

# **Google Drive for Writers**

A short guide to getting the most  
out of Google Drive

(Second Edition)

**by Scott Nesbitt**



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## Introduction

As someone who writes for a living, and who is serious about my work, I focus more on words than tools. But I can't deny that a good tool helps make writing easier.

Over the years, I've used a lot of software to churn out words. Most of that software no longer exists and I miss some of it. But I've never really found a piece of writing software that I could take everywhere with me and use with any computer or device that I've owned. That is, until I discovered **Google Drive**.

I use Google Drive to do quite a bit of my writing. Not everything, mind you, but I do use Google Drive to prepare outlines, drafts, completed versions of articles, and a whole lot more.

Why do I use Google Drive so much? It's simple and no matter where I am — at home or on the road — and no matter which computer or device I'm using, I can get on or get access to my writing. All I need is an Internet connection and a web browser. And the internet connection isn't always necessary (more on this later).

## Hold On ... Just What is Google Drive?

Simply put, Google Drive is an online office and productivity suite. It's made up of a word processor, a spreadsheet, a presentation tool, a drawing application, and a tool to make forms. This book focuses on the word processor component of that suite.

Being on the web, the documents that you create with Google Drive are stored online. You can get to them wherever and whenever you have an internet connection. And you're not limited to using a desktop or laptop computer. I've used Google Drive with my smartphone, my tablet, and even with an Android-powered media player.

No matter what I was using, I could easily view and edit my documents.

Google Drive — specifically, the word processor component that I'm covering in this book — is easy to use. It packs the main features that you need for writing and formatting your work, as well as for collaborating with others. You don't get all the bells and whistles that you find in, say, Microsoft Word but Google Drive does enable you to:

- Create and edit documents.
- Format text.
- Add tables and images to your documents.
- Share and collaborate.
- Track revisions.

And you can do a lot more.

## **What Happened Google Docs?**

Good question. Once upon a time, Google's web-based office suite was called Google Docs. But in the middle of 2012, Google made some changes to that service. While you can still create and edit and collaborate on documents, Google Docs has been expanded to include the storage for files other than your documents.

That means you can upload PDF files, images, videos, Word or LibreOffice Writer documents, and more to back them up in case of an emergency. Google Drive can automatically convert files from your desktop word processor so you can edit them online. You can even use the Google Drive app on your smartphone or tablet to view or download those files.



## What This Book *Isn't* and Is About

This isn't a comprehensive guide that will teach you everything about Google Drive. The beauty of Google Drive, and what initially attracted me to it, is that it's simple. At its core, Google Drive is easy to use and easy to learn.

Instead, this book guides you through a number of useful features and functions of Google Drive. I'm skipping the basics and showing you how to use Google Drive not (just) as a word processor but as a powerful tool for writing, submitting that writing to editors, and collaborating with others. You'll also discover how to easily and efficiently organize and back up your work.

*Google Drive for Writers* consists of the following chapters:

- **Some Basics**, which guides you through aspects of Google Drive with which you might not be familiar.
- **A Few Useful Features**, which outlines five features of Google Drive that can help writers work more efficiently.
- **Using Styles**, which explains the importance of styles and how to apply and modify them.
- **Setting Up Your Page**, which looks at how to change the page layout of your documents.
- **Using and Creating Templates**, which shows you how to use Google Drive's collection of templates and how to create your own.
- **Working with Links and Bookmarks**, which explains how to link to content outside of your documents and within them.
- **Organizing Your Work**, which explains how to better organize your documents using folders.

- **Backing Your Documents**, which details how to get your documents out of Google Drive and on to your computer.
- **Collaborating with Others**, which looks at how use Google Drive's collaboration features to effectively work on documents with other people.
- **Sending Your Work to Editors ... and Others**, which explains how to email documents from within Google Drive.
- **Using Scratchpad**, which explains how to Scratchpad (a useful extension to the Chrome web browser) to take notes.
- **Taking Notes with Google Keep**, which explains how to use Google Keep (a dedicated note taking tool that's part of Google Drive).
- **Working Offline**, which discusses how you can work on your documents even when you don't have a connection to the internet.
- **Storing Files**, which goes over how to upload and save files (not just documents) to Google Drive.
- **Using a Spreadsheet to Track Your Writing (and More)**, which shows you how to take advantage of Drive's Spreadsheets feature to track your submissions, earnings, expenses, and collaborative projects.

## You Don't Need To Be a Writer

While I wrote this book with writers in mind, you don't need to be one to take advantage of the information on these pages. Whether you're a writer, a student, a user of Google Apps for Business, a small business owner, or just someone who wants or needs to put information down on

a page, I think you'll find something useful in this book.

Keep in mind, though, that Google Drive isn't for everyone. For some people, it's too basic — it doesn't pack the features and *functionality* (whatever that means) that they expect from their word processors. But Google Drive adheres to the 80/20 rule: 80% of users of any software only use 20% of its features.

Anyway, you can't know if Google Drive isn't for you unless you give it a try.

Ready to learn more? Great! Let's get started!



## Some Basics

If you're familiar with Google Drive, you can safely skip this chapter. If you're new to Google Drive, you might want to read this chapter if only to get the lay of the land.

Let's take a close look at some aspects of Google Drive that you might find unfamiliar.

## Google Drive Isn't (Just) a Word Processor

It includes a suite of tools: word processor, spreadsheet, presentation tool, simple drawing application, and a tool to build forms. Google Drive is also a very flexible way to store files.

Since this book is aimed at writers, I'll be focusing on the word processor portion of the suite. But most of what I cover in these pages applies to the other components of Google Drive, too.


## My Drive

Google Drive doesn't act like the file manager on your desktop or laptop computer. While it does let you group your files into what are called *folders* (more about these later), all of your documents are literally lumped together on the main Google Drive screen.


That screen is called **My Drive** and looks like this:

- TITLE


---

- ☆  Amazon Marketplace Payments Offline personal


---

- ☆  Blog Post Topics (2012) Offline blogging


---

- ☆  Blog Advertising Offline blogging


---

- ☆  Web App Fees Offline personal


---

- ☆  NZ Embassy Letter - Birth Certificate Update Offline


---

- ☆  Scratchpad


---

- ☆  Top 10 tools for project management and collaboration Offline Scratchpad

---

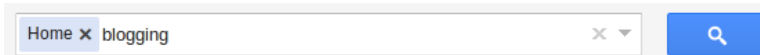
- ☆  Adventures in Modern Publishing - Slides presentations

---

- ☆  New structure elements in HTML5 Offline Scratchpad

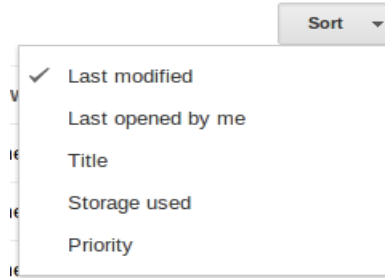
As you create more documents, the list (obviously) gets longer and messier. Worse still, the list isn't sorted alphabetically. Instead, the newest documents, or the ones that you've worked on most recently, rise to the top. That can make finding a specific document a bit difficult, especially if you haven't touched it recently.

You can group similar documents together; I'll be discussing how to do that in the chapter "Organizing Your Work." But since Google is pretty good with search, they've included a nice search engine with Google Drive. It's at the top of the **My Drive** page. Just type a term in the search box, and it will narrow down your the number of documents in the list.



## Sorting Your Documents

You can also sort the documents on the **My Drive** page by clicking the **Sort** menu in the top-right corner.



While **My Drive** displays the newest, or most-recently edited, documents at the top of the list, you can also sort documents:

- By when they were last opened.
- Alphabetically, by the title of the document.
- By the size of the document (the biggest first, followed by smaller ones).
- By their priority.

All but the last one option is easy to figure out. Priority, obviously, is how important a document is. Notice that there's a star beside the name of each document in **My Drive**.

<input type="checkbox"/>	TITLE
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆	Using Social Sign-on to Target Content to Visitors Offline
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆	Using Social Sign-On to Target Content to Visitors and Customers Offline
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆	Three Limitations and Disadvantages of Using Social Sign-On Offline
<input type="checkbox"/> ☆	Factors to Consider When Implementing Social Sign-on Offline

When you click that star, it turns yellow. That marks the document as more important than other documents. For example, you can set a priority for the documents that you're currently working on. By selecting **Priority** from the **Sort** menu, you can make sure that those documents appear at the top of the list on the **My Drive** page.

## The Interface

When you create a new document, you'll notice that the Google Drive interface is very familiar. It's similar to most of the word processors that you've used in the past. Google Drive is a bit more stripped down, though.

Google Drive has fewer features than, say, LibreOffice Writer or Microsoft Office. But remember what I said earlier about the 80/20 rule? Google Drive has all the basic functions you need. Those functions include:

- Styles for headings.
- Text formatting (like bold, italics, and underline).
- The ability to insert lists and tables into a document.
- The ability to search and replace text.
- The ability to insert images and links.
- Calculating a word count.



There are also a number of other useful and powerful features, which the subsequent chapters of this book cover in detail.

## Saving Your Documents

If you look closely at the Google Drive interface, there's something that you'll notice missing: a way to save your documents. There's no **Save** icon on the toolbar and there's no item for **Save** under the **File** menu.

But don't worry. Google Drive does the work for you. It automatically saves your documents after you stop typing. It takes a few seconds, and for many people that automatic save feature is the one that takes the most getting used to. Just keep your eye on the menu bar. When Google Drive is saving a document, the menu bar displays the text **Saving ...** When it's done, it displays **All changes saved**.

With that out of the way, let's move on to actually using Google Drive for your writing.



## A Few Useful Features

I'd like to spend a few pages looking at five features in Google Drive. These features, in the greater scheme of the application, aren't all that complex or important. But I find them useful and think you will too.

### Inserting a Page Break

Google Drive doesn't really understand the concept of a page. In fact, it tends to fake pages when you're editing a document on screen. When you download or send a document as a file (these are explained later), the pagination might be off. This mainly results in orphaned text which can be unsightly.

The solution to this problem is to add a page break. You can do that to avoid orphaned text, or to emphatically mark the end of one section or chapter of a document that you're working on.

To add a page break, position the cursor at the start of the block of text before which you want to insert the break. Then, select **Insert > Page Break**.

### Getting a Word Count

Most writers work under one or more restrictions. One of the most common restrictions is a limit to the number of words that we have for an article or a whitepaper or an essay. To stay within that limit, getting an accurate word count is essential.

To do that in Google Drive, select **Tools > Word Count**. You get a detailed view of the number of words and characters, both in the document and in any text you've highlighted.

✕

Word count

Counts	Selection	Document
Pages	0	3
Words	0	703
Characters (no spaces)	0	3530
Characters (with spaces)	0	4212

Close


## Inserting a Table of Contents

While I generally don't use Google Drive for longer documents, I know a number of writers who do. Usually, those documents are anywhere from 15 to 50 pages long. Sometimes longer. A key component in a document that size is a table of contents. It provides the initial point of navigation through the document.

Add a table of contents by first placing your cursor somewhere near the top of your document and either pressing Enter on your keyboard or adding a blank page. Then, select **Insert > Table of Contents**. Google Drive scans all of the headings in the document and generates the table. And, as in a word processor, the items in the table of contents are hyperlinked and headings are indented.

Here's a very simple example of a table of contents:

[Using Social Sign-on to Target Content to Customers](#)  
[A Quick Refresher](#)  
[The Profile is the Key](#)  
[Targeting Content](#)  
[Don't Forget Privacy](#)  
[Picking Your Tool](#)



Notice that icon in the top-left corner of the table of contents? Whenever you add another heading, click that icon to refresh the table of contents.

When you export your work as, for example, a Word or PDF file the table of contents and the hyperlinks are preserved. The refresh icon doesn't appear in printed or exported files.

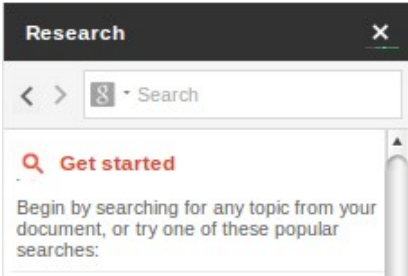
## Doing Research

Research is a key to strong writing. But jumping away from writing to open another browser tab or window to do that research can be annoying. It can definitely slow you down.

You can get around that by using the **Research** feature.

That feature is, essentially, a gateway to Google's search engine but one which allows you to quickly scan search results without navigating away from Google Drive.

There are two ways to use the **Research** feature. The first is to select **Tools > Research**. The **Research** pane opens in the right side of the Google Drive window.



Type what you want to research in the search box. You can search using Google's search engine or using Google Scholar (a database of scholarly literature). You can also search for images and quotes.

The second way is to highlight a piece of text in your document, and then select **Tools > Research**. The **Research** pane opens, with some search results already displayed.

For example, while writing an article on social media a while back, I needed some background information on something called *social CRM*. I just highlighted those words in my document and got some good information without leaving Google Drive.

