SWIPE

iPhone

NEWS • REVIEWS • TIPS

THE BEST WEATHER APPS

PLUS:

OFFICE PRODUCTIVITY TIPS

SWIPE
iPhone mag
NEWS • REVIEWS • TIPS

Welcome

A note from the editor

Welcome back readers,

Summer is more or less here, but depending on where you're reading this from, that doesn't necessarily guarantee sunny skies! Luckily the App Store has hundreds of weather forecasting apps to help ensure you don't get stuck in an unexpected downpour, and we've picked out our very favorites to help you choose the best app for your specific needs.

We've also got a great feature for you this week, as lead contributor Craig Grannell talks us through his home office setup. If you ever work from home on an iPhone, iPad, or Mac, this article will show you the tools you'll need to ensure you stay productive throughout the day.

Elsewhere, we've got some killer reviews to dig your teeth into, and the culmination of our iWork tutorial series with a guide to making great presentations with Keynote.

Finally, it's worth mentioning that Apple's WWDC event is right around the corner, so be sure to check back into Swipe next issue for the full lowdown on all the big announcements – including iOS 13!

Until next time,

Tom Rolfe
Editor-in-Chief

Follow Tom

Meet the team

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Engineering Lead

Follow Mark

Jon Bonnick
Founder

Follow Jon

Contributors

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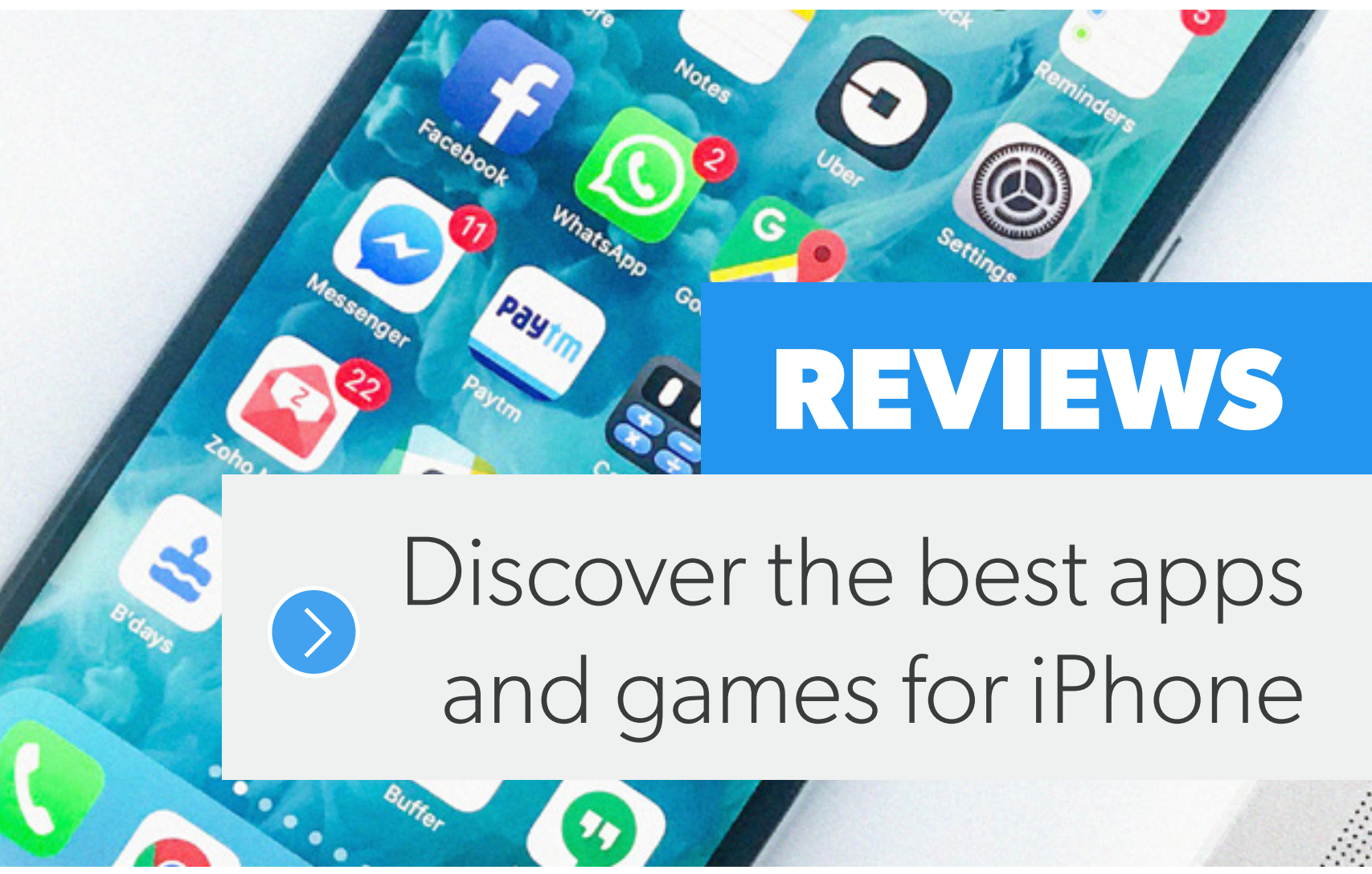
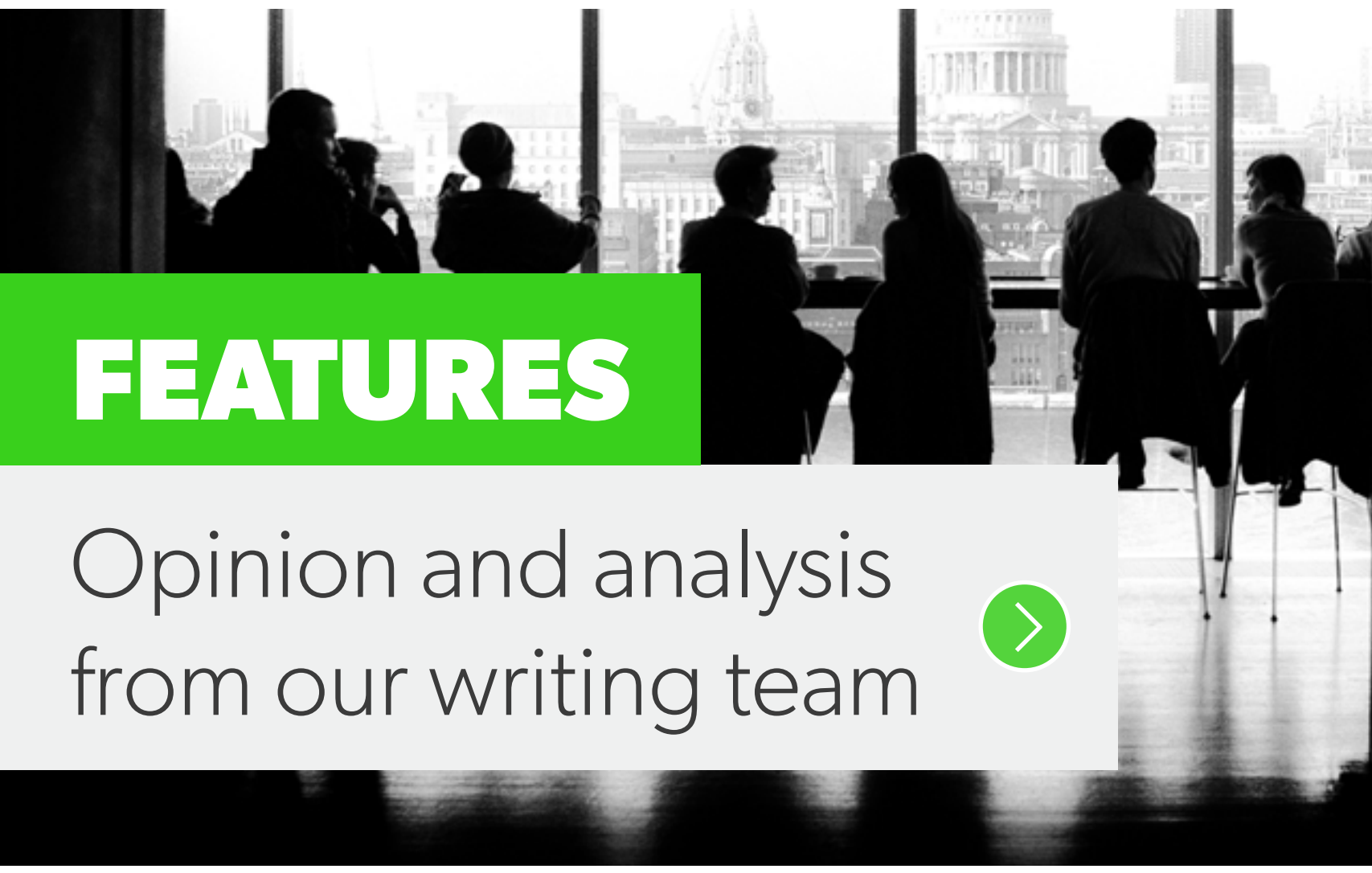
NEWS

