

printout

Keystone MacCentral Macintosh Users Group ❖ www.keystonemac.com

Keystone MacCentral February 18th 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
- ♥ Apple Maps: Your Ultimate Navigation Companion
 - ◆ iOS 18 Photos App: Disaster or Dream?
How to Fix It and Customize It!
 - ♥ How To Use the Redesigned iOS 18 Photos App

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 © 2025, Keystone MacCentral, 310 Somerset Drive, Shiresmanstown, PA 17011.

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OS X.2 Updates Boost Apple Intelligence and More

Apple has released [macOS 15.2 Sequoia](#), [iOS 18.2](#), and [iPadOS 18.2](#) with new and improved Apple Intelligence features, plus [watchOS 11.2](#), [visionOS 2.2](#), [tvOS 18.2](#), and [HomePod Software 18.2](#) with other improvements.

The Apple Intelligence updates introduce ChatGPT integration with Siri and Writing Tools, the Image Playground app, custom Genmoji on the iPhone and iPad, and Image Wand for Apple Pencil users on the iPad. Writing Tools lets you describe how you'd like something rewritten rather than limiting you to canned styles. iPhone 16 users can also use the Camera Control button to learn more about their surroundings using Visual Intelligence.

Despite Apple's emphasis on Apple Intelligence, the other new features in this beefy set of updates may have a more significant impact on your overall experience. Let's examine those first.

Shared macOS, iOS, and iPadOS Improvements

As is usually the case, many of the new capabilities in Apple's apps and services cut across the company's three main operating systems. Shared improvements include:

- Photos displays the Favorites album in the Utilities collection as well as the Pinned Collections for easier access. You can also clear the album history for Recently Viewed and Recently Shared.
- Safari offers a few new background images to customize its Start Page, tries to use secure HTTPS on all websites, and simplifies import and export for history, bookmarks, and passwords.
- Find My allows you to share item locations with trusted third parties (see "[Find My Will Let You Share Lost Item Locations with Anyone—Including Airlines](#)," 25 November 2024).

- Apple Music and Apple TV now support natural language search, which lets you describe what you're looking for using any combination of categories, such as genres, moods, actors, decades, and more. Now, you can ask Siri to play "1960s soul Christmas music" with theoretically better results. This also works on the HomePod once you update to HomePod Software 18.2.
- Podcasts adds Favorite Categories to simplify finding new shows. (On the iPhone, tap your avatar in the upper right, then tap Manage Favorite Categories to select some, after which a Categories item appears in your Library. On the Mac, Categories appears on the sidebar.) Podcasts also now personalizes the Search page to highlight the most relevant categories and collections.
- Apple News+ subscribers now get three difficulty levels of Sudoku.
- Stocks provides pre-market price quotes for tracking the NASDAQ and NYSE tickers prior to market open.

macOS 15.2 Sequoia Improvements

New options that are unique to the Mac under [macOS 15.2](#) include:

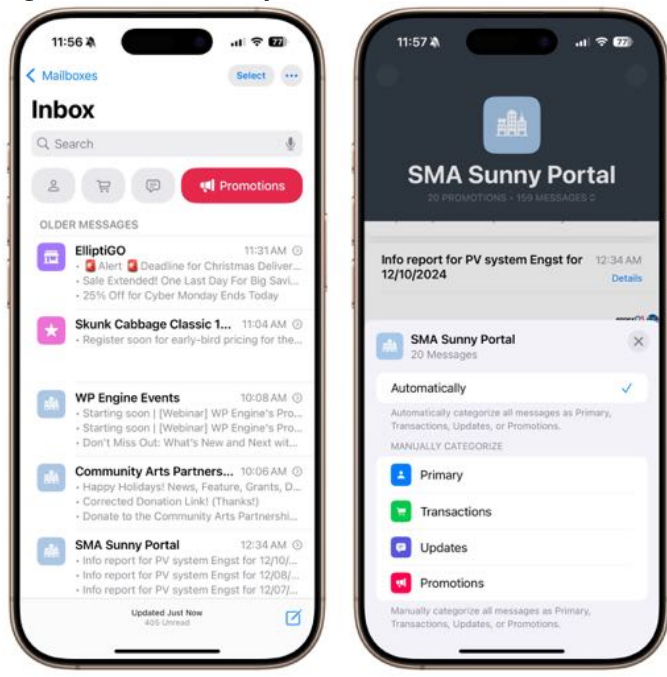
- Presenter preview lets you choose a window or the full screen before you share it when connecting to an external display or using AirPlay.
- System Settings > Control Center enables you to place an icon for Weather in your menu bar so you can get current conditions and click through to forecasts.

