

# printout

Keystone MacCentral Macintosh Users Group    www.keystonemac.com

## Keystone MacCentral December 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Please see your membership email for the links  
to this month's Zoom meeting or email us  
at [KeystoneMacCentral@mac.com](mailto:KeystoneMacCentral@mac.com).

During our program this month we plan to discuss Generative AI

Practical applications include the following.

- **Written creation:** Producing a draft in a desired style and length
- **Question answering:** Enabling users to locate answers
- **Tone:** Text manipulation, to soften language or professionalize text
- **Summarization:** Offering summarized versions of conversations, articles, emails and webpages
- **Software coding:** Code generation, translation, explanation and verification



We have virtual meetings via Zoom  
on the third Tuesday of each month.

Emails will be sent out prior to each meeting.  
Follow the directions/invitation each month  
on our email – that is, just click on the link  
to join our meeting.

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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 © 2023, Keystone MacCentral, 310 Somerset Drive, Shiresmanstown, PA 17011.

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By Adam Engst

# iPhone Recommendations for Senior Citizens

**I**t's a truism that we're all older than we've ever been. But some may feel age more keenly, like older friends and family members whose physical and cognitive capabilities have declined slightly or quite a lot. I remember giving my grandparents Bernie and Estelle an old-even-for-then Macintosh SE/30 back in the mid-90s and upgrading both them and my other Grandma Helen to gundrop iMacs not long after. But after Grandpa Bernie died, my Grandma Estelle, though sharp as a tack, couldn't physically use a keyboard, and she was denied the pleasure of directing him in exactly how to use it, just as she'd been his navigator on car trips for decades. As Grandma Helen started to succumb to dementia, it became ever more difficult for her to remember how to use the iMac, and we eventually took it away to reduce the distress it caused her (and us).

Nowadays, the devices in question are less commonly Macs and more often iPhones and iPads. That transition has prompted several valuable discussions in TidBITS Talk, one asking which iPhone model would be best for an 84-year-old who isn't tech-savvy, and another looking for recommendations to simplify the iPhone interface for an 81-year-old who is starting to find his iPhone overwhelming. I'm attempting to distill into this article the best advice from those discussions, with added information from my experience helping older friends and family members with their iPhones.

It's important to note that older users may require more accommodation than younger users. They usually know what they want, but they're more likely to have physical limitations (like low vision or arthritis in the hands), their level of technical experience can vary more widely, and they need good reasons to learn new things. What works for one person may be inappropriate for another. If you're helping someone pick out or set up an iPhone, listen carefully to what they say they want

and combine that with what you know about their strengths and weaknesses. Try to introduce new things—like Check In; see [“iOS 17's Check In Feature Provides Peace of Mind and Could Even Save Lives,”](#) 9 October 2023—by explaining how it will answer a desire they already have. That said, if they choose something you don't know how to troubleshoot—like an Android tablet—you should clarify that you'll be at sea, too.

Please don't take offense at anything here—of course, not all older people have problems with technology! Physical and cognitive capabilities vary widely among people of every age—heck, our friend [George Jedenoff turned 106](#) back in July, and he was going strong with his Mac back in 2019 (see [“George Jedenoff: A 101-Year-Old TidBITS Reader,”](#) 17 June 2019, and [“102-Year-Old George Jedenoff Publishes His Autobiography,”](#) 26 August 2019).

## The Best iPhone for Senior Citizens

This TidBITS Talk discussion started with [Gerald de Haan asking for advice on getting a new iPhone for his 84-year-old mother](#), who is accustomed to an iPhone with a home button and Touch ID and lacks a technical bent. He worried that an iPhone relying on Face ID would require her to learn too many new gestures. Others in the discussion agreed.

