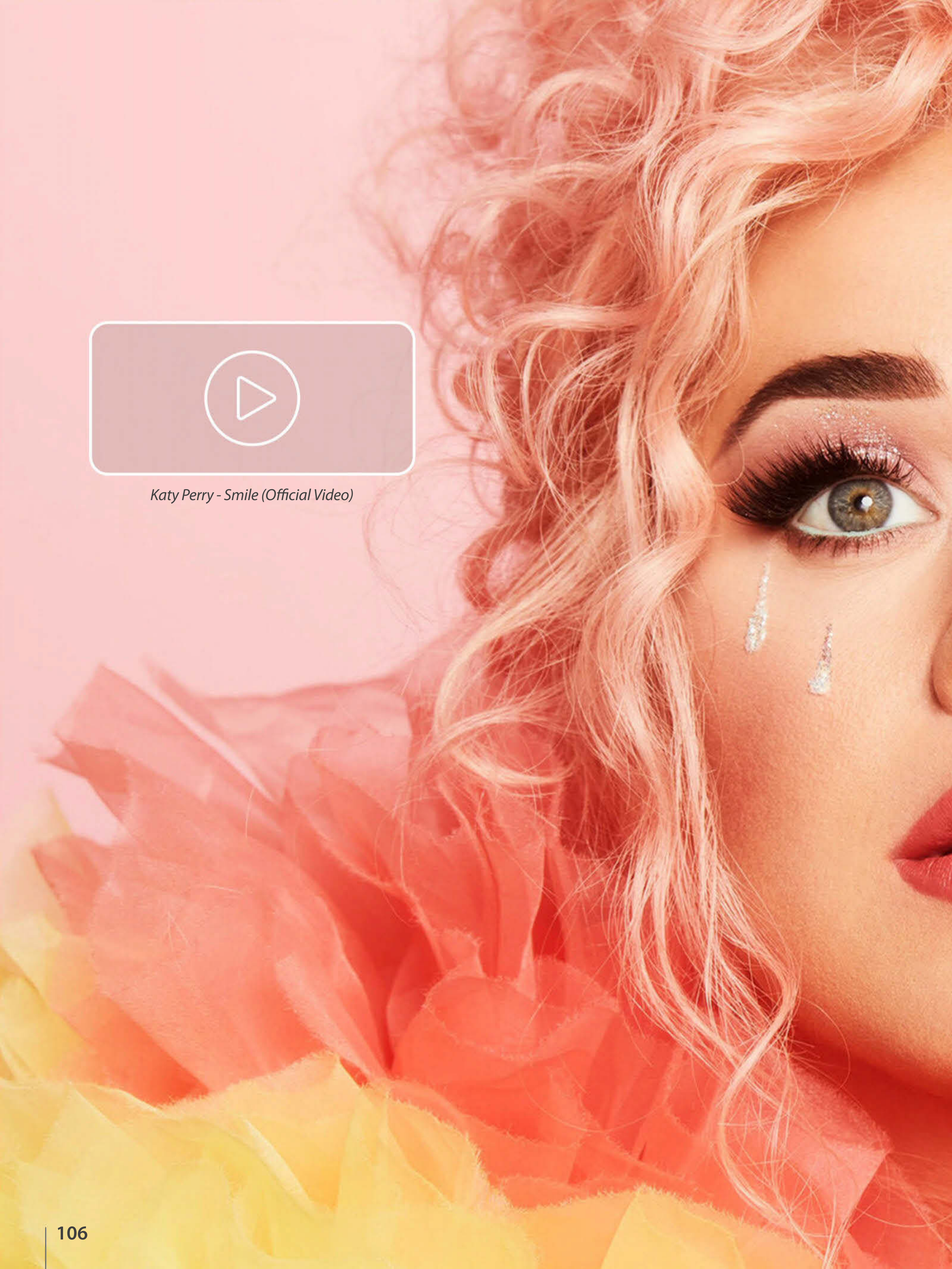
1. Although Perry conceived the album following a breakup with then-boyfriend Orlando Bloom, the two have since reconciled and are now engaged.

2. On August 27, Perry's partner Orlando Bloom c**onfirmed the birth of their daughter, Daisy**.

3. The album's lead single, released on May 15, 2020, is similarly named "Daisies".

4. That single's lyrics reference Perry's fall from public favor and how she bounced back.

5. "This record is a representation that I overcame [the pain] and got to the other side," she explained to Apple Music.



Katy Perry - Smile (Official Video)

Club Future Nostalgia (DJ Mix)

Dua Lipa & The Blessed Madonna

Only months after her widely acclaimed, Mercury-nominated second studio album Future Nostalgia got many of us dancing in quarantine, the London-born Lipa has teamed up with renowned DJ The Blessed Madonna to bestow a new shiny, remixed sheen on that album's sound.

FIVE FACTS:

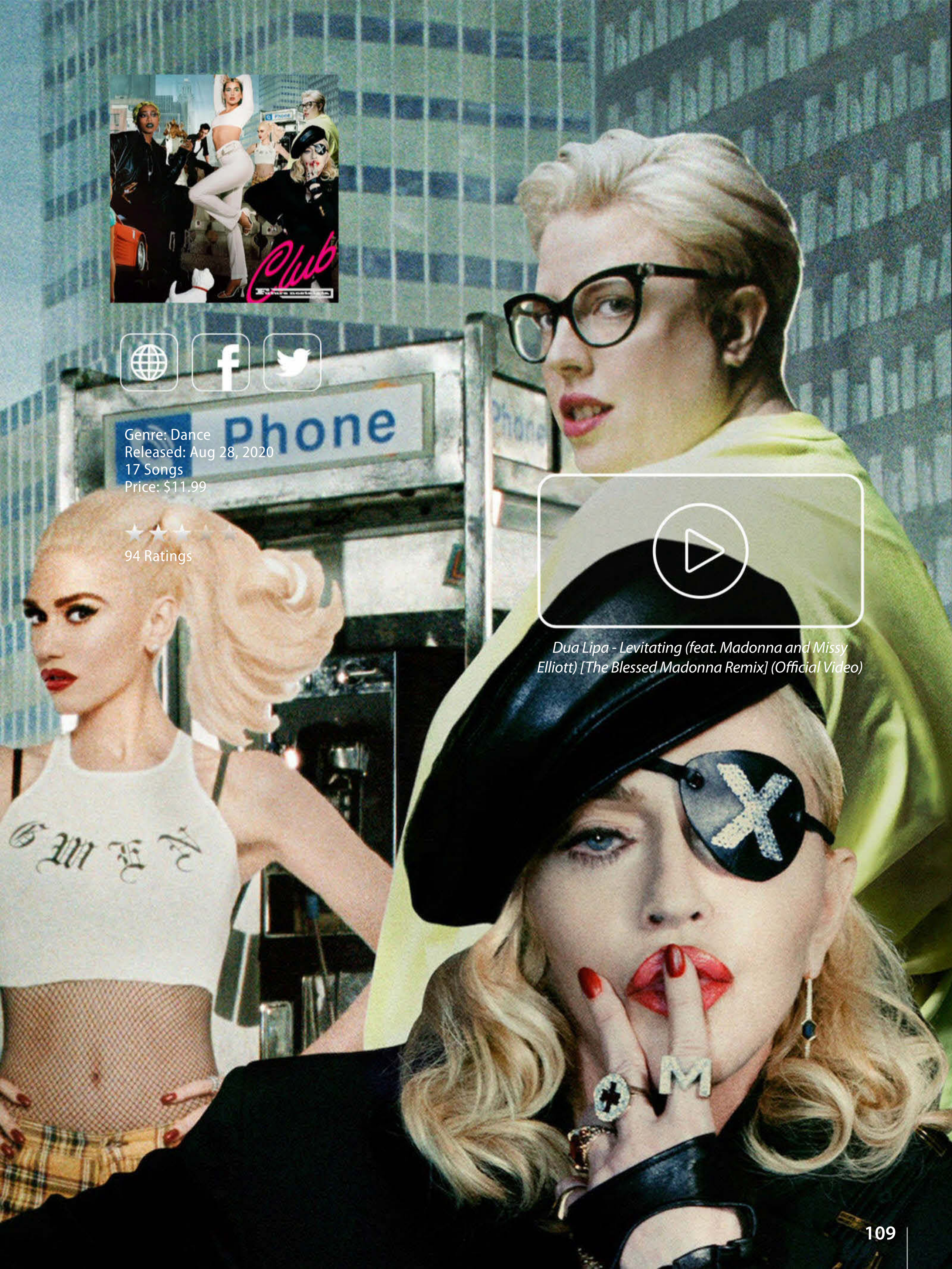
1. Before her music career took off, Lipa worked as a model for the British fashion retailer ASOS.

2. In 2015, she clinched a record deal with Warner Music Group partly due to co-writing the song "Hotter Than Hell", which later appeared on her eponymous debut studio album released in 2017.

3. Her second studio album, Future Nostalgia, arrived on March 27, 2020 to critical acclaim.

4. "I bump into people on the street who have just been like, 'Thank you for soundtracking my workout during quarantine,'" Lipa told Apple Music about that album's reception.

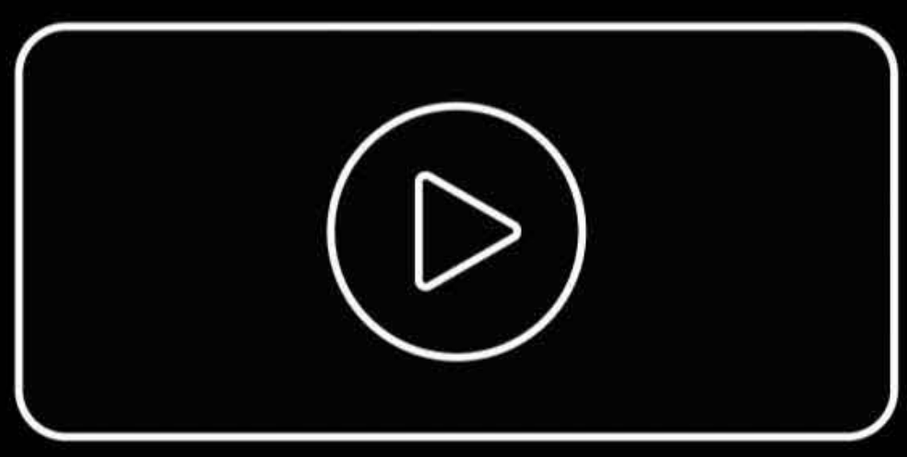
5. Club Future Nostalgia features Gwen Stefani, Missy Elliott and Madonna, who is not related to the DJ namesake also involved with the album.



