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Well, they've chosen to release it now, and it's pretty much as auto-magic because I've been led to believe. Just tap the option, tap the Panorama, tap the Camara button, and start panning in steady motion, level, and ... That's it. iOS will take a stream and transform it into a panoramic view of up to 23 megapixels. It's very easy to use, easier than an app that takes a few shots and sews them together, and it produces excellent results. Other platforms, and other variants of the platform have had it temporarily. As always, Apple's approach is inflexible or configured, but for many people trading will be fine. The Video App Videos lost the video podcast, which has moved to the standalone Podcast app launched alongside iOS 6 (see music section, below, to see the app new one). While you can go to the iTunes Store app (see iTunes Store, below) to see a list of iTunes videos purchased before, including Movies, TV Shows and Music Videos, and download them back to the Videos app, it's better if Apple surfaced that here too. I have a music video with Next to it, but no Movies or TV Shows, so functionality there, it's inconsistent. iTunes Match for a movie may not be the beginning with Hollywood, but the embedded version of the Bought tab will be far more user-friendly and efficient, and can coexist well with the Shared features (Home Sharing). YouTube (Relieved) With iOS 6, YouTube is no longer a built-in app. The old app was developed by Apple but data was pulled from YouTube. Apple doesn't update it aggressively and Google can't show ads in it, which is their core business. So instead of continuing to languish, far behind both the Android YouTube app and mobile web apps, Apple and Google let it die. And now Google has released their own YouTube app for iOS. As features go, it has more of them. You can't upload from the Google YouTube app, but you can still from iOS via ShareSheet, so it's not a functional problem. The only real problem is Google's abysmal support for AirPlay. If you try to enable it in an app, you get audio only and pop-ups tell you to use the AirPlay mirror. Then you get a slow, cut, awful, surprising experience that sends you back to the web app. If you just want to watch a video (with ads) on your iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad, however, it's good. Maps With iOS 6, the old Google-powered Maps app is lost and in place is the All New Maps app and Apple, with data supplied by TomTom and others. Creating a new Maps app solves problems for Apple -- getting their biggest competitor, Google, hooks data off their platform and controls their own location destiny -- but does it solve anything for users? Does it produce a better Maps experience for us? Google reportedly won't let Apple turn by turn, and now we've turned round by turn. But we lose things too, like StreetView. We got Flyover, but we lost the direction of transit. If all of that sounds like one and a half steps forward and two steps back, you're not wrong. Rebuilding the Maps app from the ground up, especially with custom-made vectoring maps, luxury 3D models, and almost all of the user's features have become undeveloped. Apple's engineering and design efforts had to focus on this, the companies they had to buy, and the integration they had to do had to have the same opportunity costs. Apple's efforts put in replacing something come at the expense of that effort into completely new features. This is not an iMovie or Final Cut Pro, however. This is not a specific application that the user segment will complain about up to the have the opportunity to re-implement all radical re-design features initially forced to hitch a ride. The map is the premiere. The map is serious. Peta is my mother and my sister can't find where they need to go. Apple has many currencies with their user base. They spent some here. The new map is beautiful, slippery, and sometimes, amazing. But he was not burned completely. Not to mention. And he will be for everyone, Apple, users and developers until it's done. (Google will reportedly release the stand-alone Google Maps app into the App Store, and one much more competitive with the Android version of their Maps app, which can provide a powerful alternative until and even after that, Apple has iOS Maps completely up to par.) Apple's mapping softens raw map data from TomTom and others now, but they've reassessed all the map art itself using resolution-free vector graphics. Google does this for the Android version of Google Maps, but Apple doesn't have an older version of iOS Maps. The difference is interesting. They scale quickly and precisely and look great from any angle. Apple also creates labels and iconography separately, so no matter how you turn on the map, you can read and understand what's on them easily. You can find a location, just like before, even if the point of interest is better single, such as the current location and the current pin location. You have the same three basic modes as before -- standard, hybrid, and satellite. You access it, as well as Pin Drop/Replace, Print, Hide Traffic, and List Results through the same page drop-down button at the bottom right as before. If you zoom out deep in standard mode, you'll get a map of the world as you find it in the atlas. If you zoom out far enough in hybrid or satellite mode, you get a 3D-given Poly9-style world that you can spin. The Arrow button at the bottom of the left will still pull you back to your current location, and the second pipe will still orient you according to your current direction. Now, however, at any time you do not point north, a new compass icon appears at the top right. Type and your orientation is returned north (and the compass icon will disappear so that it is needed again). If you are in standard mode, you will see a 3D button to