

That Out-of-the-Box Experience

In This Chapter

- ▶ Unboxing the tablet
- ▶ Charging the battery
- ▶ Locating important tablet-things
- ▶ Getting optional accessories
- ▶ Storing a tablet

Your Android tablet adventure begins by opening the device's box. Sure, you've probably already done that. I don't blame you; I had already opened the box that my Android tablet came in before I read this chapter. No problem. So, to help you recall the ordeal, or to get you oriented if you found the process daunting, or just to prepare you for that out-of-the-box experience yet to come, this chapter provides you with a gentle introduction to your new Android tablet.

Initial Procedures

If you've purchased a cellular tablet, the folks who sold it to you may have already done some configuration before you left the store. That's great because an LTE tablet requires some extra setup before you can use the device. That duty is explained in Chapter 2. For now, all tablet owners — cellular and Wi-Fi — need to perform two basic tablet activities, described in this section.

Liberating the tablet from the box

Thanks to an excess of funds, your federal government has conducted numerous studies on how people use electronic devices. Men and women wearing white lab coats and safety goggles, and wielding clipboards, drew solid



conclusions by thoroughly examining hundreds of Android tablets. The results were unanimous: An Android tablet works better when you first remove it from its box. Thank you, federal grant!

I assume that you're pretty good at the box-opening thing, so I probably don't need to detail that procedure. I can affirm, however, that it's perfectly okay to remove and throw away those plastic sheets stuck to the front, back, and sides of the tablet. And don't be embarrassed when, three weeks from now, you find yet another plastic sheet still clinging to the tablet. Remove the plastic sheet. Throw it away.

Along with the tablet, you'll find the following items in the box:

- ✔ **USB cable:** You can use it to connect the tablet to a computer or a wall charger.
- ✔ **Power adapter:** Use this thing (and the USB cable) to charge the tablet. The adapter may come in two pieces, both of which must be assembled.
- ✔ **Power charger and cable:** These are included with some tablets that don't use the USB cable to charge the battery.
- ✔ **Useless pamphlets:** If your tablet is like mine, you'll find that the safety and warranty information is far more extensive than the setup guide. That shows the priority our culture places on lawyers versus technology writers.
- ✔ **The 4G SIM card holder:** For the cellular tablet, you need a 4G SIM card. If you purchased your tablet at a phone store, someone there may have tossed the SIM card holder into the box as well. You can throw it out.

Go ahead and free the USB cable and wall charger from their clear plastic cocoons.



I recommend keeping the box for as long as you own your Android tablet. If you ever need to return the thing, or ship it anywhere, the original box is the ideal container. You can shove all those useless pamphlets and papers back into the box as well.

Charging the battery

The very first thing that I recommend you do with your tablet is give it a full charge. If the tablet comes with its own charging cord, connect the cord to the tablet and plug the cord into the wall. Otherwise, most Android tablets use the USB cable to charge the battery. Obey these steps:

1. Assemble the power adapter and USB cable.

If necessary, assemble the power adapter's two pieces, and then plug the USB cable into the adapter. They snap together only one way.

2. Plug the adapter into the wall.**3. Attach the USB cable to the Android tablet.**

Look for the tiny connector on the tablet's bottom edge; typically, at the center. The connector might instead be located on the tablet's side.

Upon success, a large “battery charging” type of icon might appear on the Android tablet's touchscreen. This icon lets you know that the tablet is functioning properly — but don't be alarmed if the battery icon fails to appear.

If a Welcome screen or Setup screen appears when you charge the tablet, you can proceed with configuration. That process is covered in Chapter 2.



- ✓ Some tablets feature an HDMI connector, which looks similar to the USB or power connector. Don't jam the USB cable into that hole.
- ✓ Even if your Android tablet comes fully charged from the factory, I still recommend giving it an initial charge, to at least familiarize yourself with the process.
- ✓ The USB cable is also used for connecting the tablet to a computer to share information, exchange files, or use the tablet as a modem. The latter process, called *tethering*, is covered in Chapter 16.



