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A GUIDE TO GOOGLE TOOLS
TIPS & TRICKS YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

by Ryan Dube

A Guide to Google Tools – Tips & Tricks You Can't Live Without

Written by Ryan Dube

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Whether you're a student, educator, executive or a scientist, Google offers online services and products that help everyone remain as productive as possible.

There are many Google services that have come and gone through the years, but a few of them — like Gmail, Google Drive and of course Google Search — stay even more relevant as time goes on.

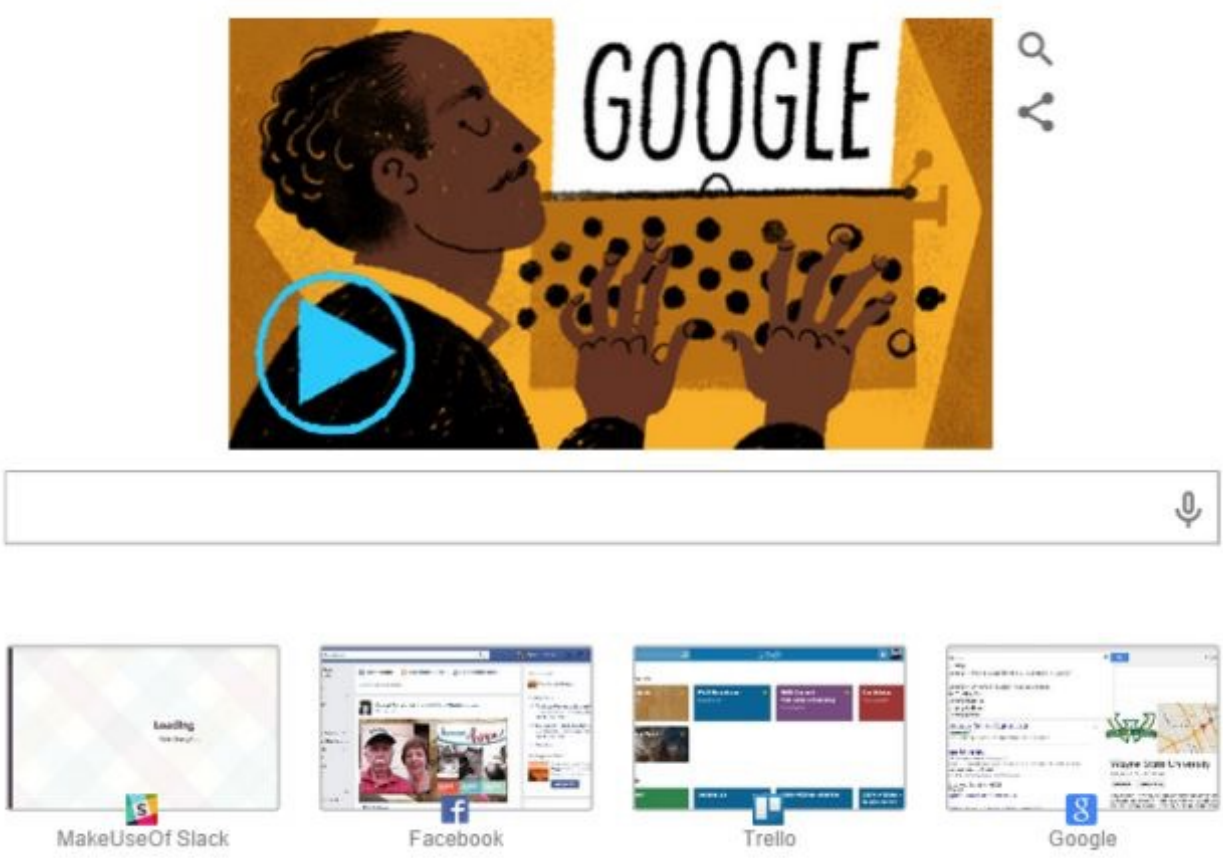
The following is a comprehensive guide of tips, tricks and hacks that'll help you make better use of Google services you use. Whether you're a novice or a seasoned expert, you're likely to find something here that you can add to your own productivity toolbox.

Use the following table of contents to jump to any section that you need. Bookmark this page, and come back whenever you're looking to streamline your use of any of these Google services.

If you use any of these Google services and are looking to make more efficient use of them, then let's get started.

Google Search Hacks and Tips

Google was first known for its search engine. Over the years, Google has maintained its minimalist search page design, which often betrays the wealth of tools and hacks that hide just below the surface.

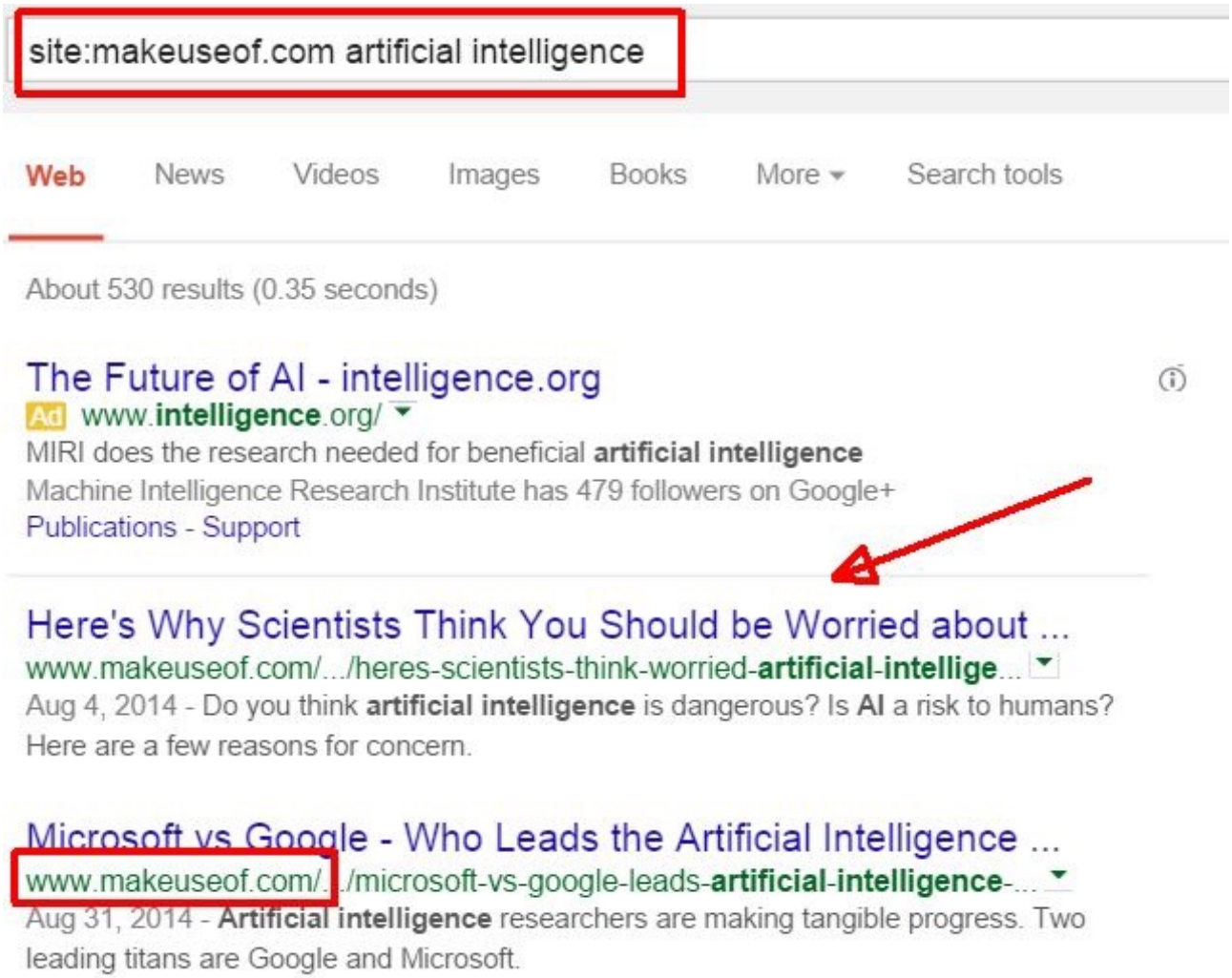


Don't be fooled. There's a lot more you can do on this page than just search the Internet. Instead of searching the entire Internet, you may be more interested in seeing search results from just one page.

Google Site Search

To do this, type **"site:xxx.com search-term"**

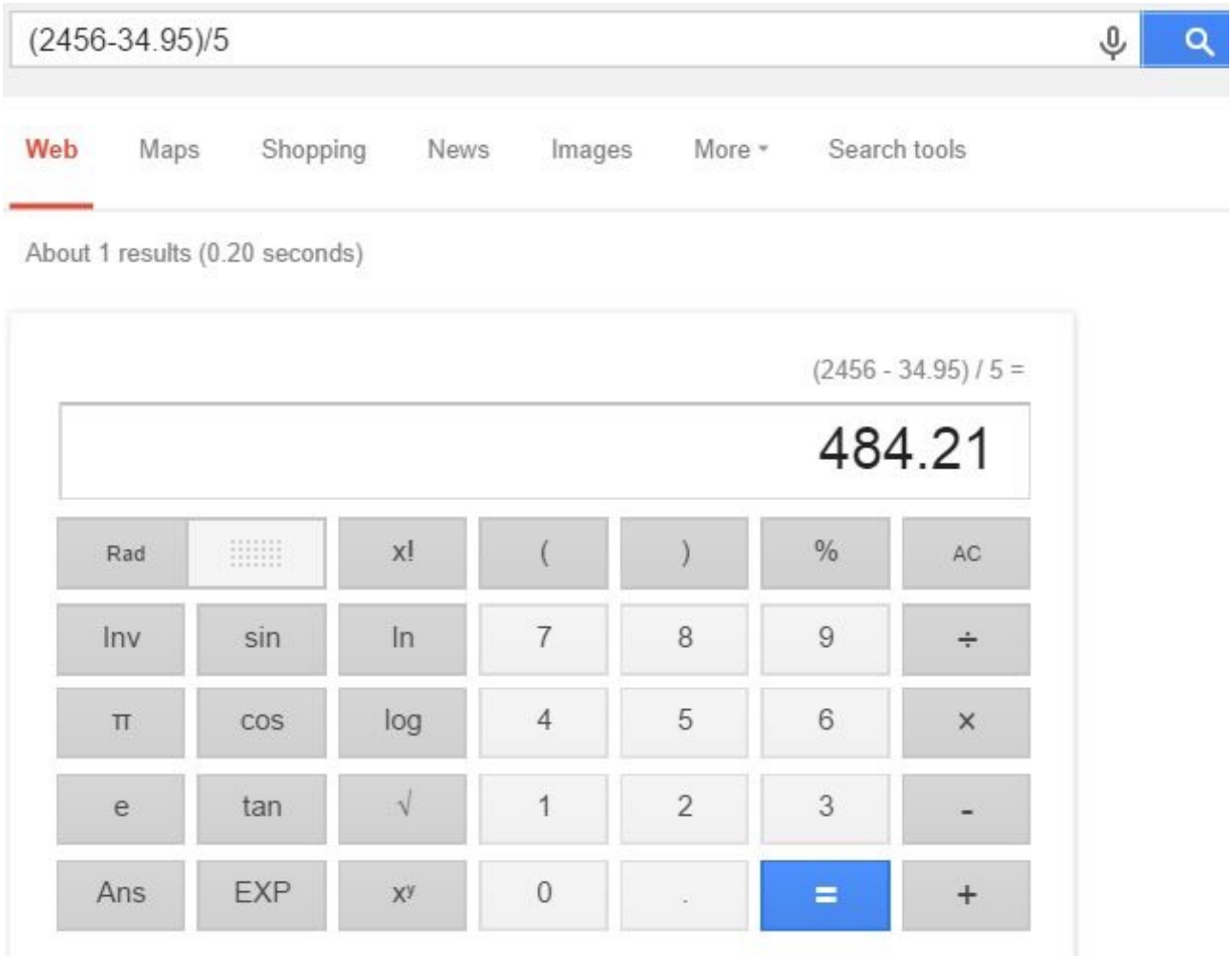
For example, to search MakeUseOf.com for everything to do with artificial intelligence, type **"site:makeuseof.com artificial intelligence"**. The results look like the following.



Google ads still display results from Google advertisers, but all regular search results are focused on the site that you're interested in. This is a great way to find an article that you read a long time ago on a site, and want to find it again. Sometimes Google Search works better than an embedded search right on the website itself.

Google Calculator

Sometimes while you're browsing the Internet, you might have the need to run a few calculations. Maybe you're paying your bills and need to run some numbers from your budget. Don't bother opening up calculator on your computer, just open Google Search and type in the formula.

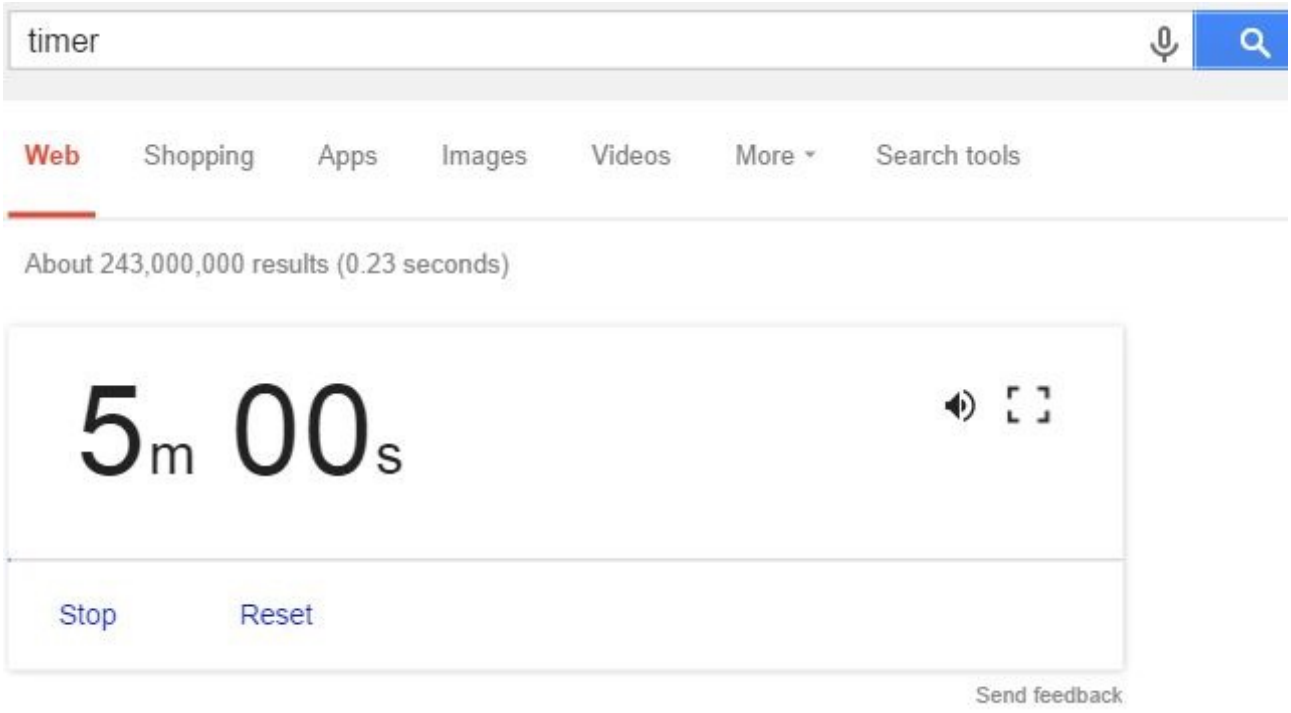


When you press the enter key, or click the search button, an embedded calculator pops up in the search results, displaying the answer to your calculation. You can use this calculator as any other calculator on your computer.

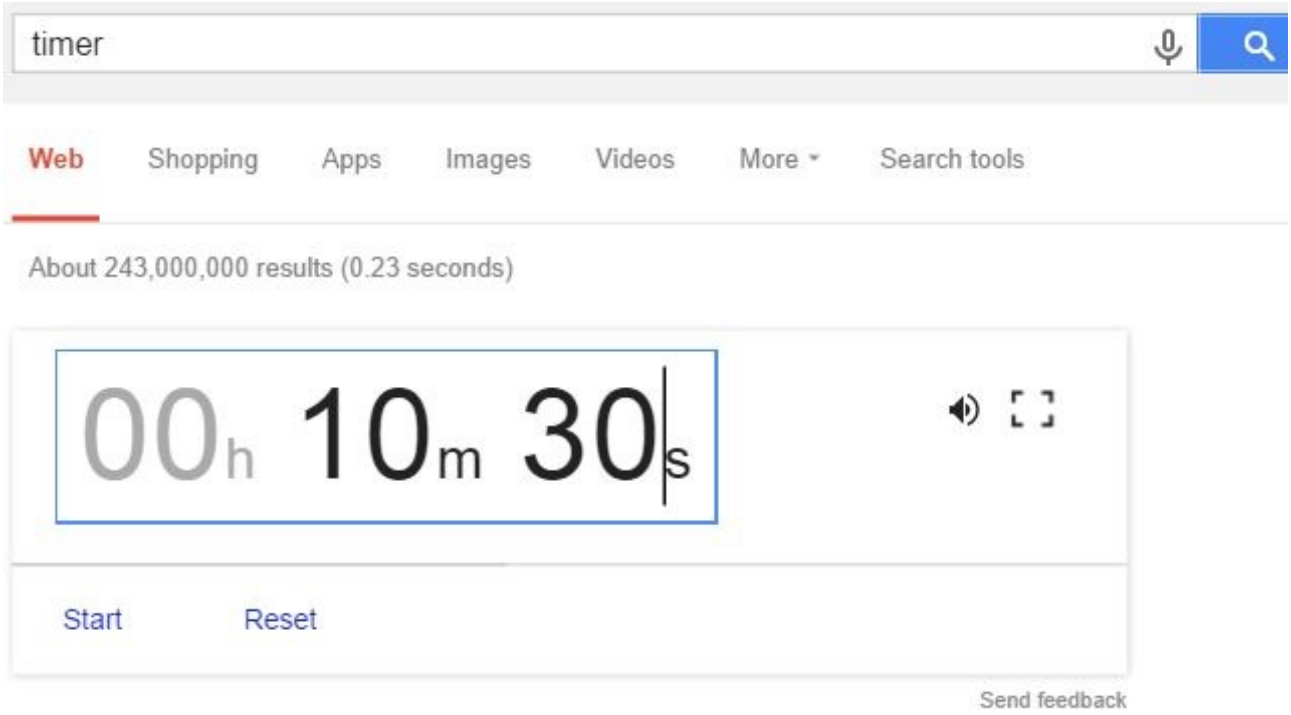
Pro tip: If you just want to launch the calculator without using an equation, just type "calculator" in the search field, and the embedded calculator will pop up.

Set a Timer

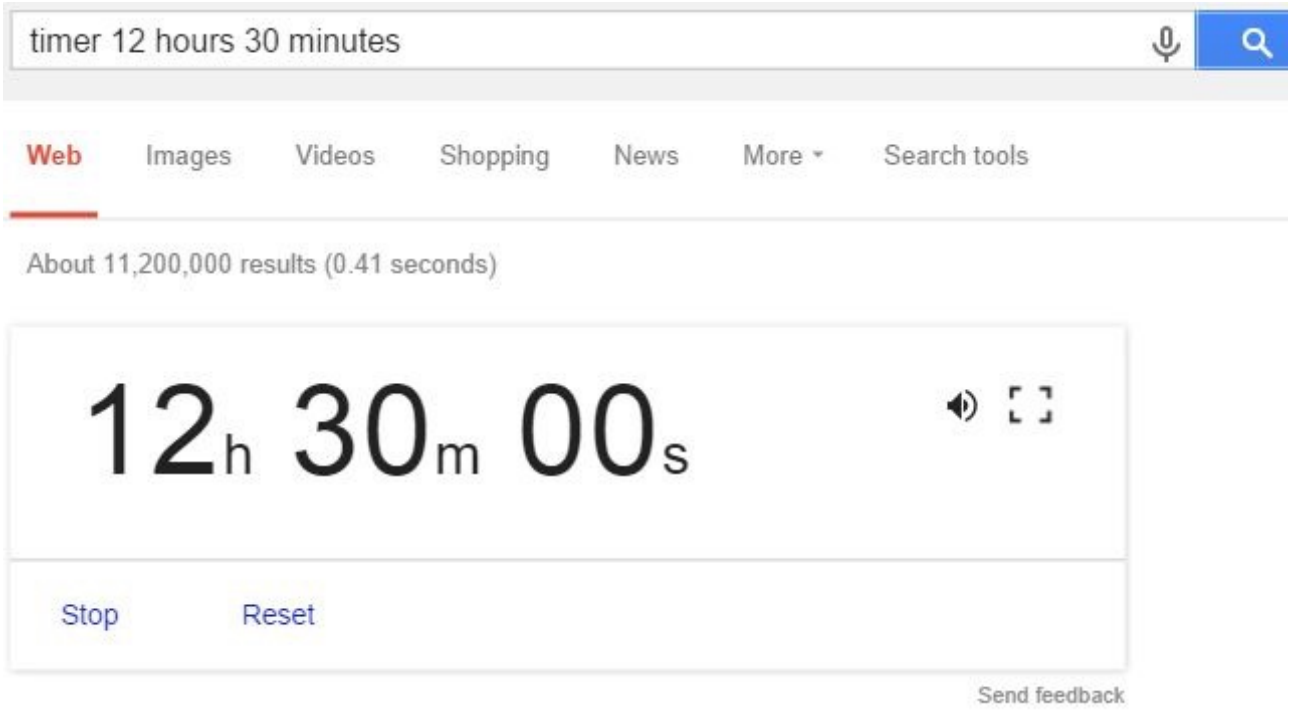
Did you just put a ham in the oven and sat down to use your computer, forgetting to set the oven timer? No worries, just type **"timer"** into the Google Search field to launch an embedded timer tool.



The timer defaults to 5 minutes. If you want to change the countdown period, just click in the timer tool and type in whatever you'd like the timer to count down from.



Or, save yourself some time and type the time you'd like right in the timer command itself. To set the timer for 12 hours and 30 minutes, just type **"timer 12 hours 30 minutes"**.

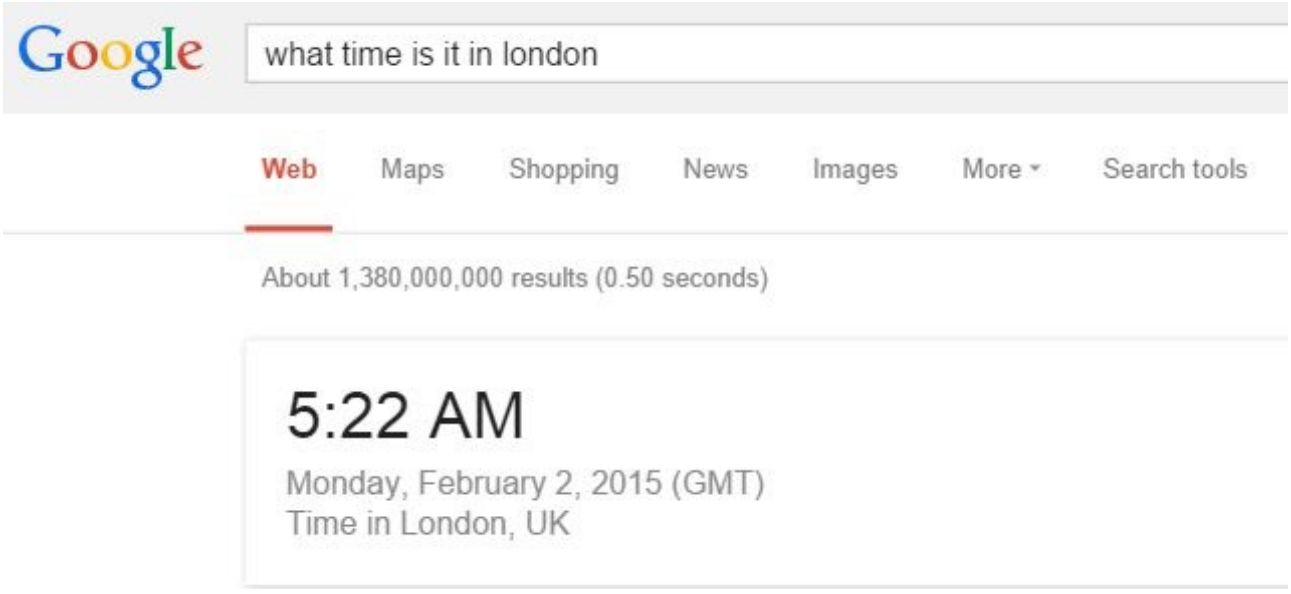


The timer will emit a loud beeping sound when it hits zero, so don't forget to turn your computer speakers on. To fill the whole screen on your computer or mobile device with the timer, just press the square symbol to the right of the speaker.

Of course, if you want some more functional online timers, you might want to consider going with one offered the 10 online timers that Saikat wrote about.

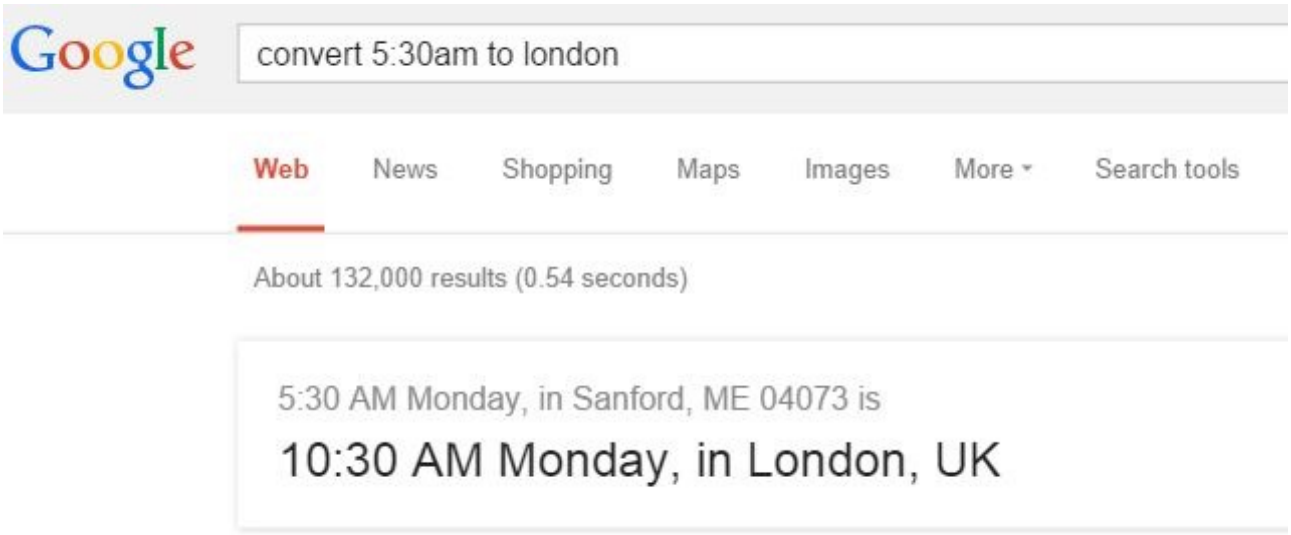
Convert Time Zones

Want to set up a meeting with someone from another country, and not sure what time zone they're in? Have no fear, once again Google is at the rescue. The easiest way to do this is to type, **"What time is it in London"**

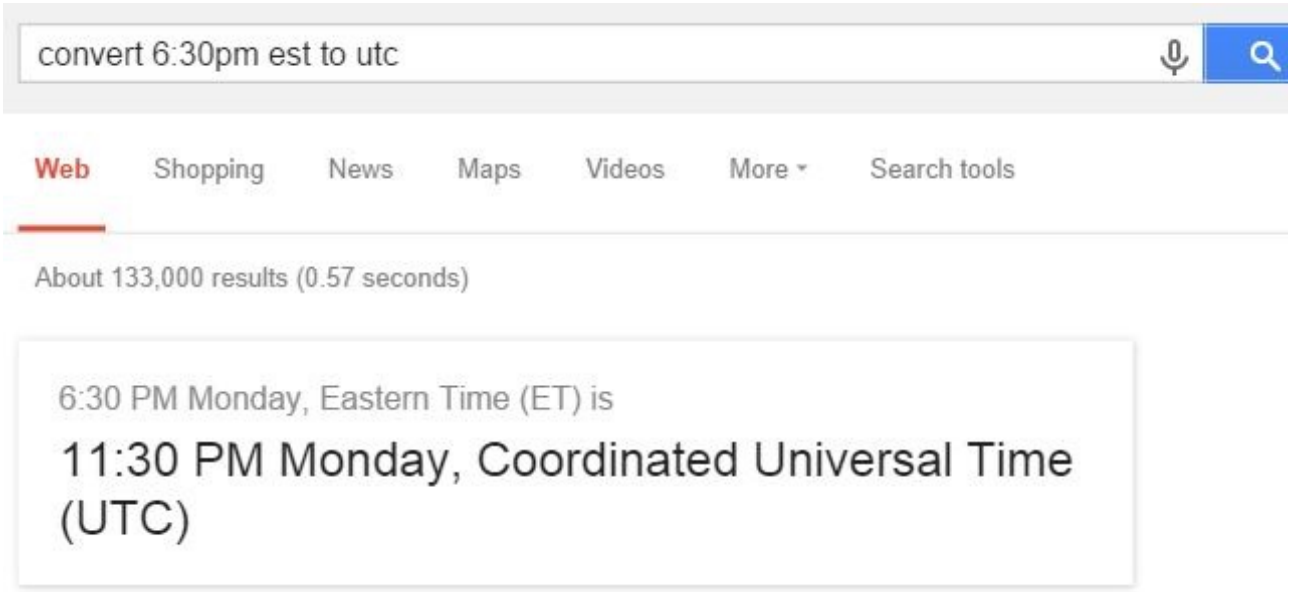


This shows you the time difference between your time right now, and the remote location.

