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Fans of Android modding rejoice, it's been discovered that the Pixel Watch bootloader can be unlocked, but you'll need a special cable or very steady hands.

One tradition of the Google Pixel series is that you've always been able to unlock the bootloader, which makes it easily possible to install your own custom Android ROM. This has made the Pixel series a fan favorite among the modding community, and many were hoping to see that tradition continue with the Pixel Watch.

On that front, there's been good news and bad news. In a statement given to [XDA-Developers](#), Google confirmed that while it is possible to unlock the bootloader, doing so requires a specialty cable that "Fitbit currently does not provide."

As spotted by a few Pixel Watch reviewers and early adopters, there are four pogo pins on the upper side of the watch, inside the watch band connector. Presumably, Fitbit's special cable would either connect magnetically or perhaps slot into place just like a normal Pixel Watch band would.

However, without that official option available, resourceful developers/hackers have taken matters into their own hands. On Twitter, developer [Shiny Quagsire](#) has shared his own efforts at modding the Pixel Watch, beginning with how to unlock the bootloader.

To do so, the first step was to figure out exactly how those pogo pins are used, then cut up and modify one end of a USB cable into individual wires. Three of the four cables are then carefully spaced to match the pogo pins and taped together. With that complete, it takes a bit of gentle maneuvering to hold the makeshift "connector" against the pins of the Pixel Watch.

Shiny Quagsire's efforts were rewarded, getting a full ADB/Fastboot connection to the Pixel Watch via the modified USB cable, which, while sketchy, is workable for simple experiments but not for flashing a new ROM. Once connected, the process of unlocking the bootloader was just as simple as it is on every Pixel phone.

**bootloader is unlocked 🎉**

also a pic of my hacked up cable, I'd need something proper if I even wanted to try flashing this thing lmao [pic.twitter.com/Fu4dqtdCY7](https://pic.twitter.com/Fu4dqtdCY7)  
— Shiny Quagsire (@ShinyQuagsire) **October 20, 2022**

Just like Pixel series phones, when the Pixel Watch bootloader is unlocked, you're warned about it every time it restarts. This is an important safety measure to ensure that anyone running modified/altered software on their watch or phone is well aware of it.

With this first foray into cracking open the Pixel Watch, it's clear we're at the beginning of a new era of modding Wear OS smartwatches. In time, the techniques will hopefully improve — whether Fitbit releases the debugging cable themselves or the community creates one of their own — and more interesting possibilities will arise. For now, though, it's just fun to see the lengths to which some will go in order to modify a device like the Pixel Watch.

## More on Pixel Watch:

- [Google says the Pixel Watch does not suffer from screen burn-in, just image retention](#)
- [Pixel Watch teardown finds that cracked screen replacement would require battery removal \[Video\]](#)
- [Here's why Google Fit doesn't work with Fossil's Wear OS 3 update, wonky on Pixel Watch](#)

