What is Android?

Android is an open source and Linux-based **Operating System** for mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers. Android was developed by the *Open Handset Alliance*, led by Google, and other companies.

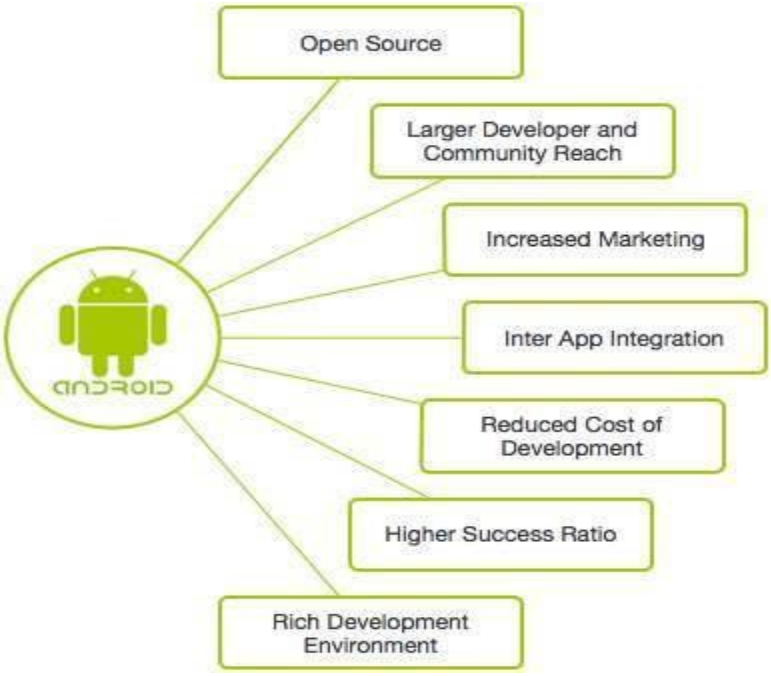
Android offers a unified approach to application development for mobile devices which means developers need only develop for Android, and their applications should be able to run on different devices powered by Android.

The first beta version of the Android Software Development Kit (SDK) was released by Google in 2007 where as the first commercial version, Android 1.0, was released in September 2008.

On June 27, 2012, at the Google I/O conference, Google announced the next Android version, 4.1 **Jelly Bean**. Jelly Bean is an incremental update, with the primary aim of improving the user interface, both in terms of functionality and performance.

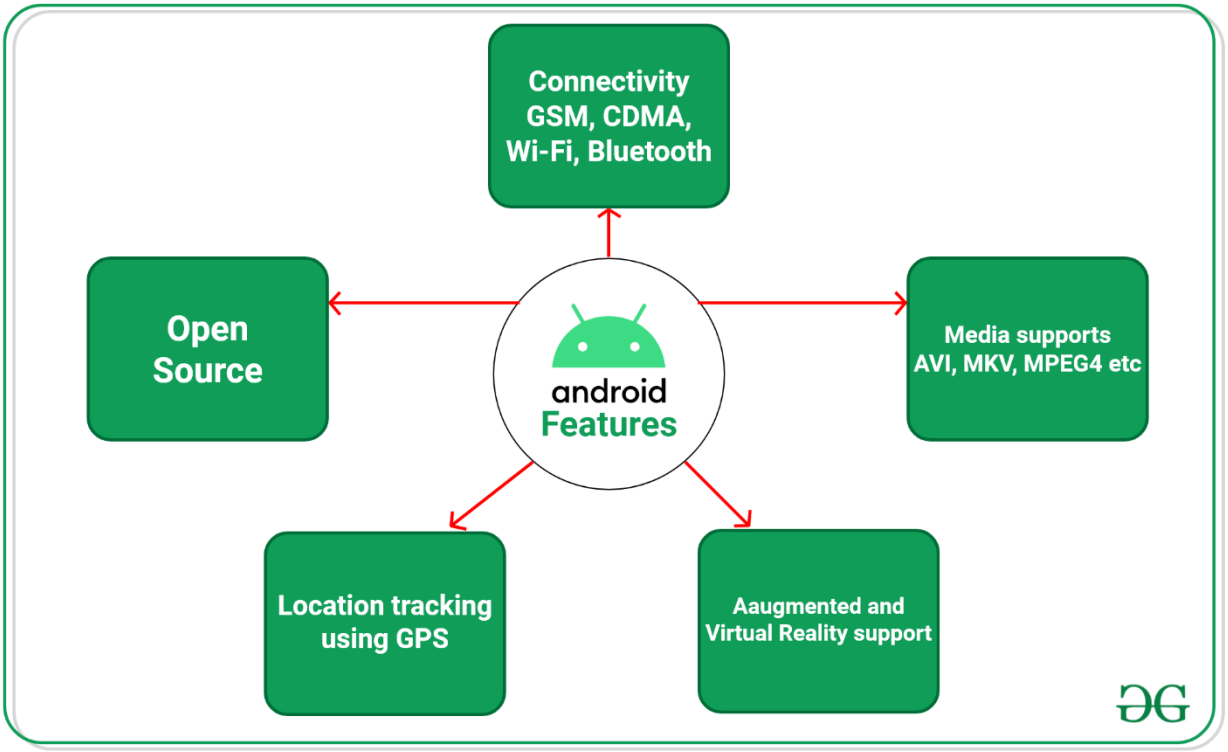
The source code for Android is available under free and open source software licenses. Google publishes most of the code under the Apache License version 2.0 and the rest, Linux kernel changes, under the GNU General Public License version 2.

