

Background: Cell phones come packed with increasing amounts of unnecessary bloatware, both from Google as well as manufacturer and manufacturer-associated apps you never, ever see after neatly tucking them away into a miscellaneous folder somewhere far out of swiping reach (Google Play Magazines, lol)... much like computers used to until we learned to not be afraid of digging in behind the screen and deleting that garbage (Norton Antivirus, lol).



But there's good news! You can regain control over your phone. You can delete these apps that constantly spy on you, that continue taking up valuable space, that keep asking you for unnecessary updates. The process is simple; it just takes a bit of poking around and not being afraid of black screens with white letters.

A bit about me: I started fiddling with this stuff a few years ago, when I first heard about [custom ROMs](#) and installed one on my Nexus 4. It was brilliant, but in the process I [soft-bricked](#) my phone so I spent many, many hours perusing the [XDA-Developers forums](#), learning how to breathe life back into my device again... and I did it! Since then I've graduated onto a [OnePlus 3](#), with which I've tinkered around quite a bit already. You can read all about my setbacks and successes on <http://dontworrymom.com/tag/cell-phone>.

Workshop outline: There will be two parts. In the first, I'll explain the basics behind unlocking and rooting an Android phone, installing recovery software (TWRP or ClockworkMod), debloating a device of unnecessary firmware and Google apps, installing a custom Google Apps set (just the Play Store, that's all you really need), and lastly how to install a custom ROM (a skin over the stock Android software, eg: CyanogenMod, Paranoid Android, Oxygen/Hydrogen OS). There will also be a minute dedicated to talking about MD5 checks, and why performing these is key before installing any sort of software, and I may also install CyanogenMod live onto my OnePlus 3 so you can see how that's done. The second part will be a discussion about apps in general and alternatives to Google in specific, from messaging (Signal, Telegram) to search (StartPage) to maps (OpenStreetMap) to even the Play Store itself (F-Droid).

Who is this for? Anyone who wants to recover control over their device; anyone who wants to understand how Android works at a very basic level. Absolutely zero technical skill is required. I came at this from a real side angle and suspect everyone else is too. And don't expect to get inside your phone at all; this will be a mere information session on how I got into mine. The workshop is completely free, but donations to DCTRL are always appreciated!