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The iPhone facelift

Why do we keep buying iPhones?



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Steve Jobs announced the **first iPhone at the MacWorld event in 2007**, since then the company has released more than 21 iPhone models. In September of 2020, Apple announced the iPhone 12, where an estimated **2 million people pre-ordered the new phone in the first 24 hours**.

After the iPhone 6 faced a heavy lawsuit concerning planned obsolescence, Apple vowed to improve on the software to avoid this, meaning each iPhone produced after this complication would seemingly work just fine. So **why is it that so many people bought the new iPhone so quickly?** Kelly Goldsmith, (associate professor of marketing at Vanderbilt University) says that “people are attracted to the **improvements in quality and capability**”.

Apple as a brand represents innovation. Having the latest and greatest phone is essentially a status symbol, “It’s something that you carry with you all the time, so it **conveys information about you to other people**” (Goldsmith). In this case, having the newest iPhone is a boost of self-esteem,



it serves as a reminder that you’re not outdated.

With 21 models released it’s hard to say exactly how much better each phone released is. Earlier in Apple’s iPhone journey, the upgraded features were at their peak with cameras implemented front and back, Siri being introduced, touch and face identification and larger screens for a better experience. As this peak hit, however, it’s becoming **more difficult for companies to offer new features that change the user’s experience**. For example in 2019 Apple’s new iPhone model was all about the better camera experience powered by an A13 processor, but that was as advanced as it got. The upgraded differences between the iPhones produced today are seeming smaller and smaller.

A vast majority of people upgrade their iPhones due to the status quo consequently leading to **treating their iPhones as disposable**. A recent interview with Alan Segavcic (common class man) gives an insight for a new perspective,

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“When I turned 16 years old, I learned how to rebuild my car’s engine, give it a tune-up and change the oil. But today, nobody can maintain, tune up, or work on their engines because they need expensive gear and experience. It’s the same with an iPhone.”

Unlike Android phones the physical iPhone is designed to be inaccessible to the user, the battery cannot be changed by a user and they **cannot control the software** that is implemented. On account of that, Apple’s iPhones are conceived as hermetically sealed, they are tightly integrated devices with **“no user-serviceable components”**. Meaning any attempt by the user to open the case **invalidates the warranty**. The product is designed so that going to a professional and paying significant amounts of money compared to simply buying the bigger and better iPhone has created a **throw-away mentality**.

On the contrary, the Fairphone 3+ is a dual-sim Android phone where the back of the case snaps off and the battery is easily

removed and replaced. Other modules of the phone, including the camera, can be removed and replaced without elaborate tools or expertise. The phone costs \$670, and iPhone 12’s pricing starts at \$1000 - **both phones were released in 2020**.

Conclusively, Apple has created an upgrade cycle that **skims on the verge of planned obsolescence**. It unethically encourages its customers to treat their iPhones as disposable which also has a negative consequences on the planet. The **CO2 emissions** for example - a 2018 study estimated that building a new iPhone, specifically, mining the rare materials, accounts for 85-95% of the device’s total CO2 emissions for two years. That means, that “buying one new phone takes as much energy as recharging and operating a smartphone for an entire decade”. Considering Apple hasn’t addressed any environmental concerns since 2018, and that the iPhone culture is only growing, the planet can only expect a **degrading impact**.



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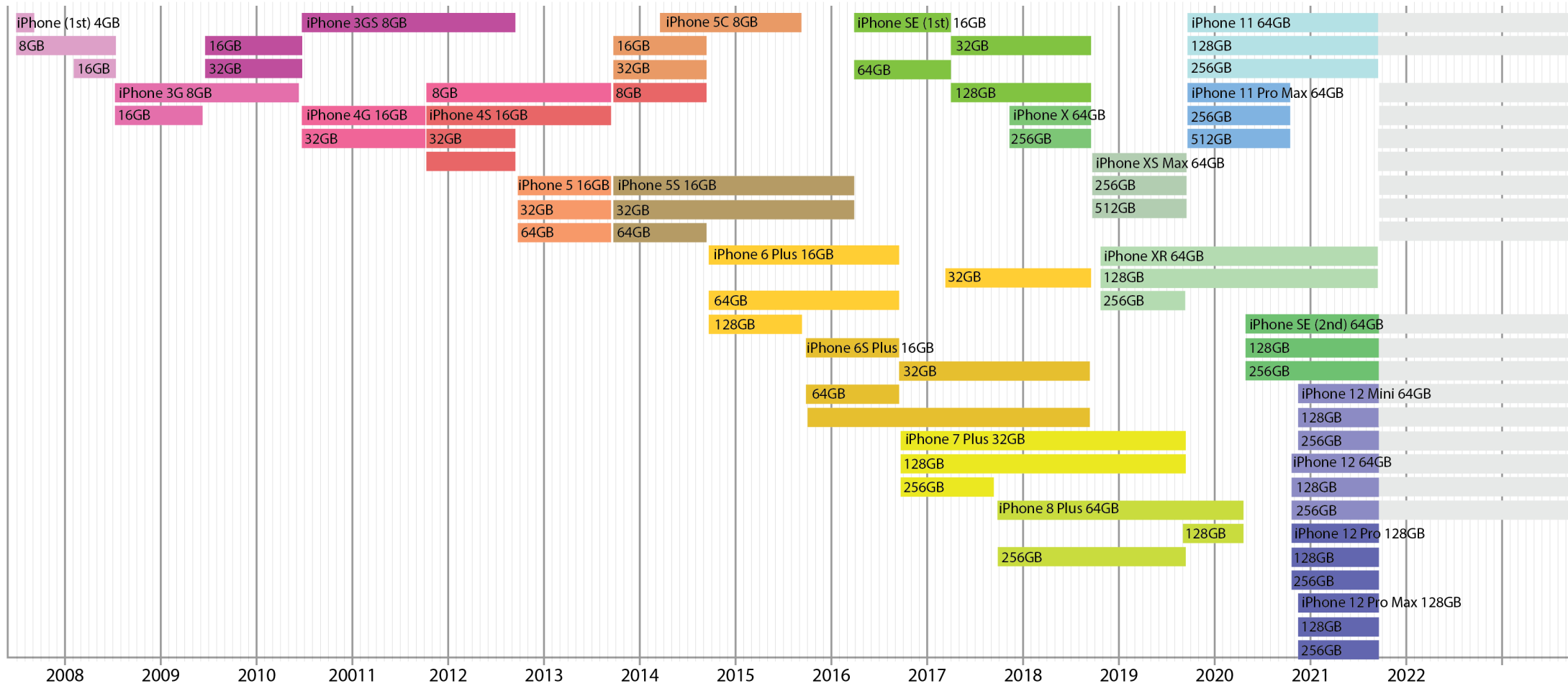
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Timeline of iPhone Models



- iPhone 2G
- iPhone 3G
- iPhone 3GS
- iPhone 4
- iPhone 4S
- iPhone 5
- iPhone 5C
- iPhone 5S
- iPhone 6
- iPhone 6S
- iPhone 6S Plus
- iPhone 7
- iPhone 7 Plus
- iPhone 8
- iPhone 8 Plus
- iPhone SE (1st)
- iPhone SE (2nd)
- iPhone X
- iPhone XR
- iPhone XS
- iPhone XS Max
- iPhone 11
- iPhone 11 Pro
- iPhone 11 Pro Max
- iPhone 12
- iPhone 12 Pro
- iPhone 12 Pro Max
- iPhone 13
- iPhone 13 Pro
- In Production

History of IOS software updates for every iPhone model to date

