

Researching Your Family Roots Online

# Internet

[www.internet-genealogy.com](http://www.internet-genealogy.com)

# GENEALOGY

## GET CONNECTED!

From online to handheld, we look at the latest hi-tech research tools!

### Portraits From the Past

Where to Find Your Old Family Photos

### California Dreamin'

Resources For Uncovering Your West Coast Roots

### Obituaries Online

Where to Find Notices of Your Ancestors' Death on the 'Net

### Firefighters in the Family!

Where There's Smoke, There's Usually Fire!

**PLUS!**

**Getting More From Google™**



Publication Mail Agreement No. 40062022

# Getting More From Google™

MOST GENEALOGISTS ARE likely familiar with the popular search engine Google. At one time or another, we've all probably plugged our names, or those of our ancestors, into the search box to see what turns up. Perhaps you've even used Google Maps to print off directions to a cemetery or courthouse during a research trip to your ancestor's hometown. But there is so much more to using this Internet powerhouse than just vanity searches and maps. This article will discuss ten ways to utilize Google for genealogy and much, much more!

## GETTING STARTED

If you don't already have a free Google account, you'll need to set one up to be able to use many of the features beyond "search". First, go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). Click "sign in" in the upper right corner of the Google page. In the box on the right, under the sign in fields, you will see "Don't Have a Google Account?" Click the "Create an Account Now" link. Enter your desired e-mail address and a password. Enter Word Verification.

Read the Terms of Service, and if you accept them, click the "Accept" button. Click the "Show Me My Account" link. If you already have a Google account, you may skip this step and log in as usual. You may also want to consider setting up a separate Google account to use primarily for genealogy-related tasks and correspondence.

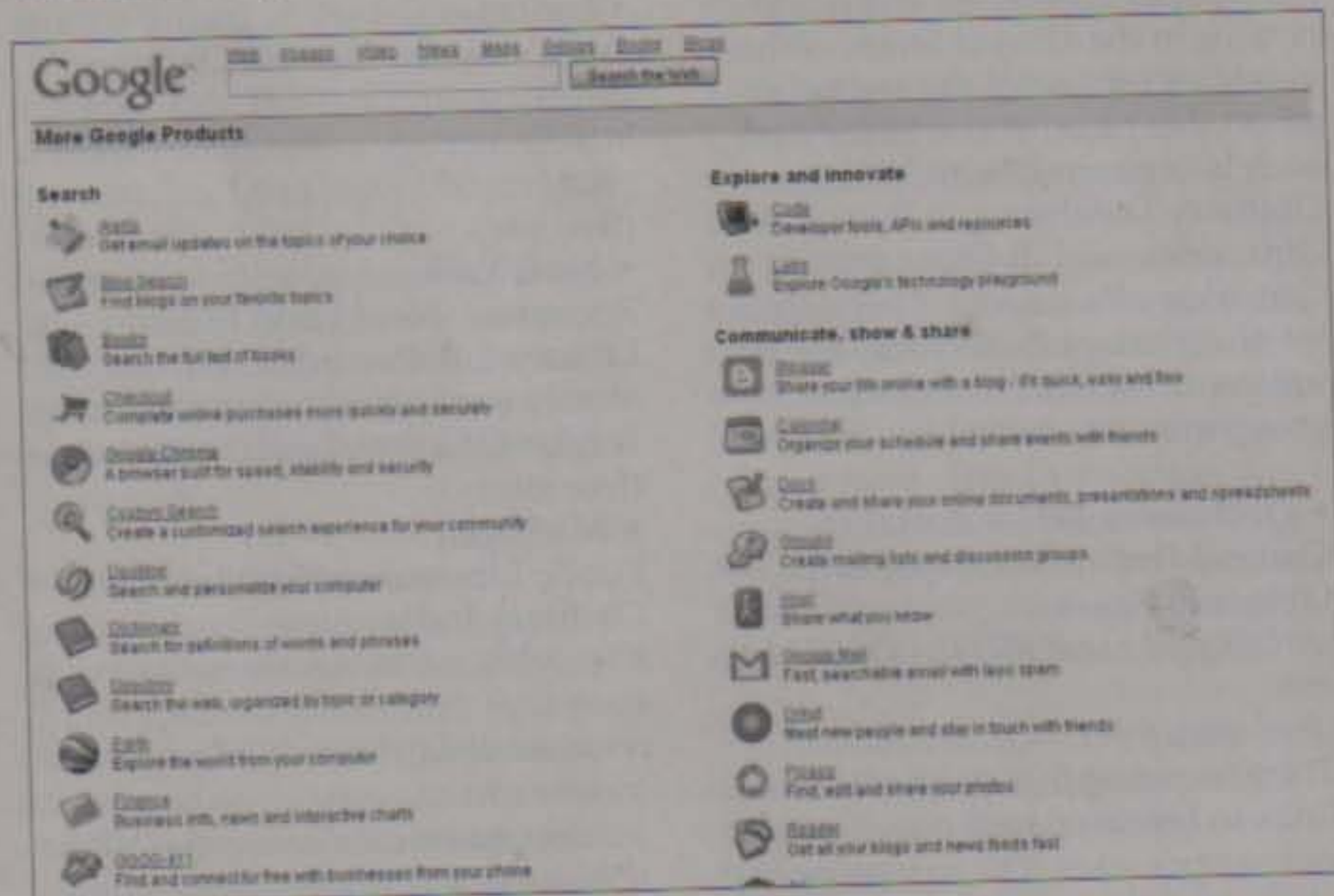
## GOING GA-GA FOR GOOGLE

Once you're signed in, you're ready to unleash the power of Google. For a glance at all that Google has to offer, go to the main page and click the "more" link, and then the "even more" link. You can also go directly to [www.google.com/intl/en/options/](http://www.google.com/intl/en/options/).