The latest stories from the world of Apple



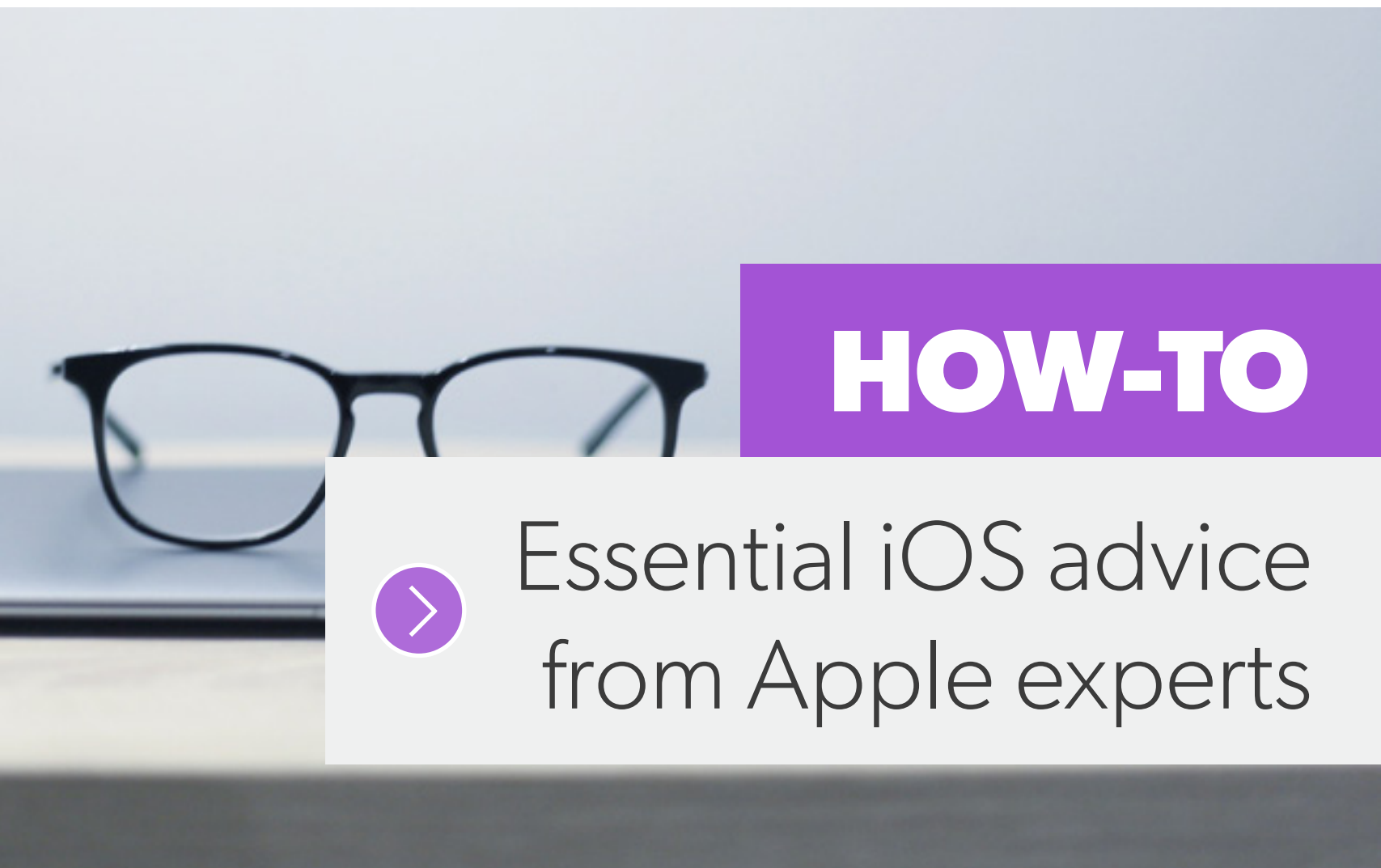
REVIEWS

Discover the best apps and games for iPhone



FEATURES

Opinion and analysis from our writing team

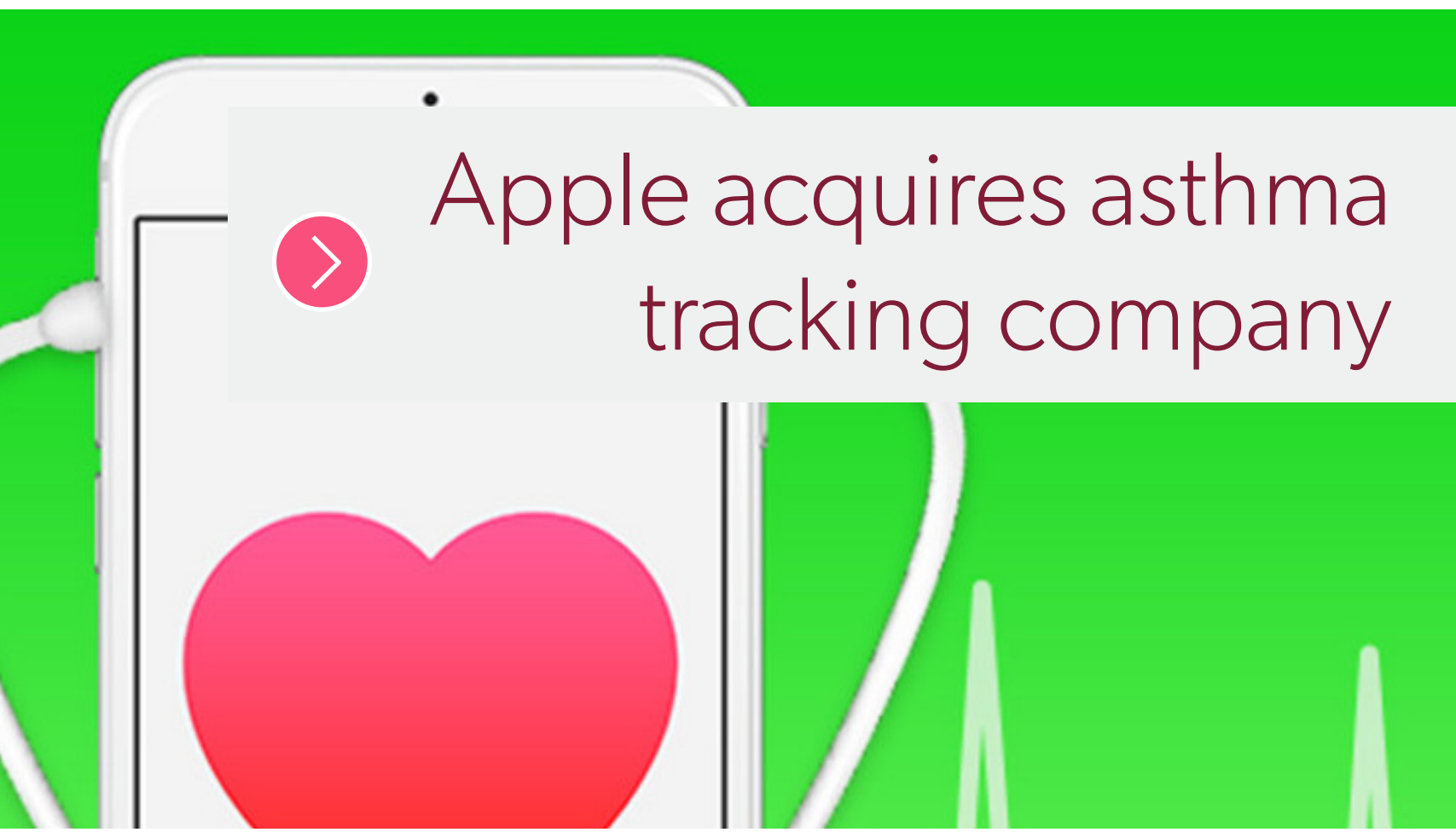


HOW-TO

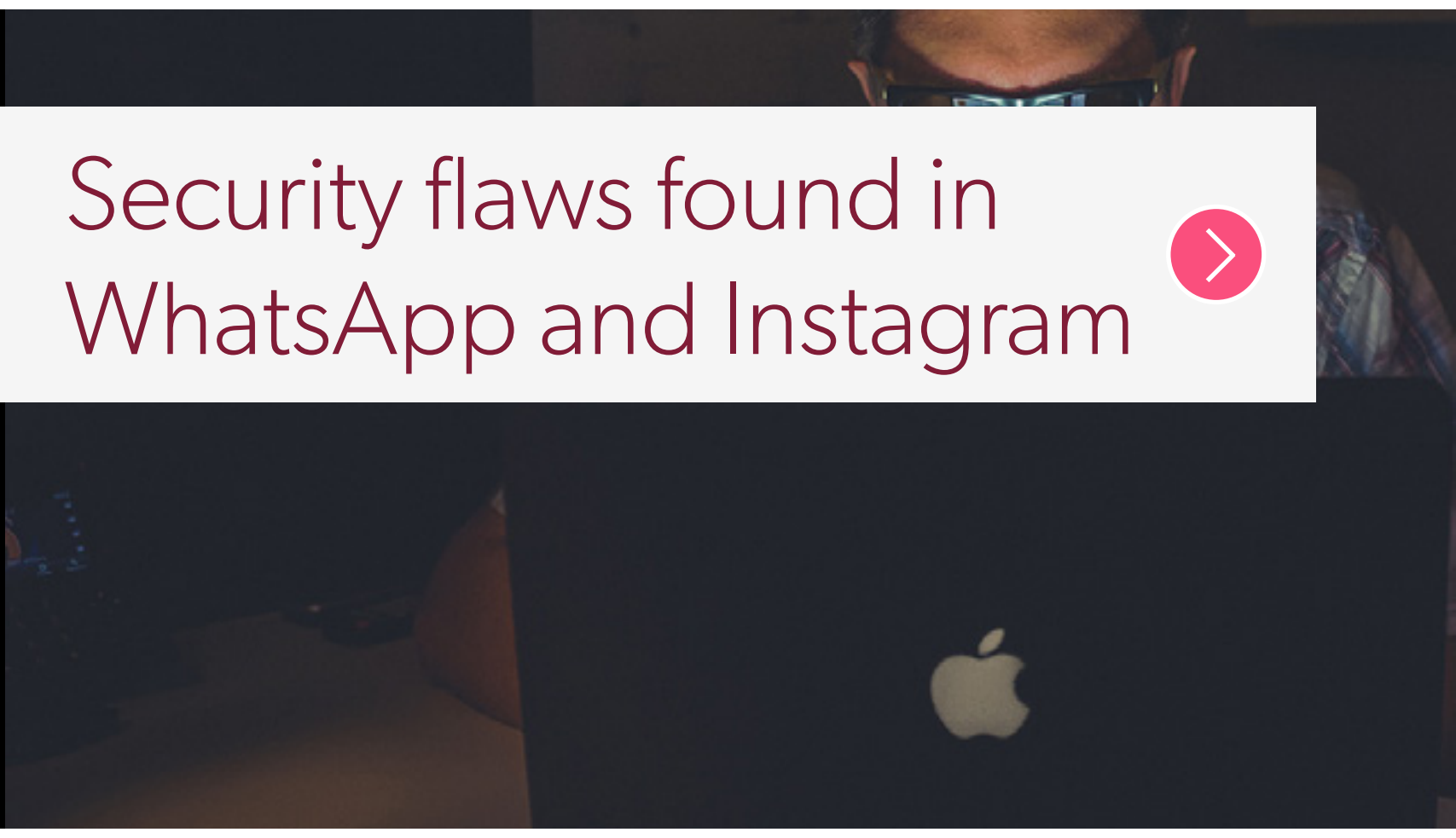
Essential iOS advice from Apple experts

NEWS

iOS 12.3.1 brings bug fixes and battery life



Apple acquires asthma tracking company



Security flaws found in WhatsApp and Instagram

New MacBook Pro range released

Apple wins 'Creative Marketer of the Year'

iOS 12.3.1 released

Latest update brings bug fixes and battery life improvements

It's not long since Apple unleashed its all-new TV app with iOS 12.3, but already a smaller iOS 12.3.1 update is here with a few further improvements.

On paper, it's a pretty minor update, with bug fixes for problems with VoLTE calls and Messages' "unknown senders" and "report junk" features. If you've experienced issues with any of those things this is an essential update, and of course if you've not yet checked out the new TV app this update will have all that too.

But beyond those very specific fixes, it looks as though Apple has continued to slowly improve performance and stability behind the scenes. Test results from Geekbench show a marked improvement in the battery life of older iPhones when running iOS 12.3.1.

According to these scores, iPhones 5S, 6, and 7, all showed battery life increases of around 10%. There is a margin of error with this kind of testing, but it certainly looks like some of the changes in the latest update are proving to be good news for those still using older models.

iOS 12.3.1, then, is a great update for these people – but we would recommend always grabbing the latest update as soon as you can, no matter which model of iPhone or iPad you have.

Remember that all iOS updates are free, and can be quickly and easily delivered over the air (that is, without plugging into a computer) from Settings > General > Software Update. ■

Breathing sensors

Apple buys up healthcare company specializing in asthma tracking technology

Apple buys up a new company "every few weeks," according to CEO Tim Cook, on its neverending quest for new talent and ideas. Often these purchases are kept under wraps, but when we hear about them it can give pretty serious clues as to Apple's plans for the future.

