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How to switch between Samsung and Apple

Why neither company makes it easy to say goodbye

March 18, 2013 | Quentin Fottrell

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Samsung's new smartphone may boast cool new technology — like an eye tracker that pauses video when users turn away from its screen — but if the company wants to persuade iPhone users to give up their iPhones, it'll need to add one more key feature: a simple way to transfer music and other media out of Apple's operating system.

It may be easy for people to switch phones once their wireless contract expires, but converting music and media libraries has always been a more complicated affair. It's "complex, time-consuming and expensive, depending how you use the phone," says technology analyst Jeff Kagan. Here's the rub:

Samsung (KR:005930) uses Google's Android operating system, while Apple's iOS relies on iTunes and iCloud. Industry pros say both companies have an interest in making it a challenge to abandon their operating systems. (Samsung and Apple did not respond to requests for comment.)

See: Who inherits your iTunes library?

The good news: Both Samsung and Apple (US:AAPL) phones play AAC and MP3, the two most common types of digital music files, so consumers just have to find a way of transferring those files — rather than converting them. "Apple doesn't allow any company to directly sync with iTunes," says Whitson Gordon, editor-in-chief of Lifehacker.com, a consumer advice website. In 2009, Apple charged 30 cents per song to upgrade existing music libraries — stripping them of digital rights management. In 2011, iTunes Match was introduced to make songs DRM-free for an annual fee of \$25 for a maximum of 25,000 songs. In theory at least, that makes it easier for consumers to transfer their songs to non-Apple gadgets. (Before 2009, Apple only sold DRM files, except in the case of record label EMI's catalog, which has been DRM-free since 2007.)

But consumers defecting from one operating system still need to find a way to transfer those music files between different Android and Apple devices. "I'm surprised the companies haven't made more of an effort to make it easier to switch to their phone," says Whitson, "but that's difficult to do without stepping on the toes of their competitors." There are, however, third party apps for that. Apps like **iSyncr** (\$3.99) enable users to sync their iTunes "ecosystem" or suite of products with their Android device. A free app called **doubleTwist**, from Google Play, also syncs music from iTunes. Still, experts say it would be nice to have a new generation of phones with built-in features that easily transfer music between rivals. "I don't own the rights to a digital song," says Rick Singer, CEO of GreatApps.com, "but I believe that I own the right to play that song on whatever device I see fit. It's like getting a CD for your car and not being able to play the same CD in your new car."

For those who have yet to amass a large collection, there could be an alternative solution: "Buy all your music from Amazon," says digital marketing consultant Bryan Eisenberg. Amazon's store and cloud player work across all operating systems and, in January, allowed songs to be purchased and downloaded directly onto mobile devices — whether they are Apple or Android. Otherwise, switching between different operating systems can be complex and time-consuming, Kagan says, "so expect even more solutions for customers to bridge this gap."

See: Will Amazon push Apple to lower music prices?

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