- ✓ You can also charge the tablet by connecting it to a computer's USB port. As long as the computer is on, the tablet charges.
- ✓ The battery charges more efficiently if you plug it into a wall, as opposed to charging it from a computer's USB port.
- ✓ Most Android tablets I've seen don't feature a removable battery, so the battery cannot be replaced if it's defective. If the battery doesn't charge or keep a charge, you should return the tablet for a refund or replacement.

Tablet Exploration

One of the most expensive things to get fixed on a car is the franistan. Ho boy, that busted part can cost thousands of dollars to replace. The high price is due to the fact that there is no such thing as a franistan. It's made up. If you don't know that tidbit, you *will* pay a lot to get your car fixed.

Like an automobile, your tablet lacks a franistan. The way you know this tidbit is by reading this section to discover what is and what isn't part of the standard Android tablet.

Finding things on the tablet

Take heed of Figure 1-1, which is my attempt at illustrating a generic Android tablet's hardware features. Use this figure as a guide as you follow along on your own tablet to locate some key features.

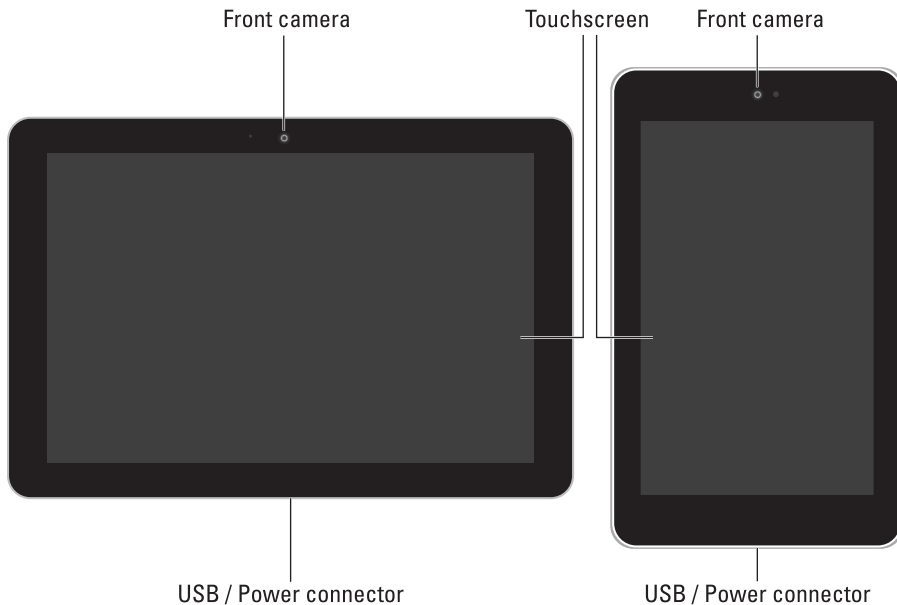


Figure 1-1: Things to find on your Android tablet.

Important items you'll find on the front of the tablet include:

Touchscreen display: The biggest part of the tablet is its touchscreen display, which occupies almost all the territory on the front of the device. The touchscreen display is a look-touch gizmo: You look at it but also touch it with your fingers to control the tablet.

Front camera: The Android tablet's front-facing camera is found above the touchscreen. On larger tablets, the camera is on top when the tablet is oriented horizontally (as shown on the left side of Figure 1-1). On small-format tablets, the camera is on top when the tablet is oriented vertically (as shown on the right side of Figure 1-1).

Light sensor: It's difficult to see, but a teensy light sensor is found near the front camera. The sensor is used to help adjust the brightness level of the touchscreen and probably serves other functions as well, none of which has to do with mind-reading.

Buttons or keys: Some Android tablets feature physical buttons or touch-activated buttons just below the touchscreen. These buttons are labeled with various icons, listed in Chapter 3. You use the buttons for navigation purposes, to control various apps that run on the tablet. (Other tablets display the same or similar buttons as part of the touchscreen display.)

