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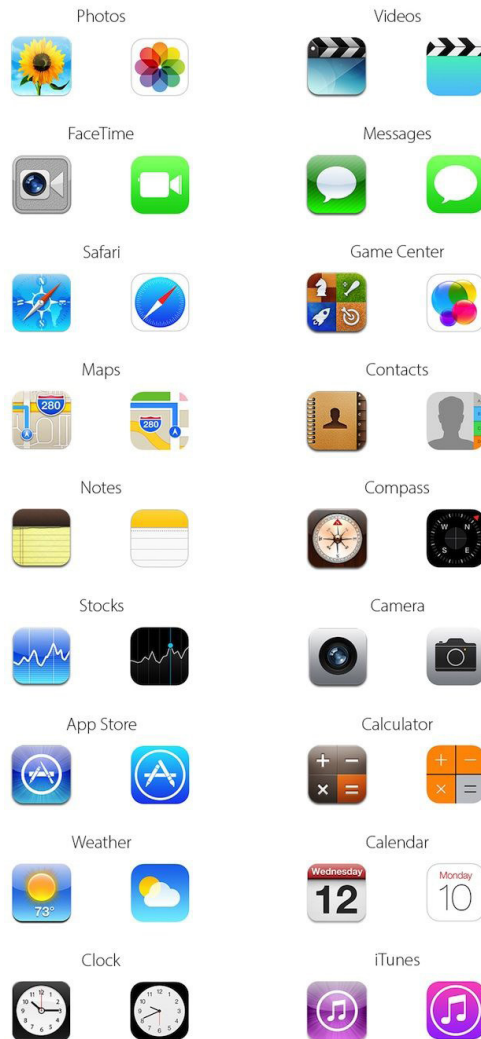
# Iconic evolution

From stale... to smart



# Iconic evolution

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Icons. Icons are seen everywhere in this digital world, like our computers, games, social networking sites and our very own mobile phones. Despite their tiny size, they function as a much more bigger aspect in conveying a certain message to the viewers. While an icon may look simple and easy to create, there is much more that goes into processing one. Apple is widely known across the world: first, because of its revolutionary invention of a non-button mobile phone; second, for its highly expensive prices that might disappoint most of the consumers. While most people buy iPhones just for the sake of it, the visual design aspect of it is pretty much neglected.

When the first generation of iPhone was launched, the app icons were mostly photographic and straightforward, causing a less professional look. The icons were ordinary and obvious and less stimulating to view, for example, the iMessage icon straight out said "SMS" on a thought bubble. It did not have a specific colour scheme to follow, but most of the icons consisted of dull and cool colours.

The bubble effect was highly used in every app icon, in an attempt to give a 3D effect. Icons like Safari, Mail and Phone had a translucent image background that made the foreground, i.e, the compass, envelope and phone icon, respectively, stand out.

The attempt to make the icons look aesthetic and uniform, was barely considered, examining the first generation icons.

However, throughout the release of new iPhone generations, there was subtle changes in the icons. For example, the iMessage icon changed in 2009 for the iPhone 3GS. The word "SMS" was taken out from the icon. A slightly larger change was seen in iPhone 4S when the icons had a minimised bubble effect and some icons like the Maps icon had changed.

It was when the iPhone 5 was introduced, when there was major change to the icons. The icons were flattened and the bubble effect was completely removed, producing glyph-like-icons. Apple created a colour palette for its icons. The colours were

# Apple's app icon colour palette

bright and vibrant. These colours were even used for the covers of iPhone 5C. Photos icon was changed from a flower image to an abstract flower consisting of rounded rectangles as petals, each in different colours of the colour palette. One of the principles that Apple uses for its icon making process is, Lineage. It is where an icon is developed rather than entirely changing the design. We can witness that Apple strictly abides to this principle from the examples given above. Another such example is the lineage of Keynote icon, that had been discussed by Alexander MacLean during WWDC 2017. The first version was a wooden podium that held a lot of detailing and seemed far too complicated to be an icon. However, gradually, this was refined to a glyph icon that was simple and stuck to the colour palette Apple had adapted.

Like the designer of Apple, Alexander MacLean said in WWDC 2017, "Your icon is the face of your brand.", it is very important to construct something that is easy to identify, simple and intriguing

enough to stay in one's mind. This journey of Apple's app icon design has gone from being photographic, complicated and stale, to simple, clear and smart.



Pink



Red



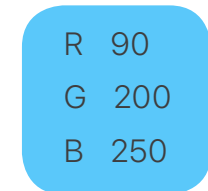
Orange



Yellow



Green



Teal Blue



Blue



Purple

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# Evolution of iOS icons

