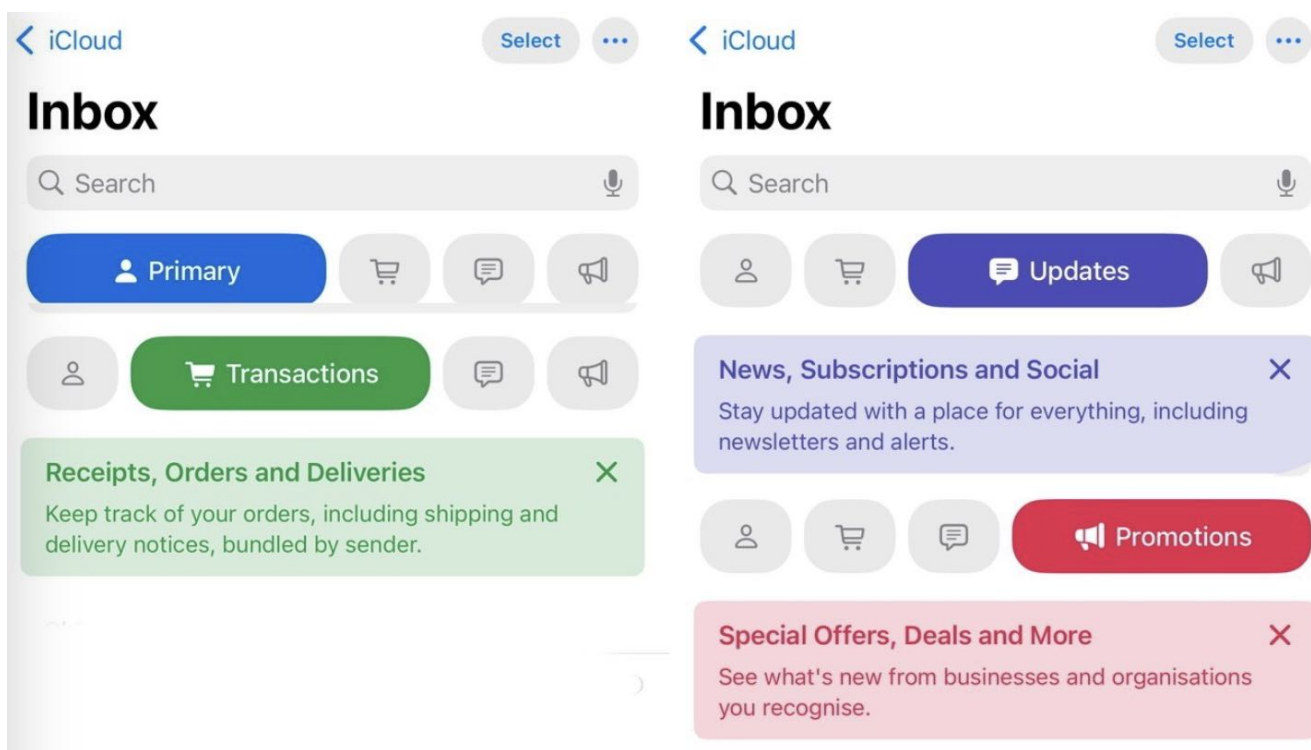


How to use or disable iOS Apple Mail's new categories feature

Charles Martin Feb 06, 2025

As of [iOS 18.2](#), Apple's Mail app features categories to help users sort through their mail. Here's what it does, how to fine-tune it, and how to turn it off if you prefer.

After updating to [iOS 18.2](#) or later, the Mail app [now categorizes](#) incoming email into four broad categories. These are **Primary**, **Transactions**, **Updates**, and **Promotions**.



The idea to automatically categorize incoming emails has been kicking around Apple for years. The feature was [originally intended](#) to debut in iOS 13, but awaited further development of Apple's machine learning and [Apple Intelligence](#) features in order to ensure the work was all done on-device.

In our experience, the **Primary** category works very well. Email from people in our contacts, time-sensitive notifications, and email from other individuals rather than companies tend to be seen here.

Traditionally, Mail also shows the first line or two of a received email. If your iPhone supports Apple Intelligence, time-sensitive emails will be at the top, and some emails in the **Primary** category will now show short summaries of the content.

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As before, you can tap on a given email to open it, or do a half-swipe to the left to choose options including deleting, flagging, or additional tools like forwarding and replying. You can also half-swipe to the right to set a reminder for a given email, or mark it unread.

The other categories

In addition to **Primary**, the other categories are **Transactions**, **Updates**, and **Promotions**. In our experience, these categories need a bit of user training in order to reach their peak usefulness.

If your iPhone model supports Apple Intelligence, those other categories — apart from **Primary** — will group all email from a given sender by default. When you tap on a given email summary, the most recent message is shown.

