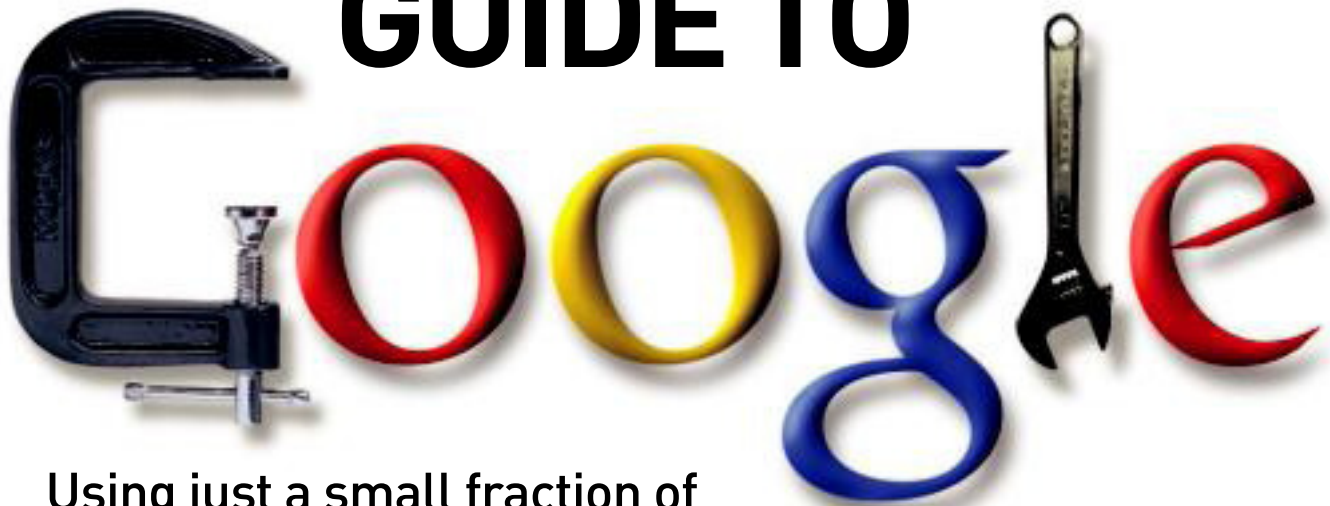


THE POWER USERS GUIDE TO



Using just a small fraction of Google's vast application offerings? That's about to end!

BY GINA TRAPANI

Remember that old maxim that says we use only about 10 percent of our brain's capacity? It's been proven as hokum by modern neuroscience, but we think we can safely apply the same basic analogy to Google: The vast, vast, *vast* majority of computer users—even those practiced in hardcore nerdery—are almost certainly using a pitiful fraction of all the applications and features intrinsic to Google's ever-expanding matrix of software code.

Sure, a *Maximum PC* reader may be well-versed in Google's advanced search operators (Google **allintext**: "**advanced search operators**" if you missed that chapter), but we're willing to wager that even the most curious among you haven't taken the time to play with more than a few Google applications, let alone explore all their advanced features. Indeed, Google HQ is a fan-friggin'-amazing hotbed of R&D, but its developers are relatively quiet about the tools they've released. And that's a

shame, because Google's constant innovation should get more press.

To address your inevitable Google knowledge deficit, we commissioned Gina Trapani to share her favorite tips. Gina launched Lifehacker.com, writes about Google for a bazillion media outlets, co-hosts the "This Week In Google" netcast, and pretty much makes it her job to know as much as possible about Google's sundry apps and features.

Want even harder hardcore tips? Or did we leave out an application you really want to know about? Send your requests to comments@maximumpc.com. Oh, and by the way: Google Buzz was announced literally minutes before this article went to press. But we'll certainly cover this app in a future issue—because if there's one thing this world needs, it's more social media options. FTW!

—JON PHILLIPS

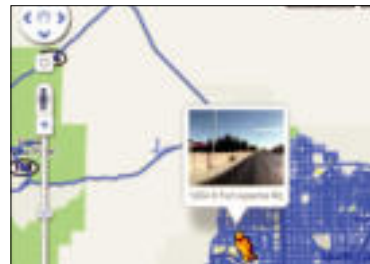
MAPS

Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>) is a mapping application and route planner that provides driving, walking, and public transit directions from your starting point to one or more destinations. Launched in 2005, Maps is based on technology created at Australian startup Where2

by brothers Lars and Jens Rasmussen (currently the lead engineers on Google Wave). Along with Gmail, Google Maps was one of the first web apps to extensively use Ajax, a JavaScript programming technique that updates map imagery as you pan and zoom, all without reloading the page.

Preview Which Streets Made Street View's Cut

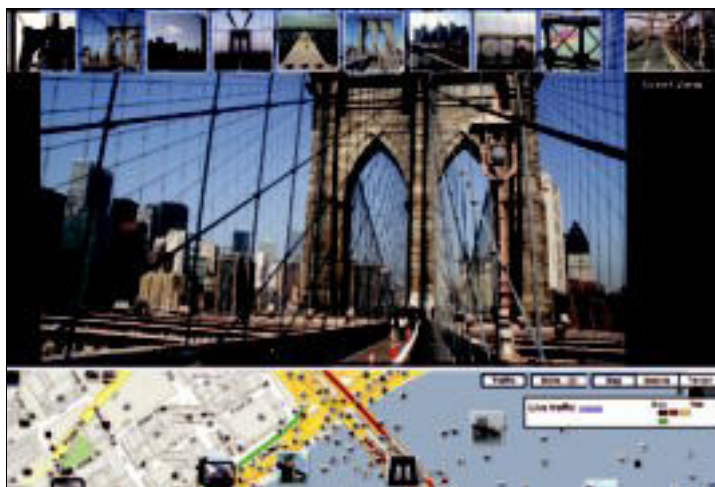
Not only does Google Maps display aerial imagery in Satellite view, it also offers a huge database of on-the-ground photos via Street View. To switch to Street View from the basic map screen, drag and drop the yellow "pegman" from the top of the zoom control onto the map. When you do, blue lines appear on the streets where ground imagery is available (throughout the United States and in select other countries). Drop the pegman onto the road of your choice, walk down the street by clicking the navigational arrows, and double-click any area of a photo to zoom in on it. Some images are so clear, you can read the hours on No Parking signs.



