KEYSTONE MacCentral

printout

Keystone MacCentral Macintosh Users Group ❖ www.keystonemac.com

Keystone MacCentral June Program
June 15, 2021 06:30 PM

Join our Zoom Meeting

The link is provided on our email.

> We have virtual meetings via Zoom
> on the third Tuesday of each month.
>
> Emails will be sent out prior to each meeting.
> Just follow the directions/invitations each month
> on our email — that is, just click on the link.

Contents

Keystone MacCentral is a not-for-profit group of Macintosh enthusiasts who generally meet the third Tuesday of every month to exchange information, participate in question-and-answer sessions, view product demonstrations, and obtain resource materials that will help them get the most out of their computer systems. Meetings are free and open to the public. *The Keystone MacCentral printout* is the official newsletter of Keystone MacCentral and an independent publication not affiliated or otherwise associated with or sponsored or sanctioned by any for-profit organization, including Apple Inc. Copyright © 2021, Keystone MacCentral, 310 Somerset Drive, Shiresmanstown, PA 17011.

Nonprofit user groups may reproduce articles form the Printout only if the copyright notice is included, the articles have not been edited, are clearly attributed to the original author and to the Keystone MacCentral Printout, and a copy of the publication is mailed to the editor of this newsletter.

The opinions, statements, positions, and views stated herein are those of the author(s) or publisher and are not intended to be the opinions, statements, positions, or views of Apple, Inc.

Throughout this publication, trademarked names are used. Rather than include a trademark symbol in every occurrence of a trademarked name, we are using the trademarked names only for editorial purposes and to the benefit of the trademark owner with no intent of trademark infringement.

By Julio Ojeda-Zapata

Apple's AirTag Promises to Help You Find Your Keys

Do you often misplace your keys or purse? Apple's long-rumored AirTag has finally arrived to rescue you from your torment. The round doohickey attaches to something you tend to misplace or fear losing so you can zero in on it using your iPhone.

This idea is hardly new. Similar location-tracking tags are available from the likes of Chipolo, ESR, Samsung, Spigen, and Tile. But full integration with Apple's ecosystem is a selling point here since AirTags work with the Find My app that already helps you keep track of your Apple gadgetry along with your family and friends.

An AirTag is a small disc of polished stainless steel with IP67 water and dust resistance. It incorporates a speaker to announce its whereabouts, and a removable cover lets users replace the CR2032 battery. Apple is offering free engraving, including a selection of 31 emojis.
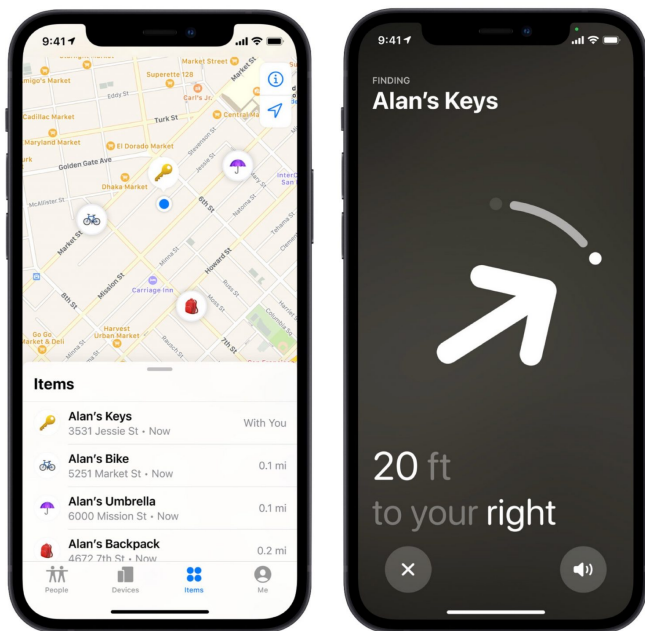

Apple intends the AirTags to match AirPods for setup ease. Simply bring them close to any iPhone running iOS 14.5 or an iPad running iPadOS 14.5 to connect. At that point, you can assign an AirTag to an item with a corresponding name (such as "keys" or "backpack") or use any other name you like.

An updated version of the Find My app features a new Items tab (along with People, Devices, and Me) that displays your AirTags. If you need to track down a particular AirTag, Find My displays a map with the item's current or last known location. Better yet, if the AirTag is within Bluetooth range, you can use Find My or Siri to make it emit a sound, just as you would with AirPods.

You'll get the best experience when tracking down an AirTag with an iPhone 11 or iPhone 12, which can detect the AirTag's U1 chip using Ultra Wideband technology. When that's the case, a feature called Precision Finding lets you accurately determine the distance and direction of a lost AirTag if it's within Bluetooth range. As you move, your iPhone gathers input from the camera, ARKit, accelerometer, and gyroscope to guide you using a blend of sound, haptics, and visual feedback—including a pointing arrow that shifts on the screen.

What if you're not within Bluetooth range of the AirTag? That's when Apple's vast Find My network —with nearly a billion in-use Apple devices— comes into play. Any of those devices within range of the AirTag can relay its location—anonymously, privately, and in the background—back to you.

If you lose track of an AirTag, you can place it into Lost Mode to be notified if and when it is found. A person finding that AirTag can tap it on an iPhone or other NFC-capable device (such as an Android phone) and be transported to a Web page showing contact information if you've provided it.

Apple was careful to share other important facts:

• iOS devices can detect an AirTag that isn't with its owner and notify you if an unknown AirTag is seen to be traveling with you from place to place over time. That addresses concerns about the Find My network being used to track people without them knowing.

• If you detect an unknown AirTag, you can tap it with an iPhone or other NFC-capable device, and instructions will guide you through disabling the unknown AirTag.

