

Apple Bits

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ABOUT NEOAC

We are an informal group of Apple users and enthusiasts. We have members of all levels of computer expertise using all types of Macs and Apple products.

Annual dues are \$20.00 per family. In September, the cost for a new membership through the end of the year is \$10. To join or renew your membership, you can either pay at a meeting, on our web site or mail a check made out to "NEO Apple Corps" and send to the post office box noted above.

Dues include access to our listserv (an online bulletin board where you can post questions and/or comments at any time), a PDF of our monthly newsletter and the opportunity to participate in our monthly raffle for valuable Apple and Apple-related products.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Thanks to those members who have renewed. Dues are \$20 and include any family members that you can claim on your taxes. Membership privileges include participation in the raffles, the listserv, and picnic attendance. Prospective members should fill in the form on the last page.

MEETINGS

Unless otherwise noted, NEOAC meetings start at 9:30 a.m. on the fourth Saturday of each month at the Strongsville Public Library.

Strongsville Public Library
18700 Westwood Drive
Strongsville, OH 44136
(directly behind the police station)
440-238-5530
<**DIRECTIONS**>



NEXT MEETING

June 23

UPCOMING MEETINGS

July 28 (picnic)
August 25
September 22

iOS 11.4, tvOS 11.4, HomePod 11.4, and watchOS 4.3.1 Finally Bring Airplay 2 and Messages in iCloud

TIDBITS STAFF



<https://tidbits.com/2018/05/29/ios-11-4-tvos-11-4-homepod-11-4-and-watchos-4-3-1-finally-bring-airplay-2-and-messages-in-icloud/>

Almost a year after they were first announced, Apple has finally shipped AirPlay 2 and Messages in iCloud (see “[iOS 11 Gets Smarter in Small Ways](#),” 5 June 2017):

- AirPlay 2: While iTunes on the desktop has allowed you to send audio to multiple AirPlay receivers for years, AirPlay 2 finally brings this feature to iOS with the iOS 11.4 update. The tvOS 11.4 update also makes the fourth-generation Apple TV and Apple TV 4K into AirPlay 2 receivers and, intriguingly, HomeKit accessories.
- Messages in iCloud: With this innovative feature, your iMessages

will be stored in the cloud and actually sync properly between devices. (Wait, weren’t they already supposed to do that?)

As always, we recommend holding off on installing any major updates until you’ve backed up your devices and waited a few days to see what, if any, unwelcome repercussions they may bring.

iOS 11.4

You can install the [iOS 11.4](#) update (306.5 MB on the iPhone X) from Settings > General > Software Update or via iTunes.

Besides AirPlay 2, the main feature of iOS 11.4 is Messages in iCloud. (We discuss AirPlay 2 later in the article since it spans three operating systems.) This feature was included in

some of the iOS 11 beta releases last summer but removed before release.

Before we explain how to turn on Messages in iCloud, there are two things you should understand:

- Once enabled, it's a pain to turn off because your device must first download all the messages from iCloud.
- When you turn it on, your messages in the Messages app count against your iCloud storage quota. (That's one way to boost Services revenue...) While actual messages likely won't use much space, photos, videos, and other attachments will.

But if you use iCloud backup, Messages in iCloud might be a win for you, since your messages will no longer be included in iCloud backups. And since each iOS device using Messages in iCloud no longer backs up messages to iCloud, that can save you a ton of iCloud storage! In the screenshot below, you can see the difference between Josh's iPhone X, which has Messages in the Cloud enabled, and his iPad Pro, which does not. Despite the iPhone X having way more stuff on it, its iCloud backup is taking up a fraction of the space of the iPad Pro.

After Josh enabled Messages in iCloud on his iPad Pro, his iCloud backup size shrank from 3.9 GB to just a hair over a gigabyte, and his overall iCloud usage decreased by about 3 GB.

Regardless, we think it's shameful that Apple is effectively charging for message sync features that have been free on every other Internet messaging client in history. But, unlike most messaging clients, iMessage is end-to-end encrypted, and that's still true even if you use Messages in iCloud.

Messages in iCloud offers two advantages over regular Messages syncing:

- Messages no longer take up space on your devices.
- Your messages sync perfectly. Sign into a new device and all your messages appear in iMessage—supposedly even in order! Delete a message on one device, and it disappears from the other devices.