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# Featured

from 9to5Google



Google Assistant Driving Mode is not dead, but it's now just a voice bar

Abner Li | Feb 1 2024



OnePlus 12 Review: Settled or not, simply the best value in an Android 1

Ben Schoon | Feb 2 2024



Pixel Watch Camera app can now switch to Night Sight, Video, & other

Abner Li | Feb 1 2024

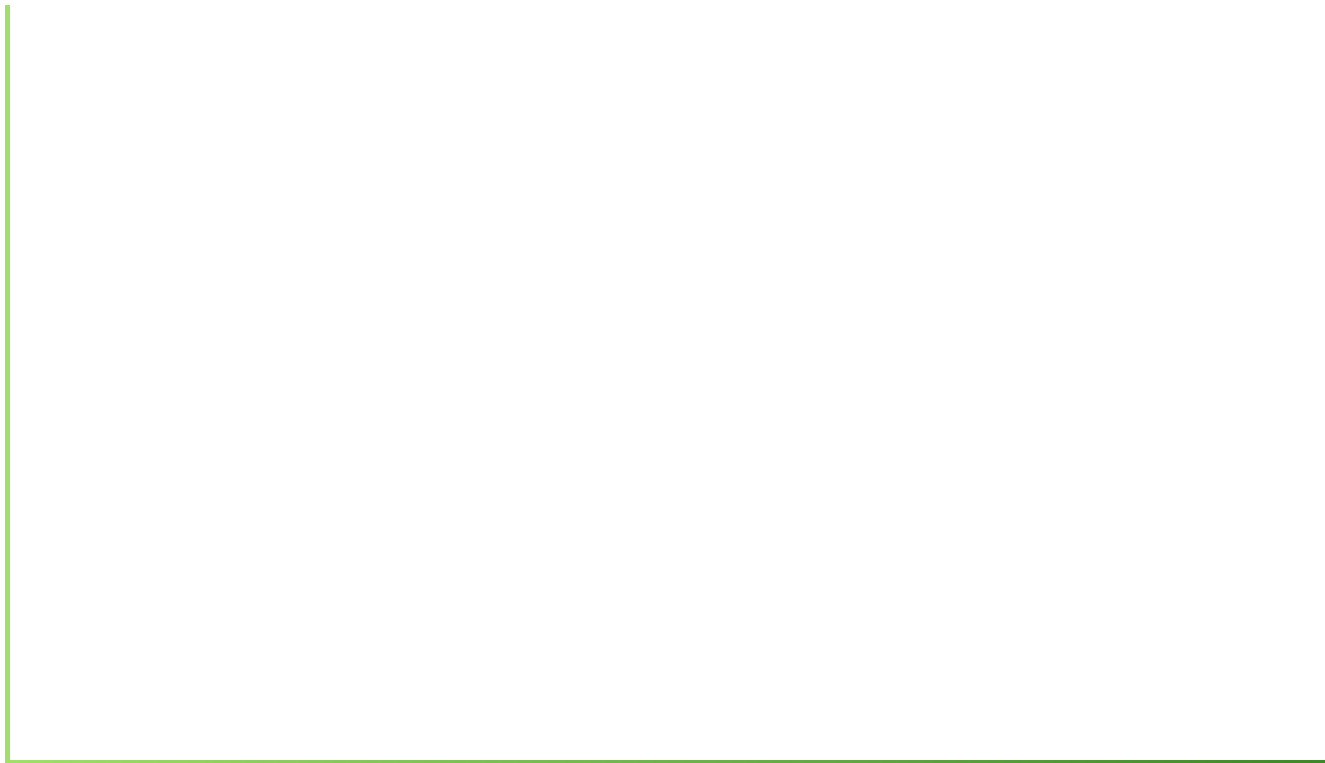


Google is preparing to fully rename Bard to Gemini

Kyle Bradshaw | Feb 1 2024






Check out 9to5Google on YouTube for more news:



# Comments

Conversation 5 Comments


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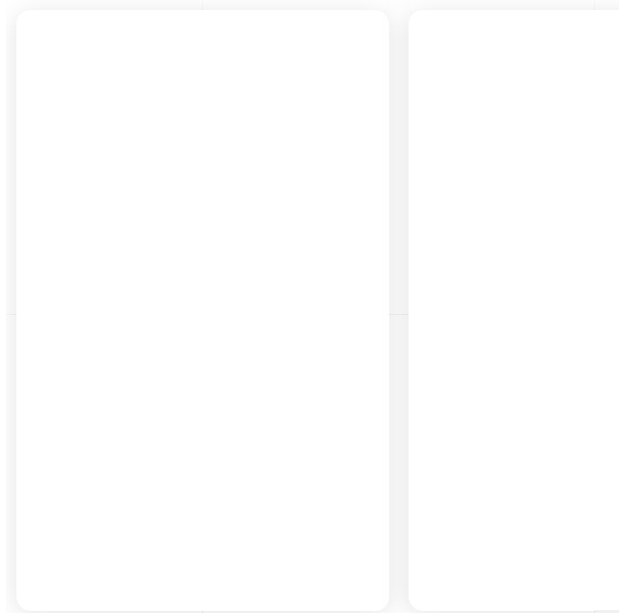
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## Guides



### Wear OS

Wear OS is Google's wearable platform which is d...



