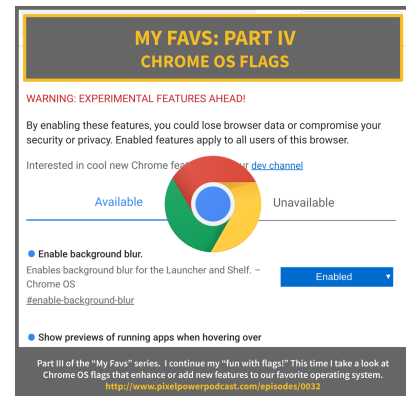

0032: My Favs Part IV: Chrome OS Flags

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All support helps me offset the cost of hosting the podcast and allows me to bring you even more pixel-powered content.



Synopsis

[2019-08-25] The fourth in a six-part series of episodes I'm calling, *My Favs*. In this episode, I share my favorite flags for the Chrome OS. Before that, I share the difference between flags on Chrome for Android and Chrome OS. In the Addendum, I've FINALLY experienced the new Android Auto, sadly, not by using my Pixel 3 XL.

Series Links:

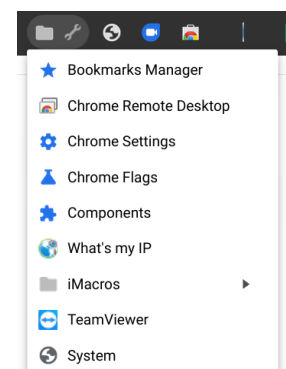
- | | |
|---|--------------|
| • 0034: My Favs Part VI: Android Apps | [2019-09-22] |
| • 0033: My Favs Part V: Chrome Browser Extensions | [2019-09-08] |
| • 0032: My Favs Part IV: Chrome OS Flags | [2019-08-25] |
| • 0030: My Favs Part III: Chrome for Android Flags | [2019-08-05] |
| • 0029: My Favs Part II: Android Apps for Chrome OS | [2019-07-21] |
| • 0028: My Favs Part I: Chrome OS Apps | [2019-07-07] |

Show notes available at:

<https://www.pixelpowerpodcast.com/episodes/0030>

Opening

- Thanks to Johanna for the opening comments!
- You can send your audio comment using [this link](#).
- Welcome to part IV of my favs and as Johanna hoped, I'm taking a look at Chrome OS flags
- Last week we took a quick break for me to talk about the [Pixelbook versus the Pixel Slate](#)
- I'm back this week to talk about Chrome OS flags
- While flags for Chrome for Android only affected the browser, some of the flags I will talk about today will affect Chrome OS and even add new



features

- I'm sharing flags found on the current beta channel (version 77)
- I use flags (and other [chrome://links](#)) so frequently I have a bookmark created (as shown in the image above)

Flags for Chrome OS

Comprehensive show notes again this episode to help you learn more about flags.

About Flags (as a reminder from [episode 0030](#))

- Separate page that displays a LONG list of flags to activate and deactivate
- Used to allow developers to try new features before they are released, but users can take advantage of these flags to try out new upcoming OS features or customize browsing experience
- Can be subtle (scrolling performance) and dramatic changes to both features and appearance (color picker and context menu)
- The flags I share are in the beta version of Chrome OS version 77 - stable and canary may have different flags

REMEMBER: Flags may not become a part of future Chrome OS releases. Be prepared to live without a flag feature, break the OS/browser, or adjust your usage of the feature as updates occur.

NOTE: Don't be afraid of flags. I've never found a situation where they have borked my phone and you can easily disable a flag or restore all flags to default. It's a fun way to hack around a bit without causing any damage.

Accessing Flags

Type the following in the Chrome Browser address bar (URL text edit area):

`chrome://flags`

A long list of flags will display (and it's a long one!). Go ahead and scroll through and read some of the descriptions. Some you will understand immediately based on the descriptions, others will only be understandable if you are developer. However, there are some user friendly options in the list.

Searching Flags

You do not have to scroll through a long list to find specific flags.