A quicker way to check the right remote meeting time is to ask Google to do the conversion for you by typing (without quotes) — **"convert 5:30am to london"**.



You can also do a time conversion to specific time zones by typing something like, **"convert 6:30pm est to utc"**.

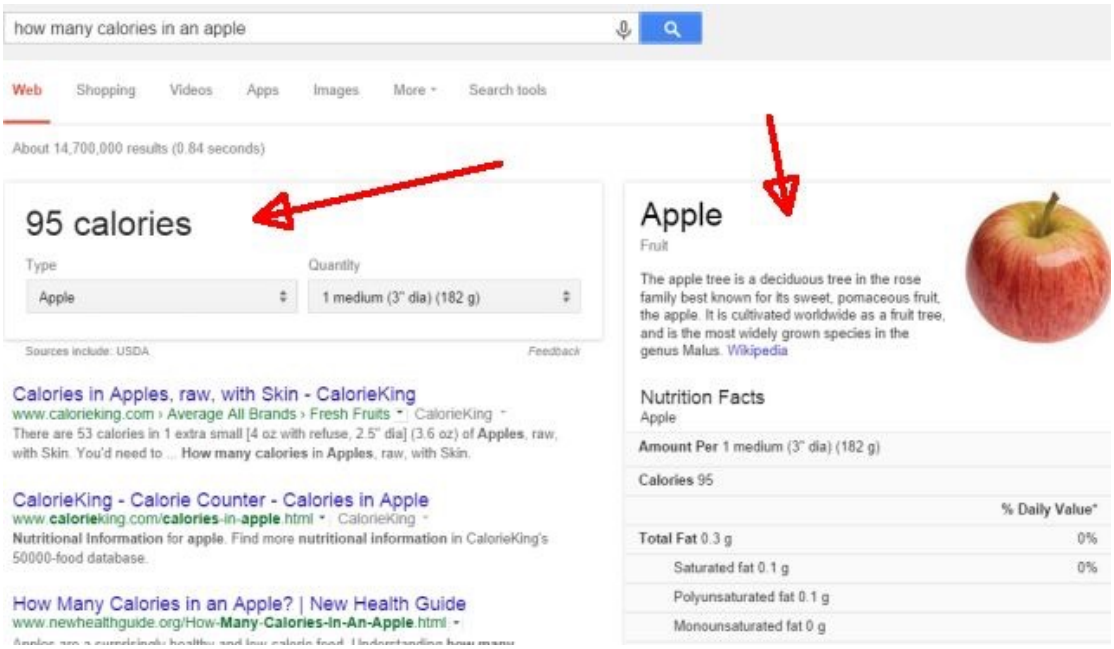


As you can see, Google Search in intelligent enough to take your plain English sentence asking for time conversions, and provide you with the exact answer you need.

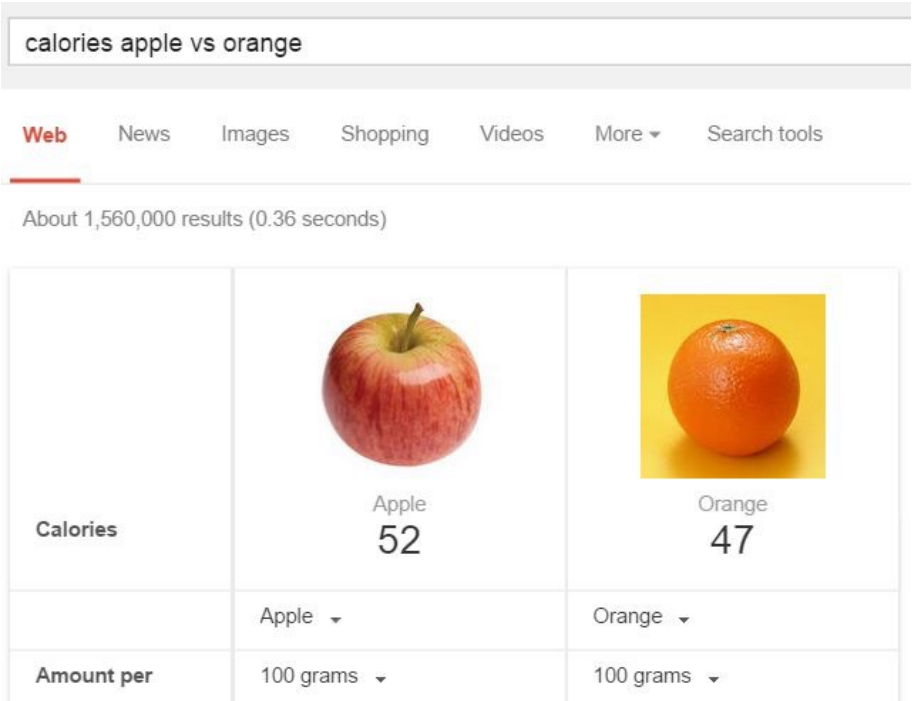
There are other ways to check or visualize time zones around the world, but Google search is convenient if you use it a lot.

Compare Calories

If you're on a diet and are watching your caloric intake, Google is there for you. This is the calorie counting feature in Google Search Saikat wrote about a couple of years ago. You can check the calorie content and nutritional information for specific foods by asking Google. For example, typing **"how many calories in an apple"**, you get the estimated calorie content, and on the right a full "nutritional label" for that food.



Also, you can compare the calories in different foods to see which one you can eat more of without gaining weight! Just type in **"calories apple vs orange"** to see the comparison.



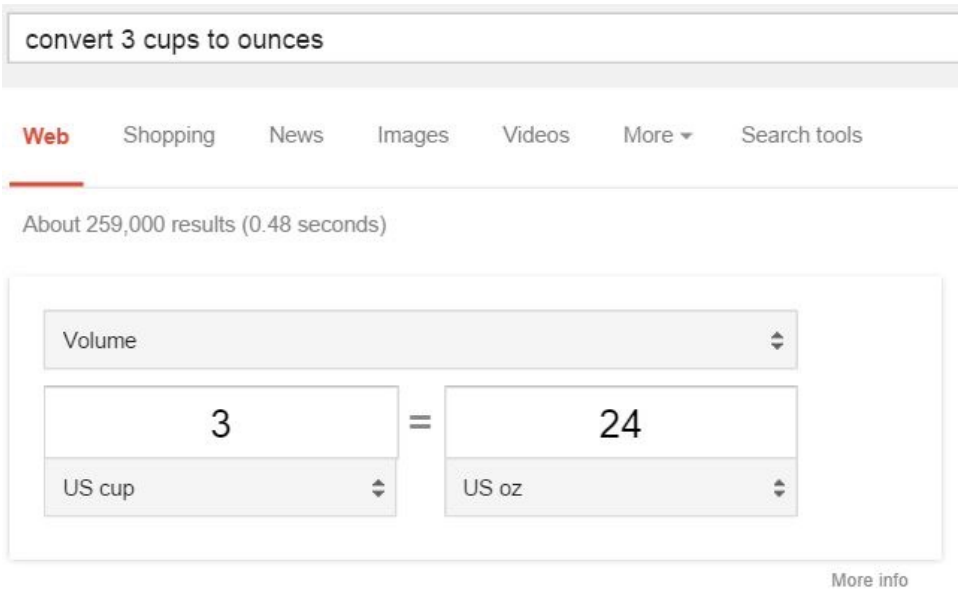
You'll also see a comparison of carbohydrates, sugar, vitamins and other nutritional information.

If you're really into eating healthier, there are also lots of great websites that'll give you nutritional information about various foods.

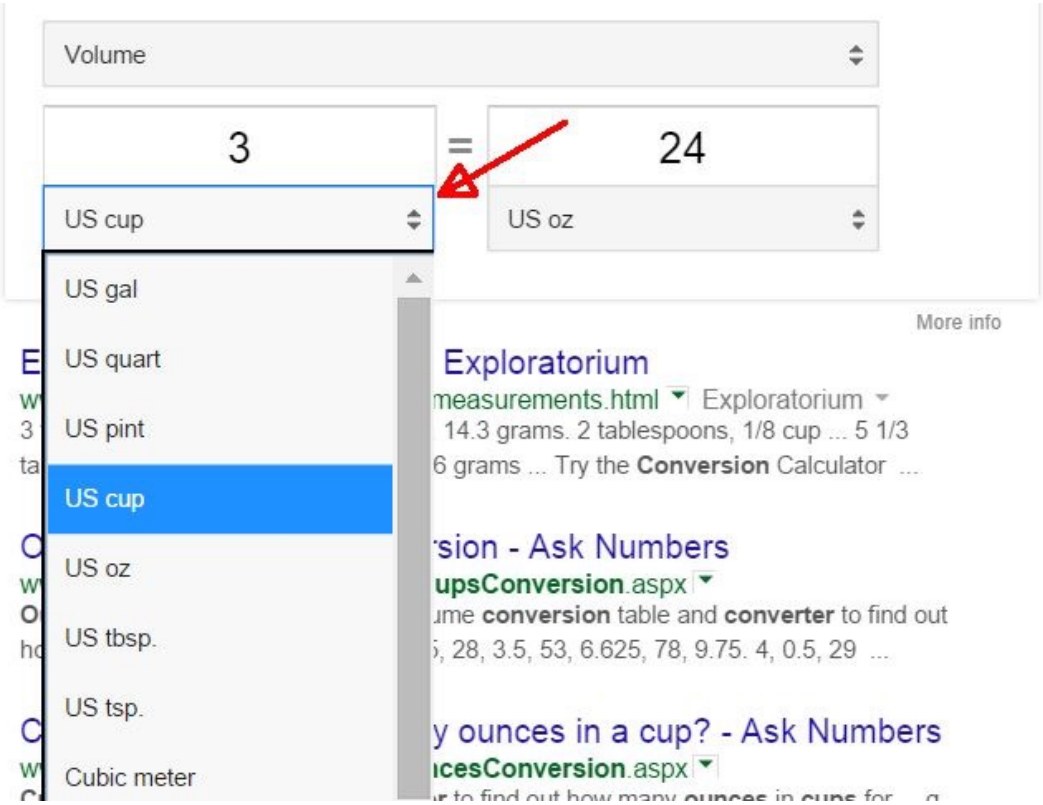
Convert Units

There are lots of times when you may need to do a quick unit conversion, and sometimes it's difficult to do them in your head. Google has you covered when you're making a recipe and need to convert cups into ounces. Or you're traveling in another country and need to convert kilometers to miles.

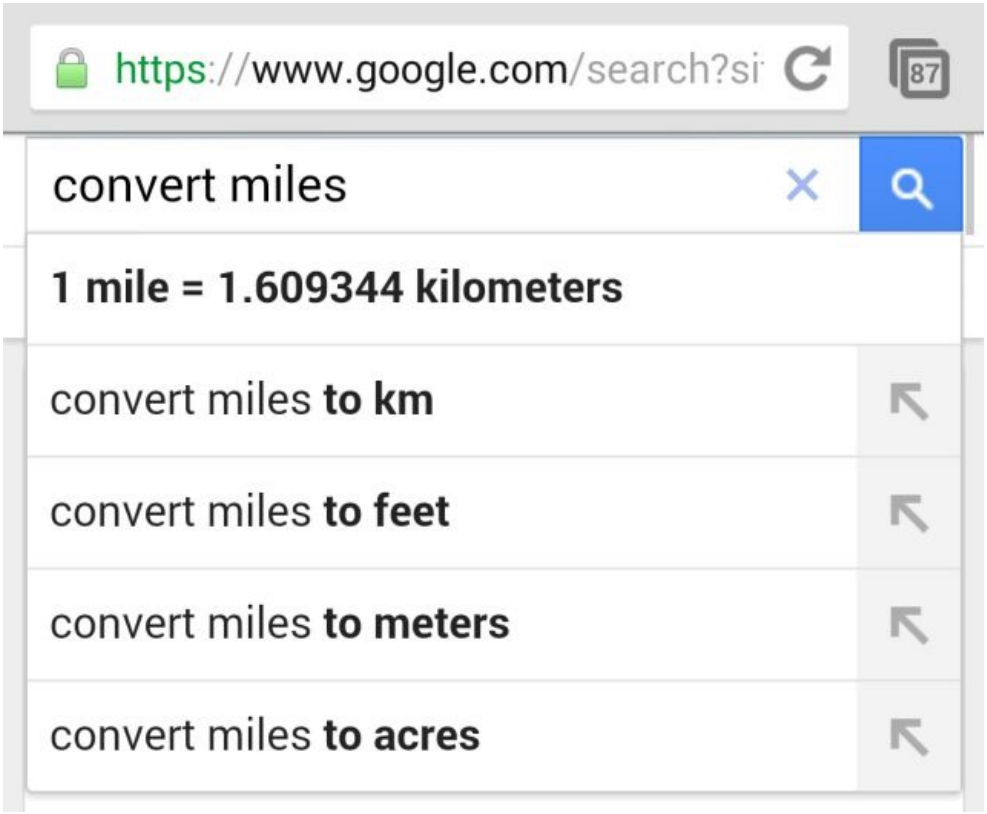
Converting in Google Search is as simple as typing something like "**convert 3 cups to ounces**". What you'll see in return is not just the answer, but an embedded conversion tool where you can alter either side of the conversion.



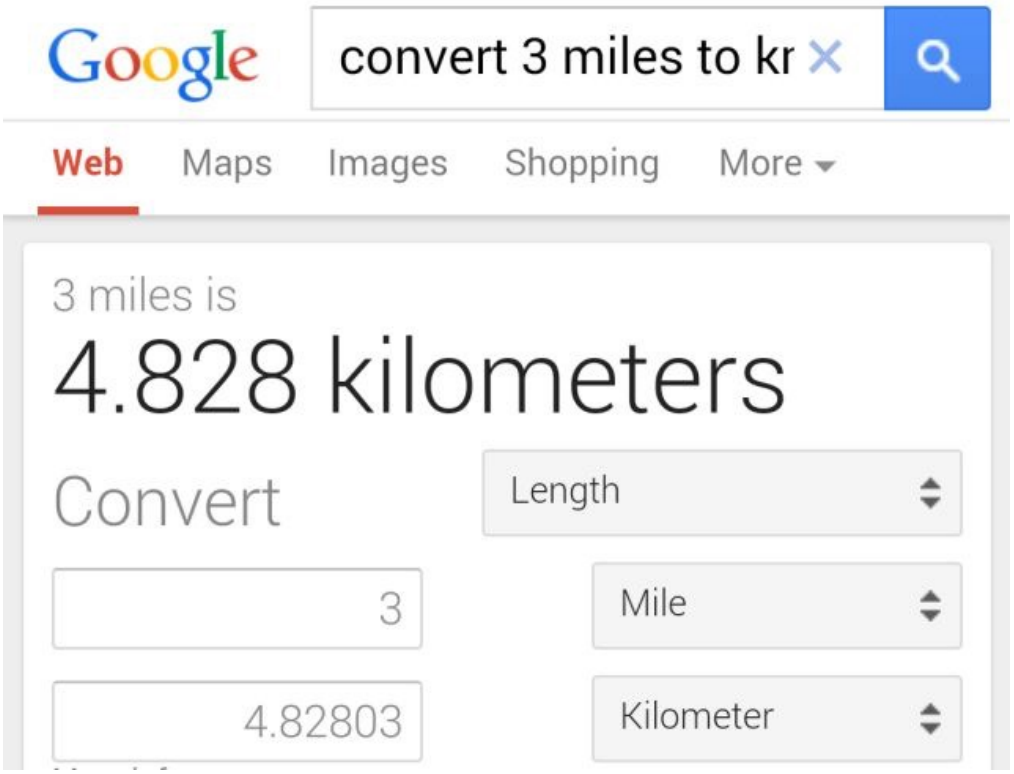
If you find that those weren't the conversion units you wanted, just click on the dropdown arrow on either side and choose a different unit to convert.



The same feature is available via your smartphone. In Chrome mobile, as you type in your conversion question, a dropdown list of results show up that aligns with your query.



Conduct your search, and a functional conversion tool shows up in the mobile search results.



The usefulness of having such a flexible conversion tool in your pocket everywhere you go can't be understated!

Check the Weather

Maybe, you just want to know what the weather looks like outside your office building at the moment, or you want to know how the weather is going to be during your vacation next week. Use Google as your own personal weatherman.

Type in "**weather**", and Google will identify your location based on your current IP address, and then provide you with the current temp, precipitation and humidity right now, as well as a 7 day forecast.

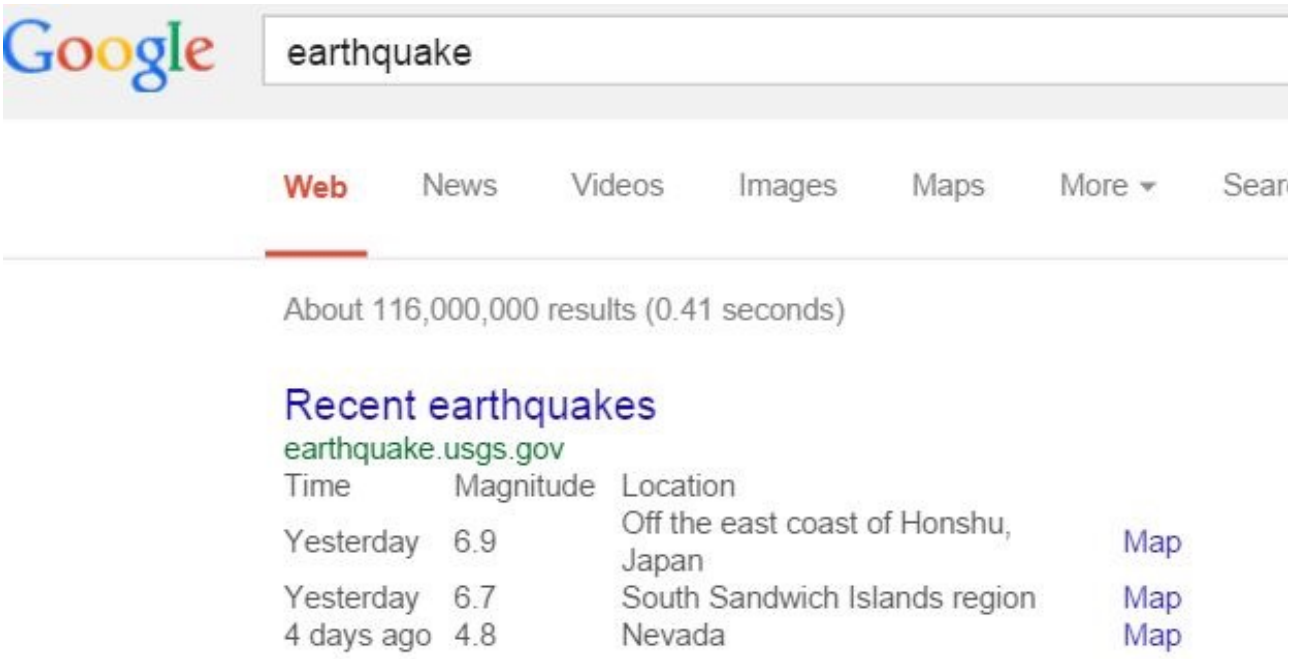
If you want to see the weather further out into the future, go ahead and ask Google for the weather next week.

You'll see the weather a week from now, and the 7 day forecast from that day onward.

There are lots of great weather watching sites and tools like Wunderground or Weather Watcher Live that do the trick. But if you're in a hurry, a Google Search powered by Weather.com is all it takes.

Check Recent Earthquakes

The weather isn't the only thing Google Search can tell you about. Did you know you can get a full report of recent earthquakes by typing "**earthquake**" into the Google Search field?

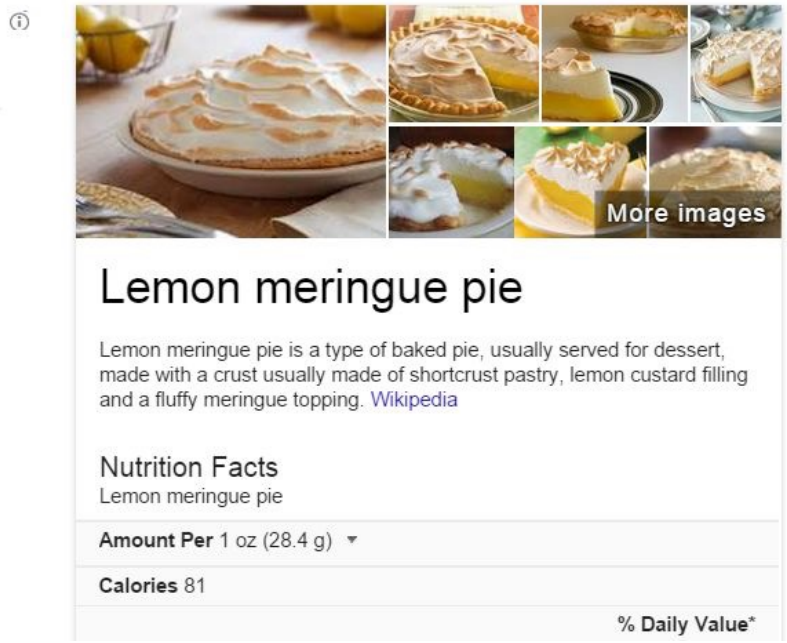


This gives you a short list from the USGS of the most recent earthquakes around the world, including the time they occurred, the magnitude of the quake, and the location.

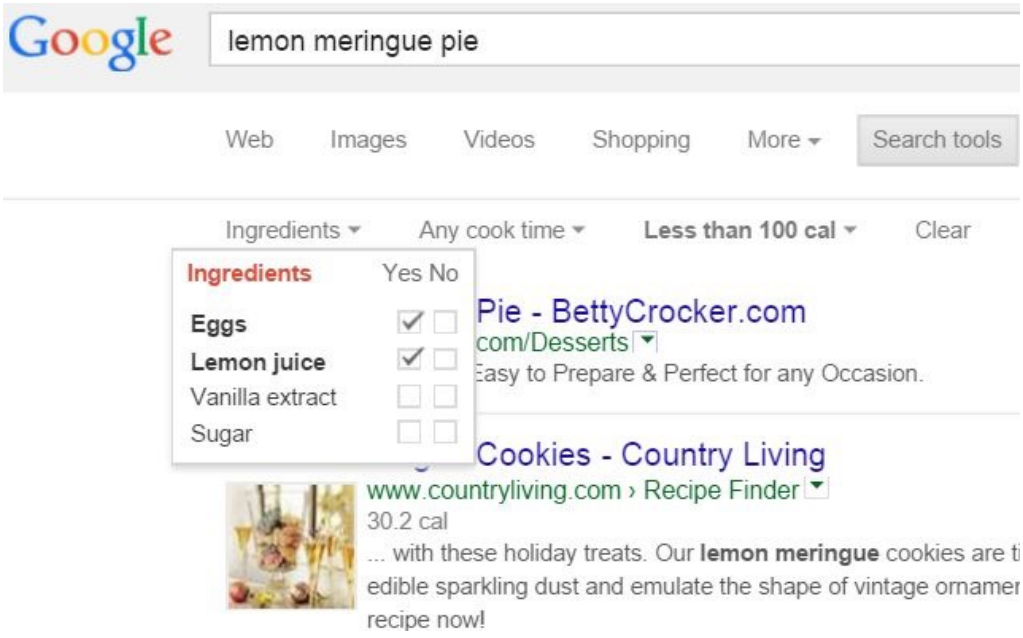
Keep in mind that for deeper research into these threats, there are plenty of earthquake tracking web services out there. Then Android weather apps and iPhone weather apps give you lots of valuable earthquake information in your pocket too.

Find Recipes

Are you a foodie? Do you get excited at the prospect of trying some new recipe you've never cooked before? You may be surprised to learn that Google has access to thousands of recipes — anything that you could possibly need. Imagine having instant access to a giant library of recipes and nutritional food information. All you have to do is type in something like "**lemon meringue pie**" into the search field, and there you've got the nutritional information about the dish, alongside search listings.



If you click "Search Tools" in the menu at the top of search results, you can select specific ingredients that you want to find recipes for.

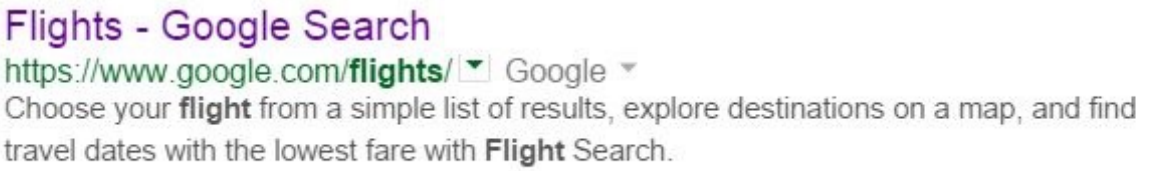


This will filter the "recipe view" search results to show only sites that have recipes featuring only those ingredients. It's like a food-lover's dream search engine!

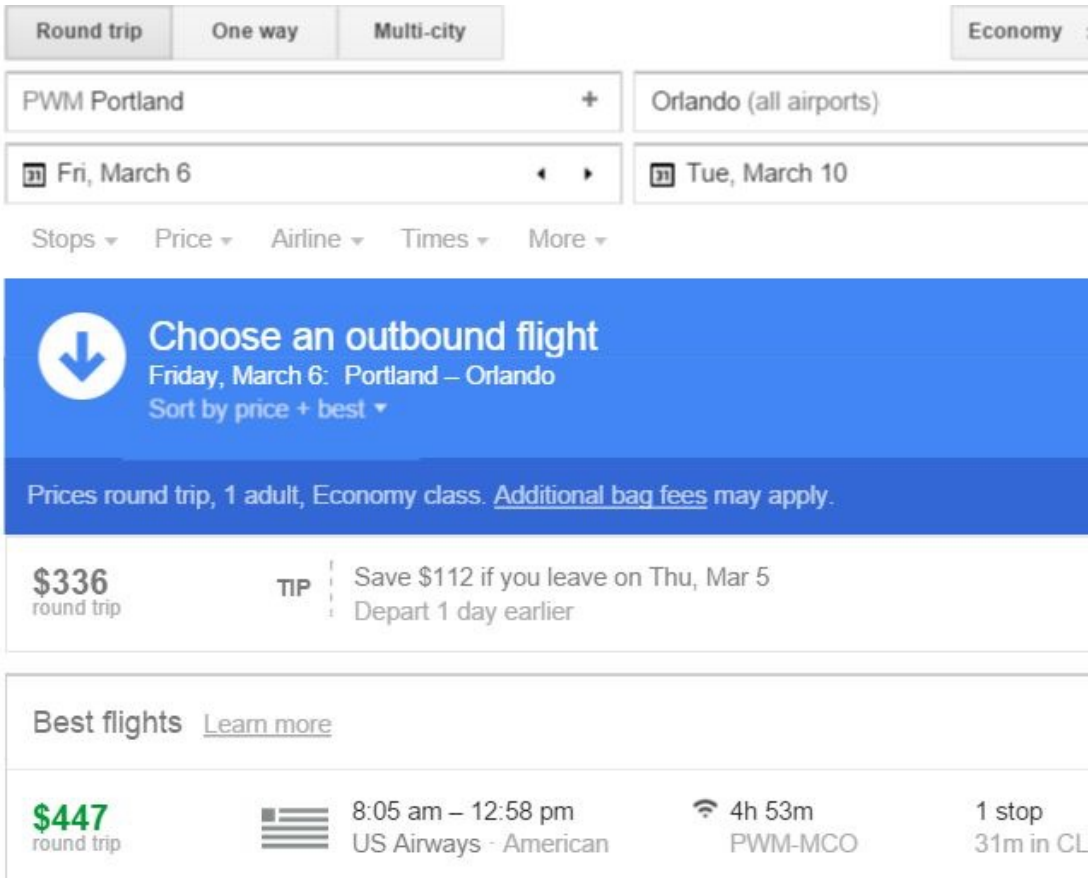
Recipe lovers should check out Joel's review of 4 websites filled with affordable recipes, or Saikat's review of 6 websites that show you how to cook with leftovers.