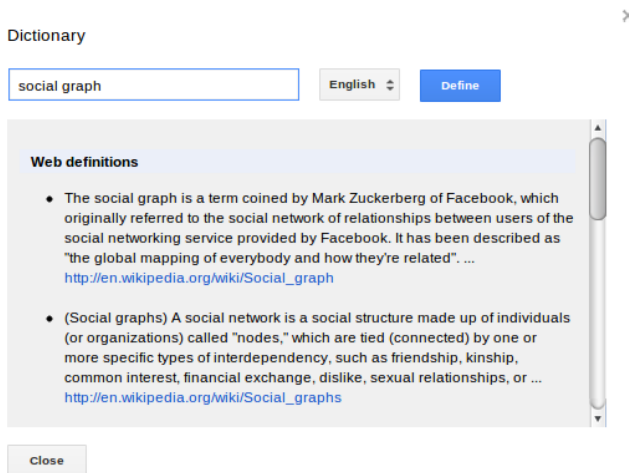


## Defining a Word or Term

Ever run into a word or term that you didn't now or didn't quite understand? You might have put it in your document yourself, with the caveat that you'd get back to it and add some detail later. Or you might be working with another writer, and they added the word or term but didn't adequately explain it.

To get a definition, all you need to do is highlight the word or term and then select **Tools > Define**. You get a list of definitions.

Let's go back to that article on social media that I mentioned earlier. There's one term I kept hearing while writing that piece: *social graph*. My understanding of that term was hazy, but I needed to know what it meant to write the article. So, I highlighted it and got a handful of useful definitions.







## Using Styles

How do you format your documents? I mean, format things like headings and body text. Do you highlight them with your mouse and then change the fonts settings? Or do you use styles?

I'm hoping that you use styles. Styles allow you to apply pre-set formatting to elements of your text. Styles provide a consistent look and feel to your documents, and are faster and easier to apply than manual formatting.

Like every good word processor, Google Drive allows you to add styles to your documents. And you should. Using styles is faster, cleaner, and more consistent than manually applying formatting.

## A Short Rant Before We Continue

One of my few professional pet peeves is the use and, more often than not, the lack of use of styles.

People who should know better fall into the trap of not using styles in their word processing software of choice. Instead, they apply formatting manually — by highlighting text and changing the size of a font and making it bold or italic. A cumbersome and dirty process.

Why is it a trap? Styles aren't there just to make a document look nice. Styles enforce consistency by controlling the size and attributes of fonts, spacing, kerning, and more.

Yes, those things are important. And not just to maintain a consistent look and feel. Chances are you're sending your work to editors and publishers who will pull your document into their production workflow. Using styles ensures that everything will transition properly into that workflow.

Not using styles will disrupt the workflow or it will result in

bad formatting in the document. Some poor production person or another writer will have to go in and fix the problems. Having done that more than a couple of times in the past, I can say that it's very annoying.

Thanks for bearing with me. Now, let's continue.

## What Styles are Available in Google Drive?

There aren't many. Just the bare minimum of what you need to build a document. Like the default styles found in most desktop word processors, the styles that are available in Google Drive are usable. A bit bland, but usable.

Those styles are:

- Title
- Subtitle
- Heading 1
- Heading 2
- Heading 3
- Normal Text

**Title**

*Subtitle*

**Heading 1**

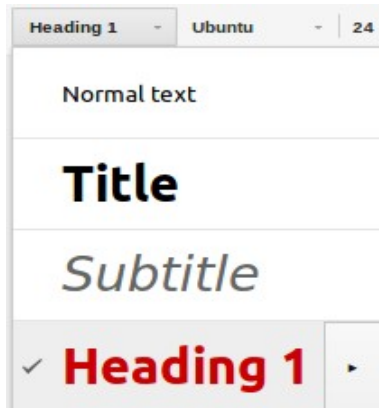
**Heading 2**

**Heading 3**

Normal Text

## Applying Styles

Using your mouse, highlight the text whose style you want to change — for example, some words that you want to turn into a heading. Then, select the styles that you want to apply to the text from the **Styles** list on the toolbar.



## Customizing Styles

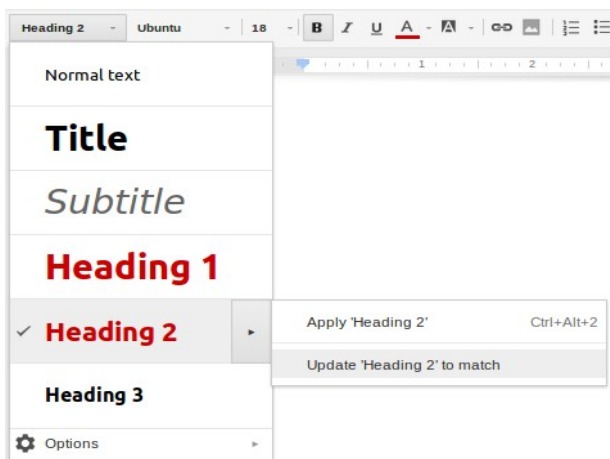
The styles that are available in Google Drive are usable but bland. You can change aspects of the built-in styles — like the font and size of the font, the color of the text, and how the text is aligned — very easily. Let's look at how to do that.

If you're reading this book on color screen, you'll probably have noticed that the headings are red. I chose red because it stands out from the black body text. Let's see how to do that with a document in Google Drive.

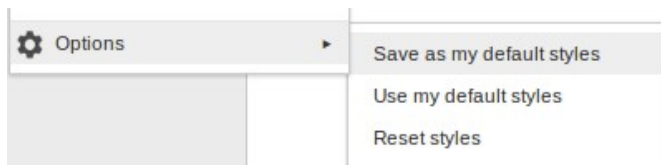
Create or open a document that has several blocks of text with the *Heading 2* style applied to it. Find the first of those blocks of text and highlight it. Then, on the toolbar, click the **Text color** button and find the shade of red labeled **RGB (204, 0, 0)**; it's the one in the second column, sixth block down.

Earlier, I mentioned that manually applying formatting is a no-no. That's true in most cases, but it's OK if you're customizing a style.

When you make the kind of change that I described above, the heading that you highlighted turns red. But only that heading. If you want the other blocks of text formatted with the Heading 2 style to match, click the **Styles** list. Then, click the arrow pointing to the right beside the style for Heading 2 and select **Update 'Heading 2' to match**.



Remember that the changes you make only apply to the document that you're currently working on. If you decide that you want to use the changes you've made across all of your documents, expand the list of styles and click **Options**. Then, in the menu that flies out, select **Save as my default styles**.



## Setting Up Your Page

As someone who writes, your page is your canvas. And depending on what you're writing, the way in which your page is set up can influence the length of your sentences or paragraphs, or determine the size of any images and diagrams that you want to include in your document.

While Google Drive doesn't offer you a lot of flexibility in the way in which you can set up a page, it does enable you to:

- Choose a page size.
- Add a header and/or a footer to your page.
- Insert page numbers and page ranges.

Let's look at how to do that.

## Choosing a Page Size

As with most desktop word processors, the default page size of a Google Drive document is 8.5 inches by 11 inches. If you're in North America, that usually works for most documents. But 8.5 inches by 11 inches isn't the standard paper size elsewhere in the world. And if you're writing the chapters of what will become an ebook, you might want to look at a smaller page size.

With Google Drive, you don't get too many options to change the size of a page. And you can't create a custom page size. But the stock page sizes are more than adequate for most of what you need to do.

To change the page size of your document, select **File > Page setup**.

Page setup

**Orientation**

Portrait     Landscape

**Paper size**

Letter (8.5" x 11")

**Page color**

**Margins (inches)**

Top: 1

Bottom: 1

Left: 1

Right: 1

OK    Cancel    Set as default

There are two elements in the **Page Setup** window that you'll want to pay attention to. The first, obviously, is the **Paper Size** list.

**Paper size**

- Letter (8.5" x 11")
- Tabloid (11" x 17")
- Legal (8.5" x 14")
- Statement (5.5" x 8.5")
- Executive (7.25" x 10.5")
- Folio (8.5" x 13")
- A3 (11.69" x 16.54")
- A4 (8.27" x 11.69")
- A5 (5.83" x 8.27")
- B4 (9.84" x 13.90")
- B5 (6.93" x 9.84")

You can select a paper size that fits your needs. And those needs might change depending on the type of document you're writing. If you're in New Zealand and are writing a document that will be printed, then you'd choose **A4** from the **Paper Size** list. For the ebooks that I write and publish as PDF files, on the other hand, I choose **B5** (6.93 inches by 9.84 inches). More on this in the chapter **Using and Creating Templates**.

The second element that you need to pay attention to is the settings for the margins, which add space around your pages. Again, the default (one inch all around) is usually fine for most purposes. But feel free to play around with the margins to find ones that work for you.

Notice the **Set as default** button in the **Page Setup** window? If you make any changes to the page layout – for example, select the **A4** paper size and set the margins to half and inch all around – and click **Set as default**, then *all* of your documents in Google Drive will use that paper size. So be careful. Click that button only if you really mean it.

Let's look at some of the other elements of a page that you can customize.

## Adding Headers and Footers

Headers and footers can be useful tools in laying out a page. If you're not familiar with them, headers and footers are spaces at the top and bottom of a page. And those spaces are independent of the rest of the page – what you put into a header or a footer doesn't encroach on whatever else is on the page.

Headers and footers are generally contain things like page numbers (more on that in a moment), a chapter title, the name of the author of a book or article, small logos, or some other information. The information that you put into a header or footer is carried over to each page in a

document, providing a bit of visual consistency and continuity throughout that document.

Insert a header or footer by selecting **Insert > Header** or **Insert > Footer**. Google Drive adds a blank space at the top or bottom of the page. You can type text into that space, format that text, or add an image.

Here's a header I put together with a small image and some text



That example's quite basic, but with a little imagination you can probably come up with something a bit more appealing.

## Adding Page Numbers and Page Counts

With longer documents, you'll want to insert a page number or a page count into that document. Let's look at how to do that.

Select **Insert > Page Number** Then, select either **Top of page** or **Bottom of page** (depending on where you want to put the page number). I always put page numbers at the bottom of the page.

By default, Google Drive puts the page number on the right. You can format the page number by either centering it or putting it on the left side of the page. And you can change the font and the size of the font.

I'm old fashioned, so I put center page numbers at the bottom of the page.

But a page number sometimes isn't enough. Every so often, you might want to give readers an idea of how many pages are in a document. I often find this is the case when I'm writing business documents. Adding a page count is



simple. Just insert a page number to your document. Then, click to the right of the page number. Add a space, type **of**, and then enter another space. Finally, select **Insert > Page count**. You'll wind up with something that looks like this:

---

2 of 5

Now that you know how to set up a page, it's time to start using it.



## Using and Creating Templates

You're probably familiar with *templates*. They're canned page or document designs that have a specific purpose – an article, a book chapter, a report, a letter, or a resume.

The idea behind a template is simple: to give a document a consistent look, feel, and structure. A template gives a document *consistency*. The bulk of that consistency comes from *styles*, which control the size and attributes of fonts, spacing, margins, and more.

Templates don't just give documents a consistent look and feel. They can be useful if you submit electronic manuscripts to publishers.

In fact, templates are especially useful if the publisher you work with expects an article, a book chapter, or even an entire book to have a certain format or layout. Publishers will pull your document into their production workflow, and using a template ensures that everything will transition properly into that workflow. If a template changes, the changes will propagate throughout the document automatically.

Google Drive puts hundreds of templates at your fingertips. Or, you can create your own. Let's look at how to do both.

### Before You Begin

If you plan to use templates with Google Drive, you should create a folder (and sub folders below it) for your templates. That will make it easier to organize those templates.

I talked about creating folders in the chapter **Organizing Your Work**. When you create a folder for your templates, name the top-level folder something like *Templates* or *Writing Templates*. Below it, create sub folders for the types of writing that you do. I use the following sub folders:

- Articles
- Corporate Writing
- ebooks
- Timesheets and Invoices

It only takes a couple of minutes to create that folder structure, but it can help you to quickly find a template for a particular kind of writing.

## Using Google's Templates

As I mentioned earlier, Google has a library of templates (which you can find **here**). Many of the templates were created by the folks at Google, and many were created by users of Google Drive. There are templates for documents, spreadsheets, presentations, forms, and drawings. Let's focus on the document templates.

Get started by going to Google's templates site. Click the **Documents** link on the left of the page to get the full list of available document templates. I'd only recommend that if 1) you think you'll get lucky and find what you're looking for on the first page or three, or 2) if you have a lot of time to search. Remember, there are hundreds of templates in that collection.

It's better to use the search box on the page. You might have heard that Google's pretty good at the whole search thing ... Seriously, though, let's say you want to write a press release. Search for *press release*. You'll get a few dozen examples – many of the best of them are on the first couple of pages of results.

The nice thing about Google's templates is that each one includes a thumbnail that will give you a general idea of what the template looks like when it's in use.



You can see a template in all its glory by clicking the **Preview** link. Once you've found a template that suits your needs, click the **Use this template** button. That adds the template to **My Drive**.

