Google Chrome & Chrome OS

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by Paul McFedries
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Introduction

You may know *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* as a goofy humans-coexisting-with-dinosaurs movie from the 1970s. However, in technology circles, “When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth” refers to a grim humans-coexisting-with-mainframes story from the 1970s. I refer, of course, to IBM and its brontosaurus-size computers (called mainframes). Those hulking machines aren’t extinct (for example, they’re still used for massive tasks such as airline scheduling, payroll processing, and tracking *Lost* plotlines), but they were supplanted by a couple of kids in a garage who founded Microsoft and built the Windows-centric world we live in today.

However, Microsoft is now more than 35 years old and has dominated the desktop for most of that time. Is Microsoft the new dinosaur of the tech world? If so, then what digital mammals are looking to take over that world? (Man, stretching metaphors can be so tiring!) Most pundits and prognosticators think it just might be Google. This nimble and adaptable company already dominates search and online advertising, and now it’s taking more or less direct aim at Microsoft with a new operating system called Google Chrome OS.

But Google’s goal isn’t to dominate the desktop, because there is no desktop in Chrome OS. Instead, everything happens online: creating documents, spreadsheets, and presentations, collaborating with other people, e-mailing, sharing photos, you name it. It’s a radically new way of computing, and if you find the whole idea head-scratching odd and more than a little confusing, then you’ve come to the right place. Welcome to *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Google Chrome and Chrome OS*.

In this book, you’ll learn everything you need to know (but thankfully not everything there is to know) about Google Chrome OS and its tied-at-the-hip partner, the Google Chrome web browser—from understanding this “cloud computing” business that lies at the heart of Google Chrome OS to configuring the system, surfing with Chrome, to getting things done “out there” where Chrome OS lives. All that and I promise you we’ll even have a bit of fun while we’re at it.

How This Book Is Organized

*The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Google Chrome and Chrome OS* is organized into three reasonably sensible parts. To help you locate what you need fast, here’s a summary of what you’ll find in each part.
Part 1: Getting to Know Google Chrome OS. The two chapters that open the book get you off to a gentle start by giving you the skinny on this cloud computing stuff that people are always going on about (Chapter 1) and then taking you on a tour of Google Chrome OS (Chapter 2).

Part 2: Taking the Chrome Browser for a Spin. In a very real sense, Google Chrome OS is the Google Chrome web browser. That’s because almost everything you do in Google Chrome OS happens through the browser, so it makes sense that you should become familiar with what the Chrome browser can do. That’s the goal of Part 2, which devotes three chapters to the Chrome cause. You learn how to browse the web with Chrome (Chapter 3), how to customize Chrome to suit your surfing style (Chapter 4), and how to keep you and your computer safe while online (Chapter 5).

Part 3: The Cloud Nine: Getting Things Done. Surfing the web with Chrome OS is cool, for sure, but if you’re going to live in the cloud (at least part time, anyway), then you’re going to have to work and play in the cloud, too. That’s not a problem since there’s plenty to do in cyberspace. Here in Part 3, I take you through nine useful and fun Google applications: Google Docs (Chapter 6), the Google Docs word processor (Chapter 7), the Google Docs spreadsheet application (Chapter 8), the Google Docs presentation program (Chapter 9), Gmail (Chapter 10), Google Reader (Chapter 11), Google Calendar (Chapter 12), Google Maps (Chapter 13), and Picasa Web Albums (Chapter 14).

Some Things to Help Out Along the Way

I’ve liberally sprinkled the book with features that I hope will make it easier for you to understand what’s going on. Here’s a rundown:

* Stuff that you have to type will appear in a monofaced font.

* Menus, commands, and dialog box controls that you have to select, as well as keys you have to press, appear in a bold font.

* Whenever I tell you to select a menu command, I separate the various menu and command names with commas. For example, instead of saying “Click the Format menu, then click Theme, and then click Colors,” I just say “Select Format, Theme, Colors.”

* Many Chrome OS commands come with handy keyboard shortcuts, and most of them involve holding down one key while you press another key. For example, in some applications, you save your work by holding down the Ctrl
key, pressing the S key, and then releasing Ctrl. I’m way too lazy to write all that out each time, so I’ll just plop a plus sign (+) in between the two keys like so: Ctrl+S.

I’ve also populated this book with several different kinds of sidebars:

**CHROME LORE**
These asides give you extra information about the topic at hand, provide you with tips for making things work easier, and generally just make you a more well-rounded Chrome OS user.

**DEFINITION**
These notes give you definitions of new words suitable for use at cocktail parties and other social gatherings where a well-timed bon mot can make you a crowd favorite.

**CHROME CAUTION!**
These notes warn you about possible Chrome OS pitfalls and tell you how to avoid them.

**SEE ALSO**
Each of these elements points you to another section of the book that contains related material.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**
These juicier tidbits take you deeper into Chrome OS and show you useful tweaks that enable you to supercharge your system and take control over various aspects of Chrome OS.
Acknowledgments

Master of mysteries and lord of law, high-pinnacled upon the throne of thought, his face suffused with the dim splendors of the Transfiguration, his legs intertwined and his tongue a-cheek, the editor spills his will along the paper and cuts it off in lengths to suit.

—Ambrose Bierce

Do you ever think about another person’s job and say to yourself, “Man, how do they do that?” That happens to me all the time when I think about editing, because an editor is, as Ambrose Bierce says, “master of mysteries and lord of law.” The finer points of sentence structure and production codes are opaque to most of us, but they’re an editor’s bread and butter, and paying attention to them always results in better and clearer prose. So I’m a big fan of editors because they make me look good! You should be a fan, too, because the editors who worked on this book made it a much better read. There’s a list of them near the front of the book, but I’d like to pass along my sincere thanks to the fine folks I worked with directly: Development Editor Jennifer Moore, Copy Editor Amy Lepore, Production Editor Kayla Dugger, Technical Editor Vince Averello, and Acquisitions Editor Tom Stevens.

Special Thanks to the Technical Reviewer

The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Google Chrome and Chrome OS was reviewed by an expert who double-checked the accuracy of what you’ll learn here to help us ensure that this book gives you everything you need to know about Google Chrome and Chrome OS. Special thanks are extended to Vince Averello.

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Okay, you’ve got a computer, you’ve got it loaded up with Google Chrome OS, and you’ve got your favorite accessories (your favorite beverage, relaxing background music, cat draped over your head, and so on). Hey, you’re ready to go! However, just to build the suspense, this part presents some “look before you leap” stuff. If you’ve got some time and you want to know what this “cloud computing” is all about, take a hike through Chapter 1, “Figuring Out Cloud Computing,” which reveals just what the heck a “cloud” is, tells you the pros and cons of cloud computing, and shows you what Google Chrome OS has to do with all this. If you want to be properly introduced to your new operating system, then the place to go is Chapter 2, “Getting Started with Google Chrome OS,” which gets your life with Google Chrome OS off to a rousing start.
When you think about operating systems (or, really, I guess I should say *if* you think about operating systems), you probably think about the standard job titles an operating system wears: application launcher, hardware mediator, file wrangler, printing concierge, and so on. Whether it’s Microsoft Windows or Mac OS X, these are the things that your average operating system is supposed to do, right?

Right, except there’s a new operating system in town, and there’s nothing average about it. I speak, of course, of Google Chrome OS, and it’s far from average for one very good reason: It doesn’t do *any* of the standard operating system jobs I just mentioned! (Actually, to be accurate, I should say that Google Chrome OS *does* do some of those jobs but only in the most minimal way possible.)

Okay, so just what does Google Chrome OS *do*, exactly? Its main job title (arguably it’s *only* job title) is cloud facilitator. That probably doesn’t mean a darn thing to you right now, but that’s fine because I’m going to spend this entire chapter explaining myself.
What’s All This Talk About a “Cloud”!?

In the early 1990s, the computer company Sun Microsystems launched a new marketing campaign with a singularly perplexing slogan: “The network is the computer.” What on Earth did that mean? I knew about networks, of course, having worked for a company that had all its computers wired together, but that network was used primarily for sending e-mail. My computer was my computer. After I became a freelance writer in 1991, I didn’t even have a network at home for two years! My computer was my computer, and my network was whatever floppy disk I had at hand (the infamous “sneakernet” solution). Even after I cobbled together my first network in 1993, the only upshot was that I used floppy disks less. My computer stayed resolutely in front of me, and I’m sure this was the case for most folks back then.

However, in the past few years we’ve seen Sun’s slogan morph from perplexing to prophetic. As the number of things we do online increases—from banking to reading news to sharing photos—we see that the network (that is, the Internet) is now at least an extension of our computers. And as we increasingly access our data using wireless technologies, we see that a big chunk of our computing lives now sits “out there” in that neither-here-nor-there nonland known as cyberspace.

The amorphous and opaque nature of the Internet has long meant that when systems geeks create diagrams of their networks, they usually include relatively faithful renderings of tangible objects such as computers, routers, and modems, but the intangible Internet is almost always represented by a cloud, as shown in Figure 1.1.

This cloud metaphor is a pervasive one, and it’s the reason why nowadays when people talk about using Internet-based software and hardware, they say they’re working (playing, sharing, or whatever) in the cloud. It's also the source of the phrase cloud computing. This is a new type of computing in which our data and even the software we use to work with that data resides within the cloud, and we access everything not only with our PCs but also with cloud-friendly devices such as netbook computers, tablet PCs, and even smartphones such as iPhones and BlackBerries.
The Cloud Is the Computer

You may be wondering how on Earth (or, I guess, how in the cloud) you’re supposed to do workaday computing duties such as making up memos, banging out budgets, and putting together presentations without having the corresponding programs on your computer. The secret is that the cloud is the computer and a pretty darn powerful one at that.

The cloud is a powerful computer because many companies are spending billions to bulk up the cloud’s infrastructure. The basic unit of this new infrastructure is the data center, typically a massive building (think multiple football fields’ worth) housing enormous computer clusters networked together to power the online services that we’ve come to rely on: Google’s search engine, Amazon’s sales operations, YouTube’s
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videos, and so on. The stupendous size of these so-called server farms is why even the most complex Google search returns results in a split second and why even the longest YouTube video starts within seconds.

DEFINITION

Clusters are collections of computers, usually numbering in the thousands or even the hundreds of thousands, networked together.

Server farms are collections of servers that are networked together to perform a particular task, such as delivering web search results.

But the cloud doesn’t exist just so you and I can get speedy search results and videos. Perhaps an even bigger sea change wrought by cloud computing is its ability to offer companies computer power. This began with Amazon’s S3 (Simple Storage Service), which offers companies storage space on Amazon’s thousands of servers for a fraction of the cost of purchasing physical hard drives. Now, with EC2 (Elastic Compute Cloud), Amazon is offering companies processing power by letting them use the spare processor time on Amazon’s servers. (If you’re a Second Life player, that virtual world is generated by Amazon computers.) This trend is called virtualization because it offers companies the use of virtual computing equipment, and it enables companies with small budgets to get computing on demand.

CHROME LORE

Some smart folks have pointed out that the cloud is rapidly becoming analogous to the electric grid: in the same way that you can just plug a device into a wall socket and get electricity cheaply and instantly, so now can you plug into the cloud and get data, storage space, and even processing power cheaply and instantly. This is “utility computing” powered by massive “utility data centers” that are the cloud equivalent of power plants. As Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has said, “You don’t generate your own electricity, why generate your own computing?” Good question!

The Pros (and, Yes, a Few Cons) of Cloud Computing

This seems like an awful lot of trouble to go through just to shift our computing chores from “in here” to “out there.” Why bother? Mostly because doing all your
work on a computer means that in an increasingly mobile and connected world, you keep bumping your noggin on the following increasingly frustrating problems:

- Working on documents is fine in the comfort of your home or office, but what if you need to access data while you’re out and about, particularly when you’ve got an Internet connection (such as a wireless hotspot at a coffee shop or an airport)?
- When you’re not at your desk, looking up something in a document or workbook is fine if you have a notebook computer with you, but what if you just have a smartphone or PDA?
- Many computer programs offer a powerful set of tools that enable you to collaborate with other folks on your network, but what if the person you want to work with can’t access your network?

Google’s solution for all these woes is to allow you to shift your data to the cloud. If you have a Google account, you can store your documents in your Google online storage area.

Online storage is useful, to be sure, but Google ups the ante by also offering an online suite of applications called Google Docs, which includes a word processor, spreadsheet application, and presentation program, as well as applications such as Gmail, Google Talk, Google Calendar, Google Maps, and more. These are powerful and useful programs that run in the cloud instead of on your local PC. Here’s how this helps to solve the problems I mentioned earlier:

- You can access any document that resides on the server from anywhere in the world that has an Internet connection.
- The Google applications work in a wide variety of browsers (not just Google Chrome). This means you can at least view your documents using your smartphone, PDA, or any other web-enabled device.
- The Google Docs applications not only enable you to view and edit documents online, they also enable multiple users to collaborate on a document, which means you can work with someone outside your network.

As an added bonus, there’s a long list of annoying and time-chewing computer maintenance chores that simply vanishes into the ether.
• You never have to worry about installing programs because the programs exist in the cloud and are already waiting for you to simply show up and use them.

• You never have to upgrade your existing programs because that’s handled automatically behind-the-cloud-scenes, so you can rest assured that you’re always using the latest and (hopefully!) greatest version of whatever program you connect with online.

• You never have to perform irksome chores such as defragmenting your hard drive (since you store nothing on your hard drive) or backing up your data (since it’s all stored safely in the cloud).

• You never have to uninstall anything. If a cloud application begins to grate on your nerves, simply switch to another one!

Clearly, cloud computing is a whole new kettle of electronic fish. Are there any downsides to it? Not surprisingly, there are a few:

• No Internet? No joy. This is the Big Kahuna of cloud computing conundrums: If where you are has no Internet connection, then you’re toast, plain and simple. To do cloud-bound work—particularly using Google Chrome OS—you must be able to connect to the Net.

• Slow Internet? Only a little joy. Doing even basic web surfing is a frustrating bit of business with a slow Internet connection, but trying to actually do some work in the slow lane? Fuhgeddaboutit! Cloud computing requires a fast connection, period.

• Molasses-in-January applications. Even if you have the zippiest broadband connection possible, you’ll still find online applications noticeably slower than offline programs. That’s because the online application must occasionally converse with the server (for example, to save your work), and although that’s usually done remarkably quickly, you’ll notice some delays.

• Missing-in-action applications. The cloud actually offers a surprising range of online applications—word processors, spreadsheets, photo sharing, and many more—but don’t expect to find every type of program out there.

• Need more space? It’ll cost you. As you will see in Chapter 2, you need a Google account to use Google Chrome OS, and the default account comes with 1 GB of storage for Google Docs. (Gmail offers 7 GB for messages,
while Picasa Web Albums offers 1 GB for photos.) That’s not much, and if you want more you have to buy it. For example, an extra 20 GB goes for $5 a year (as I write this, with all prices in U.S. dollars), an additional 200 GB will cost you $50 a year, and 1 TB (1,024 GB) will set you back $256 annually.

**How Google Chrome OS Fits into All This**

All this talk of “server farms” and “utility computing” surely warms the cockles of a networking geek’s heart, but what does it mean for the rest of us? That’s where Google Chrome OS comes in because this new operating system was forged from the ground up to work with and in the cloud. You’re no doubt used to your operating systems coming with a bunch of programs installed on your computer, such as WordPad and Paint in Windows and Mail and Address Book in Mac OS X. Know how many programs get installed on your computer with Google Chrome OS? Zero. Zilch. Naught. None.

Actually, I take that back (but only part way). Google Chrome OS does come with a program installed, but only one: the Google Chrome web browser. That program starts when you log in to Google Chrome OS, it runs constantly throughout your session, and you can’t switch to any other program or close it (unless you turn off your machine). That’s sounds like you’re getting ripped off, but it’s just the Google Chrome OS way of doing things. That is, you use the Chrome browser to access the web and do all your work in the cloud using online applications such as Google Docs, Gmail, and Google Calendar. If you create any files as you do your cloud-work, those files remain in the cloud indefinitely after you shut down your Google Chrome OS session.

So, in sum, your Google Chrome OS computer is a modern take on what used to be called, in days of yore, the *dumb terminal*, which was “dumb” because it could do nothing on its own except access programs and data held captive on mainframe computers. Your Google Chrome OS machine is actually a bit smarter than that because it at least comes with the Chrome web browser, which is a pretty sophisticated program in its own right.

**Getting Ready for the Cloud**

Cloud computing has an undeniably attractive appeal because it simplifies computing to its basics: You use your computer to access the cloud, and you use the cloud to
Part 1: Getting to Know Google Chrome OS

work or play or communicate or whatever. This is a radically new way of doing computer business, so you won’t be surprised to hear that you’ll need to do a bit of prep work before making the switch. Not a lot, mind you, as the following list shows:

- **Get your mitts on a Google account.** This is a must, and I explain the details in Chapter 2.

- **Add storage to your account.** It’s possible that the default storage limits I talked about earlier will be enough for you, but I seriously doubt it. Figure out approximately how much you’ll be storing in the cloud and then bump up your storage accordingly. (Again, see Chapter 2 for the nitty-gritty on how to go about this.)

- **Get your word processing documents ready.** If you’re going to use the Google Docs word processor (which I yammer on about in Chapter 7), then you’ll want to convert your existing Microsoft Word, StarOffice, or OpenDocument files to the Google Docs word processing format. (See Chapter 6 for info on uploading files.) However, the maximum word processing document size that Google Docs will convert is 500 KB. If you have a document larger than that, consider splitting it into multiple files to get them smaller than 500 KB.

- **Get your spreadsheets ready.** I talk about the Google Docs spreadsheet program in Chapter 8, and if you’re going to use it to edit existing spreadsheets in the cloud, you’ll need to convert those files to the Google Docs spreadsheet format. You can convert Microsoft Excel and OpenDocument files, but the maximum size Google Docs can handle is 1 MB. Consider splitting any spreadsheet over that size to get the resulting fragments under the limit.

- **Get your presentations ready.** If you’re going to use the Google Docs presentation program (see Chapter 9 for the full scoop), you can convert your existing Microsoft PowerPoint files to the Google Docs presentation format. The maximum presentation size that Google Docs will convert is 10 MB, so if you have a presentation bigger than that, you’ll need to split it into smaller files.

That’s about it, really. The rest of your prep work just involves getting your head around the idea of cloud computing and getting yourself psyched up to work in the cloud. When you’re ready to take the plunge, Chapter 2 will get you started.
The Least You Need to Know

- Networking nerds have long used a cloud metaphor to describe the Internet, and that metaphor is why when people talk about using Internet-based software and hardware, they say they’re working in the cloud and doing cloud computing.

- The cloud’s infrastructure consists mostly of massive data centers that house enormous server farms, which are collections of computers usually numbering in the thousands.

- Cloud computing means that you never use programs or store data on your computer. Instead, you use cloud-based software and store your data in the cloud.

- The main advantages of cloud computing are that you can access documents from any location that has Internet access; you never have to worry about installing, upgrading, or uninstalling programs; and you don’t have to worry about maintaining or backing up your data.

- The main disadvantages of cloud computing are that you can’t work or access your files if you have no Internet access, cloud programs tend to be a bit slower than local programs, you might not be able to find all the applications you need, and you might have to pay for extra storage.

- Google Chrome OS is designed to let you access and work in the cloud, and it comes with just a single program to let you do that: the Google Chrome web browser.
In This Chapter

- Getting your mitts on a Google account
- Learning the layout of the Google Chrome OS landscape
- Customizing Chrome OS to make it your own
- Preparing to get loud and proud in the cloud

I know, I know. You can’t wait to get started. What is it? A looming deadline? Unfettered curiosity? A type-A personality? Well, not to worry. This chapter gets you up to speed quickly by showing you the one thing you need to use Google Chrome OS (besides a computer, of course) and giving you a quick-and-not-even-remotely-dirty tour of the Google Chrome OS screen.

For good measure, you also learn how to make a few tweaks that enable you to customize Google Chrome OS to suit the way you work or play.

Your Passport to the Cloud: Getting a Google Account

Before you gather up a smaller version of your stuff and cart it off temporarily to a foreign land, you probably need to convince your friendly neighborhood government mandarins to issue you a passport so you can prove who you are when you enter the new country.
In a similar way, you also need to prove who you are before you can enter the kingdom of Chrome OS, which then gives you access to your cloud stuff: e-mail messages, documents, photos, and so on.

The “passport” you use to get through Chrome OS immigration is a Google account, which consists of two things:

* **Username.** This is an e-mail address, and it uniquely identifies you since no two people in the world can have the same e-mail address. You can use an existing e-mail address if you already have one, but you’ll get the most out of Google's section of the cloud if you create your own address using Google’s Gmail service.

* **Password.** This is a secret sequence of characters you use to prove that you’re the legitimate owner of the Google account.

Together, the username and password constitute your Google account (and therefore your Chrome OS) *login* data.

As you will see in the next section, you get yourself a Google account online by going to the Google website. What the dickens do you do if you’ve never been online before and were, in fact, aiming to use Chrome OS to get online? This brings us to a bit of a conundrum: you need to get online to get a Google account, but you can’t get online with Chrome OS until you have a Google account. This is known in the trade as a *buried shovel* problem.

**DEFINITION**

In computing, a *login* is a mechanism you use to prove who you are by entering a username and its associated password.

A *buried shovel* refers to a tool or technique that’s required to perform a certain task but that’s only available after you perform that task.

So what’s the solution? Borrow a different shovel! That is, you’re going to have to cajole a friend or family member to let you use his or her computer to get online and create your Google account.
Signing Up for a Google Account

Okay, I'm ready to get started, so I'm going to assume you are, too! Here are the steps to follow to create your very own Google Gmail account, which you'll be able to use to log in to Chrome OS:

1. Use your favorite web browser (or even your second-favorite browser) to navigate to the Google home page at www.google.com.

2. Click the Gmail link near the top of the page. (Or, if Efficiency is your middle name, combine steps 1 and 2 by going directly to http://mail.google.com.) The Welcome to Gmail page appears.

3. Click Create an account. Your web browser sends you to the Create a Google Account—Gmail page.

4. Use the First name and Last name text boxes to type your name. (No, you don't have to use your real name if you don't want to.)

5. In the Desired Login Name text box, type the username you want to use. (Your actual Chrome OS username will be this name plus “@gmail.com”; in other words, it will be your Gmail address.)

6. Click the check availability! button. This tells Google to run through its list of existing accounts to see if the name has already been taken. If the name is already spoken for, you will see a message telling you as much and offering you a list of alternatives; either click one of the alternatives (if it strikes your fancy) or repeat steps 5 and 6 until you hit a winner.

7. Use the Choose a password text box to type the password you want to use. As you type, Google critiques your password using the Password strength indicator. Here's how to get a Strong rating, as shown in Figure 2.1:

   * The password must be at least eight characters long.
   * Make sure the password is a mixture of letters and numbers.
   * Don't use anything blindingly obvious such as your name or your login name.
8. Use the **Re-enter password** text box to type your password using the same letters and numbers you typed in step 7.

9. Use the **Security Question** list to choose one of the preset questions. (If you’re a rugged or semirugged individualist, choose **Write my own question** and then type a custom question in the new text box that shows up.)

10. Use the **Answer** text box to provide an answer for the question, as shown in Figure 2.2. Make sure this is something you’ll remember because, if you ever forget your password, Google will only send it to you if you can answer this security question.

11. Use the **Recovery email** text box to type another one of your e-mail addresses that Google can use if you, say, forget your Google account password. If you don’t have another e-mail address to use, no problem: just skip this step.

12. Use the **Location** list to choose your country.
13. Take a second or ten to decipher the curvaceous text in the Word Verification section and then type that word in the text box. (This seemingly pointless exercise is to prove you’re a human being and not some nonhuman program that’s trying to create oodles of Google accounts for nefarious purposes.)

14. Click the I accept. Create my account button. Google gets right to work and sets up your fresh-baked account.

### Changing Your Account Info

Once you’ve got your Google account minted, you’ll be happy to hear that your particulars aren’t set in stone. You can change almost anything except your Gmail address. The next few sections provide the低down.

#### Change Your Password

If you don’t think your account password is safe or if you’re just tired of using it, go ahead and change it by following these steps:


2. Click the Search settings link near the top-right corner of the page and then click Google Account settings. The My Account page appears.
3. Click the **Change password** link. Google presents the Change password page, shown in Figure 2.3.

![Change password page]

**Figure 2.3** Use the Change password page to, you know, change your password.

4. Type your current password. (If you’ve forgotten your password, click the option button beside your security question and then use the text box to type the answer.)

5. Use the **New password** text box to type the password you want to use.

6. Use the **Confirm new password** text box to type your password using the same letters and numbers you typed in step 5.

7. Click **Save**. Google saves your new password.

**Edit Your Personal Info**

With your Google account, your personal info includes your first and last name, as well as optional stuff such as a nickname, your zip code, your country, and your time zone. Here’s how to make changes to this data:


2. Click **Search settings** (it’s the link near the top-right corner of the page) and then click **Google Account settings**. The My Account page shows up.

3. Click the **edit your personal info** link. The Edit personal information page unmagically appears, as shown in Figure 2.4.

4. Use the **First name** and **Last name** text boxes to enter your name (or some reasonable facsimile thereof).

5. (Optional) Use the **Nickname** text box to type a nickname, if you want to use one. Google will display your nickname instead of your real name in some services.
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Figure 2.4 Use this page to mess around with your Google account’s personal data.

6. Use the Zip code text box, as well as the Country and Time zone lists, to enter your location data.

7. If you have another e-mail address and you want to associate it with your Google account (for example, to have Google send your account password to that address if you forget the password), type the address in the Add an additional email address text box.

8. Click Save. Google stores your data in a safe place.

Build a Public Profile

Google has a few “social” features (such as Google Buzz) that enable you to connect with and share stuff with other people. I don’t get into that in this book, but if you want to check it out for yourself, then you should put together a public profile, which is a collection of data you want to share with other folks: where you grew up, where you work, a photo of yourself, and so on. You can share as much or as little as you feel comfortable. Here’s how it works:


2. Click the Search settings link near the top-right corner of the page and then click Google Account settings. The My Account page appears.

3. Click the Create a profile link. Google takes you to the Create your profile page, shown in Figure 2.5.
4. Use the **First name** and **Last name** text boxes to type your name (or something similar).

5. To add a photo to your profile, click **Change photo** to open the Upload a Picture of Yourself window. Click **Browse**, select the photo, click **Open**, drag the box to select the area you want to use, and then click **Apply Changes**.

6. Fill in the rest of the profile as you see fit.

7. Click **Create a Google profile**. Google tucks away your data.

**Adding Storage to Your Google Account**

Later in this book (see Part 3 in particular), you learn how to use cloud services such as Google Docs (for creating documents, spreadsheets, and presentations), Gmail (for e-mail), and Picasa Web Albums (for photos). All of these services require you to store files in the cloud, which is cool because it means you can access those files wherever you are. Think of it as your own personal hard drive in the sky (sort of).

Like any hard drive, your online storage area comes with only a limited amount of space. For your still-shiny Google account, you get the following:

- 1 GB of storage for Google Docs files
- 7 GB of storage for Gmail messages
- 1 GB of storage for Picasa Web Albums photos
If you hang out in the cloud regularly, chances are you'll bump your head against one or all of these ceilings eventually. (Who knew that clouds had ceilings?) Fortunately, there's plenty more gigabytes where these came from, although unfortunately they're not free. As I write, for example, an extra 20 GB costs $5 a year, 200 GB goes for $50 a year, and a whopping 1 TB (1,024 GB) of extra space requires a whopping $256 annually.

If you need the extra space and are willing to fork over the extra bucks to get it, here's how to upgrade your storage:

2. Click the More link near the top of the page, and then click Documents. (Even faster, combine steps 1 and 2 by surfing directly to http://docs.google.com.) The Google Docs page appears.
3. Click Settings and then click Documents settings to come face-to-face with the Settings page.
4. Click the General tab.
5. In the Storage area, click the Upgrade storage link. Google drops you off at the Purchase additional storage page, shown in Figure 2.6.

![Figure 2.6](image)

Use the Purchase additional storage page to increase your storage space and decrease your bank balance.

6. In the Select a plan section, click the option for the plan you want to use.
7. Click the Buy X for $Y per year button (where $X and $Y depend on the option you chose). You land on the Google Checkout page.
8. Fill in your credit card and billing address and proceed with the checkout details (which I won't go into here).
Firing Up Google Chrome OS

After you poke your computer’s power switch, Google Chrome OS begins pulling itself up by its own bootstraps. Most machines will take a few minutes to boot, so this is an excellent time to grab a cup of coffee or tea and review your copy of *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*.

**DEFINITION**

*Boot* is a verb that means to start a computer. The idea of Chrome OS pulling itself up by its own bootstraps is actually a pretty good way to describe the whole process of Chrome OS starting itself up from scratch.

After your machine has churned through a few behind-the-scenes (and happily ignorable) chores, you end up staring at the login screen, shown in Figure 2.7. What’s happening here is that Chrome OS wants to know which Google account you’ll be using to access cloud stuff, so it’s asking you to type your Google account username (that is, your e-mail address) and your account’s password. Go ahead and do that and then press **Enter**.

![Figure 2.7](image)

*Figure 2.7*  Fill in your Google account e-mail address and password to get the Chrome OS show on the road.
Google Chrome OS: The 50¢ Tour

The screen shown in Figure 2.8 is typical of the face that Chrome OS presents to the world. (Note that your screen might have a different look, depending on how your computer manufacturer chose to set up your machine.) If you’re new to Google Chrome OS, you need to get comfortable with the lay of the Chrome OS land. To that end, let’s begin by comparing the Chrome OS screen (Figure 2.8) with a screen that shows the Chrome web browser with a similar configuration (Figure 2.9).

As you can see, the Chrome OS screen in Figure 2.8 bears an uncanny resemblance to the Chrome web browser screen in Figure 2.9 on the next page. If you read Chapter 1, this shouldn’t surprise you one bit because you learned that Chrome OS essentially is the Chrome browser, with a few extra knickknacks and doodads bolted on. The common features—the tabs, the navigation bar, and the content area—work in Chrome OS exactly as they do in the Chrome browser, so as far as browsing the web goes, using Chrome OS is no different than using Chrome. (If you’re new to the Chrome browser, I show you how it works in Chapter 3.)
The only differences—and as far as you and I are concerned, these are the things that turn the Chrome browser into the Chrome operating system—appear in the top row of the screen, and I’ve pointed them out in Figure 2.10.

Here’s a quick rundown on what each of these features represents:

- **Chrome icon.** Click this icon to display the applications menu, which I talk about in the next section.

- **System time.** This area shows you the current time. If you really need to see the current date, too, click the time and Chrome OS displays a menu that includes the date at the top.

- **Battery icon.** This icon tells you the current battery status (assuming, of course, that your computer has a battery). If your computer is plugged in, you see a plug icon (makes sense). If your computer is running on batteries, the amount of white in the background of the icon slowly falls as the battery level decreases. To see what percentage of the battery power remains, click the icon.
• **Network icon.** This icon tells you whether your computer is connected to a Wi-Fi (wireless) network or to an Ethernet (wired) network. Clicking the icon displays a menu that enables you to turn Wi-Fi and Ethernet on and off and to connect to a wireless network.

• **System menu.** Click this icon to see a menu of system settings, most of which relate to the Chrome browser but a few of which are specific to Chrome OS. (See the section “Customizing Google Chrome OS” later in this chapter.)

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*Figure 2.10* These five features essentially turn the Chrome browser into the Chrome operating system.
Making Things Happen: The Applications Menu

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Google Chrome OS doesn’t come with any applications (ignoring the obvious one, the Chrome web browser). For the most part, you make things happen in Chrome OS by using the browser to surf to sites that offer online applications.

However, Google Chrome helps you out a bit by offering the applications menu, which you unfurl by clicking the Chrome icon. Figure 2.11 shows the applications menu that appears (but, again, yours might look a bit different).

![Figure 2.11](image)

*Click the Chrome icon to display the applications menu.*

Each icon you see represents some cyberspatial destination, so you can click an icon to surf directly to that site without having to type the address. In most cases, Chrome OS loads the website into the Chrome browser in the standard way. However, four of the icons display mini-applications that tie in to Google services: Contacts, Calculator (see Figure 2.12), To-do list, and Calendar Panel.
Chapter 2: Getting Started with Google Chrome OS

Customizing Google Chrome OS

Since Chrome OS is very nearly the twin of the Chrome web browser, you won’t be surprised to learn that most of the system’s customization options relate to the browser. I will take you through these browser-related customization settings in Chapter 4. However, a few (actually, a very few) customization trinkets are specific to Chrome OS, and I’ll show them to you in the next couple of sections.

Setting Your Time Zone

If the time displayed by Chrome OS is wrong, the culprit is likely the time zone setting, which is probably set to some time zone far away from where you live (the default is Pacific Standard Time). Here’s how to fix that:

1. Click the time and then click Open date and time options. (Just so you know, another route you can take is to click the System menu and then click Options.)
2. Click the Timezone list. Chrome OS displays a long list of time zones.

3. Click your time zone.

4. Click Close. Chrome OS switches to your time zone and adjusts the time accordingly.

**Customizing the Touchpad Settings**

If your computer has a touchpad, you might find that the touchpad is too hard to use, either because it doesn’t recognize your touch gestures or because it’s too slow. Similarly, you might think that you can simulate a “click” by tapping the touchpad, but, alas, that’s not the case unless you customize Chrome OS to accept this so-called tap-to-click gesture.

Follow these eminently reasonable steps to customize your touchpad settings:

1. Click the System menu and then click Options. The Options dialog box appears.

2. Click the Chromium OS tab, shown in Figure 2.13.

![Figure 2.13](image)

**Figure 2.13** Use the controls in the Touchpad section to bend your computer’s touchpad to your will.

3. Click and drag the Touch Sensitivity slider to the left (to make Chrome OS less likely to recognize your touch gestures) or to the right (to make Chrome OS more likely to recognize your touch gestures).

4. Click and drag the Speed Sensitivity slider to the left (to make Chrome OS less responsive to the speed of your touch gestures) or to the right (to make Chrome OS more responsive to the speed of your touch gestures).
5. If you want to be able to click something by tapping the touchpad, activate the **Enable tap-to-click** check box.

6. If you want to be able to scroll a web page by dragging a finger vertically along the left or right edge of the touchpad, activate the **Enable vertical edge scrolling** check box.

7. Click **Close** to put your new settings into immediate effect.

**The Least You Need to Know**

- To grab yourself a Google account and a Gmail address, head for www.google.com, click **Gmail**, and then click **Create an account**.
- To make changes to your Google account, surf to www.google.com, click **Settings**, and then click **Google Account settings**.
- To start Chrome OS, turn on your computer and then log in using your Gmail address and your Google account password.
- For quick access to some popular online applications, click the **Chrome** icon to open the applications menu and then click the site you want.
- To customize Chrome OS, click the **System menu** and then click **Options**.
Taking the Chrome Browser for a Spin

There are plenty of days when it seems that our computers are just an excuse for surfing the web, and that’s particularly true for any computer running Google Chrome OS. That’s because the Chrome web browser sits front and center, so Part 2 devotes three chapters to Chrome’s goodies. You begin, appropriately enough, at the beginning, by learning the all-important Chrome basics in Chapter 3, “Browsing the Web with Chrome.” You then get into customizing Chrome to suit your surfing style, which is the subject of Chapter 4, “Customizing Chrome.” No matter how you get online or where you go when you get there, security and privacy are paramount. That must be why I decided to devote an entire chapter to these crucial topics, so be sure to learn how to keep you and your computer safe while online by reading Chapter 5, “Surfing with a Net: Security and Privacy.”
Browsing the Web with Chrome

In This Chapter

- Using Chrome to navigate the web
- Saving web pages to your bookmarks list
- Searching for the information you need
- Figuring out these newfangled tabs
- Dealing with file downloads

E-mail is the most widespread Internet pastime (since almost everyone who’s online has an e-mail account), and social networking and instant messaging have their place in the wired world. However, for sheer, unadulterated, no-holds-barred, time-wasting, finger-clicking, mega-JPMs (jolts per minute) fun, you can’t do much better than the World Wide Web. The web (the aficionado’s preferred short form) is home to millions of sites that display everything from simple “Hey, look at me!” personal home pages, to “Hey, buy me!” online shopping malls, to “Hey, surf me” corporate marketing efforts.

If the web has a downside, it’s that there may be too much eye candy. When people are first exposed to the web’s embarrassment of riches, they often can’t get enough and spend endless hours surfing (as navigating from site to site is called). This addiction must have hit the Chrome OS programmers, too, because it’s clear that they built Chrome OS with the web in mind. In fact, Chrome OS is really just the Google Chrome web browser with a few Googly bells and whistles bolted on.

This chapter shows you how to use the Chrome web browser. You will learn all the standard page-navigation techniques, and you will learn all the features that Chrome offers for making your online journeys more efficient and pleasant.
Getting to Know Chrome’s Nuts and Bolts

When you first log in to Chrome OS, the Chrome web browser greets you at the door and ushers you inside. There’s a good chance that you’ll now arrive at the Google website, shown in Figure 3.1. (You may end up at a different site if your version of Chrome OS comes with custom Internet settings.) Note that this screen changes constantly, so don’t sweat it if the one you see looks different than the one shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1  When you log in to Chrome OS, you usually end up at the Google website.

Google is your Chrome home page, and it’s designed to let you quickly search for stuff on the web. (You’ll get the details on this searching stuff a bit later in this chapter; see the section “Searching for Sites.”)
If you don’t like Google (or whatever you have as Chrome’s default start page), it’s easy to change it, and you will learn how this is done in Chapter 4 (see the section “Home Sweet Home: Setting Up Your Home Page”).