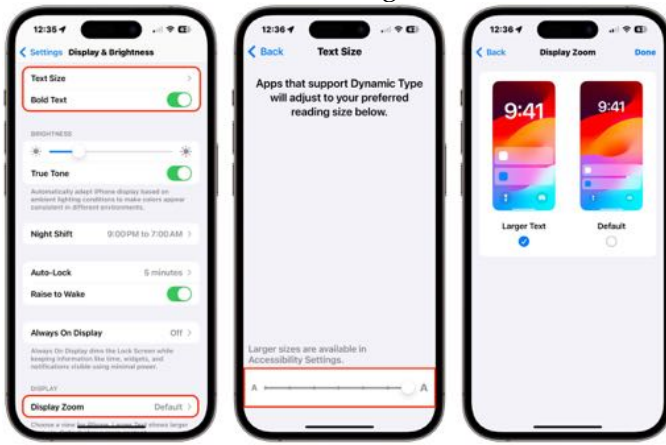
For instance, with Face ID, you swipe up from the bottom of the screen to return to the Home screen from an app, which is less obvious than pressing the home button on an iPhone with Touch ID. Another significant difference is that Touch ID users would be accustomed to swiping up from the bottom to display Control Center, whereas with Face ID, you open Control Center by swiping down from the top-right of the screen.

Because we all rely on familiar interface interaction patterns—essentially muscle memory—the “best” iPhone will usually be the one that's the most like the previous one. In Gerald's case, that would be a third-generation [iPhone SE](#), which has the added

benefit of being Apple’s least expensive model. In contrast, if the person in question has already grown accustomed to Face ID, it’s best to stick with one of those models if it fits their budget. Keep in mind that Apple sells previous-generation iPhones—new and refurbished—for hundreds less than the current models, which can help the pocketbook, too, with little to no loss of core features.

Although familiarity is good, remember you should ask the person what they want and combine that with what you know about them. JKBull’s 95-year-old mother just upgraded from an iPhone 8 with Touch ID to an iPhone 15 with Face ID. For her, the big win was moving from a 4.7-inch screen to a 6.1-inch screen, enabling her to jack up the font size to where she could read it easily and have more screen territory. As much as I consider the Plus and Pro Max models ludicrously large, their 6.7-inch screens could be even better than the 6.1-inch screen for someone with low vision. Settings to explore for such people include:

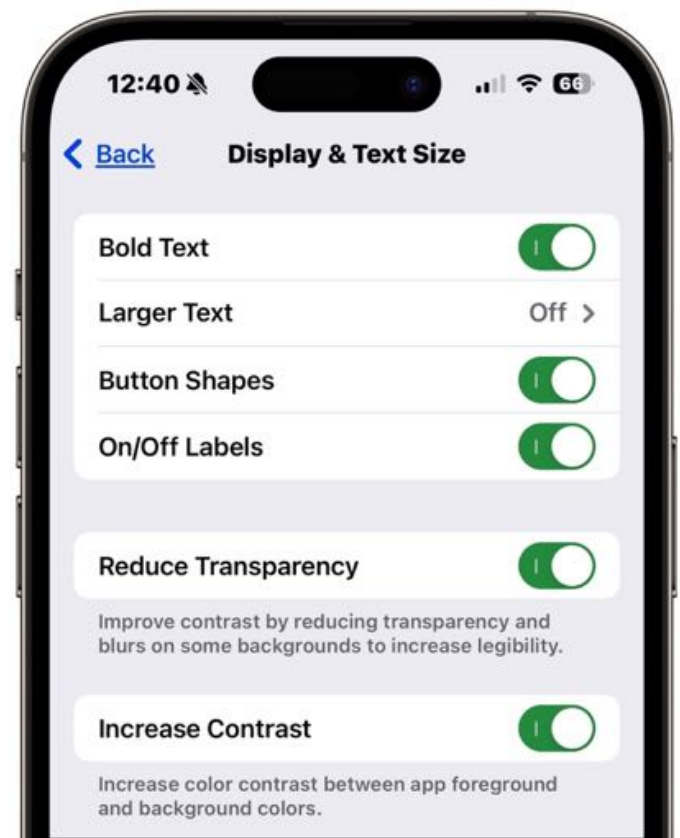
- **Settings > Display & Brightness > Text Size** lets you boost text size in apps that support Dynamic Text.
- **Settings > Display & Brightness > Bold Text** makes all the text on the iPhone darker.
- **Settings > Display & Brightness > Display Zoom > Larger Text** bumps up the text size on the Lock Screen and Home Screen and in many apps, and it makes Home Screen icons larger.