## 1. HOME BASE

Perhaps you already have Google set as your "home page", but you can also make it your "home base". Google Chrome is Google's very own web browser and it is much faster than Internet Explorer. With it, you can search and navigate to web pages from the same box, quickly and easily arrange and organize tabs however you wish and get to your favorite websites in a click in the thumbnails of your most visited

your life in and out of the genealogical world. Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). Click on the iGoogle hyperlink in the upper right corner of the page. Click "Sign in", and enter your e-mail address and password. To fully utilize iGoogle as an organizing tool, I suggest that you make your iGoogle page your "Browser Homepage". If you're using Google Chrome, click the tool icon, then select Options from the menu. Under the Basics tab, go to



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sites on the New Tab page. To get Chrome, go to [www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome) and click "Download Google Chrome" — it installs in minutes if you are running Windows Vista, XP, or 7 (Mac users, you are out of luck — no version is available yet). Chrome is still in Beta, so you can report bugs and make suggestions for improvement.

## 2. DAILY ORGANIZER

You may already use Google Calendar and Mail. But you'll want to get iGoogle to organize

the Home page section: Select "Open this page" and type "[www.google.com/ig](http://www.google.com/ig)" in the text box, then close. Microsoft Internet Explorer users: Start from your iGoogle homepage, and locate the "Home" button in your browser bar (the icon that looks like a little house). Click the drop down menu. Select Add or Change Home page. Select the "Use this Webpage as Your Only Homepage" button. Click "Yes" to set iGoogle as your home page in Firefox, click and drag the link "Make iGoogle my homepage" to

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sites on the New Tab page. To get Chrome, go to [www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome) and click "Download Google Chrome" — it installs in minutes if you are running Windows Vista, XP, or 7 (Mac users, you are out of luck — no version is available yet). Chrome is still in Beta, so you can report bugs and make suggestions for improvement.

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the "Home" icon on your browser. If you are using the Safari browser for Apple Macintosh computers, navigate to the "Safari" in the top menu. "Select Preferences" from the menu, and set the following fields under the General tab: In the Home page field, type "[www.google.com/ig](http://www.google.com/ig)". For New windows opens with, select: Home Page; For New tabs opens with, select: Home Page.

