

INTERNET SEARCH & SERVICES--Newest Features

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GOOGLE SERVICES

Google Desktop Search www.desktop.google.com

Download the free desktop search application and you'll be able to search your hard drive the same way you search the Web.

Google Gmail (no website at this time)

To snag a free Google email account you must be invited by a current user. Each new member gets 10 invites; when offered to the whole world of computer users, Google G-Mail will offer:

- **Search, don't sort.**
- Use Google search to find the exact message you want, no matter when it was sent or received.
- **Don't throw anything away.**
- 2,429,754,171 megabytes (and counting) of free storage so you'll never need to delete another message.
- **Keep it all in context.**
- Each message is grouped with all its replies and displayed as a conversation.
- **No pop-up ads. No untargeted banners.**
- You see only relevant text ads and links to related web pages of interest.

The service keeps message threads together, so you get the full conversation under one tab. With 2 gigabytes of free storage (a message, with attachments, can be 10 megabytes) and a speedy Search feature, you won't ever have to clean out your inbox again.

Picasa www.google.com/picasa

Free software to organize all the digital photos on your hard drive, arranging them in neat folders (just the way you named them) and making them more easily accessible. Everything you might want to do with your images view, edit, email, print, post to your blog is within easy reach. You can fix redden, adjust color and contrast, or add special tints or a switch to sepia tone. The Order button gives you a short cut for placing a print order with websites such as Shutterfly and Snapfish. The email button automatically downsizes the file before sending it to make it easier on the recipient to view.

Google Development Labs www.labs.google.com

Several new features are in the works including: Google Ride Finder, Google Personalized Search, Google Web Accelerator, Google TV and Video Search, and **these three**:

Google Maps www.maps.google.com/

The maps are draggable, which means you can use your mouse to move north, south, east or west; you can also zoom in or out, get driving directions and find local points of interest (there's

a Local Search button on the top of the page). Type "pizza" into the local search field, specify where, and clickable pizzeria markers pop up instantly on the screen. Google Maps also offers satellite images of the area you're viewing, if they're available.

Google Suggest www.google.com/webhp?complete=1

This feature reacts to what you type into the search field by trying to finish your thought for you, generating a list of possibilities that changes with each stroke. It works like a married couple that finishes each other's sentences. Tip: you won't see a link to Google Suggest on the Google home page. Just type in the link above.

Google Personalized Home Page www.google.com/ig/customize

Google is offering custom home pages, a la My Yahoo and My MSN (and soon there will be My AOL too see below). But Google's version manages to maintain a streamlined design, even with a busier page. You can elect to display news headlines from a few different sources (the New York Times, BBC News, Wired), plus local weather, a Quote of the Day and a snapshot of your Gmail inbox. You must register for a Google account.

YAHOO! SERVICES

Yahoo Music www.music.yahoo.com/unlimited/

With this service, you don't have to purchase individual tracks before transferring them to your portal music player. Rather, you pay a flat subscription fee \$7 a month or \$60 a year for unlimited downloads. (Of course, if you close your account, the files will no longer play.)

Yahoo My Web www.search.yahoo.com

Better than bookmarks, this new service within Yahoo Search allows you to create your own personal web archive that you can search from your desktop and share with others. While you surf, the program saves pages you view for easier access later, and files them under Search History. Click My Web from yahoo.com or download the My Yahoo toolbar.

Yahoo News www.news.yahoo.com

The best place to get all the day's top stories just got better. The new-and-improved version uses the popular tab approach to organize articles into categories: U.S. News, Business, Entertainment, Sports, Tech, Politics, Health, etc. Users can create a My Sources list so those stories appear first, or flip through headlines from several sources. You can also sign up to get RSS feeds.

Yahoo Storage www/briefcase.yahoo.com/bc

Briefcase securely stores your files so you can access them from any computer. Simply log into Briefcase using your Yahoo username and password from any PC to upload, access or share up to 30 MB worth of content for free. More space will cost you: 50 MB runs \$3 per month or \$25 per year, 100 MB more is \$5 per month or \$35 per year. If that's still insufficient, try **Streamload**. The service offers up to 10 GB storage for free with access to 100 MB of it per month; or, for a \$10 monthly fee, you get unlimited storage and up to 10 GB worth of downloads.

MSN SERVICES

MSN VIRTUAL EARTH www.virtualearth.msn.com

MSN's Virtual Earth gives you the same navigation and manipulation tools that you get with Yahoo and Google maps, but with an interesting twist: You will also have the option of viewing an aerial photograph of the local area, or select Hybrid View to see the photo with streets and major places labeled. Going forward, the company says it plans to give users the ability to add points of interest and other details to maps of neighborhoods they know and to add a filtering tool so that they can control how much and what type of data appears on their maps.

MSN's main search page has already been revamped. When you search keywords, you can click through different sets of results: Web links, news items, images and Encarta encyclopedia entries, as well as a desktop option (which requires a separate download) that lets you search for relevant files stored on your PC. Select Local to conduct a local search, map the results, and view satellite images--all features that will be tightly integrated with Virtual Earth.

AMERICA ONLINE SERVICES

AOL PORTAL www.beta.aol.com

AOL is busy reinventing its public page as a Web portal, unlocking the gates to most of its Web properties and making the content accessible to everybody. You can view an early version by clicking a link from beta.aol.com. News, Internet Radio (including XM satellite radio stations), Shopping, Travel, Food and other channels will retain an AOL look and feel; "Maps" will take you to AOL partner site Mapquest.com, Movies to Moviefone.com and so on. A new video hub, complete with a separate search tool, will feature music and comedy performances, news, sports and celebrity gossip, plus exclusive content streamed live and on-demand (Aolmusic.com, for example, webcast live the July 2 Live 8 Concerts from around the world and will keep the programs in the archive for six weeks.) A new My AOL feature will let users construct a personalized home page, which, like My Yahoo, can include RSS feeds.

AOL MAIL **INSTANT MESSENGER (AIM) MAIL**

AOL's new free email service named for (and promoted alongside) the company's hugely successful AOL Instant Messenger program, which is also free debuted in July, offering 2 gigabytes of free storage and a clean, straightforward interface (save for the banner-style ads). You don't have to download anything to register just choose a screen name and password and you're good to go. If you have an existing AIM screen name, you can use that as your email address too.

AOL EXPLORER www.beta.aol.com/projects/aolexplorer

You might call it window dressing for your Windows browser. AOL Explorer is an add-on to Internet Explorer an overlay designed to steer you to specific AOL features, such as your AIM email account, tabbed browsing, and desktop search features. It also adds a layer of spyware protection. On aol.com, click BETA-AOL Product, or go to <http://beta.aol.com/projects/aolexplorer>.