- **Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size > Larger Text** provides a switch for Larger

Accessibility Sizes that give you even larger options for the Text Size slider.

- **Settings > Accessibility > Display & Text Size** has other useful options; consider enabling:
  - **Button Shapes**, which can make it easier to determine when text is a button instead of a descriptive label
  - **On/Off Labels**, which can make it a little more clear when a switch is on or off
  - **Reduce Transparency**, which eliminates visual bleedthrough of background interface elements
  - **Increase Contrast**, which is helpful for those with reduced visual contrast sensitivity, which can stem from cataracts or other eye conditions and makes everything they see soft at the edges



- **Settings > Accessibility > Zoom** can be helpful for those who need portions of the screen zoomed, but it’s hard to use and can be confusing, so reserve it for those highly incentivized to learn it.

Apple provides a dizzying array of additional options in Settings > Accessibility, and it's absolutely worth exploring them to see if any will be helpful. Remember that many come with added complexity, such as learning new taps, gestures, or button presses.

One last note. Betty Taylor said on TidBITS Talk that her parents had significant difficulty with iPhone touch screens in their final years because of changes to their skin. She gave them pen-style capacitive styluses to work around their fingers not registering.

## How Best to Simplify an iPhone

As the iPhone and iOS have become more capable, Apple has had to bulk up interface options. For many of us, that's good—no one may use everything Apple provides, but everyone can pick and choose. However, those who find the options too much to deal with or end up in unexpected modes because of inadvertent swipes might do better with a more straightforward interface.

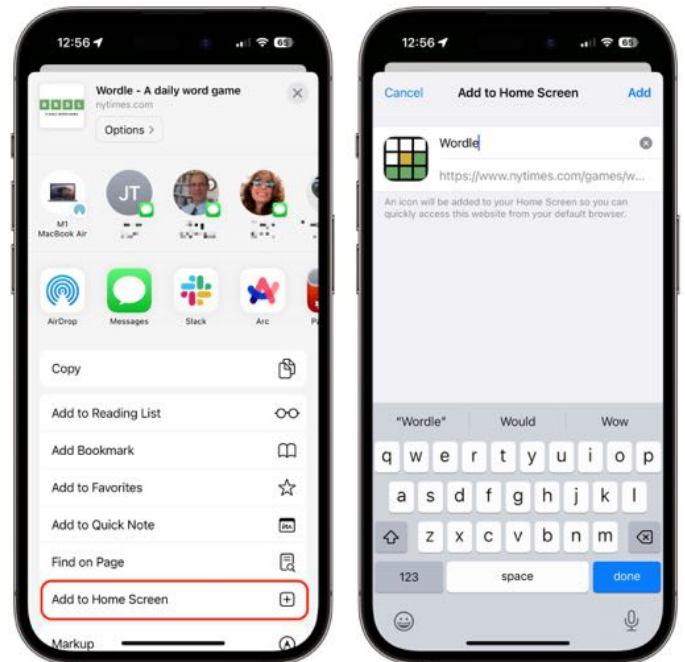
On TidBITS Talk, [Michael broached the question of how to help an 81-year-old friend](#) who was never a power user and is finding his iPhone with Face ID overwhelming. This user needs email, WhatsApp, Safari (where he plays Wordle every day but has to search Google for it each time), Photos, and several banking apps. Suggestions came fast and furious:

- Add websites to the Home Screen.
- Move unused apps to the App Library or delete them outright.
- Arrange the most-used apps on the first Home Screen and Dock.
- Turn off all unnecessary notifications.
- Simplify access to frequently used chats, email recipients, and the like.
- Use dictation or, if available, a Mac or iPad with a keyboard for text-intensive tasks.
- Understand that communicating with young people may require learning new approaches.

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

## Add Websites to the Home Screen

Making Wordle, or any website, more accessible is simple: add it to the Home Screen. To do that, navigate to the desired page in Safari, tap the share icon, and tap Add to Home Screen. On the next screen, give the Home Screen icon a name (keep it short) and tap Add. Of course, in Wordle's case, there's also a [NYT Games](#) app that includes Wordle.



