

Touring Marshmallow on Your Samsung Galaxy Tab S2

By Eric Butow

For readers of *My Samsung Galaxy Tab S2* by Eric Butow

When the Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 was released, Samsung intended to have the latest version of the Android operating system, known by its nickname Marshmallow, installed on the tablet. Instead, the Tab S2 shipped with the previous Android version, known as Lollipop. So I wrote *My Samsung Galaxy Tab S2* to tell readers how to use the tablet with the Lollipop operating system. Samsung is infamous for taking its sweet time upgrading its devices to the latest version of Android, and Marshmallow wasn't available for the Tab S2 until late June 2016.

This article presumes that you already received a message on your Tab S2 telling you to upgrade and that you have upgraded your tablet. After the upgrade is complete, then you see...the same Samsung TouchWiz interface you saw in Lollipop. When you swipe right to left and left to right between the two Home screens, the only indication that you've upgraded is how a couple of icons look, including the Apps icon and Settings icon you see in Figure 1.

Big deal, you say? There's more just waiting to be discovered, so I'll start our tour of Marshmallow by looking at the Quick Settings and Notifications area changes and then exploring updated settings and apps. Note that the apps I discuss in this article are ones that were discussed in *My Samsung Galaxy Tab S2*.

Quick Settings and Notifications

When you open the Quick Settings and Notifications from any screen, the most immediate changes you'll see in the screen is a color change and the Screen Rotation feature name and icon has changed; this feature is now called Auto Rotate as you see

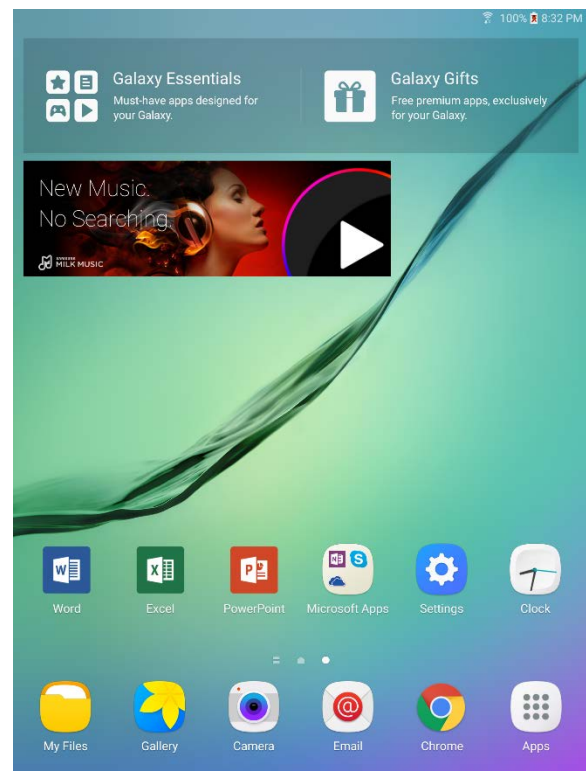


Figure 1. The Settings icon on the second Home screen looks different than the one in Lollipop.

in Figure 2. You'll also notice that the S Finder option is hidden. You can still tap Quick Connect to connect devices to your Tab S2 quickly. The name of your Wi-Fi network appears at the bottom of the screen (see Figure 2).

The Settings and Change User icons still appear in the right side of the screen as they did in Lollipop. However, the Edit feature is hidden. You can show the Edit option by tapping the down arrow icon to the right of the Change User icon in Figure 2. After you tap the down arrow, you see all 14 quick settings you can change in Figure 3.

The second row of setting icons includes, from left to right:

- Do Not Disturb mode to silence all calls and hide all alerts.
- Reading Mode to change the screen colors so it's easier to read text on the screen.
- U. Power Saving to view your battery information and initiate power saving modes.
- S Finder to open the S Finder app and search for information on your Tab S2.
- Private Mode to hide content from the Gallery, Video, Music, and My Files apps from other users of your Tab S2.
- Smart View to view content stored on your Tab S2 on your Samsung Smart TV.
- Sync to turn auto sync of your accounts (such as email) off and on.