You apparently don't have to enable Messages in iCloud to fix the longstanding "jumbled message" bug in the Messages app that causes messages to display out of order. The release notes specify that iOS 11.4 "addresses a Messages issue that could cause some messages to appear out of order."

To enable Messages in iCloud, go to Settings > Your Name > iCloud and turn on Messages. To check and see how much space your Messages take up, tap Manage Storage on that screen and look next to the Messages listing. To disable Messages in iCloud, turn off Messages in Settings > Your Name > iCloud, but it'll take a while to

complete because your device has to download all the messages first.

Frankly, we don't yet know what this could break, so don't be too flippant about flipping this switch.

For messages to upload to iCloud, your device must be connected to Wi-Fi and power. Otherwise you'll see a message telling you that uploading is paused.

iOS 11.4 also includes a number of other improvements:

- Enables teachers to assign their students reading activities in iBooks with the Schoolwork app
- Fixes an issue where certain character sequences could cause Messages to crash
- Addresses an issue in Safari that could prevent logging in or accessing files on Google Drive, Google Docs, and Gmail
- Fixes an issue in Health that could prevent data syncing
- Fixes an issue that could prevent users from changing which apps can access Health data
- Resolves an issue that could cause an app to appear in an incorrect location on the Home screen
- Fixes an issue where CarPlay audio could become distorted
- Fixes an issue where selecting music from your iPhone could fail when playing music over Bluetooth, or when connected to USB in some vehicles

tvOS 11.4

The [release notes for tvOS 11.4](#) mention just one thing: AirPlay 2 support. Specifically, when you install tvOS 11.4 on a fourth-generation Apple TV or Apple TV 4K by going to Settings > System > Software Updates > Update Software, you can now use it as an AirPlay 2 receiver or to send audio to multiple devices.

After you install the tvOS 11.4 update and your Apple TV boots back up, you're asked in which room your Apple TV is located. If you have HomeKit set up, you'll notice that some of those room names are HomeKit rooms. That's because your Apple TV is now counted as a HomeKit accessory. For more information on HomeKit and HomeKit rooms, see "[A Prairie HomeKit Companion: Core Concepts](#)" (3 November 2016) and my book, [Take Control of Apple Home Automation](#).

HomePod 11.4

Like the other updates, the HomePod 11.4 update focuses on AirPlay 2, making each device an AirPlay 2 receiver and letting the HomePod send audio to other AirPlay 2 receivers. The other big feature is stereo pairing, which I'll explain below. Also, the HomePod can finally interact with your iCloud calendars: ask it something like, "When is my next haircut?" and it should tell you!

Michael Cohen says that you can also use Siri on your iPhone to control the

HomePod. Try telling it something like “Tell HomePod to play.”

In theory, you shouldn’t need to install the HomePod 11.4 firmware manually, but if you want to, [Apple has instructions](#). In short, open the Home app on an iOS device that’s signed into the same Apple ID as the HomePod. When you select the Home tab, in the upper-left corner tap the Add and Edit Homes arrow button that generally indicates something to do with location—no, we have no idea why Apple tied it to that button. Then tap Software Update and tap Install.

AirPlay 2

Now that you have all the relevant devices updated, using AirPlay 2 is simple in iOS:

- In iOS, open Control Center, look at the media control platter, and tap the button in the upper-right corner to reveal output devices.
- The circles (see the screenshot below) indicate every eligible AirPlay 2 receiver. Tap each one to check it and send audio to that device. If one of the receivers is already playing audio, you will be asked if you want to replace what’s playing.

From the media control platter, you can use the sliders to adjust the volume of each device independently. To stop playing to multiple devices, either tap the checked circles to deselect individual devices or tap a single device (not the add/remove

circle), such as your iPhone’s speakers.

Note that the AirPort Express isn’t AirPlay 2 compatible (my AirPort Express is called TV Extender in the screenshot above). You can still output to those devices, but only to one at a time from iOS.

You can also output to AirPlay 2 devices from tvOS 11.4. To do so while in the Music app:

Enter the Now Playing screen (unless you’re already there).

Swipe up and to the left to highlight the audio output icon (if you don’t see these icons, press Menu to expose them).

Click the touchpad and select output devices, just as in iOS 11.4.

To output all Apple TV audio to AirPlay 2 receivers, go to Settings > Video and Audio > Audio Output and select them on that screen.