• An AirTag separated from its owner for an extended period will, when moved, play a sound to draw attention to itself. It's probably best that it

be a sound and not a little voice calling out, "Help me!"

Apple took accessibility into consideration when designing the AirTag. Precision Finding using VoiceOver, for instance, can direct blind users to an AirTag with directions like "AirTag is nine feet away on your left."

The company also put a focus on privacy. No location data or history is stored inside AirTags. Communication with the Find My network is end-to-end encrypted so only the owner of a device has access to its location data, and no one, including Apple, knows the identity or location of any device that helped find it. Bluetooth signal identifiers transmitted by AirTags rotate frequently to prevent unwanted location tracking.

Apple is making it easy to personalize your AirTags. In addition to engraving, it will sell a range of keychain-like accessories made from materials such as polyurethane and leather. Third-party manufacturers such as Belkin, Moment and Nomad are already announcing their own AirTag accessories.

Apple is again teaming up with the luxury leather maker Hermès to offer ludicrously priced accessories such as the Bag Charm ($299), Key Ring ($349), and Luggage Tag ($449). Apple says that Hermès accessories will be sold with a custom-engraved AirTag based on the brand's iconic Clou de Selle signature. We don't know what that means either.

A single AirTag costs $29, or you can buy a four-pack for $99. Pre-orders opened on 23 April 2021, with availability on 30 April 2021.

AirTag Hermès
Key Ring

From $349

AirTag Hermès
Bag Charm

From $299

AirTag Hermès
Luggage Tag

From $449

By Adam Engst & Josh Centers

Apple Releases iOS 14.5, iPadOS 14.5, macOS 11.3, watchOS 7.4, and tvOS 14.5

Get ready for the most significant set of Apple operating system updates since the release of macOS 11, iOS 14, iPadOS 14, watchOS 7, and tvOS 14 last year. In this bundle of updates—iOS 14.5, iPadOS 14.5, macOS 11.3, watchOS 7.4, tvOS 14.5, and HomePod Software 14.5—Apple has added support for its new AirTags, tweaked Siri, and beefed up Apple Music, Podcasts, News, and Reminders. iOS 14.5 and watchOS 7.4 also allow fallback authentication to an Apple Watch when Face ID fails due to mask-wearing, and macOS 11.3 improves its support for running iOS and iPadOS apps on M1-based Macs.

Given the compelling nature of some of these features and the importance of the security fixes, we recommend installing sooner rather than later. However, it's still worth waiting at least a few days to make sure there are no unwanted side effects. If nothing else, AirTags will start arriving on 30 April 2020, so if you've ordered some, you'll want to update by then. (In fact, there is nothing

more to say about AirTag support in these updates since it's built into the Find My app.)
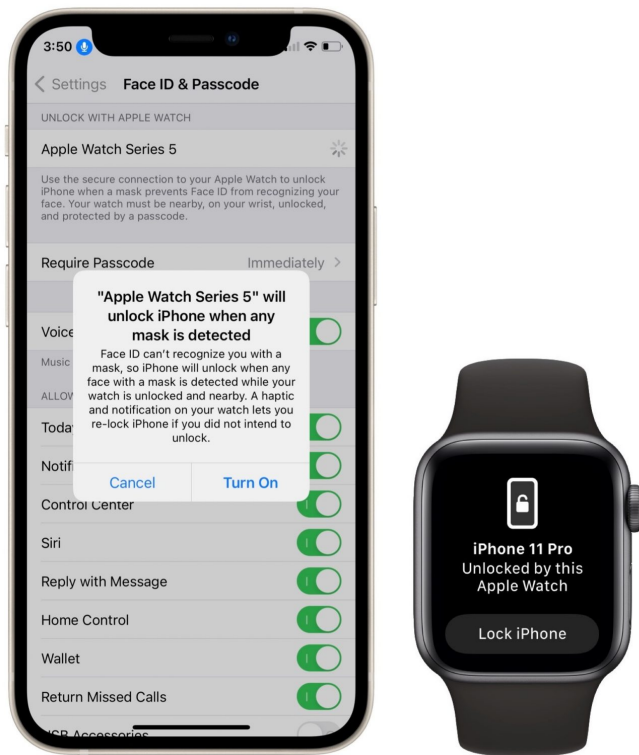
After a quick look at the Apple Watch fallback authentication for Face ID mask failures, we'll cover the features shared among some or all of the operating systems, followed by changes that are specific to each. Note that iPadOS 14.5 is, as far as we can tell from the release notes, just a subset of iOS 14.5, so we won't break it out separately.

Unlock Face ID-enabled iPhones with an Apple Watch

If you have a Face ID-enabled iPhone and an Apple Watch, the "how fast can I install this update" feature in iOS 14.5 and watchOS 7.4 is the capability to unlock your iPhone if you attempt to use Face ID while wearing a mask. It works brilliantly, automatically unlocking your iPhone on Face ID failures if your Apple Watch is nearby, on your wrist, unlocked, and protected by a passcode.

To turn the feature on, go to Settings > Face ID & Passcode and scroll down to the Unlock With

Apple Watch section. Enable the switch associated with your Apple Watch, and acknowledge that you understand the conditions under which the feature works. From then on, you won't find yourself staring at your iPhone in a grocery store, wondering why it isn't unlocking as it does at home. Instead, you'll feel a haptic tap on your wrist, and your iPhone will unlock before you have a chance to realize you're wearing a mask.

App Tracking Transparency Enabled

The most contentious feature of iOS 14.5 and iPadOS 14.5 is Apple's new App Tracking Transparency technology, the latest blow in its effort to stem the egregious privacy abuses foisted on users (see "Apple Unveils Stringent Disclosure and Opt-in Privacy Requirements for Apps," 7 January 2021). App Tracking Transparency "lets you control which apps are allowed to track your activity across other companies' apps and websites for ads or sharing with data brokers." Earlier this month, Apple published a white paper outlining how it works.