## Remove or Delete Unused Apps

Another way to reduce complexity is to arrange the most used apps on the first Home Screen. If the person uses other apps occasionally, locate them on a second Home Screen, but demote apps that aren't being used at all to the App Library or delete them outright.

Touch and hold on any app to bring up a popover with a Remove App option. You can also touch and hold any empty spot on a Home Screen to enter jiggle mode and tap the ⊖ icon to bring up a popover with removal options. I wrote instructions for simultaneously moving multiple apps to the App Library in ["Manage iPhone Home Screen"](#)



[Apps in Bulk with iOS 14's App Library](#) (19 April 2021).



## Arrange Apps for Ease of Access

The order in which icons appear on the Home Screen may be important too, and a discussion might reveal whether the person would prefer the icons to appear in order of use, alphabetically by name, or by icon color.

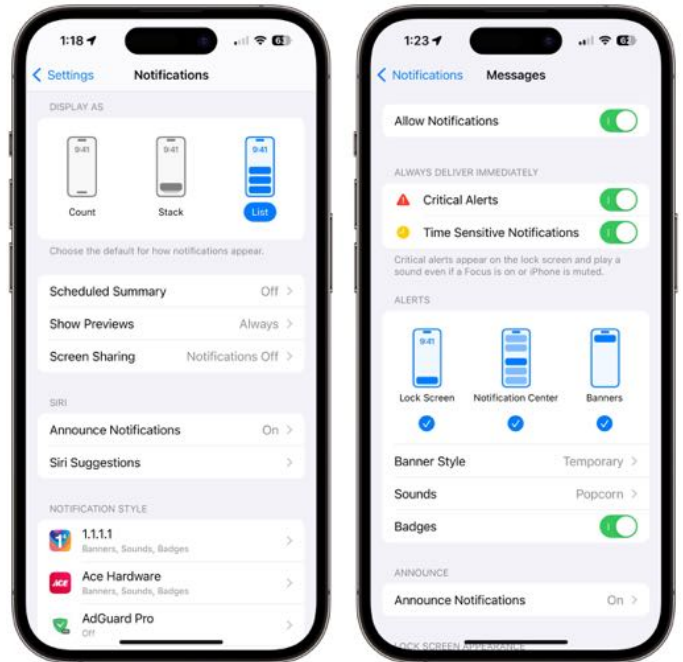
Don't forget that the most-used apps can, and usually should, appear on the Dock.

To move icons around, touch and hold an empty space on a Home Screen to enter jiggle mode, then drag icons to the desired locations. I recommend reading "[Five Tips for Easier Rearranging of iOS Apps](#)" (22 September 2020) for techniques to make this process easier.

## Turn Off All but Essential Notifications

Notifications can also contribute to a feeling of being overwhelmed. Apple provides various ways of managing or reducing notification frequency, but they feel to me like they're designed primarily for busy professionals. For those who just want a less interrupting iPhone experience, I recommend using Settings > Notifications to display notifications as a list (more visible than a stack), turn off Scheduled

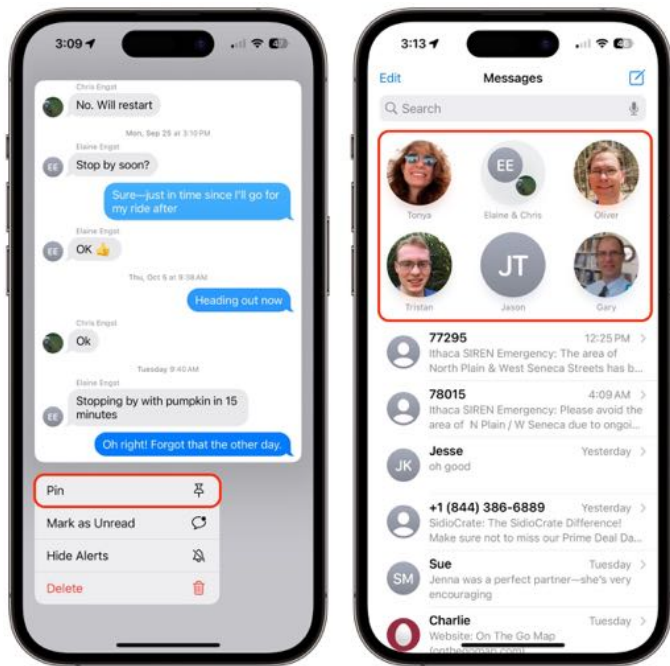
Summary (because it can be unclear why something would appear then), and turn on Show Previews (so there's more context for why a notification appeared). Then, go through the app list and turn off notifications entirely for all but essential apps, like Messages. Obviously, what counts as an essential app will vary, so talk through what those might be.



