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Photo Pixels (Pixabay) Google recently removed several apps from the Google Play Store after discovering that they violated the terms of the Play Store service and, more importantly, could be used as stalkers. That doesn't mean they're removed from your Android device though, so now is the perfect time to remove them. If you are not familiar with this phrase, the stalker includes giving a third party access to another user's device, location data, and other sensitive information. These apps often present themselves as normal tracking tools- for employees' activities on company phones or the whereabouts of your children (moral gray zone from the start), but they can also be used to spy on romantic partners, friends or roommates. These apps violate Google's policy on apps distributed through Google Play: Surveillance and commercial spy apps are expressly banned on Google Play. Only policy-compatible applications that are specifically designed and edited, like parental (including family) monitoring or enterprise management, can be distributed in the Store with tracking and reporting features, provided they fully comply with the requirements described below. As part of these requirements, tracking apps must clearly show that they are active and cannot mislead users about their purpose. In other words, apps that try to hide on a user's device and send their location data to someone else don't go. Security company Avast is responsible for highlighting these seven stalkerware apps for Google that you should remove from your Android device if you see them: Employee work Spy Mobile TrackingPhone Cellular TrackerSpy Children TrackerSpy TrackerTrackTrack Employees Check the Work Phone Online Spy Free! you don't see them, but suspect that your movements are being tracked in some order, consider performing the factory reset on your device. You'll have to reinstall apps and you'll want to back up critical data time like your photos and videos before you start resetting, but this is the best and easiest way to make sure that hidden apps don't track your location. Once you've set up a new device, make sure you're using a stronger unlocking method so that someone can't go back and reinstall any tracking tools. G/O Media can get commission there are dozens of probably hundreds of Android phones on the market today. Some are exclusive to specific carriers, some are available worldwide, but few are at the head of their class. This week we wanted to know which Android phones you thought were available, not just because they round up a checklist of features or high-end equipment, but because you think they offer a great overall experience. Here's a look at the top five Android phones, based on your nominations. Earlier this week, we asked you which Android phones you thought were the best. There's many sites are willing to tell you which phones are the best based on the chips inside, camera, storage, or Android version preinstalled, but these things don't always add up to a great user experience. We asked you which phones - past or present - you thought were the best, and over 300 nominations later, we came back to set aside the top five. Poll is closed, votes are counted! To find out which of the five contenders below took the top prize based on your votes, head over to our hive five follow-up posts to find out and discuss the winner! Looking for a decent Android phone? Of course, we know that the market will be completely different within Read more! G/O Media can get a commission! Samsung Galaxy Note - Often called phablet because of its included stylus and massive 5.3 Super AMOLED display, Samsung Galaxy Note (ATT, \$299 w/contract) is huge, but many of you praised it for mixing the handheld phone with some desperately needed tablets. The 8MP and 2MP rear and front cameras and 1.4GHz dual-core processor won't hurt matters either, and while it's definitely not the right size for everyone, those of you who love it and others are looking forward to releasing it on other carriers. Also, even if the Galaxy Note ships with Android 2.3 Gingerbread pre-installed, there are plenty of ROMs available to bring it to the Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich, or simply replace the TouchWiz Samsung interface completely. The HTC One S - The HTC One Series is HTC's latest attempt to recreate itself, not what the company really needs, most people who have used HTC devices love them, and the HTC One X and One S are no exception to this rule. One X (ATT, \$199 w/contract) is HTC's new flagship phone, sporting a 4.7 screen, a quad-core Nvidia Tegra 3 (internationally) or a dual-core Qualcomm Snapdragon processor (US/Canada), an Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich (with HTC Sense UI on top), a built-in Beats Audio, and an 8MP rear camera with a 1.3MP rear camera. HTC One S (T-Mobile, \$189 w/contract), on the other hand, slightly less than 4.3 screen, 1.5GHz dual-core processor, 8MP rear and VGA front