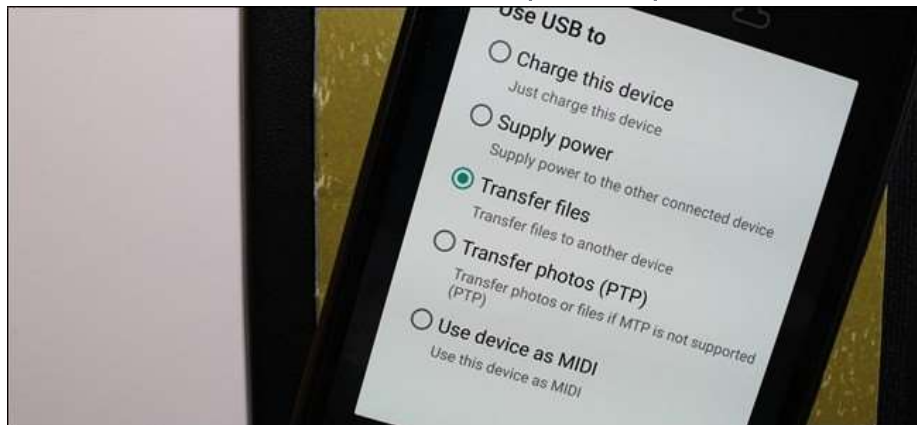
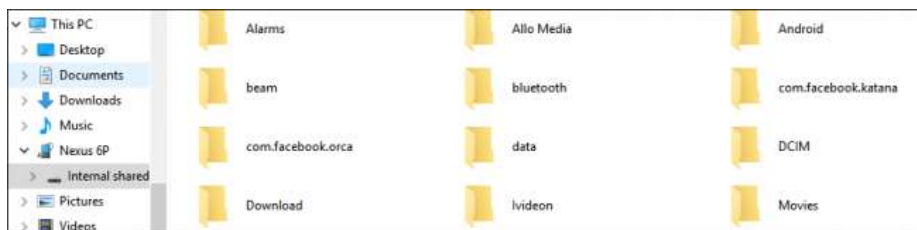


How to Get Your Android Device to Show up in File Explorer (If It Isn't)



You can use your Android phone to listen to tunes, watch videos, and take photos, but in order to get those files on—or off—your device, sometimes you have to plug it into your desktop PC. When things work right, it's great, but it can be frustrating if your device isn't detected.

Normally, when you plug in your Android device, Windows will recognize it as an MTP (Media Transfer Protocol) device and quietly mount it.



From there, you can browse the device's storage and easily add or delete files. Of course, [you can do this from your phone or tablet](#), but using a traditional desktop computer can turn a potentially long, tedious operation, into a short, blissful one. Plus, you need to be able to copy files over, which means your PC needs to see and treat your device as traditional attached storage.

However, if you've ever attempted to unlock your device such as to install a new ROM or root it, then you may have at one time or another installed the Android Debug Bridge (ADB) driver on your computer. This driver works great for being able to use the computer to send commands to your device, but it may mess up your easy-peasy file manipulation.

Start with the Obvious: Restart and Try Another USB Port

Before you try anything else, it's worth going through the usual troubleshooting tips. Restart your Android phone, and give it another go. Also try another USB cable, or another USB port on your computer. Plug it directly into your computer instead of a USB hub. You never know when you have bum hardware, and no amount of software troubleshooting can fix that problem. So try the obvious stuff first.

