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AMAZON

7 Great Android Apps You Can't Get on the Kindle Fire

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Brent Rose

So, Amazon doesn't exactly highlight this, but all of its Kindle Fires are Androids on the inside. Amazon slaps a heavy skin on top, so it's not at all recognizable, but it's Android all the same. Great, so you get access to all of the Android apps, right? Not exactly.

Amazon has strayed far enough from the Android path that it doesn't have access to the Google Play Store (formerly the Android Market). And while there are 50,000 offerings in Amazon's Apps for Android store, that pales in comparison to the 600,000 apps every other Android user has at their disposal.

A lot of what Amazon's missing is junk. But some very good apps got left out in the cold. Here's what you'll be missing most:

Google Apps (obviously)

The Play Store isn't the only Google-built app that didn't make it over the water. Actually, none of them did. That means [Google Maps](#), [Translate](#), [Drive](#), [Earth](#), Calendar, [Wallet](#), [Gmail](#), [Chrome](#), [YouTube](#), and others aren't anywhere to be found among Amazon's Android apps. Which is a shame, because they're all the best at what they do.

Instagram

This isn't a huge surprise since the original Fire didn't have a camera, but as of now you won't be able to browse your Instagram feed from your new Kindle Fire HD, either. If I couldn't see what Jesus Diaz has for dinner every night I think I'd kill myself.

Groupon

Bargains! Good, cheap bargains on things you probably don't need but damnit they're such a bargain! Well, none of that on your Fire (at least not from Groupon). Although frankly, this might have just as much to do with the fact that Amazon owns a major stake in megacompetitor LivingSocial. Either way, Groupon's a notable absentee.

Firefox

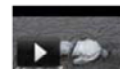
Firefox for Android isn't perfect yet, but if you use it as your main desktop browser, you were probably psyched about being able to sync all of your bookmarks, browsing history and all of that good stuff. No Firefox *and* no Chrome? As good as Kindle Fire's native browser is, it's always nice to have options.

Games

[Dead Trigger](#), [Oscura](#), [Minecraft](#), [Grand](#)



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WISH YOU WERE HE 8,858
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ANDROID 21,880
Is This a New Sony Nexus Phone?



Theft Auto III, Osmos, Shoot the Zombirds.

All really, really good games. None of them available through Amazon.

Adobe PhotoShop Touch

Want to do some semi-serious photo editing on your tablet? Adobe's PhotoShop Touch is the current benchmark, and it's AWOL on the Fire. You can get PhotoShop Express, but it's not nearly as robust.

Widgets

One of the banner features of Android is widgets. They provide super fast access to the information you want and/or instant controls for music, settings, or just about any program you want. They're really handy, but they live on your tablet's desktop. The Kindle Fire has ditched said desktop, so widgets wouldn't make any sense.

This list is just from a short skim through the top Android app and through stuff I have on my phone. There are many others (Speedtest.net, for example). In other instances, they'll have a free version, but not the more fully featured paid version, or vice versa.

Now, there are some options for getting these tantalizing forbidden apps onto your Fire, but none of them will appeal to the masses. It is possible to sideload apps on to the Fire, but doing so is [a royal pain in the ass](#). And yes, it's possible to root the Fire and have it run a custom version of Android, but most people can't or don't want to. More importantly, you probably shouldn't *have* to. In terms of app ecosystems, Android is the hands-down winner.

Amazon may have more books and music than the Google Play Store, but here's the thing: in Android you can just download the Amazon MP3 app, or the Kindle App, and then you have access to all of those Amazon titles, *plus* Google's, *plus* pretty much anybody else's. There's no Amazon Instant Video yet, but with all of the other sources, you aren't likely to miss it.

That's not to say the Kindle Fires aren't more than decent. They are! But remember that there are some gaping holes in its game—the kind that don't show up on a spec sheet.

3 discussions in response to Brent Rose

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ere's the part I don't quite get (and I have a Kindle Fire, so this is not bashing). If Amazon wants to push the idea of "hardware as a service", why not simply use a stock build of Android with a video player launcher on top? Why not make Amazon Video available on other Android devices? People would FLOCK to buy a real tablet at these prices and with Amazon's iTunes-like features built in. Instead, we have to choose between a full tablet or that stupid Kindle launcher, etc. Maybe it's just me. Personally, I had to get away from the Fire and go back to a generic Android tablet (the Nexus) in order to do everything I wanted... and it's too bad, because I could have used when I want to download a video from Amazon



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you buy a Kindle Fire (whatever one) instead of a Nexus, you're probably on track. That's what I see another Android device? I'd like to see this device with a Nexus7 on the market for only \$30 more; all of the apps, upgrade support, it doesn't have that stupid Amazon integration. Maybe it's just me. You are following jamiej831s comments

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100% the reason to root. I have the OG Kindle, running JB. This thing is awesome. With the specs it has I am very very happy and surprised at how snappy the thing is. I originality rooted and left the Amazon skin and just side loaded the google play. Not everything worked, so I ended up just going with custom ROMs. Best decision made. I'd imagine the Dev community will be all over the HD



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n terms of app ecosystems, Android is the hands-down winner. You mean, "...the Play Store is the hands-down winner" I think the general consensus (which I, even as an Android user, can't dispute) is that the App Store is both beat handily.



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Thanks, I was just about to jump out of a window because I imported the Nexus 7 in Holland and it costs the same as the Amazon (I bought it before it was imported) but it's that the App Store costs now (250\$ in the US and 250 euro in Europe, so importing it would have cost me exactly the same as buying it when it officially started being sold in The Netherlands if the import tax didn't exist). Now this awesome thing. I think I'm one of the few that are happy that it doesn't run stock Android.



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is article is a waste of time and effort. Firstly, everyone can run highly modified versions of Android. Secondly, you CAN get any of those apps on the Kindle Fire by either rooting it or side loading the apps on there. I side load onto mine the other day and I could easily get the others. Besides, who cares? The Kindle Fire is a fancy E-Reader, not a tablet. If you are not interested in fiction, you don't even need any of that stuff. People who don't read should buy a real tablet.



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One big hole in Android content is downloadable (versus streaming) video content. Play has movies and TV that a tablet fully supports and intended for Amazon. Amazon-readers should buy a real tablet.



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You can sideload the Amazon Video player... Just have to be sure to run otarootkeeper and set yourself to temp unrooted mode as it checks for root and fails to play if root is found. Again, not for the masses, but another reason for those with the know-how to skin the kindle



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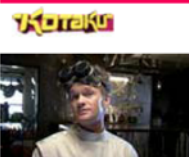
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