Perusing Nougat on Your Samsung Galaxy Tab S2
By Eric Butow

For readers of My Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 by Eric Butow

If the new Samsung Galaxy Tab S3 doesn't interest you but you still want to use the latest and greatest Android version 7.0 (called Nougat) on your Galaxy Tab S2, you may have already upgraded your Tab S2 to Nougat. If so, or if you haven't and you're not sure what's included with Nougat that makes it worth upgrading, this article will help you decide about and/or get started with Nougat. Note that the apps I discuss in this article are ones that were discussed in *My Samsung Galaxy Tab S2.*

The Lock Screen

The Lock screen in Nougat shown in Figure 1 looks a lot like what you saw in Marshmallow. Your latest notification summaries appear below the time and date, and minimized notifications appear within an icon row below the notification at the bottom of the list. As with Marshmallow, swipe from left to right (or right to left) on the screen to view the Home screen.

Note

If your home screen was locked in Marshmallow, it will still be locked in Nougat so you'll still have to log in with your password or with the fingerprint sensor.

The Internet and Camera icons appear at the bottom left and right of the Lock screen, respectively. Tap and hold on the Internet icon and then swipe upward to view the Internet app screen and surf the Web. You can take a photo by

Figure 1. Below the notifications, you'll see the battery charge status, which in this case is fully charged.

tapping and holding on the Camera icon and then swiping up to open the Camera app. When you're done with either app, you can return to the Home screen by pressing the Home button.
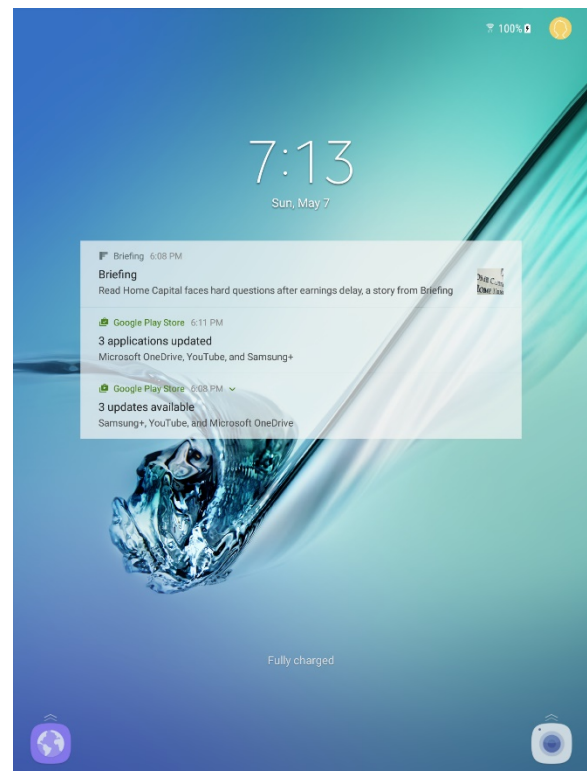
The (Slightly) New Home Screen
After you upgrade to Nougat, you'll see the same Home screen layout that you were used to in Marshmallow with a few minor icon changes, such as to the Email and Camera icons that you see in Figure 2 below. Swipe from left to right in the primary Home screen to see the Flipboard Briefing screen so you can start reading your Flipboard stories. When you're in the primary Home screen, you can also swipe from right to left to view the secondary Home screen shown below in Figure 3.

Quick Settings and Notifications
As with Marshmallow and other past versions of Android, you can view the Quick Settings and Notifications screen by tapping and holding on the top edge of the screen and swiping down. And like all upgrades in Android, the Quick Settings and Notifications screen has some changes from the previous version, and not just with the fonts and placement of features such as icons. Each notification tile, an example of which is shown in Figure 4 on the next page, now includes three separate sections, from top to bottom:

