

## Google Services

### Which Web browser am I using

When a client has a problem with their Web browser, one of the first questions we normally ask is what Web browser are you using. Many times the answer is “Google”. This necessarily leads to additional questions to answer the original question because there is no Web browser named Google. There is a browser named Google Chrome and there is the Google home page on the Internet.

It’s easy to get the Google terms mixed up because Google is a part of nearly everything we do online. In this article we will look at some of the other services Google provides, but first let’s answer the original question. Below are the four most popular Web browsers for Windows. You will notice that only Google Chrome looks like it might have something to do with Google.



Here is a picture of the Google home page for google.com which can be set as the home page in ANY browser, including the three above that do not have Google in their names. The google.com home page is designed for searching the Web, and this service is where Google got its start.



### A brief Google history

In the late 1990’s Larry Page and Sergey Brin, two students in Stanford University's Ph.D. program embarked on a research project with the goal of making an efficient search engine for the Web. At that

time other search engines were already available, WebCrawler, Yahoo, Lycos, Altavista, among others, but although they helped find things on the expanding World Wide Web, search results were more often skewed toward whichever advertiser paid the most. When advertisers can buy their way to a top spot, it often comes at the cost of user experience, and that's where Google did things differently.

Page and Sergey's efforts were focused on creating a search service that was based on relevance rather than advertising dollars. To that end, they developed a method of scouring the Web for websites that had the most links to them from other prominent Web sites and then ranking those sites. By the end of 1998, Google had an index of about 60 million pages and people had already discovered the search results were better than those of their competitors.

While search is still Google's core purpose, the company now provides services and goods ranging from (among many) email and photo storage to productivity software (the Google Docs suite), the internet browser Chrome, the mobile operating system Android, Chrome laptops and the Pixel mobile phone. Google has evolved from that two-man enterprise into a multibillion-dollar corporation.

### Google other services

As Google has grown, the company has added many new services. Some are designed to help make Web searches more efficient and relevant, while others seem to have little in common with search. With many of its services, Google has entered into direct competition with other companies.

### Gmail

Google's Gmail, a free Web-based email program, is perhaps the company's best-known service outside its search engine. When Gmail first launched, Google limited the number of users who could create accounts. The first group of users could invite a limited number of people to join, and so Gmail invitations became a commodity. Today, anyone can sign up for a free Gmail account.

### Google Docs

Another free program from Google is Google Docs, a productivity software suite. It includes word processing (Google Docs), spreadsheets (called Google Sheets) and a presentation program (Google Slides). Creating a Google Docs account is free. You can share documents on Google Docs, which allows friends to view and make changes to documents. All of your documents are stored on Google's servers, where you can share them and access them wherever there's an internet connection.

### Google Maps and Google Earth

Google Maps is a Web-based service that provides detailed information about geographical regions and sites around the world. It provides 360° panoramic views of streets (Street View), real-time traffic conditions, and route planning for traveling by foot, car, bicycle and air (in beta), or public transportation.

Although Google Maps was originally available only on the PC, Google Maps for Android and iOS devices was released in September 2008 and features GPS turn-by-turn navigation along with dedicated parking

assistance features. In August 2013, it was determined to be the world's most popular app for smartphones, with over 54% of global smartphone owners using it at least once.

A product related to Google Maps is Google Earth, an interactive digital globe that features satellite images, 3D views and information on millions of places around the planet. Google Earth is also available on PC, Androids and iOS.

## Other services

In 2007, the company acquired video sharing site YouTube, now the second-most popular site on the Web (behind Google.com). Google also has made forays into hardware with its own branded phone (the Pixel), a device that streams music and video to your TV (Chromecast), easy-to-use laptop computers (Chromebooks) and "smart" devices (like the Google Nest thermometer and Google Home) that connect to the internet to help with everyday life.

As you can see, Google is more than just a search service. If you need help using any of these services, please email or give us a call. We can help.

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