the right of the Arrow button. Typing it will give you a view of an uninteresting area. If you are in hybrid or satellite mode, however, the 3D icon becomes a building icon and typing it will put you into Flyover mode (see Flyover, below). The map includes local search and more than 100,000,000 points of interest, everything from schools, to restaurants, to museums, to hotels, to Apple Retail stores, right on the map, ready to go. In most cases, menoreh brings a popup menu to that location, in case of traffic problems, such as construction, however, you are given more precise details on the issue. You can hide the pop-up menu by typing it, and re-show it by typing the pin or icon that gave birth to it. Popups are labeled with yelp location names and rating, if any. On the right is the blue Arrow button. on the Blue Arrows button carrying the information page at that location. If there is no Yelp data, Apple will show you whatever standard data is available. This is a huge hero image spot on the information page that will get static satellite photos if that's all Apple has. If there is a Flyover for You will get a smooth cauldron of 3D models. If you have Yelp data, you'll get a Ken Burns-style photo montage. Yelp reviews, and pictures. You can type to read more reviews or see more photos, or you add them yourself, but you'll be sent to the Yelp app to do so. Likewise if you want to sign in or write an tips tip. To the left of the popup label used on the StreetView button. Now it is the Navigation button. Type and you're on your way. You can also enter into the idolatry mode by typing the new Right Turn icon at the top left. That's where Guiding, Walking, and Transit (with a large kaveat) has moved on to (see navigation and traffic, and transit, below). All of this works fine, depending on where you live. In the United States, it's very good. In Montreal where I live, he has been almost perfect. However, different people in different parts of the world have reported inappropriate data and decisions. Apple continues to bring better data to more locations, but there may be upheaval as they do so (see Availability, below). Navigation and traffic Turn-by-turn navigation is a very competitive market with steady players like Gamin/Navigon, TomTom, TeleNav and others, as well as free alternatives from the like of Google on Android and Nokia on Windows Phone. You need to have some serious resources, not to mention stone mapping, to get into it, and that's what Apple does in iOS 6. Navigation works for both driving and walking directions, and you can enter round-by-round mode in one of three ways: Have Siri take you somewhere: Take me home, show me how to get to Yerba Buena Gardens, and more. Type the Navigation button to the right of the location popup menu. Type the Right Round button and find the path. Siri is fast. Just ask for a place, you will be sent directly to the Maps app, a route that is shown in a simple way and then starts automatically on your journey. Typing the Navigation button is just a little less so -- if there are multiple different paths you'll talk to them, and you can type to switch between them, or type Start to get started. The Right Turn button gives you the most choice. It lets you switch between Driving and Running directions with the Maps app, Transit directions in third-party apps (if there is one), and changing between routes if multiple routes are available. Once you're on your way and navigating, type anywhere to exit full screen mode and get the menu and button back. Type End to stop navigating and return to Maps. Type Overall Description to switch back to the page at first, or to see the location journey, and Reconnect to return to navigation. Tap the 3D button to switch between standard and display a slightly angle. Navigation remains in standard mode, though, so not satellite imagery or luxury Flyovers here. If there is a construction, you can tap the icon for more information about it. Based on publicly acquired traffic data, iOS will also alert you to any traffic changes and offer alternative routes, though estimated time you will save, if any. If you exit the map app, the green bar remains at the top of your screen to remind you of in-progress navigation (similar to the in-call bar, tethering and others in the previous version of iOS). Voice navigation continues when you're outside the Maps app and the green bar will also change to an overlap of the mark when a turn is going to happen. Navigation also persists even on the Lock screen. That's the advantage of a first-party solution. Navigation gives good instructions and clearly uses the Siri voice. This animation is fantastic, with a cinematic pan between sections and for change of direction. Everything is beautifully illustrated, with faux sign posts for instructions. I've used iOS Map navigation frequently and it works well. On several occasions it also worked better than the famous third-party navigation apps, giving the right instructions when they sent me in circles. Again, however, the quality of mapping data in your area will be the deciding factor in how useful it is for you. Flyover Flyover uses 3D modelling to really let you fly the city, from Sydney to Montreal, Cupertino to Paris. It looks absolutely amazing. It's not available in all cities anymore, but a growing list. (Apple needs to fly literally and shoot cities, then clean up and install models.) To enter Flyover mode, tap the 3D button on the bottom left of the screen when in hybrid or satellite mode (that is, it looks like a model building instead of simply saying 3D. Then you can use one finger to move the screen around and two fingers to control the camera angle. To call Flyover a demo or commercially unfair, but not call it a mapping service, at least not yet. It's more of a simulator, like an open world, but a real world, a game