macOS 15.2 also includes fixes for [42 security vulnerabilities](#). To protect older versions, Apple released macOS 14.7.2 Sonoma, which includes fixes for [25 vulnerabilities](#), and macOS 13.7.2 Ventura, which addresses [22 vulnerabilities](#).

iOS 18.2 and iPadOS 18.2 Improvements

You'll find even more noteworthy additions on the iPhone and iPad using [iOS 18.2](#) and [iPadOS 18.2](#):

- Mail Categorization on the iPhone (but not the iPad, oddly) sorts your email into buckets for Primary, Transactions, Updates, and Promotions. In my experience, its accuracy is poor, particularly with the distinction between Promotions and Updates, but it's easy to retrain.



- Mail's new Digest View groups all the messages from one sender into a single collection for easy browsing (see above).
- Photos improves video viewing by letting you scrub frame by frame and adding a setting to turn off auto-looping video playback. It also fixes a bug that prevented recently captured photos from appearing immediately in the All Photos grid.
- Safari gains a File Download Live Activity that shows the progress of a long download in the Dynamic Island on the iPhone's Home Screen.
- Voice Memos on the iPhone 16 Pro models now supports layered recording, so you can add vocals over an existing song idea without needing headphones. Apparently, this is a [big deal for musicians](#).

- Hearing Test on the AirPods Pro 2 is now supported in Cyprus, Czechia, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Romania, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. Additionally, the Hearing Aid feature now works in the United Arab Emirates.
- Camera no longer degrades Night mode photos captured with long exposures on the iPhone 16 Pro models.

iOS 18.2 and iPadOS 18.2 address [20 security vulnerabilities](#). Apple also released iPadOS 17.7.3 with fixes for [14 of these vulnerabilities](#); I don't know why iOS 17.7.3 wasn't released alongside it.

watchOS 11.2 Improvements

The least impressive update of the collection comes from watchOS 11.2, which has only two additions that most TidBITS readers won't notice:

- Tides expands map support for tidal conditions and coastal locations in China.
- Camera Remote can now pause iPhone video recordings.

watchOS 11.2 addresses [15 security vulnerabilities](#), though all are in shared code.

visionOS 2.2 Improvements

For some, [visionOS 2.2](#)'s changes might make the Vision Pro worth another look:

- Mac Virtual Display offers two new aspect ratios: 21:9 and 32:9, the latter of which is equivalent to two 5K displays next to each other. This feature may make the Vision Pro more compelling to someone who wants to use it for a massive Mac desktop while traveling.
- Mac audio can be routed directly to the Vision Pro.
- Apple TV on the Vision Pro allows sports multitaskers to watch up to five Major League Soccer or Major League Baseball games simultaneously with Multiview.
- SharePlay lets you watch live sporting events with others. Safari can display spatial photos and videos embedded on Web pages. visionOS 2.2 addresses [12 security vulnerabilities](#), again in shared code.

