Lollipop 5.0 is here!

AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 27, 2014

1. **First look at Android 5.0**

2. **What's new in Google Now**

3. **How to find your lost device**

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Lollipop features some significant changes to the Android platform with a sleek new user interface, cross platform support and improved performance via the new ART runtime engine. The operating system also offers better battery life, improved notifications, OpenGL ES 3.1 and 64-bit support, among other features. Google describes Lollipop as "*the largest Android release yet*,"

Here are some most notable features of **Android 5.0 Lollipop**, along with some insight as to when you might be able to get your hands on it.

1) MATERIAL DESIGN

Lollipop features a redesigned *User Interface*, which is referred to as *Material Design*, in which Google made extensive use of animations and layered elements to deliver what it promises. The material design interface runs on multiple types of devices, including everything from your smartphone and tablet to your laptop and TV. The new interface supports elevation values, real-time shadows and lighting that gives a 3D appearance overall.

2) SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

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With Lollipop, Security gets enhanced as well, since it comes with encryption turned on by default in order to protect users' data from being accessed on lost or stolen devices. Most importantly, now you are free to share your devices with any of your friends, as Lollipop offers you **guest user mode**, where you can create multiple user accounts to enable your friends to log in on your device. Therefore, in both the cases, no one will be able to access your private files.

3) ANDROID SMART LOCK

For an extra layer of security, there is an **Android Smart Lock**, which makes it easier to unlock your phone without having to constantly enter a pin or trace a pattern. Android smart lock secures your phone or tablet by pairing it with a trusted device like your Android smartwatch, car, or even facial expressions.

For example, your Android Lollipop device will recognize your Smart watch and let you unlock your phone by simply tapping the power button. The company has also enforced the SELinux security module for all apps to give better protection against vulnerabilities and malware.

4) NOTIFICATIONS ENHANCEMENT

Notifications also get enhanced with the new OS, as of now you'll be able to rank them based on your priorities. You can now view and respond to messages directly from your lock screen, and also could hide notifications for sensitive contents by turning on Priority mode through your device's volume button. You can also choose to avoid calls from interrupting the game you are playing or the movie you are watching.

5) KILL-SWITCH IMPROVEMENT

Among lots of other features of Lollipop, Google is supporting a **"kill-switch"** to make stolen phones unusable through what it is calling "*Factory Reset Protection.*"

Essentially, it requires a password before a phone can be reset, ideally preventing thieves and intruders from making use of stolen phones.

6) RUNTIME AND PERFORMANCE BOOST

- Users will experience a faster, smoother and more powerful computing with Lollipop. ART, an entirely new Android runtime, improves application performance and responsiveness as well. The new Android is ready for the 64-bit era, as it comes fully prepared to support a full 64-bit environment. Shipping 64-bit native apps like Chrome, Gmail, Calendar, Google Play Music, and more.

7) BATTERY LIFE

Last but not least, Android Lollipop is expected to bring some serious battery improvements to your mobile devices via Google's Project Volta. The software will benefit you from a Power Saving mode that detects when your handset's battery life is low, the app can automatically reduce CPU load and display brightness.

According to Google, the feature can get you an additional 90 minutes when you are running low, which is a lot of power when you are running on empty. The feature also displays an estimated time left to fully charge when your device is plugged in as well as time left on your device before you need to charge again.

Android 5.0 Lollipop release date

Google made Lollipop official on the 15th of October, confirming it would be available first on the Nexus 9. The 9in tablet can be pre-ordered now, with a launch date set for the 3rd of November. The Nexus 6 smartphone will follow a few weeks later, with pre-orders starting in 'late October' ready for a 'mid November' release. The Nexus Player will follow at some point too, although there aren't any concrete details on the Mysterious Android TV set-top box.

Anyone with an older Nexus device such as the **Nexus 5** smartphone, or **Nexus 7** and **Nexus 10** tablets, will get over-the-air (OTA) updates 'in the coming weeks'. Google Play Edition handsets are also expected to get swift updates, and we're pleased to see the older Nexus 10 still getting some love from Google – even if it has now finally been discontinued.

According to AndroidPolice, the first OTA update will be released on the 3rd of November, but only for the Wi-Fi versions of the 2012 and 2013 Nexus 7, and Nexus 10. The Nexus 5 and two-year-old **Nexus 4** will have to wait, as Wi-Fi and cellular devices take a little longer to develop updates for. This is only a rumoured date, although the site is confident in its two (anonymous) sources.

