



INSTANT

Short | Fast | Focused

BlueStacks

Start running Android apps on a Mac/PC in no time, using BlueStacks

Gary Judge

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Instant BlueStacks

Instant BlueStacks

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Gary Judge is an IT Consultant who designs network solutions by day and blogs by night. When not sharing his thoughts about technology or music on Google Plus and Twitter, he can be found blogging about mobile technology on www.head4space.com.

He feels that there has not been a better time to be into technology, and having worked professionally in the IT industry for 12 years and an active hobbyist for nearly 20 years, he has witnessed a massive number of improvements that have resulted in such mind-boggling developments as the smartphone.

This is the first book that Gary has written, and he hopes it will be the first of many.

I'd like to thank the folks at Packt Publishing who have kept me going while I've been writing this book, my wife for allowing me the time to get things done, the various members of my family who have encouraged me, and my dog for not really being bothered either way.

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Steve Price has worked in the IT industry for over 20 years and has been involved in the music industry since the early 90s. His current IT responsibilities have varied, but he is currently running an IT department at the headquarters of a FTSE 100 company. He is also trained as a Lean Continuous Improvement Leader.

His involvement in the music industry includes Internet PR for Orbital as well as DJing/composing his own music to reviewing music and artist gigs via social media. His track "Punky" was co-remixed with Long Range and released on the album "Madness and Me" in 2007.

He has been an online social-media-obsessed individual since the early days of 28.8 dialup and BBS's!

He created Loopz in the early 90s and this has metamorphosed from a paper zine to an award winning website. Loopz is also used as a DJ/music artist name.

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Websites: <http://www.loopzorbital.com> (Loopz blog) and <http://www.loopz-music.com> (Loopz music)

I would like to thank my lovely wife, Emma and both of my gorgeous children (Leah and Harry) for dealing with my obsessive hobbies.

Oliver Salzburg works as an IT consultant, advising companies on how to restructure their IT environments and implementing software solutions to solve the problems his clients present to him.

He also serves as a moderator on Q&A platform "Super User" and maintains several small open source projects.

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Chapter 1. Instant BlueStacks

Welcome to *Instant BlueStacks*. This book has been especially created to provide you with all the information that you need to set up the BlueStacks suite of tools. You will learn the basics of BlueStacks App Player, learn how to synchronize the apps using Cloud Connect, and discover some tips and tricks for using these tools.

This book contains the following sections:

So, what is BlueStacks? helps you find out about the BlueStacks suite of software tools, what you can do with them, and why they are so great.

Installation covers how to download and install BlueStacks with ease and then set it up so that you can use Android apps as soon as possible.

Quick start – installing your first app will show you how to get started with BlueStacks; installing and optimizing your system to run Android apps. This section will also show you the steps to configure the BlueStacks environment so that you get going with the software.

Top 5 features you need to know about will help you learn how to perform various tasks with the most important features of BlueStacks. By the end of this section, you will be comfortable with making changes to the BlueStacks environment, connecting BlueStacks with a Google account so that you can access apps and content you've purchased elsewhere, syncing apps between a tablet/phone and BlueStacks using Cloud Connect, installing Android apps that do not feature in the app stores, and troubleshooting BlueStacks.

People and places you should get to know provides you with many useful links to the project page and forums as well as a number of helpful articles, tutorials, and blogs of expert BlueStacks users.

So, what is BlueStacks?

BlueStacks is a suite of tools designed to allow you to run Android apps easily on a Windows or Mac computer. The following screenshot shows how it looks:



At the time of writing, there are two elements to the BlueStacks suite, which are listed as follows:

- **App Player:** This is the engine, which runs the Android apps
- **Cloud Connect:** This is a synchronization tool

As the BlueStacks tools can be freely downloaded, anyone with a PC running on Windows or Mac can download them and start experimenting with their capabilities. This book will walk you through the process of running BlueStacks on a computer and show you some of the ways in which you can make the most out of this emerging technology. There are other ways by which you can run an emulator of Android on your computer. You can, for instance, run a virtual machine or install the Android **Software Development Kit (SDK)**. These assume a degree of technical understanding that isn't necessarily required with BlueStacks, making BlueStacks the quickest and easiest way of running apps on your computer.

BlueStacks is particularly interesting for users of Windows 8 tablets, as it opens up a whole library of mature software designed for a touch interface. This is particularly useful for those wanting to use many, free, or cheap Android apps on their laptop or tablet.

Note

It is worth noting that, at the time of writing this book, these tools are beta releases, so it is important that you take time to report the bugs that you may find to the developers through their website. The ongoing development and success of the software depends upon this feedback and results in a better product. If you become reliant on a particular feature, it is a good idea to highlight your love to the developers too.

This can help influence which features are to be kept and improved upon as the product matures.

App Player

BlueStacks App Player allows a Windows or Mac user to run Android apps on his or her desktop or laptop. It does this by running an emulated version of Android within a window that you can interact with using your keyboard and mouse. The App Player can be downloaded and installed for free from the BlueStacks website, <http://www.bluestacks.com>. Currently, there are two main versions available for different operating systems:

- Mac OS X
- Windows XP, Vista, 7, and 8

Once you have installed the software, an Android emulator runs on your machine. This is a light version of Android that can access app stores so that you can download and run free and paid apps and content. Most apps are compatible with App Player; however, there are some that are not (for technical reasons) and some that have been prevented by the App developers from running.

Note

If you are running any another operating system on your computer, the more computing power you can make available to the App Player the better. Otherwise, you might experience slow loading apps or worse still ones that do not function properly.

To increase your chances of success, first try running App Player without running any other applications (for example, Word).

Cloud Connect

Cloud Connect provides a means to synchronize the apps running on an existing phone or tablet with the App Player. This means that you do not have to manually install lots of apps. Instead, you install an app on your device and sign up so that your App Player has exactly the same apps as your device.

Installation

You can install BlueStacks App Player and set it up on your system in three easy steps. The third step has been split up for Windows 7, 8, and Mac OS X so that you can follow the specific information for your operating system.

Step 1 – what do I need?

Before you install the BlueStacks App Player, you will need to check that you have all the required elements as listed here:

- Disk space: 2 GB free (min).
- Memory: 2 GB (min).
- A Dual-core CPU (recommended).
- BlueStacks App Player requires an OpenGL ES compatible graphics card and drivers (a utility such as DoctorGL can help identify your graphics card capability and check if driver upgrades may be required).
- To install BlueStacks App Player on Windows, you need to be logged in with full admin rights. When installing on Mac OS X, you need to provide credentials, which have the rights to change the system.
- Mac OS X installations require Snow Leopard or greater.