In this case, the purchase of start-up company Tueo Health gives us an indication that Apple is looking to include more and more health-tracking capabilities into its devices. Tueo Health specializes in helping parents monitor their children's asthma, using a combination of smart app tracking and breathing sensors.

Apple has been pretty vocal about its plans to make the Apple Watch a game-changer in the healthcare world, with the latest generation of smartwatch adding fall-tracking sensors as well as the capability to perform a simple ECG test at home. Our bet would be that Apple's acquisition of Tueo is the first step in an R&D journey to see whether breathing sensors could be incorporated into a future version of the Apple Watch.

Of course, at this early stage its impossible to know whether these functions will ever see the light of day. Developing health tracking features can take years – in fact, we wrote back in 2017 about several healthcare patents Apple took out, and not a single one has yet been seen.

With WWDC right around the corner, could this mean we'll see more of a focus on healthcare features announced for the next interaction of iOS and watchOS? ■

Security Vulnerabilities

Flaws open up WhatsApp and Instagram to hackers

A pretty serious Instagram security flaw has made the news this week, following on from a similarly worrying vulnerability found in WhatsApp earlier this month. Both have already been fixed, but paint a concerning picture for anyone registered to either service. (Read: pretty much everyone).

Source code on Instagram's website was at fault in this first case – that is to say, the app itself was not to blame – but it left private user data potentially exposed. It's unclear whether anyone took advantage of the flaw, but thousands of users' personal contact details were open to attack for several months before the code was patched back in March.

Meanwhile, the bug in WhatsApp's iOS and Android apps opened up those devices to attack via spyware. This particular vulnerability isn't one that just anyone could take advantage of, but its something that would let a committed and extremely talented hacker potentially access files on the device. Again, we don't know for sure how many users were affected but it seems as though the flaw was primarily used to target specific individuals and not the general public.

WhatsApp has since been updated to address the flaw, so make sure to check for updates in the App Store to ensure you're protected.

It's also worth noting that although some have tried to use this failure by WhatsApp to call into question the effectiveness of end-to-end encryption – Bloomberg even going so far as to (**laughably**) call the very concept a pointless gimmick – we should still be thankful to all the services that use it. iMessage uses end-to-end encryption, as does WhatsApp, and Signal. In this case, WhatsApp's mistake left one of the ends open to attack – the encryption in the middle had nothing to do with it.

Saying end-to-end encryption is pointless because rare attacks like these can still happen is like saying there's no point installing locks and security alarms on your house because talented criminals might still be able to break in some other way.

After a horrendous year in the media spotlight last year, Facebook must be pretty pleased some other companies are making the news for security mistakes. Except – wait, oh yeah, both Instagram and WhatsApp are owned by Facebook. Whoops! ■

New MacBook Pro

Latest update fixes keyboards and improves performance

Apple has announced a beefy update to the MacBook Pro line, which not only fixes the keyboard issues prevalent in the previous generation but also brings the most processing power ever seen in a Mac laptop.

The new computers feature 8-core Intel processors for the first time, offering twice the performance speeds of the previous quad-core processors. It's also 40% faster than existing 6-core processors, which until now were the best you could get in a MacBook. If that all sounds like tech jargon, just know that these babies are *very fast*.

Here's what Apple has to say about its latest release:

"Whether it's college students mastering a course of study, developers building world-class apps or video editors creating feature films, we're constantly amazed at what our customers do with their MacBook Pro.

Now with 8-core processors for an incredible performance boost, along with its stunning Retina display, fast storage, all-day battery life and running macOS, MacBook Pro continues to be the world's best pro notebook and we can't wait to get it into our customer's hands to see what they do next."

Perhaps more important than all that is the fact that Apple has fixed the dodgy keyboard that has caused users all kinds of trouble over the past couple of years, and it seems to be (quietly) admitting to fault.

Apple has also extended its Keyboard Service Program to include the 2018 MacBook Pro and 2018 MacBook Air in addition to the 2019 MacBook Pro. That means free repairs for eligible users, which is great news for anyone experiencing problems with the oft-maligned "butterfly keyboard" seen on those models. Apple also launched a similar service program for 2016 MacBooks with backlight issues.

The updated MacBook Pro range is available immediately from Apple's retail stores and **online store**. ■

Cannes Lions

Apple wins 2019 creative marketing award

Apple has long been known for the time, money, and effort it puts into its advertising campaigns. The company's image has been developed with years and years of successful marketing, and some of the most iconic TV ads of recent years. (Remember the **early iPod ads**, and **Mac vs. PC**?)

Now, that hard work has been rewarded at the *Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity*. Apple has been dubbed "Creative Marketer of the Year" in response to its inventive video ads over the past year.

Most notably, Apple hired acclaimed director Spike Jonze last year to create a **4-minute short film** advertising its HomePod speaker. Though the HomePod itself hasn't been as successful as Apple hoped, the accompanying commercial has been widely praised for its originality and compelling visual effects.

This is perhaps the biggest award in marketing, given to productions that turn ads into something worth watching in their own right. It's the first time Apple has won the award, and hopefully it will spur it on to even bigger and better videos in future. ■

REVIEWS

ROUNDUP

Our 10 favorite weather apps

APPS & GAMES

Gardens Between

Surreal time-travel puzzler

Big Bang AR

Augmented Reality science

Alt-Frequencies

Ambitious narrative game

InShot

Smart, slick video editor

PLUS

More from the App Store

Weather Apps

10 of the best weather forecast apps for your iPhone and iPad

The weather affects everything. And, unsportingly, it often doesn't do what you want it to. That's not great if it pours down when you're outside. Better to check the forecast first, and then have a fighting chance of planning your day – and beyond.

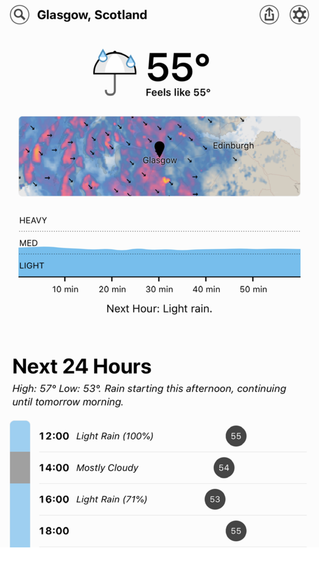
On iPhone, there's plenty of choice when it comes to weather apps, as you'll discover in this round-up. What we're not going to do is delve into which apps and services are most *accurate*. That way lies madness – given that accuracy is extremely variable, and depends on location and a slew of other factors. (Our advice: if a weather app is too often wrong, find out where it gets its data, and use something different.)

Instead, then, we're going to concentrate on features, so you can pick and choose the kind of app you'd most like to point your peepers at, in the hope the weather won't drown your dog walk, melt your skiing holiday, or blow away your picnic.

DARK SKY

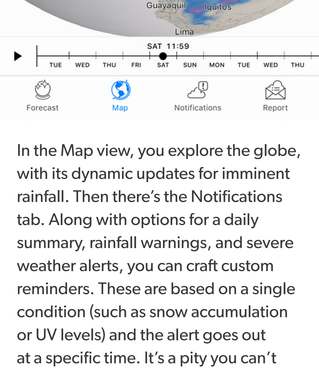
PRICE: $4/£4
SIZE: 49.8 MB **VERSION:** 6.4

In its earliest incarnation, Dark Sky was as much about arresting visuals as weather forecasting. Neon rainfall patterns billowed across dark-hued maps. It was gorgeous – but limited. These days, Dark Sky is neither as pretty nor as simple – but it has evolved into one of the finest weather apps around.



The Forecast tab provides an indication of current conditions, a radar map, and – when relevant – a graph indicating rainfall over the coming hour. The radar places tiny arrows near storms, to show their direction of travel. In tandem with the rainfall graph, these prove to be a great help in planning your next few hours.

Scroll down and you can peruse the next 24 hours and next seven days. The lack of color feels dreary, but in limiting blue to rainfall, and using black bars for temperature ranges, the app cements its ability to serve plenty of information at a glance.



In the Map view, you explore the globe, with its dynamic updates for imminent rainfall. Then there's the Notifications tab. Along with options for a daily summary, rainfall warnings, and severe weather alerts, you can craft custom reminders. These are based on a single condition (such as snow accumulation or UV levels) and the alert goes out at a specific time. It's a pity you can't combine multiple conditions, but the feature's nonetheless welcome.

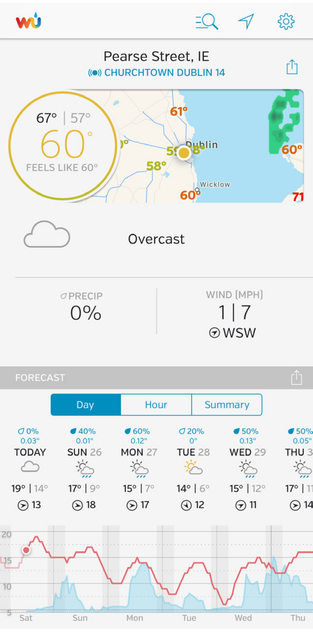
The one downside with Dark Sky is limited distribution – it's only available in the USA, UK, and Ireland. If you're in one of those regions, it's a superb premium experience. If not, grab an alternative, and hope this weather wonder makes its way to your shores soon.

DARK SKY

WEATHER UNDERGROUND

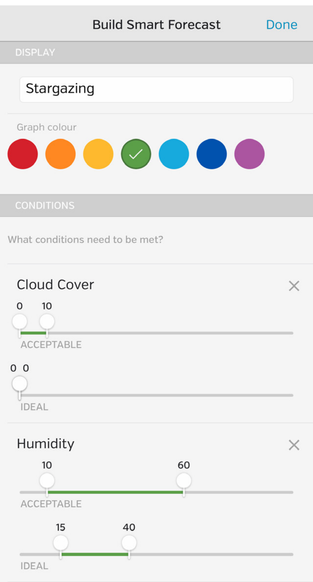
PRICE: FREE
SIZE: 247 MB **VERSION:** 5.12

The main reasons you might be drawn to Weather Underground are that it's a major name, used as a weather source for other apps, and free. But Weather Underground has far more going for it than the lack of a price tag.



Select a location and you'll get a wealth of information. At the top of the screen, you'll see current conditions and a local map. (Tick/cross buttons let you provide feedback if what's shown is inaccurate.) Scroll down for an extended forecast. Keep going to delve into further details (humidity; pressure; dew point), videos (mostly US-oriented), sunrise/sunset times, pollen count, and webcams.

That might sound like a lot of scrolling, but Weather Underground's standout customization helps. Each section is a tile, and – bar the top one – they can be reordered, so you can more quickly get at what most interests you. Also, you can create 'smart forecasts', based on user-defined conditions like sun hours, cloud cover, and rainfall. When done, you'll have a graph that informs at a glance when you can head out for some stargazing or sunbathing.