where, absent bosses to fight you can just let yourself explore. Let yourself stroll and stroll. It's like travelling in California Adventure. I've lost hours for it. But I've never found it useful for the orientation of real-world locations as Google's StreetView. Transit Transit is less characteristic in iOS 6 than it is an injury. Rebuilding Maps from the ground up has no doubt herculean duties and doing so in time to launch no doubt requires a compromise and come at a cost. Collecting transit information sounds like a difficult task with diverse, debris, fragile stakeholders. Google does all the weightlifting for this before, and at the moment, Apple hasn't been able to replicate that effort. So they punched. In iOS 6, the Transit button remains on the map, but will now send you to the App Store app to provide such services. When you search for directions, and select Transit, a list of installed transit apps appears and you can type to launch one and get your page information. If there are additional apps in the App Store, Maps will show you as well. Then it's between you and a 3rd party app. This may be a challenge for the 3rd party application, but it reduces services for users. Instead of one, a unified, consistent experience, everything from quality to interface will vary from app to app -- if the app is even available in their area. Whether Apple leaves it this way, or whether they introduce their own transit direction in a permanent future update can be seen. For now, I'm lucky, I've got a great transit app available to me. But if you don't, that doesn't help you a little bit. Reporting problems and adding an Advantage location to have hundreds of millions of users on your platform is that anything like Maps will be punched, earnestly, by those users. There is great value in people sourcing all that data and feedback, and using it to improve the system. Apple, their credit, makes that easy in iOS 6. To notify Apple (and possibly their partners) about any problems, inaccuracies, or omissions in their mapping data and points of interest (POI), simply tap the page cake at the bottom right, tap Report Problems above the Print button, and then choose what type of problem you want to report: Incorrect search results, roads or other labels are incorrect, the location disappears, problems with the instructions , problems with satellite images, or if none of them are fit, my problems are not listed. The rest is up to Apple. If they take advantage of the potential feedback pool here, they will have a great opportunity to quickly improve and improve iOS 6 Maps. And they have to. The weather forecast in iOS 6 doesn't change when it works, but the interface has been redesigned and redrawn weather images become sleeker and more modern. Passbook is a new, built-in app for iOS 6 designed to serve as a one-stop repository for all tickets, coupons, gift cards and other vouchers provided by third-party App Store apps. This means that all the stuff in your Apple Store app, Starbucks app, Delta app, Fandango app and more is easily accessible via a single Home screen icon. Apple contrasts with the pre-iOS 6 experience it needs to fumble for apps then fumble to pass in it. If you remember you have a pass. Since Passbook knows what time it is and where you are, it can put whatever card you need right on your Lock screen, exactly when you need it. The way it works easily. A pass is a JSON file with a package source that can be presented to you in the app, or as a link on the web or in an e-mail message. Tap them put in the Passbook. This means you don't need to have a Starbucks app installed to use a gift card in the Passbook, or any 3rd party application for that matter. When you get to the airline's entrance, the Starbucks line, or the cinema, however, instead of having to find the appropriate app, launch it, and then find the appropriate pass in the app, the Passbook collects everything together for you in one place. (And Apple has gone to some lengths to make their passes look good, and to help developers make their passes look as good as To use a pass, tap and it will exit its slot and take over the screen. If you have more than one pass for the same thing -- 2 tickets for Amtrack, 3 coupons for Target, etc. -- you can swipe between them. If a pass is a gift card, it can show the latest balance information right at the front. If passes are tickets, and something like the gate changes, which will also be displayed right at the front. To see additional information about the pass, tap the information button on the bottom right and it will flip more, just like the Weather or Stock app. In hindsight, you can draw to refresh, toggle the screen notification key inside or off, and view additional information such as authentication numbers, locations, and other details about a specific pass. And if you don't want the pass anymore, you can tap the trashcan button, verify the deletion, and Apple will turn it into a schematic shred right before your eyes. The passbook can also present a Lock screen notification so, when the right time arrives, or you arrive in the right place, your pass appears. If something changes, like door information, you'll get notifications as well. And multiple notifications conclude, just as you'd expect. On the negative side, while the Passbook itself is excellent, some applications that feed him are still awful, thin website bandages with terrible user experiences that make selection, pay, and get to the point where you can add passes to passbook elusive and annoying processes. An interesting passbook in a) rather than making a repository for something traditional, like a document, Apple does it for something still on the horizon, a digital voucher; and b) unlike Google and Microsoft, it is not yet a real mobile wallet with built-in payments. That makes Passbook stuck in the past and