Another useful feature of AirPlay 2 is that you can tell Siri which receivers to use. For example, on Josh’s iPhone X, he can tell Siri to “play relaxing music everywhere” to play music throughout my house. Also, you can send music to a specific speaker, with a command like “play Nine Inch Nails on my TV Room TV.”

An AirPlay 2 feature unique to the HomePod is stereo pairing. After installing the updates, you’ll see it as a new option in the HomePod’s settings in the Home app. Jason Snell [offers more details at Sixcolors](#).

Finally, a curious aspect of AirPlay 2 is that your AirPlay 2 receivers, like the HomePod, are now HomeKit accessories. Enter the Home app and you'll see them listed in their respective rooms. You can tap its accessory button to play or pause music, but there doesn't appear to be any other functionality yet. Here's hoping iOS 12 lets us integrate audio and Apple TV control in scenes and automations. (Again, I'll refer you to [Take Control of Apple Home Automation](#) to learn more about HomeKit and home automation in iOS.)

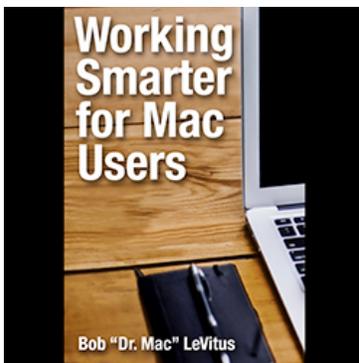
watchOS 4.3.1

And now for something completely different: watchOS 4.3.1, which weighs in at about 97.5 MB (or larger

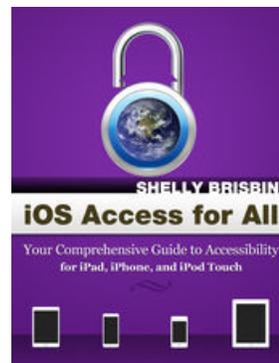
if you haven't updated in a while). Install the update from the Watch app on your iPhone (in Watch > Settings > General > Software Update). Remember that the Apple Watch must be on its charger, charged to at least 50 percent, and on the same Wi-Fi network as your iPhone.

watchOS 4.3.1's release notes mention only fixing an issue that caused Apple Watches to sometimes remain at the Apple logo during startup. Well, that seems like a good reason to update!

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[Working Smarter for Mac Users](#)

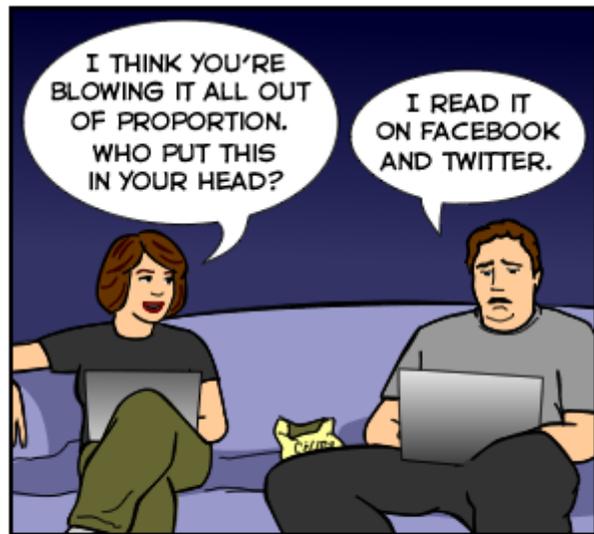


[iOS Access for All](#)

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Membership Renewal

For those members who wish to mail in their renewal, simply print and fill out this page, include check or money order for \$20 (made out to NEO Apple Corps) and mail to:

NEOAC
P.O. Box 361782
Strongsville, OH 44136

Name (first last):

Email address (Please include even if opting out of Google Group, so an acknowledgement of the receipt of your check can be issued; a written receipt will be available at the next meeting.):

Street Address:

City, State & Zip Code:

Form

New or Renewal: circle one

1. New
2. Renewal
3. Lifetime member

Are you part of a family membership?
circle one

1. No
2. Primary member (the one who paid)
3. Secondary member (everyone else)

What computer model(s) do you own?
(e.g. Mini, MacBook, iPhone, iPad)

What is the primary OS you use?
(e.g., Snow Leopard? Lion? Mountain Lion? Mavericks? Yosemite? iOS? Other?)

Years using a Mac: circle one

1. less than one year
2. 1-3 years
3. More than 3 years

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Do you want to receive listserv email?

1. Yes
2. No