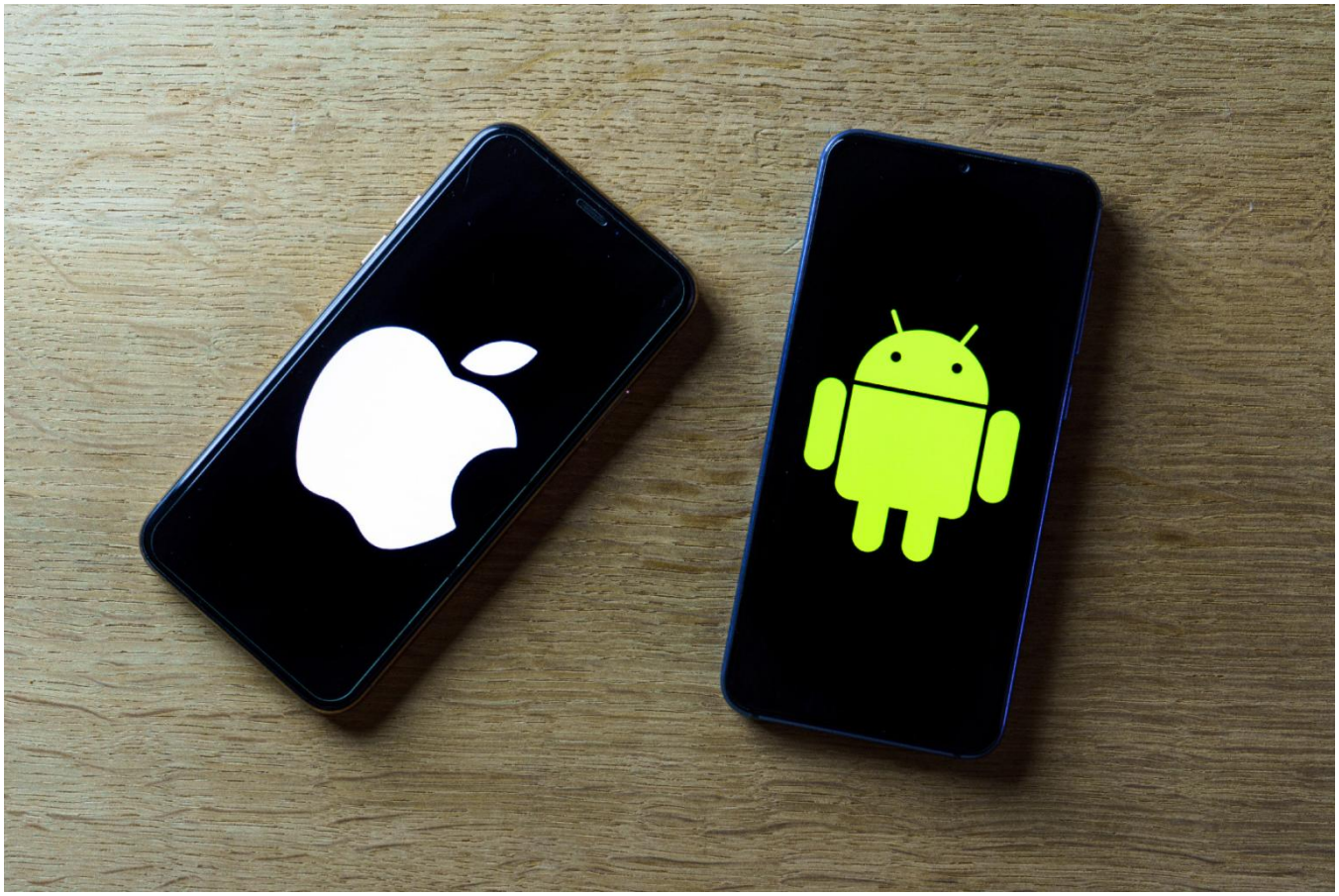
Factsheet – How the DMA is making smartphones better: interoperability and data portability case studies

FACTSHEET

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The Commission's enforcement of the Digital Markets Act (DMA) is delivering new interoperability and data portability features for developers and providers of connected devices (such as headphones, smartwatches, and smart glasses). As a result, iPhone and Android users can expect to see improvements in how their smartphones work over the next weeks and months.