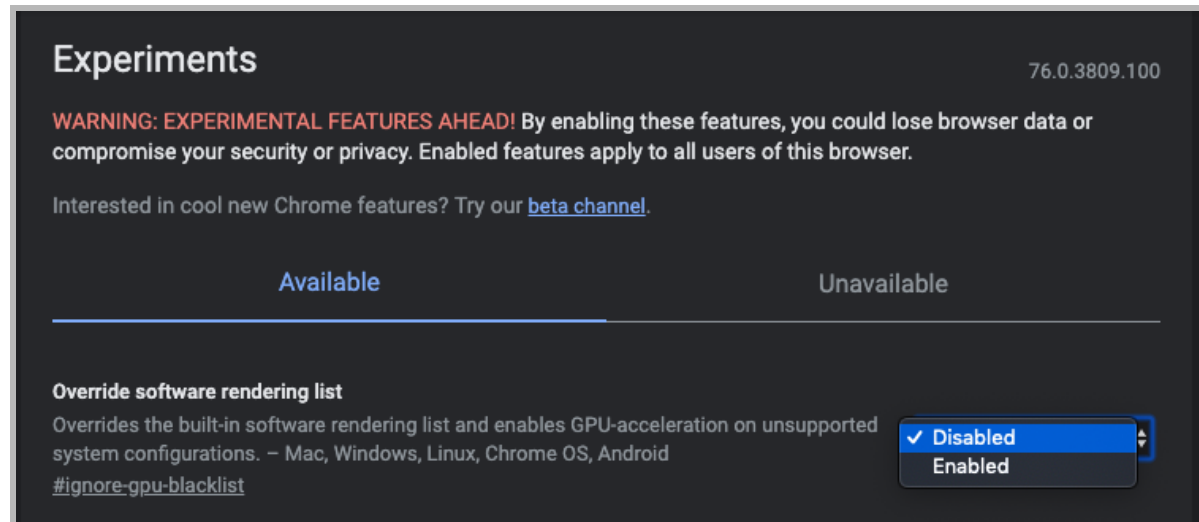
- Use the *Search flags* text edit box
- Use direct links (as found in these show notes)

View show notes for [episode 0030](#) for my tips on how to search.

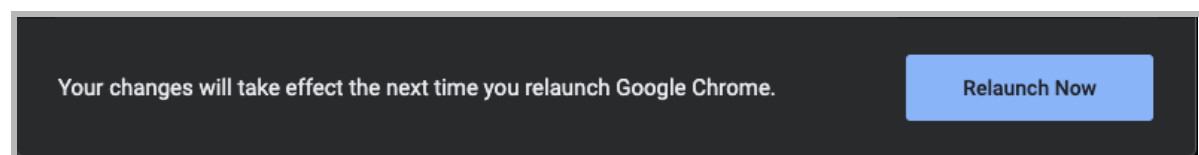
Enable/Disable Flags

Not much different from Flags on Chrome for Android:

- Locate a flag
- A drop down window will appear showing the current status of the flag which is usually *Enabled/Disabled/Default* or additional options specific to the flag as shown below:



- To activate the flag, a prompt at the bottom of the screen will appear as shown below:



- You do not need to activate flags individually, but can make changes and then relaunch Chrome to manage multiple flags at once

TIP: Best practice is to try a single flag at a time to troubleshoot. Some flags work well together and some do not.

- Use the *Reset all to default* button to clear every flag used

Favorite Flags

These are the flags I have activated on my [Pixelbook](#) and [Pixel Slate](#). In the list in the show notes, the first line is the Google description of the flag and you can copy the second line and paste it into the address bar to jump directly to the flag.

I briefly talk through each of these flags and add additional commentary to the official description when helpful:

Show previews of running apps when hovering over the shelf.

Shows previews of the open windows for a given running app when hovering over the shelf. – Chrome OS

#shelf-hover-previews

Hover over a Launcher icon to reveal thumbnail(s) preview of the window open in an application.

Enable Discover App

Enable Discover App icon in launcher. – Chrome OS

`#discover-app`

Reveals the Discover App in the launcher to that provides help for ChromeOS and a quick way to view and redeem your Chromebook offers.

Newblue

Enables the use of newblue Bluetooth daemon. – Chrome OS

`#newblue`

Improves compatibility with some Bluetooth devices, but can also break others. Give it a try if you are having issues.

Enable Virtual Desks

A preview of the upcoming Virtual Desks features on Chrome OS devices. – Chrome OS

`#enable-virtual-desks`

You should have access to Virtual Desks now (Version 76), but if not, enable this flag to enhance your productivity (Three-finger swipe up to view desks or create a new desk).

Crostini Backup

Enable Crostini export and import. – Chrome OS

`#crostini-backup`

Export and import your Crostini (Linux) VM.

Crostini GPU Support

Enable Crostini GPU support. – Chrome OS

`#crostini-gpu-support`

Enables graphics processing unit support to the Crostini VM. Significantly speeds up my 3D printer slicer software, Cura.

Crostini USB Support

Enable mounting USB devices in Crostini. – Chrome OS

`#crostini-usb-support`

Enable USB support in the Crostini VM.

Crostini USB Allow Unsupported

Allow mounting unsupported USB devices in Crostini. At your own risk. To enable, Crostini USB Support must also be enabled. – Chrome OS

```
#crostini-usb-allow-unsupported
```

Enables unsupported USB devices to the Crostini VM. Could be dangerous, or could make that device that won't work in Linux usable.

Enable New Print Preview UI Layout

If enabled, Print Preview will display a new UI layout. – Mac, Windows, Linux, Chrome OS

```
#enable-new-print-preview-layout
```

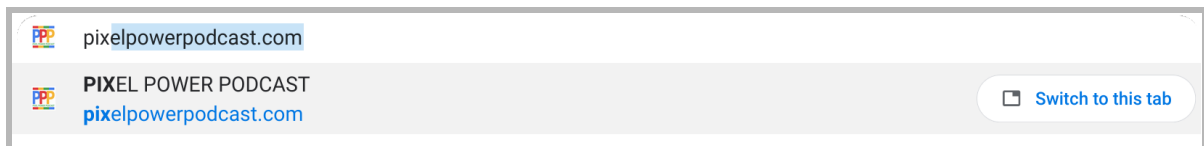
Enables a smaller and more streamlined print preview layout with more features discoverable.