Step 2 – downloading BlueStacks App Player

The easiest way to download BlueStacks App Player is to go to <http://www.bluestacks.com>. Select the type of operating system you wish to install on (Windows or Mac) by downloading the appropriate installation package. The following screenshot shows the BlueStacks site:



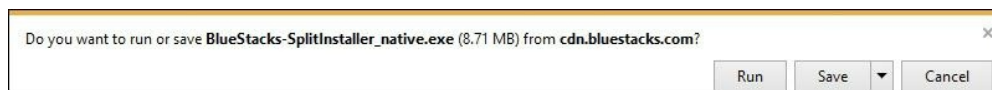
Step 3 - installing BlueStacks App Player

Perform the following steps corresponding to the operating system you use to install BlueStacks in your system:

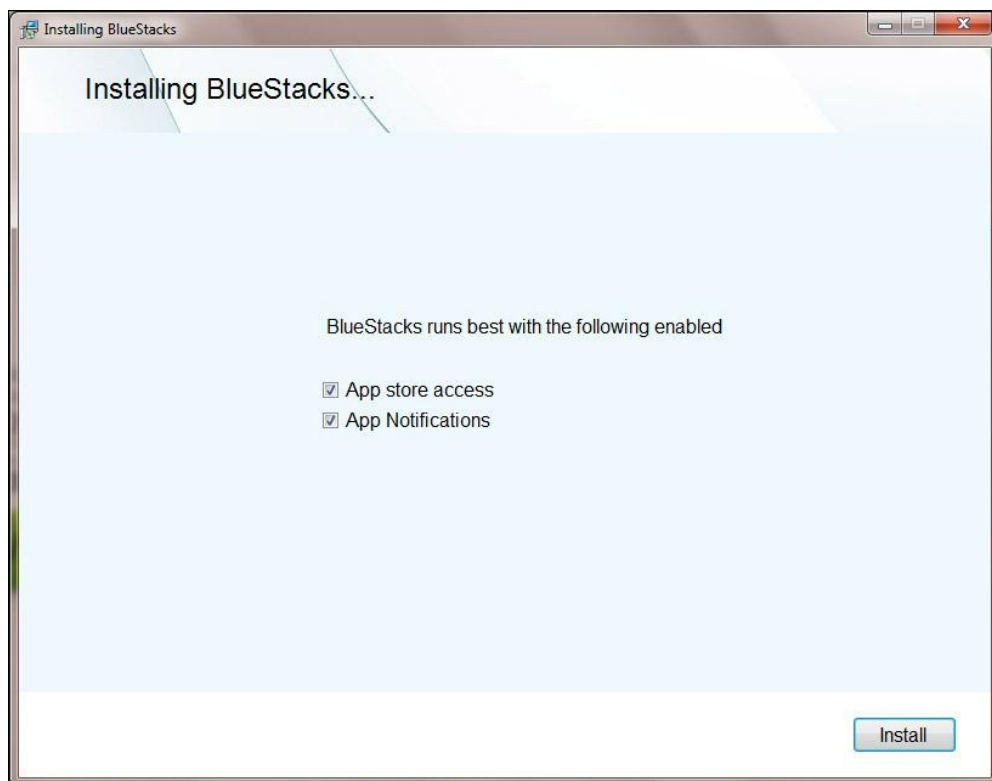
For Windows 7

Perform the following steps to install BlueStacks for Windows 7:

1. When prompted to **Run** or **Save**, as shown in the following screenshot, click on **Save** so that you have the file in hand for future reference. After it has downloaded, click on **Run**.



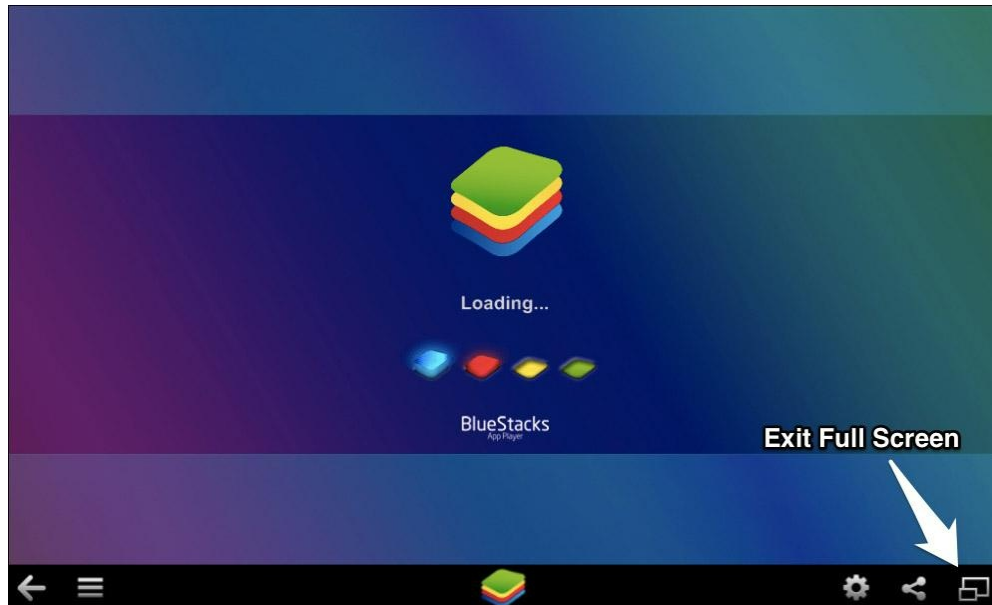
2. Click on **Continue**, when prompted to do so, and leave both the installation components checked (**App store access** and **App Notifications**), as shown in the following screenshot. These allow you to install apps and keep you notified of updates for the BlueStacks App Player.



3. Now, click on **Install** and, while the installation is being carried out, there are a number of apps being promoted, as shown in the following screenshot. If you are stuck for an app, try out one of these as they've been extensively tested.



4. After the installation is fully complete, the App Player will start automatically. By default, it loads in the fullscreen mode. You can now exit the fullscreen mode by clicking on the double-rectangle icon to the bottom right corner, as shown in the following screenshot:

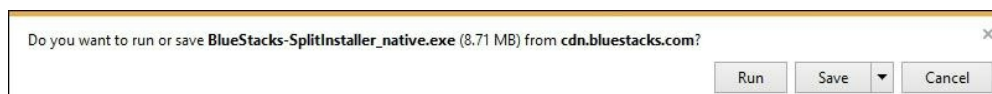


If you do this, you may also notice that a couple of icons have been installed onto your desktop.

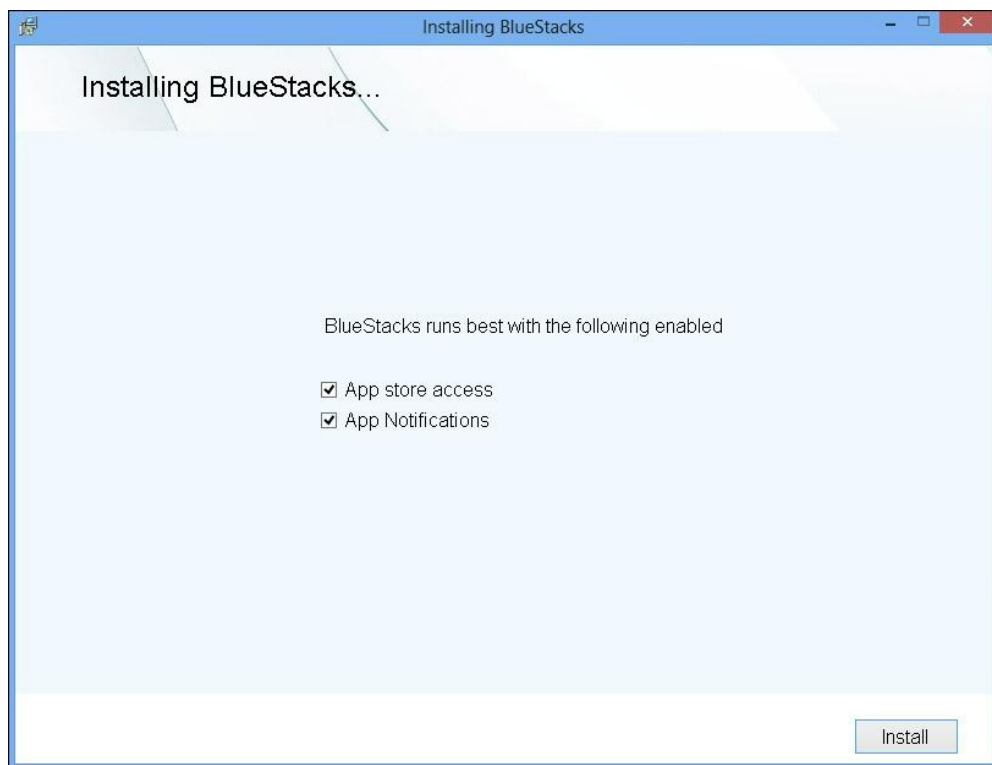
For Windows 8

Perform the following steps to install BlueStacks for Windows 8:

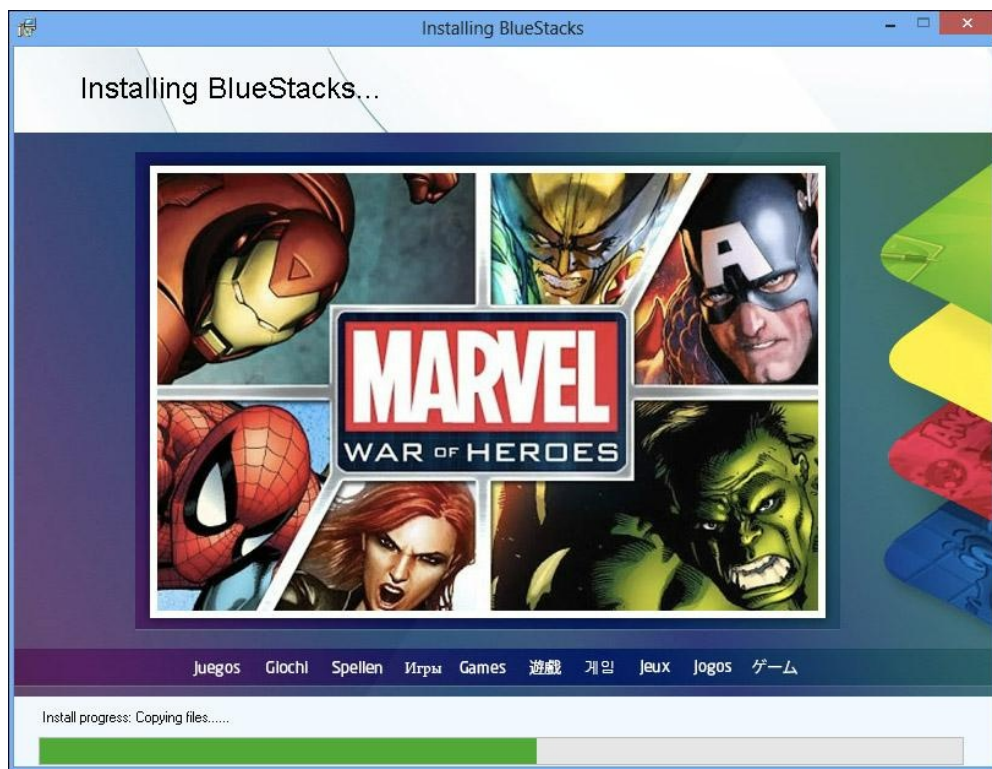
1. When prompted to **Run** or **Save**, as shown in the following screenshot, click on **Save** so that you have the file in hand for future reference. After it has downloaded, click on **Run**.



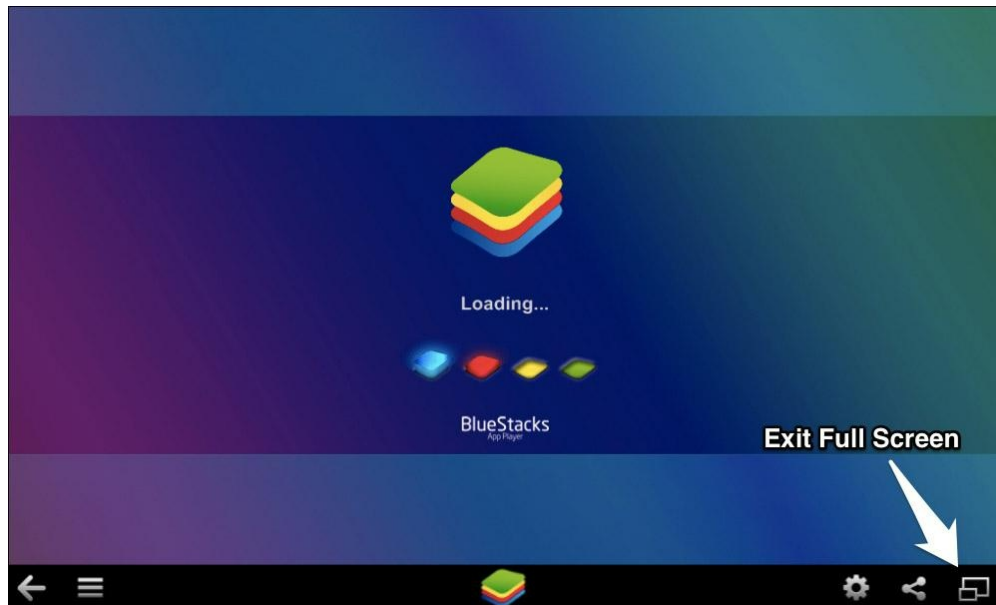
2. Click on **Continue** when prompted to do so and leave both the installation components checked (**App store access** and **App Notifications**), as shown in the following screenshot:



3. Now, click on **Install** and, while the installation is being carried out, there are a number of apps being promoted, as shown in the following screenshot. If you are stuck for an app, try out one of these as they've been extensively tested:



4. After the installation is fully complete, the App Player will automatically start. By default, it loads in the fullscreen mode. You can now exit the fullscreen mode by clicking on the double-rectangle icon at the bottom right corner. If you do this, you may also notice that a couple of icons have been installed onto your desktop.

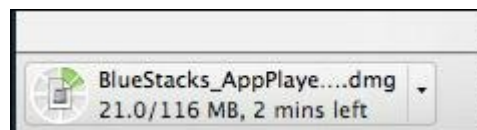


Also, if you press the Windows button, you will notice that some tiles have been added to the **Start** menu.

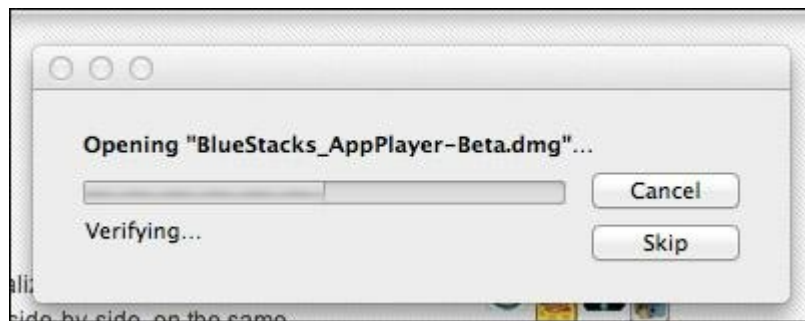
For Mac OS X

Perform the following steps to install BlueStacks for Mac OS X:

1. Download [BlueStacks_AppPlayer-Beta.dmg](#) on your computer, as shown in the following screenshot:



2. When the file has downloaded, double-click to open it, as shown in the following screenshot:

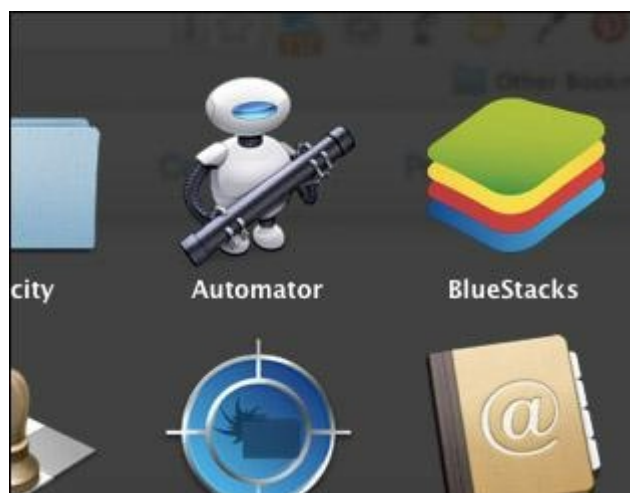


3. Once the initial expansion process has completed, you will need to drag the **BlueStacks** icon into your **Applications** folder, as shown in the following screenshot:

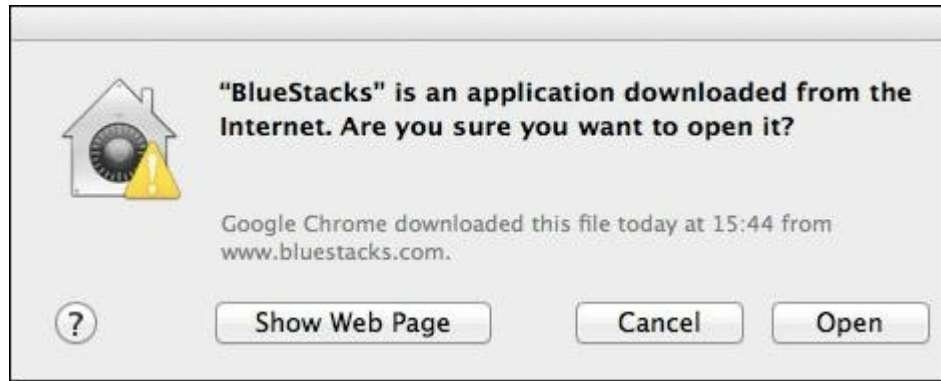


This will copy the files to the necessary locations.

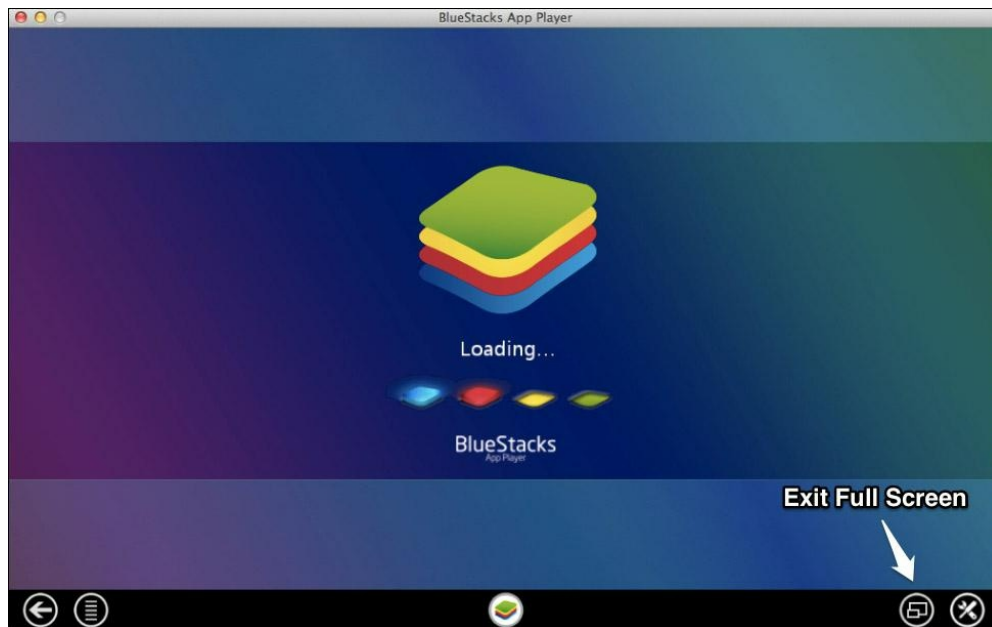
4. After the files have been copied, you can run the application from your dock, as shown in the following screenshot:



5. The first time you run the application, you will be warned that this has been downloaded from the internet. Click on **Open** to proceed, as shown in the following screenshot:



6. By default, BlueStacks App Player loads in the fullscreen mode. You can now exit the fullscreen mode by clicking on the double-rectangle icon at the bottom right corner, as shown in the following screenshot:



And that's it

At this point, you should have a working installation of the BlueStacks App Player and are free to play around and discover more about it.

Quick start – installing your first app

To get the most out of the BlueStacks App Player, you need to install some apps. These are the same apps that are available for Android devices and open up a wealth of free and inexpensive tools for your computer. This section will walk you through the setting up of BlueStacks App Player so that you can enjoy what it has to offer.

You may need to jump to Step 2, if you are prompted to set up [1-Click Sync](#). Different beta versions of BlueStacks app player have been known to have this at different points in the process.

Step 1 – getting familiar with App Player

Now that you have App Player installed, you will need to familiarize yourself with the interface. The following screenshot identifies the main components of the interface, which you will see when it has finished loading:



Here is a description of each of the buttons:

Installed apps	This is the button through which you can access apps that you have installed.
-----------------------	---

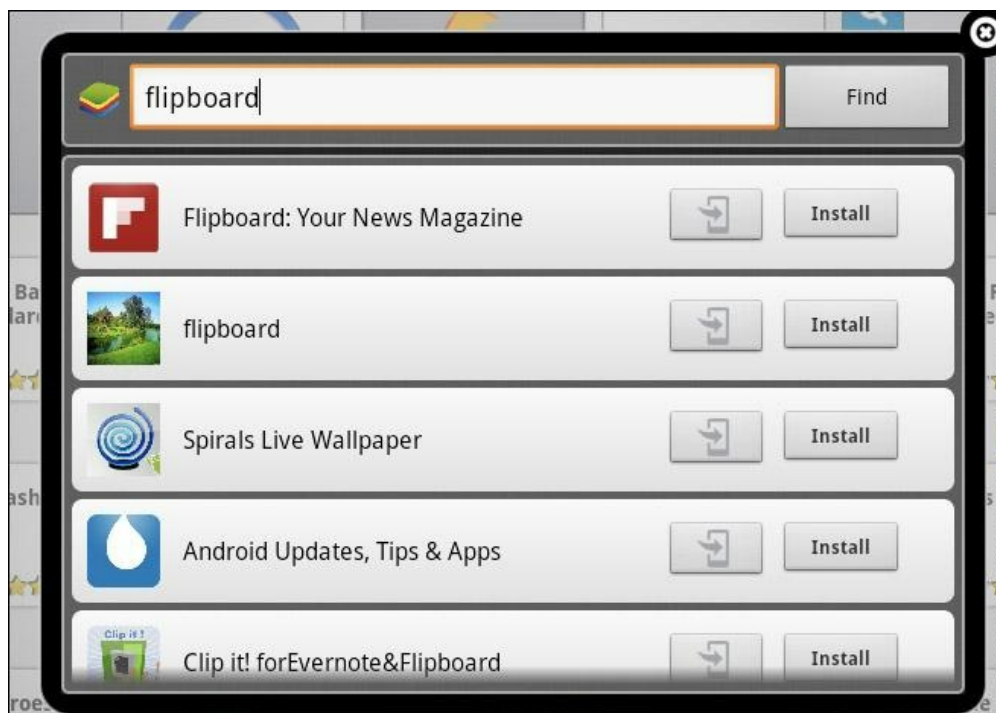
Top Charts	The Top Charts page is selected by default. This displays the most popular apps used by other App Player users.
1-Click Sync	Click here to set up 1-Click Sync, which allows you to send apps to an Android device (requires a Google account).
Search	This button searches for apps to install.
Settings	This button helps us configure App Player and manage apps.
Window / Full Screen	This button toggles between the fullscreen and windowed view of App Player.
Home Button	This button gets you back to the first page.
Back	This button takes you back a step.
Top Charts Content	This area is where the contents of the current page appear (in this instance, Top Charts)

Feel free to explore the various parts of the App Player to get familiar with the environment. If you get stuck anywhere, clicking on the **Home** button will get you back to this page.