Remember to move the template to a template folder. Whenever want to use it, open the template, make a copy of it, rename that copy, and then start writing.

## Creating Your Own Templates

What happens if you can't find a template that quite right for your needs? You can create a template of your own, or modify an existing Google Drive template.

Remember, though, that you don't have as much flexibility when comes to modifying a template in Google Drive as you do in a desktop word processor like Microsoft Word or LibreOffice Writer. But, for most people, Google Drive's capabilities are more than enough.

Before you start building your own template or modifying an existing one, you should think about the design of your template. You don't have to be a graphic artist or page layout wizard to do a good job, but you should sketch the look of your page or document out on a piece of paper. It doesn't need to be a drawing. It could simply be a list of

page attributes. Think about:

- The fonts that you want to use
- The levels of heading
- The colors of the fonts
- The size of the page and the margins.

Once you have that figured out, it's time to start building your template.

### **An Example: An ebook Chapter Template**

I'm going to walk you through how I created the template that I use for my ebooks. This section builds on several of concepts that I've introduced in this book.

When I use this template, I download the individual chapter files to my computer, assemble them in a word processor, and then create a PDF that I then sell.

My ebooks use the same simple layout:

- The page size is B5 (about 7 inches by 10 about inches).
- The body font is 10 point sans-serif.
- I use three levels of heading, all of them red and left aligned, and with the following attributes:
  - Heading 1 - The font is 18 point Arial.
  - Heading 2 - The font is 16 point Arial.
  - Heading 3 - The font is 14 point Arial.
- Each page has a footer that contains a page number, which is centered in the footer.

Start off by creating a new document. Modify the page layout by selecting **File > Page Setup**. Select **B5** from the **Paper Size** list. The default margins are one inch around, which is what I use.

Next, let's change the font and style of the body and heading text. I explained how to do this in the chapter **Using Styles**, but let's go through it again.

Type **Heading 1** at the top of the page, then apply the Heading 1 style to it. Highlight the heading, then do the following:

- Change the size of the font by selecting **18** from the **Font Size** list.
- Choose **Arial** from the **Font** list.
- Click the **Text Color** button and, from the window that pops out, choose the shade of red on the far right side of the second row at the top. That red has a value of **RGB (152,0,0)**.

Then, highlight the heading again and select **Heading 1** from the **Styles** list. Click the arrow pointing to the right beside Heading 1 and select **Update 'Heading 1' to match**.

Repeat that for Heading 2, Heading 3, and the body text.

Finally, let's add a page number. To do that, select **Insert > Page Number > Bottom of page**. This adds a page number, which will automatically increment, in the footer. I've always preferred having page numbers in the middle of a footer, so highlight the page number and click the **Center** button on the toolbar.

Something that I like to do is put placeholder elements the template to show where each element goes. Let's go back to the template that we just built.

At the top of the chapter, I include the placeholder **[Chapter Title]**, followed by body text stating **Begin writing here**. I do something similar for Heading 2 and Heading 3, as you can see below:

## **[Chapter Title]**

Begin writing here

### **[Section]**

More text

#### **[Subsection]**

More text here

When you're done, save the template to your **Templates** folder. As I mentioned earlier, when you need to use the template open it, make a copy, rename that copy, and then start writing.

If you're interested, you find a copy of this template (which you can reuse and modify) **here**.



## Working With Links and Bookmarks

We live in an age of **hypertext**. With a mouse click, anyone can not only jump from one place on the web to another, but also to any location within a document they're reading. Sometimes, it's hard to imagine a world or, at least, a document that doesn't allow you to do that.

Unless you're writing for print, you'll probably include at least one link in something you're writing. It might be to a website with more information about the subject you're covering. It might be to your Twitter or Facebook page. Or it might be a link to another section of the document that you're writing.

No matter what you're linking to, it's easy to insert a link in Google Drive. Best of all, regardless of what format in which you publish your document – as a word processor file, a PDF, or as HTML – the links stay active.

Let's look at how to add links and bookmarks to your documents in Google Drive.

### Adding Links to a Document

As I mentioned a few paragraphs ago, a link lets a reader jump from your document to a place on the web, or to another point in the same document. All with the click of a mouse.

So, just how do you add a link to a document? Here's how:

Start off by highlighting the text that you want to turn into a link. Say, for example, you're pointing readers to your Twitter page – that text could read, for example, *You can find news and updates on my Twitter page*. Then, select **Insert > Hyperlink**. Doing this opens the **Edit link** window.

### Edit link

**Text to display**

**Link to**

**Web address**

**Email address** [Test this link](#)

**Bookmark**

In the **URL for the link** field, type the address of the website or page that you're linking to – in this case, the URL of **my Twitter page**.

**Text to display**

**Link to**

**Web address**

**Email address** [Test this link](#)

**Bookmark**

When you're done, click **OK**.

You might have noticed a couple of things about the **Edit link** window. First, you can edit what's in the **Text to display** field. The second is the link labeled **Test this link**, which lets you make sure that the URL you entered works. Clicking the link opens a new window. If the site or page loads then all is good. If it doesn't, fix the link and try again.

## Creating an Email Link

Did you notice the **Email address** option in the **Edit link** window? Instead of adding a link to a website, you can create a link using your email address. When a reader clicks the link, they'll be able to send you a message.

Clicking the link will open a new message window in their default mail program – for example, Thunderbird on their desktop or Gmail on the web.

To add an email link, click **Email address** in the **Edit link** window and then type your email address in the **Email address for the link** field.

Edit link

Text to display

Link to

Web address

**Email address for the link**

Email address

Bookmark

There's a little trick that you can use to add a subject link to the message when a reader clicks the link. All you need to do is add `?subject=Subject` to the end of your email address.

So, let's say I want to create an email link that will include the subject line *Feedback on your ebook*. So, I'd enter **scott@scottnesbitt.net?subject=Feedback on your ebook** in the **Email address**.

Now what about jumping to another place in a document? Setting that up takes a little more work. Which is where *bookmarks* come in. Let's take a closer look at how to use bookmarks and links in a Google Drive document.

## Adding Bookmarks

In the previous section, I focused on creating links that take you *outside* of your document. If, however, you're writing and publishing for electronic consumption, you'll

probably find that you need to include at least one or two links to a place within a document.

You'd do that to, for example, to point a reader to a section of the document that contains information that's related to what they're reading or to a previous section that discusses a concept.

But for those kinds of links to work, you need to insert *bookmarks*. Just as you'd use a bookmark to mark your place in a dead-trees book, an electronic bookmark is a *pointer*. It tells a link where to go *within* a document.

Adding a bookmark, and a link to it, in a document is easy. Here's how:

First off, navigate to the point in the document to which you want to link. That's often a heading, although it's not uncommon to link to a paragraph or a place within a paragraph.

Next, click where you want to insert the bookmark. If you're linking to a heading, click either the beginning or the end of the heading. Then, select **Insert > Bookmark**.



Now, let's link to that bookmark. Find the text in the document that will act as the link. Select that text with your mouse and then select **Insert > Link**.

In the **Edit link** window, click **Bookmark** and then select the bookmark that you want to link to. Click **OK** to create the link.

## Edit link

**Text to display**

exporting your documents

**Link to**

Web address

Email address

Bookmark

Bookmark 1: Doing the job, one file at a time  
Bookmark 2: Doing a bulk export

Bookmark 3: Final thoughts

OK

Cancel

Adding links to your documents makes them more interactive and gives your readers more options not only for navigating around a document but also for accessing additional information. Links (and bookmarks) are easy to add to a document. But don't let that ease of use trick you into inserting links simply because you can.



## Organizing Your Work

When you first start using Google Drive, you'll notice that the way in which your documents and files are saved is rather free form. Actually, that's being generous. It's messy.

All of your documents are literally lumped together in a long list on the **My Drive** page. That's fine if you have a few documents or files. But as time passes and you add more and more documents to Google Drive, the mess increases.

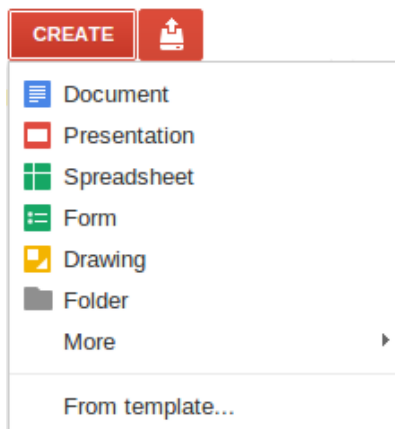
As I mentioned in the chapter **Some Basics**, Google Drive sorts documents and files by the date they were created or last modified. You can change the way that Google Drive sorts your work but that's not always helpful.

That's where folders come in. Just as you have directories and subdirectories for documents on your computer, you can create folders for your documents in Google Drive. A folder is just like a directory on your computer. It holds documents that are somehow related. If, for example, you regularly write for a particular publication, you can create a folder named after that publication. Folders keep your works organized and make it easier to find.

Over the next few pages, I'm going to show you how to create and effectively use folders in Google Drive.

## Creating a Folder

You can create a folder by clicking the **Create** button in the upper-left corner of the page and choose **Folder**.



You'll be asked to give the new folder a name.



Give your folder a descriptive, meaningful name. A name that will easily identify the contents of that folder. Using a name like *My Writing* or *Writing Notes* isn't the best way to go. By doing that, you're just shovelling the mess from the top-level list in **My Drive** into another place. Sure, the mess might be smaller but it's still a mess.



Earlier in this chapter, I gave an example of naming a folder after publications to which you regularly contribute. That strategy works well. While you might have a large number of folders, you'll be able to quickly zero in on your work.

I'll be offering a few tips for better organizing your documents and files later in this chapter.

## Folders Within Folders

In the previous section, I mentioned that using a name like *My Writing* or *Writing Notes* for your folders isn't the best way to go. Well, that's not **always** the case. You can use those names and then create *sub folders* to further organize your writing. A sub folder is merely a folder below a main folder in **My Drive**.

Let's say that you decide to create a folder called **My Writing**. Under that folder, you can have separate sub folders for each publication that you write for, a folder for drafts, and another folder for notes.

To create a sub folder, first click the folder in **My Drive** under which you want to create the sub folder. Once you're inside the main folder, click the **New Folder** button on the toolbar. From there, give the sub folder a descriptive name.

You can create as many sub folders as you need. You can even add folders to sub folders — doing that, you wind up with what techie types call a *folder structure*. Think of the folder structure as a tree. The main folder is the trunk, and the sub folders are the branches and leaves connected to that trunk.

I go into more detail about creating effective folder structures later in this chapter.

## Moving Documents Into Folders

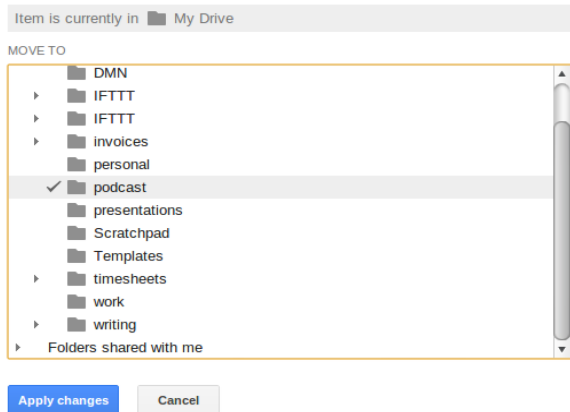
When you create a new document or upload a file to Google Drive, that document or file is automatically put into **My Drive**. Yes, into that long and messy list. You need to manually move your documents and files into folders.

You've probably noticed checkboxes beside the names of documents, files, and folders.



Click the checkbox beside the document or file that you want to move into a folder. Then, click the **Organize** button.

From there, select the folder into which you want to move the document or file and then click the **Apply Changes** button.



You can, if necessary, select multiple documents or files and move several of them at once.

## Using Folders Effectively

As I've stressed throughout this chapter, one of the keys to using folders in Google Drive effectively is to give them descriptive, meaningful names. Another key is to create an effective folder structure.

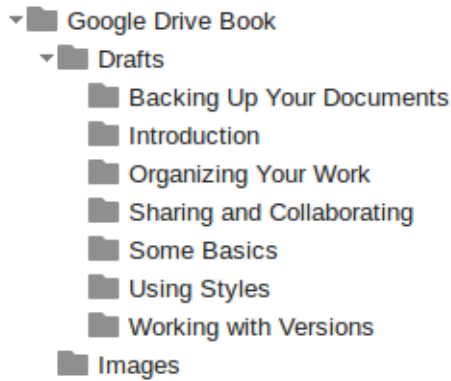
I've found that the most effective folder structures are *project-based* and *task-based*. Let's take a look at both of those structures.

### Project-Based Folders

A *project-based* folder structure is for a specific, one-time project. That could be a writing assignment you're doing for a corporate client or it could be for a book that you're writing.

Depending on the project, you might have subdirectories for images, notes, and the like. Let's say you're writing a book. You'd have a main project folder, with a sub folder for drafts of each chapter, another for files that have been edited, and one for the final approved drafts.