### Fitbit

Google Pixel Watch

## Author



Kyle Bradshaw |



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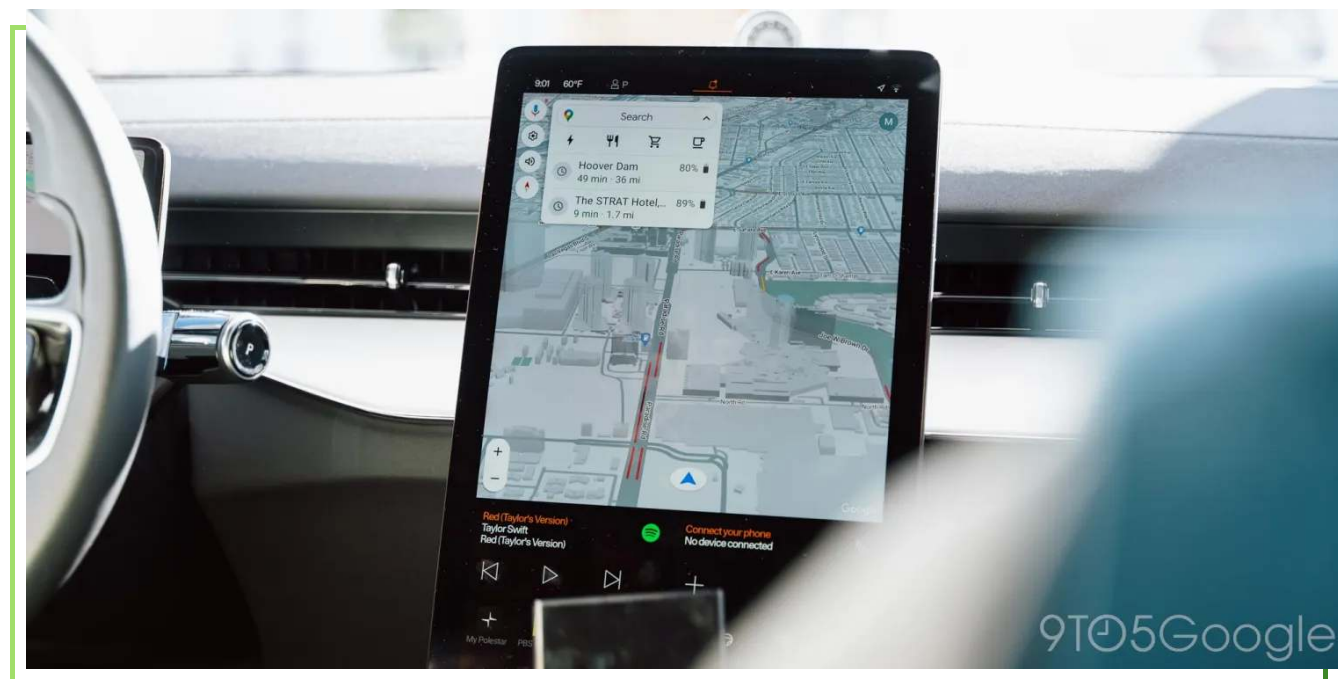
Kyle is an author and researcher for 9to5Google, with special interests in Made by Google products, Fuchsia, and uncovering new features.

Got a tip or want to chat? Twitter or Email. [Kyle@9to5mac.com](mailto:Kyle@9to5mac.com)

ANDROID AUTO   GOOGLE MAPS

# Android Auto more widely rolling out 3D buildings in Google Maps, enabled by default

 **Ben Schoon** | Feb 3 2024 - 10:35 am PT |  **7 Comments**





Earlier this year Google Maps on Android Auto started showing buildings in 3D while driving. Now, that functionality is rolling out more widely, and we've got a few more details on it as well.