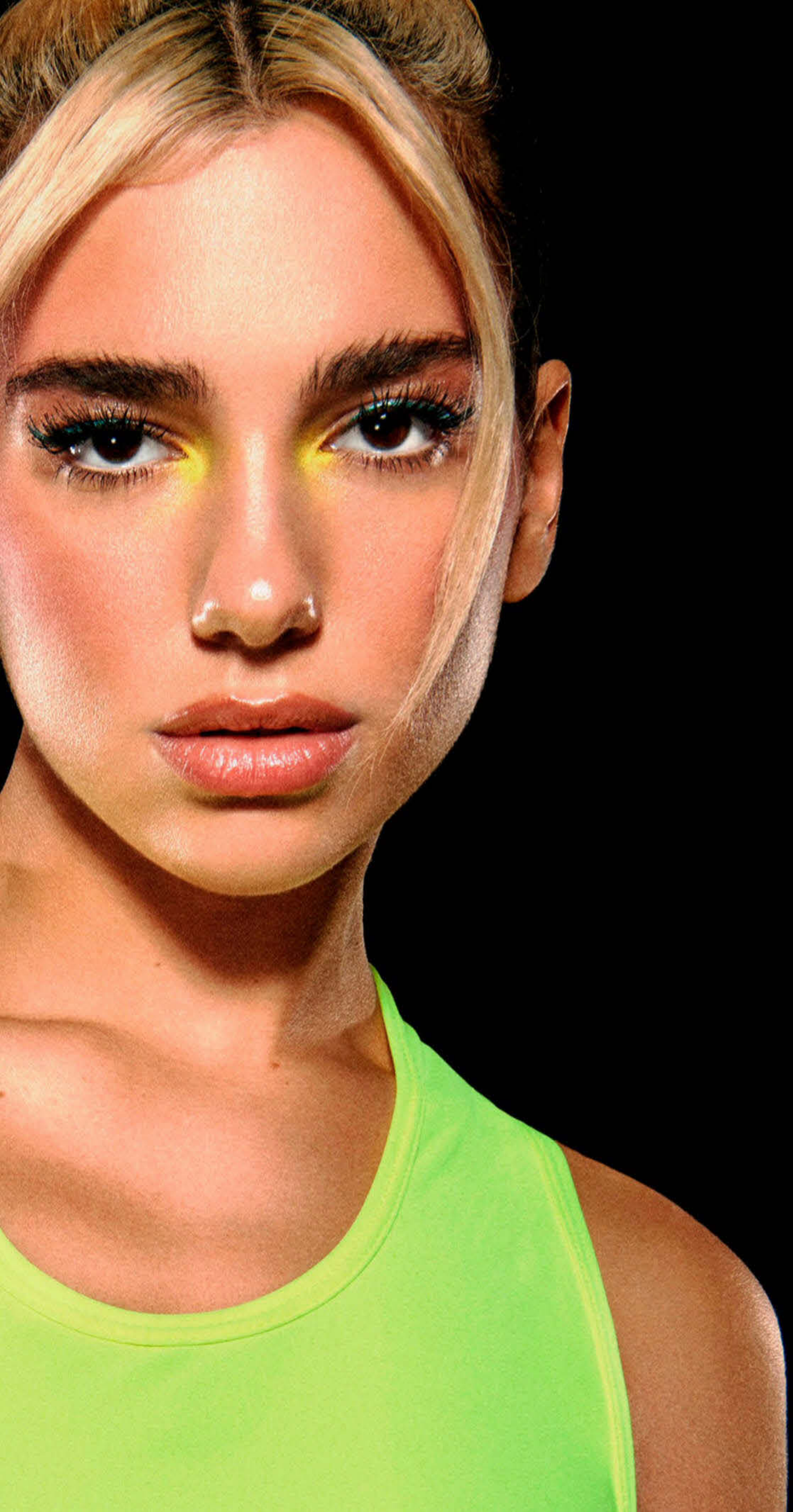
Genre: Dance
Released: Aug 28, 2020
17 Songs
Price: $11.99

94 Ratings

Dua Lipa - Levitating (feat. Madonna and Missy Elliott) [The Blessed Madonna Remix] (Official Video)



Physical (feat. Gwen Stefani)
(Mark Ronson Remix) (Mixed)



CHADWICK BOSEMAN'S DEATH LEAVES SADDENING MARK ON ROUGH 2020

Kobe Bryant. Rep. John Lewis. And now, Chadwick Boseman.

So far, 2020 has been marred with bad news and tragedy with the deaths of several popular Black icons including Bryant, Lewis and recently Boseman, who died Friday. All three were viewed as leaders in their respective fields of sports, politics and film — places where people, particularly in the Black community, have often looked for inspiration during a year of racial tension and protests against the police brutality of unarmed Black people.

But for many, the loss of another major figure such as Boseman is taking a toll. The actor, who starred in the blockbuster superhero Marvel film "Black Panther," shockingly died at the age of 43 in his home in Los Angeles after he privately battled colon cancer for four years.

"These are pillars in our community," Rev. Al Sharpton said. "In times of instability, you depend on pillars. It's bad enough when there's a storm outside and you hear the lightning and thunder. It gets worse when the pillars that you're building and standing on (are) shaking. It's like they're chipping away at our foundation. The very building is shaking down, because the things that undergird and protect us from the storms are being removed."

An image of the late Georgia Congressman and civil rights pioneer U.S. Rep. John Lewis is projected on to the pedestal of the statue of confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee in Richmond, Virginia, in July.

Sharpton called Boseman an important pillar that humanized several Black historical trailblazers in his roles — including color-line breaking baseball star Jackie Robinson, legendary singer James Brown and the first African American U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Boseman's family said he endured "countless surgeries and chemotherapy" while portraying King T'Challa of Wakanda in the Oscar-nominated "Black Panther," a film that proved a person of color could lead in a successful superhero film.

"For him to pass at this time when we are disproportionately affected by COVID and have all of these attacks by law enforcement, and him being the symbol bringing us to Wakanda, it's just a blow," Sharpton said. "To hear that our superhero who projected a positive light was now gone, it was a gut blow."

Boseman was elevated to a stage that many Black actors don't get the chance to occupy, said Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James. And his ability to be "transcendent" on that stage brought a comic book character to life for many in the Black community.

"Even though we knew that it was like a fictional story, it actually felt real. It actually felt like we finally had our Black superhero and nobody could touch us. So to lose that, it's sad in our community," James said, lamenting on the loss of "the Black Panther and the Black Mamba in the same year."

In January, Bryant died in a helicopter crash involving eight others including his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna. Lewis died in July after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer last year.

Other notable deaths this year include actress Naya Rivera, civil rights leader C.T. Vivian, music executive Andre Harrell and Hall of Fame Georgetown basketball coach John Thompson, who was the first Black coach to lead a team to an NCAA championship and prioritized academics to his athletes.

Image: Victoria Will

"The year 2020 has been up and down for everybody," Milwaukee Bucks player Giannis Antetokounmpo said, adding that Boseman left "so much behind."

"It's a lot to unpack," said Oklahoma City Thunder guard Chris Paul. "Chadwick was a special guy. I think everyone took it hard, especially the Black community. That was one of our black superheroes. I think 'Black Panther' was something so powerful, for myself along with my kids to see a superhero that looks like them and the way that he played it with such class and elegance. That was tough."

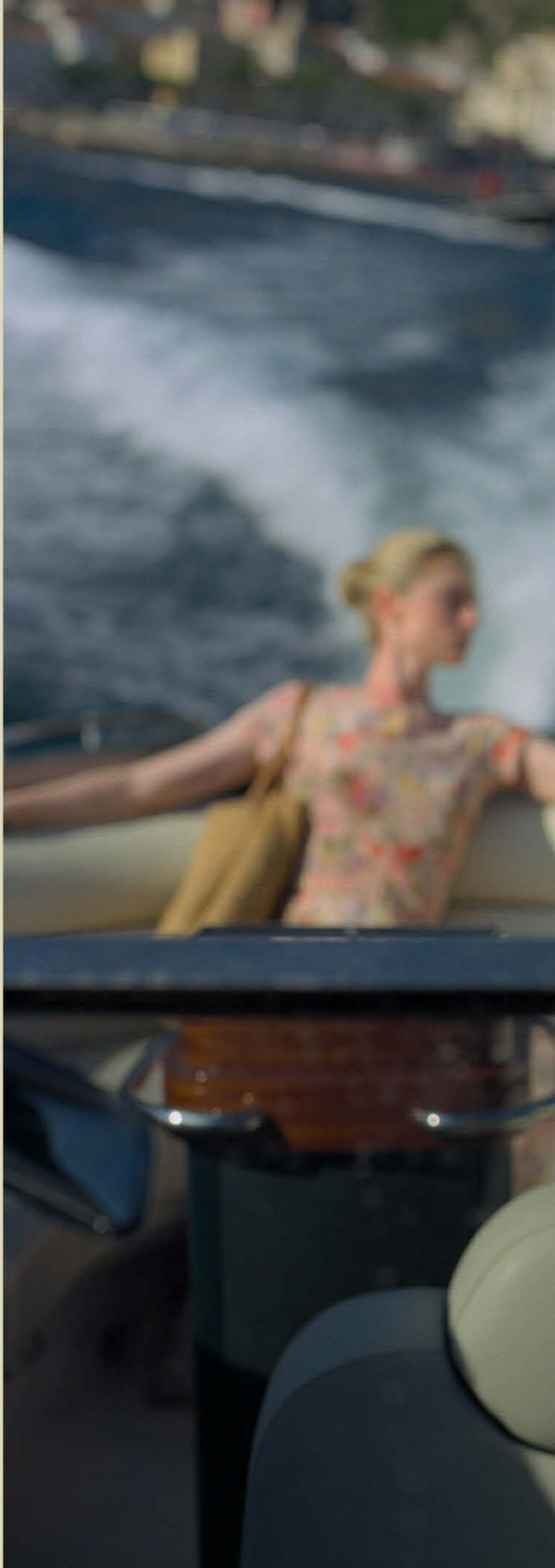
Activist Martin Luther King III called Boseman's death another "great loss." But he encourages people not to lose hope even in a year of tumult.

"We could easily say 'Oh my God. This is the most terrible year that existed.' But I choose not to say that," said the son of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. "Our ancestors had to go through so, so much. And yet, we're still here. We are nowhere where we need to be, but we are always making progress and moving ahead."

Gil Robertson, the co-founder and president of the African American Film Critics Association, said Black people are at a critical crossroads of their survival in America.

"We're getting it from all sides of the fort," Robertson said. "We're losing these strong men. These men who operated with a level of integrity. A level of authenticity. I find all of this alarming. I hope that our community can really come together. ... Not just for one cause. Just to make a consistent effort to rehabilitate our community."

IN 'TENET,' A TIME-BENDING THRILLER FOR BENDED TIMES



I went in fresh to "Tenet." I didn't have any real sense of the plot, yes, but it's more that it had been some five months since I was last in a movie theater. That's a long hiatus — a dark ages for sitting in the dark — for someone, anyone, used to going to the movies more days than not. The last film I had seen in a cinema, back in March, was the Vin Diesel vehicle "Bloodshot," so you can imagine my eagerness for a new aftertaste.

TENET - Final Trailer

It's complicated, in a way, to parse the experience. There's the feeling of being back in a movie theater, and then there's the sensations particular to "Tenet." For Christopher Nolan, whose films build their conceptual architecture around the metaphysics of movies themselves, it's kind of one and the same. His movies are designed, from a molecular level, to unlock innate cinematic powers and glorify the almighty Big Screen — a lonely god these last few months.

As the first major film released in theaters since the pandemic began, "Tenet" has swelled in the minds of anxious moviegoers, adopting the role of savior. Nolan vs. COVID-19 is as much part of the drama of "Tenet" as anything on screen, and just as convoluted and disorienting. Seeing "Tenet" for this critic meant crossing numerous state lines and watching it at a nearly empty movie theater — a luxury of social distancing that won't be possible for most, even in reduced capacity theaters. At its best, moviegoing has always been thrilling, even dangerous. That may be doubly so right now.

For better and worse, "Tenet" is just a movie. It won't beat the virus and it won't single-handedly save movie theaters. It won't even really blow your mind. But for much of its 150-minute running time, Nolan's globe-trotting sci-fi riff on the spy thriller will provide a dazzling escape, one dense with singular imagery and intellectual puzzles. And, perhaps most vitally, it will give a cool, brutalist refresher of the movies' capacity for awe, for imagination, and, yes, for tiresome grandiosity. For the palindromic "Tenet," it cuts both ways.