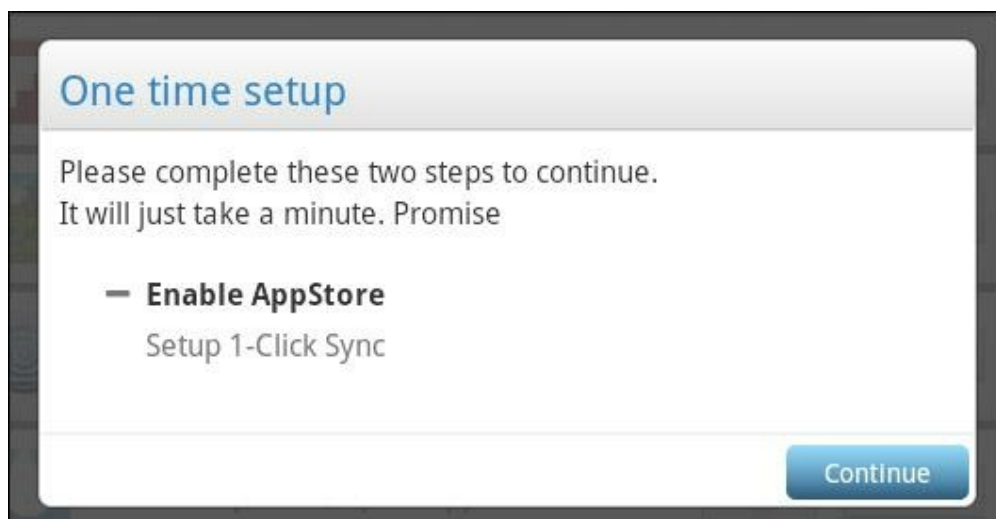
Step 2 – installing Flipboard

Now that you are relatively familiar with the interface, you should dive in and install an app. The following steps will walk you through installing Flipboard, which is a mobile-only magazine-style RSS reader:

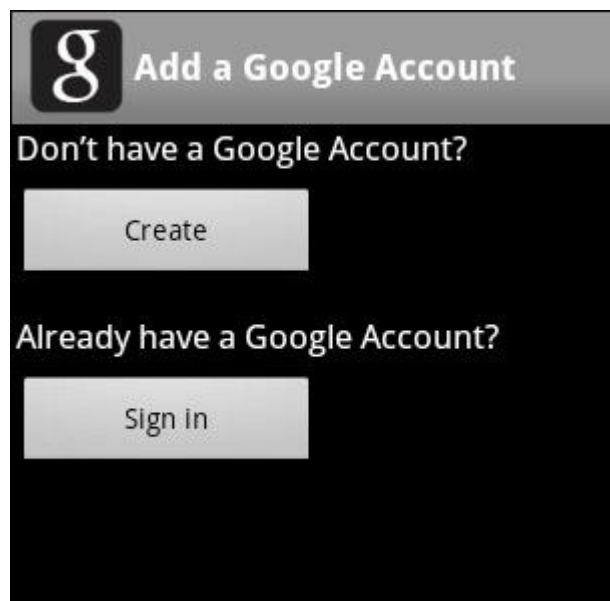
1. Click on the **Search** icon.
2. Type [Flipboard](#) and then click on **Find**, as shown in the following screenshot:



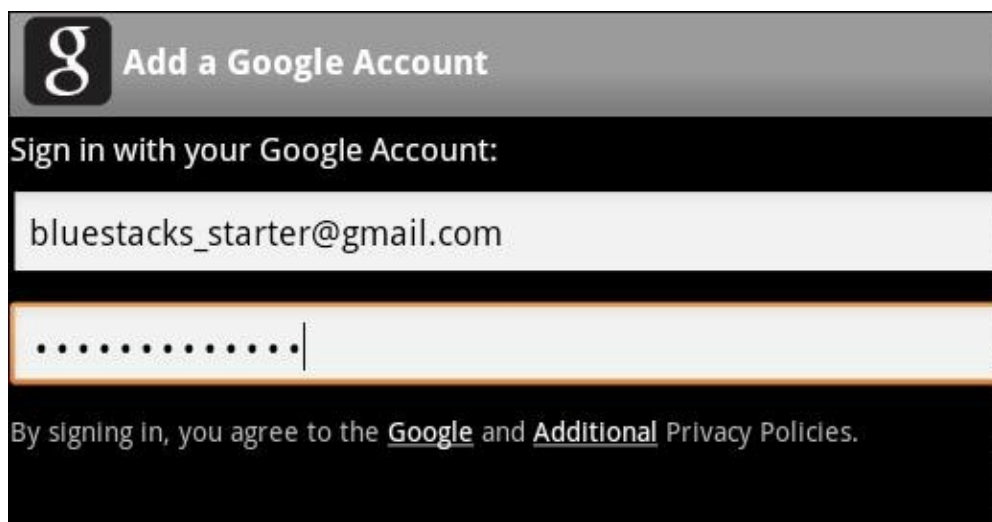
3. Click on **Install** next to **Flipboard: Your News Magazine**.
4. As this is your first app installation, you will need to configure **One time setup** as shown in the following screenshot:



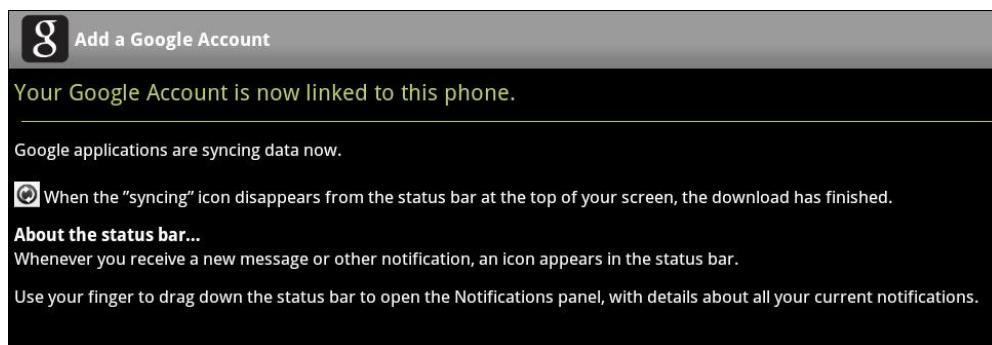
5. After clicking on **Continue**, you will be informed that you need to provide Google account details. Click on **Next** to proceed.
6. Either create a new Google account or sign in if you have one already. The window that appears is shown in the following screenshot:



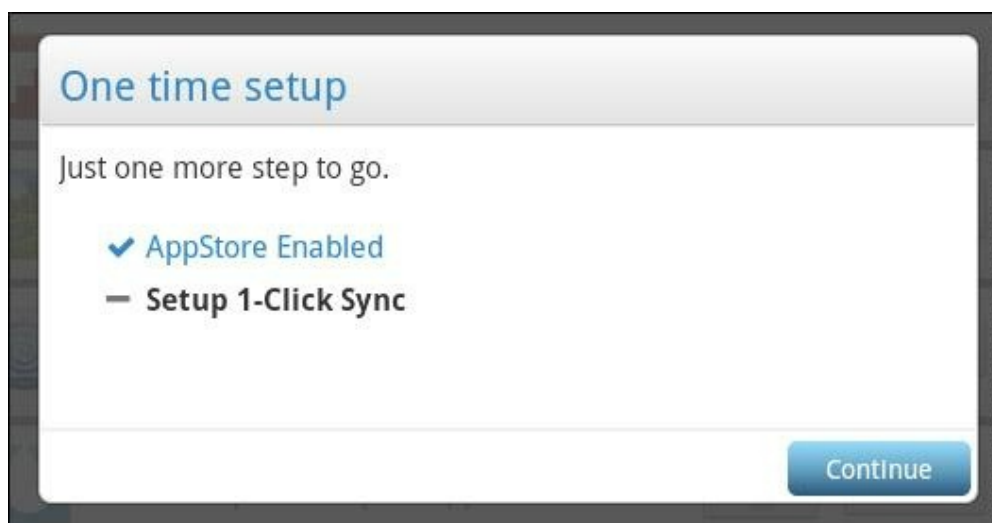
7. Click on **Sign in** if you already have a Google account or click on **Create** to set up a new account. This will take you to the Google website where you need to provide some personal information and set up a username that will also act as your e-mail address.
8. Type in your details and then click on Sign in, as shown in the following screenshot:



9. After a while, your Google account will be synchronized. Click on **Finish Setup** and the following screenshot should appear on your screen:



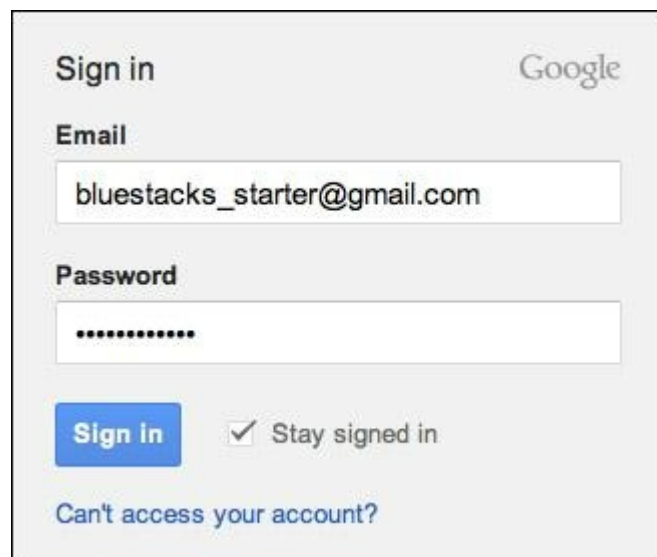
10. Next, you need to enable **1-Click Sync**, as shown in the following screenshot:



11. Click on **Continue**.
12. When prompted, click on **Proceed**, as shown in the following screenshot:

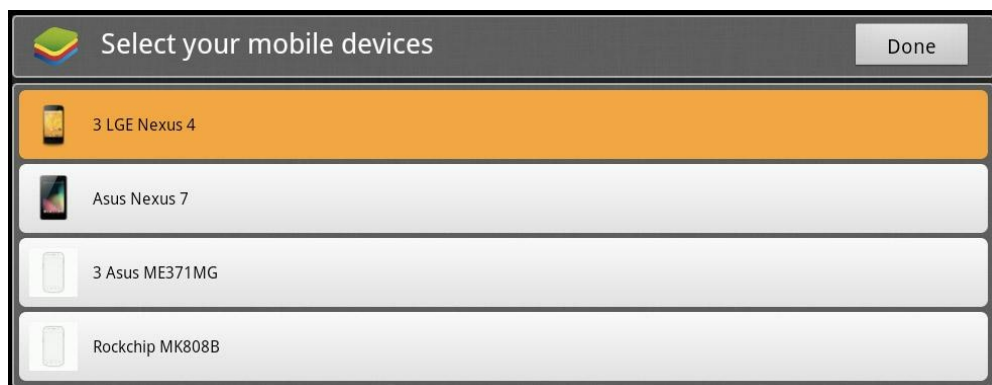


13. Sign in with your Google account, as shown in the following screenshot:

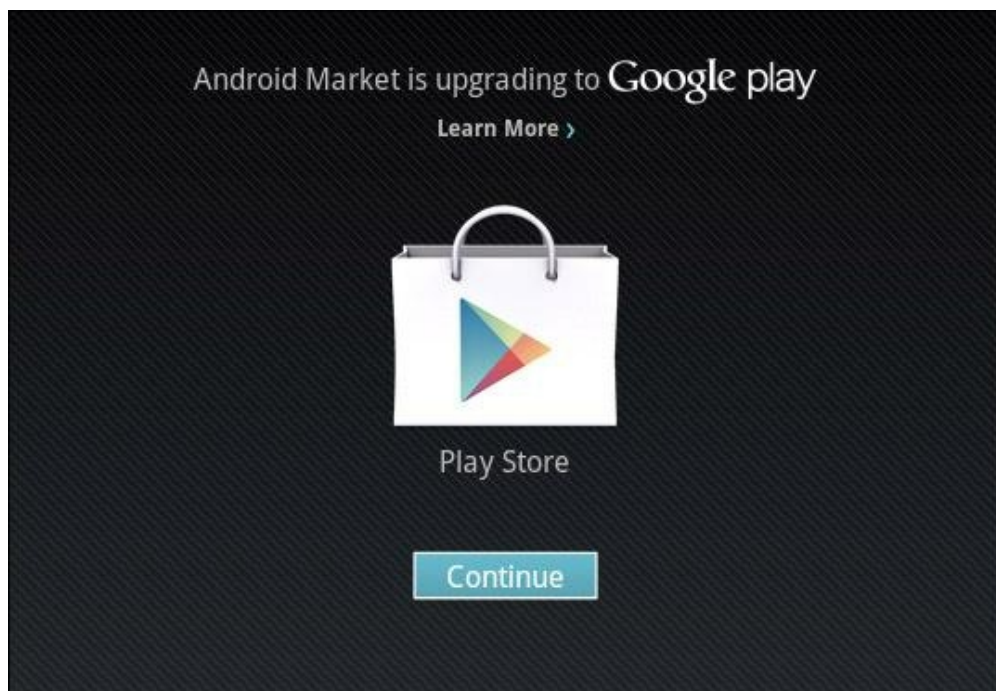


A screenshot of the Google Sign in interface. At the top left is the text "Sign in" and at the top right is the "Google" logo. Below "Sign in" is the label "Email". Underneath is a text input field containing the email address "bluestacks_starter@gmail.com". Below the email field is the label "Password". Underneath is a password input field filled with ten dots. Below the password field is a blue "Sign in" button. To the right of the button is a checked checkbox followed by the text "Stay signed in". At the bottom is a blue link that says "Can't access your account?".

14. If you already have devices, you can sync the app content from these by highlighting them. Click on **Done**, as shown in the following screenshot:



15. Click on **Finish and Let's Go!** when prompted.
16. You will now be taken to **Play Store**. Click on **Continue**, as shown in the following screenshot:



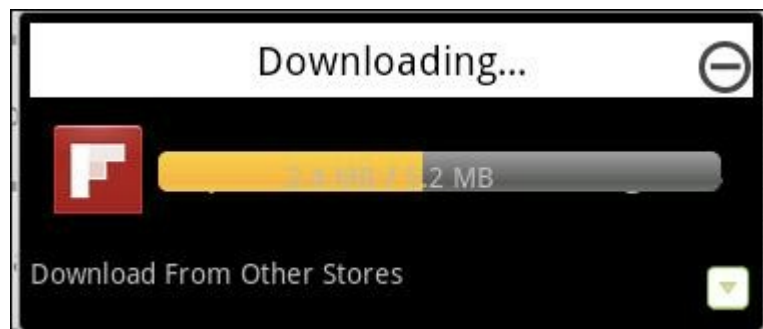
17. Now that you have set up **1-Click Sync**, you are taken back to installing **Flipboard**, as shown in the following screenshot:



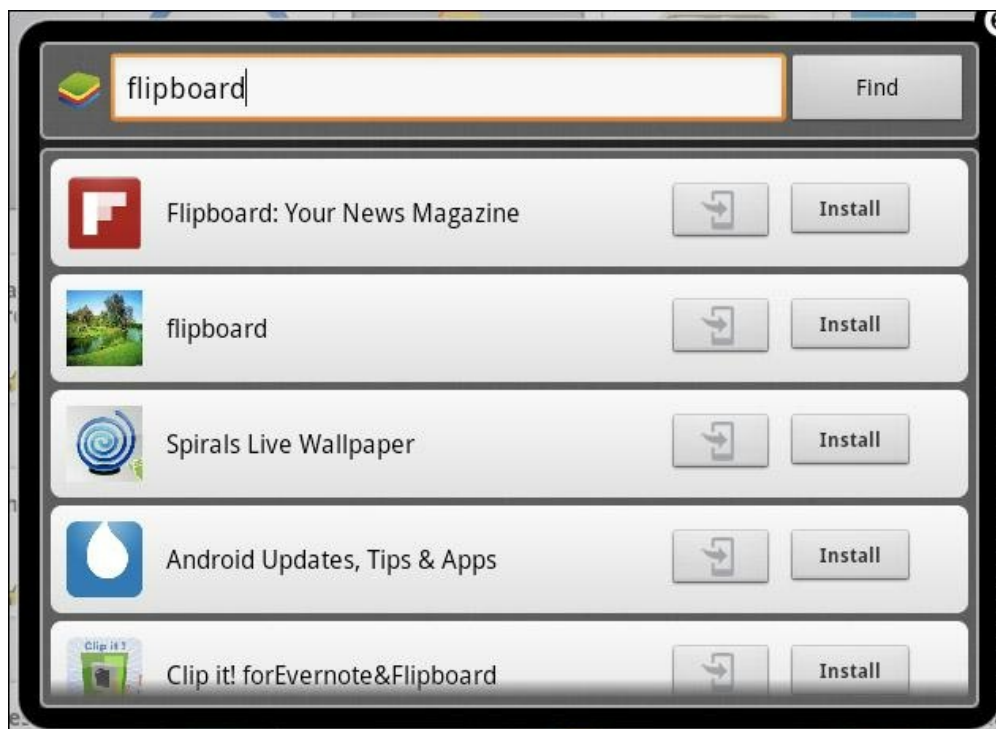
18. Clicking on **Install** will take you to a collection of **App Stores** to install **Flipboard** from (see the following screenshot).



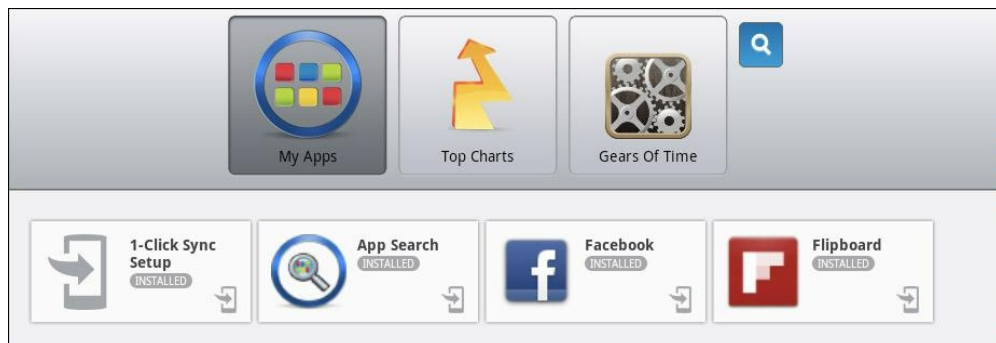
19. Click on one of the **Flipboard** icons at the top-left column to begin installing the app.
20. Flipboard will begin downloading, as shown in the following screenshot:



21. When the download is complete, it will take you back to the **Search** screen, as shown in the following screenshot:



22. Click on the cross at the top right corner to close the **Search** window and then click on **My Apps** to see that **Flipboard** is now installed, as shown in the following screenshot:



23. Click on the **Flipboard** icon to run the app, as shown in the following screenshot:



Top 5 features you need to know about

As you get more used to using BlueStacks, you'll start to appreciate the power of running Android apps on your computer that BlueStacks offers you. With that in mind, here are the top five features that will help you progress from being a novice so that you can make the most of the software.

The BlueStacks environment

Once you've got going with BlueStacks App Player, you will no doubt want to get under the hood and make some changes. The settings icon at the bottom right corner, as shown in the following screenshot, takes you to the page where changes to the environment are made:



When you are in the settings screen, as shown in the following screenshot, there are a couple of options you may wish to tweak that are described as follows:



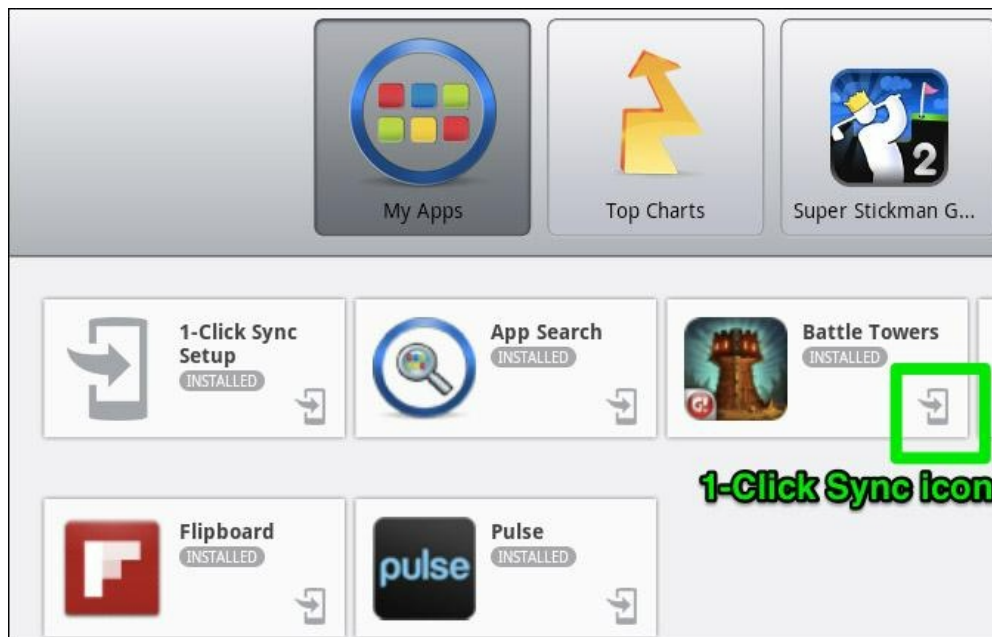
- **Change Language:** This option enables users who do not natively speak English to choose an option that is compatible with their mother tongues.
- **Manage Accounts:** This option allows you to update your Google account for accessing the App Store. You can add more than one account if you have apps purchased in different accounts that you do not wish to purchase again.
- **Manage Applications:** This option is where you can uninstall apps that you are no longer using and set whether they are the tablet or default versions of the app. The majority of the time the default option is fine, but you may need to select the tablet option if you are find that an app does not run automatically in the fullscreen mode.

1-Click Sync

This short guide will run you through the process of sending apps to your phone from BlueStacks App Player using 1-Click Sync, as listed in the following steps:

1. Before starting, you will need to make sure that you have the same Google account setup in your Settings section as that on the device you wish to send an app to.
2. From within **App Player**, click on the **1-Click Sync** setup.
3. Select the device you wish to sync the app to.
4. Click on **Done**.