ANDROID   GOOGLE BARD

## Google Bard to become 'Gemini' very soon with 'Advanced' tier and Android app

 **Ben Schoon** | Feb 3 2024 - 7:02 am PT |  **20 Comments**





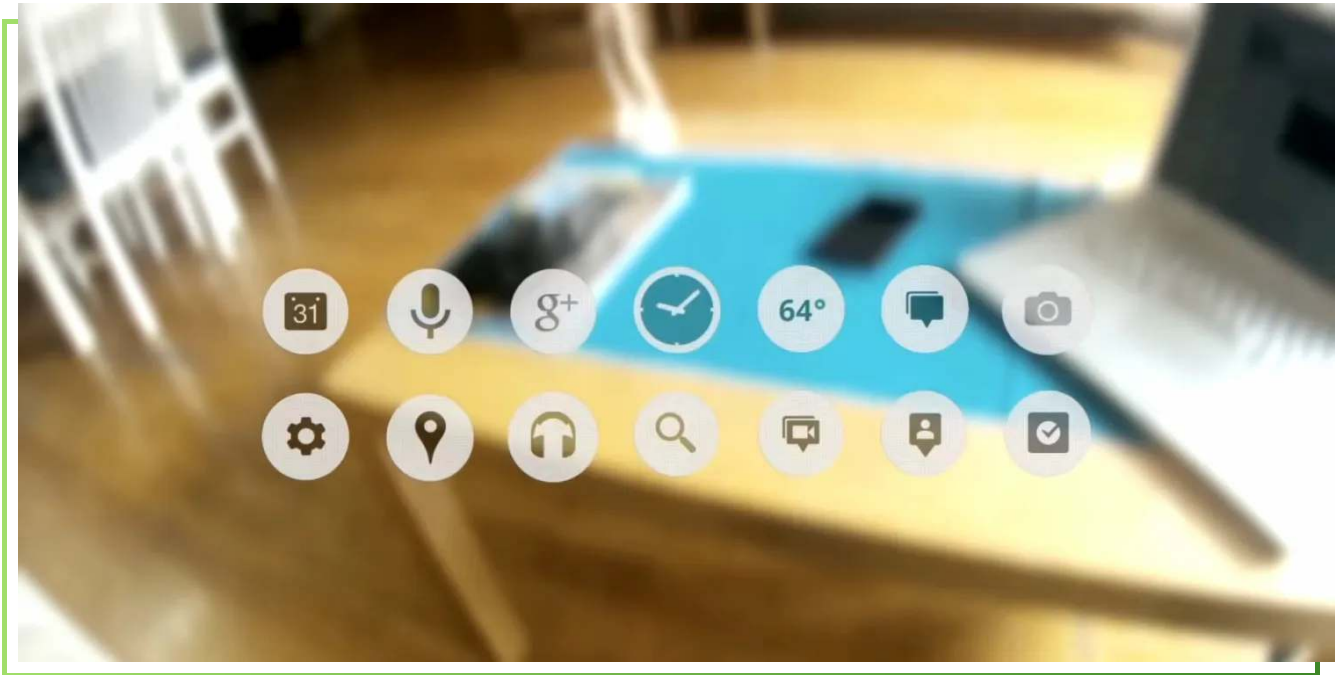
Google Bard is in for a big shakeup in the next few days, as an early changelog reveals that the “Gemini” rebrand is coming next week with a new Android app and more.



NEWSLETTER   GOOGLE GLASS

## The line from Google Glass to Apple Vision Pro

 **Abner Li** | Feb 2 2024 - 1:45 pm PT |  **28 Comments**



In a few hours, I'll get to use Apple Vision Pro for the first time. It's frankly a moment I've been waiting for since April 4, 2012.