Omnibox tab switch suggestions

Enable suggestions for switching to open tabs within the Omnibox. – Mac, Windows, Linux, Chrome OS

```
#omnibox-tab-switch-suggestions
```

When searching in the browser omnibox, you can now view tabs open and switch to them as shown below:



Already active in Chrome OS 77.

Omnibox Google Drive Document suggestions

Display suggestions for Google Drive documents in the omnibox when Google is the default search engine. – Mac, Windows, Linux, Chrome OS

```
#omnibox-drive-suggestions
```

Use the omnibox to search for files located in your Google Drive account. Huge timesaver!

Enable Play Store search

Enable Play Store search in launcher. – Chrome OS

`#enable-play-store-search`

Search the Google play store for apps directly in the launcher.

Enable Google Assistant

Enable an experimental Assistant implementation that will work on all Chromebooks. – Chrome OS

`#enable-native-google-assistant`

If the assistant isn't working on your Chromebook, give this one a try! Not necessary for Pixel devices.

Enable Google Assistant with hardware-based hotword

Enable an experimental feature that uses hardware-based hotword detection for Assistant. Only a limited number of devices have this type of hardware support. – Chrome OS

`#enable-assistant-dsp`

Enhance the detection of hotwords on your Pixel devices.

Send tab to self

Allows users to receive tabs from other synced devices, in order to easily transition those tabs to this device. This enables the sync infrastructure for this feature. – Mac, Windows, Linux, Chrome OS, Android

`#enable-send-tab-to-self`

Send tabs to your other devices (listen to [episode 0030](#) for more information)

Google Password Manager UI

Enables access to the Google Password Manager UI from Chrome. – Mac, Windows, Linux, Chrome OS, Android

`#google-password-manager`

Access to an enhanced password manager.

Enable App Management page

Shows the new app management page at `chrome://apps`. – Mac, Windows, Linux, Chrome OS

`#app-management`

Not available on Chrome OS 77 just yet, but keeping it turned on for later version. Check out this [Chrome Story YouTube video](#) for a preview.

Assistant & Launcher integration

Combine Launcher search with the power of Assistant to provide the most useful answer for each query. Requires Assistant to be enabled. – Chrome OS

`#enable-assistant-launcher-integration`

Put everything in one place.

CrOS Release Notes

Instructs OS to show notification about CrOS ReleaseNotes on login after update, show webview describing new OS features. – Chrome OS

`#release-notes`

View a webpage that displays new features after an update. Live on Chrome OS 77, but give it a shot on stable Chrome OS 76.

Split OS and browser settings

Show separate settings for the OS and browser – Chrome OS

`#split-settings`

Separate Chrome OS settings from Chrome browser settings. Chrome OS updates are still in the browser setting?!?

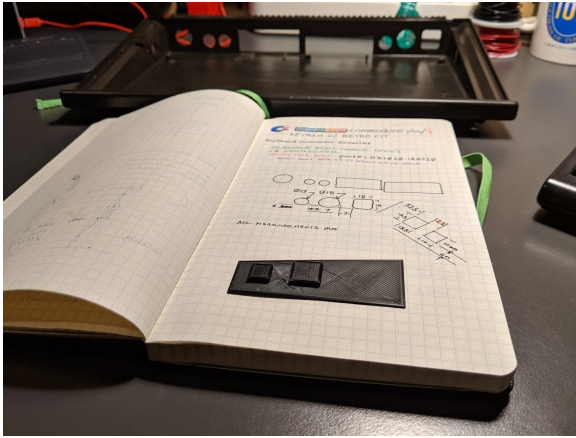
Those are my favorite Chrome OS flags. What are yours? Send me an [email](#) or post a tweet with the hashtag [#pixelpowerpodcast](#).

Addendum

In this segment I share comments and corrections from past shows, observations from living the pixel-power life, and something completely unrelated.

Feedback from Last Show

- Once again, thanks to Johanna for the audio feedback
- I still prefer my Pixel Slate for work, but grab my Pixelbook at home and on the weekends



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- Send audio feedback via .mp3 file via Google Docs (record, upload, and share the link via [email](#))

Music Credit

- Thanks to artist [Kevin MacLeod](#) for the *Goodnightmare* loop that accompanies the last segment

Notes on Notes

WARNING: If you see this warning, take heed as you are venturing into uncharted or dangerous areas.

REMEMBER: Remember to do this or that to get the most out of your device.

NOTE: Simple words of wisdom or addendum items to the regular notes.

TIP: A little something extra that you may not know or brings even more productivity to the table.