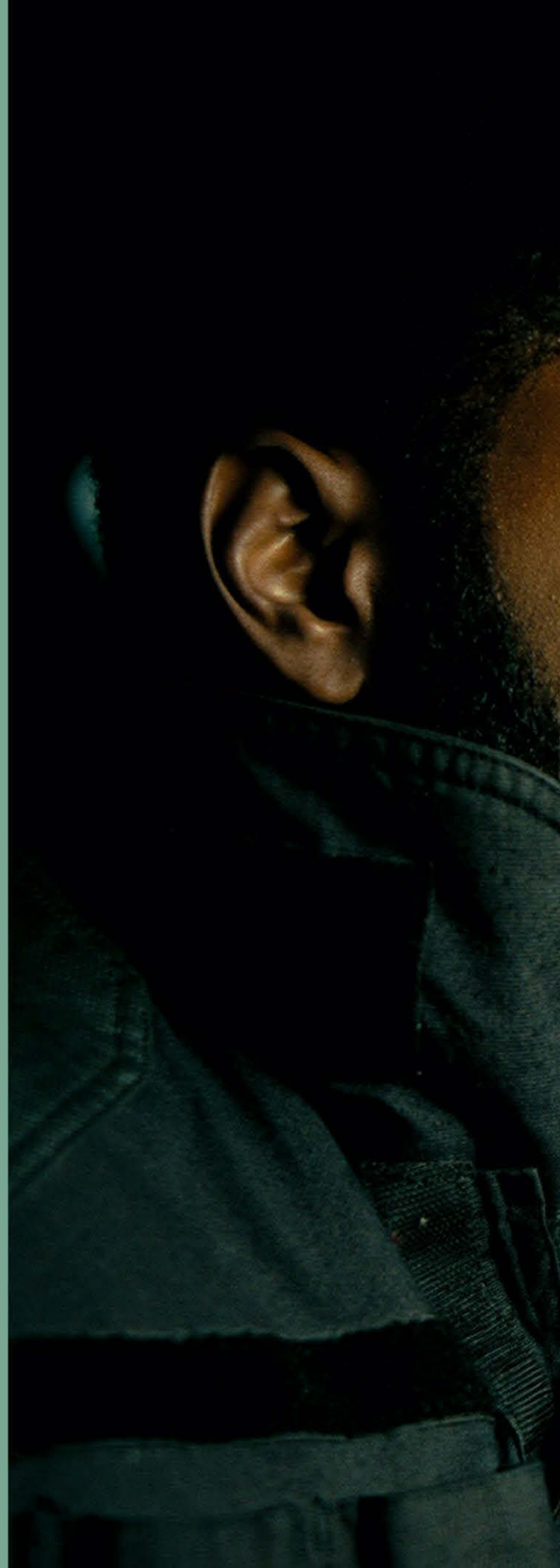
Naturally, "Tenet" opens on a crowded auditorium. At an opera house in Kyiv, just as

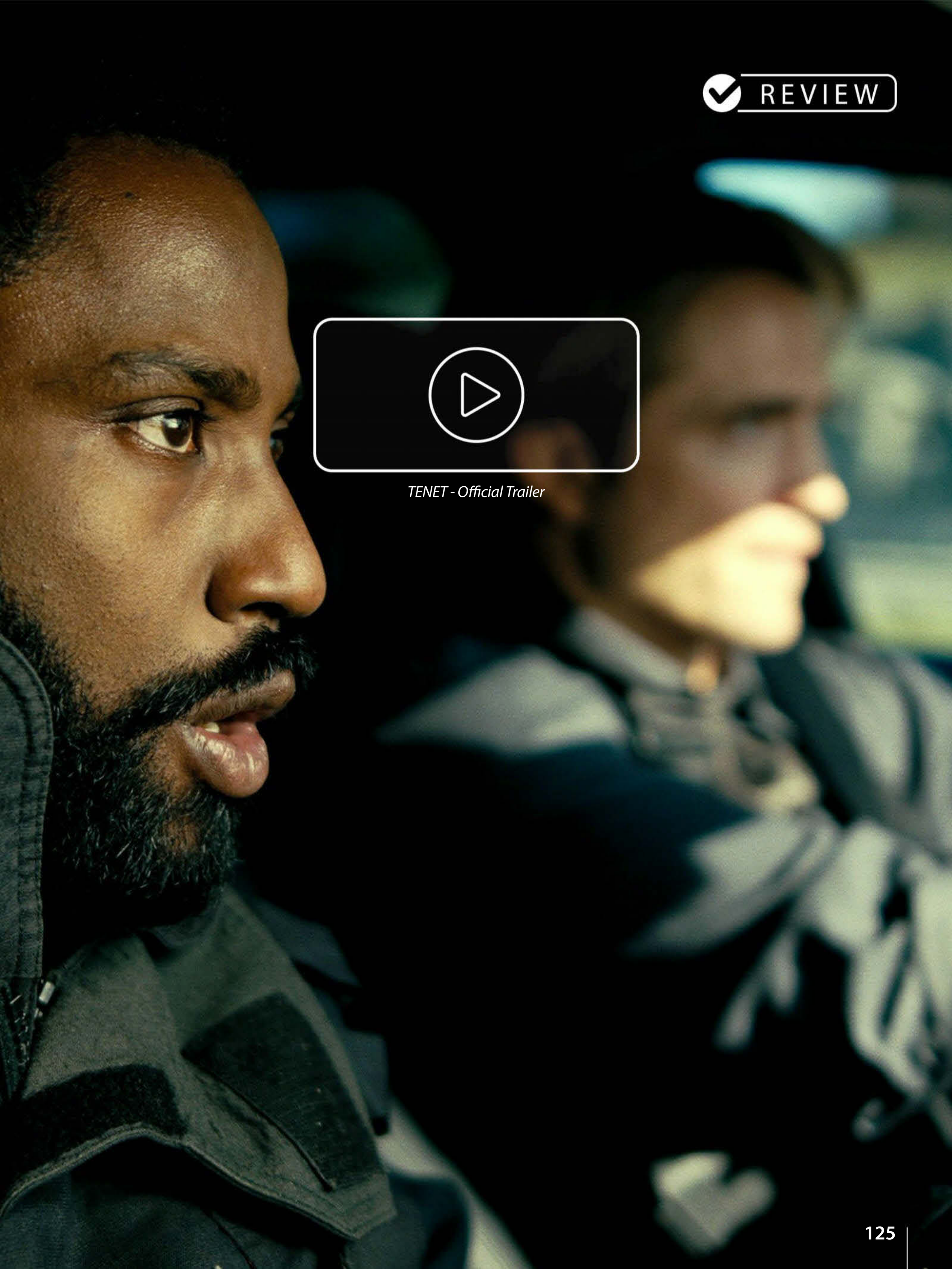
the conductor is raising his baton, a barrage of bullets rings out and masked men take the stage. Outside, a squadron of covert American agents are stirred. They pick a local police patch for their shoulders, and one among them (John David Washington, known only as "the Protagonist" in the credits) maneuvers to rescue a man who sits in a closed balcony. He greets him with the coded phrase "We live in a twilight world."

As he's trying to stop bombs from going off in the theater, an odd thing happens. Tussling with one of the terrorists, a bullet seems to fly backward into the gun. After being taken hostage and tortured, he blacks out. When he wakes up much later, he's told that he's been released from the CIA and been enlisted in a shadowy organization known as Tenet. The mission goes beyond borders, he's told. A Cold War — "ice cold" — is brewing. He's to try to prevent World War III and an apocalypse worse than nuclear holocaust.

The details of this secret war — who's on what side, what's at stake — take a while to unspool. But just as Nolan's last film, the gorgeously synchronized WWII survival tale "Dunkirk," was arranged elementally by land, sea and air, "Tenet" is spliced between past, present and future. A heady genre movie that puts James Bond-like tropes through a collider, it's very much a companion piece to "Inception" (a heist movie with a sci-fi spin) and just as laden with continual explanation.

The central conceit here is that a rare mineral can reverse the entropy of objects. That means time travel, inverted weapons, car chases that speed both ways and the biggest blockbuster

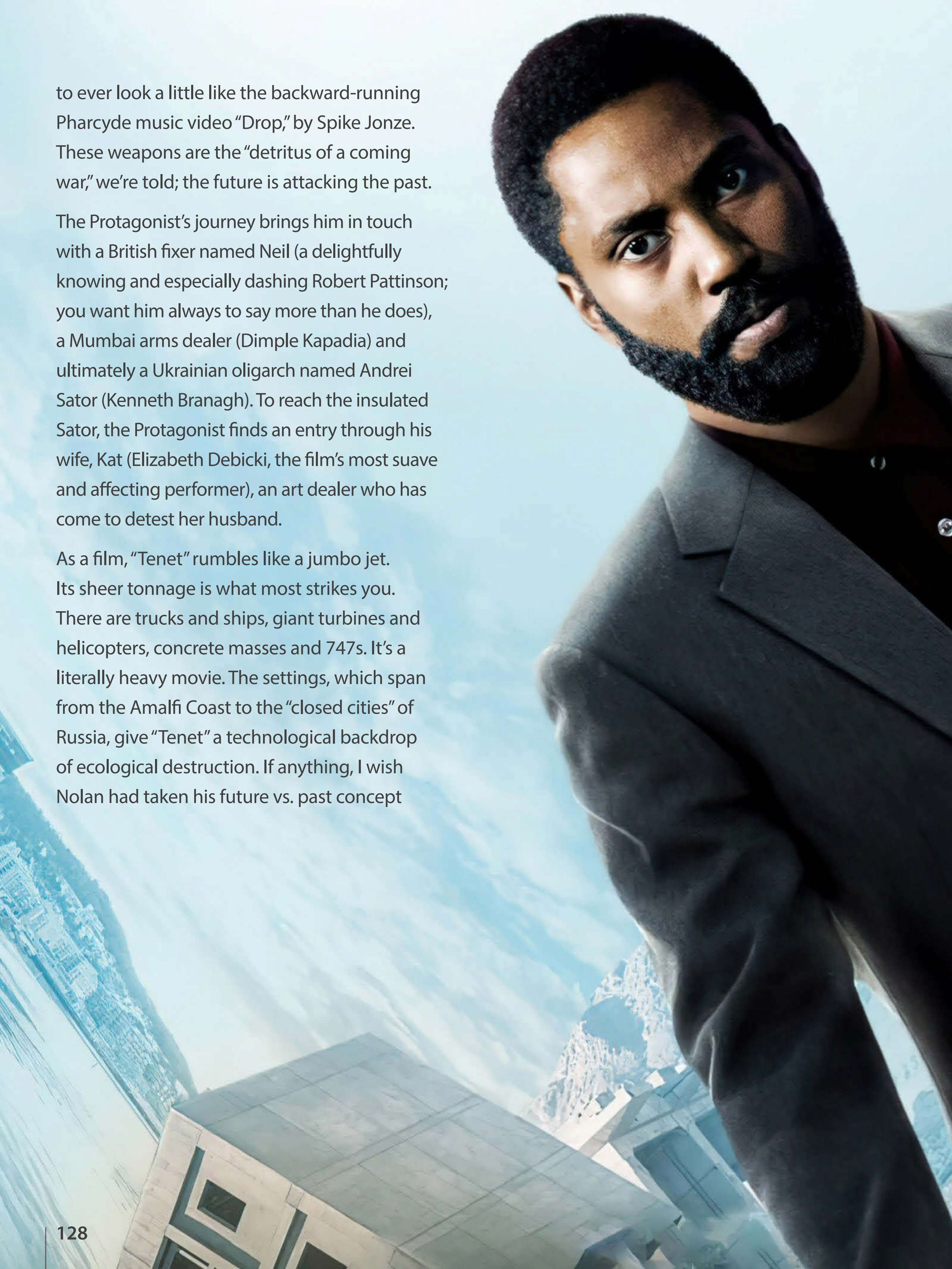




TENET - Official Trailer

TENET - New Trailer
TENET

REVIEW
VET



to ever look a little like the backward-running Pharcyde music video "Drop," by Spike Jonze. These weapons are the "detritus of a coming war," we're told; the future is attacking the past.

The Protagonist's journey brings him in touch with a British fixer named Neil (a delightfully knowing and especially dashing Robert Pattinson; you want him always to say more than he does), a Mumbai arms dealer (Dimple Kapadia) and ultimately a Ukrainian oligarch named Andrei Sator (Kenneth Branagh). To reach the insulated Sator, the Protagonist finds an entry through his wife, Kat (Elizabeth Debicki, the film's most suave and affecting performer), an art dealer who has come to detest her husband.

As a film, "Tenet" rumbles like a jumbo jet. Its sheer tonnage is what most strikes you. There are trucks and ships, giant turbines and helicopters, concrete masses and 747s. It's a literally heavy movie. The settings, which span from the Amalfi Coast to the "closed cities" of Russia, give "Tenet" a technological backdrop of ecological destruction. If anything, I wish Nolan had taken his future vs. past concept

TENET- Behind the Scenes Exclusive

further, instead of situating it so firmly in the more familiar (in movies) world of black-market weapons dealers.

