

A quick guide to iPhone OS 3.0

What, why, who, how explained

by Rob Kerr published on 18 June 2009

What is it?

It is the long awaited major Apple software update to the iPhone and iPod touch that brings a host of new features and abilities that either haven't been seen, or weren't available before to the Apple device users.

What are the variations of the technology?

There are really just two variations to the Apple update, a free update to the iPhone and a chargeable version for the iPod touch.

There may also be some slight variations to the handset version, depending on what the actual mobile phone network may support. Not all carriers around the world will be capable of handling some of the more advanced features of this update.

Also some of the more phone-centric functions will not work on the iPod touch, seeing as that device is missing those key hardware components.

Why should I care?

Version 3.0 of the operating system is said to have resolved many of the issues and features that the handset has lacked since its arrival on the scene back in 2007. Some of these abilities are standard in all mobile phone operating systems and have been for many years, they just weren't present on the iPhone.

One of the new features that is included in this latest update is the ability to cut and paste text and images from place to place. This apparently was a much requested item from users and has been missing since the first iteration of the iPhone. Now users can, for example, select text from a web page on the iPhone's browser and copy and paste it straight into an email. This is an ability other mobiles have had and for a number of years, it is perhaps why this feature may have



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drawn a lot of criticism for not being present beforehand. Apple has mentioned there were security risks in the past, as to why this has taken so long to be included, but haven't really offered any more of an explanation than that.

Another inclusion is the ability to send multimedia messages or MMS for the very first time. In essence this basically means an iPhone user can send a text message with rich multimedia content, such as images, pictures or even audio, once again being a standard feature on many other phones.

Many users have found the way of entering text on an iPhone cumbersome to say the least, especially when they've experienced other full touch widescreen displays that can be turned sideways to produce a much larger onscreen keyboard. This landscape way of typing is now an option to users on version 3.0, which should be popular as it also was one of the most requested features of the virtual keyboard for the OS.

Bluetooth has been a part of the iPhone, only never really used to its fullest potential in the past. On the newest update, stereo Bluetooth has been enabled for listening to wireless audio from the handset. This now opens up a much wider use for the mobile, not to mention the possibilities of accessories and ways of enjoying music and films without being tethered to the handset by a wire.

Operating systems such as Windows Mobile have been able to support mobile phones being used as USB dongles for a while. Effectively this turns a handset into a mobile broadband modem for a laptop or netbook, allowing internet access. The ability, under the name 3G tethering, has now become a part of the recent update by Apple. This just further extends the usefulness of the iPhone to portable computer users away from the likes of Wi-Fi, or an Ethernet socket. Although it's become apparent not every network around the world that carries the handset will support this addition, the majority of them will do so.

There are other notable additions to the new software, such as a new search function, other notifications - not just from the arrival of mail, to the possibilities of voice memo recording and peer to peer gaming.

What's a good example in practice?

The update can be seen on the iPhone or the iPod touch, or even the upcoming iPhone 3G S which will already have version 3.0 installed by default. This enables the handset to access all of these new features from the start, with the likes of video recording now being possible.

Is there a competing technology that I should be aware of?

Other phones have had many of these features and for many years, the next versions possibly being ahead of Apple's abilities, seeing as they're late in joining them on an even keel.

Not so much competing, but the iPod touch has also received a chargeable update with many of the same features that the iPhone has seen, as it runs more or less the same operating system. The iPod touch update will miss out on the phone-centric items, which would be redundant on that platform anyway.

This software revamp allows for the buying and downloading of TV shows, movies and audio-books straight on to the device over Wi-Fi. This ability is also seen in the iPhone update too, which means both devices have direct access to the iTunes repository but only from Wi-Fi and not over a mobile phone network.

Much like iPod shuffles and other devices from known manufacturers, the ability to shake the iPod touch to change the music or items is now present in this update. This utilises for the first time the accelerometer of the device, which the touch also uses to detect when the handset is turned on its side for displaying images.

What is in store for the future?

The update from the previous version of 2.2.1 to 3.0 is a very significant one, what's next could be

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to bring in new aspects that aren't already seen on other mobile phones, whilst improving the qualities that are already there.