## More

from **SPACE  
EXPLORED**



Add Momentus to the list of companies scavenging for cash



**Seth Kurkowski** | Feb 4 2024



Farmers are the OG early adopters of new tech, this time it's Starlink int



**Seth Kurkowski** | Feb 3 2024



For one last time a Space Shuttle has been lifted into launch position



**Seth Kurkowski** | Feb 1 2024



Japan's SLIM lander regains communications after landing nose down



**Seth Kurkowski** | Jan 31 2024





**This Week in Launch: SpaceX to launch Northrop Grumman's next cargo mission**



**Seth Kurkowski** | Jan 29 2024

APPS & UPDATES

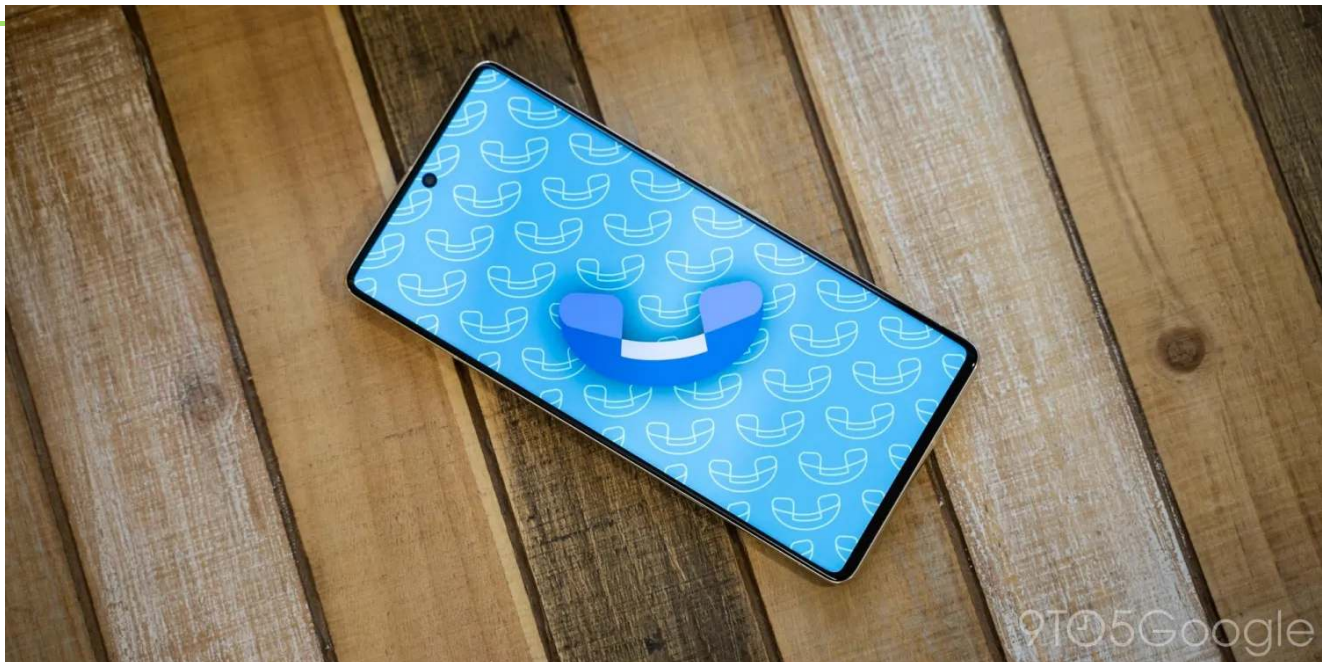
GOOGLE PIXEL

GOOGLE PHONE

## Google Phone app removing Nearby Places, teases more Pixel call AI in 2024



**Abner Li** | Feb 2 2024 - 12:54 pm PT | 29 Comments



The Phone by Google (as it's officially named) app is losing a “Nearby Places” feature that “allowed business name search queries entered into the Phone app to provide local business phone number results beyond just your personal contacts.”