"Tenet" lacks the elegant mastery of "Dunkirk" or the cosmic soulfulness of "Interstellar," but it has a darkly grand geometry. As instruments in an abstraction, most of Nolan's protagonists verge on the hollow. Washington glides through the film with charisma and preternatural smoothness but his character's inner life goes unexplored. Leonardo DiCaprio's Cobb in "Inception" wasn't so different, but the mission plunged directly into his subconscious. Nolan, a visionary filmmaker, can sometimes be too busy conjuring visions to build a character.

Time is Nolan's real protagonist, anyway. Its loss was the agony of "Interstellar." A ticking clock, on three different temporal tracks, measured "Dunkirk." In "Tenet," it moves in circles: backward and forward like waves in the ocean. It's a distinctive characteristic of the movies, and it's one you can feel Nolan investigating and experimenting with. It's easy to imagine "Tenet" was born in an editing suite, while a shot was rewound and epiphany struck.

Time has grown strangely elastic during the pandemic (as have movie release schedules). Today, yesterday and tomorrow blur together. So it's some comfort that even still, Nolan's clock keeps ticking.

"Tenet," a Warner Bros. release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for intense sequences of violence and action, some suggestive references and brief strong language. Running time: 151 minutes. Three stars out of four.

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD | Official Trailer

IN 'COPPERFIELD,' IANNUCCI BRINGS DICKENS TO LIFE

It's not hard to draw a straight line from Charles Dickens to Armando Iannucci. In each there's a passion for human frailty and absurdity, and, above all, a richness of people. Nobody filled pages with a vivid cast of characters like Dickens, so who better to take a shot at "David Copperfield" than the man behind the teeming ensembles of "Veep," "In the Loop" and "The Death of Stalin"?

In his third film as director, following his farce of bumbling and bloody Kremlin power struggles, Iannucci has turned to Dickens' most quintessential and autobiographical novel with the same zeal he previously reserved for political parody. "The Personal History of David Copperfield" is one of the more lively, colorful and whimsical Victorian costume dramas you're likely to see. It's a movie flowing with fresh

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD |
First Look Featurette

air, which isn't something normally said of adaptations of 700-something-page books.

Iannucci, famed for his improvisational style and expletive-laden barrages, clearly finds in Dickens a writer simpatico in fondness for language and taste for multitudes. In many ways, they make a good match, with Iannucci's more anarchic, free-wheeling style animating the wit and idiosyncrasies of Dickens' tome.

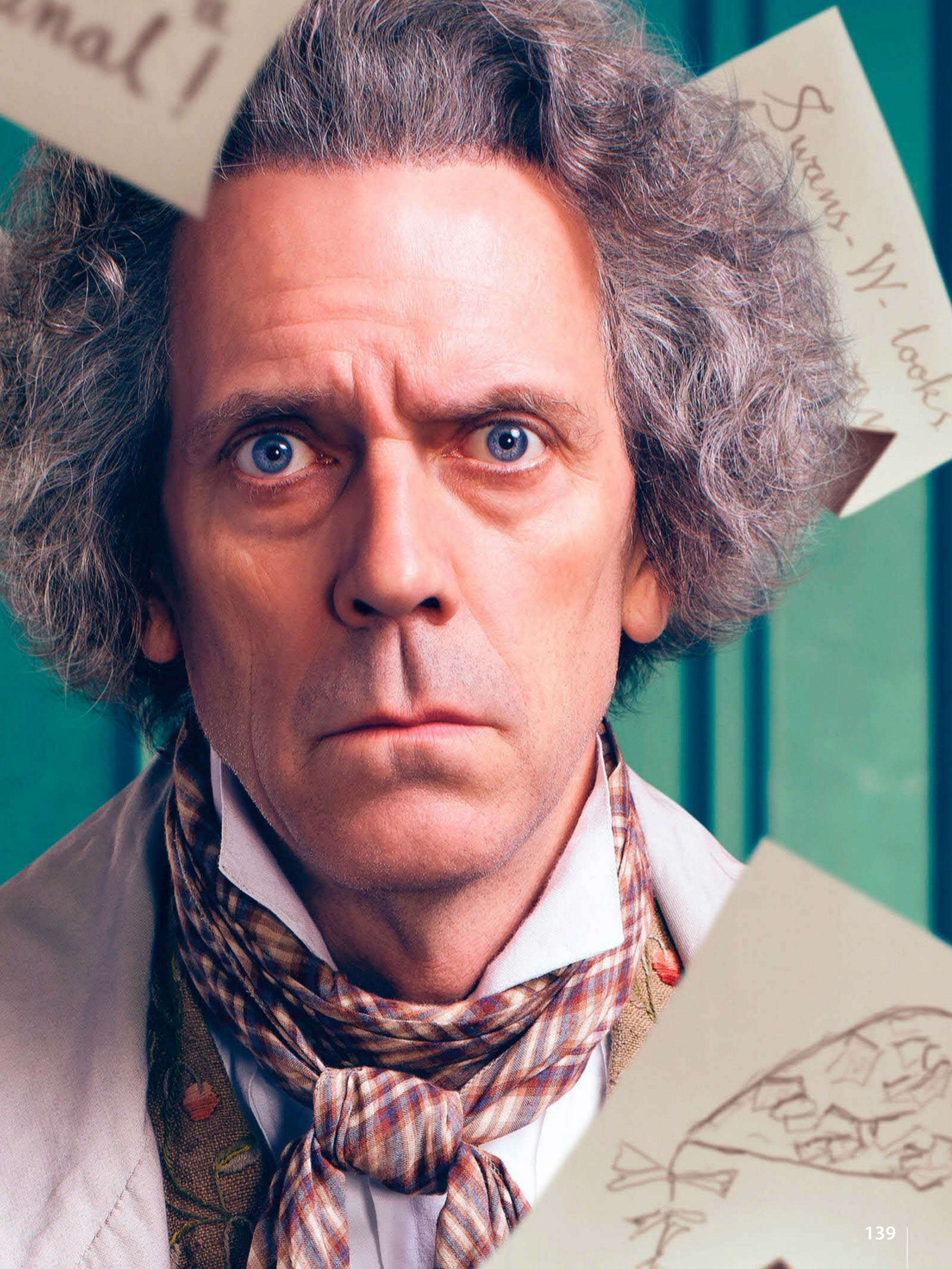
And just as in the absurdly deep bench of "Veep," casting has made a difference. Dev Patel winningly plays Copperfield, once out of childhood (as a boy, he's played by compelling youngsters Jairaj Varsani and Ranveer Jaiswal), with wide-eyed wonder, always alive to the world around him, if generally rather mystified by it. Still, the film belongs largely to the overall cast, including Tilda Swinton, as David's aunt Betsey Trotwood; Hugh Laurie as the mentally ill, King Charles I-obsessed Mr. Dick; Peter Capaldi as the creditor-evading Wilkins Micawber; Rosalind Eleazar as the romantic interest Agnes Wickfield; Benedict Wong as the wine-swilling Mr. Wickfield; Ben Whishaw as the plotting Uriah Heep.

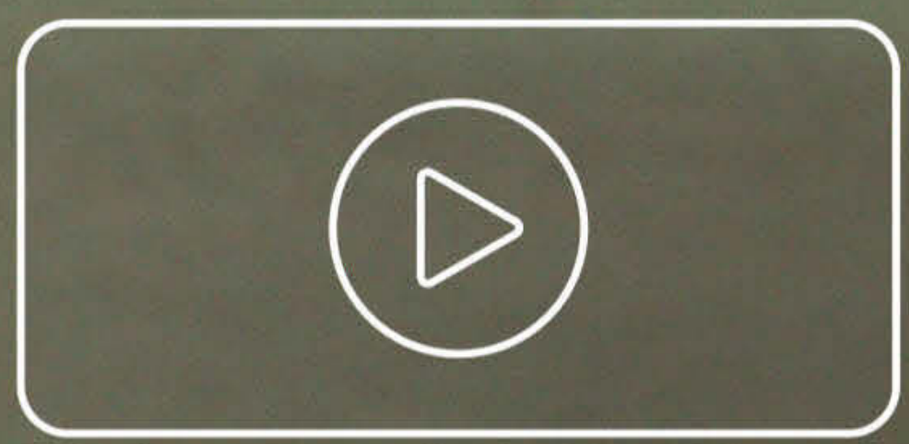
The performers, a distinctly multicultural cast, add considerably to the vibrancy of the film, collectively making a fairly irrefutable argument for colorblind casting, for anyone who needs one.

But while "The Personal History of David Copperfield" keeps a restless, brisk pace as it rushes through Copperfield's life, Iannucci and his co-writer Simon Blackwell arrange the film in such distinct chapters that the movie feels more like a litany of scenes than the dramatic evolution of a young man. Some sections are better than others. The episode with Laurie and

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD | "Donkey-Free Zone" Clip

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD |
"I Like To Pretend He Speaks" Clip





THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD | A Period Like No Other Featurette

Swinton at their country home, flying kites and chasing away donkeys, is so good that you want a whole film of them.

But if Iannucci's gift for the interplay of ensemble has a downside, it's in situating what's intended to be "a personal history" less from the first-person perspective of Copperfield. You come away appreciating certain bits rather than feeling the sweep of a story.

But we should all probably happily take a Dickens adaptation that risks being too funny, too zany, too sentimental. For Iannucci, whose portraits of politics past and present haven't exactly been the stuff of idealistism, it's also an exuberantly optimistic film celebrating the life force of art and eccentricity. Who couldn't use a little of that right now.

"The Personal History of David Copperfield," a Fox Searchlight release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for thematic material and brief violence. Running time: 120 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

TOP 10 SONGS

DYNAMITE
BTS

WAP (FEAT. MEGAN THEE STALLION)
CARDI B

BLINDING LIGHTS
THE WEEKND

STARTING OVER
CHRIS STAPLETON

DYNAMITE (TROPICAL REMIX)
BTS

ICE CREAM
BLACKPINK & SELENA GOMEZ

MIDNIGHT SKY
MILEY CYRUS

RAIN ON ME
LADY GAGA & ARIANA GRANDE

TRENCHES
MONICA & LIL BABY

MOOD (FEAT. IANN DIOR)
24KGOLDN

bran

TOP 10 ALBUMS

SMILE
Katy Perry

S&M2 (LIVE)
Metallica

OUT OF BODY
Needtobreathe

FOLKLORE (DELUXE VERSION)
Taylor Swift

B7
Brandy

HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL (ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST RECORDING)
Lin-Manuel Miranda

SI VIS PACEM, PARA BELLUM
Seether

TRAVELLER
Chris Stapleton

THE GREATEST SHOWMAN (ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK)
Benj Pasek & Justin Paul

FOLKLORE
Taylor Swift

TOP 10 MUSIC VIDEOS

DYNAMITE
BTS

DYNAMITE (B-SIDE)
BTS

ICE CREAM
BLACKPINK & Selena Gomez

AH AH AH (FEAT. FIVIO FOREIGN)
DreamDoll

ARMIES (LYRIC VIDEO)
KB

10K
KB

WAP (FEAT. MEGAN THEE STALLION)
Cardi B

TIGER INSIDE
SuperM

RAIN ON ME
Lady Gaga & Ariana Grande

MIDNIGHT SKY
Miley Cyrus

Real
ousewi
TOMAC
bravo

TOP 10 TV SHOWS

WHOLE NEW BALLGAME
Below Deck Mediterranean, Season 5

LOOK WHO'S SQUAWKING
The Real Housewives of Potomac, Season 5

COMPROMISING POSITIONS
90 Day Fiance: Happily Ever After?, Season 5

THE TRUTH HURTS
90 Day Fiance: The Other Way, Season 2

NO PARTY LIKE A MOB PARTY
The Real Housewives of New York City, Season 12

DENISE AND DESIST
The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills, Season 10

THE WORLD IS PURPLE
Yellowstone, Season 3

MELTDOWN IN MIDDLETOWN
Darcey & Stacey, Season 1

DAYBREAK
Yellowstone, Season 1

OPENING NIGHT
RuPaul's Drag Race: Vegas Revue

ROBE
IMM
SE

TOP 10 BOOKS

MELANIA AND ME
Stephanie Winston Wolkoff

ALL THE DEVILS ARE HERE
Louise Penny

MIDNIGHT SUN
Stephenie Meyer

PENTHOUSE PRINCE
Kendall Ryan

DARK SONG
Christine Feehan

TIDELANDS
Philippa Gregory

THE ANTI-BOYFRIEND
Penelope Ward

DONALD TRUMP V. THE UNITED STATES
Michael S. Schmidt

A KINGDOM OF FLESH AND FIRE
Jennifer L. Armentrout

SUMMER DESSERTS
Nora Roberts

Image: Kena Betancur

ZOOM RIDES PANDEMIC TO ANOTHER QUARTER OF EXPLOSIVE GROWTH

Zoom's videoconferencing service is deepening its integral role in life during the pandemic as tens of thousands more businesses and other users pay for subscriptions to get more control over their virtual meetings.

