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Google New Google Sites deals Google Sites is a free drag-and-drop site service that allows anyone to create their own website and get it online. The last time we looked at it, Google was in the process of rebuilding websites. Almost a year later, this process is still happening, so the platform is still available in two flavors. Google's New Sites is, well, 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 is clearly short on features. You can forget about ecommerce or a blog platform, for example. Unless you are a G Suite user, you can only publish sites in a domain sites.google.com (sites.google.com/view/yourname.) You don't even get any site template. You can subscribe to Google New Sites here The older version of the service is still available as Classic Google Sites. It has many more features, including templates, but most are too dated, there is no support for building responsive websites, and classic websites will eventually stop working when the move to new Google sites is complete. Clearly, if you're looking for sleek designs or high-power features and functionality, no version of sites will work for you. Check our Wix or Weebly instead. But if you just need a quick way to put together some basic pages to share with friends, family or colleagues, new Google sites may work fine. It's simple, integrates well with other Google services, and requires no more registration: if you have a Google account, you can use it right now in a few clicks. Starting Starting your browser in sites.google.com will take you to the editor of New Sites. There is a button, bottom left of the page to take you 'Back to the classic sites' if you prefer. But we're here to look at the 'new' Sites. As Classic Sites will eventually disappear forever someday, we won't cover it in this review, and we recommend you don't use it either. New Google Sites offers an extremely minimalist environment where we could do little more than tap the big '+' icon on the lower right side 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, you can also share site projects with others. This allows you to access other people's Google Sites projects from your own management console, and means you're able to work on them together. By default, you start with an empty page and a gray header (Image credit: Google) Editor Aiar Your first New Google Sites project and it opens in a very sparse and minimalist editor. Most of the screen is reserved a preview of the current page. Other site builders will typically 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 white white You are free to change or delete this header if you do not need it. A toolbar on the right displays a set of discouraging widgets. General purpose page components are limited to text, dividers, and images. The ability to embed URLs or HTML code may be able to help you add more. The other options are just about embedding content from other Google services and apps: YouTube, Calendar, Map, Docs, Slides, Sheets, Forms and Graphics. Choose from a handful of themes, select a favorite color and basic font options (Image credit: Google) This is not as bad as it sounds. A Themes tab gives you a choice of six header and site styles, and allows you to fine-tune 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 bottom right button of the image to reverse it. There doesn't seem to be a way to manually change the photo. There's a good amount of flexibility when adding text and images to your page. Add text and images and drag them across the page at will (Image credit: Google) Click a text box and it's added to the page, upload an image, and the same thing happens. However, once there, you can click and drag them around. Text cannot involve images, but objects can be dragged across the page, then resized and repositioned (you don't have pixel-level accuracy, but there's enough control to be useful). The editor doesn't offer any right-clicking support – give it a try and you'll see the default browser menu right-click – but strong keyboard shortcut support lets you copy and paste elements, resize objects, format text, and use Ctrl+Z to undo a serious error. You can add pages and subpages, even hide them from the navigation menu (Image credit: Google) A Pages tab lets you add new pages to your site. By default, they automatically appear as top-level pages in the navigation menu (Home/One, Home/Two, Home/Three), but you can also add sub-pages (Home/One, Home/One/Subpage, Home/Two) or hide navigation pages entirely. You can see how your site will look on a phone, tablet or computer (Image credit: Google) While the publisher always displayed our site in desktop mode, tapping preview allowed you to view the site in desktop, tablet, or mobile views. The new editor of Google Sites is not exactly powerful, but is already much more capable than it initially seems. It would be nice to see how it develops in the future, although we should note that it hasn't changed much in the year since we last reviewed it. You have a handful of free images to choose from, or you can simply insert your own Google Google's media manipulation features may seem basic, at least initially, with only YouTube images and embedding available from the default controls. But as with the editor, dig a little deeper and the service proves a little smarter than you might expect. For example, replacing the hideously dull header (or any other) is as easy as hovering your mouse over it and clicking Change image > Select image. Then you can choose from a gallery of about 50 free images, as well as browse your Google Albums or Drive, or run a Google Images search. This is 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 so useful elsewhere. Click on YouTube and you can embed one of your own YouTube uploads or run general searches on YouTube to find what you need. The Calendar control incorporates any of your calendars into the page, while the Map control can refer to your own maps or any new location you need. Google Docs controls let you embed Slides, Graphics, Forms, and other documents. There's nothing special about the viewer – it's just a scroll window – but this provides an easy way to combine multiple content sources on a single page. The embed tool can add versatility to your site, such as 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 the Embed tool allows you to enter a Vimeo URL on our page as well. A basic carousel is available, which offers a handful of preferences (Image credit: Google) There is also a basic image gallery feature. Add your photos, set a handful of preferences and go away. It's no frill, but it works. Even with these features, Google's new sites can't compete with the best of the rest. There are no animations, no light box controls, no significant formatting options (borders, spacing, shadows), no blog 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 services If you get lost, help pages can provide an answer (Image Credit: Google) Support New Google sites are not difficult to use, but if you're having problems or aren't sure how to do something, the Sites support pages should point you in the right direction. Articles are organized into five categories: Get Started; Create; Edit, share and publish; Analytics, accessibility and troubleshooting; and New Sites vs. Classic Sites. They are usually clear and straightforward with simple step-by-step guides for common tasks such as '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 site support forum This is reasonably busy with 30 or more posts per day, and when we check, almost everyone quickly received genuinely helpful responses. Finally, a search engine checks both the official help pages and the forum sites for anything related to your chosen keywords and offers a list of cleverly ranked results with the most likely hits usually near the top. If you do do any problems with new Google sites, a few minutes on the support site will probably provide the answers you need. Final verdict New Google sites are very limited now to building serious sites, but can be useful to create simple pages of nice appearance in a relatively short period of time. We also highlight the best site builder

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