

Some Notes about Android Phones/Tablets

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Online copies are available from the Android Users Page at:

U3A Bendigo Website: <http://u3abendigo.com/layt>

U3A Network at St Mary's <http://ben.local/layt>

1. Android is a Mobile Phone and Tablet operating system developed by Google. It was first released in 2008. Each major release version is named after something sweet:

Android 1.6. Donut

Android 2.1. Eclair

Android 2.2. Froyo

Android 2.3. Gingerbread.

Android 3.0. Honeycomb.

Android 4.0. Ice Cream Sandwich.

Android 4.1. Jelly Bean.

Android 4.4. KitKat.

Android 5.x. Lollipop

Android 6.x. Marshmallow

Android 7.x. Nougat

2. Various manufacturers make Android devices: Samsung, Motorola, ASUS, HTC, Huawei, LG, Sony, Xiaomi, to name a few. The manufacturers are fiercely competitive and are constantly redesigning their product lines to include faster processors, more memory, longer range, quicker downloads, better cameras, etc..
3. Each release of the Android operating system adds new capabilities and utilizes the improved features of the most recently released Android devices.
4. An App is an application, typically a small, specialised program downloaded onto Mobile devices.
5. Modern Mobiles and Tablets are called smart phones or devices, because they have many features. Some of their features include: they can connect to the Internet, they have Wi-Fi, they can run Apps, they have a web browser, and they have a built in Qwerty keyboard. They also have touch screens to make them user friendly. Generally, the more expensive Phones and Tablets have better displays (brighter and higher contrast that make it easier to read), together with better cameras (faster focusing and higher quality images). These days many people use their mobile phone as their main camera instead of a traditional camera.
6. Your Mobile Phone normally has a SIM card (Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, etc) installed. This is primarily used for making/receiving phone calls and sending/receiving SMS and MMS messages, but can also be used for Data (most Phone Plans have some data included). Wi-Fi has nothing to do with the SIM card. SMS messages are just plain text messages, whereas MMS messages contain a graphic (e.g. a photo). Mobile phone service providers (Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, etc) charge more for MMS messages, typically \$0.12 for SMS and \$0.35 for MMS messages.
7. Data is used for things like: Internet activity, sending/receiving emails, and downloading/installing/updating Apps from the Play Store. Data can be provided via your SIM card, and/or by Wi-Fi. Your SIM card uses the mobile tower network, e.g. Telstra, Optus, Vodafone. Whereas Wi-Fi uses ADSL or the NBN network.
8. Your SIM card (Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, etc) can make phone calls and send SMS messages without using Data. However, for sending/receiving emails, MMS messages and connecting

to the Internet, you need Data on your Mobile Plan. As mentioned, most Mobile Plans include some Data, e.g. 800MB, 1.5GB, 3GB, 5GB etc. Generally, the Data lasts for 1 month only. If you are a light user, you only need about 800MB/month. However, you must take into consideration whether you have ready access to Wi-Fi. I have Wi-Fi in my home, so most of my Data usage is done on my Wi-Fi. My Mobile Plan has only 800MB of Data/month.

9. Don't be afraid to try installing and uninstalling Apps from the Play Store. Start with free ones. Paid Apps typically range from about \$1 to \$6, and this is paid only once (it is not an annual charge).
10. Transferring photos from your Mobile to your computer. Common methods are: via email, via a wired connection between devices (micro-USB connector to USB connector), using a cloud App like Dropbox, and via Wi-Fi using a file transfer App (which has to be installed on your computer as well as on your Mobile Phone).
11. When you get an Android Phone you set-up a Google Account (gmail address and password), for the following reasons:
 - a) You must have a Google Account to download Apps from the Google Play Store, even for free Apps.
 - b) All Android devices using the same Google Account will be able to access the data. For example, if you have an Android phone and Android tablet you will see the same emails, contacts and calendar on both.
 - c) If you purchase an App for one device you can install it on other devices without paying anything extra.
 - d) Your Phone or Tablet data will be backed-up to the cloud, so if you lose your phone, or upgrade to another, you can easily restore all your emails, contacts, calendar, Apps etc.
12. When you set-up any Account, eg a Gmail account, or register a new App, you should write-down the username and password and keep it in a safe place, eg wallet or handbag, as you will be requested to log-in in the future, usually at some unexpected time! Make sure you write down the username and password clearly, using capitals, spaces and other characters. There is nothing more frustrating when you are doing something on your phone, tablet or computer and being asked to enter your account details – and you can't remember the username and/or password.
13. I recommend you consider changing the default aspect ratio of the camera, including the video camera, from 4:3 to 16:9 (go to the camera settings to do this). This is the aspect ratio of Mobile phone screens and Smart TV screens. When you make that change your photos and video will fill the screens.
14. It's a good idea to go through your photos on your Mobile or Tablet from time to time and delete ones that are no good or that you don't need to keep.
15. When you get more experienced you may like to arrange your photos, videos and data files in separated directories and put them onto a micro-SD card in your mobile device. This frees up space for your mobile/tablet's primary storage.

