

printout

Keystone MacCentral Macintosh Users Group ❖ www.keystonemac.com

Keystone MacCentral November 19th Meeting

Please see your membership email for the links to this month's Zoom meeting or email us at KeystoneMacCentral@mac.com.

During our program this month we plan to discuss

- ❖ How to Create QR Codes
- ❖ Installing Ring Tones
- ❖ Bundle Hunt
- ❖ Mac OS 15.01



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

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by Adam Engst

Apple Intelligence Arrives in macOS 15.1 Sequoia, iOS 18.1, and iPadOS 18.1

In keeping with its WWDC promise of a slow rollout (see “[Examining Apple Intelligence](#),” 17 June 2024), Apple has released macOS 15.1 Sequoia, iOS 18.1, and iPadOS 18.1 with support for the first set of [Apple Intelligence](#) features, with more to come. Accompanying those releases are watchOS 11.1, tvOS 18.1, and visionOS 2.1.

Changes Unrelated to Apple Intelligence

Before I look at the Apple Intelligence features, I want to call out a few unrelated changes in [macOS 15.1 Sequoia](#), the only update for which Apple has published release notes:

- iPhone Mirroring now allows you to drag and drop files, photos, videos, and more between your Mac and iPhone.
- A new option in the App Store app’s settings lets you automatically download and install games and apps to an external drive.
- You can send Game Center friend invites directly from the Contacts app, and Friend Suggestions and receivers can see the invites in the inbox in Settings. These features also appear in iOS 18.1 and iPadOS 18.1.

Despite holding back on the published release notes so far, Apple did call out a few other changes in iOS 18.1 and iPadOS 18.1 when installing the updates:

- Control Center has new controls to add connectivity controls individually and reset your configuration.
- The App Store now lets you use natural language searches.
- Podcasts no longer incorrectly marks unplayed episodes as played.
- 4K videos recorded while the device was warm no longer stutter in playback scrubbing in Photos.

- Digital car keys should now work with vehicles with passive entry after restoring from a backup or transferring directly from another iPhone.
- Apple fixed a bug that could cause iPhone 16 models to restart unexpectedly.

Also, when the AirPods Pro 2 with [firmware update 7B19](#) are used with an iPhone or iPad running iOS 18.1 or iPadOS 18.1 or later, they gain the promised Hearing Test, Hearing Aid, and Hearing Protection features (see “[Apple Releases AirPods 4, Adds Hearing Aid Mode to AirPods Pro 2](#),” 12 September 2024).

watchOS 11.1 also includes a fix for an issue with writing breathing disturbances data to HealthKit. tvOS 18 and visionOS 2 only have bug fixes.

Finally, there are [numerous security fixes](#) in all the new operating systems, along with security updates to the older iOS 17.7.1, iPadOS 17.7.1, macOS 14.7.1, and macOS 13.7.1. None of the vulnerabilities are being exploited in the wild, but with 50 fixes in Sequoia and 27 in iOS 18.1 and iPadOS 18.1, you’ll want to update to take advantage of them.

Initial Apple Intelligence Features

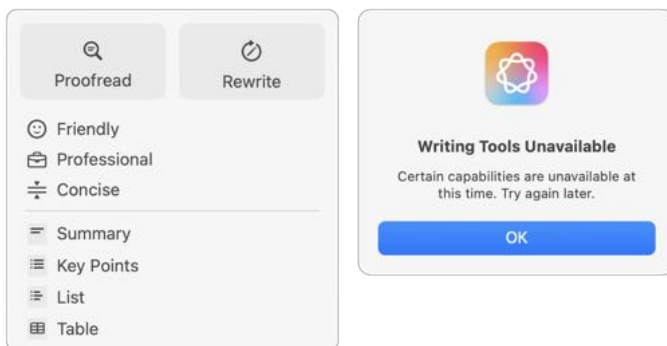
The [initial Apple Intelligence features](#) are the real news surrounding these releases and the main reason you might want to update. However, you may not be able to take advantage of them unless you have new enough devices. Apple Intelligence is available only on M-series Macs, the iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 16 lineups, and iPads with an A17 Pro or any M-series chip. Otherwise-compatible Intel-based Macs and older iPhones and iPads can still upgrade but lack the processing power for Apple Intelligence (see “[The Real System Requirements for Apple’s 2024 Operating Systems](#),” 12 July 2024).