The abundance of blue lines shows us that Google's Street View van covered Las Vegas pretty well, but didn't venture very far into the desert.

IN-CAR NAVIGATION?

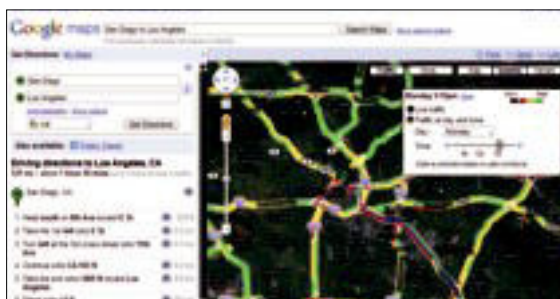
In Maps Help, search "Using Maps with your navigation device" to learn how to send directions straight from Google Maps to your Tom-Tom, Garmin, BMW, or Mercedes navigation systems.



Add Local Color to Your Map

Don't miss out on the brave new world beyond the Map, Satellite, Terrain, and Street View features in Google Maps. Under the More button (located between the Traffic and Satellite buttons on the top-right of a map), you can overlay links to photos, videos, Wikipedia articles, webcams, transit maps (in some cities), and real estate listings. This feature is perfect when you want to know the history of a monument, find open homes for your Sunday real estate tour, or see what's happening on the local zoo's "panda cam."

Click a few boxes, and Google's View of New York City becomes absolutely silly with user-contributed photos and videos. And when you switch to Street View, you'll be able to peruse your More choices in a thumbnail gallery.



Using predictive analysis of data collected from road sensors and GPS-equipped mobile phones, Google's Traffic function gives you a color-coded snapshot of how road conditions might shape up.

Check Traffic to Avoid the Madness!

Before you start the car, check for clogged arteries by clicking the Traffic button. By default you'll see live, current traffic conditions—anonymous collected from drivers' mobile devices—but you can change the day and time to see extrapolated predictions. To do so, in the Traffic pop-up click the Change link, and set the day and time of your departure. Things looking bad out there? Well, when you get directions in Google Maps, you can always opt for an alternate route by clicking and dragging the suggested route to another road. Or you could opt to ditch the car entirely: Click the Public Transit or Walking link on the right panel below the starting point and destination to see how you can get there by bus, train, trolley, or on foot.

DOCS

Google Docs (<http://docs.google.com>) is a web-based word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation application that stores any files you create in it, as well as files you upload.

While Google Docs doesn't offer all the functionality you'd find in Microsoft Office, its web-based collaboration features present a whole new world of utility.

Save Time on Formatting with Templates

Whether you need an invoice, resume, or calendar, you don't have to design it from scratch—just grab a template, thousands of which can be found in the drop-down menu of the Create New button. Various spreadsheets, text documents, presentations, and forms are broken down by categories like “Resumes and Cover Letters,” “Personal Finance,” and “Legal.” (Hint: Choose your language from the “Narrow by language” drop-down to hide foreign-language templates.) Google Docs will keep track of which templates you've used in the past for easy reuse. The spreadsheet templates—pre-formatted with built-in formulas and charts—are reason enough to check out Docs.

This personal financial budget shows you exactly where all your money's going. Oh well, at least the spreadsheet is free!



Conduct Surveys with Forms

Google's form templates are awesome for not only collecting data from co-workers, loved ones, and website visitors, but also for tallying responses. In Google Docs, click the Create New button, and chose “form” from the drop-down. Now, enter your questions, as well as the types of answers each question should get. You can format answers for multiple choice, check-boxes, and other common survey criteria, as well as add section headers and choose custom visual themes. Clicking the “Email for” button will send your contacts a link to the form (you also can copy and paste the link to publish it yourself). When your recipients answer the form's questions, a Google spreadsheet living in the cloud collects and charts the responses for you to see. For example, you can gather all your friends' vital personal specs—phone numbers, home addresses, even favorite foods—with one simple questionnaire.

Feel free to mix in “check all that apply” questions with those demanding “one answer only.”

Chat While You Crunch Numbers

When you give other people access to a document in Google Docs, a blue notification icon on the far right of the menu bar will inform you who else is viewing and/or editing the document while you have it open. In spreadsheets, this bar has a down arrow on it, which you can click to expand a chat panel. Not only will you be able to see real-time updates to your spreadsheet as others change it, you can instant message your collaborators as you work. This feature is conspicuously absent in documents and presentations.

Visualize Data with Interactive Gadgets

Once you've got a spreadsheet full of data, you'll want interesting ways to visualize it without doing too much work. Enter Google Docs gadgets, which are interactive charts, maps, and other data visualizations you can embed in a spreadsheet, publish on a web page, or include on your iGoogle homepage. From your Google Spreadsheet's Insert menu, choose “Gadget...” to choose and configure a gadget that displays your data in informative ways. You can create your own gadget or use one of the many provided, which include charts, gauges, timelines, org charts, and the fun “Bars of Stuff.”

Ditch the Thumb Drive and Store Files at Google Docs

Google Docs isn't just for office files anymore: You can now upload, store, and share any kind of file, including music, video, photos, and zip files. A simple click of the Upload button will save files to your home in the cloud. File sizes can be as high as 250MB, and you get up to 1GB of space for storing non-Google Docs files. Once your treasures are uploaded, select a file and click the Share link to give others access to it. You can also share entire folders, creating a Dropbox-like meeting space for your friends and colleagues to work on files together.