Facebook and other data-collection companies have fought to prevent Apple from requiring App Tracking Transparency, suggesting in self-serving PR campaigns that it will hurt small businesses and cute woodland creatures. All iOS apps must support App Tracking Transparency to make it through Apple's App Store approval process.

We're curious to see if most people even notice App Tracking Transparency. That's because it appears, at least on our iPhones and iPads, that Apple has disabled the Allow Apps to Request to Track option in Settings > Privacy > Tracking by default. Since apps cannot restrict functionality based on your answer, there is no rational reason that we can see to turn that feature on and allow apps to request peeping-tom privileges. If an app does present a prompt asking if it can track you, we recommend saying no, adding an obscenity, and deleting the app with prejudice.

Siri Gets More Diverse, Adds Default Service Support

In an effort to be more inclusive and support Apple's long-standing contention that Siri has no gender, these updates add two new voices to Siri's American English choices and eliminate the default voice option, so everyone gets to pick their preferred voice during initial device setup. However, it doesn't prompt you to choose when you're merely updating your operating system, so if you want to test-drive the new voices, visit Settings > Siri & Search > Siri Voice (iOS) or System Preferences > Siri (macOS).

It's good to see Apple bring more diversity to Siri's voices and eliminate assumptions that could make some users uncomfortable. Voice 4 was previously identified as "female" (with Voice 1 as the traditional "male" counterpart), but Adam is giving the new Voice 3 a try, although he generally prefers voices with accents that disguise speech synthesis pronunciation flubs that would be more obvious in an American accent.

Siri can also now default to using alternative apps for music, podcasts, and audiobooks. If you have third-party apps installed that can handle those types of content, the first time you ask Siri to play audio after updating to iOS 14.5, you will be asked which one to use. If you later want to change, just specify the service name once ("Hey Siri, play Planet Money on Overcast"), and Siri will switch to that service going forward.

Other new Siri features (at least in iOS and iPadOS) include:

- If you're wearing AirPods or compatible Beats headphones, Siri can now announce incoming calls, and you can answer hands-free. Enable this in Settings > Siri & Search > Announce Calls by choosing any option other than Never.

- Apple says you can now ask Siri to call emergency contacts, but we're unsure precisely what this means beyond asking Siri to call any contact.

- You can start a Group FaceTime call with Siri by listing contacts or mentioning a Group Name that you set up in Messages.

Enhancements to Apple Music, News, Podcasts, Reminders, and More

Although none of these changes are earth-shaking, they may be welcome:

- **Apple Music:** Apple has added city charts that showcase popular songs from over 100 cities around the world, so you can see where David Hasselhoff is still trending. The iOS version of Music also now lets you share lyrics using Messages, Facebook, and Instagram Stories, and those using Messages can play the snippet without leaving the app. On the Mac, Apple says a new autoplay option keeps the music flowing by playing a similar song after it reaches the end of a

song or playlist. We can't find any setting to control this feature, but perhaps there's a defaults write command available if you don't like it.

• **News:** It's hard to know how popular News is—it certainly isn't a major source of new readers for TidBITS, but Apple keeps tweaking it. New in this set of updates are a redesigned News+ feed and "a new Search experience."

• **Podcasts:** Although the release notes make no mention of the podcast subscriptions that Apple announced recently (see "Apple's Spring Loaded Appetizers: Apple Card Family, Podcast Subscriptions, and a Purple iPhone," 20 April 2021), the Podcasts app boasts redesigned show pages, top charts and popular categories in search results, and the option to download episodes to your library for offline access. You can customize the download and notification settings on a show-by-show basis. We'll probably keep using Overcast.

• **Reminders:** Apple's simple task-management app continues to slouch toward respectability. In iOS, you can (finally!) sort your reminders by title, due date, creation date, or priority. On the Mac, where sorting has been available for a while, you can now sort the Today smart list. And (finally!) your sort orders for each list sync across all your devices. Oh, and if you want to kill trees, you can now print your lists.

• **Apple Fitness+:** You can now stream audio and video from Apple Fitness+ workouts to AirPlay 2-enabled TVs and devices.

• **Emojis:** The couple kissing and couple with heart emojis now support interracial relationships. You can set skin tones for each character in those emojis.

• **Game Controllers:** iOS, iPadOS, and macOS now support wireless controllers from the latest Microsoft and Sony game consoles. We anticipate tvOS 14.5 will have such support as well.

iOS and iPadOS Bug and Security Fixes

The iOS 14.5 and iPadOS 14.5 updates address a bunch of bugs, including:

• Messages at the bottom of a thread being hidden by the keyboard

• Deleted messages still appearing in search results

• Messages repeatedly failing to send texts in some threads

• Mail not loading new email until restarting the device

• The call blocking and identification section not appearing in Phone settings

• iCloud Tabs not appearing in Safari

• iCloud Keychain being prevented from turning off

• Reminders created with Siri unintentionally being set for early morning hours

• AirPods routing audio to the wrong device after switching automatically

• Missing or duplicate notifications when automatically switching AirPods destinations

In device-specific fixes, the iOS 14.5 update will recalibrate maximum battery capacity on iPhone 11 models to fix inaccurate battery health estimates. It also re-optimizes the iPhone 12 display to reduce a dim glow that appears at reduced brightness and black backgrounds.