16. It's a good idea to minimise clutter on your front, start-up screen. Only have a few of your most common Apps there. You can arrange to have a short-cut directory of your favourite Apps on your front start-up screen. There are also Apps called launchers that you can have on the front screen to be able to quickly go to your favourite Apps.
17. Apps are regularly updated on your Mobile/Phone/Tablet – using some Data of course. You can switch off automatic updating, but it is only recommended for infrequently used Apps. Most Mobiles/Tablets are configured to update Apps only when Wi-Fi is available.
18. Mobile Phones and Tablets will require a system update from time to time. This is an update to the main Android operating system. Your Mobile/Tablet is generally configured to download the update file on Wi-Fi. Once the update file has been downloaded you get a prompt to install it. Installing the update can take 5 to 15 minutes, depending on how many Apps you have installed.
19. There are hundreds of Apps that can be downloaded and installed from the Google Play Store, including lots of games. It's a good idea to spend a bit of time browsing the Apps in the Play Store. Generally, more popular Apps appear at the top of lists. Also, the number of downloads (shown below the App name) can be used as a guide to their popularity.
20. Although Phones/Mobiles/Tablets come with some pre-installed Apps, most people like to check out and install other Apps from the Google Play Store. Sometimes they find these other Apps to be more user friendly.
21. If your Phone is on a pre-paid Phone Plan, and you don't have much in the way of personal information (e.g. banking details) on your Phone/Tablet then it's probably not necessary to have a screen lock on your phone. It's makes it simpler to start using your Phone when in a hurry.
22. Mobiles and Tablets have what's called 'predictive text' set as the default setting for typing (e.g. in SMS messages and emails). You can switch off this function in the settings. I find it annoying and frustrating as I don't like all the prompts coming up when you are typing words. I prefer to type the traditional way.
23. The “Share” symbol/function that pops up at the top of the screen when you are using certain Apps is often used to send photos or files via email or by SMS. When you touch the Share symbol, you can select an appropriate App from a list that pops up.



Things you can do with an Android Mobile/Tablet

1. You can make mobile phone calls, from anywhere where there is a mobile signal. Generally, this is anywhere within about 50 kms of a town/city in Australia. Emergency calls can be made from more remote areas as the mobile phone companies share their towers. Unfortunately, however there are so-called black spots where there is no mobile phone coverage at all.
2. You can send an SMS message, with attached photo or graphic, to anyone with a Mobile Phone number.
3. You can send and receive emails.
4. You can communicate with people on social networks, eg Facebook and Instagram.
5. You can take great photos, including burst shots, and record full HD video. There is one limitation with Android devices: Mobile Phones only have digital zoom. They do not have optical zoom.
6. You can look up anything on the Internet using a variety of Browsers including Google Chrome. You can save web sites, and import bookmarks – just as you can with a computer.
7. You can look up a certain place or location and have it shown on a detailed map.
8. You can use GPS navigation, also called Satellite Navigation (Sat Nav). Some cars now have the ability to project the screen and audio from your mobile device to the car multimedia system.
9. You can track your movements and have it recorded on a map, and get copious information regarding your movements, including: velocity, distance travelled, etc. This information can be saved to a file which can in turn be viewed on a computer or forwarded to someone.
10. You can edit and modify any photo or graphic, including inserting text and freehand painting/sketching/writing, adding a frame, cropping, resizing, placing stickers (including emoticons and other funny symbols). The possibilities are limitless! This is great fun.
11. You can store lots of photos and videos on the devices, including video that you might have downloaded from YouTube on your computer and subsequently transferred to your device. Note: you cannot download YouTube video on your Android device in Australia – there is a block on that.
12. You can store usernames and passwords securely in an App on your device. The same App can be installed on a computer as well. An example of such an App that I have been using for years is KeePass.
13. You can have Google Photos upload all your photos on your device to a cloud for safe keeping. Then you can access the photos from any of your devices. You can also keep all your photos on a computer in Picasa and upload them to Google Photos. As Picasa does not run on Windows 10, Google is phasing it out, replacing it with Google Photos.

14. If you have the Shazam App installed on your device, you can open it and get nearly any song you hear identified. Most of the songs can then be bought within Shazam, using Google Play, and subsequently downloaded onto your computer. The cost of each song is about \$1.60.
15. You have an accurate clock with timer and alarm functions. The clock is maintained by your Mobile network, e.g. Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, etc (if you have a SIM card) or by the Internet via Wi-Fi.
16. You can run a calendar with diary that is easy to use. This is always with you to remind you of an appointment/task. You can instantly add a new appointment/task or update an existing one. The calendar can be synchronised with other devices.
17. You can have a Birthdays App installed which is very handy. The App can be configured to give you 5 days, 3 days and/or 1 days notice.
18. All your contacts, with details such as phone numbers, email addresses and home addresses are readily available on other devices. Your contacts data can be backed up on your device in case your Phone is lost or replaced. The data can also be saved to a file, e.g. pdf file, so that you can keep a copy on your computer.
19. You can play lots of games on your devices, such as golf, card games, 10-pin bowling, and Mah-jong. The number of games available is mind boggling! You can play against the device (against the App in effect) or you can play with someone online (they must have the same App installed and be online of course). Other players can be anywhere in the world!
20. You can install a flashlight App. Some Phones have such an App pre-installed.
21. Most Phones come with a Calculator App.
22. You can cast the screen of your device to a Smart TV. You must have a Chromecast device attached to your TV. This feature is most amazing as you can sit in your lounge chair with your device and show others what you see on your screen – with crystal clear images and sound.
23. You can install a toilet App on your device so that you can find out where the nearest public toilet is. Handy for us chaps!!
24. You can install a weather App so you can get the latest weather information, including the latest radar image, showing impending rain.

As you can see, Android devices are fantastic, especially if you devote time to learn about them and use them constructively.