Why Android ?



Features of Android

Android is a powerful open-source operating system that open-source provides immense features and some of these are listed below.

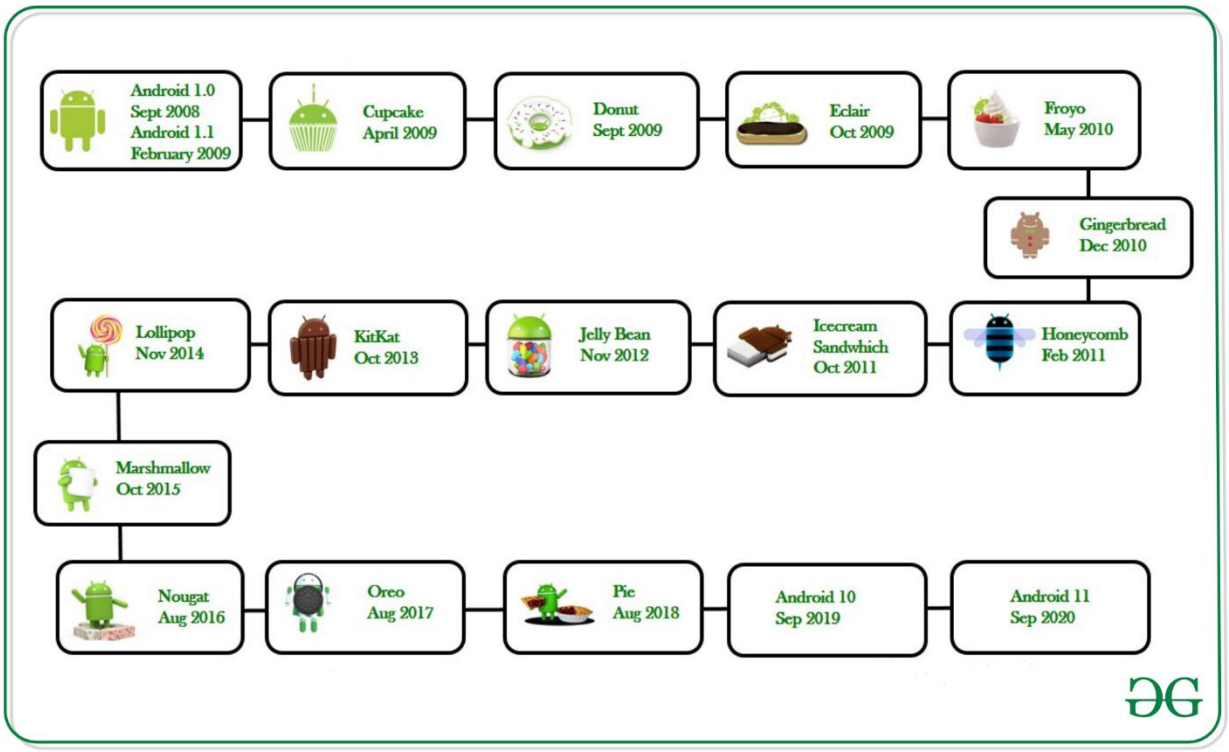


- Android Open Source Project so we can customize the OS based on our requirements.
- Android supports different types of connectivity for GSM, CDMA, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, etc. for telephonic conversation or data transfer.
- Using wifi technology we can pair with other devices while playing games or using other applications.
- It contains multiple APIs to support location-tracking services such as GPS.
- We can manage all data storage related activities by using the file manager.
- It contains a wide range of media supports like AVI, MKV, FLV, MPEG4, etc. to play or record a variety of audio/video.
- It also supports different image formats like JPEG, PNG, GIF, BMP, MP3, etc.

- It supports multimedia hardware control to perform playback or recording using a camera and microphone.
- Android has an integrated open-source WebKit layout based web browser to support User Interface like HTML5, CSS3.
- Android supports multi-tasking means we can run multiple applications at a time and can switch in between them.
- It provides support for virtual reality or 2D/3D Graphics

Android Versions

Google launched the first version of the Android platform on Nov 5, 2007. Since then, Google released a lot of android versions such as Apple Pie, Banana Bread, Cupcake, Donut, Éclair, Froyo, Gingerbread, Jellybeans, Kitkat, Lollipop, marshmallow, Nougat, Oreo, etc. with extra functionalities and new features.



The following table shows the version details of android which is released by Google from 2007 to date.

Code Name	Version	API level	Release date
Apple Pie	Android 1.0	1	September 23, 2008
Banana Bread	Android 1.1	2	February 9, 2009
Cupcake	Android 1.5	3	April 30, 2009
Donut	Android 1.6	4	September 15, 2009
Eclair	Android 2.0 – 2.1	5-7	October 26, 2009
Froyo	Android 2.2 – 2.2.3	8	May 20, 2010
Gingerbread	Android 2.3 – 2.3.4	9-10	December 6, 2010