## Simplify Access to Frequently Used Conversations and Correspondents

Interfaces are easier to use when their elements are visible and don't move. If you're helping an older person simplify how they use their iPhone, you can lock down parts of Messages and Mail.

For Messages, ask with whom the person regularly texts and pin those conversations. Touch and hold a conversation and tap Pin in the menu that appears. An icon for the conversation then appears at the top of the list, making it more accessible than having to scroll through any other conversations below. Pins sync across devices linked by iCloud if they also have a Mac or iPad.



## Use Dictation or Delegate Text-Intensive Tasks to a Mac or iPad with a Keyboard

Text-intensive activities, such as writing email, are challenging on iPhones for most of us, and that may be even more so for older people dealing with finger dexterity or movement issues. Although learning to tap the microphone button on the keyboard and dictating effectively may be difficult, the desire to communicate may outweigh the difficulty.

If they already have a Mac or an iPad with a keyboard, it may be worth helping them set it up for text-intensive tasks. (It's highly unlikely to be worth purchasing another device and training the person to use it unless they're already comfortable with routine keyboard use.) Email is the most obvious of such tasks, but even Messages may be easier for them to use on a larger screen and with a keyboard. And if anyone plans to emulate George Jadenoff and write an autobiography, a keyboard is almost certainly a must.

## Understand Necessary Communication Compromises

Finally, it may be helpful to discuss new forms of communication. One thread of the TidBITS Talk conversation revolved around an older person not seeing any reason to text instead of emailing or calling. The problem is that it always takes two to tango, and one party or the other will often have to adjust their expectations and behavior to make communication happen fluidly.

Other messaging apps, such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger, may have similar options. I categorically refuse to use them because of the harm done to individuals and society by their parent company, Meta, but not everyone can make that choice without losing access to important people.

For Mail, the problem often comes in addressing messages. You can trim contact lists so it's easier to start typing a person's name to add their address to the To line of a message. But if the person mostly sends email to a handful of people, I've whipped up a tiny Shortcut that you can [download](#), edit with the desired names and addresses, and then add to the Home Screen. It uses just two actions: Choose From Menu and Open URLs, hard-coding the desired names in the menu and the appropriate **mailto** URLs in the menu details. (This last part was slightly fussy because Shortcuts wanted to work with variables. However, once I cleared the variable, it let me type the URL manually.) Once you've edited the Shortcut, use the down-pointing arrow menu at the top to rename it and save it to the Home Screen. Giving it a custom icon is left as an exercise for the reader. Tapping its Home Screen icon presents a menu of names, and selecting one creates a correctly addressed new message in Mail.

For instance, if a grandparent wants to communicate with their grandchild, they may have to accept the need for text messages since many students won't appreciate (or pick up) a phone call and may ignore most emails. Similarly, with

communications being much more fluid today, engaging with frequent short messages or calls can be a good way to keep younger relatives from worrying. 🗑️

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By Adam Engst

## Kini Provides Peace of Mind with Minimalist Motion Detection

I rarely write about projects being funded on Kickstarter. While I'm happy to assume the risks of backing a compelling project myself, I hesitate to cover them in TidBITS for fear they are just attractive promises—carefully crafted descriptions and slick videos for well-intentioned products that may never ship and, if they do, may not work as described. But there are exceptions, and the Kickstarter project I'm reviewing here is an actual product I've been using for a week.

### Kini Motion Detector

The product is a tiny plastic box of solid-state sensors and radios called [Kini](#). One of the reasons I'm comfortable writing about it is that [Kinisium](#), the company behind it, is primarily Mahboud Zabetian and his wife Nicky. I've known Mahboud for decades, primarily through a private mailing list of the sort of Mac developers who frequented MacHack back in the day. He ran a network analytics and security forensics firm called WildPackets for many years and has devoted his time since to mobile and user-experience consulting for the likes of Visa and YouTube. Although it keys off some of Mahboud's expertise, Kini is a change of pace that started as a passion project to monitor valuables and help keep children safe from guns.