Before I show you how to use this page to see more of the web, it’s best to take a minute or three to get your bearings by checking out the main features of the Chrome window (most of which I’ve pointed out in Figure 3.1):

- **Page title.** This part of the screen shows you the title of the current web page. The title actually resides in something called a tab, which is a useful feature. See the section “Juggling Sites: Surfing with Tabs” later in this chapter to learn why these tab things are such a big deal.

- **Address bar.** This area shows you the address of the current page. Web page addresses are strange beasts indeed. I’ll help you figure them out a bit later in this chapter.

- **Back** and **Forward.** You use these buttons to return to sites you’ve visited, as I explain in excruciating detail a bit later.

- **Content area.** This area below the tab takes up the bulk of the Chrome screen. It’s where the body of each web page is displayed. You can use the vertical scrollbar to see more of the current page.

- **Links.** The content area for most web pages also boasts a link or 2 (or 10). These links come in two flavors: images and text. (The latter is usually underlined or in a different color than the rest of the text.) When you put the mouse pointer over a link, Chrome does two things (see Figure 3.1): it changes the pointer into a hand with a pointing finger, and it displays the address of the linked page at the bottom of the screen.

**Web Page Navigation Basics**

Now that you’re familiar with the lay of the Chrome land, you can start using it to navigate sites. This section takes you through the various ways you can use Chrome to weave your way through the web.

The most straightforward method is to use the links that appear on whatever web page you have in front of you. Locate a link that strikes your fancy, click the link, and you’re immediately whisked to the other page (although the pace of the whisk depends on the speed of your Internet connection).
CHROME LORE

Just to keep us all confused, not all the images you see on a web page are necessarily links. Some are there strictly for show—you can click them until your finger falls off, and nothing will happen. How can you tell links from nonlinks? The only surefire way is to point your mouse at the picture. If the mouse pointer turns into the little hand with the pointing finger, then you know you’re dealing with a link.

If you happen to know the address of the web page you want to visit, you can strike out for this new territory by following these suspiciously straightforward steps:

1. Click inside the Address bar.
2. Delete the current address.
3. Type the address for the new site.
4. Press Enter.

The Weirdness of Web Addresses

Internet addresses, with their http this and slash (/) that, are obvious geek creations that now find themselves at large in the real world. You’ll deal with them a lot, so let’s see if we can knock some sense into them. Here’s an example that illustrates the general format:

http://mcfedries.com/cigchromeos/index.html

- **http://** This part identifies this string of characters as a web address.
- **mcfedries.com** This is the domain name (think of it as the address) of the host computer where the web page resides (mcfedries.com is my web home).
- **/cigchromeos/** This is the host computer storage location that contains the web page.
- **index.html** This is the name of the file that contains the web page bits and pieces.
Chapter 3: Browsing the Web with Chrome

More Address Bar Fun

Besides showing you the address of the current page and letting you enter a new page address, the Address bar has a few other tricks up its digital sleeve:

- The Address bar monitors the address as you type. If an address you previously entered matches your typing, the rest of that address is displayed automatically. Press Enter to select that address, press Delete to remove the rest of the address, or just keep typing to specify something different.

- Chrome assumes any address you enter is for a website. Therefore, you don’t need to type the http:// prefix because Chrome adds it for you automatically.

- Chrome also assumes that most web addresses are of the form http://www.whatever.com. Therefore, if you simply type the “whatever” part and press Ctrl+Enter, Chrome automatically adds the http://www. prefix and the .com suffix. For example, you can get to my home page (http://www.mcfedries.com) by typing mcfedries and pressing Ctrl+Enter.

To and Fro: More Web Navigation Techniques

After you start leaping and jumping through the web’s cyberspatial byways, you often want to head back to a previous site or even to your home page (the first page you see when you launch Chrome). Here’s a rundown of the various techniques you can use to move back and forth in Chrome:

- To go back to the previous page, click the Back button. (Pressing Alt+Left Arrow also does the job.)

- After you’ve gone back to a previous page, you can move forward again by clicking the Forward button. (To keep your keyboard from getting lonely, you can also press Alt+Right Arrow.)
Both the Back and Forward buttons do double duty as drop-down lists. When you click and hold down the left mouse button on either Back or Forward, Chrome displays a list of the sites you’ve visited. You can then click the site you want and jump straight there.

To return to the home page, click the Home button (pointed out in Figure 3.1). (Keyboard aficionados can also press Alt+Home.)

**CHROME LORE**

When you surf to another page, Chrome may pause for a while and then display a message that says *This page cannot be displayed.* This often means that the website is kaput or down temporarily. However, I’ve found that Chrome sometimes displays this message for no good reason and that clicking Reload (see Figure 3.1) or pressing either F5 or Ctrl+R to refresh the page will bring the program to its senses.

**Techniques for Efficient Web Gallivanting**

The paradox of the web is that even though it doesn’t really exist anywhere (after all, where is the amorphous never-never land of cyberspace?), it’s still one of the biggest earthly things you can imagine. There aren’t hundreds of thousands of pages or even millions of them. No, there are billions of web pages. (Of course, if you ignore all the pages that are devoted to *Lost* and *American Idol,* then, yes, there are only a few hundred thousand pages.)

To have even a faint hope of managing just a tiny fraction of such an inconceivably vast array of data and bad wedding photos, you need to hone your web browsing skills with a few useful techniques. Fortunately, as you’ll see in the next few sections, Chrome has all kinds of features that can help.

**Managing Your Bookmarks**

One of the most common experiences that folks new to web browsing go through is to stumble upon a really great site and then not be able to find it again later. They try to retrace their steps but usually just end up clicking links furiously and winding up in strange Net neighborhoods.
If this has happened to you, the solution is to get Chrome to do all the grunt work of remembering sites for you. This is the job of the Bookmarks feature, which holds “shortcuts” to web pages and even lets you organize these shortcuts into separate folders.

Here’s how you tell Chrome to remember a web page as a bookmark:

1. Navigate to the page that has you all aflutter.

2. Click **Bookmark this Page** (the star icon pointed out in Figure 3.2) or press **Ctrl+D**. Chrome displays the Bookmark Added! dialog box, as shown in Figure 3.2.

3. The Name text box shows the name of the page, which is what you’ll select later on when you want to view this page again. If you can think of a better (or shorter) name for the page, don’t hesitate to edit this text.

4. Click **Close** to finish.

Okay, I know just what you’re thinking: “‘Bookmark Added’? Bookmark added where⁈”

Exactly. To solve this particular Chrome conundrum, first take a peek back at Figure 3.2 and check out the selected item in the Folder list. It’s Bookmarks bar, and *that* is where Chrome added your new bookmark. Not helping? I hear you. So now you’ve got to knock Chrome upside the head and tell it to get with the program and actually display the Bookmarks bar. You’ve got two ways to go here:

- Click **Tools** (the wrench icon helpfully pointed out in Figure 3.2) and then click **Always Show Bookmarks bar**.
- Press **Ctrl+B**.
Chrome coughs up the Bookmarks bar, which (as shown in Figure 3.3) is a horizontal strip below the Address bar. As you can see, the Bookmarks bar holds the bookmark that I added earlier, plus a few other choice sites that I added while you weren’t looking. Now we’re getting somewhere!

![Bookmarks bar](image)

**Figure 3.3** *With the Bookmarks bar displayed, your bookmarks are now just a mouse click away.*

After you have some pages lined up as bookmarks, you can return to any one of them at any time by clicking the page title in the Bookmarks bar.

If you need to make changes to your bookmarks, you can do a couple of things right from the Bookmarks bar. Right-click the bookmark you want to mess around with and then, in the shortcut menu that slinks in, make use of any of the following commands:

- **Open in New Tab.** Click this command to open the bookmarked page in a new Chrome tab.

- **Open in New Window.** Click this command to open the bookmarked page in a new Chrome window.

- **Open in Incognito Window.** Click this command to open the bookmarked page in an Incognito Chrome window. (To find out just what on Earth I’m talking about here, see the section in Chapter 5 called “Your Own Private Web: Incognito Browsing.”)

- **Edit.** Click this command to rename the bookmark or change the bookmark’s address.

- **Delete.** Click this command to blow away the bookmark.
MAXIMUM CHROME

Here’s one of my favorite Chrome tricks: You can convince Chrome to open not just a single bookmark but all the bookmarks in the Bookmarks bar. Right-click an empty section of the Bookmarks bar and then click Open All Bookmarks. You’re welcome.

For more heavy-duty adjustments, you need to launch the Bookmark Manager, which gives you a bird’s-eye view of your bookmarks. The easiest route is probably to right-click the Bookmarks bar and then click Bookmark Manager, but you can also press Shift+Ctrl+B. (If you’re looking to kill some extra time, you can also click Tools—the wrench icon—and then click Bookmark Manager.)

Not surprisingly, this pushes the Bookmark Manager window into view. You get four tabs to play with:

- Bookmarks bar. Click this tab to see the bookmarks that you’ve added to the Bookmarks bar, as shown in Figure 3.4.

- Other Bookmarks. Click this tab to see the bookmarks that you’ve added to the Other Bookmarks folder. To add bookmarks to this folder, either drag an existing bookmark and drop it on Other Bookmarks, or when you add a bookmark in Chrome, be sure to select Other Bookmarks in the Folder list. To access these bookmarks in Chrome, click Other Bookmarks in the Bookmarks bar and then click the bookmark you want.

- Recently Added. Click this tab to see your latest bookmarks.

- Search. This tab displays the results of your bookmark searches. If you’re dealing with dozens or even hundreds of bookmarks, use the Search box to type a word or phrase for the bookmark you want to find and then press Enter. Bookmark Manager displays the matching bookmarks in the Search tab.

CHROME LORE

Why bother with the Other Bookmarks folder? Mostly because the Bookmarks bar is only so wide, so it can hold only a limited number of bookmarks. This means that you’ll eventually have to store some bookmarks in the Other Bookmarks folder. A good strategy is to keep just your best-of-the-best sites in the main Bookmarks bar for one-click access and move the best-of-the-rest to Other Bookmarks for two-click access.
You can also click to select a bookmark and then use the appropriate command on the Organize menu (Edit, Delete, Cut, Copy, or Paste) to manage your bookmarks. You can also select Organize, Add Page to add a bookmark for a page right in the Bookmark Manager.

When you’re done, click Close (X) on the Bookmark Manager tab to return to Chrome.

![Figure 3.4](image)

**Figure 3.4** Use the Bookmark Manager to, you know, manage your bookmarks.

### Using the History List

I showed you earlier how you can click the Back and Forward buttons to follow in your own web footsteps. Chrome wipes those lists clean, however, when you reboot your computer. What do you do when you want to revisit a site you checked out a few days ago? Well, you’ll be happy to know that Chrome keeps track of the addresses of all the pages you’ve perused during the previous two weeks!

Here’s how it works:

1. Click the Tools icon and then click History (or press Ctrl+H). Chrome fires up a new tab and uses it to display the History page, as shown in Figure 3.5.
2. Scroll down to the day when you surfed the site.
3. Click the page you want to see. Chrome displays the page in the content area.

If you do a lot of surfing, your History list will be crammed to the gills with links. To find the one you want, click inside the Search box, enter a word or phrase for the site you want, and then click Search History.
Chapter 3: Browsing the Web with Chrome

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Figure 3.5 The History list keeps track of all the web addresses you called on in the last while.

Searching for Sites

Clicking willy-nilly in the hope of finding something interesting can be fun if you’ve got a few hours to kill. But if you need a specific tidbit of information now, then a click-click here and click-click there just won’t cut the research mustard. To save time, you need to knock the web down to a more manageable size, and the main Google site (www.google.com) can help you do just that.

The idea is straightforward: you supply the Google search engine (as it’s called) with a word or two that describes the topic you want to find. Google then scours the web for pages that contain those words and presents you with a list of matches. Does it work? Actually, yes it does, most of the time. The biggest problem is that, depending on the topic you’re looking for, the search engine might return thousands or even millions of matching sites! You can usually get a more targeted search by adding more search terms and avoiding common words. For example, suppose you want to know the airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow. If you search on just “swallow,” you’ll hit a wall of tens of millions of results. However, a search for “airspeed unladen swallow” will get you some pretty good results right off the bat.
Running a Basic Google Search

A basic site search couldn’t be easier:

1. Click Chrome’s **Home** button (or press Alt+Home) to bring up the Google search page. (On the off chance that Google isn’t defined as your Chrome home page, type google.com in the Address bar and press Enter.)

2. Use the big text box to type the word or phrase you want to find.

3. Click **Google Search** (or just press Enter). Google displays the results a few seconds later.

As you can see in Figure 3.6, you get a series of links and descriptions. (Generally speaking, the higher the link is in the list, the more likely the page it points to matches your search text.) Clicking a link displays the page.

**SEE ALSO**

To learn how to remake Chrome OS searching in your own image, see Chapter 4, particularly the section “Customizing Chrome’s Search Engine.”

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**Figure 3.6** After performing the search, Google displays a list of links to matching pages.
Chapter 3: Browsing the Web with Chrome

Getting Serious with Advanced Google Searches

If you're feeling gung-ho, you can refine your Google searches to get much more specific results. This is particularly useful if you don't find a good match when you try a standard Google search.

By default, Google looks for pages that match all of the words you specify, in any order. However, you can refine your search to return sites that match an exact phrase, that match one or more of your words, or that do not contain a particular word. You can also refine your Google search by restricting it to a specific website.

Here are the steps to follow:

1. Navigate to the Google home page.

2. Click Advanced Search. (Conveniently, the Advanced Search link is also available in the results page of any Google web search.) The Advanced Search page shows up, as shown in Figure 3.7.

3. Use the all these words text box to type the words that must appear in the matching pages.

4. Use the this exact wording or phrase text box to type an exact phrase that must appear in the matching pages.

Figure 3.7  Use Google's Advanced Search page to kick your searching up a notch.
5. Use the **one or more of these words** text boxes to type up to three words or phrases if you want the matching pages to include one or more of these words or phrases.

6. Use the **any of these unwanted words** text box to type the words that must not appear in the matching pages.

7. If you want to search within a particular site, use the **Search within a site or domain** text box to type the address of the site you want to search.

8. Click **Advanced Search**. Google displays the search results.

The good news is that you don’t have to use the Advanced Search form to refine your Google searches. Instead, you can use special words and characters—called **operators**—in the regular Google search box. Table 3.1 summarizes the operators you can use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“”</td>
<td>Surround words with quotation marks to search for the exact phrase (for example, “espresso machine”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Use this operator (you must use uppercase letters) to match one word or another (for example, espresso OR cappuccino)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Place this operator in front of a word to match pages that don’t include the word (for example, espresso -expresso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site:</td>
<td>Use this operator to search within a site (site:coffeegeek.com)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Juggling Sites: Surfing with Tabs

What do you do if you want to go forward or back to a page but you also want to keep the current page at hand? No worries. Press **Ctrl+N** to open up a second Chrome window. You can then use that copy to leap to whatever page you want.

That’s a neat trick, but it’s not unusual to use it too often and end up with a half-dozen or more Chrome windows crowding the screen. That’s a lot of windows to wield.
Fortunately, the Time of Many Windows may soon be a thing of the past. That’s because Chrome comes with a nifty feature called tabs that lets you browse multiple sites in a single window. Sweet!

To achieve this new level of clutter-free browsing, you create a new tab in the current window and then use that tab to display a different web page. How do you create a new tab? Like so: press Ctrl+T or click the New Tab button, pointed out in Figure 3.8. Chrome opens the New Tab page, and you have several ways to navigate to the new page you want to display in the tab:

- The New Tab page includes the Bookmarks bar, so you can click a bookmark.
- The New Tab page also includes a few of the more popular sites from your browsing history, displayed as mini versions called thumbnails, so you can click a site thumbnail to go to that site.
- You can also type the page address in the Address bar and press Alt+Enter to load the page into the new tab.

Here are a few tab techniques you can use to impress your friends:

- If you see a link that you want to load into a separate tab, right-click the link and then select Open Link in New Tab.
- To view a page that you have loaded in another tab, click the tab. You can also press Ctrl+1 to switch to the first tab (counting from the left), Ctrl+2 to switch to the second tab, and so on, up to Ctrl+8. Pressing Ctrl+9 always switches to the last tab, no matter how many tabs you have open.
- To cycle through your open tabs, hold down Ctrl and tap Tab to cycle the tabs left to right. Hold down Shift and Ctrl and tap Tab to cycle the tabs right to left.
- To get rid of a tab, click it and then click the “X” that appears on the right side of the tab (or press Ctrl+W).
- If you close a tab by accident, press Ctrl+Shift+T to reopen it. (You can actually do this to restore up to the last 10 tabs you’ve closed.)
Dealing With Files in Chrome

As you click your way around the web, you’ll find that some links don’t take you to other pages but are instead tied directly to a file. In most cases, after you click the link to the file, you’ll see the Downloads bar at the bottom of the screen, which shows you the progress of the download, as shown in Figure 3.9. (If Chrome thinks a file might be harmful to your computer, it asks you to confirm the download; click Save if you’re sure the file is okay or Discard to bail out of the download.)
Once the file is downloaded, click the arrow beside the filename and then click one of the following commands:

- **Open**. Click this button to launch the downloaded file.
- **Show in Folder**. Click this button to open a window that displays the contents of the folder into which you saved the file. This is a good choice if you want to do something other than launch the file (such as rename it or run your antivirus program on it).

You can also click the **Show all downloads** link to open the Downloads page shown in Figure 3.10. Use the Downloads page to clean up your downloads: Click **Remove from list** to get rid of a download; click **Clear all** to remove all the downloads.

![Figure 3.10](image)

**Figure 3.10**  Click **Show all downloads** to open the Downloads page, which shows a list of all your downloaded files.

**CHROME CAUTION!**

You need to be careful about downloading files because they can contain viruses that wreck your system. To be safe, you should only download from reputable sites or from sites that you trust explicitly. If you plan on living dangerously and downloading files willy-nilly, at least get yourself a good antivirus program and use it to check each file you download.
The Least You Need to Know

* To surf to another page, either click a link or type an address in the Address bar and then press Enter. Use the Back button to return to the previous page; use the Forward button to head the other way.

* To scour the web for a particular topic, head to Google (www.google.com), type a word or two in the Search box, and press Enter.

* Click the Bookmark this Page icon (or press Ctrl+D) to save a page to the Bookmarks list.

* Click the Tools icon and then click History (or press Ctrl+H) to open the History list.

* To create a new tab, press Ctrl+T or click the New Tab button. You can also right-click a link and then click Open Link in New Tab.
In This Chapter

- Configuring your startup pages
- Setting up a special home page
- Choosing a search engine other than Google
- Giving Chrome a makeover by changing the theme
- Adding on to Chrome with extensions
- Remaking Chrome in your own image

When you launch Chrome right out of the box, you see that it comes in a basic, one-size-fits-all outfit. This off-the-rack approach is fine for some people, but the rest of us prefer a little more individuality to our Chrome wear. We want our version of Chrome to reflect our impeccable tastes, our inimitable personality, and our charming quirks.

Thankfully, Chrome is only too happy to oblige such rugged individualism. The program comes with a small but useful set of features that allows you to customize to your heart's content. This chapter takes you through many of these features, including customizing the startup page, setting up a home page, customizing the search engine, changing the theme, and adding extensions to Chrome.
Home Sweet Home: Setting Up Your Home Page

If you have Chrome open in front of you right now, take a look at the left side of the navigation bar. (If you don’t have Chrome open at the moment, take a look at Figure 4.1 instead.) See the little icon that looks like a house? (It’s the fourth one from the left.) That’s the Open the Home Page icon, and its only job is to whisk you immediately to the Chrome home page, which in the default setup is the main Google web page (www.google.com).

That’s handy, for sure, but it might not be exactly what you want. For example, rather than the Google main page, you might prefer that the home page be your favorite site, a site you use regularly, your corporate site, or your personal page or blog. In fact, Chrome gives you two choices:

- **The New Tab page.** This is the page that Chrome normally coughs up when you open a new tab, and it shows thumbnails for the sites you’ve visited most often and for tabs you’ve recently closed. By making this your home page, you get quick access to these sites without having to tack on a new tab.

- **A specific web page.** In this case, you specify the address of the page that you prefer Chrome to load when you click the Open the Home Page icon.

Here are the steps to follow to set up your Chrome home page:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench on the right side of the navigation bar).
2. Click **Options.** Chrome displays the Options dialog box.
3. Click the Basics tab (which should be selected by default, but you never know).

4. In the Home Page group, click one of the following options (see Figure 4.2):
   - **Use the New Tab page.** Click this option to convince Chrome to crack open the New Tab page whenever you click the Open the Home Page icon.
   - **Open this page.** Click this option to have Chrome open a specific web page whenever you click the Open the Home Page icon. Use the text box to type the address of the page you want to open.

5. If you never, ever use the Open the Home Page icon and can’t be cajoled into clicking it for love or money, you can free up a bit of room on the navigation bar by removing the icon. To make this so, deactivate the Show Home button on the toolbar check box.

6. Click Close to put your new settings into effect.

**A Fresh Start: Configuring Chrome’s Startup Pages**

When you first crank up your computer and log in, Chrome OS automatically pushes the Chrome browser onto the screen, and you’re ready to get down with the cloud. You’d think (sensibly, in my opinion) that Chrome would show you the same initial web page each time you log in to Chrome OS. You’d think (even more sensibly) that Chrome would show you your home page each time you log in to Chrome OS. Hah! Not so, I’m afraid. In fact, it’s possible that you might see a different page (or set of pages) each time you start your machine. What’s up with that?

The reason behind this seemingly odd behavior is that Chrome’s default startup setting is to redisplay the tabs you had open when you last shut down your computer.
This actually makes a tiny bit of sense because there’s at least a chance that you’ll want to continue working with whatever site or sites you had open when you last shut down or restarted the system. However, there are a few problems with this default behavior:

* If you had a truckload of tabs open when you last shut down or restarted your system, it could take Chrome quite a while to reopen all those sites at startup.
* You might have a specific page or set of pages that you prefer to see at startup.
* You might prefer to keep things simple and start off with just your home page.

Whatever problem you’re trying to overcome, here are the steps to follow to do it:

1. If you have a page or set of pages that you want Chrome to open at startup, you can save a bit of time later on by setting up your tabs now to show those pages.
2. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon on the right side of the navigation bar).
3. Click **Options** to open the Options dialog box.
4. Click the **Basics** tab (which is usually selected by default).
5. In the On Startup group, click one of the following options (see Figure 4.3):
   * **Open the home page.** Click this option to configure Chrome to open your home page each time you log in to Chrome OS.
   * **Reopen the pages that were open last.** Click this option (the default choice) to have Chrome remember the tabs you had open when you last shut down or restarted Chrome OS and to then reopen those tabs at startup.
   * **Open the following pages.** Click this option to specify a page or pages to open at startup. If you’ve already opened tabs for those pages (as I suggested in step 1), click **Use Current** to add them to the list. Otherwise, click **Add** to open the Add dialog box, type the address in the URL text box, click **Add**, and repeat as needed.
Chapter 4: Customizing Chrome

Figure 4.3 Use the options in the On Startup group to configure Chrome’s startup pages.

6. Click Close to put your new startup settings into effect.

Customizing Chrome’s Search Engine

You normally use Chrome’s Address box to type the address of the web page you want to peruse. However, if you use the Address box to type something non-address-like, Chrome assumes you’re entering a search term. To prove it, check out Figure 4.4. As you can see, I’ve typed *rutabaga* in the Address bar. In the list that Chrome displays, the first item is *rutabaga—Google Search*, and that item is highlighted. This means that if you press Enter at this point, Chrome sends your Address box text to the Google search engine, which then displays the results. Nice!

![Figure 4.4](image-url)
Chrome and Chrome OS are Google products, so it makes sense that Chrome offers to run a Google search. However, you might be more of a fan of Bing (Microsoft’s search engine) or Yahoo! or even something completely different. If so, no worries: You can customize Chrome to use whatever search engine you like.

**Choosing a Different Search Engine**

By default, Chrome is on speaking terms with two other search engines besides Google: Bing and Yahoo!. To choose one of these as your preferred search engine, follow this procedure:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon on the right side of the navigation bar).
2. Click **Options**. Chrome displays the Options dialog box.
3. Click the **Basics** tab (which should be selected by default).
4. Click the **Default Search** list (see Figure 4.5) and then click the search engine you want to use.

![Figure 4.5](image)  
Use the Default Search list to select your search engine.

5. Click **Close** to put your new search setting into effect.

**Creating Your Very Own Search Option**

If Google, Bing, or Yahoo! don’t cut the search mustard for you, you can configure Chrome to use some other search engine. It’s true! The only tricky part to all this is that you have to know the address that the search engine uses.

How do you know the proper URL to use for a search engine? Go to the search engine site and run a search with a single word. When the results appear, examine the URL in the Address bar, which usually takes the following general form:

```script
ScriptURL?Query=Gobbledygook
```
Chapter 4: Customizing Chrome

Here, *ScriptURL* is the address of the site’s search script, and *QueryGobbledygook* is the data sent to the script, plus a bunch of other indecipherable text. For example, if you go to the Technorati blog search engine (www.technorati.com) and run a search using the word TEST, you see the following in the Address bar when the results show up:

www.technorati.com/search?return=posts&authority=high&q=TEST&x=8&y=0

To use such an address to create a custom Chrome search, you copy the URL and substitute %s for the search text you used, like so:

www.technorati.com/search?return=posts&authority=high&q=%s&x=0&y=0

To save you some legwork, here are some search URLs with the %s added for a number of search sites:

**All the Web:**
www.alltheweb.com/search?query=%s&cat=web

**Ask.com:**
www.ask.com/web?q=%s

**Excite:**
http://msxml.excite.com/info.xcite/search/web/%s

**Lycos:**
http://search.lycos.com/default.asp?query=%s

**Technorati:**
www.technorati.com/search/%s

Now you follow these steps to set up your custom search engine:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon on the navigation bar).
2. Click **Options**. Chrome displays the Options dialog box.
3. Click the **Basics** tab (which should be selected by default).
4. Beside the Default Search list, click **Manage**. Chrome displays a list of its defined search engines (which it calls *search options*, for some reason).
5. Click **Add**. Chrome displays a dialog box that asks you for the search engine details.

6. Use the **Name** text box to type a name for the search engine.

7. Use the **Keyword** text box to type the text you want to use to access the search engine (as described in the next section).

8. Use the **URL** text box to type the search engine’s search URL. Figure 4.6 shows an example.

![Figure 4.6](image)

**Figure 4.6** Configure your custom search engine by entering a name, keyword, and search URL.

9. Click **Add**. Chrome adds the search engine to the list.

10. If you want your new search engine to be the Chrome default, click the search engine in the list and then click **Make Default**.

11. Click **Close** to put your new search setting into effect.

### Accessing Any of Your Search Engines

What happens if you want to, say, keep Google as the default search engine but use Bing from time to time? You could just go to the Bing.com site, but Chrome lets you search with Bing using the convenience of the Address box. To access any of the search engines that are defined in Chrome, follow these steps:

1. Click inside the Address bar and delete any existing text.

2. Type the keyword of the search engine. (See the previous section to learn about these keyword thingies.)

3. Press **Tab**. Chrome displays **Search Engine:** in the Address box, where *Engine* is the search engine name. Figure 4.7 shows an example.
4. Type your search text.
5. Press Enter. Chrome passes along your text to the search engine and displays the results.

Managing the Search Options List

Once you start messing around with the Chrome search options, you might find that a bit of maintenance is in order after a while. For example, you might want to change the name or keyword for a search option, change the default search option, or even remove a search option that has grown tiresome and boring.

You can do all that and more by taking advantage of Chrome's list of search options, which you can rouse from its slumber by following these steps:

1. Click the Tools menu (your old friend the wrench icon on the navigation bar).
2. Click Options to come face-to-face with the Options dialog box.
3. Click the Basics tab, if it's not already front and center.
4. Beside the Default Search list, click Manage. Chrome displays the list of search options, as shown in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.7  Type the search engine keyword and press Tab to access that search engine.

Figure 4.8  Use Chrome's list of search options to perform your Chrome search maintenance tasks.
Here’s what you can do with this list:

- **Edit a search option.** Click the search option you want to mess with and then click **Edit**. In the dialog box that shows up, edit the name, keyword, and URL, and then click **Save**.

- **Make a search option the Chrome default.** Click the search option and then click **Make Default**. (Remember that the default search option is the one that Chrome uses when you enter a search term in the Address box without using a search option keyword.)

- **Get rid of a search option.** Click the search option, double-check that you’ve selected the one you want to blow away (Chrome won’t ask you to confirm the deletion, hence the paranoia), and then click **Remove**.

When you’ve had enough of all this, click **Close** to return to the Options dialog box and then click **Close** again to return to Chrome.

**Replating Chrome: Changing the Theme**

In Chrome, the *theme* is a set of colors, icons, and effects that controls the look of the Chrome window. On most pages, you only see the theme’s effects in the tab bar and the navigation bar, where the theme changes the background color, tab color, icon color, and in some cases the icons themselves. If you’re tired of looking at the same old, same old, you can spruce up your cloud home by applying a new theme. You can apply one of the two built-in themes, or you can access dozens of themes in the Themes Gallery.

**Applying a Built-In Theme**

Follow these steps to apply a built-in theme:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench button on the right side of the navigation bar).
2. Click **Options** to meet up with the Options dialog box.
3. Click the **Personal Stuff** tab.
4. Click **Use GTK+ theme**. (If you’ve already applied this theme and want to restore the original Chrome look, click **Use Classic theme** instead.)

5. Click **Close**. Chrome applies the new theme.

**CHROME LORE**

Are you wondering what GTK+ stands for? You may be sorry you asked. GTK is short for GIMP Toolkit. Okay, so what about this GIMP acronym? Ah, GIMP is short for GNU Image Manipulation Program. Sigh. Okaaayyy, what does GNU stand for? GNU is short for GNU’s Not Unix. Huh? Yes, you read that right: The acronym itself is part of the phrase the acronym stands for. This is called (yes, there’s a name for this kind of thing) a self-referential acronym, and it’s the sort of linguistic horseplay that geeks revel in. This would be a good time for the rest of us to just move on with our lives.

---

**Applying a Theme from the Themes Gallery**

Follow these steps to apply a theme from the Themes Gallery:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench button on the right side of the navigation bar).

2. Click **Options** to meet up with the Options dialog box.

3. Click the **Personal Stuff** tab.

4. Click **Get themes**. Chrome admits you to the Themes Gallery.

5. Choose which wing of the Themes Gallery you want to tour:
   - **Themes by Artists**. Click this link to see thumbnail versions of various themes created by artists (see Figure 4.9).
   - **Themes by Google**. Click this link to see thumbnail versions of some themes created by the good folks at Google (see Figure 4.10).

6. If you want to get a better look at a theme, click the theme name to open a page that gives you an example of a Chrome window with the theme applied.

7. Click **Apply this theme**. Chrome downloads and then applies the theme.
Figure 4.9  The Themes by Artists gallery has Chrome themes built by right-brained Chrome fans.

Figure 4.10  The Themes by Google gallery has Chrome themes direct from Google.
Chrome and Then Some: Adding Extensions

Chrome is an awfully nice web browser and has almost all the features anyone would need in a top-notch cloud companion. Notice I said “almost.” No browser can do everything, and no browser can anticipate every person’s needs:

- If you’re a heavy e-mail user, wouldn’t it be nice if Chrome could let you know when you have new messages waiting for you in your Gmail Inbox?
- If you rarely meet an RSS feed that you don’t want to subscribe to, wouldn’t it be nice if Chrome had some quick way to add feeds to Google Reader? (If you don’t have any idea what an RSS feed is and what Google Reader does, make a beeline for Chapter 11 to get the full scoop.)

For these kinds of conundrums and thousands more, you can get Chrome to work around the problem by installing extensions, which are Chrome add-ons that give Chrome new features, new options, and new capabilities. For example:

- **Google Mail Checker.** This extension adds an icon to the Chrome navigation bar that tells you the number of unread messages you have in your Gmail Inbox.
- **RSS Subscription Extension.** This extension tells you when a site has an RSS feed available and enables you to add the feed to Google Reader.

**DEFINITION**

An extension is a mini program that extends the functionality of the Chrome browser.

Come On In: Installing an Extension

To add on to your Chrome house, you need to install an extension using these steps:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon on the right side of the navigation bar).
2. Click **Extensions**. Chrome displays the Extensions page.
3. Click the **browse the gallery** link. (If you already have at least one extension installed, click the **Get more extensions** link instead.) Chrome takes you to the Google Chrome Extensions page.
MAXIMUM CHROME

If you don’t feel like slogging through steps 1 to 3, you can combine them by surfing directly to the Google Chrome Extensions page at https://chrome.google.com/extensions.

4. Use the links on the left (such as Most popular and Top rated) to browse the extensions or, if you know what you want, use the search box at the top of the page to ferret out the extension.

5. Click the extension you want to check out. Chrome takes you to a page that tells you a bit about the extension, shows user reviews, and tells you how many people are using it (see Figure 4.11).

6. If you like what you see, click the Install button. Chrome asks if you really know what the heck you’re doing.

7. Shrug your shoulders and click Install. Chrome does what it’s told and installs the extension. Figure 4.12 shows Chrome with the Google Mail Checker installed.

Figure 4.11  In any list of extensions, click an extension to see more info about it.

Figure 4.12  With the Google Mail Checker extension installed, the Chrome browser now tells you when you have unread messages in your Gmail Inbox.
Chapter 4: Customizing Chrome

Taking a Timeout: Disabling an Extension

Most extensions work most of the time for most people. All those “mosts” are my indirect way of telling you that problems do crop up from time to time when you use extensions. If you suspect (or hope!) the problem is temporary, you can disable an extension. For example, if an extension grabs data from another site and that site is down temporarily, it’s best to disable the extension so that it doesn’t affect Chrome. Similarly, if you’ve got lots of extensions installed and you find that Chrome is a bit sluggish, you can disable a few extensions to make Chrome a bit lighter on its feet.

Here’s how you go about disabling an extension:

1. Click the Tools menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click Extensions to rendezvous with the Extensions page.
3. Locate the extension you want to hobble and then click its Disable link. Chrome goes right ahead and disables the extension, no questions asked.

When you’re ready to give the extension a second chance, click Tools, click Extensions, and then click the Enable link beside the extension.

Get Out! Uninstalling an Extension

Each extension seems like a good idea at the time you install it. Unless you’re an outright pessimist, you probably figured that an extension you installed was going to help you work harder, be more efficient, or have more fun. Sadly, many extensions don’t live up to expectations. The good news is that you don’t have to put up with a loser extension after you realize it’s not up to snuff. You can uninstall it—in other words, completely remove the extension from Chrome—so that it doesn’t clutter up your toolbar or any other location where it might have inserted itself.

Here’s what you do:

1. Click the Tools menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click Extensions to call up the Extensions page.
3. Locate the extension you want to remove and then click its Uninstall link. In a somewhat shocked tone, Chrome asks if you’re sure you want to go through with this.
4. With a snort of derision, click the Uninstall button. Chrome mutters under its breath but uninstalls the extension anyway.
The Least You Need to Know

* To configure your Chrome home page, select **Tools, Options, Basics** and then click either **Use the New Tab page** or **Open this page** and type the page address.

* To open a particular passel of pages when you start Chrome, open those pages in their own tabs; select **Tools, Options, Basics**; click **Open the following pages**; and then click **Use Current**.

* To choose a different search engine, select **Tools, Options, Basics**; click the **Default Search** list; and then click the search engine.

* To apply a different theme to Chrome, select **Tools, Options, Personal Stuff**; click **Get themes**; and then use the Themes Gallery site to select a theme.

* To install a Chrome extension, select **Tools, Extensions**; click the **browse the gallery** link (or **Get more extensions**); and then use the Google Chrome Extensions page to install the extension.
In This Chapter

- Keeping hackers and other miscreants out of your system
- Figuring out phishing
- Maintaining privacy in the cloud
- Blocking those annoying pop-up windows
- Staying safe and secure while you leap from cloud to cloud

The Internet is a more cosmopolitan place now than in its relatively lawless beginnings. However, although the Net is no longer the digital equivalent of the Wild West, we’ve progressed only to about the level of Al Capone’s Chicago of the 1930s. In other words, although most of your cloud dealings will be safe and pleasant, there are plenty of cyberhoodlums and e-gangsters roaming the Net’s dark streets and alleyways. You need to exercise some caution to avoid the Internet’s version of muggings and extortion.

Fortunately, the situation is not so grim that you can’t easily protect yourself. As you will see in this chapter, avoiding virus purveyors, scammers, system intruders, and other Internet bad guys is a relatively simple combination of common sense and the prudent tweaking of a few Chrome settings.

Chrome Security: The Basics

Tons of people are flocking to the cloud, and tons of content providers and application developers are waiting for them there. Still, the cloud is by no means in the mainstream. That is, although millions of people use the cloud, that’s still only a small percentage of the hundreds of millions—perhaps even billions—of potential
cloud denizens who are sticking with their local programs and data. Reasons for this abound, but one of the biggest is the security issue. There are two issues, actually:

- **Protecting the data that you send to the cloud**  Many cloud applications ask you to supply sensitive data, such as your credit card number. You wouldn’t leave credit card receipts lying in the street, but that’s more or less what you’re doing if you submit a normal online form that has your Visa number on it. The solution here is to only enter sensitive data on pages that are secure (more on this in a sec).

- **Protecting yourself from the data that the cloud sends to you**  The nature of the cloud means that all kinds of items—text, graphics, sounds, Java applets (a kind of mini program), and more—get deposited on your computer, at least temporarily. How do you know all that stuff is safe? And if you’re not sure about something, how do you refuse delivery?

### Understanding Chrome’s Secure-Site Indicators

Chrome offers a few features that tackle these issues directly. For example, on the protecting-the-data-that-you-send-to-the-cloud issues, the Chrome window gives you visual cues that tell you whether a particular page is secure. For example, Figure 5.1 shows Chrome displaying a secure web page. Notice how a lock icon appears on the right side of the Address bar and that the address of a secure page uses https up front rather than http. Both of these features tell you that the web page has security credentials that pass muster with Chrome.

