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This How-To Geek School course aims to teach you how to use Android effectively by showing you the most important settings and techniques you need to really become an Android professional and get the most out of your device. Android is the most popular mobile operating system in the world. While Apple's iOS (iPhone and iPad) gets generous attention and has a devout following, Android continues to rack up impressive numbers. In fact, it holds about 88 percent of the global market share. One reason for this is that Android faces little competition. iOS continues to be its only viable enemy, especially in the United States, where it claims a 43 percent market share. Windows phone and ever-fading BlackBerry can't come close to stacking up. All this really means that many people use Android and, time after time, we see people trying to master it. It's not that Android is hard to use, in fact, it's very easy, but earlier versions are often slow and clunky while new ones have a lot of features that you need to learn to do most of it. Also, people may simply not know or implement many of the ways you can better manage your device rather than control you. That's what we're here to help. Understanding Android Versions Android has seen many versions since version 1.0 was released in 2008. Since 2009 they have been named after desserts or sweets along with their respective version numbers. For example, the first public version of Android was called Cupcake. Since then we've seen Doughnut,clair, Froyo, Gingerbread, Honeycomb, Ice Cream Sandwich, Jelly Bean, KitKat, Lollipop, Marshmallow, and Nougat. Unlike the iPhone, however, not all recent phones are sure to get the latest and greatest version. Depending on your phone, its manufacturer and the carrier you are on, you can buy a phone that gets stuck on one version while everyone else moves on. This means that there are many different versions of Android out there still floating in the wild. Given how many versions there are, it's hard to write instructions for everyone, but we believe in always having the latest version of any operating system installed. Not just to take advantage of the latest features, but also because the latest versions represent a long-term effort by Google to hone its operating system, so that it works on much older hardware than previous versions of Android. If you can't upgrade to the latest version of Android, then this probably means you're stuck with the version you have until you can buy a new phone or tablet. Don't worry, most of the information we cover here can still be applied in some way, and if it can't, you still have this series as a resource when you finally update! What is the difference between pure Android and other distributions? bodies go through a wide range of tricks to make Android more user-friendly. But what you often end up with is an intricate mess of eye candy and unscathed apps that add add bloated than they cost. If you buy a Google Nexus or Pixel phone, your phone will probably have custom leather for Android made by its manufacturer like the Samsung TouchWiz interface and LG LG UX. While each has their own dedicated fans, this problem splinters the Android community even further, and gives everyone a different interface to learn. But some phones, notably Google's Nexus and Pixel lines contain the original version of Google Android, without additional settings. This has attracted its own hardcore following of users who swear in stock, or pure Android. The result of this is Android distribution, as Google intended. For the purposes of this series, we will refer to Android shares and, if necessary, Samsung Touchwiz or LG UX. We include Samsung simply because it is used by 29 percent of U.S. Android users, and worldwide, the company accounted for 23 percent of all smartphone shipments in 2013. Getting a Lay of the Land Android is super easy to use. It uses several consistent UI features and elements that can be found on almost all Android devices. We'll go on a small tour of them before diving a little further into the many settings you'll encounter throughout this series. Home screen unlock the device and you are met on the home screen. Think of it as a desktop of sorts, but unlike traditional PCs, you can have as many home screens as you want that you just swipe left or right to access. You can place a number of app shortcuts (which we'll cover in Lesson 2), app groups and widgets on your home screen (s). Below is a screenshot of the Android home screen stock on the left, and Samsung Touchwiz on the right. Note that your home screen will vary depending on how your phone maker puts it down or how you customize it. The status of the bar at the top, constantly present, is the status of the bar. it rarely leaves the display, except for some full-screen apps (such as video players or games). The state bar displays important information, including how much signal you have (both Wi-Fi and cellular), battery and notifications such as texts and emails. This will pretty much look the same through the different skin manufacturer, except for some stylistic options. Notification notifications have always been one of Android's strengths. With notifications, the system and apps can notify you when something needs attention, such as an email, text message, or something specific app, such as a Facebook alert. When you receive the notification, you will see the icon to the left of the status bar at the top of the phone. Pull down on the status bar to see all your notifications that you can then attend or clean up. You click on the notification to open this email, text message, or whatever it is. If you want to clean it up, just swipe it away, or click on the clear notification icon at the top to take care of all of them at once. Fast panel settings In modern versions of Android, you'll find find The settings panel is located in the notification zone. In a stock of Android devices, you pull the shadows down in half to expose the fast settings, while other devices like Samsung and LG-condense it in the always visible part of the shadow. Below we look at the Stock Android on the left, and Samsung Touchwiz on the right. The Dock is sometimes called Favorite Tray-allows you to pin certain apps such as contacts and phone dialer, so they appear no matter what home screen you swiped to. In the next lesson, we'll cover how to create app folders. The navigation bar at the bottom of the device is the Navigation Bar, which, like the status bar, is always visible, except for full-screen apps or games. The navigation rack almost always displays three characters (left to right): back, home, and the latest apps. Some manufacturers allow you to customize this layout or switch it altogether. Even so, you should always see these three navigation elements wherever you are on your device. It is worth noting that Samsung is one of the latest manufacturers that still uses physical capacitive buttons rather than on-screen navigation, like most Android devices. App Drawer Finally has an app drawer. This is where all your application shortcuts hang out, and access by pressing a circular button with six points in it. It's usually in the center of the dock, but some manufacturers move it in the far right direction in their launchers. From here you can open apps, delete them, or click and hold to place shortcuts on your home screen. Android Settings Learn Menu Settings because this is how you