future. It has a QR code and a bar, not an NFC or other wireless transaction processing. It leaves payments in the hands of third parties, not Apple's massive iTunes cash register. In this it feels like the first step, a water test -- a way to make the mainstream comfortable and want more facilities. The only question is how long it takes mainstream users to decide those waters and fines, and want to dive in, and for Apple to get the available partnerships to take the next step. For now, however, the Trumps Passbook app, and makes it easier than ever to swipe, scan, and go. iPad Clock has a clock app! It works the same way as the iPhone clock app and the iPod touch that precedes it, but with an interface more suitable for larger screens. Unfortunately, iPad still doesn't have built-in stock, Voice Memos, Compass, or Calculator apps like iPhone and iPod touch. You can also select any song in your Music library to serve as your alarm sound. Just select the alarm, type Edit, type Sound, and then type one of the songs that you've loaded or type Choose Song to select something else. Easy, but a great addition. Eternal Warning it's easier to add with Siri than it adds to the heavy pipe app itself. However, with iOS 6 you get the ability to re-order tasks in the list using the same Edit and drag the process other applications have enjoyed since the beginning of iOS. The iTunes Store The iTunes Store, first launched as part of iOS 1.1 (Phone OS 1.1) alongside the original iPod touch now gets a new and darker makeover. Functionality really doesn't change, or has a search taken on the new App Store interface. The iTunes Store also remains an HTML5-filled app, which Even Facebook has now left for their iOS app. This means that it is slow and subject to the peace of mind the network connection. There may not be any help at the moment, though. iTunes needs to be updated so frequently, it's the only way to do it. One thing that helps, though, is the extended use of pumping iOS as mentioned in the Home Screen section (above). If you tap on something that has related apps, such as the iTunes Music Festival, you won't be sent to the App Store. The App Store page comes to you and once you're done, you can continue to browse the browsing media. App Store Apps get the same new and darker looks like the iTunes Store, but the interface has got a bigger overhaul. Especially searches. Apple has also fundamentally changed the way the App Store handles password requests, and how they handle the download process in general. Apple has been messing with the App Store's search algorithm for several months now, in some cases making things better and more logical, in others seeming to break it completely. It's probably a constantly running job and now the results themselves look okay. It's a troubled new interface. Missing is a drag display of a drab of compact lists that allow you to see many application options at once and choose who captures your interests. Now you get card-based views (no different to Safari Pages) that really show you one app at a time. This means you have to swipe more to see options, and developers face a harder time than ever getting attention -- unless they are the result of a first or second search. So it looks better but it doesn't work better. If anything Apple should explore metaphors like this for fast app converters, not app Store searches. To get an idea of losing efficiency, imagine if Google worked this way... A better solution is possible to block card displays to landscape mode, such as CoverFlow in Music, and either return to the display list for portrait mode, or apply the format new to show different search results compiled, such as most relevant, highest rated, most liked, most recent, and others. How Apple can improve App Store search in its own iOS 6 App Store page gets new layouts, Shared Sheets and capabilities for Facebook Likes (and Unlike) directly from the Review tab. There are also tabs that show you Related apps, both from the same builder and based on what customers who download the app have also downloaded. Overall, it is finicky layout but it provides more information about the app itself. There are still no demo videos, but there are tabs to see more apps by the same developer and to get an app update history. Also, if you already installed the application, instead of the Buy price button or the Download/Update button, you'll get the Open button that sends you directly to the app. On a very positive side too, Apple has completed two old annoyances with the store itself. First, you no longer need to enter your iTunes password to update the app. Just tap and install. And installing an app no longer boycotts you out of the App Store. They install while you live in the store. If you remain on the app page or update page, the progress bar at the bottom of the app icon will tell you the download progress. This comes at a cost for new users, who may be left wondering where their new app goes (because they are no longer taken out of the store and had to watch it install on the Home screen, where they can find it again later). To help reduce that, Apple packs a small New ribbon around newly installed apps. Although this compromise is slightly worse for the unfamiliar, it is much better for the majority. How many real stores take you home and make you watch as they hang your new pants, after all? Still no videos, still no upgrades, still no demos, still no children's share, still not so much things. But the App Store, as an HTML5-fed app like the iTunes Store can enjoy some level of small update whenever Apple wants. And iOS 6, if nothing else, shows Apple still working the App Store experience. The Games Center Game Center gets challenges, so you can tap scores or achievements and trash talking your friends more than ever. Talking about friends, with your permissions the new