- The notification category, such as if the notification is from a specific app or the Android System (that is, Nougat).
- The notification title, such as if your Tab S2 is connected to Wi-Fi.
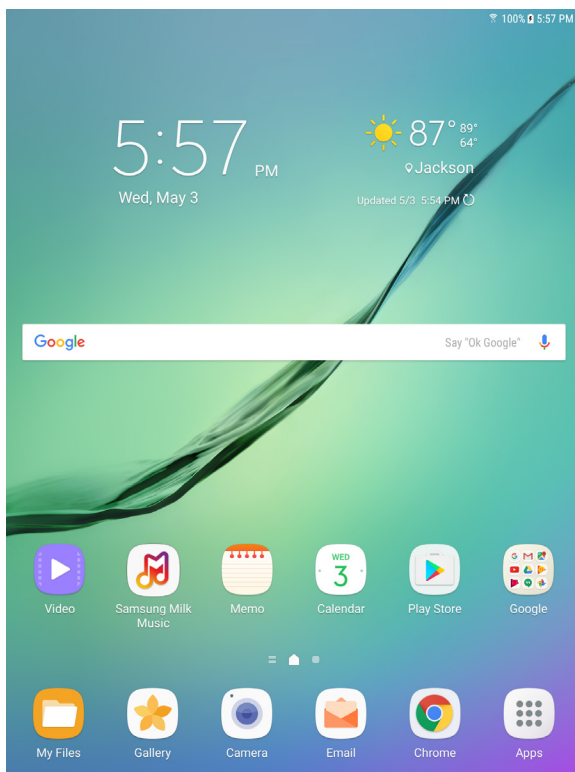

Figure 3. Google just can't stop tweaking the look of icons with each new version of Android, so in Nougat the icons are rounded squares.
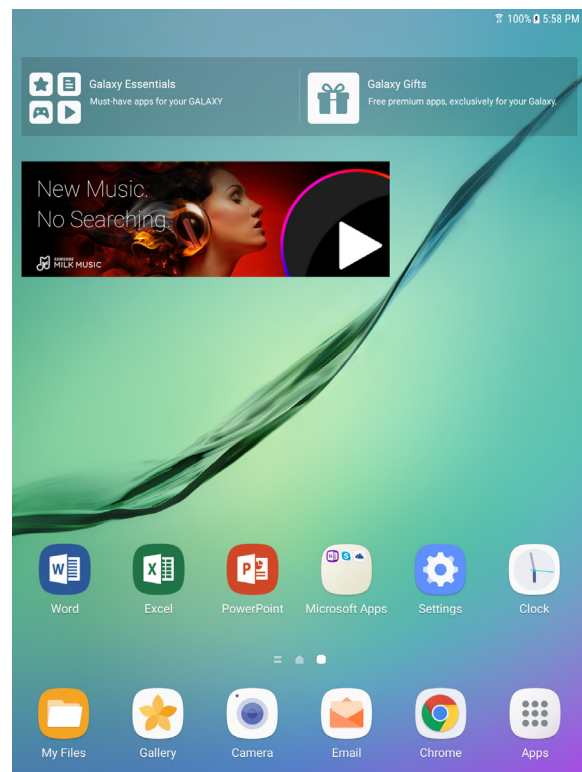

Figure 2. The second Home screen still contains all your Microsoft apps including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

- The notification message, such as how many apps that the Google Play Store recently updated on your Tab S2.

Viewing more information about the notification is the same as with past versions of Android: Tap the notification tile to open the app associated with the notification, such as the Google Play Store app to view all apps that have been updated recently. Clear all notifications by tapping Clear All at the bottom right of the screen.

If you want to view the main Settings app screen, then tap the Settings icon in the upper-right corner of the Quick Settings and Notifications screen.

The icon bar at the top of the screen contains a row of eight setting icons that represent the settings you may use most often. Those settings are, from left to right:

- Set your Wi-Fi settings.
- Turn the Tab S2 locator on and off.
- Increase or decrease the sound from your speakers.
- Turn screen auto-rotation on and off.
- Turn Bluetooth on and off.
- Set power saving mode options to extend your battery life.
- Turn on Airplane mode to silence all calls and messages, turn off your data network if you use one, as well as turn off Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.
- Turn on Reading mode to minimize blue light coming from your screen, which I'll talk about in more detail later in this article.
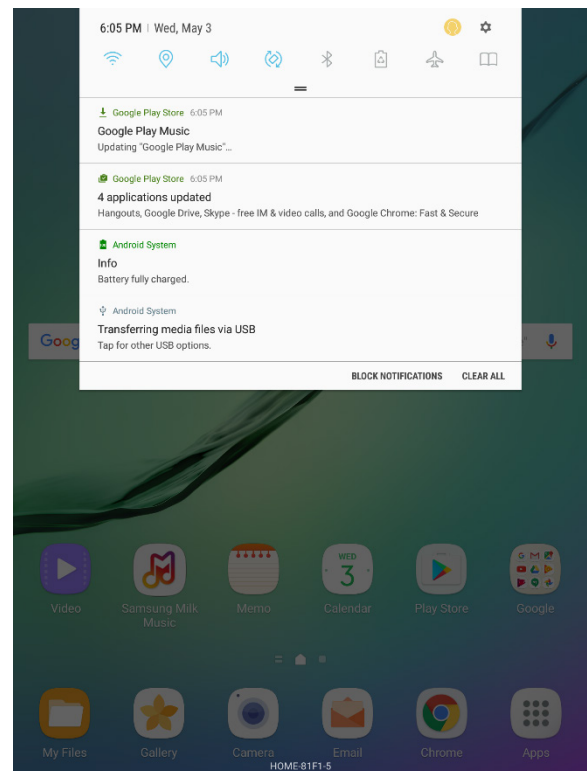
Figure 4. If there are more notifications than fit on the screen, swipe up and down on the screen to view all your notifications.