New DMA data portability solutions

Full device data transfer and eSIM transfer (worldwide)

Apple and Google have been working on a cross-OS data transfer solution that allows users to **easily move all their data when switching between an iPhone and an Android phone** ('device transfer'). This will represent a **major upgrade** for users worldwide: currently, users who want to switch device makers face significant challenges due to the limitations of the current data transfer solutions, especially in terms of completeness of the data.

The device transfer solution is described as allowing users to easily and wirelessly

transfer data from one ecosystem to another when they set up a new device. It will support **many types of data, including contacts, calendar events, messages, photos, documents, Wi-Fi networks, passwords, and even data from third-party apps**. Apple overviewed this project in its DMA compliance reports and has now made the relevant documentation available to developers in beta (AppMigrationKit).

This solution will follow Apple's and Google's rollout of the **eSIM transfer solution in 2025**, which greatly simplified the transfer of eSIMs and phone numbers between iPhones and Android phones (and vice versa). The solution to transfer eSIMs is already supported by several European and non-European carriers, with more to come.

Taken together, the device and eSIM transfer solutions will reduce data lock-in and unlock user choice. Users will be able to choose a new phone based on the innovative features they value, without being locked into an ecosystem due to the complexities associated with transferring their data. The device transfer solution will also benefit app developers, who will be able to easily retain their users when they change ecosystems.

Links to relevant documentation:

- Transfer your eSIM from Android to iPhone - Apple Support
- Transfer a SIM to a new phone - Android - Pixel Phone Help
- Perform a one-time transfer of your app's on-device data to or from a device running another platform (AppMigrationKit)

Browser data portability (worldwide)

Web browsers are the apps through which users access the web. They are a crucial gateway for users of mobile devices to access digital content. To make the user experience smoother and more personalised, users can choose to store in their web browser useful data, including bookmarks, browsing history, passwords, credit card data, extensions, etc.

Users may want to switch their web browser (facilitated by a DMA choice screen), but this should not come at the cost of losing this useful data. On desktop operating systems, browser data portability has always been fairly easy: in a couple of clicks, the user can import data from one desktop browser to another. On mobile OSs, due to stricter rules related to app isolation, seamless data portability among browsers has so far not been possible.

Over the course of two years of regulatory dialogue, Apple developed two subsequent

solutions to allow users to import their Safari data into another browser that is installed on the iOS/iPadOS device. The most recent solution relies on a new bidirectional API that any browser app on iOS/iPadOS can integrate with to both import and export data from and to any other browser app that also integrates with the API.

The API-based transfer, which can be initiated by the receiving browser, happens app-to-app but is OS-mediated and user-mediated, preserving app data isolation (unlike on desktop) and avoiding the need to expose the data to the cloud. This makes this solution the first on-device data portability framework that is simultaneously user-friendly, secure, and private.

These portability solutions have already been adopted by some third-party browsers, such as Chrome and Vivaldi, which can now offer the user to import data from Safari.

Link to relevant documentation:

- Export Safari data to another browser on iPhone – Apple Support (UK)
- Transferring browsing data to another browser | Apple Developer Documentation
- See also commentary: Web browsers - a data portability patchwork | Data Transfer Initiative

New DMA interoperability solutions on iOS and Android

As part of their DMA compliance, Apple, Google, (and Microsoft) have created **portals for developers to request interoperability** to features of their designated operating systems. Developers can now:

- **Submit** interoperability requests in Apple's, Google's, (and Microsoft's) portals; and
- **Consult** interoperability requests made by other developers (if the developer agreed to make the request public) on Apple's and Google's portals.

Furthermore, the Commission **has issued guidance to Apple for interoperability** with iOS for connected devices and its interoperability request process. The Commission **is in the process of issuing guidance to Google for interoperability with Android for AI services**.