Facebook integration can try to connect you with people you already know. And yes, you can swipe and delete game Center entries for games without having to delete the game again. Nice, all right. But the overwhelming news for Game Center is, thanks to the OS X Mountain Lion, it is now across the entire line of Apple products. Right, you can challenge and play your friends not just on iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad, but Mac too. And vice versa. And thanks to AirPlay Mirroring now everywhere on all the latest devices, you can all push your game through Apple TV and to the HDTV big screen if you like. We're not there yet, not by any stretch, but if Force One Hair and Faux Stig (see screenshot of WWDC, above) are any indications, we witnessed the death of a console box and not mobile. The future of mobile games and projections. Casual games are already there. More will follow. FaceTime FaceTime now brings together iPhone phone numbers with Apple ID, just like Messages (see Messages, above). It can now be used through a cellular network, if your carrier chooses to allow it, and if you are on an appropriate plan, if choosing to block it. (Skype has been doing this for a while. It's utter garbage that carries try to prevent iOS from doing the same.) The Phone App phone gets all the new dialers very silver. I wasn't a fan when I first saw it and while it didn't bother me as it used to be, I still didn't find it visually pleasant. Your tastes of course vary. The phone also enjoys all the benefits of Do Not Disturb (see Notification Center, above) but also gets some extra features all of themselves. The first allows you to reject phone calls when replying with an iMessage or SMS message in an enclosure or custom. Reply with the Messages option all started with Can't speak now ... and you can choose from: I'll call you later. I'm on my way, what is up? Or your custom messages of the Second choice allow you to decline with the Remind Me Later feature. Options here include time reminders and geofences, location-based: Within 1 hour. When I go. When I got home. When I got to work. To get to this option, Apple provides a variation of the fast Camera access system they introduce in iOS 5 and is improved in iOS 5.1. When you get a call, you're shown a phone icon on the right side of the regular Slide to Unlock the controls. Swipe over it and you're shown both Reply options With Messages and Remind Me Later. Tap you want and you're done -- Your messages sent or your Reminders are set up. Interestingly, no option appeared when I received a Skype call, but did when I received a landline call that didn't have messaging capabilities. Reply to the harkens message back when Bill Gates surprised the mobile world by taking the CES stage with Ed Colligan to announce the first Windows Mobile Palm Treo. It seemed like a genius magic at that time. It seems like a practical feature now. Binding locations into call reminders are smarter, but Apple still doesn't pull the trigger on a contextual prediction feature. If my iPhone knew I had an appointment across the city within 15 minutes, and it knew traffic and time was such that I couldn't make it, why not warn me and give me the option to send a message or call my tendency and reschedule? That would be one of the next competitive battlegrounds, and Apple has all the pieces to implement them, if they choose it. Finally, 5 years later and Apple has yet to give us a simple setting switch to turn off warning beeps and buzzes when we use phone calls. If nearby sensors can turn off the screen and touch sensors, we should be able to turn on notifications if we don't want them to cut our skulls when our phones are in our ears. How Apple can allow us to silence alerts while we use phone Mail Mail gets the App Store embedded in the app, as mentioned earlier (see Home screen, above) and various other small but simple features that overall improve installability. Loren Brichter-inspired pull-to-refresh is now in the Mail, and now standard control developers can use in the iOS 6 app. Unlike the original Tweetie that inspired it, iOS is refreshing on the pull axis, and doesn't wait for you to let go first. Even in the era of push emails, pull-to-refresh is therapeutic and empowering, if nothing else. There are two new specialized inboxes in iOS 6 mail -- VIP and Flagged. Anyone you add as a VIP in Contacts is inserted into a special VIP inbox, and any messages you flag in Mail, put in each inbox, are dedicated so you can find them more easily later. You can now attach a photo or video to an email that is running without having to leave the Mail app, go copying photos and return. Just tap and hold to get a menu pop-up, tap the arrow to step through the menu option, and tap Insert Photos or Videos, and voila. Unfortunately, it doesn't help with any other file types you might want to attach, such as iWork documents. But: baby steps. Each email account can now have its own email signature, so your work email and home email, for example, doesn't all have to get stuck with Being Sent from my iPhone the same if you prefer they're not so stuck. You can also tap and hold the New Mail Post button at the bottom right to get a list of saved email drafts, if you want to continue writing something that previously started. Again, nothing jaw drops and itself, but some good updates to the mail system can already be used. Now we only need some hot sign-all-as-reading action ... Safari has been on the iPhone since the first version launched in 2007, and has improved, year after year, version after version, ever since. iOS 6 follows similar, steady, evolutionary patterns, handles perennial user pain points such as image uploads, and provides parity with features from other browsers, such as Chrome tab synchronization. It also makes reading List more robust, and provides interesting