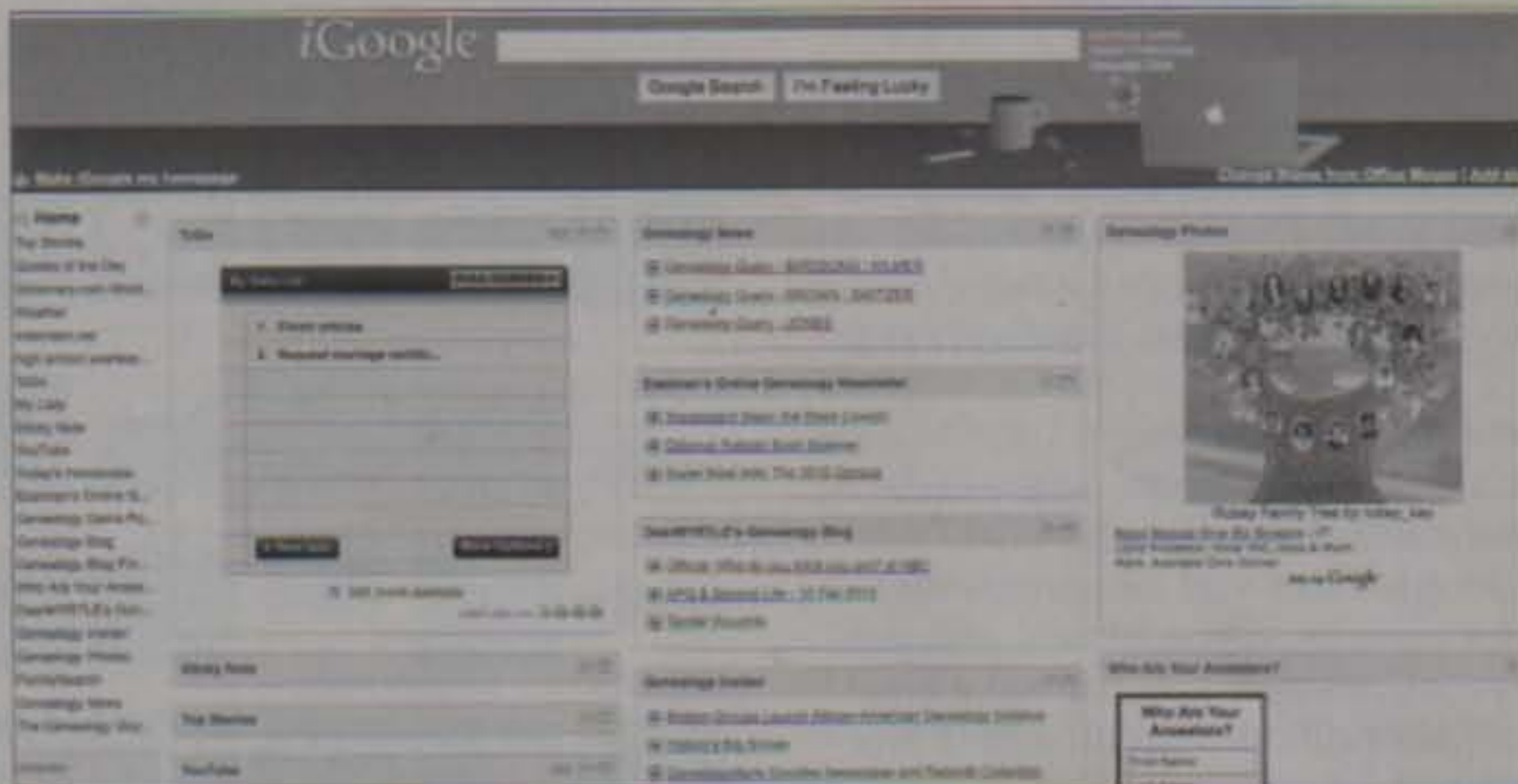
**Go-Go Gadgets:** iGoogle comes with these cool tools, which are referred to as "Gadgets". Gadgets are special boxes that you can add or subtract from your iGoogle page. Each gadget performs one specific task. To add gadgets, make sure you are in your iGoogle homepage and click the "Add Stuff" link in the upper right corner. There are several useful Google Tool Gadgets. Locate the "Search for Gadgets" box and search for the word "Google" to bring up all the Google gadgets. You can also click on the Tools category found in the left-hand column. A few of the gadgets I find useful include: Bookmarks, To-Do List and Sticky Notes. Click the "Add it Now" button for the gadget you want. For genealogists, there are a number of Genealogy Google Gadgets. To find them, go back to your iGoogle page, click on "add stuff" and in the "Search for Gadgets" search box type "Genealogy" and click the "Search" button. You'll see several pages of results, including a few different search box modules for Ancestry.com, FamilySearch and the American Memory Search for the Library of Congress' American Memory collections, as well as gadgets for some of the popular genealogy blogs, such as DearMyrtle, Eastman's Online Genealogical Newsletter, and the GenealogyGuys and Genealogy Gems podcasts. Simply click the "Add it Now" button for each gadget that you want. When you return to your iGoogle page, you'll see the gadgets you added. You can then rearrange where gadgets are placed. I like to group my gadgets into columns based on their functions. For example, I put

all of my "routine task" gadgets in the left-hand column (mail, calendar, to-do list, sticky notes, etc.). In the center column, I put all of my "genealogy gadgets" (family search, ancestry, blogs, podcasts, etc.). On the right-hand side, I put my "miscellaneous" or "just for fun" gadgets (tip of the day, newsreader, weather, daily horoscope, Youtube, etc.). Gadgets behave similar to the windows you're

and change to reflect the time of day.

### 3. NEWS SOURCE

Use Google's Newsreader, <http://news.google.com>, to keep up with daily news stories. Add the Newsreader as a gadget in iGoogle. But you can also use Google to investigate historical newspaper archives for information about your ancestors. Go to



The author's personalized iGoogle page with gadgets "geared for genealogy".

used to seeing on your computer, so you can move them around, minimize or maximize them, and delete them as desired. To move a gadget to another location on the page, click on the bar at the top of the box and drag the gadget to its new location. To minimize a gadget, click the down arrow button and choose "minimize this gadget". To maximize a gadget, click the click the down arrow button and choose "expand this gadget". To delete a gadget, click the down arrow button and choose "delete this gadget". I prefer to minimize those gadgets I use only occasionally. This cuts down on the clutter on my screen. Once you get the hang of iGoogle, you can customize it by adding a theme. In the upper right corner, click the "Select Theme" link. Select a theme (there are many options). Click the theme once and it will be applied to iGoogle. If you want to try a different theme, just click on a new one and it will change. You'll be prompted to enter your ZIP Code. Your new theme will detect the time on your computer

[www.google.com/archivesearch](http://www.google.com/archivesearch) to perform searches on family surnames or businesses, vital records, schools your ancestors attended, employers they worked for, clubs and activities they may have participated in, and community or world events during their lifetime. News Archive includes three different types of content: 1) Partner content, where Google works with publishers and repositories to make their newspaper holdings available within the News Archive search; 2) Online archival materials where Google constantly scans, or "crawls", the Internet to catalog content, including online archival materials from a variety of sources that Google has indexed; and 3) Pay-per-view, which requires a fee to access. You can find a more detailed explanation of each type of content at <http://news.google.com/archivesearch/about.html>.

