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## Google android 9. 0

Click to view as an open source advocate and developer with a serious love/hate relationship with my iPhone, I couldn't wait to get my paws on the Google device with a brand spankin' new open-source cell phone operating system, Android-and I wasn't disappointed. I've spent the last four days using the HTC G1 phone running the first edition of Android, and while it's not an iPhone-killer, it's a killer device for heavy Google users (like you and me). Let's look at why Android doesn't live up to its hype. Note: Since the iPhone I use as my primary phone is my only experience with the touchscreen smartphone operating system, I will base my Android observations on it, even if the iPhone is not the only touchscreen operating system out there. (Sorry about that.) Also, when I mean the iPhone compared to Android, I'm talking about iPhone 2.0 software, and when you refer to it compared to the G1, I'm talking about iPhone hardware. You got it all? Good. Let's. First, a quick tour around the G1 phone itself. The first thing the owner of the iPhone notices is that there are helluva many buttons as you even flip from the keyboard: five, to be exact, plus a rubber trackball (that I came to love, more on that later). Love affair aside, at first all those buttons are confusing and look kind of low-rent next to the iPhone's sleek how-to-they-DO-that single button. The phone is also thicker, and unlike the iPhone, it has a slight bend at the bottom (pictured right). This can be a problem for iPhone users who like to slide the phone into the front pocket of their jeans. The iPhone slips there easily; The G1, on the other hand, hisses into the thigh a little more, and that rubber trackball can rub and roll on the fabric inside the pants. However, despite its tendency to grab on the inside of my jeans pocket, I absolutely love the rubber trackball for scrolling on the G1. From a clean economy motion point of view, it's much, much faster to scroll through and click using trackball versus swipe the screen. After a few days, I love rubber trackball in a kind of scary, illegal-in-some-states way. The reason for the extra bulk, of course, is the flip-out of the full QWERTY keyboard on the G1. Having never had a sidekick or any other phone with a full keyboard, this was a new experience for me—but one I came to enjoy pretty quickly because with a full keyboard comes context-insensitive keyboard shortcuts and launcher combos. (More on that below.) I wasn't so excited about the idea of a big hinge on my phone, but in practice, the G1's screen flips to display the keyboard in a really smooth, solid motion and snaps into place with authority. The keyboard buttons actually don't stick out as much as I expected, so pressing them doesn't have that tactile feedback I was hoping for. I write fewer errors on this keyboard than iPhone touch keyboard. Unlike the iPhone, the G1 screen is not multi-touch. You can only use one finger to swipe the screen or scroll up and down. This is a bummer for iPhone owners used to pinch and expand to zoom in and out, especially when browsing the web. For a closer look at what exactly the hardware is like, see Gizmodo's photo-laden hands on. (Those guys try phones for a living, so their hardware assessment is much more informed than mine.) As for my size of complaints, see Gizmodo's Sizemodo post, which compares the G1 with other phones out there. In short, it's robust, so you have to decide if the keyboard is worth it in bulk. But let's talk about the main thing we care about here at Lifehacker: software. Android's Google-User Dream (Duh) Android is a huge advantage is its close integration with Google services that use the most-Gmail, GCal, Google Talk, Maps and YouTube right now, although it's still missing Google Reader, Docs, Bookmarks, and very many other GOOG apps that could come in pretty well on the phone. One can only assume how the software matures those will appear eventually. Assuming you're already an established Google user, you can pop in your Google Account username and password (Google Apps domain accounts work too), and as Steve Jobs would say, BOOM!-you have your email, contact list, calendar events, the whole shebang on your phone, over the air, synchronized with the cloud, no contact with your computer needed. It wasn't even close to the experience I had with my iPhone, which requires several email account settings and re-settings, and not a small amount of tinkering with my address book and syncing with my computer to get everything as it should be. Within four days I still connected the G1 to the computer—all I need is in the cloud on Google and on the phone, period. That's why heavy Google apps users will want Android. The software has a lot going on in it, but instead of running through every detail on how to do things, let's take a look at just a few of the benefits Android's G1 offers are worth mentioning. Android is a Gmail-reading powerhouse. I've never had a better email reading experience — specifically Gmail — on my mobile device than I did with Android. Android offers an interface very similar to the web front of Gmail, with conversations threading, labels, stars, archiving-all features that you expect from full-on, original Gmail. Update: Here's a quick video of Gmail in action on Android. You can also use a label to determine what syncs in real time. To navigate through conversations, you can scroll trackball or flick; Writing messages is obviously easy with the QWERTY keyboard and you can set up email signatures as well. Much to my dismay, Gmail is online do not work on G1. Hopefully in future iterations, you can hit J or K on your keyboard to move forward and back through Gmail conversations. In addition to the Gmail client, there is a straight-up email client for your other POP and IMAP accounts. Android offers Google Street View Maps, and along with Compass mode, it blows your mind. (When can he actually find your location.) Like the iPhone, Android is location-aware, and puts Google Maps to good use. You'll get all the beautiful touch scrolling, zooming, satellite view, and pinpoint-my-current-location goodies in Google Maps on Android that the iPhone has to offer. The feature of one eye-popping you don't get anywhere else is Google Maps Street View—a very cool Compass mode that