There's an example of a project-based folder structure on the next page:



## Task-Based Folders

Earlier in this chapter, I illustrated an example of setting up a folder structure for a publication to which you regularly contribute. I call that type of folder structure a *task-based* structure. You can use this kind of folder structure, for example, to hold blog posts or articles that you write for online and print publications.

Let's go back to the example of creating a folder structure for a publication to which you regularly contribute. You can name the main folder after the publication. Under that folder, you can have sub folders for particular years. Under the sub folders for each year, you can have sub folders named after the articles you've written (or are writing).

Here's an example of a task-based folder structure:

- ▼ **Panda Magazine**
  - ▼ 2011
    - Apps to Monitor Your Panda
    - Bamboo Substitutes
    - Best Brushes for Your Panda
  - ▼ 2012
    - Building a Bamboo Habitat
    - Top 10 Toys for Your Panda
    - Travelling with Your Panda

Setting up a directory structure to properly manage and organize your documents in Google Drive requires a bit of work upfront. But once you get into the habit of creating and using your directory structures, you'll find they make it easier to manage your writing.



## Backing Up Your Documents

Things happen. Sometimes, those things are bad. Very bad.

With online services like Google Drive, that could mean a server problem that wipes out one or a few or all of your documents. Or you could get locked out of your account. Which means you can't get access to those documents.

On the other hand, you could decide that Google Drive isn't for you. As I mentioned in the introduction to this book, it's not for everyone.

No matter what the case, you'll want to regularly download copies of your documents to your computer. You can do that inside Google Drive by backing up individual files or folders. You can also use a service that Google provides to save your documents.

Let's look at all of those options for backing up your work.

## A Bit About File Formats

The information in this section will become important soon. It's definitely worth spending a little time reading what comes next.

If you look on your computer, you'll probably see files with names that end in *.doc*, *.txt*, *.pdf*, or even *.html*. The *.whatever* portion of the name of the file is called an *extension*, and that extension identifies the format of the file. The format tells software, and you, what program created that file. The format also tells software about the structure of the file and how to read it.

Why is that important to you? Not all file formats are created equally. Not all software can read all file formats — a text editor, for example, can't open a file created with Microsoft Word. Choosing the right format could be crucial

to the integrity and usability of your backups.

In Google Drive, you can export your documents in six file formats:

**Microsoft Word (.docx):** The file format used with Microsoft Word version 2007 and later. These files have the extension *.docx* — for example, *report.docx*. If you're using an older version of Word, you can convert *.docx* files to a format using an online tool like Zamzar.

**OpenDocument Format (.odt):** The file format used with a number of Open Source word processors, notably OpenOffice.org Writer and LibreOffice Writer. These files have the extension *.odt* — for example, *article.odt*.

**Rich Text Format (.rtf):** This is a word processor file format that's been around since 1987. Just about every word processor, old or new, supports Rich Text Format. These files have the extension *.rtf* — for example, *LetterToMom.rtf*. While Rich Text Format is good for exchanging information, it doesn't retain style information like Microsoft Word and OpenDocument files do.

**PDF Document (.pdf):** This is a common format for archiving and distributing documents like ebooks, reports, articles, and more. These files have the extension *.pdf* — for example, *BestsellingNovel.pdf*. The difference between PDF documents and the other file formats is that you can't readily edit PDF files. As well, you can't open a PDF file in a word processor. You can only view them in a specialized application, like the free Acrobat Reader.

**Plain Text (.txt):** This is a simple file format that you can open in software like Notepad, TextEdit, or Gedit. You can also open plain text files in any word processor. Plain text files have no formatting. In fact, they're pretty bland. But they save your words nicely. These files have the extension *.txt* — for example, *Newsletter.txt*.



**Web Page (.html, zipped):** Web pages are written in a text-based format called HTML (Hypertext Markup Language). When viewed in a web browser like Chrome or Firefox, you see the formatted page and not the code that makes up the page. When you select this option, Google Drive creates a file with the extension *.html* — for example, *MyThesis.html* — and then compresses it into an archive with the extension *.zip* (for example, *MyThesis.zip*). If you've included any images in your document, those are included in the archive as well.

For most people, Microsoft Word (.docx) is probably the safest bet. Just about every modern word processor can open a .docx file.

## Backing Up Individual Documents

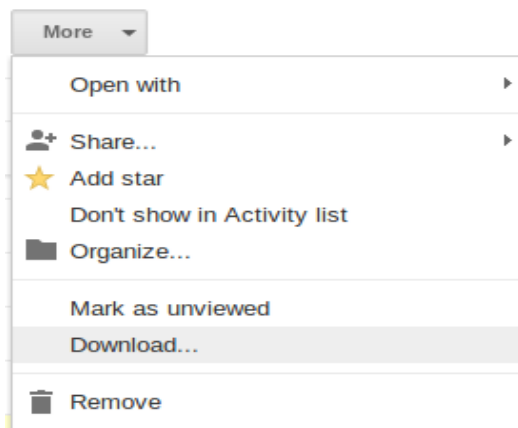
Open the document that you want to back up. Then, select **File > Download As**. A small menu flies out. Select the file format that you want to save the document as from that menu.

Your web browser downloads the file to your computer.

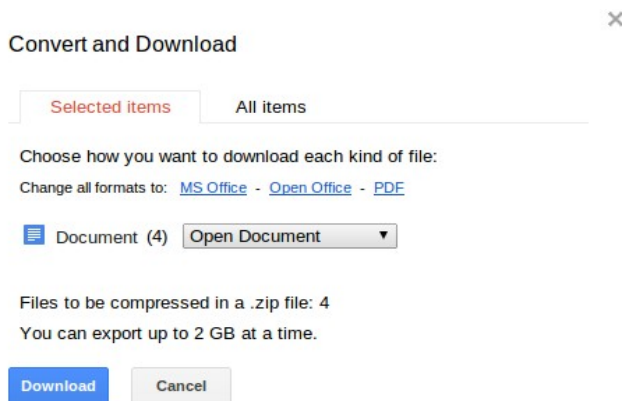
## Backing Up Multiple Documents

What happens if you want to back up more than one document? Saving them to your computer individually is a time-consuming process. To save time, you can download multiple files to your computer.

Go to **My Drive**. When you're there, click the checkboxes beside the documents that you want to back up. Then, click the **More** button at the top of the window and select **Download**.



When you select **Download**, a window opens that allows you to specify how you want Google Drive to backup up your documents.



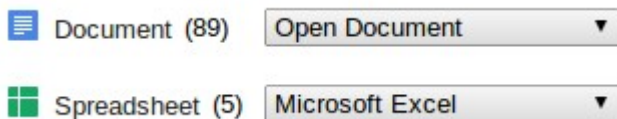
Notice the **Document** list? In this example, it's set to **Open Document**. You can click the list and choose one of the other file formats (which are explained above). Then, click the **Download** button.

Google Drive compresses the files into an archive. This can take anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes, depending on the number of files that you have selected and how large they are. Once the files have been put into the archive, Google Drive downloads the archive. It has a file name like *documents-export-[date].zip* — for example, *documents-export-2012-10-11.zip*.

## Backing Up Folders

If you've organized your work into folders, you can back those folders up. You back up a folder in the same way you would back up multiple documents. Go to **My Drive** and click the checkbox beside the name of the folder that you want to back up. Then, click the **More** button at the top of the window and select **Download**.

When you select **Download**, a window opens letting you specify how you want Google Drive to backup up the documents in the folder. If, like me, you've added other types of documents to your folders, they'll appear in formats lists.



In the example above, you'll notice that in addition to 89 documents, I also have five spreadsheets in the folder I'm trying to back up. I use those spreadsheets to track submissions to publications and to track the sales of my ebooks. In this case, Microsoft Excel is usually the best option for saving spreadsheets.

As with exporting multiple files, Google Drive compresses the contents of the folder into an archive. This can take anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes, depending on the number of files that you have selected and how

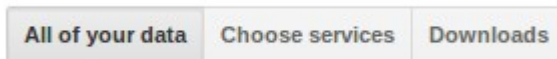
large they are. Once the files have been put into the archive, Google Drive downloads the archive. It has a file name like *[name\_of\_folder]-[date].zip* — for example, *Writing-2012-10-11.zip*.

## Using Google Takeout

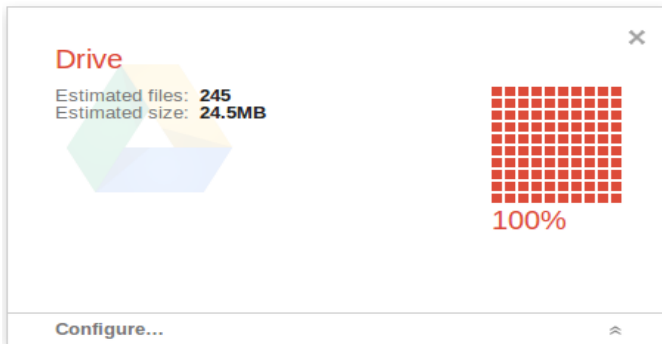
What if you want to grab all of your data in one fell swoop? You can do that using a service called Google Takeout. According to Google, Takeout *makes escaping from Google products as easy as possible*.

You can choose to download *all* of your information in Google's services, or just data from specific services. We're obviously going to focus on getting information out of Google Drive.

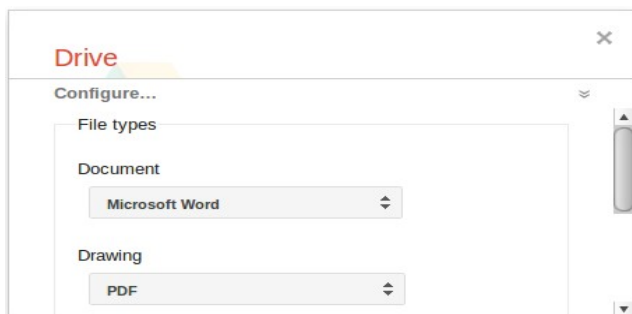
Go to Google Takeout. Click the **Choose Services** button at the top of the main page.



You're taken to the **Select a service** page. Click the **Drive** button. Google Takeout estimates the number of files that you have in Google Drive and the size of the download, as shown on the next page.



Notice the **Configure** button at the bottom of the estimate? Click that to tell Google Takeout what file formats you want to use for your backup.



For example, you can export all of your documents as Microsoft Word files and all of your spreadsheets as Microsoft Excel files.

When you're ready, click the **Create Archive** button. Just as when you exported multiple files and folder in Google Drive, Google Takeout compresses the contents of your Google Drive into an archive. This can take anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes, depending on the number of files that you have selected and how large they are. Once the files have been put into the archive, click the **Download** button. Google Takeout downloads the archive. It has a file name like *[your\_gmail\_address]-takeout.zip* — for example, *you@gmail.com-takeout.zip*.

Keep in mind, though, that Google Takeout is **all or nothing**. It takes everything in Google Drive — all documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings, and all files that you've uploaded to Google Drive — and backs it up. Depending on how many documents and files you have in Google Drive, that could be a pretty big backup file. While writing this book, I did a backup and it weighed in at around 24.5 MB. I'm sure it's grown a bit bigger since then ...



## Collaborating with Others

Writing is often viewed as a solitary endeavor. The lone writer tapping away at a keyboard in a cold garret and all of that. While that's how many writers still work (well, substitute a dining room table or coffee shop for the garret), it's not uncommon for writers to work together. You also might be working with clients who want to review or edit your work.

That collaboration usually happens at a distance. The distance could be a few city blocks or a continent and several time zones away. The traditional way of collaborating involves sending word processor files around by email. When you do that, not-so-nice things can happen. Like what? Like files getting lost or corrupted, people working on older versions of files, and more.

Using Google Drive, you don't have to worry about that. You can collaborate online, and all your collaborators need is a free Google Drive account. You have to do a bit of set up, but that little bit of work eliminates a lot of headaches.

## Collaborating on Documents

Before others can collaborate on a document in Google Drive with you, you need to share that document with them. Sharing a document involves sending your collaborators a link (which Google Drive generates) and giving them permission to edit the document.

Open the document that you want to share and then click the **Share** button in the top-right portion of the window. This opens the **Sharing settings** window.

## Sharing settings


Link to share (only accessible by collaborators)


[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1N\[REDACTED\]rXuP1RDVn](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1N[REDACTED]rXuP1RDVn)

Share link via:



Who has access

 Private - Only the people listed below can access [Change...](#)

 Scott Nesbitt (you) [REDACTED] [Is owner](#)

Add people: [Choose from contacts](#) [Can edit](#) ▼

Notify people via email - [Add message](#)

Send a copy to myself  
 Paste the item itself into the email

[Share & save](#) [Cancel](#)

In the **Add people** section of the window, type the email addresses of the people with whom you want to share the document. Notice that beside the box for the email addresses is a setting labeled **Can edit**. If you want others to edit the document, leave that as it is. You can also change that setting to:

- **Can view** - The people to whom you send the link can only read the document.
- **Can comment** - The people to whom you send the link can view and add comments to the document. More about this soon.