Finally, iOS 14.5 and iPadOS 14.5 sport 44 security fixes that address a multitude of vulnerabilities, including one in WebKit Storage that Apple says may have been actively exploited in the wild.

macOS 11.3 Big Sur

As noted above, macOS 11.3 Big Sur includes many of the same changes as iOS 14.5 and iPadOS 14.5. Nonetheless, Apple did give macOS some attention on its own as well:

• **Hibernation on M1-based Macs:** M1 Macs now support hibernation, also called *safe sleep*. When a Mac is in normal sleep, power keeps the contents of RAM fresh. Since laptop batteries give out eventually, safe sleep saves the contents of RAM to disk (well, flash storage, but that gets confusing when talking about RAM). It takes quite a bit longer for a Mac to wake out of hibernation since

it has to reload the contents of RAM to restore the previous state.

- **iPhone and iPad apps on M1-based Macs:** When running an iPhone or iPad app on an M1-based Mac, you can now resize the window and display the highest supported resolution of the app when viewing it in full screen. Apple also added keyboard and mouse support for iPhone and iPad games that support device tilt or hardware game controllers.

- **Safari:** You can now customize the Start Page section order, and developers can now create extensions that replace the new tab page. Safari gains support for the WebM and Vorbis formats for audio and video. Finally, support for the Web Speech API lets developers incorporate speech recognition into Web pages for real-time captioning, dictation, and voice navigation.

- **About This Mac:** The Services tab shows warranty and AppleCare+ status. You can now purchase AppleCare+ from About This Mac (see "You Can Now Extend AppleCare+ for Macs or Get It for an Apple TV," 22 April 2021).

macOS 11.3 also fixes several bugs beyond the aforementioned shared issues with Reminders, iCloud Keychain, and AirPods audio switching. Mac-specific fixes address problems with:

- External 4K monitors not displaying at full 4K resolution when connected with USB-C

- The login window not displaying correctly after restarting on M1-based Mac minis

- The Dwell feature not working in the Accessibility Keyboard

Finally, the security notes for macOS 11.3 list 53 security fixes, including the concerning WebKit Storage vulnerability that may have been exploited in the wild. Potentially even worse is another vulnerability in System Preferences that could enable a malicious app to bypass Gatekeeper checks. Although Apple doesn't acknowledge this in the security notes, an article at Motherboard claims that this vulnerability, which could allow a malicious app double-clicked by the user to take

over the Mac, has been circulating in malware since early 2021. Update soon.

The macOS 11.3 update is a 5.71 GB download, available from Software Update.

watchOS 7.4

Apart from being able to unlock iPhones when Face ID is stymied by a mask, Apple says that watchOS 7.4 gives you the option of classifying the Bluetooth device type in Settings so you can correctly identify headphones for audio notifications. We're not entirely sure what that means yet.

watchOS 7.4 also brings support for the ECG app and irregular heart rhythm notifications for users in Australia and Vietnam, suggesting that Apple finally got regulatory clearance there.

Additionally, the watchOS 7.4 update features 33 CVE security entries.

tvOS 14.5

Unsurprisingly, Apple also released tvOS 14.5, which adds the new color calibration feature mentioned in "Apple Updates Apple TV 4K; Introduces New Siri Remote" (20 April 2021). Once you have updated your Apple TV and your iPhone, go to Settings > Video and Audio > Calibration to try it out.

If you've had trouble running out of space on your Apple TV, tvOS 14.5 can now automatically offload apps, just as iOS will do when it needs to reclaim space. The app data is saved, the app remains on your Home screen, and it will download again automatically when you try to launch it. Look for the setting in Settings > Apps.

Although typing in tvOS is painful at best, tvOS 14.5 gains the Type to Siri feature that has been available in iOS for some time, which lets you type Siri requests instead of speaking them. Turn it on in Settings > Accessibility.

tvOS 14.5 also adds support for the Xbox Series X|S Wireless Controller and Sony PS5 DualSense Wireless Controller. Such game controller support is all the more relevant since the new Siri Remote

lacks the accelerometer and gyroscope that allowed the previous generation Siri Remote to act as a motion controller.
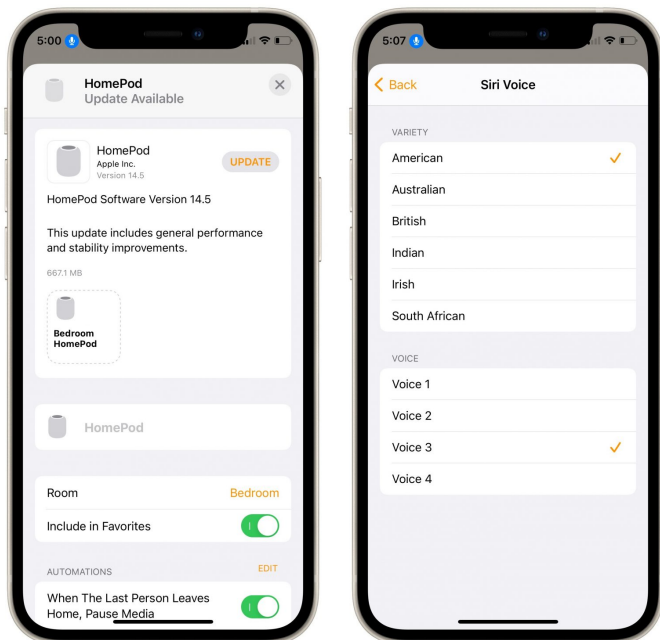
Finally, Siri now understands German in Austria and English in Ireland and New Zealand.

Apple published details of tvOS 14.5's [32 security fixes](), many shared with the other operating systems.

HomePod Software 14.5

At press time, Apple hadn't yet published any release notes for [HomePod Software 14.5](). However, in the Home app, it's described as including "general performance and stability improvements." The only change we could identify was the addition of the two new Siri voices.

The HomePod Software 14.5 update weighs in at 667.1 MB. To install it, open the Home app, and if an Update Available button appears, tap it. Otherwise, touch and hold the HomePod tile, tap the gear icon to enter settings, and then tap Update near the top of the screen. Left to its own devices, the HomePod should update itself as well.

