

Exploring What You Can Do with Your Phone

In This Chapter

- ▶ Reviewing the basic capabilities of just about any cellphone
- ▶ Understanding what sets smartphones apart
- ▶ Mapping out what makes Samsung Galaxy S 4 phones so cool

Whether you want just the basics from a phone (make and take phone calls, customize your ringtone, take some pictures, maybe use a Bluetooth headset) or you want your phone to be always by your side (a tool for multiple uses throughout your day), you can make that happen. In this chapter, I outline all the things your phone can do — from the basics, to what makes Galaxy S 4 phones different from the rest. Throughout the remainder of the book, I walk you through the steps you need to take to get your phone doing what makes you the happiest.

Discovering the Basics of Your Phone

All cellphones on the market today include basic functions, and even some entry-level phones are a little more sophisticated. Of course, Samsung includes all basic functions on the Galaxy S 4 model. In addition to making and taking calls (see Chapter 3) and sending and receiving texts (see Chapter 4), the Galaxy S 4 sports the following basic features:



- ✓ **13MP digital camera:** This resolution is more than enough for posting good-quality images on the Internet and even having 4" x 6" prints made.
- ✓ **Ringtones:** You can replace the standard ringtone with custom ringtones that you download to your phone. You also can specify different rings for different numbers.
- ✓ **Bluetooth:** The Galaxy S 4 phone supports stereo and standard Bluetooth devices. (See Chapter 3 for more on Bluetooth.)
- ✓ **High-resolution screen:** The Galaxy S 4 phone offers one of the highest-resolution touchscreens on the market (1920×1080 pixels).
- ✓ **Capacitive touchscreen:** The Galaxy S 4 phone offers a very slick touchscreen that's sensitive enough to allow you to interact with the screen accurately but not so sensitive that it's hard to manage. In addition, it has an optional setting that steps up the sensitivity in case you need to use your phone while wearing gloves.

Taking Your Phone to the Next Level: The Smartphone Features

In addition to the basic capabilities of any entry-level cellphone, the Galaxy S 4 phone, which is based upon the popular Android platform, has capabilities associated with other smartphones, such as the Apple iPhone and the phones based upon Windows Phone 8:

- ✓ **Internet access:** Access websites through a web browser on your phone.
- ✓ **Photos:** The phone comes with a camera but also the ability to manage photos.
- ✓ **Wireless e-mail:** Send and receive e-mail from your phone.
- ✓ **Multimedia:** Play music and videos on your phone.
- ✓ **Contact Manager:** The Galaxy S 4 phone lets you take shortcuts from having to enter someone's ten-digit number each time you want to call or text them. In fact, the Contact Manager has the ability to track all the numbers that an individual might have plus their e-mail address and photo. On top of that, it can synchronize with the contact manager on both your personal and work PCs!
- ✓ **Digital camcorder:** The Galaxy S 4 phone comes with a built-in digital camcorder that records at a resolution that you can set, including HD.
- ✓ **Mapping and directions:** The Galaxy S 4 phone uses the GPS (Global Positioning System) in your phone to tell you where you are, find local services that you need, and give you directions to where you want to go.
- ✓ **Business applications:** The Galaxy S 4 can keep you productive while you're away from the office.

I go into each of these capabilities in greater detail in the following sections.

Internet access

Until a few years ago, the only way to access the Internet when you were away from a desk was with a laptop. Smartphones are a great alternative to laptops because they're small, convenient, and ready to launch their web browsers right away. Even more important, when you have a smartphone, you can access the Internet wherever you are — whether Wi-Fi is available or not.

The drawback to smartphones, however, is that their screen size is less than even the most basic laptop screen. The pixel resolution is there, but the raw real estate of the screen is not. Plus, image-heavy websites can take a long time to load. To accommodate this problem, more websites are adding mobile versions. These sites are slimmed-down versions of their main site with fewer images but similar access to the information on the site. These site names usually begins with m or mobile, such as m.yahoo.com.

Figure 1-1 shows the regular website for Refdesk.com on the left and its mobilized version on the right. The mobilized version has no pictures and is more vertically oriented.

