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The History of the iPhone

In this research paper, I'm going over the thirty-four different models of iPhone that have been released since the iPhone 1. In this paper I'm going to showcase how far the iPhone has come over the 15 years since it was created. The iPhone has come a very long way from the single 2 megapixel camera to the three 12 megapixel cameras that we know today, from the 3.5 inch display to the 6.7 inch display on the iPhone 13 Pro Max, over twice the size! The iconic home button has come and gone, and many other things about the iPhone have changed over the years. The iPhone is still arguably the most popular smartphone in existence, even though it has changed so much. When the iPhone went on sale, "Eager customers lined up in front of Apple Stores...In New York, hundreds camped out in lawn chairs and sleeping bags. They brought umbrellas for the rain and the summer heat. The line wrapped around several blocks." (Ventura, 42)

The iPhone 1 is small compared to most of the newer iPhones, and a few features include the iconic home button at the bottom of the phone, 30 pin charging port on the bottom of the phone, two volume buttons, headphone jack, and power button on top. There was also a camera, which there would be on all other iPhones; however, the iPhone 1 and 3G could only take pictures, and not videos. The iPhone 1 didn't have an app store! The only apps you could use were the included apps (internet browser, calculator, iPod app, google maps, etc.). You also could not set wallpaper on this phone. The iPhone 1 was released in 2007, and has changed the world since then. It also set the 3.5 inch screen that would be on the rest of the iPhones through the iPhone 4S.

We never got an iPhone 2, as instead we got the iPhone 3G, which was a glossier version of the iPhone 1. It was named for the 3g internet that it used. It also finally had an app store. The 3Gs was another improvement on the 3G, adding video, cut, copy and paste, and custom wallpapers. It also had an increased amount of RAM.

The iPhone 4 was possibly the most iconic iPhone. The iPhone 4 did away with the rounded back that the older iPhones had. The back was flat now, and the corner curves more subtle. Instead of the volume bar, there were two little round buttons. It also added a selfie camera for the first time ever. Like the other iPhones, it came with a new release of ios, the iPhone operating system, and the iPhone 4's ios was a big improvement upon previous versions. It also increased the RAM and Storage options once more.

The iPhone 4S had a big new feature added to the phone, and that was Siri. It was not very good at launch, but it would go on to become the only voice assistant of Apple. "'Hey, Siri' is probably the

best-known AI-human interaction...Siri answered one billion user requests per week in 2015, and two billion in 2016” (Merchant, 228). The 4S added still more storage sizes and also a white version.

The iPhone 5 added still more RAM to the iPhone, along with a slightly larger display at 4 inches. The old charging port was replaced with the new lightning port, and has been used on most apple devices to this day. We got two new iPhone’s a year later, the iPhone 5S and the iPhone 5C. The iPhone 5S added new reflective colors to the mix, along with touch ID, which let your phone learn your fingerprint and could quickly unlock. The ‘c’ iPhone 5c could either stand for compact, colorful, or cheap. The 5c came in many different colors. It is basically a compact version of the iPhone 5, and it was also the current “cheap iPhone” of the day. Apple has created several other cheap iPhones since.

The largest changes that occurred with the iPhone 6 were that the iPhone was much larger and thinner display, along with what was called “3D touch” which had a depth sensor, so if you pushed your finger farther into the screen (not very far at all but still) it would register as a different input. The iPhone 6 is famous for having a “gate” or something wrong with the phone that everybody knew about. The iPhone 6 had “bendgate” which meant the phone bent because it was so thin. The iPhone 6 was also the first iPhone to have a “plus” version, which had an even bigger screen. The iPhone 6S and 6S+ pretty much just fixed the bendgate issue, along with adding more storage sizes and becoming faster (just like every other ‘s’ update).

About half a year after we got the iPhone 6, we got the iPhone SE, the second cheap/small phone. It was pretty much a repackaged iPhone 5S with a faster processor and system. We got an SE 2nd Edition in 2020 (just after the iPhone 11) which was basically a repackaged iPhone 8, and an iPhone SE 3rd Gen, which came in early 2022 (the year I’m writing this). The iPhone SE 3rd Gen was a lot like the SE 2nd Gen, but using the same processor as the iPhone 13, so it is much faster and more battery efficient.

The iPhone 7 came out with the 7 and 7+, just like the iPhone 6. The iPhone 7 was the first iPhone to feature a digital home button instead of the analog button from before. It was now just a touch sensor that vibrated when you touched it. The iPhone 7+ was actually the first iPhone to have two cameras which the iPhone 7 didn’t have; the plus iPhones are finally starting to get more features than just a larger screen. The iPhone 8 didn’t really change from the design of the iPhone 7 and could almost be considered an iPhone 7s. The iPhone 8 didn’t add much other than speed, another storage option, wireless charging, and 4K video.

The same year that the iPhone 8 and 8+ were released we got iPhone X (pronounced 10), which got rid of the home button, and replaced the bezel at the top with a notch that all the selfie cameras and such were located. This notch has been used in every iPhone since. The iPhone X also replaced touch id with face id, as the home button was gone. First there was the iPhone X original, then the iPhone XS which was faster, and included more storage. The iPhone XS was also the last ‘s’ iPhone to date. The iPhone XS Max (we now have “max” instead of “plus”) added a larger screen. The iPhone XR (the only R update) was basically a small iPhone XS (larger than the X) with one camera and more colors. It was kind of like an iPhone 5C added to an iPhone X.

After the iPhone X, we got the iPhone 11, which is the phone I currently own. The iPhone 11 rearranged the cameras into the current rounded square in the corner. The iPhone 11 Pro and Pro Max

now have three cameras: normal, wide, and ultra-wide. 3D touch was removed and replaced with haptic touch. The iPhone 11 actually has the same display size of the XR. The iPhone 11 Pro has a slightly smaller display. The Pro Max has a much larger display.

Now we have a whole lineup of iPhones within each series, and the iPhone 12 adds one to that; we now have the iPhone 12 mini, 12, 12 Pro, and 12 Pro Max. The iPhone 12 is pretty much the same as the iPhone 11, but it has a new processor and square sides. Here is a picture with an iPhone 11 on the left and an iPhone 12 Pro on the right to illustrate what I mean by “square sides”

(Parikh)

This was the biggest change with the iPhone 12. Not a whole lot else was different.



The iPhone 13 was also a lot like its predecessor, the iPhone 12, but the cameras got better, and there were some new camera modes. Not a whole lot else was different, honestly, other than the camera placement being altered on the iPhone 13 and the minis.

The iPhone has come a very long way. So far, we have had 12 main iPhone models, along with the 3 SE's, in addition to all the mini's and max's, plus's and s's. I hope this paper has helped show how far Apple has come with its iPhone, and I wonder what the iPhone 14 and SE 4th edition will bring! “There’s over a billion iPhones active, in use, right now” (Brownlee 29:25).

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