Check Flight Schedules

If you're a frequent traveler and need to stay on top of flight times, Google may become your best friend. The fastest way to look up flight times for your local airport is to search google for "**flights**". You'll see a convenient embedded flight search tool come up.



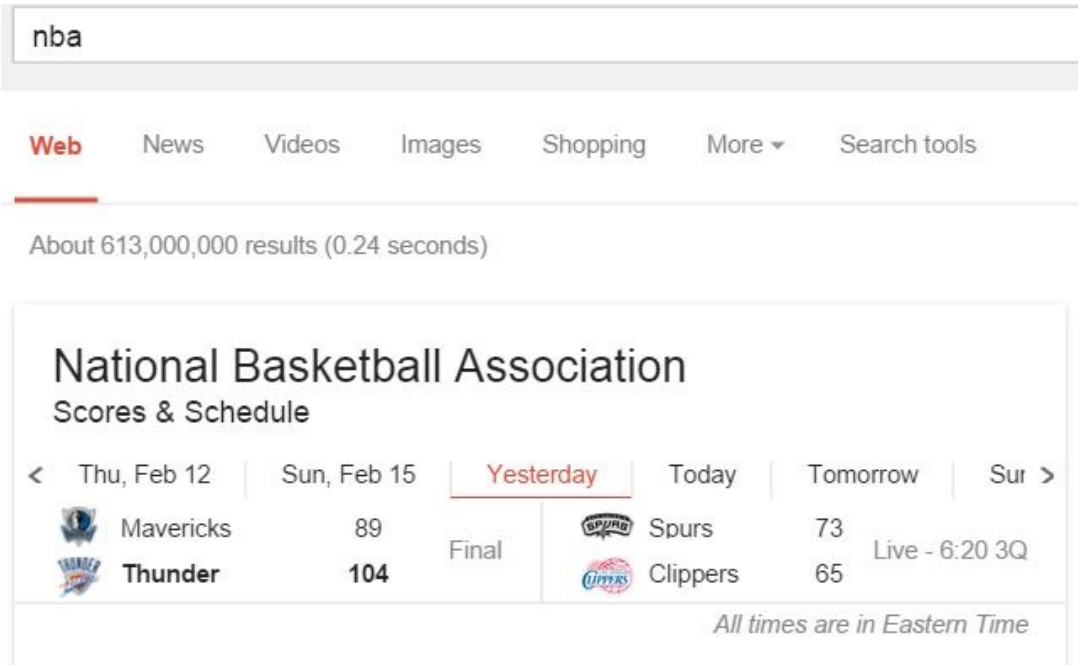
Type in your destination, and get all the flights heading out of your local airport.



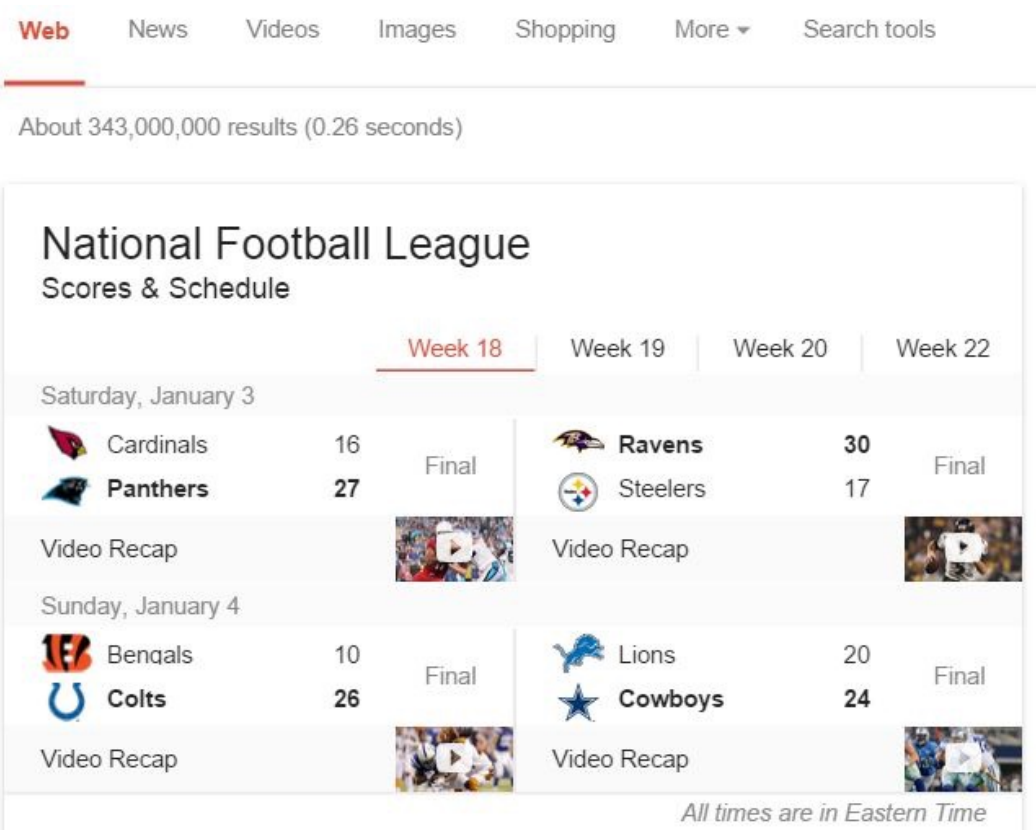
If this is a tool that you find yourself using often, then you'll want to bookmark Google Flights, so you can access this page directly for your flight time research.

Check Sports Schedules & Scores

Are you a huge sports fan? Well, Google makes it super-easy to track your favorite sports teams. Depending on the sport, you can search for a particular league, and get the upcoming season games. For example, search for NBA, and you get the schedule for upcoming basketball games.



You can also scroll through the results of recent games. For example, if you want to track the lead-up to the NFL Superbowl where the New England Patriots usually win — it's easy!

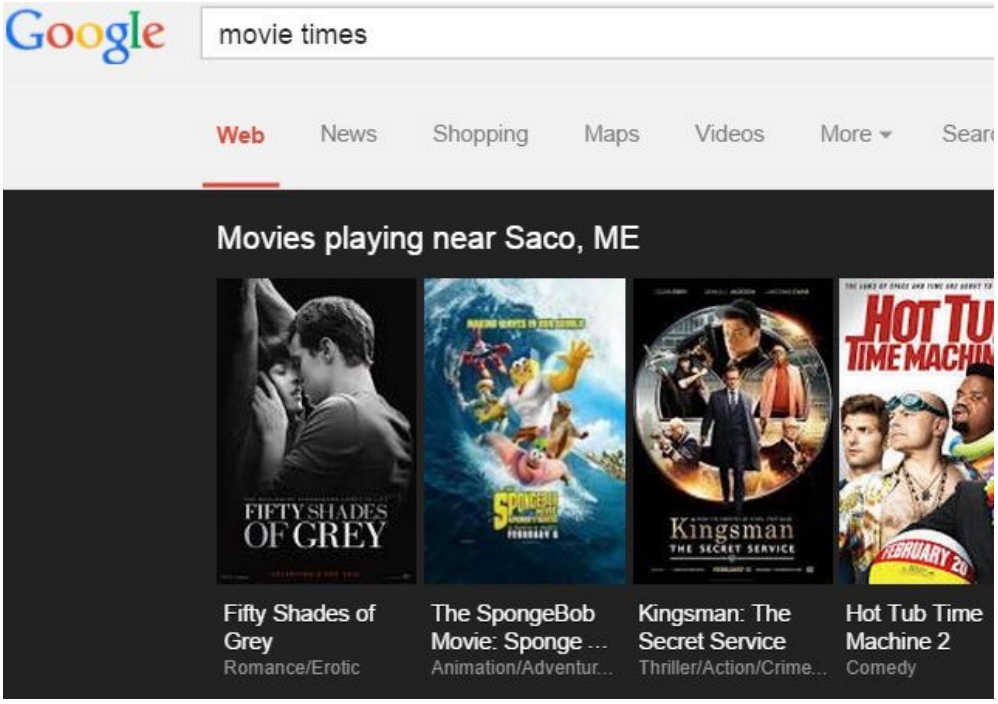


If you have a favorite team, all you have to do is search for the team name, and you get the game schedule.

Never miss a game again with Google Search at your fingertips!

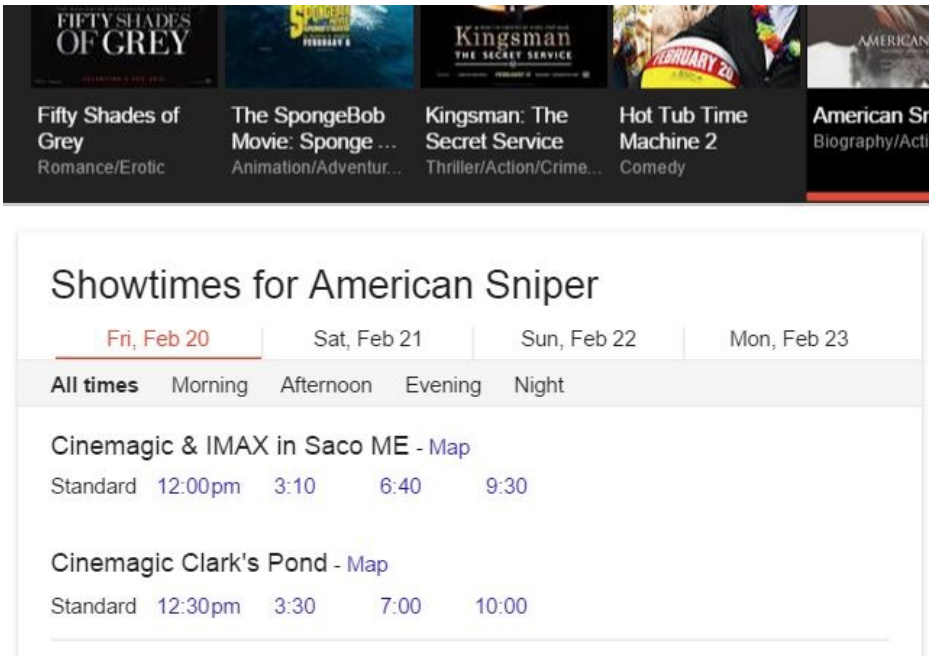
Check Movie Showtimes

It's not only sports schedules you can check with Google Search, you can also find movie showtimes in your area straight from the search field. Just type in "**movie times**", and Google will identify your location via IP, and present you with a list of movies that are showing in your area.



Pro Tip: You can also type something like "**movie times hartford ct**" for the movies that are available in some other area.

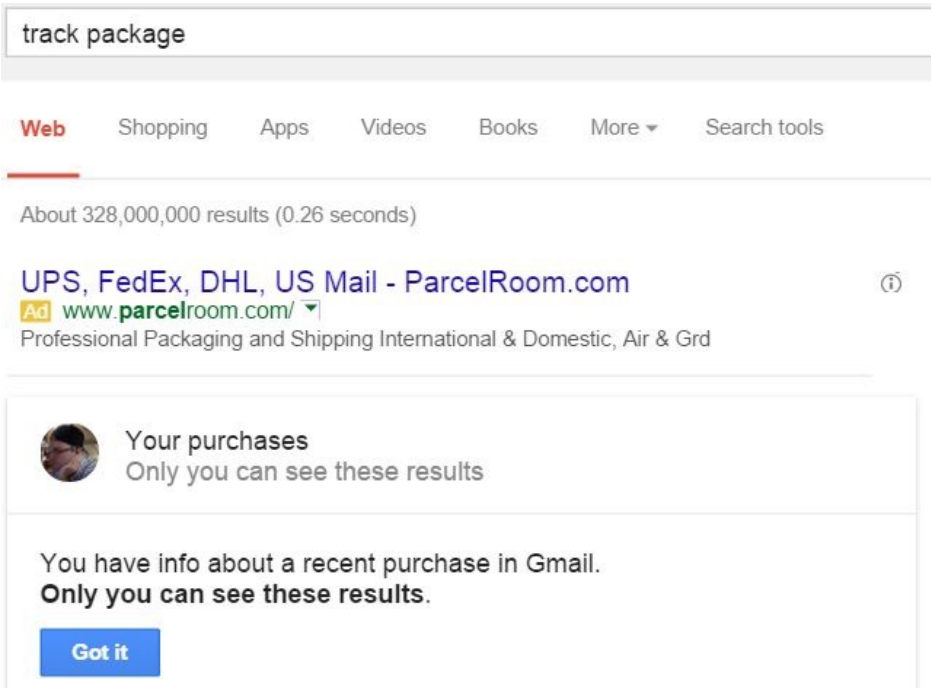
Click on any of the movies, and the showtimes at local cinemas appear underneath the movie listings, embedded in the search results.



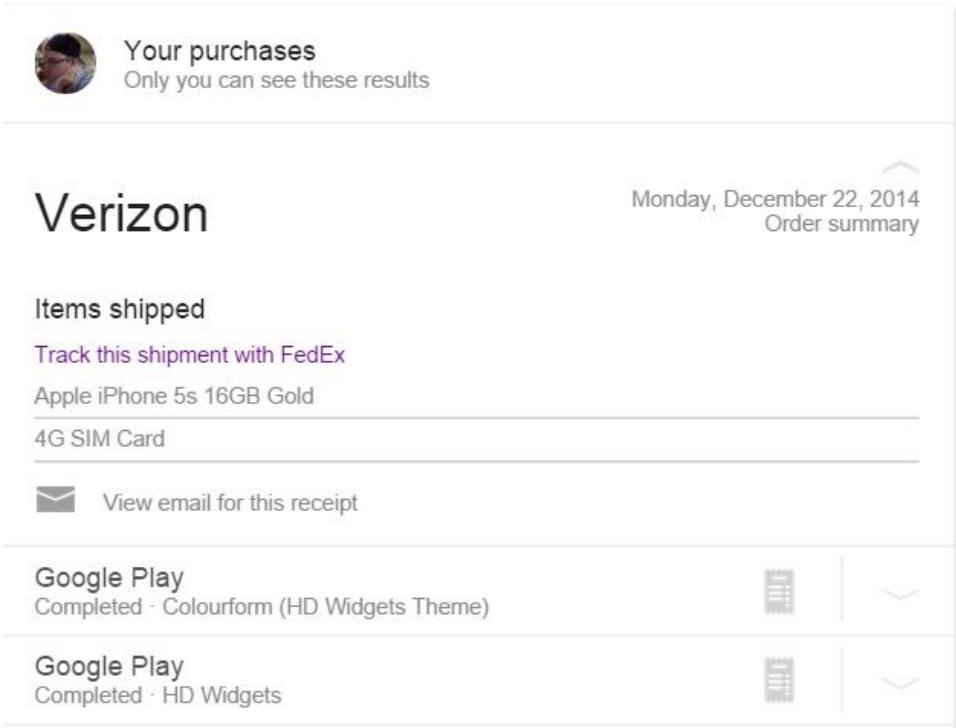
As you can see, you can click on the link for any other day to see what future showtimes are, click on a period of day (morning or night) to see showtimes during that time of day. Click through to visit that cinema's web page for purchasing advance tickets for that specific show.

Track Your Package

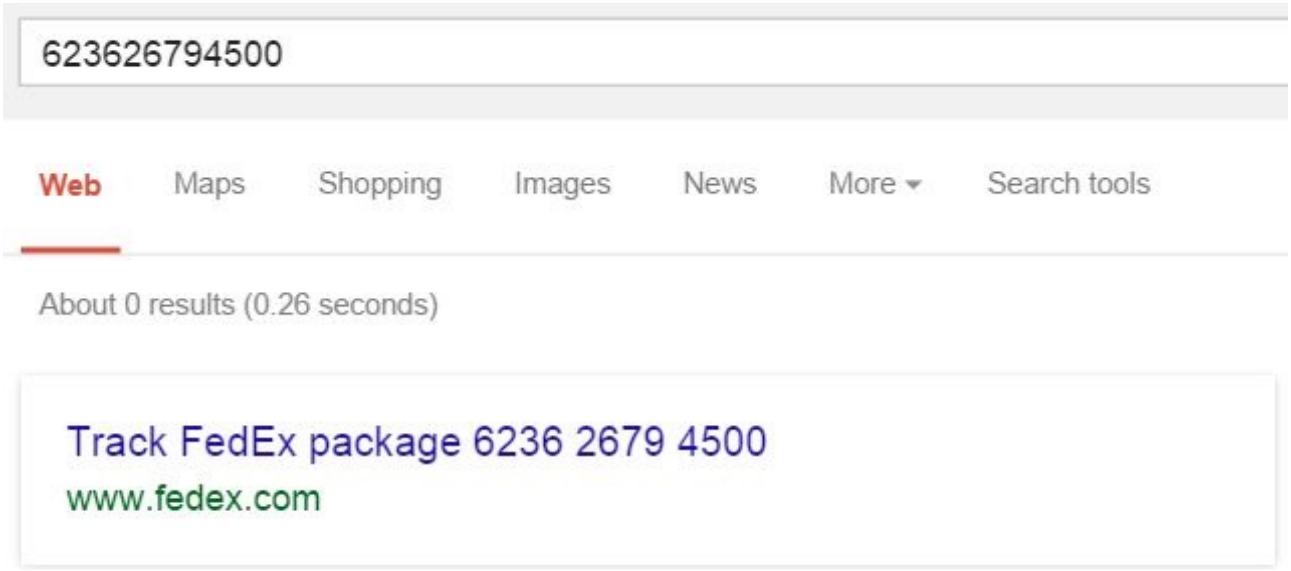
Did you know that if you're logged into Google, you can track your packages for the major shipping carriers? If you've ordered anything from Google-related companies (like from your Android smartphone), all you have to do is search for the term "**track package**".



Google presents you with a list of packages it recognizes were purchased by you, and you can click to track any of them.



It doesn't really matter who you ordered from. Track any UPS, USPS or FedEx package by typing a valid tracking number from any of those carriers into the search field.

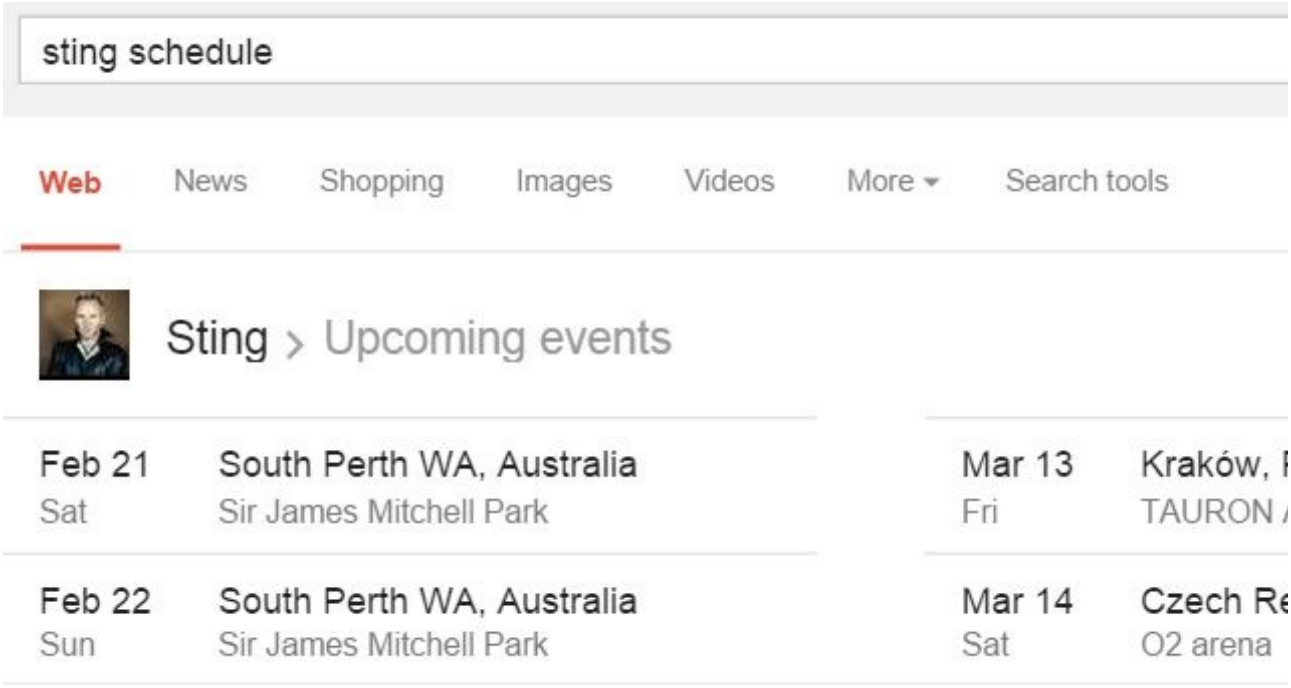


Google recognizes the correct carrier, and you get a link to visit that site for instant access to tracking information for that package. Sure, you could first go to the carrier website to do the tracking search, but why waste time when you can do that package search right from Google Search?

There are also lots of package tracking websites you can use if you track packages all the time.

Find Your Favorite Band's Songs

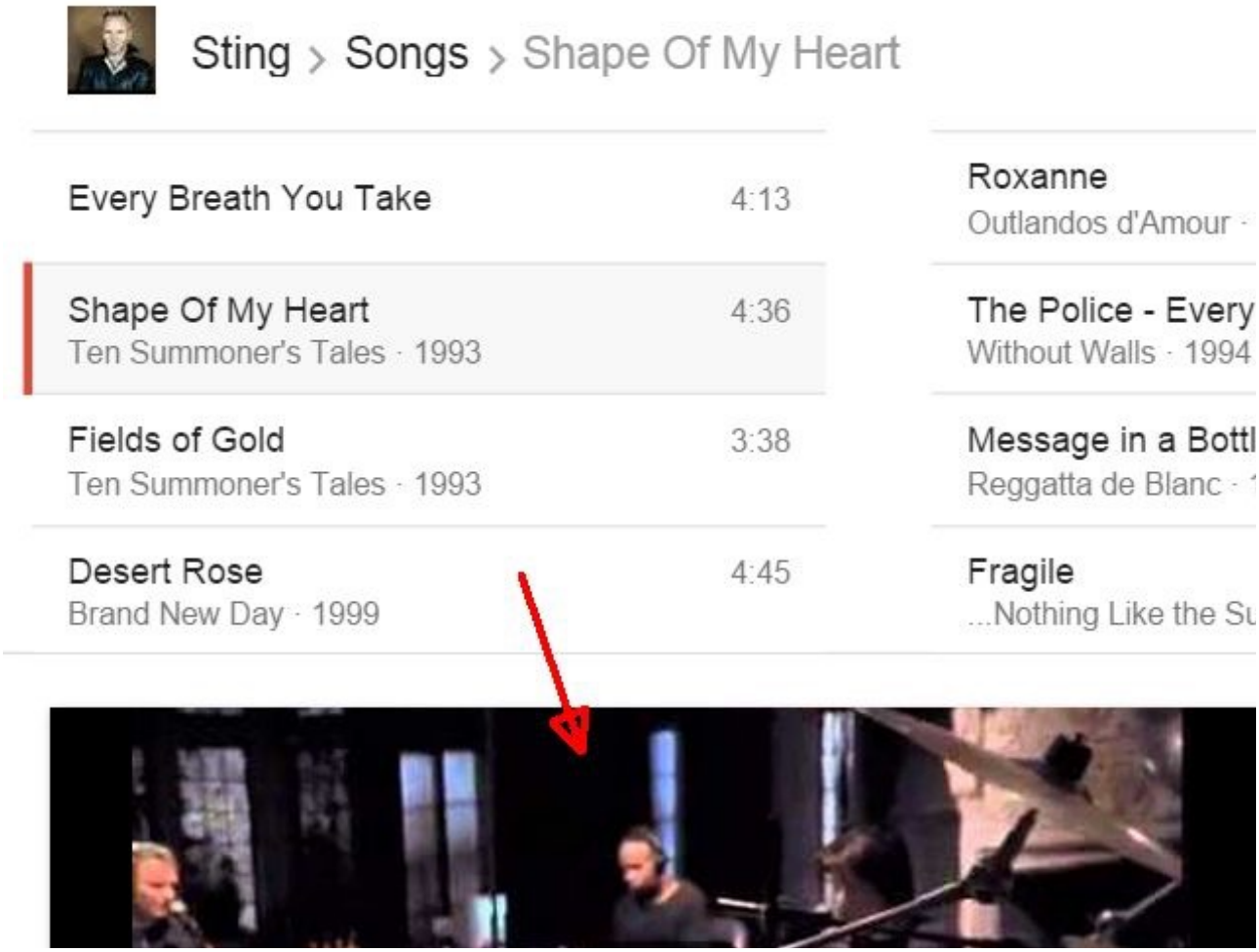
Okay, so maybe you're not into sports, but you are a music aficionado. Have no fear, band tracking is here. Just type in the name of your favorite band or artist followed by "**schedule**" and you can see all their upcoming showtimes and locations.



Click on any of the show dates, and you will see some more details about the show, as well as the venue and a map of the location.

If you think that is cool, scroll to the right and you'll see a Wikipedia-like bio area filled with lots of information about the artist. Scroll down and you'll even find a listing of their most popular songs.

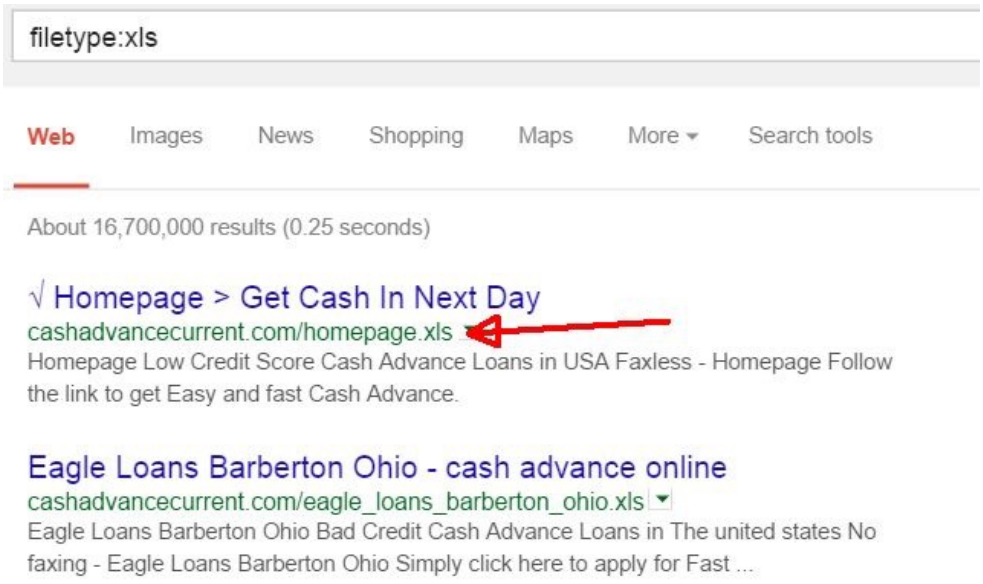
Click any of these, and be transported to a magical page of Google search results for those songs. Click any of those to see if there's a YouTube video of it available (it'll show up under the listings).