The surge in paying customers enabled Zoom to hail another quarter of explosive growth. The company reported that its revenue for the May-July period more than quadrupled from the same time last year to $663.5 million, boosted by a steadily rising number of users converting from the free to paid version of Zoom's service.

Zoom finished its fiscal second quarter with 370,200 customers with at least 10 employees, a gain of about 105,000 customers from the end of April. Just a year ago, Zoom only had 66,300 customers with at least 10 employees paying for subscriptions.

All that money pouring in helped Zoom earn nearly $186 million, or 66 cents per share, during its latest quarter, up from just $5.5 million at the same time last year.

"Organizations are shifting from addressing their immediate business continuity needs to supporting a future of working anywhere, learning anywhere, and connecting anywhere on Zoom's video-first platform," Zoom CEO Eric Yuan said.

Investors have latched on to Zoom too. After having already increased by fivefold so far this year, Zoom's stock price is poised to to climb to even loftier heights. The exuberant response to its quarterly report lifted the company's shares by nearly 23%.

If the stock follows a similar arc during the week, Zoom for the first time will boast a market value of more than $100 billion — exceeding the combined value of two storied automakers, General Motors and Ford, and two major airlines, American and United.

Back in early June, Zoom warned that it might suffer a wave of subscriber cancellations during the second half of the year if efforts to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus allowed more workers to return to offices. But the ongoing outbreak has prompted many major employers to keep their offices closed through rest of the year and possibility into next summer,

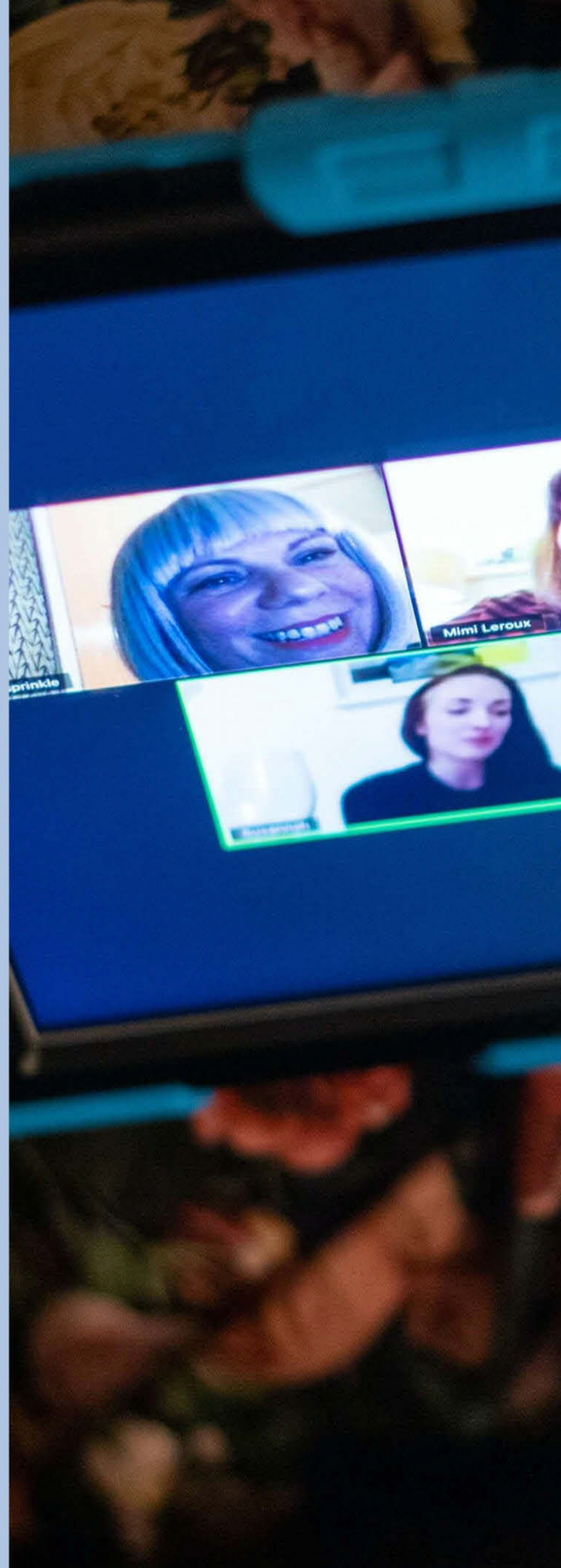


Image: Dominic Lipinski

a development that could propel Zoom to even greater heights.

In a show of confidence, Zoom raised its revenue projection for its fiscal year ending in January to nearly $2.4 billion, up from roughly $1.8 billion that the San Jose, California, company predicted in early June. The forecast is now more than double the $910 million revenue that Zoom had anticipated as it began its fiscal year.

Zoom has been thriving largely because the worst pandemic in a century shut down large parts of the economy in March, with employers shuttering their offices and schools closing their campuses. That forced millions of workers and students to hop on to Zoom and other videoconferencing services to get their jobs and schoolwork done.

Zoom quickly emerged as the most accessible videoconferencing service, cementing itself as the pandemic's most popular place to connect remotely for everything from virtual cocktail parties to complex court hearings, in addition to the daily grind of work.

The sudden demand seemed to catch Zoom off guard initially, leaving its service vulnerable to hackers and mischief makers who exploited security weaknesses to barge into or snoop on meetings. Zoom says it believes it has closed most of the loopholes and eventually won back some school districts that temporarily abandoned the service because of security concerns.

More recently, Zoom suffered a major outage on the same say many schools were resuming online instruction after a summer break. Although the outage only lasted a few hours, the breakdown heightened awareness about society's increasing reliance on Zoom.

Image: Dominic Lipinski

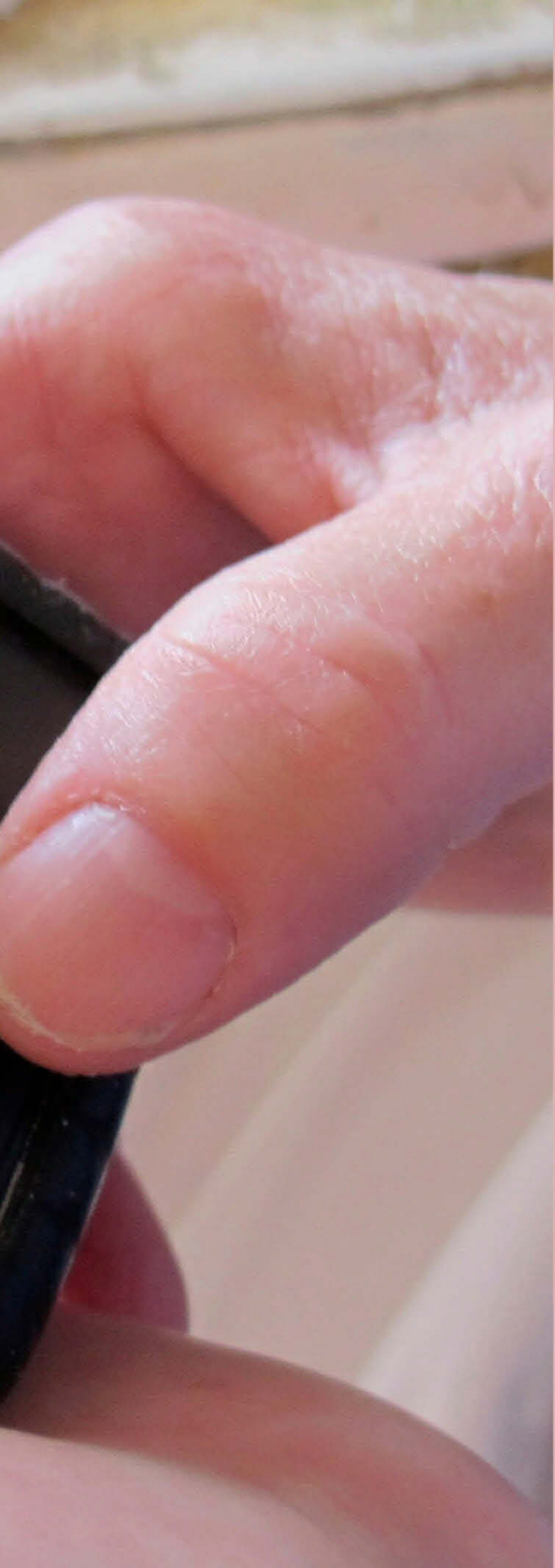
FAD OR FUTURE? TELEHEALTH EXPANSION EYED BEYOND PANDEMIC

Telehealth is a bit of American ingenuity that seems to have paid off in the coronavirus pandemic. Medicare temporarily waived restrictions predating the smartphone era and now there's a push to make telemedicine widely available in the future.

Consultations via tablets, laptops and phones linked patients and doctors when society shut down in early spring. Telehealth visits dropped with the reopening, but they're still far more common than before.

Permanently expanding access will involve striking a balance between costs and quality, dealing with privacy concerns and potential fraud, and figuring out how telehealth can reach marginalized patients, including people with mental health problems.

Pump
Block Mode
Units left
Started
- Reservoir -
10:19
AM
Off
88.6 U
8:57 AM
Aug 24
- Battery life -



"I don't think it is ever going to replace in-person visits, because sometimes a doctor needs to put hands on a patient," said Seema Verma, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and the Trump administration's leading advocate for telehealth.

Caveats aside, "it's almost a modern-day house call," she added.

"It's fair to say that telemedicine was in its infancy prior to the pandemic, but it's come of age this year," said Murray Aitken of the data firm IQVIA, which tracks the impact.

In the depths of the coronavirus shutdown, telehealth accounted for more than 40% of primary care visits for patients with traditional Medicare, up from a tiny 0.1% sliver before the public health emergency. As the government's flagship health care program, Medicare covers more than 60 million people, including those age 65 and older, and younger disabled people.

A recent poll of older adults by the University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation found that more than 7 in 10 are interested in using telehealth for follow-ups with their doctor, and nearly 2 out of 3 feel comfortable with video conferences.

But privacy was an issue, especially for those who hadn't tried telehealth. The poll found 27% of older adults who had not had a telemedicine visit were concerned about privacy, compared with 17% of those who tried it.

Those who tried telehealth weren't completely sold. About 4 in 5 were concerned the doctor couldn't physically examine them, and 64% worried the quality wasn't as good.

"After the initial excitement, in the afterglow, patients realize 'I can't get my vaccine,' or 'You can't see this thing in the back of my throat over the computer,'" said Dr. Gary LeRoy of Dayton, Ohio, a primary care doctor and president of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

For Medicare beneficiary Jean Grady of Westford, Vermont, telemedicine was a relief. She needed a checkup required by Medicare to continue receiving supplies for her wearable insulin pump. Being in a high risk group for COVID-19, Grady worried about potential exposure in a doctor's waiting room, and even more about losing her diabetes supplies if she missed Medicare's checkup deadline.

"I would have had to go back to taking insulin by syringe," she said.

Grady prepared for the virtual visit by calling her clinician's tech department and downloading teleconference software. She says she would do some future visits by video, but not all. For example, people with diabetes need periodic blood tests, and their feet must be checked for signs of circulatory problems.

Still, quite a few follow-ups "could be done very efficiently and be just as useful to the physician and myself as going in and seeing them in person," Grady said.

