

Why are so many people unhappy with the Android launcher experience?

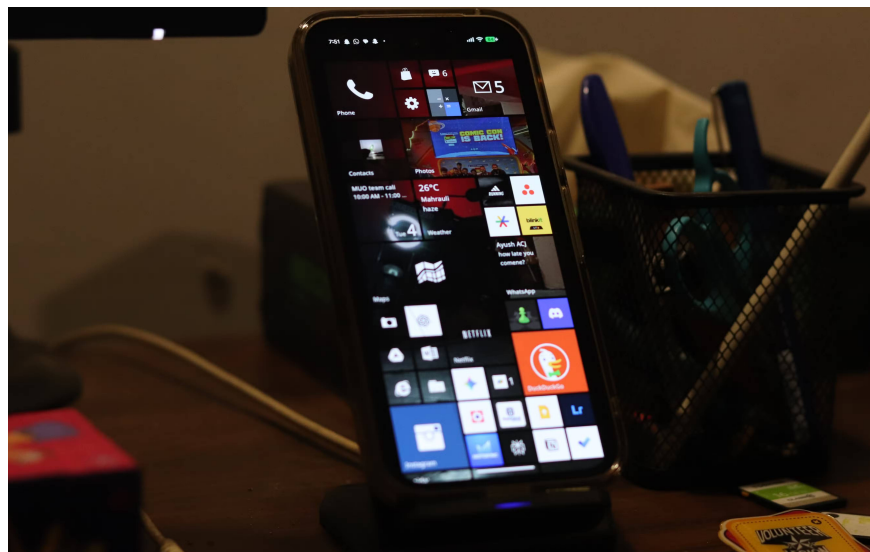
Every Android launcher I tested had issues with the recent apps screen and split screen mode, which prevented people from using their favorite launchers.

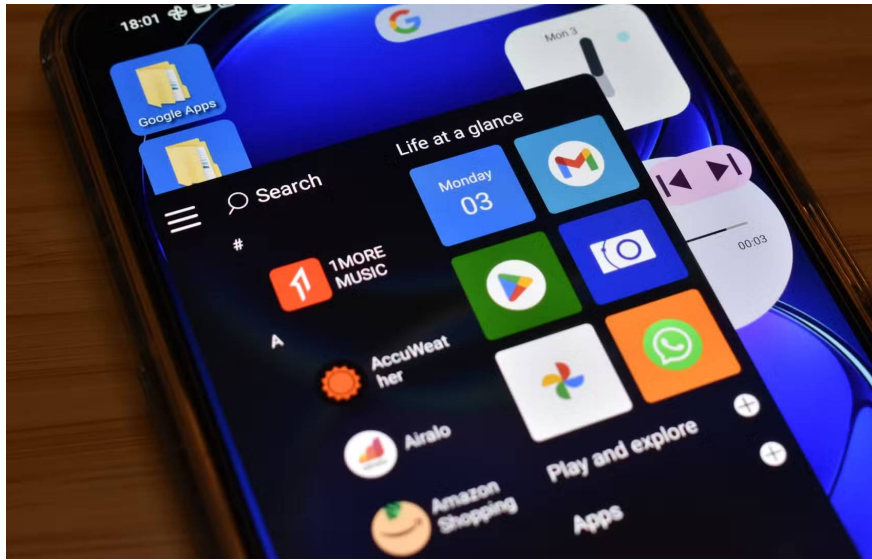
Stock Android is great, but depending on your specific needs, a launcher can be a really powerful tool that makes your phone both more powerful and more beautiful. You may have finally found an Android launcher that's worth switching to, but it still has some problems.

Your perfect launcher can easily fall apart when you try to multitask on your Android phone. Every Android launcher I've tested has issues with the recent apps screen and split-screen mode, which has stopped people from using their favorite launchers.

Android launcher is a multitasking nightmare

The moment every launcher starts running again automatically







Imagine you are using your favorite launcher and then open the recent apps screen. There is a chance that your launcher may or may not appear on this screen. If it does, you accidentally close it and it will immediately return to the default launcher until you restart the launcher app. That is one of the reasons why many people like to use their default Android launcher.

If you try to open two apps in a split-screen configuration, you might run into launcher issues. And it's not just split-screen. Floating windows, the ability to open apps in pop-up view, app switching gestures—all of these multitasking features tend to malfunction as soon as you put a custom launcher on your home screen.

The severity of the problem varies greatly depending on your device and Android version.

Launchers can't get a basic feature right

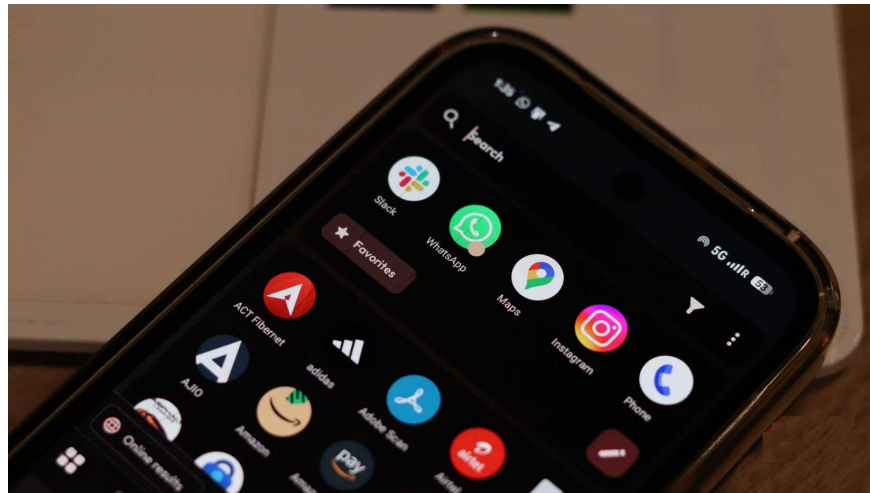
Bugs that break even the best launchers



This isn't a limitation of third-party launchers either; it's a design decision on Google's part. Instead of letting third-party launchers handle these functions entirely, Google has centralized them in the system launcher.

So while your custom launcher might handle the home screen just fine, as soon as you swipe up to view recent apps or try to enable split-screen mode, the system will refer to the default launcher on your phone.

Inevitably, your custom launcher and system launcher will conflict with each other, and the system launcher will win out because it is considered the default for some actions. When these two launchers interact, especially when it comes to multitasking features, you will encounter weird bugs like apps disappearing from the recents view or the launcher crashing completely.

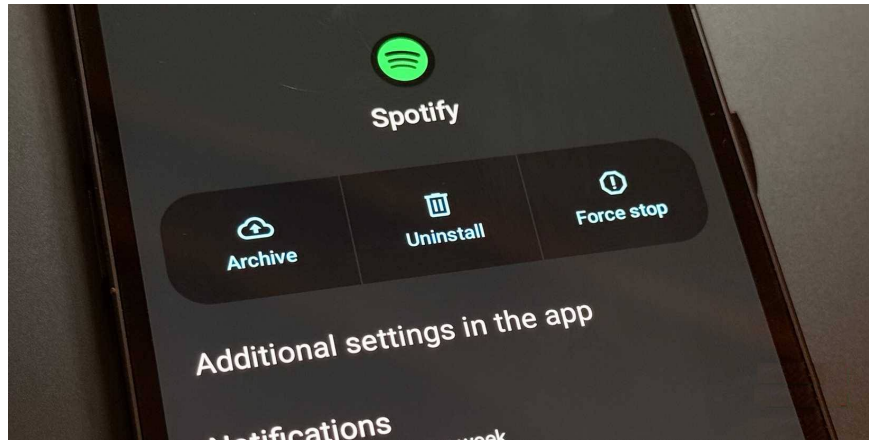


Temporary solutions to improve user experience

Temporary fixes to a permanent problem

If you are determined to use a third-party launcher despite these issues, there are a few options to work around the problem. You can try disabling the default launcher after using the recent overview. If the problem started after a specific update, rolling back to a previous version of the launcher may also help.

Enabling launcher access can also help improve stability. For split-screen mode specifically, enabling the non-resizable multi-window option in developer options can fix the issue for Pixel users.



However, this is just a temporary fix, not a real solution. This problem could easily be solved if Google considered third-party launchers as real alternatives to regular apps. The fact that even specialized launchers like Niagara, Microsoft Launcher, and even the now-outdated Nova launcher have issues like this only detracts from the otherwise great software on the phone.

Better system stability than custom launcher

Predictability can help you stay sane.

These issues aren't major, and no launcher can render your phone unusable for the reasons outlined above. You may have never noticed them before, or the launcher you're using doesn't have them at all. Either way, they make installing any custom launcher a bit of a gamble, eventually forcing you to revert to the default launcher on your phone.

If multitasking is a big part of your workflow, you'll have the best user experience with the default launcher. If you can tolerate occasional crashes and annoyances, a third-party launcher is a great way to add new options and customization to your phone.

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