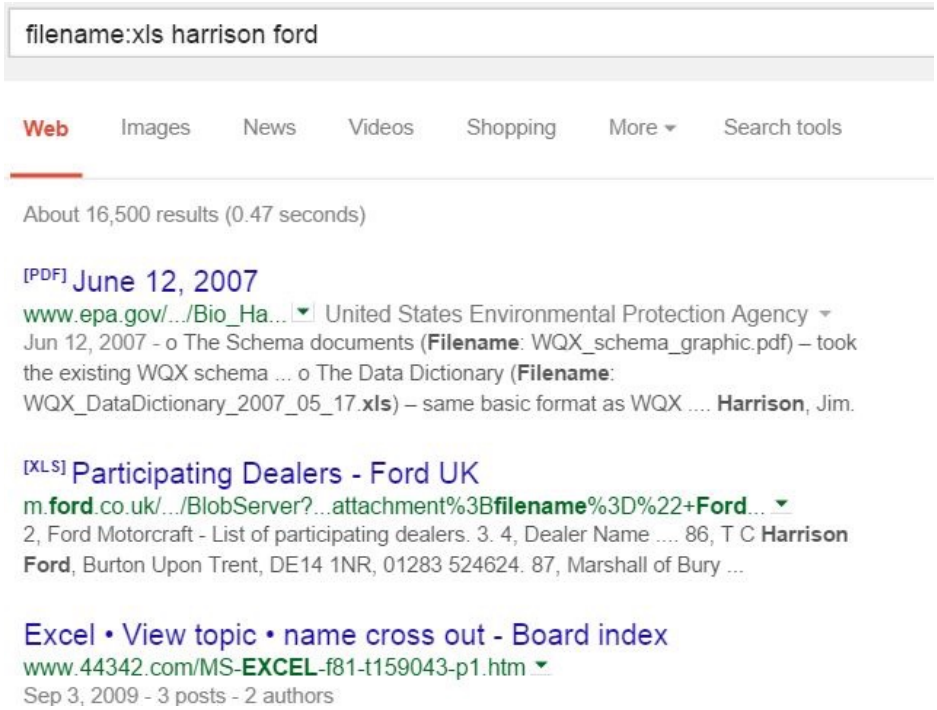
Google Search just became every music fan's dream come true!

Search for File Types

If you're a connoisseur of certain programs, you can scour Google for files with that program's file extension. For example, if you want to see what Excel files are available across the web for download, you can use the "filename" code word to ask Google to give you results of only XLS files. The command for this is "**filename:xls**".



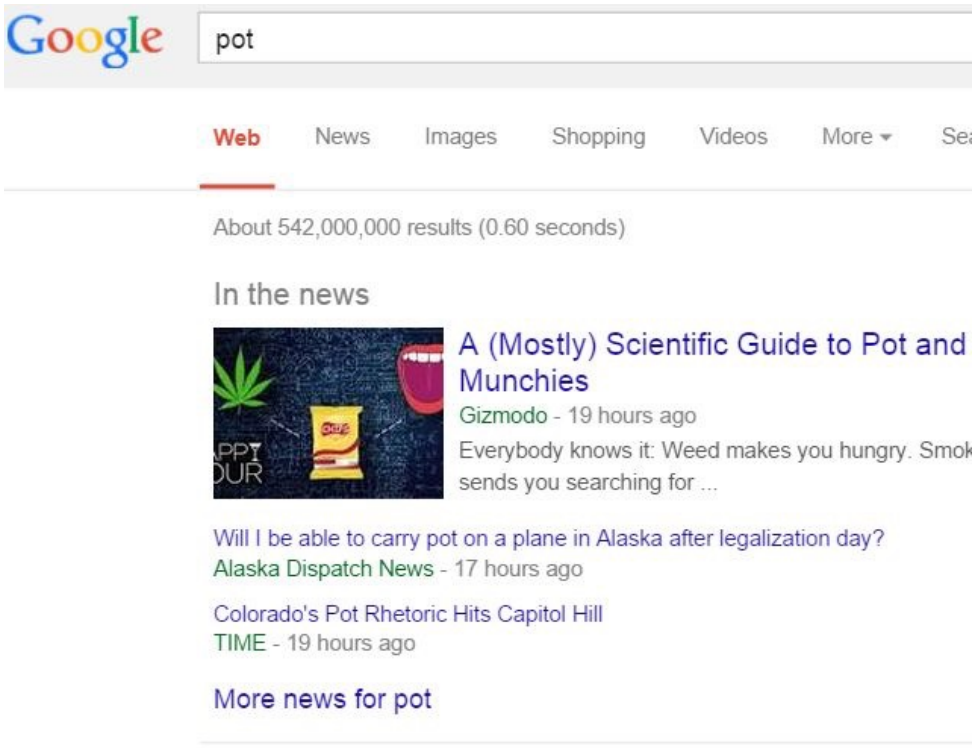
Download files to your heart's content. Of course, this gives you every single xls file across the Internet. Not very helpful. Maybe instead, you might only be interested in Excel files that contain information about Harrison Ford. Just type, "**filetype:xls harrison ford**", and your results will be filtered accordingly.



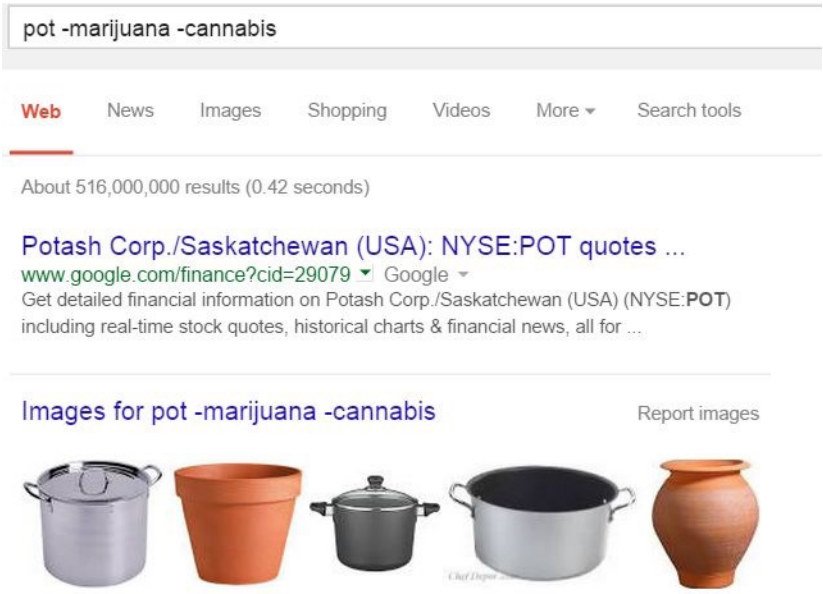
Okay, not a likely search of course. Most people would probably look for an image file of an actor! There are a lot of filetypes you can search the web for, and they're all found on a Google Support page listing all filetypes that are indexable by Google.

Ignore Certain Words

Sometimes when you're looking for certain information on topics or words with meanings, it can be useful to block certain words from search results. For example, if you search for the word "**pot**", you get every result from cannabis and marijuana to pottery and even our own author Justin Pot!



You can filter out results you don't want by typing "**-**" followed by words or sites that you want Google to ignore. So then "pot -marijuana -cannabis" turns up some cleaner results!

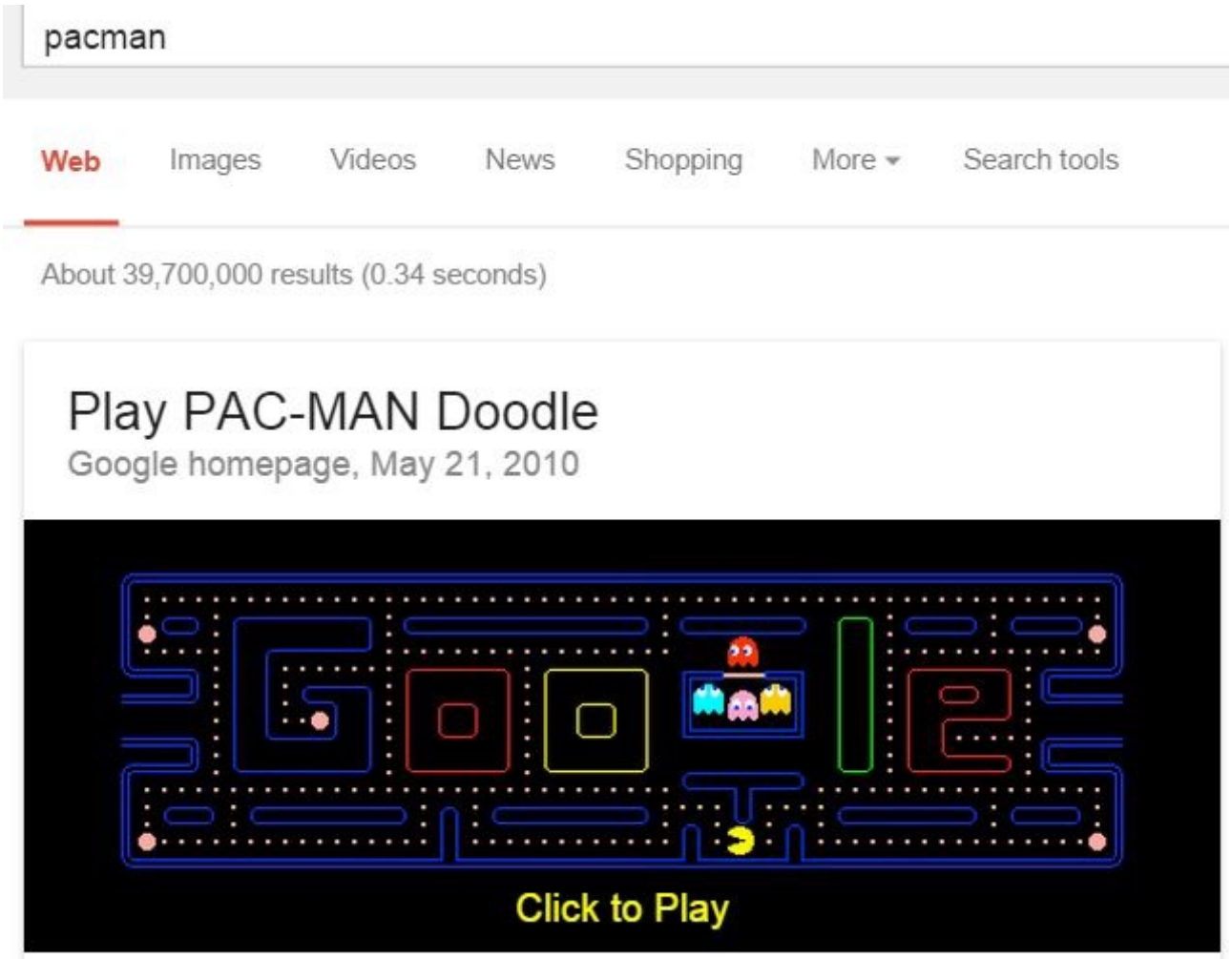


Now you research pottery to your heart's content, without looking like a pothead!

There are lots of Google Search operands that Tina listed. With their help, your web searches will be more efficient and accurate.

Play Pacman!

Feel like a quick game of Pacman? Fine! Just search google for "**pacman**" and you'll have access to the Pacman Google Doodle game.

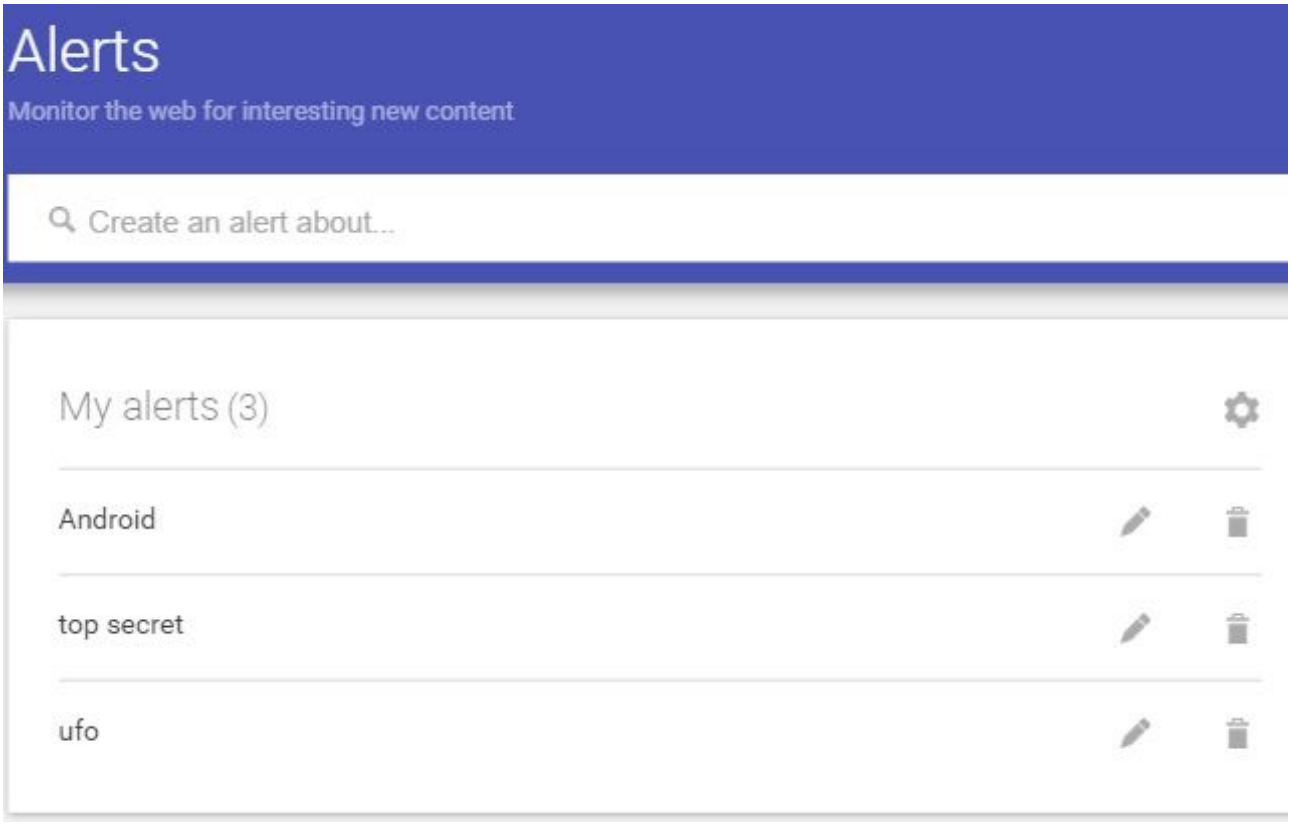


That's not the only game available. You can also try all sorts of other past interactive games and activities on the interactive Google Doodle page.

If you love Google Doodles, make sure to check out Dave's review of playable Google Doodles.

Set up Google Alerts

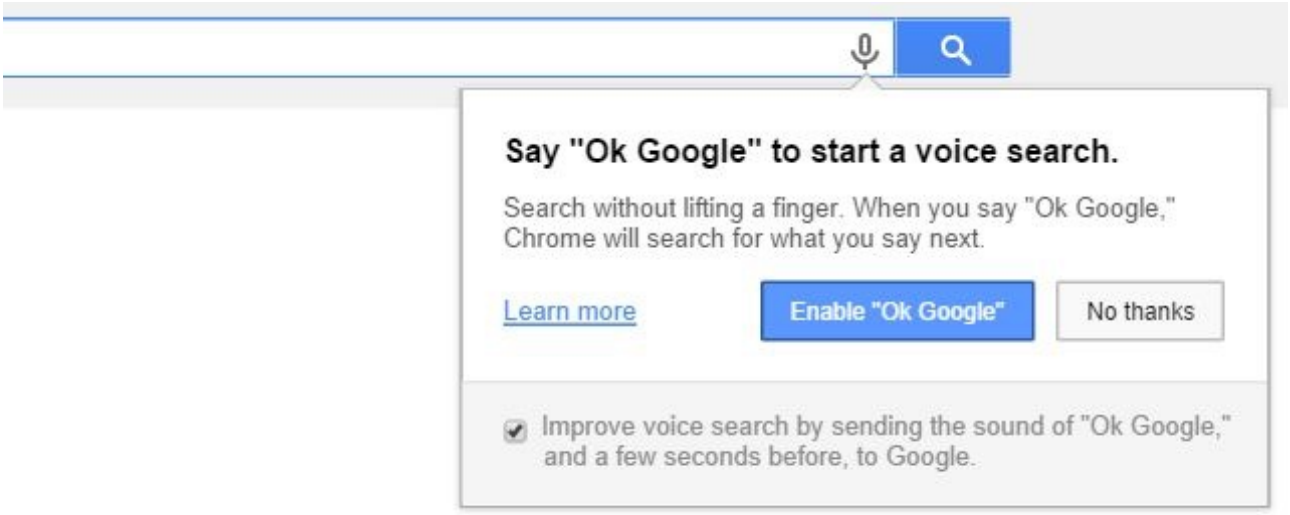
There are times when you may want to know when specific Google Search results change with new listings in those results. Sure, you could conduct the search every day, or several times a day, but why go through the hassle when you could just automate that activity using Google Alerts?



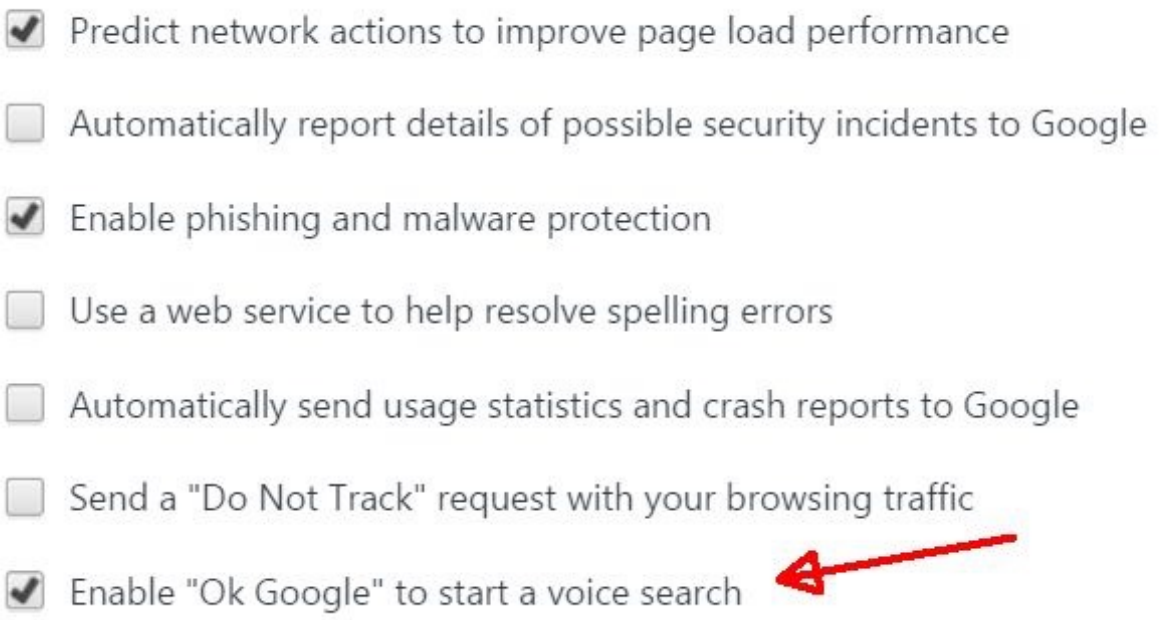
All you have to do is enter your favorite search terms into the "Create an alert about…" field, and Google will email you whenever there are new results. Use Google Alerts for things like new movies with your favorite actor, news reports about a disease you're concerned about, news about your favorite sports teams, and much more.

Using the "Ok Google" Voice Search

Feeling a bit lazy (or lacking a keyboard)? The good news is that you don't need a keyboard to use Google Search. On Google Chrome you can just enable the "Ok Google" feature by clicking on the small microphone icon in the Google Search field. This feature is also available for iPhone and Android phones.



You'll know Google is listening when you when you see the icon turn solid. You can also enable "Ok Google" in Chrome Advanced Settings under the "Privacy" header.

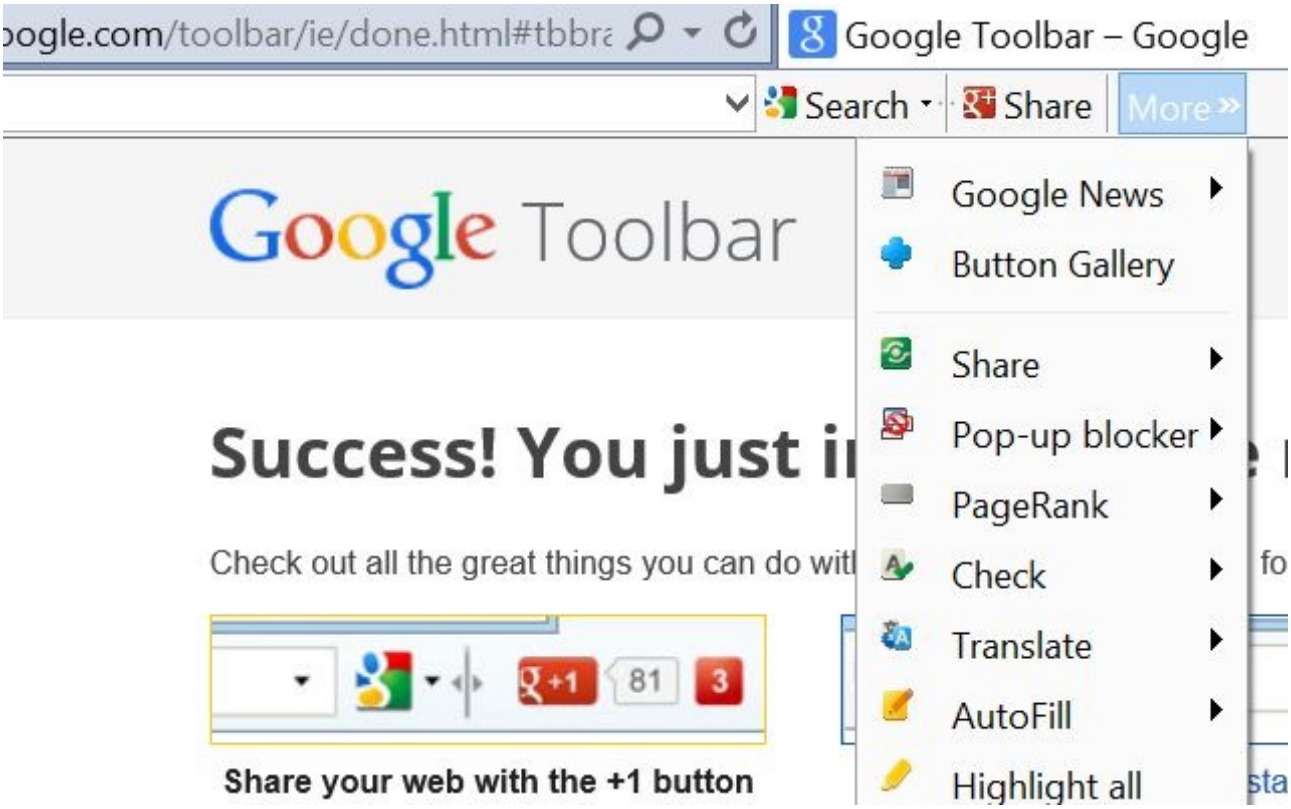


Andre described a list of cool commands you can say to Google Now beyond the standard search terms. Jason Cross over at Green Bot also provided a crazy thorough list of all commands you can say to Google Now.

The Google Toolbar — Should You Use It?

Google Toolbar sounds like a single weapon of advanced Google Search features for any browser. The truth is that Google Toolbar is only needed for people who don't use Chrome, but want advanced Google features integrated into their browser.

Furthermore, the Toolbar is only offered for users of Internet Explorer. The Firefox toolbar was discontinued in 2011. The reason offered by Google: "…many features that were once offered b



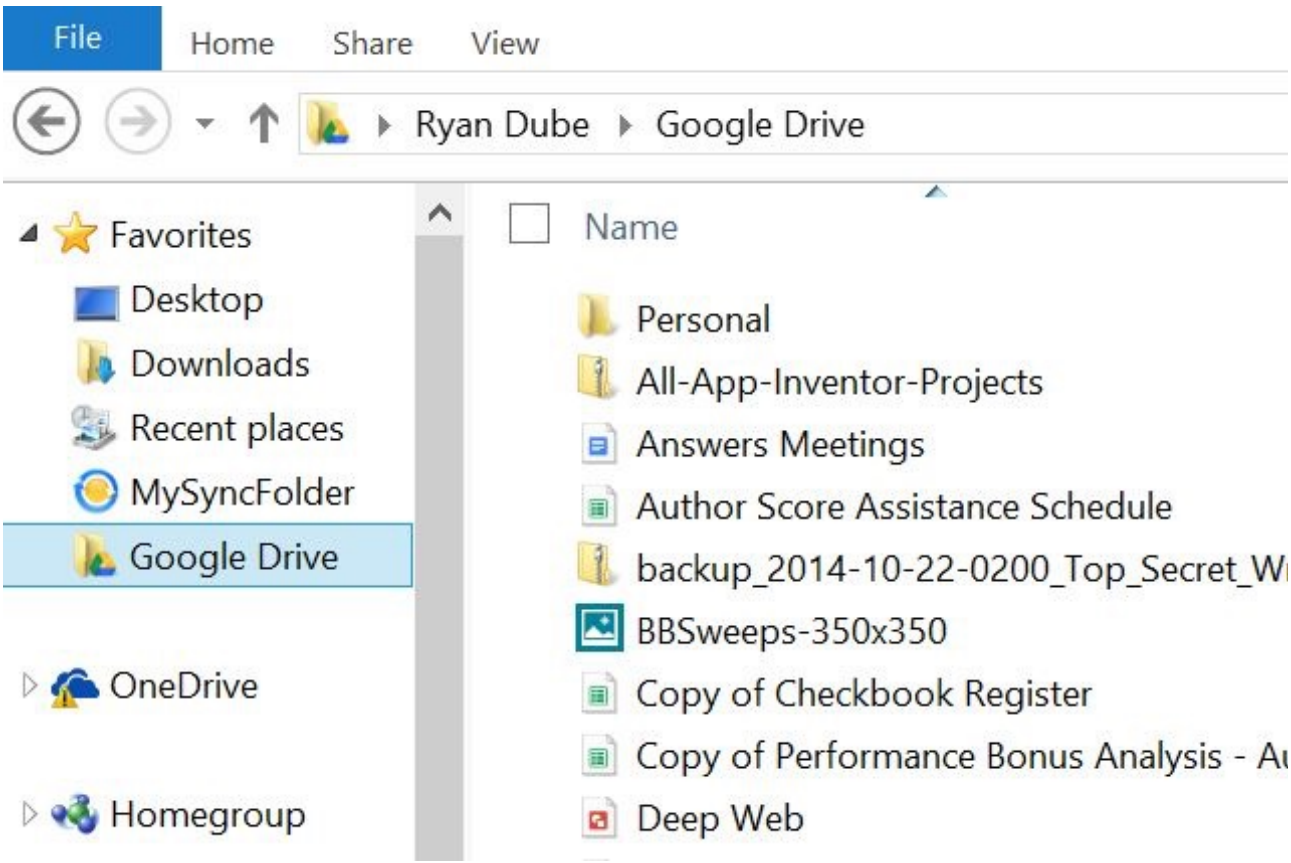
The toolbar lets IE users get access to conveniences like integrated Google Search, direct share to Google Plus, AutoFill, and other Google services integrated into the Google Chrome browser.

Google Drive Like You've Never Seen It

While Google Search is the most popular Google resource ever used on the Internet, Google Drive isn't too far behind. With Google Drive, create documents, spreadsheets and manage your own files right from the convenience of a cloud solution — accessible anywhere.

Mount Google Drive

The beautiful thing about Google Drive is that there are so many integrated apps that make it accessible from everywhere, including your mobile devices. Installing Google Drive on your Mac or Windows PC is simple and easy.



Once you mount your Google Drive, you can access all your sheets, documents and other files right from the convenience of your computer.

