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## Google apps sites

Google Sites is a free drag-and-drop website builder and hosting service that enables anyone to create their own website and get it online. Last time we looked at it, Google was in the process of rebuilding Websites. Almost a year later, this process is still ongoing, so the platform is still available in two flavors. New Google Sites is, yes, the new version of the service. It has a better editor and supports more up-to-date technology (including the ability to create responsive pages), but it's clearly short on features. You can forget about e-commerce or a blogging platform, for example. Unless you're a G Suite user, you can only publish websites to one sites.google.com (sites.google.com/view/yourname.) You don't even get any website templates. You can sign up for New Google Sites hereThe older version of the service is still available as Classic Google Sites. It has many more features, including templates, but most are very dated, there is no support for building responsive sites, and Classic Sites will eventually stop working once the move to New Google Sites is complete. Clearly, if you are looking for stylish design or powerful features and functionality, neither version of Websites will work for you. Check our Wix or Weebly instead. But if you just need a quick way to put some basic pages together to share with friends, family or colleagues, new Google sites can work fine. It's simple, integrates well with other Google services and doesn't require any additional registration: if you have a Google Account, you can use it right now in a few clicks. Getting StartedPrinting your browser sites.google.com takes you to the New Sites Editor. There is a button, bottom left of the page to take you 'Back to Classic Sites', if you prefer. But we're here to watch the new Sites.As Classic Sites will eventually disappear for good one day, we won't cover it in this review, and we'd recommend you don't use it either. The New Google Sites offers an extremely minimalist environment, where we could do little more than tap the big + icon, the lower right part of the page to create a new site. The management section at the top of the main page, is a little more interesting than it looks. You can create multiple sites, for example, and navigate them by name or thumbnail. Conveniently, it is also possible to share website projects with others. This allows you to access other people's Google Sites projects from your own management console, and allows you to work on them together. By default, you start with a blank page and a gray header (Image credit: Google)EditorLaunch your first New Google Sites project and it opens in a very sparse look and minimalist editor. The main part of the screen is taken up by a preview of the current page. Other site builders will provide a template to help you get started, but new sites leave you with little more than a dull gray header and a lot of empty space. You are free to change or or that title, if you don't need it. A toolbar on the right displays an underwhelming set of widgets. General page components are limited to text, dividers, and images. The ability to embed URLs or HTML code might help you add more. The other options are just about embedding content from other Google services and apps: YouTube, Calendar, Map, Docs, Photos, Sheets, Forms and Charts.Choose from a handful of themes, choose a favorite color and basic font options (Image credit: Google)This isn't quite as bad as it seems. A Themes tab gives you a choice of six header and site styles, and allows for simple tweaks of site colors and font styles. When you add an image to the header, it is automatically adjusted for readability, which changes its settings. If you don't like the result, you can always click the lower-right part of the image button to restore it. There doesn't seem to be a way to manually change the image. There's a good amount of flexibility when you add text and images to your Page. Add text and images, and drag them around the page after ask will (Image credit: Google)Click on a text box and it is added to the page, upload an image and the same thing happens. But once they're there, you can click and drag them around. Text can't wrap around images, but objects can be dragged around the page, then resized and repositioned (you don't get pixel-level precision, but there's enough control to be useful). The editor doesn't offer support for right-click — give it a try and you'll see the default browser's right-click menu — but strong keyboard shortcut support allows for copying and pasting elements, resizing objects, formatting text, and using Ctrl+Z to undo a serious mistake. You can add pages, and subpages, even hide them from the navigation menu (Image credit: Google)A Pages tab allows adding new pages to your site. By default, these automatically appear as top-level pages in the navigation menu (Home/One, Home/Two, Home/Three), but you can also add subpages (Home/One, Home/One/Subpage, Home/Two) or hide pages from navigation completely. You can see how your website will look on a phone, tablet or computer (Image credit: Google)While the editor always displayed our site in desktop mode, tap Preview enabled view the site in desktop, tablet or mobile views. The new Google Sites editor isn't exactly powerful, but it's already much more capable than it originally seems. It would be good to see how it develops in the future, although we have to note that it has not changed much in the year since we last examined it. You have a handful of free images to choose from, or you can simply insert your own (Image credit: Google)Google Site media management features may seem basic, initially, with only images and YouTube beds available from the standard controls. But as with the editor, dig a little deeper and the post turns out a little smarter than you might think. For example, replacing the terribly boring header image (or someone else) is as simple as your mouse over it and click Change Picture &gt; Select Picture. You can then choose from a gallery of about 50 free images, as well as browse google albums or Drive, or run a Google Images search. It's much more convenient than other services, which either don't support a media library or require you to build one from scratch. Integration with Google services is equally useful elsewhere. Click YouTube and you can embed one of your own YouTube uploads or run general YouTube searches to find what you need. The calendar control embeds one of your calendars on the page, while Map Control can refer to your own maps, or what new location you need. Google Docs controls let you embed Pictures, Charts, Forms, and other documents. There's nothing special about the viewer — it's just a scrolling window — but this provides an easy way to combine multiple content sources into a single page. The embed tool can add versatility to your site, like including playable Vimeo clips (image credit: Google)If you need more, the Embed control may be able to help. New Google Sites may have a dedicated button to add YouTube videos by default, but with the Embed tool you can insert a Vimeo url into our page as well. A basic carousel is available, offering a handful of preferences (Image Credit: Google)There is also a basic image gallery feature. Add your photos, set a handful of preferences and away you go. It's not really frills, but it works. Even with these features, New Google Sites can't compete with the best of the rest. There are no animations, no light table controls, no significant formatting options (borders, spacing, shadows), no blogging options. Still, it's undeniably easy to use, and the features you get are more than capable of handling many simple applications. Also check out the best web hosting servicesIf you get lost, the help pages can provide an answer (Image Credit: Google)SupportNew Google Sites is not difficult to use, but if you are having problems or if you are unsure how to do something, the support pages for websites should point you in the right direction. Articles are organized into five categories: Get started; Create; Edit, share & publish; Analysis, availability & troubleshooting; and New Sites vs Classic Sites. They are generally clear and straightforward with simple step-by-step guides to common tasks like Add a file from your computer and Add or edit headers and footers. We found the help pages told us everything we needed to know, but if you have a more in-depth question, there is also a Sites support forum available. This is reasonably busy with 30 or more posts a day, and when we checked, almost everyone had quickly received really good answers. Finally, a Search Engine searches both the official help pages and forums sites for everything related to your chosen keywords, and gives you an intelligent-sorted over results with the most likely hits generally near the top. If you have any problems with New Google Sites, a one minutes on the support site are likely to provide the answers you need. Final verdictNew Google Sites are too limited right now for serious website building, but can be useful for creating neat simple pages in a relatively short time. We have also highlighted the best website builder