Interoperability with Apple iPhone for connected devices

Connected devices are a varied, large and commercially important group of products, ranging from smartwatches, headphones, virtual reality headsets, smart glasses, and more. Apple's connected devices (e.g. Apple Watch, Vision Pro, AirPods) often have privileged access to features of Apple's operating systems (i.e. iOS). Without access to the same features, third parties cannot compete with Apple on the merits and provide innovative products.

Following the Commission's decision on connected devices of 19 March 2025, Apple must release interoperability solutions for some key iOS features to allow developers and connected device providers to offer European users the same experience as with Apple's devices.

By 1 June 2026, Apple is due to roll out new interoperability solutions for several features, including **notifications**, **proximity pairing**, and parts of the measures for **audio switching**:

- **Notifications** are essential to ensure that users can stay informed about events, updates, reminders, and alerts from apps. They are also widely used to react and reply to messages – something that currently is only available to Apple branded connected devices, such as the Apple Watch. Users of third-party connected devices will be able to receive and react to notifications from their iPhone and make full use of their accessories. The beta version of the Accessory Notifications framework was already released in iOS 26.3 (EU only).
- **Proximity pairing** allows any connected device to pair with an iPhone through a simplified procedure. In practice, a user can simply bring a connected device (e.g. headphones) next to the iPhone, which will automatically prompt the user with a simple interface to proceed with the pairing of the device. Third-party connected devices will be able to implement this simple process, which significantly improves the user experience when users purchase, connect, and set up a new non-Apple connected device with their iPhone.
- **Automatic audio switching** allows users to automatically switch the audio source from one device to another, e.g. from a smartphone to a computer, when using supported wireless headphones. In practice, when users who are listening to music on a device (e.g. a tablet) via wireless headphones, receive a call on the iPhone, the iPhone will automatically switch the headphone's audio source from the tablet to the iPhone. Apple will have to expand this feature for non-connected devices by 1 June 2027.

Furthermore, in line with the deadlines set out by the Commission, Apple has **already released** (partial) interoperability solutions for **automatic Wi-Fi connection, NFC, peer-to-peer Wi-Fi**, **close-range wireless file transfer solutions** and **background execution**:

- **Automatic Wi-Fi connection.** In iOS 26.4, Apple released the Wi-Fi Infrastructure framework and Accessory Transport Extension framework (EU only), which allows, subject to user consent, third-party connected devices to access the iPhone's information about local Wi-Fi networks. The automatic Wi-Fi connection therefore allows connected devices to seamlessly join the Wi-Fi networks the iPhone is connected to, as currently possible on the Apple Watch.
- **NFC Controller in Reader/Writer mode.** In iOS 26.0, Apple released the NFCPaymentTagReaderSession class, which enables a number of new payment-related use cases on iPhones (EU only). For example, it allows users to use their iPhone to initiate various connected devices, such as rings or bracelets, to pay in a shop like with a payment card – without the presence of the iPhone. Users can now also use their physical credit card as an additional authentication factor when registering in a banking app, reducing the risk of fraud.
- **High bandwidth peer-to-peer Wi-Fi connection (Wi-Fi Aware).** In iOS 26.0, Apple released the Wi-Fi Aware framework (worldwide). Wi-Fi Aware is a modern and secure peer-to-peer Wi-Fi standard that allows communication with nearby devices without an internet connection. For instance, third party developers can now cast a high-resolution video from an iPhone directly to a TV or to virtual reality glasses, or share files directly between devices, even when they are not connected to the same network.
- **Features for close-range wireless file transfer solutions.** Apple has released and updated relevant iOS frameworks (e.g. AccessorySetupKit, Wi-Fi Aware, DeviceDiscoveryUI) to allow developers to access the same iOS-controlled features as available to Apple's AirDrop in order to develop their own third-party file sharing app. The solution allows developers to securely pair and connect external devices to exchange files similarly to AirDrop.
- **Background execution**. In iOS 26, Apple released an update (worldwide) to make sure that Bluetooth accessories continue working as intended when the user quits the companion app of their connected device, or when the connected device returns within range after being disconnected (e.g. when the user returns home after a run). For instance, the iPhone can now fetch the latest weather information and synchronise it to a smartwatch without requiring active user interaction (e.g. by re-opening the companion app). The iPhone can now also reliably open the user's Bluetooth-enabled car when they get nearby the vehicle. Apple will have to provide further access to

background execution on non-discriminatory terms by the end of 2026.