If you want to view and/or change feature settings, tap and hold on the icon for a couple of seconds and then you'll see the available settings in the Settings screen.

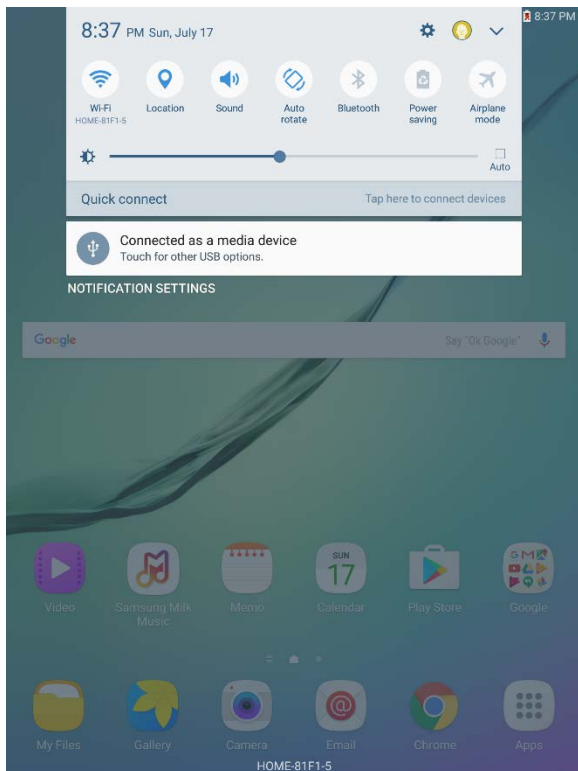


Figure 2. The Auto Rotate icon appears in the center of the icon row.

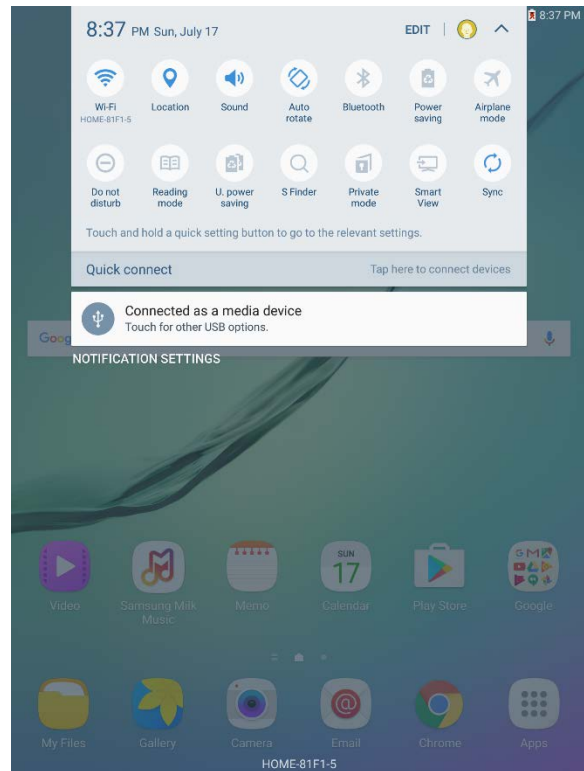


Figure 3. The second row of feature setting icons appears below the top row in the screen.

Email

Samsung has tweaked the Email app a bit in Marshmallow, but you won't notice it when you open the Email app and you see your list of messages. Tap Search in the upper-right corner of the screen to open the improved Search area at the top of the screen shown in Figure 4.

Below the Search box, you see a button bar that lets you determine the category in which you want to search. The default is All. Search sender names by tapping From. Search recipient names by tapping To. Search for terms within the message subject by tapping Subject. After you tap the category, type the characters in the Search box. As you type, a list of messages that matches your search criteria appears on the screen. Tap the message in the list to view it.

Return to your Inbox by tapping the orange Back icon in the upper-left corner of the screen.