cameras, Beats audio, and ice cream sandwich. Both devices are thin, power-up devices designed to attract Android lovers' attention back into a select group of high-end HTC devices, rather than a dozen-plus ones HTC has released in the past. As long as it works. Samsung Galaxy S/S II - The Samsung Galaxy S series devices are among the most popular smartphones in the world, and even though Samsung and Apple are embroiled in a patent lawsuit about how similar the Galaxy S is to the iPhone (and vice versa), that hasn't stopped the Galaxy S and Galaxy S II from selling millions of units worldwide. The Galaxy S was one of the first dual-core Android smartphones, and certainly one of the to show Samsung a new (at the time) Super AMOLED display, offering bright and clear colors even in bright light. It is still available for song depending on the carrier you pick it up from (in the US, it was sold under the name Vibrant (T-Mobile), Captivate (ATT), Fascinate (Verizon Wireless), and Epic (Sprint) in both 3G and 4G variants.) Story aside, The Samsung Galaxy S II is the company's current model and has a 4.3 Super AMOLED display, 1.2GHz dual-core processor, and while it comes with Android 2.3, most carriers have been slowly rolling out updates to bring the device to Android 4.0. Prices vary depending on the carrier and the option you take, but one thing is for sure: when it was launched, most people consider the Galaxy S II the best Android smartphone, if not the best smartphone-available on the market, making a furore about the upcoming Samsung Galaxy S III that much louder. The Motorola The Droid series from Motorola (Motorola Milestone, internationally) series was one of the earliest Android phones on the market to really bring Android to the masses, and is definitely the first Android phone available on Verizon Wireless at the time. It's been a tough call for a group of droids together, but it's worth noting that those of you who have assigned droid lines in large quantities specifically mentioned slider models rather than candy models like Droid Razr, Razr Maxx, or Bionic (although they all got strong nominations as well) - all available on Verizon Wireless in the US. The Motorola Droid 4 (VW, \$199 w/contract) is the current iteration of the phone, featuring a 4 qHD display, 1.2GHz dual-core processor, 8MP rear and 1.3 MP front-facing camera, and, above all, a slide-out backlit keyboard that allows the phone to be used in both portrait and landscape modes without compromising the real estate screen. The Droid line is still one of the few high-end Android devices with a physical keyboard, making it popular for both portability and people who prefer a physical keyboard screen. Droid 4 sports Android gingerbread, and rides Verizon Wireless' 4G network. Samsung Galaxy Nexus - The Samsung Galaxy Nexus (VW, Sprint, \$199/w contract, \$399 unlocked) is the current official Google Phone, starting with android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich and currently serves as the flagship Android device. It sports a 4.6 Super AMOLED display, curved contour screen, 1.2GHz dual-core processor, and 5MP and 1.3 MP rear and front cameras. This is a pure Google experience, i.e. a phone (largely) without viruses and other applications pre-installed by carriers and manufacturers, and in particular missing the Samsung TouchWiz custom layer in favor of a clean version of Ice Cream Sandwich. The phone is also sporting Google NFC system, Google Wallet. The camera boasts zero shutter lag, and it's this The first phone to run with an ice cream sandwich is pre-installed and it's still one of the few devices that you can get that already is. If you want to make the most faithful and clean Android experience possible, or want an Android phone that is officially supported by Google, this is it. There you have, five Android phones, based on your nominations. Now it's time to vote for all of the champion. It was hard this week to run down the top five considering there are three Samsung devices in management, but some have received more nominations than some of the other contenders combined, so we can't ignore the fact that many of you have a strong opinion about these particular models. Is there anything to be said for the nominees we missed? Your favorite phone doesn't get enough nominations to be included? Remember that the top five are based on your most popular nominations from calling for applicants to thread from earlier in the week. Share your thoughts in the comments below. Hive Five is based on reader nominations. As with most Hive Five posts, if your favorite stayed away, it's not because we hate it, it's because he didn't get the nominations needed in calling for job applicants to make the top five. We understand that this is a bit of a popularity contest, but if you have a favorite, we want to hear about it. Is there an offer for Hive Five? Email us tips@hivefive@lifehacker.com! Photo pitaya Sroilong. Sroilong.

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