

Google Services

Google was started by Sergey Brin and Larry Page as a search engine in September 1998.

- a. Their initial goal: "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful."
- b. Added in 2011: type in "Do a barrel roll" in the search engine and make the page do a 360° rotation!
- c. They've added online productivity software including Gmail, maps, an office suite, and a social network.
- d. Next they built desktop apps including Earth, Chrome browser, Picasa for editing photos, and Gtalk IM.
- e. Recently they developed the Android mobile OS, and the browser-only Google Chrome OS.

Now let's look at several of Google's services in more detail, starting with Google Search:

- a. The Google search engine is the most popular, with 67% market share by 2014, crowding out others.
- b. You can search for anything by typing in plain English (or in another language) what you're looking for.
- c. How does it do it? It uses "web crawler" robot programs that scour the Web and index what they find.
- d. It returns anywhere from a few dozen to millions of results, prioritized by relevancy and ranking.
- e. Most people only look at the first page of results, so "SEO" (Search Engine Optimization) is the effort to get a site on the first page of search engine results.

Others of our lessons cover Gmail and Maps, so let's consider Google+ social networking service.

- a. First, create a Gmail account and a user profile, then you can set up a free Google-Plus account.
- b. Google+ is organized around "circles" of your contacts that you import from Gmail, Facebook, etc.
- c. You can post a message to just 1 person, or a "circle" of family, friends, people from work, church....
- d. Upload photos manually, or automatically from an Android device to share them instantly with friends.
- e. Chat, voice and video calling are integrated in G+. "Hangouts" give you video calls with up to 10 people.
- f. Create or join a "Community" - a group of people with a shared interest, similar to an email forum.
- g. As of December 2012 Google+ had 343 million users globally, or about 25% of all social networking.

Google's online office suite: Docs word processing, Sheets spreadsheets, and Slides presentation program:

- a. Store these files in your Google Drive (it's also a folder on your PC), and view them with Google Viewer.
- b. Docs, the word processor, has many of the same functions as Microsoft Word, but a different file type: when Docs saves a document in Docs format, it uses the extension ".gdoc", not ".doc" or ".docx".
- c. Similarly, Google "Sheets" uses the ".gsheet" format instead of the MS Excel's ".xls" or ".xlsx" formats.
- d. Likewise, Google "Slides" uses the ".gslides" format rather than MS PowerPoint's ".ppt" or ".pptx" formats.
- e. You can select the option to download a Docs file in the ".docx" format, then open it in MS Word.
But be careful: the formatting might change slightly, or even quite a lot, when you open it in Word!
- f. You can also download "Sheets" and "Slides" files in comparable Excel and PowerPoint formats.
- g. All of these types of files can be shared and worked on by several users at the same time!
- h. Now you can even edit Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint files directly in Docs, Sheets and Slides.

Here are some other Google services, as listed on the nine "dots" after you sign in:

- a. **Play** - millions of e-books (100,000s are free!), magazines, your mp3 music, purchased music.
- b. **YouTube** - hundreds of millions of videos, including free movies (get the "MovieTube" Android app).
- c. **News** - top headlines, plus you can create and save customized searches of topics in the news.
- d. **Drive**- up to 5Gb of free storage on the Web, accessible from any Internet-connected device.
- e. **Calendar** - import your calendar from Outlook, Thunderbird, etc., and keep it in sync anywhere.
- f. **More:** Translate, Mobile Offers, Wallet, Shopping, Blogger, Finance, Photos, Videos, Even more....
- g. **"Google Home and Office"** menu of 14 programs you can use wherever you're connected to Internet.

How does Google do it? How do they make money by giving away their services and software?

- a. Microsoft's specialty is selling PC software, Apple's business model is on selling cool devices.
- b. Google is focused on universal software that runs on the WWW and collects your information.
- c. **You** - your eyeballs are Google's real products. They create and sell your profile to advertisers.