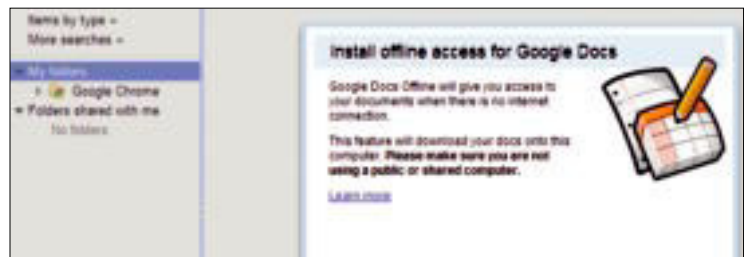
Files converted to Google Doc documents don't count toward the 1GB storage limit. Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel files can all be converted and stored for free, but you might lose features and formatting.

See a Document's Revision History

When multiple people are working on a document, things can change fast. To see who changed what and to compare revisions, open a document and from the File menu choose "See revision history." You'll get a list of all the changes a document has undergone. You can also select two revisions and compare them to see exactly what changed between them. Just be aware that revision history is available to anyone you share a document with—even your boss. So, if you don't want collaborators or viewers to see the history, make a copy of the document, which wipes away the bread-crumbs trail of its changes.

Get Your Documents Offline

One of the biggest concerns about keeping data in the cloud—instead of on your hard drive—centers on the question of offline access. So, if you're wondering how you'll work on your Google Docs files when you're on a non-Wi-Fi-equipped flight, Google Gears has you covered. This free browser add-on for Firefox, Internet Explorer, and Safari gives you access to your files offline, and syncs changes when you connect to the Internet again. You can download Google Gears at <http://gears.google.com>.



Google Gears helps you keep your cloud business in sync.

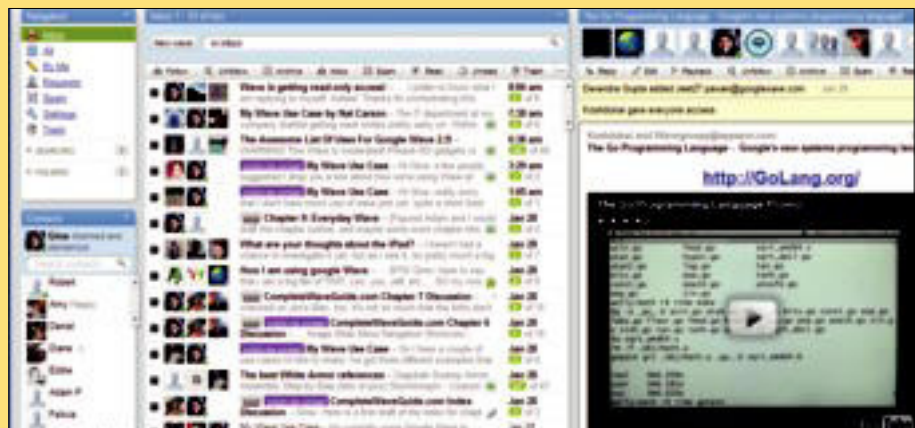
GOOGLE WAVE

Collaboration Made Easy

Google Wave (<http://wave.google.com>) is a new, real-time group collaboration tool that's currently an invitation-only beta product. Combining features from email, chat, wikis, and forums, Google Wave is best described as a mash-up between a real-time wiki and multimedia chat. You do all your group collaboration in "waves" (note the lowercase W), which function as a hybrid conversation/document—wrap your head around that!—that multiple people can view, edit, and add to.

Waves are live documents and change right before your eyes: You can watch collaborators' cursors move about with fury, keystroke by keystroke. You can also embed interactive content—like polls, YouTube clips, and slide shows—and easily discuss a

At first glance, it seems like there's nothing Wave can't do.



particular sentence in a block of text with the inline reply feature. Wave is young and missing essential features (like the ability to remove someone from a wave), but there's no mistaking its ambitions to change how power-users work together online.

CALENDAR

Google Calendar (<http://google.com/calendar>) is a scheduling application that offers email, SMS alerts, and collaboration features. The interface is similar to Microsoft Outlook's calendar, with daily,

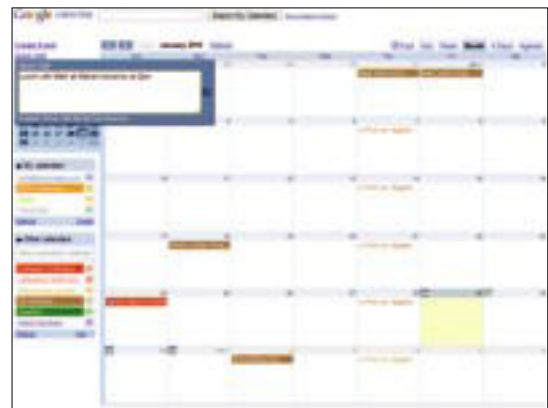
weekly, and monthly views, as well as a customizable time period and agenda views. Launched in April 2006, Google Calendar officially graduated from beta status in July 2009.

Get Your Agenda via Email or Text Message

When you create an event in Google Calendar, you can also configure an email or SMS reminder to come to you minutes, days, or weeks in advance—great for remembering to order flowers for Mom's birthday. You can also receive your daily agenda via email first thing in the morning. To do so, in the calendar list on the left, click the down-arrow button next to the appropriate calendar, then select Notifications. Check the "Daily agenda" box, and save your settings to get an email each morning at 5 a.m. in your timezone of the day's upcoming events. You can also get your schedule via text message: Text the word **day** to shortcode GVENT (48368) to receive your day's agenda. The word **next** will get the next event on your calendar, and the **nday** command will send back tomorrow's events. (Standard text messaging fees apply.)