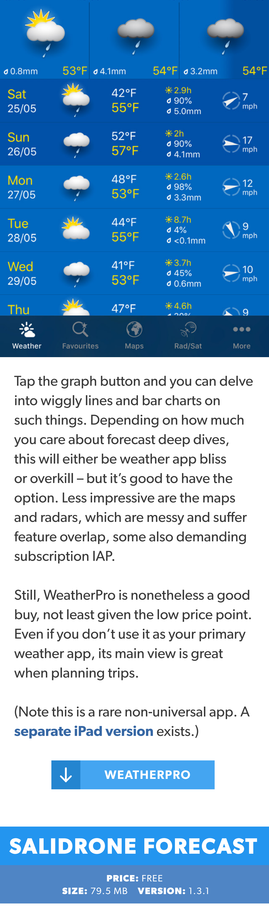
Elsewhere, the radar view is good, not least the overview that combines temperatures and rainfall. The adverts are non-intrusive – but if you don't like them, they're gone with a $2/£2 annual payment. The only black mark is a weird bug where the app often loads to a white screen. Swipe horizontally to deal with that – and wonder why those making this product haven't fixed a long-standing bug that makes an otherwise fine weather app appear broken.

WEATHER UG.

WEATHERPRO

PRICE: $1/£1
SIZE: 104 MB **VERSION:** 4.8.8

The biggest plus with WeatherPro is it packs the screen full of data. On selecting a location, you get to see the current conditions, and a small radar map. The forecast for the coming week outlines temperatures, sun hours, wind speed, and precipitation odds/amount.



Tap the graph button and you can delve into wiggly lines and bar charts on such things. Depending on how much you care about forecast deep dives, this will either be weather app bliss or overkill – but it's good to have the option. Less impressive are the maps and radars, which are messy and suffer feature overlap, some also demanding subscription IAP.

Still, WeatherPro is nonetheless a good buy, not least given the low price point. Even if you don't use it as your primary weather app, its main view is great when planning trips.

(Note this is a rare non-universal app. A **separate iPad version** exists.)

WEATHERPRO

SALIDRONE FORECAST

PRICE: FREE
SIZE: 79.5 MB **VERSION:** 1.3.1

Having snuck on to the App Store at the tail end of 2018, Saildrone Forecast might be the new kid on the block – but even in this early incarnation, it's an effective and intriguing weather app. Also, at the time of writing, it's entirely free.

Given the inherent quality in the app, the lack of a price-tag is a surprise. The map view is reminiscent of the original Dark Sky, with neon rainfall animating across a rich, dark landscape. Neatly, tap anywhere on the map, and you get a pop-up outlining the current conditions at that location.

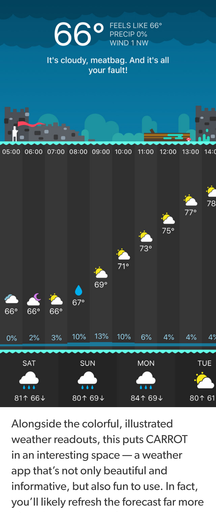
Atop the map view, there's a tab that details the weather at a saved location. This area can be expanded, and is designed to be used independently of the map. There's perhaps a lack of detailed info that some users may require – UV, for example; but Saildrone Forecast is an excellent download if you want a weather app that looks great, works well, and won't impact on your wallet.

SALIDRONE

CARROT WEATHER

PRICE: $5/£5
SIZE: 347 MB **VERSION:** 4.11

There's a lot going on in Carrot Weather, but you'll likely first notice it's helmed by an AI that seems hell-bent on the eradication of humanity. Like a combination of Siri, HAL 9000, and your favorite weather forecaster, CARROT delivers robotic forecasts with snark and malice.



Alongside the colorful, illustrated weather readouts, this puts CARROT in an interesting space — a weather app that's not only beautiful and informative, but also fun to use. In fact, you'll likely refresh the forecast far more often than necessary, just to see what CARROT's going to say next.

Fortunately, the app nails pretty much everything else, too. The radar's a weak spot, but the app has arguably the best Today View widget, and excellent Apple Watch complications. Splash out on premium IAP and you also get a range of useful notifications, app customization, and alternate data sources. But even in its default state, CARROT is an excellent buy.

CARROT WEATHER

LIVING EARTH

PRICE: $5/£5
SIZE: --- MB **VERSION:** ---

A rather nice passive app for a docked iPhone, Living Earth ($5/£5) combines a world clock and weather forecasting. The 3D take on the Earth – which you can spin with a finger – is a live simulation, with cloud patterns and tropical storms. The actual reporting won't sate the data-hungry; but this is perhaps the most beautiful app on test.

LIVING EARTH

VENTUSKY

PRICE: $3/£3
SIZE: --- MB **VERSION:** ---

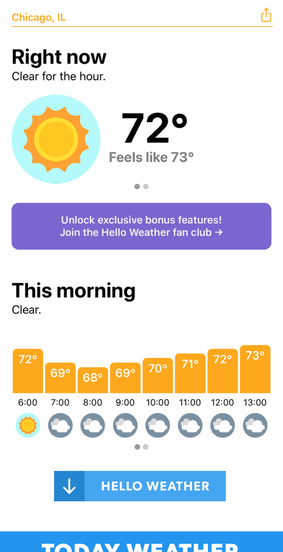
Another looker, Ventusky ($3/£3) kicks off as a colorful map. Wind speed and direction is represented by gently animating arrows. Layers can be applied to detail temperatures, rainfall, and more. Load a location for access to an extended forecast, graphs, and webcams. Although the interface isn't as elegant and refined as the map component, there's no denying Ventusky is an interesting app for weather wonks.

VENTUSKY

HELLO WEATHER

PRICE: FREE +IAP
SIZE: --- MB **VERSION:** ---

In its free incarnation, Hello Weather is a cheery take on Dark Sky – albeit without the hyperlocal rainfall graphs. Its bright colors and icons are extremely readable – and rather fun. Go premium ($7/£6 per year) and you unlock a radar, alternate data sources, Apple Watch complications, custom app icons, and a bunch of themes.

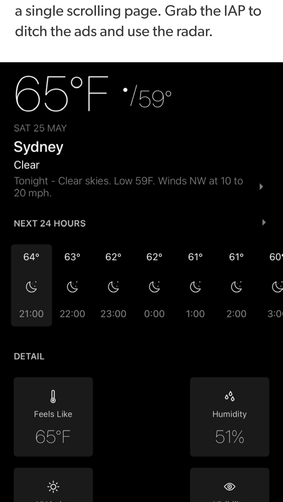


HELLO WEATHER

TODAY WEATHER

PRICE: FREE
SIZE: --- MB **VERSION:** ---

Another freebie, Today Weather (free or $4/£4) has a design style gunning for minimalist chic. Use the settings to ditch the pointless photo that takes up half the screen, and it's then all sleek monochrome icons, and spindly fonts. The app's nicely readable, though, offering fast access to plenty of info on a single scrolling page. Grab the IAP to ditch the ads and use the radar.



TODAY WEATHER

APPLE WEATHER

PRICE: FREE
SIZE: --- MB **VERSION:** ---

Finally, we'd be remiss to ignore Apple Weather (free), which comes built into your iPhone. It's not the most feature-rich app around, nor particularly customizable. But if all you want is quick access to the basics, and a bit of extended info (sunrise/sunset times; UV index; humidity; and so on) at a swipe, it does the job well enough.

REVIEW by JON MUNDY

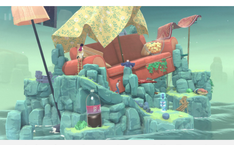
THE GARDENS BETWEEN

DEVELOPER: THE VOXEL AGENTS
PRICE: $5/£5
SIZE: 747 MB
VERSION: 1.01
PLATFORM: iPHONE & iPAD

A dreamy time-manipulation puzzler

There are plenty of visually impressive games on the App Store, but there are only a few you could call downright beautiful. The Gardens Between firmly belongs in that prestigious category.

This time-manipulation puzzler takes place in a stunning dreamworld filled with items from the shared memory of two young friends, Arina and Frendt. Across each compact island level you'll weave your way past VHS players, squeaky bike-powered pulley systems, classic games consoles, giant Jenga sets and more.



Arina is on lamp duty, while Frendt interacts with the gizmos

The game's mechanics are equally pure, combining movement and action into one brain-warping system. Our two plucky heroes will make their way to the peak of each island of their own accord. All you need to do is touch and drag right to scrub forward through time, or left to rewind.

Your aim is to have Arina light a lantern and carry it to the exit point, but various obstacles will stand in your way. Thankfully, not all of the level's furniture will obey the linear flow of time. Frendt can interact with certain strange artifacts and robotic helpers that operate on their own isolated timeline, enabling you to construct dizzying time loops and physics-defying lamp relays.

There are plenty of clever time manipulation puzzles

The Gardens Between is a port, having originally launched on PC and console, but you wouldn't know it to play it. The whole simplified screen-scrubbing control system makes the game feel completely native to mobile. Even the way you can play in either landscape or portrait, with no particular advantage or shortfall either way, screams of a mobile-focused game.

Only some occasionally spotty performance on our iPhone X really muddied our impression of the game. It's not a deal breaker given the sedate, cerebral nature of the action, but it inevitably leaves the slightest of scuff marks on such a polished game.

Each level is a climb to the peak of an island

The game doesn't always make its solutions completely clear either, and you'll have to grit your teeth and trial-and-error your way through some of the challenges. But The Gardens Between makes a virtue of wide-eyed experimentation.

Besides, with presentation this stellar and a sublime soundtrack to match, there's really no such thing as wasted time in this dreamy world. ■

VERDICT

Beautiful, ingenious, and intuititve

THE GOOD

Stunningly dreamy world
Clever time-manipulation mechanic
Clear and intuitive controls

THE BAD

Occasional performance hitches
Some trial and error required

4.5
★★★★½

DOWNLOAD

REVIEW by ANDY PRICE

BIG BANG AR

DEVELOPER: CERN
PRICE: FREE
SIZE: 63.2MB
VERSION: 1.0
PLATFORM: iPHONE & iPAD

Explore our beginnings in this single AR-powered edutainment app

What do you get when you cross the world's biggest institute of science, an internet giant, and a still relatively gimmicky technology? Well, throw in a Hollywood celebrity as a narrator, and you get something surprisingly compelling!

Learn how the universe began

Despite its relatively uninspiring name, the effect is quite the opposite in the app which is a collaboration between CERN and Google Arts & Culture. Featuring actor Tilda Swinton, the 'better with headphones' app using Augmented Reality to take users back in time by 13.8 billion years to the time of the Big Bang.

Get up close and personal with the stars using your device's AR functionality

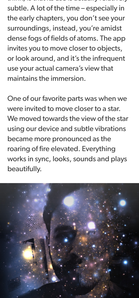
The app takes things back to the beginning and pulls out the formation of the universe and everything in it using the backdrop of your everyday surroundings.

In terms of design, this app is phenomenal. The AR works incredibly well and isn't filled with the bugs or choppy animations so often seen in apps like this. As a result, you'll get a smooth and seamless experience – though be aware that it will drain your battery pretty quickly!