Google Now

You can still access Google Now by tapping on the Google Search box within the first Home screen. However, Marshmallow now includes Google Now on Tap that you can access by tapping and holding down on the Home button for a couple of seconds. After you go through the brief setup process, you can start searching on Google by tapping the Google search box at the top of the screen shown in Figure 5, and access other Google Now options in the menu bar at the bottom of the screen.

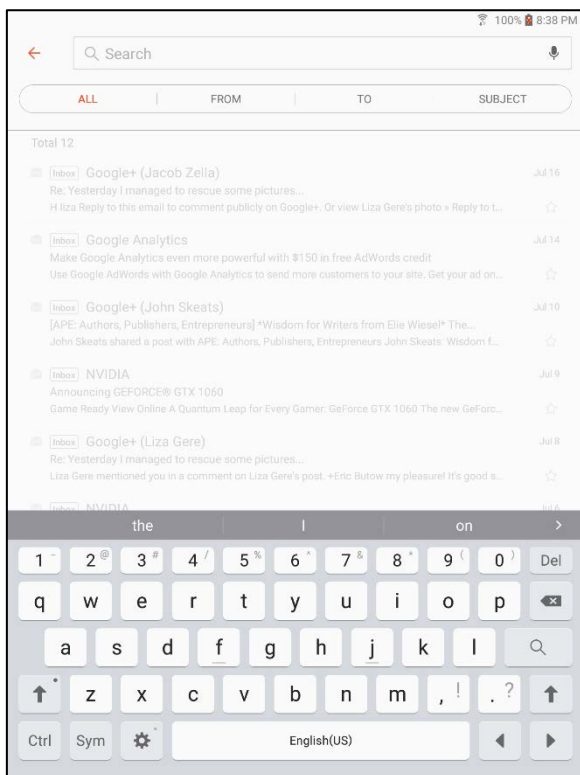


Figure 4. The blinking cursor appears within the Search box at the top of the screen so you can type your search term(s).

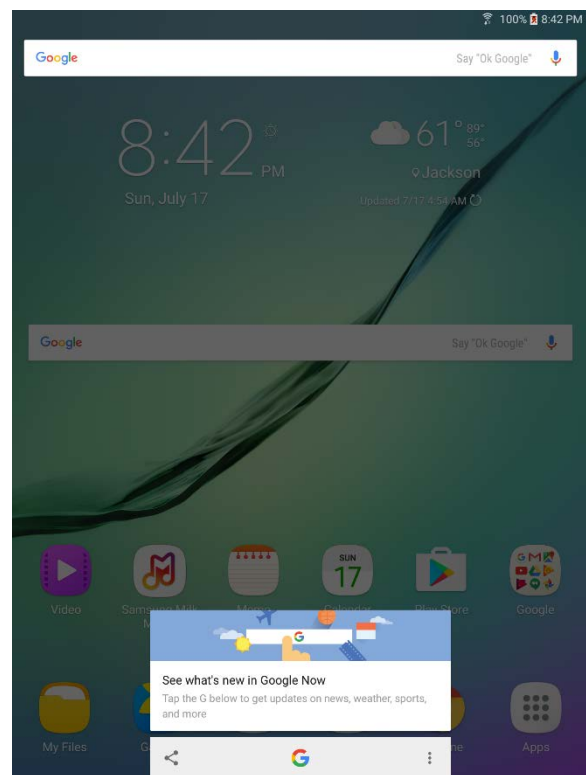


Figure 5. The three Google Now options appear in a menu bar at the bottom of the screen.

A message box above the menu bar reminds you that you can open Google Now by tapping the Google icon in the center of the menu bar. To the left of the Google icon, you can take a screenshot of the screen that's currently dimmed behind the Google Now screen, which is the first Home screen in Figure 5, and then send it to someone else using a variety of methods such as an email file attachment. To the right of the Google icon, tap the Settings icon to change Google Now settings or send feedback about Google Now to Google.