Google News Archive also offers a handy interactive timeline feature, which delivers relevant articles to you, organized by date. The flexible browsing options enable you to see a historical

## Getting More From Google!

overview of the search results, or you can choose to view timelines showing a century worth of articles down to a month's worth of articles, organized in date order. For example, my grandfather was a steelworker and if I want to learn more about the steelmaking process, I can search for "Bessemer converter" — and by using the timeline, I can search within a specific date range, for example, 1894-1911, by plugging those dates into "search other dates".

To maximize your results, you'll want to experiment with the various search options, use operators to broaden or narrow your searches and you can even customize how results are displayed.

### 4. OFFICE ASSISTANT

Can you use Google as a word processor? Absolutely! With Google Docs you can create text documents, spreadsheets and presentations that you can save and collaborate on with others. If you want to type genealogical correspondence, you can then save it in Google, or you can download a copy to your hard drive as a Word file, or other popular formats, by going to "File", then "Download as" and selecting your desired format. There are even pre-formatted templates for resumes, letters, reports and invoices. I find Google Docs helpful when I'm working on my notebook computer, which runs an older version of Microsoft Office (2003) and someone sends me a Word file created in a newer version of office and hasn't saved it down. I use Google Docs to convert the file so I can open and view it. There are some size limitations (for example, each document you upload and convert can be up to 500K, plus up to 2MB per embedded image). To learn more, go to <http://docs.google.com/support/?hl=en>. There are other useful features too, such as a calculator, unit measure converter and a dictionary. View them at [www.google.com/intl/en/options/](http://www.google.com/intl/en/options/) and [www.google.com/intl/en/help/features.html](http://www.google.com/intl/en/help/features.html).

### 5. TRAVEL AGENT

Use Google to check flight status

times, weather, currency conversion and more. You can find these under [www.google.com/intl/en/options/](http://www.google.com/intl/en/options/) — click Web search features. Of course, Google Maps is a great tool for determining the locations of addresses in your family history. Use it to check if an ancestor's house is still standing or if it has been replaced by a shopping center or highway. When you input addresses in Google Maps, don't forget to use the Satellite

gy terms, such as archive, baptism, marriage, cemetery, church, etc., into the native language of your ancestor to gather results posted online from other countries.

### 7. PHOTO KEEPER

Download Google's photo organizing software Picasa and — Voila! — you have a ready-made digital photo album/scrapbook. As soon as you install Picasa, it will start searching your hard drive for



Google's Picasa provides a free tool for organizing, labeling and sharing your photographs.

View and Street View options for perspectives that put you right where your ancestors once stood. Tap into the power of Google Earth, <http://earth.google.com> to catch glimpses of your ancestral village and other historical imagery from around the globe.

### 6. TRANSLATOR

You can use Google to translate words, phrases and documents, <http://translate.google.com>. This online translator is handy for words or phrases. Enter a search phrase in your own language to find information in other languages. A number of languages (from Afrikaans to Hungarian to Yiddish and more) are available for translation. If you have a webpage, click on the Tools and Resources link to see how to use website translator to make your webpage instantly available in other languages. Consider using the Google Language Tools to translate commonly used genealo-

images. In minutes, you'll see thumbnail displays of your entire photo library. Once the search is complete, you can sort photos into appropriate albums. You can then use your Picasa program to add labels to digital images, type in captions or other identifying information. Keyword your photos to make searching for them easier. Picasa also has a few editing tools, such as a one-click photo enhancer and a red-eye remover. If you want to share an album with a family member or friend, you can tell Picasa to share it by simply going to the album, then click on "share", type in the person's e-mail address, include an optional message, and click "send e-mail". You can also e-mail individual images. You get up to 1024 MB of free storage, but can purchase additional storage starting from 20 GB (\$5 USD per year) up to 1 TB (\$256 USD per year)! I found Picasa especially useful when I was working on the local

Pittsburgh history books I have published with Arcadia Publishing, [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com). I could organize my chapters into albums and easily share images with my co-authors.

#### 8. LIBRARIAN

If you're not tapping the mega power that is Google Books, <http://books.google.com>, you should be! It has over 100,000 genealogies and local histories, so you'll want to search on your ancestor's surname, ancestral town, religion, affiliations, etc. In addition, the "My Library" feature allows you to take books you've located on Google Books and save them on a page for future viewing whenever and wherever you like, and even allows you to sort them into categories. To learn more, go to <http://books.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=75375&topic=9259&hl=en>.

In addition to Google Books, you may want to check out Google Scholar, <http://scholar.google.com>, to search across many disciplines and sources: articles, theses, books, abstracts and court opinions, from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities and other websites. Was your ancestor an inventor? Use Google Patent Search, [www.google.com/patents?hl=en](http://www.google.com/patents?hl=en), to search over seven million Patents from the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). With so much information available with a click of your mouse, Google is like having your own personal virtual librarian. Be sure to use the Images and Videos tabs to search specifically in these areas, too.

#### 9. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Go to [www.google.com/talk/](http://www.google.com/talk/) to download features, such as the Video and Voice plug-in, to Chat within Gmail, iGoogle, and Orkut (online community) — available for PC and Mac or Google Talk software to chat from your desktop (PC only with Windows XP or later). In addition, Google's "Grand Central", [www.grandcentral.com](http://www.grandcentral.com), offers a free way to have a phone number dedicated to genealogy contacts — for example,

newly found relatives or fellow researchers — while still allowing you to retain your privacy and security. You set up an account, choose a Grand Central phone number and manage your voice-mails online. You can have several phones forwarded to your Grand Central number, and there's also the ability to download voicemails as MP3 files.