The app does a great job of visualizing things like background radiation

All the greatest hits from the science world are here – from experiencing the first particles and atoms, to exploring stars and supernova. You can also explore the nebula, all accompanied by the transatlantic tones of Swinton, who delivers her words with an engaging authority. The planets, the stars, and the rest of the digital effects are overlaid over what your camera can see, but it's not just dodgy graphics slapped on top of the world.

Rather, the AR makes use of star scenes and uses them as filters over the camera image adding to the engagement.



Visualize your home planet in the comfort of your own home…

The secret to its success with AR, we think, is that its use is actually relatively subtle. A lot of the time – especially in the early chapters, you don't see your surroundings, instead, you're amidst dense fogs of fields of atoms. The app invites you to move closer to objects, or look around, and it's the infrequent use your actual camera's view that maintains the immersion.

One of our favorite parts was when we were invited to move closer to a star. We moved towards the view of the star using our device and subtle vibrations became more pronounced as the roaring of fire elevated. Everything works in sync, looks, sounds and plays beautifully.

Don't forget to take a star selfie!

Put simply, it's best in class for AR apps, combining a full screen of detail with high fidelity audio to fully immerse the user, while the content itself is divided up helpfully into chapters. While it's quite short, it's a lovely slice of science to enjoy and inspire.

And the best part? It's entirely free. ■

VERDICT

Wonderful app with interesting information

THE GOOD

Looks amazing
AR works incredibly well
Great production values

THE BAD

Extremely power hungry
It's fairly short

4.5 ★★★★½

DOWNLOAD

REVIEW by ANDY PRICE

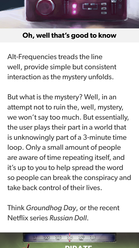
ALT-FREQUENCIES

DEVELOPER: FUGO IN DIGITAL
PRICE: £5.49
VERSION: 1.0
VERSION: 1.2
PLATFORM: iPHONE & iPAD

Ambitious narrative game delivered by simple game mechanics

Alt-Frequencies is a new audio mystery game that on the surface looks (and sounds) quite complex. But as you dig in, despite a lofty approach to storytelling, the game is quite simple.

Narrative games with a lot of text to read are tricky – the balance is how much interaction you want the reader to have to feel involved, but not too much that a developer would have to create shedloads of content to follow the 'choose-your-own-adventure' style approach.



Oh, well that's good to know

Alt-Frequencies treads the line well, provide simple but consistent interaction as the mystery unfolds.

But what is the mystery? Well, in an attempt not to ruin the, well, mystery, we won't say too much. But essentially, the user plays their part in a world that is unknowingly part of a 3-minute time loop. Only a small amount of people are aware of time repeating itself, and it's up to you to help spread the word so people can break the conspiracy and take back control of their lives.

Think *Groundhog Day*, or the recent Netflix series *Russian Doll*.

Tune in to various stations to look for something important

You'll be doing this over the airwaves. The game sees you essentially sit in front of a radio, skipping through frequencies to find information, record it, and then play it back to other frequencies in the hope that someone can help push the message forwards.

Record sounds and play them back to different stations to progress

There's an interesting mix of characters that you'll come across, from conspiracy theorists, to arrogant DJs, to activists willing to help the course. Will you be able to inform a sleeping public that the world isn't as it seems? You'll have to play to find out.

You never know which station might provide a nugget of information to progress the story

The idea itself is fascinating and will engage those with a conspiracy theory/science fiction bent, but we did find it could be a bit slow sometimes. You essentially get given instructions, swipe through radio signals listening out for a piece of information, before recording it and finding the right radio show/host or person to play it back to. It's an incredibly simple model, but at times it's too simple for its own good and we would have liked a little more dynamism to proceedings.

On the audio side, the game really comes into its own. There's a vast voice cast ranging from the cheesy to the spooky, while the dialogue is nicely written and often very funny. The visual design is basic, but it works and supports the audio-focus of this story.

Just in time for another time loop...

However, it's a neat trick to tell a story that itself is very cool. It's not a cheap game, but we don't think that'll stop those are already reading this review and wanting it to be over already so you can head to the App Store.

Well, go on, don't let us hold you up – you never know when the loop will reset and you'll have to read it all over again. ■

VERDICT

Smart time loop story

THE GOOD

Original concept
Ambitious narrative

THE BAD

Could do with more mechanics

4.0
★★★★☆

DOWNLOAD

REVIEW by JOE WHITE

InShot

DEVELOPER: INSHSHOT INC.
PRICE: FREE
SIZE: 64 MB
VERSION: 1.36.0
PLATFORM: iPHONE & iPAD

A powerful video editor that can also handle photos and collages

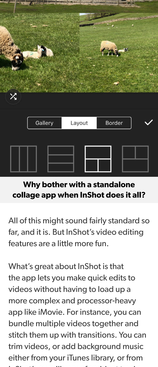
InShot is a pretty powerful little app. A free download on the App Store (with a further "pro" offering available to paying users) InShot lets iPhone owners make smart, meaningful edits to video and images. If you're the kind of person who likes to play around with content before posting it to social media or sharing it with friends, InShot could be a useful addition to your Home screen.

The app lets users do three things: edit video, edit images, and create collages. It markets itself as a video editor but potential users will be pleased to find that InShot includes a range of simple but effective tools for tweaking photos, too. This includes a range of nice filters, support for adding text to your images, cropping, and adjusting lightness, contrast, tint, saturation, and more.

The photo editing options are handy, if a little basic

Granted, this only just goes beyond the editing capabilities of the built-in Photos app, but it's a nice surprise feature for folks who were maybe expecting InShot to only offer video editing options.

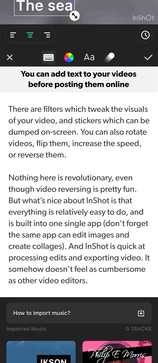
The same can be said of the collage creator – you might have downloaded a dedicated app for putting together image collages in the past, but InShot can do it for you.



Why bother with a standalone collage app when InShot does it all?

All of this might sound fairly standard so far, and it is. But InShot's video editing features are a little more fun.

What's great about InShot is that the app lets you make quick edits to videos without having to load up a more complex and processor-heavy app like iMovie. For instance, you can bundle multiple videos together and stitch them up with transitions. You can trim videos, or add background music either from your iTunes library, or from InShot's own library of ambient tracks.



You can add text to your videos before posting them online

There are filters which tweak the visuals of your video, and stickers which can be dumped on-screen. You can also rotate videos, flip them, increase the speed, or reverse them.

Nothing here is revolutionary, even though video reversing is pretty fun. But what's nice about InShot is that everything is relatively easy to do, and is built into one single app (don't forget the same app can edit images and create collages). And InShot is quick at processing edits and exporting video. It somehow doesn't feel as cumbersome as other video editors.

Adding background music to your video is so easy

While you can do a lot free of charge in InShot, an IAP of $3.49 (£3.49) per month or $11.99 (£11.99) per year adds "pro" features which essentially are more filters, more stickers, and more transitions. The free app's banner ad and watermark are also removed, however it's possible to use and enjoy InShot without spending a dime.

If there is a criticism to level at InShot, it's that the app probably isn't going to blow you away. But when you remember that there's a lot on offer in this relatively small package, the appeal of InShot begins to take root. So, for an all-in-one editor for images, videos, and collages, look no further. ■

VERDICT

Decent all-in-one editing suite

THE GOOD

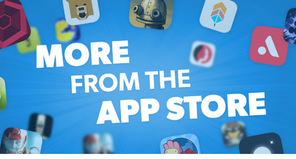
Offers a lot in one package
Not as cumbersome as other editors
Really easy to combine and trim clips

THE BAD

Nothing revolutionary

4.0
★★★★☆

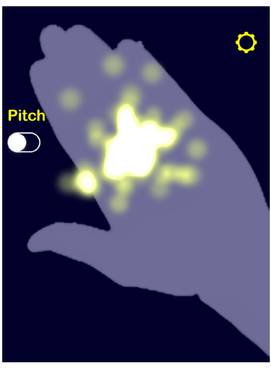
DOWNLOAD



AIRSYNTH

PRICE: $2/£2
SIZE: 16.8 MB **VERSION:** 1.0

Here's a fascinating premise – a music-creation app that uses the TrueDepth sensor on the front of the X-series iPhones as a means to play a tune. It's essentially a virtual theremin, as you hold your hand over the front of your iPhone to alter the pitch of a sustained note. There are five different 'voices' to experiment with, and a cool visualization effect that maps out your inputs. It's a very surreal experience. ■



DOWNLOAD

WORD FORWARD

PRICE: $3/£3
SIZE: 134 MB **VERSION:** 1.0

We love a good polished word game here, and Word Forward looks to be just such a thing. It's classic word scramble stuff, as you touch and drag to form words from a grid of letters. But the words themselves can twist in any direction, even diagonally, while there are also some potentially game-changing special tiles to incorporate. Add in some sharp presentation and you're halfway to word game heaven. ■

DOWNLOAD

TROPICO

PRICE: $12/£12
SIZE: 2.5 GB **VERSION:** 1.2.1

Tropico, the city-building simulation with a tongue-in-cheek political twist, has finally made the transition to iPhone. Originally for PC and Mac, the game came to iPad not long ago and is now available on the small screen. It's a remarkable achievement, and a great excuse to dive back into this gem. As the leader of a fictional Carribean island, you're in charge of everything from infrastructure to foreign policy. Will you build a utopian society for the people, or use every dirty trick at your disposal to take total control? ■

DOWNLOAD

Working from home

Contributor *Craig Grannell* shows us how to make your home office work for your Apple hardware – and for you

by CRAIG GRANNELL

People increasingly work from home. Whether you're fully freelance, work at home once or twice a week, or just use a home office to catch up on things now and again (or get some peace), it's important to look beyond the technology.

Don't get me wrong. I'm happy when sitting in front of the latest iPad, using a top-notch iPhone, and tapping away on a keyboard connected to an iMac. But when it comes to comfort and productivity, all the finest Apple hardware in the world isn't enough.

This feature, therefore, looks at how to kit out a home office, in a way that will enhance your enjoyment – and your productivity.

Get a standing desk

People are these days too often sedentary, which has resulted in widespread health problems. Although your Apple Watch might urge you to move on an hourly basis, spending the rest of your time in a chair isn't great.

Standing desks are a solution, but too much standing can also be dangerous, resulting in Achilles tendonitis and other problems. What you need is a desk that can be quickly, easily, and regularly switched between standing and sitting positions.

I use an IKEA Bekant (from $379/£455). The motor moves it between modes within seconds, it'll carry a 155lb/70kg load, and I've found it sturdy and well-balanced for typing on.

Don't skimp on your chair

When you're sitting, your back won't thank you for buying a terrible chair. A typical low-priced office chair is fine if you only use it briefly; but for longer home office sessions, you need to invest in something better.

I have an Aeron, which sits in the wallet-punching $1200/£800 ballpark. But I figured it was something I'd sit on daily, for hours at a time, and so was worth it. However, when spending such a sum on a chair, do test it first. Also, be mindful you can pick up Aeron refurbs at around half price.

