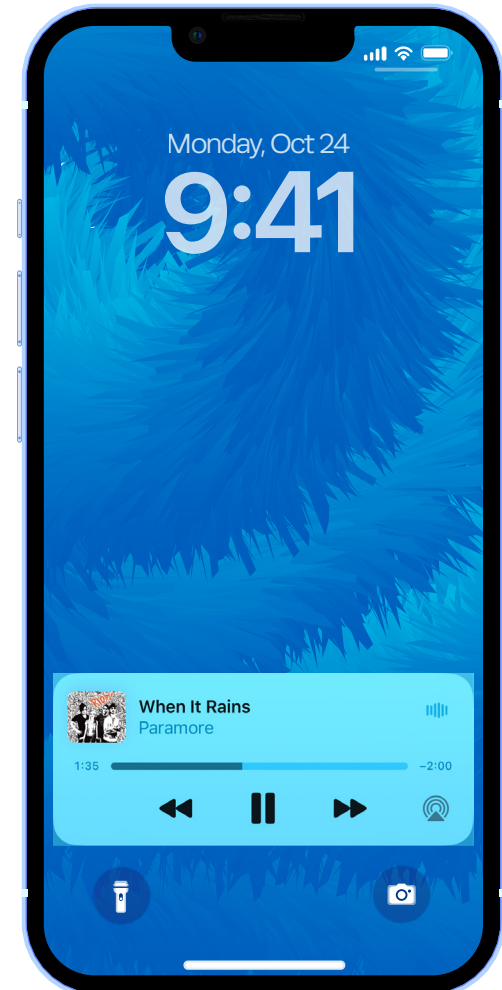


# Screen Makeover

Not using widgets? Then you're missing out on Apple's newest addition to the iPhone lock screen.



# Screen Makeover

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After years of minor changes to the layout and design of the iPhone lock screen, Apple has introduced a dynamic overhaul of its standard user interface with iOS 16. The new update brings apple users a redesigned lock screen interface that allows users to edit and customise their screen with the addition of widgets, a “graphical user interface” that comes in three varied sizes for the iPhone, small, medium, and large. These data-rich mini apps offer greater flexibility and are helping to personalise the screens of Apple devices with quick accessibility that reveals information at a glance. The lock screen presently offers hundreds of widgets in many sizes, eight different date/time text fonts with a customisable colour palette. This highly anticipated feature is set to improve user experience and assist apps to re-engage with their customers, so how beneficial is this new feature, and do widgets increase app engagement?



According to Apple, a widget’s central purpose “is to provide useful content people can get without opening up your app”. It may seem redundant to develop a widget that replaces the need to open the actual app, but it helps reveal information that is relevant to the user at the time they need it, creating an opportunity for repeat user engagement. Creating a widget that displays relevant information and contains convenient features will be significantly more useful to its users, encouraging them to interact with the app more frequently and recommend it to others.

To customise the lock screen after the iOS 16 update, the user must press and hold anywhere near the bottom of their lock screen to transport to the customisable space where they can edit the current screen or create an entirely new screen. When creating a new screen, the iPhone will suggest photos that are most compatible with its depth effect, a feature that places the object of a photo above the date and time, emulating a sort of 3D effect. Users

can also add a photo shuffle, emoji wallpaper or reflect the live weather of their location on the lock screen display.

There are currently five widget slots available to populate live data directly from an app. Some are interactive and launch the app when tapped, while others display static information. Apps that may contain sensitive information, like Facebook's Messenger, will not populate information until you have entered your passcode or Face ID. Many widgets included are from Apple's built-in apps like Clock, Weather and Calendar however, developers can design their own by using the WidgetKit framework included in Apple's dev tools.

A great benefit of widgets is that users no longer need to open the application to view or access information. Whether it's an e-commerce app that sells clothes or an app that serves as a communication tool between employees, a widget means businesses can

now attract users beyond physically tapping on an app icon. Consumers are devoting more time to their phone screens than ever before, favouring social media apps like Tik Tok and Instagram, while third-party apps are less used and often uninstalled, however with Apple more focused on widget development, less popular apps may be able to "command more screen real estate and engagement" outside their apps.

Businesses that possess a widget have a competitive edge as they have a higher chance of being displayed and used, notably because widgets are still a novel concept within the iOS system that is constantly being improved and upgraded. Many companies still do not hold a widget in the iOS system and could soon fall behind as Apple continues to ride the success of its widget implementation. More than likely, Apple will add more cutting-edge functionality to widgets that will allow users, for example, to scroll, look and buy an outfit without entering

the app at all. Companies will benefit from implementing widgets now rather than later as it will help to futureproof their app.



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