Many private insurance plans, including those in Medicare Advantage, offer some level of telemedicine coverage.

But traditional Medicare has restricted it to rural residents, who generally had to travel to specially designated sites to connect.

Under the coronavirus public health emergency, the administration temporarily waived Medicare's restrictions so enrollees anywhere could use telemedicine. Patients could connect from home. Making such changes permanent would require legislation from Congress, but there's bipartisan interest.

Sen. Lamar Alexander, chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, says he'd like to see broader access, without breaking the bank.

"Our job should be to ensure that change is done with the goals of better outcomes and better patient experiences, at a lower cost," said Alexander, R-Tenn.

That's a tall order.

Payment will be a sticky obstacle. For now, Medicare is paying clinicians on par for virtual and in-person visits.

"Policymakers seems to be in a rush to pass legislation, but I think it is worth taking a little more time," said Juliette Cubanski, a Medicare expert with the nonpartisan Kaiser

Family Foundation. "Fraud is one big area that policymakers need to be cognizant of."

Fraud-busters agree.

Telehealth is so new that "we don't have at this point a real sense of where the huge risks lie," said Andrew VanLandingham, a senior lawyer with the Health and Human Services inspector general's office. "We are sort of in an experimental phase."

Despite the risks, advocates see opportunities.

Expanded Medicare telehealth could:

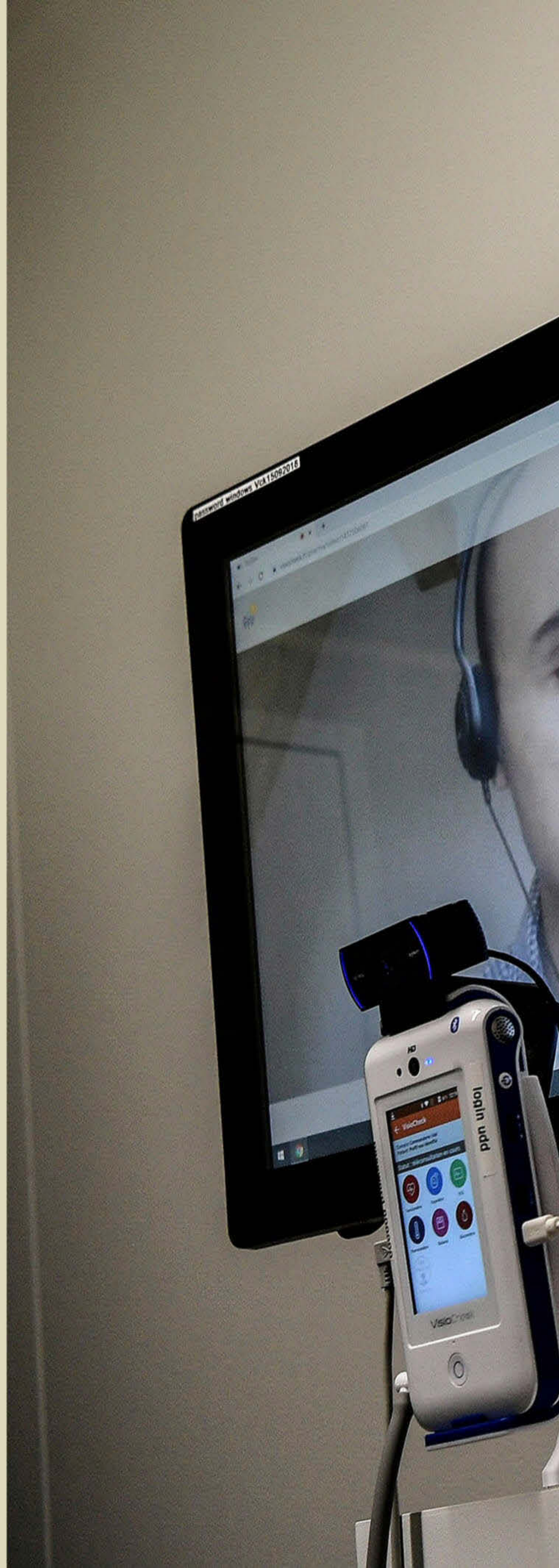
—help move the nation closer to a long-sought goal of treating mental health the same as physical conditions. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., wants to use telemedicine as a springboard to improve mental health care. IQVIA data shows 60% of psychiatric consults took place by telehealth during the shutdown.

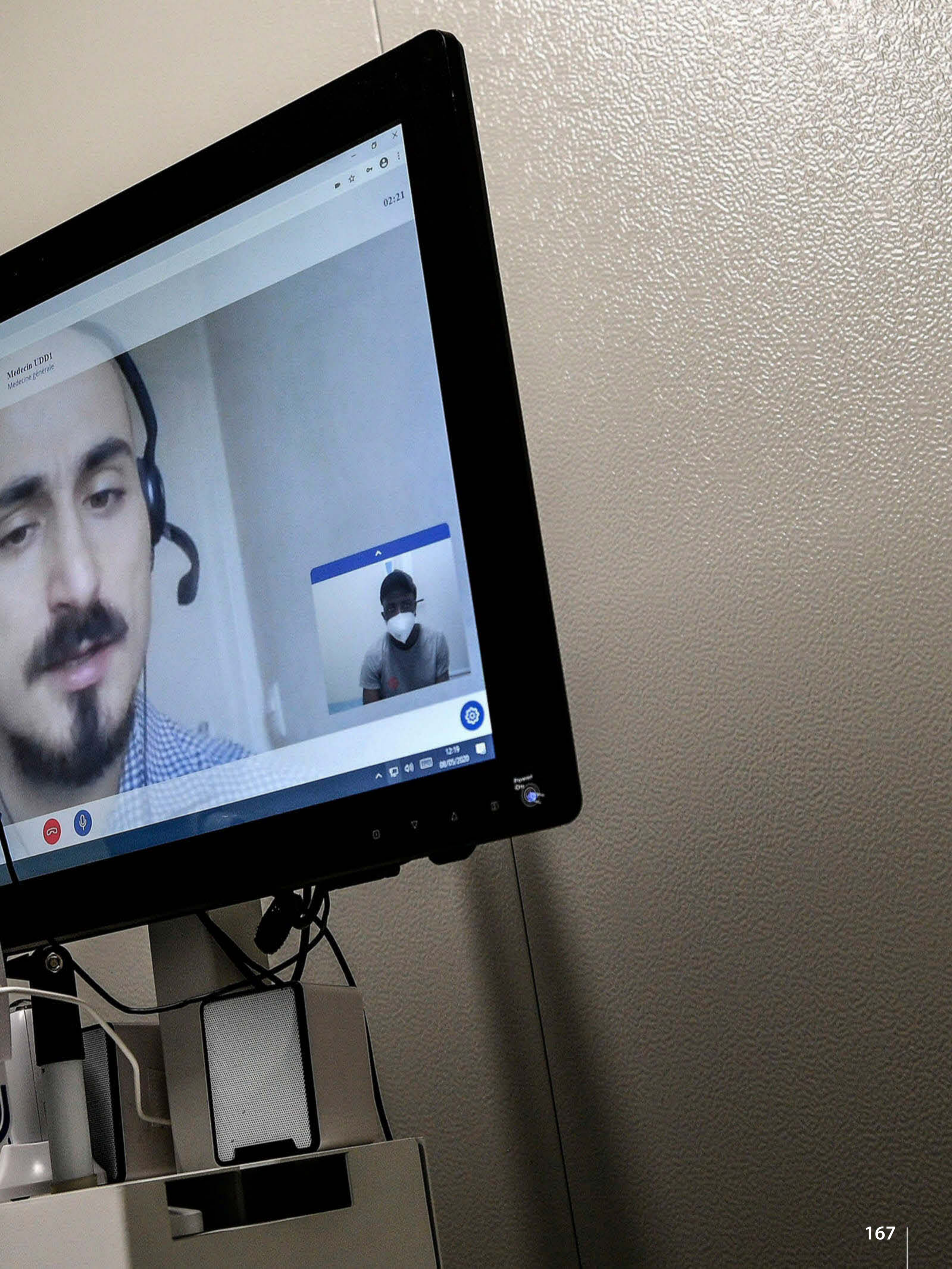
—increase access for people living in remote communities, in low-income urban areas and even nursing homes. Medicare's research shows low-income beneficiaries have had similar patterns of using telehealth for primary care as program enrollees overall.

—improve coordination of care for people with chronic health conditions, a goal that requires patient and persistent monitoring. Chronic care accounts for most program spending.

University of Michigan health policy expert Mark Fendrick says Medicare should figure out what services add value for patients' health and taxpayers' wallets, and pay just for those.

Telehealth "was an overnight sensation," said Fendrick. "Hopefully it's not a one-hit wonder."

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FLORIDA ANNOUNCES IT WILL LIFT BAN ON NURSING HOME VISITS

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announced that he will lift the state's ban on visiting nursing homes that has cut off vulnerable seniors from family since mid-March over fears of spreading the new coronavirus.

With his voice cracking at times, he wondered aloud if his actions might have contributed to suffering in his state as he made his announcement during a round table in Jacksonville.

Image: Lynne Sladky

GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA
IN GOD WE TRUST
Ron DeSantis
Governor of Florida

"Part of having a healthy society is understanding that human beings seek affection," DeSantis said. "Many of the folks understand that they have loved ones who are in the last stage of their life. They're not demanding a medical miracle. They're not having unrealistic expectations. They just would like to be able to say goodbye or to hug somebody."

The visibly emotional governor paused to collect himself, and silence filled the room for about 20 seconds.

DeSantis said he would lift the ban on visitations in an executive order, following recommendations from a nursing home task force.

The governor's order is expected to allow family members to visit their loved ones no more than two at a time, wearing protective gear including masks. Facilities would need to go 14 days without any new cases of COVID-19 among staff or residents to allow the visits. Children under the age of 18 are not yet allowed.

The task force appointed by the governor recommended a lengthy set of rules last week, giving wide leeway for wary nursing homes on how to implement them. Critics were quick to express concern over what will likely be a patchwork approach, varying greatly among facilities statewide.

South Carolina took a similar step, with Gov. Henry McMaster announcing visitations at nursing homes could resume after nearly six months, but only outdoors and with no hugs or kisses.

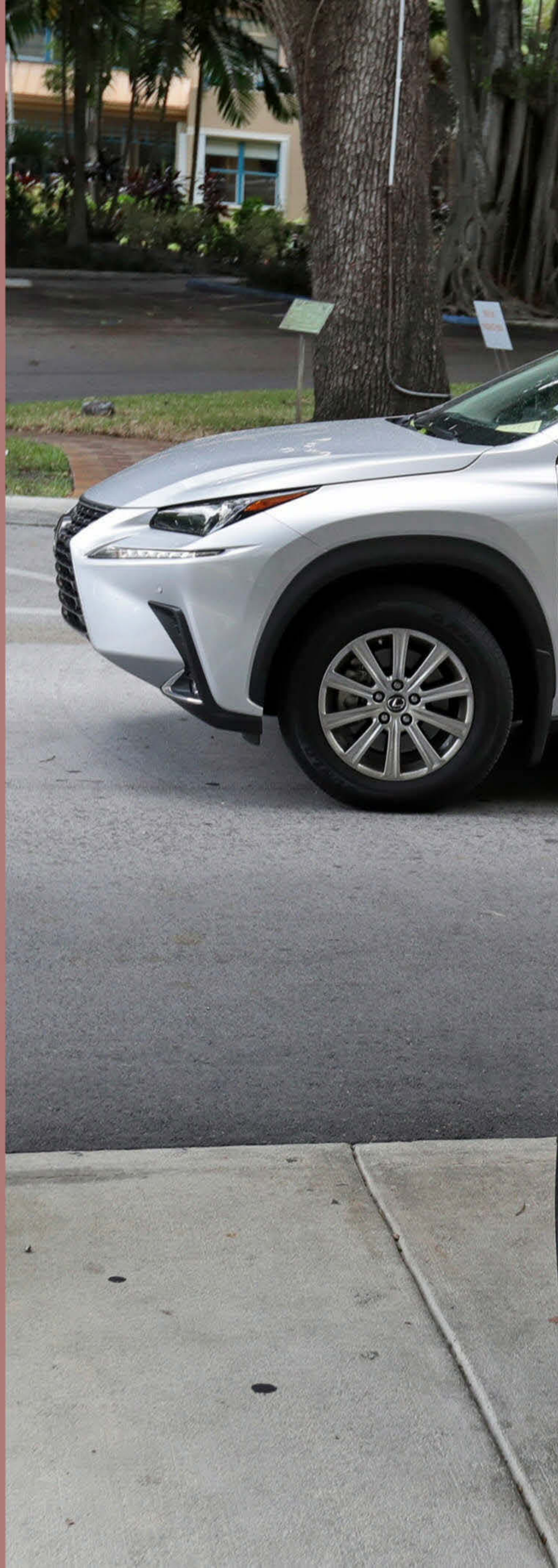

Image: Wilfredo Lee

"As expected, the months of separation and isolation have caused loneliness, depression, stress, anxiety among the residents. I worry about them, like you do, every day," McMaster said in Columbia.