Whatever chair you buy, set it up correctly – your back should be straight, and your forearms flat – parallel with the tabletop when typing. Ideally, your eyes should meet the top third of the display you're using.

Make some noise

Some computers and displays have built-in speakers that might be fine for your needs. If you primarily work with an iPad, though, you'll want more power than an iPad Pro can provide – let alone Apple's cheaper tablets, with their limited two-speaker set-ups.

Investment will naturally be driven by how much you care about decent audio, and/or how long you'll spend in your office. I really like my Ruark Audio MR1s (£329, depicted), which work wired or over Bluetooth – although they're tricky to find outside of Europe.

However, there are plenty of other decent wireless speakers around, including Apple's HomePod ($299/£279), and the Sonos One ($199/£199). Again, try before you buy, to see which option sounds best to your ears.

Buy useful device stands

Think of device stands as more than just bits of metal or plastic to prop up devices – or ensure you don't misplace them! Buy ones that are functional in other ways.

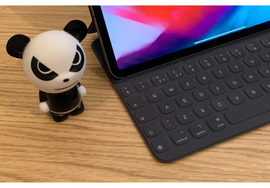
For my iPhone, I use an Anker Fast Wireless Charger ($17/£18). The stand is nondescript, and so isn't a distraction. But it usefully charges an iPhone in portrait or landscape; I can leave a passive app running and still see it; and the stand's wireless nature means my phone's readily available whenever I need it, rather than me having to disconnect a cable, or pluck the device from a horizontal mat.

For an iPad, consider a stand that transforms your tablet into something akin to a laptop, enabling it to potentially entirely replace a PC or Mac. Apple's Smart Keyboard Folio (from $159/£159) takes time to get used to, but in extended use is reliable and comfortable.

Brydge makes keyboard cases that are more laptop-like (one of which is depicted above), with backlit keys and a huge range of viewing angles. Alternatively, if you own an Apple Magic Keyboard, consider the Touchtype Pro ($69). Shipping in September 2019, this clever case houses your iPad Pro and Apple keyboard, and in a snap transforms into a stand with multiple viewing angles – and, handily, you can set the iPad in landscape or portrait.

Cut the clutter

A danger of any home office is that it can become a dumping ground for tech junk – or any other junk, for that matter. So if you're rethinking your desk and what goes on it, look at things in a more holistic manner. If you have a pile of leads and accessories, buy some drawers, and organize your things using dividers. Recycle or sell old technology you no longer need. Above all, keep your desk clear, so you can focus on what you should be doing.



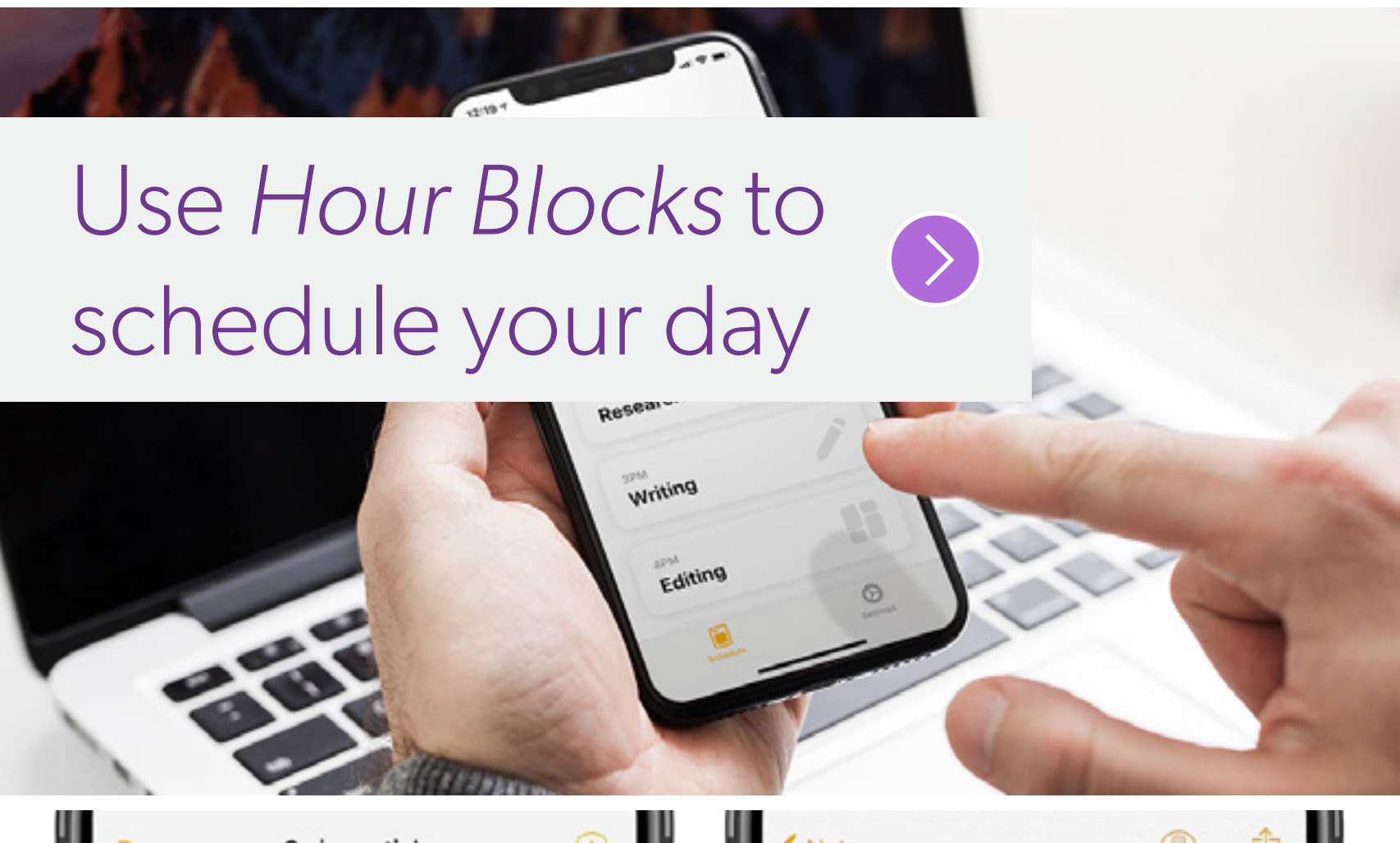
That said, there is a fine line between minimal and soulless. Aim for refined and productive rather than sparse. If there are – to coin a phrase from a well-known TV show about tidying – objects that 'bring you joy', keep them around, whether they're pictures on the wall, or the odd treasured knick-knack.

Safeguard your electronics

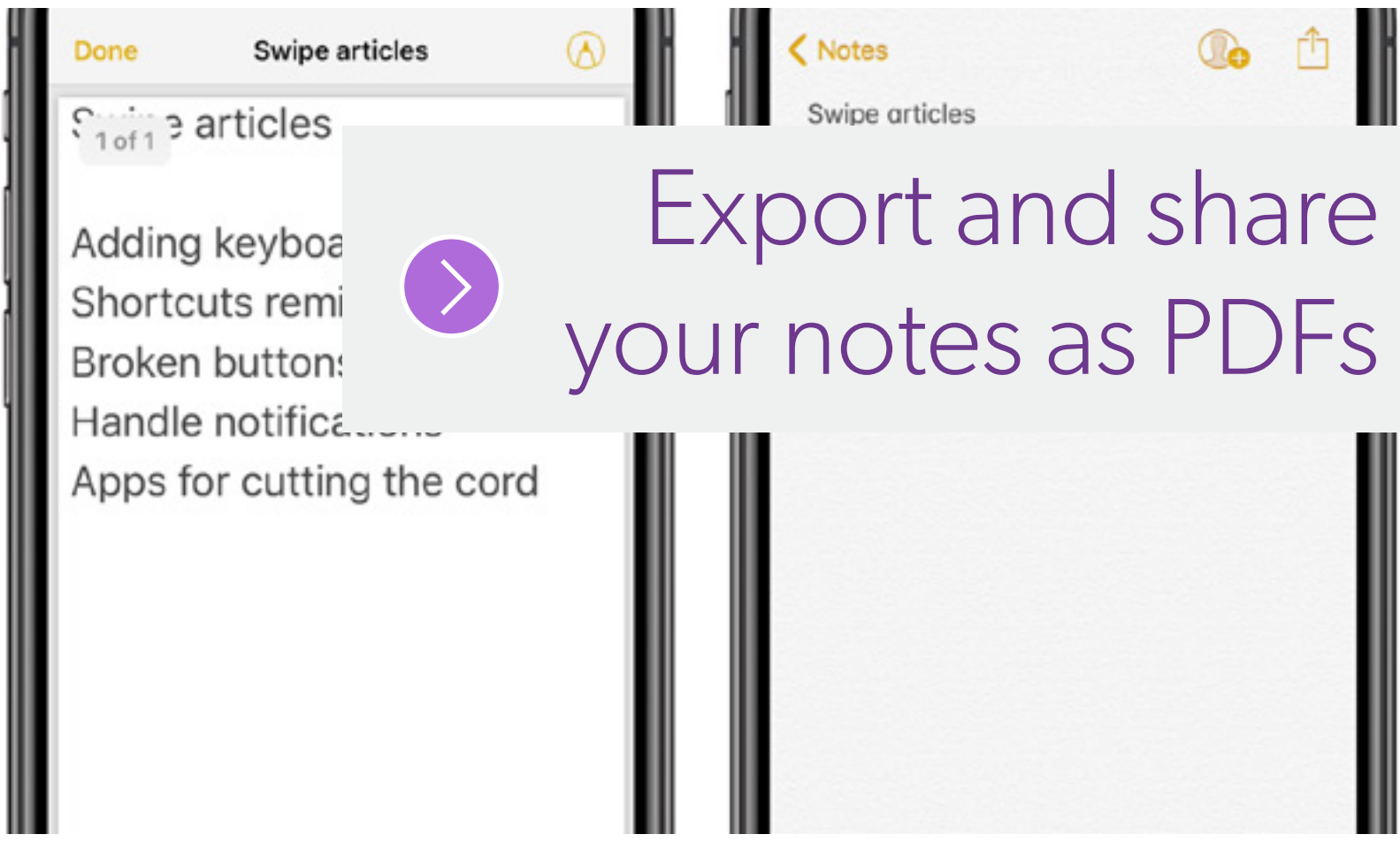
Electronic kit is fragile and expensive to repair. If you often drink while you work (as in, coffee or water – I'm not suggesting you're Hunter S. Thompson), get a placemat, and always keep your glass/cup in the same place to train muscle memory and avoid spillages. (Ideally, keep it away from electronics entirely.)