With [tvOS 18.2](#), the Apple TV 4K picks up a few enhancements:

- Screen Savers adds Snoopy and Woodstock animations that adapt to the day, weather, and holidays. If only the featured photos screen saver didn't obscure images with an entirely unnecessary clock.
- Enhance Dialogue works with the second-generation HomePod to help you hear speech more clearly over background sounds.
- Cinematic playback on compatible projectors and displays supports 21:9 and other cinematic aspect ratios for home theaters. You also get ultra-widescreen viewing for FaceTime calls. However, cinematic playback is only available on the third-generation Apple TV 4K.

tvOS 18.2 eliminates [15 security vulnerabilities](#) that appear to be the same as the watchOS versions.

HomePod Software 18.2 Improvements

Along with Enhance Dialogue when paired with an Apple TV, [HomePod Software 18.2](#) provides one important new capability:

- Siri supports the new Apple Music natural language search, so you can describe what you want to hear using any combination of categories, such as genre, mood, decade, or activity.

Apple Intelligence Additions

With these releases, Apple continues its phased rollout of Apple Intelligence features, with many more of the promised features making their debut.

Note that Apple Intelligence features only work on a Mac with Apple silicon, an iPhone 15 Pro or any iPhone 16 model, or an iPad equipped with an M-series chip or the newest iPad mini featuring the A17 Pro. The device and Siri language must be set to localized English for Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the UK, or the US.

Apple says Mac users in the EU can access Apple Intelligence when using a compatible device with supported settings and languages, and iPhone and iPad users in the EU will start to get Apple Intelligence features in April 2025.

Apple Intelligence features, Apple says that future updates will give Siri access to personal context and onscreen awareness for tailored responses, plus enable it to take action in external apps. Priority Notifications will give preference to your most important notifications, and Image Playground will add a Sketch style.

We'll have more in-depth coverage of some of these features in separate articles, but here's a brief overview of what's available now:

- Image Playground: An entirely new app, Image Playground lets you create images using text descriptions—as you swipe left, it keeps creating new possibilities. Images can be created from scratch or in the likeness of a person from a photo. Deepfakes won't be happening with Image Playground since you're limited to two styles: Animation, described as “a modern 3-D animated look,” and Illustration, “which offers images with simple shapes, clear lines, and colorblocking.” Along with the Image Playground app, you can create images directly in Messages, Freeform, Keynote, and others. Images remain in your library and sync across all your devices.



- Genmoji: With Genmoji, you can use text descriptions to create custom emoji. Invoke the feature by tapping the button to the right of the search field in the Emoji keyboard, then describe your desired emoji. As with Image Playground, you can keep swiping left to generate more

possibilities. Tap an emoji to insert it, and remember that if you're sending it in Messages, it will be large if it's in a message by itself but small if it's added to text. Created Genmoji are added to your emoji collection, but they're actually stickers, so you can remove them by tapping the @ button in Messages, tapping Stickers, and using touch-and-hold on a Genmoji to access the Remove button.



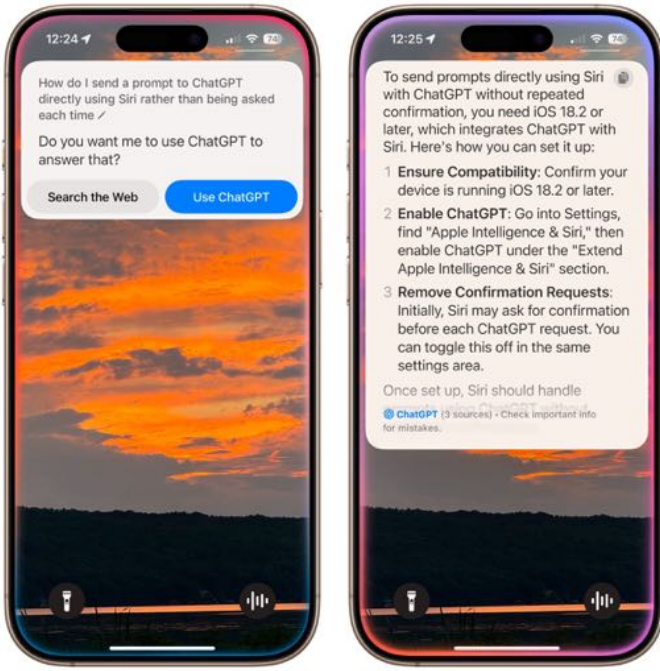
- Image Wand: Notes now provides an Image Wand tool for iPad users who take notes with an Apple Pencil. Select the tool, circle a rough sketch, and Image Wand turns it into a polished image. If your circle includes text, Image Wand tries to consider when building the final image.