Phew! Have you noticed anything else in any of these updates? With any luck, we'll see only a few minor bug and security fix releases before it's time to move on to iOS 15, iPadOS 15, macOS 12, watchOS 8, and tvOS 15.

Apple Releases iOS 14.5.1, iPadOS 14.5.1, macOS 11.3.1, and watchOS 7.4.1

Oops. Apple just released iOS 14.5.1 and iPadOS 14.5.1 to fix an important bug in iOS 14.5 and iPadOS 14.5. If you had already disabled Settings > Privacy > Tracking > Allow Apps to Request to Track, you may not have received App Tracking Transparency prompts from apps, even if you re-enabled the setting. We were wondering why we couldn't get any apps to ask to track us.

iOS 14.5.1
Apple Inc.
135.1 MB

iOS 14.5.1 includes bug fixes, provides important security updates, and is recommended for all users.

For information on the security content of Apple software updates, please visit this website:
https://support.apple.com/kb/HT201222

By Joh Centers

Standard Ebooks Makes Classic Texts Beautiful

The volunteers at Project Gutenberg are some of the great unsung heroes of the Internet. Since 1971 (!), they have digitized over 60,000 out-of-copyright books for preservation and convenience. While Project Gutenberg texts are better than they used to be, they are often plagued by typos and don't always have the nicest or most consistent typography.
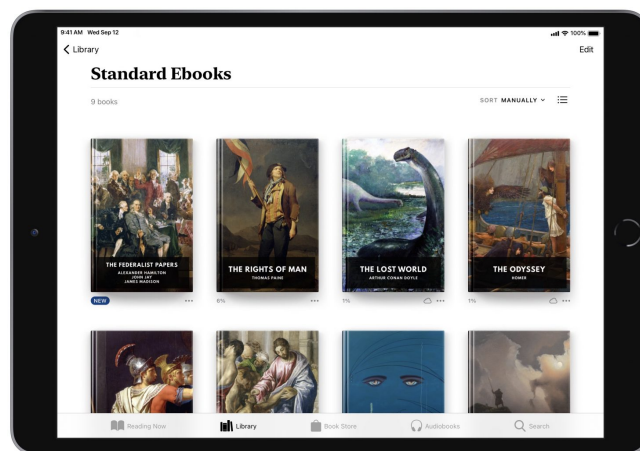
A new project has risen to build on Project Gutenberg's great work: Standard Ebooks. Their mission is as follows:

Ebook projects like Project Gutenberg transcribe ebooks and make them available for the widest number of reading devices. Standard Ebooks takes ebooks from sources like Project Gutenberg, formats and typesets them using a carefully designed and professional-grade style manual, fully proofreads and corrects them, and then builds them to create a new edition that takes advantage of state-of-the-art ereader and browser technology.

In other words, the volunteers at Standard Ebooks take selected books from Project Gutenberg, carefully proofread them, and put them in a prettier package to read on your favorite device. Standard Ebooks titles provide:
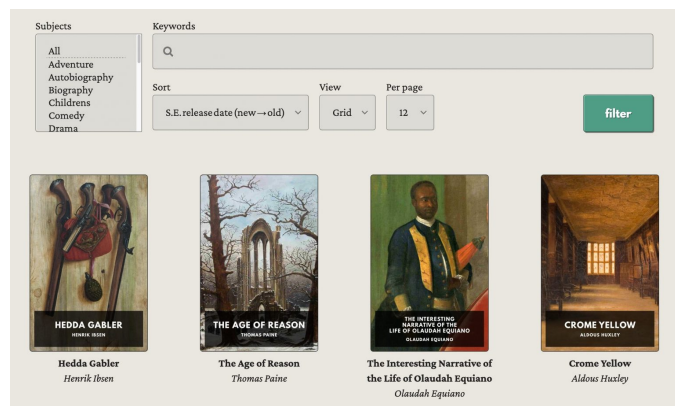
• Modern and consistent typography following a rigorous modern style manual

• Careful proofreading

• Rich metadata

• Upgrades to make them play nicely with e-readers, including hyphenation, popup footnotes, high-resolution and scalable graphics, and working tables of contents

• High-quality covers

• Clean code and semantic markup for easy maintenance

Needless to say, every title offered by Standard Ebooks is free and libre, with no DRM.
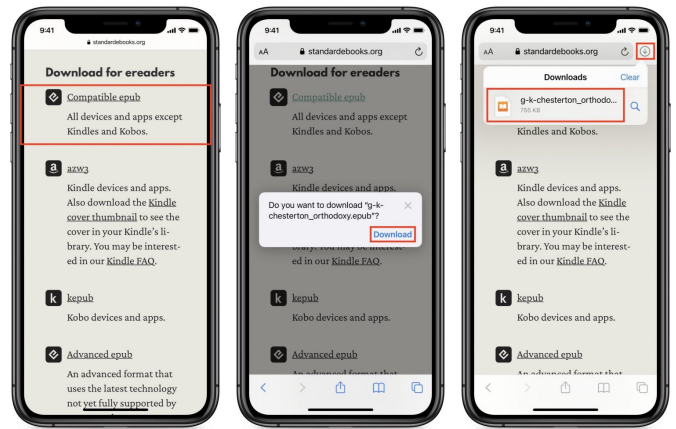

Add Standard Ebooks Titles to Apple's Books

The Standard Ebooks library is large and constantly expanding. You can browse by subject or search for a title. As you can see from the screenshot below, there's a great deal of diversity in the offerings, and there's something for everyone.

Here's how to download a title in Safari and load it into Apple's Books app on an iPhone or iPad. Once you tap a title you're interested in, scroll down to the "Download for ereaders" heading and tap "Compatible epub." (It is a little troubling that the

Standard Ebooks site lowercases EPUB, in flagrant contradiction to the style set by the [standard's creators](#).) There is also an "Advanced epub" option, but I haven't found any advantages to that file format, and it tends to strip away the nice cover art.

Tap Download when prompted. Once the download is complete, tap the download icon in the upper-right corner and then tap the EPUB file in the downloads popover. The book should open in Books.

It's even easier on the Mac. Click "Compatible epub" just as above, and if Books is your default EPUB app, double-click the downloaded file to load it into your library and open the book. If you have your Books library set to sync via iCloud, it doesn't matter which device you add the EPUB files to because they will sync between each other.

That to the highth of this great argument
I may assert the Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first (for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell) say first what cause
Moved our grand parents in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The Mother of Mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,

With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild:
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all; but torture without end

Page 7

Page 8   35 pages left in this chapter

Standard Ebooks titles look beautiful on any Apple platform.

Standard Ebooks also provides specially formatted .azw3 files for Kindle devices and apps, and .kepub files for Kobo devices and apps.

How You Can Help

If you have some spare time and love books, Standard Ebooks is always looking for volunteers. You can join their mailing list to get involved, make suggestions, and submit typos. They're also looking for proofreaders and those with the technical skills to compile ebooks. And, of course, they always need money to pay for their tools and keep the servers running. ⬦

By Josh Centers

Prevent Apple's Updated Podcasts App from Eating Your Storage

Apple's Podcasts app has always been a mess. In the first iOS version, users complained about Podcasts' skeuomorphic tape player that moved as a podcast played, but the real issues were its clunky interface, inconsistent playback behavior, and syncing failures. Apple recently overhauled the Podcasts app for the gazillionth time in iOS 14.5, iPadOS 14.5, and macOS 11.3 Big Sur, but unfortunately, it appears that Podcasts is still a hot mess.

Most tellingly, MacRumors lists a litany of user complaints in "Users Despair at Apple Podcasts App After iOS 14.5 Update." Some are as old as the Podcasts app, like syncing not working properly, whereas others are new to the latest release.

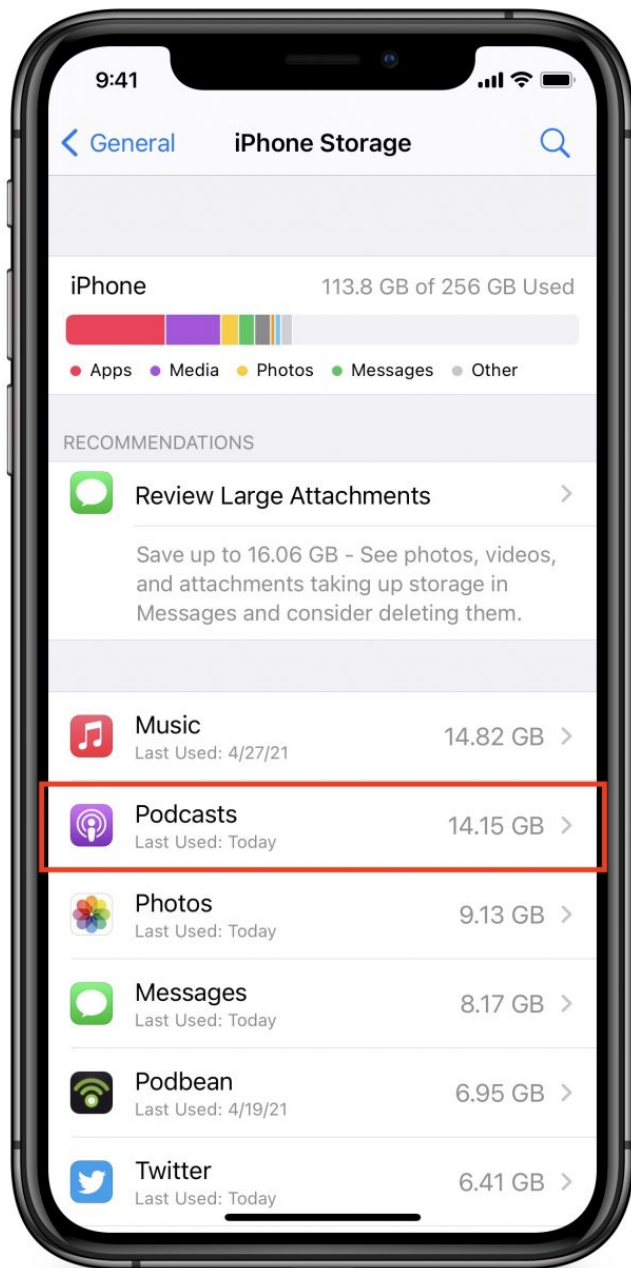### Finding the Podcasts Data Thief

I immediately noticed that I was already suffering from one of the complaints: Podcasts resetting your download settings and downloading every episode of every podcast you subscribe to or that has even a single episode in your library.

I subscribe to a few podcasts in the Podcasts app but generally leave downloads off to save space—streaming works fine for me. However, a few weeks ago, I specifically tracked down and
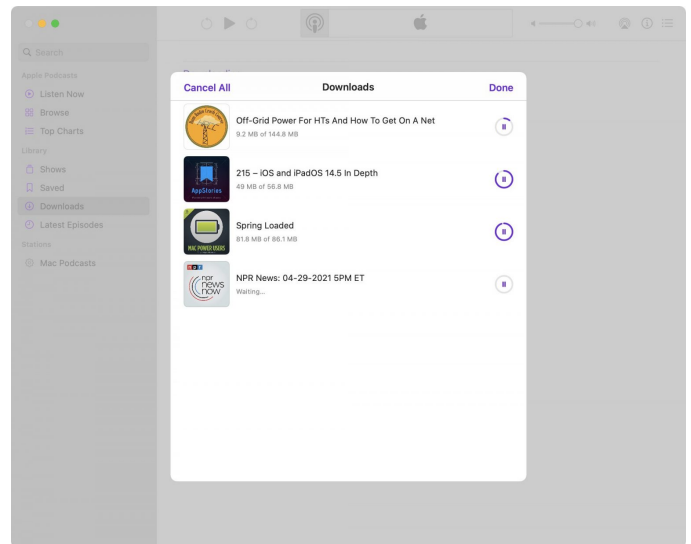
downloaded an episode of the Ham Radio Crash Course podcast so I could listen to it while driving out of cellular range. I didn't subscribe to the podcast, as I don't usually listen to it, but I was interested in that particular episode.

When I opened the new Podcasts app on my iPhone, I found that it had me "following" Ham Radio Crash Course—you no longer "subscribe" to podcasts in the Podcasts app, but instead "follow" them like "friends" on social media—and it had downloaded episodes before and after the only one I intended to download.
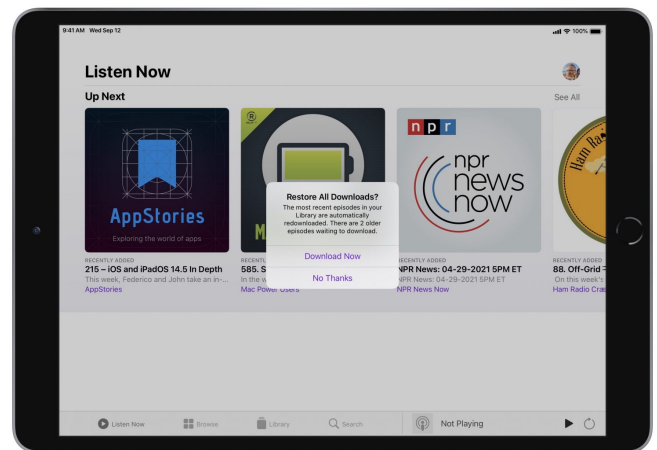
I went to Settings > General > iPhone Storage and was aghast to discover that the Podcasts app was now taking up 14.2 GB of space. Luckily, I have 256 GB of storage and plenty of free space on my iPhone, but if I'd had less available storage, it could have gotten awkward quickly.

When I opened Podcasts on my iPad running iPadOS 14.5, it asked me if I wanted to restore downloads, and I was able to respond No Thanks. So far, it doesn't seem to have automatically downloaded anything.

My suspicions alerted, I launched Podcasts on my MacBook Pro running macOS 11.3 and caught it trying to download a slew of recent podcast episodes. Happily, I was able to click Cancel All before it could finish.

Fortunately, my Internet service isn't metered, but if yours is, you might want to check your monthly usage. I also didn't have to worry about running out of space on any of my devices, but I've certainly been in situations in the past where losing lots of free space to unwanted podcast downloads would have been problematic.
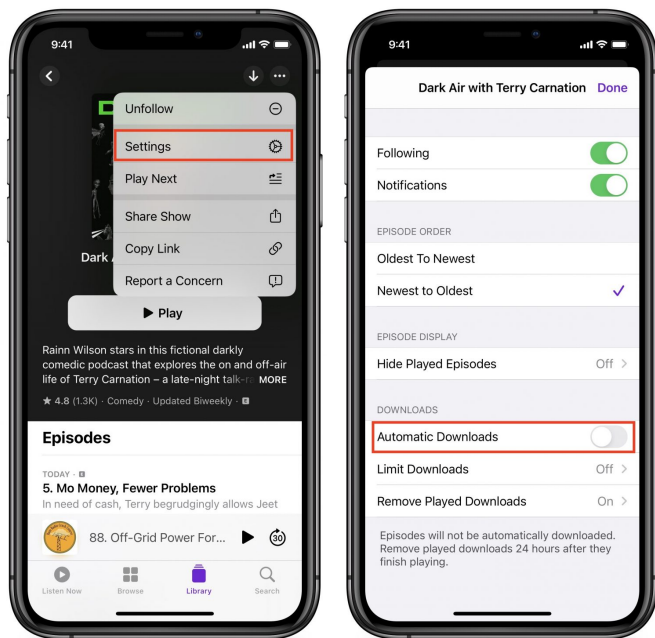
Read on to learn how to stop Podcasts from downloading all these additional episodes and recover the space if it already has.

Stop Automatic Podcast Downloads

To stop automatic downloads, you must either unfollow each show individually or go into the show's settings and turn off automatic downloads. Both are easy.

iPhone and iPad

1. Tap the Library tab at the bottom.

2. Tap Shows. (If Shows doesn't appear in the Library, tap Edit and select it before proceeding.)

3. Tap a show for which you want to turn off downloads.

4. Tap the ellipsis button in the upper-right corner.

5. Either tap Unfollow or, to disable downloads, choose Settings.
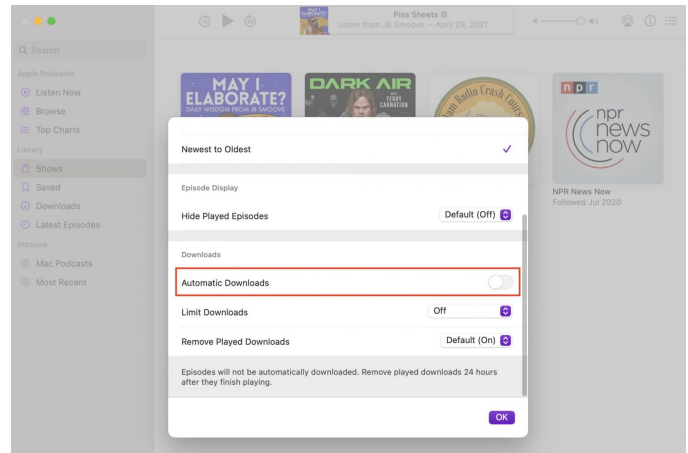
6. Turn off Automatic Downloads.

7. Tap Done.

To make sure that Podcasts doesn't automatically start downloading episodes of new podcasts that you follow, go to Settings > Podcasts and, under Automatic Downloads, turn off Enable When Following.

Mac

The process is similar on the Mac.

1. Click Shows in the sidebar.

2. Move the mouse pointer over a podcast to reveal an ellipsis button.

3. Click the ellipsis button and choose either Unfollow or, to disable downloads, Settings.

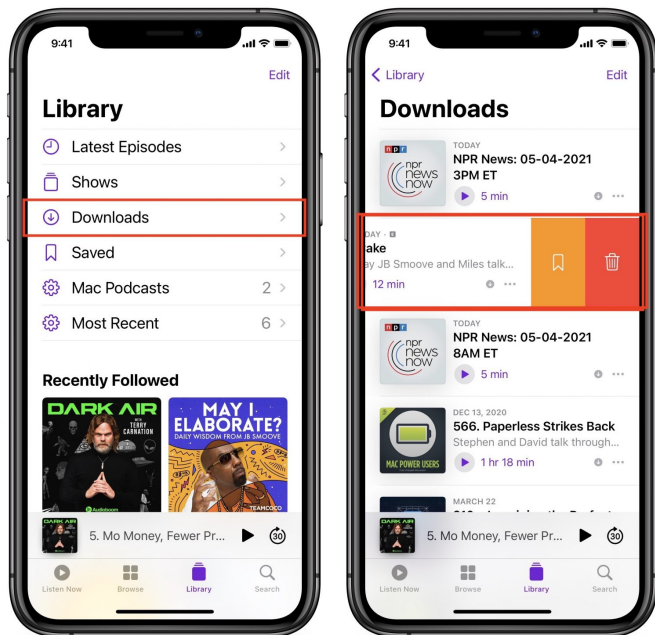4. Turn off Automatic Downloads.

5. Click OK.

To prevent downloads from cluttering your drive in the future, open Podcasts > Preferences > General and deselect Automatic Downloads.

Delete Unwanted Podcasts Downloads

What if Podcasts has already downloaded episodes? If you have plenty of space, you could just wait for them to go away as you listen to them, but it's likely that Podcasts has downloaded episodes you've already listened to or never will. Here's how to reclaim that space.
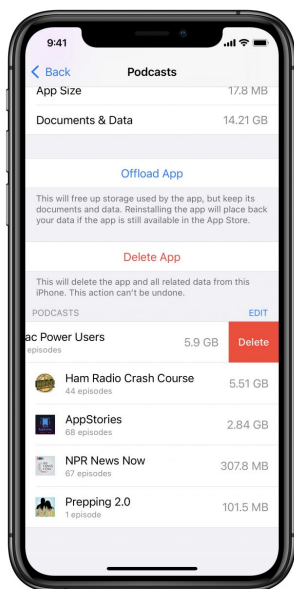
iPhone/iPad

To remove downloaded episodes, navigate to Library > Downloads (again, if Downloads doesn't appear in the Library, tap Edit and enable it). Then swipe left on any episode and tap the red Trash button to delete it.

This approach works fine if you have only a few to delete or if you want to pick and choose which episodes to remove. But what if Podcasts downloaded hundreds of episodes?
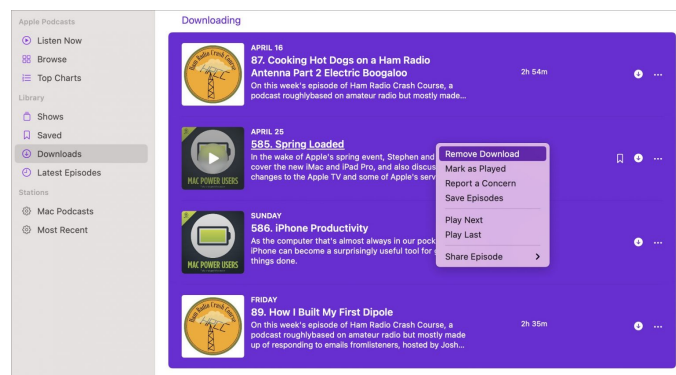
Happily, there's an easy way to delete them en masse. Go to Settings > General > iPhone/iPad/iPod touch Storage > Podcasts. There, you can see exactly which shows you have downloaded episodes of and how much space they consume. Swipe left on a show to reveal a Delete button that lets you remove all downloaded episodes at once.

Or, if you want to get rid of your Podcasts headaches once and for all, you could also tap Delete App.

Mac

On the Mac, click Downloads in the sidebar to see all your downloaded episodes. To delete all of them, click the first download to select it, press and hold Shift, scroll down to the last podcast, and click it to select all the intervening episodes. (You can also Command-click individual episodes to select or deselect them if you want to leave some.) Control-click any of the selected downloads and choose Remove Download.

Try Overcast Instead

We've had Apple's Podcasts app available on various platforms for nearly nine years now, but it has never been very good. After that amount of time, it's hard to imagine that Apple will ever make it more than a lowest-common-denominator app for those who don't know to find a better alternative in the App Store.

Speaking of alternatives, most of us use Overcast for our podcast listening, and we recommend it to our readers. It's well-made and straightforward, and it boasts innovative features like Smart Speed, which dynamically shortens silences in talk shows, and Voice Boost, which boosts and normalizes the volume so every show has the same audio levels. For our coverage, see "Overcast Refines the iPhone Podcast Experience" (16 July 2014), "Overcast and Apple's Podcasts Make the Apple Watch a Decent Podcast Player" (15 October 2018), and "Overcast Gains Podcast Clip Sharing" (29 April 2019).