In Florida, nearly two-thirds of facilities have not had new cases since Aug. 11, said Mary Mayhew, who led the task force and heads the state's Agency for Health Care Administration.

The biggest sticking point was over physical contact, with gut-wrenching debates between the task force's health experts and an advocate for families. The task force ultimately recommended that essential caregivers be allowed to touch and hug loved ones. But some members, including state Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees, repeatedly expressed grave concerns during task force meetings.

"The more people that are coming in, that really increases the risk," Rivkees said last week.

Task force member Mary Daniel pleaded on behalf of hugs for residents, who she said are dying from loneliness. Daniel took a part-time job as a dishwasher just to be allowed to visit her husband, who has Alzheimer's.

I Love You

"I'm turning in my two weeks' notice today. I'm not going to be a dishwasher anymore. I'm going back to being just a wife," Daniel said. She represents the group Caregivers for Compromise Because Isolation Kills Too.

All parties agreed on the terrible toll isolation has taken on residents, who have now gone almost six months without seeing loved ones.

Some facilities expressed concerns about the continued danger of exposing vulnerable residents to the virus while new cases remain high — though trending downward for several weeks — and without more widespread testing and stricter distancing rules.

"I am concerned that the state will throw open the doors to our communities and then walk away. Suddenly you will see a war develop between providers and families as we try to do what is best for residents and staff," said Jay Solomon, CEO of Aviva senior home in Sarasota.

It's unclear how many of the state's more than 4,000 nursing homes, assisted living facilities and group homes will choose to open to visitors in any capacity.

The head of Florida Health Care Association, which represent 82% of the nursing homes in Florida, said many facilities told him they are very wary about allowing visitors, while others are eager to do so.

Brian Lee, head of Families for Better Care, an advocacy group for nursing home residents, said Florida's recommendations are "woefully inadequate."

I Love You
HAZEL CYPEN TOWER

"Governor DeSantis' panel failed to recommend an at-the-door, rapid testing protocol that would identify asymptomatic COVID carriers before entering a nursing home," he wrote in an email.

Mayhew said that she felt confident visitors would adhere to the rules knowing the stakes were high.

"Human touch is absolutely critical," said Mayhew, whose 87-year-old mother has been living with her for several months during the pandemic. "I understood how much my mother craved the interaction. No one should be going this long without a hug."

Hospitalizations and new confirmed cases in Florida's summer outbreak of COVID-19 have trended downward since late July, and daily reported deaths have been declining since a peak of about 185 on Aug. 5.

Still, thousands of people continue to test positive for the virus daily.

The Florida Health Department said in a news release that 7,643 people tested positive in results received the previous day, about half because of a tardy dump of 75,000 results from a private lab dating back as far as April. Otherwise, the number would have been 3,773, the department said.

The state said it would be severing ties with that lab, Quest Diagnostics. DeSantis said in a statement that delivering such "stale" results was irresponsible.

Quest apologized in a statement saying that it "takes seriously" its responsibility to report lab data on time and the glitch was the result of a technical issue.

GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA
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Ron DeSantis
Governor of Florida

dreams gardens
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
ENCYCLOPEDIA of TREES & SHRUBS

A ROOM WITH A VIEW? WE'RE LOOKING FOR ONE WITH A DOOR

Without warning last spring, millions of parents found themselves working from home while their kids attempted to do schoolwork under the same roof. The changes happened so quickly that families — especially those short on space — could only make the best of it with hastily arranged solutions.

Nearly six months later, many interior designers are helping clients make more considered decorating changes, big and small, to serve the whole family during the new school year.

Interior designer Everick Brown says a priority for his clients in the suburbs outside New York City has been finding enough quiet space and privacy to effectively work, study and take Zoom calls.

We all used to want a room with a view, says Brown. “Now everybody’s just searching for a room with a door.”

He’s also focusing on health and wellness: A portable standing desk can easily be moved from room to room so family members can share it when one needs a break from sitting.

There are also desktop risers that turn any desk or even the kitchen table into a standing desk for part of the day.

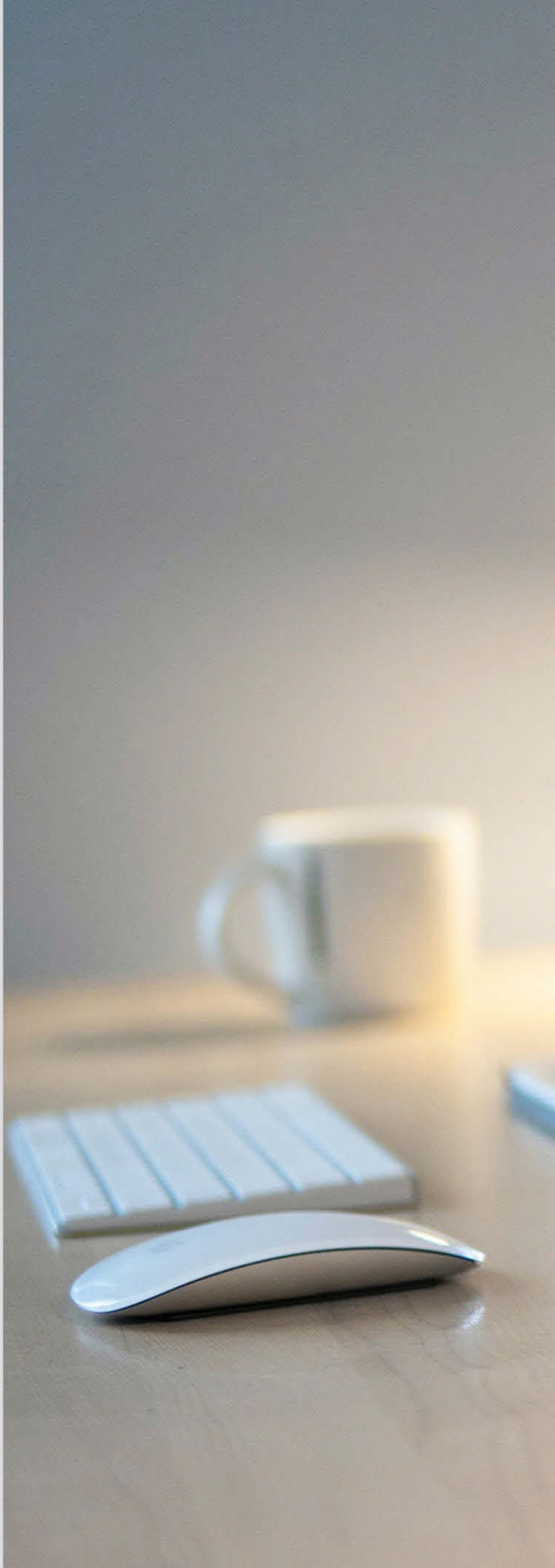
For families with younger kids, New Jersey-based interior designer Linda Kitson suggests finding a work table and chair scaled to a child’s size, just as elementary school would have. Properly sized seating lets kids sit with their feet on the floor, which may help them concentrate and stay on task.

If a low table and small chair aren’t available, try placing a stool or sturdy box under the table to create a solid resting place for little feet.

For adults, too, ergonomics matters: Be sure to use a desk or table and chair at the right height, so your feet can rest solidly on the floor and your back is supported.

Sometimes the answer is using a room in a completely new way.

Kitson has a client with two daughters who each had their own bedroom. They’ve now moved the two kids into one room — letting them choose a new paint color together to make the



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NESCAFÉ

space feel like it belongs to both of them — and put desks in the other bedroom to create a shared classroom.

It's a temporary shift that can easily be undone if normal schooling resumes soon. In the meantime, it allows both girls to spend their school day in a space with plenty of natural light and a view out a window, rather than tucked away in a basement playroom.

And even if an entire room can't be repurposed, there are ways to give each family member a workspace that serves them. It doesn't have to be large: "48 inches wide by 24 inches deep is about all you need to accommodate notes and a pencil, and your laptop or iPad, and then a desk light," Brown says. "What we're really looking at is basically a 4-foot-by-4-foot space."

Some families might find that working near one another, rather than in separate rooms, is better -- especially those with young kids who may need some assistance with technology during the day.

"A lot of times when kids are left to their own devices or in their own room, they get distracted really easily," says New York-based interior designer Jenny Dina Kirschner. "So sometimes it is nice to have that communal working space."

For one client in Brooklyn, Kirschner carved out an open workspace within a living room by placing a desk along the back of the sofa. With ample shelving and closed storage along the wall behind the desk, this section of the living room becomes a micro-office that blends with the decor of the rest of the room.

While kitchen tables can be practical workspaces, there can be a downside to this solution.

"When it becomes somebody's command center, then they need to pick up and move that stuff every day. And you're sitting with somebody else's work staring at you, and they might be thinking, 'Oh, I need to go back to work after dinner,'" Kitson says.

Managing that work/life balance is just as important as managing space, she says. We don't just need to work and study at home this year. We need to have fun, too.

New Jersey-based interior designer Terri Fiori says allowing a child to choose beautiful but calming colors for their bedroom can help create a workspace the student is excited about.

If your home has a window seat, she says, you can let kids spend part of the day studying there (or use it yourself). A view of the outdoors can help focus and boost everyone's mood.

Kitson even helped one client create a mini-parkour, or obstacle course, that their two young boys can use for fun, physical breaks from their school day. For daily exercise, these brothers will skip to a doorway, jump up to ring a bell, then use a 2-by-4 installed in the hallway as a balance beam. Hopping off of it, they'll crawl through nylon hoops, then climb over the back of a slip-covered sofa and crawl back to their school desks.

"They'll have all the endorphins of exercise," Kitson says, and hopefully return to their desks ready to focus on another hour of school, while their parents are working.

