Using ChromeOS for work

Developer Mode

Developer Mode is not strictly for development. What it does is turns off OS Verification on each reboot, giving up some of the protection built into ChromeOS but allowing you greater flexibility to use the system.

Changing to/from Developer Mode wipes your Chromebook. Be sure you have a backup of important data before doing this. It takes several minutes. After it is through re-initializing the system, you will be presented with the standard setup screen.

Note that each time you reboot your Chromebook, you will get a warning that “OS verification is OFF” and inviting you to press the space bar to reset your system to normal. You can wait for the timeout, or press Ctrl+D to speed the bypass of the message. If you accidentally press the space bar, all information will be wiped and the system will be returned to standard ChromeOS mode. *Your system is wiped without warning* if you press the space bar!

To enter Developer Mode

1. Boot or reboot the system by holding ESC+Refresh and press the power button
2. System reboots and gives you an error “Chrome OS is missing or damaged. Please insert a recovery USB stick or SD Card.”
3. Press Ctrl+D to enter Developer Mode

Setup

The following instructions are designed to decrease the dependencies and information sharing you have with Google services. You can adjust these to meet your particular needs.

1. fully charge your Chromebook before proceeding, or have it plugged in
2. Turn on your new Chromebook
3. Click Get Started
4. Connect to a wireless network, then click Next
    1. **Note**: Not sure why, but if you have a USB-C to Ethernet connector, it does not appear to work during the install.
5. Accept and continue. OPTIONAL, uncheck the box that says “Help Improve Chrome OS features” which automatically sends usage data to Google
6. Select “You” from “Who's using this Chromebook”. Selecting “A child” will put limits on the features appropriate for children.
7. Sign in to your Chromebook - enter your google account here (generally a gmail account)
8. enter your password
9. Sync your Chromebook - for most situations, choose No thanks here.
    1. In some cases, you have to check “Review Sync Options following setup”
10. When asked for Google Assistant, choose “No Thanks”
11. When asked to Connect to your Phone, choose “No Thanks”

12. Google Play apps and Services - Uncheck “Back up to Google Drive” to ensure your information is not stored on Google's servers
13. Uncheck Use Location to block apps from determining your location
14. Check Review Google Play options following setup
15. Google Assistant, click No thanks (includes app information and Web and App activity)
16. Connect your phone, click “No thanks”, sync's information on your phone, through Google's servers, to your Chromebook
17. At this point, you should get an “You're All Set” message and you can then review your settings.

Secure the installation

You should be in the post installation settings review, but if not, you can do the same by going into Settings (click the clock, then click the gear box).

Basically, we're removing all the left over permissions that we may have missed during the install (or that Google overrode). The locations change regularly, so if you can't find a particular item below, use the search function to find it. We normally just go through the entire list and turn off anything suspect, but here are some highlights.

1. Choose Manage what you sync and turn off anything still on (should all be off if you chose no thanks on Sync your Chromebook above)
2. Security and Privacy
3. Lock screen and signing - (set for either password only, or password or pin)
4. Click Accounts
    1. choose Sync and Google Services
    2. Turn off Autocomplete searches and URLs
    3. Turn off Google Drive search suggestions
5. Search - change to DuckDuckGo
    1. Open Chrome web browser
    2. Enter the URL https://duckduckgo.com
    3. Select “Add DuckDuckGo to Chrome”
    4. Follow instructions to make DuckDuckGo your default search engine
6. Open Google Play Store
    1. Select Manage your Apps. At the time of this writing, you would click on your symbol (generally the initial of your name in a colored circle in the upper left). We will set permissions for existing apps, and allow the installation from F-Droid
        1. Turn off/remove any apps not needed
        2. Notifications - You can turn of notifications from any/all apps
    2. Select Play Protect (again, you may need to find it through the little circle)
        1. Turn off (this will allow you to totally mess up your chromebook if you install something, so only install apps from sources you trust completely)

Install Apps

1. Open Google Play Store
    1. OpenVPN Connect – OpenVPN Client for Android
    2. Microsoft Remote Desktop – Connect to Windows machines using Remote Desktop Protocol

    3. Chrome Remote Desktop – Control or be controlled by remote machine
        1. Not sure which method to use
            1. Chrome Remote Desktop from Store appears to be master only
            2. https://remotedesktop.google.com/
2. Install F-Droid
    1. https://f-droid.org/
    2. Download to someplace on your Chromebook so we can install. Ignore any warning about installing an unknown app.
    3. If it does not automatically install
        1. Locate downloaded APK.
        2. Double Click to install
3. Open F-Droid. Wait 10-20 minutes for the repository to be updated
    1. Install the following apps by clicking the spyglass. On the first one, you will get a notice about not being able to download and install. Select “Settings”, then “Allow from this source”.
        1. AVNC – VNC Viewer for Android
        2. Monocles – XMPP chat program
        3. Jitsi Meet – Video chat with Jitsi (https://jitsi.org/)
4. Additional Software if desired (from F-Droid)
    1. FBReader – e-book reader. Kind of buggy under ChromeOS
    2. VLC – Best audio/video program available
    3. NextCloud – Store your files on NextCloud
    4. NextCloud Notes – Store/Edit/Create Notes on NextCloud
    5. DAVx8 – Sync contact and calendar lists with NextCloud
    6. K-9 Mail – Excellent mail reader for all android/ChromeOS devices

If you are a computer technician who needs to access machines via ssh or over a serial connection, see Linux on ChromeOS

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Last update: **2022/11/07 06:24**