

Tips and tricks for Android devices

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These notes contain tips and trick for Android devices. The information has also been published in the Waikato Management School Dean’s newsletter and ITS documentation.



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Overview

Android is an open source operating system, developed by Google, and used by a range of devices such as smartphones and tablets. Android devices usually come with a range of built-in programs (called applications, or apps) such as a web browser, email client, calendar and maps. In addition, you can download a huge variety of apps to your device from the Android market, now called Google Play.

Files such as documents, spreadsheets and images can be transferred to and from the device. Smartphones and tablets are very portable, so you can have access to your email, calendar and important documents, without carrying a laptop around. The notes below provide an introduction to some of the features available.



Getting started

Please contact the WMS Helpdesk for assistance with the basic set-up of your device. The set-up will include:

- adding your University of Waikato email, calendar and contacts
- ensuring you have wireless access
- checking that the correct time and date are set

Navigation

The icons on your home screen are shortcuts to applications. Press quickly on an icon to open items on your device.

A “long-press” on an icon or part of the screen will give you additional options. For example, if you long-press on:

- an icon on the home screen - you can drag it to a new position, or remove it altogether.
- an empty area of the home screen – gives you options to add a folder, short-cut or widgets.
- a web address - you can choose to copy it, or share the link in various ways.

How to use Google Play

Finding apps

To find applications for your device, you can either go to the Play icon on your device or to <https://play.google.com/store?hl=en>



On your device, you can search for apps by key word, or go through the categories. You can browse by free, or paid apps, or by popularity.

Installing apps

Free apps

Once you find an app you want to install, follow the prompts and the app will be downloaded. Note: you cannot download to your computer then move an app to your device—all downloads go directly to your tablet or phone.

Paid apps

To pay for an application, you need to have a Google Checkout account with your Google email account. You will be prompted to set one up either when you set up your device, or when you make your first purchase.

When you purchase and download the Android app to your device, the cost of that app will be billed to your credit card. Downloads can usually be returned for a full refund within 24 hours of purchase. Your purchased apps are tied to your Google Account and can be installed an unlimited amount of times on any Android device.

Recommended apps

Apps you find useful will, of course, will depend on your interests. Contact the WMS Helpdesk for some recommendations.



Deleting apps

If you no longer want a particular app on your device, select the Settings Go to **Applications**, select the app and choose **Uninstall**

Uploading and downloading files for your Android device

You have several options when moving files to and from your Android device. Some are explained below.

Using a USB connection

You can treat your Android device just like a USB stick, i.e. you can copy files to and from the SD card in your device. To do this:

- Connect the device to your computer using a USB cable.
- Your computer may immediately recognize the device – if it does not, then:
 - follow any instructions that appear on the device, or,
 - slide down the “blind” or “status bar” the top of the screen, select the **USB connected** option and confirm (there may be a **Connect USB Storage** button, or a **Mount** button).
- On the computer, if you are asked about what to do, select "Open folder to view files".
- If the device does not appear, go to My Computer or Computer (on Windows machines) and find it under the **Removable Storage** heading.

Google Docs (re-branded as Google Drive)

Google Drive is available as an app on your Android device (version 2.1 or higher). With this app, you can access and edit your Google Documents without having to use your browser. There are [notes](#) available on the WMS IT web site.



Email attachments

- To save an email attachment to your device, from within the mail message:
 - Select the **View** or **Save** button.
 - Choose one of the apps listed.
 - The file will either open (and you can save the file from within the application) or save to the device.

Downloading a file from a web site

- In a web page:
 - Select the link to the file.
 - You may be asked to complete the action using one of the installed apps. Choose an app—the file will open.
 - Alternatively, when the file has downloaded, a small downward-pointing arrow appears at the bottom of the screen. Select the arrow, and then choose an app to open the file.
- To find “lost” files:
 - Saved an attachment or downloaded a file and can’t find it?
 - Locate the **Downloads** app shortcut and select the file from there.
 - It is a good idea to put a shortcut to the Downloads app/widget on your Home screen.

Dropbox

Using a Dropbox allows you to access files from anywhere. Any computer or device with a “My Dropbox” folder has everything backed up and synchronised to the Dropbox.com server. See the video at <http://www.dropbox.com/> for a quick overview. There are many cloud services similar to Dropbox. Do carefully consider whether these third-party providers are suitable repositories for your documents.

VPN application

There are a few VPN (Virtual Private Network) apps available from the Android market, ie Google Play. These programs allow you to connect to your computer from another computer or device.

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