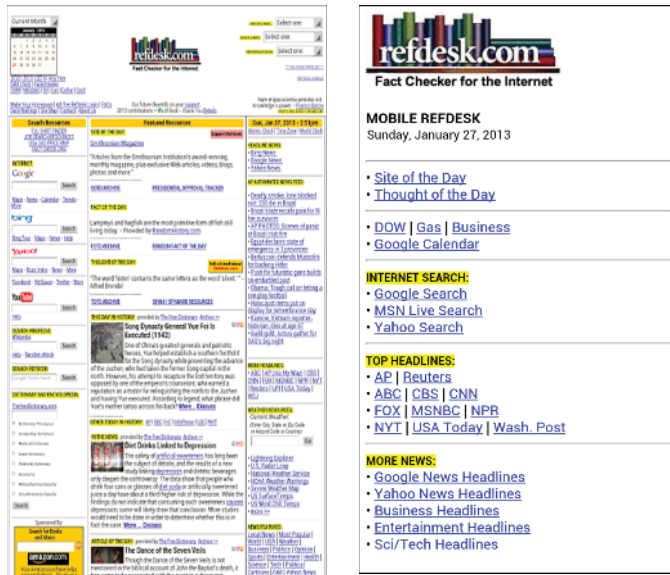


Figure 1-1: A mobile website is a slimmed-down version of the main site.

On the Galaxy S 4 phone, you can use the mobile version of a website if you want, but if you prefer to use the standard website, you can pinch and stretch your way to get the information you want — see Chapter 2 for more information on pinching and stretching.

For more information on accessing the Internet from your Galaxy S 4 phone, turn to Chapter 7.

Photos

The image application on your phone helps you use the digital camera on your Galaxy S 4 phone to its full potential. Studies have found that cellphone users tend to snap a bunch of pictures within the first month of phone usage. After that, the photos sit on the phone (instead of being downloaded to a computer), and the picture-taking rate drops dramatically.

The Galaxy S 4 phone image management application is different. You can integrate your camera images into your home photo library, as well as photo-sharing sites such as Picasa and Flickr, with minimal effort.

For more on how to use the Photo applications, you can turn to Chapter 9.

Wireless e-mail

On your Galaxy smartphone, you can access your business and personal e-mail accounts, reading and sending e-mail messages on the go. Depending on your e-mail system, you might be able to sync so that when you delete an e-mail on your phone, the e-mail is deleted on your computer at the same time so you don't have to read the same messages on your phone and your computer.

Chapter 6 covers setting up your business and personal e-mail accounts.

Multimedia

Some smartphones allow you to play music and videos on your phone in place of a dedicated MP3 or video player. On the Galaxy S 4 phone, you can use the applications that come with the phone, or you can download applications that offer these capabilities from the Play Store.

Chapter 12 covers how to use the multimedia services with your Galaxy S 4 phone.

Business applications

Whether your company gives you a Galaxy S 4 phone for work or you buy your Galaxy S 4 phone yourself, the Galaxy S 4 phone offers you the ability to work on Microsoft Office applications.

Chapter 14 explores how to set up your phone to work with Microsoft Office applications.

Customizing Your Phone with Games and Applications

Application developers — large and small — are working on the Android platform to offer a variety of applications and games for the Galaxy S 4 phone. Compared to most of the other smartphone platforms, Google imposes on application developers fewer restrictions on what is allowable. This freedom to develop resonates with many developers, resulting in a bonanza of application development on this platform.

As of this writing, more than 700,000 applications are available from Google's Play Store. For more information about downloading games and applications, turn to Chapter 8.

Downloading games

Chapter 10 of this book is for gamers. Although your phone comes with a few general-interest games, you can find a whole wide world of games for every skill and taste. In Chapter 10, I give you all the information you need to set up different gaming experiences. Whether you prefer standalone games or multi-player games, you can set up your Galaxy S 4 phone to get what you need.

Downloading applications

Your phone comes with some very nice applications, but these might not take you as far as you want to go. You might also have some special interests, like philately or stargazing, that neither Samsung nor your carrier felt would be of sufficient general interest to include on the phone. (Can you imagine?)

Your phone also comes with preloaded *widgets*, which are smaller applications that serve a particular purpose, such as retrieving stock quotes or telling you how your phone's battery is feeling today. They reside on the extended Home Screen and are instantly available.