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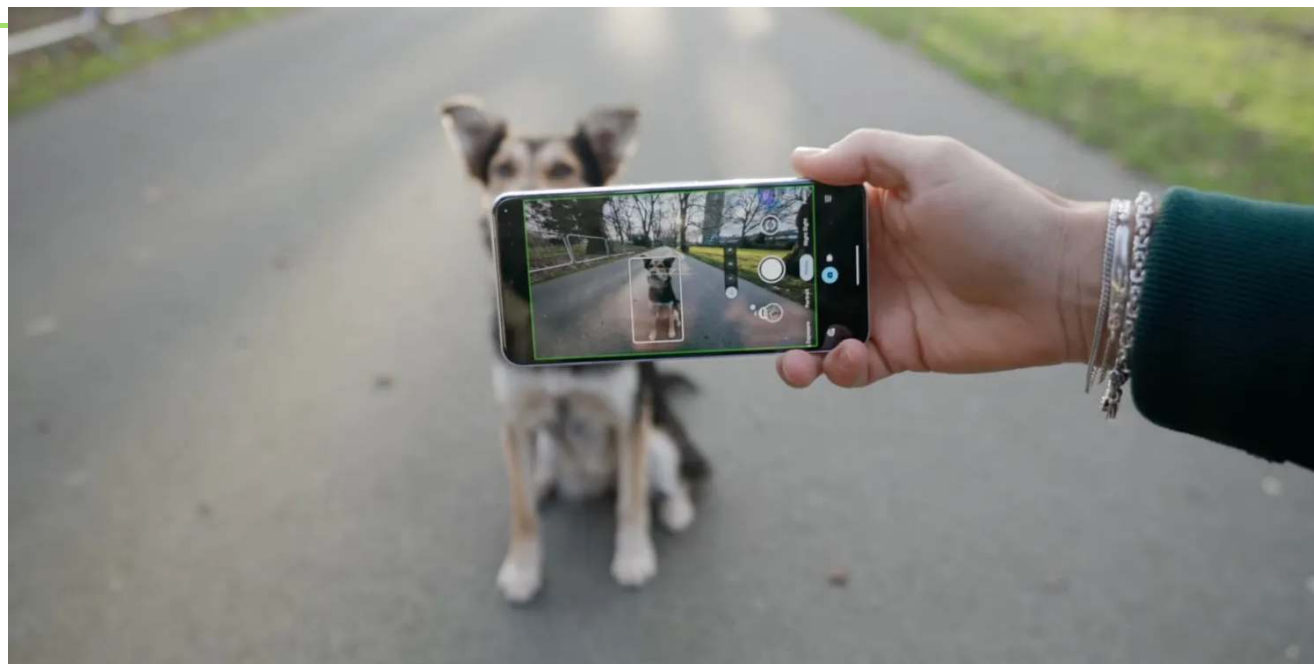
GOOGLE PIXEL

GOOGLE PIXEL 8

GOOGLE AD

## Watch Google's Pixel 8 Super Bowl camera ad about Guided Frame

 **Abner Li** | Feb 2 2024 - 12:17 pm PT |  **3 Comments**



Google will once again have a Pixel commercial during the Super Bowl. The Pixel 8 and 8 Pro Super Bowl ad focuses on using the camera with Guided Frame.

  
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Android game and app deals: Exploding Kittens, Tempest, Plancon Space Conflict, more

 from **9to5Toys** | Feb 2 2024 - 12:09 pm PT

 **0 Comments**

Your Friday afternoon collection of the best Android game and app deals are now ready and waiting down below. Joining today's Google Play offers, we are also tracking deals on **Samsung Galaxy Watch 4 Classic** models as well as the **latest Bose Ultra QuietComfort headphones and earbuds**. As for the apps, highlights include titles like Exploding Kittens, Majesty: The Fantasy Kingdom, Tempest, Plancon: Space Conflict, and more. Hit the jump for a look at all of today's best Android game and app deals.



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from **9T05Mac**



**iOS 17.4 is coming next month: Here's everything new so far**



**Chance Miller** | Feb 5 2024



**Apple TV+ teases a dozen new original TV shows coming soon**



**Benjamin Mayo** | Feb 5 2024



**Apple Watch Series 9 new all-time low at \$299, AirPods 3 \$140, USB-C Pencil, more**



**Rikka Altland** | Feb 5 2024



**Moog turns Apple Vision Pro into a futuristic instrument for music creat**



**Zac Hall** | Feb 5 2024



**Exclusive Apple Music USHER content offered ahead of Super Bowl hal show**





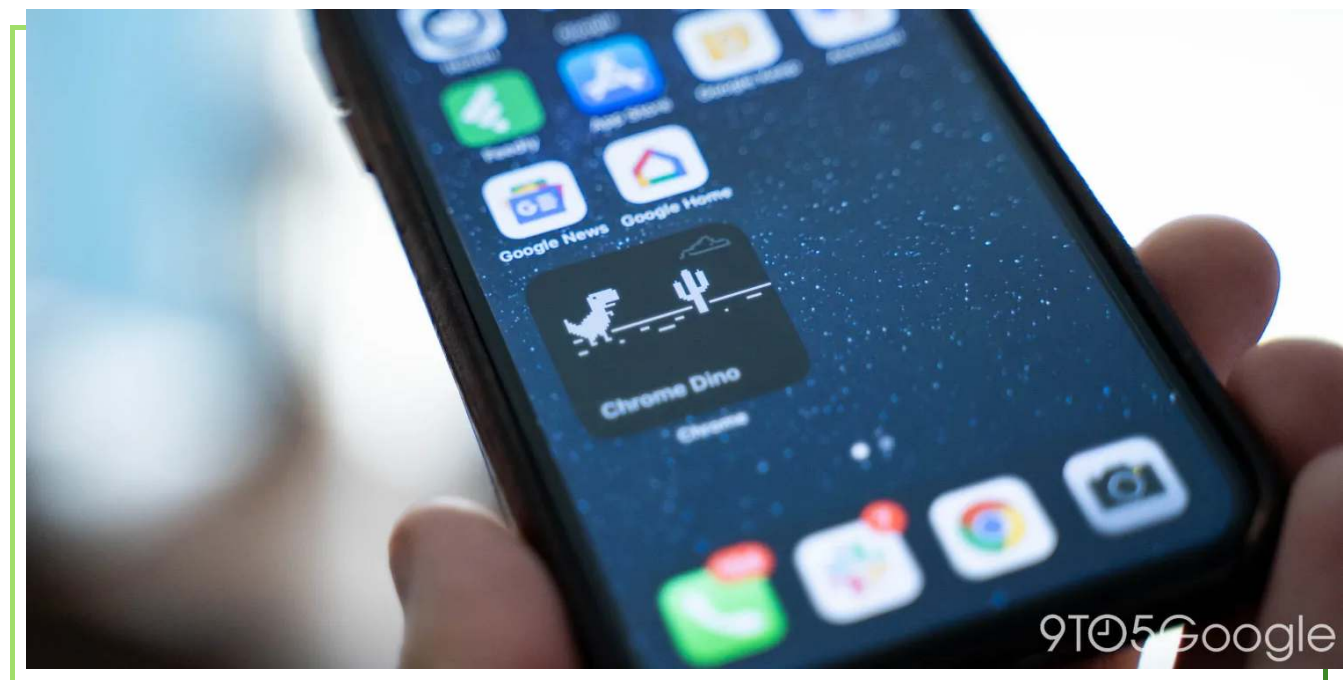
**Ben Lovejoy** | Feb 5 2024

GOOGLE CHROME   IOS

## Chrome boss says Apple's new iPhone

## browser engine approach stifles ‘real choice’

 **Abner Li** | Feb 2 2024 - 11:46 am PT |  **17 Comments**





In response to the Digital Markets Act (DMA), Apple **announced last week** that it would allow “alternative” browser engines on the iPhone in Europe. Google’s head of Chrome today shared their thoughts on the upcoming iPhone browser engine change.



