Android hosts file editor









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There's no shortage of browser extensions you can use to stay productive by blocking distracting websites throughout the day. (Sorry Reddit, YouTube, and Facebook.) But are they really that effective at keeping you from doing the work you need to get done? If you don't have much self-control, you can disable or uninstall the extensions, or switch to another browser to thwart your good intentions. What I find even more effective—because it's annoying to reset and it's universal for any browser you use on your system to use a particular IP address instead of whatever your DNS server resolves to when you type a URL into your browser's address bar. So, instead of facebook.com sending you to 31.13.71.36 (or whatever Facebook's IP is when you read this article), you can have your browser send yourself to your own computer—127.0.0.1—which loads a fat pile of nothing on your screen.Editing your hosts file in WindowsFirst, you'll want to navigate to the directory that contains your hosts file. It's buried within your Windows (System 32) drivers) etc That's a good thing, since this means you'll probably forget where it is, and that'll make it trickier for you to undo your changes when temptation strikes. Once you're in that folder, open up the hosts file using any text editor you want. If your operating system gives you grief about needing administrator access, or some other message that says it can't edit the hosts file while it's in use, you have a few options. You can run your favorite text editor as an administrator (right-click and select that option when you're in the Windows Start menu), which could allow you to edit the file. You might also have to restart your computer and, when it boots back up, immediately navigate to the hosts file, you'll likely see something like this: You'll want to start adding entries below the final "#" character, and the syntax will look a little something like this:127.0.0.1 facebook.comEach domain you want to block should appear directly below the one before it. As for what you should enter for the website, I've found success adding both the www and non-www versions of the site on separate lines. That's all you need; Don't try to get specific with a URL like facebook.com/messages/t/, which won't work. You're blocking entire domains, not pages. Once you're done making your blocking list, save the hosts file. In some cases, you'll find that your blocking works right away—trying to load the site in your changes to take effect. If you're still finding that the site works, even though it shouldn't, you might want to add the site's actual IP address as well as another entry, which you'll find via a typical DNS lookup tool. In Facebook's case, your line in your hosts file would look something like this: 127.0.0.1 31.13.90.36If you're still having trouble, you might have to switch browsers. Chrome might still allow you to access Google websites, for example, even though they'll be blocked in Firefox or Edge.Editing your hosts file by clicking on Go > Go to Folder and entering /private/etc/hosts. Open it in a text editor and immediately attempt to save it. You'll be asked to create a duplicate file, which you can dump on your desktop temporarily-don't save it with the .txt extension, though. Open the duplicate file and perform the same additions, save the file and copy it from wherever it is you saved it back to /private/etc/hosts , overwriting the original hosts file. If the websites you added aren't immediately blocked, try flushing your DNS cache or restarting your DNS cache or r matter of long pressing on its icon in the app drawer, but what if you want to create a shortcut to a specific like an MP3, document or video?MORE: Android 6.0 Marshmallow Guide: Tips, Tricks and How-TosWhile this isn't built into the operating system, a quick trip to Google Play will have you creating shortcuts to any file or folder on your phone with just a few taps of your screen. Here's how to do it in the latest version of Android.1. Download and install ES File Explorer File Manager. There are other file managers that will allow you to create file shortcuts, but for this tip, we'll use ES File Explorer File Manager. Navigate to the file, files or folder that you wish to create a shortcut for. You can navigate to the files using the Category menu on the homescreen of ES File Explorer File Manager. Or if you know the file you are looking for is in the Download folder you may want to navigate there by tapping the icon in the upper-left corner of the app and selecting Download.4. Long press on the file that you want to select. A checkbox will appear on the file's icon and menu options at the top of the screen will change.5. Tap the overflow icon (three vertical dots) in the upper-right corner. 6. Select Add to Desktop. There's no message to indicate that the shortcut has been created, but if you exit the app you will see the new shortcut pop up in the first available space on your homescreen. You can now drag and drop the shortcut to a folder with as few or as many images as you like in it. When you think about your smartphone, apps and interfaces are probably the first things that come to mind. Beneath all that surface-level stuff, though, our modern mobile devices are filled with files — folders upon folders of 'em! — just like the clunky ol' computers we've relied upon for ages. We may not come face to face with our phones' file systems too often, but it's valuable to know they're there — and to know how they can work for us when the need arises. After all, your Android device is a productivity powerhouse. It can juggle everything from PDFs and PSDs to presentations and podcasts. It can even act as a portable hard drive and house any sort of important files you might need in your pocket (and not just on some far-away cloud). Your mobile device can carry an awful lot of data, and there may come a time when you want to dig in and deal directly with it. Here's everything you need to know to get under the hood and tap into your phone's file managing powers. Managing files on your Android phoneYou might not realize it at a glance, but Android actually allows you to access a device's entire file system — even from the device itself. The operating system has had its own native file manager since 2015's Android 6.0 Marshmallow release, and what started out as an experimental-seeming effort has evolved into a capable tool for basic data manipulation. With Android 6.0 through 7.1, the system-level file manager is somewhat hidden: You have to look in the Storage section of your system settings, then scroll all the way to the bottom and tap the line labeled "Explore" to find it. With Google's Android 8.0 Oreo release, meanwhile, the file manager lives in Android's Downloads app. All you have to do is open that app and select the "Show internal storage" option in its menu to browse through your phone's full internal storage. You can then open, move, rename, copy, delete, and share files as needed. And if you have Android 9 or higher on your phone, things get even easier: In those recent Android versions, the file manager exists in its own sensibly named Files app. Just open it up to browse any area of your local storage or a connected Drive account; you can either use