![The lock icon](image)

**Figure 5.1**  An example of a secure web page.
Understanding Chrome’s Bad Site Warnings

How does Chrome protect you from nasty data that comes in from the cloud? Chrome acts as a kind of digital scout that leads the way as you surf the cloud. If the scout detects that an upcoming neck of the web woods is potentially dangerous, it will temporarily disable the site and warn you about the danger.

For example, certain sites put together by nerds who have succumbed to the dark side of The Force contain a nasty bit of programming business called malware, the term for malicious software such as viruses, Trojan horses, and spyware. The last of these is a plague upon the earth that threatens to deprive a significant portion of the online world of its sanity because spyware refers to programs that surreptitiously monitor a user’s computer activities—particularly the typing of passwords, PINs, and credit card numbers—or that harvest sensitive data on the user’s computer and then send that information to an individual or a company via the user’s Internet connection.

**DEFINITION**

**Malware** is the generic term for malicious software such as viruses and Trojan horses. Another example is spyware, a program that surreptitiously monitors a user’s computer activities and steals that data.

Fortunately, Chrome is hip to the malware thing, and it can detect when an evildoer’s site is trying to install a malware program on your computer. In that case, you don’t see the site itself but the impossible-to-miss warning shown in Figure 5.2.

![Figure 5.2](image-url)  
*Figure 5.2*  If Chrome sniffs out malware in the site you were supposed to surf to, it blocks the site and displays this warning.*
You now have two choices:

* Sensibly get the heck out of Dodge by clicking the appropriately named **Back to safety** button. Actually, this is really your only choice, so don’t even bother to read the next bullet. Seriously.

* Foolishly navigate to the site anyway by activating the **I understand that visiting this site may harm my computer** check box and then clicking the **Proceed anyway** button.

This feature is so important that it’s worthwhile to take a few seconds out of your busy schedule now (yes, right now) to make sure these warnings are turned on in Chrome:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click **Options** to open the Options dialog box.
3. Click the **Under the Hood** tab.
4. Make sure the **Enable phishing and malware protection** check box is activated.
5. Click **Close**.

**Avoiding Phishing Lures**

In the preceding section, you oh-sharp-eyed reader may have noticed that the feature Chrome uses to protect you from nefarious sites was called “Enable phishing and malware protection.” “Phishing?” you may have asked out loud.

*Phishing* refers to creating a replica of an existing web page to fool you into submitting personal data (such as a Social Security number), financial data (such as a credit card’s number, expiration date, and security code), or a password. It’s a whimsical word for a serious bit of business, but the term comes from the fact that Internet scammers are using increasingly sophisticated lures as they “fish” for your sensitive data.

**DEFINITION**

*Phishing* is the practice of creating a replica of an existing web page to fool folks into divulging personal info, financial data, or a password.
Chapter 5: Surfing with a Net: Security and Privacy

The most common ploy is to copy the web page code from a major site—such as a banking site or eBay—and use that code to set up a replica page that appears to be part of the company’s site. You receive a fake e-mail with a link to this page, which solicits your credit card data or password. When you submit the form, it sends the data to the scammer while leaving you on an actual page from the company’s site so you don’t suspect a thing.

Commonsense Ways to Thwart Phishing

A phishing page looks identical to a legitimate page from the company because the phisher has simply copied the underlying source code from the original page. However, no spoof page can be a perfect replica of the original. Here are four things to look for:

- **Weirdness in the address** A legitimate page will have the correct domain—such as citibank.com or ebay.com—while a spoofed page will have only something similar—such as citibank.whatever.com or blah.com/ebay.

- **Weirdness in the addresses associated with page links** Most links on the page probably point to legitimate pages on the original site. However, there may be some links that point to pages on the phisher’s site.

- **Text or images that aren’t associated with the trustworthy site** Many phishing sites are housed on free web hosting services. However, many of these services place an advertisement on each page, so look for an ad or other content from the hosting provider.

- **No lock icon** A legitimate site would only transmit sensitive financial data using a secure connection, which (as you saw earlier in Figure 5.1) Chrome indicates by placing a lock icon in the Address box. If you don’t see the lock icon with a page that asks for financial data, then the page is almost certainly a spoof.

Chrome’s Got Your Back: Phishing Protection

If you watch for these things, you’ll probably never be fooled into giving up sensitive data to a phisher. However, phishing attacks are becoming legion, so we need all the help we can get. To that end, Chrome is smart enough to detect most phishing sites because it does two things each time you visit a site.
• Chrome analyzes the site content to look for known phishing techniques (that is, to see if the site is “phishy”).
• Chrome checks to see if the site is listed in a global database of known phishing sites.

If you come upon a site that Chrome suspects is a potential phishing scam, it blocks access to the site and displays the not-even-remotely-subtle warning shown in Figure 5.3.

![Figure 5.3](image)

**Figure 5.3** If Chrome detects a possible phishing site, it displays this warning.

You’ve got two ways to proceed from here:

• Return to a safer Net neighborhood by clicking the **Back to safety** button.
• If you’re 100 percent (not 98 percent or even 99 percent—100 percent) certain that the site is legit and Chrome has made a mistake, click the **Proceed anyway** button.

### Managing Your Cloud Passwords

Computer security is a remarkably fragile thing. You can erect firewalls, encrypt communications, even physically lock your laptop, but in most security situations, there’s only one thing sitting between an intruder and your computer or your online data: a password. In other words, your precious data, your private thoughts, your confidential memos, your secret ideas are protected by just a few measly characters.
That doesn’t seem like much of a barrier when you look at it in such a stark light, but it’s actually not as bad as all that. Or I should say that it’s not as bad as all that provided you have a password that’s up to the job. A good strong password that can’t be guessed at, figured out, or hacked means you’ve set up an all-but-impenetrable barrier that will keep your computer and your data safe.

In this section, I’ll show you how to achieve this optimal password state and how to use Chrome’s password-related features.

**Bulletproof Your Passwords**

Many of the sites and applications that you use in the cloud require a password. Just to get access to Chrome OS requires your Google account password, and then most online sites that either store your data (such as Flickr) or contain sensitive information (such as a banking site) require a password.

However, it’s not enough to just use any old password. You can improve the security of your cloud locations by making each password robust enough that it is impossible to guess and is impervious to software programs designed to try different password combinations. Such a password is called a *strong password*. Ideally, you want to build a password that provides maximum protection while still being easy to remember.

**DEFINITION**

A **strong password** is a nonobvious password that’s at least eight characters long and includes at least one character from at least three of the following four sets: lowercase letters, uppercase letters, numbers, and symbols.

Lots of books will suggest absurdly fancy password schemes (I’ve written some of those books myself), but there are really only three things you need to know to create strong-like-bull passwords:

1. **Use passwords that are at least eight characters long**—Shorter passwords are susceptible to programs that just try every letter combination. You can combine the 26 letters of the alphabet into about 12 million 5-letter combinations, which is no big deal for a fast program. If you bump things up to 8-letter passwords, however, the total number of combinations rises to 200 billion, which would take even the fastest computer quite a while. If you use 12-letter passwords, as many experts recommend, the number of combinations goes beyond mind-boggling: 90 quadrillion, or 90,000 trillion!
• **Mix up your character types**—The secret to a strong password is to include characters from the following categories: lowercase letters, uppercase letters, numbers, and symbols. If you include at least one character from three (or, even better, all four) of these categories, you’re well on your way to a strong password.

• **Don’t be too obvious**—Because forgetting a password is inconvenient, many people use meaningful words or numbers so that their password will be easier to remember. Unfortunately, this means that they often use extremely obvious things such as their name, the name of a family member or colleague, their birth date, their Social Security number, or even their system username. Being this obvious is just asking for trouble.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

How will you know whether the password you’ve come up with fits the definition of strong? One way to find out is to submit the password to an online password complexity checker. (If you’re the least bit paranoid about these things, consider submitting a password that’s only similar to the one you want to use.) I recommend Microsoft’s (http://tinyurl.com/cpjh4 or www.microsoft.com/protect/fraud/passwords/checker.aspx), but a Google search on “password complexity checker” will reveal many others.

**Juggling Multiple Logins**

If you read books or websites devoted to security, almost every single one will offer the same two bits of password advice:

- Use a different password for every site that requires one.
- Don’t write down your passwords.

If you’re like me, you probably have dozens of logins: e-mail accounts, social networking sites, blogging tools, and on and on. Sorry, but nobody with a life can manage dozens of different passwords, and anyone who goes that far can’t possibly remember them all, so they must be written down. In other words, the sage advice of the security gurus isn’t worth spit in the real world.

My solution is to come up with a small set of password tokens—short (four to six characters long) strings of letters or numbers that you can easily remember. Here’s
a sample set: Mgmt, Feist, Sloan, 1357, 2468. Combine these tokens to create your passwords: Mgmt1357, Sloan2468, and so on. How do you remember? Assign a symbol to each token. For example: ! for Mgmt, * for Feist, * for Sloan, # for 1357, and ## for 2468. Now, for each site and account, write down (go ahead, it’s okay) the symbols that correspond to the tokens you used for the password. If a site’s password is Mgmt1357, write down the site name followed by !#; if an account’s password is Sloan2468, write down the account name followed by *##.

**The Pros and Cons of Saving Your Passwords**

When you log in to a cloud site, Chrome just might ask if you want to save the password, as shown in Figure 5.4.

![Figure 5.4](image)

*Figure 5.4   By default, Chrome asks if you want to save passwords for certain sites.*

There are three forks on this particular road:

- **Save password**  If you click this button, Chrome tucks away the site password in a secure place. The next time you visit the site and surf to the login page, Chrome will fill in your password for you automatically.

- **Never for this site**  If you click this button, Chrome not only doesn’t save your password, it doesn’t ask you again for that particular site. Chrome stores the page address as a site exception.

- **X**  Click this icon on the right side of the message bar if you’re not up for making such an important decision right now.

Earlier I said that Chrome _might_ ask if you want to save the password. Chrome isn’t stupid (or, at least, the people who programmed Chrome aren’t stupid), so it doesn’t ask to save the password for any site that’s secure (such as banking sites and corporate sites).
That’s cool, but should you save passwords for your other sites? Isn’t it weird to create strong passwords and then have Chrome save them? These are tough questions, so let’s look at the pros and cons.

Pros:

- I can sum up the biggest pro in three words: convenience, convenience, convenience. If you’ve got a billion passwords to remember, it’s awfully nice to have Chrome shoulder some of that burden for you.

- If you forget a password (and you haven’t written down your passwords using some sort of coding system like the one I blathered on about in the previous section), Chrome’ll save your bacon because it lets you see any of your saved passwords.

- Chrome is totally flexible about saving passwords. You can not only designate certain sites as exceptions, but you can also remove any passwords that you’ve previously saved.

Cons:

- The biggest con, by a country mile, is that if an intruder (or even an overly inquisitive child) sits down in front of your computer, he’ll be able to log in to all the sites where you’ve saved the password. Major bummer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHROME CAUTION!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having some snoop directly access your computer is a drag, but Chrome OS does come with a couple of safeguards. First, you have to log in to Chrome OS at startup; second, Chrome OS goes into sleep mode after 10 minutes of inactivity, and then you have to log in again. These logins are pretty big hurdles for the intruder to leap, assuming your Google account is protected by a strong password. So here’s a new rule: Never leave your computer unattended unless you turn it off or it’s in sleep mode.</td>
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- I included being able to view your saved passwords in the list of pros, but that can also be a con because it lets an unauthorized user see your passwords, too. This becomes a major con if you use the same password for secure sites because now the intruder can log in to any of your sites. (The obvious lesson here is to use different—and even stronger—passwords for secure sites.)
By not actively typing a password each time, you might forget it after a while. Chrome OS can remind you, of course, but bad things can happen to good operating systems, and a Chrome OS crash could trash your passwords.

So which way should you go? The risk of having your saved passwords lost to a Chrome crash is minimal, so it really comes down to the risk of intrusion. If you think it’s wildly unlikely that some infiltrator will get his or her hands on your computer while it’s logged in to Chrome OS, then feel free to save your passwords. If you routinely leave your computer unattended in a public place or at the office while logged in to Chrome OS, then you probably want to either avoid saving your passwords or save passwords for only the most innocuous sites.

Configuring Chrome to Never Save Passwords

If you decide that it’s just too dangerous to have Chrome save your site passwords, then you probably don’t want to be pestered with the message bar that asks whether you want to save a password each time you log in. If so, then follow these steps to disable this Chrome feature:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click **Options** to open Options dialog box.
3. Click the **Personal Stuff** tab.
4. Click the **Never save passwords** option, as shown in Figure 5.5.
5. Click **Close** to make it so.

![Figure 5.5](image.jpg) You can configure Chrome to stop pestering you to save your login passwords.
Removing a Saved Password

What happens if you save a site password and then later on you realize that it’s just too risky to have that password stored in Chrome? You could rend your garment, pour ashes on your head, and wail about your sorry fate, or you could remove the risky password from Chrome. Assuming you chose the latter course, here’s how it’s done:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click **Options** to open Options dialog box.
3. Click the **Personal Stuff** tab.
4. Click the **Show saved passwords** button. Chrome cranks out a list of your saved passwords.
5. Click the **Saved passwords** tab, shown in Figure 5.6.

![Figure 5.6](image)

*Figure 5.6  The Saved passwords tab lists the login passwords you’ve asked Chrome to store for you.*

6. Click the password you want to get rid of. Chrome won’t ask you to confirm the deletion, so quadruple-check that you’ve selected the right password.
7. Click **Remove**. Chrome gets right down to business and blows away the password.
8. Click **Close** to return to the Options dialog box.
9. Click **Close** to finish up.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

If you ask Chrome not to prompt you to save any passwords, then you should probably also delete any passwords you stored earlier. Follow the steps in this section, but when you get to the list of passwords, click **Remove All**.
Removing a Site Exception

Earlier you learned that when Chrome asks if you want to save a password, you can click **Never for this Site** to add that site as an exception. If you change your mind about the site, you should tell Chrome, which means removing the site exception. Here are the steps to wade through:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click **Options** to open Options dialog box.
3. Click the **Personal Stuff** tab.
4. Click the **Show saved passwords** button to see the list of your saved passwords.
5. Click the **Exceptions** tab, shown in Figure 5.7.

![Figure 5.7](image)

*Figure 5.7  The Exceptions tab lists the sites you’ve asked Chrome to not prompt you about saving passwords.*

6. Click the site you want to remove from the list. Chrome does not ask you to confirm the removal, so quintuple-check that you’ve chosen the correct site.
7. Click **Remove**. Chrome wastes no time and removes the site right away.
8. Click **Close** to return to the Options dialog box.
9. Click **Close** to move on with your life.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

If you’ve been overly zealous about these site exceptions, you might want a fresh start. Follow the steps in this section, but when you get to the list of exceptions, click **Remove All**.
Covering Your Tracks: Deleting Your Browsing Data

You might think that the biggest online privacy risks are sitting out “there” in cyberspace, but that’s not true. Your biggest risk is actually sitting right under your nose, so to speak: it’s Chrome. That’s because Chrome (just like Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, and any other web browser) saves tons of information related to your online activities. So the first step in covering your online tracks is to manage the information that Chrome stores.

As you surf the web, Chrome maintains what it calls your *browsing data*, which consists of the following six types of online info:

- **Browsing history** This is a list of addresses of the sites you’ve visited, as well as each of the pages you visited within those sites. This is a major privacy accident just waiting to happen because anyone sitting at your computer can see exactly where you’ve been online over the past few weeks.

- **Download history** This is a list of the files you’ve downloaded. This is a privacy predicament because it means that others can see what you’ve downloaded.

- **Cache** This is a storage area on your computer, and it consists of copies of text, images, media, and other content from the pages you’ve visited recently. Chrome stores all this data so that the next time you view one of those pages, it can retrieve data from the cache and display the site much more quickly. This is clearly a big-time privacy problem because it means that anyone can examine the cache to learn where you’ve been surfing.

- **Cookies** This is Chrome’s collection of cookie files, which are small text files that sites store on your computer. I discuss cookies in more detail later in this chapter (see the section “Controlling Cookies to Control Cloud Privacy”), but for now it’s enough to know that, although most cookies are benign, they can be used to track your activities online.

- **Passwords** This is the list of saved passwords that I talked about in the preceding section.

- **Form data** This refers to the AutoFill feature, which stores the data you type in forms and then uses that saved data to suggest possible matches when you use a similar form in the future. For example, if you use a site’s Search
box frequently, Chrome remembers your search strings and displays strings that match what you’ve typed, as shown in Figure 5.8. (Press the down-arrow key to select the one you want and then press **Enter**.) This is definitely handy, but it also means that anyone else who uses your computer can see your previously entered form text.

![Figure 5.8](image)

*Figure 5.8  Chrome’s AutoFill feature suggests previously entered text that matches what you’ve typed so far.*

Fortunately, you can plug any and all of these privacy holes by deleting the data:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click the **Clear browsing data** command. Chrome prompts you to choose which bits of data you want to nuke, as shown in Figure 5.9.

![Figure 5.9](image)

*Figure 5.9  Use this dialog box to choose which bits of browsing data you want Chrome to obliterate.*

3. Activate the check box beside each type of data you want removed.
4. Use the **Clear data from this period** list to provide a timeframe to delete: Last day, Last week, Last 4 weeks, or Everything.

5. Click **Clear Browsing Data**. Chrome terminates the selected data with extreme prejudice.

6. Click **Close** and strike “Delete browsing data” from your to-do list.

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**MAXIMUM CHROME**

If you just want to delete your browsing history for a particular day, select **Tools, History** (or press **Ctrl+H**) to open the History list, locate the day you want to forget, and then click the **Delete history for this day** link.

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**Your Own Private Web: Incognito Browsing**

Deleting your browsing data is a handy technique, for sure, but you have to remember to do it, and it’s a distressingly all-or-nothing affair. That is, when you delete history, downloads, the cache files, cookies, passwords, or form data, you delete all of them for whatever timeframe you choose. This is a problem because you often only want to remove the data for a single site or a few sites.

Fortunately, Chrome implements a feature that solves these problems: incognito browsing. When you activate this feature, Chrome stops storing private data when you visit websites. It no longer saves cache files, cookies, browsing and download history, form data, and passwords.

**CHROME CAUTION!**

Incognito browsing is stealthy, but for some sites it might be too stealthy. That’s because some sites require cookies to operate correctly, so they may cough up various electronic hair balls when you have cookies disabled.

To use incognito browsing, select **Tools, New Incognito Window** (or press **Ctrl+Shift+N**). Chrome opens a new browser window as shown in Figure 5.10. To help you remember that incognito browsing is activated, you see the incognito icon to the left of the first tab (pointed out in Figure 5.10).
The incognito icon

![The incognito icon](image)

**Figure 5.10** When you activate incognito browsing, Chrome opens a new window and displays the incognito icon to remind you that you’re in stealth mode.

When you’re ready to surf out in the open again, press Ctrl+F4 to close the incognito window.

### Disabling Chrome’s Web Services to Maximize Privacy

You may not know it, but while you’re surfing hither and thither around the cloud, Chrome is hard at work behind the scenes making life easier for you. No, it’s not paying your bills or cleaning your house, but it’s doing three things that are almost as useful:

- If you try to surf to a page and an error occurs (for example, Chrome can’t connect to the site or the site address is invalid), Chrome will offer up some suggested alternatives.

- When you start typing in the Address bar, Chrome not only shows matching sites that you’ve visited, but it also shows matching popular sites from elsewhere in the cloud. For example, if you type e in the Address bar, you see a list of site options that may include eBay, ESPN, Expedia, and so on.

- When you surf to a page, Chrome examines all the links on that page and then retrieves the official web address—called the Internet Protocol (or IP) address—for each link. This helps because, if you click a link, Chrome doesn’t have to waste time converting the link address into an IP address.
The system that converts regular web addresses into IP addresses is called the Domain Name System (DNS, for short), so this feature is called DNS pre-fetching.

**DEFINITION**

*DNS pre-fetching* is a Chrome feature that looks up the corresponding IP address of each link on a page you visit.

This is all very helpful, but you take a bit of a privacy hit in each case because, in order to provide you with these services, Chrome sends data to Google: in the case of a navigation error, it sends the address you were trying to visit. For Address bar suggestions, it sends the Address bar text you’ve typed. For DNS pre-fetching, it sends the page address and the addresses of all the page links.

For the most part, this is all done anonymously or the data is stored temporarily, so the privacy implications aren’t huge. However, if you’re just not happy with having so much private data sent to Google, you can shut down one, two, or all three of these services. Here’s how:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click **Options** to open Options dialog box.
3. Click the **Under the Hood** tab.
4. If you don’t want Chrome to suggest sites when a navigation error crops up, deactivate the **Show suggestions for navigation errors** check box.
5. If you don’t want Chrome to suggest sites when you type in the Address bar, deactivate the **Use a suggestion service to help complete searches and URLs typed in the address bar** check box.
6. If you don’t want Chrome to do the DNS pre-fetching thing, deactivate the **Use DNS pre-fetching to improve page load performance** check box.
7. Click **Close** to put your enhanced privacy into effect.
Controlling Cookies to Control Cloud Privacy

A cookie is a small text file that’s stored on your computer. Websites use them to “remember” information about your session at that site. For example, if you do some shopping online, the site probably offers a shopping cart. In many cases that shopping cart data—what you ordered and how many of each—is stored in a cookie. Similarly, if a site lets you specify customizations such as fonts and colors, those page customizations are usually kept in a cookie.

This all sounds benign, and in the vast majority of cookie cases it is, but there are times when cookies can compromise privacy, so you need to know what’s in the cookie dough.

“Cookies!? What’s With the Crazy Name?”

First, what’s up with the dumb name? Perhaps not surprisingly, the term cookie has nerdy origins because it derives from the old programming term magic cookie. Programmers would use a magic cookie to send data between two programs or between two different parts of the same program, and the receiver then performs some operation on the data. It’s this idea of passing data from one thing to another (in this case, from a website to your computer) that inspired the original cookie creators.

Understanding Cookie Dangers

Chrome stores cookies on your computer, and the good news is that no other site can access your cookies. This means that cookies are generally safe and private under most circumstances. Notice I said most circumstances, not all circumstances. To understand why cookies can sometimes compromise your privacy, you have to understand the different cookie types that exist:

* **First-party cookie**—This is a cookie set by the website you’re viewing.

* **Third-party cookie**—This is a cookie set by a site other than the one you’re viewing. Advertisers that have placed an ad on the site you’re viewing create and store most third-party cookies.
These cookie types can compromise your privacy in two ways:

- A site might store personal information—your name, e-mail address, home address, phone number, and so on—in a first- or third-party cookie and then use that information in some way (such as filling in a form) without your consent.

- A site might store information about you in a third-party cookie and then use that cookie to track your online movements and activities. An advertiser can do this because it might have (for example) an ad on dozens or hundreds of websites, and that ad is the mechanism that enables the site to set and read its cookies.

**Controlling Your Cookies in Chrome**

To help you handle these scenarios, Chrome implements a privacy feature that gives you extra control over whether sites can store cookies on your machine. Here's how you set it up:

1. Click the **Tools** menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click **Options** to open Options dialog box.
3. Click the **Under the Hood** tab.
4. Use the **Cookie settings** list to choose one of the following options:
   - **Allow All Cookies**  This setting tells Chrome to accept all requests to set and read cookies.
   - **Accept Cookies Only from Sites I Visit**  This setting tells Chrome to accept requests to set and read only first-party cookies. This is the setting to use if you want to maximize privacy while minimizing surfing disruptions.
   - **Block All Cookies**  This setting tells Chrome to reject all requests to set and read cookies.
5. Click **Close** to put the new cookie recipe into effect.
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CHROME CAUTION!

Blocking all cookies might sound like the easiest way to max out your online privacy. However, many sites rely on cookies to operate properly, so if you block all cookies, you might find that your web surfing isn't as convenient or as smooth as it used to be.

Throwing Out Cookies

Earlier in this chapter, I showed you how to delete cookies as part of deleting your Chrome browsing data (see the section “Covering Your Tracks: Deleting Your Browsing Data”). However, crumbling all your cookies is a bit drastic. Instead, you might prefer to get rid of cookies for specific sites, such as advertisers. Also, you might experience problems on some sites, and you can often resolve those problems by deleting the site’s cookie (or cookies) and trying again.

Here are the steps to follow to delete a specific cookie:

1. Click the Tools menu (the wrench icon).
2. Click Options to get at the Options dialog box.
3. Click the Under the Hood tab.
4. Click the Show cookies button. Chrome opens the pantry and displays the cookies stored on your computer.
5. Click the cookie you want to crumble. Chrome displays the cookie’s ingredients, as shown in Figure 5.11.
6. Click Remove. Chrome tosses out the cookie.
7. Click Close to put the lid back on the cookie jar and return to the Options dialog box.
8. Click Close.
Figure 5.11  In the list of cookies, click a cookie to see its contents.

Blocking Nasty Pop-Up Windows

One of the most annoying things on the web is those ubiquitous pop-up windows that infest your screen with advertisements when you visit certain sites. (A variation on the theme is the “pop under,” a window that opens “under” your current browser window so you don’t know it’s there until you close the window.) Pop-up windows can also be dangerous because some unscrupulous software makers have figured out ways to use them to install spyware on your computer without your permission. They’re nasty things, any way you look at them.

Fortunately, Chrome stops pop-ups before they start because it looks for pop-ups and prevents them from opening. When Chrome squashes a pop-up, it displays a message in the lower-right corner of the screen, as shown in Figure 5.12. To see the name and address of the terminated pop-up, click the message, as shown in Figure 5.13. Note, too, that if you want to see the pop-up anyway, you can click the **Always show pop-ups from site** item (where site is the address of the current website).
Figure 5.12 When Chrome thwarts one or more pop-ups, it displays a message like the one shown here.

Figure 5.13 Click the message to see a list of the pop-ups blocked and to allow pop-ups on the current site, if that works for you.

The Least You Need to Know

- When it’s displaying a secure web page, Chrome adds a lock icon on the right side of the Address bar, and the address of the page uses https up front rather than http.
- When Chrome displays a warning about a malware or phishing site, click the Back to safety button to prevent problems.
- A strong password is one that contains at least eight characters and uses at least one character from at least three of the following sets: lowercase letters, uppercase letters, numbers, and symbols.
- If you don’t want Chrome to prompt you to save passwords, select Tools, Options, Personal Stuff and then click the Never save passwords option.
- To remove some or all of your browsing data, select Tools, Options, Personal Stuff; click Clear browsing data; activate the check box beside each type of data you want removed; choose a timeframe; and then click Clear Browsing Data.
- To configure Chrome to set and read only first-party cookies, select Tools, Options, Under the Hood and use the Cookie settings list to choose Accept Cookies Only from Sites I Visit.
You know what they say: All surf and no work (or play) makes Jack an unproductive boy. Well, okay, nobody has ever said that, but it is true that you can use Google Chrome OS to work and play online. There are a few billion things you can do, but here in Part 3 you'll get the scoop on a fistful of Google applications. I concentrate mostly on Google Docs, which is a suite of online applications that lets you organize files (which I cover in Chapter 6), do word processing (that’s in Chapter 7), create spreadsheets (Chapter 8), and build presentations (Chapter 9). Google also lets you send and receive e-mail with the Gmail application (Chapter 10), read blogs and other “feeds” with Google Reader (Chapter 11), maintain your schedule with Google Calendar (Chapter 12), get from here to there with Google Maps (Chapter 13), and share photos with friends (or whomever) with Picasa Web Albums (Chapter 14).
In This Chapter

- Creating files in the cloud
- Launching files into the cloud
- Renaming and deleting files
- Editing documents in the cloud
- Collaborating with other people on a document
- Mastering various other nifty Google Docs file techniques

If you’re going to spend an extended time in the cloud, then you’re going to need provisions. After all, you wouldn’t go on a hike without packing some water, a few fistfuls of trail mix, and a pound or two of your favorite beef jerky. Fortunately, when it comes to your cloud excursions, no strips of dried meat are required. Instead, you need to pack up your old kit bag with files: documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and whatever else you want to work on (and play with) in the cloud.

Your home base for most of these files will be Google Docs (http://docs.google.com), which enables you to create and edit documents, and I’ll tell you how to do that in the next three chapters. For now, though, you need to get comfy with using Google Docs to organize your files. This chapter shows you how to create new files and folders, rename and delete files, edit documents, and more.
A Fresh Beginning: Starting a New Document

When you first arrive at Google Docs, you don’t see much because your online storage folders are empty. To fix that, you have two choices:

* Create a new document.
* Upload some documents from your computer to Google Docs.

I’ll get to the uploading portion of the show a bit later in this chapter (see the section “Uploading Files to the Cloud”), so let’s start by figuring out how to create new documents in Google Docs.

Creating a Shiny, New File

Here are the seemingly too-few steps to follow to convince Google Docs to create a new document for you:

2. Click Create new.
3. Click the type of document you want: Document (that is, a word processing file), Presentation, or Spreadsheet.

That’s it! Google Docs creates the file and opens it for editing in the appropriate Google Docs program.

Saving Time with Templates

Creating a blank document as outlined in the previous section is fine, but it does mean that you have to cobble together your document, particularly the layout and formatting, by hand. You may be able to save yourself some time and effort by creating a new document based on a template. A template is a special file that comes with a predefined layout, preset formatting, and sometimes even pretyped titles and headings. The idea is that you use the template as a starting point for your own document, and you save time because you don’t have to bother with the layout, formatting, and headings.
Google Docs comes with hundreds of templates in 15 different categories, so you’re bound to find something you like. Here’s how it works:

2. Click **Create new**.
3. Click **From template**. Google Docs displays the Template Gallery in a new Chrome tab.
4. Click the category you want to use. Google Docs displays the templates for that category. For example, Figure 6.1 shows the Resumes and Cover Letters category.

![Google Docs Template Gallery](image)

**Figure 6.1** In the Template Gallery, click a category to narrow down your template search.

5. If you’re not sure about a template and would prefer to take a quick peek under the hood before committing yourself, click **Preview**.
6. When you find a template you like, click its **Use this template** button. Google Docs forges a new file based on that template and then opens the file in the appropriate application.
Uploading Files to the Cloud

Rather than cobbling together documents from scratch, you can seed the cloud with a few of your own files. You do this by uploading the files from your computer to Google Docs. (Uploading is the process of loading files from your computer to the cloud; it is the opposite of downloading, in which you bring files from the cloud or some other remote location to your computer.)

Here are the steps to run through to get a file from here (that is, your computer) to there (the cloud):

1. In Google Docs, click **Upload**. Google Docs transports you to the Upload Files page.

2. Click **Choose File**. Google Chrome OS barges in, opens a file dialog box, and displays your Chrome OS home directory, which is your main directory on your computer’s hard drive (see Figure 6.2).

![Figure 6.2](image)

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**Figure 6.2** *Use this dialog box to choose the file you want to upload.*

3. Click the file you want to upload.

4. Click **Open**. Google Docs adds the file to the Upload Files page.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

If you want to populate your little piece of the cloud with several files, feel free to upload multiple files. Repeat steps 2 through 4 in this section to add multiple files to the Upload Files page.
5. In the Upload Files page, make sure the **Convert document, presentations, and spreadsheets to the corresponding Google Docs format** check box is activated. This is crucial if you want to edit your documents online.

6. Click **Start upload**. Google Docs grabs the file, yanks it into the cloud, and then lets you know when the upload is complete.

7. Click **Back to Google Docs**. Your uploaded file now appears in the list of documents.

### A Few Basic File and Folder Chores

With your cloud abode festooned with files, you're almost ready to start doing some real work. Before you get there, however, you need to know about a few basic file chores, including creating new folders and renaming and deleting files. The next few sections show you how to perform these routine maintenance file tasks.

### Forging Folders for Your Files

If you only load up Google Docs with a few files, then you probably don’t have to worry too much about keeping them organized. However, once you get the hang of using Google Docs to create and edit files, I think you’ll find that your little collection of cloud documents expands rather quickly, so you could end up with dozens of files online.

That’s awesome, but in the long run you’ll have regrets if you don’t act now to organize your documents in some way. That is, rather than just letting things pile up in the main Google Docs folder, you need to create your own folders and use each one to store only related documents. For example, you might create a Spreadsheet folder to hold your spreadsheet files, a Memos folder to hold your office notes, a Shocked and Appalled folder to hold your letters to the editor, and so on. If several people have access to your Google Docs storage (such as your spouse and kids), you can set up separate folders for each person.

Here are the steps required to crank out a new folder for yourself in Google Docs:


2. Click **Create new**.
3. Click **Folder**. Google Docs creates the new folder and prompts you for a name, as shown in Figure 6.3.

![Figure 6.3](image)

*Figure 6.3  Give your spiffy new folder a name and description.*

4. Type a name for your folder.
5. (Optional) Type a description for the folder.
6. Click **Save**. Your new folder appears in the **My folders** section, as shown in Figure 6.4.

![Figure 6.4](image)

*Figure 6.4  Your new folder appears in the My folders section.*

**Moving Files from One Location to Another**

Now that you’ve got a folder or two to work with, you can start getting your cloud affairs in order by moving files into the appropriate folders. Fortunately, moving stuff in Google Docs doesn’t require hunting down boxes and tape or hiring big, beefy guys to sweat all over your possessions.

Here are the steps to follow to move a document to a different folder:

1. Activate the check box beside the file you want to move.
2. Click **Folders**. Google Docs displays a list of your folders.
3. Activate the check box beside the folder you want to use as the destination. (Truth be told, you can activate two or more check boxes, if you want, and Google Docs will make copies of the document in each folder.)

4. Click **Apply changes**. Google Docs moves the file to the folder (or folders) you chose.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

If you've got decent mouse skills, you can also move a file using drag-and-drop. That is, you drag the file from the list of files, hover it over the folder you want to use, and then drop it in.

### A File by Any Other Name: Renaming Files

If you don't like the name of a file, you can easily rename it to something you can live with. Here's how it works in Google Docs:

1. Open the folder that contains the file you want to rename.
2. Click to select the check box to the left of the filename.
3. Click **Rename**. Google Docs creates a text box around the filename and highlights the name.
4. Edit the name.
5. When you're done, press **Enter** to remove the text box and confirm the new name.

### Save Your Work, Save Your Life

Most people learn the importance of saving documents the hard way. For me, it was a power failure that wiped out an entire morning's writing. Believe me, that kind of thing can make you old before your time. Why is saving necessary? Well, when you work with a new document (or with an existing document), you're actually making all your changes in the volatile confines of your computer's memory. When you shut off your computer (or if—groan!—a power failure forces it off), everything in memory is wiped out. If you haven't saved your document to the Google Docs storage area, you'll lose all the changes you've made. Total bummer.
Now that I’ve scared the wits out of you, let’s see exactly how you go about saving a document. The amount of effort required on your part depends on whether you’re working with a new document or an existing document.

If you’re working on a new document, first give the document a name by following these steps:

1. Select File, Rename. Google Docs prompts you to enter a name for the document.
2. Type the name you want to use.
3. Click OK. Google Docs applies the new name and saves the document.

For an existing document, Google Docs gives you five (yes, five) ways to save your work:

- Select File, Save. This saves your work and leaves the document open.
- Select File, Save and Close. This saves your changes and closes the document.
- Click the Save button in the toolbar.
- Press Ctrl+S.
- Click the Save now button above the menu bar on the right side of the window. This button says “Saved” if your document has no unsaved changes, and it immediately changes to “Save now” when you change anything in the document.

Saving isn’t quite shooting-fish-in-a-barrel easy, but it’s pretty close.

**CHROME LORE**

I’m sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but Google Docs doesn’t trust you. That is, just in case you forget to save, Google Docs will take over. It gives you about two minutes, and if you don’t save your stuff in that time, Google Docs goes right ahead and saves your work for you anyway. Uh, thanks.
Get Offa My Cloud: Deleting Files

Okay, it’s time to take out the garbage. Here are the steps you follow to delete a file:

1. Open the folder that contains the file you want to delete.
2. Click to select the check box to the left of the filename. (If you’ve got several files you want to trash, feel free to select each file’s check box.)
3. Click Delete. Without hesitating, Google Docs deletes the file (or files) you selected.

Retrieving Files from the Trash

One of the sad realities of cloud life is that sometime, somewhere, you’ll accidentally delete some crucial file that you’d give your eyeteeth to get back. Well, I’m happy to report that you can keep your teeth where they are because Google Docs’ Trash folder is only too happy to restore the file for you. (Actually, if the deletion was the last thing you did, and you did it recently, you don’t have to bother with the Trash folder; just click the Undo link.)

Here’s how to “undelete” a file in Google Docs:

1. Click the Trash folder. Google Docs displays a list of the files you’ve deleted.
2. Click the check box beside the file you want to return from the dead.
3. Click Undelete. Google Docs instantly returns the file to its original location, safe and sound. (Insert sigh of relief here.)

Making Life Easier: Selecting Multiple Files

So far, I’ve only shown you how to work with one file at a time. But if you’ve got, say, a dozen files to move or delete, the procedure can get old in a hurry. The solution is to first select all the files you want to work with and then do the move (or delete, or whatever).

You’ve got a couple of ways to proceed here:

* If you want to work with a few files in the current folder, activate the check box beside each file.
• If you want to work with all the files in the current folder, click the Select button (it’s the one with the check mark on it to the left of the Share button) and then click Select all visible.

**Downloading a File to Your Computer**

If you’ve created a file in the cloud, or if you’ve uploaded a file to the cloud using some other computer, you might be feeling a bit out of sorts because you don’t have a copy of the file on your computer. I hear you. Fortunately, Google Docs feels your pain and enables you to download a copy of a file to your computer. Here’s how it’s done:

1. Click the file to open it.

2. Select **File, Download as**. Google Docs displays a list of file formats. Let’s see if we can make sense out of this list:

   * **Word processing document.** If you’ve got Word installed on your computer, go with the Word format. If you use OpenOffice, go with the OpenOffice format. Otherwise, the RTF (Rich Text Format) route is probably your best choice.

