Google’s AirDrop competitor, Nearby Share, is reportedly getting a big upgrade

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Because sending a photo to your computer shouldn’t be this hard

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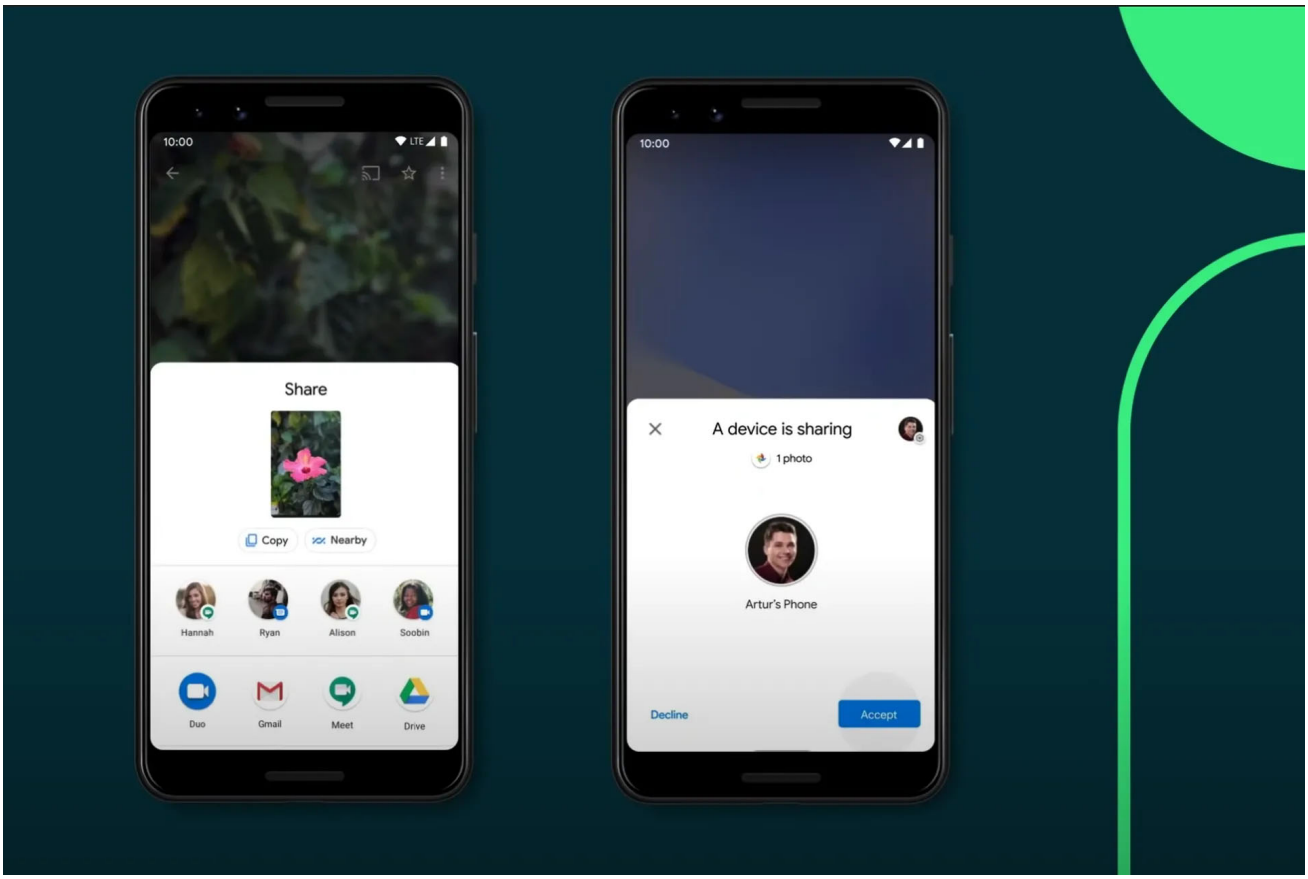

When Google launched Nearby Share in 2020, Android users everywhere rejoiced. They finally had a tool to rival Apple's AirDrop, a simple way to move files between devices without having to attach them to an email or upload them to Google Drive just to download them again on a new device.

Now, ahead of Google I/O, a few users have noticed an upgrade lurking in Google Play Services that makes Nearby Share even easier. The new "self-share" mode, as spotted by Esper's Mishaal Rahman (via *Android Police*), appears to let you send files between your own devices with a single tap. The feature has been rumored for months but now appears to be much closer to being ready.

Until now, Google has required the recipient of a share to accept it, which is a very good idea for security and trolling reasons but an annoying additional step when all you want to do is send a photo from your phone to the laptop in the other room. The newly seamless sharing only works for devices that have Nearby Share enabled, are physically close to you, and are

logged into your Google account. Anyone else not on your account will still have to accept each share from your device.

Nearby Share is an important feature for Google, especially as the Android ecosystem continues to expand across devices. If Google is going to be inside your phone, your laptop, your TV, your speakers, and your smartwatch, it needs to make it easy for users to move stuff between all those devices. Apple has continually shown what's possible here, with AirDrop but also with features like Universal Control. It can be a hard thing to get right, though: for every magical second-screen experience Apple offers, it also shipped the feature that makes your AirPods switch from your phone to your laptop at the worst possible times.

But both companies know that a successful ecosystem requires not just making things but making them work together, and both are seemingly pushing hard toward that goal. (In a perfect world, these would be cross-platform features, too, but don't hold your breath on that.)

There's no word yet on when the Nearby Share update will be released, but with Google I/O scheduled to start on May 11th, it's likely not far away.

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