Android 5.0 Lollipop updates for other phones

Major Android releases are always eagerly anticipated, which makes being stuck on an outdated version because your phone manufacturer doesn't plan on releasing an update even more frustrating. We've listed every major manufacturer's official position on Lollipop below, and while it's good news for HTC, Motorola and Sony, it's grim reading for Samsung and LG.

THE VOCAL

HTC has pledged to update both the current **HTC One (m8)** and last year's **One (m7)** within 90 days of receiving the Lollipop source code from Google. Considering that code was made available on the 17th of October, that means HTC customers should get an update by the 15th of January at the latest – assuming mobile phone networks don't slow down the process. The HTC One Mini and **One Mini 2** will eventually get Lollipop too, but likely at a later date.

Motorola's strong ties to Google means it will almost certainly be the first manufacturer to get Lollipop updates on to customers' phones. It has promised to upgrade the **original** and **2nd generation Moto X (2014)**, the **original** and **second generation Moto G (2014)**, and the **Moto E**, as well as the older DROID Ultra, DROID Maxx and DROID Mini, although there's no exact date for release yet.

Sony has made big promises for Lollipop; it plans to bring the update to every phone in the Z series, going back as far as the original **Xperia Z**. The rollout will begin with the more recent **Xperia Z3** and **Xperia Z2** devices starting early 2015, then eventually filter down the **Z1 range** and older Z-series devices.

THE SILENT

There's been no official statement from **Samsung** regarding Lollipop, meaning the only confirmed phone due for an update the Google Play Edition version of last year's **Galaxy S4**. It should get it in the next few weeks. Despite the silence, it's safe to assume the current crop of available handsets, including the **Galaxy S5** and **Galaxy Note 4** will get an update eventually: according to Sammobile, both will get Lollipop in November.

Likewise, **LG** hasn't said anything about its plans for Lollipop. It too has a Google Play Edition device, the **G Pad 8.3**, which will get an update alongside Google's own Nexus range, but there's no news on when **G3** owners can expect an upgrade.

<u>GOOGLE NOW UPDATES</u>

SHOW ME MY BILLS:

Google has added a neat little feature for Google Now in case you're forgetful when it comes to paying bills. Saying or typing "show me my bills" or "my bills due this week" in the Google Search box on your phone will now bring up bills that are due soon, as well as past bills (that you may or may not have paid).

Wondering how Google gets that information in the first place? Well, your Gmail inbox gives them all they need. Kind of unsettling, but hey — they're indexing and your inbox for purposes of search and targeted ads anyway, so why not?

If you have bill notifications coming to your inbox with the due date and amount then they should be included in this query. Give it a go the next time you need to crunch some numbers and get your payments squared away. And for the paranoid? You might as well close your Gmail account because this is what Google does. Love it or leave it.

GOOGLE EVERYWHERE:

The new "OK, Google" hotword detection will let you start a Google Now search from any screen on your device, even the lockscreen. This change rolled out last week, but despite a couple of updates to the app from the Google Play store, many people are still reporting that they aren't seeing this set of options in the Google Now app.

When you spontaneously remember something you need to do at a future time or date while using your device, you can simply say, "OK, Google," and then the Google Now interface will be at your service.

Step 1: Open Google Now and type "OK Google everywhere" in the search box. You can also say "OK, Google" and then say "OK, Google everywhere," if you're feeling fancy.

Step 2: Tap the menu button on your device and choose Settings > Voice > "Ok Google" Detection.

Step 3: Check the box next to "From any screen" (and also "From lock screen" if you choose).

You'll have to agree to the terms provided by Google, and then teach the app what your voice sounds like by saying, "OK, Google" three times.

That's it! Now you can use Google Now when using another app, or just after waking up your device.

CAR LOCATOR:

Step 1: Make sure you have the right version

You'll need version 3.4 of the Google Search app (at least) in order to kick-star the parking location feature. To see which version you have, open Google's search app, and find the vertical ellipsis menu button (in some cases you have to scroll down to the bottom of the app). Tap "Help & feedback," then look at the string of numbers along the top to see your version number. You'll find updates in the Google Play store by searching for Google Search.