   * **Spreadsheet.** If you’ve got Excel on your computer, your best bet here is the Excel format. If you’re an OpenOffice user, go with the OpenOffice format. If you just want the data on the current worksheet, CSV (Comma-Separated Values) is the way to go.

   * **Presentation.** If your computer has PowerPoint installed, you’ll want the PowerPoint format; otherwise, to preserve the look of the presentation, you need to go with PDF (Portable Document Format).

3. Click the file format you want to use. Google Docs cajos the Chrome browser into downloading the file to your computer. (For more on downloading files, see the section in Chapter 3 titled “Dealing With Files in Chrome.”)
A Few Basic Document Editing Chores

You now know how to create a document, how to upload a file, and how to save a file. What’s missing? Oh yeah, you’ve got to do some work eventually! Of course, most of what you do in a document depends entirely on the Google Docs application you’re using, but let’s look at a few basic skills that you can use in any of the Google Docs programs.

Selecting Text

Most documents contain some sort of text that you can format (for example, add bold or underline to) or cut and paste. Before you can do any of these things, though, you need to select the text you want to work with.

To select text with a mouse, drag the mouse over the characters you want. That is, you first position the mouse pointer ever so slightly to the left of the first character you want to highlight. Then you press and hold down the left mouse button and move the mouse to the right. As you do, the characters you’re passing over become highlighted (meaning that they now appear as white text on a blue background). While you’re dragging, you can also move the mouse down to select entire lines. When you release the mouse button, your text remains selected.

To select with the keyboard, position the cursor to the left of the first character, hold down the Shift key, and then press the right-arrow key until the text you want to work with is selected. Use the down-arrow key (or even Page Down if you’ve got a lot of ground to cover) if you need to highlight multiple lines.

If you botch the highlight (that mouse dragging thing does take some practice) or if you decide not to work with the highlighted text, you can remove the highlight by clicking elsewhere in the document. (Keyboardists, first release the Shift key and then press one of the arrow keys.)

CHROME CAUTION!

If you highlight some text and then press a letter on your keyboard, you’ll be dismayed to see your entire selection disappear and be replaced by the character you pressed! (This also happens if you press a number or even the Enter key.) This is, unfortunately, normal behavior that can cause trouble for even experienced document jockeys. To get your text back, immediately select Edit, Undo. (For more info, see the section “To Err Is Human, to Undo Divine” later in this chapter.)
Copying a Selection

One of the secrets of computer productivity is a simple maxim: Don’t reinvent the wheel. In other words, if you’ve got something that works (it could be a picture, a section of text, whatever) and you need something similar, don’t start from scratch. Instead, make a copy of the original and then make any necessary changes to the copy.

Happily, the Google Docs applications make it easy to copy:

1. Select the text you want to copy.
2. Press Ctrl+C. This tells Google Docs to store a copy of the text.
3. Position the cursor where you want to place the copy. (It could even be in another document or even another application.)
4. Press Ctrl+V. A perfect copy of your selection appears instantly.

Chrome Lore

When you start using the Google Docs applications, you’ll notice that they include an Edit menu and that the menu includes Copy and Paste commands. Why not use them (or at least mention them)? The problem is that they don’t work! They require access to your computer’s memory, and that’s a no-no in the world of cloud computing security.

Moving a Selection

If you need to move something from one part of a document to another (or from one document or application to another), you could do it by making a copy, pasting it, and then going back to delete the original. However, if you do this, your colleagues will certainly make fun of you because there’s an easier way:

1. Select the text you want to move.
2. Press Ctrl+X. Your selection disappears from the screen, but don’t panic. Google Docs is saving it for you.
3. Position the cursor where you want to place the text. (It could even be in another document or even another application.)
4. Press Ctrl+V. Your text miraculously reappears in the new location.
Deleting a Selection

Even the best typists make occasional typos, so knowing how to delete is a crucial editing skill. Put away the Wite-Out, though, because deleting a character or two is easier (and less messy) if you use either of the following techniques:

- Position the cursor to the right of the offending character and press the Backspace key.
- Position the cursor to the left of the character and press the Delete key.

If you have a large chunk of material you want to expunge from the document, select it and press the Delete key.

To Err Is Human, to Undo Divine

At some point in your computing career, usually when you least expect it, you’ll have the “uh-oh” experience. This occurs anytime you do something that you didn’t want to, such as consigning a vital piece of an irreplaceable document to deletion purgatory. Just so you’re prepared, here are the symptoms: your life inevitably flashes before your eyes (and you remember where you lost that roller skate key in Grade 3), you start hallucinating (mostly distorted images of your boss saying “You’re fired!”), and your stomach does back flips that would be the envy of any gymnast.

Fortunately, the Google Docs applications come with an Undo feature to get you out of these jams. The Undo command restores everything to the way it was before you made your blunder. (I’ve had some family gatherings where an Undo command would have come in very handy!)

To use the Undo feature, select the Edit, Undo command. (You can also press Ctrl+Z or click the Undo button in the toolbar.) If you need to wipe out the last few actions you performed, keep selecting Undo as needed.

Collaborating on a File with Other Cloud Folk

So far, almost all of the document deeds you’ve learned about have been the cloud equivalent of the tasks and techniques that are available on your computer. That’s about to change big time because Google Docs allows you to do something that’s
simply not possible on your computer: work together with other people on the same document at the same time!

It sounds like science fiction, I know, but the tall-forehead types call it collaboration, and it's becoming increasingly popular because so many projects require a diverse set of skills, and the “wisdom of the crowd” often means that bringing multiple intellects to bear on a problem usually leads to a better and faster solution. If you want to collaborate with your fellow cloud denizens, you could distribute the document to each user, but since multiple users will be annotating or editing the document, you then have the rather nightmarish challenge of coordinating all those changes.

Google Docs thumbs its electronic nose at such a primitive solution and instead allows you to “invite” people to work on a document with you. You can do this with people who have a Google account, of course, but you can also collaborate with people who don't do the Google thing.

**Inviting Googlers to Collaborate**

Let's begin with collaborations involving other people who have a Google account. To invite one or more people, follow these steps:

1. Get things off to a rousing start by using either of the following techniques:
   - If you're currently hanging around in the Google Docs list of files, activate the check box beside the document you want to collaborate on, click **Share**, and then click **Invite people**.
   - If you have the document open in a Google Docs application, click the **Share** button and then click **Invite people**.

2. In the Share with Others dialog box, use the Invite box to type the e-mail address of the person you want to invite. Feel free to enter multiple addresses, separating each with a comma.

**SEE ALSO**

Rather than typing the addresses, select them from your Google Contacts list by clicking the **Choose from contacts** link. I'll talk about the useful Contacts tool in Chapter 10 in the section “Easier Addressing: Using the Contacts List.”
3. If you want your peeps to make changes to the document, leave the To edit option selected; otherwise, click To view if you don’t want them to make changes.

4. Google Docs uses the document name as the Subject line, but go ahead and change that if you feel like it.

5. Use the Message box to type a high-spirited message to your troops. Figure 6.5 shows an invitation just about ready to ship.

![Share with others dialog box](image)

**Figure 6.5** Fill in the Share with others dialog box to invite folks to hammer away at your document.

6. Click Send. Google Docs does what it’s told and sends an e-mail invitation to each person. You end up in the People with access tab, which shows who now has access to the document.

7. Click Save & Close.

The message that each of your friends receives will look suspiciously like the one shown in Figure 6.6. The person just clicks the link, signs in to his or her Google account, and the collaboration fun begins.
Inviting Non-Googlers to Collaborate

When you invite cloud folk as I described in the previous section, those people must first sign in to their Google accounts to access the document. If people don’t have a Google account, they can always create one, but unlike you and me, some people do not welcome our Google overlords, so they wouldn’t create a Google account if you paid them.

That’s okay, though, because you can still get people collaborating without requiring them to be Googlers. Here’s how:

1. You have two ways to get started:
   * If you have the Google Docs list of files onscreen, activate the check box beside the document you want to share, click Share, and then click Get the link to share.
   * If the document is open, click the Share button and then click Get the link to share.

2. In the Get the link to share dialog box, activate the Allow anyone with the link to view check box.

3. If you’re okay with non-Googlers editing your document, activate the Also allow them to edit check box.
4. Google Docs displays a web address in the Share this link via email or IM box, as shown in Figure 6.7. Click the address to select it.

![Figure 6.7](image)

**Figure 6.7** Copy the web address and share it with your non-Google collaborators.

5. Right-click the address and then click **Copy**.

6. Click **Save & Close**.

7. Switch to Gmail or Google Talk, start a new message, and then paste the web address into the message (by pressing **Ctrl+V**).

8. Address the message to whomever you want to work with and then send the message.

When the other person receives the message, he or she clicks the link to access your document without having to sign in to Google.

**Seeing Who Else Is Working on a Document**

When you open the document that you’ve shared, you won’t know right away whether anyone else is working on it. Google Docs will eventually tell you, but to find out right away, follow these steps:

1. Click **Share**.

2. Click **See who has access**. Google Docs opens the Share with others dialog box and displays the People with access tab.

3. Click **Save & Close**.
Now check out the right side of the menu bar. As you can see in the example shown in Figure 6.8, Google Docs displays **Also editing now:** and either the name of the collaborator (if that person signed in to his or her Google account) or Guest (if that person doesn’t have a Google account).

![Figure 6.8](image)

**Figure 6.8** Google Docs uses the menu bar to tell you who else is working on the document.

### The Least You Need to Know

- To play with files in the cloud, go to Google Docs at http://docs.google.com.
- To fire up a new document in the cloud, click **Create new** and then click the type of file you want: **Document**, **Presentation**, or **Spreadsheet**.
- To rustle up a new folder to store your files, click **Create new** and then click **Folder**.
- To save a document, select **File**, **Save**. (You can also press **Ctrl+S** or click the **Save** button in the toolbar.)
- To reverse a document editing error, select **Edit**, **Undo**. (You can also press **Ctrl+Z** or click the **Undo** button in the toolbar.)
- To collaborate with folks on a file, click **Share** and then click either **Invite people** (for people with Google accounts) or **Get the link to share** (for people without Google accounts).
In This Chapter

- Getting around in the Google Docs word processor
- Inserting regular text and irregular text, too
- Formatting text and paragraphs to get them just so
- Creating bulleted lists and numbered lists out of thin air
- Getting started with word processing in the cloud

Almost everyone who uses a computer uses it to write something from time to time. It could be a letter to Mom, a memo to the honchos at HQ, or yet another attempt at the Great (insert nationality here) Novel. Most computer-based writing is handled by a program called a word processor, which is a geeky term for a program that lets you not only type in text, but also edit it and format it so that it looks all nice and pretty.

Fortunately, just because you’re now hanging around with the cloud crowd, it doesn’t mean you get ripped off on this word processing stuff. Google Docs comes with its own word processor, and you can use it to process words right in the cloud. Granted, the Google Docs word processor doesn’t have all the highfalutin features you get in the more glamorous word processors, but who uses those features anyway? The Google Docs word processor can handle day-to-day stuff like memos, letters, resumés, and reports without a complaint. This chapter gets you up to speed with this useful program.
So what can’t you do in the Google Docs word processor? A full list would take several pages, so let’s just hit the highlights. With the Google Docs word processor, you can’t: create or modify styles; apply or modify document themes; change the page setup, including columns, line breaks, and hyphenation; adjust paragraph indentation and spacing; set tabs; build document elements such as cross-references, citations, and indexes; and create envelopes and mailing labels.

Taking a Look Around the Word Processor Window

To start the Google Docs word processor, first use Chrome to navigate to Google Docs (http://docs.google.com). Now you’ve got a couple of ways to go:

- To start a new word processing document, click Create New and then click Document.
- If you’ve already got a cloud-bound word processing document, click the document name in the list of files.

Figure 7.1 shows a fresh document residing in the Google Docs word processor window and points out a few landmarks of note.
Here’s a summary of the important features of the Google Docs word processor window:

* **Menu bar.** These are the pull-down menus, and they give you access to all the word processor’s commands.

* **Toolbar.** You use the toolbar for one-click access to the most important commands, such as Save and Undo, as well as many of the word processor’s formatting commands. I’ll talk about this formatting stuff later on in this chapter (see the section “A Fountain of Formatting Fun”).

* **Typing area.** This is the vast, white expanse that takes up the bulk of the Google Docs word processor window, and it’s where your document text will appear.

* **Insertion point cursor.** The text you type always appears to the right of this blinking, vertical line.

### Entering Text in the Google Docs Word Processor

Unlike some of today’s big bucks word processors, the Google Docs word processor doesn’t require a degree in rocket science to get up and running. Once you’ve got the word processor window onscreen, you can simply go ahead and start typing. The characters you enter appear at the insertion point cursor.

### Getting Around in a Document

For the terminally verbose, the Google Docs word processor can handle documents as large as your computer’s memory will allow. When your documents become several pages or more in length, however, you’ll need some way to navigate them quickly. If you use a mouse, you can move the insertion point by clicking on the appropriate spot inside the window. To move to other parts of the document, use the scroll bar.

From the keyboard, you can use the techniques outlined in the following table to navigate a document:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Move ...</th>
<th>Press ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left one character</td>
<td>Left arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right one character</td>
<td>Right arrow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continues*
To Move … Press …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left one word</th>
<th>Ctrl+Left arrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right one word</td>
<td>Ctrl+Right arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the beginning of a line</td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the end of a line</td>
<td>End</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up one line</td>
<td>Up arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down one line</td>
<td>Down arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up one screen</td>
<td>Page Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down one screen</td>
<td>Page Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the beginning of the document</td>
<td>Ctrl+Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the end of the document</td>
<td>Ctrl+End</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Some Text Selection Tricks**

When editing and formatting a word processing document, you’ll often need to select a group of characters or lines to work with. Since selected text appears with a dark background, this is also called *highlighting* text.

I showed you some standard text-selection techniques back in Chapter 6, but the Google Docs word processor has a few more you can add to your repertoire:

* **Select a word**: Double-click the word.

* **Select a line**: Click to the left of the line to move the insertion point to the start of the line, hold down *Shift*, and then click to the right of the line.

* **Select a paragraph**: Click to the left of the first line to move the insertion point to the start of the paragraph, hold down *Shift*, and then click to the right of the last line. If you’re feeling athletic, you can also select a paragraph by *triple*-clicking anywhere inside the paragraph.

* **Select the entire document**: Press Ctrl+A.
Inserting Foreign Letters and Other Oddball Symbols

When adding text using the Google Docs word processor, you're not limited to the letters, numbers, and symbols you can eyeball on your keyboard—you can add dozens of others as well. For example, were you stumped the last time you wanted to write “Dag Hammarskjöld” because you didn’t know how to get one of those ö thingamajigs? I thought so. Well, hang on to your hat because I’m going to show you an easy way to get not only an ö, but a whole universe of strange and wondrous symbols.

Here’s what you do:

1. Position the insertion point where you want the character to show up.
2. Select Insert, Special characters. Google Docs opens the Insert Special Characters dialog box, shown in Figure 7.2.

![Figure 7.2](image)

Figure 7.2  The Insert Special Characters dialog box gives you access to an awesome collection of weird and wacky characters.

3. Use the drop-down list on the left to select a category such as Symbol, Punctuation, or Number. If you’re interested in foreign characters, select Latin.
4. Use the drop-down list on the right to select a symbol subcategory. Google Docs displays all the characters that are available in that subcategory.

5. Click the character you want to use. If you can’t quite make out a character, hover the mouse pointer over the character box and Google Docs pops up a magnified version of the symbol.

6. Click OK. Google Docs inserts the character into your document, just like that!

A Fountain of Formatting Fun

When you first crank out a new document, the file is essentially naked. It passes its days exposed to the elements, shivering and teeth-chatteringingly cold. Brrr! To put some color in your document’s cheeks and prevent it from catching its death, you need to clothe it with the text you want everyone to read. These new text garments might be warm, but they aren’t much to look at. I mean, face it, a plain-text document just doesn’t present your prose in the best light. I’m definitely talking Worst Dressed List here.

However, how your document looks really doesn’t matter for those times when you’re just kicking around the cloud. At this stage, you’re the only one who sees your document, so you usually don’t care how it looks. But what about when it’s time to go out on the town? What do you do when you want the rest of the web world to see your creation? Heck, you can’t send your document out into cyberspace looking like that!

Before your document has its coming-out party, you need to dress it up in apparel appropriate for the occasion. In short, you need to format your text so that it looks its best. This section is your word processing page fashion consultant as it examines the various ways you can use the Google Docs word processor to beautify your words.

Sprucing Up Your Text with Fonts

“The least you can do is look respectable.” That’s what my mother always used to tell me when I was a kid. This advice holds up especially well in these image-conscious times. If you don’t look good up front (or if your work doesn’t look good), then you’ll often be written off without a second thought.
When it comes to looking good—whether you're writing up a memo, slicking up a spreadsheet, or polishing up your resumé—fonts are a great place to start. This section gives you the skinny on what fonts are, how to use them, and how to add new ones to your system.

Fonts are to characters what architecture is to buildings. In architecture, you look at certain features and patterns, and if you can tell a geodesic dome from a flying buttress, you can tell whether the building is gothic or art deco or whatever. Fonts, too, are distinguished by a unique set of features. Specifically, there are four things to look for: typeface, type size, type effects, and character spacing.

**Typeface**

Any related set of letters, numbers, and other symbols has its own distinctive design called the *typeface*. Typefaces, as you can see in Figure 7.3, can be wildly different depending on the shape and thickness of characters, the spacing, and the mood of the designer at the time.

![Figure 7.3 Some sample typefaces.](image)

Typefaces come in three flavors: serif, sans serif, or decorative. A serif typeface contains fine cross strokes (typographic technoids call them *feet*) at the extremities of each character. These subtle appendages give the typeface a traditional, classy look. Times New Roman is a common example of a serif typeface.

A sans serif typeface doesn't contain these cross strokes. As a result, sans serif typefaces usually have a cleaner, more modern look (check out Verdana in Figure 7.3).
Decorative typefaces are usually special designs used to convey a particular effect. So, for example, if your document really needs a funky-but-slightly-wacky effect, something like Comic Sans MS would be perfect.

**Type Size**

The *type size* just measures how tall a font is. The standard unit of measurement, just so you know, is the *point*, and there are 72 points in an inch. So, for example, the individual letters in a 24-point font would be twice as tall as those in a 12-point font. (In case you’re wondering, this book is written in a 10-point font.)

**CHROME LORE**

Technically, type size is measured from the highest point of a tall letter (such as “f”) to the lowest point of an underhanging letter (such as “g”).

**Type Effects**

The type effects of a font refer to attributes that you apply to the text, such as *bold* and *italics*. Other type styles are underlining and strikethrough. In the Google Docs word processor, you can also apply colors to the text itself and to the text background. You normally use these effects to highlight or add emphasis to sections of your documents.

**The Character Spacing**

The character spacing of a font can take two forms: *monospaced* or *proportional*. Monospaced fonts reserve the same amount of space for each character. For example, take a look at the Courier New font shown earlier in Figure 7.3. Notice how skinny letters such as “i” and “l” take up as much space as wider letters, such as “y” and “w.” While this is admirably egalitarian, these fonts tend to look like they were produced with a typewriter (in other words, they’re *ugly*). By contrast, in a proportional font, such as Verdana or Times New Roman, the space allotted to each letter varies according to the width of the letter.

**Avoiding the “Ransom Note” Look**

The downside to Google Docs’ easy-to-use fonts is that they can sometimes be *too* easy to use. Flushed with your newfound knowledge, you start throwing every font in sight at your documents. The result is usually a mess. If you use too many different fonts in one document, it turns even the most profound and well-written documents...
into a real dog’s breakfast. (It’s known in the trade as the “ransom note” look.) Here are some tips to avoid overdoing your fonts:

- Never use more than a couple of typefaces in a single document. Anything more looks amateurish and will only confuse the reader.
- If you need to emphasize something, bold or italicize it in the same typeface as the surrounding text. Avoid using underlining for emphasis.
- Only use larger sizes for titles and headings.
- Avoid bizarre decorative fonts for large sections of text. Most of those suckers are hard on the eyes after a half dozen words or so. Serif fonts are usually very readable, so they’re a good choice for long passages. The clean look of sans serif fonts makes them a good choice for headlines and titles.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

The default document font is 10-point Verdana, which is nice enough. However, what if you’re a raving fan of serif fonts such as Times New Roman? What if that 10-point type size is just too darn small? To fix these font flaws, select **Format**, **Document Settings** to crank up the Document Styles dialog box. Use the **Font** lists to choose a new default typeface and type size, activate the **Make these the default styles for all new documents** check box, and then click **OK**.

**Formatting with Fonts (Finally!)**

Okay, you’re finally ready to apply all your newfound font wisdom. Here are the steps to plow through to format text with a particular font:

1. Select the text you want to format.
2. Click the **Font** list (pointed out back in Figure 7.3) and then click the typeface you want to apply.
3. Click the **Font size** list (once again, helpfully pinpointed in Figure 7.3) and then click the size you prefer.
4. If you want to tart up your text with one or more type effects, most of the effects you want are a mere mouse click away on the toolbar. The table on the next page gives a summary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Apply ...</th>
<th>Click ...</th>
<th>Or Press ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolding</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ctrl+B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italic</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Ctrl+I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlining</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Ctrl+U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A text color</td>
<td>A down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A text background color</td>
<td>B down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If you want to apply the strikethrough effect, select **Format, Strikethrough**.

**CHROME LORE**

Instead of typing some text and then going back and formatting it, it’s no problem to apply some formatting options first and then type your text. First, position the insertion point where the new text will appear. Now use the steps in this section to make your formatting selections, return to the document, and then start typing. The Google Docs word processor dutifully displays the new text using the formatting you selected.

**Getting Your Paragraphs Just So**

Although the content of your documents is important, how the documents look on the page is equally (if not more) important. Why? Because in these busy times, people will simply ignore a document if it looks cramped and uninviting.

To avoid this fate, use the word processor’s various paragraph formatting options to make yourself look good on paper. To try them out, first place the insertion point cursor inside the paragraph you want to format. (If you want to format multiple paragraphs, select at least some text in each paragraph.) Now select the **Format** menu’s **Align** command to display a menu of alignment options.

Here’s an explanation of what each command in the Align menu is all about:

- **Left**. If you select this command, all lines in the paragraph are aligned with the left margin.
Center. If you select this command, all lines in the paragraph are centered between the margins.

Right. If you select this command, all lines in the paragraph are aligned with the right margin.

Justified. If you select this command, all lines in the paragraph are aligned with both the left margin and the right margin.

For easier paragraph formatting, you can also apply alignments using the toolbar or the keyboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Align ...</th>
<th>Click ...</th>
<th>Or Press ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ctrl+L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ctrl+E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ctrl+R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justified</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ctrl+J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just so you have some idea of what the heck I’m talking about, Figure 7.4 shows examples of the various paragraph formatting options.

![Figure 7.4 The Google Docs word processor’s paragraph formatting options.](image-url)
For good measure, you can also indent a paragraph from the left margin. This is a great way to set off a paragraph (such as a quotation) from the rest of the text. Use the following toolbar buttons to change the indents of the current paragraph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Do This …</th>
<th>Click …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase Indent</td>
<td>![Increase Button]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease Indent</td>
<td>![Decrease Button]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

If you really want to let loose on this indent thing, you can indent your paragraph from both margins. Select the paragraph (or paragraphs) and then select **Format, Paragraph Styles, Block quote**.

**Sectioning Your Document with Headings**

Many document designers divide their text into several sections, like chapters in a book. To help separate these sections and thus make life easier for the reader, you can use headings, which are special paragraphs that, ideally, act as mini titles that convey some idea of what each section is all about. To make these titles stand out, the Google Docs word processor has a series of heading formats that display text in larger, bold fonts. There are six heading tags in all, ranging from Heading 1, which uses the largest font, down to Heading 6, which uses the smallest font.

What’s with all the different headings? Well, the idea is that you use them to outline your document. Here’s an example:

- Format the document title as Heading 1.
- Format the document subtitle as Heading 2.
- Format each main section title as Heading 3.
- Format each subsection title as Heading 4.

To apply these headings to a paragraph, place the insertion point inside the paragraph and select **Format, Paragraph styles**. Then select the command for the style you
want to apply (such as Heading 1). Note, too, that the Google Docs word processor offers shortcut keys for each style: press Ctrl+1 for Heading 1, Ctrl+2 for Heading 2, and so on, up to Ctrl+6 for Heading 6.

**Making Your Point with Bulleted Lists**

Are you making a list and checking it twice? Gonna find out who’s naughty and … oops, drifted off to the North Pole for a second! But if you do want to include a list in your document, what’s the best way to go about it? You could just type each list item and then press Enter to move to the next item, but how boring is that? Fortunately, Google Docs offers a couple of tools that are specially designed to give you much more control over your list-building chores. In fact, Google Docs offers not one but two different list styles: bulleted lists and numbered lists.

Let’s start with a bulleted list, which is a list of items in which Google Docs displays a small dot to the left of each item. That dot is called a bullet, so that’s why these are called “bulleted” lists.

Follow these steps to create a bulleted list from scratch:

1. Position the insertion point where you want your bulleted list to appear.
2. Click Bulleted List in the toolbar (see Figure 7.5). An alternate method is to press Ctrl+8. Google Docs starts the list by displaying the first bullet.
3. Type the text for the list item.
4. Press Enter. Google Docs adds a bullet for the next item in the list.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until your list is complete.
6. Press Enter twice to tell Google Docs to stop with the bulleted list already.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

If the black dot doesn’t do it for you, Google Docs has a couple of other bullet varieties you can try on for size. Right-click the bulleted list and then click Change List. (Alternatively, position the insertion point anywhere in the list and press Ctrl+9.) In the Change List dialog box, use the Appearance list to select a different bullet style and then click OK.

What if you’ve already got some pathetic-looking list that you’re dying to turn into a professional-looking bulleted list? Fret not, my bulleted listless friend. First select
the entire list and then click the **Bulleted List** icon in the toolbar. Presto, change-o, Google Docs converts the text to a bulleted list.

Figure 7.5 shows an example of a bulleted list.

![Bulleted List](image)

Figure 7.5  You can prettify a random list by entering it as a bulleted list.

**Putting Your Affairs in Order with Numbered Lists**

A bulleted list is useful for items that are more or less random. However, some lists have an inherent order to them. It could be a series of steps to perform, a top-ten list, bowling league standings, or any kind of ranking. One way to cobble together such a list would be to type a number at the beginning of each item: 1 for the first item, 2 for the second item, and, well, you get the idea. That doesn’t sound so bad, but what if the order changes or you want to insert a new item in the middle? D’oh! Now you have to change all those numbers by hand.

Forget that. Let Google Docs handle all the hard work for you by creating a *numbered list*. This is a list for which Google Docs inserts the numbers at the beginning of each item automatically. If you add new items or change the order, Google Docs is happy to renumber the list lickety-split.

Here are the steps to trudge through to build yourself a numbered list:

1. Position the insertion point where you want your numbered list to appear.

2. Click **Numbered List** in the toolbar (see Figure 7.6). An alternate method would be to press **Ctrl+7**. Google Docs starts the list by displaying “1.” to mark the first item.
3. Type the text for the list item.
4. Press Enter. Google Docs adds the next number in the list.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until your list is complete.
6. Press Enter twice to tell Google Docs that your numbered list is complete.

You can also magically convert existing text into a numbered list. First select all the text that you want to convert and then click the Numbered List icon in the toolbar. Without even so much as a sigh, Google Docs turns the text into an honest-to-goodness numbered list.

Looking for an example of a numbered list? Check out Figure 7.6, which should be coming along right about now.

![Figure 7.6](image_url) For an ordered list of items, make your life easier by building the list as a numbered list.

**Finding Lost Text in Humongous Files**

Finding a particular word or phrase is usually no problem in small Google Docs word processor files. But as your competence with the Google Docs word processor grows, so will your documents. When you start dealing with 10- or 20-page tracts, that’s when finding what you need becomes a real needle-in-a-haystack exercise.

To help out, the Google Docs word processor has a Find feature that will do the searching for you. To try it out, pull down the Edit menu and select the Find and...
replace command (or press Ctrl+F). You will then see the Find bar, as shown in Figure 7.7.

![Figure 7.7](image)

**Figure 7.7** Use the Find bar to search for a word or phrase in your document.

Use the **Find what** text box to enter the word or phrase you want to locate. You can also refine your searches by clicking the **Options** arrow to the right of the **Find what** text box and then activating one or both of the following options:

- **Match case.** Activate this option to make the Google Docs word processor’s searches case sensitive. For example, if you enter **Curt** as your search text and activate this check box, the Google Docs word processor will ignore the word “curt” and will only find the name “Curt.”

- **Match whole word only.** Google Docs will normally try to find partial matches for your search text. For example, entering **bag** will find “baggage,” “rutabaga,” and, of course, “bag.” If “bag” is all you want, activate this option, and Google Docs will ignore partial matches.

- **Find previous.** Activate this option if you prefer to search backward (that is, toward the beginning of the document) rather than forward (that is, toward the end of the document).

When you're ready to go, click the **Find next** button (or press Ctrl+G, if you're so inclined). If Google Docs finds the text, it highlights it. If that’s not the instance of the text you’re looking for, keep selecting **Find next** (or doing the Ctrl+G thing) until you find it. If Google Docs can’t locate a match, you’ll see the message **No matches found** in the Find bar.
Finding and Replacing Text

A slightly different kettle of fish involves finding text and *replacing* it with something else. For example, you might want to change each instance of “Ave.” to “Avenue” or some instances of “affect” to “effect.” (Yeah, I have a hard time remembering which is which, too.)

To do this, once again select the **Edit, Find and replace** command (or once again press *Ctrl+F*) to open the Find bar. As before, you use the **Find what** text box to enter the text you want to locate. Now you also use the **Replace with** text box to enter the replacement text. You’ve got a couple of ways to proceed:

- If you know you want to replace every occurrence of the search text with the replacement text, click the **Replace all** button. Google Docs wades through the entire document, finding and replacing as it goes. When it’s done, it displays a message in the Find bar telling you how many occurrences it replaced.
- If you only want to replace *certain* instances of the search text, select the **Find next** button. Whenever the Google Docs word processor finds an instance you want to replace, select the **Replace** button.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

If you only need to search and replace within a particular section (say, a paragraph or two), you can save time by selecting the appropriate text before running the Find and replace command. In this case, Google Docs will only look for the search text in the selected area.

The Least You Need to Know

- Once you’ve got a document opened in the Google Docs word processor, just start typing. If you want to add some text to a different part of a document, move the insertion point cursor to the spot you want to use.
- To insert a character not found on your keyboard, select the **Insert, Special characters** command.
- To fancy up your text, use the font-related tools on the toolbar, including the Font list, the **Font size** list, and the **Bold, Italic, and Underline** icons.
• To align a paragraph, place the insertion point inside the paragraph and select **Format, Align**. Then select a command (such as **Center**).

• Make better-looking lists that folks will *want* to check twice by using the tool-bar’s **Bulleted List** icon (for a list with no order) or **Numbered List** icon (for an ordered list).

• To find—and optionally replace—text in your document, select **Edit, Find and replace** and use the Find bar to locate or replace text.
Building Google Docs Spreadsheets

In This Chapter

- Taking a look around the Google Docs spreadsheet
- Understanding basic spreadsheet lingo
- Filling up your spreadsheet with text, numbers, and other data
- Building formulas and functions to calculate stuff
- Displaying data in fancy charts
- Getting the complete skinny on everything you need to know to create Google Docs spreadsheets

If you’ve never used a spreadsheet before, the very idea may seem intimidating, and getting the Google Docs spreadsheet program to do anything useful may seem like a daunting task. However, a spreadsheet is really just a fancy electronic version of a numeric scratch pad. With the latter, you write down a few numbers and then use dimly remembered elementary school techniques to calculate a result. At its most basic level, a Google Docs spreadsheet is much the same: You type one or more values into the sheet, and then you create a formula that calculates a result.

Well, okay, it’s maybe not quite as simple as all that, but I promise you it’s not much harder. This chapter will tell you everything you need to know (and not a single word more!).

Taking a Tour of the Spreadsheet Window

To start the Google Docs spreadsheet application, use Chrome to navigate to Google Docs (http://docs.google.com) and then head down one of the following paths.
• To start a new spreadsheet, click **Create New** and then click **Spreadsheet**.
• If you've already got a spreadsheet kicking around the cloud, click the spreadsheet name in the list of files.

Figure 8.1 shows a freshly baked Google Docs spreadsheet and points out a few of its main features.

![Google Docs spreadsheet window diagram](image)

**Figure 8.1** *The Google Docs spreadsheet window.*

Here's a rundown of the main bits and pieces of the Google Docs spreadsheet window:

• **Menu bar.** These are the pull-down menus, and they give you access to all the spreadsheet's commands.
• **Formula bar.** You use this oversized text box to type your formulas and to see the formulas that reside in cells.
• **Toolbar.** You use the toolbar for one-click access to the most important commands, such as Bold and Undo, as well as many of the spreadsheet's formatting commands.
• **Row.** This is a horizontal area that you use to enter data.
- **Row headers.** This area shows the row numbers, where 1 is the topmost row, 2 is the second row, 3 is, well, you get the idea. A default Google Docs spreadsheet has 100 rows (although you can add more, if need be).

- **Column.** This is a vertical area that you use to enter data.

- **Column headers.** This area shows the column letters, where A is the left-most column, B is the second column, and so on. A Google Docs spreadsheet has 20 columns lettered A through T (and, yup, you can add more columns).

- **Cell.** This is the intersection of a row and a column, and it’s where everything spreadsheet-y happens: entering data, formatting data, building formulas, and so on.

### Getting Started: Entering and Formatting Spreadsheet Data

As you saw in the preceding section, a spreadsheet is a rectangular arrangement of rows and columns, and the intersection of each row and column defines a cell. Crucially, each cell has a unique address that combines its column letter and row number. For example, the upper-left cell in a spreadsheet is at the intersection of column A and row 1, so its address is A1. When you click a cell, it becomes the active cell, which Google Docs designates by surrounding the cell with a heavy border and by displaying a small black square in the bottom-right corner (see cell B4 in Figure 8.1).

You use these spreadsheet cells to enter your data, which you’ll learn more about in the next section. For now, you should know that spreadsheet cells can hold three kinds of data:

- **Text.** These entries are usually labels such as August Sales or Territory that make a spreadsheet easier to read, but they can also be text/number combinations for items such as phone numbers and account codes.

- **Numbers.** These entries can be dollar values, weights, interest rates, or any other numerical quantity. You can also enter dates and times, if you’re into that kind of thing.

- **Formulas.** These are calculations involving two or more values, such as 2*5 or A1+A2+A3. I discuss formulas in more detail later in this chapter (see the section “Calculating with Formulas and Functions”).
Fill 'Er Up: Entering Spreadsheet Data

Old programmers like to mystify nonprogrammers with the phrase “garbage in, garbage out” (or GIGO), which just means that if you feed a computer bad data, you’ll get a bad result.

The GIGO principle is alive and well and living in Spreadsheet World because a spreadsheet is only as useful—and as accurate—as the data it contains. Even a small mistake can render your results meaningless. So rule number one of good spreadsheet style is to enter your data carefully.

If you’re new to spreadsheet work, you’ll no doubt be pleased to hear that entering data in a spreadsheet cell is refreshingly straightforward:

1. Click the cell you want to use.
2. Start typing.
3. When you’re done, press Enter. Google Docs moves down to select the next cell in the column. (If you prefer to bail out without adding anything to the cell, press Esc instead.)

**CHROME LORE**

When entering numbers or text, you can also confirm your entry by pressing any of the arrow keys or by clicking on another cell. The active cell pointer moves either in the direction of the arrow or to the clicked cell. This feature is handy if you have, say, a lengthy row of data to type in.

**Entering Text**

In the Google Docs spreadsheet program, text entries can include any combination of letters, symbols, and numbers. Although sometimes used as data, you’ll find that you mostly use text to describe the contents of your spreadsheets. These descriptions are very important because even a modest-size spreadsheet can become a confusing jumble of numbers without some kind of guideline to keep things straight. Text entries can be quite long, but in general you shouldn’t use anything too fancy or elaborate. A simple phrase such as Monthly Expenses or Payment Date can usually suffice.

**Entering Numbers**

It won’t come as any surprise to you to find out that numbers are what spreadsheets are all about. You add them together, subtract them, take their average, or perform any number of mathematical operations on them.
Somewhat obviously, a cell entry that contains only numbers is considered a numeric entry. However, Google Docs also recognizes that you're entering a number if you start the entry with a decimal point (.), a plus sign (+), a minus sign (–), or a dollar sign ($). Here are some other rules for entering numbers:

- You can enter percentages by following the number with a percent sign (%). Google Docs stores the number as a decimal. For example, an entry such as 15% is stored as 0.15.
- Besides using a minus sign, you can also use parentheses to indicate a negative number. If you make an entry such as (125), Google Docs assumes you mean negative 125.
- You can enter commas to separate thousands, but you have to make sure that each comma appears in the appropriate place. Google Docs will interpret an entry such as 12,34 as text.
- If you want to enter a fraction, you need to type an integer, a space, and then the fraction (5 1/8, for example). This is true even if you're entering only the fractional part. In this case, you need to type a zero, a space, and then the fraction; otherwise, Google Docs will interpret the entry as a date. For example, 0 1/8 is the fraction one eighth, but 1/8 is (depending on your computer’s settings) treated as January 8.

You will find out more information about number formatting later in this chapter (see the section “Applying a Numeric, Date, or Time Format”).

**CHROME CAUTION!**

A common source of errors in spreadsheets is to mistakenly enter a lowercase L (l) instead of a one (1) and an uppercase o (O) instead of a zero (0). Watch for these errors when entering your data.