the file type icons at the top of the screen or, if you want to look folder, tap the three-dot menu icon in the upper-left corner and look for your phone's name. JR Raphael/IDG The most recent version of the system-level Files app on your phone, odds are you're using a device by a manufacturer — such as Samsung — that opts not to include this system-level Android element in its software and instead to provide its own self-made alternative (ostensibly with the goal of pushing its own cloud storage service alongside Google Drive). Such an app might exist within a folder bearing the manufacturer's name, in your app drawer, and might be called My Files — or something along those lines. You'll probably find the same basic sort of file management functionality within it, just with a somewhat different interface and set of options. If you want to do more than the most basic on-device file management, meanwhile, a third-party file management functionality within it, just with a somewhat different interface and set of options. If you want to do more than the most basic on-device file management, meanwhile, a third-party file management, meanwhile, a third-party file management functionality within it, just with a somewhat different interface and set of options. needs in my separate roundup of the best Android file manager apps. Supplementing your phone's local storageOne little-known feature of Android is its ability to connect with external storage devices like USB memory sticks and even larger-capacity portable hard drives. A phone just has to support something known as USB On-The-Go, or USB OTG, in order for the connection to work. A fair number of devices, including Google's Pixel phones and many Samsung Galaxy products, offer such support. If you aren't sure if your best bet is to Google its name along with "USB OTG"; odds are, you'll find the answer fairly quickly. Provided your device supports USB OTG, all you need is a USB-A to USB-C adapter like this one made by Amazon. (If you have an older device that doesn't have USB-C, you'll need a USB-A to micro-USB adapter instead; you can find plenty such options on Amazon or at pretty much any electronics retailer.) Use the adapter to plug the external drive into your phone, then look for a notification confirming the drive is connected. Tap the "Explore" option within the notification, and that's it: You can now browse and access all the files on your external drive. JR Raphael/IDG Look for the notification that pops up when an external drive is connected, and you'll be browsing the drive's contents in no time. When you're finished, don't forget to go back to the notification and tap "Eject" before disconnecting the drive. Just plug your device into any Windows, Mac, or Chrome OS computer, and you can access its entire file system and drag and drop files between it and your desktop with ease.With a Windows or Chrome OS system, it's essentially as simple as plug and play. With a Mac, you'll first need to install a special program on your computer before the connection can be established. For step-by-step instructions on any of those fronts, click over to my comprehensive Android file transfer guide. Transferring files wirelessly between devices Want to transfer files between your Android phone, iPhone, etc.) without the need for wires? No problem. Your most basic option is to embrace a middleman — specifically, a cloud storage service like Google Drive, Dropbox, or Microsoft OneDrive. Just upload the files to a folder within the respective app on your Android phone, then find the folder within the same app on the receiving device (or vice versa). You can get more advanced than that, though — and make your life significantly easier as a result. If you're transferring between two Android devices in the same app on the receiving device (or vice versa). You can get more advanced than that, though — and make your life significantly easier as a result. Files app (which, confusingly, is not the same as the aforementioned Files app that comes preinstalled on many devices) will get the job done with minimal fuss and hassle. Just install the app on both devices, tap the Share tab at its bottom, and then tap the Share tab at its bottom. sends. If you're using devices on different platforms — and/or devices that aren't in the same physical location — a handy tool worth considering is a multiplatform app called Join (which also has the ability to encrypt its transfers, though you'll need to look inside the app's settings to activate that option). Install the app on your Android device and then install that same app, the Chrome version, or the Windows 10 version on any other device with which you want to share files. You can also access the service via a regular website on any desktop computer — if, for instance, you use a Mac along with a browser other than Chrome. Once you've signed into the apps on both ends, you're ready to initiate hassle-free file transfers in either direction. On Android, just share a file from any app — a file manager, an image gallery, or any other sort of file-using utility — and select Join as the destination. The file will appear on your desktop within seconds. On a computer, meanwhile, sending a file is as simple as opening the Join app or extension, selecting your phone as the receiving device, and then dragging the file into the window. JR Raphael / IDG Drop a file into Join on your desktop (left), and it'll appear on your desktop (left), and it'll appear on your desktop (left). text from a computer directly into your phone's clipboard — but even if you just use it for wireless file transfers, it's well worth keeping around. The app comes with a free (ad-supported) one-month trial and then requires a one-time \$5 purchase if you want to keep using it.Syncing your Android phone's storage with a computer Maybe you like having certain files stored locally on your Android phone, but you also want those files to be backed up and saved on your computer. The best of both worlds, right?Believe it or not, this is actually quite easy to pull off. Just grab an Android app called AutoSync, which is available for use with Google Drive, Dropbox, and Box. It'll let you create pairings between a local folder on your phone and a cloud-based folder — for free with a single folder pair and files smaller than 10MB or for a one-time \$5 payment without any real restrictions. Install the appropriate computer-side app for whichever service you prefer, make sure it's set to sync with your computer's hard drive — and there ya have it: Your Android device's folder is now effectively part of your PC.You can even have the folders stay constantly synced in both directions - so if you add or update a file on the computer, the same changes will appear on your phone as well. That's a wrap! Congratulations: You've officially earned the title of Android file master. (For real - you can

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even type it into a document, print it out, and tape it to your desk so everyone knows.)Next up: Make sure you understand the ins and outs of Android backups. They're ultimately made up of files, too, after all — and pretty important ones, at that. This article was originally published in September 2017 and most recently updated in February 2020. Copyright © 2020 IDG Communications, Inc.