1000 chairs
WARHOL
RED BOOKS
MARC CHAGALL
50 WONDERS OF THE WORLD
BIRDS of PREY
WILD ANIMALS
THE DEEP
SHOW
ART DECO
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Los Angeles Times

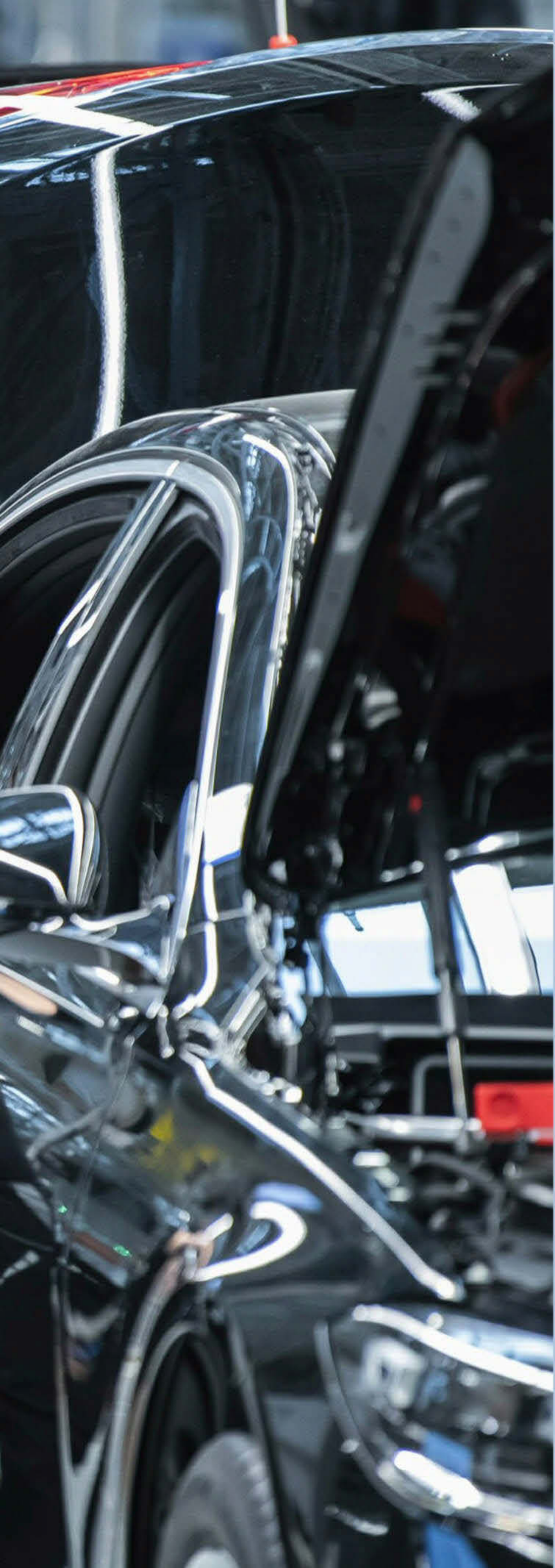
MERCEDES-BENZ UNVEILS NEW FLAGSHIP S-CLASS SEDAN

Daimler AG unveiled the new version of its Mercedes-Benz S-Class luxury sedan, the company's most important model and one it hopes will generate fat profits to help the Stuttgart-based automaker through the COVID-19 recession and wrenching structural changes to the auto industry.

Daimler CEO Ola Kallenius called the long, sleek S-Class "the heart of our brand" during an on-line event Wednesday in which he touted the car's highly personalized luxury technology.

Image: Silas Stein

Image: Silas Stein



The company will be relying on profits from its internal combustion-driven luxury vehicles like the S-Class and SUVs to finance investment in new, low-emission technology. Ferdinand Dudenhoeffer, director of the Center for Automotive Research in Duisburg, called the S-Class "very important" for Daimler and its Mercedes-Benz luxury division because it generates 15-20% of operating earnings from only 3% of sales.

Kallenius is carrying out a cost-cutting drive to conserve cash during the recession, as well as to find the money for expensive investment in the electric and digital technologies that are transforming the car industry under pressure from regulators and competitors from the tech sector.

In particular, carmakers in Europe must sell significantly more electric vehicles to meet tough limits on carbon dioxide emissions from the start of next year. Carbon dioxide is the main greenhouse gas blamed by scientists for climate change. The limits are part of the European Union's effort to comply with the 2015 Paris climate accord.

The new version does not look much different from the previous one, apart from new horizontal taillights. Features include a voice assistant that functions in all seats and can be used to ask for a hot seat massage or to play one's favorite music.

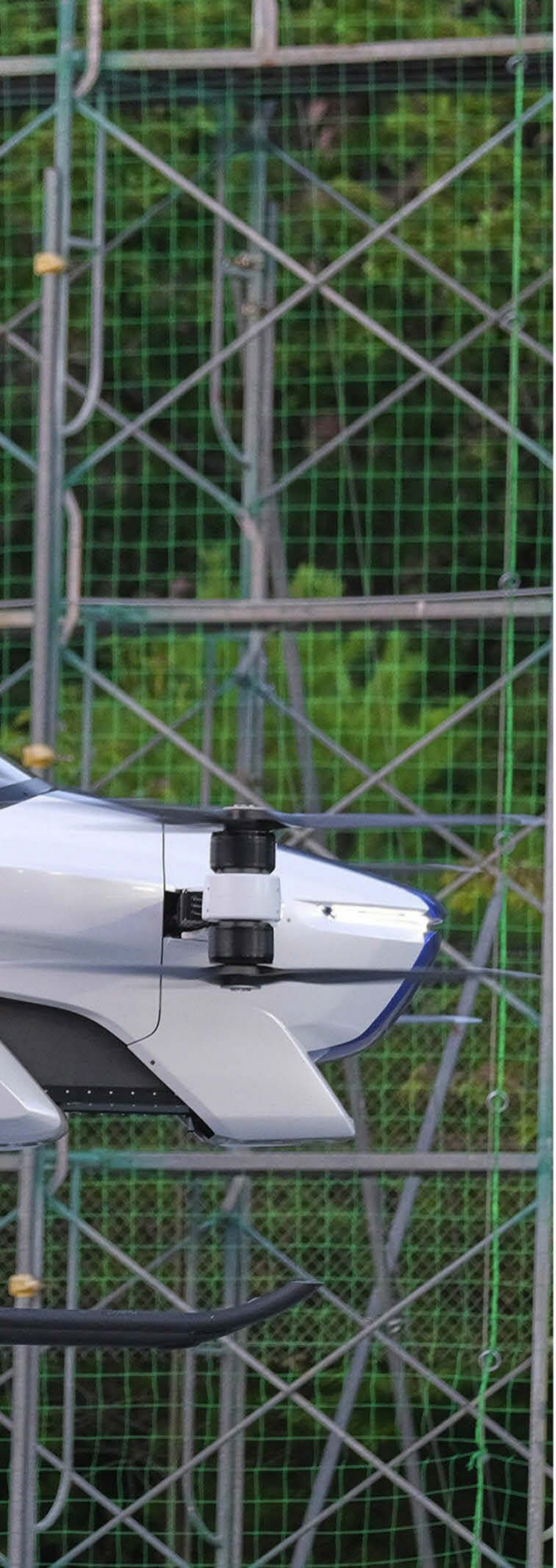
Drivers up front can use the dashboard touchscreen to swipe content to their kids' screens in the back — while ensconced in seats adjusted for a perfect fit by 18 motors and guided by the car's digital brain that remembers

personal mirror and seat positions. Customers in China, a crucial market for the vehicle, will be the first to get an option to order dinner through the voice assistant as they drive home.

The rear wheels can turn up to 10 degrees, enabling a tight turn radius despite the vehicle's size. The S-Class comes in a hybrid version that combines electric and internal combustion propulsion, with an improved all-electric range of 100 kilometers (62 miles) before the internal combustion engine needs to kick in.

The internal combustion and hybrid versions will be joined by the EQS, an all-electric sibling model expected next year. The company's news release didn't have price information; the old model started at $94,500 in the United States.

SKYDRIVE
CARTIVATOR
SKYDRIVE



JAPAN'S 'FLYING CAR' GETS OFF GROUND, WITH A PERSON ABOARD

The decades-old dream of zipping around in the sky as simply as driving on highways may be becoming less illusory.

Japan's SkyDrive Inc., among the myriads of "flying car" projects around the world, has carried out a successful though modest test flight with one person aboard.

In a video shown to reporters, a contraption that looked like a slick motorcycle with propellers lifted several feet (1-2 meters) off the ground, and hovered in a netted area for four minutes.

Tomohiro Fukuzawa, who heads the SkyDrive effort, said he hopes "the flying car" can be made into a real-life product by 2023, but he acknowledged that making it safe was critical.

"Of the world's more than 100 flying car projects, only a handful has succeeded with a person on board," he told to media.

"I hope many people will want to ride it and feel safe."

The machine so far can fly for just five to 10 minutes but if that can become 30 minutes, it will have more potential, including exports to places like China, Fukuzawa said.

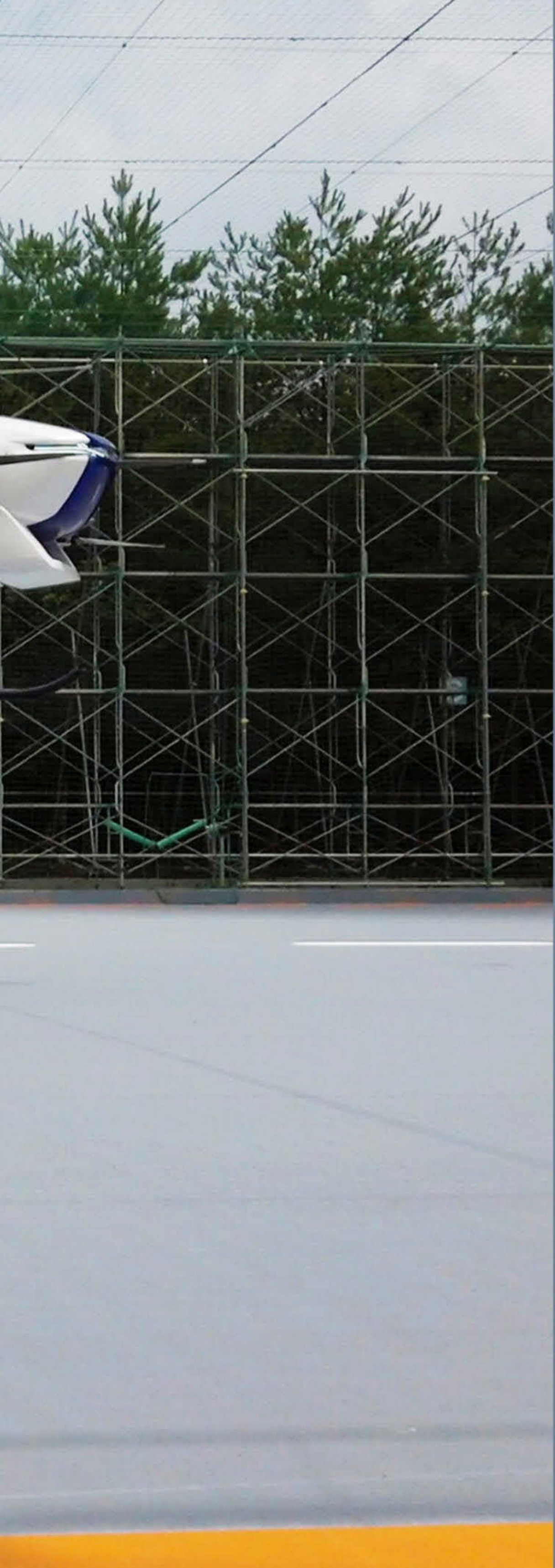
Unlike airplanes and helicopters, eVTOL, or "electric vertical takeoff and landing," vehicles offer quick point-to-point personal travel, at least in principle.

They could do away with the hassle of airports and traffic jams and the cost of hiring pilots, they could fly automatically.

Battery sizes, air traffic control and other infrastructure issues are among the many potential challenges to commercializing them.

"Many things have to happen," said Sanjiv Singh, professor at the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, who co-founded Near Earth Autonomy, near Pittsburgh, which is also working on an eVTOL aircraft.

CARTIVATOR
SKYDRIVE



"If they cost $10 million, no one is going to buy them. If they fly for 5 minutes, no one is going to buy them. If they fall out of the sky every so often, no one is going to buy them," Singh said in a telephone interview.

The SkyDrive project began humbly as a volunteer project called Cartivator in 2012, with funding by top Japanese companies including automaker Toyota Motor Corp., electronics company Panasonic Corp. and video-game developer Bandai Namco.

A demonstration flight three years ago went poorly. But it has improved and the project recently received another round of funding, of 3.9 billion yen ($37 million), including from the Development Bank of Japan.

The Japanese government is bullish on "the Jetsons" vision, with a "road map" for business services by 2023, and expanded commercial use by the 2030s, stressing its potential for connecting remote areas and providing lifelines in disasters.

Experts compare the buzz over flying cars to the days when the aviation industry got started with the Wright Brothers and the auto industry with the Ford Model T.

Lilium of Germany, Joby Aviation in California and Wisk, a joint venture between Boeing Co. and Kitty Hawk Corp., are also working on eVTOL projects.

Sebastian Thrun, chief executive of Kitty Hawk, said it took time for airplanes, cell phones and self-driving cars to win acceptance.

"But the time between technology and social adoption might be more compressed for eVTOL vehicles," he said.

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