

Official Blog

Insights from Googlers into our products, technology, and the Google culture

Android has helped create more choice and innovation on mobile than ever before

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It's hard to believe, but smartphones barely existed ten years ago. People used feature phones, which had very basic functionality, and were a nightmare for developers. The way to build apps was device by device and platform by platform—Google had a closet full of hundreds of phones that we tested one by one each time we wanted to launch new software.

Android was born from this frustration. We hoped that by offering a great, free open-source operating system, we could turbocharge innovation by allowing manufacturers and developers to focus on what they do best. At the time, most people thought this plan was nuts.

Fast forward to today. The pace of mobile innovation has never been greater. Smartphones are being adopted globally at an increasingly fast pace, with over hundreds of millions shipped each quarter, and the average smartphone price fell 23% between 2012 and 2014. It's now possible to purchase a powerful smartphone, without subsidies or contracts, for under \$100. And the app ecosystem has exploded, giving consumers more choice than

—that’s right, literally anyone. And it’s not just phones. Today people are building almost anything with Android—including tablets, watches, TVs, cars, and more. Some Android devices use Google services, and [others](#) do not.

- Our Google Play store contains over one million apps and we paid out over \$7 billion in revenue over the past year to developers and content publishers.
- Apps that compete directly with Google such as Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft Office, and Expedia are easily available to Android users. Indeed many of these apps come pre-loaded onto Android devices in addition to Google apps. The recent Samsung S6 is a great example of this, including pre-installed apps from Facebook, Microsoft, and Google.
- Developers have a choice of platforms and [over 80% of developers](#) are building apps for several different mobile operating systems.

The European Commission has asked questions about our partner agreements. It's important to remember that these are voluntary—again, you can use Android without Google—but they provide real benefits to Android users, developers and the broader ecosystem.

Anti-fragmentation agreements, for example, ensure apps work across all sorts of different Android devices. (After all, it would be pretty frustrating if an app you downloaded on your phone didn't also work on your eventual replacement phone.) And our app distribution agreements make sure that people get a great "out of the box" experience with useful apps right there on the home screen (how many of us could get through our day without messaging or email?). This also helps manufacturers of Android devices compete with Apple, Microsoft, and other mobile ecosystems that come preloaded with similar baseline apps. And remember that these distribution agreements are not exclusive, and Android manufa

manufacturers compete on their unique innovations. Developers can reach huge audiences and build strong businesses. And consumers now have unprecedented choice at even lower prices. We look forward to discussing these issues in more detail with the European Commission over the months ahead.

Posted by Hiroshi Lockheimer, VP of Engineering, Android



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