

The Samsung SmartSwitch app

A utility for copying apps and data from one Android smartphone to another when you upgrade

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In December 2019, I upgraded from a Samsung Galaxy S7 phone to a Samsung Galaxy S10 phone.

As with any upgrade, I was eager to install my contacts, my apps, and my data on the new phone.

About two years ago, I upgraded from an S5 to S7. At that time, I used the Verizon Wireless app called Content Transfer to copy items from the S5 onto the S7. That app left a lot out of the transfer, most notably my Memos but also a large number of apps.

This time around, hoping for a more complete transfer, there is a new kid on the block, a competitor: the Samsung data transfer app called **SmartSwitch**. The app, like ContentTransfer, provides a capability to transfer data wirelessly between two phones running the app. In this case, to use the wireless method, both phones must be Samsung smartphones.

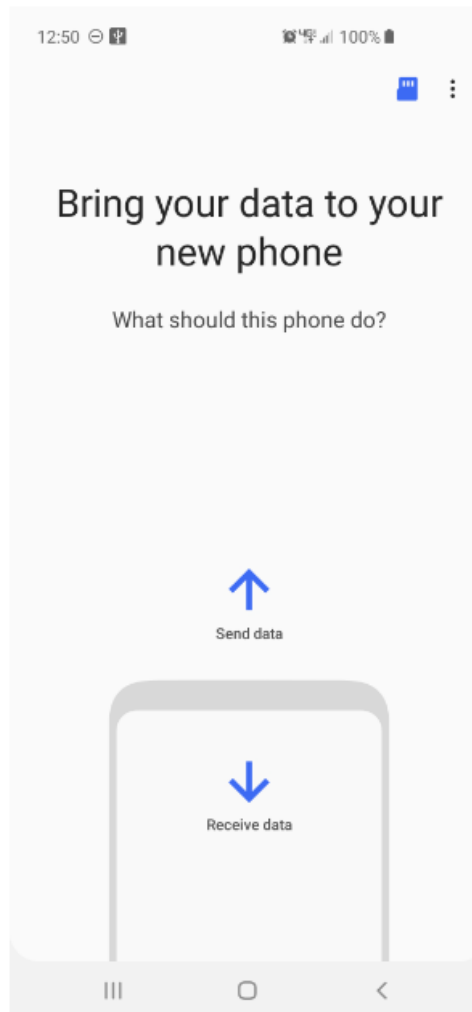
SmartSwitch will also work even if your *old phone is not a Samsung phone*. The Samsung Galaxy S10 includes an On The Go (OTG) adapter, which gives the S10 a USB-A socket, just like the USB sockets on your computer. You can connect the old phone's USB cable to the Samsung Galaxy S10 via that OTG adapter. Then start up SmartSwitch on the S10, and it will treat the old phone as a USB peripheral and reads its contents for transfer onto the S10.

I do not think that the OTG cable transfer method will work at all if the old phone is an iPhone. But it should work on most Android phones.

In my case, since both were Samsung phones, I ran the SmartSwitch app on both. I told the old one to send data, and I told the new one to receive data. Each phone recognized the other quickly using a wireless technique, possibly Wi-Fi or Near Field Communication (NFC).

I decided to write this article because I realized that the apps do not provide useful guidance about what they can and cannot accomplish. I can report what SmartSwitch did and did not accomplish it for me at the end of 2019.

Illustration 1 depicts the SmartSwitch app's main screen that I used the wireless transfer method. Note the two arrows. For wireless data transfer, the app must be



running on both phones, the two phones must be close together (no more than 4 inches apart), and the appropriate arrow of each app must be tapped at roughly the same time. Tap the Up arrow on the old phone to send data. Tap the down arrow on the new phone to receive data.

The SmartSwitch app said about 7 gigabytes would be copied from the S7 to the S10. The transfer took about 18 minutes. That is a data transfer rate a bit less than 0.4 gigabytes per minute.

What got transferred into the S10?

APP TRANSFER

Most of the S5 apps got transferred. The **app layouts on the Home screens** were almost identical to the layouts on those screens on my own phone. This made it very easy to compare screens to confirm that S10 apps were in place.