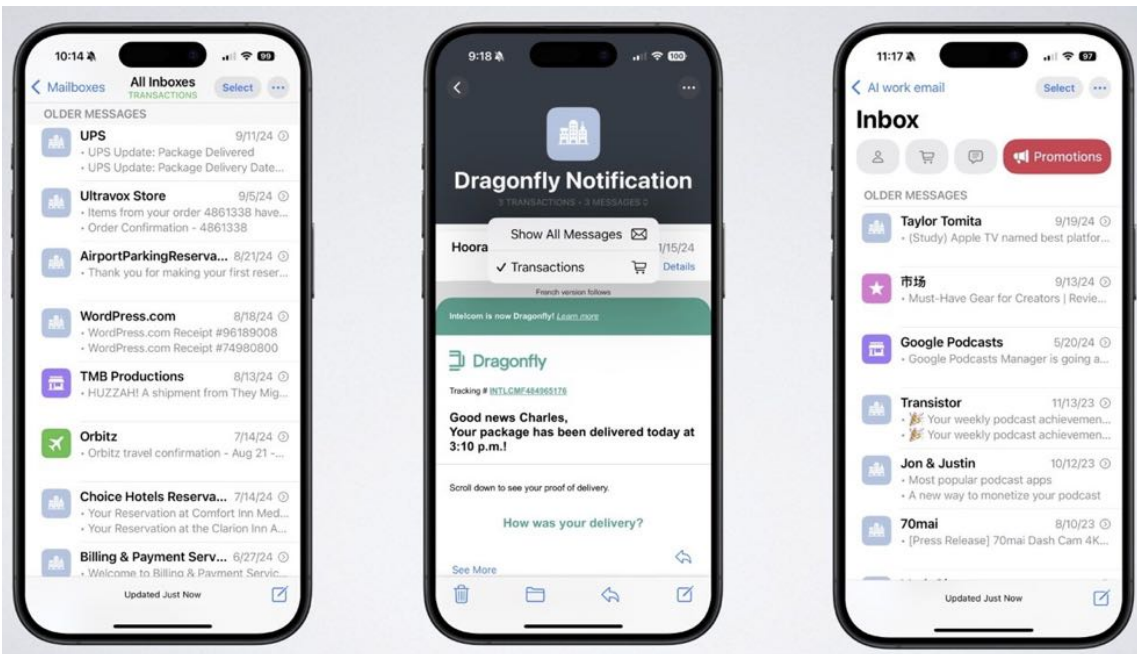
You can also view all messages from a particular sender, if their emails are in any but the **Primary** category. Tap on the top or newest one and you get a digest page with the sender's details at the top.

That top section also includes an ellipses icon, which provides tools including **Delete All**.

This is once place where you can re-categorize an email, but you can also do that directly from the inbox. Do a half-swipe to the left on an email, tap the three buttons icon, and tap **Categorize Sender**.

Once you've moved an email to a specific category done this, all messages from that

particular sender will be put into the new category instead.



Showing off the new categorization features of Apple Mail in iOS 18.2

The **Updates** category is intended for messages from companies you've allowed to email you with their news updates, or from social sites like FaceBook, Bluesky, and X. At first, you may find yourself moving some messages that arrive here to other categories, but once that's done it works well.

The **Promotions** category is where mass emails go. Depending on how much of this type of mail you get, you may need to spend a few minutes marking mass emails from your community groups and clubs to go to other categories, but again Mail remembers your choices and files future emails correctly.

Turning the categories feature off

Though it can be very useful — after a bit of training — some users will prefer to not have the categorization feature on at all, preferring to weed through their incoming email themselves.

Apple has made it very simple to turn off the categorization feature. At the top of the iOS Mail app, there is a three-dots menu on the right. Tap it, and change from **Categories** to **List View**" and you're back to the way Mail worked previously.

In that menu, you can also opt to turn off **Show Priority** if your iPhone supports Apple Intelligence. When this is unchecked, urgent or time-sensitive emails will not rise to the top unless they happen to be the most recent messages.

Alternatively, you can quickly switch to the all mail category. Either tap on the currently-selected category, or swipe across the categories. This is best used when you want to keep the categorization, but temporarily need to see all your mail in the list view.

If you choose to leave the new Mail categorization feature on, you can fine-tune how it works via a section in Mail's preferences. To get there, open **Settings**, scroll down to **Apps**, tap on **Mail**, tap on **Apple Intelligence & Siri**, and turn on or off any options there.

You can also choose to turn off Apple Intelligence altogether if you want, assuming your iPhone model supports it. Apple Intelligence features only show up on the [iPhone 15 Pro](#) and iPhone 15 Pro Max, or the [iPhone 16](#) models or later.



To do so, open the **Settings** app, scroll down until you see an **Apple Intelligence & Siri** category, tap it, and turn off **Apple Intelligence**. You won't see this category at all if your iPhone does not support Apple Intelligence features.

Surveys taken early on in the Apple Intelligence rollout found that many users don't yet consider the suite of features to be [that important](#) to them. This is likely to change as further updates — including a much-improved [Siri](#) — roll out across 2025.

Charles Martin, Weekend editor. Charles Martin is a Contributing Editor for AppleInsider, and former editor for the late, lamented MacNN. He is a writer, performer, podcaster, and broadcaster, specializing in smart tech and bad jokes. He lives in Victoria, BC.