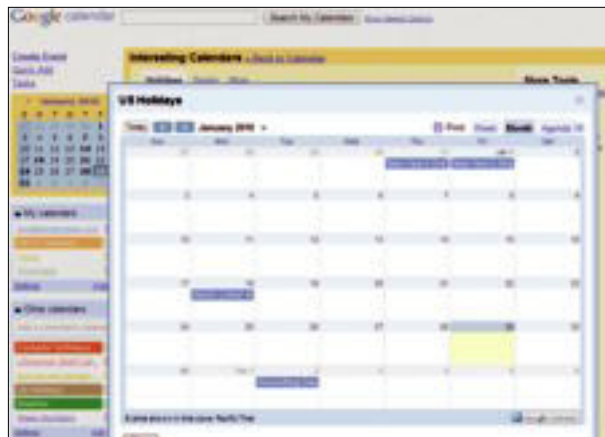
Quick-Add Events with Natural Language

The Google Calendar app is quite remarkable in its ability to generate calendar items from events you describe in natural, conversational language. For example, if you type "Lunch with Mark tomorrow at 2pm at Maria's," Calendar will parse "tomorrow at 2pm," scheduling the event for the correct day and time, and even fill in "Maria's" as the event location.



We wish more apps—and even people—could intelligently interpret conversational language.

Subscribe to Team Schedules, Birthdays, and More



Does your company give you a paid vacation for Groundhog Day? Your IT department can share your company's complete paid vacation day schedule via Google Calendar.

You can instantly add sports team schedules, holidays, and your contacts' birthdays to your schedule by subscribing to public calendars. In the Other Calendars module on the sidebar, click the Add link. From the drop-down, choose "Browse interesting calendars" to pick and choose from a selection of calendars, like religious or U.S. holidays, or your contacts' birthdays (compiled from your Google contact entries and their Google Profiles). You can also subscribe to any public calendar, or any of your contacts' Google calendars by choosing "Add by URL" or "Add a friend's calendar."

Incorporate the Weather Forecast on Your Calendar

Get the weather forecast for this weekend's softball game directly on your Google Calendar. In Settings, under the General tab, enter your location (either city and state

or zip code) and then, near "Show weather based on my location," choose whether you'd like the temperatures in Celsius or Fahrenheit. Save your changes, and GCal

will display a small weather icon for the next four days; click the icon to expand forecast details.

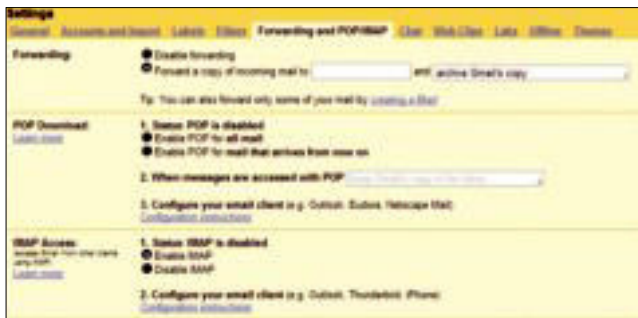
GMAIL

When Google's free, web-based email service (<http://mail.google.com>) launched as an invitation-only beta on April 1, 2004, initial speculation had it that the 1GB storage offer was an April Fool's gag. It wasn't a gag, and Google has only gotten more generous; as of this writ-

ing, Gmail storage capacity is up to 7GB. Thanks to all this storage space—along with threaded conversations, a powerful spam filter, conversation labels, and more—Gmail remains a standout amid other free webmail products that have been around much longer.

Access Gmail via IMAP

While most email providers offer only one-way POP downloads of your messages, Gmail offers the more sophisticated, two-way sync protocol, IMAP. With IMAP, you can access your Gmail on multiple computers and mobile devices, and changes you make on one device are immediately reflected everywhere else. IMAP syncs the read and unread status of all your Gmail messages in all your labels (represented as traditional folders in your IMAP client of choice). To enable IMAP in Gmail's Settings, click the "Forwarding and POP/IMAP" tab. You'll have to configure your email program using Gmail's secure IMAP settings; click the "Configuration instructions" link to get the details for your email software.



With IMAP settings, you can keep Gmail properly synced on all your sundry Internet machines.

Master Gmail's Keyboard Shortcuts

If you receive a lot of email, Gmail's keyboard shortcuts are essential, and should be committed to muscle memory as soon as possible. To enable keyboard shortcuts in Gmail's settings, go to the the General tab, and select the "Keyboard shortcuts on" radio button. Now you can move forward and back between your messages using the J and K keys, tap R to reply to a message, C to compose a new message, and the / key to move your cursor to Gmail's search box. Some keys even perform multiple actions. For example, if you're done reading a message, press] to archive it and move to the next message. See all the available keyboards shortcuts at <http://goo.gl/hlBI>.

Catch Embarrassing Email Mistakes Before You Send

Just sent an email you wish you could take back? Told someone the file was attached and sent the message before you actually attached it? Gmail Labs, Gmail's "testing ground for experimental features," offers two tools that can help. The Undo Send feature gives you a few minutes to click an undo link after you've sent a message you immediately regret. The Forgotten Attachment Detector checks to see if you mentioned the words "attachment" or "attached" in your message but did not attach a file. If it suspects you've made a mistake, it prompts you with a dialog box that asks if you forgot your attachment—all before it sends the email. To enable Gmail Labs and get these and other Labs features mentioned on this page, click the Labs tab.



Google has a very canny way of making us feel slightly incompetent, doesn't it?

Mute a Chatty Email Thread

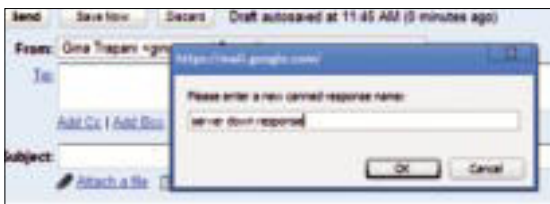
When an email conversation is stuck in a never-ending "reply all" cycle and you wish you weren't on the recipient list, open the conversation and choose Mute from Gmail's More Actions menu. This will silence the thread, meaning that any new replies to it will skip your inbox and be archived automatically. You can still search for and find muted messages; you just won't get notifications of new replies while it's going on. To find conversations you've muted, enter **is:muted** into Gmail's search box.



Just check the box of a thread you want to silence, then mute it—mute it good.

Send Repetitive Replies Faster with Canned Responses

When you receive a lot of email that requires the same response, you need not suffer the indignity of same-replying from scratch every time. Gmail's Canned Responses feature (another tweak from Gmail Labs) lets you set up email scripts that you can choose from a drop-down to send as a reply to a message. For example, you could have a Canned Response called "thanks" associated with the message, "Thanks for letting us know, we're working on it!" With Gmail Labs and Canned Responses enabled, open a new email, compose your canned response, and from the Canned Responses drop-down under Save, choose "New Canned Response" and enter a name for it. Then, any time you want to use the response when replying to an email, click the Canned Responses link, and choose its name from the Insert section. Canned Responses also work in filters. For example, you could say that any email from certain addresses should automatically get a particular canned response.



Whether you need a uniform reply to server-outage complaints, or just want to tell that latest Nigerian 419 scammer that you thank him for thinking of you but aren't currently interested, a Canned Response will get the job done.



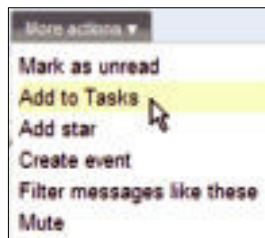
Which email identity does Gina want to use today?

Send and Receive Mail from Other Accounts in Gmail

Switching to Gmail sounds tempting, but what if you don't want to change your email addresses? You don't have to. Gmail comes with a built-in POP fetcher, which can retrieve messages from up to five existing email accounts and drop them in your Gmail inbox. You can also set up multiple "From:" addresses that match your existing accounts. This way, when you send an email in Gmail, you can have it originate from your Gmail account, or from your alternate "From:" addresses. To start using other email addresses within Gmail, go to Settings and enter your other account details in the Accounts tab.

Add an Email to Your Task List

Gmail's built-in to-do list application, Tasks, makes it easy to turn messages into to-dos. You can manage your tasks, subtasks, task descriptions, and due dates just by clicking the Tasks link in the Gmail sidebar. And if you've got an email message that contains a to-do item in it, choose "Add to Tasks" from the More Actions menu to add it to your list with a link to the message.

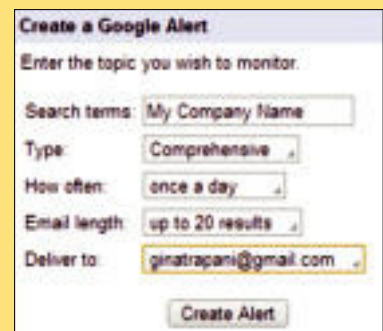


If a message has a chore attached to it, just add it to Tasks, and it will loom over your to-do list like the proverbial albatross.

CRAWLER ALERTS

Let Google Do the Search Work for You

You want to see the latest, greatest search results for a brand name, person, or any keyword, but find it too time-consuming to manually search Google every few days? Then turn to Google Alerts (<http://google.com/alerts>), which will automatically deliver these hits via email or RSS feed. Simply enter the keyword you want new results for, what sources you want to monitor (News, Blogs, Web, Video, Groups, or Comprehensive), how often you want the email alerts, how many results the alerts should contain, and what email address the alerts should go to. Then, as Google crawls the Internet and indexes new content that contains your keyword, you'll get an email summarizing those results. If you've already got too much email, choose Feed from the "Deliver to:" drop-down to subscribe to alerts in your feed reader instead.



Want to know how many people are referencing your name online? Setting up a Google Alert will keep you apprised.

READER

Google Reader (<http://reader.google.com>) is a news aggregator that lets you subscribe to website RSS and Atom feeds, organize them into folders, share items with followers, and read

their content offline. Billed as “an inbox for the web,” Reader displays the number of unread items per feed (and per folder of feeds), just like an email client does.

Follow People in Addition to Feeds

Your friends are your most trusted informants, and seeing what they’ve been reading might bring you the news you care about more quickly than a faceless website could. To get started following people in Reader, click the “People you follow” link in the sidebar. You can find people to follow by name or email address, as well as configure access to your own shared items. Click the Follow button to add someone to the “People you follow” area, where each person’s profile will display a count of things they liked, shared, or commented on.



Once all your pals begin following each other, your reads on good reads will grow exponentially.

READ YOUR FEEDS OFFLINE

To read your feeds somewhere other than in a web browser, try the free desktop newsreader FeedDemon (<http://google.com/ALNW>). It syncs with Google Reader, and maintains your subscriptions, tags, and read and unread item status whether you changed them on the desktop or in the web application.

Sort Feed Items ‘By Magic’

You can instantly see the most interesting feed items first, using Google’s version of magic: Hover over any feed, and from the drop-down menu change the sort order from “newest” (the default) to “by magic.” The “Sort by magic” algorithm ranks items based on your reading habits as well as global Google Reader activity to predict which items will interest you most. The more feed items you like and star in Google Reader, the better the magic will work.



Is Doug Henning still alive? Something tells us he’d like this feature.

Graph Your Reading Habits

How much time do you spend reading and sharing feeds? Click the Trends link on the Reader sidebar to get an overview of how many feed items you read per month, with navel-gazing stats like what day of the week and hour of the day you read feeds most. Trends also shows you which of your feeds are most frequently updated, inactive, and least subscribed-to, as well as how active your Reader friends are. To see how much you interact with an individual feed, click it and then click the Show Details link on a feed’s blue menu bar to see a bar graph that displays how many items that feed has published compared to how many you’ve read.



Spending too much time reading, and not enough time writing? The Trends feature can chart this in living color.

CHROME

Google Chrome (<http://google.com/chrome>) is an open-source, tabbed web browser developed with a focus on simplicity and speed. Its design is extremely minimalist, stripping away many of the menus and buttons common in other web browsers. A mere 16 months after it launched, Chrome

is the third most widely used web browser, after Internet Explorer and Firefox. The latest stable build of Chrome is available as a free download for Windows, Mac, and Linux. Willing testers can also use beta versions of Chrome, which include previews of new features that are in development.

Customize the 'New Tab' Screen

When you open a new tab in Google Chrome, by default you get the aptly named "New Tab" screen, a smart grid of thumbnail previews of your most visited websites. You can customize the look, layout, and position of the thumbnails on this launcher page to make it more useful. To remove a thumbnail, hover over it and click the X in the upper right-hand corner. To relocate a thumbnail to a different position in the grid, hover over it, then drag and drop it to its new location. To pin a thumbnail to a spot—so it's always there, no matter how often you visit it—hover over it and click the thumbtack button on the upper left-hand side.



Stabbing a tab with a thumbtack insures it will remain stationary on your thumbnail view.

HONEY, I HID THE PRON

If you want to web surf without leaving behind traces of your activity—"to plan surprises like gifts or birthdays," according to Google's faux-naïve language—you can activate Incognito mode, which is under Chrome's Tools menu. Downloaded files and visited webpages won't appear in the browser's history, and new cookies will be closed upon exiting the incognito window.

Manage Tab and Extension Memory Usage

Chrome is a speedy browser, but once third-party extensions are in the mix, you're a bit vulnerable to memory leaks and slowdowns. To see what's eating Chrome's memory, launch its internal Task Manager using the Shift+Esc keyboard shortcut. Much like the Windows Task Manager, it will show you how much memory, CPU, and network bandwidth each tab and extension is using. Select a runaway memory hog and choose "End process" to nix its greedy activities.

Sync Your Bookmarks—Everywhere

If you're running Chrome on several computers, you don't have to worry about missing bookmarks you saved while working on another machine. Press Ctrl+Shift+B to launch the Bookmark Manager, and click the "Synchronize my bookmarks..." button. Sign into your Google account, and Chrome will merge and sync the bookmarks in your current instance of Chrome with every other installation of Chrome that has sync enabled (and is signed into your Google Account). Chrome actually saves your bookmarks in Google Docs. After you sync your bookmarks, you'll find a Google Chrome folder in your Google Docs account with a Bookmarks subfolder, and all your links stored within. This way, if you want to access your bookmarks from a different browser, you can access them by logging into Google Docs.

Add Features to Chrome with Extensions

The latest stable version of Google Chrome includes support for third-party extensions: installable plugins that add features to Chrome, like ad blocking, email notifications, or a session manager. To start exploring extensions, choose Extensions from the blue-wrench menu on the far right of the Chrome menu bar. If you have extensions already installed, they'll be listed here. Otherwise, click "Get more extensions" to browse a catalog of extensions categorized and ranked by popularity. We especially like the One Number extension, which adds a button to Chrome's toolbar that displays the number of unread messages in your Gmail, Google Reader, Google Voice, and Google Wave accounts.

PICASA

Google's Picasa photo management software (<http://picasa.com>) comes in two flavors: desktop software you install on your PC or Mac, and an online version called Picasa Web Albums (<http://picasaweb.google.com>). While you'll

want to sort, organize, tag, rate, and edit the gigabytes of digital photos you've collected on your desktop, Picasa's Web Albums interface makes publishing and collaborating on those photos easier.

Group Your Photos by the People in Them

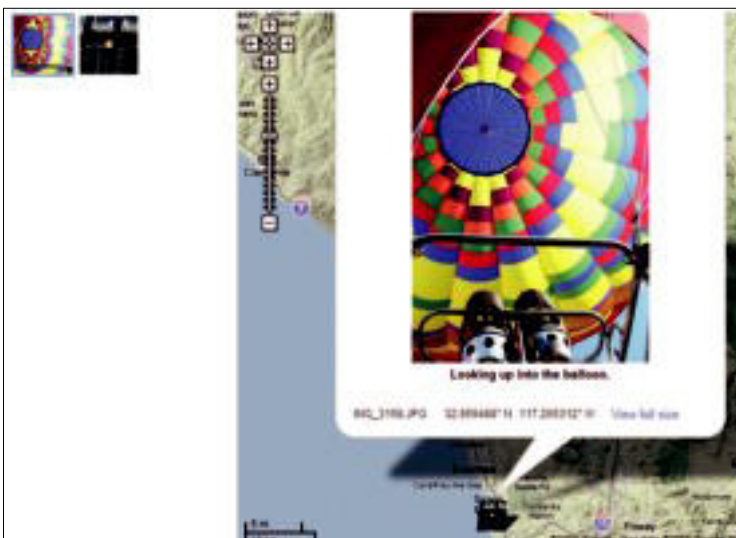
Both Picasa and Picasa Web Albums can recognize faces in your photos, and let you identify those faces by assigning Name Tags to them. Once your photos are loaded into Picasa on the desktop, it will scan them and place all the images with faces in them in an Unnamed People album (under People in the left column). Browse that album, and add a

name to each person pictured to identify them. If you're signed into your Google account, link those photos with the corresponding person in your Google Contacts list. For each person you identify, Picasa creates a person-specific album, and continually scans your library for new photos that include faces matching ones you've already tagged. Picasa will ask you

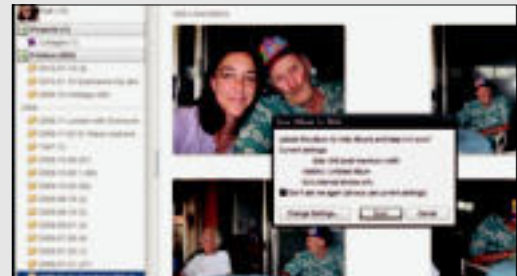
to confirm its name tag suggestions on faces it finds. The suggestions are often, but not always, accurate. Regardless, you can always correct an inaccurate name tag. Picasa Web Albums also uses name tags, and can list photos by the people in them. To turn on this feature, click the Try It button on the right side of your album list, in the Name Tags section.

Put Your Photos on the Map

You can easily add location information—aka geotags—to your photos and display them on a Google Map, with each photo pinned to the location where it was shot. To assign location data in the desktop app, click the Places button on the bottom right, between People and Tags. In the Google Maps panel that appears, search for an address. Once you've found the location where a photo was taken, click OK in the "Put photo here?" dialog. In Picasa Web Albums, choose a photo, and in the information panel on the right, click the Add Location link to find an address in Google Maps, and then put the photo there. Once you've geotagged your photos, you can view a map of photos by clicking the View Map link for an album.



