LEARNING MADE EASY

2nd Edition

Android®

for dummies®

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Set up, configure, and get connected

Shoot and share photos and videos

Use social media, text, and email to stay in touch

Dan Gookin

Author of *Microsoft Word 2019 For Dummies* and *Laptops For Dummies*

Android®

2nd Edition

by Dan Gookin

for dummies®
A Wiley Brand

Android® For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.,** 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2020942384

ISBN: 978-1-119-71135-3; 978-1-119-71136-0 (ebk); 978-1-119-71137-7 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Introduction

You know it's intimidating when they call it a "smartphone." Worse, the supersize smartphone, the tablet, supposedly does everything your computer does but without a keyboard — or very many knobs or switches. Still, if you own one of these devices, don't you want to get all the features you paid for?

This book makes the complex subject of Android phones and tablets understandable. It's done with avuncular care and gentle handholding. The information is friendly and informative, without frightening you. And yes, ample humor is sprinkled throughout the text to keep the mood light. New technology can be frustrating enough without a touch of levity.

About This Book

Please don't read this book from cover to cover. This book is a reference. It's designed to be used as you need it. Look up a topic in the table of contents or the index. Find something about your Android mobile gizmo that vexes you or you're curious about. Look up the answer, and get on with your life.

Every chapter is written as its own, self-contained unit, covering a specific Android topic. The chapters are further divided into sections representing tasks you perform with the device or explaining how to get something done. Sample sections in this book include

- Typing without lifting your finger
- Making a conference call
- Blocking calls
- Sending email to a contact
- Surfing the web on a mobile device
- Helping others find your location
- Recording video

- Creating a mobile hotspot
- Flying with an Android
- Extending battery life

You have nothing to memorize, no sacred utterances or animal sacrifices, and definitely no PowerPoint presentations. Instead, every section explains a topic as though it's the first thing you've read in this book. Nothing is assumed, and everything is cross-referenced. Technical terms and topics, when they come up, are neatly shoved to the side, where they're easily avoided. The idea here isn't to learn anything. This book's philosophy is to help you look it up, figure it out, and move on.

How to Use This Book

This book follows a few conventions for using your Android phone or tablet, so pay attention!

First of all, no matter what name your phone or tablet has, whether it's a manufacturer's name or a pet name you've devised on your own, this book refers to it as an *Android.* Sometimes the term *phone* or *tablet* is used, and sometimes *device* or, rarely, *gizmo*.

Because Samsung modifies the Android operating system, and because the company's gizmos sell more than other phones and tablets, its devices are often called out in the text — specifically, when a Samsung galactic gizmo does something different from a typical Android gizmo.

The main way to interact with an Android mobile device is to use its *touchscreen*, which is the glassy part of the device as it's facing you. The physical buttons on the device are called *keys.* These items are discussed and explained in Part 1 of this book.

The various ways to touch the screen are explained and named in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 covers text input, which involves using an onscreen keyboard. When you tire of typing, you can dictate your text. It's all explained in Chapter 4.

This book directs you to do things by following numbered steps. Each step involves a specific activity, such as touching something on the screen; for example:

3. **Tap the Apps icon.**

This step directs you to tap or touch the graphical Apps icon on the screen. When a button is shown as text, the command reads:

3. **Tap the Download button.**

You might also be directed to choose an item, which means to tap it on the screen.

Various settings can be turned off or on, as indicated by a master control, which looks like the on–off toggle, as shown in the margin. Tap the master control to enable or disable the feature, or slide its button to the right or left. When the feature is enabled, the Master Control icon appears in color.

Foolish Assumptions

Though this book is written with the gentle handholding required by anyone who is just starting out, or who is easily intimidated, I've made a few assumptions.

I'm assuming that you're still reading the introduction. That's great. It's much better than getting a snack right now or checking to ensure that the cat isn't chewing through the TV cable again.

My biggest assumption: You have or desire to own a phone or tablet that uses Google's Android operating system.

Your phone can be any Android phone from any manufacturer supported by any popular cellular service provider in the United States. Because Android is an operating system, the methods of doing things on one Android phone are similar, if not identical, to doing things on another Android phone. Therefore, one book can pretty much cover the gamut of Android phones.

If you have an Android tablet instead, it can be a Wi-Fi–only tablet or an LTE (Long-Term Evolution) tablet that uses the same mobile data network as an Android phone. This book covers both models.

Any differences between an Android phone and tablet are noted in the text. For the most part, the devices work similarly because they run the same Android operating system.

