

## Going Android: An Experiment



I've logged plenty of hours on Android phones, starting with the very first one, the remarkably rudimentary [G1](#) [1], back in 2008. But the phones in question have always been backups to my main handset (which, since mid-2008, has been an AT&T iPhone). Or they've been Android phones that I was [reviewing](#) [2] or otherwise experimenting with.

What I've never done is just use an Android model as the phone I rely on all day long to get actual stuff done.

The release of [Android 4.1](#) [3] — also known as Jelly Bean — seemed like a good opportunity to change that. At the moment, the new operating system is available only on the Galaxy Nexus units that Google handed out to developers and other attendees at last week's Google I/O conference. So I took one of those phones down to my local AT&T store on Friday afternoon and had a rep switch my service over. For the moment at least, I'm putting my iPhone 4S aside and going Android full time and will write about the experience.

So far, I've mostly been getting up and running. After the switchover, my wife and I couldn't exchange text messages, which seems to have been an artifact of two glitches: her iPhone initially thought it could still send me iMessages (which only work on Apple devices), and my Galaxy Nexus suffered from a known Android bug that I had to fix by deleting her contact record and starting over.

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I've also been loading the Nexus up with my favorite apps from iOS — and when they're not available, hunting for substitutes. I've installed Instagram, Instapaper, Flipboard, Foursquare, Path, Evernote and Draw Something. On the iPhone, I use an app called [JotNot Scanner Pro](#) [4] to photograph receipts for expense reports; for the Nexus, I found something comparable called [CamScanner](#) [5]. And after consulting with Android users on Twitter, I've settled (for now, at least) on a Twitter client called [Boid](#) [6]. (On iOS, I usually use Tweetbot.)

All of these Android apps look good so far, but I did run into one snag: I was looking forward to reading the entire *New York Times* in Flipboard on my phone, but when I try to do so, I get a message saying the *Times* isn't available on my device. Then again, I also can't read it on my iPad, even though I'm a paying subscriber; I'm not sure why.

On the iPhone, I've been using an inventive new app called [Cue](#) [7], which melds together data from your e-mail, calendar and other sources into a snapshot of your day and the people who are part of it. The Cue folks are working on an Android version, but it isn't here yet, and I don't know of anything similar.

Oh, and here's a case study in Android fragmentation: Bejeweled is available for Android ... but it doesn't run on the Galaxy Nexus. I found a replacement called [Jewels Star](#) [8] that mimics the experience rather closely.

While setting up the Nexus, I wanted to install a custom lock-screen wallpaper on the phone while leaving the backdrop otherwise alone, as I did on my iPhone ... and discovered that I couldn't. But it *is* doable with a utility called [WidgetLocker](#) [9], which lets you tweak the lock screen in a ridiculous quantity of ways. It's a good example of the sort of third-party customization app that iOS simply does not permit.

Speaking of customization, I set up the Nexus to work with Google Voice for both incoming and outgoing calls; incoming ones work well on the iPhone, but outgoing ones are clunky enough that I rarely make them. On Android, Google Voice is a first-class calling option integrated right into the phone.

That's about it so far. I feel like I'm still in the process of moving into a new home, getting familiar with the surroundings and unpacking my belongings. More thoughts to come. And hey, Android aficionados: tell me which apps I should be using.

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