Swipe down within the icon bar to view the entire list of icons that you can change in Figure 5 on the next page. The icons in the first row and the first two icons in the second row are the ones that appear in the icon bar.

The third row of setting icons includes, from left to right:
- Tablet Visibility so you can set up Samsung Quick Connect to connect your Tab S2 to other devices, such as your smartphone, more easily.
- Do Not Disturb mode to turn off all calls and alerts.

- Private mode to hide Gallery photos and other files from other users who use your phone.
- Smart View to view content stored on your Tab S2 on your Samsung Smart TV.

Swipe from right to left within the icon list to view more icons as you see in Figure 6 below. The only icon on this screen is Sync so you can 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.

Settings

Now that we've reviewed the quick settings, it's time to view the redesigned Settings screen in Nougat. As with Marshmallow, open the Settings screen by tapping the Apps icon at the lower-right corner of the Home screen and then tapping the Settings icon in the Apps screen.

The Settings screen looks a lot like what you saw in Marshmallow, but the Settings category list has many more options as you'll see in Figure 7 on the next page. You see the first 13 categories in the list, from the Connections category (which is selected by default) to General Management.
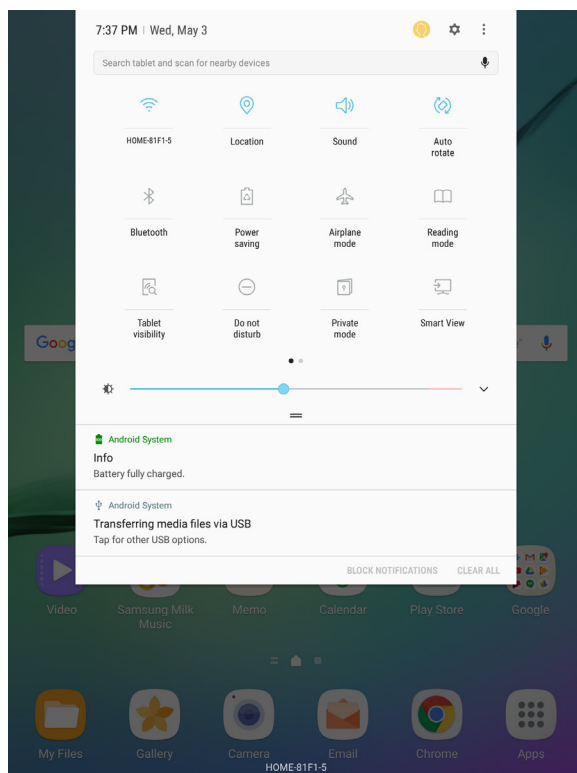
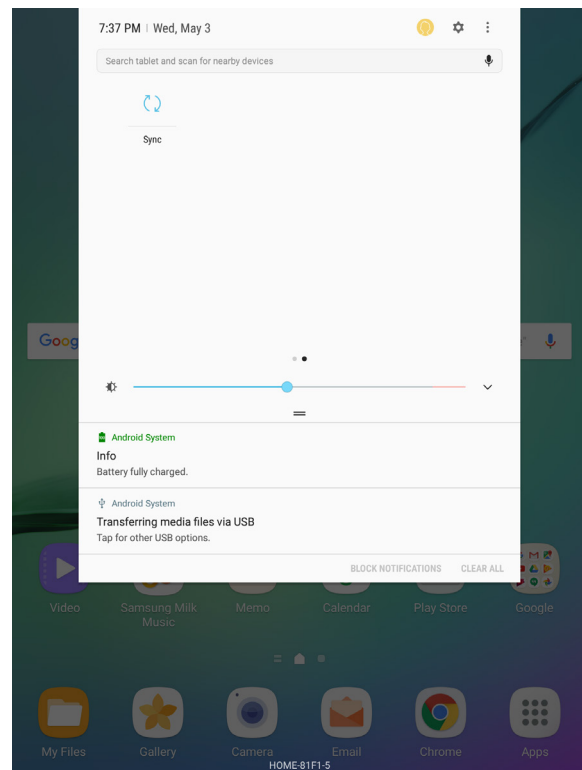Figure 6. The Brightness slider appears underneath the list of icons.