ways for websites to alert users about, and transfer them into, applications. First off, Safari gets a new Share Sheet, with options for Mail, Messages, Twitter, Facebook, Add to Home screen, Print, Copy, Bookmarks, and Add to Reading lists. Safari on iPhone and iPod touch also now has a Full Screen button similar to the Video app. Tap it, and the content fills your screen and only the back/forward ghost and full-screen mode controls come out permanently. This may be required by a new aspect ratio of 16:9 iPhone 5 and iPod touch 5. Landscape navigation bars are pretty old on old devices, they'll make new ones look ridiculously stunted. The iCloud tab allows you to view pages open on any other iOS or OS X devices that you've logged into the same account. If you start reading pages on your MacBook, you can open them immediately on your iPhone while you take the bus, and iPad while you sit in the coffee shop, and never lose your place. (If someone else has access to your device, make sure you use your mind to talk about which page you left open -- nothing like NSFW content appears for others at work, or at home, to stumble...) On iPad, the iCloud tab has iCloud shaped buttons. On iPhone and iPod touch, they are available via the Bookmarks button. What's more, you can tap and hold the back/forth navigation buttons to reveal the history selectors for the current tab. The Reading List, introduced in iOS 5, has been extended with offline mode. Now, when you save a page to reading List, Safari will download a copy of the content and save it available to you, even if you don't have a connection when you want to read it (for example, if you're on the subway to or from work). Upload photos corrects one of the fastest standing problems with iOS. At a long time, it's old, Safari will now bypass the buttons on websites trying to access your file system, and present you with the Camera app or photo app image selector. So adding an avatar and putting pictures on social networks can now be done directly at Safari. Hallelujah. If you go to a website that also has an App Store app, like Yelp! -- or iMore finally! -- the website can tell you about the app with a Smart app banner, and give you a button to see it in the App Store. If you already install the app, the Smart app banner will give you a button to open the app, and take you to the same place in the app you see on the website. (May not automatically, but use some form of URL scheme.) As Apple added, they also took -- just like the OS X Mountain Lion, they've removed built-in support for RSS and, if you want to continue reading them, will now direct you to the App Store to buy the app. I found Safari RSS very simple on both iOS and OS X, and it's annoying that it gets floppy disks. But that's Apple's way. Damaged, it took a long time to get image uploads to Safari that almost every popular website has created an app to provide that functionality. Still for a website that hasn't been, it's a welcome addition, a long time ago. The iCloud tab can be useful for someone with plenty of Apple devices. The Instapaper-inspired Reading List still won't be enough for power users, but ultimately enough beef to be useful for most casual users. Smart banners once again show Apple's preference over web content, and given how much better user experience the original app remains, that's not a bad thing. Taken together, Safari's updates are excellent. There is a regular upgrade to the Nitro JavaScript engine so the performance is excellent, and no doubt on the new iPhone 5 hardware will get better. Music Music gets a new silver style interface in iOS 6, at least for iPhone and iPod touch. (iPad already.) Video (see Videos, above) Music loses podcast content to the new dedicated Podcast app and is available on the App Store. If you've enabled iTunes Match, you can no longer swipe-to-delete songs in the Music app. iTunes Match automatically manages storage, erases local cached music when storage runs low. If you turn off iTunes Match, you can manually delete music. Podcasts Soon Apple launched iOS 6 at WWDC 2012, they released the Podcast app into the App Store. They have now updated it to support both the iOS 6 feature and the iPhone 5 high screen. I was originally intended to include all of this in my iOS 6 review but because of constraints in size and time, I posted separately, and linked. Before the release of the dedicated Podcasts app, the podcast is downloaded via the iTunes app and can be played again either in the Music or Video app, depending on whether it is an audio or video podcast. The split, along with a lack of ability to subscribe to podcasts, makes it an under-ideal experience, which many third-party apps try to solve). Apple's attempts to solve themselves are similar in structures to iBook or Newsstand. It has a place to find your existing content and a place to get more content, in this case the Library and the Catalog view. (Since the podcast is all free, it's not called Store because it's in another Apple app, similar, but it works the same.) Library View organizes your plans either in the grid view, featuring album art, or list views. To see a specific podcast episode, tap it. There is pull-to-fresh support so you can check out new episodes at any time. From the episode view, you can tap the episode title to start streaming it immediately, the white drop-down button to start downloading it (the 50MB limit applies if you're in a cellular), or a blue arrow button to get more information, including the description of the episode (which should include a show note, but because the link doesn't work, they're basically useless). You can also press the share button to access the Share Sheet so you can Mail, Messages, Twitter, Facebook, or Copy podcast links. Tap the artwork of the podcast or arrow on its right to see options for the podcast. Options