

Google's Fast Share is an upcoming AirDrop-like file sharing tool for Android

Google is working on a file sharing service called Fast Share which looks like a replacement to Android Beam and a competitor to Apple's AirDrop.

When I discovered that Google was [deprecating Android Beam](#) in Android Q, I was surprised to see how many people were upset by the news. The file transfer service used NFC to transfer files between devices, and although it was slow and rarely used, it still had its fans because of how widely available it was. *Every* Android device supported Android Beam, as a matter of fact. Now, in order to share files, you have to use other methods that aren't guaranteed to work on every device. Google has pushed users toward the [Files by Google](#) app, but it now appears that the company is working on a new file-sharing tool. The tool, called Fast Share, is part of the Nearby service in Google Play Services, and it looks to be not only an Android Beam replacement but also an Apple AirDrop competitor.

Fast Share was first spotted by [9to5Google](#) earlier today, but we quickly [figured out](#) how to access it for ourselves to share the below screenshots. We also thank XDA Recognized Developer [Quinny899](#) for his assistance in getting some of these screenshots. The screenshots show that the new file-sharing tool will let you "share to nearby devices without Internet," much like Android Beam once did. Rather than NFC, the service uses Bluetooth to initiate a handshake and then subsequently transfers files over a direct Wi-Fi connection. This will allow for larger files to be transferred much more quickly than Android Beam. Fast Share even allows you to give your device "Preferred Visibility" to nearby devices, which lets those devices "always see your device when you're nearby, even if you're not using Fast Share."

The share flow seems similar to Apple's AirDrop file sharing service, which Android users have wanted for years. You can send one or more files to another device by selecting the files you want and picking the "Fast Share" option in the share sheet menu. Then, you can pick which device you want to send to once the devices appear in the scanning menu. The activity currently shows generic share targets, including a Chromebook, a Google Pixel 3, an iPhone, and a smartwatch. Hopefully, the service will actually support sending files to Chrome OS devices, Apple iOS devices, and Wear OS smartwatches once it goes live, but we can't say for sure just based on the presence of these generic share targets.

What we can be sure of is that the service will support sending and receiving files to and from other Android devices with Google Play Services installed. Whether Fast Share will require a specific Android OS version is something we're not sure of, though. I would imagine that it'll support most modern Android releases given that it only requires Bluetooth and Wi-Fi Direct support.

We'll keep an eye out on this file sharing service and will let you know if or when it goes live. It looks like it'll be a decent competitor to Apple's AirDrop, but given its reliance on Google Play Services, some will be disappointed that it won't be as ubiquitous as Android Beam. Google is known to rip services out of AOSP and put them into Google Play Services, so this move shouldn't come as a surprise. Still, given how many Certified Android devices are on the market, you'll likely have a hard time finding a device that won't support this new file sharing tool once it's available.

Via: [9to5Google](#)