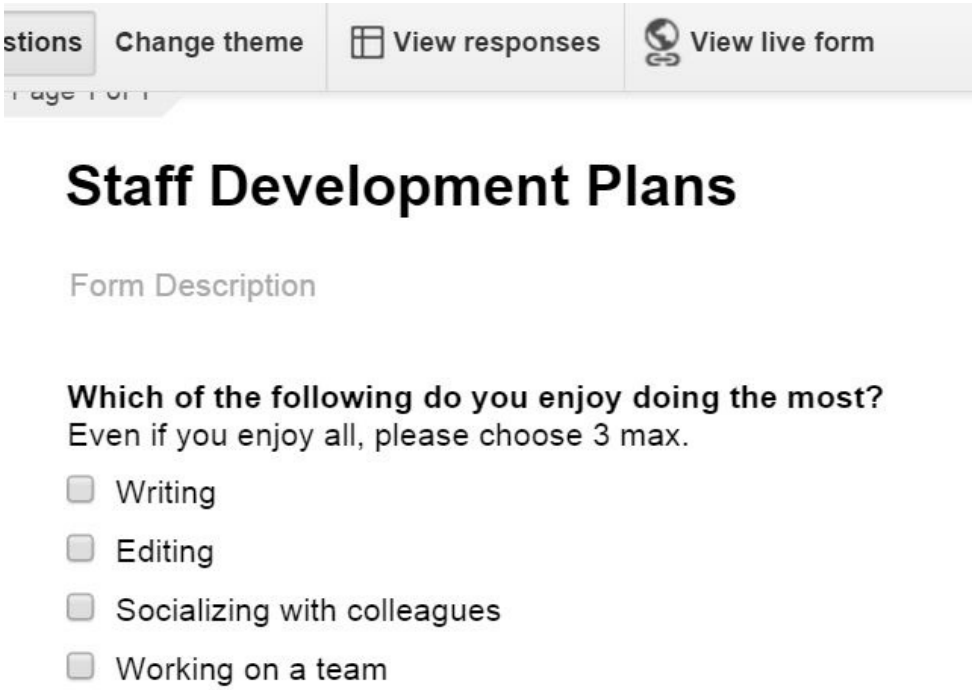
Install as Mobile App

You can install Google Drive on your smartphone device at Google Play or iTunes. The app makes accessing your important files while you're on the go just about as easy as it can get.

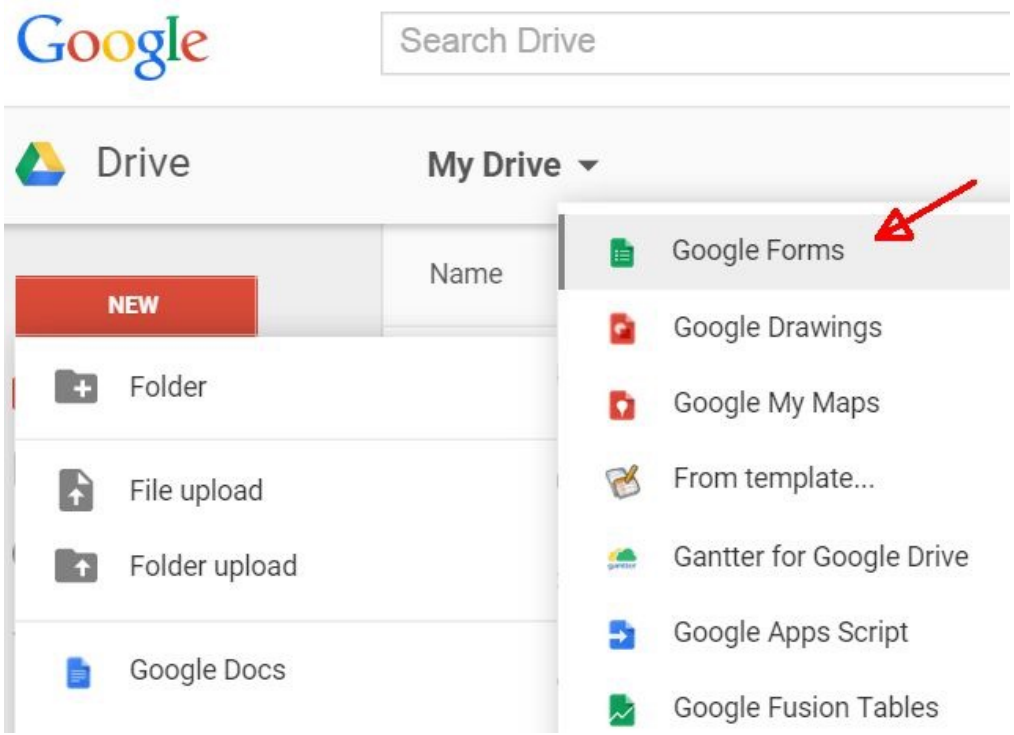
Save your grocery list to a Google Doc, track your finances in a Google Sheet or even create a time management system right on your Google Drive that you can access from anywhere. The power of Google Drive can't be understated.

Cool Uses for Forms

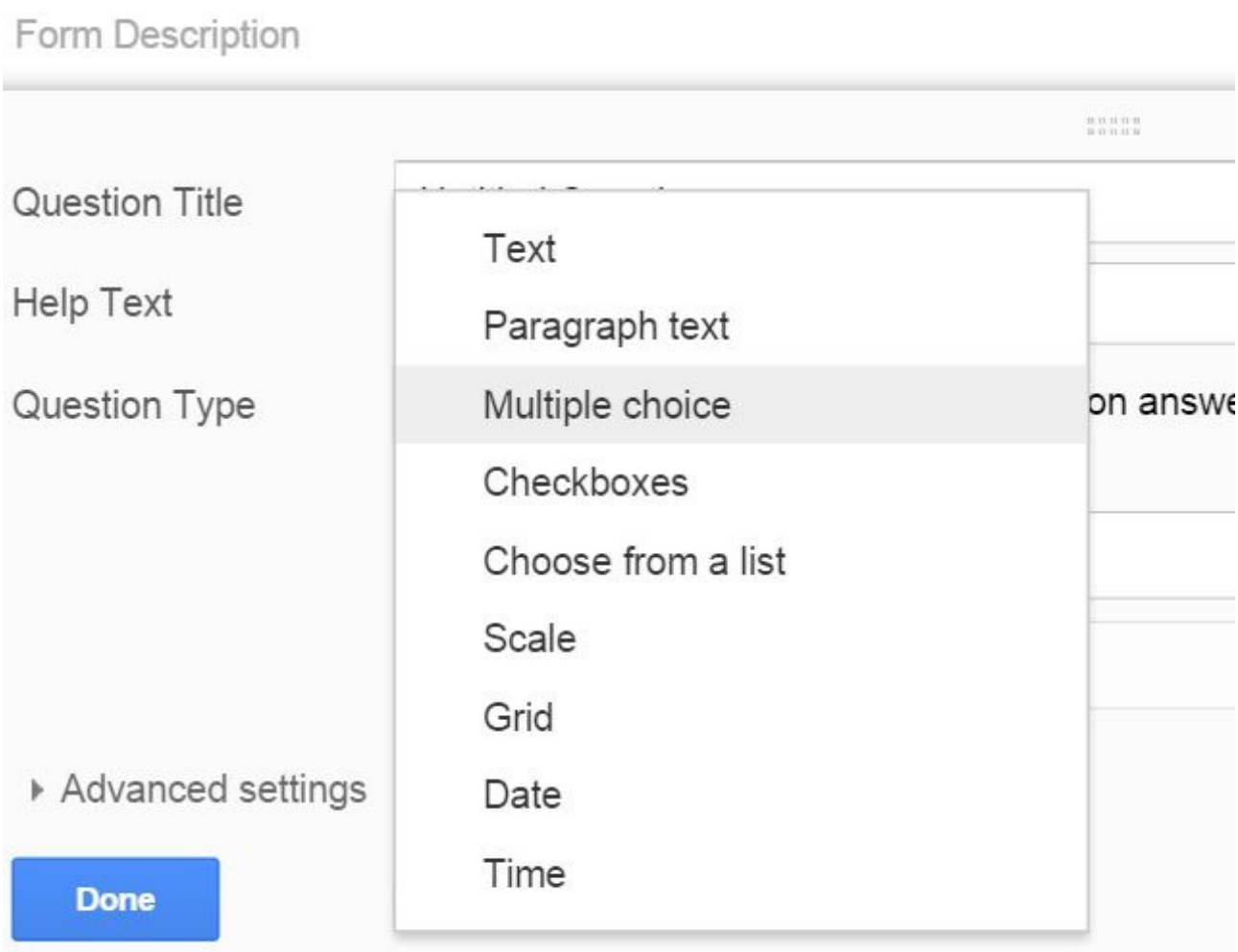
Of course, there's a whole lot more to Google Drive than just sheets and docs. Are you organizing an event with a bunch of friends, and looking for their input?



Forms are easy to create in Google Drive. You don't even need to create a spreadsheet first. Just go to Google Drive, click the "New" button, and then choose "Google Forms".



After that, it's just a matter of piecing together your form, choosing the type of question you want to ask in each section.

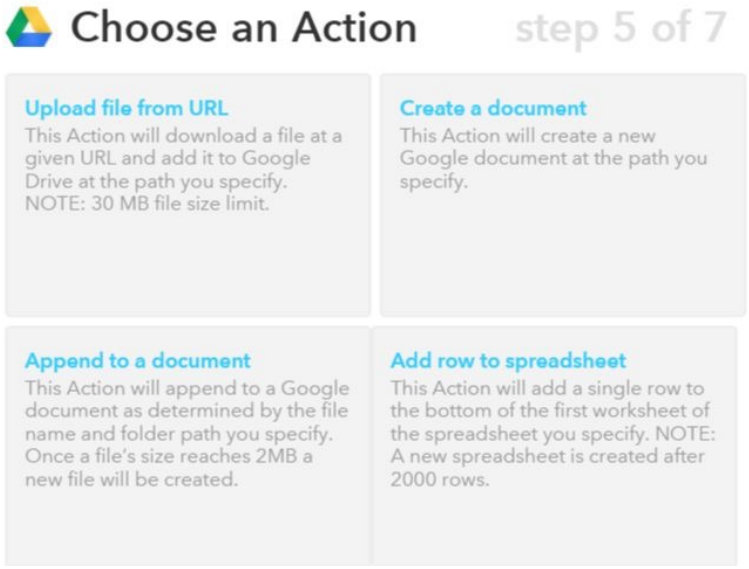


Send the form to your friends, and the data collected from the form will go to a new spreadsheet that is created automatically in your Google Drive account for you.

For more details on this, make sure to check out David's article on creating surveys with Google Docs.

Useful IFTTT Recipes

Google Drive is such a convenient way to collect data, it becomes a perfect Action in an IFTTT recipe.



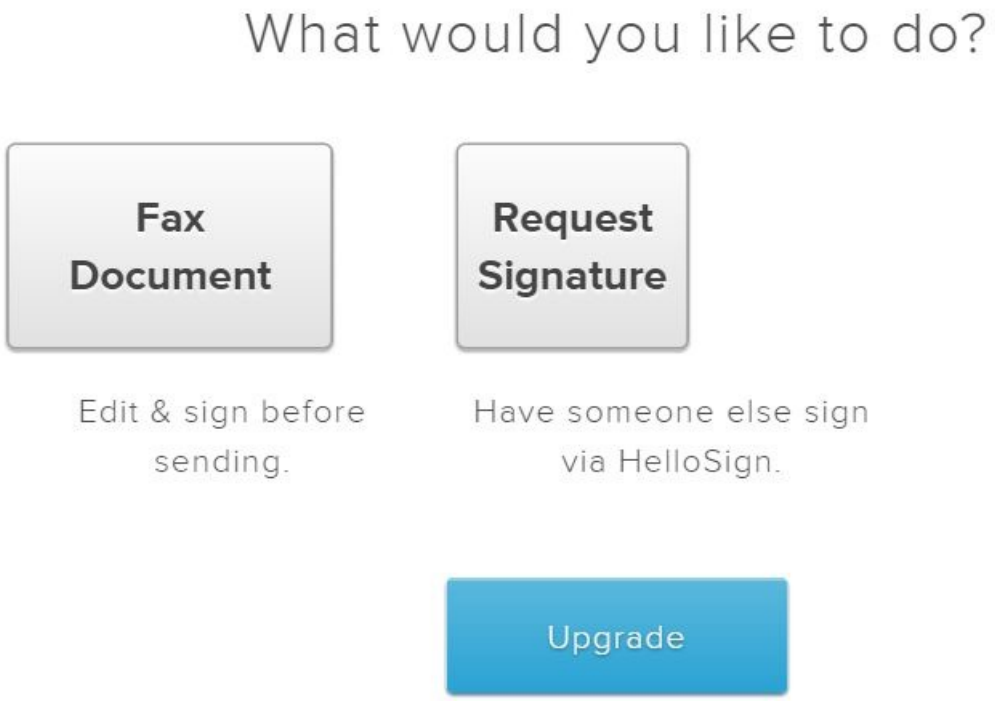
Whether the Input is a buzzing story from Time or a stream from your favorite RSS feed, these inputs can be fed into a document or spreadsheet in your Google Drive account.

You can do the same thing with email, calendar events, and much more. Use IFTTT to turn Google Drive into an unbelievable data collection system that you can customize for your needs.

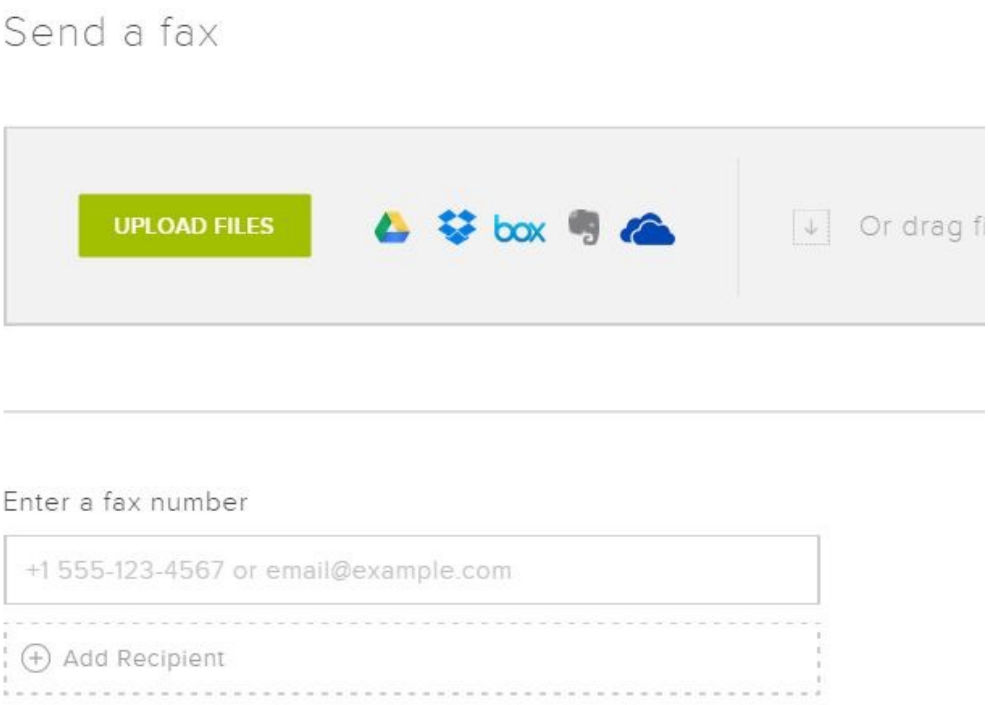
MakeUseOf has covered IFTTT countless times, such as Craig's list of 10 great IFTTT recipes, Nancy's list of 8 iPhone IFTTT recipes, and of course our comprehensive IFTTT guide.

HelloFax

Inside of Google Drive, there are also many apps that you can add to your account. One of the more useful of those is an app called HelloFax that lets you send 50 free faxes a month.



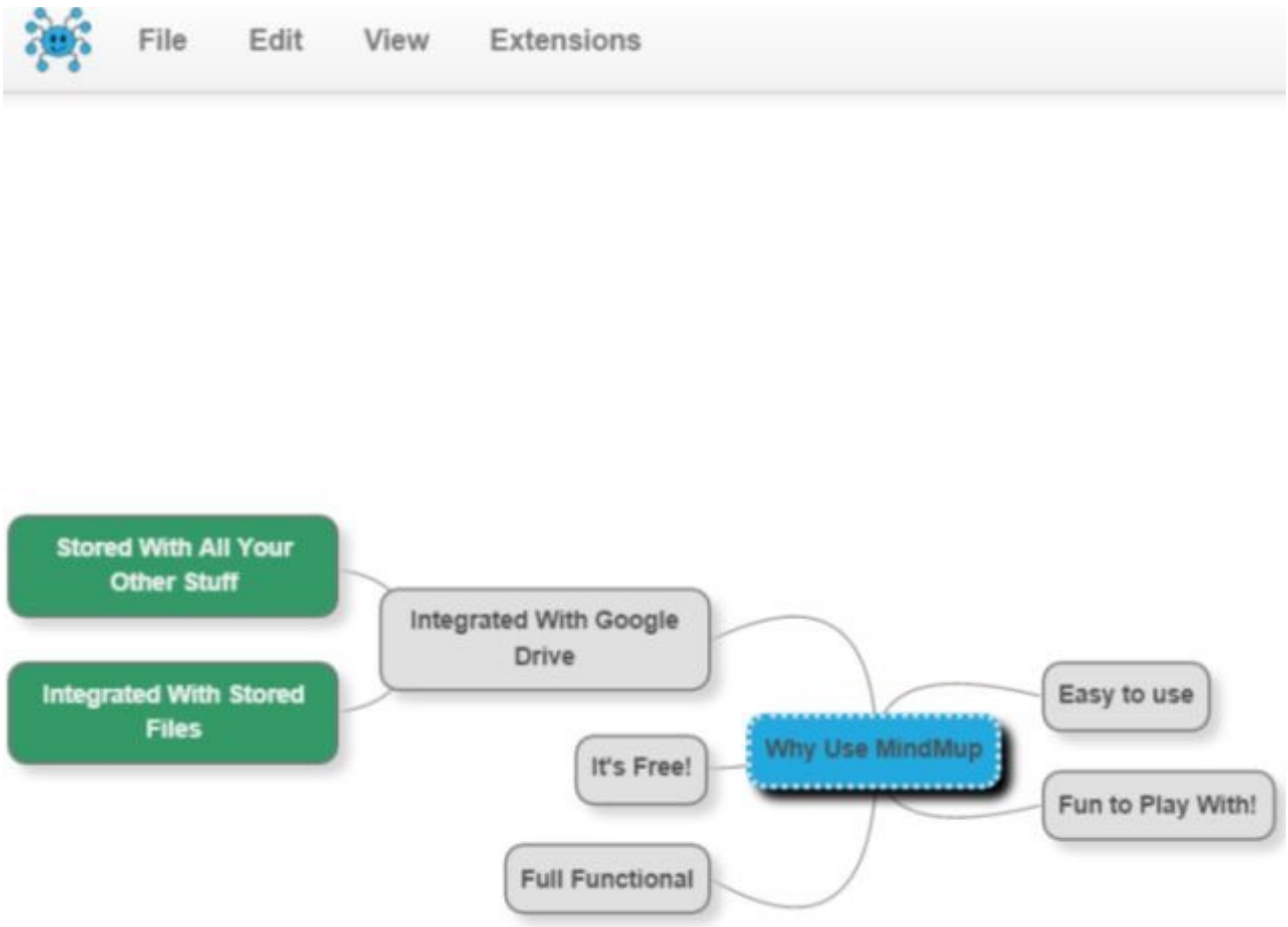
For an individual or a small business, this may be more than enough. It's ultra-simple to use. All you have to do is upload the files from your Drive account (it also works with Dropbox, Box, Evernote and OneDrive.



Type in fax numbers (or email addresses), and your documents will get faxed immediately.

MindMup

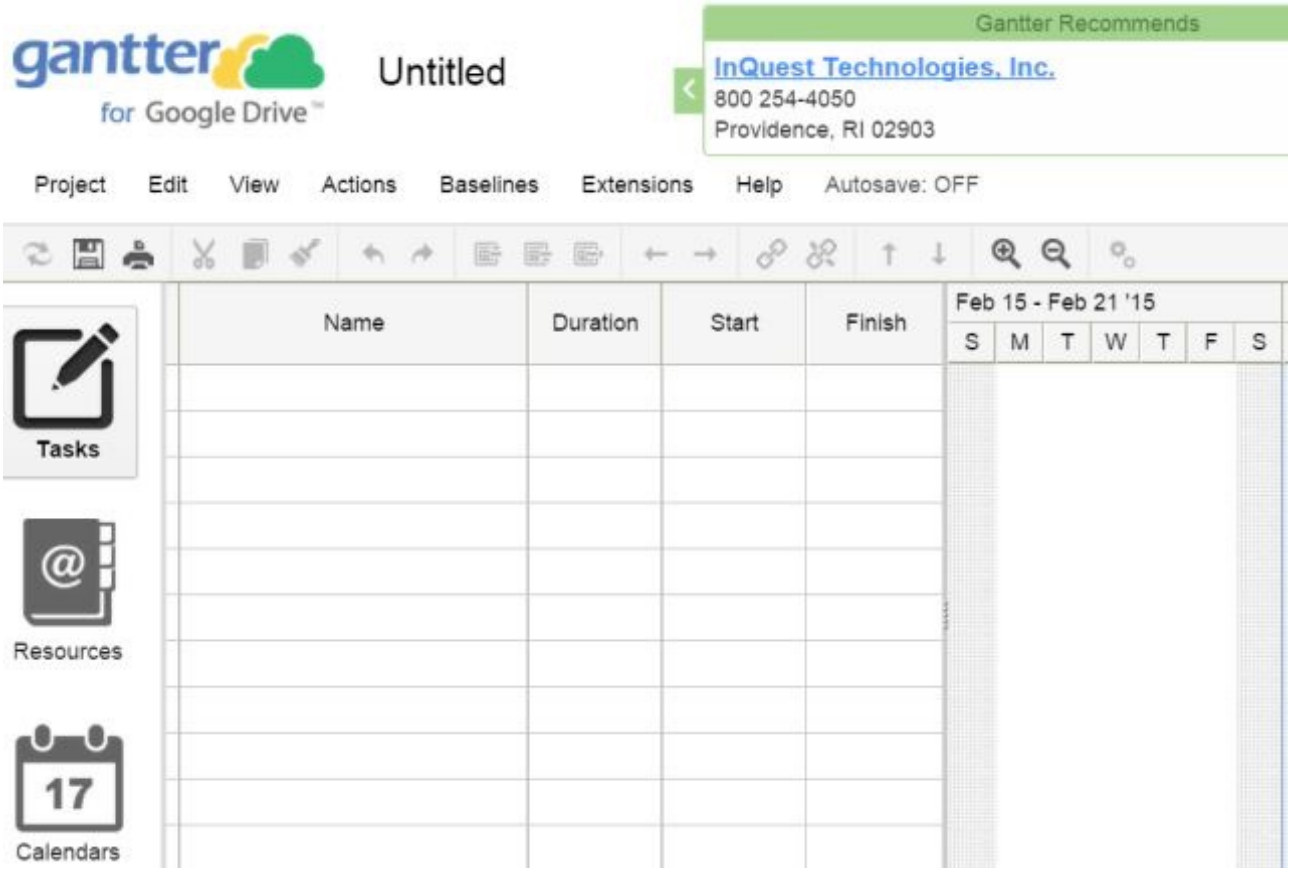
Mind mapping is one of the most popular brainstorming techniques for productivity experts. Activating MindMup puts mind mapping right inside your Google Drive account. You can add MindMup to Google Drive by clicking on **Create**, and then **Connect more apps**.



It's a flexible tool that lets you create full mind maps that are easy to build, with an interface that isn't complicated or cumbersome. Once you add it to Google Drive, it becomes yet another tool you can use as part of your entire Google Drive productivity toolbox.

Gantter

Speaking of productivity, Gantter is another add-on that you can add to your Google Drive account for free. Anyone who is familiar with Gantter knows that it's one of the most functional (and free) cloud-based project management tools out there. When you bring it into Google Drive, it allows you to create a new Gantter chart for any project that you may need to plan out and manage.



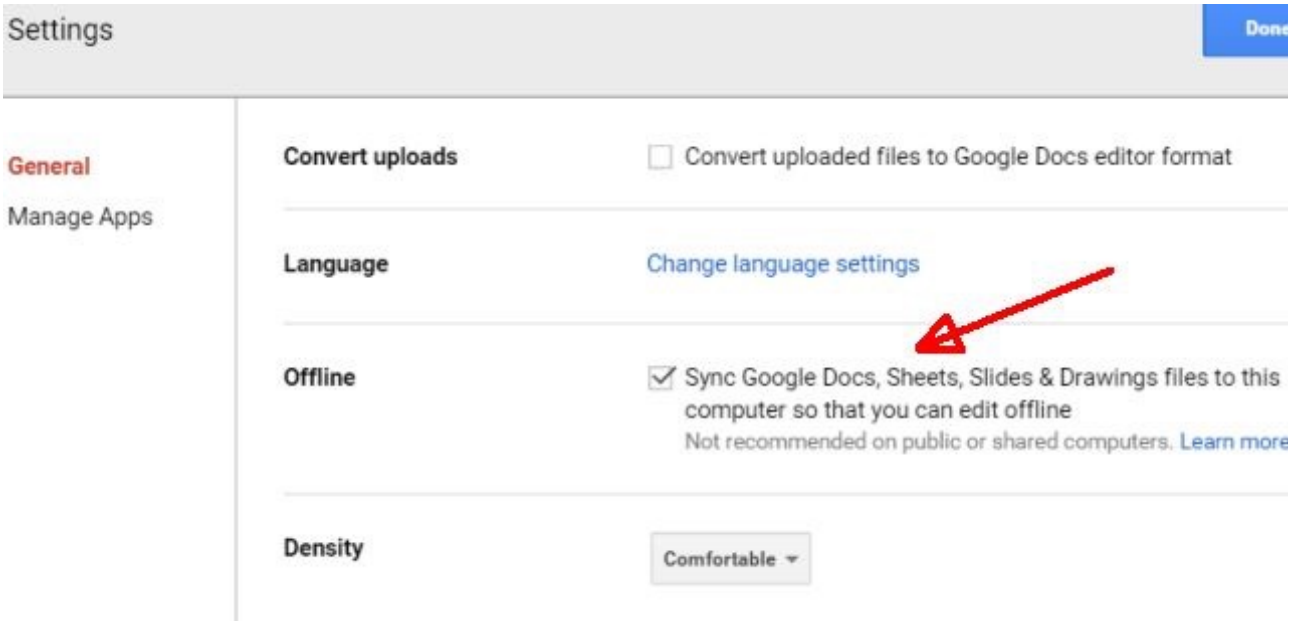
You can even import or export projects to or from MS Project, making it easy to collaborate with folks who only use Microsoft Project, without having to buy the software.

The beauty of having the add-on in your Google Drive account is that there's no worry about losing your project management files as they're all conveniently stored in the cloud.

Google Drive Offline

For ultimate productivity, you've got to do your work even when you don't have Internet access. Google Drive may be a cloud solution, but that doesn't mean you can't access all your files when you're not online.

Google provides an "Offline" feature if you're a Chrome user, that syncs the data in your Google Drive account to your computer. Log into your Google Drive account, click on "**Settings**" and under **General**, make sure that the **Offline** option is selected.



This allows you to make changes to any of those files while you're offline, and all changes sync to the online copy once you're reconnected to the Internet.

Google Keep – What is It?

By now you've surely heard of Evernote, Simplenote, OneNote and dozens of other note-taking apps. Is there space for yet *another* note-taking tool?