The Android operating system itself comes in versions, or flavors. This book covers current Android versions 8.0 through 10.0. To confirm which Android version your gizmo uses, follow these steps:

1. **Open the Settings app.**

   Directions are found in Chapter 3 for accessing the Settings app.

2. **Choose System.**

   If you see the About Phone or About Tablet item on the main Settings app screen, choose it. This item might be named About Device.

3. **Look at the item titled System Update or Android Version.**

   Newer devices use System Update to disclose the current Android version. Older devices show a number by the Android operating system item. Also check for the item Software Information.

Don't fret if these steps confuse you: Check out Part 1 of this book, and then come back here. (I'll wait.)

More assumptions:

You don't need to own a computer to use your Android mobile thingy. If you have a computer, great. Your phone or tablet works well with both PC and Mac. When directions are specific to a PC or Mac, the book says so.

Programs that run on your Android are *apps,* which is short for *app*lications. A single program is an *app*.

Finally, this book assumes that you have a Google account, but if you don't, Chapter 2 explains how to configure one. Do so. Having a Google account opens up a slew of useful features, information, and programs that make using your Android more productive.

Icons Used in This Book

This icon flags useful, helpful tips or shortcuts.

This icon marks a friendly reminder to do something.

WARNING

This icon marks a friendly reminder not to do something.

TECHNICAL STUFF

This icon alerts you to overly nerdy information and technical discussions of the topic at hand. Reading the information is optional, though it may win you the Daily Double on *Jeopardy!*

Contacting the Author

My email address is `dgookin@wambooli.com`. Yes, that's my real address. I reply to every email I receive, and more quickly when you keep your question short and specific to this book. Although I enjoy saying Hi, I cannot answer technical support questions, resolve billing issues, or help you troubleshoot your phone or tablet. Thanks for understanding.

My website is `wambooli.com`. This book has its own page on that site, which you can check for updates, new information, and all sorts of fun stuff. Visit often:

```
wambooli.com/help/android
```

Beyond the Book

Thank you for reading the introduction. Few people do, and it would save a lot of time and bother if they did. Consider yourself fortunate. No, consider yourself handsome, well-read, and worthy of praise, though you probably knew that.

Beyond my own website (see the preceding section), my beloved publisher also offers its own helpful site, which contains official updates and bonus information I'm forbidden by law to offer to you. Visit the publisher's official support page at `www.dummies.com` and then search for *Android For Dummies, 2nd Edition* — the whole thing! I'd offer more specific information, but I don't have it. The publisher told me that the actual address of the online material is held in one of 20 briefcases and that if I choose the right one, I get paid — something like that.

Your task now: Start reading the rest of the book — but not the whole thing, and especially not with the chapters in order. Observe the table of contents and find something that interests you. Or look up your puzzle in the index. When these suggestions don't cut it, just start reading Chapter 1.

Enjoy this book and your Android mobile gizmo!

1 Your Own Android

IN THIS PART . . .

Get started with your Android gizmo.

Work through configuration and setup.

Learn basic techniques and procedures.

Force yourself to enjoy the onscreen keyboard.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Unboxing your Android
- Charging the battery
- Locating important things
- Getting optional accessories
- Storing an Android

Chapter 1
An Out-of-the-Box Experience

You begin your Android adventure by removing the device from its box. Yes, I know: You've already completed that task. I don't blame you; I removed my new Android from the box before I read this chapter. Yet you may consider a few helpful tips and suggestions before that out-of-the-box experience becomes a distant memory.

Liberation

Like most electronics, your new Android phone works fastest when you remove it from its box. Savor the moment. Breathe deep the scent of the industrial epoxy used to seal the box. Gingerly lift out the packaging. Marvel as you peel back the plastic sheeting.

Array before you the contents of the box. These useful items include

- **The device itself:** If further assembly is required, directions are found inside the box.
- **USB cable:** Use it to connect the device to a computer or a wall charger.

- **Power adapter:** Use this thing with the USB cable to charge the Android's battery. The adapter may come in two pieces, both of which must be assembled.
- **Earbud headset:** This item might be a simple headset, or you might find a microphone/controller gizmo on one of the earbud leads.
- **Useless pamphlets:** It's odd that the safety and warranty information is far more extensive than the flimsy user guide. That shows the priority our culture places on lawyers over technology writers.
- **The SIM card and removal tool:** You may find the card holder used to install the device's SIM card. If the SIM has already been installed, you can toss the holder, though I recommend keeping the SIM card removal tool.

ANDROID BUYING TIPS

The major things to look for when purchasing an Android gizmo are its cellular provider, storage, camera options, screen size, and overall design.