Buying applications allows you to get additional capabilities quickly, easily, and inexpensively. Ultimately, these make your phone, which is already a reflection of who you are, more personal as you add more capabilities.

Take a deep breath

You don't have to rush to implement every feature of your Galaxy S 4 phone the very first day you get it. Instead, pick one capability at a time. Digest it, enjoy it, and then tackle the next one.

I recommend starting with setting up your e-mail and social accounts, but that's just me.

No matter how you tackle the process of setting up your Galaxy S 4 phone, it'll take some time. If you try to cram it all in on the first day, you'll turn what should be fun into drudgery.

The good news is that you own the book that takes you through the process. You can do a chapter or two at a time.

What's cool about the Android platform

The Samsung Galaxy S 4 phone is the top-of-the-line Android phone. That means that any application developed for an Android phone will run to its full capability. This is significant because one of the founding principles in the creation of the Android platform is to create an environment where application developers can be as creative as possible without an oppressive organization dictating what can and cannot be sold (as long as it's within the law, of course). This has inspired many of the best applications developers to go with Android first.

On top of that, Android is designed to run multiple applications at once. Other smartphone platforms have added this capability, but Android is designed for you to be able to jump quickly among multiple apps that you're running — and that makes your experience that much smoother.

You and Your Shadow: Understanding How Your Cellular Carrier Bills You

In the United States, most cellular companies sell phones at a significant discount when you sign up for a service agreement. And most cellular companies offer discounts on phones when you want to upgrade to something newer (as long as you also sign up for another couple of years of service). So, it's not surprising that most people buy their phones directly from cellular companies.

If your new Galaxy S 4 phone device is an upgrade from an older phone, you might have a service plan that was suitable with your last phone but isn't so great anymore. If this is your first cellphone (ever, or with this particular carrier), you might start with an entry-level plan, thinking you wouldn't need "that many minutes," only to find that you and your phone are inseparable, and you need a better plan. The good news is that most cellular carriers allow you to change your service plan.

Most cellular service plans have three components of usage:

- ✓ Voice
- ✓ Text
- ✓ Data

I walk you through each of these components and how they affect using your Galaxy S 4 in the following sections.

Voice usage

Voice usage is the most common, costly, and complex element of most service plans. Cellular providers typically offer plans with a certain number of anytime minutes and a certain number of night/weekend minutes. Some providers offer plans with reduced rates (or even free calls) to frequently called numbers, to other cellphones with the same cellular provider, or to other cellphones in general. If you talk a lot, you might be able to opt for an unlimited voice plan (for domestic calls only).

At its core, a Galaxy S 4 phone device is, obviously, a phone. In the early days of smartphones, manufacturers were stung by the criticism that smartphones weren't as easy to use as traditional cellphones. Indeed, you do have to bring up the phone screen to make a call (more on making and receiving calls in Chapter 3). As an improvement, Samsung has made sure that the screen used to make calls is only one click away from the Home screen.



If keeping track of minutes is important to you and your calling plan, be mindful of all those e-mails and social network updates that prompt you to call someone right away. You might be tempted to make more calls than you did with your old (dumb) cellular phone.

Text usage

A texting “bundle” is an add-on to your voice plan. Some service plans include unlimited texting; others offer a certain number of text messages for a flat rate. For example, maybe you pay an additional \$5 per month to get 200 free text messages — meaning that combined, you can send and receive a *total* of 200 messages per month. If you go over that limit, you pay a certain amount per message (usually more for text messages you send than those you receive).

As with voice, the Galaxy S 4 phone makes it very convenient to text, making it more likely that you'll use this service and end up using more texts than you expect. However, nothing obligates you to buy a texting plan.

My advice is to get at least some texting capability but be ready to decide if you want to pay for more or stay with a minimal plan and budget your texts.

What if I didn't get my phone from a cellular company?

With a few exceptions, such as an “unlocked” GSM phone, each phone is associated with a particular cellular company. (In this context, a *locked* phone can work only on its original carrier.) Maybe you bought a secondhand phone on eBay, or you got a phone from a friend who didn't want his anymore. If you didn't get your phone directly from a cellular provider, you will need to figure out which provider the phone is associated with and get a service plan from that company. Some Galaxy S 4 phones sold in the United States all have the cellular company's logo on the phone printed on the front. That makes it easy to know which carrier a phone will operate with.