Writing Tools

For some, the most compelling Apple Intelligence features will be Writing Tools, which are available in nearly any app that accepts text. A new Edit > Writing Tools menu appears in most Apple apps and will undoubtedly start to appear in third-party apps as well. Until then, you can usually access Writing Tools by selecting some text, Control-clicking the selection, and looking in the Writing Tools submenu. Capabilities include:

- **Proofread:** The Proofread tool attempts to fix spelling, grammar, and punctuation mistakes. Although Proofread appears to do a decent job (if nowhere near what [Grammarly](#) can do), it walks you through changes only in a few Apple apps like Mail and Messages, making it difficult to use in other apps. In those apps, you have to pore over the original and the rewrite to determine what would change. Nor does it tell you if it has no suggestions. You can replace or copy the suggested revision.
- **Rewrite:** The Rewrite tool suggests different versions of your text, with options to make it friendlier, more professional, or more concise.
- **Summarize:** Along with a straight summary, Writing Tools can also create a list of the key points in your text, make a list based on the selection, and create a table.

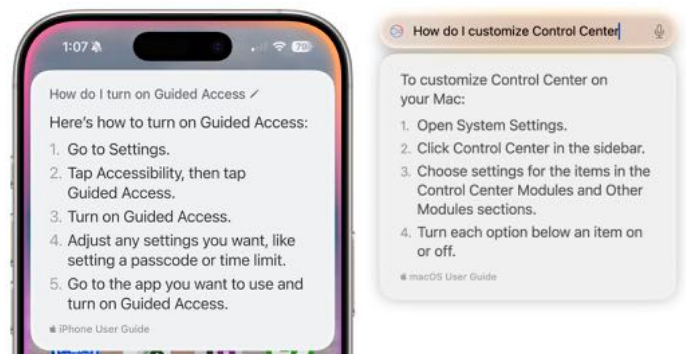
Although I thought all Writing Tools relied on local processing rather than Apple's Private Cloud Compute data centers, when testing the summarization tools, I was informed that "certain capabilities" were unavailable at that time.



Siri Improvements

Apple has redesigned the Siri interface, replacing the animated circle with a glowing light on iPhone and iPad, while on the Mac, it now features a floating lozenge that displays voice input or lets you type Siri commands. Typing to Siri is also available on the iPhone and iPad—double-tap at the bottom of the screen to reveal the text field. I don't love the new Siri interface because of how it makes everything on the iPhone screen go all wobbly; you can eliminate that animation by turning on Settings > Accessibility > Motion > Reduce Motion.

In theory, Siri has a richer language understanding that will let it follow along even if you stumble over your words or change them mid-sentence. Plus, Apple claims Siri maintains conversational context throughout a session. I'm unsure what sort of conversations you could have with Siri that would benefit from these improvements. As far as I can tell, Siri's only new trick is that it knows about the contents of the Mac, iPhone, and iPad user guides, so you can ask it how to accomplish tasks explained in those guides.



So far, I'm underwhelmed. I haven't found any of the purported improvements to make a difference in my Siri usage. Plus, Apple has said nothing about Siri on the HomePod, which is by far the most common destination for my Siri commands.

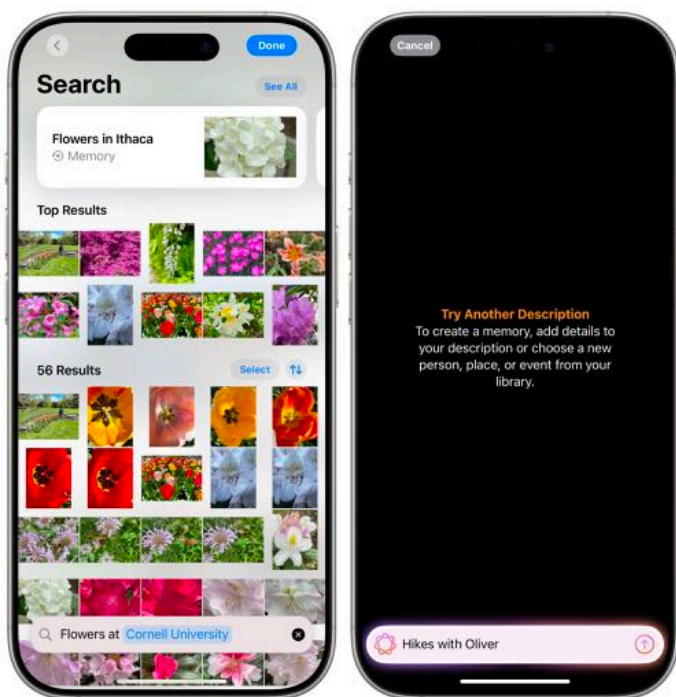
Photos Enhancements

Thanks to Apple Intelligence, Photos gains three new features:

- **Clean Up:** The marquee addition is Clean Up, which can identify and remove distracting people

and objects in your photos. It's not perfect, but in the right conditions, it can work well. I'll be looking more at Clean Up shortly.

- **Descriptive search:** Although Photos has long had a machine-learning-powered search that lets you find photos based on their contents, you can now find photos based on more extensive and natural descriptions. It also seems to perform pretty well.
- **Descriptive memory movies:** The Memories feature in Photos has always left me cold—it's not how I want to interact with my photos—but if you like it, perhaps you'll enjoy creating movies by describing what you want in them. Some of my tests were unsuccessful, presumably due to too few photos.



Priority Messages and Summaries in Mail

In Mail, Apple Intelligence powers a handful of features that might enhance the email experience:

- **Priority:** Mail attempts to identify conversations that are more important to you and display them at the top of the message list. The conversation it chose for me was reasonably important, but oddly, I couldn't display or open the messages.
- **Message summaries:** In the message list, Mail can now summarize the message or conversation rather than showing the first few lines. That's a win and seems to work well.
- **Conversation summaries:** For longer messages and conversations, a Summarize button appears at the top of the message pane. Every time I click it, Apple Intelligence processes briefly and then reports, "Unable to summarize these messages."



- **Smart Replies:** A Smart Reply feature suggests replies in both Mail and Messages. The replies are reasonable but obvious and may be worth using if you were going to write the same thing anyway.

Even though I have Mail configured to access my Gmail and iCloud accounts, I don't use it regularly, so something may be messed up with my installation.

Notification Summaries

As with messages in Mail, Apple Intelligence can summarize notifications, either individual notifications that contain more content than can fit in the notification or stacks of notifications that encapsulate multiple messages or actions. If you

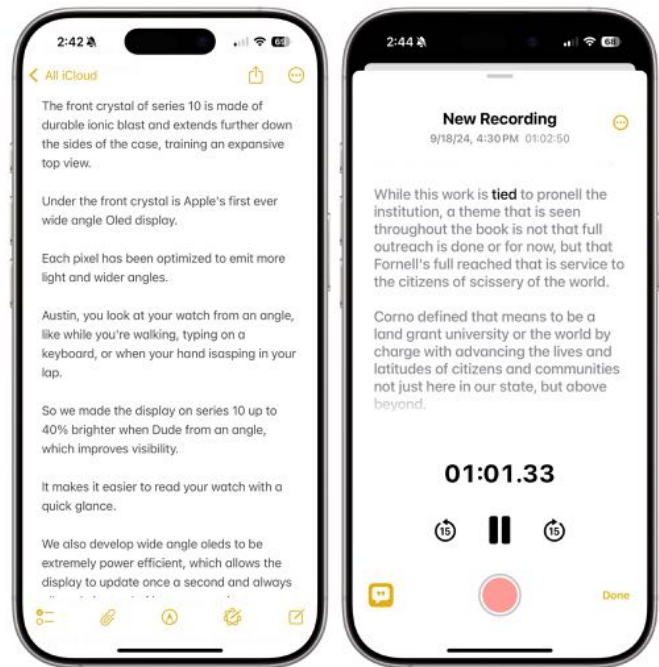
don't like it for certain apps, it's easily turned off in Settings > Notifications > Summarize Previews.



Audio Recording, Transcription, and Summarization

Finally, both the Notes and Phone apps can now record, transcribe, and summarize audio. When you turn on recording in the Phone app, it notifies participants. I've tested this feature in Phone only once, on a customer support call, but the tech's accent was too strong for Apple Intelligence to cope.

I had better transcription luck in Notes. Recording Apple's Glowtime event produced a decent transcript of the talk, partly because the audio was very high quality (I had positioned my iPhone next to the speaker through which the sound was playing). There were still many mistakes, but I found it helpful to be able to search the exported text. A second test, at a public talk about a book to which my mother had contributed, proved less successful because the iPhone had trouble picking up the audio—it was sitting in my lap in the fourth row of a small lecture room. It also failed miserably at nearly all proper names.