Figure 5. Search your phone for settings or nearby devices in the Search box above the setting icons.

You also see the Advanced Features option for setting a variety of other settings, such as muting alarms from your Tab S2 by placing your palm over the screen, as well as the Device Maintenance setting that I'll talk about later in this article.

Within the list, swipe up on the screen to view the Software Update, About Device, and Developer Options categories. In Marshmallow, these three categories were combined into one About Device category, but in Nougat these three categories are separate. If you're a developer, you previously had to perform a little routine within the About screen to enable developer mode. In Nougat, developer options (including USB debugging) are turned on by default and you can access and change these settings by tapping Developer Options in the list.

At the bottom of many settings lists, you'll see a section called Looking for Something Else? This section provides links to related topics, and you can tap on the topic link to read more about that topic on the screen. For example, within the Connections settings list shown in Figure 7, the Looking for Something Else? section contains a link to the Samsung Cloud. Tap this link to view the Samsung Cloud settings screen.

Internet Quick Launch
If you need to check the Web quickly without going to the Home screen and then opening the Internet app, you can open the app from the Lock screen by tapping and holding on the Internet app icon in the lower-left corner of the screen (as you saw in Figure 1) and then swiping upward. If you haven't used the Internet app before, then you'll be able to view an introductory screen with information about bookmarks and extensions.
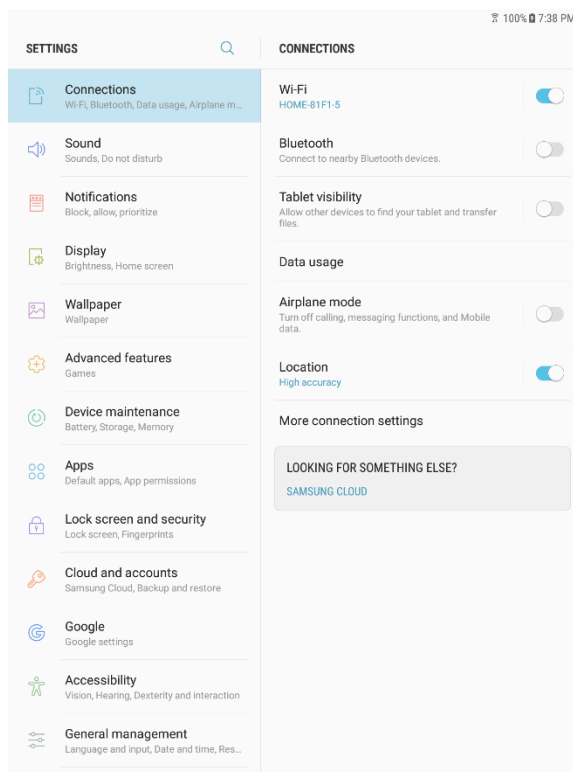

Figure 7. As in Marshmallow, the Connections category is selected by default and the Connections settings list appears on the right side of the screen.

Note
When your Tab S2 is protected with a pattern, PIN, password, or fingerprint lock type, then you'll need to enter your security information (or put your thumb on the Home button) first.

The next time you use the Internet app, you won't see this introductory screen. By default, the Internet app opens the Galaxy Owners web page within the Samsung website. You can return to the Home screen by pressing the Home button.