uses your phone's accelerometer to adjust what you see on the screen as you move. Here's a quick clip of street view + compass mode on. (The clip automatically skips to Compass Mode.) The bad news is that Android hasn't been able to pinpoint my location from several different locations in San Diego, which means that any kind of location app won't work as planned. This is a problem — if you're thinking of a G1, try it in your area first. Android offers more options for what you can put on the start screen. My one huge grip on the iPhone (and my Nokia before it) was the inability to put a shortcut on the home screen on a new text message with my better half number filled into the To: box. Texting my husband is the thing I do most often on my phone, so it should be a one-tap or one-click act, and it's not in the iPhone 2.0 or Symbian. It's not quite that either on Android, but you can create a link to a specific contact on the home screen, which makes texting my ladies a two-tap affair. Update: Just download any Cut Apps from Android Market, which extends the home screen shortcut options to include a new text message with a Do: box filled in. Yay! App options, even in this early term, are already making Android so much better. Thanks, Jason! By default, you can also add a link to the Gmail label to Start, as well as a Google widget (yuck, I know — that's what bigass lessons are, a music playlist, and all apps or folders. Android builds search front and center. A Google phone wouldn't be anything if it wasn't search-centric. You can start your search in any context by pressing the Search Keyboard button (it's a magnifying glass in the image on the right). From the home screen or inside the browser, just start typing the text to call up the Google search box and go. Android has a notification bar that you can drag down in the shadow window style to see more information. When you install a new app, download a file, receive a new text message, email, or voice mail, Android displays information on the notifications at the top of the screen. Here it is The incoming SMS looks like this: You can tap and drag this notification bar down to expand it to get more information (and delete items). Compared to the iPhone's modal pop-up announcement, android window shade definitely takes the cake. Android is not an iPod — and that's a good thing and a bad thing. The good news: Android comes with a full-featured music player. The bad news: no video player save YouTube. Good news: Android comes with Amazon MP3 included in its apps menu by default so you can buy DRM-free tunes (which you can't do on an iPhone). The bad news: it's no iPod. There is no integration with iTunes, and it may be years of iPod ownership talking, but the music player is not as slippery and fun to use as the iPod. Will a college student with years of Mac ads burned to the brain and iTunes Store purchases stored on her hard drive opt for Android via iPod-to-makes-calls-and-sends-texts? It's been a while since I've been a student, but I say most likely not. Android offers customizable keyboard shortcuts. Fantastic thing you get with a full QWERTY keyboard? Why, keyboard shortcuts, of course! Android lets you define a keyboard combination to run apps in the settings area. Unfortunately, you can't assign a keyboard combination to anything other than an app (such as a contact or Gmail label). Android app offerings have barely even begun. We haven't even made it to the Android Market yet, where developers will start offering apps that run on Android. Right now Android apps menus are pretty thin, but there is an app quite familiar to iPhone users: iTunes remote control app. Here's a video demo of one of our favorite iPhone apps in action on Android. Android iTunes remote control from Jeffrey Sharkey on Vimeo. Android is in desperate need of a screenshot-taking app, by the way—which is why all the screen grabs in this review are from the emulator. You can copy and paste on Android. Unlike Apple with the iPhone, Google has figured out how to do background tasks and clipboards on Android. See how copying and gphone vas works. Android web browser is (almost) as good as Mobile Safari. As for me, the best part of the software for the iPhone is Mobile Safari and it's tabbed browsing and touch-zooming and panning. The Android browser (not yet officially Chrome) offers tab-based browsing, such as mobile Safari, and renders pages just as well (it's based on Webkit as well as Safari). But here's where the lack of multi-touch biting takes you to your ass: Android mechanisms for zooming in and out on the page and magnifying the area on-page just don't feel as good as Safari's two-finger pinch and extend to me. This means that android browser has hooks to the map and phone dialer which Mobile Safari is not. Here's a sample of a few neat android browser tricks. While Android is I'm not about to throw you olde iPhone. Why I'm not trading in my iPhone for the G1 As you can see, Android on the G1 is a sweet setting, if a little unfinished, and as my love/hate iPhone relationship veers more often into hate these days, it's tempting to make the transition—but I'm not, yet. In addition to the voluminous problem mentioned above, T-Mobile's 3G coverage in San Diego is absolutely brutal. (I know we're a second-tier city, but we're still a city!) Just as I drooled over the location of android-awareness features (like compass mode), no matter where I tried, in neighborhoods around San Diego, Android wasn't able to determine my location (and yes, GPS was turned on). Although Android does a great job of bring your Google Account information to your phone, it doesn't handle multiple Google Accounts at all. I use one for work and one for personal reasons, and there is no way to easily switch personas in Android right now. All this on top of the fee I would have to pay to get out of my iPhone contract means I won't be buying a G1 with Android anytime soon. But as the software matures, the apps come out, and my contract is coming to an end, there's a good chance I'll change my mind. Now he's starting to wait for 2.0. Update: Gadgetmasters at Gizmodo posted a crazy-thorough review of the G1 and hit on tons of hardware details we glossed over to focus on the software. Here it is: T-Mobile G1 Google Android Phone Review. Reviews.

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