Kini is a one-trick pony. All it does is alert you that it has moved. It incorporates accelerometers

like those in smartphones to detect motion in any of three dimensions. When it detects motion, it communicates via your Wi-Fi network to an Internet-to-SMS gateway that sends you (or any other phone number you specify) a text message, generally within 10 seconds. That's it. There's no app, and the cost of the text message service is covered by the \$65 purchase price (discounted on Kickstarter), so you don't have to sign up for yet another subscription. There's no alarm company involved, and Kinisium knows nothing about what you're monitoring or where it's located.

You can use Kini to monitor anything that moves, such as access to personal, valuable, and off-limits items, plus locations. Possibilities include:

- Guns (even when stored correctly in a safe; combinations aren't always secret)
- Jewelry
- Valuable coin or stamp collections
- Camera gear
- Artwork
- Liquor cabinets or just that bottle of 30-year-old Scotch
- Medicine cabinets containing potentially harmful drugs
- Filing cabinet drawers with important papers

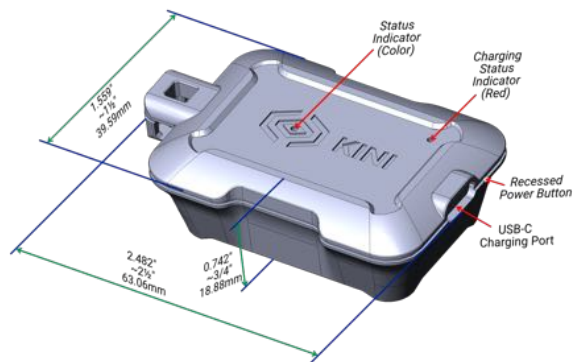


- Tool chests
- Fancy bikes or motorcycles
- Outbuilding doors

Kinisium has 3,000 units of the Kini built, with circuit boards for another 10,000 arriving within weeks. That should be more than sufficient to satisfy the demand from Kickstarter even though it has already blown through its \$7500 goal, raising over \$28,000 as of this writing.

## Kini Hardware and Setup

From a physical perspective, a Kini is a small plastic box with a USB-C connector for charging on one end and a hanger through which you can thread an included plastic-coated steel cable on the other end. The bottom is flat, so you can attach one side of a pair of hook-and-loop fasteners (think industrial Velcro) for mounting the Kini. It's about the size of two stacks of 10 quarters, weighs 31 grams, and comes in red and grey. LEDs report on status and charging. A Kini holds a charge for over a year (or possibly longer), and the batteries should last a decade. It alerts you when you need to charge.



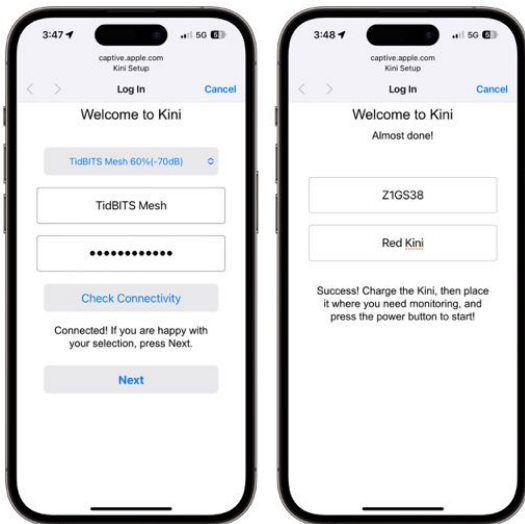
What about usage? There's no subscription, but text messages cost money. Less than a cent each, but even that adds up. Kini's primary use cases assume

low usage, so Kinisium says that it may throttle alerts—after advance warning—if you exceed 5 messages per day, 45 per month, or 400 per year. Contact Kinisium if you have higher messaging needs. And although I said that the Kini doesn't require an app, they're working on one as a way of sidestepping the SMS fees.

The Kini comes in environmentally conscious packaging—a small cardboard box with compostable “coffee pouch” envelopes for the Kini, a USB charging cable (USB Type A to USB-C) and pin for accessing the recessed power button, and the plastic-coated steel cable and hook-and-loop fasteners. It's nice to see minimal use of plastic.

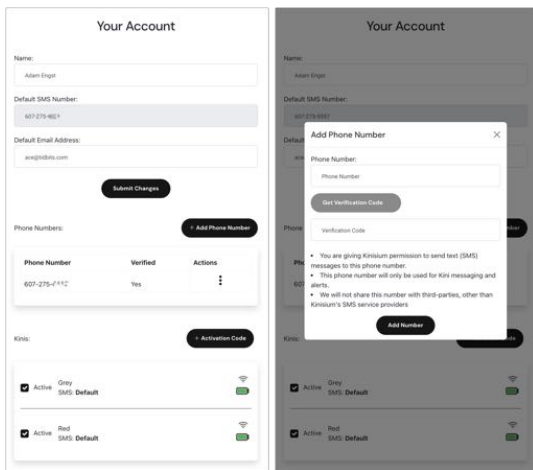


The setup is a touch fussy because no apps are involved. When you turn on the Kini for the first time, it creates a Kini Setup Wi-Fi network. Connect to that from an iPhone, iPad, or Mac and log in with the provided password, after which you enter a 6-character code printed on the Set Up Kini envelope. That adds the Kini to your Kini account and removes the setup network.



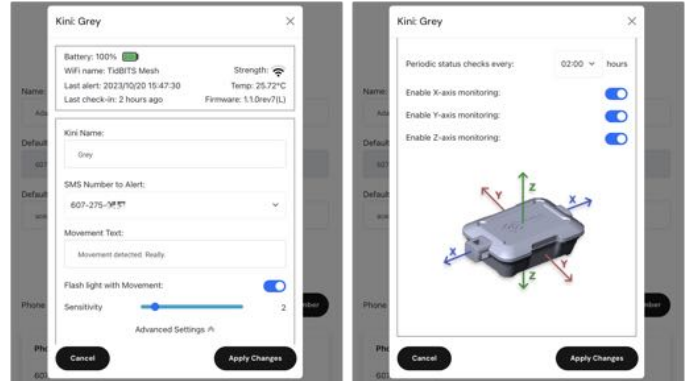
The captive portal page for the KINI Setup network worked perfectly on my iPhone 15 Pro with iOS 17 and M1 MacBook Air running macOS 14 Sonoma, but it wouldn't trigger on my 2020 27-inch iMac under macOS 13 Ventura—early release teething pains. If that happens, you can [navigate directly to the necessary Web page](#).

In your KINI account, you can change your name, phone number, and email address, plus add more phone numbers. However, each KINI can only alert a single phone number at the moment.

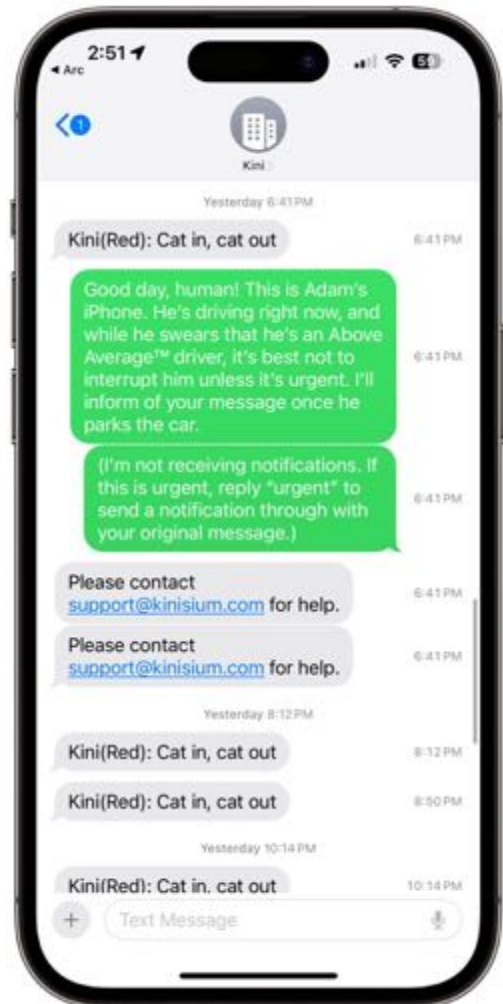


Clicking a KINI at the bottom of the account brings up its settings, where you can change its name, choose which phone number to alert, customize the text you'll receive with every activation, choose whether it should flash an LED with movement, and set the sensitivity (below left). Clicking Advanced Settings at the bottom lets you configure