The **Can edit** setting, as you've probably guessed, allows people to view, comment on, and change a document.

Then, click the **Share & save** button. The person or people with whom you are sharing will receive an email with a link to the document in Google Drive.



## Tracking Changes

When you have more than one person working on a file, things can happen. Generally, those are good things. But every so often, someone might delete a sentence or a paragraph that shouldn't have been deleted. Or you might decide that something you got rid of a draft or two back actually works and which you want to restore.

In Google Drive, when you delete text it's not gone forever. *Revision history* can save you a lot of time and decrease your stress. Revision history is a useful features that modern word processors pack, but which not enough people use often enough.

Revision history tracks the changes that you made to a document. You don't need to enable it; revision history runs behind the scenes. Any changes that you make to a document are logged to the revision history every time you save that document.

To view the revision history of a document, open the document and select **File > See revision history**. The **Revision History** pane opens on the right side of the document window.

Any changes that were made to a document are marked in a sickly green. Often, that's not terribly useful — when you open the **Revision History** pane, Google Drive displays *all* of the changes that were made to the document. The entire document will be green.

It's better to get a view of each revision. To do that, click the **Show more detailed revisions** button at the bottom of the **Revision History** pane. Click on a revision to view it.

## 10 Great Ways to Make a Few Bucks Online[title here]

There seem to be no end to examples of people who make four, five, or even six figures from their blogs or websites. And who among us hasn't looked a tad enviously at those numbers and thought *Why can't that be me?*

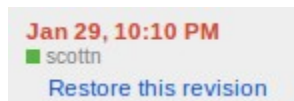
In the example above, the text **[title here]** was replaced with the actual title of the document. Notice that the text that was replaced has a line through it.

Let's look at another example from the same document:

### Teliad

[Teliad](#) is a link-based advertising system that embodies simplicity. ~~In some ways, it's quite quaint.~~ You get a flat rate for an ad link. That *rate* can range anywhere from a few dollars to a few tens of dollars. Then, you manually place the link somewhere on your website or blog. *Yes, you read that correctly. While the rates that Teliad pays might not be the highest, they're not based on*

Notice that some text was deleted (it has the line through it) and some more text was added. Now, I want to reinsert the deleted text. To do that, click the **Restore this revision** link in **Revision History** pane.



Be careful when restoring a previous revision. It will get rid of any work you have done subsequent to that revision.

## Adding Comments

If you're collaborating over long distance — whether with one or more other writers or with an editor — someone in that group might have some questions or suggestions about something in the document. Traditionally, you would have exchanged emails about that. The problem with doing that is you can easily lose your place in an email thread. Or

it can be difficult to find exactly where in a document your collaborator is pointing out an issue.

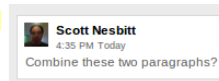
It's easier to insert a comment into a document. Just highlight the word or phrase or sentence or paragraph to which you want to add a comment. Then select **Insert > Comment**. A small text box opens.



Type your comment in the box and then click the **Comment** button. Google Drive highlights the text in yellow (making it easy to identify) and adds your comment to the margin of the document.

It's not money for nothing, but it is money for doing something that you enjoy.

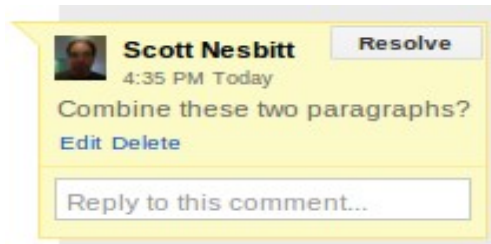
Let's look at ten great ways to make a few dollars off your blog or website.



In case you're wondering, Google Drive will send you an email to inform you of any comments that were added to a document.

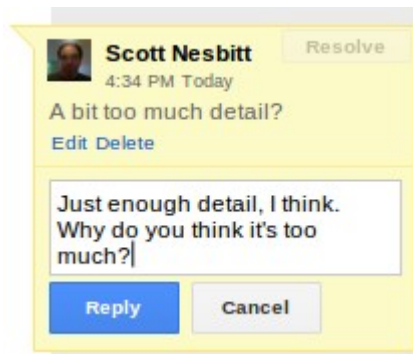
## Working with Comments

So, you have a few comments in your document. Now what? There are a few things you can do. If it's a simple change, you can make the change. After that, you can click in the comment in the margin and then click the **Resolve** button.



The comment, and the highlighting in the text of the document, is removed.

On the other hand, if you need more clarification about a comment or want to discuss it, click on the comment and type something in the **Reply to this comment** field. Then, click the **Reply** button.



Google Drive maintains a thread of the replies in the margin. You can also view all comments and replies (including ones that have been resolved) but clicking the **Comments** button in the top-right corner of the document window.

## Collaborating at the Same Time

So, what happens if two (or more) people are working on a document at the same time. You'd think that would get messy, and that one person's edits would stamp out those of another. That's not the case. Google Drive enables two or more people to work on a document at the same time without there being too many problems. And you can view what they're doing as they type, as shown below:

### Kontera

Chances are your blog or website contains more than just a bit of text. Why not make that text work for you with [Kontera](#)? Kontera is a [pay-per-click](#) service that offers a 70% revenue share. It inserts ads directly into your text, based on the context of that text. So when, for example, a visitor hovers over the word *computers* a clickable ad related to computers pops up. All you need to do is add some code to your site.

Once that happens, the service automatically feeds ads to your site.



The cursor for each of your collaborators is assigned a color — you're usually lime green and the other people who have access to the document are assigned colors quite arbitrarily. For example, the cursor for the collaborator on the document used for the example above is shaded pink. You'll notice that the Google Drive user name of your collaborator appears above the cursor.

You can also use the comment feature (described above) as a rudimentary instant messaging tool. Just add a comment to something a collaborator has added, and use the comment thread to discuss it.

There's an example of this on the next page.



**dmncommunications**

6:52 PM Today

Added this. Thoughts?

[Comment](#) · [Resolve](#)



**Scott Nesbitt** It reads well. Care to expand on it a little more?

6:58 PM Today



**dmncommunications** Sure. How about we insert a diagram that shows how the ads are added to the site?

6:58 PM Today



**Scott Nesbitt** Works for me!

6:58 PM Today

## Sending Your Work to Editors ... and Others

If you write for a living, there comes a time when you'll need to send what you've written to someone. That someone can be an editor at a publication or a publishing house, a production person, or just someone who will read your work.

You can use the collaboration features that I discussed in the previous chapter to do that, but not everyone is comfortable using Google Drive. They might not want to learn how to use it, either.

Luckily, those collaboration features aren't the only game in town. Let's take a look at a couple of ways in which you send your work in Google Drive to others.

### Going Old School

Remember when I showed you how to download your files in Google Drive as actual word processor files? Doing that is often the easiest way of sending someone your work.

Just download the document that you want to send and then compose a new message in your email software or web-based email service like Gmail or Yahoo! Mail. From there, attach the file that you downloaded to the message and click **Send**.

As you might recall, you can download documents from Google Drive in a variety of formats. Before you download and email a file, contact the person to whom you intend to send to document. Ask them which file format they're most comfortable with. Most likely, that will be Microsoft Word. Asking is a nicety, but one which minimizes any frustration on the part of your recipient.

## Sending Documents from Within Google Drive

Instead of downloading and emailing a document, why not send it from within Google Drive? Doing this can save you time and doesn't clutter your computer with a bunch of files.

How do you send documents from within Google Drive? Open the document that you want to send and then select **File > Email as attachment**. Doing that opens the following window:

Email as Attachment

Attach as

HTML ▾

To (required) [Choose from contacts](#)

Subject

Online Usability Testing: 10 Great Tools to Make Your Web Site More Visitor Friendly

Message

Send a copy to myself

Send Cancel

It looks like an email window, doesn't it? That's exactly what it is. Google Drive uses Gmail (Google's web-based email service) to send the files.

To get going, choose the type of file that you want to send from the **Attach as** list. You can send files in the formats



that in the chapter "Backing Up Your Documents." As I mentioned earlier, Word is often your safest bet for sending your documents.

Then, enter the email address of the person to whom you want to send the file in the **To** field. Add a descriptive subject for the email in the **Subject** field, include a short message, and then click the **Send** button. The message and the attachment will show up in the recipient's inbox.

I use this feature to send articles to editors and have had no problems with it. Keep in mind that you need a Gmail account to use this feature — you'll obviously have that if you're using Google Drive. On top of that, the message (and the attachment) will not appear in the **Sent Mail** folder of your Gmail account. If you're worried that the document wasn't sent, it's worthwhile following up with the recipient. It's a little extra work, but it's worth the peace of mind.



## Taking Notes with Scratchpad

Taking notes is the life blood of writers. Ideas, research, observation, links, and more. We all need to jot down information as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

Just as there are many reasons for taking notes, there are many ways to do it. Especially online. With Google Drive, it's easy to take and organize your notes. I explain how to do this in my ebook *Getting Organized with Google's Tools*. But having to jump from one browser tab or window to another to take notes can really disrupt your flow.

Instead, why not have a smaller window handy? One that will let you save your notes to Google Drive, and yet only get in your way when you need it to. You can do that with an extension for the Chrome web browser called Scratchpad.

## Getting Going

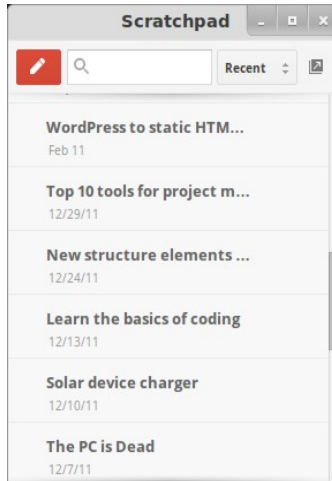
You'll need the Chrome web browser to use Scratchpad. If you don't already use it, and are curious or want to switch from the browser that you use, you can download Chrome and give it a try.

Next, go to the Chrome Web Store and install Scratchpad. When you're done, it appears on one of Chrome's application screens, as shown on the next page.



**Note:** If you use a Chromebook (a small laptop computer running Google's Chrome OS that's designed for working on the web), then Scratchpad is already installed.

Click the icon to launch Scratchpad. It exists as a small window that floats in the background until you need it.



## Using Scratchpad

In the Scratchpad window, click the pencil symbol in the top-left corner. This creates a new note (called, for some reason or another, a *message*).

From there, you can:

- Type your thoughts.
- Copy and past a link to an interesting site, article, or blog post.
- Jot down anything that you comes to mind.

Working in Scratchpad is just like using a text editor or a word processor. If you need to, you can add character formatting, change the font and size of the font, and create a bulleted or numbered list using the toolbar at the bottom

of the note window.



Remember to rename the note — the default name, *Untitled message*, won't mean anything when you're trying to find a specific note. To rename a note, click **Untitled message** at the top of the window and start typing.

Try to give your notes a descriptive name which reflects their content. Like what? Say you're working on an article about productivity apps for mobile devices and you've collected a bunch of links into a Scratchpad note. You can, for example, name the note *Links for mobile productivity apps article*. That's not the most exciting title, but it works.

Scratchpad automatically saves your notes to Google Drive. You can return to the list of notes in Scratchpad by clicking the list icon in the top-left corner of the window.

## Getting to Your Notes

Of course, notes are only good if you know where they are. And there are actually two places where you can find the notes that you took with Scratchpad.

The first place, obviously, is in the Scratchpad window. In the list view, just click the name of the note that you want to view. The note opens, and you can add to it or copy and paste from it.

The second place is in Google Drive. When you install Scratchpad, it creates a new folder in your Google Drive account called **Scratchpad**.

Click on the name of the Scratchpad folder, and you get a list of all of your notes. To open a note, click its name. The note opens in a Google Drive editing window.



## Taking Notes with Google Keep

In the previous chapter, I introduced Scratchpad. It's a small, simple tool for taking notes and saving them to Google Drive. While Scratchpad is good for taking simple text notes, you might want to do a bit more. There are a number of web-based note taking applications out there – tools like **Evernote**, **Simplenote**, and **Catch**.

Each of those tools, and many like them, are useful, flexible, and pack any number of features. But if you like keeping your web-based tools under one umbrella, then you'll want to take a close look at **Google Keep**.

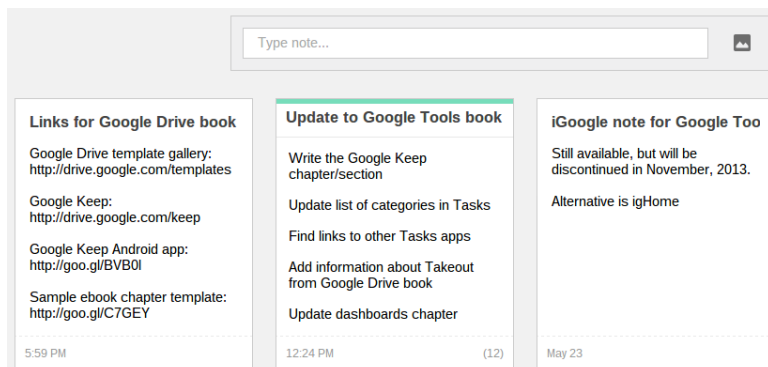
Google Keep inhabits the middle ground between a powerful note taking tool like Evernote and a more basic tool like Simplenote. That said, Keep lacks a few features like the ability to:

- Organize your notes in folders or using *tags* (which are keywords that identify content and which can be used to search and filter it).
- Attach files, like PDFs, to a note.
- Save your notes in Drive, as you would with Scratchpad.