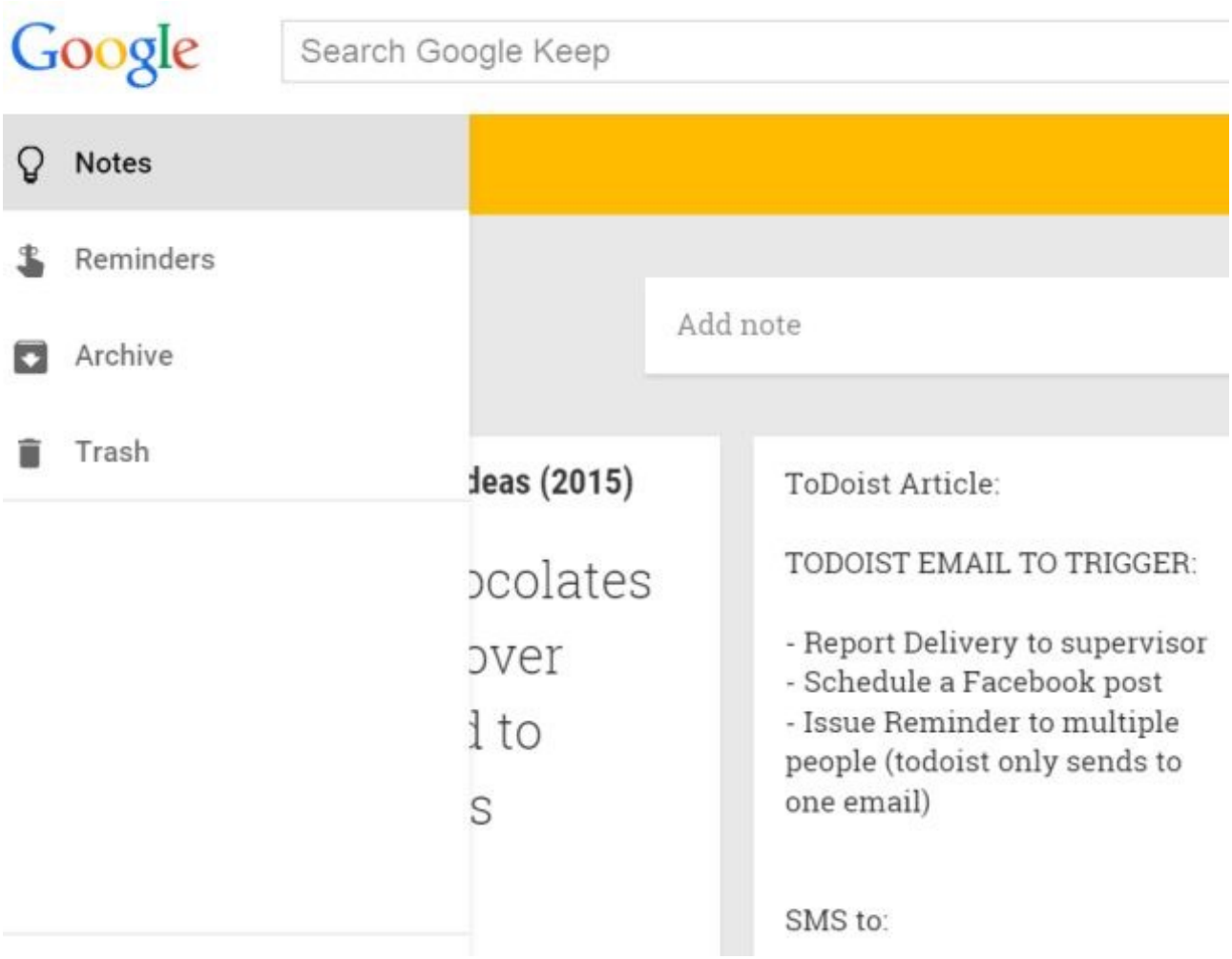
The beauty of Google Keep is its usefulness despite its simplicity. Yes, it's a quick and easy note-taking app, but there are a lot of hidden features that make it more than that.

- Speak to Google Keep on your smartphone and it'll transcribe your words to text.
- Capture pictures or scan documents right to your Google Keep account.
- Share your notes and lists with others for easy collaboration.
- Color code your notes for better organization.
- Use the built-in search tool to find your notes, no matter how many you've created.
- Location based reminders pull up notes when you're in a specific location.

Since your Google Keep account is on the cloud, you can access it from your phone, tablet or computer no matter where you are.

Browser App

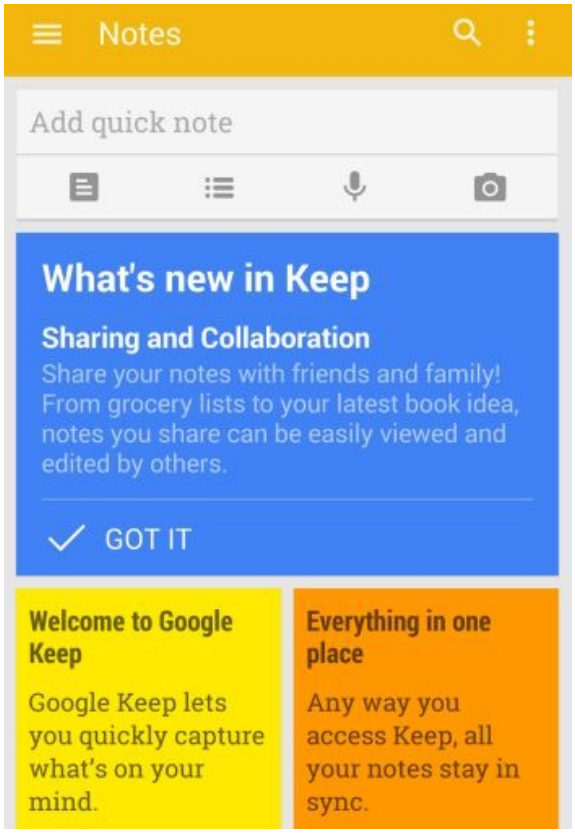
The browser-based version of Google Keep is the simplest way to use Google Keep, since you can install it as an add-on for most browsers.



Of course, you won't always be sitting at your computer when you need to use it, which is why having it synced with your mobile devices is so useful.

Mobile App

The Google Keep mobile app earns its keep (pun intended).



The app lets you quickly create a note, a list, a voice memo (transcribed) or a photo snapshot with just one tap of the finger.

Everything you add while on the go will be available the next time you fire up your browser. That's the beauty of storing your notes on the cloud. And if you have any Android wearables, the top ten items in your Google Keep app will sync up and display — all you have to do is swipe down to scroll down through your notes.

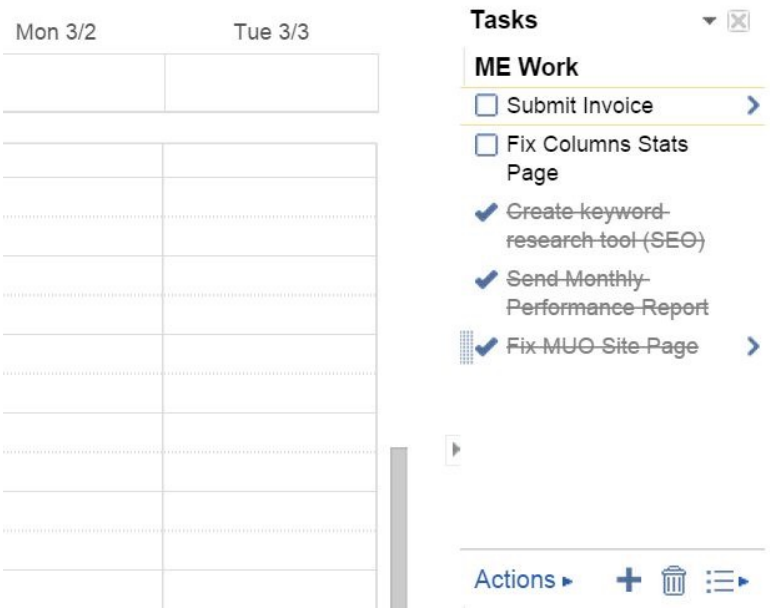
Saikat has reviewed Google Keep's text recognition capability, and Mihir lists 4 great tips and tricks for using Google Keep better.

Google Calendar – Not Just For Appointments

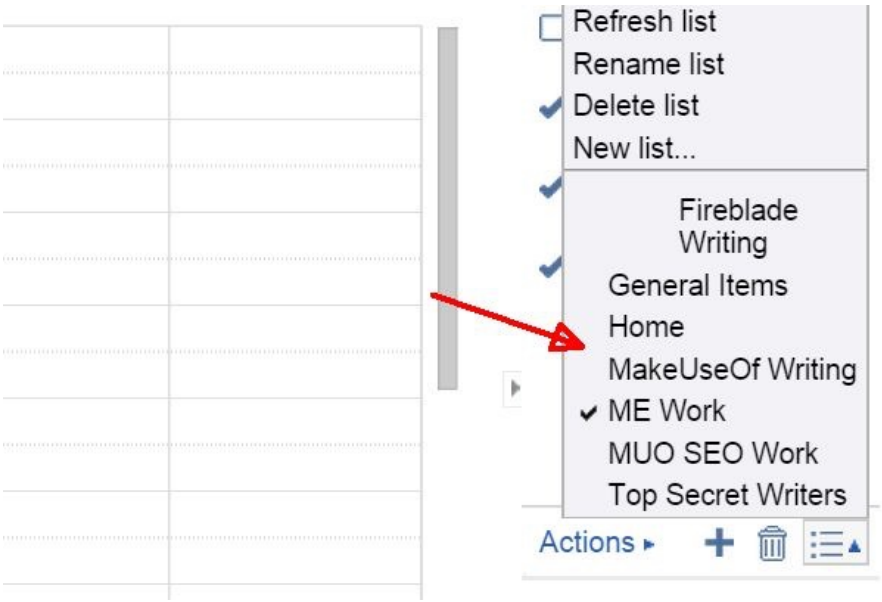
What's a productivity system without a calendar? Let's face it, few companies do calendars better than Google. Google Calendar is not just an online calendar. It's a phenomenon. An entire community of productivity enthusiasts who swear by the fact that Google Calendar apps, tools and tricks make them more productive people.

Google Tasks

The single most important features in Google Calendar that makes it so useful for productivity is the embedded Tasks tool.



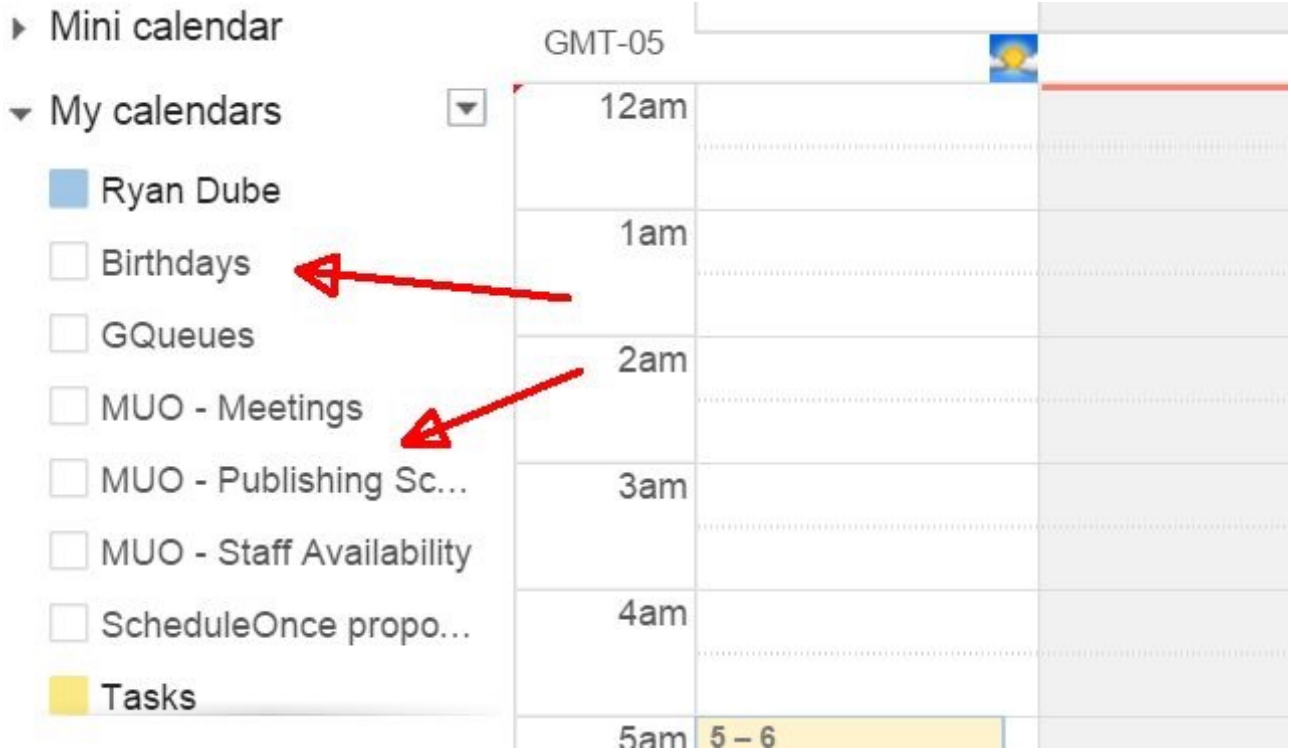
The beauty of Google Tasks is how much is packed into such a small space. Click that list icon, and up pops your sublists — in other words you can have a long lists of lists to help you better organize every aspect of your life.



Best of all, they are all displayed in this little compact area beside your calendar.

Importing Calendars

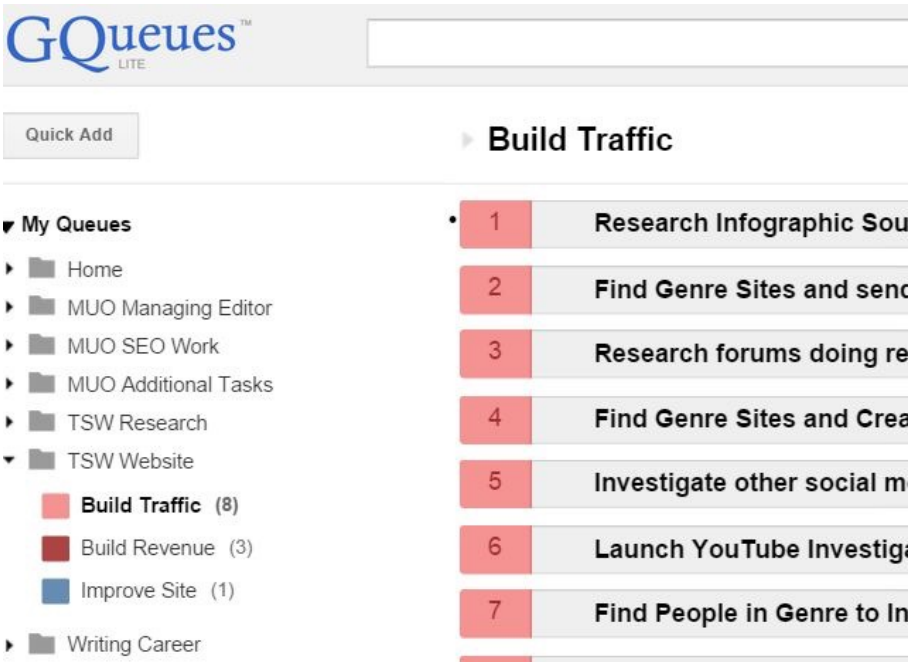
Like Tasks, the calendar itself is deceivingly simple. It appears to be one calendar, but it can hold many for different needs. All you have to do is import additional calendars, and you can display them all (or filter out whatever you like) all in the space of this single calendar.



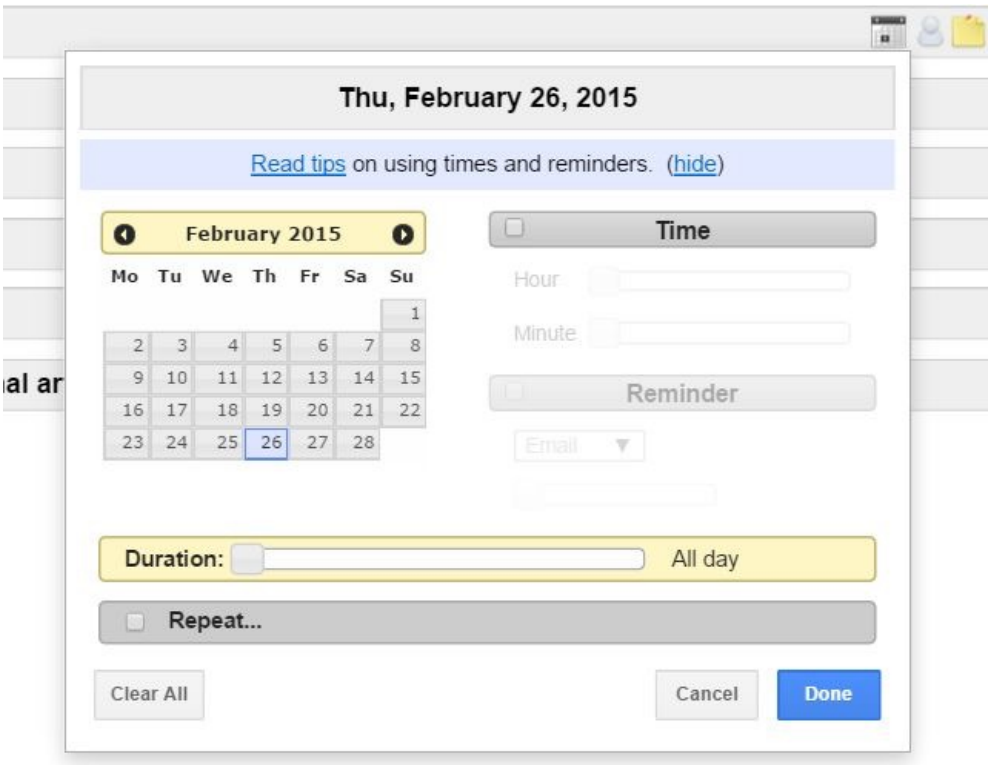
If your family has a birthday calendar and they've shared it with you, you can import that. If your client has a work calendar they've shared with you, you can import that. There's a variety of free, public calendars out there, featuring things like sports schedules or national holidays, which you can import and display, integrated right into your Google Calendar.

GQueues

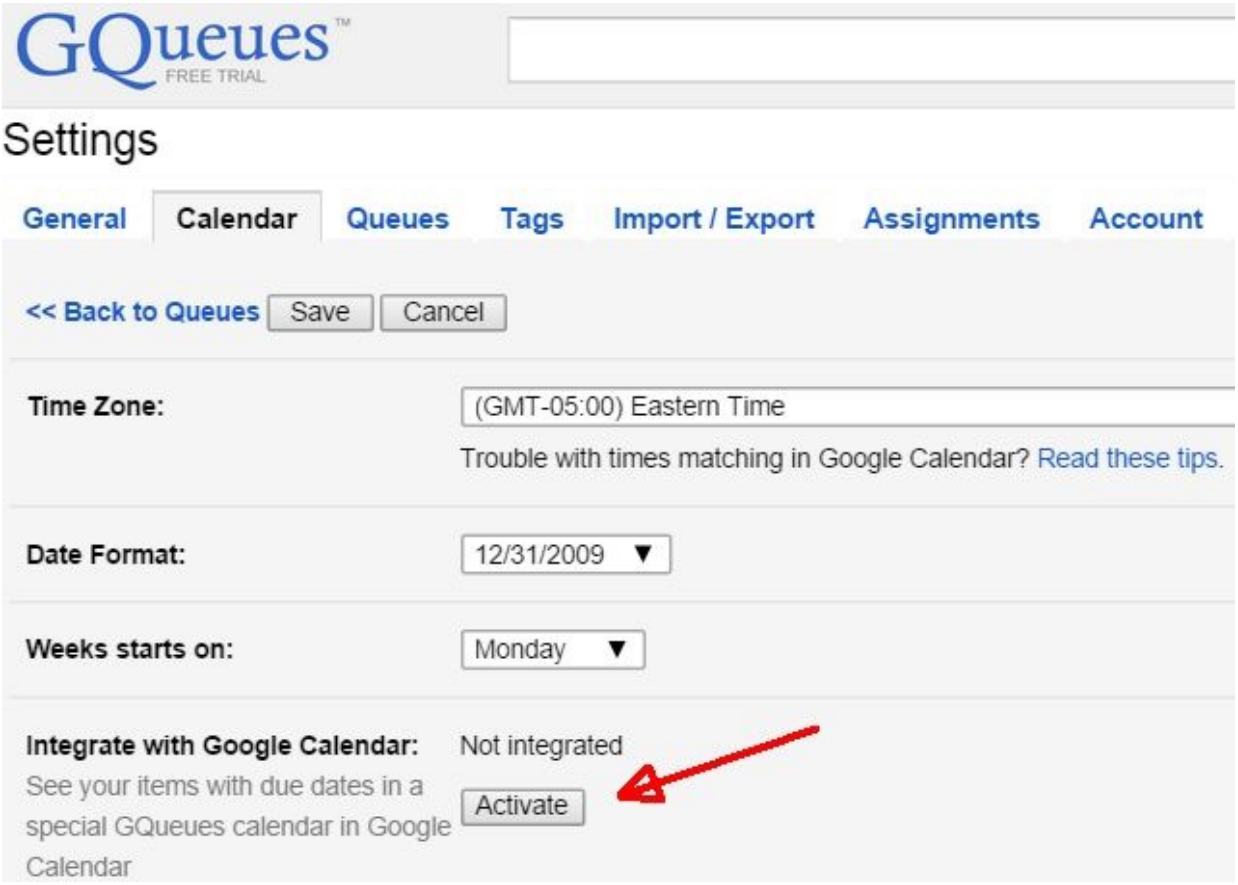
Google Tasks is great, but if you want an even more advanced time management system, you'll want to use something like GQueues. This is a popular time and project management tool, accessible anywhere you have web access.



For each task in a project, you can set a due date.

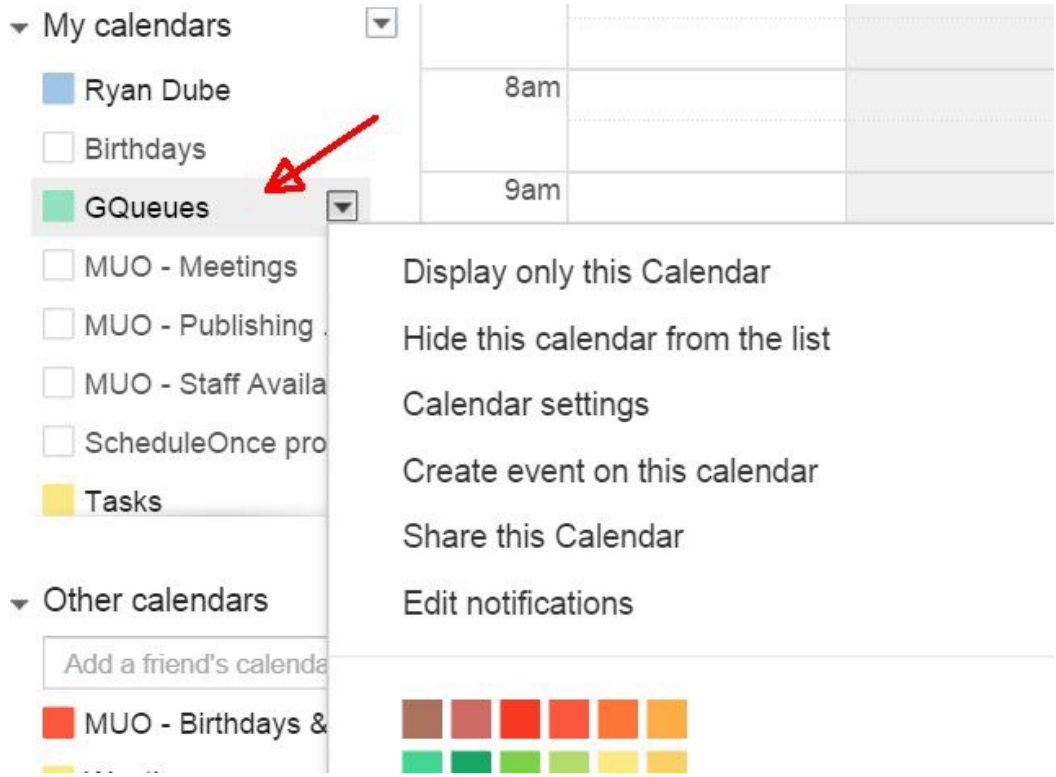


Wouldn't it be sweet if that due date would automatically show up in your Google Calendar? Well, if you're using the premium version of GQueues, you can do that! All you have to do is go into GQueues settings, and click on the Calendar tab.



Here, find "Integrate with Google Calendar", and click the **Activate** button.

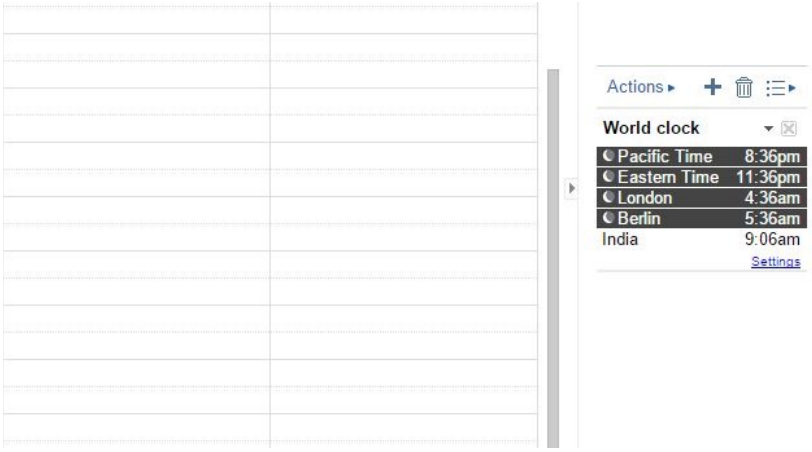
Now you'll see your new GQueues imported calendar show up in Google Calendar.



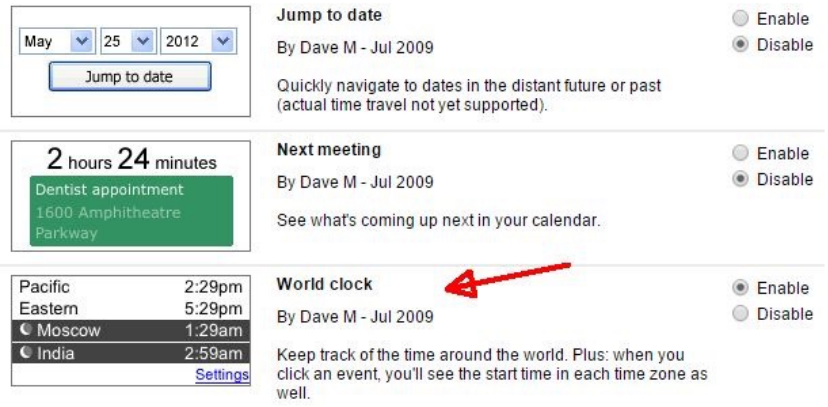
It's an automated and convenient way to track all your to-do tasks without having to worry about manually transferring those items into your calendar.

World Clock

If you're an online worker, or you have lots of friends from all over the world and you're not sure when a good time might be to chat with them, the World Clock add-on in Google Calendar is a lifesaver.

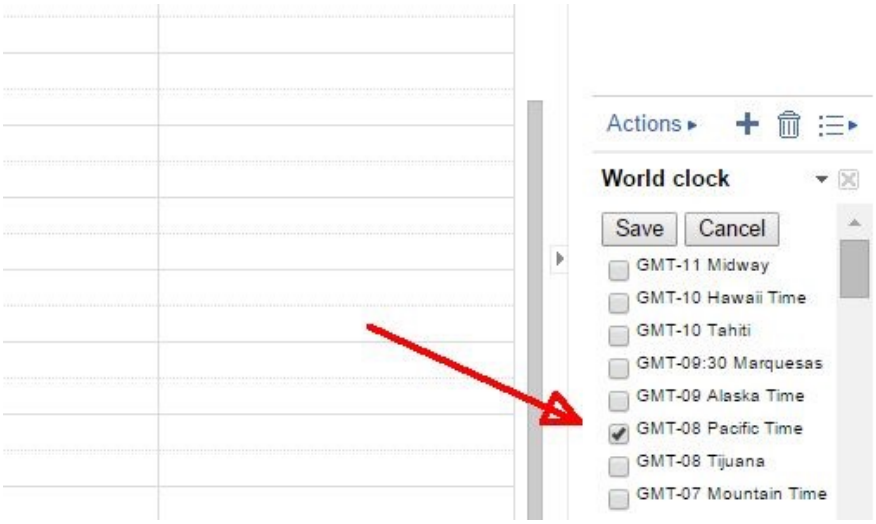


You don't have to wonder what time it is in different parts of the world any more. It's listed in the time zones of your choice. Go to **Calendar Settings**, choose **Labs**, and then enable the **World Clock**.



