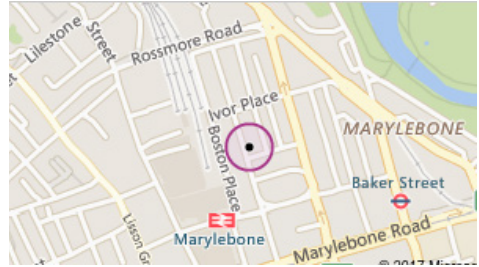


The meeting on Monday 12 February 2018 will be downstairs at the Sir John Balcombe Balcombe Street London NW1 6HE



Members Only Special Offers

Current special offers

- Disk Drill PRO: 30% Discount
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- SlideShark iPad PowerPoint Viewer: Free App plus Offer.

The meetup on Monday 12 February 2018 will be from 7pm at the Sir John Balcombe, 21 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6HE

This month we will be having a Hardware special evening. How do you get the best out of your older Macs? How good is the new Apple Home Pod (if it comes out!) and what are the current hardware issues with Macs like sticky keys? Bring older devices or any issues you want to discuss.

We'll kick off the evening with our regular Newsbyte presentation at 7pm. Our Raffle Prize this month will be wireless earbuds.

**If the article on pages 3 & 4 are of particular interest, it is worth see the full article in MacFilos where there are illustrations and interesting videos*

Apple Releases iOS 11.2.5, macOS 10.13.3, watchOS 4.2.2, and tvOS 11.2.5

Apple has released updates for all of its major operating systems: iOS 11.2.5, macOS 10.13.3, watchOS 4.2.2, and tvOS 11.2.5. The big news for iOS is support for the upcoming HomePod smart speaker (see "HomePod Arrives February 9th, Multi-Room Audio to Follow Later in 2018," 23 January 2018) and Siri learning to read the news, but otherwise the updates are minor. More interesting are the security notes.

In them, we learn that all four updates resolve kernel-related vulnerabilities discovered by Jann Horn of Google Project Zero, the researcher responsible for finding the Meltdown and Spectre vulnerabilities (see "Apple Releases Meltdown and Spectre Info and Updates," 5 January 2018).

In this case, the details are still reserved, which means they won't be described until everyone affected has had a chance to release patches. That could imply that the vulnerabilities are quite serious.

Also notable is the fix for the recently reported bug that could cause Messages in iOS, macOS, and watchOS to crash or otherwise fail to work if it received a maliciously crafted URL (see "Messages App Plagued by Another Crashing Link Bug," 17 January 2018).

Although all of these updates are generally minor, the increased emphasis on security fixes and the severity of recent vulnerabilities suggest that you should update sooner rather than later:

iOS 11.2.5 -- The iOS 11.2.5 update is 178 MB on the iPhone X and 163 MB on an 10.5-inch iPad Pro, and you can install it in Settings > General > Software Update or via iTunes. As mentioned, the big news is HomePod support, although the release notes merely say, "Setup [sic] and automatically transfer your Apple ID, Apple Music, Siri, and Wi-Fi settings to HomePod."

Another new feature is that Siri can now read the news to you if you say "Hey Siri, play the news." Siri can provide news for specific categories, including sports, business, and music, but Apple apparently hasn't tweaked Siri's artificial intelligence to avoid reading you stories that will make your stomach hurt.

When you first ask Siri for news, it launches the Podcasts app to play the latest news roundup from NPR's feed. If you're not an NPR fan, you can tell Siri to switch to Fox News, CNN, or the Washington Post. Sports news comes from ESPN by default, but you can opt for NBC, and

business news comes from CNBC. If you ask for music news, Siri instead opens the Music app to play the Beats 1 Best of the Week. For other topics, Siri looks to other podcasts, but the results can be pretty random.

The iOS 11.2.5 update also fixes a potpourri of issues that:

- Could cause the Phone app to display incomplete information in the call list

- Caused Mail notifications from some Exchange accounts to disappear from the Lock screen when unlocking the iPhone X with Face ID

- Displayed Messages conversations out of order

- Made CarPlay's Now Playing controls unresponsive after multiple track changes

- The update also enables VoiceOver to announce playback destinations and AirPods battery level.

Finally, iOS 11.2.5 addresses ten security vulnerabilities, including those mentioned above.

macOS 10.13.3 -- The macOS 10.13.3 update clocks in at a whopping 1.97 GB in Software Update, but lists only two bugs that aren't related to security. One fixes a problem that could cause Messages conversations to be listed out of order, and another corrects a bug that could cause your Mac to freeze when connected to an SMB-based file server.

As best we can guess, the large size of the update may be due to the location of the 15 security vulnerabilities fixed, which include a handful of problems in the kernel.

watchOS 4.2.2 -- In its release notes, Apple says merely that watchOS 4.2.2 "includes improvements and bug fixes." It's clear that the update is important solely for the security fixes noted above. We recommend installing it the next time you charge your Apple Watch overnight since watchOS updates are so slow to install.