Important items found on the tablet's edges include:



Power/Lock key: The Power/Lock key is labeled with the universal power icon, shown in the margin, although the icon may be difficult to see. Press this key to turn on the tablet, to lock it (put it to sleep), to wake it up, and to turn it off. Directions for performing these activities are found in Chapter 2.

Volume key: The tablet's volume control is two buttons in one. Press one side of the key to set the volume higher or the other side to set the volume lower. This key is often found next to the Power/Lock key. It's the larger of the two.

USB/Power connector: This slot is where you connect the USB cable, which is used both to charge the battery and to connect your Android tablet to a computer. The slot is also where the tablet connects to the dock, should one of those be available. See the later section "Optional Accessories."

External storage slot: The tablet's external storage is added by inserting a memory card into the external storage slot. Details on using this feature are covered in the next section.

SIM card cover: This spot is used to access the cellular tablet's SIM card, which is inserted into a slot beneath the cover.

Headphone jack: This hole is where you can connect standard headphones.

HDMI connector: Use this hole to plug in an HDMI cable. The other end of the cable fits into an HDMI TV or monitor, which you can use to view the tablet's content on a larger screen. Not every Android tablet features an HDMI connector.

Speaker(s): Stereo speakers are found left and right on the tablet, sometimes on the front, mostly on the sides, occasionally on the back.

Microphone: A miniscule circular opening serves as the device's microphone. Some tablets may feature two microphone holes. Don't worry if you can't find them; they're there.

The typical Android also has a back side. It's not shown earlier, in Figure 1-1, because the censors won't let me do an illustration and also because the back is boring: On it you may find the tablet's main camera and LED flash. That's it.

- ✓ Samsung tablets feature a Home button or Home key directly below the touchscreen. This physical button serves the same purpose as the Home icon on other Android tablets.
- ✓ Samsung tablets also feature Recent, Menu, and Back buttons. The Menu button is found only on older tablets; the Recent button is found on current Samsung tablets.
- ✓ Some tablets lack a rear-facing camera. To those tablet owners, I can recommend getting a painting program for your tablet and using it to paint the images you would otherwise photograph.
- ✓ Not every rear-facing camera features a flash.
- ✓ Some tablets use NFC, or Near Field Communications, so that you can send and receive information by touching your tablet with another NFC device. The NFC technology is internal, which means that you don't really see it on your tablet, although it's typically found on the back of the device.
- ✓ Be careful not to confuse the SIM card slot with the external storage slot. They're not the same thing. You'll rarely, if ever, access the SIM card.
- ✓ SIM stands for Subscriber Identity Module. The SIM card is used by your cellular provider to identify your tablet and keep track of the amount of data transmitted over the mobile data network. Yep, that's so you can be billed properly. The SIM also gives your cellular tablet a phone number, though that number is merely an account and not something you can dial into or use for sending a text message.
- ✓ Don't stick anything into the microphone hole. Yes, it's tempting, but don't. Only stick things into your tablet that you're supposed to, such as the USB cable, headphones, memory card, or SIM card.



Inserting the MicroSD card

External and removable storage is available on some Android tablets. The storage is in the form of a *MicroSD card*, which can be used for photos, videos, music, evil plans, and so on.

The MicroSD card is teensy. (That's a scientific description.) The card fits into a slot on the edge of your tablet but can also be inserted into your computer and read like any removable media card.

The MicroSD card can be insert into the tablet whether the device is on or off. Heed these directions:

1. Locate the MicroSD card hatch on the tablet's edge.

Figure 1-2 illustrates the hatch's appearance, although it may look subtly different on your tablet. The card may be labeled *MicroSD*. Do not confuse it with the SIM card cover.



Figure 1-2: Opening the memory card hatch.