include the ability to toggle podcast subscriptions on or off, download automatically on or off, type orders (oldest or recently first), play orders (oldest or latest in advance). You can also mark all episodes like the one that plays or doesn't play. When an audio podcast episode plays, you get a full-screen album art that, unlike the Music app, is properly centered. Tapping the list view button at the top right gives you a list of additional episodes, so you can easily switch between them. Taps the album art, which replaces the list view button at the top right, takes you back to the main player screen. This is pretty much the same behavior as the Music app, and consistency is appreciated. Basic control is also consistent in behavior otherwise In the podcasts of large, gray, industrial, and almost old school looking. You have a play/pause and skip back/forward, and if you hold a skipping backwards/forwards, you will get a rewind and fast forward. There are also two new controls, 15 seconds skipping backwards and skipping forward. They are useful if you miss something and want to re-hear or watch it again quickly, or if you want to segments you don't enjoy. Pressed underneath are the volume scrashers and the AirPlay buttons (if an AirPlay device is detected). Unlike the Music app, if you tap an album art that you're not brought to the list view. Instead, the art of the album lifts up to reveal a very skeuomorphic selection panel that fills many screens with old-style reel-to-reel tape players. It also provides control for sharing (with the same sheet as above), for hearing speed (1/2x, 1x, 1/2x, 2x, and 3x), and sleep timers (off, 5, 10, 15, 30, or 45 minutes, 1 hour, or when the current episode ends.) There is also a position scrubber with a small red line that shows your current time index in the podcast. Although the touchpoint looks small, it works just as scrubber rankings in the Music app. You can also reveal the preferred screen by using a small grip control at the bottom of the album's art to pull it off. To get back to the player screen, take a grip -- now at the top -- and pull back down. Strangely, you can't tap the tape deck to pull it down the way you can tap the art of the album to pull it away. There are no consistent points there. (or fit and finished points.) Also, although Podcasts is an App Store app, it seems to enjoy certain privileges that can't afford other podcast app stores. That is, Podcasts can use special controls on the Lock screen and in fast application converters. From the standard forward/back button, the annoying skipping the entire episode for other players, the 15-second forward and backward buttons are laid out instead. If other players have access to the same controls, hopefully they will implement them. If they don't, Apple should provide it so that everything in the App Store remains fair and works as possible. The video player interface is different from the audio player interface. Unlike audio players, video players are not given the same character or style, and there is no skeuomorphism in sight. On the other hand, it's almost identical to how podcasts are used to play in the Video app. It adds a playback speed button, however, but without 3x options. There is a full-screen toggle/widescreen, which is more important at 3:2 iPhone and previous iPod than it had at 16:9 iPhone 5 or iPod touch 5. Also missing are the back/forward buttons 15 seconds new, and in their place the single back button, long 30 seconds. It is also the only part of the Podcast app that supports landscape orientation (although you can watch in the portrait also if you really want to). Unlike iBook or Newsstand, Podcast also has a strange hybrid area that is in the Library section but provides catalogue content. It's called Top Station and this is another way for Apple content displayed or recommended, but uses radio dialer metaphors instead of regular iTunes Store list views. It is accessed via a large pipe at the bottom of the screen, and is given the same replacement to the podcast library itself, which is interesting. On The above, you can toggle between audio and video podcasts. On the tuner band you have the basic iTunes podcast category above and below it, sub categories. Below that you have a large album art for 5 performances, one above the other. Swipe ho horrifiedly move you through the sub-sector and then the category. A vertical swipe takes you through the recommended podcasts. Horrible and vertical scrolling is free, so if you swipe into the fifth podcast in one category, you'll still be shown the first if you swipe into different categories. Tap the latest artwork and episodes will start playing. Otherwise, if you linger for a while, an information icon will appear at the bottom right of it. Tap and you'll get a list of episodes and Subscription buttons. This is a visually dynamic way to suggest new plans, and new ways to bring save/catalog content into the App Library section. It would be interesting to see if we got an analogue for this in iBook and Newsstand (shelves?), and other player apps like Music and Videos. The Catalog section is what used to be the Podcasts section of the old iTunes app, but all is done in the style of a new iTunes app. Tap the Catalogue button and you get the iBook style twisted animated door. Inside, there are tabs for Features, Audio, Videos, Charts and Search. If you tap a chart, you start with audio and video charts combined on a single page by scrolling cloating, along with the Categories button at the top left to get a more specific chart. If you tap See All &t; you get the correct vertical list view of either audio or video podcasts. The Categories button, however, gets awkwardly requoted next to the back button for the chart, which expresses the screen title between it and the Library (which sometimes appears and sometimes