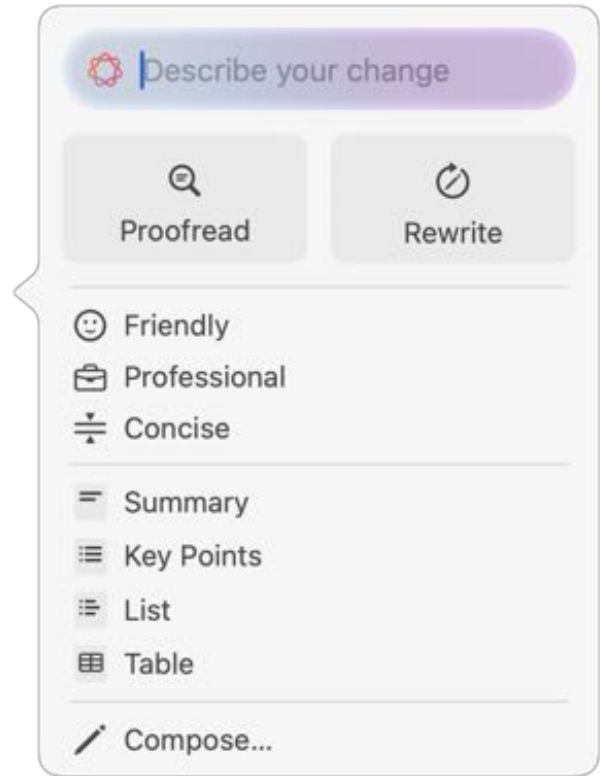
- Visual Intelligence on the iPhone 16: With iOS 18.2, the Camera Control button gains superpowers. Press and hold it (whenever the Camera app isn't already open, since that will trigger video recording), and Visual Intelligence presents Ask and Search buttons on either side of the shutter button. You can tap either button to ask ChatGPT about the image or perform a Google image search. Press the Camera Control button again or tap the shutter button to freeze the image in case you can't immediately tap Ask or Search.



- ChatGPT integration with Siri: Many people hoped that integrating ChatGPT would make Siri less stupid, but it may have instead muddied the waters. Siri can send queries to ChatGPT, but unless you explicitly specify that, Siri's responses can mix its own answers with ChatGPT's, leading to random and inexplicable results. The interface is also awkward because you generally speak to Siri, but there's no option to have ChatGPT's responses read back to you. Additionally, you cannot scroll back to any response before the most recent one without using the ChatGPT app or website. I plan to write more about issues with Siri and ChatGPT soon (see "[Functional and Conceptual Pitfalls in Siri's ChatGPT Integration](#)," 3 December 2024).



• Writing Tools: Adding ChatGPT to Writing Tools is likely a bigger win. The new Compose option taps ChatGPT to generate content wherever you're writing, and it can also use ChatGPT's image-generation capabilities to add images. Writing Tools also lets users describe their own changes to selected text (including recasting it as a poem, for example) instead of relying solely on the canned options to make the text friendlier, more professional, or more concise.



Should You Update? Should You Upgrade?

[After the initial publication of this article, Shirt Pocket Software reported that macOS 15.2 prevents SuperDuper from making bootable backups (see [“macOS 15.2 Sequoia Breaks Bootable Backups in SuperDuper,”](#) 16 December 2024). Despite what I say below, until Apple fixes the bug or we learn more about what's going on, anyone relying on a bootable backup—as opposed to a data-only backup—should hold off updating or upgrading. — Adam]

The answer to both questions is now yes. For those who have already upgraded to this year's crop of Apple operating systems, these updates bring numerous new features, a few bug fixes, and security updates. Apart from waiting a few days to make sure nothing unexpectedly ugly crops up, I see no reason not to update.