- 2. Insert a fingernail into the slot on the teensy hatch that covers the MicroSD slot, and then flip up the hatch.**

There's a fingernail-size indentation on the slot cover, similar to the one shown in Figure 1-2. When pressure is applied, the hatch that covers the slot pops up and kind of flops over to the side. The slot cover may not come off completely.

- 3. Orient the MicroSD card so that the printed side faces up and the teeny triangle on the card points toward the open slot.**
- 4. Use your fingernail or a paperclip to gently shove the card all the way into the slot.**



The card makes a faint clicking sound when it's fully inserted.

If the card keeps popping out, you're not shoving it in far enough.

- 5. Close the hatch covering the MicroSD card slot.**

If the tablet is on (and has been configured), you may see an onscreen prompt. If so, ignore the prompt and just touch the OK button on the tablet's touchscreen.



- ✓ Not every Android tablet features external storage. If you can't find a MicroSD card slot on the tablet's edge, that feature isn't available to your tablet.
- ✓ The tablet works with or without a MicroSD card installed.
- ✓ Almost always, the MicroSD card is a purchase you must make in addition to your Android tablet. Rarely does a tablet come with the MicroSD card preinstalled.
- ✓ MicroSD cards come in a smattering of capacities, measured in gigabytes (billions of bytes), abbreviated GB or just G. Common capacities include 8GB, 16GB, 32GB, and 64GB. The higher the capacity, the more stuff you can store but also the more expensive the card. But:
- ✓ Your tablet has a limit on the size of the MicroSD cards it can accept. For most Android tablets, that limit is 32GB. Newer (and more expensive) tablets can handle higher capacities. Check the tablet's box to determine the maximum size for external or removable storage.



- ✓ To use a MicroSD card with a computer, you need an SD card adapter. Insert the MicroSD card into the adapter, and then plug the SD card adapter into the computer. The adapter is an extra purchase, although some MicroSD cards come with such an adapter.
- ✓ SD stands for Secure Digital. It is but one of about a zillion media card standards.
- ✓ In addition to the MicroSD card, your Android tablet features internal storage. That storage is used for the programs you install on the tablet, as well as for the tablet's operating system and other control programs.
- ✓ Refer to Chapter 17 for more information on storage.

Removing the MicroSD card

Most of the time, you leave the MicroSD card inside your Android tablet. When the urge hits to remove it, heed these steps:



1. Turn off your Android tablet.

You can damage the media card if you just yank it out of the tablet, which is why I recommend first turning off the tablet. Specific directions for turning off an Android tablet are found in Chapter 2.

2. Open the itty-bitty hatch covering the MicroSD card slot.

3. Use your fingernail to press the MicroSD card inward a tad.

The MicroSD card is spring-loaded, so pressing it in eventually pops it outward.

4. Pinch the MicroSD card between your fingers and remove it completely.

The MicroSD card is too tiny to leave lying around. Put it into a MicroSD card adapter for use in your PC or another electronic device. Or store it inside a miniature box that you can label with a miniature pen in miniature letters: "MicroSD Card Inside." Don't lose it!



It's possible to remove the MicroSD card without turning off the tablet. To do that, you need to *unmount* the card while the tablet is running. This technical procedure is explained in Chapter 17.

Optional Accessories

Your credit card company will be thrilled when you discover that an assortment of handy Android tablet accessories are available for purchase. You can find them at the place where you purchased your tablet, online or in the real

world. Here are just a few of the items that you can consider getting to complete your tablet experience:

Earphones: You can use any standard cell phone or portable media player earphones with an Android tablet. Simply plug the earphones into the headphone jack at the top of the tablet and you're ready to go.

HDMI cable: For tablets with an HDMI (video output) port, you can get an HDMI cable. The cable connects the tablet to an HD monitor, where you can view videos or pictures on a large-format screen.

Pouches and sleeves: Answering the question "Where do I put this thing?" is the handy Android tablet pouch or sleeve accessory. Try to get one designed for your tablet. If not, check the size before you buy. Not every 10-inch tablet fits into the same 10-inch pouch.