Those are some of the things that Google Keep can't do. Let's take a look at what it **can** do.

## Simplicity is the Core Feature

That simplicity starts with the interface. Google Keep's interface is, as you can see below, is both quirky and spartan.



The interface is simple both in appearance and in its ease of use. And it doesn't take too long to adapt to that interface, either.

Let's take a look at how to use Google Keep to take and maintain notes.

## Creating a Note

Creating a note is easy. Just click in the **Type note** field at the top of the Google Keep page. It expands to let you add a title to the note, along with whatever content you want to type.



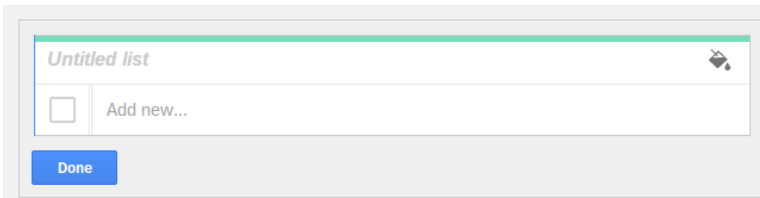
There's no limit to the amount of text that you can include in a note. However, you can't add formatting (like bullets or bold text) to a note in the way that you can with Scratchpad.



You can also attach an image to a note by clicking the **Insert an image** button. From there, click the **Choose an image to upload** button. Find an image on your computer, and then click the **Done** button to save it.

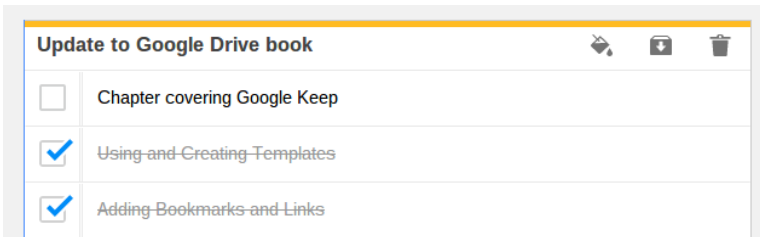
## It's Not Just Text and Images

You're not limited to creating only plain text notes with the occasional image embedded into them. You can also create checklists. To do that, click the **New list** button.



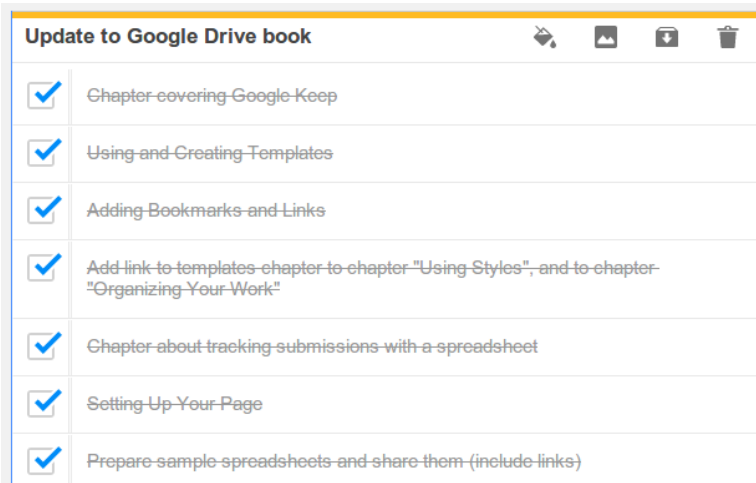
The list can contain as few or as many items as you need. When you type in the space for an item in the list, Google Keep automatically adds a line below it. Click in the space marked **Add new** and start typing. Keep doing that until you have all the items in your checklist.

When you want to mark an item as done, click the checkbox beside that item.



What good is a checklist? You can use it for just about anything. I use checklists as to do lists or as a pre-publication check for an ebook or article. The example below is the checklist that I used when preparing the

second edition of this book.

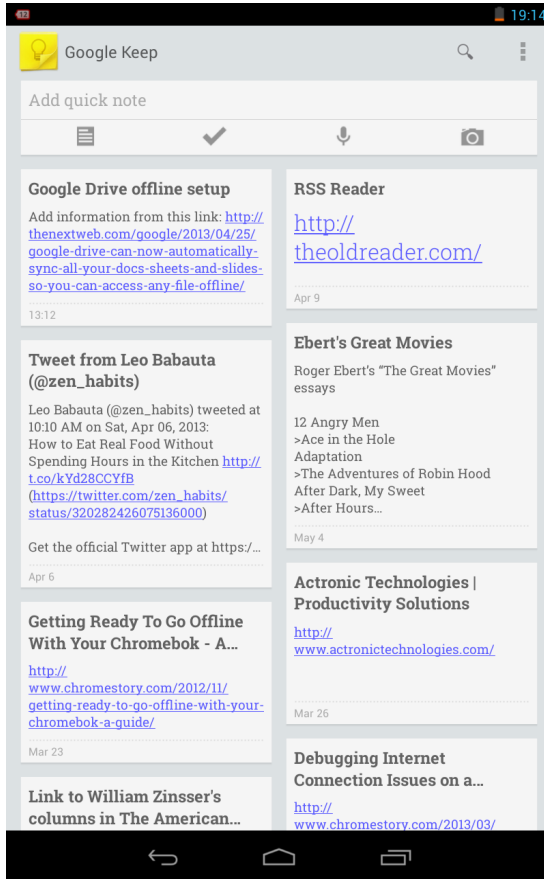


## Going mobile

In many ways, Google Keep seems to be designed mainly for the mobile world. There's an Android app for smartphones and tablets available from the Google Play store.

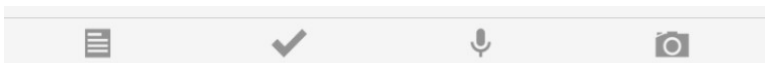
And you don't need to be connected to the internet or a wireless network to use the Google Keep app. If you take notes while offline, they'll be synchronized to Google Drive then next time you're connected to the internet.

The design of that app mirrors the spartan interface of the desktop version.



Even though it's designed for a different kind of device, the mobile version of Google Keep works the same way as the web-based version. Instead of clicking, you tap to add a note, image, or list.

Notice, though, there are four types of notes that you can create with the mobile app:



You can create a text note, a checklist, a voice note, and a photo note. You know about the first two types of notes, but let's look at taking voice and photo notes.

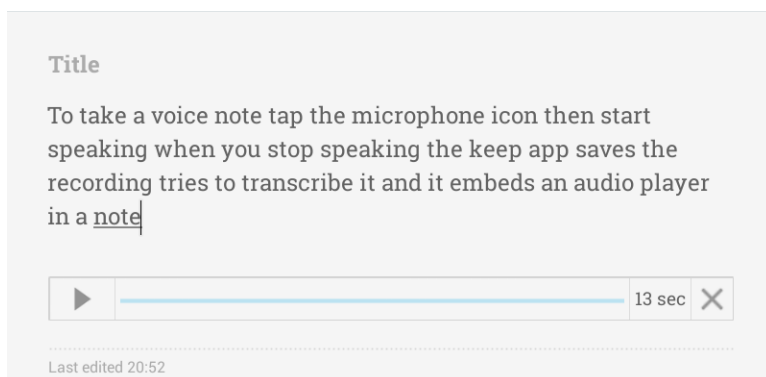
## Voice and Photo Notes

You can record and save a voice note or take a photo and save it as a note. Admittedly, this isn't anything new – the mobile versions of several other note taking tools have had this capability for a while.

### Taking a Voice Note

With a voice note, Google Keep will try to transcribe what you're recording in the body of the note. The transcriptions don't always work well – you'll either get an approximation of the recording or something completely different. That said, you can replay recordings within a note.

To take a voice note, tap the microphone icon. Then, start speaking. When you stop speaking, the app saves the recording, tries to transcribe it, and embeds an audio player in the note.



The only problem is that if you pause for too long, the app thinks that you've stop speaking and saves the note. This can get frustrating.

## Taking a Photo Note

A photo note is just that: an image that you take with the camera on your device, and to which you can add text. Not on to the photo itself, but below the photo as a caption.

To take a photo note, tap the camera icon. Point your device at whatever you want to take a photo of and then tap the big blue button on the screen.

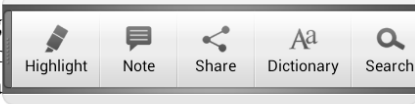
The Google Keep app saves the photo, and you can add a title and some text. Use that text to describe the photo, where you took it, or when you took it.

## Sharing

Not only is the app's interface designed for mobile, but Google Keep is also nicely integrated into the Android **Share** menu. This enables you to save, for example, the address of a web page or some text that you've highlighted in an ebook or on a web page to Google Keep.

To do that, highlight some text in an ebook or tap and hold the URL of a web page in a web browser. Or, as in the example on the next page, hold and drag some text in an application.

us, sometimes passively and other times very intentionally, from reaching the goal. Obstacles and frustrations, though, represent a single concept that stands as a constant fortress wall.



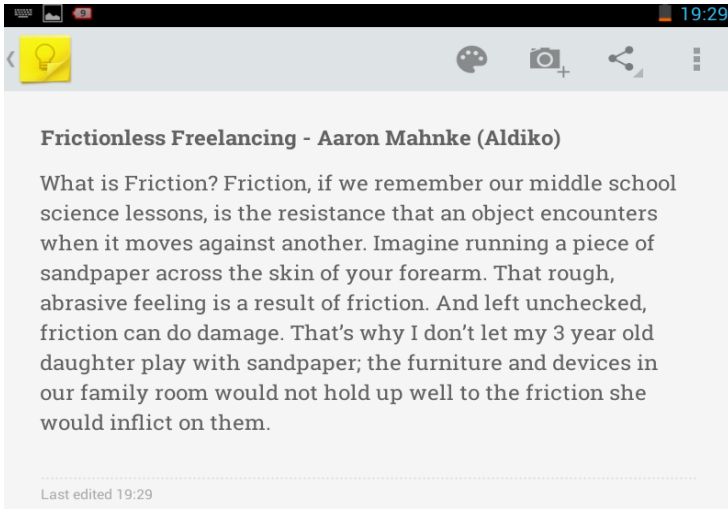
Friction.

### What is Friction?

Friction, if we remember our middle school science lessons, is the resistance that an object encounters when it moves against another. Imagine running a piece of sandpaper across the skin of your forearm. That rough, abrasive feeling is a result of friction. And left unchecked, friction can do damage. That's why I don't let my 3 year old daughter play with sandpaper; the furniture and devices in our family room would not hold up well to the friction she would inflict on them.

Yes, there are places where friction is a good thing. Tire manufacturers

Then, tap the menu icon and select **Share**. You're presented with a list of applications on your device. Tap **Keep**, and the note is instantly added to Google Keep.



## Two Other Useful Features

Google Keep also has a pair of features you'll find useful. You can delete and archive your notes, and search them.

Let's take a look at both those features.

### Deleting and Archiving Your Notes

As time goes on, you'll undoubtedly collect a large number of notes. There's nothing wrong with that. Taking notes and collecting information is part and parcel with being a writer.

But thanks to the freeform nature of Google Keep, you wind up with a note after note after note. That can lead to a lot of clutter in Google Keep, especially if you no longer need many (or just some) of those notes.

To clear out that clutter, you can delete or archive notes that you no longer want or need.

To do that, hover over a note. A pair of icons appear.

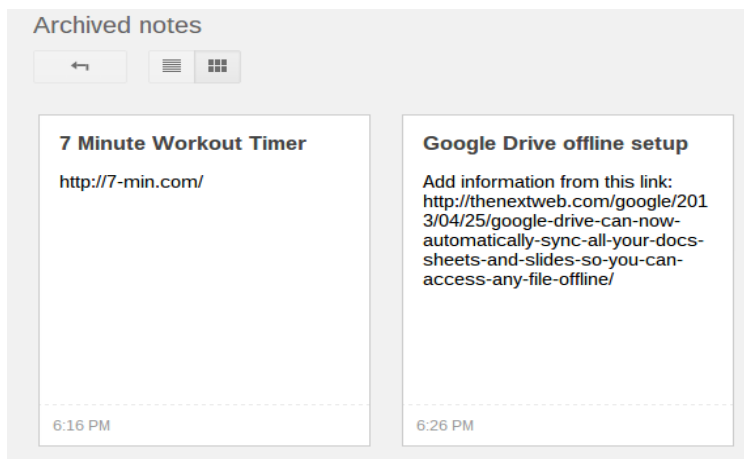


Click or tap the **Delete** button (the trash can) and the note is gone. It's history. You'll never see it again. Remember to click or tap **Delete** with caution.