does), and cancels it beyond the point of use. There is also a lack of consistency for audio icons, with toggles using relatively common speaker icons, and tab bars using chunkier, round the glyph speaker, which is tempting. Find bifurcates between episodes and podcasts. The episode result page is a more chaotic one both, presenting a vertical list of 4 episodes each that you can scroll through the cruel, as well as a large set of album art for related podcasts that aren't vertically stacked but can also landly scroll. For the episode, tap the down arrow next to a certain episode begins it downloading the episode. Tap on the art of an album or episode title, or anything else for that matter, takes you to the podcast page. In the podcast results tab, you're only given a list of plans that match search results. Tap on one of the podcasts and you're taken to its information page. On the podcast page You get general information about the presentation, including artists, ratings, categories, and can press the Subscribe button to add it to your library. You also have tabs for show details, plans, includes a list of descriptions and episodes, Reviews, that lets you Like shows through Facebook, along with regular iTunes reviews, and Related, which shows you more podcasts than the same artist, and more podcasts in the same subcategory. If you have more than one iOS device, iCloud support moves subscriptions between them, and maintains your last position. Overall, the Podcasts app adds a lot of features that are very missing from the implementation of apple's iTunes app podcasts. It's not perfect, and indeed many users find it buggy and disappointing at times. Episodes signify themselves as unplayable. Interactions with iTunes on the desktop can't be sorted to say at least. The Podcasts app is also shackled by a common masseuse in Apple's audio API that causes audio playback to restart after using Siri or putting down calls. Hopefully Apple continues to gloss over and fix it, regardless of what's happening with the recent App Store app that swords double-edged at its best. The feature Podcasts require most now is background download. If Newsstand can pick up your periodical every morning, Podcasts should be able to retrieve your podcasts when you are installed and connected to Wi-Fi. However, Apple doesn't allow other App Store apps to do so, so either it will be an unfair competitive advantage, or Apple will eventually need to make the background download API available to everyone. I've heard the last rumor, so let's hope it will come, and faster than iOS 7... Power users may want to hold on to power customers, where the App Store has a few, but for those who only want to enjoy podcasts once in a while, as well as iCloud syncing and Apple-style integration, Podcasts is a great choice. Bottom line iPhone OS 1.0 is all about encouraging users with an exciting multitouch interface and a fresh new take on smartphones. iPhone OS 2.0 for iOS 4 is about filling and rounding up features and functions, and creating an iPhone, and then an iPad, ecosystem. iOS 5 is about taking your iPhone and iPad to iCloud. iOS 6 is all about preparation for what comes next, and unfortunately for users this time around, many have something to do with Apple. There's never a good time to go back and rebuild things that users don't think need to rebuild, like Maps, or set up things that won't be fully realized for another generation or two, like passbooks. But Apple chose to do all of those things, and more. And they chose to do it now, in iOS 6. Android remains an unrelenting competitor, but had to go back and work on user experience, solidarity, and consistency, something Apple nailed in an iPhone OS 1. webOS has been killed by HP. Windows

Phone is as it is held back because it is supported by Microsoft notes with Windows everywhere, and has yet to find a clear story or market. BlackBerry won't have a shot at relaunch to early 2013. And Facebook and Amazon are still more vapor than software. Software, it seems to believe they have a chance, now, to fix some of the problems they themselves face. They seem to believe the tock in their product update cycle that includes Retina iPad, iPhone 5, and perhaps a mini iPad gives them the opportunity to repatriate and enforce important elements of their platform. In a perfect world, Apple can do everything at once. But we don't live in a perfect world. We live in a world of opportunity costs, where even one of the richest companies, the most successful on earth has to face a certain reality. That is, engineering talent is limited at the time itself. Money and efforts spent re-making Maps and expanding Siri cannot be spent on actionable notifications, inter-application communication, new fast application conversion metaphors, or any other higher hanging fruit iOS arguably still in need. Compared to previous versions of iOS, and compared to competing platforms, iOS 6 does not have the same level of customers facing pizazz this year. Sure, there are no new Distractions and Privacy features, FaceTime over 3G, Siri for iPad and iPod touch, VIP mail, Panorama photos, Safari image uploads, single app modes, and many small and satisfying gems, but making new Maps apps is a huge amount of work for Apple that can't be spent elsewhere. And put Siri and The Passbook for Apple's future compromised ability to deliver nowadays. So yeah, iOS 6 is a software update divided against itself. But taken as a whole, as a total of all new and better features, it is still strong enough to stand up. Now that they've put the platform for the future, however, the bigger challenge Apple faces is nailing what's to come. Leanna Lofte and Ally Kazmuch contributed photography for this review We may earn commissions for purchases using our links. learn more. More.

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