The combination of audio and transcript was quite valuable. I appreciated being able to jump around in the audio by tapping within the transcript, and I've returned to the Glowtime transcript several times to confirm what Apple said.

Interestingly, the Writing Tools summaries of the transcripts eliminated many of the more egregious transcription errors, though they introduced other problems. In neither case did I have a use for a summary, so I can't say if it would have been beneficial.

Update or Upgrade?

Should you install macOS 15.1, iOS 18.1, and iPadOS 18.1? If you have already upgraded to macOS 15.0, iOS 18.0, and iPadOS 18.0, yes, update in the next week or so. Apple is still working toward the full feature set it promised for these operating systems at WWDC, and there's no reason to put off playing with Apple Intelligence any longer.

However, if you haven't yet made the jump to macOS 15, iOS 18, and iPadOS 18, I suggest waiting a bit longer. Apple is now promising another release in December with more Apple Intelligence features like ChatGPT integration, Genmoji, and Image Playground. That won't be the final feature release of this generation of operating systems, but it seems like a reasonable compromise between upgrading immediately and waiting for everything to settle down later next year. 🍷

By Adam Engst

Does Limiting an iPhone's Battery Charging to 80% Increase Lifespan?

Thanks to Juli Clover of MacRumors for her year-long experiment to test whether preventing an iPhone 15 Pro Max from charging above 80% would increase battery longevity. With the iPhone 15 line, [Apple added a feature](#) that allows users to prevent their iPhones from charging over a certain percentage. Clover locked the maximum charge at 80% for the past year and has now [reported her findings](#):

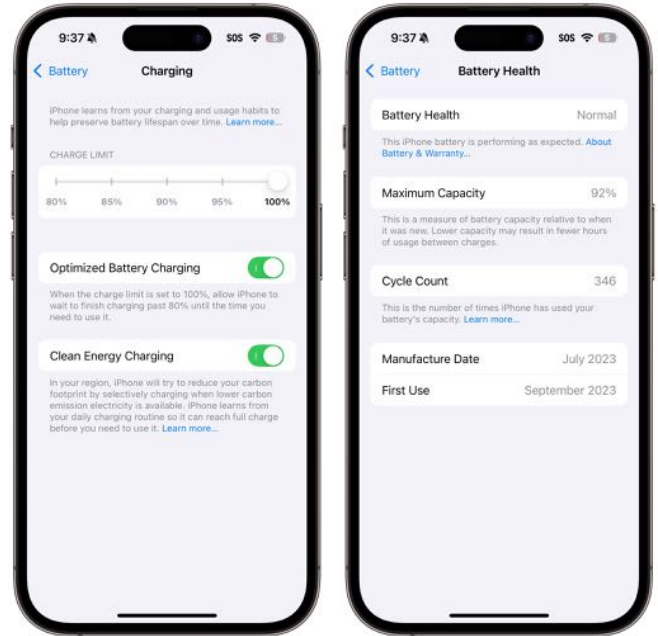
My iPhone 15 Pro Max battery level is currently at 94 percent with 299 cycles. For a lot of 2024, my battery level stayed above 97 percent, but it started dropping more rapidly over the last couple of months.

How much difference did it make? Several of her colleagues at MacRumors with the same iPhone model who charged normally reported slightly lower capacity numbers (87% for 329 cycles and 90% for 271 cycles), suggesting that limiting the maximum charge provided a slight benefit.

(Generally speaking, the more cycles a battery has experienced, the lower its maximum capacity. For reference, Apple defines a charge cycle as using an amount that represents 100% of your battery's capacity, regardless of how it's used over time.)

Curious, I checked Settings > Battery > Battery Health on my iPhone 15 Pro, too, and [Glenn Fleishman](#), [Nick Heer](#), and [John Gruber](#) have also reported the following capacities on iPhone 15 Pros with normal charging:

- John Gruber: 89% with 344 cycles
- Glenn Fleishman: 91% with 411 cycles
- Adam Engst: 92% with 346 cycles
- Nick Heer: 95% with 273 cycles



This anecdotal data suggests that the impact of limiting the maximum charge to 80% may be minor over a one-year period. It's possible that the benefit would be seen only after two or three years, when the iPhone might otherwise need a battery replacement. Apple presumably has better data that suggests that limiting maximum charge might be worth considering for those prioritizing battery longevity over convenience.