#### 10. PERSONAL RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Google has several great features to help streamline your research tasks. The Google Toolbar includes a Google search box for searching, no matter where you are on the web. To add the Google Toolbar to your Internet Browser, go to <http://toolbar.google.com>. Click the blue button that says "Install Google Toolbar". Click "Agree" and "Download". The toolbar includes a useful highlighting search button, a bookmarking feature and a wide variety of buttons you can add to customize your toolbar. Click the button that looks like three building blocks to go to the Google toolbar button gallery.

To take your research up a notch, consider enabling the Google Sidewiki — a browser sidebar that enables you to contribute and read helpful information alongside any web page. It's available as a feature in Google Toolbar. Simply download the latest version of Google Toolbar and enable the Sidewiki button in the Toolbar Options menu. Once the button is displayed on the Toolbar, click it to open the sidebar, where you'll be able to see Sidewiki entries that other people have written for the page that you're on. For example, if you go to FamilySearch, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), you can view others' comments. If there are no entries, you can be the first to write one.

Finally, setting up a Google Alert is a way to tell Google to keep searching on your behalf when you are not actively doing so yourself (while you are at work, asleep or on the road). Go to [www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts). Enter the keyword(s) that you want searched (e.g., your surname + genealogy, your hometown, etc.).

Using the drop down menus, select: What parts of the Internet you want searched and how often you would like to be alerted (once a day, once a week, as it happens), and how many you want to receive (up to 20, up to 50), and the e-mail address that you want the alerts to be sent to. You can have up to 1,000 alerts, and edit or delete your existing alerts at any time by clicking the link on the left side of the alerts page that says "Click Here to Manage Your Google Alerts."

Obviously, the 10 suggestions above barely scratch the surface of the power of Google for your genealogical research. For a more comprehensive review of what Google can do for you as a researcher, I highly recommend the book, *Google Your Family Tree* by Daniel M. Lynch (FamilyLink.com, Inc. 2008).

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

By the time this article appears in print, it's likely Google will already have other features and communication tools that genealogists can use to search further, smarter and faster. For example, Google Wave (an online tool for real-time communication and collaboration) and Google Buzz (a new way to share updates, photos, videos and more, and start conversation topics) are in preview, and Google has even released an Android (smart) phone. I'm always curious to see what's next. I don't know about you, but when it comes to tracking down my elusive ancestors, I'll take all the help I can get!



*Freelance writer, lecturer and instructor, Lisa A. Alzo, is a regular contributor to Internet Genealogy.*

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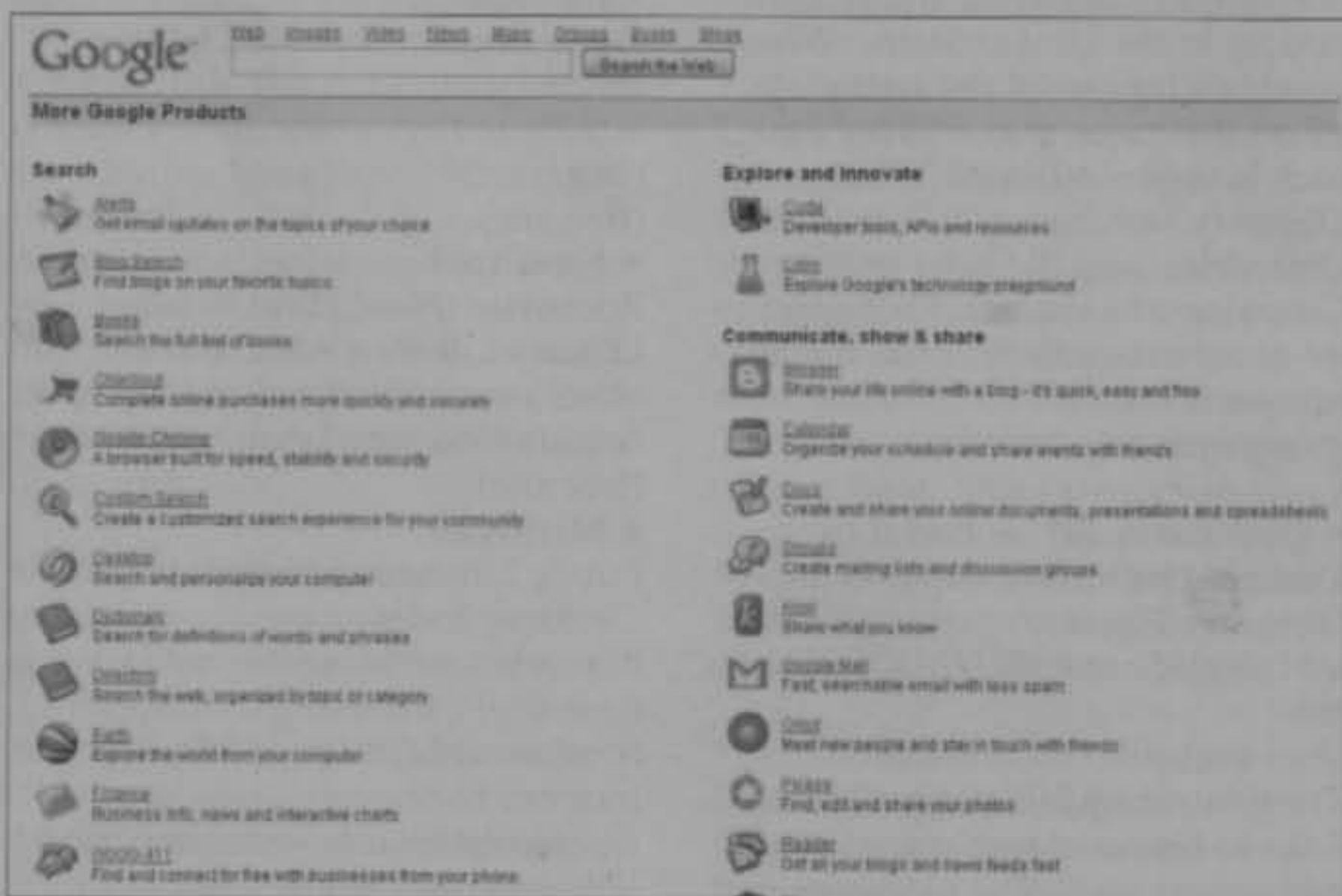
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sites on the New Tab page. To get Chrome, go to [www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome) and click "Download Google Chrome" — it installs in minutes if you are running Windows Vista, XP, or 7 (Mac users, you are out of luck — no version is available yet). Chrome is still in Beta, so you can report bugs and make suggestions for improvement.

