

## Re: Can 4.5 give me anything that 4.1 doesn't? (Noobe)

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<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/PocketPC/microsoft.public.pocketpc.activesync/2009-01/msg00189.html>

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- *From:* Todd Allcock <eleconnec@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Tue, 27 Jan 2009 12:50:58 -0700
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At 27 Jan 2009 11:34:10 -0600 Ken Maltby wrote:

Your concern for "hacked" firmware is one that should be taken into consideration, but it's more a matter of whether you have an understanding of the process of such hacking, or not. You need to be able to make some minor adjustments to the hack, on some occasions. There are plenty of times where it is much less of a risk, such as making a DVD Drive region free or updating the disk media tables. Many devices have the ability to flash firmware as a feature, for the very intent of adding features or capabilities at a later date. Then there is the case where models of a device may differ in firmware only ( an exceptionally easy way to have products at several price points come off the same hardware production run).

The problem with "hacking" Windows Mobile is the intense level of customization that goes into each device. Since WM devices lack the multi-GB hard drives of desktops, each device includes only what is absolutely necessary in its firmware- i.e. the drivers for the display and WiFi hardware on that device only, for example, unlike a desktop OS with a variety of hardware drivers pre-included to support a myriad of potential hardware configurations.

The hackers have to source their upgrades by stripping them from the firmware of different, hopefully similar models, merging them with the drivers of the original device (assuming they'll even work with the new OS) or replacing them with drivers of newer models by trial-and-error hoping to find workable combinations.

When I "unofficially" upgraded my HTC Wizard from WM5 to WM6, I tried five or six ROMs before finding one that was mostly stable- some would make the device hemorrhage memory, lockup the WiFi radio, hang the device randomly, etc. Plus you're at the mercy of what features the "chef" felt

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necessary or desirable. I saw a hacked ROM for my Wizard that had several different 3rd-party media players and texting programs added, but Word and Excel Mobile left out for space reasons! (Business functionality was obviously not a priority for this particular hacker!) Another modified so many default registry settings with his "secret custom tweaks" he inadvertently disabled file sync! I was the only person to point this out among the several dozen "attaboys" and "best ROM ever" posts on the forum he posted the ROM at- the typical hacked ROM user apparently has a far different usage scenario than I!

Another ROM I tried impressed me at first with its speed and responsiveness, until I realized it was accomplished by including and autostarting a CPU overclocking program in the ROM, pushing my Wizard's poor little 200MHz processor to 260!

There is also the fact that OS are generally made to be easily adapted to as large a base of hardware, as possible. Often they cover almost all the possible implementations of a particular processor, in a particular version of the OS, for that processor or processor family. (Not to mention Linux.)

Such is not as true of a mobile OS! ;-)

So, my questions still stand, if I were to attempt such "upgrades" what benefits could I reasonably expect to see, or is there no real benefit of 4.5 over 4.1?

With all due respect to the good folks at Microsoft, Activesync is NOT their best product by a long shot. Many folks have big problems syncing or even getting it to recognize their device. There is no benefit to changing a working Activesync setup with another "untested" one. The Devil you know, as they say...

I'm still using a pre-release beta version of AS 4.5 simply because it works, and I'm unwilling to gamble on the actual release version!

Having said that, should you decide to upgrade, you will have to use 4.5-lower versions do not support WM6+.

Or WM6.1 over WM5?

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WM6 offers HTML email support, and a (very slight) prettying up of the UI. (The spinning "please wait" circle that mimics the hourglass on a desktop is now multicolored. It's a nice touch since you tend to see it more often in WM6!) Other than the above, I don't recall any earth-shattering changes.

However, I'd say go for it, if, (and only if!) you have access to the current WM5 firmware should you decide to rollback. (Typically vendors don't offer the device's original firmware to roll back to unless they also provide an update, probably under the theory that no one needs a 50MB download of their device's included "permanent" firmware.) I don't think WM5 has any inherent advantages over WM6, but you might miss the current stability of your device if the ROM creator wasn't very skilled, or just has a different "stability" tolerance than you do. (Many consider "only" having to reset the device a few times a day a "success!")

Still, upgrading my Wizard was certainly a fun experience, but as a contrast, I haven't experimented with my current device (a WM6 AT&T Tilt.) I haven't even used the official available WM6.1 upgrade since I'm happy with the Tilt's current stability and functionality, and see no reason to mess with that!

—

Todd Allcock, Microsoft MVP, Mobile Devices

Sent from my Windows Mobile device, otherwise this post would've been longer, much wittier, and spell-checked.

What is an MVP? <http://mvp.support.microsoft.com/gp/mvpfaq>

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