Picasa lets you geotag in a Google Maps view, and you can also "View in Google Earth" by hitting the link at the top right.



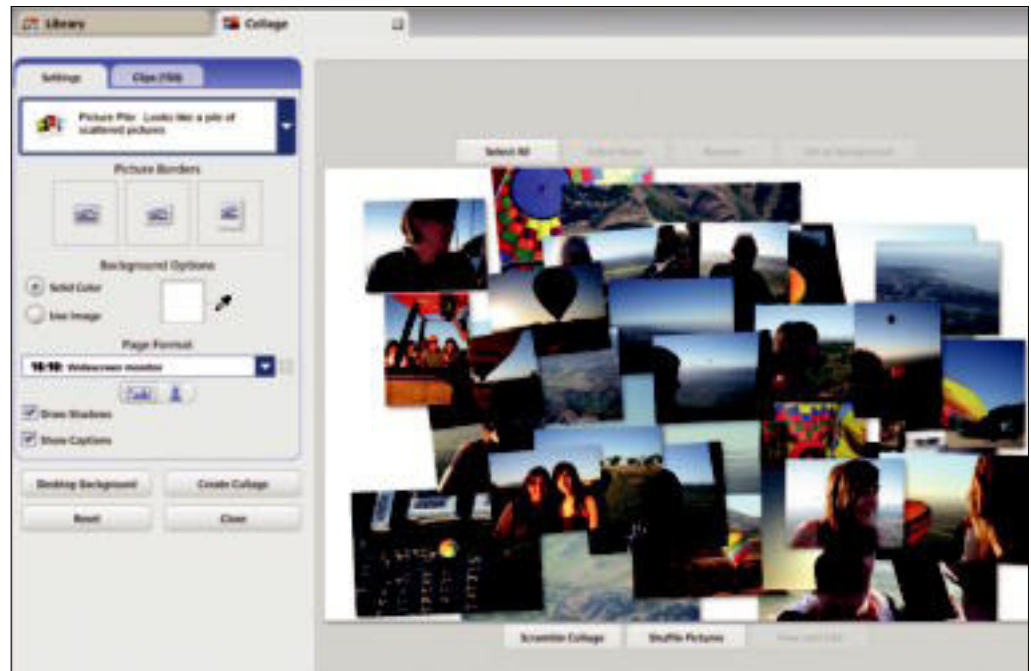
Behold, the Picasa desktop app in all its glory.

Automatically Sync Photos (and Edits) on Your Computer to the Web

Once you publish a photo album in Picasa Web Albums, you don't have to re-upload an image by hand every time you change a caption, add a name tag, or crop a photo. Instead, you can automatically sync changes to photos. To do so, go to the desktop app and select an album or a folder of photos. Toggle on the "Sync to Web" control, and sign into your Google account. Now, configure your sync settings—what size photos should be, whether they should have a watermark, whether they should be public or private—and start automatically syncing that local album to Picasa Web Albums. With web syncing on, any photos you add to the album or edits you make to existing photos automatically update in Web Albums—all without having to manually upload them again.

Get Arts-and-Crafty with Your Photos

The desktop version of Picasa comes with several built-in tools to create nifty projects from your photos. To get started, choose an album or folder of photos, and from the Create drop-down menu choose Picture Collage, Movie, or Gift CD. Picasa's built-in Movie Maker tool can create photo slide shows with music, transitions, text, and captions, and includes an option to instantly upload your project to YouTube. The Picture Collage maker organizes a set of photos into various layouts, such as a picture pile, grid, contact sheet, or mosaic. You can save the collage to edit later, or set it as your desktop background. Finally, the Gift CD maker burns a disc of selected photos and an accompanying slide show.



Notice that you can set the aspect ratio of your Picture Pile so that it matches the dimensions of your desktop.

Make Your Photo Albums Collaborative

When you've taken photos at an event with other attendees—say, a wedding—everyone's got his or her own pictures, and they're not always stored in the same place. But when you share a photo album in Picasa Web Albums, you can allow others to edit the photos in it, as well as add new photos to make that album collaborative. In both Picasa and Picasa Web Albums, choose an album or folder of photos, and click the Share button at the top. In the Share Photos dialog, enter the email addresses of the people you want to see the album, and check the "Let these people contribute to my album" box to grant them permissions. Now your collaborators can add and edit photo captions, apply name tags, edit the photos themselves, and add photos to the album. Just remember that any photos added by collaborators will count toward your Picasa storage quota, which is 1GB if you haven't yet upgraded from a free Picasa account.



Inviting friends and family to collaborate on albums is as simple as sending a quick invite.



Don't even try uploading a photo to Gina's Picasa account. You will be stymied!

Upload Photos via Email

Sure, you can upload photos to your online albums from within Picasa itself, but you can also upload photos via email—a perfect method for your camera phone. To set up your secret upload email address, go to Picasa Web Albums and click the Settings link in the top-right corner. Under the General tab, in the "Upload photos by email" section, check the box next to "Allow me to upload photos by email." Enter a secret word to get your unique email address, and click the Save Changes button. Now add that secret email address to your contacts. Next time you snap a photo from your smartphone and want to instantly upload it to Picasa, send it via email to that address. To add a photo directly to a particular album, enter the name of the album in the subject line of your message.

SEARCH

The front door to the granddaddy of all of Google's web applications—its web search engine—is an unassuming text box that doesn't give you any hint to what it can do. In July 2008, Google's

index exceeded 1 trillion unique websites, and a billion new web pages are purportedly added per day. Here's how to twiddle Google's knobs and levers to find your needle in that haystack.

CHROME OS

Just a Lean Browser Wrapper?

Google Chrome OS is a yet-to-be-released, open-source operating system whose sole purpose is to quickly get you online. As such, only a single, installed application runs on it: the Google Chrome browser, which provides shortcuts to web applications like Google Calendar, Yahoo Mail, Hulu, Facebook, and Twitter.