What if you've been waiting in the wings to upgrade? I've had no qualms about recommending upgrades for everything besides Macs. I haven't

encountered any notable problems with any of those operating systems. Nor has macOS 15 Sequoia proved problematic in my testing, but I'm more cautious in recommending Mac upgrades because it's far more likely that someone would rely on an app that hasn't yet been updated or a piece of hardware that isn't compatible.

The main issues that remained after macOS 15.1 revolved around networking—specifically interactions with Apple's built-in firewall and VPNs. For instance, Objective Development's Little Snitch ran afoul of [two bugs](#) in Apple's Network Extension framework. Apple said nothing about such fixes in macOS 15.2's release notes, but that means little—the company often fails to call out general fixes.

Those relying on a VPN or firewall should wait until compatibility has been confirmed, but I think it's now safe for most others to upgrade to Sequoia. Along with a positive personal experience, my consultant friends generally recommend upgrades to their clients. Plus, the holiday break often provides some time to upgrade and explore new features when you aren't faced with work deadlines.

Please don't interpret the fact that I'm saying you can upgrade to mean that you must upgrade now. The main downside to putting it off for another few months is not being able to take advantage of new features. But as always, don't delay too long. My experience is that the longer the wait, the more likely problems are to crop up after upgrading and the more trouble you'll have adjusting to all the changes. 🗑️

By Adam Engst

Functional and Conceptual Pitfalls in Siri's ChatGPT Integration

Apple has integrated ChatGPT into Siri with the second set of Apple Intelligence features that debuted in this week's operating system releases (see "[iOS X.2 Updates Boost Apple Intelligence and More](#)," 11 December 2024). Don't get too excited.

I've been trying to use this feature in the betas and now in the release versions of macOS 15.2 and iOS 18.2, and if anything, it has increased my frustration when interacting with Siri. Worse, I fear that some deeper issues may argue against the integration of Siri and ChatGPT.

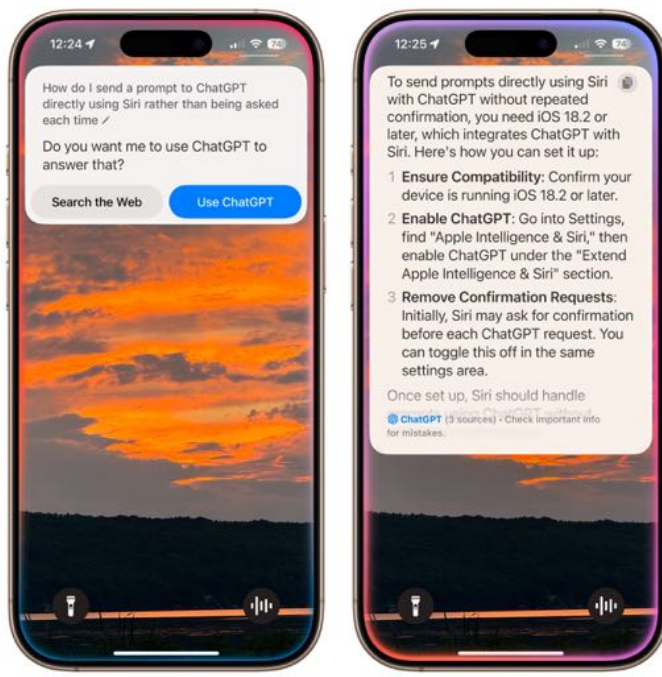
Functional Problems

A few of the functional problems I've encountered include:

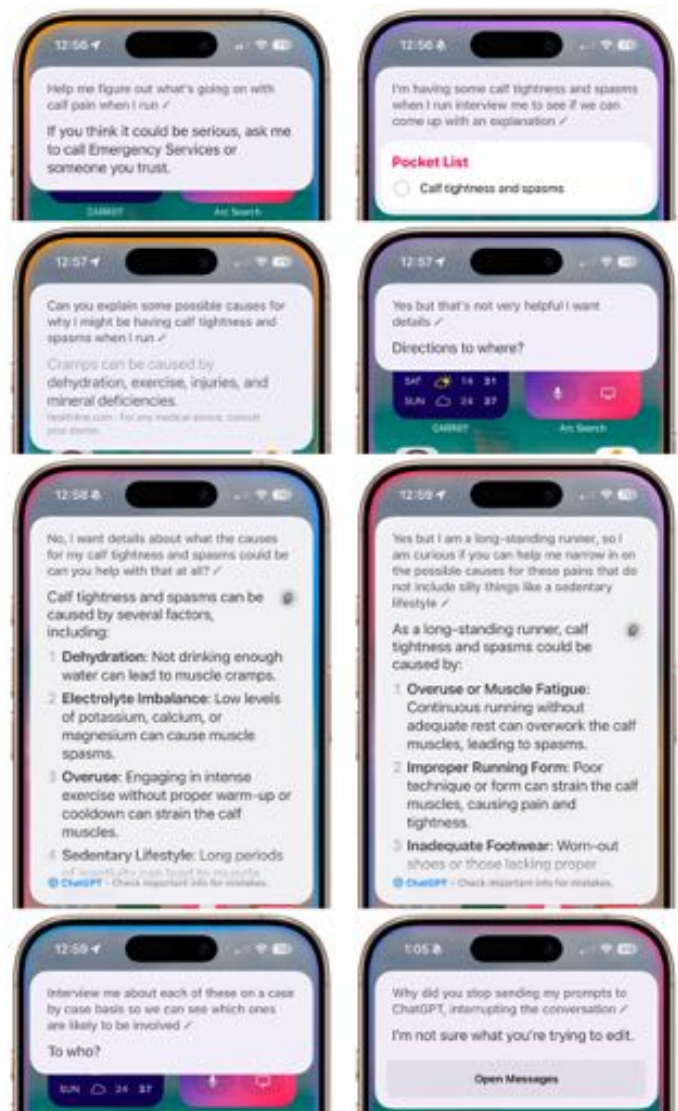
- You must enable ChatGPT separately for each device, so the first time you issue an involved

query to Siri on a new device, your query will fail, and you'll be prompted to enable ChatGPT. It doesn't feel welcoming.

- On my M1 MacBook Air, I am continually told that ChatGPT is unavailable and to try again later, even while it works fine on my iPhone 16 Pro. My MacBook Air is seemingly cursed because [Apple Intelligence summarization never works](#) on it, either. A call to Apple support is in my future.
- For privacy reasons, Siri asks if you want to use ChatGPT on each prompt that goes beyond what Siri can answer internally or with a simple search. That's annoying, but you can eliminate the confirmation step in Settings > Apple Intelligence & Siri > ChatGPT > Confirm ChatGPT Requests.



- At least ChatGPT got the general area of Settings right.
- On my M1 MacBook Air, triggering Siri by clicking its Dock icon brings up Type to Siri, and I have to click the microphone button to be able to dictate to it. That's a change: on my 27-inch iMac, which doesn't support Apple Intelligence, clicking the Siri button causes Siri to listen to the microphone instantly.
- On the iPhone, you can invoke Siri by holding the side button or using "Hey Siri." However, if you want to continue the conversation with ChatGPT, you may find that Siri doesn't always listen while its splooshy animation jiggles around the edge of the screen. Holding the side button down was more reliable but more awkward. Similar animations appear at times when you can't dictate, too, so you can't assume fancy graphics mean Siri is listening.
- Depending on what words you use, Siri may give you a seemingly random response or provide Web search results rather than allowing you to engage with ChatGPT. Those random responses may even come during a discussion with ChatGPT. To ensure your prompts go to ChatGPT, say its name somewhere in your prompt.