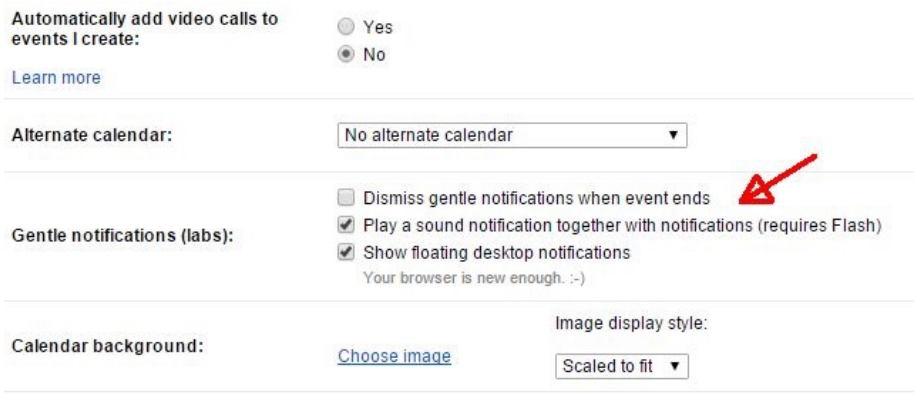
For your preferred time zones, go to the World Clock that's now displayed in your Calendar, and click on the **Settings** link underneath it.

Click the checkboxes for all the time zones that you want displayed in the World Clock app, and you'll always know what time it is anywhere in the world!



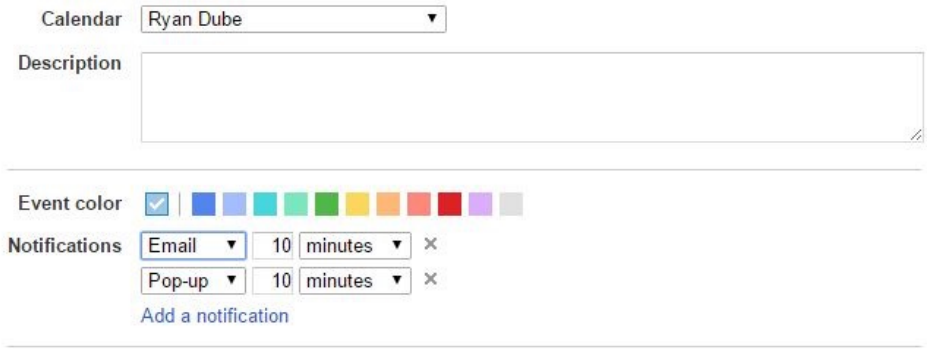
"Gentle Reminders" Desktop Notifications

Just because your Calendar is "in the cloud" doesn't mean that you can't get notifications on your desktop. In fact, that's exactly what you can do with Google Calendar, and all you have to do is enable it in the Settings section.

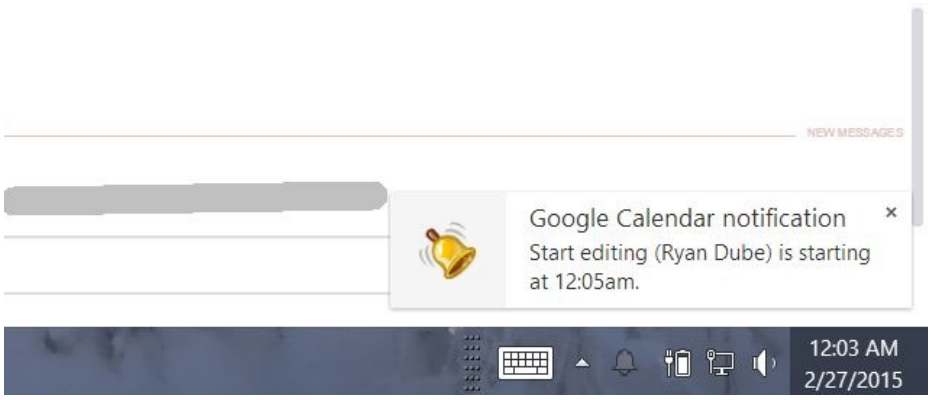


As you can see, you'll need Flash enabled and a relatively new browser for this feature to work. However, it's well worth it. Now you'll never forget another appointment, because your computer will pop up a little note and play a gentle bell whenever you have a scheduled event about to start.

You will need to make sure to enable pop-up notifications whenever you set up a new event.



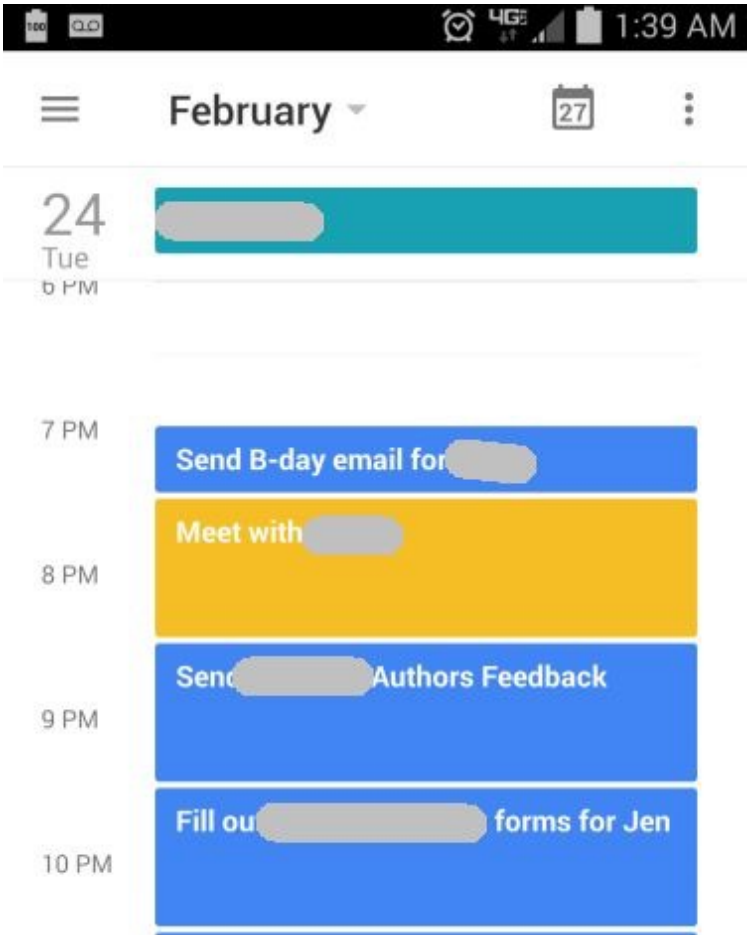
Trust me, this is one of the most effective ways to always be on time without having to depend on your faulty human memory.



The reminders are in fact very gentle; just appearing right above the lower right part of your desktop (not blocking your workspace), and emitting a gentle bell. This feature is also enabled in the Labs section of your Google Calendar Settings.

Google Calendar Mobile Client

You aren't always at your desk when you need to see your schedule. People check their schedule more when they're on the go than when they're home. So it's ultra-convenient to sync your Google Calendar with both iOS and Android.



When you can bring your calendar everywhere you go, and with the built-in notifications, you'll never forget another meeting again!

Don't forget to check out Yaara's great IFTTT hacks that work well with Google Calendar.

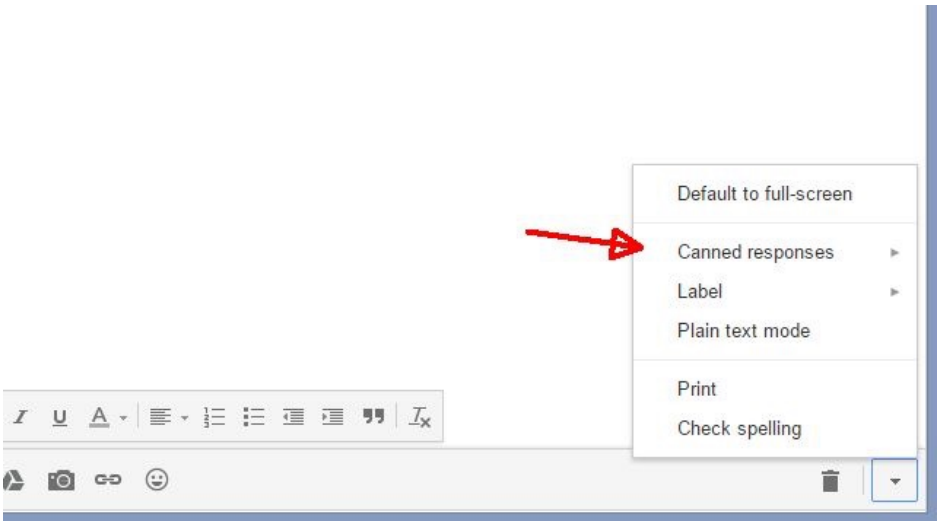
Gmail – A Communication Powerhouse

Who could cover Google's top tools without mentioning Google Gmail, one of the world's most popular email services? Gmail is used both privately and by businesses for communications. As of February 2015, Gmail boasts 425 million users, and that user base continues to grow. Over 5 million businesses use Gmail as the platform for their email communications. We love Google so much here at MakeUseOf that we offer both a free beginner's guide, as well as a power user guide to the popular email service.

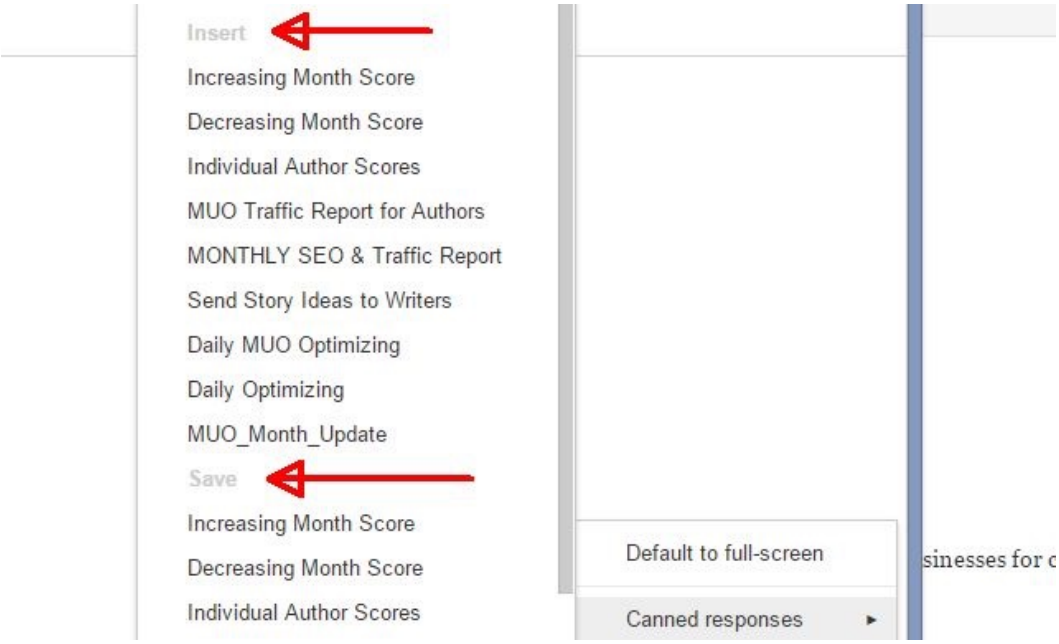
It doesn't get much more ubiquitous than that.

Canned Responses

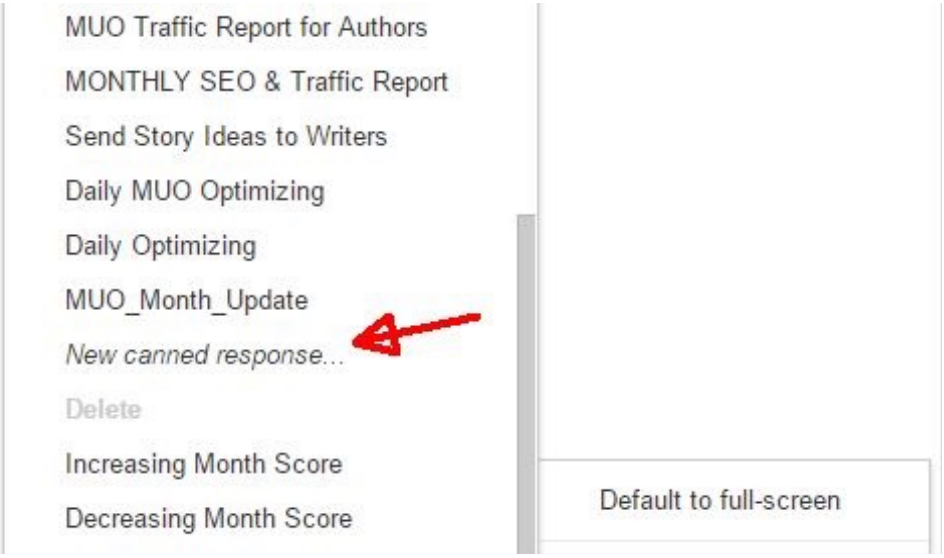
One of the things that makes Gmail so productive for many people is the "Canned Response" feature. While you're composing any email, just click the dropdown arrow at the lower right part of the window, and choose **Canned responses** from the list.



There are three sections in the list, **Insert**, **Save** and **Delete**. The insert section lets you paste the saved email template into your current composition window. Save and Delete are used to either save your currently composed email as a new template, or to delete an existing template.



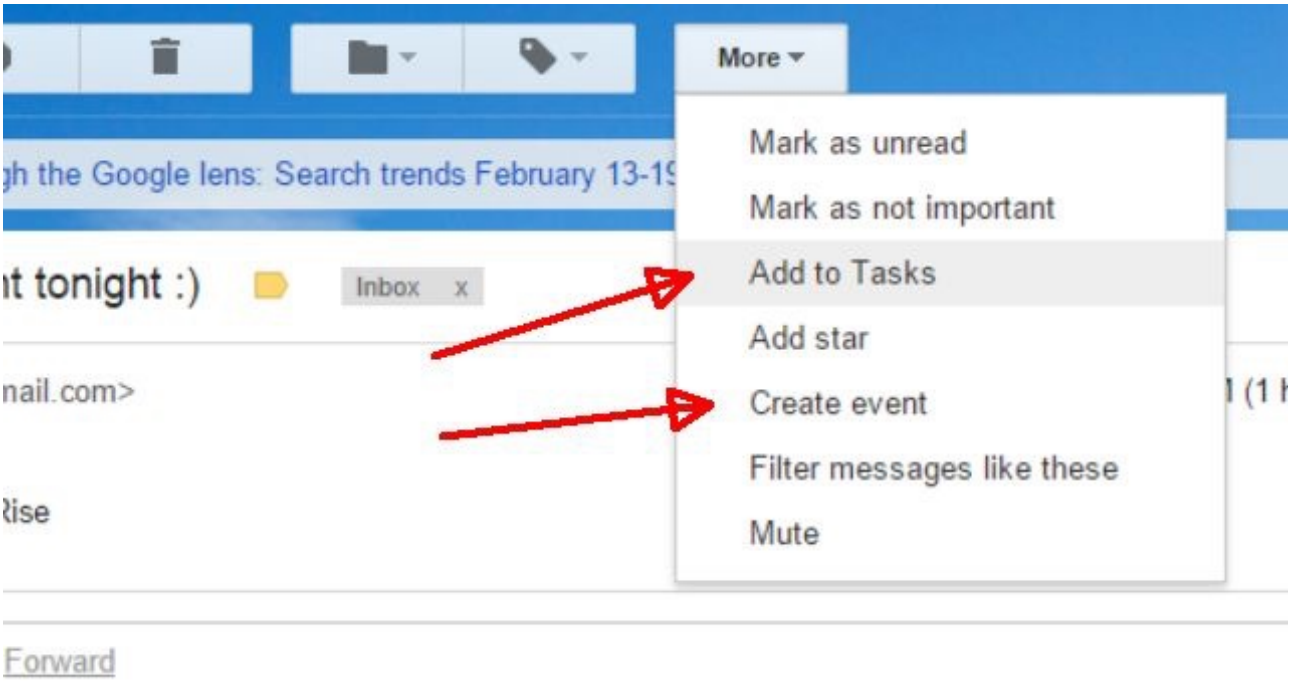
If you don't want to overwrite an existing template, you can create a new one by clicking the **New canned response…** link.



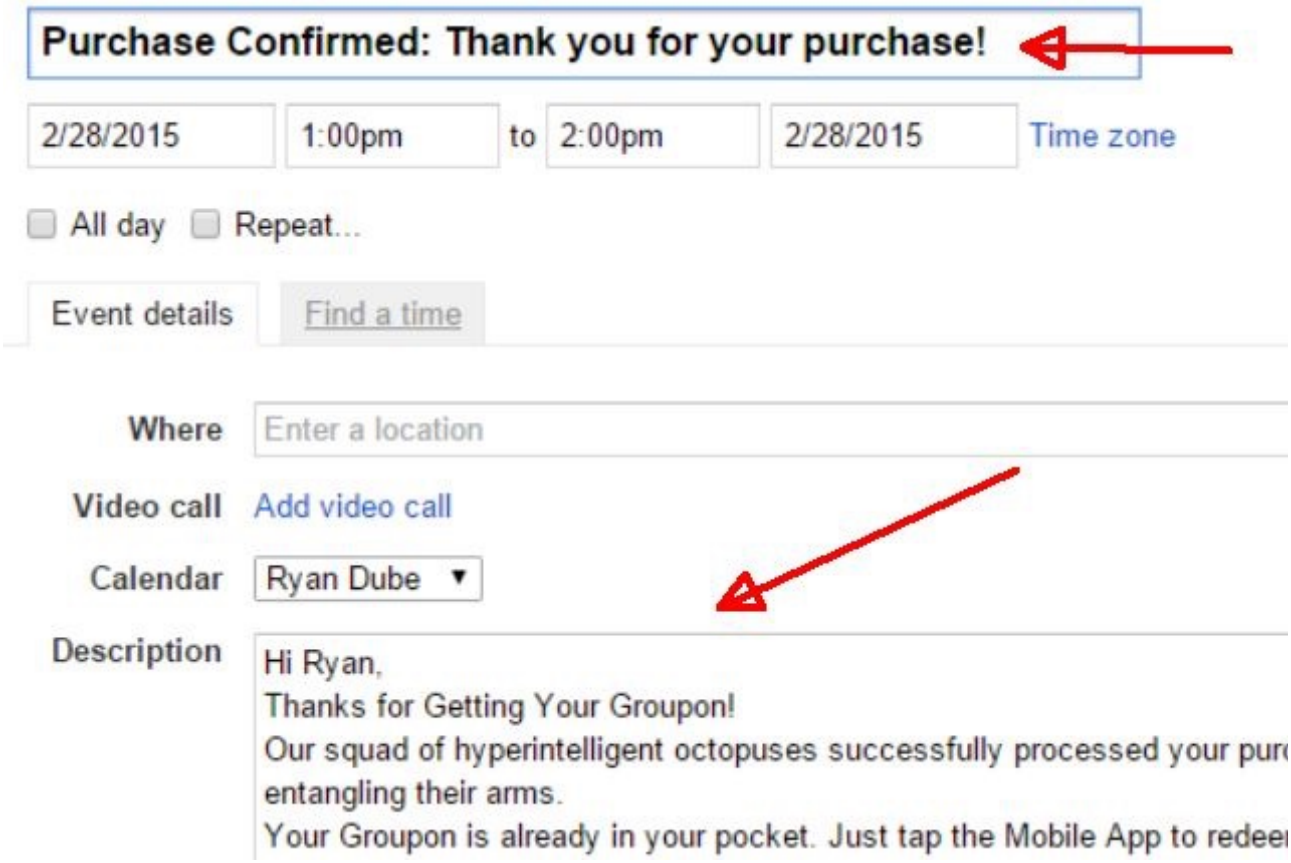
The convenience of this can't be understated, especially if you are a manager. Why retype entire emails when only about 5 to 10% of the content needs to change? Just save the template and fill in the areas that matter. This allows you to send people carefully written emails with all the information included, but still personalized for each individual person.

Google Calendar Integration

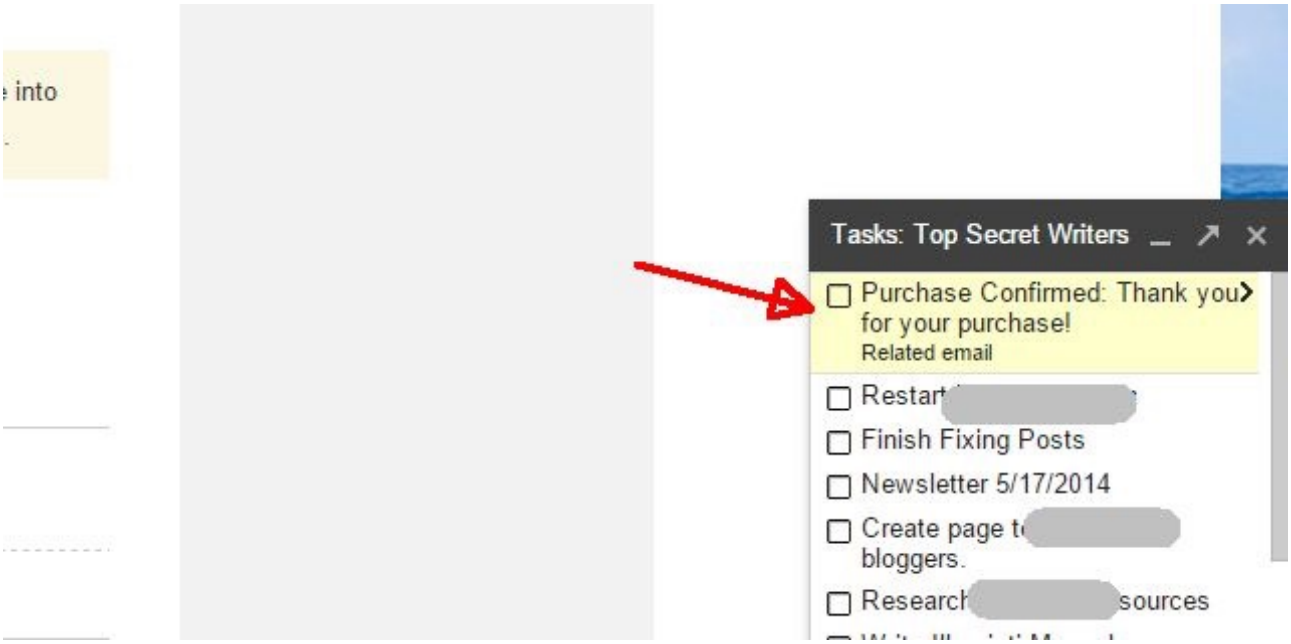
Of course, it wouldn't be Google if top services weren't integrated in some way. That's true for Gmail and Calendar, which can pass information back and forth. In the direction from Gmail to Calendar, you can click on the **More** button at the top of your email inbox to either add the current email as a new task, or in the form of a new event in your Calendar.



Adding an email as an event will put the email subject line as the event title, and the email itself into the event notes.



Adding an email as a task will use the subject line as the task, and then includes a link to the email underneath the task listing.

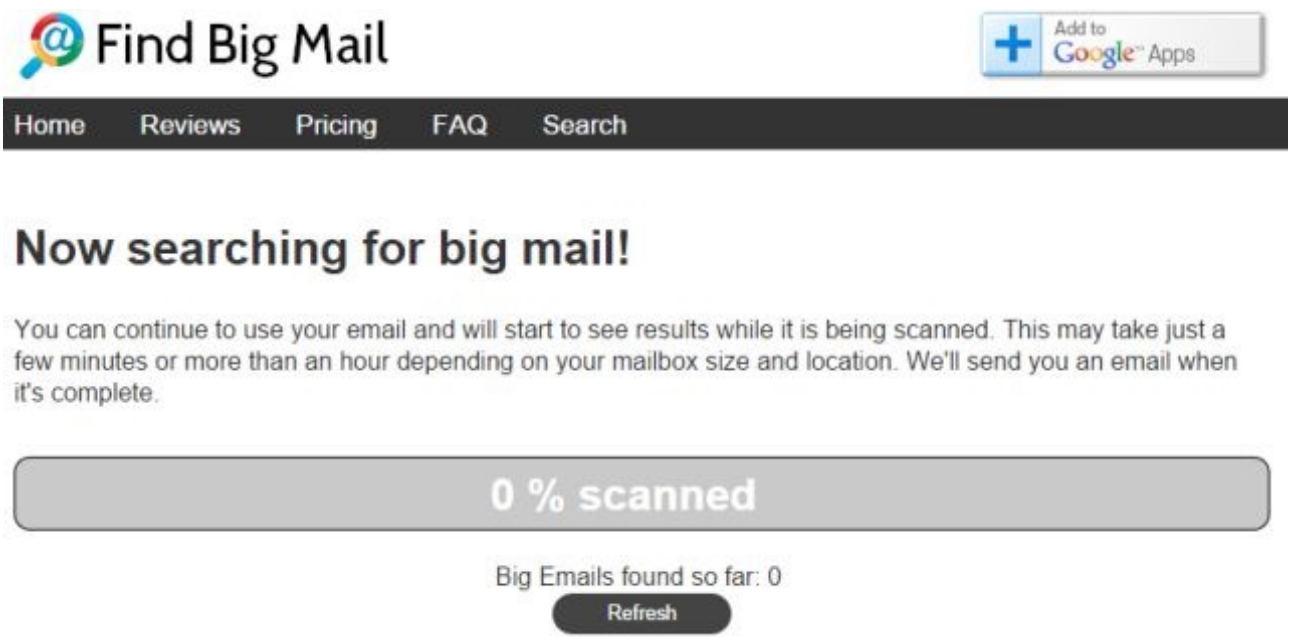


Of course, you can go in the other direction from Calendar to email by adding email notifications to specific events, as mentioned in the Google Calendar section. These integrations between Calendar and Gmail help you to be efficient with your time and tasks.

Find Big Mail

There will be times when your Gmail account starts to reach its 15 GB capacity, especially if you're so busy that you've never found the time to clean your inbox. By the time you've hit that limit, cleaning it all up without losing important emails may seem like a monumental task.

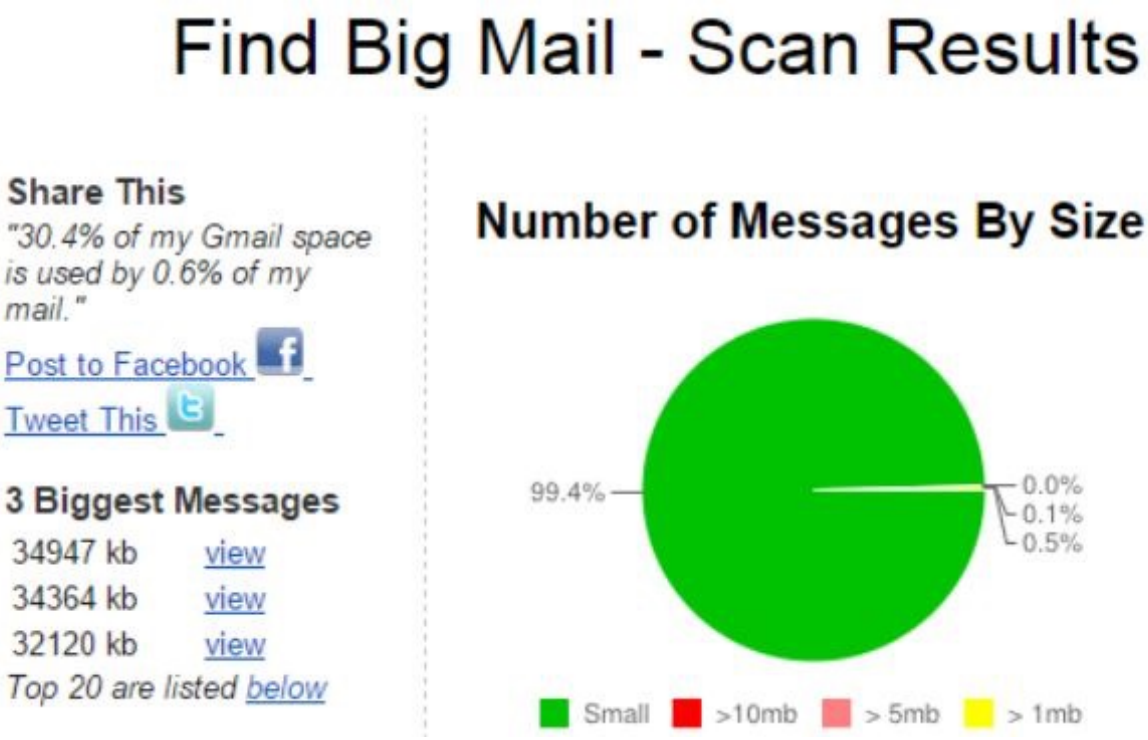
Have no fear, because there are online tools that can help you with that chore — like Find Big Mail. All you have to do is type your Gmail address in the field on the Find Big Mail main page.