After you open Google Now and swipe upward in the screen to view cards, you'll see a new card (see Figure 6) telling you that you can add cards from other apps and sites to your Google Now screen. Learn more by tapping Learn More and then view the information in your preferred web browser, or tap Customize to turn this feature off.

Widgets

Samsung has tweaked the widgets you can access in Marshmallow, but the method for viewing hasn't changed: Tap and hold on one of the two Home screens and then tap Widgets at the bottom of the screen. There are still three pages of widgets as there were in Lollipop, but the widget layout is different. If there is a widget group, then you'll see the number of widgets in the group immediately after the group name, such as Calendar (2).

On the first widget page shown in Figure 7, there is no longer a Chrome widget group because there is no longer a Chrome bookmark widget so you can add just a single Chrome bookmark.

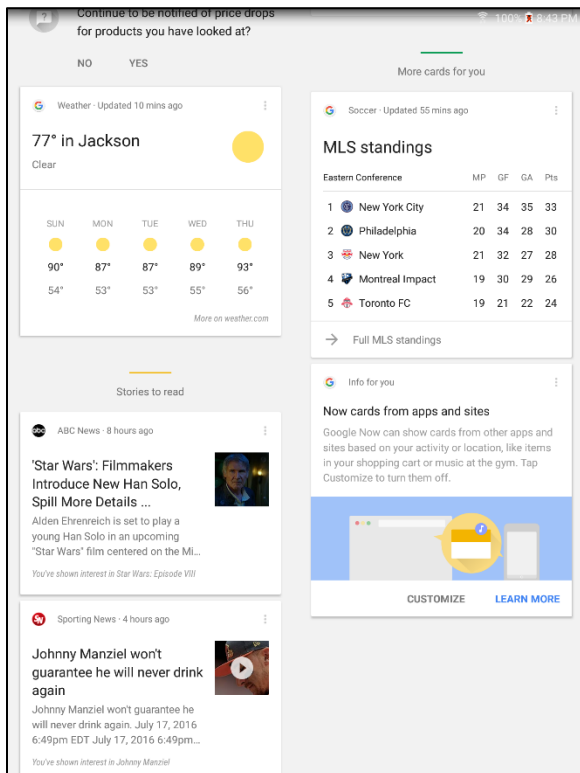


Figure 6. The Now Cards from Apps and Sites card appears on the right side of the screen.



Figure 7. The first widget page contains six individual widgets and three widget groups.

You're left with the Chrome bookmarks widget so you can view a list of your Chrome bookmarks within the widget. The Clock widget has been renamed Digital Clock so now it's at the right side of the center row on the page. What's more, the Directions widget has been moved into a new Maps widget group and so the Email widget has moved from the second page to the first.

On the second widget page shown in Figure 8, there is a new Maps widget group that contains the Directions widget as well as a new Driving Mode widget. As you learned about in Chapter 9 of *My Samsung Galaxy Tab S2*, Google Maps senses where you are when you have your tablet in your car and verbally gives you directions to reach your destination. Google calls these verbal directions Driving Mode, and when you add the Driving Mode widget to a Home screen, you can tap the widget to open Google Maps and see where you are on the map and the next step you'll have to execute, such as a turn. (Do this while you are safely stopped.)

There is also a new Memo widget group on the left side of the bottom row. This group contains the Create Memo widget so you can create a new memo and the Widget Memo widget so you can view a list of your memos.

The third widgets page shown in Figure 9 now only has six widgets, and there is only one change from the widgets offered in Lollipop: There are now two weather widgets in the Weather group.



Figure 8. The second widget page contains two individual widgets and seven widget groups.