- Although you can talk to ChatGPT using Siri, its responses always come back as text. That's fine in many cases, but anyone accustomed to ChatGPT's Advanced Voice Mode (where ChatGPT provides spoken responses) will be disappointed.
- The longer your prompt to ChatGPT, the more likely it is that Siri will stop listening at some point and send whatever it has up to that point. If you think it's irritating when people interrupt you while you're speaking, just wait until Siri indicates it's bored with what you're saying.
- There's no way to review the ChatGPT transcript to refer to previous responses—you can see only the last response. However, if you sign into your ChatGPT account in Settings > Apple Intelligence & Siri > ChatGPT, you can view the full transcripts of all your chats. (Signing into my ChatGPT

account also fails on the M1 MacBook Air. Cursed, I say!) At least you can delete abortive transcripts that you mistakenly triggered with Siri.

Deeper Concerns

As frustrating as these issues are, I have deeper concerns. Is Siri a good way to interact with ChatGPT? Will increasing the number of ways Siri can mess up reduce our desire to use it? We hoped Siri's Apple Intelligence enhancements—and particularly the ChatGPT integration—would make Siri less frustrating. Might the reverse be true?

Apple markets Siri as a digital assistant, capable of carrying out simple commands and performing highly directed searches. In my experience, Siri works fairly well for playing music using artist names, controlling HomeKit devices, setting timers, and making reminders. Some searches, such as asking about tomorrow's weather, also work reasonably well.

But using Siri to trigger Web searches is frustrating, particularly if you become accustomed to using Siri on a HomePod. Such prompts usually generate, "I've found some Web results. I can show them to you if you ask again from your iPhone." rather than a useful response. Also, although Apple has made slight improvements in Siri's ability to maintain context in a conversation of late, we have 13 years of experience in failure with anything but single, separate commands. If Siri heads off down an incorrect response path, our only recourse is to shut it up with, "Hey Siri, stop," and then issue a differently worded request rather than redirecting the conversation.

In contrast, ChatGPT cannot carry out commands of any sort, and it's not a search engine, although OpenAI recently gave paying ChatGPT Plus users access to such capabilities. Much has been written about how generative AI systems get facts wrong and make things up, and that's not wrong—if you want to search the Web, use a search engine.



ChatGPT is far more valuable for analyzing data, creating content, and exploring unfamiliar topics. It's designed for conversation, with follow-up queries, comments, and additional information necessary for optimal results. Siri and ChatGPT simply don't do the same sort of things.

Apple doesn't want us to anthropomorphize Siri, but that's nearly impossible when speaking to a digital assistant that responds with a natural-sounding voice. So when Siri responds randomly, sometimes stops listening to you before you're done speaking, and is generally a lousy conversationalist, it's impossible to avoid the feelings of pique that a person with similar conversational traits would trigger. You wouldn't keep trying with such a person, and many of us won't keep trying with Siri either.

What's up with Siri's seemingly random responses? In my conversation above, Siri suggested I call emergency services, created a reminder, did a Web search, thought I was asking for driving directions, and was just generally confused a few times. Yes, my prompts were an attempt to speak naturally, but isn't Siri supposed to be able to handle that now?

If Apple Intelligence is going to improve Siri, it has to understand what's being asked and do something sensible. In the past, Siri's failure mode was mostly binary—it either did what you wanted or failed in a predictable way. With Apple Intelligence, Siri seems primed to fail in ever broader and more unpredictable ways, which could reduce our enthusiasm for using it for even simple tasks.

Apple will undoubtedly keep working on Siri, but I worry that it will be too little, too late. From experience, I know that I'm unlikely to retry a particular task with Siri after failing enough times, as has been the case with trying to add text to a note in Notes. 🗑️