**Entering Dates and Times**

Google Docs uses serial numbers to represent specific dates and times. To get a date serial number, Google Docs uses December 31, 1899, as an arbitrary starting point and then counts the number of days that have passed since then. So, for example, the date serial number for January 1, 1900, is 2; January 2, 1900, is 3; and so on. The table on the next page displays some sample date serial numbers.
To get a time serial number, Google Docs expresses time as a decimal fraction of the 24-hour day to get a number between 0 and 1. The starting point, midnight, is given the value 0, so noon—halfway through the day—has a serial number of 0.5. The following table displays some sample time serial numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>6:00:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.375</td>
<td>9:00:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.70833</td>
<td>5:00:00 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.99999</td>
<td>11:59:59 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can combine the two types of serial numbers. For example, 40413.5 represents noon on August 23, 2010.

The advantage of using serial numbers in this way is that it makes calculations involving dates and times very easy. Because a date or time is really just a number, any mathematical operation you can perform on a number can also be performed on a date. This feature is invaluable for spreadsheets that track delivery times, monitor accounts receivable or accounts payable, calculate invoice discount dates, and so on.

Although it’s true that the serial numbers make manipulating dates and times easier for the computer, it’s not the best format for humans to comprehend. For example, the number 25,404.95555 is meaningless, but the moment it represents (July 20, 1969, at 10:56 P.M. EDT) is one of the great moments in history (Neil Armstrong setting foot on the moon). Fortunately, Google Docs takes care of the conversion between these formats, so you never have to worry about it. To enter a date or time, use any of the formats outlined in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m/d/yyyy</td>
<td>8/23/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m/d/yy</td>
<td>8/23/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yyyy-mm-dd</td>
<td>2010-08-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm-dd-yyyy</td>
<td>08-23-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m/d</td>
<td>8/23 (Google Docs assumes the current year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m-d</td>
<td>8-23 (Google Docs assumes the current year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mmm-d</td>
<td>Aug-23 (Google Docs assumes the current year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d-mmm</td>
<td>23-Aug (Google Docs assumes the current year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d-mmm-yyyy</td>
<td>23-Aug-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mmmm d, yyyy</td>
<td>August 23, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mmm-yy</td>
<td>Aug-10 (Google Docs assumes the first day of the month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h:mm:ss AM/PM</td>
<td>10:35:10 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h:mm AM/PM</td>
<td>10:35 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h:mm:ss</td>
<td>22:35:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h:mm</td>
<td>22:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m/d/yyyy h:mm:ss</td>
<td>8/23/2010 22:35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are Google Docs’s built-in formats, but they’re not set in stone. You’re free to mix and match these formats as long as you observe the following rules:

- You can use either the forward slash (/) or the hyphen (-) as a date separator. Always use a colon (:) as a time separator.
- You can combine any date and time format as long as you separate them with a space.
- You can specify the month using the number (January is 1, February is 2, and so on), the first three letters of the month name, or the entire month name.
- You can enter date and time values using either uppercase or lowercase letters. Google Docs automatically adjusts the capitalization to its standard format.
- To display times using the 12-hour clock, include either AM (or just A) or PM (or just P). If you leave these off, Google Docs will use the 24-hour clock.

You will find out more information on formatting dates and times later in this chapter (see the section “Applying a Numeric, Date, or Time Format”).
Getting from Here to There in a Spreadsheet

Data entry is much faster if you can navigate your spreadsheets quickly. The following table lists the most commonly used navigation keys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press …</th>
<th>To Move …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrow keys</td>
<td>Left, right, up, or down one cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Down</td>
<td>Down one screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Up</td>
<td>Up one screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Home</td>
<td>To the top-left corner of the spreadsheet (cell A1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+End</td>
<td>To the bottom-right corner of the spreadsheet (usually cell T100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+arrow keys</td>
<td>In the direction of the arrow to the next nonblank cell if the current cell is blank, or to the last nonblank cell if the current cell is nonblank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quick Fixes: Editing Cell Contents

If you make a mistake when entering data or you have to update the contents of a cell, you need to edit the cell to get the correct value. One option you have is to select the cell and begin typing the new data. This method erases the previous contents with whatever you type. Often, however, you only need to change a single character or value, so retyping the entire cell is wasteful. Instead, Google Docs lets you modify the contents of a cell without erasing it. To edit a cell, first use either of the following techniques to get an insertion point for editing:

* Click the cell and then press **F2**.
* Double-click the cell.

You can now make your changes and press **Enter** when you're done to save your work. (Or you can cancel the procedure without saving your changes by pressing **Esc**.)

Applying a Numeric, Date, or Time Format

The numbers—both the raw data and the formula results—are the most important part of a spreadsheet, so applying appropriate numeric formats to your numbers
is always worth the time. For example, be sure to format dollar amounts with the appropriate currency symbol and format large numbers to show commas as thousands separators. If your spreadsheet includes dates or times, you should also format them to make them more readable and to avoid ambiguous dates such as 3/4/10 (which could either be March 4, 2010, or April 3, 2010, depending on where you live).

Follow these steps to apply a numeric, date, or time format:

1. Select the cell that you want to format.
2. Select one of the following toolbar buttons:
   - **Format as currency.** Click this button to apply the currency format (leading $, no decimal places).
   - **Format as percent.** Click this button to apply the percent format (trailing % sign, two decimal places).
   - **More formats.** Click this button to display a list of the available data formats (see Figure 8.2).

![Figure 8.2](image-url)  
*Figure 8.2* Click *More formats* to see the list of data formats.
3. If you clicked More formats, click the format you want to use. (In the list of formats, note that you can click either the More currencies command or the More formats command to see more options.) Google Docs applies the formats to the cell.

Dealing With Columns and Rows

One of the easiest ways to improve the appearance of your spreadsheet is to manipulate its rows and columns. This section teaches you how to adjust column widths and row heights and how to hide and unhide entire rows and columns in addition to gridlines and headers.

Tweaking the Column Width

You can use column width adjustments to improve the appearance of your spreadsheet in a number of different ways:

* If you're faced with a truncated text entry or number, you can enlarge the column so that the entry appears in full.
* If your spreadsheet contains many numbers, you can widen the columns to spread the numbers out and make the spreadsheet less cluttered.
* You can make your columns smaller to fit the entire spreadsheet onto your screen or onto a single printed page.
* You can adjust the column width for the entire spreadsheet to create a custom grid for a specialized model (such as a timeline).

MAXIMUM CHROME

To set the width to the widest entry in the column, position the mouse pointer at the right edge of the column header and double-click.

Here are the steps to follow to adjust the column width:

1. Move the mouse pointer to the column header area and position the pointer at the right edge of the column you want to adjust. The mouse pointer changes to a two-headed horizontal arrow.
2. Press and hold down the left mouse button.
3. Drag the pointer to the right (to increase the width) or to the left (to decrease the width).

4. When the column is the desired width, release the mouse button. Google Docs adjusts the column width accordingly.

**Fussing With the Row Height**

You can set the height of your spreadsheet rows using techniques similar to those used for adjusting column widths. Google Docs normally adjusts row heights automatically to accommodate the tallest font in a row. However, you can make your own height adjustments to give your spreadsheet more breathing room or to reduce the amount of space taken up by unused rows.

**CHROME CAUTION!**

When reducing a row height, always keep the height larger than the tallest font to avoid cutting off the tops of any characters.

Follow these steps to adjust the row height:

1. Move the mouse pointer to the row header area and position the pointer at the bottom edge of the row you want to adjust. The mouse pointer changes to a two-headed vertical arrow.
2. Press and hold down the left mouse button.
3. Drag the pointer down (to increase the height) or up (to decrease the height).
4. When the row is the desired height, release the mouse button. Google Docs adjusts the row height accordingly.

**Getting the Hang of Ranges**

Okay, it’s time to shift your spreadsheet work into a higher gear *without* doing much in the way of extra work! The secret to this productivity miracle is a simple-but-vital spreadsheet concept: the *range*.

**DEFINITION**

A *range* is any collection of related cells. A range can be as small as a single cell and as large as the entire spreadsheet, but most are somewhere in between these extremes.
Most ranges are rectangular groups of adjacent cells. These kinds of ranges, like individual cells, have an address, and this address is given in terms of range coordinates. Range coordinates have the form UL:LR, where UL is the address of the cell in the upper-left corner of the range and LR is the address of the cell in the lower-right corner of the range. For example, a range consisting of the intersection of the four rows from 3 to 6 and the three columns from B to D would have the coordinates B3:D6. Figure 8.3 shows this range selected.

Figure 8.3  *The range B3:D6.*

“So what’s the big deal with ranges? Why bother?”

Excellent questions, all. The major benefit of ranges is that they speed up your work by letting you perform operations or define functions on many cells at once instead of one at a time.

For example, suppose you want to apply a currency format to a column of dollar values. If you work on individual cells, you might have to perform the format procedure dozens of times. That hurts just thinking about it. However, by first selecting the range that covers all the cells you want to format, you can do it with a single format command and free yourself for more productive pursuits.

Similarly, suppose you want to know the average of a column of numbers running from B1 to B50. You could enter all 50 numbers as arguments in the AVERAGE function, but typing `AVERAGE(B1:B50)` is decidedly quicker.

**Selecting a Range**

When the Google Docs spreadsheet program requires that you select a range, there may be some situations where you can specify the range by typing the range
coordinates. For example, you might stumble upon a dialog box that requires a range input, and you can type the range coordinates in the text box provided. Similarly, you’ll often come across spreadsheet functions that require a range value for an argument, and you can type the range coordinates while you are typing the rest of the formula.

However, using your mouse or keyboard to select the range you want to work with is much more common, so the next few sections take you through a few useful range-selection techniques using both devices.

**Handy Mouse Techniques for Selecting a Range**

The mouse is the standard range-selection tool because it is both flexible and fast. Here are the three main techniques:

- **To select a rectangular range:** Click and drag the mouse pointer over the cells you want to select.

- **To select an entire column:** Click the column header. To select multiple adjacent columns, click and drag the mouse pointer over the column headings.

- **To select an entire row:** Click the row header. To select multiple adjacent rows, click and drag the mouse pointer over the row headings.

**Nifty Keyboard Techniques for Selecting a Range**

If you’re inputting data, you can save time by leaving your hands on the keyboard to select a range. Here are the main techniques you can use to select a range via the keyboard:

- **To select a rectangular range:** Use the arrow keys to select the upper-left cell of the range, press and hold down the Shift key, and then use the arrow keys (or Page Up and Page Down, if the range is a large one) to select the rest of the cells.

- **To select an entire column:** Select a cell in the column and then press Ctrl+spacebar. To select multiple adjacent columns, select a cell in each column and then press Ctrl+spacebar.

- **To select an entire row:** Select a cell in the row and then press Shift+spacebar. To select multiple adjacent rows, select a cell in each row and then press Shift+spacebar.
Making Life Easier with Named Ranges

Working with multiple cells as a range is much easier than working with the cells individually, but range coordinates are not very intuitive. For example, if you see a formula that uses the function AVERAGE(A1:A25), knowing what the range A1:A25 represents is impossible unless you look at the range itself.

You can make ranges more intuitive by using range names, which are labels that you assign to ranges. With a name defined, you can use it in place of the range coordinates. For example, assigning the name ClassMarks to a range such as A1:A25 immediately clarifies the purpose of a function such as AVERAGE(ClassMarks).

Google Docs also makes range names easy to work with by automatically adjusting the coordinates associated with a range name if you move the range or if you insert or delete rows or columns within the range.

Naming a Range

Here’s a run-through of the steps you need to follow to name a range:

1. Select the range you want to name.
2. Select Edit, Named ranges, Define new range. The Range names dialog box appears.
3. Type the range name in the Nickname text box (see Figure 8.4).

![Figure 8.4](image-url) Use the Range names dialog box to spell out a snappy name for your range.
4. Click Save. Google Docs defines the name.
5. Click Done.

Using a Range Name

Using a range name in a formula or as a function argument is straightforward: Just replace a range's coordinates with the range's defined name. For example, suppose that a cell contains the following formula:

=B1

This formula sets the cell's value to the current value of cell B1. However, if cell B1 is named TotalProfit, then the following formula is equivalent:

=TotalProfit

Similarly, consider the following function:

AVERAGE(A1:A25)

If the range A1:A25 is named ClassMarks, then the following is equivalent:

AVERAGE(ClassMarks)

If you're not sure about a particular name, you can get Google Docs to insert it into the spreadsheet for you. Here are the steps to follow:

1. Start your formula or function and stop when you come to the spot where you need to insert the range name.
2. Select Edit, Named ranges. Google Docs displays a menu that includes a list of your defined range names.
3. Click the name you want to insert.

Range Magic I: Filling a Range with Data

In your spreadsheet travels, one day you might realize that you have a range where you need to have the same value in every cell. You could accomplish this by typing the value into each cell, but you don't need me to tell you that would be time-consuming and very tedious. You can save a lot of time (and avoid boring yourself
silly) by using a feature called Auto-Fill, which tells Google Docs to fill the entire range with the value in a single operation. Here are the steps to follow:

1. Select the first cell in the range you want to fill.
2. Type the value or formula you want to appear in every cell in the range.
3. Select the first cell again. This time, notice that Google Docs places a small square in the lower-right corner of the cell. I’ll call this the Auto-Fill handle.
4. Move the mouse pointer over the Auto-Fill handle. The mouse pointer changes to a large crosshair pointer (+).
5. Click and drag the Auto-Fill handle down. As you drag the Auto-Fill handle, Google Docs displays a dashed outline of the range you’ve covered, as shown in Figure 8.5.
6. When you’ve covered the entire range that you want to fill, release the mouse button. Google Docs fills the range with the value you entered in step 2. Figure 8.6 shows an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>2010 Final</td>
<td>Budget Factor</td>
<td>2011 Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/31</td>
<td>Cost of Goods</td>
<td>$6,132</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/30</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$4,600</td>
<td>(</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/31</td>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
<td>(</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/31</td>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
<td>(</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/30</td>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>(</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Shipping</td>
<td>$16,250</td>
<td>(</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>(</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/30</td>
<td>(</td>
<td>(</td>
<td>(</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/30</td>
<td>(</td>
<td>(</td>
<td>(</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/30</td>
<td>(</td>
<td>(</td>
<td>(</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8.5 When you click and drag the Auto-Fill handle, Google Docs displays a dashed outline to show you the range you’ve selected so far.
Range Magic II: Filling a Range with a Series of Values

Rather than filling a range with the same value, you might need to fill it with a series of values. This could be a text series (such as Sunday, Monday, Tuesday or January, February, March) or a numeric series (such as 2, 4, 6 or 2009, 2010, 2011). Again, pecking out these kinds of series by hand is lame, particularly for longer series. Fortunately, the Auto-Fill feature also makes it easy to create a series. Here is how it works:

1. Type the first two series values in the first two cells of the range you want to use.
2. Select the first two cells in the range. Google Docs displays the Auto-Fill handle in the bottom-right corner of the selected cells.
3. Position the mouse pointer over the Auto-Fill handle. The pointer changes to a crosshair (+).
4. Click and drag the Auto-Fill handle until the dashed gray border encompasses the range you want to fill.
5. Release the mouse button. Google Docs fills in the range with the series.

Figure 8.7 shows a few examples of series created using this technique. The cells with gray backgrounds are the initial cells in each series. (For the Multiple-Cell Series, note that each series “value” is actually two cells, such as F2 and F3.)
You can fill a range with a series of values based on the initial two values in the range.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when using the fill handle to create series:

- Clicking and dragging the Auto-Fill handle down or to the right increments the values. Clicking and dragging up or to the left decrements the values.

- Google Docs recognizes standard abbreviations such as Jan (January) and Sun (Sunday).

- If you use three or more numbers as the initial values for the series, Google Docs creates new values that reflect the “best fit” or “trend” line of the initial values. This is a line through the data points for which the differences between the points above and below the line cancel each other out (more or less). If you were to graph the series, the new values would appear as a straight line that indicates the overall trend of the initial values.

Range Roving I: Copying a Range

Okay, let’s face an inevitable fact of spreadsheet life: You will reuse data every now and then, and there’s no shame in that. For example, if you work hard to construct a range with a particular set of data, you might find that you need to create a second range that uses different data so you can compare the two. Although the numbers might be completely different in the second range, the labels and headings probably won’t be. Only someone with way too much time on his or her hands would recreate this second range from scratch. Instead, you can make this sort of spreadsheet chore go much faster if you start off by creating a copy of the original range.
Copying a range is such a common procedure that Google Docs gives you a couple of methods, each of which comes in handy for different situations:

**Chrome Caution!**

Check out the destination range before copying a range to make sure you won’t be overwriting any existing data. If you accidentally destroy some data during a copy, immediately click *Undo* or press *Ctrl+Z* to undo the operation.

- **Drag-and-drop.** Select the range you want to copy, hold down the *Ctrl* key, and then move the mouse pointer over any edge of the selection (except the Auto-Fill handle). You’ll know you’ve got it right when the outer edge of the selection turns dark gray. Click and drag the edge and drop it on the destination range. This method is most useful for making quick range copies on the same spreadsheet.

- **Copy-and-paste.** Select the original range, press *Ctrl+C* to copy it, select the upper-left cell of the destination range, and then press *Ctrl+V* to paste it. This method is useful for making copies in different sheets or different files.

**Range Roving II: Moving a Range**

If you want to move a range, Google Docs gives you two similar methods:

- **Drag-and-drop.** Select the range you want to move and then move the mouse pointer over any edge of the selection (except the Auto-Fill handle). Click and drag the edge to the destination range.

- **Cut-and-paste.** Select the original range, press *Ctrl+X* to cut it, select the upper-left cell of the destination range, and then press *Ctrl+V* to paste it.

**Spreadsheet Shoehorning: Inserting a Range**

When you throw together a spreadsheet, you usually work down and to the right, adding new rows to the bottom of the data and new columns to the right. It all sounds awfully neat and orderly, but you just know it won’t last, right? Nope. At some point you’ll realize that you forgot a row (or a column) of data that’s supposed to go in the midst of your existing data. Does this mean you have to delete the last few
rows (or columns) so that you can add the missing data? No way! Instead, Google Docs takes pity on you and allows you to insert a new row (or a new column) while leaving your existing data intact.

Inserting a Row (or Two)

Here are the techniques you use to insert one or more rows:

- **Inserting a new row above the current row**: Select a cell in the row below where you want to insert the new row and then select Insert, Row above.

- **Inserting a new row below the current row**: Select a cell in the row above where you want to insert the new row and then select Insert, Row below.

- **Inserting multiple rows above the current rows**: First decide how many rows you want to insert, then select cells in the same number of rows below where you want the new rows inserted. Select Insert, X Rows above (where X is the number of rows you selected).

- **Inserting multiple rows below the current rows**: Begin by deciding how many rows you want to insert, then select cells in the same number of rows above where you want the new rows to show up. Select Insert, X Rows below (where X is the number of rows you selected).

Inserting a Column (or Three)

Here are the methods that Google Docs offers for inserting one or more columns:

- **Inserting a new column to the left of the current column**: Select a cell in the column to the right of where you want to insert the new column and then select Insert, Column left.

- **Inserting a new column to the right of the current column**: Select a cell in the column to the left of where you want to insert the new column and then select Insert, Column right.

- **Inserting multiple columns to the left of the current columns**: Figure out how many columns you want to insert, then select cells in the same number of columns to the right of where you want the new columns inserted. Select Insert, X Columns left (where X is the number of columns you selected).
• Inserting multiple columns to the right of the current columns: Decide how many columns you want to insert, then select cells in the same number of columns to the left of where you want the new columns to appear. Select Insert, X Columns right (where X is the number of columns you selected).

Range, Range, Go Away: Deleting a Range

I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings, but it's best that you hear it from me: No spreadsheet, not even yours, is ever built perfectly from scratch. It's sad but true, and it means that you'll often end up with incorrect, old, or unnecessary data that you need to expunge from the spreadsheet.

Google Docs offers these methods for blowing away a range:

• Deleting the contents of a cell or range: Select the cell or range that you want to delete and then press Delete. (If that's just too easy, you can also select Edit, Clear selection.)

• Deleting an entire row: Select at least one cell in the row you want to delete and then select Edit, Delete row X (where X is the row number).

• Deleting multiple rows: Select at least one cell in each of the offending rows that you want to delete and then select Edit, Delete rows X–Y (where X is the first row you selected and Y is the last row).

• Deleting an entire column: Select at least one cell in the column you want to delete and then select Edit, Delete column X (where X is the column letter).

• Deleting multiple columns: Select at least one cell in each of the columns you want to get rid of and then select Edit, Delete columns X–Y (where X is the letter of the first column and Y is the letter of the last column).

Putting Your Spreadsheet Affairs in Order: Sorting a Range

One of the advantages of using Google Docs as a simple database is that you can rearrange the records so that they are sorted alphabetically or numerically. This feature enables you to view the data in order by customer name, account number, part number, or any other field.
Sorting the Entire Spreadsheet

One of the quirks of Google Docs is that it prefers to sort the entire spreadsheet. That’s not a problem if your sheet consists of nothing but data. In this case, you sort that data by using the following two-step dance:

1. Select a cell in the column you want to use for sorting.
2. Select Tools and then select one of the following commands:
   * Sort sheet by column X, A → Z. Select this command (where X is the column you selected) for an ascending sort (A to Z for letters, 0 to 9 for numbers).
   * Sort sheet by column X, Z → A. Select this command (where X is the column you selected) for a descending sort (Z to A for letters, 9 to 0 for numbers).

Brrr! Freezing Your Headings

This full-spreadsheet sorting behavior is a big problem if, like most spreadsheet databases, you have headings at the top of each column. With the default sort, Google Docs would include the headings row in the sort, which is just dumb.

To work around this brain-dead behavior, you have to freeze the headings row, which means that Google Docs separates the headings row from the rest of the spreadsheet. Assuming your column headings are in the first row, you can freeze that row by selecting Tools, Freeze rows, Freeze 1 row. (If your headings are in row 2, select the Freeze 2 rows command instead.)

Google Docs adds a bar below the frozen row (see Figure 8.8) to remind you that the row (or rows) above it is frozen.
Okay, Now You Can Sort a Range

With your headings frozen, follow these steps to sort the data in the unfrozen part of the spreadsheet:

1. Select a cell in the column you want to use for sorting.
2. Select **Tools** and then select one of the following commands:
   - **Sort sheet by column X, A → Z.** Select this command (where X is the column you selected) for an ascending sort (A to Z for letters, 0 to 9 for numbers).
   - **Sort sheet by column X, Z → A.** Select this command (where X is the column you selected) for a descending sort (Z to A for letters, 9 to 0 for numbers).

Calculating with Formulas and Functions

Although you can use a Google Docs spreadsheet as a simple database system, that's not really what the program is all about. At its heart, the Google Docs spreadsheet application is a very powerful and sophisticated calculator that can take the raw data on a spreadsheet and summarize it, analyze it, and manipulate it in many different ways.

The secret behind Google Docs’ calculation prowess is the formula, a collection of values and symbols that together produce some kind of result. Knowing how to build formulas, particularly if you enhance those formulas with Google Docs’ powerful spreadsheet functions, is the royal road to spreadsheet mastery and to learning everything you can about your data. This section tells you everything you need to know to become adept at formula building. You also learn how to wield Google Docs’ powerful spreadsheet functions to take your formulas to a higher level.

Making On-The-Fly Calculations

You don’t always have to use Google Docs for big-time calculation. Sometimes you just need to know the sum of a few cells or the average of the values in a range. Formulas and spreadsheet functions exist that can handle these simple calculations, of course, but setting up a separate formula may be overkill in some cases, particularly if you don’t need to save or reuse the result.
Fortunately, Google Docs helps you make these on-the-fly calculations with its Auto-Calculate feature. Whenever you select multiple cells, Google Docs automatically calculates the sum of the numeric values in the selection and displays this data in the status bar, as shown in Figure 8.9.

You can see more Auto-Calculate results by clicking the sum in the status bar. As you can see in Figure 8.10, Google Docs also calculates the average, the count (the number of numeric cells in the selection), and the minimum and maximum values in the selection.

Figure 8.9  *Google Docs’ Auto-Calculate feature displays the sum of the selected cells in the status bar.*

Figure 8.10  *Click the sum in the status bar to see all five of Google Docs’ Auto-Calculate results.*
Creating Your Very Own Formulas

The simple calculations you've seen so far are fine for quick needs, but most of your spreadsheet work will require more elaborate calculations, and for that you need to create your own formulas. The next few sections tell you everything you need to know to quickly create powerful formulas with Google Docs.

Creating a Simple Formula

This section begins with a very simple example so you get the feel of how to build a formula. This example calculates the mortgage principal by subtracting the down payment (in cell B4) from the house price (in cell B3):

1. Select the cell in which you want the formula result to appear.
2. Type an equals sign (=). All Google Docs formulas begin with an equals sign.
3. Click B3.
4. Type a minus sign (–).
5. Click B4.
6. Press Enter.

Figure 8.11 shows this example in action. As you can see, the formula result appears in cell B5, whereas the formula itself appears in the formula bar when you select cell B5.

![Select the cell that contains your formula...](Figure 8.11) A simple formula that calculates the difference between two values.
All Google Docs formulas have this basic structure: an equals sign (=) followed by one or more operands—which can be a cell reference, a value, a range, a range name, or a function name—separated by one or more operators—the symbols that combine the operands in some way, such as the minus sign (−).

**CHROME CAUTION!**
When you need to include a cell reference in a formula, just typing the cell address is often tempting. However, to ensure accuracy, always click the cell itself instead of typing its address.

### Understanding Formula Operators

Almost all Google Docs formulas fall into one of two categories: arithmetic or comparison. Each category has its own set of operators, and you use each type in different ways, as shown in the rest of this section.

Most of your formulas will be arithmetic formulas, which combine numbers, cell addresses, and function results with mathematical operators to perform numeric calculations. The following table lists the operators used in arithmetic formulas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ (addition)</td>
<td>=3+2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– (subtraction)</td>
<td>=3−2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– (negation)</td>
<td>=−3</td>
<td>−3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* (multiplication)</td>
<td>=3*2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ (division)</td>
<td>=3/2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% (percentage)</td>
<td>=3%</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^ (exponentiation)</td>
<td>=3^2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You use a comparison formula to compare two or more numbers, text strings, cell contents, or function results. If the statement is true, the result of the formula is given the logical value TRUE (which is equivalent to any nonzero value). If the statement is false, the formula returns the logical value FALSE (which is equivalent to 0). The following table lists the operators you can use in comparison formulas.
Using Functions for Faster, More Powerful Formulas

A function is a predefined formula that calculates a result based on one or more arguments, which are the function's input values. Note that most functions have at least one argument and that, for functions with two or more arguments, in most cases some of those arguments are required (that is, Google Docs returns an error if the arguments are not present) and some are optional.

For example, suppose you want to calculate the annual payments for a mortgage. Given an interest rate (call it rate), the term (call it NPER for “number of periods”), and the principal (call it PV for “present value”), then Google Docs’ PMT (“payment”) function can calculate the result:

\[ \text{PMT} \left( \text{rate}, \ NPER, \ PV \right) \]

In a real example, you'd replace rate, NPER, and PV with actual values or cell references. (I'll show you an example in a sec.)

Functions not only simplify complex mathematical formulas, but they also enable you to perform powerful calculations such as statistical correlation, the number of work days between two dates, and square roots.

Entering Functions Directly

The quickest way to include a function in a formula is to type the function and its arguments directly into the cell. Here are the steps to follow:

1. Start typing the function name. As you type, Google Docs displays a list of function names that begin with what you’ve typed so far (see Figure 8.12).
2. Keep typing until you see the function you want in the list.

3. Click the function. Google Docs adds the function name and a left parenthesis—(. (If you're typing the function name by hand, be sure to add the left parenthesis after the name.) Google Docs now displays the function syntax (that is, the list of arguments associated with the function), as shown in Figure 8.13.

4. Enter the arguments, separated by commas. Each argument can be one of the following:

   - **Value.** Type the number (or whatever).
   - **Cell reference.** Click the cell. In Figure 8.13, for example, the rate value is in cell B6, so you’d click that cell.
   - **Function.** This is a bit on the complex side, but you can use another function as a function argument.
5. Type the right parenthesis: ).

6. Press Enter. Google Docs enters the formula and calculates the result. Figure 8.14 shows the result for the PMT function. It’s a negative number because anything you pay out—such as mortgage payments—is considered negative (which sounds about right).

![Figure 8.14 The result of the PMT function.](image)

### Inserting a Function from a List

Google Docs’ pop-up function list and syntax are so useful that typing functions by hand is almost always the fastest way to incorporate functions into your formulas. However, if you’re not sure which function you need, then you need to turn to Google Docs’ Insert a Function feature. Here are the steps to follow to insert a function at the current cursor position using this feature:

1. Select Insert, Function. Google Docs displays a list of functions—Sum, Average, Count, Max, and Min—as well as the More command.

2. If one of the five displayed functions is the one you want, click it and skip the rest of these steps. Otherwise, click More. The Insert a function dialog box appears.

3. Click a function category. Google Docs displays a list of functions in that category. For example, Figure 8.15 shows the list of functions that appears when you click the Statistical category.
4. If you want to see the function syntax, click the function.

5. Double-click the function you want to use. Google Docs inserts it into the cell.

6. Replace the function’s arguments with actual data (such as values or cell references).

**Visualizing Data with Charts**

One of the best ways to analyze your spreadsheet data—or get your point across to other people—is to display your data visually in a chart. With nearly two dozen chart formats to choose from, Google Docs gives you tremendous flexibility when you’re creating charts.

Although you can create a chart from any range of numeric data, most charts work best if you have headings for each column of data and for each row of data. Figure 8.16 shows a sample range that’s all set for plotting on a chart.
Chapter 8: Building Google Docs Spreadsheets

Figure 8.16  For best chart results, include column and row headings with your data.

Creating a Chart

Here are the steps to trudge through to build a chart:

1. Select the range you want to plot, including the row and column headings.

2. Select Insert, Chart. Google Docs displays the Create chart dialog box, shown in Figure 8.17.

Figure 8.17  Use the Create chart dialog box to, you know, create your chart.
3. Click a chart type: Columns, Bars, Pie, Lines, Area, or Scatter. Google Docs displays the available chart variations in the Sub Type section.

4. Click the chart subtype you want to use.

5. If your data has row headings, be sure to activate the Use column X as labels check box (where X is the column letter where your row label appears).

6. If you want to add labels to your chart (a good idea if other folks will be gawking at it), you get three text boxes in the Labels section of the dialog box:
   * Chart title. Type the overall chart title, which appears at the top of the chart.
   * Horizontal axis. Type a label that names or describes the values displayed on the chart’s horizontal axis.
   * Vertical axis. Type a label that names or describes the values displayed on the chart’s vertical axis.

7. Use the Legend list to decide where you want the chart legend to appear (or select No legend to skip it). The legend describes the chart’s data, so it’s a good idea to include one.

8. Click Save chart. Google Docs adds the chart to the spreadsheet, as shown in Figure 8.18.

---

Figure 8.18  A chart, ready for action.
Editing a Chart

After you’ve created a chart, you may decide that the existing chart type doesn’t display your data the way you want, or you may want to experiment with different chart types to find the one that best suits your data. Fortunately, the chart type and other chart data isn’t set in stone; you can change it at any time.

Here is the easiest way to change the chart data:

1. Click the chart you want to change.
2. Select Chart, Edit chart. The Edit chart dialog box appears. (It’s identical to the Create chart dialog box shown in Figure 8.17.)
3. Fiddle with the chart options as you see fit.
4. Click Save chart. Google Docs updates your chart with the new settings.

The Least You Need to Know

- To start a new spreadsheet in Google Docs, click Create New and then click Spreadsheet.
- A row is a horizontal area that you use to enter data, a column is a vertical area that you use to enter data, and a cell is the intersection of a row and a column.
- In a spreadsheet cell, you can enter text, numbers, or formulas.
- To select a rectangular range, click and drag the mouse pointer over the cells you want to select. You can also click a row or column header to select that row or column.
- All Google Docs formulas consist of an equals sign (=) followed by one or more operands separated by one or more operators.
- To create a chart, select the range you want to plot, including the row and column headings, and then select Insert, Chart.
Creating Google Docs Presentations

In This Chapter

- Building a presentation, one slide at a time
- Formatting your slides
- Running a presentation in the cloud
- Reviewing complete instructions for constructing a presentation with the sweat of your own brow

We’ve all, at one time or another, had to sit through the adult version of show and tell: the presentation. We’ve all had to endure the mind-numbing tedium of the droning presenter who does little more than read his or her own bullet points, and we’ve all had the mind-expanding pleasure of listening to an expert presenter offer fascinating facts in a lively and engaging manner.

Wherever you find yourself in this presentation spectrum, if you’re going to live in the cloud, then you’re going to have to present in the cloud, too. The good news is that cobbling together a presentation for the cloud isn’t as time-destroying as creating an off-cloud slideshow. The latter—probably using Microsoft PowerPoint—is a seemingly endless exercise of slide manipulating, transition taming, animation adding, and show customizing. Who among us hasn’t wasted entire days just tweaking PowerPoint transitions? Raise your hand if you’ve never spent hours making text and other objects enter a slide using convoluted-yet-mathematically-precise flight paths.

I’m happy to report that these off-cloud time sucks are nowhere to be found in Google Docs’ cloud-based presentation program. (Unless, of course, you really like messiing around with transitions and animations, in which case then I guess I’m sorry to report this.) As you will see in this chapter, Google Docs offers no transitions
(nope, not even a basic fade in/fade out) and one measly animation effect. It all seems a bit parsimonious, I know, but transitions and animations require computing horsepower, and that’s in short supply when everything happens in the cloud. Don’t worry, though. Google Docs offers plenty of features and options for creating compelling cloud-based presentations.

**Taking a Peek at the Presentation Window**

To start the Google Docs presentation application, use Chrome to surf to Google Docs (http://docs.google.com) and then open one of the following doors:

* To crank out a new presentation, click **Create New** and then click **Presentation**.
* If you’ve already got a presentation in the works, click the presentation name in the list of files.

Figure 9.1 shows a newborn Google Docs presentation with some of its features.
Here’s a rundown of the main bits and pieces of the Google Docs presentation window:

- **Menu bar.** These are the pull-down menus, and they give you access to all the presentation program’s commands.

- **Toolbars.** You use the toolbars for one-click access to the most important commands, such as Save and Undo, as well as many of the presentation program’s formatting commands.

- **Slide Sorter.** This area shows thumbnail versions of your slides, and you can use it to add, delete, and navigate slides as well as to sort the slides (hence the name).

- **Slide area.** This is where Google Docs displays the current slide, so it’s where most of the presentation action occurs.

### Putting Together a Presentation

Fine words butter no parsnips, as they say (no, they really do), so it’s time to start slapping up a presentation. Roll up your sleeves (if your sleeves are roll-up-able), crack your knuckles (if your knuckles are crackable), sit up straight (if your spine is straightenable), and we’ll begin.

### It’s All About the Slides

The heart (and possibly even the soul) of any presentation is the collection of slides that comprises the bulk of its content and that serves as both the focal point and the organizing structure of your talk. The slides are the bridge between your audience and yourself. Building an effective presentation consists mostly of creating and organizing slides, which in turn involves four things:

- The content—text and graphics—presented on each slide
- The organization of the content presented on each slide
- The formatting applied to each slide: fonts, colors, background, and so on
- The organization of the slides within the context of the entire presentation

This section and the next one take you through various Google Docs techniques that support these four design ideas.
Inviting a New Slide to the Presentation Party

When you start a new presentation in Google Docs, the resulting file starts off with a single slide (refer to Figure 9.1) that uses a layout called Title because you normally use it to add a title and subtitle for your presentation. You then add more slides to your presentation so that you can add the content.

Before getting to the specifics of adding a slide, you should understand that all slides contain some combination of the following three elements:

- **Title.** This is a text box that you normally use to add a title for the slide.
- **Text.** This is a container that you use to add text—which is usually a collection of bullets—to the slide.
- **Content.** This is a container into which you add any type of content, which could be an image, a drawing, a video, a table, or a shape (such as a circle or an arrow).

In each case, the new slide usually contains one or more placeholders, and your job is to fill in the placeholder with your text or a content object. Each slide uses some combination of Title, Text, and Content placeholders, and the arrangement of these placeholders on a slide is called the slide layout.

Google Docs offers several default slide layouts, each of which offers some combination of Title and Text placeholders. (You add Content placeholders by hand.) Google Docs offers five layouts:

- **Title.** A slide with two text boxes: a larger one for the overall presentation title and a smaller one for the subtitle.
- **Text.** A slide with a Title placeholder and a Text placeholder.
- **Two Columns.** A slide with a Title placeholder and two Text placeholders placed side by side.
- **Caption.** A slide with a Text placeholder near the bottom of the slide, which you use to enter a picture caption or some other description of the slide content.
- **Blank.** A slide with no placeholders.
Here are the steps to follow to add a slide to your presentation:

1. In the **Slide Sorter** list, click the slide after which you want the new slide to appear.

2. Select **Slide, New slide**. (You can also press **Ctrl+M** or click the **Insert** button [+] at the top of the Slide Sorter.) Google Docs displays the Choose slide layout dialog box, shown in Figure 9.2.

3. Click the slide layout you want to use. Google Docs shoehorns the new slide into the Slide Sorter and displays the slide in the slide area.

![Figure 9.2](image)

*Use the Choose slide layout dialog box to pick a layout that strikes your fancy.*

**Making Life Easier: Duplicating a Slide**

If you have a slide in the current presentation that has similar content and formatting to what you want for your new slide, you can save yourself great big hunks of precious time by inserting a duplicate of that slide and then adjusting the copy as needed. Here are the steps to follow to duplicate a slide:

1. In the **Slide Sorter**, click the slide you want to duplicate. (If you have multiple slides you want to duplicate, you can save time by selecting all the slides at once. You will find out how later in this chapter; see the section “Slick Slide Selection Skills.”)
2. Choose **Slide, Duplicate slides**. (You can also click the **Create a duplicate copy of the current slide** button at the top of the Slide Sorter.) Google Docs creates a copy of the slide and inserts the copy below the selected slide.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

A quicker way to duplicate a slide is to select it, press **Ctrl+C** to copy it, and then press **Ctrl+V** to paste it. If you want the copy to appear in a particular place within the presentation, select the slide after which you want the copy to appear and then press **Ctrl+V**.

---

**Adding Stuff to a Slide**

After you have added one or more slides, the next step is to fill in the placeholders. The next few sections take you through some of the details.

**Adding Text**

Adding text to a slide couldn’t be simpler:

- In a slide layout with a Title or Text placeholder, click inside the placeholder to enable editing and then type your text.

- In a slide layout that doesn’t have a Text placeholder—or if you want to add a new Text placeholder just to be different—first select **Insert, Text** or click the **Text** button in the toolbar. (It’s the “T” icon; see Figure 9.3.) You can then type your text.

**Adding a Bulleted List**

By an ancient law decreed when dinosaurs (such as IBM) ruled the earth, the vast majority of presentation slides consist of a title followed by a bunch of bullet points. Why this should be so has been lost in the dim mists of digital history, and there’s nothing you or I can do about it. If you’re building a presentation, your audience will expect mostly bulleted lists, and you **must** give the audience what they want, or they’ll turn on you.
To avoid nasty scenes at your presentations, be sure to do your bulleted list duty, as described in the following steps:

1. Click inside a Text placeholder to open it for editing.
2. Position the insertion point where you want your bulleted list to appear (usually at the top of the placeholder).
3. Click **Bullet List** (yes, that’s what Google Docs calls it) in the toolbar. Google Docs displays the first bullet.
4. Type the text for the list item.
5. Press **Enter**. Google Docs adds a bullet for the next item in the list.
6. If you want the next item to be a sub-bullet, press **Tab**; if you want the next item to be a sub-sub-bullet, press **Tab** again. If you’ve been creating sub- (or sub-sub-) bullets and you want to move back up the bullet hierarchy, press **Shift+Tab** until you get the bullet you want.
7. Repeat steps 4 through 6 until your list is complete.
8. Press Enter twice (or until the current bullet disappears) to tell Google Docs that your bulleted list is done.

What if your slide already includes text that you’re just dying to convert to a bulleted list? Die not, oh reader. Instead, just select the entire list and then click the Bullet List icon in the toolbar. Just like that, Google Docs morphs the text into a bulleted list.

Adding an Image

Yes, most presentations consist of slide after slide of bullets, but that doesn’t mean you have to foist a sea of text on your audience. Every now and then, throw them a visual bone by including an image in a slide. Here’s how:

1. Click the slide where you want the image to live.
2. Select Insert, Image or click the Image icon in the toolbar (see Figure 9.3). Google Docs coughs up the Insert Image dialog box.
3. Make sure the Browse your computer for the image file to upload option is selected. (If the image you want to use is located in the cloud, use Chrome to figure out the image address and then copy the address. Select Specify an image URL and then paste the address into the text box. Skip merrily to step 6.)
4. Click Choose File. The Open dialog box appears.
5. Select the image file and then click Open.
6. Click OK. Google Docs adds a new placeholder to the slide and displays the image inside the placeholder.

Figure 9.4 shows an image inserted into a slide. Notice that when you click the image you see the placeholder, and you can use the placeholder to do two things to the image:

* **Size the image.** Hover the mouse over any of the squares that appear on the corners of the placeholder. The mouse changes to a two-headed arrow. Then click and drag the square to get the size and shape you want.

* **Move the image.** Hover the mouse over a placeholder border (but not a corner). The mouse changes to a four-headed arrow, as shown in Figure 9.4. Then click and drag the border to position the image on the slide.
Chapter 9: Creating Google Docs Presentations

Mouse pointer for moving the image

Click and drag a corner to size the image

Figure 9.4  After you plop the image onto the slide, you can use the image placeholder to move and size the image.

Adding a Drawing

If you’re in more of a do-it-yourself mood—or I guess I should call it a “draw-it-yourself” mood—you can create your own drawings from scratch and insert them into a slide. I know, I know, who the heck has time for that! Ah well, it’s there, so I may as well show you how it works:

1. Click the slide where you want the drawing to appear.
2. Select Insert, Drawing. Google Docs brings you face-to-face with the Insert Drawing dialog box.
3. Use the toolbar to click a drawing tool such as a line, arrow, or shape.
4. Click and drag inside the work area to create the shape.
5. Use the selection handles that appear around the shape to move and size the shape to taste.
6. Use the buttons in the toolbar to change the fill color, line color, line width, and line style.
7. Repeat steps 3 through 6 to complete your masterpiece.
8. Click **Save & Close**. Google Docs inserts the drawing.

9. Move and size the drawing as described in the preceding section.

**Adding a Video**

You might think that adding video to a slide would be a no-go because of the limitations of the cloud. Ah, but you forget that the cloud already comes with a built-in video playback system: YouTube! That’s right, Google Docs lets you embed YouTube videos into any slide, and during the presentation you can start, pause, and stop the playback, just like any YouTube video.

Now I just know at this point you have dreams of talking cats and skateboard accidents dancing in your head, but let’s stay focused here: The video should enhance or complement your presentation, so choose wisely.

The really cool thing that Google Docs does here is take the title of your slide and use it as the basis of a YouTube search. Clever! If that search falls short, you can always run your own search.

You don’t have to always insert other folks’ videos. If you have your own video you’d prefer to insert and you have a YouTube account, go ahead and upload your video to YouTube.

Here’s how it all works:

1. Click the slide where you want the video to play.

2. Add or edit the slide title to reflect the type of video you want.

3. Select **Insert, Video**. Google Docs opens the Select Video dialog box and runs a YouTube search on your slide title, as shown in Figure 9.5.

4. If you don’t see a suitable video, type your own search term in the **Google text box** and click **Search videos**.

5. Click the video you want to insert. Google Docs displays a preview of the video.

6. Click **Select video**. Google Docs inserts a placeholder for the video.
Figure 9.5  When you run the Insert, Video command, Google Docs opens the Select Video dialog box and runs a YouTube search using the slide title.

Adding a Table

If you want to present data that would look best in a row-and-column format, go ahead and use a table:

1. Click the slide where you want the table to appear.
2. Select Table, Insert table. Google Docs displays a grid.
3. Move your mouse into the grid and over the square that represents the number of rows and columns you want in your table.
4. Click the square. Google Docs inserts the table, just like that.

Now you just fill in the table cells with your data. You can also use the various commands on the Table menu to move rows, insert new rows and columns, and delete rows and columns.
Adding a Shape

If your slide just doesn’t look right without a starburst, speech bubble, or fancy arrow, then you, my friend, are looking to add a shape to your slide:

1. Click the slide where you want the shape to show up.
2. Select Insert, Shape. Google Docs displays a gallery of common shapes.
3. If you see the shape you want, click it and skip to step 7. Otherwise, to create a custom shape, click More shapes to open the Insert Drawing dialog box.
4. Click Shape and then click the shape you want to use.
5. Click and drag the mouse to create the shape.
6. Click Save & Close. Google Docs adds the shape to the slide.
7. Move and size the shape’s placeholder as you see fit.

Adding Speaker Notes

When figuring out the content of your presentation, it’s best to keep the actual amount of information on a slide to a minimum—just the high-level points to provide the framework for the topics you want to present. How, then, do you keep track of the details you want to cover for each slide? Two words: speaker notes. These are extra bits of text that you add “off to the side” of a slide, which means they don’t appear in the presentation itself, but you can display them to yourself during the show.

To create speaker notes, follow these steps:

1. Click the slide you want to work with.
2. Select View, Show speaker notes. (You can also click the View Speaker Notes icon in the lower-right corner of the slide.) Google Docs displays the Speaker notes pane.
3. Use the large text box to enter your notes, as shown in Figure 9.6.
Figure 9.6  Select View, Show speaker notes and then use the Speaker notes pane to type handy presentation messages to yourself.

Slick Slide Selection Skills

If you want to mess around with your slides—for example, if you want to duplicate slides or change the slide order—then your first chore is always to select the slides you want to use. Here are a few simple-but-surprisingly-useful Slide Sorter techniques to commit to memory:

- To select a single slide, click it in the Slide Sorter.
- To select multiple consecutive slides, use the Slide Sorter to click the first slide, hold down Shift, and then click the last slide.
- To select multiple nonconsecutive slides, use the Slide Sorter to click the first slide, hold down Ctrl, and then click each of the other slides.
- To select all the slides, click any slide in the Slide Sorter and then press Ctrl+A.
MAXIMUM CHROME

Here’s a seemingly obscure scenario that you’ll come across more often than you think: You need to select most (but not all) of the slides in a presentation, and the ones you don’t want to select are scattered about the presentation. The easiest way to leap this hurdle is to press Ctrl+A to select every slide, then hold down Ctrl and click the slides you don’t want selected.

Slippery Slides: Changing the Slide Order

As you trudge your way through a presentation construction project, if you’re very organized and very lucky, you just might end up with the slides in exactly the order you want to present them to the world. Good work! Ask your nearest colleague to give you a pat on the back. It’s okay, I’ll wait.

Unfortunately, this state of presentation perfection is rarely achieved, so when you sweep away the sawdust and take a good look at your new presentation, you’ll no doubt see that some slides aren’t quite where they’re supposed to be. That’s no big whoop because Google Docs gives you two different methods for changing the slide order. Not even remotely surprisingly, you use the aptly named Slide Sorter for this:

- Click and drag the slide you want to move and drop it below the slide after which you want it to appear.
- Right-click a slide and then click either Move slide up (or press Ctrl+Up arrow) or Move slide down (or press Ctrl+Down arrow).
- Click the slide you want to move, press Ctrl+X, select the slide after which you want the moved slide to appear, and then press Ctrl+V.

SEE ALSO

The Google Docs presentation program is cool and all, but it’s a PowerPoint world out there, particularly when you leave the cloud and return to terra firma. So after you’ve slaved long and hard over your presentation, you can transfer your labors to the real world by downloading your presentation in PowerPoint format. See Chapter 6 for the details.

Formatting Slides

When it comes to presentations, content is king (not to mention queen, prince, princess, court jester, you name it). Populating your slides with accurate, up-to-date,
and useful information is the royal road to a good presentation that won’t waste your audience’s time or tempt them to aim chunks of fruit at your noggin. However, content doesn’t represent the entire journey. These days, your presentation must look as good as the information it contains. It may not be fair, but it’s almost always true that if your presentation looks like you spent very little time on the formatting, most folks will also assume you spent very little time on the content.

To avoid that fate, you must consider the look of your slides to be at least as important as the text and other content. Fortunately, you rarely have to spend the same amount of time on formatting and design as you do on building content. That’s because Google Docs has some powerful and useful formatting and design tools that make it easier to create eye-catching slides with very little effort. I’ll take you through these formatting and design tools in this section.

SEE ALSO
Many of the presentation formatting features—including fonts, type sizes, type effects, alignments, and numbered lists—are uncannily similar to the same features in the Google Docs word processor. I yakked on and on about all that stuff back in Chapter 7.

Applying a Slide Theme

By far the easiest and fastest way to apply high-quality design and formatting to a presentation is to use a theme. For Google Docs, a theme is a predefined collection of formatting options that control the colors, fonts, and background used with each slide in the presentation. Google Docs’ 15 built-in themes are nice on their own, but you can also customize any aspect of the theme to get the look you want.

Applying one of Google Docs’ predefined themes takes just a few mouse clicks, as the following steps show:

1. Open the presentation you want to format.

2. Select Format, Presentation settings, Change theme. Google Docs unveils the Choose theme dialog box shown in Figure 9.7.

3. Click a theme that looks inviting. Without further ado (not that there’s been much ado to this point, mind you), Google Docs applies the theme to all the slides in the presentation.
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Figure 9.7  Give your presentation a complete makeover in just a few clicks by applying a theme.

Changing the Slide Background

The default slide background is white, which is almost always an excellent choice because it makes your text super easy to read and it helps your images, drawings, and other slide knickknacks stand out.

Of course, you could also argue that a plain white background is, well, dull and that you’d like something a bit more lively. Similarly, you might have applied a theme to your presentation and ended up with a slightly odd background that interferes with the slide content.

Whatever the reason, you’re free to change the background of a slide (or of all your slides, for that matter). You have two choices:

- Use a solid color as the background
- Use an image as the background

Applying a Solid Color as the Background

If you want to go the solid-color route, follow these steps:

1. If you want to apply the background to a particular slide only, select the slide.
2. Select Format, Presentation settings, Change background. Google Docs unfurls the Choose Background dialog box.
3. Click the Change background icon. Google Docs drops down a palette of spiffy colors, as shown in Figure 9.8.

![Change background](image)

Figure 9.8  Google Docs offers up a wide range of pretty background colors.

4. Click a color that strikes your fancy.

5. If you want Google Docs to go crazy and apply the background to all the slides in the presentation, select the Apply background to all slides check box.

6. Click Save. Google Docs goes right ahead and applies the background.

**Applying an Image as the Background**

If you’ve got a picture that would be just right as a slide background, follow these steps to make it so:

1. If you want the image to appear as the background of a particular slide only, select the slide.

2. Select Format, Presentation settings, Change background. Google Docs opens the Choose Background dialog box.

3. Click Insert image. Google Docs surreptitiously adds the Choose File button to the dialog box.

4. Click Choose File to display the Open dialog box.
5. Select the image you want to use as the background.
6. Click Open. Google Docs uploads the image and displays a preview.
7. To force Google Docs to apply the image as the background for every slide in the presentation, select the **Apply background to all slides** check box.
8. Click Save. Google Docs adds the image background.

**Easy-as-Pie Centering**

When you use one of Google Docs’ predefined slide layouts, the placeholders appear attractively centered on the slide, which looks good. However, if you add your own placeholders, unless you’re super careful, chances are the content will be slightly off center. That haphazard look may be just the feel you want, but it’s more likely you’ll want to get your placeholders neatly centered.

That’s not a problem at all. In fact, it takes just a couple of steps:

1. Select what you want centered:

   * If you want to center a single placeholder, click it.
   * If you want to center multiple placeholders, click the first placeholder, hold down **Shift**, and then click the other placeholders.

2. Select **Format, Center on slide, Horizontally**. Google Docs centers your stuff. (Note, too, that you can also select **Format, Center on slide, Vertically** to center things between the top and bottom of the slide.)

**Revealing Slide Stuff One Element at a Time**

I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter that Google Docs offers one and only one animation effect. That effect is called Incremental Reveal, and it lets you display slide items one at a time instead of revealing all the slide content at once. That’s pretty useful, particularly for bulleted lists where you don’t want the audience reading ahead.

To apply the Incremental Reveal animation effect to a slide, follow these steps:

1. Click the placeholder of the content you want to animate. Google Docs places a border around the placeholder.
2. Right-click the placeholder’s border.

3. Click **Incremental Reveal**. Google Docs adds a stopwatch icon to the lower-left corner of the placeholder.

4. Repeat steps 1 through 3 to apply the Incremental Reveal effect to other slide objects, as time and taste dictate.

When you apply the Incremental Reveal to multiple items, Google Docs adds numbers to each stopwatch icon, as you can see in Figure 9.9. These numbers tell you the order that the content will appear when you present the slide. When you run your presentation, you click the mouse to reveal each item.

![Incremental Reveal icons](image)

*Figure 9.9* With multiple Incremental Reveal effects applied, the numbers in the icons tell you the order of the reveals.

**Getting the Slide Show on the Road:**
**Running the Presentation**

With your slides laid out, the text perfected, and the formatting just right, you’re now ready to present your slide show. The next few sections show you how to start and navigate a slide show.
Starting the Presentation

Google Docs gives you several ways to launch a slide show:

- In the Google Docs home page, activate the check box beside your presentation file and then select More actions, View Presentation.
- In the presentation program, select View, start presentation. You can also click the Start presentation button or press Ctrl+F5.
- To start the presentation from a particular slide, right-click that slide and then click Start presentation from this slide.

Figure 9.10 shows a slide show on the go.

![Slide show image]

**Figure 9.10** Google Docs offers several tools for navigating the slide show.
Controlling the Presentation

With your slide show running, you now need to navigate from one slide to the next. By far the easiest way to do so is to use the mouse: Click the mouse anywhere inside the slide to advance to the next slide. If you have Incremental Reveal animations defined in a slide, clicking the mouse also initiates those reveals in the order you defined.

Here are some other navigation notes for your presentation:

- Displaying the next slide or the next Incremental Reveal object: Click the slide, click Next Slide, or press one of the following keys: spacebar, Right arrow, or Down arrow.
- Displaying the next slide and all its Incremental Reveal objects: Press Page Down.
- Displaying the previous slide or previous Incremental Reveal object: Press either Left arrow or Up arrow.
- Displaying the previous slide and all its Incremental Reveal objects: Click Previous Slide or press Page Up.
- Jump to any slide: Click Slide Menu and then click the slide you want to view.
- Display the speaker notes: Click Actions and then click Show speaker notes.
- Run the slide show automatically: Click Actions and then click Play.
- End the presentation: Press Esc or close the browser window.

Presenting to an Audience

If you want other folks to join in on your presentation, Google Docs is happy to oblige. To make this a reality, you need to do a couple of things:

- Share your presentation with the people you want in the audience. See Chapter 6 to learn how to share a document with someone.
- Send your audience members the address of the slide show. To get the address, start the show, click the address that appears at the bottom of the screen, and then press Ctrl+C to copy it. You can then paste the address into a Gmail message.
Having a Mid-Presentation Chat

If you have an audience following along with your slide show, you might get a sudden urge to be social. In a regular presentation, you can simply start chatting with anyone in the audience. In the cloud, however, the nearest audience member could be miles away, but you can still strike up a chat.

To try out this neat feature, start your slide show and then click View together in the lower-right corner of the screen.

The first time you click View together, you might see a message telling you that you need to install Adobe Flash Player. That’s cool, so go ahead and click the link to install the plug-in.

Google Docs opens a chat window and displays a list of the audience members, as shown in Figure 9.11. Use the text box at the bottom of the chat window to type a message and then press Enter to post it.

Figure 9.11  Click View together to see and chat with your slide show audience.
The Least You Need to Know

- All slides consist of three types of placeholders: Title, Text, and Content (which you use for images, drawings, videos, tables, or shapes).
- To insert a slide, select Slide, New slide. You can also press Ctrl+M or click the Insert button (+) at the top of the Slide Sorter.
- To add your own slide placeholders, click the Insert menu and then click the type of content you want to add: Text, Image, Drawing, Video, Table, or Shape.
- To rearrange your slides, either click and drag them to their new locations or right-click a slide and then click either Move slide up or Move slide down.
- To apply a slide theme, select Format, Presentation settings, Change theme and then click the theme you want.
- To launch a slide show, select View, start presentation. You can also click the Start presentation button or press Ctrl+F5.
In This Chapter

- Composing and sending an e-mail message
- Working with the Contacts list
- Handling attachments
- Reading incoming messages
- Using folders, labels, signatures, and other message techniques

The world passed a milestone of sorts a few years ago when it was reported that, in North America at least, more e-mail messages are sent each day than postal messages. Now e-mail message volume is several times that of “snail mail” (as regular mail is derisively called by the wired set), and the number of e-notes shipped out each day is counted in the billions.

The really good news is that e-mail has become extremely easy to use because e-mail programs have become much better over the years. An excellent example of this trend is Gmail, Google's cloud-based e-mail program. As you will see in this chapter, shipping out messages and reading incoming messages is a painless affair, thanks to the admirable e-mail capabilities of Gmail.

The Lay of the Gmail Land

When you navigate to Gmail, Chrome displays a window that looks much like the one in Figure 10.1.
The links on the left represent some of the folders used by Gmail to organize your messages. In Gmail, you deal with two types of folders: user folders and system folders.

Gmail comes with four user folders already set up for you: Personal, Receipts, Travel, and Work. However, you’re free to create and delete user folders at will.

System folders are created by Gmail, and unlike user folders, they can’t be monkeyed with by the likes of you and me. That is, you can’t create new system folders, and you can’t delete any of the existing system folders. There are nine system folders in all:

- **Inbox.** This folder holds the e-mail messages that you receive.
- **Buzz.** This folder holds the messages you’ve exchanged with folks on your Buzz social network.
- **Starred.** This folder holds the messages that you’ve marked as important by starring them (that is, clicking the star icon that appears beside the message).
- **Chats.** This folder holds the messages you’ve exchanged with other people via chat.
- **Sent Mail.** This folder holds the messages that you’ve sent.
- **Drafts.** This folder holds messages that you’re in the middle of composing and have saved.
- **All Mail.** This folder holds all your messages.
Chapter 10: Keeping in Touch with Gmail

- **Spam.** This folder is the Siberia to which Gmail exiles suspected spam messages.
- **Trash.** This folder holds the messages that you delete.

By default, Gmail only shows links to five of these system folders: Inbox, Buzz, Starred, Sent Mail, and Drafts. To control which folders you see, click **Labels** and then click **Manage labels.** In the Settings page that appears, click **show** to add a folder to the left of the Gmail window; click **hide** to remove a folder from the window.

Okay, I hear what you’re saying: “Dude, what’s all this about labels? I thought we were talking about folders!”

It’s weird, I know. You see, in the sometimes odd realm known as Gmail, folders are inextricably linked with something called **labels.** A label is like a combination of a category and a storage area. It’s a category because you can use a label to differentiate between various kinds of messages, such as work and personal; it’s a storage area because each label also corresponds to a folder.

For example, when you click the **Personal** folder, what you’re really ordering Gmail to do is to show you a list of all the messages to which the Personal label has been applied. It’s head scratching, for sure, but you get used to it (believe me). I’ll go into this a bit more later in the chapter (see the section “Taking Charge of Your Message Labels”).

### The Outbox: Sending an E-Mail Message

Let’s begin the Gmail tour with a look at how to foist your e-prose on unsuspecting colleagues, friends, family, and former *Brady Bunch* cast members. This section shows you the basic technique to use and then gets a bit fancier in discussing the Contacts list and attachments.

### The Basics: Composing and Sending a Message

I’m ready if you are, so let’s get right to it. Here are the basic steps to follow to fire off an e-mail message to some lucky recipient:

1. Click the **Compose Mail** link. You end up with the Compose Mail page onscreen, as shown in Figure 10.2.
2. In the To text box, type in the e-mail address of the recipient. It’s perfectly acceptable to enter multiple addresses in this text box. Use a comma (,) to separate each address.

3. The address you put in the To box is the main recipient of the message. However, it’s common to shoot a copy of the message off to a secondary recipient. To do that, click Add Cc (Cc is a holdover from the age of typewriters and stands for courtesy [or carbon] copy) and then enter the e-mail address in the Cc text box that suddenly appears. Again, you can enter multiple addresses, if you’re so inclined.

There’s also a blind courtesy (or carbon) copy (Bcc), which delivers a copy of the message to a specified recipient. However, none of the other recipients sees that person’s address anywhere. To enter a Bcc address, click Add Bcc to display the Bcc text box and then type the address (or addresses).

4. Use the Subject line to enter a subject for the message. The subject acts as a kind of title for your message. It’s the first thing the recipient sees, so it should accurately reflect the content of your message, but it shouldn’t be too long. Think pithy.
5. Decide what type of message you want to send. You have two choices:

- **Plain Text.** Click this link to send out the message without any formatting. This makes life easier for your recipient if he or she doesn’t have an e-mail program that supports formatting (although almost all modern-day e-mail programs are formatting friendly). If you’re not sure what your recipient is using, choose this command.

- **Rich formatting.** This is the default format, and it enables you to include formatting in your message. (If you’ve already clicked Plain Text, click the **Rich formatting** link to restore the formatting toolbar.) This enables you to make your message look its best because you can mess around with fonts and colors. However, your recipient might have problems if his or her e-mail program doesn’t support this formatting (again, programs that require plain text are rare these days).

6. Use the large, empty area below the Subject line to type in the message text (also known as the **message body**).

7. If you elected to use rich formatting, use the buttons on the toolbar to change the font, format paragraphs, add a background image, and more.

8. When your message is fit for human consumption, you have two sending choices:

- **Sending the message ASAP.** Click the **Send** button. Gmail sends the message, no questions asked.

- **Sending the message when you’re good and ready.** Click the **Save Now** button. This tells Gmail to mark the message with the Drafts label, which means that Gmail has saved the message. When you’re ready to send the message, click **Drafts**, click the saved message, and then click **Send**.

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**CHROME LORE**

Gmail has a Check Spelling command on the toolbar. It’s a good idea to run this command before foisting your message on the recipient. It just takes a second, and if the spell checker finds an error or two, you’ll save yourself a bit of embarrassment.
Note that after your message is Net bound, Gmail also is kind enough to apply the Sent Mail label to the message, which means you can see the message by clicking the Sent Mail link. This is handy because it gives you a record of all the missives you launch into cyberspace.

Easier Addressing: Using the Contacts List

If you find yourself with a bunch of recipients to whom you send stuff regularly (and it’s a rare e-mailer who doesn’t), you will soon grow tired of entering their addresses by hand. The solution is to toss those regulars into the Contacts list. That way, you can fire them into the To or Cc (or even Bcc) boxes with just a few mouse clicks.

To get to the Contacts list, click the Contacts link. The page you see will look an awful lot like the one shown in Figure 10.3.

Here’s how you add someone to the Contacts list:

1. In the Contacts page, click the New Contact button (helpfully pointed out in Figure 10.3). Gmail displays a blank contact form.
2. In the Name text box, type the person’s first and last names.
3. Go ahead and enter the person’s Title and Company if you feel like it.

4. Use the Email text box to enter the recipient’s address and use the drop-down list to choose the type of address: Home, Work, or Other. (If this person has multiple e-mail addresses, click add to insert another Email field. Repeat this procedure as often as necessary.)

5. Fill in the other fields if you feel like it.

6. When you’re done, click Save to add the new recipient to the Contacts list.

After you have some folks in your Contacts list, Gmail gives you a ton of ways to get them a message. Here’s my favorite method:

**Chrome Lore**

If you want to send a message to a particular set of recipients, you can organize them into a group and then specify the group name in the To line. To create a group, open the Contacts list, click New Group (see Figure 10.3), type a group name, and then click OK. To add a recipient to the group, click a contact, click Groups, and then select the group.

1. In the New Message window, click the To link to open the Choose from Contacts window.

2. In the drop-down list, select My Contacts to see all your contacts.

3. Click a contact name. Gmail adds the contact to the To (or Cc or Bcc) list.

4. Repeat step 3 until you’ve selected all your recipients.

5. Click Done.

6. Repeat steps 1 through 5 with the Cc link and the Bcc link, as needed.

**Inserting Attachments and Other Hangers-On**

Most of your messages will be text-only creations (perhaps with a bit of formatting tossed in to keep things interesting). However, it’s also possible to send entire files along for the ride. Such files are called, naturally enough, attachments. They’re very common in the business world, and it’s useful to know how they work.
DEFINITION

An attachment is a separate file that accompanies an e-mail message.

1. In the Compose Mail page, click the Attach a file link. The Select Files to Upload dialog box rears its head.
2. Find the file you want to attach and then highlight it.
3. Click Open. Gmail returns you to the Compose Mail window where you see the name of the file.

As you can see, adding attachments isn’t that hard. However, that doesn’t mean you should bolt an attachment or two onto every message you send. Adding attachments can greatly increase the size of your message, so it may take the recipient quite a while to download your message, which won’t always be appreciated. Some ISPs put an upper limit on the size of a message (usually between 2 MB and 6 MB), so it’s also possible that your recipient may never see your note. Use common sense and only attach files when it’s absolutely necessary.

The Inbox: Dealing With Incoming E-Mail Messages

Some people like to think of e-mail as a return to the days of belles-lettres and billets-doux. (These people tend to be a bit pretentious.) Yes, it’s true that e-mail has people writing again, but this isn’t like the letter writing of old. The major difference is that e-mail’s turnaround time is usually much quicker. Instead of waiting weeks or even months to get a return letter, a return e-mail might take as little as a few minutes or a few hours.

So if you send out a message with a question or comment, chances are you’ll get a reply coming right back at you before too long. The good news about Gmail is that any messages sent to you are automatically displayed in your Inbox, so you just have to sit back and wait for correspondence to arrive.

Reading Your Messages

Figure 10.4 shows the Inbox folder with a few messages. The first thing to notice is that Gmail uses a bold font for all messages that you haven’t read yet. You also get info about each message organized with the following half-dozen columns:
* Select. Use these check boxes to select the messages you want to work with.

* Star. Click a star icon to apply a Starred label to the message. Use this for messages that you want to stick out from the herd.

* From. This column tells you the name (or occasionally, just the e-mail address) of the person or company that sent you the message.

* Subject. This column shows you the subject line of the message, which will hopefully give you a brief description of the contents of the message.

* Attachment. If you see a paper clip icon in this column, it means the message is accompanied by a file attachment. See the next section “Attending to Attachments.”

* Received. This column tells you the time (if the message arrived today) or the date (if the message showed up prior to today) the message was received.

To read a message, click it to open the message in a separate page. To read other messages, either click Back to Inbox and then click a message, or use any of the following Gmail techniques:

* To read the next oldest message in the list, click Older.

* To read the next newest message in the list, click Newer.
Part 3: The Cloud Nine: Getting Things Done

Attending to Attachments

As previously mentioned, if you get a message that has one or more files tied to it, you’ll see a paper clip icon beside the message subject. Gmail gives you two ways to handle any attachments in the current message:

- **Downloading the file to your computer.** Open the message and then click **Download**.
- **Opening the file in Google Docs.** If the file is one that Google Docs knows how to handle, click the **Open as Google document** link to load the file into the appropriate Google Docs program.
- **Viewing the file.** If you just want to see what’s in the file, you can view it as HTML (the code that underlies web pages). Open the message and click **View as HTML**.

What to Do with a Message After You’ve Read It

This section gives you a rundown of all the things you can do with a message after you’ve read it. In each case, you need to have the message open. Here’s the list:

- **Ship out a reply.** If you think of a witty retort, you can e-mail it back to the sender by clicking the **Reply** link.

- **Ship out a reply to every recipient.** If the note was foisted upon several people, you might prefer to send your response to everyone who received the original. To do that, click the arrow beside the Reply button and then click **Reply to all**.

- **Forward the message to someone else.** To have someone else take a gander at a message you received, you can forward it by clicking the arrow beside the Reply button and then selecting **Forward**.

- **Move the message to another folder.** If you find your Inbox folder getting seriously overcrowded, you should think about moving some messages to other folders. Either open the message or, if you want to move multiple messages, use the Inbox to select the message check boxes. Click **Move to** and then click the folder you want to use as the destination.

- **Label a message.** You can organize your messages by applying labels to them. For example, if you travel a lot, you can keep tabs on all your
travel-related messages by applying the Travel label to each one. This means that you can then easily see all your travel messages (no matter what folder they reside in) by clicking the Travel link. Either open the message or, if you want to label multiple messages, use the Inbox to select the message check boxes. Click Labels and then click the label you want to apply.

- **Delete the message.** If you don’t think you have cause to read a message again, you might as well delete it to keep the Inbox clutter to a minimum. Either open the message or, if you want to delete multiple messages, use the Inbox to select the message check boxes. Click the Delete button. Note that Gmail doesn’t get rid of a deleted message completely. Instead, it just dumps it in the Trash folder. If you later realize that you deleted the message accidentally (insert forehead slap here), you can click Trash (click the more link to see it), select the message check box, and then select Move to, Inbox.

### Taking Charge of Your Message Labels

Right out of the box, Gmail comes with four prefab labels: Personal, Receipts, Travel, and Work. Surely that’s enough labels for anyone, right?

Maybe not. Even if you’re good at deleting the detritus from your Inbox folder, it still won’t take long before it becomes bloated with messages, and finding the note you need becomes a real needle-in-a-haystack exercise. What you really need is a way to organize your mail. For example, suppose you and your boss exchange a lot of e-mail. Rather than trying to find her messages in your Inbox folder, you could create a label just for her messages. You could also create labels for current projects or for each of your regular e-mail correspondents. There are, in short, a thousand-and-one uses for labels, and this section tells you everything you need to know.

### Creating a New Label

To create a new label, follow these steps:

1. In the Gmail sidebar, click the more link.
2. Click Create new. Gmail sends in the New Label dialog box.
3. Use the text box to enter the name of the new label.
4. Click OK.
Performing Label Maintenance

Here’s a quick look at a few other label maintenance chores you may need to perform from time to time:

- **Renaming a label.** If you don’t like a label name, it’s easy (and perfectly legal) to rename any of the user labels. (You can’t touch the system labels, though.) To do so, click **Settings** and then click the **Labels** tab to display the complete list of labels. Click the label name to open it for editing, type the new name, and then press **Enter**.

- **Displaying a label in Gmail.** By default, Gmail only shows the Personal and Travel labels in the main Gmail window. If you use another frequently, add a link for it. Click **Settings**, click the **Labels** tab, and then click the **show** link beside the label.

- **Hiding a label in Gmail.** If you rarely or never use one of the displayed labels, reduce the clutter in the main Gmail window by hiding that label. Click **Settings**, click the **Labels** tab, and then click the **hide** link beside the label.

- **Color-coding a label.** You can make it a tad easier to differentiate one label from another by applying a color to a label. First, display the label in the main Gmail window as described earlier in this list. Move the mouse pointer over the label to display the drop-down arrow, click the arrow, and then click the color you want to use.

- **Deleting a label.** To get rid of a label you no longer need (but not the messages it was applied to), click **Settings**, click the **Labels** tab, and then click the **remove** link beside the label.

Some Handy Message Maneuvers

You spend the bulk of your Gmail time shipping out messages to far-flung folks and reading messages that those folks fire back at you. To help you get the most out of these sending and reading tasks, this section looks at a few more message options offered by Gmail.
Reporting Spam

Spam—unsolicited commercial messages—has become a plague upon the earth. Unless you've done a masterful job at keeping your address secret, you probably receive at least a few spam e-mails every day, and it's more likely that you receive a few dozen. The bad news is most experts agree that it's only going to get worse. And why not? Spam is one of the few advertising mediums where the costs are substantially borne by the users, not the advertisers.

The best way to avoid spam is to not get on a spammer’s list of addresses in the first place. That’s hard to do these days, but there are some steps you can take:

* Never display your actual e-mail address in a web page or other online location. The most common method that spammers use to gather addresses is to harvest them from web pages, online forums, newsgroup posts, and so on. If you must display your address, one common tactic is to alter your e-mail address by adding text that invalidates the address but is still obvious for other people to figure out:

  user@myisp.remove_this_to_e-mail_me.com

* When you sign up for something online, use a fake address if possible. If you need or want to receive e-mail from the company and therefore must use your real address, make sure you deselect any options that ask if you want to receive promotional offers.

* Never open suspected spam messages because doing so can sometimes notify the spammer that you've opened the message, thus confirming that your address is legit. For the same reason, you should never display a spam message in the Windows Mail preview pane.

* Never—I repeat, never—respond to spam, even to an address within the spam that claims to be a “removal” address. By responding to the spam, all you're doing is proving that your address is legitimate, so you'll just end up getting more spam.

If you do get spam despite these precautions, you can exact a small measure of revenge by reporting that junk message to the spam-hating folks at Google:

1. Either open the message or, if you want to report multiple messages, use the Inbox to select the message check boxes.
2. Click the **Report spam** button. Gmail sends the spam info to headquarters and then quarantines the message in the Spam folder.

### Setting Up a Signature

In e-mail lingo, a *signature* is a chunk of text that appears at the bottom of all your messages. Most people use their signature to give contact information, and you often see sigs (that’s the hip short form) adorned with witty quotations or sayings.

Here are the steps to plow through to create a signature:

1. Click **Settings** to display the Settings page.
2. Click the **General** tab.
3. Scroll down to the **Signature** section.
4. Click the nameless option button beside the large text box.
5. Use the text box to compose the signature.
6. Click **Save Changes** to return to Gmail.

The next time you crank out a new e-mail message, you’ll see your signature added to your message automatically.

### Creating a Vacation Responder

When your vacation time rolls around and you head off for some R & R, I hope you don’t check your work e-mail while you’re away. Life’s too short for that! However, being so carefree does leave you with a fairly serious problem: When new messages arrive, the senders won’t receive a reply from you for a while, and that could cause some bad feelings.

To avoid this fate, you should set up a vacation responder. This is a message that Gmail automatically sends out in response to an incoming message. Most vacation responders just let people know that you’re away from the office and that you’ll return on a particular date. What about sending responses to incoming spam? Ah, that’s where Gmail shows its smarts: It offers an option to send vacation responders only to people in your Contacts list. Nice!
A vacation responder is a good idea because it lets a sender know you might not be able to deal with his or her message right away. However, there’s no need to be overly specific about where you are. Letting people know you’re out of town poses a bit of a security risk, because if that info falls into the wrong hands, your home could be targeted by thieves.

Follow these steps to turn on and configure a vacation responder:

1. Click **Settings** to display the Settings page.
2. Click the **General** tab.
3. Scroll down to the **Vacation responder** section.
4. Click the **Vacation responder on** option button.
5. Click inside the **First day** box and use the calendar to click the first day you want to use the vacation responder.
6. Activate the **Ends** check box, click inside the text box, and then use the calendar to click the last day you want to use the vacation responder.
7. Use the **Subject** text box to type the subject line of the vacation responder message.
8. Use the **Message** text box to type the vacation responder message.
9. To tell Gmail to only respond to your contacts, activate the **Only send a response to people in my Contacts** check box. Figure 10.5 shows a vacation responder ready for action.
10. Click **Save Changes**.