The problem with drawing conclusions about battery longevity is that it's a [multi-variable scenario](#). A few that come to mind include:

- Batteries are analog chemical systems, so no two batteries will be identical.
- Heat is a major contributor to battery degradation, so leaving an iPhone in a hot car while at the beach can speed up this process.
- The charging method may play a role, partly because wireless charging generates more heat. For instance, Juli Clover's charging was roughly

70/30 split between wired USB-C charging and wireless MagSafe charging, whereas the majority of my iPhone 15 Pro's charging was via MagSafe (see "[Going All in on MagSafe for the iPhone in the Office, Bedroom, and Car](#)," 6 May 2024). If you're concerned about battery longevity, favor wired charging when possible.

- Charging habits affect battery longevity. The existence of the maximum charging and Optimized Battery Charging options highlights the extent to which lithium-ion batteries don't like being charged to 100% and held there. They also don't like being completely discharged, so try to avoid that.

If you believe intentionally forgoing the top 20% of an iPhone's charge could be awkward, you aren't wrong. Juli Clover wrote:

I left my iPhone at that 80 percent limit and at no point turned the setting off or tweaked it. There were some days when I ran out of battery because I was without a charger for most of the day, and there were other times that I had to bring a battery along to make sure I didn't run out of power. It wasn't always convenient to keep it at 80 percent, but there were days when it didn't have too much of an impact.

My takeaway is that it's seldom worth trying to outthink what Apple has done in iOS to optimize battery charging. For users who prefer convenience without sacrificing much battery longevity, Optimized Battery Charging automatically holds the charge at 80% and finishes only when necessary, making it a good alternative to locking the maximum charge at 80%. Turn it on in Settings > Battery > Charging 

iOS 18.2 Apple Intelligence features for the iPhone 15 Pro and iPhone 16 models

Share AirTag Location With Trusted Friend or Airline

Find My has a new option to Share Item Location with an "airline or trusted person" that can help you locate something that you've misplaced. More than 15 airlines will offer the feature, which will be integrated into each airline's customer service process for locating mishandled or delayed baggage, according to Apple.

Require Screen On for Camera Control

On iPhone 16 models, under "Display & Brightness" in the Settings app, there is a new Camera Control toggle called Require Screen On. When enabled, this setting requires that your iPhone screen is illuminated before a press of the Camera Control button will open the Camera app or a compatible third-party camera app. It's a

handy option if you find yourself pressing the button accidentally.

Lock Auto Exposure and Auto Focus

By applying light pressure on the Camera Control button on iPhone 16 models, you can now lock auto focus and auto exposure settings. The lock remains active until you release your finger from the button.

View Video Fullscreen in Photos

When iOS 18 was released in September, it brought a major redesign to the Photos app on the iPhone, but some of the updates received mixed feedback. Since announcing iOS 18, Apple has made ongoing adjustments to the app, and that looks set to continue in iOS 18.2.

iPhone Mirroring With Hotspot

With iOS 18.2, you can now use iPhone Mirroring even while your iPhone's hotspot connection is shared with your Mac. Previously, connecting your Mac through Personal Hotspot prevented the use of iPhone Mirroring.

Track Safari Download Progress

With iOS 18.2, you can keep an eye on Safari download progress right from your iPhone's Lock Screen. On iPhone 14 Pro models and newer, it also appears in the Dynamic Island.

Adjust Media Volume on Lock Screen

Prior to 2022, the volume slider was a familiar presence on the Lock Screen whenever media was playing. When Apple released iOS 16, however, it removed the control without explaining the reason, much to the dismay of many users. Thankfully, Apple is bringing the control back as an option in iOS 18.2.

Play Daily Sudoku Puzzles

With iOS 18.2, Apple News+ subscribers in the U.S. will gain access to daily sudoku puzzles, offering easy, moderate, and challenging difficulty levels. A scoreboard will keep track of your sudoku statistics, including the total number of puzzles solved and your fastest completion times for each difficulty level. This addition will be the fourth puzzle game available with an Apple News+ subscription, joining Crossword, Crossword Mini, and Quartiles.

