

iOS 26.1 – Apple’s iPhone Update Safely Leaves Android Behind

Zak Doffman Oct 26, 2025 at 10:35am EDT



This next update is a game changer
NurPhoto via Getty Images

Whisper it quietly, but there’s a serious issue at the heart of Android. Google’s success with Pixel has exposed a disconnect with the world’s most popular OS. That’s good news for Apple as it quietly prepares a radical update for a billion-plus iPhones within days.

The [Android disconnect](#) centers on upgrades and updates. Samsung is struggling with its rollout of One UI 8, which brings Android 16 and a number of

major security and privacy enhancements to users. Meanwhile, Android’s monthly update cycle favors Pixel over Galaxy, even though Samsung outsells Google more than ten-to-one.

Meanwhile, Apple is readying a new way to update iPhones, ensuring that everyone, everywhere can stay safe with critical security fixes as soon as they’re released. Given an alarming rise in spyware and other mobile threats, this is now critical.

...

This [revamp](#) of Apple’s “[Rapid Security Responses](#)” will deliver firmware updates without the usual palava of warnings, downloads and taps to install. It could even work without a device restart, albeit you may be prompted to do that when it has loaded.

This comes with iOS 26.1, still expected this month albeit time is running out. Per [9to5Mac](#), “after a summer of beta testing, Apple released iOS 26 to everyone last month. Now, attention has shifted to iOS 26.1. This update is available to developers and public beta testers now, and will likely be released to everyone later this month.”

Unlike the original Rapid Security Response, the new Background Security features should operate silently in the background. The only Android vendor to get close anywhere to this level of efficiency is Google. Pixel is first to everything, and with its accelerating hardware improvements is pushing new boundaries for an Android OEM that controls hardware and software, as Apple does on the other side of the fence.

...

This isn't the only security update coming with this next major iOS release.

[MacRumors](#) reports that iOS 26.1 "is introducing a feature that iPhone users have been requesting for years – the ability to disable the Lock Screen camera swipe."

Absent this, "there's been no way to prevent someone from using it to snap unwelcome photos on your locked iPhone (short of disabling the Camera app completely, which isn't exactly practical). Apple plans to release iOS 26.1 later this October."

In the world of flagship smartphones, security and privacy are now major selling points. That's why Samsung pushes its [hybrid AI message](#) as a counterpoint to Google's more cloud-centric architecture. But given the awkward optics around upgrades and updates, one can't help but think Apple's move leaves Android with some catching up to do.