Interoperability with Apple iPhone for other use cases

Apple has released more interoperability solutions in response to developers' requests submitted via Apple's DMA portal and following regulatory dialogue with the Commission. For example:

- **Password managers**. Third-party password managers can now suggest strong passwords and allow the user to create a new password entry inline when they log into a new website/app, without going through a separate window (worldwide).
- **Alarm apps**. With AlarmKit, third-party alarm apps are now able play an alarm at a specified time or when the device is muted. They are also able to display a screen overlay which gives the user an option to snooze or stop the alarm (worldwide).
- **Memory allowance.** Apple increased the amount of memory that developers can use with UNNotificationServiceExtension (worldwide). This increase was implemented in response to a DMA request and allows developers to, for example, better support end-to-end encryption for push notifications.
- **Call spam protection.** Third-party apps can now better protect users against spam calls. Apple released the Live Caller ID Lookup app extension in iOS 18, which allows developers to provide caller ID and call-blocking services from a server that the developer maintains (worldwide).

Interoperability with Google Android for AI services

The Commission has published draft measures that Google should implement to ensure that third-party AI services have access to the same features that are available to Google's services. These measures are currently undergoing public consultation. Interested developers have until 13 May 2026 to submit their views on the measures.

The measures cover several key features, including:

- **Wake words.** The proposed measures would allow users to invoke third-party AI apps using their voice via customised wake words at any time, even when their screen is locked, with minimal impact on battery.
- **Access points with contextual data.** The draft includes proposed measures to allow third-party apps and services to be invoked via the system-wide access points, such

as long press on the home button. Those services would also receive contextual data to offer enhanced capabilities, such as translating text or searching for information on screen (as currently available to Google's Circle to Search).

- **App interactions and screen automation.** The proposed measures would ensure that competing AI services can interact with applications and execute tasks at the user's request, such as sending an email using the user's preferred email app, ordering food or sharing a photo with friends.

The DMA is delivering

The changes described above are just some examples of concrete benefits that the DMA's interoperability and data portability obligations bring to smartphone users and app developers. There is much more that gatekeepers have implemented and will have to implement over the coming weeks and months to comply with the DMA – including new APIs for third-party earbuds to implement live translation and for media apps to provide better media casting experiences. While improvements that are DMA-driven might not always be identified as such, the DMA continues to quietly deliver on its promises by increasing user choice and creating more opportunities for everyone.

Background

The Digital Markets Act (DMA) is an EU regulation designed to make the digital sector fairer and more contestable. It defines objective criteria for designating large digital platforms as "gatekeepers" and imposes specific obligations and prohibitions these gatekeepers must follow.

The DMA entered into force on 1 November 2022, and its obligations became applicable to designated gatekeepers in March 2024. The designated gatekeepers include Apple and Google, each designated for multiple core platform services, notably their mobile operating systems: Google's Android and Apple's iOS and iPadOS.

Contestability of mobile ecosystems is a key focus area of the DMA, which imposed various requirements on Apple and Google, notably regarding interoperability, data access and portability.

The DMA requires **data portability rights** for end users via Article 6(9) DMA. Data portability is critical in the context of mobile operating systems: users store a lot of important data on their phones, and they do not want to lose this data when they buy a

new phone or switch to a new app.

Similarly, the **interoperability requirement** – Article 6(7) DMA – requires gatekeepers to allow third parties to access the same OS features that are available to the gatekeeper's own services that run on top of the OS. This is to ensure that Apple and Google no longer have exclusive access to OS features and that third-party developers can also build services and compete on the merits with the gatekeepers on their platforms. Importantly, Apple and Google remain free to decide which features are added to the OS – the DMA simply requires a level playing field. Users also remain free to decide which apps to use, and which permissions to grant to these apps.

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