Screen protectors: These plastic, clingy things are affixed to the front of the tablet, right over the touchscreen. They help protect the touchscreen glass from finger smudges and sneeze globs while still allowing you to use the touchscreen.

Vehicle charger: You can charge the Android tablet in your car if you buy a vehicle charger. It's an adapter that plugs into your car's 12-volt power supply, in the receptacle that was once known as a cigarette lighter. The vehicle charger is a must if you plan on using the Android tablet's navigation features in your auto or when you need a charge on the road.

Docks, various and sundry: Most people manhandle their tablets. Tsk, tsk. You can be more refined and get your Android tablet a dock. There are several kinds, from the simple prop-dock that holds up the tablet at a pleasant viewing angle to docks that contain keyboards to multimedia docks that feature HDMI and USB ports.

Keyboard: Some docking stands double as tablet keyboards, but you can also obtain any Bluetooth keyboard for use with your Android tablet. See Chapter 16, which covers the Bluetooth connection.

USB Adapter: This USB adapter isn't the same thing as the USB cable that comes with your tablet. It's a dongle that plugs into the tablet's Power/USB jack to allow the tablet to host a USB device, such as a keyboard, mouse, modem, or external storage device (hard drive or optical drive).

Other exciting and nifty accessories might be available for your tablet. Check for new garnishes and frills frequently at the location where you bought your tablet.



- ✓ None of this extra stuff is essential to using your tablet.
- ✓ See Chapter 17 for more information on the HDMI connection and how to view tablet content on the "big" screen.



- ✓ You can use Bluetooth earphones or a cell phone Bluetooth headset with any Android tablet.
- ✓ If the earphones feature a microphone, you can use that microphone for dictation, recording, and even chatting with friends.
- ✓ If the earphones feature a button, you can use the button to pause and play music. Press the button once to pause, and again to play.
- ✓ Android tablets generally don't recognize more than one earphone button. For example, if you use earphones that feature a Volume button or Mute button, pressing that extra button does nothing.
- ✓ A useful accessory to get is a microfiber cloth to help clean the tablet's screen, plus a special cleaning solution wipe. See Chapter 20 for more information about cleaning an Android tablet's screen.

Where to Keep Your Tablet

Like your car keys, glasses, wallet, and phaser pistol, your Android tablet should be kept in a safe, easy-to-find, always handy place, whether you're at home, at work, or on the road or while orbiting the Klingon homeworld.

Making a home for the tablet

I recommend returning your Android tablet to the same spot whenever you finish using it. If you have a computer, my first suggestion is to make a spot right by the computer. Keep the charging cord handy, or just plug the cord into the computer's USB port so that you can synchronize information with your computer on a regular basis, not to mention keep the tablet charged.

Another handy place to keep the tablet is on your nightstand. That makes sense because, in addition to using the tablet for nighttime reading or video watching, it can serve as an alarm clock.

If you have a docking stand, plug your tablet into it whenever you're not toting it about.

Above all, avoid putting the tablet in a place where someone can sit on it, step on it, or otherwise damage it. For example, don't leave the tablet on a table or counter under a stack of newspapers, where it might get accidentally tossed out or put in the recycle bin.

Never leave the tablet on a chair!

As long as you remember to return the tablet to the same spot when you're done with it, you'll always know where it is.



Taking the Android tablet with you

If you're like me, you probably carry the Android tablet around with you to or from the office, at the airport, in the air, or in your car. I hope you're not using the tablet while you're driving. Regardless, it's best to have a portable place to store your tablet while you're on the road.

The ideal place for the tab is a specially designed pouch or sleeve. The pouch keeps the tablet from being dinged, scratched, or even unexpectedly turned on while it's in your backpack, purse, or carry-on luggage or wherever you put the tablet when you're not using it.

Also see Chapter 18 for information on using an Android tablet on the road.