But if you know that you'll use that note in the future, why not *archive* it? Archiving a note moves it out of the main list of notes in Google Keep. Click or tap the **Archive** button, and the note you selected vanishes.

Well, at least out of the main list of notes. If you scroll down to the bottom of the Google Keep page, you'll see a button labeled **Archived notes**. Click it to jump to the Archived Notes view.

Here's a sample:



You can view, edit, and delete notes on this page. You can also click the **Restore** button to move the note back into the main list in Google Keep.

## Searching Your Notes

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Google Keep doesn't give you a way to organize notes. It's quite free form – notes are listed in chronological order, the newest at the top.

Google Keep does, however, have a search function that narrows down the list of notes based on the word or phrase that you type in the search box at the top of the page.



Let's say I want to find a note related to this book. I type **google drive** in the search box and press Enter. Keep comes back with all the notes containing the words **google**



and **drive**, as shown below:

The image displays three screenshots of Google Keep notes, each with a colored header bar. The first note, titled 'Links for Google Drive book', lists links to a template gallery, Google Keep, and an Android app. The second note, titled 'Update to Google Tools book', contains tasks like writing a chapter, updating categories, and finding links. The third note, titled 'Update to Google Drive book', lists tasks such as covering a chapter, adding bookmarks, and tracking submissions. Each note includes a timestamp and a count of items.

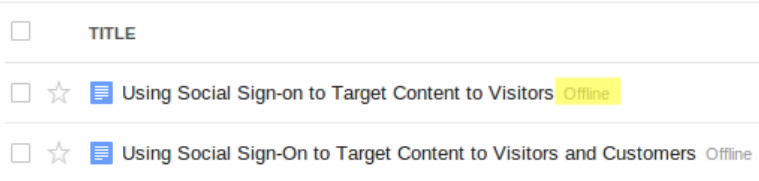
Note Title	Timestamp	Count
Links for Google Drive book	5:59 PM	
Update to Google Tools book	12:24 PM	(12)
Update to Google Drive book	6:31 PM	(21)

Searches don't, however, come back with archived notes. You'll have to go to the **Archived Notes** view and do a search from there.



## Working Offline

In some of the images in this book, you may have noticed the word **Offline** beside the names of documents, like the ones below:



While Google Drive is a web-based application that requires an internet connection for you to use it, you can also use Google Drive when you don't have a connection. That can be when, for example, you're working away from your home or office and don't have a wireless connection. Or you might be on an airplane and want to get some work done before arriving at your destination.

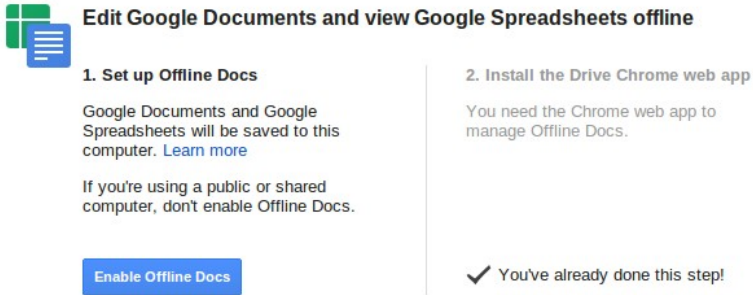
You don't need to let your thoughts and words slip away or to scramble for pen and paper. Instead, you can take Google Drive offline with you. Let's look at how to do that.

## Taking Your Documents Offline

First off, I should warn you that there's one catch to taking your documents offline: you need to be using Chrome (Google's web browser) on your computer or the Google Drive app for your tablet or smartphone. It won't work with anything else.

The first step to taking your documents offline is to enable offline access. To do that, click **More** in the menu on the left side of the Google Drive window. Then, click **Offline Documents**.

The **My Drive** portion of your browser window changes to this view:



**Edit Google Documents and view Google Spreadsheets offline**

**1. Set up Offline Docs**

Google Documents and Google Spreadsheets will be saved to this computer. [Learn more](#)

If you're using a public or shared computer, don't enable Offline Docs.

**Enable Offline Docs**

**2. Install the Drive Chrome web app**

You need the Chrome web app to manage Offline Docs.

✓ You've already done this step!

Click the **Enable Offline Docs** button. You're almost ready to go. If you haven't done so, you should install the Google Drive extension for the Chrome web browser. It's free, and enables you to manage your documents when you're offline.

You will need to enable offline docs for every computer that you use — for example, I had to do that with my laptop and my Chromebook.

Once you've done that, Google Drive synchronizes your documents for offline use on your computer. Depending on the number of documents that you have, this could take a while. While you will be able to view documents and spreadsheets offline, you can only edit documents.

## Editing Your Documents

When you don't have an internet connection, go to **<https://docs.google.com/offline>**. There, you get a condensed view of **My Drive**, listing all of the documents that are synchronized for viewing and editing offline.

Just click on the name of the document that you want to edit and it will open in the same editing window that you're

used to when working online.

You can make changes to the document and save it. Once you're back online, your changes will be uploaded the next time you go to Google Drive.

Using Google Drive's offline access can cause problems if the document that you're working on is shared with others, and those others have been editing the document while you've been offline. When your document is uploaded to Google Drive, it will replace any previous version. There's no way you can avoid this happening. But you can use Google Drive's change tracking feature (which was explained in the chapter **Collaborating with Others**) to recover any changes that your collaborators have made.

## Disabling Offline Access

You might find that you don't do too much, or any, work offline. If you need to, you can turn off the offline feature. To do that, click the gear icon in the top-left corner of the Google Drive window and select **Stop Using Offline Docs**.

A new page opens in your browser.



### Disable Offline Docs for this browser

This will remove the local copies of any Google Docs that are stored on this computer. The online versions of these files will not be affected. If you're using Offline Docs on another computer, you'll need to turn the feature off in each browser on each machine where it's used.

Selected account: 

[Disable Offline Docs](#)

Click the **Disable Offline Docs** button. Your documents and files are not longer available when you don't have an internet connection.

As you did when you enable the offline feature, you'll need to disable offline docs on every computer for which it's enabled.

## Storing Files in Google Drive

Google Drive is for more than creating and editing documents (and other work). As its name suggests, Google Drive is like a web-based hard drive where you can store files. And not just word processor documents, spreadsheets, and presentations.

You can upload just about any type of file to Google Drive. Photos, audio, video, archives, and more. It's easy to do. All it takes is a few clicks.

Let's take a look at how to store files in Google Drive.

### Why Do It?

It's convenient, it's fairly safe, and you get 5 GB of free storage. You can also buy more space if you need it.

For writers, it's important to have your writing and any other related information in one place. It's part of being organized and makes finding the information that you need easier when you need to find it.

What could that information be? For example, it could be notes or information that you've typed into a text file. It could be articles you've downloaded. Or it could be handwritten notes that you've scanned. If you have that information on your desktop computer, but need it when you're using a laptop or tablet then that information isn't much use to you. By putting it in Google Drive, it's there when you need it.

You probably don't want to put all of your files in Google Drive. Especially not files with personal or sensitive information. While Google Drive is secure, there's no guarantee that your account or the service itself won't get hacked. Choose what files that you want to save to Google Drive carefully.

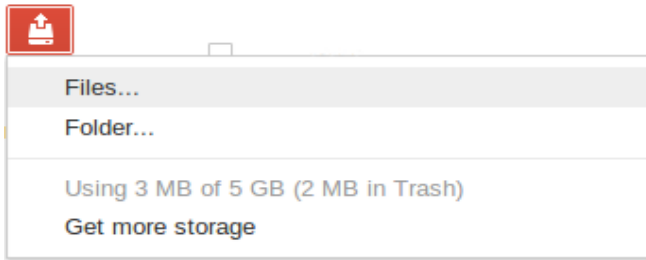
## Before You Begin

If you plan to store files in Google Drive, don't just upload them to **My Drive**. Instead, remember the lessons in the chapter "Organizing Your Work". Create folders and sub folders for the files that you want to upload. Give those folders and sub folders descriptive names.

And if you plan to save notes related to a specific document or a project to Google Drive, keep that information with the document or project to which it relates. Again, use descriptively-named folders and sub folders to better organize any additional information.

## Uploading Files

Let's assume that you've created a folder for the files that you want to store in Google Drive. Navigate to that folder and click the **Upload** button on the left side of the Google Drive window.



Notice that you can upload either files or a folder from your computer. Let's assume that you want to upload a file. Select **Files**. You'll be asked to locate the file that you want to upload on your computer. You can upload multiple files at the same time by clicking them and pressing the CTRL key on your keyboard.



Click **OK**. Google Drive will ask you to confirm two settings:

- Convert documents, presentations, spreadsheets, and drawings to their Google Docs formats.
- Convert text from PDF and image files to Google documents.

If you only want to store files in Google Drive, clear the check boxes beside each setting. Then, click the **Start upload** button. Depending on the number of files that you're uploading, the size of those files, and the speed of your internet connection, the upload can take anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes.

**Note:** The process for uploading a folder to Google Drive is the same as what I've just described.

## Downloading Stored Files or Folders

So what happens if you want to pull a file or a folder that you're storing in Google Docs on to your computer? You can do that easily.

Find the file or folder that you want to download. Then, right click on it and select **Download** from the menu that flies out. Google Drive transfers the files to your computer.

You can also download multiple files to your computer. Click the check boxes beside the name of each file, and then right click and select **Download** from the menu that flies out.

A window opens letting you specify how you want Google Drive to backup up your documents. With files that aren't documents — like videos, PDF files, audio files, or photos — there's only one option: **As Is**. From there, click the **Download** button. Google Drive compresses the files into an archive and downloads it to your computer.

What about downloading a folder? Do the same thing. Again, you'll be asked to tell Google Drive what file formats you want to use for the contents of the folder. In many cases, the only option you'll have is **As Is**. After you click the Download button, Google Drive compresses the folder into an archive and downloads it to your computer with a name like *[name\_of\_folder]-[date].zip* — for example, *Templates-2012-10-12.zip*.

## Using A Spreadsheet With Your Writing

When most people think of spreadsheets, images of number crunchers and bean counters probably come to mind. Well, spreadsheets usually conjure those images for me ...

While spreadsheets don't have a lot to do with actually writing, they're more than just a financial tool. Writers can use spreadsheets in some very useful ways. So useful that spreadsheets can increase your productivity.

The main ways in which you can use a spreadsheet include:

- Keeping track of queries and submissions.
- Keeping on top of your earnings.
- Recording the progress of a larger writing project, or one on which you're collaborating with others.

Let's take a look at how to do all of that. But before we do, let's go over at how to create a spreadsheet.

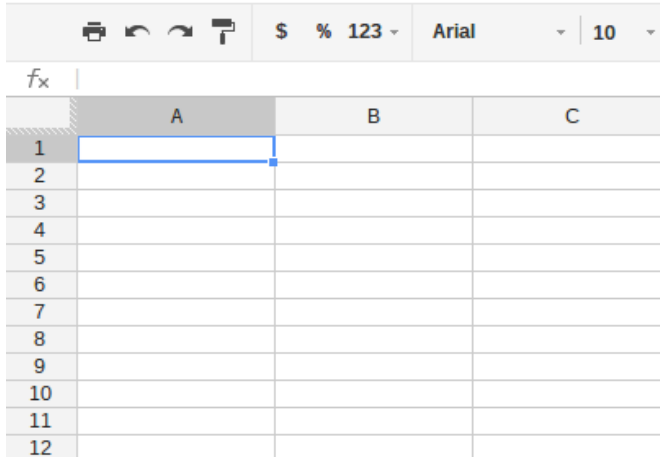
## Creating a New Spreadsheet

If you're familiar with spreadsheets in general, and the Spreadsheets feature in Google Drive in particular, then feel free to skip to the next section. But if you're new to spreadsheets or need a quick refresher, then read next few paragraphs. I'll be outlining some basics of using a spreadsheet.

On the **My Drive** page, click the **Create** button and then click **Spreadsheet**. You're presented with a blank canvas that consists of a number of vertical columns and horizontal rows, as shown on the next page.

## Untitled spreadsheet

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Help

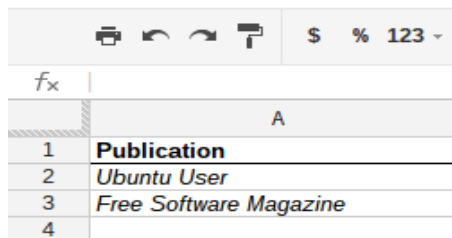


A screenshot of a spreadsheet application window titled "Untitled spreadsheet". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "View", "Insert", "Format", "Data", "Tools", and "Help". Below the menu bar is a toolbar with icons for print, undo, redo, and insert, followed by currency and percentage symbols, the number "123", the font name "Arial", and the font size "10". The spreadsheet grid has a formula bar labeled "fx" and three columns labeled "A", "B", and "C". The rows are numbered from 1 to 12. The cell at row 1, column A is selected with a blue border.