GOOGLE PIXEL   GOOGLE STORE

## Google Store financing now requires a purchase of \$149 or more

 **Ben Schoon** | Feb 2 2024 - 10:15 am PT |  **5 Comments**





The Google Store has offered its own financing option for years now, but recently, Google has implemented a minimum purchase amount to use the line of credit.





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**APPS & UPDATES**   YOUTUBE MUSIC

## YouTube Music sending out more notifications, adds 'Samples' carousel

 **Abner Li** | Feb 2 2024 - 8:58 am PT |  **5 Comments**



Since the start of this year, there have been more YouTube Music notifications on Android and iOS alerting users about new releases and playlists.



## More

from **electrek**



Here are all the confirmed EV ads airing during the 2024 Super Bowl [Videos]



**Scooter Doll** | Feb 5 2024



A 147.5 MW wind farm is breaking ground in Oklahoma – a first for Avar



**Michelle Lewis** | Feb 5 2024



Researchers achieve super-safe, ultrafast Li-ion battery charging



**Michelle Lewis** | Feb 5 2024



Volvo marks 17 straight months of growth as EV sales lead the way in Jä



**Peter Johnson** | Feb 5 2024



Idiots are already driving on Tesla Autopilot with Apple Vision Pro on their faces



Fred Lambert | Feb 5 2024



Save \$100 on OnePlus 12, Galaxy Watch 4 Classic \$179, Sony XM4 headphones, more



Rikka Altland | Feb 2 2024 - 8:58 am PT

0 Comments

As the work week comes to an end, you can lock-in a \$100 pre-order discount on the **OnePlus 12 at \$800**. It comes joined by the best price ever on the **Samsung Galaxy Watch 4 Classic at \$179**, as well as **Sony's XM4 ANC headphones at \$278**. Hit the jump for all that and more in the latest 9to5Toys Lunch Break.



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## One UI 6.1 brings custom alarm wallpapers for Samsung Galaxy phones



Andrew Romero | Feb 2 2024 - 8:45 am PT | 3 Comments




The Galaxy S24 series might not have a lot of change going for it on the physical front, but that's where the newest iteration of One UI 6 lives. In the latest version of Samsung's One UI 6.1, users are able to set custom wallpapers for their Galaxy phone alarm.



ANDROID AUTO   SAMSUNG GALAXY S24 ULTRA   SAMSUNG GALAXY S24

**Your new Galaxy S24 might not play nicely with Android Auto in some cars**



 **Ben Schoon** | Feb 2 2024 - 8:15 am PT

 **5 Comments**

Android Auto is quite literally a reason to buy a car for many folks, but Samsung's **new Galaxy S24 series** is apparently having some early issues with the platform.



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from **9TO5Toys**



**KRK's GoAux studio speakers are great at-home and on-the-go down at \$219 (\$130 off)**

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**Apple's 14-inch M2 Pro MacBook Pro with 16GB of RAM hits \$1,579 (New Reg. \$1,999)**

 **Rikka Altland** | Feb 5 2024



**mophie's latest 3-in-1 fold-up MagSafe travel charger sees rare price drop to \$127.50**

 **Justin Kahn** | Feb 5 2024



**Hiboy's S2R Plus e-scooter with 22-mile range at 19 MPH hits \$400 low (off), more from...**

 **Reinette LeJeune** | Feb 5 2024



**New Amazon all-time low hits Instant's Vortex Plus 6-qt. Air Fryer Oven (Reg. \$130+)**

 **Justin Kahn** | Feb 5 2024