Easily Manage Default Apps

iOS 18.2 includes a new "Default Apps" section that can be found in the Settings app, which can be used to manage your default apps for the iPhone.

In the latest beta, US users can access the Default App interface to choose their preferred Email, Call Filtering, Browser, and Passwords, and Keyboards.

Adjust Camera Control Double-Click Speed

A new option in Settings → Accessibility → Camera Control allows you to adjust the double-click speed

for the Camera Control button. The available options are Default, Slow, and Slower. The settings are added alongside existing options to adjust the speed of the double light press and the force of the light press.

Categorize Emails in Mail

In iOS 18.2, Apple is introducing an updated version of the Mail app for built-in categorization. Mail Categories effectively organize your incoming emails into distinct sections for easier navigation.

Important emails are grouped in a "Primary" category, while other types are categorized into three additional sections. The "Transactions" section streamlines access to receipts, orders, and shipping information, allowing you to quickly locate your purchases. Meanwhile, the "Updates" section gathers newsletters, appointment reminders, and various subscription emails, keeping you informed. Lastly, the "Promotions" category highlights special offers and promotional messages, to make sure you don't miss out on any deals.

Generate Images Using Prompts

Image Playground is a totally new app designed to help you create images based on your ideas. Similar to ChatGPT, you can generate images by providing a prompt, and Apple offers suggested categories like themes, locations, and costumes to inspire your creativity. The app specializes in stylized content, meaning the generated images won't be realistic, but you can choose from Animation and Illustration styles.

Additionally, you can include likenesses of friends and family by pulling images directly from your Photos app. While Image Playground functions as a standalone app, it can also be integrated into apps like Notes and Messages and added to third-party applications.

Get an iPhone Charge Time Estimate

In iOS 18.2, newly discovered code suggests you may be able to get notified about how long it will take your iPhone to reach a specific charge level. This would build upon iOS 18's existing battery health capabilities, which include new options to

limit maximum charging to 80%, 85%, 90%, or 95% to help preserve long-term battery health. iOS 18 also now alerts users when their iPhone is being charged with a slower-than-optimal charger.

Create Custom Emoji Characters

Genmoji are akin to traditional emojis but offer enhanced functionality. With Genmoji, you can create virtually any emoji you desire, freeing you from the limitations of the standard emoji set.

While they function like emojis on Apple devices, they are not encoded characters from the Unicode Consortium. Instead, Apple developed a unique API for Genmoji, ensuring they display correctly in any application that supports rich text. You can generate a Genmoji by providing a description of your desired design, and you even have the option to create Genmoji that resemble individuals from your Photos library.

Query ChatGPT via Siri

Apple is collaborating with OpenAI to incorporate ChatGPT into the iPhone, iPad, and Mac. This partnership allows Siri to handle complex requests by referring them to ChatGPT, such as generating images or creating text from scratch. With the Writing Tools feature, ChatGPT can produce and illustrate original content, expanding its capabilities beyond what Siri can currently offer.

View ChatGPT Limits

As part of Apple's collab with OpenAI, iPhone users can access ChatGPT for free but are limited to a small number of requests using the latest ChatGPT-4 turbo engine and a limited number of

DALL-E 3 image generations. To that extent, the Apple Intelligence & Siri section in Settings will display ChatGPT limits for free users, but it also provides an option to upgrade to the paid ChatGPT Plus plan. Once these limits are reached, access reverts to a more basic version of ChatGPT, which is less costly for OpenAI to maintain. Full access requires a ChatGPT Plus subscription, priced at \$19.99 per month.

Visual Intelligence

If you have an iPhone 16, you can make use of Visual Intelligence, a feature that offers insights about your surroundings. For instance, when you open the camera and aim it at a restaurant, you'll receive details such as opening hours and reviews.

Additional capabilities of Visual Intelligence include reading text aloud, identifying phone numbers and addresses for adding to Contacts, copying text, and summarizing information. Users can also search Google to find where to purchase a specific item they see, and by pointing the camera at an object, they can access further information through ChatGPT.

More Options in Writing Tools

Apple is upgrading the Writing Tools feature to include options for more open-ended modifications. In iOS 18.1, Writing Tools can only adjust the tone to friendly, professional, or a simplified version. However, with the release of iOS 18.2, users will be able to specify the desired tone or content changes, such as incorporating more action words or transforming an email into a poem. 🗑️