Step 2: Say you're a speed racer

Google Now cards for parking will only appear if Google thinks you drive. To make sure this is the case, go into the Google Search App (where you see Google Now cards) and tap the icon that looks like a magic wand (it's actually the customize button). Pick the option "Everything else," tap "How do you usually get around," and make sure that you select "Driving."

Step 3: Start driving

Google uses GPS and the phone's sensors to distinguish driving in a vehicle from, say, cycling or walking. After you park the car, a card should pop up in the Google Now card stack with a map showing your rough location. You should get more accurate results with Wi-Fi and Location settings turned on.

When the card appears, you can tap it to expand the map. If you've made more than one stop on the same trip, an option to see previous locations sprinkles some breadcrumbs. Accidentally swiping the card away gives you a few moments to retrieve it by pressing the Undo button, but if you've dismissed it or turned it off in the settings, it won't remember where you were before. It also won't hold onto your parking spot for you overnight, and there's no way to pin that right now.

A few limitations

While the parking locator may help you out of a bind from time to time, it isn't quite ready to replace your brain. Locations aren't exact -- for example, the card won't tell you which stall you've parked in at a busy mall, but it can show you if you've parked closer to one side of a block-long parking lot or another. Also, it doesn't really have any way of knowing that you've actually been driving a car. You may have been riding a bus, or been a passenger in someone else's car. As a result, Google Now may surface some false positives, and that could chafe over time.

Use punctuation and smileys:

Just because you're dictating an e-mail doesn't mean you have to sacrifice good grammar.

When speaking, just say punctuation like, "Hey comma where are you question mark." You can also say things like "smiley face" or "sad face."

It's also basically like Shazam:

You can identify any song that's playing by saying, "What am I listening to?" and Google will go into Shazam mode, identifying the song, and giving you the option to purchase it.

This can also be used for live TV. Just say, "Listen to TV" and Now will give your more info about whatever program you're watching.

FIND MY LOST PHONE

The subject of security for the Android platform is far from straightforward. There's some debate about whether you really need antivirus apps on your smartphone. Much depends on whether you sideload apps, but there's no denying that malware has grown into a much greater concern since we first wrote this article back in 2012. Luckily security apps have improved dramatically to keep pace with the new threats, so you have plenty of great protection to choose from.

The majority of Android security apps are actually packages that include a host of other tools from contact filtering to remote lock or wipe. Here is a few of the more popular and top rated security apps that can also help find your lost Android device:

LOOKOUT MOBILE SECURITY

AVAST MOBILE SECURITY & ANTIVIRUS

AVIRA FREE ANDROID SECURITY

360 MOBILE SECURITY

BITDEFENDER MOBILE SECURITY & ANTIVIRUS

If you manage to lose your Android phone, or it's stolen, you can now track the device down as long as the software is set up properly. It can help you find it if you've left it round a mate's house or it can really help out the police when you report a theft. Android Device Manager uses your GPS technology to locate the device and also offers the ability to change your passwords or even wipe the entire phone. None of these features are enabled unless you set it up properly so follow these simple steps below to be sure you're protected.

Google recently pushed out an update to the service which adds a new text field at the bottom of the remote locking screen to add a phone number at which you can be reached. So if someone finds your misplaced phone, they'll be able to easily contact you and return it. When they power the device up, they'll see a screen displaying the message you added and an option to call the owner."

Download Android Device Manager

Head over to the Google Play Store and download the app itself. For each device you put the app on it'll ask for your location data permission, it'll also want your password as well.

Track It Down

Once you've accepted that it'll allow you to see all your devices which have location data turned on. It'll give you the name of the device, the time it was located and the location with the best possible accuracy. Switch between devices to find the right one.

You don't want to clear the data off the wrong device or let a robber know you're tracking them. Selecting Ring will make it go off for five minutes at maximum volume, it'll even work if it's set to vibrate - but this is more for finding your phone if you've left it in your coat and forgot about it, or whatever.

Ring, Lock or Erase

Now you've found your device you then get three options. You can ring the device, lock it or erase all the data onboard. The three options are at the bottom of the screen but be sure you've chosen the right one.

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Now You're Safe

Whether your device falls down the back of the sofa or you're pickpocketed on a night out, you'll be able to find where your device has got to.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS