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Sync Android Contacts, Calendar, and Files to ownCloud

By mike | May 14, 2013 | Linux Stuff

Do you dislike Google? I do. I hate the fact that Google wants to record every little bit of information from your life and data mine it to death. And just like how the iPhone requires an Apple ID , Android phones seem to require you to share all your information with Google via a Google account.

These discussions online always bring out the Google supporters who will call those who do not want to share info with google 'paranoid' or say 'why would your information be so important'. Listen, I just don't want a 3rd party company to have information about me, about my schedule, about who I speak with, etc. It's not about being paranoid, it's just about wanting to keep my personal life private.

Since I do need access to mail and information when on the road, I have need of a smartphone. Yet I don't want to have my phone and it's data linked to an Apple ID or Google ID. I've finally found a way to have an Android Phone without the need for a Google account and yet have calendar, contacts, and data kept secure in a personal cloud and shared between multiple devices and via web interface.

By using an opensource product called 'ownCloud' to run a personal cloud service on a host that I
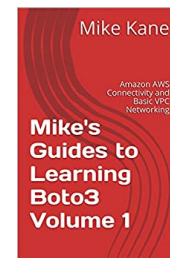
« How to install ownCloud to Ubuntu 12.04   Exchange 2010 Error applying Service Pack "Setup

own, I can use a few apps to sync all those items from my phone to my own personal cloud.

For starters, you need to have ownCloud installed on a host. This is my other post showing how to get started. https://www.slsmk.com/how-to-install-owncloud-to-ubuntu-12-04/

For some of these apps, you need to use F-Droid appstore. Visit the F-Droid Site, Download the APK, and sideload it to your phone by opening the file on the phone and selecting package installer to open the file. F-Droid Appstore can be used to load apps just like the Playstore.

From F-Droid, grab the apps called 'ownCloud Client' and 'DavDroid'. This app will be used to create the Link between the Contacts app on android and the ownCloud Contacts application.
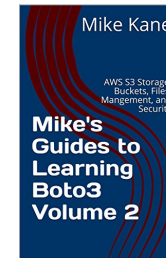
Setup the Contacts sync adapter
1) Load DAVDroid on your phone as indicated above.

2) From your phone, go to MENU – SETTINGS – ACCOUNTS – and Add new account.

3) Pick DAVDroid from the list of account types

4) In Server name, use the name from the ownCloud server you already have setup.
https://SERVERNAME/owncloud/remote.php/carddav/principals

5) Enter the Username and Password for the owncloud account you want to sync.

6) In the DAVDroid settings, pick the entry you want to sync. Set it up the way you like.

Setup the CalDAV Calendar Sync Adapter
1) Load DAVDroid on your phone from F-Droid Appstore as indicated above.

2) From your phone, go to MENU – SETTINGS – ACCOUNTS – and Add new account.

Files, Management, and Security

Mike Kane

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3) Pick DAVDroid Sync adapter from the list of account types

4) In Server name, use the name from the ownCloud server you already have setup.
https://SERVERNAME/owncloud/remote.php/caldav/principals

5) Enter the Username and Password for the owncloud account you want to sync.

6) You should log into the ownCloud server with this account and check the calendar settings for
Timezone, 24h format, etc...

Setup the ownCloud Client for File Sync
1) Load the ownCloud app from F-Droid Appstore.

2) From your phone, goto MENU – SETTINGS – ACCOUNTS – and Add a new account.

3) Pick ownCloud from the list of account types

4) In URL, use the ownCloud Server that you already have setup: https://SERVERNAME/owncloud

5) Enter the Username and Password for the ownCloud account you want to use to sync files.

6) Open up the ownCloud app and look at the options. You can have it sync every time you take a
picture or on a schedule. It's up to you. You can also define the file locations to sync as well.

Now to cut the Google Cord for Contacts... Lets turn off the Google sync for good. From the phone,
SETTINGS – APPS – Swipe over to ALL apps. For each of the following, open it up, CLEAR the Data, then
DISABLE the app.
1) Gmail
2) Google Contacts Sync
3) Google Calendar Sync

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4) Google Bookmark Sync

With these disabled, you can still keep a Google account for the playstore if you want, but mail, calendar, and contacts will not sync with Google Server.

If you really want to dump Google, disable everything and use a 3rd Party app store like Amazon or F-Droid. Or just side-load all the APKs you want. Disable or delete the following to really dump google:
1) Google Account Manager
2) Google Play Services
3) Google Play Store

And that's it.

For contacts, when you create a new contact, you should see the DAVDroid Sync Adapter instead of a Google Account. New contacts will be synced to and from the ownCloud Service.

For Calendar, you should select the Calendar to Display from within the Calendar app. New appointments will be synced to and from the ownCloud service.

Make sure you test everything. Create calendar events on server and phone and make sure they sync. Same thing for Contacts and Files.

Important: Make sure you have a backup of the ownCloud Database. Schedule a backup of SQLite or the MySQL DB regularly. It also doesn't hurt to export your contacts to a VCF file and save it as well. Keep multiple backups of anything you can't live without. This is your own host running cloud services, not a 3rd party server anymore. IF your host fails, you lose your data if you don't have a copy somewhere.

Congratulations, You are no longer a slave to Google's insatiable appetite for data. Your stuff remains yours and in your possession while enjoying the benefits of syncing with the Cloud.

Uncategorized

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Tagged android, featured, owncloud. Bookmark the permalink.

18 Responses to *Sync Android Contacts, Calendar, and Files to ownCloud*

Joe JULY 17, 2013 AT 5:28 PM

Android has an account type called Server that is apparently made for syncing calendar and contacts. I'd rather use that than needing 3.party apps, but haven't had any luck getting it to work.

Reply

jakob AUGUST 9, 2013 AT 12:14 PM

Thanks for the write-up, helped me a great deal! I did however prematurely (after setting up contacts) /delete/ my google account from contacts and thus lost my calendar events, but those weren't too important (yet) anyway – so I'm all good 🙂 Thanks again...

Reply

thomas AUGUST 16, 2013 AT 8:49 AM

thanks, this was of great help when attempting to separate the nexus 7 from its ties to google.

Reply

gnumber9 AUGUST 19, 2013 AT 8:44 AM

great thread if not just for better functionality of a device, but as far as privacy goes: the new ipv6 has an identifier portion in the address. so, anonymity is becoming a more complex issue. i am not saying it can't or will not be able to happen, but the push is so many addresses, they can be tied to people, places and things. 1984!

Reply

Joe MacHoll AUGUST 29, 2013 AT 8:11 PM

Hi Mike,
this is one of the best concisely written article about saying good-bye to google and use OwnCloud instead. Well done!
Joe

Reply

Mike SEPTEMBER 18, 2013 AT 9:22 AM

Thanks Joe. Hope you found it useful.

Reply

Vexatus OCTOBER 17, 2013 AT 2:39 AM

Hi Mike,

I have installed the 1.4.4 android app and sorry but I can't see the "scheduler" or "folders to sync" option. I can only select "keep updated" in the file options but this will only be updated in the "OwnCloud" folder on my SD card. Could you post some pic's of how to set it up?

Best regards

V.

Reply

Dominik Steigl DECEMBER 26, 2013 AT 6:42 PM

Hello Mike,

first, thank you for sharing your awesome knowledge.

While looking for an alternative to aCal (I don't like the interface very much), and since the calDav Sync Adapter told me that my password was incorrect (I copied it out of a synced document..) I found this little gem in the F-Droid Store:

http://davdroid.bitfire.at/what-is-davdroid

Maybe you could add it to this post, so others can see!

Best Regards

D.S.

Reply

Mike JANUARY 23, 2014 AT 12:28 PM

Yes, I've seen davdroid. Very promising since 1 app can handle the cal and cards. Sadly, I had issues running it on KitKat on a Nexus 5. But It may work for others.

Reply

Kasem SEPTEMBER 26, 2014 AT 5:26 PM

It is working for me. I have Nexus 5 running kitkat

Reply

jedabo JANUARY 12, 2014 AT 6:06 PM

Hello Mike,
Thanks a lot !
I agree with Joe !
It's a really good and concise tutorial !
Applied it from A to Z, and magically all works fine.
Well deserved beer !

Reply

Mike JANUARY 23, 2014 AT 12:27 PM

Thank you very much. Cheers.

Reply

Wolfgang JANUARY 16, 2014 AT 7:45 AM

Thanks for this mini-howto. It isn't quite what I was looking for, but that's not your fault!
(See below.) But your words about privacy are very important and if you think about
things like the NSA they become even more important!
OwnCloud is absolutely awesome and very, very easy to install. I use it to synch my
Android phone and Thunderbird/Lightning (contacts and events) and my Firefox's
bookmarks.
Sadly, I have not yet found any Android calender that can synch events AND tasks to
OwnCloud. I know that the app "CalDAV Sync" will sync the tasks and that there's also an
app for showing the tasks by the same author than "CalDAV Sync", but I would really like

to have one calendar app that can manage my events AND my tasks, and that can synch both events AND tasks to OwnCloud.

So, if anyone knows about such an Android calendar app, I'd be very happy to hear about it.

Reply

Pingback: Sync Android Contacts, Calendar, and Files to ownCloud | KefeTout

Al Castellano MARCH 22, 2016 AT 2:33 PM

I just found your tutorial and it was very helpful. Thank you. Owncloud is syncing nicely, but I'm still trying to get calendar working. It's on my end so I'll just have to play a bit more.

Reply

Dave AUGUST 4, 2016 AT 7:17 PM

halleluya....Me too dislike how google force people in beleving that google is there only to help making there life so mutch better, all for 'free'. well...i do not want to sell my private life (or soul) to google for ' free'. Not even while i have nothing to hide. (that is often the excuse for wanting to receive 'free' services or applications in return for their private lives)

Reply

Pingback: *La pièce manquante : Owncloud – Les tiroirs de Paquito*

rubo77 MAY 31, 2017 AT 2:18 AM

I tried davdroid with Nextcloud on my old nexus5 with android 4.4, but it didn't work: I successfully logged in into my Nextcloud with davdroid, but the contacts-davdroid-

account didn't show up in the android contacts options.

can you update this manual to include a Nextcloud solution?

Tip: I managed to sync my contacts with nextcloud, using "carddav sync beta"

https://dmfs.org/carddav/?getit

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