

Working With Cross Platforms – How To Combine Windows, Mac, And Android Pain-Free



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In the ideal world, you would do all your writing, editing, or graphic design tasks on a single platform. It doesn't matter whether it's macOS or Windows – if all your work is being done on one system, then you won't have to struggle much to ensure a smooth workflow.

But once you move your projects across different platforms, you may notice how much less efficient you become. Switching from iPhone to Android to Windows and then to Mac can throw off even the most experienced computer user.

Today, we are going to share a few tips and tricks to make a Windows-macOS-Android environment a little friendlier for work. Needless to say, you probably will have to tolerate some inconveniences no matter what you do, but if you follow our tips, you will be able to minimize the differences between your work environments.

We'll cover how to pair Windows with Android, Mac with Android, and Windows with Mac – from simple to hard, in our opinion. We've decided to write our guide in pairs to make things easier for you.

Pairing Windows With Android

Making Android and Windows environments work together is quite simple for two reasons:

- **Windows and Android devices are drastically different.** When it comes to macOS & Windows environments, if you get used to one system, then you'll expect the same features from the other because the hardware is visually similar. But in reality, macOS and Windows are very different, which may cause confusion when switching to one platform to another. Windows and Android devices are vastly different – Windows is available on laptops or desktop PCs, while Android is installed on tablets and smartphones. You don't expect an Android phone to deliver a Windows experience, and the other way around, which makes transitioning from device to device easier.
- **App markets on Windows and Android are largely similar.** If you have a workhorse app on Windows, then chances are that the same app is also available on Android. This works both ways. With Mac computers, this is often not the case.

With these two points in mind, our #1 tip would be the following – **use software that is available on both Windows and Android (and also preferably macOS if you have that too)**. This will allow you to do work on one platform, sync the data, and then review or pick up the work on any other device.

The #2 tip would be that you should use companion apps to synchronize your key data between Windows and Android. As simple examples, you could use:

- Cortana to sync reminders.
- Outlook to sync calendar events.
- OneNote to sync notes.
- OneDrive to access, edit, and share files between platforms.
- Microsoft Launcher to access Windows Timeline records.

Pairing Mac With Android

Next, we have Mac & Android. Although we are again dealing with a computer & mobile device environment, making macOS work with Android is more challenging than Windows with Android.

Pairing Mac with Android is especially difficult if you prefer Apple services. This is because Apple services such as FaceTime and iCloud aren't available on Android. In contrast, most Android and Google apps are available on macOS and iOS.

Depending on whether you prefer Google or Apple services, your course of action will be different. Let's have a look at what you could do.

By the way, the tip we gave in our Windows & Android section applies here too – opt for apps that are available on all your devices.

If you prefer Apple services

If you prefer the Apple ecosystem, you have two options:

- Forget about your preferences and switch entirely to Google. This is a sub-optimal solution since taking all your data like photos or contacts from Apple to Google can be very tedious.
- Make Apple services work on an Android phone.

Here's what you may want to do to make Apple services work on Android:

- Add your iCloud account to Gmail on Android. Android Central has a [nice guide](#) detailing this process.
- Export your contacts from iCloud and import them via Google Contacts.
- Export your calendar from iCloud and import it through Google Calendar.
- Export your Safari bookmarks and import them to the browser you are using on Android. Most likely, it's Google Chrome. Chrome is great because it's available on macOS, Windows, and Android.

If you prefer Google services

If you prefer Google services, then pairing a Mac with an Android mobile device will be much easier. This is because the macOS Mail, Calendar, and Contacts apps work with Google accounts with no issues. The only thing you need to do to continue using Google services is to add your Google account under **System Preferences > Internet Accounts**.

Additionally, use apps that are available both on macOS and Android (don't forget about Windows too).

Pairing Windows With Mac

Finally, let's talk about Windows & Mac.

This is perhaps the most difficult combo because you have similar computer shells with drastically different operating systems.

When you switch from macOS to Windows or the other way around, you will have to deal with different key functionality and varying operating system behavior. Fortunately, you can rather easily solve this problem – you can **make macOS feel and operate like Windows**. Here's how you could do that:

- **Scroll like in Windows.** Enable Windows-like scrolling by navigating to **System Preferences > Trackpad > Scroll & Zoom** and unchecking **Scroll direction: natural**.
- **Function keys like in Windows.** In macOS, the F-keys are used in conjunction with the Fn key. To make them work like in Windows, navigate to **System Preferences > Keyboard > Keyboard** and check **Use all F1, F2, etc. keys as standard function keys**.
- **Search within a folder.** In Windows, when you search for something in a folder's search bar, Windows only looks for the keyword in that folder. macOS' Finder searches on the entire hard drive, slowing the process down. To change this behavior, go to **Finder > Preferences > Advanced**, locate **When performing a search**, and choose **Search the Current Folder** in the drop-down menu.
- **Remap keyboard combinations.** On Windows, you are most likely often using shortcuts like F5 for refreshing, Alt + F4 for quitting apps, and F11 to enter fullscreen mode. macOS also has such functions, but their key mappings are different. To change the macOS default key mappings, go to **System Preferences > Keyboard > Shortcuts**. You may have a look at existing shortcuts and change the necessary ones. You should also go to **App Shortcuts** in the list on the left – here, you may add, remove, or edit shortcuts to specific apps.

These changes may be done on macOS without installing any third-party apps. If you want to make your experience even more Windows-like, then a few examples of doing so would be:

- **Maximize app windows just like in Windows.** By default, the green zoom button will either maximize the window or resize it to fit others. To make it behave like in Windows, download [Right Zoom](#) for free.
When you open the app for the first time, you will see its configuration screen. There, you may change the behavior of the zoom button to be like on Windows, as well as set hotkeys to maximize windows.
- **Shut down apps with the close button.** By default, the red close button closes the window without quitting the app. To solve this issue, you may download [RedQuits](#).

For a smoother experience, you may also:

- Arrange programs on your Windows taskbar and macOS Dock in the same way.
- Try to use the same keyboard and mouse on both your Windows and Mac devices. You may use Windows keyboards and mice with Mac computers, while Apple's Magic Mouse and Magic Keyboard won't work on Windows without some tricks.

Keep in mind that the features and functionality available to you may differ depending on your macOS version.

Final Words

Ideally, you would have only one work platform, but if you have to use Windows, Mac, and Android, then your only option is to adapt.

Above, we've given you a few ideas on how to make the Windows-Mac-Android ensemble work smoother. For many people, our tips will be enough – if you have specific needs, then do more research to find out how else you could make your transitions from platform to platform a little less painful.