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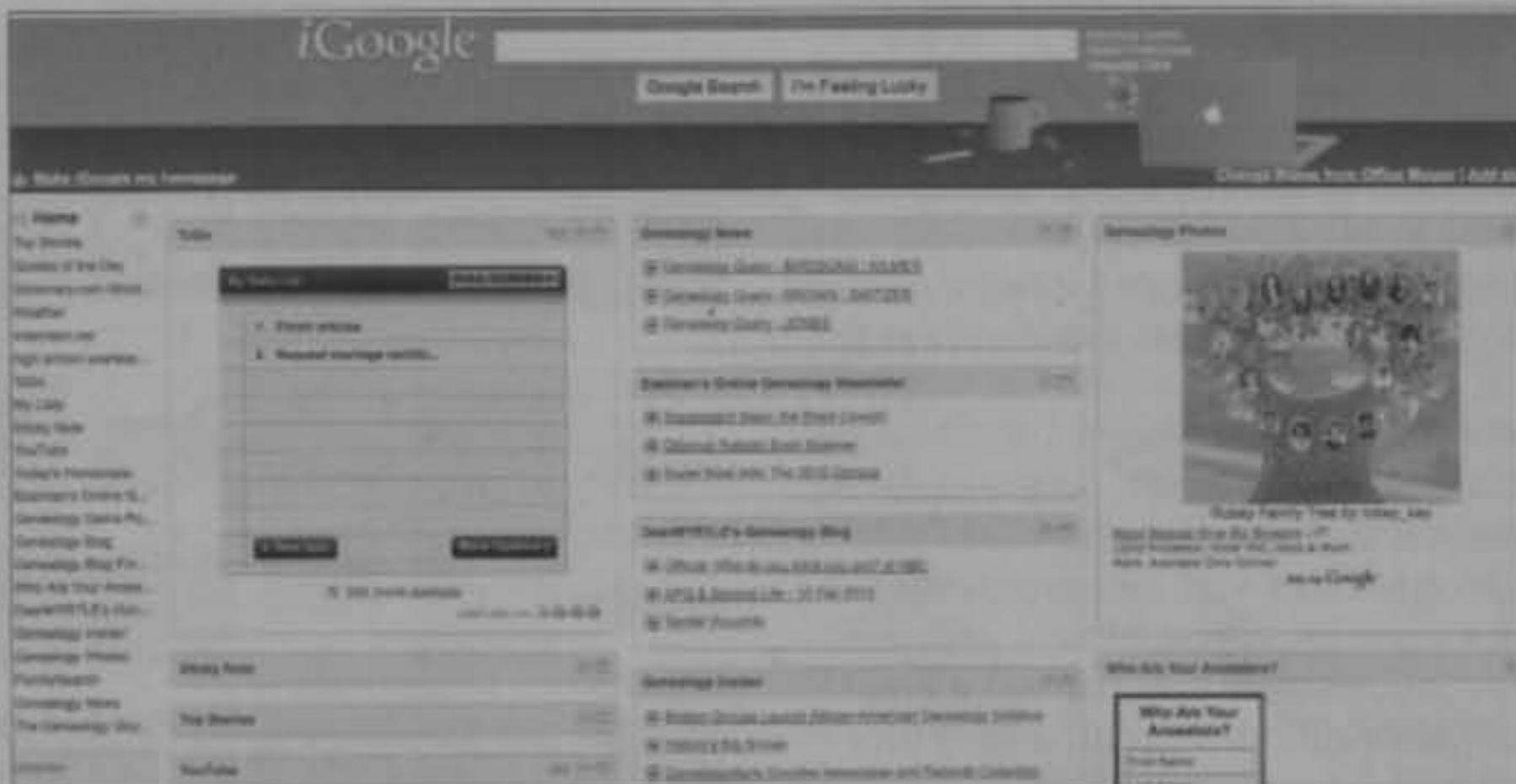
**Go-Go Gadgets:** iGoogle comes with these cool tools, which are referred to as "Gadgets". Gadgets are special boxes that you can add or subtract from your iGoogle page. Each gadget performs one specific task. To add gadgets, make sure you are in your iGoogle homepage and click the "Add Stuff" link in the upper right corner. There are several useful Google Tool Gadgets. Locate the "Search for Gadgets" box and search for the word "Google" to bring up all the Google gadgets. You can also click on the Tools category found in the left-hand column. A few of the gadgets I find useful include: Bookmarks, To-Do List and Sticky Notes. Click the "Add it Now" button for the gadget you want. For genealogists, there are a number of Genealogy Google Gadgets. To find them, go back to your iGoogle page, click on "add stuff" and in the "Search for Gadgets" search box type "Genealogy" and click the "Search" button. You'll see several pages of results, including a few different search box modules for Ancestry.com, FamilySearch and the American Memory Search for the Library of Congress' American Memory collections, as well as gadgets for some of the popular genealogy blogs, such as DearMyrtle, Eastman's Online Genealogical Newsletter, and the GenealogyGuys and Genealogy Gems podcasts. Simply click the "Add it Now" button for each gadget that you want. When you return to your iGoogle page, you'll see the gadgets you added. You can then rearrange where gadgets are placed. I like to group my gadgets into columns based on their functions. For example, I put