All phones have a cellular connection, but only some Android tablets use this feature. Most tablets use only the Wi-Fi connection for Internet access, which is fine. Cellular or LTE (Long-Term Evolution) tablets cost more and also incur monthly mobile data charges.

Some Androids feature removable storage, in the form of a microSD card. This feature allows you to expand the device's storage and more easily share files with a computer, though using removable storage isn't without its issues. See Chapter 19.

The device's camera has a maximum resolution, measured in megapixels (MP). The higher the value, the better the camera, though unless you plan to edit high resolution images, a zillion megapixels isn't worth the extra cost. Ensure that an Android tablet has both front and rear cameras. And confirm that the rear camera has a flash. It's not an important feature, but it's best to know before you buy the device.

Both screen size and design play together — specifically, with how the device feels in your hand. Some large format phones, often called *phablets* (for *ph*one/t*ablets*) are too big for some people — and pockets. Tablets come in two sizes: a smaller format, about the size of a paperback book, and a larger format, better suited for watching videos. The best way to know which size works best for you is to try out a few devices at the store.

Beyond these basic items, Android phones and tablets have only subtle software differences. Do ensure, however, that your device can access and use Google Play, the online store for the Android operating system. Some bargain phones and tablets restrict your purchases to the manufacturer's own app store. I would avoid those gizmos.

The important thing to do is confirm that nothing is missing or damaged. Ensure that you have all the parts you paid for, including any optional accessories. If anything is missing or appears to be damaged, immediately contact the folks who sold you the device.

TIP

- I recommend keeping the packaging and its contents as long as you own the Android: The box makes an excellent storage place for that stuff — as well as for anything else you don't plan to use right away.
- The process of transferring information from your old phone to a new one is covered in Chapter 2.

Android Assembly

Android devices come fully assembled. If not, directions that came with the device describe what to do. Even then, odds are that the nice people at the store assembled the gizmo for you. If not, well then, they weren't so nice, were they?

Peeling off the plastic sheeting

Like laser blasters and time travel pods, your Android ships with a clingy plastic sheeting adhering to its surface. The sheeting might describe various features, so look it over before you peel it off. And, yes, you must remove the sheeting; it's for shipping protection, not for long-term protection.

TIP

- Check the device's rear camera to confirm that you've removed the plastic sheeting from its lens.
- Feel free to discard the plastic sheeting.

Installing the SIM card

A *SIM card* identifies an Android device to the digital cellular network. Before you can use it on that network, the SIM card must be installed.

TECHNICAL STUFF

SIM stands for *s*ubscriber *i*dentity *m*odule, which should help you if you enjoy doing crossword puzzles.

Most of the time, the sales staff at the phone store install the SIM card. They pretend it's a task that requires a PhD in quantum mechanics, though it's really LEGO-brick simple.

If you've purchased your phone or cellular tablet outside the realm of the phone store and you have a SIM card to install (and you know how to obtain service for it and all that stuff), follow these steps when the device is turned off:

1. **Locate the SIM card cover on the device's outer edge.**

   The cover features a dimple or hole on one end.

2. **Firmly insert the SIM card removal tool into the hole on the SIM card cover, and press to remove the SIM card tray.**

   The SIM card cover pops up or the SIM card tray slides out.

3. **Pop the SIM card out of the credit-card-size holder.**

   Push the card with your thumb and it pops out. Don't use scissors or else you may damage the card.

4. **Set the SIM card into the SIM card tray or otherwise insert it into the SIM card slot.**

   The SIM card is shaped in such a way that it's impossible to insert improperly. If the card doesn't slide into the slot, reorient the card and try again.

5. **Insert the SIM card tray back into the slot or close the SIM card cover.**

   You're done.

The good news is that you seldom, if ever, need to remove or replace a SIM card.

CHOOSING A CELLULAR CARRIER

You do have a choice when it comes to the cellular provider for your Android device. Most of the time this decision is made by where you buy the phone: The store that provides mobile data also sells you the device. However, you can buy an unlocked phone, which can be used with any compatible cellular service.

The key issue when choosing a carrier is coverage. Though its colorful coverage maps may look good, the best way to ensure that a cellular provider has the coverage you need is to ask your friends and associates who use that same provider. Does the signal work everywhere? Is the signal consistent?

Another option available to you, though unpopular, is to pay full price upfront for the phone. Buying the phone outright frees you from a long term contract (generally, two years). Though expensive, using the service without a contract makes it easier to switch carriers if you later choose to do so.