![Figure 10.5](image)

*A vacation responder ready to work when you’re not working.*
Dealing With the Onslaught: Filtering Messages

It’s an unfortunate fact of online life that the e-mail system is the source of many unwanted messages. Whether it’s the scourge of spam or someone you’ve had a falling out with, you inevitably end up getting some messages that you instantly delete.

You can save yourself the bother by setting up Gmail to delete these annoyances for you. You can also go beyond this by having Gmail look for certain messages and then automatically apply a label, forward the message, star the message, and more.

Muting a Conversation

Let’s begin with the most straightforward case: muting messages that have a particular subject line. *Muting* means that any message that comes in with that subject line is automatically archived (that is, it doesn’t appear in your Inbox folder), so you never see the message. This is one of Gmail’s best features because it lets you tune out boring or irrelevant conversations.

To mute a conversation, open any message from the conversation, click **More actions**, and then click **Mute**.

If you have a change of heart down the road, you can unmute a conversation by displaying all your messages (by opening the All Mail folder), clicking a muted message, and then clicking **Move to Inbox**.

Forging Fancier Filters

If you need to control messages based on conditions other than (or in addition to) the subject, or if you want to do something other than just archive a message, then you need to set up *message filters*. These filters are rules that tell Gmail exactly what to look for (such as specific words in the subject line or message body) and exactly what to do with any messages that meet those conditions (label them, forward them, and so on).

**DEFINITION**

*Message filters* are specific instructions that tell Gmail how to handle certain incoming messages.

Here are the steps to follow to set up a message rule:

1. Click **Settings** to display the Settings page.
2. Click the **Filters** tab.
3. Click **Create a new filter**. Gmail displays the Create a Filter page as shown in Figure 10.6.

![Create a Filter](image)

**Figure 10.6** The first step when creating a filter is to specify the criteria that determine which messages the filter applies to.

4. Use one or more of the text boxes to type your filter criteria:
   - **From.** Use this text box to type an e-mail address. Gmail applies the filter to any incoming message from that person.
   - **To.** Use this text box to type an e-mail address. Gmail applies the filter to any incoming message that was sent to that address.
   - **Subject.** Use this text box to type a word or two. Gmail applies the filter to any incoming message that includes your text in the subject line.
   - **Has the words.** Use this text box to type a word or two. Gmail applies the filter to any incoming message that includes your text in the message body.
   - **Doesn’t have.** Use this text box to type a word or two. Gmail applies the filter to any incoming message that does not include your text in the message body.

5. If you want Gmail to apply the filter to any incoming message that has an attachment, activate the **Has attachment** check box.

6. Click **Next Step**. Gmail now displays a list of actions you can take on messages that satisfy your criteria, as shown in Figure 10.7.
7. Activate one or more of the check boxes to determine what action (or actions) Gmail should take:

- **Skip the Inbox.** Activate this check box to have Gmail bypass the Inbox and archive the message to the All Mail folder.
- **Mark as read.** Activate this check box to have Gmail mark the message as read.
- **Star it.** Activate this check box to have Gmail star the message.
- **Apply the label.** Activate this check box to have Gmail apply a label to the message. Use the drop-down list to choose the label.
- **Forward it to.** Activate this check box to have Gmail forward the message to the address you specify.
- **Delete it.** Activate this check box to have Gmail send the message straight to the Trash.
- **Never send it to Spam.** Activate this check box to tell Gmail not to treat the message as spam.

8. If you want Gmail to go ahead and run the filter on the Inbox right away, activate the **Also apply filter to X conversations below** check box (where X is the number of conversations that match the criteria).

9. Click **Create Filter.** Gmail builds the filter and displays it in the Filters tab.
If you’re creating a rule based on the address of an existing message, you can save yourself a bit of time by opening the message and then selecting More actions, Filter messages like these. This displays the first Create a Filter page with the address of the sender added to the From text box.

The Least You Need to Know

- In Gmail, folders and labels are sort of the same thing.
- To ship out a message, click Compose Mail, enter the address and a Subject line, fill in the message body, and then select Send.
- To read messages, click a message in the Inbox folder and then use the Older and Newer links to navigate the messages.
- To create a new label, click Labels, click Create new, and then type the label name.
- If you want to finish your messages with a flourish, create a signature by clicking Settings, clicking the General tab, and then using the Signature section to type the signature.
Reading Feeds with Google Reader

In This Chapter

- Getting to know Google Reader
- Subscribing to RSS feeds (whatever they are)
- Using Google Reader to read your feeds
- Staying ridiculously well informed with almost no effort

Some websites—particularly news sites and these blogs that everyone’s talking about nowadays—regularly add new content. That’s awfully nice of them, but it does mean that you have to check the site often if you want to keep up with the latest. You can avoid this hassle altogether by turning the tables and having the site tell you when it has posted something new. You can perform this trick if the site has a feature called RSS (most people say this is short for Really Simple Syndication, but opinions vary), which enables you to subscribe to the feed that the site sends out. This feed contains the most recent wit and wisdom that the blogger (or whoever) has added to the site.

So far so good, but you need a feed reader to get the site’s feed and display the shiny new content. That’s the bad news. The good news is that Google Reader is a cloud-based application that has feed-reading capabilities baked right in, so you can subscribe to and read RSS feeds right from the comfort of your browser. This chapter introduces you to Google Reader and shows you how to use it for maximum feed fun.

Getting Started with Google Reader

To start Google Reader, either click the Chrome icon and then click Google Reader, or steer the Chrome browser to www.google.com/reader. The first time you
do this, you see a Google Reader page that looks alarmingly similar to the one shown in Figure 11.1.

**DEFINITION**

A **feed** is a special data file that a website creates to display the latest items that have been added to the site.

A **feed reader** is a program that enables you to subscribe to RSS feeds and display the feeds so that you can read and work with their contents.

![Google Reader page](image)

**Figure 11.1** You see this version of the Google Reader page when you're first starting out.

You use the navigation pane on the left to jump to the different parts of the Google Reader program, but you'll spend most of your time on the right side of the window, which is where your feed items will eventually show up. Since you're not subscribed to any feeds yet, Google Reader is kind enough to display a few recommended items so that you have something to see. In the next couple of sections, I'll show you how to find feeds and subscribe to them.
Finding Feeds

How do you know if a site has an RSS feed or two? Most sites provide links to RSS feeds, so you have to look for a link or two. In particular, many sites will flag an RSS link with a special RSS icon, which has an orange background and white “signal” lines. Figure 11.2 shows an example.

Rather than scouring a site for an RSS link, you can get Chrome to do all the work for you. If you install the RSS Subscription Extension (see Chapter 4), you’ll see an RSS icon in Chrome’s Address box when it detects a feed on the site, as shown in Figure 11.3.

![RSS icon]

Figure 11.2 Keep your eyes peeled for a link to an RSS feed, particularly one festooned with the RSS logo.

Rather than scouring a site for an RSS link, you can get Chrome to do all the work for you. If you install the RSS Subscription Extension (see Chapter 4), you’ll see an RSS icon in Chrome’s Address box when it detects a feed on the site, as shown in Figure 11.3.

![RSS icon]

Figure 11.3 With the RSS Subscription Extension installed, you’ll see the RSS icon in the Address box when a site has one or more RSS feeds available.
Feed Me: Adding a Subscription

Just knowing that a site has an RSS feed available doesn’t do you all that much good. Sure, you can read the feed if you want, but how will you know when it has been updated with fresh-out-of-the-digital-oven content? Other than obsessively checking the site every few minutes, the more sane approach is to subscribe to that feed using Google Reader. There are actually several ways you can do this, and it pays to be familiar with all of them.

Using the RSS Subscription Extension Thingy

If you installed the RSS Subscription Extension (as I explained in Chapter 4), then you can follow these steps to subscribe:

1. Click the RSS icon that appears in the Address box when Chrome sniffs out a nearby feed. Chrome takes you to the Subscribe to the Feed page, shown in Figure 11.4.
2. Make sure you see Google Reader in the list.
3. Click Subscribe Now. Chrome displays the feed in Google Reader.
4. Click Subscribe. Google Reader adds the feed to your list.

![Figure 11.4](image)

Make sure you see Google Reader in the list and then click Subscribe Now.

Using the Google Icon

Some sites give you direct links for subscribing to a feed using popular feed readers such as Bloglines, Yahoo!, and of course Google Reader. When you access a site's RSS feed, look for a collection of icons, as shown in Figure 11.5. If you see a Google icon, follow these steps:
1. Click the **Google** icon. Chrome whisks you to the Add to Google page.

2. Click **Add to Google Reader**. Google Reader boldly adds the feed to your subscriptions and Chrome dutifully displays the feed in Google Reader.

![Figure 11.5](image.png)

**Figure 11.5** If you see a Google icon on a site’s RSS page, mumble “thanks” under your breath and click the icon to launch the subscription process.

### Using Google Reader Directly

Every now and then, you don’t see the RSS icon in the Address box (assuming you have the RSS Subscription Extension installed), and the site doesn’t offer a handy Google icon. Now what? In this case, I suggest a short warm-up because you’ve got a bit more work ahead of you:

1. Use Chrome to open the site’s RSS page.
2. Select the address that appears in the Address box and copy it.
3. Use Chrome to navigate to Google Reader at www.google.com/reader.
4. Click the **Add a subscription** button. Google Reader pops up a little text box.
5. Paste the RSS feed’s address in the text box.
6. Click **Add**. Google Reader adds the feed subscription, no problem.
Read Me: Reading Your Feeds

Now that you’ve got some feeds stuffed into Google Reader, you’re ready to start reading those feeds and become annoyingly smart and well informed.

First let’s take a look at the Google Reader interface now that you’ve subscribed to a few feeds, as shown in Figure 11.6.

![Google Reader subscribed to a few feeds](image)

Your starting point is the **Subscriptions** list at the bottom of the navigation pane. Not surprisingly, this is a list of the feeds you’ve subscribed to. The number at the end of the feed name tells you how many items (posts, stories, articles, comics, or what have you) you haven’t yet read. You have two ways to begin:

* To read a specific feed, click the feed in the **Subscriptions** list.

* To read all your feeds, click **All items**, which appears near the top of the navigation pane.
Google Reader then displays the items on the right side of the page. By default, Google Reader shows the items in Expanded view, which shows the item title, author, text (all the text or sometimes just an excerpt), and the various icons you can use to work with the item (more on that a bit later). If you'd prefer a quick overview of the items, click the List link in the top-right corner of the feed. To return to the regular view, click the Expanded link.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

As your Subscriptions list grows, it will one day expand to the point where you have to scroll the list to find a feed. Boo! To delay that day for a while at least, hide any navigation bar sections you don't use by clicking the minus sign (–) that appears to the right of the section name. Click plus (+) to restore a hidden section.

You read the feed by plowing your way through this list of items. If you're in the Expanded view, you can use either of the following two techniques:

- Use the scroll bar to browse to and fro.
- Click Next item to bring the next feed item to the top of the list. (You can also click Previous item to redisplay the previous feed item.)

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

One day you might crack open Google Reader and notice that one of your feeds is gone from the Subscriptions list. No, there are no gremlins at work here (at least I don’t think there are). Instead, Google Reader automatically hides feeds that don't have any unread items. To see all your feeds, click the drop-down arrow to the right of Subscriptions and then click Show all.

If you want to see the original post in its natural setting (particularly if the feed just shows an excerpt and not the full post text), click the item title. In the Expanded view, you can also use the following icons at the bottom of each item to manage your items:

- **Add star.** If you want to save an item for posterity, click this icon. Google Reader adds the item to your Starred items section, which you can click at any time to see your starred stuff.
- **Like.** If you particularly enjoyed an item, let the world know by clicking this icon. As other folks read this item, they’ll see X people liked this item.
(where X is the number of “likers”), which they can click to see the list of people who clicked their own Like icons. Note that people can then click to your Google profile, so don’t click Like if you don’t want you preference to be public.

* **Share.** Click this icon to add the item to your Google Profile and to share it with people who are following your profile. To see your shared stuff, click **Shared items** in the navigation pane.

* **Share with note.** This is the same as sharing, except you also add a short note for other people to read. To see your shared notes, click **Notes** in the navigation pane.

* **Email.** Click this icon to e-mail the item to someone.

* **Keep unread.** As you ramble through your items in Expanded view, Google Reader does you a favor by automatically marking each item as read as it comes into view. If you’d rather keep an item as unread for now, activate the item’s **Keep unread** check box.

* **Add tags.** Click this icon to add one or more tags, which are words or phrases that you can use to categorize similar items. For example, if you add the tag “Fruits to try someday” to several items, you can click that tag to see all those items. (To see your tags in the Subscriptions list, click the Subscriptions drop-down arrow and then click **Show all**.)

### Managing Your Subscriptions

Although Google Reader has all sorts of goodies for feed items, as you saw in the previous section, it doesn't come with much in the way of bells and whistles as far as subscriptions go. In fact, there are really only two truly useful things you can do: rename a subscription and unsubscribe.

### Renaming a Subscription

Behind every feed is a person who manages the feed, which means that you’ll often see odd things such as weirdo feed names (or even feeds with no name). Hey, humans occasionally mess up, but that’s okay because you can fix things by supplying your own name to the subscription in Google Reader. Here’s how:
1. Click **Settings** and then click **Reader settings** to open the Settings page.

2. Click the **Subscriptions** tab, as shown in Figure 11.7. (You can get here a bit more directly by clicking the **Manage subscriptions** link that lurks at the bottom of Google Reader’s Subscriptions list.)

![Google Reader Settings](image)

**Figure 11.7**  In Google Reader’s Settings page, use the Subscriptions tab to perform maintenance chores on your subscribed feeds.

3. Click the **Rename** link beside the feed that needs the new moniker. Google Reader displays the Rename dialog box.

4. Use the text box to type your preferred name for the subscription.

5. Click **Save**. Google Reader renames the subscription.

6. Click **Back to Google Reader** to get out of there with your dignity intact.

### Unsubscribing from a Feed

It’s an inevitable fact of feed life that with some feeds the initial rush of excitement and anticipation will give way to disappointment. Some feeds turn out to be not as good as you’d hoped, while others just grow tiresome, boring, or annoying after a while. It happens, and the best thing to do is move on with your life by unsubscribing from the feed.
1. Click **Settings** and then click **Reader settings** to open the Settings page with the Subscriptions tab front and center. (If you're in a rush, you can also click the **Manage subscriptions** link at the bottom of Google Reader’s **Subscriptions** list.)

2. Click the **Unsubscribe** icon (the trash can) beside the feed that you want to break up with. Google Reader asks you if you’re sure you want to go through with this.

3. Click **OK**. Google Reader severs all ties with the feed.

4. Click **Back to Google Reader** to put all that messy business behind you.

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**The Least You Need to Know**

- To start Google Reader, either click the **Chrome** icon and then click **Google Reader**, or steer the Chrome browser to www.google.com/reader.

- To find a feed, look for the RSS icon or install the RSS Subscription Extension, which displays an RSS icon in the Address box when it detects a feed.

- One way to subscribe to a feed is to access a site’s RSS feed, click the **Google icon**, click **Add to Google Reader**, and then click **Subscribe**.

- Another way to subscribe is to open a site’s RSS page, copy the page address, navigate to Google Reader, click **Add a subscription**, paste the address, and then click **Add**.

- To read a feed, click the feed in the **Subscriptions** list.

- To unsubscribe from a feed, click **Manage subscriptions**, click the **Unsubscribe** icon (the trash can) beside the feed, and then click **OK**.
It seems almost redundant to describe modern life as “busy.” Everyone is working harder, cramming more appointments and meetings into already-packed schedules, and somehow finding the time to get his or her regular work done between crises. As many a management consultant has advised over the years (charging exorbitant fees to do so), the key to surviving this helter-skelter, pell-mell pace is time management. Although there are as many theories about time management as there are consultants, one of the keys is that you should always try to make the best use of the time available. Although that often comes down to self-discipline and prioritizing your tasks, an efficient scheduling system can sure help.

That’s where Google Calendar comes in. It’s a sort of electronic secretary that, while it won’t get you coffee (at least not yet), will certainly help you keep your affairs in order. Google Calendar is a simple electronic day planner you can use to keep track of appointments, meetings, tasks, and other commitments. So whether you have a date and can’t be late or you have a rendezvous you need to remember, Google Calendar can handle it.
Getting Started with Google Calendar

To start Google Calendar, either click the Chrome icon and then click Google Calendar, or steer the Chrome browser to www.google.com/calendar. The first time you do this, Google Calendar makes you jump through a few hoops. Here’s what happens:

1. Sign in to your Google account. The Welcome to Google Calendar page appears, as shown in Figure 12.1.

![Figure 12.1](image)

Before you can use Google Calendar for the first time, the program needs to get to know you better.

2. Type your first name and last name in the appropriate text boxes.

3. Use the Location list to select your country or territory.

4. Use the Time zone list to select your time zone. (If you can’t select a time zone at first, don’t put your fist through the monitor. Once you select a country, Google retrieves a list of that country’s time zones, and this sometimes takes a while.)

5. Click Continue. Google stores your data in some vast cloud warehouse and Google Calendar shows up (finally!).
Navigating the Google Calendar Window

When you and Google Calendar finally meet, you’ll see a window that bears an uncanny resemblance to the one shown in Figure 12.2.

As you can see, Google Calendar is laid out more or less like a day planner or desk calendar. Here’s a quick tour of the four main sections:

- **Mini-calendar.** This area shows one month at a time (usually the current month). You use the mini-calendar area to change the date displayed in the Calendar area. Dates for which you have already scheduled appointments or meetings are shown in bold type. Note that today’s date always has a grey square around it.

- **Calendar.** This part of the Google Calendar window at first shows one week at a time, with each day divided into half-hour intervals. The appointments and meetings you schedule will appear in this area.

- **My calendars.** This area displays a list of your calendars. Most people use just a single calendar, but you might want separate calendars for, say, business use and personal use.
• Other calendars. This area displays a list of other people’s calendars that you subscribe to. By default, Google Calendar includes a calendar of your country’s holidays.

Time Traveling: Changing the Date

Google Calendar always opens with today’s date displayed. However, if you want to work with a different day, the mini-calendar area makes it easy. All you have to do is click a date, and Google Calendar will display it in the Calendar area. If the month you need isn’t displayed in the mini-calendar, use either of the following techniques to pick a different month:

• Click the Previous Month arrow (to the left of the month name) to move backward one month at a time.
• Click the Next Month arrow (to the right of the month name) to move forward one month at a time.

Here are two other techniques for changing the date:

• To move to today’s date, click the Today button.
• Click the Previous and Next buttons to navigate the current view. For example, in the default Week view, click Previous to navigate to the previous week and click Next to navigate to the next week.

Changing the Google Calendar View

By default, Google Calendar uses the Week view in the Calendar area, which shows a single week’s worth of appointments and meetings. However, Google Calendar is quite flexible and has several other views you can use. Here’s the complete list:

• Day. This view shows a single day’s worth of events. Above the Calendar area, click the Day tab.
• Week. This view gives you an entire week’s events. Above the Calendar area, click the Week tab.
• Month. This big-picture view shows a whole month’s worth of events. Above the area, click the Month tab.
• **Four days.** This view shows just four days of events. Above the Calendar area, click the **4 Days** tab.

• **Agenda.** This view displays a list of your upcoming events. Above the Calendar area, click the **Agenda** tab.

## Setting Your Social Schedule: Entering Events

Got a party to plan, a meeting to make, or a lunch to linger over? Whether you’re a gadabout, hobnobber, or social butterfly, you’ll like how easy Google Calendar makes it to schedule these and other get-togethers.

Before getting down to brass Google Calendar tacks, you should know that Google Calendar lets you create three kinds of items:

• **Event.** An event is the most general Google Calendar item. It refers to any activity for which you set aside a block of time. Typical events include a lunch date, a trip to the dentist or doctor, or a back waxing. You can also create repeating events that are scheduled at regular intervals (such as weekly or monthly).

• **All-day event.** An all-day event is any activity that consumes one or more entire days. Examples include conferences, trade shows, vacations, and “mental health” days. In Google Calendar, events don’t occupy blocks of time. Instead, they appear as banners above the affected days. You can also schedule recurring all-day events.

• **Task.** A task is a specific chore, action, or project that you want to accomplish. Examples include paying a bill, completing a report, and learning Esperanto. Tasks generally have a start date and a due date, and you can set up Google Calendar to pester you when the task is approaching due.

The next few sections show you how to create events, all-day events, and tasks.

### Adding an Event I: The Easier-Than-Pie Method

If you’re running late but it’s essential that you schedule an event before you forget it, here’s the quickest route.
1. Navigate to the date when the event occurs and then switch to Day view, Week view, or 4 Days view.

2. Select the event time:
   - To create a one-hour event, click the time when the event starts.
   - To create a longer or shorter event, position your mouse over the start time, then click and drag the mouse down to create the event. When you reach the end time, release the mouse button.
   - To create an all-day event, click inside the all-day event area.

3. In the pop-up window that appears, use the What text box to type a title or name for the event (see Figure 12.3).

4. Click Create event.

![Figure 12.3](image)

Figure 12.3 Click (or click-and-drag) in the Calendar area to create a new event in no time flat.

Adding an Event II: The Spooky English-to-Event Method

One of Google Calendar’s coolest (and most mysterious) features is Quick Add, which lets you create a new event without navigating to the date or selecting the time in advance. With Quick Add, you type what appear to be normal English sentences—“Lunch with Karen at noon” or “Meeting with Alphonse at Java Joe’s on August 23 at 2 P.M.”—and Google Calendar converts the text into an honest-to-goodness event. This apparent feat of mind reading is what makes Quick Add feel a bit spooky at
first. However, there’s rational behavior at work here, and you need to know how
everything works.

For starters, these “sentences” you use with Quick Add have a specific form:

\textit{What} \textit{Who} \textit{Where} \textit{When}

Here’s what these mean:

- **What**  This is the name or title of the event.

- **Who (optional)**  This is the name of the person you're meeting. To ensure that Google Calendar gets this right, precede the name with the word with. If it’s a solo event, you can skip this part.

- **Where (optional)**  This is the location of the event. To let Google Calendar know you're entering a location, precede the location with \textit{at} or \textit{in}. If the location isn't necessary, feel free to bypass this part of the sentence.

- **When**  This is the date and/or time when the event will occur. If you specify just a time, Google Calendar schedules the event when that time next occurs (later today, or tomorrow if the time has already passed). If you specify just a date, Google Calendar schedules an all-day event for that day. You can precede the date with \textit{on} and the time with \textit{at}. Here are some other useful keywords you can use to specify the date and time:

  - \textit{tomorrow}  Tells Google Calendar to schedule the event tomorrow.

  - \textit{next day}  Tells Google Calendar to schedule the event on the next occurrence of \textit{day}, where \textit{day} is the day of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (you get the idea).

  - \textit{noon}  Tells Google Calendar to schedule the event at 12 P.M.

  - \textit{start—end}  Tells Google Calendar to schedule the event beginning at \textit{start} and ending at \textit{end} (for example, 11 A.M.—1:30 P.M.).

  - \textit{for duration}  Tells Google Calendar to schedule the event for the number of minutes or hours specified by \textit{duration} (for example, for 45 minutes).

So with the extra keywords that help Google Calendar interpret the text, your general sentence looks more like this:

\textit{What} with \textit{Who} \textit{at/in} \textit{Where} \textit{on} \textit{Date} \textit{at} \textit{Time}
Here are some examples:

Submit Thomas the Tank Engine review at 4 P.M.
Lunch with Karen at Joy Bistro on August 23 at 12:30 P.M.
Meeting with Dalai Lama tomorrow at noon for 15 minutes
Determine fate of free world on July 15 at 2 P.M.–4 P.M.
Easy-Bake Oven convention in Atlanta on 9/15

Here are the almost-too-easy-to-believe steps required to add an event using Quick Add:

1. Click the Quick Add link (it’s just above the mini-calendar). Google Calendar dutifully displays the Quick Add box.
2. Type your event sentence in the text box.
3. Press Enter. Google Calendar interprets your sentence in the blink of an eye and converts it to an event, just like that.

Adding an Event III: The Everything-and-the-Kitchen-Sink Method

The two methods you learned about in the previous sections are fast, for sure, but they skip some valuable event details such as setting up a reminder and specifying a calendar (if you use more than one).

To work with everything Google Calendar offers for an event, you need to display the event details, as shown in the following steps:

1. Navigate to the date on which the event occurs.
2. Click Create Event. Google Calendar displays a form for entering the event particulars.

CHROME LORE

Google Calendar fills in the event start and end times automatically by using the current time as a starting point. That is, Google Calendar looks at the time now and schedules the event to start on the next available half hour. For example, if it’s currently 11:05 A.M., Google Calendar assumes you want an hour-long event that runs from 11:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. To create the event at a specific time, click (or click-and-drag) the time and then click edit event details.
3. Use the **What** text box to type a name or title that describes your event.

4. Use the first two **When** controls to set the date and time that the event starts. Use the left control to change the date and use the right control to change the time.

5. Use the next two **When** controls to set the date and time that the event ends. Use the left control to change the date and use the right control to change the time.

6. Use the **Where** text box to specify the location (such as a room number or address) for the event.

7. Use the **Description** box to type anything else regarding the event: a longer description, talking points, a few good jokes, and so on.

8. If you’d like Google Calendar to remind you that your event is coming up, use the first set of **Reminder** controls to choose the type (**Email** or **Pop-up**) and to specify how soon before the event the reminder should be displayed. Feel free to set up a second reminder if you think you need it. (If you don’t need any stinking reminders, use the **Remove** links to get rid of them.) Figure 12.4 shows an event ready for scheduling.

9. Click **Save**. Google Calendar adds the event to your calendar.
Creating a Repeating Event

If you have an event that occurs at a regular interval (say, weekly or monthly), Google Calendar lets you schedule a repeating event. For example, if you create a weekly event, Google Calendar will fill in that event automatically on the same day of the week at the same time for the duration you specify. Thanks!

To schedule a recurring event, follow the steps from the previous section. In the details form, use the **Repeats** list to select one of the following recurrence patterns:

- Daily
- Every weekday
- Every Mon., Wed., and Fri.
- Every Tues. and Thurs.
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

Scheduling an All-Day Event

As I previously mentioned, an all-day event is an activity that consumes one or more days (or at least the working part of those days; you do have a life outside of work, right?). Some activities are obvious all-day events: trade shows, sales meetings, corporate retreats, and so on. But what about, say, a training session that lasts from 9:00 to 4:00? Is that an all-day event or just a long event?

From Google Calendar’s point of view, the main difference between an event and an all-day event is that an event is entered as a time block in the Calendar area, but an all-day event is displayed as a banner at the top of the Calendar area. This means that you can also schedule events on days that you have all-day events.

A good example that illustrates these differences is a trade show. Suppose the show lasts an entire day and you’re a sales rep who will be attending the show. You could schedule the show as a day-long event. However, what if you also want to visit with customers who are attending the show? It’s possible to schedule conflicting events, but having that day-long event in there just clutters the Calendar area. In this case, it
makes more sense to schedule the show as an all-day event. This leaves the Calendar area open for you to schedule events with your customers.

Scheduling an all-day event is exactly the same as setting up an event. In fact, there are just two differences in the details form (see Figure 12.5):

- You need to activate the All day check box.
- You can only specify dates for the start and end of the event.

Figure 12.6 shows an all-day event added to the calendar.

**Figure 12.5** Activate the All day check box to turn a garden variety event into an all-day event.

**Figure 12.6** All-day events appear at the top of the Calendar area.

**Things to Do: Setting Up a Task**

It has become a time-honored tradition for the responsibly forgetful among us to write down reminders of things to do and upcoming activities. The idea behind
Google Calendar’s Tasks list is to give you an electronic equivalent of these to-do lists. To display the Tasks list, click the **Tasks** link that appears ever-so-slightly above the mini-calendar.

With the Tasks list proudly displayed on the right side of the Google Calendar window, here are the steps you need to follow to set up a task:

1. Click **Add task** (the + icon). Calendar plops the new task into the Tasks list.
2. Type a name or title that describes your task. If you’re satisfied with that, feel free to skip the rest of these steps. Otherwise, to add details such as a due date and description, click **Edit Details** (the > icon).
3. Use the **Due Date** control to set the date when the task is to be completed (theoretically at least). Once you’ve specified a due date, Google Calendar adds the task to the calendar as shown in Figure 12.7. It also creates a Tasks calendar, which appears in the My Calendars sections.
4. Use the **Description** box to record any details about the task: specific actions to perform, task resources, suggested ways to procrastinate, and so on.
5. Click **Back to list** to wrap things up.

**Figure 12.7**  *When you create a new task with a due date, the task gets added to the calendar on that date.*
When you’ve completed the task, let Calendar know by activating the check box that appears beside the task in the Tasks list. (You also see the check box in the calendar if the task has a due date.)

**Configuring Calendars**

You already know more than enough to use the cloud to help organize your noncloud life, but Google Calendar has loads of other features that you can make good use of. I won’t go into them all, but the rest of this chapter hits the features that I think you’ll find most useful.

**Messing Around with Your Google Calendar Settings**

You can take your cloud calendaring to a higher level by customizing a few interesting and useful settings. To get to those settings, click the **Settings** link and then click the **General** tab. You end up staring at a fairly long list of calendar controls, but only a few are worth caring about. Here’s a list of the most useful things you can do with these settings:

* **Add a second time zone.** If you need to keep track of—or schedule events in—another location, it helps to know the local time. The easiest way to do that is to add a time zone for the other place. Click the **Show an additional time zone** link, choose the time zone from the list that appears, and add a **Label** for both your own and the new time zone to help tell them apart.

* **Set the start of the week.** By default, Google Calendar displays Sunday as the first day of each week. Now, I don’t know about you, but in my world Sunday is the last day of the week, and it’s Monday that kicks things off. If you agree, use the **Week starts on** list to select **Monday** (or **Saturday** or **Sunday**).

* **Hide weekends.** If Google Calendar is strictly a work thing for you, then there’s a good chance you never use it to schedule stuff on Saturday or Sunday. In that case, why have those days cluttering up the calendar? Beats me. In the **Show weekends** section, click the **No** option.

* **Change the default view.** When you surf to Google Calendar, you always see the Week view at first. If you routinely change to a different view, such as Day or Agenda, knock some sense into Google Calendar by using the **Default view** list to choose your preferred view.
• **Set up your own custom view.** I mentioned earlier that Google Calendar has a 4 Days view that shows you four days at a time. If you like that view but would prefer something slightly different, such as 5 days or 2 days, you can use the Custom view list to choose the view length you prefer (from **2 Days** to **4 Weeks**).

When you’ve had just about enough of all this, click **Save** to preserve your new settings.

### Creating Different Google Calendars

You don’t live a one-dimensional life, so why settle for a one-dimensional calendar? For example, rather than a one-size-fits-all calendar for work events, personal appointments, and whatever stuff your other personality gets up to, go ahead and create separate calendars for each slice of your life.

Here’s how it’s done:

1. In the **My Calendars** section, click **Create**. Google Calendar tosses you the Create New Calendar page.
2. Use the **Calendar Name** text box to give your new calendar a snappy name.
3. If you feel like adding a description, location, time zone, and other calendar minutiae, please go right ahead, but understand that none of it is crucial to your survival.
4. Click **Create Calendar**. Google Calendar forges the new calendar and adds it to the My Calendars list.

**MAXIMUM CHROME**

Google Calendar assigns a random color to your new calendar, but some of these colors are a tad on the hideous side. If you don’t like the color you get, click the drop-down arrow to the right of the calendar and then click the swatch for the color you prefer.

When you go to create a new event now, you use the **Calendar** list (see Figure 12.8) to assign the new event to the appropriate calendar.
Figure 12.8  Once you’ve got two or more calendars on the go, be sure to use the Calendar list to assign an event to the appropriate calendar.

The Least You Need to Know

- To fire up Google Calendar, surf to www.google.com/calendar.
- To change dates, use the mini-calendar to click the date you want; use the arrows to the left and right of the month to move back or forward one month at a time.
- To bring up today’s date, click the Today button.
- To create an event directly in the calendar, either click the start time (for a one-hour event) or click-and-drag the calendar from the start time to the end time.
- To create an event using a simple sentence, click Quick Add and then type a sentence using the form What with Who at/in Where on Date at Time.
- To create an event complete with details such as reminders, click Create Event.
- To add a new calendar, click the Create link in the My Calendars section.
Finding Your Way with Google Maps

In This Chapter

- Getting comfy with Google Maps
- Finding stuff in Google Maps
- The ins and outs of map navigation
- Getting there from here with directions
- Using the cloud to find your way in the world

It’s funny how some things you once took for granted now seem like artifacts from the distant past. Telephone books. Music CDs. Travel agents. And, increasingly, maps. The world has for the most part been digitized and databased, so if you want to investigate a new city or an unfamiliar part of town, don’t bother reaching for an unwieldy and unrefoldable paper map. Too twentieth century! Instead, get yourself cloud bound and pull up Google Maps. This online application can display a digital map for almost any place that’s mappable, can show you satellite and street-level views of the place, and can even give you specific directions for getting there. I’ll explain all this and much more in this chapter.

Getting Google Maps Off to a Rousing Start

To start Google Maps, click the Maps link that appears at the top of most Google pages, or maneuver the Chrome browser to http://maps.google.com. You end up at a page that probably looks more or less like the one shown in Figure 13.1. To see more of the map, click the Hide panel icon (pointed out in Figure 13.1).
Locating Stuff in Google Maps

Finding a location in Google Maps is almost comically easy: Just use the search text box to type the locale you want to view on a map. You have a couple of ways to get started:

- If you know the exact address—street, number, city, and optionally the zip code—type everything in the search box.
- If you're interested in a particular geographic location, such as a city, state, or country, enter the name of the location.
- If you're looking for a business, institution, or other place of interest, type its name and, if you know it, its city.

Click Search Maps and Google Maps goes to work. In the simplest case, Google finds just one matching location, which it promptly displays with a pin (labeled “A”), as shown in Figure 13.2.
Sometimes, however, Google won’t know exactly what you mean, and it will display multiple matching locations. As you can see in Figure 13.3, Google festoons the map with multiple pins (“A,” “B,” and so on). If a particular location looks promising, click it and Google zooms in for a closer look.
You might think that your Google Maps searches should be as specific as possible, but that’s not always necessary. For example, if Google Maps is showing a particular town or neighborhood, you can run searches for terms such as coffee, restaurant, or go-cart, and Google Maps will be happy to display a list of nearby locations that match the term. If you want to search for stuff near a particular pinned location, follow these steps:

1. Click the pin you want to use as the hub for your search. Google Maps displays information about the location and a list of actions you can perform.
2. Click **Search nearby**. Google Maps offers you the **Search nearby** text box.
3. Type your search term.
4. Click **Search**.

Figure 13.4 shows an example of a nearby search.

![Figure 13.4](image)

**Figure 13.4** You can search around a particular location to see what’s nearby.

### Navigating a Map

Just because Google Maps puts a map in front of your face, it doesn’t necessarily mean that map is ideal. It might not be the exact location you want, or it might show the location too far away or too close. Not to worry, though. Google Maps offers a
couple of tools—panning and zooming—that let you navigate a map to get the exact view you need. The next couple of sections tell you everything you need to know.

**Panning Here and There**

In imaging lingo, *panning* means moving within the image left and right or up and down. A map is an image, of course, so you can also pan whatever map you have onscreen, only in this case it means shifting the map east and west or north and south. So if Google Maps isn’t centered on the specific location you want, or if you just feel like traversing the landscape, you can use either of the following techniques to pan a map:

1. In the panning tool, which is the circle that appears in the upper-left corner of the map (see Figure 13.5), click an arrow to pan in that direction. For example, to pan east, click the right-pointing arrow.
2. Move your mouse pointer into the map (make sure it’s not over a pin), press and hold the left mouse button, and then drag the mouse. For example, to pan east, drag the map to the left.

![Figure 13.5](image-url)

*Figure 13.5  Click the arrows in the panning tool to move to and fro in the map.*
Part 3: The Cloud Nine: Getting Things Done

Zooming In and Out

A map is very much a forest-versus-trees thing. That is, you can either see the bigger picture (the forest), which might mean an entire country, state, or city, or you can see the small picture (the trees), which might mean a neighborhood, street, or address.

You can switch between these extremes either by zooming in on the map (to see the trees) or by zooming out of the map (to see the forest). Google Maps gives you a couple of ways to do this:

- On the zoom controls (on the left side of the map), click the **Zoom in** or **Zoom out** icons (see Figure 13.6).
- On the zoom controls, click and drag the **Drag to zoom** slider (once again, see Figure 13.6).

![Figure 13.6](image)

**Figure 13.6** Need to see the trees? Zoom in. Need to see the forest? Zoom out.

Changing the View

When you first start using Google Maps, it shows you the default Map view, which just makes sense. However, Google Maps is chock full of other views that can show you terrain, satellite images, traffic, and even actual street-level photos! Warning:
Playing with Google Maps’ views is seriously addictive and guaranteed to reduce your productivity.

**Street View**

When you want to locate a destination using Google Maps, the most straightforward method is to search for it, as I described in the previous section. Once you have your destination pinpointed (literally!), you can read the map to find your way—by looking for street names, local landmarks, nearby major intersections, and so on. (You also can use Google Maps to get specific directions. I’ll show you how that works later in this chapter in the section “Can I Get There from Here? Getting Directions.”) However, it’s always hard to transfer the abstractions of a map to the real-world vista you see outside your car window (or whatever) when you’re close to the destination.

Fortunately, Google Maps can bridge that gap. If Street View is available in that area, the Street View icon (it’s above the **Zoom in** button; see Figure 13.1) lights up orange. (If the icon is gray, it means no Street View for you, unfortunately.) Click that icon, and Google Maps immediately shows you the destination in all its Street View glory, as shown in Figure 13.7. To get your bearings, use the panning tools or click-and-drag the screen left or right to get a full 360-degree view of the area surrounding your destination.