If there is not a logo on the front, you need to figure out which cellular carrier it can work with. The quickest way is to take the phone to any cellular store; the folks there know how to figure it out.

To narrow down the possibilities on your own, you need to do some investigation. The easiest way is to take off the back of the phone to find the plate with the model and serial number for the phone. If you see IMEI on the plate, the phone is based on a technology called Global System for Mobile (GSM); it'll work with AT&T or T-Mobile (or both). If you see ESN on the plate, the phone will work with either Verizon or Sprint (but not both).

Data usage

Although getting texting may be optional, access to the Internet is essential to get the full experience of your Galaxy S 4 phone. The Internet is where you access the capabilities that make the Galaxy S 4 phone so special. Some cellular carriers may let you use the phone on their network without a data plan. I cannot imagine why you would want to do that. Although your phone will supplement the coverage you get from your cellular carrier with Wi-Fi, you really need to have a data plan from your cellular carrier to get most of the value out of your investment in your phone. There's just no getting around it.

Most cellular companies price Internet access with usage increments measured in the hundreds of megabytes (MB) but more often in gigabytes (GB).

As of this writing, Sprint makes it easy by only offering unlimited data. This is good news: As you customize your phone to keep up with your friends and access your favorite sites, the cost of access won't increase.

Other carriers offer an unlimited option but at a higher price. It is a challenge to figure out how much data you are going to need without going over the limit and paying a usage penalty. Some carriers try to help you by giving you some tools to estimate your usage by estimating the number of e-mails, web pages, or multimedia files you plan to download.

These are iffy. One option is to go with the lowest increment of data, unless you plan to be downloading a large number of videos, but using some of the tools I cover later to see how much data you are actually using.

Another school of thought is to go for an increment of data larger than you think you'll need. After you have some experience with how much data you actually use, you can call your carrier to scale back your usage if appropriate.



Don't blame me if you do not check your usage! It's easy to check and increase your usage, even mid-billing cycle.

Another consideration: Family plans

A popular option is to combine your usage of voice, text, and data with your family members. The family unit on the plan gets to share a fixed allotment of voice minutes, texts, and data. This works well, as long as a responsible person checks your usage during the billing period!

Yet one more consideration: International usage

If you travel internationally with your Galaxy S 4, you should check with your carrier about your billing options before you travel. Voice and text are usually not too bad when you roam internationally. Data is another story.

Rates for data when roaming internationally can be very high. You can end up with a very unpleasant situation if you do not check and plan accordingly.

One final consideration: Web subscription fees

Don't forget that some web-based services charge subscription fees. For example, WeatherBug offers a consumer service that gives you weather conditions, but it also offers WeatherBug Pro that provides more information — with a monthly fee to subscribers. Yup, if you want WeatherBug Pro on your phone, you have to pay the piper. Some of these services can be billed through your cellular carrier (check first), but just make sure you're willing to pony up for the service.

Surviving Unboxing Day

When you turn on your phone the first time, it will ask you a series of ten questions and preferences to configure it. Frankly, they are trying to make this book unnecessary and put me out of business. The nerve!

The good folks at Samsung are well intentioned, but not every one of their customers of the Samsung Galaxy S 4 knows from day one whether she wants a Samsung account, what's a good name for her phone, or what the purpose of a drop box is, much less whether she wants to bother to sign up for one.

You can relax. I'll help you answer these questions, or, when appropriate, I refer you to the chapter within this book that helps you come up with your answer.

On the other hand, if your phone is already set up, you probably took a guess or skipped some questions. Maybe now you're rethinking some of your choices. No problem. You can go back and change any answer you gave and get your phone to behave the way you want.

The questions are as follows:

- ✓ **Screen 1: Language/Accessibility:** This option lets you select your language. The default is English for phones sold within the United States. Also, the phone has some special capabilities for individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability and think you might benefit, take a look at these options.
- ✓ **Screen 2: Wi-Fi:** Your phone automatically starts scanning for a Wi-Fi connection. You can always use the cellular connection when you are in cellular coverage, but if there is a Wi-Fi connection available, your phone will try to use this first. It is probably cheaper and may be faster than the cellular.