A few apps were *not* transferred, perhaps because they were stored on my microSD card. The **Firefox browser** and **Keeper Security** showed up as ghosted gray icons on the S10. When I tapped each gray icon, SmartSwitch installed those apps using the Google Play store.

One app, **Amazon Kindle**, did not show up at all. I re-installed it from the Google Play Store.

Another exception was **Yahoo Finance**, which was installed but was not present in my Money folder. So I put Yahoo Finance into the folder.

And the **Memos app** was missing, or so I thought. Read on.

DATA TRANSFER

My **contacts** got transferred to the S10. That was my primary goal. My 200+ **custom ringtones** got transferred also.

Most of my **data** in the phone's internal storage got transferred, including the photo for the Lock Screen and the photo for the Home screen. I was pleasantly surprised about that since the photos themselves were originally on the microSD card. Android must have copied the two photos to internal memory when I assigned the photos to screens.

My **text message conversations** got transferred.

I was especially concerned about the **400+ saved geocache files** that I stored using the c:geo app; those are stored in internal memory, but I had backed up the files onto my S7 microSD card just in case those were not transferred. As it happens, those geocache files were indeed transferred by SmartSwitch and usable by the c:geo app on the S10.

The Memos app itself did not get transferred. When I realized the Memos app did not get transferred, I guessed that perhaps another app with a different name and icon might do the same thing. I came across the **Samsung Notes app** by accident while browsing to identify bloatware on the phone, opened that app out of curiosity, and realized I could see it was loading all my Memos. So my Memos were transferred successfully but to a different app.

SOME CONFIGS TO BE DONE

Some types of configuration data did not get copied onto the S10.

I had to supply the password for the S10 to log onto my home router Wi-Fi.

I had to re-initialize **TypeApp**, my primary email app, with the email account ID and password. I had to re-initialize the **Yahoo Mail app** with my ID and password. I had to re-initialize the **Keeper Security app** with my ID and password. Like email services, Keeper Security has an encrypted backup of my data on its servers, and copies that to my phone when I enter the ID and password I established years ago for that app.

Luckily, Keeper Security on the old phone kept working after the phone was no longer on the phone network, so I could look up those ID and password combos.

In the Google Pay app, I had to re-enter the CVC numbers for the two credit cards I use via that app. One, American Express, also required me to enter a confirmation code sent as a text by American Express to me. These are reasonable config matters considering that neither Google's servers nor the credit card issuers were familiar with my new S10 phone.

Another config issue: on the old phone, I had configured the **WeatherBug app** to include many cities I have visited in the past two years: Richmond, Boston, Cincinnati, El Paso Dallas, Atlanta, Omaha, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, Jackson, Bozeman, and Twin Falls. That config did *not* get transferred. I had to re-enter those cities. The effort did not take long.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Overall, I think the Samsung Smartswitch app did a reasonably complete job. The exceptions I noted above are, in my opinion, few and minor, easily resolved.

I will admit I suspect Verizon's ContentTransfer app probably has been improved quite a bit since I last used it. That app may remain the most widely applicable solution for

anyone upgrading from one phone brand to another on the Verizon Wireless network, especially if neither one is a Samsung phone.

I also had about 60 gigabytes of data on a microSD card on the old phone, primarily music and photos. I physically moved the microSD card to the new S10 phone.

However, if instead I had a blank microSD card big enough to contain the data and I put that blank card in the new S10 phone, SmartSwitch can also be told to copy the microSD card data. Give the data transfer rate of fewer than 0.4 GB per minute, a 60 GB transfer would take more than 2 hours and might exhaust the batteries on both phones. So I am glad I did not try that. It might transfer at a much higher rate via the USB method.

The alternative solution is to use a computer to load the data onto the blank microSD card. That will take a few minutes rather than 2 hours.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout is a past president of the Washington Area Computer User Group (WAC). After his tenure, the group merged with another to form the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS). He has been taking photos since the early 1960s and writing about the uses of personal computers since the early 1980s. His digital photos won a first and second prize in the 2018 Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) digital photo contest. After many years working as a software engineer using C and C++, now John is a tech writer for the Thales Group, supporting the use of that company's advanced automatic fingerprint matching technology in the computer system of a major federal government agency.