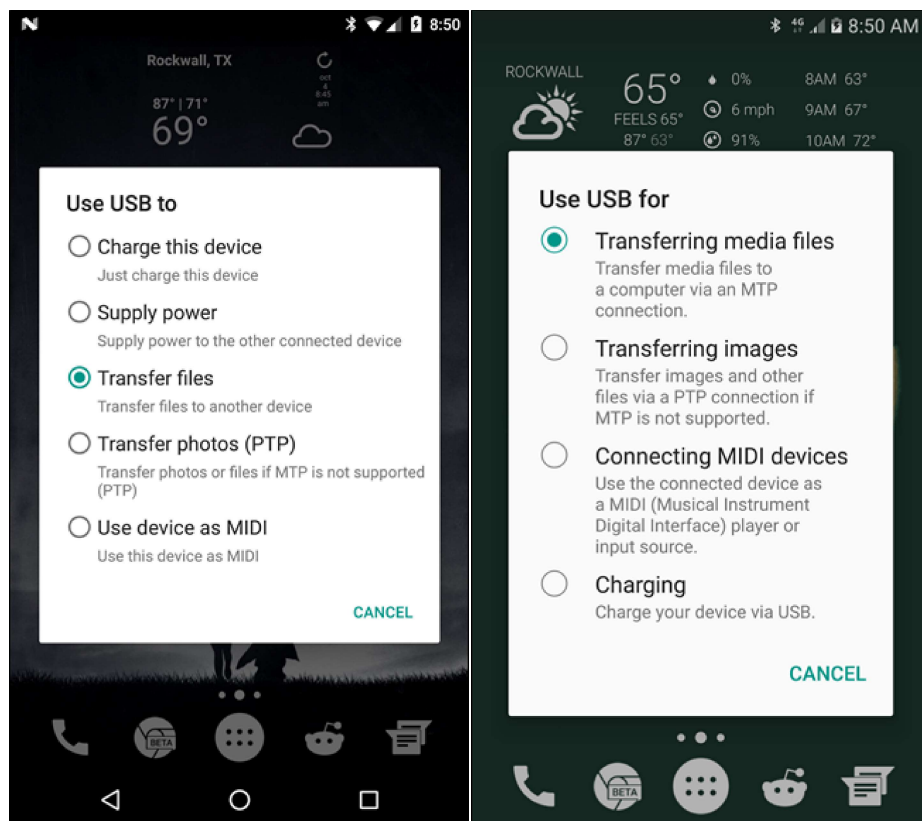
Is Your Phone Connected As Storage?

If your Android device isn't appearing in File Explorer as it should, it may be a result of *how* your phone is connecting to the computer. Your phone may only connect in charging mode by default, when you want it to be connected as a storage device.

Plug the device into your computer, pull down the notification shade, and select the "USB" option. It may say something like "USB charging this device" or "USB for file transfer." The verbiage may vary slightly depending on your device's Android build and manufacturer, but regardless it will have *something* about USB.



When you tap that option, a new menu will show up with a handful of options. Generally, it will have options like "Charge this device," "Transfer images," and "Transfer files." Again, the wording may vary slightly, but the option you want is "Transfer files."

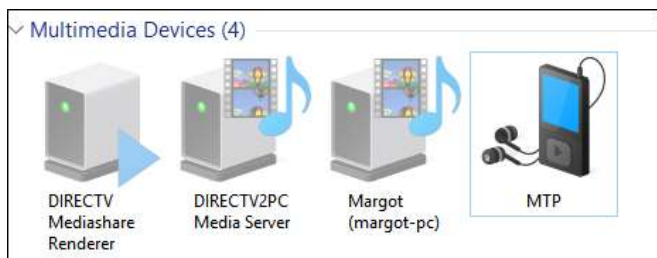


Often, simply selecting that will do the trick.

Update Your MTP Driver

If the above tip does not help, then you likely have a driver problem.

You can confirm that your computer is indeed “seeing” an MTP device but not recognizing it by opening the “Printers and Devices” control panel. If you see your device under “Unspecified” then your computer needs some user intervention. It may also show up under a generic name—in our test case, it shows up as an unspecified MTP device, but is indeed a Nexus 6P.



Luckily, if you're a longtime Windows user, fixing the problem should be a simple trip to the Device Manager.

What we need to do is change or update the driver that Windows is currently using whenever you plug your Android device into the computer via USB. To do this, open the Device Manager by clicking the Start menu and searching for “Device Manager.”

Look for a device that has the “ADB” designation. In the following screenshot, we see it's under “ACER Device.” Expand the group by clicking the little arrow on the left, then right-click on the device and select “Update Driver Software” from the context menu.

If you don't see anything with "ADB" in the name, you may have to look elsewhere. I found the Nexus 6P under "Portable Devices," and it had the yellow exclamation mark that notes there's a driver issue. Regardless of where you find the device, the required actions should be about the same.

The "Update Driver Software" window will ask you if you search or browse for driver software. You want to choose the browse option, which will advance you to the next step.

On the next screen, select "Let me pick from a list of device drivers on my computer" to advance to the next step.

This will present a long list of potential hardware types—select “Android Device” or “Android Phone.”

Finally, on the last screen you want to select the “MTP USB Device” and then “Next.”

The device driver will then install over the old one, and your Android device will be recognized as a multimedia device as seen now in the File Manager.

Now whenever you open File Explorer you should see your Android device and be able to open it, browse the file system, and add or remove content as you like.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION (3 REPLIES)

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