Be aware of where the sun hits, so electronics aren't overheated. (Get and use blinds if that's a problem.) Ensure all your plugs are surge protected, to secure your technology against voltage spikes. Also have on hand a relevant fire extinguisher, just in case of disaster. Chances are that none of your kit will ever catch fire – but you'll be happy to have an extinguisher around if it ever does! ■

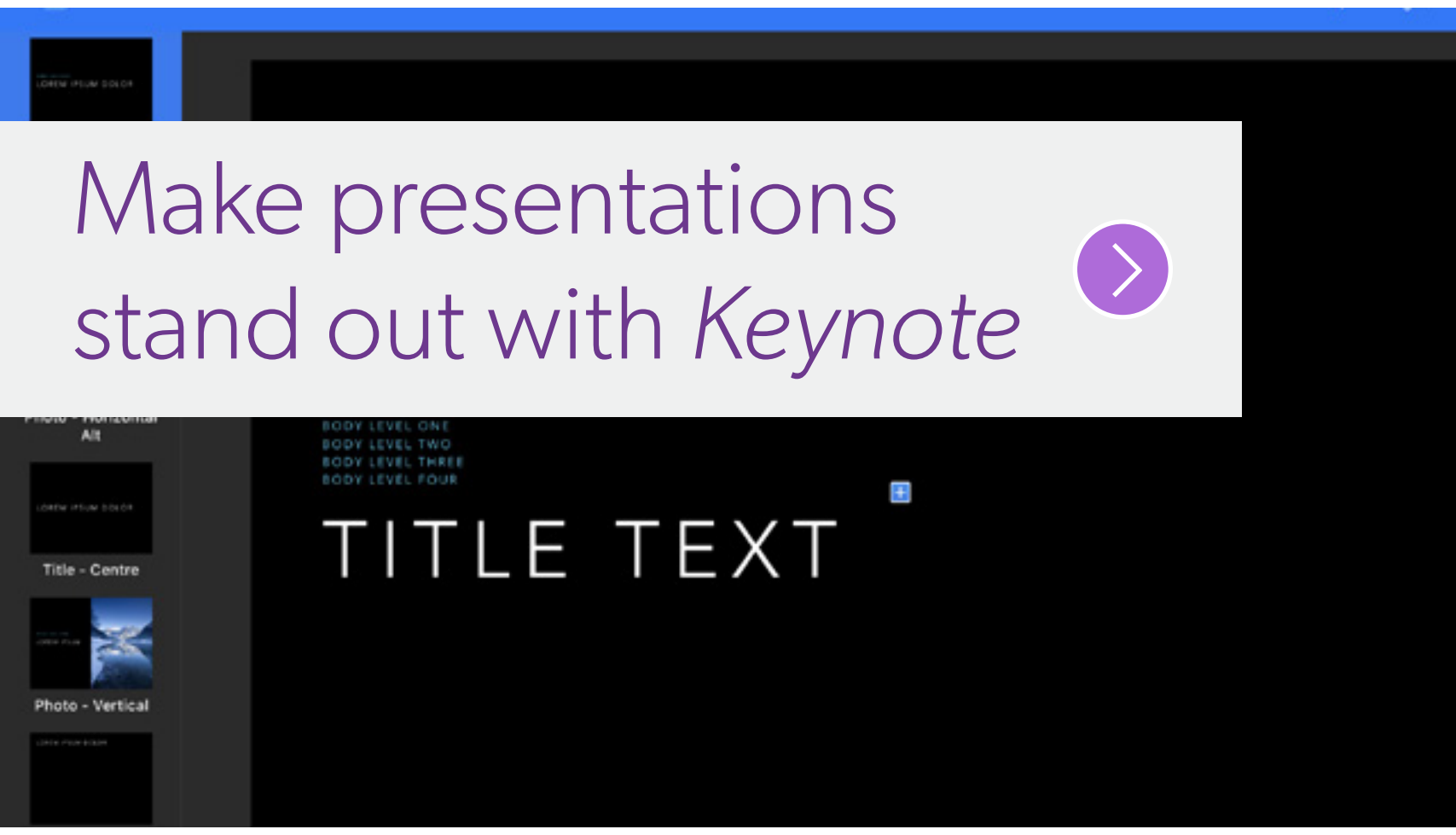
HOW-TO



Use *Hour Blocks* to schedule your day

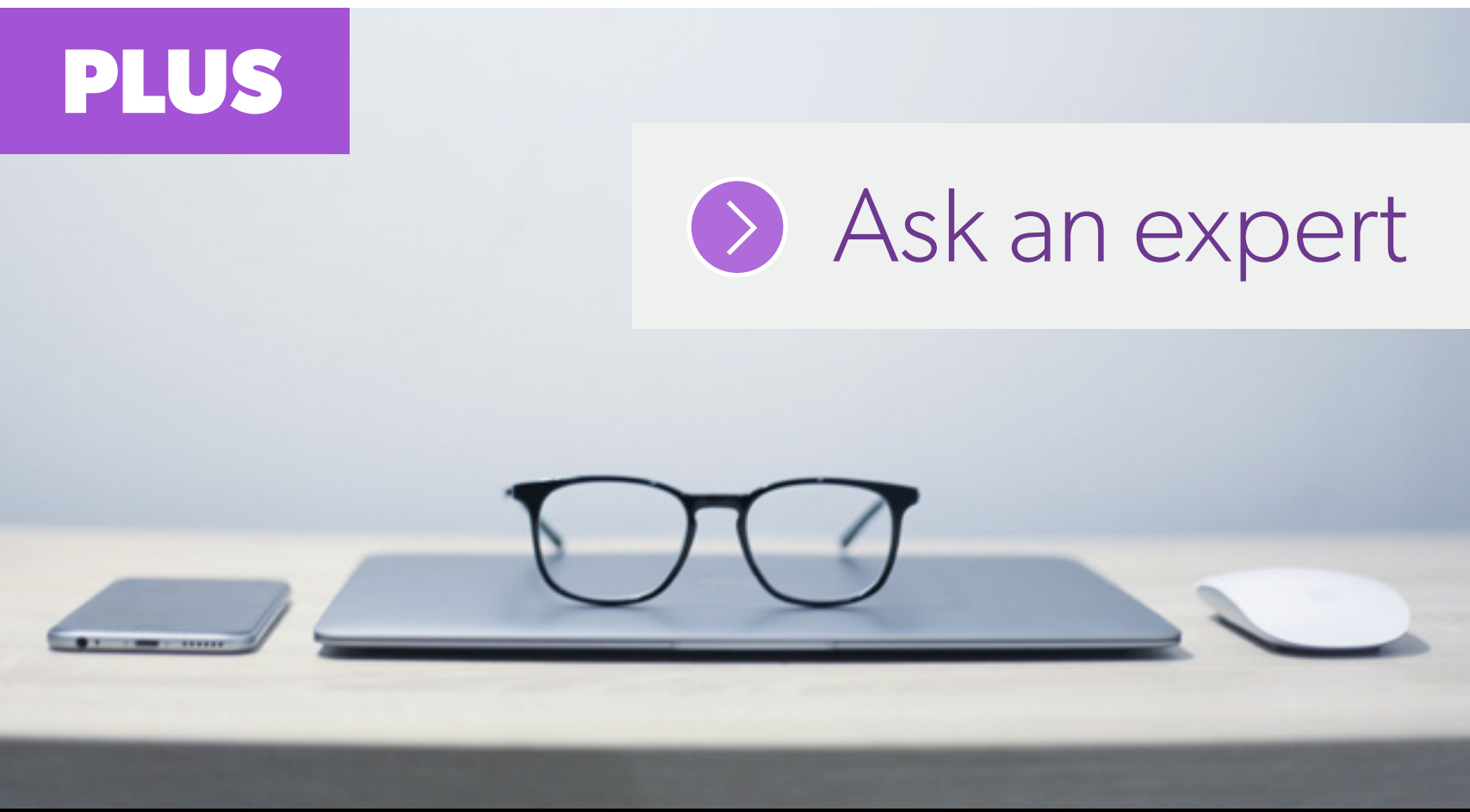


Export and share your notes as PDFs

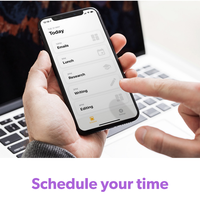


Make presentations stand out with *Keynote*

PLUS



Ask an expert



Schedule your time

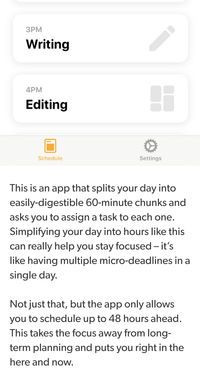
Use *Hour Blocks* to plan your days and stay productive

No matter what line of work you're in, proper scheduling is one of the most important tools you have to stay productive throughout the day.

Apple's default suite of apps goes some way to helping – Calendar and Reminders can be used to plan specific tasks and keep track of deadlines. Meanwhile, third-party apps like Things and Wunderlist are designed to help you keep on top of your daily to-do list.

But for many people, these solutions can be overkill – complex enough that working them into your daily routine is difficult. No matter how great a productivity app is, if using it doesn't quickly become second nature it's worthless.

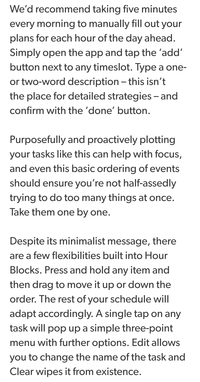
If you're the sort of person who struggles to stick to a new routine, but who knows deep down that you could really do with a more organized schedule, Hour Blocks might be just the minimal solution you've been looking for.



This is an app that splits your day into easily-digestible 60-minute chunks and asks you to assign a task to each one. Simplifying your day into hours like this can really help you stay focused – it's like having multiple micro-deadlines in a single day.

Not just that, but the app only allows you to schedule up to 48 hours ahead. This takes the focus away from long-term planning and puts you right in the here and now.

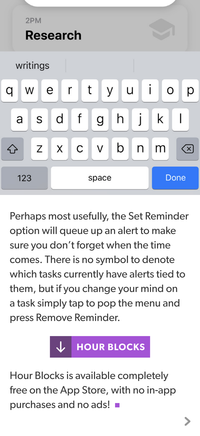
By default, Hour Blocks will automatically populate your day using events from the iOS Calendar app. This is pretty handy for meetings and regular deadlines, but if it's drafting in too much stuff automatically you can turn off individual calendars – or all of them! – from the Settings tab at the bottom of the app.



We'd recommend taking five minutes every morning to manually fill out your plans for each hour of the day ahead. Simply open the app and tap the 'add' button next to any timeslot. Type a one- or two-word description – this isn't the place for detailed strategies – and confirm with the 'done' button.

Purposefully and proactively plotting your tasks like this can help with focus, and even this basic ordering of events should ensure you're not half-assedly trying to do too many things at once. Take them one by one.

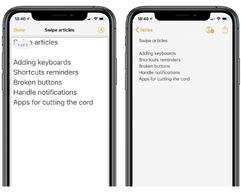
Despite its minimalist message, there are a few flexibilities built into Hour Blocks. Press and hold any item and then drag to move it up or down the order. The rest of your schedule will adapt accordingly. A single tap on any task will pop up a simple three-point menu with further options. Edit allows you to change the name of the task and Clear wipes it from existence.



Perhaps most usefully, the Set Reminder option will queue up an alert to make sure you don't forget when the time comes. There is no symbol to denote which tasks currently have alerts tied to them, but if you change your mind on a task simply tap to pop the menu and press Remove Reminder.