Everything you do in Chrome OS happens in the browser, on the web. Speed is the highest priority in Chrome OS development, and early builds running on netbooks boast promising boot speeds of four to seven seconds—which Google engineers say they will work to reduce! Currently, only source code for the open-source project—called Chromium OS—is available (find it at www.chromium.org/chromium-os). In the fall of 2010, Google and its hardware partners are slated to announce netbooks and other devices running this most lean of OSes. For more on *Maximum PC's* unique take on Chrome OS, go to <http://bit.ly/4b4Y6e>.

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The *Maximum PC* crew can't get enough of Google's savvy in finding food menus.

Find Business Hours, Restaurant Menus, and What's Nearby

Get business hours in your Google search results by searching for the business name, city, and the word "hours." For example, a search for **Seaworld, San Diego hours** includes the days and times the park is open, right on the results page. Likewise, a search for a restaurant name and the word menu (like **Ranchos Cocina Ocean Beach menu**) includes a blue link directly to the menu in the first result. Finally, when you visit Google.com in the browser on your location-aware iPhone or Android phone, you'll see the name of your current location. Click the "Near me now" link to see restaurants, coffee shops, banks, and ATMs in your vicinity.

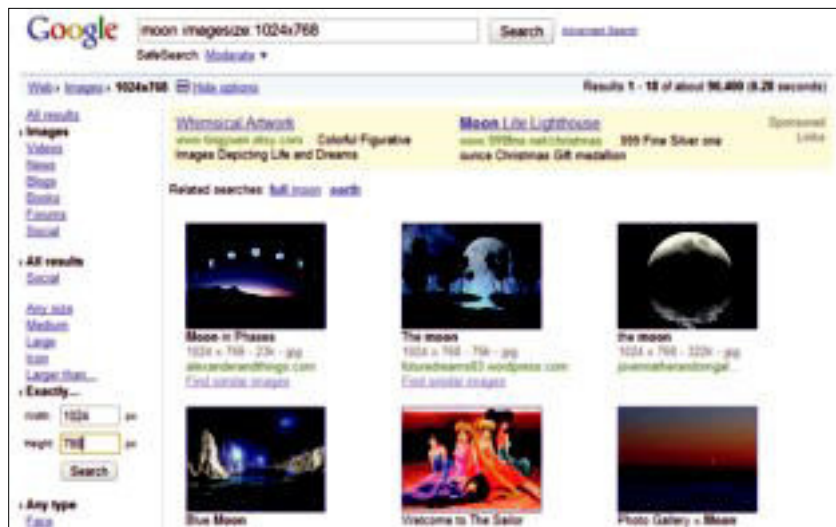
Calculate, Convert, and Get Local Time Instantly

Google's search box doesn't just return links to web pages, it can also perform calculations and conversions, as well as tell you the local time in places around the globe, and what time a plane flight might arrive. For example, search for **20% of 37.45** to see how much you should tip the waiter for dinner. To see what the local time is in faraway places like Tokyo, you would search for **what time is it in Tokyo**. Google also comes in handy while you're cooking: Enter **quarter cup in teaspoons** when you can't find your measuring cup. Finally, to quickly check whether a flight is on time, search for it by airline and flight number, e.g., **JetBlue flight 185**, and you'll get arrival and departure times at the top of the results page.

Find Images and Videos of a Certain Size and Type

Google Image search has special filters you can use to specify the size and type of the image you're looking for. For example, if you're looking for desktop wallpaper images of the moon that are 1024x768 pixels, first go into Google Images, search for moon, then in your results, click the Show Options link to set the exact size. In those options, you can also narrow down results by the type of image you're looking for—images that contain faces, a photo, clip art, or line drawing. Google's Video search offers similar options. You can specify the length of a video you're looking for as well as whether it's a cartoon, slide show, or high quality.

Sure, but can it find a video of a Simpsonized Christopher Walken reading *Goodnight, Moon*?

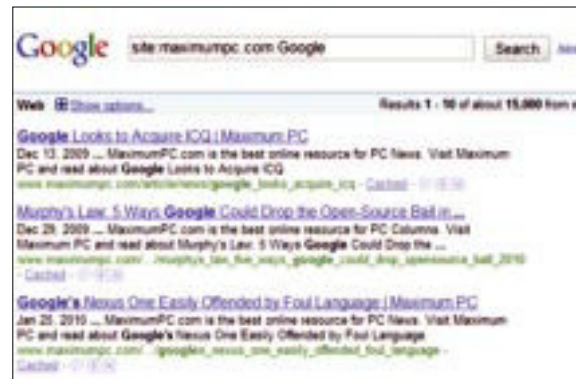


Add Custom Sections to Your Google News Page

Google News (<http://news.google.com>) comes with built-in sections like Top Stories, Business, Entertainment, and Sci/Tech, but you can also create a custom news section that you monitor over time. For example, to track news related to the Apple iPad, in News, search for iPad. Then, at the bottom of the search results page, click "Add a custom section for iPad to Google News." This will add it to your section list on the Google News sidebar.

Search Within a Single Website

Many websites don't offer their own built-in search box, and those that do don't usually provide results as good as those you get from Google. Luckily, you can search a single site from Google's search box using the site:example.com operator. For example, to search maximumpc.com for the word Google, search for **site:maximumpc.com Google**.



PROFILE ENHANCEMENT

Finally, for the Eternally Anonymous

When potential bosses, dates, clients, and old high school friends type your name into Google's web search box, what do they get back? If you've got a common name or just don't have the time to keep up an active web presence, you can still get listed in search results with Google Profiles. Head over to <http://google.com/profiles> to set up a personal page with your name, a head shot, a short bio, places you've lived, schools you've attended, and your websites. You can even include photos from Flickr, Picasa, or any online photo feed. (Hint: specify an album that contains pictures of you so that searchers can identify you!) Once you've added enough



Blessed with a relatively uncommon name, our author boasts the only profile that shows up at the bottom of a "gina trapani" search.

information to your Google Profile, a search for your name will include your profile (along with anyone else who has your name) at the bottom of the Google results page. The more information you add, the higher you'll move up the rankings.

For more info on Gina Tripani and all her Google projects, go to <http://ginatrapani.org>.