5. Now click on the **1-Click Sync icon** at the bottom right corner, as shown in the following screenshot, of the app you wish to send to your Android device:

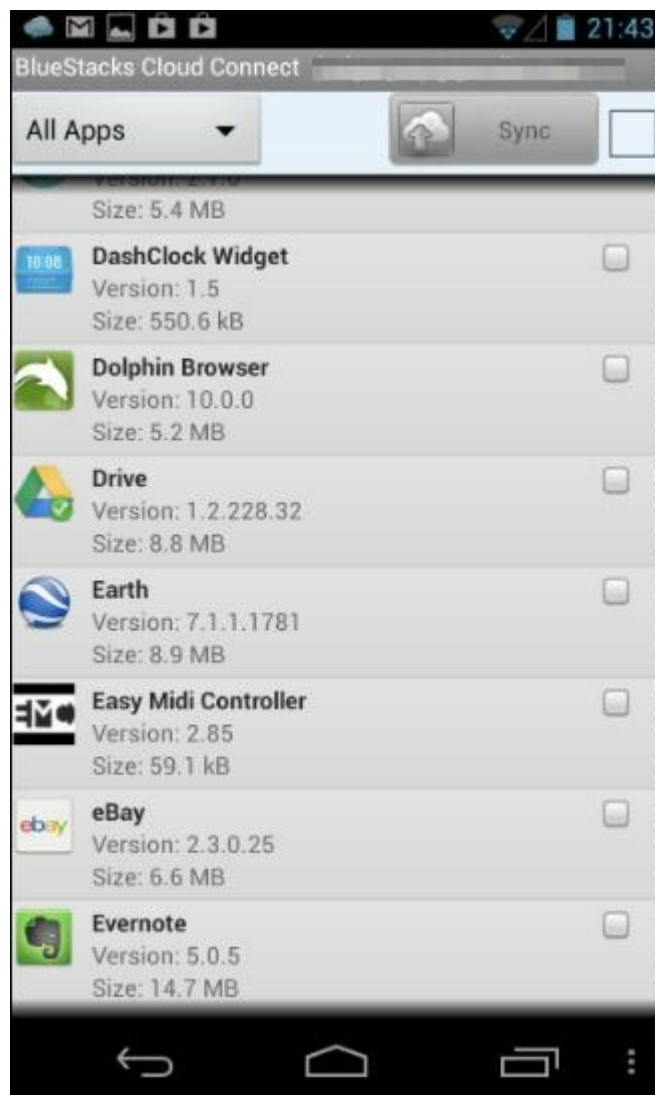


6. Now watch as the app starts automatically downloading.

Cloud Connect

Cloud Connect allows you to synchronize the apps that you have installed on your phone. The following steps help you synchronize your apps using Cloud Connect:

1. Use BlueStacks App Player on your computer and click on **Settings**.
2. Click on **Cloud Connect**.
3. Insert your e-mail address and mobile phone number (for configuration details through SMS).
4. You will be provided with an onscreen PIN, which you will need to take note of (or at least leave onscreen for the next steps).
5. From the **Play Store** app on your Android device search for [Cloud Connect](#) and then install it.
6. Once the app has downloaded, open the app and you will be prompted to insert **BlueStacks Channels PIN**.
7. Type in the PIN and then click on **Login**.
8. Once logged in, you can select the apps you wish to sync back to the App Player, as shown in the following screenshot:



Apps from outside the app store

To install apps that do not appear in the app store, you will first need to get the APK file. This is the compiled Java application written specifically for Android. The processes are different for Mac and PC, so you'll need to follow the guide that relates to the type of computer you have.

Mac

Perform the following steps to install an app on your Mac that does not appear in the app store:

1. Download an APK file from the internet, or if you are a developer, prepare one in your IDE. You can download one from http://www.freewarelovers.com/android/download/temp/1325762461_Zirco_Browser_0.4

2. Once the file has downloaded, you need to copy it into this directory: `Applications\BlueStacks.app\Contents\Runtime`. If you are using Finder, you will need to right-click on the **BlueStacks** app and then click on **Show Contents of Package**.
3. Open the terminal.
4. Type the following commands:

```
cd .. [Return]
cd .. [Return]
cd applications [Return]
cd bluestacks.app [Return]
cd contents [Return]
cd runtime [Return]
./uHD-Adb install Zirco_Browser_0.4.3.apk
[Return]
```

When the process completes, you should receive a success message.

5. This app will now be installed in your **My Apps** section of BlueStacks App Player.

PC

Perform the following steps to install an app on your PC that does not appear in the app store:

1. Download an APK file from the internet, or if you are a developer, prepare one in your IDE. You can download one from http://www.freewarelovers.com/android/download/temp/1325762461_Zirco_Browser_0.4.3.apk
2. Right-click on the file and open with **BlueStacks APK Handler**.
3. This app will now be installed in your **My Apps** section of the BlueStacks App Player

Tips for troubleshooting

If you find that you are running into trouble, you might want to consider the following tips for troubleshooting:

- Your first troubleshooting tactic is to uninstall and reinstall BlueStacks. If it is beta software, you may find that the installation isn't successful the first time.
- If you are experiencing a slow response from BlueStacks, you should try restarting your computer and make sure that very few apps are running in the background, as the App Player can be quite demanding on system resources.
- If you are a Windows user, the next step is to install the latest drivers for your graphics card. If you find that the app fails to load, it is worth

looking at the support forum to find out whether your graphics card has been used successfully by others.

- If you are using Windows 8 Pro with a touch screen device and are not able to run App Player, try downloading and running the following registry patch: <http://cdn.bluestacks.com/downloads/tools/fix-win8-pro-compat-rel.reg>.

You should take care before installing registry keys, as it poses a risk to your system. If in doubt, do not proceed, or if you wish to learn more, look at the following article from Microsoft:

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/310516>.

People and places you should get to know

The following are a list of people and places that you should become familiar with while using BlueStacks. They will guide you through getting used to the software and provide valuable insights into how to make it work better for you.

Official sites

- Homepage: <http://www.bluestacks.com>
- Wiki: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BlueStacks>
- Blog: <http://www.bluestacks.com/announcements.html>

Articles and tutorials

- <http://bloodbrothersgame.wikia.com/wiki/Tutorial:Bluestacks>
- <http://www.head4space.com/install-flipboard-on-your-mac-or-pc/>
- <http://gigaom.com/2012/09/27/amd-computers-run-500000-android-apps-with-bluestacks/>
- <http://blog.julianxhokaxhiu.com/2012/12/26/how-to-run-whatsapp-on-your-pcmac-using-bluestacks/>
- <http://www.engadget.com/2012/09/27/bluestacks-teams-with-amd-to-optimize-its-android-app-player/>
- <http://hackyogi.com/how-to-remove-error-while-installing-bluestack-in-windows/>

Community

- Official forums: <http://getsatisfaction.com/bstk>
- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/BlueStacksInc>
- User FAQ: <https://getsatisfaction.com/bstk> (sticky items in the support forum)

Blogs

- XDA Developers Wiki: http://forum.xda-developers.com/wiki/BlueStacks_App_Player
- Tumblr blogs with BlueStacks content: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/bluestacks>
- TechCrunch reporting of BlueStacks development: <http://techcrunch.com/tag/bluestacks/>
- The Verge reports on BlueStacks: <http://www.theverge.com/search?q=bluestacks>

- The Engadget reports on BlueStacks:
<http://www.engadget.com/tag/BlueStacks/>

Twitter

- The official BlueStacks twitter account: <http://twitter.com/bluestacksinc>
- The TechCrunch tweets: <http://twitter.com/techcrunch>
- The Verge tweets: <http://twitter.com/verge>
- The Technology tweets: <http://www.twitter.com/head4space>
- For more open source information, follow Packt Publishing at
<http://twitter.com/#!/packtopensource>