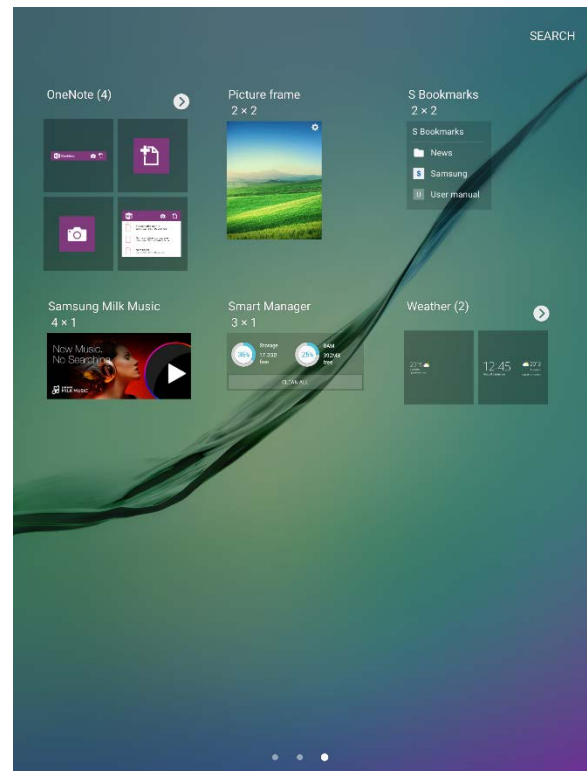


Figure 9. The third widget page contains four individual widgets and two widget groups.

The Weather group contains two widgets. The Weather widget now just contains the current temperature for the city you're in or want information about, the forecast high and low temperatures for the city, and the city's current sky conditions. The old Weather widget has been renamed Weather and Clock since it contains the weather forecast in the Weather widget as well as the current date and time.

Settings

When you open the Settings screen, you'll see the screen looks mostly the same. You may notice that the list of settings on the left side of the screen now has setting groups separated by thick gray lines as you see in Figure 10.

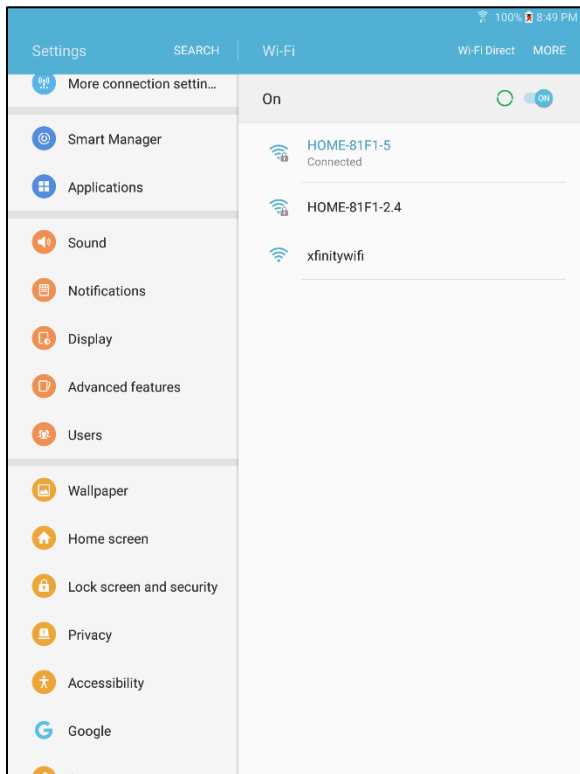


Figure 10. Swipe up within the list to view all setting options separated into groups that are demarcated by gray lines.

As you swipe up and down the settings list, you'll see three new settings in the list:

- **Smart Manager**, which you could only access from the Apps screen in Lollipop. When you tap this option, the Smart Manager app screen appears just as it does when you open the Smart Manager app within the Apps screen in Marshmallow.
- **Home Screen**. Tapping this option has the same effect as holding the Home button within the Home screen for a couple of seconds. You'll see the Home screen tiles on the screen as well as the icons for changing your screen wallpaper and viewing the Widgets screen.
- **Google**, which allows you to view and change your Google settings within the Google settings screen.

With that, you've ended your quick tour of important new features in Marshmallow. These changes aren't the only ones but the changes are minor, so enjoy finding these small changes for yourself as you explore Marshmallow on your Galaxy Tab S2.