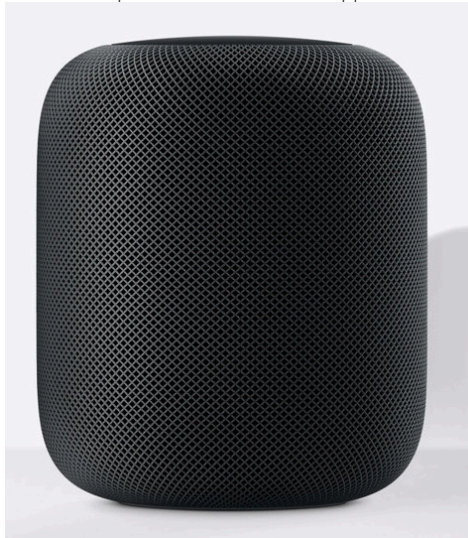
watchOS 4.2.2 is a 56.7 MB download that you install via the Watch app on your iPhone (in Watch > Settings > General > Software Update). Remember that the Apple Watch must be on its charger; charged to at least 50 percent, and within range of your iPhone, which itself must be on Wi-Fi.

tvOS 11.2.5 -- Finally, Apple has released tvOS 11.2.5, which "includes general performance and stability improvements." You can install it on the Apple TV 4K and fourth-generation Apple TV via Settings > System > Software Updates > Update Software.

As with the other operating systems, security is the main reason to update to tvOS 11.2.5, which includes 11 security fixes.

Apple HomePod: Could it replicate the success of the iPod?

Consider Apple's release of a new music-oriented device priced higher than its perceived competitors—which have already established an enthusiastic audience base over the past few years. How can it possibly survive in such a difficult position? The answer was: by being better in key ways that matter to users. iPod went on to become a legendary franchise in personal audio. Now Apple is



doing the same thing again in home audio with HomePod."

Writing for Apple Insider, Daniel Eran Dilger makes the case for Apple's possibly-better-late-than-never HomePod speaker system. It may be late to the party, but could it transform the market place as did the iPod in 2001.

The HomePod will set the standard for high-fidelity reproduction and for close integration with the Apple system. It isn't cheap but it does provide a very attractive all-in-one solution for the home

It's a good argument. By concentrating on music, the HomePod could well repeat the success of the iPod — a device which we need reminding was the very basis of modern-day Apple. In 2001 Apple was the small print at the bottom of the annual world computer report.

Foundation

The launch of the Jonny Ive-designed iMac in 1998 had certainly staved off disaster and



formed a good foundation for a stable but niche computer manufacturer. The iPod changed all that. It was the iPad that begat the iPhone, the iPhone that begat the iPad. They transformed Apple from a small company into the world's largest tech power house.

But the iPod, just like the HomePod, was late to the market. Mobile music had been around for over 20 years since the launch of the iconic blue and silver Sony Walkman in 1979. This was followed by the MiniDisk player and, later, by a raft of solid-state music players. But feeding these new streaming players needed commitment. Tracks had to be downloaded despite the active opposition of the music industry. It was by no means convenient and was of limited appeal to the general consumer. The iPod changed all that. It was good looking and easy to use. But, above all, Apple set about providing the supporting ecosystem which made it easy for users to stock up with music without worries about licensing or breaking the law. Steve Jobs' success was in persuading the major music labels to agree to on-line distribution through the Apple music store.

Written off

At launch the iPod was written off by the professionals as too expensive at a time when you could pick up a solid-state music player with larger capacity for a third of the cost. In the same way, some pundits are writing off the HomePod for the identical reason — £319 here in the UK seems a lot of a smart speaker and the Echo Dot

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It is produced solely by, and for, LMUG members.
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is a sixth of its price and answers all the fancy commands.

The Amazon Echo Dot is as cheap as chips and has a massive head start. But it is no surround-sound system and really needs an external speaker. The Echo has a much better speaker, but no match for the HomePod. The Amazon Echo Dot is as cheap as chips and has a massive head start. But it is no surround-sound system and really needs an external speaker. The Echo has a much better speaker, but no match for the HomePod.

Yet to a certain degree I agree with Dilger. The HomePod offers excellent reproduction and has all the credentials to become the iPod of the home. It brings the same voice activation and control that Amazon and Google offer with their smart speakers but, crucially, it offers integration with the Apple ecosystem which is supported by the wealthiest consumers in the world.

I have enjoyed playing with the Amazon Echo and Dot over the past year. Everyone loves talking to Alexa. But the sound from the Echo is nowhere near as good as that we can expect from the HomePod. Admittedly, you can hook up a pro sound system to any of these smart speakers, but it isn't the same as having an all-in-one high-fidelity component.

Seamless integration

The lack of integration with Apple has also been a disappointing aspect of life with Alexa. Ask her to set up a reminder task and it has to go to the Alexa app or a third-party to-do list. With HomePod and Siri my to-do reminder

can go straight to Apple Reminders and then seamlessly into Things 3, my chosen task manager. And I can access my Apple music. Apple has 30 million music subscribers, providing a ready market for the HomePod. While this total falls well behind, say, Spotify with its 60m subscribers, I prefer Apple music for its seamless integration with my iPhone, iPad and iMac — not to mention my new HomePod when it arrives. Apple customers tend to prefer to stay with Apple and that's why my money is on the HomePod.

Whether or not Dilger is correct in predicting that the HomePod will transform the home speaker market in the way that the iPod changed portable music forever, I am sure that it will succeed as a product. It's late, it's relatively expensive, but that won't stop it selling like hot cakes.

All the articles on this page come from Michael Evans www.macfilos.com. These and many others are well worth reading.