HOUR BLOCKS

Hour Blocks is available completely free on the App Store, with no in-app purchases and no ads! ■



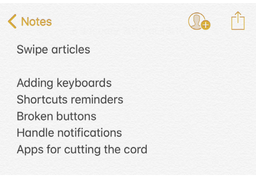
PDF Notes

How to export and share your Notes with others

It's no secret that Apple's Notes app is going from strength to strength – more features have been added year over year, including annotations, handwriting recognition, and even document scanning. It's possible to use the Notes app as a productivity powerhouse to process to handle to-do lists, quick-fire notes, and even comprehensive documents. But what happens when you need to export content out of the Notes app?

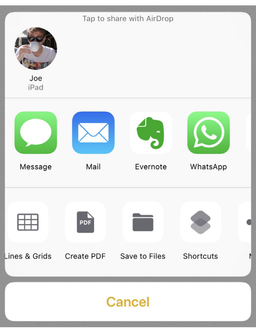
While Notes allows users to share individual notes with fellow iOS users via Messages, Mail, and AirDrop – and while the Notes app also supports collaboration – it can be difficult when sharing notes with folks who live outside of the Apple ecosystem (read: Android and Windows users). Fortunately, it's possible to export notes from the Notes app in the universally-accessible format of PDF, which is, in fact, perfect for sharing, storing, and searching through your catalog of digital notes.

And better still, the process of exporting notes from the Notes app is as simple as ABC.



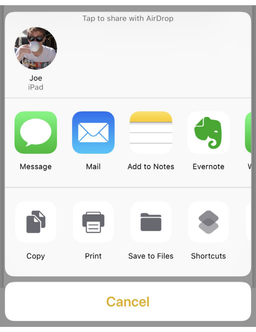
First up, locate the note you'd like to export. You can do this from either an iPhone or iPad, and don't forget that a pull-down on the list of notes in the Notes app reveals a search bar which might make finding specific notes a little easier. Once you've found your desired note, open it.

Next, you'll need to tap the sharing icon in the top-right of the app screen. Two rows of icons will appear: one with apps (on the top) and the other made up of tools or shortcuts (on the bottom). Scroll through the bottom row and locate the "Create PDF" icon, and tap it.



The Notes app will then format the current note as a PDF, adjusting the font size as necessary, and present it on-screen. To export the PDF either into the Files app (for storage) or elsewhere, you'll need to tap the same sharing icon – but this time it's moved to the bottom-left corner of the app screen.

There are plenty of options for processing the PDF at this stage, including sharing (via Messages and Mail), saving to the Files app, Printing via AirPrint, or processing with a dedicated shortcut. There's even the option of annotating the PDF via Markup before you save or send it.



So there you have it: a quick and easy way to export notes from the Notes app as PDFs. Didn't we say it was simple? ■

Keynote 101

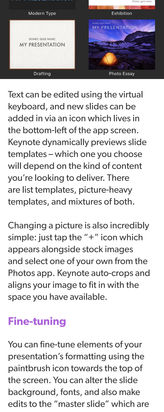
Everything you need to know about the presentation-maker

Apple's iWork for iOS suite of apps wouldn't be complete without Keynote, the portable presentation-maker. Whether you're running Keynote on an iPhone or iPad, the app offers a perfect mobile solution for creating smart-looking presentations while on the go. Here are the app's core features which will transform you from a slideshow novice into a presenter king in no time at all.

The basics

Much like Pages and Numbers, Keynote integrates with iCloud Drive and, when you first launch it, the app displays compatible presentations (from both Keynote and Microsoft PowerPoint) which are sitting in your Files app. You can tap on one to download and open it, or if you're looking to create something new, hit the "+" icon in the top-right of the screen.

Keynote ships with a plethora of templates – it's arguably the best thing about Apple's Keynote, as opposed to PowerPoint. You can choose something more simple and minimalist, or opt for a big, glossy template full of rich fonts and backgrounds. Whatever you decide, the contents are easily changeable.



Text can be edited using the virtual keyboard, and new slides can be added in via an icon which lives in the bottom-left of the app screen. Keynote dynamically previews slide templates – which one you choose will depend on the kind of content you're looking to deliver. There are list templates, picture-heavy templates, and mixtures of both.

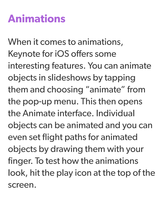
Changing a picture is also incredibly simple: just tap the "+" icon which appears alongside stock images and select one of your own from the Photos app. Keynote auto-crops and aligns your image to fit in with the space you have available.

Fine-tuning

You can fine-tune elements of your presentation's formatting using the paintbrush icon towards the top of the screen. You can alter the slide background, fonts, and also make edits to the "master slide" which are then rolled out for future use.

Changing master slides

Editing those master slides is a great idea if you'd like to customize Keynote further. To do so, tap the same paintbrush and choose "Edit Master Slide."



Then you'll need to pick the slide template which you'd like to alter. Edits made to the master slide will remain baked into Keynote. The next time you choose that slide, the edited version will load up.

Animations

When it comes to animations, Keynote for iOS offers some interesting features. You can animate objects in slideshows by tapping them and choosing "animate" from the pop-up menu. This then opens the Animate interface. Individual objects can be animated and you can even set flight paths for animated objects by drawing them with your finger. To test how the animations look, hit the play icon at the top of the screen.

Slide transitions, on the other hand, can be edited using the "…" icon at the top of Keynote's interface.

(Transitions involve the animations which occur between individual slides.)

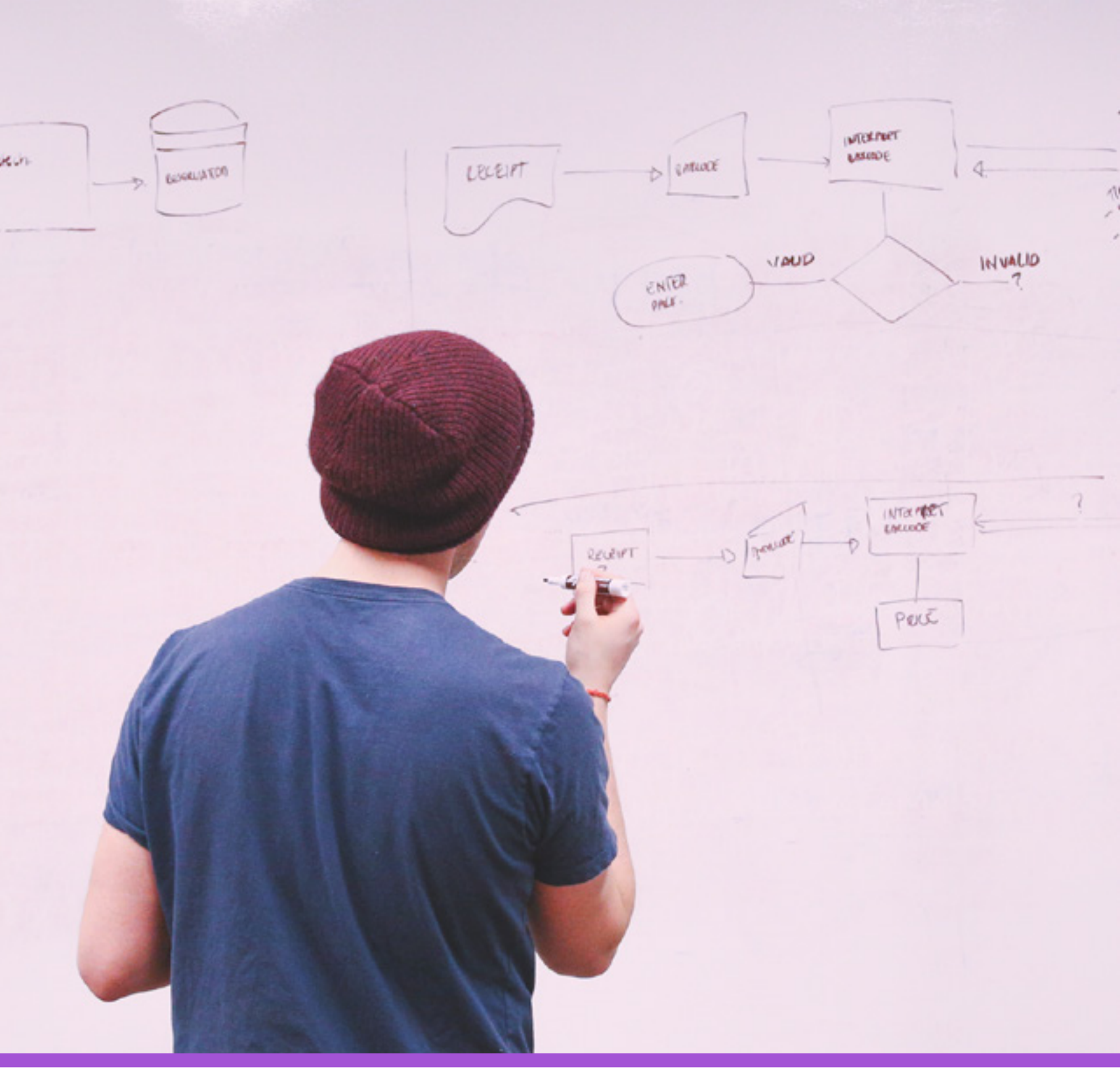
The all-important … menu

In this same menu, a bunch of bonus features are available to access. You can enable or disable presenter notes, you can access a rehearse feature (which lets you time your performance of a presentation), and you can add a soundtrack to your slideshow to create a multimedia presentation. Passwords can be set for the slideshow and a comprehensive "Keynote Help" document can be accessed.

Finally, it's possible to share and export the presentation – supported formats include PDF, PowerPoint, Movie, Animated GIF, and of course Keynote. That should keep everyone happy. Conversion between Keynote and PowerPoint occurs fairly seamlessly, and in most cases your Microsoft friends won't be able to tell that you didn't use a member of the Office suite to create your latest corporate presentation.

Don't forget the clicker

If you're using Keynote for macOS, the iOS counterpart can also function as a handy remote. To access this hidden feature, head to the document picker and hit the iPhone icon in the top-right of the screen (which sits alongside the "+" icon). Happy clicking! ■



Ask an expert

Your questions answered

No time to drop into the Apple Store and ask the Genius Bar for help with your iPhone? Maybe our resident expert could help instead!

If you have a question, send it to **swipe-ideas@intelligenti.com** and we may include the answer in the next issue of Swipe!

Q I know WWDC will be covered in the next issue of Swipe, but is there a way to tune in live for the announcements?
- *Jon*

Sure! The conference lasts a week, but all the big announcements are made at the opening keynote speech.

This year, that falls on June 3 in San Jose, and Apple is live-streaming the opening around the world at 10am PDT.

(That's 1pm on the east coast and 6pm in the UK.)

The keynotes usually last a couple of hours, and you can watch this one live via the **WWDC** website.

Or, for the big-screen experience, search for the Apple Events app on your Apple TV and tune in that way.

Enjoy, and rest assured we'll be writing about all the details in Swipe so don't worry if you miss anything!

Now turn the page to see what's in your next issue of Swipe

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iPhone mag

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