At the same time, you may not want your phone to connect to the Wi-Fi access point with the best signal. It could be that the strongest signal is a fee-based service, whereas the next best signal is free. In any case, this page scans the available options and presents them to you. If you need to enter a password, you'll see the screen in Figure 1-2.

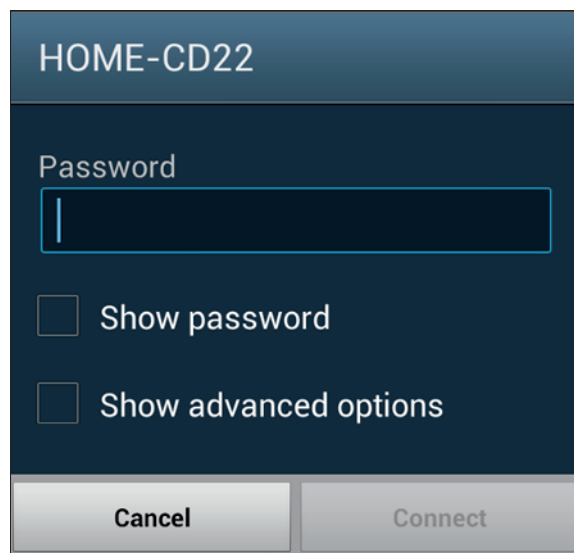


Figure 1-2: The pop-up window for a Wi-Fi password.

If this is all too much to take in right now, feel free to skip to the next screen.

- ✔ **Screen 3: Date and Time:** This is easy. The default setting is to use the time and date that comes from the cellular network. Just tap on the next button and move on. This date and time from the cellular network is the most accurate information you will get, and you do not need to do anything other than be within cellular coverage now and again.
- ✔ **Screen 4: Sign up for a Samsung Account:** My advice is to skip this screen for now. The Samsung account offers you some nice things such as backing up your phone information and access to music, movies, and video. At the same time, there is so much more out there that it is best to forge ahead and leave this for another time.
- ✔ **Screen 5: Google Account Sign-up:** “Google account” means an e-mail account where the address ends in @gmail.com. If you already have an account on Gmail, enter your user ID and password here. If you do not have a Gmail account, I suggest waiting until you read Chapter 5. I recommend that you create a Gmail account, but it is best to go through some other steps first.
- ✔ **Screen 6: Location Options:** Your phone knowing your location and providing it to an application can be a sensitive issue.

If you are really worried about privacy and security, tap the green checkmarks on the screen and then tap the button that says Next. Selecting these options prevents applications from knowing where you are. This prevents you from getting directions and a large number of cool capabilities that are built into applications. The only folks who will know your location are the 911 dispatchers if you dial them.

If you are worried about your security but may want to take advantage of some of the cool capabilities built into your phone, tap the right arrow key to move forward. Remember, you can choose on a case-by-case basis whether to share your location. I cover this more in Chapter 8.
- ✔ **Screen 7: Phone Ownership:** This screen asks you to enter your first and last name. You may ask why this is important at this point. It’s not. If you have been able to navigate this far, you may be ready to tap in your first and last name. If not, just tap the right arrow. All will be fine.
- ✔ **Screen 9: Dropbox:** This is a generous offer, but what is it for? I explain this more in Chapter 14. You may or may not ever need this. If you do, you can come back and take them up on this later. For now, just tap Skip.
- ✔ **Screen 10: Learn about key features:** If you think you don’t need this book, go ahead and take this tour of all the new things you can do. If you think you might need this book in any way, shape, or form, tap the Next button. This screen is for setting up the coolest and the most-sophisticated capabilities of the phone. I cover many of them in the course of this book. For now, skip this to get to the last screen.
- ✔ **Screen 11: Device Name:** When this screen comes up, you’ll see a text box that has the model name. You can keep this name or you can choose

to personalize it a bit. For example, you can change it to “Bill’s Galaxy S 4” or “Indy at 425-555-1234.” The purpose of this name is for connecting to a local data network, such as when you are pairing to a Bluetooth device. If this last sentence made no sense to you, don’t worry about it. Tap Finish. In a moment, you see the Home screen, as shown in Figure 1-3.



Figure 1-3: The Home screen for the Samsung Galaxy S 4.