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[www.google.com/archivesearch](http://www.google.com/archivesearch) to perform searches on family surnames or businesses, vital records, schools your ancestors attended, employers they worked for, clubs and activities they may have participated in, and community or world events during their lifetime. News Archive includes three different types of content: 1) Partner content, where Google works with publishers and repositories to make their newspaper holdings available within the News Archive search; 2) Online archival materials where Google constantly scans, or "crawls", the Internet to catalog content, including online archival materials from a variety of sources that Google has indexed; and 3) Pay-per-view, which requires a fee to access. You can find a more detailed explanation of each type of content at <http://news.google.com/archivesearch/about.html>.

Google News Archive also offers a handy interactive timeline feature, which delivers relevant articles to you, organized by date. The flexible browsing options enable you to see a historical

## Getting More From Google!

overview of the search results, or you can choose to view timelines showing a century worth of articles down to a month's worth of articles, organized in date order. For example, my grandfather was a steelworker and if I want to learn more about the steelmaking process, I can search for "Bessemer converter" — and by using the timeline, I can search within a specific date range, for example, 1894-1911, by plugging those dates into "search other dates".

To maximize your results, you'll want to experiment with the various search options, use operators to broaden or narrow your searches and you can even customize how results are displayed.

### 4. OFFICE ASSISTANT

Can you use Google as a word processor? Absolutely! With Google Docs you can create text documents, spreadsheets and presentations that you can save and collaborate on with others. If you want to type genealogical correspondence, you can then save it in Google, or you can download a copy to your hard drive as a Word file, or other popular formats, by going to "File", then "Download as" and selecting your desired format. There are even pre-formatted templates for resumes, letters, reports and invoices. I find Google Docs helpful when I'm working on my notebook computer, which runs an older version of Microsoft Office (2003) and someone sends me a Word file created in a newer version of office and hasn't saved it down. I use Google Docs to convert the file so I can open and view it. There are some size limitations (for example, each document you upload and convert can be up to 500K, plus up to 2MB per embedded image). To learn more, go to <http://docs.google.com/support/?hl=en>. There are other useful features too, such as a calculator, unit measure converter and a dictionary. View them at [www.google.com/intl/en/options/](http://www.google.com/intl/en/options/) and [www.google.com/intl/en/help/features.html](http://www.google.com/intl/en/help/features.html).

### 5. TRAVEL AGENT

Use Google to check flight status

times, weather, currency conversion and more. You can find these under [www.google.com/intl/en/options/](http://www.google.com/intl/en/options/) — click Web search features. Of course, Google Maps is a great tool for determining the locations of addresses in your family history. Use it to check if an ancestor's house is still standing or if it has been replaced by a shopping center or highway. When you input addresses in Google Maps, don't forget to use the Satellite

gy terms, such as archive, baptism, marriage, cemetery, church, etc., into the native language of your ancestor to gather results posted online from other countries.

### 7. PHOTO KEEPER

Download Google's photo organizing software Picasa and — Voila! — you have a ready-made digital photo album/scrapbook. As soon as you install Picasa, it will start searching your hard drive for



Google's Picasa provides a free tool for organizing, labeling and sharing your photographs.

View and Street View options for perspectives that put you right where your ancestors once stood. Tap into the power of Google Earth, <http://earth.google.com> to catch glimpses of your ancestral village and other historical imagery from around the globe.