Device Maintenance
Nougat now comes with a Device Maintenance app pre-installed so you can check your Tab S2 and see how it's performing. If your performance can be improved, then you can tell the app to optimize your Tab S2 automatically.
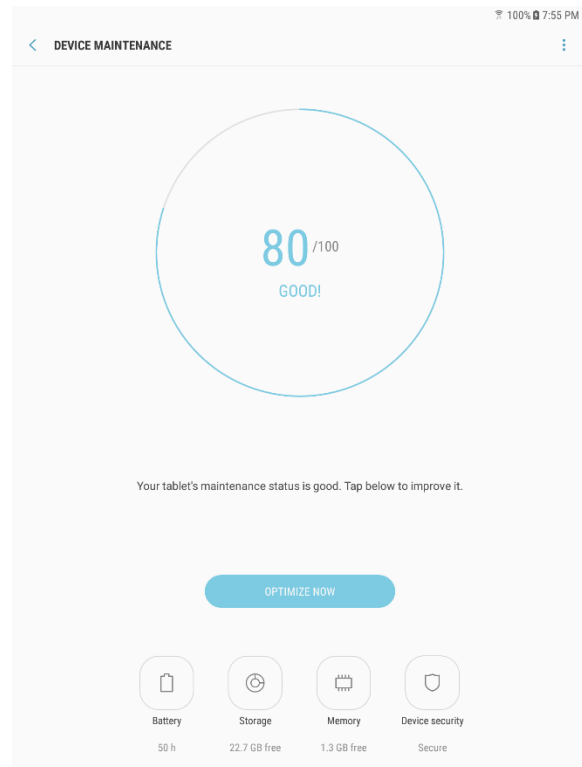

Figure 8. 80 out of 100 is good, but not good enough.

Start by tapping the Apps icon at the lower-right corner of the Home screen, and then tap Settings. Next, tap Device Maintenance in the Settings list within the Settings screen.

The Device Maintenance screen automatically checks your system performance, such as how fast system functions are running, and rates it on a scale of 0 to 100 percent. In Figure 8, the performance is 80 out of 100.

You can optimize your system automatically for the fastest performance by tapping Optimize Now. After a few seconds, the Device Management screen tells you that performance is now at 100 percent and a list of what the app optimized, such as how much storage space was freed up. Return to the main Device Maintenance app screen by tapping Done.

You can also change how the app optimizes your Tab S2 depending on how you use the device. View your optimization options by tapping the Performance Mode icon at the bottom of the Device Maintenance screen shown in Figure 8. Within the Performance Mode screen, the general (and recommended) Optimized mode is set by default. You can also select one of three performance modes:

- Game so your performance settings are as quick as possible.
- Entertainment with enhanced video and audio performance.
- High Performance so you have the highest video settings possible, which you'll learn about in the next section.

More Ways to View Your Display
Nougat now offers several new display settings so you can change how bright the screen is and what you see on the screen. Open the Settings screen, as you learned to do earlier in this article, and then tap Display in the Settings list. Many settings, such as the brightness slider and Screen Mode, may be familiar to you from Marshmallow.

There are three new options for changing the brightness and look of your screen as you see in Figure 9, and for the first two, you turn them on by swiping the slider button for the setting from left to right.

Auto Brightness
This setting will automatically sense the lighting conditions and change the brightness automatically. If you're in a room with normal lighting, that means you'll see the screen at the brightness level shown in the Brightness slider bar. If the Tab S2 senses you're in a dark room, the screen brightness will be dim to save your eyes and brain from a rude shock.

Status Bar
This option allows you to change what you see in the Status Bar. By default, in the Status Bar you see the three most recent notification icons on the left side and the battery percentage on the right side.

When you tap Status Bar in the list, you'll open the Status Bar settings list on the right side of the screen. Tap Show Recent Notifications Only to turn off the ability to show only recent notifications. This means you'll see all notification icons since you last turned on the Tab S2, and you'll see a list of all those notifications when you open the Quick Settings and Notifications screen.

Tap Show Battery Percentage to hide the battery percentage in the Status Bar. You'll still see the Battery icon within the Status Bar that will give you a graphic representation of how much battery life you have left.

Figure 9. The Display settings list appears on the right side of the screen.

Screen Saver
When your Tab S2 is charging its battery, the screen turns off automatically. If you'd prefer to see something on the screen during the charging process, tap Screen Saver. In the Screen Saver settings list that appears on the right side of the screen, tap Off. Then you can select from four different types of screen savers:

- Colors that appear randomly on the screen.
- A slideshow of photos stored in the Photo Table app.
- A slideshow of your saved photos when you tap the Photo Frame option.
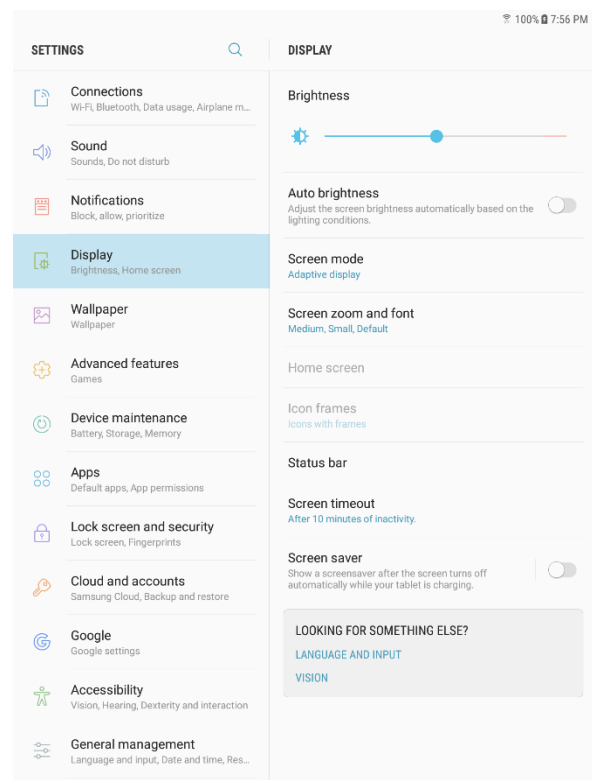- A slideshow of photos stored in the Photos app.

Don't Forget Widgets

No Android update comes complete without changes to the widgets you can choose from. Your phone/data carrier may also include some widgets of its own, such as the DirecTV widget you see in Figure 15 as my carrier is AT&T. Here's a quick review of all the widgets you can add to one of your Home pages:

- **Calendar:** A group of three different types of calendars: List, Month, and Tasks.
- **Chrome Bookmarks** so you can access your Chrome web browser bookmarks from within the widget.
- **Clock:** A group of three different clocks: Alarm, a Digital Clock, and a Dual Clock for viewing times in two different cities.
- **Contact** so you can select a contact to open and view that contact information on the screen.
- **Device Maintenance:** A group of two widgets that contains a link to the Device Maintenance Settings screen and another widget with several optimization settings you can access within the widget.
- **Drive:** A group of three widgets to access Google Drive including Drive to change your Drive account settings, Drive Scan to scan a document into PDF format with your Tab S2 camera and store the file in your Drive account, and Drive Shortcut to open your Drive account.
- **Email** for reading your new e-mail messages from within the widget.
- **Galaxy Apps** for viewing and downloading suggested Samsung apps for your Tab S2.
- **Gmail:** A group of two widgets that allow you to view Gmail messages within the widget and Gmail Label for creating a new label in the Gmail app.

Figure 10. The name of widget groups includes the number of widgets within each group in parentheses after the group name.

- **Google App:** A group of three widgets that show you the Google Feed, the Google search widget, and Google Sound Search so you can search for a song in Google Play Music based on a few notes you remember.
- **Google Play Music:** A group of three widgets to play songs in your Google Play Music playlist within the widget, a widget to open the Google Play Music app, and a widget to open your music playlist.

- **Google Play Store:** A group of three two including Play My Library to access your multimedia files and view recommended apps.
- **Maps:** A group of five widgets that provides Directions, goes into Driving Mode, shows you a friend's Location, lets you share your location with a friend, and view current traffic information.
- **Memo:** A group of two widgets that allow you to create a memo as well as view your latest memo within the widget.
- **Music** to listen to songs stored on your Tab S2.
- **OneDrive:** A group of two widgets to access your OneDrive account and change OneDrive account settings.
- **OneNote:** A group of five widgets to change OneNote account settings, record a OneNote audio note, write a new note, take a photo on your Tab S2 camera for a picture note, and a widget to read the three most recent notes.
- **S Bookmarks:** Shows you a list of bookmarks in the Internet app so you can find the bookmark within the widget and tap the bookmark to open the associated website.
- **Samsung Milk Music:** Though Samsung Milk Music has been discontinued, for some reason Samsung continues to offer both the app and the widget in Nougat. It's safe for you to ignore this widget.
- **Weather:** A group of two widgets that shows the current weather conditions for your current city as well as the weather combined with the current date and time.

With that, you've ended your not-so-quick tour of the many important new features in Nougat. These changes aren't the only ones but those changes aren't as big as the ones I've discussed, so enjoy finding these small changes for yourself as you explore Nougat on your Galaxy Tab S2.