Chapter 1

Why Android? Which Android?

If you are picking up this book, there stands a good chance you have heard of Android before, and well you should. To see the explosive growth of the Android operating system since it was released, despite never really becoming a household name, is significant. To know that in such a short time Android has surpassed Apple’s iOS, on devices like the iPhone and iPad, is more than remarkable. So, yes, you have likely heard of Android. Maybe you’ve heard of it as a “Droid” or as a Samsung, Motorola, or HTC. You are probably looking for a way to incorporate Android into your daily life. Maybe you are tired of lugging your big laptop everywhere you go. Maybe your smartphone screen is just too small to do everything you need it to do. Reading e-mail, browsing the Web, whatever you may be doing—you’ve decided it might be time for a tablet.

Android tablets do not fit a specific form factor, personality type, or general purpose. There is an Android tablet out there for every kind of person. When you are given an Android tablet, you are given a blank slate with nearly unlimited potential. Your Android tablet can be as complicated or as simple as you choose it to be. An Android tablet can be little more than a storage device for your library of books, or it can be your mobile command center for holding web conferences, playing video games, or even gazing at the stars. When choosing to buy a tablet, you choose an Android tablet because it’s the device for you.

This book will offer you a top-to-bottom guide to choosing one of the many Android tablets. You will get some help in choosing which device would be best for you, take a look at the best apps for your needs, and even spend some time optimizing your tablet to get the most out of it. *Taking Your Android Tablet to the Max!* is written for every kind of person interested in an Android tablet. It doesn’t matter if you are a tech god, a college student, a soccer mom, or a business professional, this book will help you make an educated decision and get the most out of your next device.

*Taking Your Android Tablet to the Max!* covers everything from selecting the device that is best for you to offering maintenance tricks, preserving the battery life, and making sure your tablet lasts. We’ll go into the depths of “rooting” your Android tablet and how...
to not only enable new and exciting features but get the tools you need to make sure your Android tablet is always on the bleeding edge of the latest and greatest from Google. We’ll include brief tutorials on utilizing Google’s developer tools and show you everything you will need to make sure all your friends, co-workers, and neighbors will be ready to go get one for themselves. Add *Taking Your Android Tablet to the Max!* to your bookshelf, and get ready to get the most out of your tablet.

**Android: A Brief History**

Everyone knows Android as “the Google OS,” but that’s not entirely true. Android, Inc., was once its own company, and Android was its brainchild. In 2003, the startup had a plan to create a smarter phone that was aware of a user’s location and preferences. At the time, it was something that technology simply wasn’t doing, though today location-based services are a global trend.

Android is a perfect example of what happens when innovators put their heads together. As a small startup, however, Android realized it would be much slower in getting its change to the world. The company needed a powerful catalyst. We can think of no company that is better at taking unique ideas and putting them into daily use than Google. In 2005, when Android, Inc., was only 22 months old, it was bought by Google. Google was not quite ready to launch something to the masses. There was a bigger plan in the works, something that would require the resources of many companies in order to solve some of the more fundamental problems in the phone world.

**The Open Handset Alliance**

The cell phone world was kind of a mess in 2005. Every cell phone manufacturer had a different plug to charge their phones, and most of them would change with the release of a new device from that manufacturer. The must-have feature on a phone was a camera, and e-mail was a feature that most did not have. If there was extra content to be had on your device, it was controlled by the carrier. Ringtones, wallpapers, and maybe a couple of games that worked only on your model phone—that was basically it. 3G was still relatively new in most of the United States, and our phones were really just that, phones.

When Google bought Android, Inc., it was with the intent to make it easy for you to have the Internet at your fingertips at all time. Google being primarily a search engine, the company stood to earn a lot of money making it so you could always search for something you were looking for. Still, there were problems. To be successful, Google couldn’t just offer these features on a single device, and it certainly couldn’t offer them on a single carrier. Android needed to be available to as many people as possible, and so Google reached out to companies of all types to form the Open Handset Alliance (OHA). The OHA was formed in late 2007 with 34 companies from around the world. These were companies of all types, ranging from carriers like T-Mobile and Sprint, software companies like PacketVideo and eBay, device manufacturers like Motorola and HTC, and chipset manufacturers such as Intel and nVidia. The goal was for each of