how often the KINI checks in, regardless of activation, and choose which dimensions should be watched for movement (below right).



## KINI Usage



For testing, I attached a KINI to our cat door (using [removable adhesive gel tape](#)) for a few days since I'm not expecting anyone to mess with my stuff. It

generates too many notifications to leave on for long, but it's fascinating to see when and how often our cat comes and goes. My Sleep Focus keeps the cat's late-night perambulations from waking me up, and Mahboud tells me he's considering adding a feature that would silence a Kini between certain hours, collecting the data for the history but not reporting it.

The only problem I've had is occasional messages from the Kini saying that it failed to report status, presumably due to Wi-Fi communication errors. There's only so much a tiny device can do via Wi-Fi, especially when placed in an unusual location, but Mahboud is working to improve the Wi-Fi sensitivity in firmware, which can be updated. He's also considering a version that can accept an external antenna, which would help users who want to place a Kini closer to the edge of their Wi-Fi coverage zone.

The text messages are one-way—you can't use them to talk back to Kinisium in any way. I didn't think about that until the cat went through her door while I was driving and sent me a message that triggered my automatic Driving Focus reply and, in turn, received an auto-reply from Kinisium, encouraging me to contact the company by email for support.

Although I haven't yet explored automation possibilities surrounding the Kini, the Internet automation service IFTTT has an [SMS text message trigger](#). It might let you work around the limitation of being able to alert only a single phone number and also enable alternative communication channels, such as email. Eventually, I'd like to see Check In-like automation capabilities that alert you if a Kini *doesn't* activate on a preset schedule (see "[iOS 17's Check In Feature Provides Peace of Mind and Could Even Save Lives](#)," 9 October 2023). That's another example of *negative knowledge* and could reveal, for instance, that an elderly relative forgot to open their medicine cabinet and needs a reminder.

I've been trying to think of ways around Kini's monitoring. Imagine you've put one on your liquor cabinet to monitor access by kids. You could

attempt to hide it and be the all-knowing parent, but that won't last long. Or you could hang the Kini from the doorknob in plain sight as a warning. Could a motivated teen circumvent the Kini? Although the Kini may not register very slight and careful movements, I could never move it any useful distance without triggering it. What about disabling Wi-Fi? That delays the notification, of course, but the Kini remembers its motion and reports on it once the Wi-Fi comes back online. It is possible to turn the Kini off with a paperclip without moving it, but it also reports that action. I suspect there's a combination of attacks that would work temporarily, such as disabling Wi-Fi and then destroying the Kini so it can't report in later, but even that might generate some indication about what's happened online. Besides, we're talking about a \$65 device—perfect security costs more because of all the lasers and piranhas.

Finally, if you set up a Kini, it's worth considering what you'll do if it alerts you. The details vary by situation, of course, and may often be just a matter of giving a child a stern lecture. I suggested to Tonya that when we next travel, we could hang a Kini inside the front door to alert us if it opened. A few friends and family members have keys, so it's not inconceivable someone would come in, but then what? We'd feel awkward calling the neighbors if it was a burglar. So perhaps it makes more sense to put one on my iMac and Tonya's Mac mini—even if a friend stopped in for some reason, they wouldn't mess with our computers, which may be the most attractive items in the house to steal. Then, if we got alerts, particularly if we got them from both Macs, we'd know that we should call the police from wherever we were.

Here's hoping we never have to do that because the Kinis let us be confident that no one has messed with our stuff. If ensuring similar peace of mind is desirable—or you're looking for an unusual holiday present for someone who's just a tad paranoid—check out the [Kini Kickstarter](#). 🗑️