Honeycomb	Android 3.0.x – 3.2.x	11 – 13	February 22, 2011
Ice Cream Sandwich	Android 4.0 – 4.0.4	14 – 15	October 18, 2011
Jelly Bean	Android 4.1 – 4.1.2	16 – 18	July 9, 2012
Kitkat	Android 4.4 – 4.4.4	19	July 9, 2012
Lollipop	Android 5.0 – 5.1	21 – 22	October 17, 2014
Marshmallow	Android 6.0 – 6.0.1	23	October 5, 2015

Code Name	Version	API level	Release date
Nougat	Android 7.0 – 7.1	24 – 25	August 22, 2016
Oreo	Android 8.0	26	August 21, 2017
Pie	Android 9.0	27	August 6, 2018
Android Q	Android 10.0	29	September 3, 2019
Android 11	Android 11.0	30	September 8, 2020

Programming Languages used in Developing Android Applications

1. **Java**
2. **Kotlin**

Developing the Android Application using Kotlin is preferred by Google, as Kotlin is made an official language for Android Development, which is developed and maintained by JetBrains. Previously before the Java is considered the official language for Android Development. Kotlin is made official for Android Development in Google I/O 2017.

Advantages of Android Development

- The Android is an open-source Operating system and hence possesses a vast community for support.
- The design of the Android Application has guidelines from Google, which becomes easier for developers to produce more intuitive user applications.
- Fragmentation gives more power to Android Applications. This means the application can run two activities on a single screen.
- Releasing the Android application in the Google play store is easier when it is compared to other platforms.

Disadvantages of Android Development

- Fragmentation provides a very intuitive approach for user experience but it has some drawbacks, where the development team needs time to adjust with the various screen sizes of mobile smartphones that are now

available in the market and invoke the particular features in the application.

- The Android devices might vary broadly. So the testing of the application becomes more difficult.
- As the development and testing consume more time, the cost of the application may increase, depending on the application’s complexity and features.