reach maximum control over your device. There are two ways to access Android settings: you can either open the app tray and tap the Settings label (not to be confused with the Google Settings label that is different), or you can pull down the Fast Settings panel and choose the cog icon in the top right corner. While the Fast Settings menu allows you to switch frequently used settings such as Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, you'll find many more granular controls in the main settings menu. It's heart and soul to do more with your Android device. Setting up the menu is broken down into a few simple follow-up sections on most devices, with Samsung's latest offerings being an exception to the rule where Android shares (and many others) use subsections to break this menu. Samsung throws everything into one long list. It's also worth noting that some LG manufacturers will mind, will break the menu settings down on the tabs. Honestly, it doesn't make sense to do so-well that there's a way to fix it. Let's take a walk through each of the main options in the Android Settings menu and talk about what you To be done. Wi-Fi Menu Wi-Fi, where you'll connect and disconnect from Wi-Fi networks. You can also turn to turn Wi-Fi is completely off to save the battery. We'll talk about this in more detail in Lesson 3. Use data If you're in a tight data plan and want to know how much data you're using, or if you want to see how much data you use, then you definitely want to know this setup and use it. Similarly, you can't use your phone's mobile data when you have perfectly good Wi-Fi at home. Please note that you can disable mobile data that will help save the battery, but it can have undesirable side effects such as the inability to send and receive calls or text messages. Therefore, we recommend keeping cellular data on. Learn more about this in lesson 3. Displaying is a big part of the battery usage. Simply put, if you've never used a phone, except when you need it, your battery will probably last for a few days (multiple). But you don't use your phone that way, so you can dial down the brightness and reduce the time-out period to eke out a little more time out of your battery. All of this takes place in the Settings Display section. We go into the settings display more in lesson 3. Managing apps in the Settings menu, in the App section (or app manager on Samsung devices), you can find a list of everything that's on your phone. Clicking on the app's name will provide a list of useful information: how much memory it uses, how much data it has used from a certain date, any permissions it has received, access to notification, default settings, and how much battery it has used. On Nougat is the latest version of Android- you can also see how much RAM is used by the app as well as where it was installed from (Google Play Store or if it was sideloaded). If you want to remove the app, you can also do so here by clicking on the big Delete button. You can also stop the app if it misbehaves, although you shouldn't do it very often. Keeping your phone has a certain amount of memory for apps, games, photos, videos, music and other files. If you have little space, storage settings are a great place to determine what takes up that space and how much you can return by removing apps and removing things you don't need. You'll be surprised how much space you get back this way. We'll talk about it a lot more in Lesson 5. Battery battery, or lack thereof, is a huge dead end for our cord-cutting desires. After all, what fun is a mobile device if you have to be near an outlet in case? What's the point of subtlety and ultra-portability if you have a cart around a clunky charger and cable with you everywhere? Battery settings give you a general idea how much battery you've used, how long it will last, and which apps deplete the most battery life. You can also customize Android's Battery Saver settings here. We'll talk a lot about this in Lesson 3. Location Many of your apps, such as Camera and Facebook, use your location for Functions. This can lead to high battery usage, and some people prefer not to give their location to apps they don't trust. You can set up location settings from this section. Typically, we recommend leaving the main setting and setting on High Precision, but you can click any app on this page to revoke your access to your location. We'll explain more about this in Lesson 3. Security there are so many ways to protect your device and data on Android, and this is a subsection where you will find most of these options. You'll find a security section on Lock screen and security on Samsung devices. We'll go into much more detail about the safety of your device in Lesson 4 of this series. Backing up and resetting your belongings is very important on any computer you use, but it's even more important on your phone. Aside from the everyday disasters that can befall him, it is also very easy to lose in the back of taxis, in toilets, or even for ordinary thieves. Effective use of the device's backup capabilities can save you from terrible heartache. We'll talk about it a lot more in Lesson 5. What else this series offers this series consists of five lessons that cover what we believe are the key areas for managing and mastering your Android devices. Lesson 2: Managing apps To try out new things is fun and it's all too easy to download apps until your phone is crammed with shortcuts and widgets. If you have a bunch of apps on your device, you need to understand all all all and all shortcuts, Google Play, and app settings. Lesson 3: Extending battery life You should be sure to understand how mobile batteries work and the best conditions under which they are operated. In addition, there is a ton of material that you can also make in the settings that can help you get more battery benefits throughout the day. We cover all of these things including managing battery settings and the best ways to help it survive an average day of use. Lesson 4: Keeping your device Safe speed things up and lock things down! In truth, there are many devices on the market that work very well, even when burdened with everything you can throw at it, but there are also very many that don't have it. So we'll discuss ways to improve that. Also, you should be sure to take your device's security seriously whether it's a lock pattern, password, PIN, encryption, fingerprints, or any of the other ways you can protect your data and yourself from prying eyes. Don't worry, we'll get through this in this lesson. Lesson 5: Data Management Finally, we'll talk about managing your data both in terms of how much space it takes up and whether it is regularly backed up. After all, you a lot of time on your phone and tablet, shouldn't you understand what your devices are storing and how much storage it takes? Also, if you're going to keep your most important things on a device the size of a deck of cards, cards, Do you at least make sure you can't lose everything in one moment of forgetfulness? We think so, and that's why we cover different methods, you can always make sure that even if you drop your phone down the sewer grille, everything that can be saved on it. That's it for today. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with your device's settings before we get the good stuff tomorrow, when we'll talk all about managing your apps and get to know the Settings Google Play Store. 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