### 6. TRANSLATOR

You can use Google to translate words, phrases and documents, <http://translate.google.com>. This online translator is handy for words or phrases. Enter a search phrase in your own language to find information in other languages. A number of languages (from Afrikaans to Hungarian to Yiddish and more) are available for translation. If you have a webpage, click on the Tools and Resources link to see how to use website translator to make your webpage instantly available in other languages. Consider using the Google Language Tools to translate commonly used genealo-

images. In minutes, you'll see thumbnail displays of your entire photo library. Once the search is complete, you can sort photos into appropriate albums. You can then use your Picasa program to add labels to digital images, type in captions or other identifying information. Keyword your photos to make searching for them easier. Picasa also has a few editing tools, such as a one-click photo enhancer and a red-eye remover. If you want to share an album with a family member or friend, you can tell Picasa to share it by simply going to the album, then click on "share", type in the person's e-mail address, include an optional message, and click "send e-mail". You can also e-mail individual images. You get up to 1024 MB of free storage, but can purchase additional storage starting from 20 GB (\$5 USD per year) up to 1 TB (\$256 USD per year)! I found Picasa especially useful when I was working on the local

Pittsburgh history books I have published with Arcadia Publishing, [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com). I could organize my chapters into albums and easily share images with my co-authors.

#### 8. LIBRARIAN

If you're not tapping the mega power that is Google Books, <http://books.google.com>, you should be! It has over 100,000 genealogies and local histories, so you'll want to search on your ancestor's surname, ancestral town, religion, affiliations, etc. In addition, the "My Library" feature allows you to take books you've located on Google Books and save them on a page for future viewing whenever and wherever you like, and even allows you to sort them into categories. To learn more, go to <http://books.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=75375&topic=9259&hl=en>.

In addition to Google Books, you may want to check out Google Scholar, <http://scholar.google.com>, to search across many disciplines and sources: articles, theses, books, abstracts and court opinions, from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities and other websites. Was your ancestor an inventor? Use Google Patent Search, [www.google.com/patents?hl=en](http://www.google.com/patents?hl=en), to search over seven million Patents from the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). With so much information available with a click of your mouse, Google is like having your own personal virtual librarian. Be sure to use the Images and Videos tabs to search specifically in these areas, too.

#### 9. COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Go to [www.google.com/talk/](http://www.google.com/talk/) to download features, such as the Video and Voice plug-in, to Chat within Gmail, iGoogle, and Orkut (online community) — available for PC and Mac or Google Talk software to chat from your desktop (PC only with Windows XP or later). In addition, Google's "Grand Central", [www.grandcentral.com](http://www.grandcentral.com), offers a free way to have a phone number dedicated to genealogy contacts — for example,

newly found relatives or fellow researchers — while still allowing you to retain your privacy and security. You set up an account, choose a Grand Central phone number and manage your voice-mails online. You can have several phones forwarded to your Grand Central number, and there's also the ability to download voicemails as MP3 files.

#### 10. PERSONAL RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Google has several great features to help streamline your research tasks. The Google Toolbar includes a Google search box for searching, no matter where you are on the web. To add the Google Toolbar to your Internet Browser, go to <http://toolbar.google.com>. Click the blue button that says "Install Google Toolbar". Click "Agree" and "Download". The toolbar includes a useful highlighting search button, a bookmarking feature and a wide variety of buttons you can add to customize your toolbar. Click the button that looks like three building blocks to go to the Google toolbar button gallery.

To take your research up a notch, consider enabling the Google Sidewiki — a browser sidebar that enables you to contribute and read helpful information alongside any web page. It's available as a feature in Google Toolbar. Simply download the latest version of Google Toolbar and enable the Sidewiki button in the Toolbar Options menu. Once the button is displayed on the Toolbar, click it to open the sidebar, where you'll be able to see Sidewiki entries that other people have written for the page that you're on. For example, if you go to FamilySearch, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), you can view others' comments. If there are no entries, you can be the first to write one.

Finally, setting up a Google Alert is a way to tell Google to keep searching on your behalf when you are not actively doing so yourself (while you are at work, asleep or on the road). Go to [www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts). Enter the keyword(s) that you want searched (e.g., your surname + genealogy, your hometown, etc.).

Using the drop down menus, select: What parts of the Internet you want searched and how often you would like to be alerted (once a day, once a week, as it happens), and how many you want to receive (up to 20, up to 50), and the e-mail address that you want the alerts to be sent to. You can have up to 1,000 alerts, and edit or delete your existing alerts at any time by clicking the link on the left side of the alerts page that says "Click Here to Manage Your Google Alerts."

Obviously, the 10 suggestions above barely scratch the surface of the power of Google for your genealogical research. For a more comprehensive review of what Google can do for you as a researcher, I highly recommend the book, *Google Your Family Tree* by Daniel M. Lynch (FamilyLink.com, Inc. 2008).

#### WHAT'S NEXT?

By the time this article appears in print, it's likely Google will already have other features and communication tools that genealogists can use to search further, smarter and faster. For example, Google Wave (an online tool for real-time communication and collaboration) and Google Buzz (a new way to share updates, photos, videos and more, and start conversation topics) are in preview, and Google has even released an Android (smart) phone. I'm always curious to see what's next. I don't know about you, but when it comes to tracking down my elusive ancestors, I'll take all the help I can get!



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