Thunderbird Android client is K-9 Mail reborn, and it’s in solid beta


9:54
Thunderbird Beta
Welcome to Thunderbird Beta, the Android email client designed for enhanced security, easy customization, and seamless management of all your email accounts.
Start
Import settings

Thunderbird’s Android app, which is actually the K-9 Mail project reborn, is almost out. You can check it out a bit early in a beta that will feel pretty robust to most users.

Thunderbird, maintained by the Mozilla Foundation subsidiary MZLA, acquired the source code and naming rights to K-9 Mail, as announced in June 2022. The group also brought K-9 maintainer Christian Ketterer (or “cketti”) onto the project. Their initial goals, before a full rebrand into Thunderbird, involved importing Thunderbird’s automatic account setup, message filters, and mobile/desktop Thunderbird syncing.

At the tail end of 2023, however, Ketterer wrote on K-9’s blog that the punchlist of items before official Thunderbird-dom was taking longer than expected. But when it’s fully released, Thunderbird for Android will have those features. As such, beta testers are asked to check out a specific list of things to see if they work, including automatic setup, folder management, and K-9-to-Thunderbird transfer. The beta will not be “addressing longstanding issues,” Thunderbird’s blog post notes.

Launching Thunderbird for Android from K-9 Mail’s base makes a good deal of sense. Thunderbird’s desktop client has had a strange, disjointed life so far and is only just starting to regain a cohesive vision for what it wants to provide. For a long time now, K-9 Mail has been the Android email of choice for people who don’t want Gmail or Outlook, will not tolerate the default “Email” app on non-Google-blessed Android systems, and just want to see their messages.

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