![Click here to exit Street View](image)

**Figure 13.7** Click the Street View icon to see a real-world representation of your destination.
Traffic View

Okay, it’s pretty darn amazing that Google Maps can tell you precisely where you are and precisely how to get somewhere else. However, in most cities, it’s the getting somewhere else part that’s the problem. Why? One word: traffic. Google Maps may tell you the trip should take 10 minutes, but that could easily turn into a half hour or more if you run into a traffic jam.

That’s life in the big city, right? Maybe not. If you’re on a highway in a major North American city, Google Maps can most likely supply you with—wait for it—real-time traffic conditions. This is really an amazing tool that can help you avoid traffic messes and find alternative routes to your destination.

To see the traffic data, click the Traffic button. Google Maps uses four colors to illustrate the traffic flow:

- **Green.** Routes where the traffic is moving at 50 mph or faster.
- **Yellow.** Routes where the traffic is moving between 25 and 50 mph.
- **Red.** Routes where the traffic is moving at 25 mph or slower.
- **Gray.** Routes that currently have no traffic data.

Satellite View

Want to get a real bird’s-eye view of a location? Well, if by “bird” you mean “satellite,” then Google Maps can make it happen. Just click the Satellite button and your map instantly transforms into an honest-to-goodness satellite image, as shown in Figure 13.8.

Terrain View

If you’re planning a trip and want to know whether you should pack your hiking boots, you’ll want to take a peek at your destination using Google Maps’ Terrain View. Just click the Terrain button to see a map of your location with elevation data superimposed, as shown in Figure 13.9.
Chapter 13: Finding Your Way with Google Maps

Figure 13.8  Click the Satellite button to see what your location looks like from space.

Figure 13.9  Click the Terrain button to see the peaks and valleys of your location.
I’m Over Here! Adding Your Location to Google Maps

When you first drive up to the Google Maps window, you see a map that shows some or all of your current country. That’s fine, I guess, but you probably use Google Maps a lot to search for locales near where you live. This means that you first have to send Google Maps to your current location and then do your searching. Why bother with that annoying extra step? I can’t think of a reason! Therefore, follow these steps to configure Google Maps with a default location that it displays automatically each time you navigate to the site:

1. If you’re not there already, head on back to the Google Maps home page at http://maps.google.com.
2. Click Set default location. Google Maps displays a text box for your typing pleasure.
3. Use the Set default location text box to type the address you want to see each time you navigate to the Google Maps home page (see Figure 13.10).
4. Click Save. Google Maps saves the address and then kindly displays the address on a map.

Can I Get There from Here?
Getting Directions

One possible navigation scenario with Google Maps is to map a destination and then zoom out until you can see both the destination and your current location. You can then eyeball the streets to see how to get from here to there.
“Eyeball the streets”? Hah, how primitive! Google Maps can bring you into the twenty-first century not only by showing you a route to the destination, but also by providing you with the distance and time it should take and giving you street-by-street, turn-by-turn instructions. It’s one of Google Maps’ sweetest features, and it works like so:

2. Click Get Directions. Google Maps displays two location text boxes—A and B—and loads your default address (see the previous section) into location A.
3. If you happen to be somewhere other than your default location, type your current location in box A.
4. In box B, type the address (or name) of your journey’s destination.
5. If you’re travelling by some means other than car, click the drop-down list and then click your mode of transport. Figure 13.11 shows a Get Directions form all set up to go.
6. Click Get Directions. Google Maps looks up your destination.
7. If Google Maps finds more than one possibility for the destination, it displays the possibilities. You just need to click the one you want.

Google Maps then displays the results, which (as shown in Figure 13.12) include the route on the map and the specific directions in the left pane.

![Google Maps Directions Form](image-url)

**Figure 13.11** Use the Get Directions form to specify the starting and ending points of your trip.
Figure 13.12 Google Maps shows you your route and provides you with specific directions for negotiating that route.

MAXIMUM CHROME

Instead of getting directions to the destination, you might need directions from the destination. No sweat. Once you have your two locations in the A and B text boxes, tap the Swap button. (It’s the double-arrow icon to the right of the A and B text boxes.) Google Maps swaps the locations.

Creating Your Own Maps

If you have maps you refer to frequently, it can be a real pain to constantly recreate a map each time you need it. Fortunately, the Google Maps programmers ran into this problem, too, so they figured out a way around it: My Maps. This is a feature that lets you save a map that you use frequently and then redisplay that map with just a couple of mouse clicks. Nice!

To save a map, use the following techniques:

* When you display a location, click its pin to see the location’s details, click Save to, and then click Save.

* If you asked Google Maps for directions to a destination, click the Save to My Maps link and then click Save.
To redisplay a saved map, bop over to the Google Maps home page at http://maps.google.com, click **My Maps**, click **My Saved Places**, and then click the map you want to view.

**The Least You Need to Know**

- To start Google Maps, click the **Maps** link that appears at the top of most Google pages or maneuver the Chrome browser to http://maps.google.com.
- To find a location, use the search box to enter the address or name and then click **Search Maps**.
- To navigate a map, use the panning tools to jog east, west, north, or south. Use the zooming tools to move into or out of the map.
- To change the view, click the **Street View** icon or click a button such as **Traffic**.
- To set the Google Maps default location, surf to the Google Maps home page at http://maps.google.com and then click **Set default location**.
- To get directions to a particular place, navigate to the Google Maps home page, click **Get Directions**, use box B, type the address (or name) of your journey’s destination, and then click **Get Directions**.
Human beings are endlessly creative, it seems. Whether it’s writing poems or stories, creating drawings or paintings, or composing songs or operas, we just can’t help expressing our creative side. Most of these inventive outlets appeal to only a small number of people, but there’s one fertile source of right-brain material that has nearly universal appeal: photography. Almost everyone has a camera these days, whether it’s a standalone model or one that’s bolted onto a cell phone, and with pictures now being almost exclusively digital, we just can’t help ourselves. Click here, click there, click just about everywhere!

A few photos may be meant solely for your own consumption, but chances are you’ll want to share your pics with other folks, and here in Chrome OS Land that means sharing photos with the cloud crowd. Google’s tool for sharing photos online is called Picasa Web Albums, and you’ll learn all about it in this chapter.

Getting Started with Picasa Web Albums
To start Picasa Web Albums, either click the Chrome icon and then click PicasaWeb, or steer the Chrome browser to http://picasaweb.google.com. The first time you do this, you’ll likely have to log in to your Google account and pretend to read the terms of service.
When the Picasa Web Albums page finally slides into view, you may see some text telling you to “Download Picasa.” That’s meant for people using non-cloud-based computers, so go ahead and ignore that button with all your might.

**Seeding the Cloud: Uploading Your Photos**

Your Picasa Web Albums home isn’t much to look at right now, but you’ll soon change all that by creating online albums to store your photos and uploading stacks of photos to populate those albums. How you go about getting your photos from here to the cloud depends on whether you’re just starting out or have already uploaded some stuff. The next couple of sections explain the two techniques.

**Uploading Your First Photos**

If everything is shiny and new in your Picasa Web Albums page, then it’s time to get some pictures online. The first time you perform a photo upload, Picasa Web Albums also asks you to create your first album, so all your main initial chores happen at the same time.

Follow these steps to set up your first album and stuff some photos into it:

1. Click **Upload**. Picasa Web Albums displays the Upload Photos: Create or Select Album dialog box, shown in Figure 14.1.

   ![Figure 14.1](image)
   
   *Figure 14.1 Your first chore is to create your initial photo album.*

2. Use the **Title** text box to name your first album.
3. You don’t need to bother with the other data for now, but if you feel like it go ahead and add the date, a description, and the place the photos were taken.

**CHROME LORE**

Don’t sweat things like the description and the location too much right now. You can always change things later on.

4. Click **Continue**. Picasa Web Albums creates your album and displays the Upload Photos page.

5. Click the **Choose File** button. Chrome displays a dialog box for you to choose a photo file.

6. Click the file you want to upload.

7. Click **Open**. Picasa Web Albums adds the filename to the Upload Photos dialog box.

8. Repeat steps 5 through 7 to upload up to five photos. Figure 14.2 shows an Upload Photos page with five files ready to be shot into the cloud.

![Figure 14.2](image.png) *Use the Upload Photos page to pick out up to five photos to upload.*

9. Click **Start Upload**. Picasa Web Albums gets to work and uploads the photos to your new album. When the deed is done, Picasa Web Albums drops you off at your new album, as shown in Figure 14.3.
Figure 14.3  When the upload is complete, your bouncing baby album appears with your photos.

Uploading More Photos

Once you have an album in the cloud, adding more photos to it is straightforward. Here’s how it’s done:

1. If you’re not already viewing your album, click the My Photos tab and then click the album.

   **CHROME LORE**

   If you need to forge a new album, click the Upload button, click the create a new album link, and then follow steps 2 through 4 in the preceding section.

2. Click Add Photos. Picasa Web Albums takes you to the Upload Photos page.

3. Click the Choose File button. Chrome displays a dialog box for you to choose a photo file.

4. Click the file you want to upload.

5. Click Open. Picasa Web Albums adds the filename to the Upload Photos dialog box.

6. Repeat steps 3 through 5 to upload up to five photos at a time.
7. Click Start Upload. Picasa Web Albums uploads the photos to your existing album and then returns you to the album.

**Uploading a Photo by—Drum Roll, Please—E-Mail!**

What do you do if you've got an amazing photo on your phone that you want to share with your peeps right away? Probably the fastest way to upload a photo is to e-mail it directly to your Picasa Web Albums site. It sounds like cloud voodoo, I know, but it works.

The idea is that you send your photo to a special e-mail address that (ideally!) only you know about. This address uses (in part) your Picasa Web Albums gallery address, so the first thing you need to do here is to make sure your gallery address uses your Google username and not some obscure string of numbers:

1. Click Settings to open the Picasa Web Albums Settings page.
2. Click the General tab.
3. In the Your gallery URL section, click the **Change your URL** link. The Change your URL dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 14.4.

![Change your URL dialog box](image)

**Figure 14.4** Make sure your Picasa Web Albums address is easier to remember by switching to your Google username.

4. Select your Google username.
5. Click Save.
6. Click **Save Changes**. Picasa Web Albums puts the new setting into effect.
Okay, now you're ready to set up the uploading by e-mail feature:

1. If you're not still in the Settings page, click **Settings** and then click the **General** tab.

2. In the Upload photos by email section, activate the **Allow me to upload photos by email** check box.

3. Use the **Enter a secret word** text box to type a word that uses between 6 and 15 letters and/or numbers.

4. Make a note of the address that now appears after the **Email photos to this address** label (see Figure 14.5). This is the address you'll use to upload your pics.

5. Click **Save changes**. You're now ready to do the e-mail upload thing!

**Figure 14.5**  The upload e-mail address is your gallery name plus a secret word.

The next time you want to ship a photo directly to Picasa Web Albums via e-mail, go ahead and set up the message in the usual way, including addressing it to your secret Picasa address. For the message subject line, you have two choices:

* If you want to insert the photo directly into an existing web album, type the name of that album as your subject.
• If you want to include a caption for the photo, type the caption text as your subject. In this case, Picasa Web Albums will store the photo in a special album called the Drop Box. You’ll probably want to eventually move the photo to the appropriate album (see the section “Moving a Photo to Another Album” later in this chapter).

Working With Your Web Albums

Although you’re now displaying a few choice photos around your cloud home, you’re not quite ready to invite guests over to see them. You need to do a bit of tidying and cleaning before you let anyone through the door. Fortunately, I’m not talking about bringing out the old rags and stinky disinfectants. Instead, I’m talking about a few basic album-maintenance chores, such as setting the cover image and editing the album details. The next few sections tell all.

Setting the Album Cover Photo

When you click the My Photos tab, Picasa Web Albums shows a list of your albums, as shown in Figure 14.6.
Notice that, for each album, Picasa Web Albums uses one of the album’s photos as an example. This is the cover photo, and it’s useful because it gives you (and, more importantly, other people who visit your gallery) an indication of what’s inside the album.

By default, Picasa Web Albums uses the first photo you added to an album as the cover shot. If you think the current cover photo isn’t representative of the album’s contents, go ahead and change it:

1. Click the My Photos tab to display your albums.
2. Click the album that contains the photo you want to use as the album cover.
3. Click the photo.
4. Select Edit, Set as album cover. Nothing much seems to happen at this point, but Picasa Web Albums really has changed the cover photo. (Click My Photos to see for yourself.)

### Editing the Album Info

When you create a new album, Picasa Web Albums asks for a title as well as other details such as a description and a location. If you didn’t bother with any of that extra stuff originally (or if you want to change the existing info), you can edit these details:

1. Click the My Photos tab to display your albums.
2. Click the album you want to edit.
4. Make your changes as the mood strikes.
5. Click Save changes. Picasa Web Albums does just that.

### SEE ALSO

If you’re really not sure about the stuff in the Share section, either skip it for now or skip ahead to the section in this chapter titled “Deciding Who Can View Your Photos,” which gives you the scoop.
Deleting a Photo from an Album

Sure, most of your photos are pretty darned awesome, but there may be the odd one that you decide just isn't ready for cloud stardom. There's no shame in that, and it's probably best for everyone if you just delete the photo and let that be the end of it. Here's what you need to do:

1. Click the My Photos tab to display your albums.
2. Click the album that contains the photo you want to expunge.
3. Click the photo.
4. Select Edit, Delete this photo. Picasa Web Albums asks if you're sure you really want to go through with this.
5. Say “Heck, yeah!” and click OK. Picasa Web Albums rolls its eyes but deletes the photo anyway.

Working With Your Photos

Looks like your albums are now in visitor-friendly shape, so it's time now to work on the photos inside those albums. With Picasa Web Albums you can add captions, categorize photos with tags, locate photos on a map, and move and copy photos to other albums. The next few sections take you through the details of these essential photo-maintenance chores.

Setting the Photo Caption

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but most pictures aren't worth much of anything if they're presented without something to put them into context—a title, a description, a charmingly amusing quip, or whatever. In Picasa Web Albums, you give your photos this context by adding a caption that appears below the photo. Here's what you do:

1. Click the My Photos tab to display your albums.
2. Click the album that contains the photo you want to work with.
3. Click the photo to open it.
4. Click the **Add a Caption** link below the photo. Picasa Web Albums orders up a text box.

5. Type your caption in the text box, as shown in Figure 14.7. Note that there doesn’t seem to be any practical limit on the length of the caption, so feel free to be as verbose as you think your visitors can stand (which is to say, not *too* verbose).

![Figure 14.7](image)

*Type your caption in the text box below the photo.*

6. Click **Save Caption**. Picasa Web Albums displays your caption below the photo.

Picasa Web Albums gives you two ways to perform caption maintenance:

- To change the caption, display the photo and click the **edit** link beside the caption.
- To get rid of the caption, display the photo, click the **Delete caption** icon (the trash can), and then click **OK** when Picasa asks you to confirm this rash behavior.
Tagging Your Photos

Lumping similar photos in the same album is a great way to keep things organized, but it’s not perfect. For example, you might have an album for each of your last few vacations, each of which includes shots of you, your spouse, and your kids frolicking in various exotic locales. You may also have separate albums with family photos from various occasions: weddings, parties, subpoena servings, and so on. Wouldn’t it be nice if you had some easy way to see *all* the photos of your spouse? Or *all* the photos that include your kids? Or *all* the photos that include at least one police officer?

I’m happy to report that there *is* an easy way to do this: tagging your photos. A *tag* is a word or short phrase that acts as a kind of category for a photo. For example, if your spouse’s name is Aethelred, you can add a tag named “Aethelred” to each photo that includes your spouse. Picasa Web Albums displays links for all your tags on the home page, so you just click the “Aethelred” tag to see *every* photo that contains your spouse, even if they’re scattered among multiple albums. Sweet!

Here’s how you go about applying a tag to a photo:

1. Click the **My Photos** tab to see all your albums.
2. Click the album that contains the photo you want to tag.
3. Click the photo.
4. In the Tags section, click the **Add tag** icon (+). Picasa Web Albums displays a text box.
5. Type your tag, but bear a couple of things in mind:
   - If you want to apply multiple tags in one fell swoop, separate each tag with a space, as shown in Figure 14.8.
   - If you want to use a phrase as a tag, surround the phrase with quotation marks (again, as shown in Figure 14.8).
6. Click **Add**. Picasa Web Albums adds the tags to the photos.
To use your tags, click the My Photos tab. On the right side of the page you see a new Browse Tags section, which includes links to each of your tags, as shown in Figure 14.9. Click a link to see all the photos with that tag.

Figure 14.9  Click the My Photos tab to see all your tags and then click a link to see the associated photos for each tag.
Mapping Your Photos

These days, it’s not enough just to say you visited some place. Now you have to actually show the place on a map. How on Earth (pun intended) are you supposed to do that? By adding a location to each photo.

First, however, note that you might not have to go through all this if your camera is location friendly. For example, an iPhone 3G or later has a chip inside that can determine your current location, and it will embed that information right in each photo. If you then upload an iPhone photo, Picasa Web Albums can dig out this location info, leaving you with precisely nothing to do.

If that’s not the case, follow these steps to locate your photos on a map:

1. Click the My Photos tab to display your albums.
2. Click the album that contains the photos you want to map.
3. Click Create album map. Picasa Web Albums displays the Map Your Photos dialog box.
4. Type the general location you want to use (such as a city name) and click Go.
5. If Picasa Web Albums finds multiple places that match your text, click the one you want to use. Picasa Web Albums displays a map of the location as well as the thumbnails of the album photos.
6. Click the photo you want to map.
7. Click the map on the spot where you want to map the photo. Picasa Web Albums adds the photo to the map (see Figure 14.10).
8. Repeat steps 6 and 7 to map the other album photos.
9. Click Done.
Moving a Photo to Another Album

If you have a photo that currently resides in the wrong album, there’s no need to be embarrassed because you can move the photo to the correct album without much fuss. Similarly, if you’ve just created a fresh album and some photos in an existing album would look better in the new location, go ahead and move them there. Finally, earlier you learned about the magic of uploading a photo via e-mail and how using the subject line for the caption causes the photo to end up in the Drop Box album. In that case, you probably want to move the uploaded photo to one of your existing albums.

There are reasons galore for moving a photo, but just one way to go about it:

1. Click the My Photos tab to display your albums.
2. Click the album that contains the photo you want to relocate.
3. Click the photo to display it.
4. Select Edit, Move to another album. Picasa Web Albums asks you to confirm.
5. Click OK. Picasa Web Albums asks where you want the photo moved.
6. Click **choose an existing album.** (However, feel free to create a new album here if need be: Type a title and any other details and then click *Continue.*)

7. Click the destination album.

8. Click **Select Album.** Picasa Web Albums does your bidding and moves the photo to the album and then displays that album.

**Photocopying: Copying a Photo to Another Album**

Rather than shifting a photo to an entirely different album, you might want to preserve the photo in its current home but send a clone to another album. Why not? Here are the steps to follow to copy a photo:

1. Click the **My Photos** tab to see all your albums.
2. Click the album that contains the photo you want to copy.
3. Click the photo.
4. Select **Edit, Copy to another album.** Picasa Web Albums asks where you want the photo copied.
5. Click **choose an existing album.** (If you’d really prefer to copy the photo to a new album, don’t let me stop you: Fill in the new album’s details and then click *Continue.*)
6. Click the album you want to use to store the copy.
7. Click **Select Album.** Picasa Web Albums goes to the copier room, creates a single copy in the selected album, and then displays that album.

**Sharing Your Photos with Friends and Total Strangers**

I suppose you could go to all the trouble of uploading photos, configuring albums, and adding captions and tags just so you can view your photos in the cloud. Hey, it’s a free country. However, I’m betting that the real reason you want to go to all this fuss is *so other* people can view your photos in the cloud. That’s awfully neighborly of you,
and fortunately Picasa Web Albums gives you a couple of ways to share, as I’ll show you in the next two sections.

**Deciding Who Can View Your Photos**

Before you start fiddling with the sharing knob, it helps to know what the various settings on the dial mean. Picasa Web Albums offers three levels of sharing:

- **Public.** This level means that an album is visible to anyone who knows your public gallery address (that is, http://picasaweb.google.com/username, where *username* is your Google username). This is the easiest way to go since you don’t have to do anything, but it does mean that anyone can see your photos.

- **Unlisted.** This level means that an album is given a secret address so that only people who know the address can view the photos (so it’s sort of like an unlisted phone number). This keeps the album away from strangers, but it’s a bit more work because you have to send the secret address to all the people you want to share the album with.

- **Sign-in required to view.** This level also means that your album gets a secret address, but it also means that you specify exactly who can see the album, and even those people can’t see the photos unless they’re signed in to their Google account. (That’s right: no Google account, no photos.) This is more work for you and more work for your visitors, but it gives you maximum privacy.

By default, each new album you create is assigned to the Public level. To change that, follow these steps:

1. Click the **My Photos** tab to display your albums.
2. Click the album you want to share.
3. Select **Edit, Album properties**. Picasa Web Albums calls upon the Edit Album Information dialog box.
4. Use the **Share** list to select the sharing level you want to use. If you chose either Public or Unlisted, your work is done here so skip to step 10. Otherwise, continue with step 5.
5. If you have a group defined in your Google Contacts and you want the people in that group to be able to view the album, activate the group check box and then click the Edit link. Picasa Web Albums displays the Edit Group dialog box (where Group is the name of the group).

6. Click the Add more link. Picasa Web Albums displays a list of the people in your Google Contacts list.

7. Activate the check box beside each person you want to include in the group. (If a person isn’t listed, type his or her address in the Add email text box and then click Add.)

8. Click Done.

9. Repeat steps 5 through 8 for your other contact groups as needed.

10. Click Save changes. Picasa Web Albums does just that.

If you chose the Unlisted sharing level, you now have to ship out the super-secret album address to your trusted family and friends (okay, maybe just your friends). See the next section to learn how to send an e-mail invitation for an album.

Sharing an Album by—Drum Roll, Please—E-Mail!

For other folks to see one of your online albums, they need to know the address of that album. If the album uses Public sharing, they just need to go to your public gallery address (http://picasaweb.google.com/username, where username is your Google username). Otherwise, Picasa Web Albums protects your album behind a complicated address that no mere mortal could ever guess. In that case, you need to let people know about your album by sending them an invitation to view it.

Follow these steps to share an album by sending an e-mail invitation:

1. Click My Photos to see your albums.

2. Click the album you want to share.

3. Click Share. Picasa Web Albums launches the Share Album page, which looks pretty much like the one shown in Figure 14.11.
4. Select your recipients by using any or all of the following methods:
   * In the **Enter email addresses** text box, type the address of one or more invitees, separating each address with a comma.
   * To select people from your Google Contacts list, click **To** to display the Contact Picker page, use the list to choose **My Contacts**, click each contact you want to invite, and then click **Done**.
   * If you have one or more contact groups defined, activate the check box beside each group you want to invite.

   **CHROME CAUTION!**

   By default, Picasa Web Albums lets your invitees upload their own photos to your album. If you find that preposterous, be sure to deactivate the **Let people I share with contribute photos** check box.

5. Use the **Message** text box to write a note to your invitees.

6. Click **Send Email**. Picasa Web Albums fires off the message.
Chapter 14: Sharing Photos with Picasa Web Albums

The Least You Need to Know

• To start Picasa Web Albums, either click the Chrome icon and then click PicasaWeb, or steer the Chrome browser to http://picasaweb.google.com.

• To create your first album and upload your first photos, click Upload, type an album title, click Continue, and then select your photos.

• To add more photos to an album, display the album and then click Add Photos.

• To change an album’s data, open the album and select Edit, Album properties.

• To set the photo caption, open the album, click the photo, click Add a Caption, and then type your caption.

• To set the album sharing level, open the album and select Edit, Album properties. Then use the Share list to select the sharing level.
all-day event  In Google Calendar, an event that takes up one or more entire days.  See also repeating event.

arguments  In a Google Docs spreadsheet, the input values applied to a function.

attachment  A file that latches onto an e-mail message and is sent to the recipient.

Bcc  A blind courtesy (or carbon) copy e-mail message. These are copies of the messages that get sent to other people, but the Bcc recipients’ addresses aren’t shown to the other recipients.  See also Cc.

bit  Short for “binary digit,” it represents the most basic unit of computer information. Within your computer, data is stored using tiny electronic devices called “gates,” each of which holds a single bit. These gates can be either on (which means electricity flows through the gate) or off (no electricity flows through the gate). For the likes of you and me, the number 1 represents a gate that’s on, and the number 0 represents a gate that’s off.

bookmark  A web page name and address saved within Chrome for easy recall down the road.

boot  To start your computer.

browser  See web browser.

bullet  A small dot or other character used to mark the beginning of each item in a bulleted list.

bulleted list  A list of items for which Google Docs displays a bullet to the left of each item.  See also numbered list.

buried shovel  A tool or technique that’s required to perform a certain task but that’s only available after you perform that task.
byte  Eight bits strung together that represent a single character of data. For example, the letter “X” is represented by the following byte: 01011000. Weird, I know. Further, the mathematicians tell us that a byte can have 256 possible combinations of ones and zeros (prove it for yourself by raising 2 to the power of 8), and those combinations represent all possible characters: lowercase letters, uppercase letters, numbers, symbols, and so on.

case sensitive  A search that treats uppercase and lowercase letters differently.

Cc  A courtesy (or carbon) copy. These are copies of an e-mail message that get sent to other people. See also Bcc.

cell  In a Google Docs spreadsheet, the intersection of a row and a column.

cloud  The online “place” that consists of Internet-based software and hardware.

cloud computing  A new type of computing in which our data and even the software we use to work with that data resides within the cloud.

cluster  A huge collection of computers networked together to provide online services such as cloud-based applications. See also server farm.

collaboration  Working together in the cloud with other people on the same Google Docs file at the same time.

column  In a Google Docs spreadsheet, a vertical area that you use to enter data. See also cell and row.

cookie  A small text file that’s stored on your computer and that websites use to “remember” information about your session at that site. See also first-party cookie and third-party cookie.

cursor  See insertion point cursor.

data center  A massive building housing a computing cluster or server farm.

decorative font  A typeface with a special design used to convey a particular effect.

dialog box  A box that shows up when Chrome OS or a program requires more information from you.

DNS  The Domain Name System, which translates between a regular web page address (such as www.google.com) and an IP address (such as 66.249.81.104).

DNS pre-fetching  A Chrome feature that uses DNS to look up the corresponding IP address of each link on a page you visit.
Domain Name System  See DNS.
download  To receive data from a remote computer. See also upload.
dumb terminal  A computer that can do nothing on its own except access programs and data held captive on mainframe computers.
event  In Google Calendar, any activity for which you set aside a block of time. See also all-day event and repeating event.
extension  A mini program that extends the functionality of the Chrome browser.
feed  RSS data provided by a website that tells you the latest stuff—usually blog posts or news stories—that has been added to the site. See also feed reader.
feed reader  A program such as Google Reader that lets you subscribe to and read feeds.
first-party cookie  A cookie set by the website you’re viewing. See also third-party cookie.
font  A style of text that includes the typeface, the type size, and some type effects.
formula  In a Google Docs spreadsheet, a collection of values and symbols that together produce some kind of result.
function  In a Google Docs spreadsheet, a predefined formula that calculates a result based on one or more arguments.
gigabyte  The equivalent of 1,024 megabytes. Those in the know usually abbreviate this as “GB” when writing and as “gig” when speaking. See also byte and megabyte.
insertion point cursor  The blinking vertical bar you see inside a text box or in a word processing application such as WordPad. It indicates where the next character you type will appear.
Internet Protocol (IP)  A technology that defines the Internet’s addressing scheme and determines how data moves from one site to another.
IP  See Internet Protocol.
IP address  The official address of an Internet location, which is displayed as a series of numbers such as 66.249.81.104.
link  In a web page, a chunk of text or an image that, when clicked, takes you to another web page.
login  A mechanism you use to prove who you are by entering a username and its associated password.

malware  The generic term for malicious software such as viruses and Trojan horses. See also spyware.

megabyte  The equivalent of 1,024 kilobytes or 1,048,576 bytes. The experts write this as “M” or “MB” and pronounce it “meg.” See also gigabyte.

message body  The text of an e-mail message.

message filter  A set of instructions that tells Gmail how to handle certain incoming messages.

monospaced  A typeface that reserves the same amount of space for each character. See also proportional.

muting  Configuring Gmail to look for messages that have a particular subject line and automatically archiving those messages so they never appear in your Inbox folder.

numbered list  A list in which Google Docs inserts the numbers at the beginning of each item automatically, and the items are displayed in numeric order. See also bulleted list.

operator  A special word or symbol—such as OR or a minus sign (−)—that you use to refine your Google searches.

page  See web page.

panning  Shifting a map to the east, west, north, or south.

phishing  Creating a replica of an existing web page to fool visitors into divulging personal info, financial data, or a password.

placeholder  In a Google Docs presentation, a box into which you enter data such as text or a picture.

proportional  A typeface in which the space allotted to each letter varies according to the width of the letter. See also monospaced.

range  In a Google Docs spreadsheet, any collection of related cells.

range name  In a Google Docs spreadsheet, a label assigned to a range.

repeating event  In Google Calendar, an event that occurs at a regular interval such as weekly or monthly. See also all-day event.
row  In a Google Docs spreadsheet, a horizontal area that you use to enter data.  
*See also* column and cell.

**RSS**  Really Simple Syndication—a data format that enables a website proprietor to 
create a feed of the site’s latest entries.

**sans serif**  A typeface that doesn’t have cross strokes at its extremities. This type 
of font is most often used for titles and headings that require a larger type size.  
*See also* serif.

**search engine**  A site that you use for searching the web.

**search option**  The data for a particular search engine that has been saved in 
Chrome.

**serif**  A typeface that has small cross strokes at the extremities of each character. 
Serif fonts are good for regular text in a document. *See also* sans serif.

**server**  A computer that provides data or services.

**server farm**  A massive collection of servers networked together to act as a single, 
humongous server.

**signature**  A snippet of text that appears at the bottom of an e-mail message.

**slide layout**  In a Google Docs presentation, the arrangement of the placeholders on 
a slide.

**spam**  Unsolicited commercial e-mail and the scourge of the Internet.

**speaker notes**  In a Google Docs presentation, the extra text that you add “off to 
the side” of a slide, which means it doesn’t appear in the presentation itself but you 
can display it to yourself during the show.

**spyware**  A type of malware that surreptitiously monitors a user’s computer activities 
(such as the typing of passwords, PINs, and credit card numbers) or harvests sensitive 
data on the user’s computer and then sends that information to an individual or a 
company via the user’s Internet connection.

**startup pages**  The web pages that Chrome automatically opens in separate tabs 
when you first log in to Chrome OS.

**strong password**  A nonobvious password that’s at least eight characters long and 
that includes at least one character from at least three of the following four sets: 
lowercase letters, uppercase letters, numbers, and symbols.
subject line  A line of text that describes what an e-mail message is about.

surf  To jump from web page to web page using a web browser.

tab  A feature that enables you to surf multiple sites within a single Chrome window.

tap-to-click  On a touchpad, a gesture that enables you to simulate a click by tapping
the touchpad.

template  A special Google Docs file that comes with a predefined layout, preset
formatting, and sometimes even pretyped titles and headings.

theme  In Chrome, a predefined set of colors, icons, background images, and effects
that controls the look of the Chrome window; in a Google Docs presentation, a
predefined collection of formatting options that controls the colors, fonts, and back-
ground used with each slide in the presentation.

third-party cookie  A cookie set by a site other than the one you’re viewing. See also
first-party cookie.

thumbnail  A preview of an image or HTML file (web page).

type effects  Attributes that can be applied to a typeface, such as **bold** and *italic*.

type size  The height of a typeface, measured from the highest point of a tall letter
(such as “f”) to the lowest point of an underhanging letter (such as “g”).

typeface  A distinctive design applied to any related set of letters, numbers, and
other symbols.

uniform resource locator  See URL.

uninstall  To completely remove an extension from Chrome.

upload  To send data to a remote computer. See also download.

URL  The address of a web page.

vacation responder  A message that Gmail automatically sends out in response to
an incoming message.

virtualization  Online computing power that gives businesses virtual computing
equipment; it enables companies with small budgets to get computing on demand.

web browser  A program that you use to surf sites on the World Wide Web. The
browser that comes with Chrome OS is called Chrome.
**web page**  A document on the web that contains text, images, and usually a few links.

**word processor**  A program that lets you not only type in text, but also edit it and format it so that it looks all nice and pretty.
# Chrome and Chrome OS Shortcut Keys

## Chrome Keyboard Shortcuts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press …</th>
<th>To …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+D</td>
<td>Bookmark your current webpage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+E</td>
<td>Place a question mark (?) in the Address bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+F</td>
<td>Open the Find bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+G</td>
<td>Find the next match for your input in the Find bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+G</td>
<td>Find the previous match for your input in the Find bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+L</td>
<td>Select the URL in the Address bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+N</td>
<td>Open a new window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+N</td>
<td>Open a new window in incognito mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+O</td>
<td>Open a file from your computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+R</td>
<td>Reload the current web page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+S</td>
<td>Save the current web page to your computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+T</td>
<td>Open a new tab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+T</td>
<td>Reopen the last tab you closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+W</td>
<td>Close the current tab or pop-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alt+click</td>
<td>Download the target of the link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+click</td>
<td>Open the link in a new tab in the background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+click</td>
<td>Open the link in a new tab and switch to the newly opened tab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift+click</td>
<td>Open the link in a new window</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continues*
Chrome Keyboard Shortcuts (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press …</th>
<th>To …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+n</td>
<td>Switch to the tab at the specified position number on the tab strip, where ( n ) is a number between 1 and 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+9</td>
<td>Switch to the last tab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Tab</td>
<td>Switch to the next tab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+Tab</td>
<td>Switch to the previous tab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backspace</td>
<td>Go to the previous page in your browsing history for the tab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift+Backspace</td>
<td>Go to the next page in your browsing history for the tab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esc</td>
<td>Stop the loading of your current page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spacebar</td>
<td>Scroll down in the web page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift+Spacebar</td>
<td>Scroll up in the web page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Go to the top of the page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td>Go to the bottom of the page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common Google Docs Keyboard Shortcuts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press …</th>
<th>To …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+A</td>
<td>Select all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+B</td>
<td>Format text as bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+C</td>
<td>Copy the selected item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+F</td>
<td>Find and replace text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+I</td>
<td>Format text as italics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+O</td>
<td>Open a document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+P</td>
<td>Print the document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+S</td>
<td>Save the document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+U</td>
<td>Format text as underline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+V</td>
<td>Paste the cut or copied data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+X</td>
<td>Cut the selected item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Y</td>
<td>Redo the most recently undone action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Z</td>
<td>Undo the most recent action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chrome and Chrome OS Shortcut Keys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press ...</th>
<th>To ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shift+Tab</td>
<td>Move to the previous cell in a table or row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tab</td>
<td>Move to the next cell in a table or row</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Google Docs Word Processor Keyboard Shortcuts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Press ...</th>
<th>To ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+A</td>
<td>Select all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+E</td>
<td>Center text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+G</td>
<td>Find the next match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+G</td>
<td>Find the previous match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+J</td>
<td>Justify text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+K</td>
<td>Insert a link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+L</td>
<td>Left align text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+M</td>
<td>Insert a comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+R</td>
<td>Right align text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+C</td>
<td>Display the word count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+F</td>
<td>Switch to full-screen mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+K</td>
<td>Check spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+L</td>
<td>Insert a bulleted list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+Spacebar</td>
<td>Insert a nonbreaking space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Spacebar</td>
<td>Remove formatting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+0</td>
<td>Apply the Normal style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+1</td>
<td>Apply the Heading 1 style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+2</td>
<td>Apply the Heading 2 style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+3</td>
<td>Apply the Heading 3 style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+4</td>
<td>Apply the Heading 4 style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+5</td>
<td>Apply the Heading 5 style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+6</td>
<td>Apply the Heading 6 style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+7</td>
<td>Toggle a numbered list on and off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+8</td>
<td>Toggle a bulleted list on and off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+.</td>
<td>Format text as superscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+,</td>
<td>Format text as subscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press …</td>
<td>To …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+D</td>
<td>Copy the current cell down into the selected cells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+R</td>
<td>Copy the current cell right into the selected cells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+End</td>
<td>Go to the last cell in the current data region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Home</td>
<td>Go to the first cell in the current data region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Left arrow</td>
<td>Go to the left-most cell in the data region’s current row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Right arrow</td>
<td>Go to the right-most cell in the data region’s current row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Down arrow</td>
<td>Go to the bottom-most cell in the data region’s current column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Up arrow</td>
<td>Go to the top-most cell in the data region’s current column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Backspace</td>
<td>Scroll to the active cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Enter</td>
<td>Insert a line break in the cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Page Down</td>
<td>Move to the next worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Page Up</td>
<td>Move to the previous worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+F</td>
<td>Switch to full-screen mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+S</td>
<td>Make a copy of the document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Semi-colon</td>
<td>Insert the date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+Semi-colon</td>
<td>Insert the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+Enter</td>
<td>Create an array formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Spacebar</td>
<td>Select the entire column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift+Spacebar</td>
<td>Select the entire row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift+Page Up/Page Down</td>
<td>Extend the selection up/down one screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift+Arrow key</td>
<td>Extend the selection in the direction of the arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift+F2</td>
<td>Insert or edit a comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Edit the active cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter</td>
<td>Move to the next cell in the column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esc</td>
<td>Cancel the cell entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Navigate to the start of the row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End</td>
<td>Navigate to the end of the row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press</td>
<td>To</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+M</td>
<td>Insert a new slide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+F5</td>
<td>Start the current presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+Right arrow</td>
<td>Zoom in on the slide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctrl+Shift+Left arrow</td>
<td>Zoom out from the slide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Down</td>
<td>Move down one screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Up</td>
<td>Move up one screen</td>
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