The columns and rows allow you to group information. For example, let's say you're creating spreadsheet to track your submissions. You can title the first column of your spreadsheet **Publication Name**. Each row in that column can contain the name of a publication. Here's an example:

## Query Log: 2009 - ☆ ■

File Edit View Insert Forma



A screenshot of a spreadsheet application window titled "Query Log: 2009 - ☆ ■". The menu bar includes "File", "Edit", "View", "Insert", and "Forma". Below the menu bar is a toolbar with icons for print, undo, redo, and insert, followed by currency and percentage symbols, the number "123", the font name "Arial", and the font size "10". The spreadsheet grid has a formula bar labeled "fx" and one column labeled "A". The rows are numbered from 1 to 4. The cell at row 1, column A is selected with a blue border.

	A
1	<b>Publication</b>
2	<i>Ubuntu User</i>
3	<i>Free Software Magazine</i>
4	

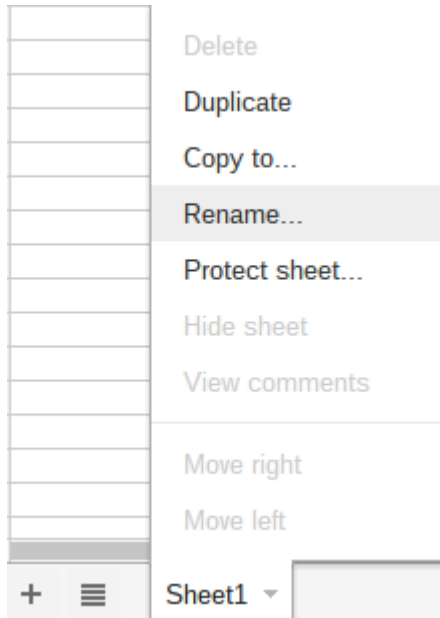
You'll notice that the columns are assigned letters, starting with **A**, and that the rows are numbered. The letters and numbers help you navigate through a spreadsheet. So, for example, if I say **C13** you know to go to the 13th row in the third column. This will come in handy later.

You'll also notice something like this at the bottom of a new spreadsheet:



Clicking the **+** button adds a new tab to the spreadsheet. You can use tabs to, for example, track submissions for each month of a year – one tab per month.

New tabs are labeled **Sheet 1**, **Sheet 2**, and the like. Those names aren't helpful. To make them helpful, rename the tabs. To rename a tab, click on the downward-facing triangle on the tab and select **Rename**.



Then, type a new name for the tab.

The menu that appears when you click the triangle contains a few other items. The items that you'll probably use most are **Duplicate** (which makes a copy of the current tab) and **Delete** (which gets rid of a tab).

What about formatting? Like a document, you can change the font and style of text in a spreadsheet, add borders, change the format of numbers and dates, and add **functions** (which automatically do math, among other things). I'll be discussing the most important function that you'll use in the section **Tracking Your Earnings** later in this chapter.

With that out of the way, let's start off by taking a look at how to use a spreadsheet to keep track of your queries and submissions.

## Tracking Your Queries and Submissions

If you send out more than a couple of queries or submissions (whether solicited or not) a week, you know that keeping track of them can be difficult. A spreadsheet is, as you've probably guessed, a great way to keep track of your queries and submissions.

There are several ways in which you can do that. I'm going to share with you the way in which I use a spreadsheet to track queries and submissions. This spreadsheet is not only easy to use and maintain, it's reusable.

Start off by creating a new spreadsheet. Then, rename the spreadsheet – for example, **Queries - 2013**. I break my queries and submissions down by month; one tab per month. So, rename the tab from **Sheet1** to **January**

Next, add the following column headings:

- **Publication** - The name of the publication (print or

online) to which you submitted the query or manuscript.

- **Contact** - The name of the editor or staff member you are dealing with.
- **Title/Subject of Article** - The title or the subject of the article.
- **Date Sent** - The date on which you sent the query or submission.
- **Reply Received** - The date on which you received a reply from the publication.
- **Status** - I use either **Rejected** or **Assigned**.

Once you've set up the first tab, duplicated it 11 times (one tab for each subsequent month). Then, rename each tab. Next year, you can make a copy of the spreadsheet, rename it, and delete the contents of each tab.

You can find a sample of this spreadsheet, which you can use and modify, [here](#).

## Tracking Your Earnings

While writing can be fun and mentally and emotionally rewarding, it's also the way in which many of us earn a living. To keep your accountant (and the taxman) happy, it's a good idea to keep track of your earnings.

Let's put together an earnings tracking spreadsheet. Like the one we created to track queries and submissions, this one is simple to use and maintain. It's also reusable.

Start by creating a new spreadsheet. Rename the spreadsheet to, for example, **Earnings - 2013**.

It's best if you track your earnings monthly. So, rename the tab from **Sheet1** to **January**. Then, add the following column headings:

- **Publication/Client**, which is the source of the

earnings (whether a print or online publication, or a corporate client).

- **Amount**, which is the amount you earned.
- **Contact**, which lists the person at the publication or the client with whom you were dealing.
- **Date of Invoice**, which is the date on which you sent the invoice. This is useful when a payment is late.
- **Date Payment Received**, which is the date on which you received a cheque, a bank transfer, or a payment via a service like PayPal.

That's all quite straightforward. Let's get a little more complex and look at formatting the numbers in the **Amount** column.

Say, for example, you garner income from 10 different sources each month. You can set up each tab to track and tally those earnings.

Start off by clicking the second row in the **Amount** column and, while holding the mouse key down, drag the mouse down to row 11. Then, click the **Format as Currency** button (the dollar sign) on the toolbar. When you enter a number in any of the cells of the column, that number will be a figure like **\$150.00**.

You'll also want to have a running total of your earnings for the month. To do that, you can insert a *function* into the spreadsheet. As I mentioned earlier, functions perform mathematical operations. In this case, adding up the figures in the **Amount** column.

Go to row 13 in the *Amount* column. In row 13, type **=SUM(B2:B11)**. Let's break this function down. **=SUM** tells the spreadsheet to add up the numbers in the column. **B2** is the second row (**2**) of the second column, while **B11** is the eleventh row of the second column. The colon (:) tells the spreadsheet to add all the values in rows B2 to B11.



Once you've set up the first tab, duplicated it 11 times (one time for each subsequent month). Then, rename each tab.

You can find a sample of this spreadsheet, which you can use and modify, [here](#).

## Tracking Your Expenses

As hard as we may try not to, every writer has to spend money from time to time. Yes, those pesky expenses. There's always something, and you need to make a habit of keeping track of those expenses. Here's one way to do it with a Google Drive spreadsheet.

The first step is to figure out what your expenses actually are. My loose definition of an expense is *anything that enables me to work or to find business*. Of course, that's open to interpretation and it's important not to go crazy silly. How? For example, thinking that your weekly groceries or the morning latte that kick starts your day are business expenses. They aren't. Well, maybe the latte ...

But you can claim things like a portion of my mobile phone bill, subscriptions to online applications, new business cards, and Internet use as business expenses. They all fit the definition in the last paragraph.

Using Google Drive allows you to edit and update your expenses spreadsheet no matter where you are. If you have an accountant, you can publish that spreadsheet for him or her to see, or just email it to them from within Google Drive.

The expense spreadsheet I use is simple. In fact, it's based on the earnings spreadsheet that we created in the last section. Let's look at how to set it up.

Create a new spreadsheet. As with the earning spreadsheet, it's best if you track your expenses monthly. So, rename the tab from **Sheet1** to **January**. Then, add

the following column headings:

- **Description** - A description of the expense.
- **Vendor** - The name of the merchant (online or bricks and mortar) with whom the expense was incurred.
- **Type** - The type of expense – for example, a computer hardware or an ebook.
- **Date** - The date on which the expense was incurred.
- **Amount** - The amount that you spent.

As with the earnings spreadsheet, format the **Amount** column to display as currency. Then, add a running total to the bottom of the **Amount** column using the **=SUM()** function. See the explanation in the last section to learn how to use this function.

Once you've set up the first tab, duplicated it 11 times (one tab for each subsequent month). Then, rename each tab.

You can find a sample of this spreadsheet, which you can use and modify, [here](#).

## Recording the Progress of a Writing Project

Maybe you're writing something big, like a book. A spreadsheet can help you keep track of what you're doing and where you are in the writing process. You'll have to remember to update the spreadsheet, but that's all part of the discipline of writing.

When writing a book, for example, you can set up individual tabs for each chapter. Then, use the spreadsheet to track:

- The status of that chapter – for example, **In Progress**, **Draft Completed**, or **Pending**.

- The target page or word count of that chapter.
- The current page or word count.
- The estimated date of completion.
- Any supporting notes you might have.

The information that you put into the spreadsheet will, of course, vary depending on what you're writing.

With a collaborative project, the concept is the same. You might want one worksheet on a spreadsheet for each person involved in the project. The individual worksheets can list the work done, the status of current work, the estimated completion date, and any notes. Of course, you'll need to share that spreadsheet with your collaborators.

## Sharing a Spreadsheet

I really don't like passing files around by email. Things get lost or mixed up or corrupted. Using Google Drive minimizes the chance of file snafus, and allows you and your collaborators (if any) to access the spreadsheets anytime and from anywhere.

Why share a spreadsheet? Doing that offers a level of transparency to everyone involved in a project. Each person working on the project can track everyone else's progress.

To share a spreadsheet, first open it. Then, follow the instructions in the chapter **Sending Your Work to Editors ... And Others**.

While a spreadsheet doesn't help you write, it can help you keep track of your writing as well as of your expenses and earnings. The Spreadsheet feature in Google Drive is quite flexible, and easy to use. And it's available wherever you are.



## Final Thoughts

It's not the tool. It's the writer.

I've been saying that for years, and I believe it. If your words aren't true, if they aren't accurate, or if they're not chosen properly then the finest software, service, or device won't make you a better writer.

Having said that, a good piece of software or a good service or a good device can make you a more efficient and more flexible writer. Google Drive fits that bill. It lets you work anywhere and with anyone. Using Google Drive, I've been able to work more efficiently and get more writing done. There's no reason you can't do that too.

I hope you've found this book useful. And I hope that it's helped you learn more about some of Google Drive's features for writers and others.

If you have any comments, suggestions, or corrections feel free to contact me. You can find my contact information at the end of this book.

## Links

Through this book, I've included a number of links to various resources on the web. If you've printed this book, or are using it while offline, those links aren't a lot of use to you.

This appendix lists all of those links. You can type them or copy them into your browser. Note that some of the links have been shortened to make typing them easier.

**Google Drive:** <http://drive.google.com>

**Google Scholar:** <http://scholar.google.com>

**Google Drive offline:** <http://drive.google.com/offline>

**Google Takeout:** <http://www.google.com/takeout>

**Gmail:** <http://mail.google.com>

**Chrome Web Browser:** <https://www.google.com/chrome/>

**Chrome Web Store:**  
<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/category/home>

**Scratchpad:** <http://goo.gl/qPVf7>

**Google Drive template gallery:**  
<http://drive.google.com/templates>

**Google Keep:** <http://drive.google.com/keep>

**Google Keep Android app:** <http://goo.gl/BVB0I>

**Sample ebook chapter template:** <http://goo.gl/C7GEY>

**Sample query tracking spreadsheet:** <http://goo.gl/vN2xi>

**Sample earnings tracking spreadsheet:**  
<http://goo.gl/IW2CY>

**Sample expenses tracking spreadsheet:**  
<http://goo.gl/bm757>

**Chromebook:** <http://www.google.com/intl/en/chromebook/>

**Google Drive extension for Chrome:** <http://goo.gl/fyxLN>

**Google Drive app for Android:** <http://goo.gl/8RctM>

**Google Drive app for iPhone and iPad:**  
<http://goo.gl/2vp5J>

***Getting Organized with Google's Tools:***  
<http://goo.gl/B9KTZ>

**LibreOffice:** <http://www.libreoffice.org/>

**Zamzar:** <http://www.zamzar.com/>

**Acrobat Reader:** <http://goo.gl/h7OQW>

**Evernote:** <http://www.evernote.com>

**Simplenote:** <http://www.simplenote.com>

**Catch:** <http://www.catch.com>

## About the Author

Freelance writer. Blogger. Soldier of fortune. Ocelot wrangler. Consultant. Husband and father. Collector of pottery. I'm a few of these things. I'm also a Canadian-born writer and technology coach who's now based in Auckland, New Zealand.

I've been writing professionally for over 20 years. And for a few of those years, I've been using Google Drive to write, collaborate, and even publish my work.

Want to connect with me? Here are a few places where you can do that:

**Web site:** <http://www.scottnesbitt.net>

**Information about my other ebooks:**  
<http://www.scottnesbitt.net/ebooks.php>

**Email:** [info@scottnesbitt.net](mailto:info@scottnesbitt.net)

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**Twitter:** @ScottWNesbitt

**App.net:** scottnesbitt

**About.me:** <http://about.me/ScottNesbitt>