The scan typically takes 2-5 minutes depending on how many emails you have in your inbox. When it's done, you'll be notified via email, and the webpage itself will display the results of the analysis.

As you can see, "find big mail" is exactly what this service does, and it does it well. As you can see, I have a whopping 36 emails that are for some reason over 10 M each. Just deleting those emails alone would free up a significant portion of my quota.

The email results are much more detailed, with specific links you can click to access the largest emails to delete them.

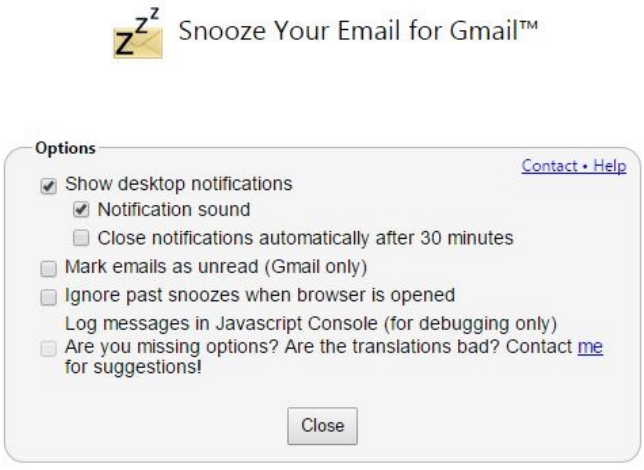


Click the links, delete (or archive locally) those emails and files, and finally start freeing up your inbox!

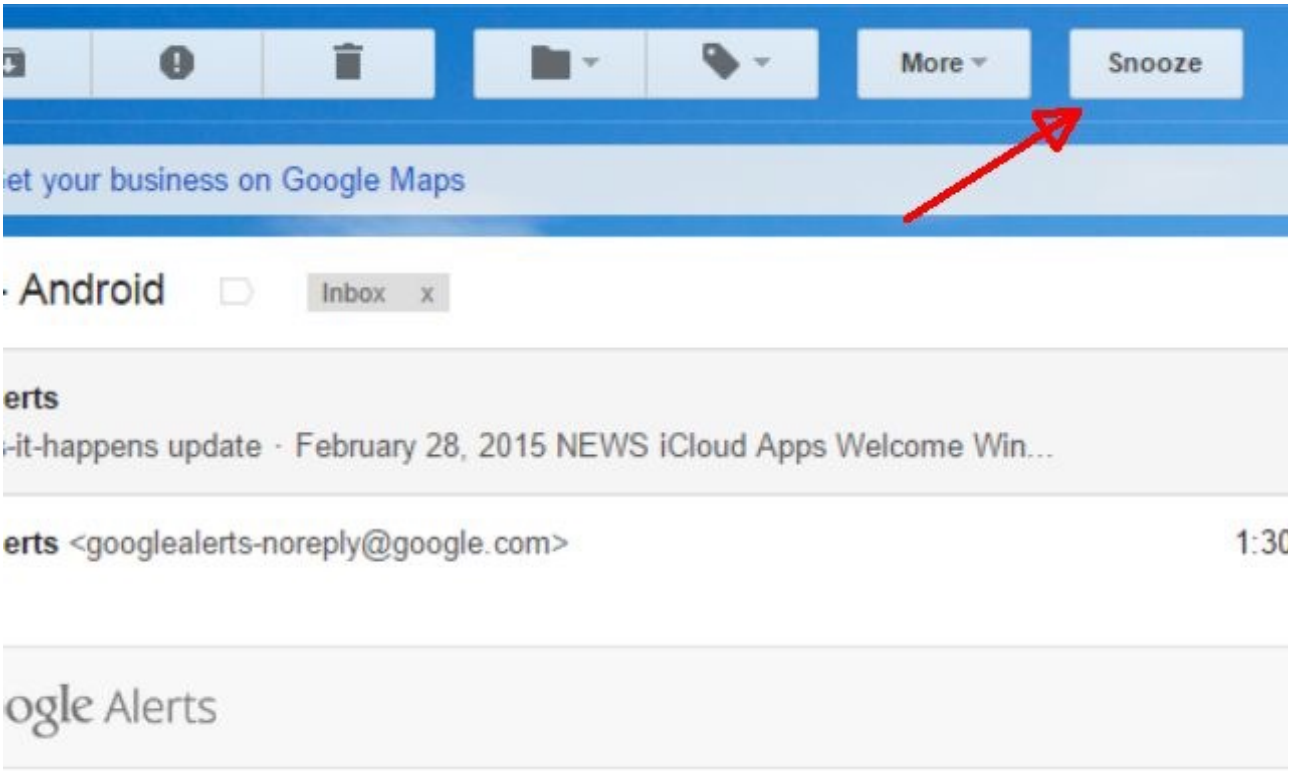
Snooze Your Email

Popular desktop email clients have the ability to "snooze" emails. This is basically putting that email away so you can deal with it later. In some clients this means marking it as unread, and in others it also includes a pop-up notification for a later time.

Gmail doesn't offer this feature, but you can still enable it by using the Snooze Your Email for Gmail extension for Chrome.



When you first set it up, you'll have the ability to customize exactly how you want to go about "snoozing" your emails – whether you want notifications, mark the emails as unread, or both. Once it's enabled, whenever you have an email open, you'll find a new **Snooze** button at the top of the page.

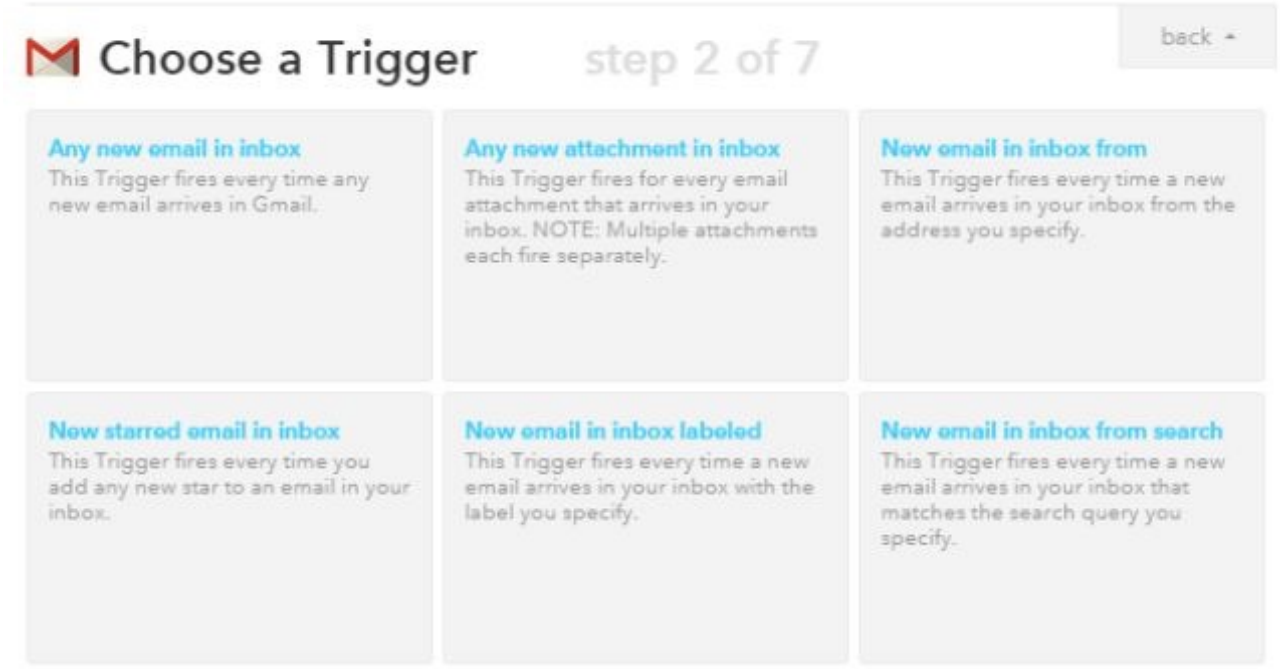


When you click the button, you can choose how long you want to wait before you're tasked with dealing with the email again.

This is very helpful for those times when you just want to scan your inbox, but don't have time to deal with time-intensive replies. Set those emails to snooze for a couple of hours when you know you'll have more time to deal with them. The advantage to your productivity here is that you won't get distracted from finishing the work you've planned. Finish your work, and then deal with those important emails after.

IFTTT integrations

IFTTT is one of the most powerful tools for integrating hundreds of external applications and Internet resources with your Gmail account.



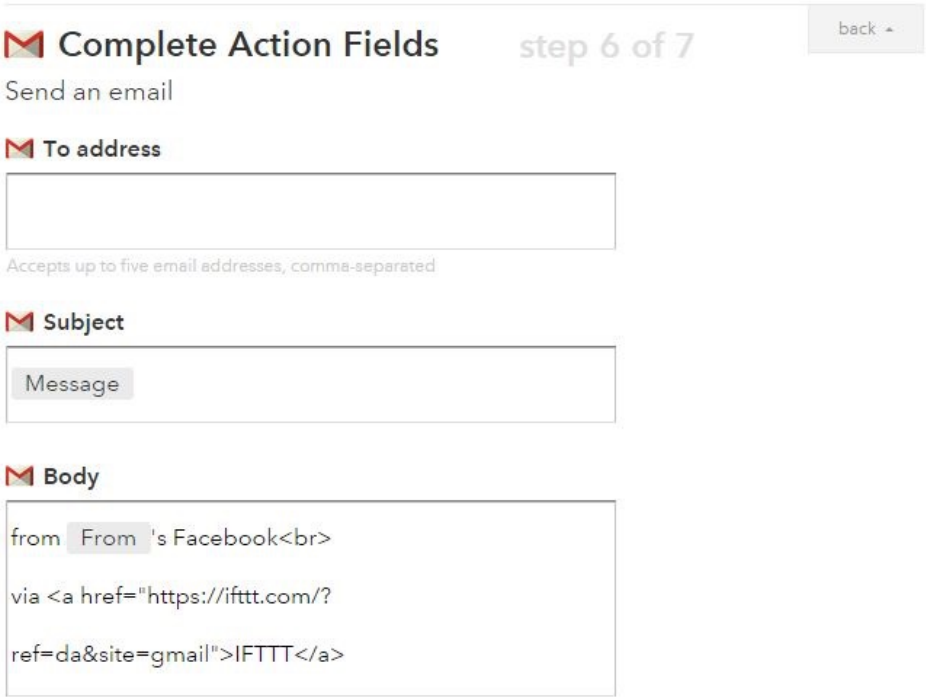
The variety of Triggers that are available in IFTTT for your Gmail account are impressive, and include:

- Any time a new email arrives in your Inbox
- Any time a new email arrives that has an attachment
- When an email arrives from a specific email address
- When you star an email in your inbox
- When you give an email a specific label
- When an email arrives that matches a particular filter "search" you define

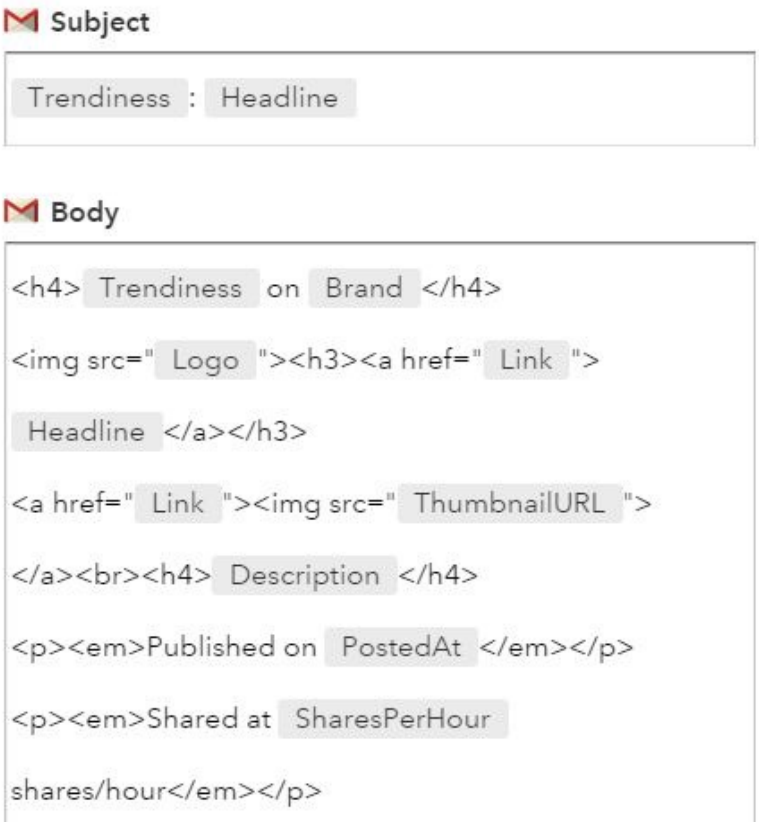
As you can see, the IFTTT triggers are very specific. What you can do with those emails is just as varied. You can do things like:

- Add the email subject and contents to a spreadsheet in your Google Drive account
- Resend the email to an RSS feed
- Post the email to a blog with the subject as the title and the contents as the post body
- Create an Evernote entry with the email contents
- Create a Facebook post based on the email contents
- Post a message to a channel in slack
- So much more…

It isn't only a trigger you can create using Gmail in IFTTT. You can also perform various actions with your Gmail using IFTTT. Depending on what trigger you choose, you can trigger various emails. For example, when you post to Facebook, you can use IFTTT to send an email to specific recipients containing the message and post details in the email.



You can trigger an email based on trending Time magazine stories so you can always stay on top of the latest news stories.

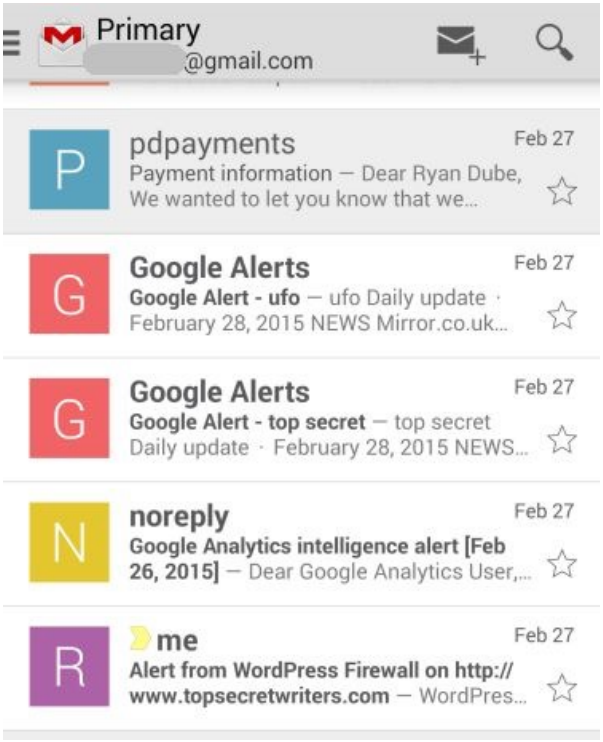


You can trigger an email when you post a Tweet containing a specific hashtag.

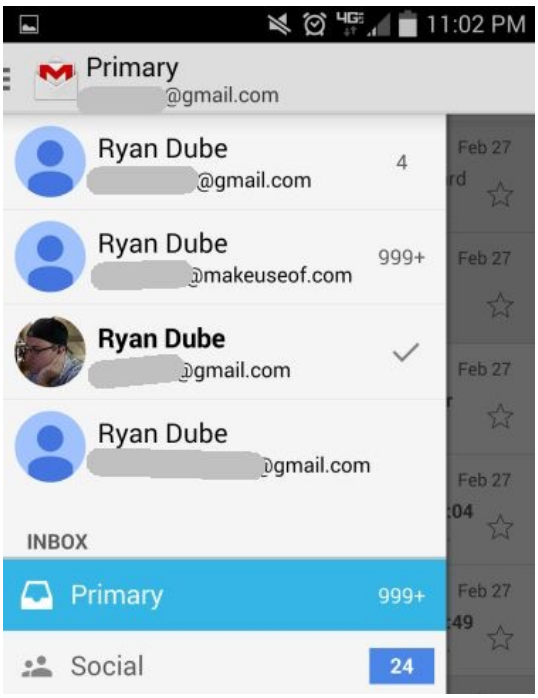
These are only a few examples of the many impressive things you can do by using IFTTT to integrate outside services with your Gmail account.

Mobile Apps

Of course, any good email service should offer a good mobile platform. Thankfully, Google offers great apps for both Android and iPhone.



The mobile app is about as simple and easy to use as any, but it also offers the ability to monitor and manage multiple email accounts, which is an absolute must for anyone who is active online, where multiple email accounts have become the norm. You can easily switch configured email accounts by tapping the top left corner of the screen and choosing the other email account.

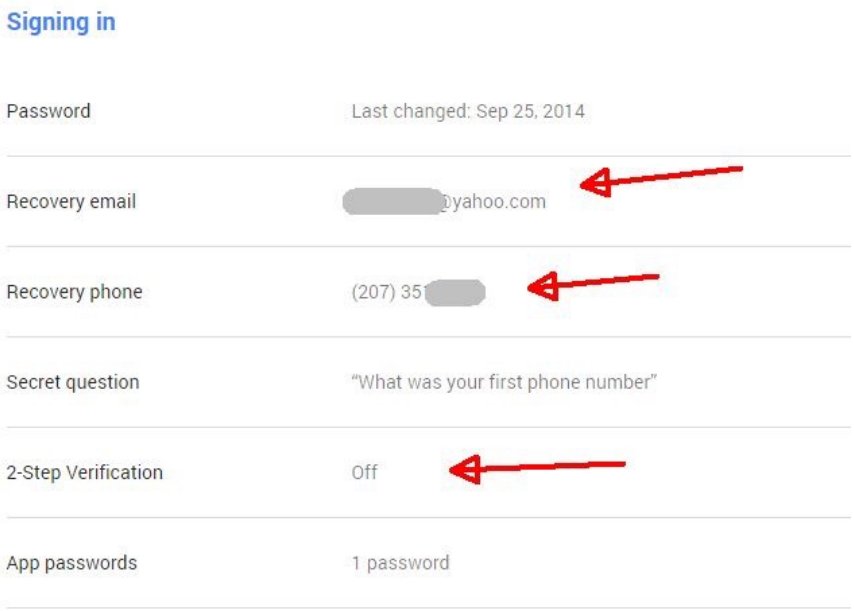


The ability to answer emails on the go is an absolute necessity these days; going a day without responding to someone's email to you is just unacceptable.

Gmail Security

Since some of your most personal and private communications can go through the Gmail account, make sure that it's as secure as possible.

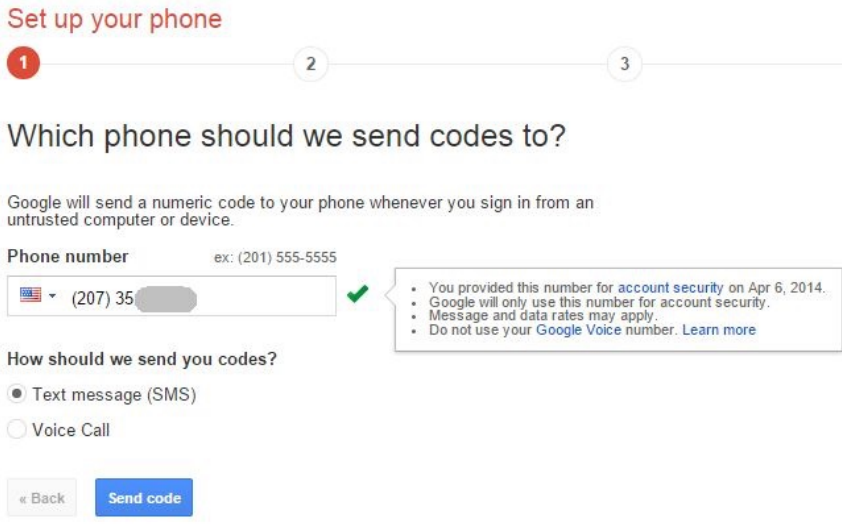
Verify critical Gmail Settings immediately to make sure you're as protected as possible. At the onset have at least one alternative email address configured, and at least one mobile phone number added. With these two things, you're guaranteed to never get locked out of your account, because Google can email or SMS your new password to you.



You'll also notice that there's a field for **2-Step Verification**. If your status is "Off" like the one above, you may want to consider enabling it for ultimate security.

How does 2-Step Verification work?

2- Step verification goes beyond a simple password login. It requires that you type in a special code that is displayed on your phone. You can choose to have this happen every single time you log into your account, or only once whenever you sign into a new computer or mobile device.



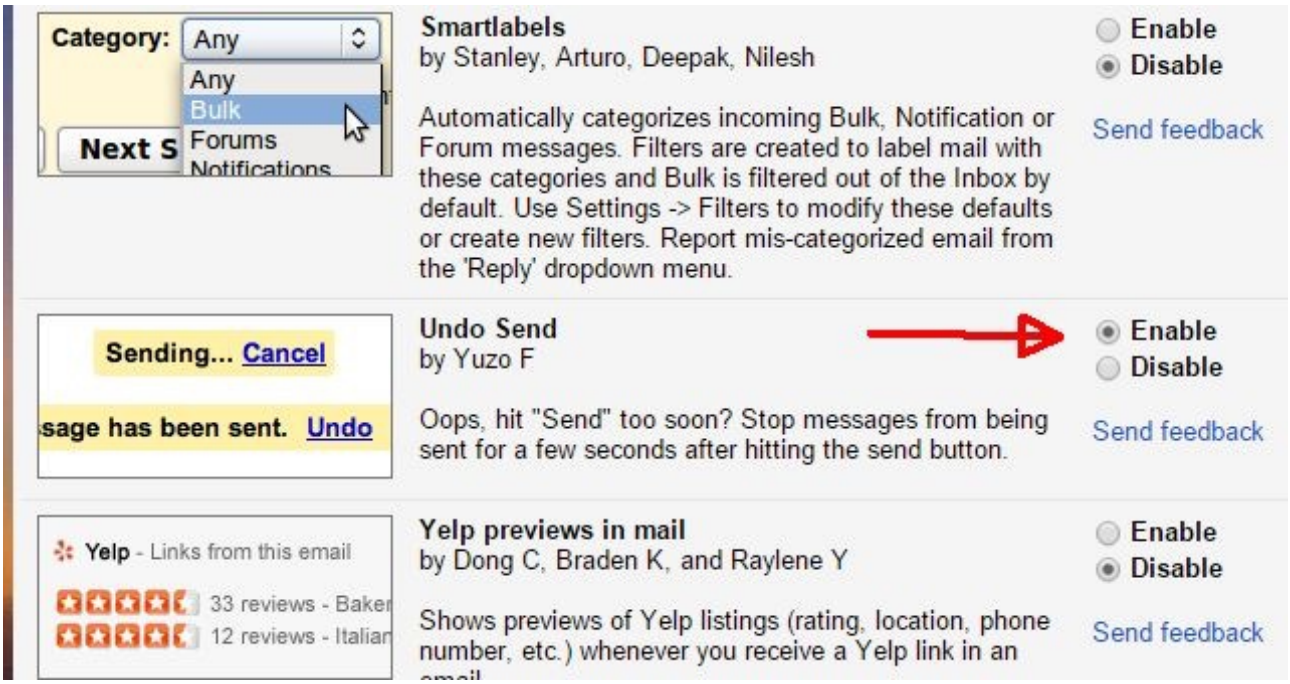
2-step verification is more secure than just a password login, because even if hackers or anyone else happens to steal your account password, they won't be able to access your account unless they've also managed to steal your phone, which isn't very likely.

If email security is high on your priority list, read Joel's list of 7 important email security tips every user should know about.

UNDO send.

Have you had the experience where you type a long email, and the moment you hit send, you realize you've made a massive mistake and want to take it all back? Well, in the real world if that happens, you're pretty much out of luck. What you say at a meeting or in a conversation with friends is just out there and there's no taking it back.

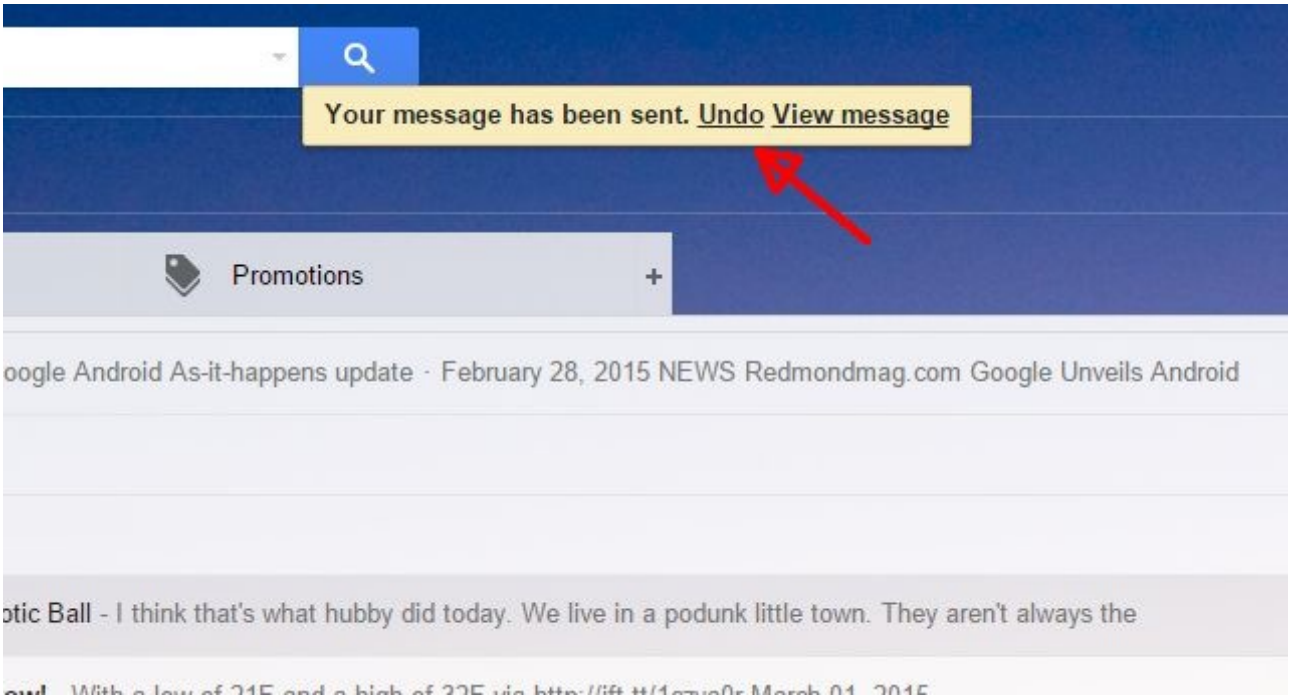
With Gmail though, that's entirely different. You can take it back by using the Undo Send extension. Enable it by going into **Gmail settings**, click on the **Labs** tab, and click **Enable**.



Then, go to the General tab, and select a time delay that you want Gmail to use whenever you're sending emails.

There's no reason setting this up to 30 seconds will cause any problems, because you won't even notice the delay after you click send. However, those precious 30 seconds give you time to realize you've just made a mistake sending that email, and to click on the "Undo" link at the top of the Gmail window.

This kind of fail-safe is handy. You may not use it often, but that one time when you need it, you'll be very glad that it was an option.



Making Use of Google Tools

Google Search, Drive, Keep, Calendar and Email make up the five Google tools with some of the highest user rates of all Google's offerings. So, it's easy to understand why Google would want to give you features that help people make the most of those tools. Even if you've used these tools and services for years, there are always new things to learn about them.

The tips and tricks offered in this guide are meant to help you make better use of these tools, so that hopefully they'll save you some time and make you a bit more productive. After all, isn't that the whole point of using productivity tools?

Continue your exploration of Google tools by searching our site for the hundreds of guides and articles on the topic. You'll find things like 7 ways to integrate Google Drive with Gmail, integrating Google Tasks with Excel, using Google Drive to capture creative ideas, and so many more unique topics throughout the site.

Are there any other tips that you're aware of for any of the five main Google tools listed above? Share your own tips and tricks in the article's comments section!