Google Chrome Extensions

Google Chrome extensions are a great way to add more features and functionality to your browser. Extensions let you customize Google Chrome with all the features you like! If you love Google Chrome, and a lot of people do, you can add a boatload of functionality to the chrome browser with extensions. If you were a fan of Mozilla Firefox browser just because of its flexibility of add-ons that let you personalize the browser to meet your many needs then you need not to be a fan anymore because Google has finally opened up its Chrome Browser to the wide world of extensions. Extensions add features to Google's new browser.

The Google Chrome Extensions Gallery is now open for all, and not just for submissions this time. Now there is an official repository of Chrome Extensions by Google. Quite a few people swear by Firefox for its extensions, but have found the speed of Chrome impressive indeed. For many the final turning point would be extensions available for Chrome, while many are sure to stick to Firefox till they find each and every of their extensions available for Chrome.

What are Google Chrome Extensions?

Extensions are small software programs that can modify and enhance the functionality of Google Chrome. You write them using web technologies such as HTML, JavaScript, and CSS. As a beta project, extensions come with a few caveats from Google. For the moment, Google is only supporting extensions in its latest beta version of Chrome, so if you prefer the official, stable browser, you'll have to forgo add-on tools for now. Interestingly, the version of Chrome that supports extensions, dubbed "the Beta Channel" version, is only available on XP and Vista, not Windows 7, though Google has promised that extensions will soon be available for Google's new Mac version of Chrome, too.

The extensions typically show up as icons next to Chrome's address bar and are easy enough to delete or disable if you wish to preserve that classic Chrome look and feel. To use Chrome extensions, you must download the latest beta version of Chrome for Windows or Linux (Mac is coming soon) at google.com/chrome. Then head to chrome.google.com/ extensions for hundreds of free add-ons to dress it up.

Here are some examples of Extensions for Google Chrome:

Google Mail Checker Extension
Uses a browser action (icon in the toolbar)
to display how many unread messages are
in your Gmail inbox. Click the icon to go
to your inbox.

News Reader Extension
Features a browser action that, when
clicked, shows a popup summarizing the
top news items.

Subscribe in Feed Reader
Uses a page action (icon in the address bar)
and content script (code injected into a
web page) to let you subscribe to a feed in
the current web page.

Here are seven great chrome extensions to get you started.

1. Google Apps Shortcuts
   This add-on gives you fast access to Google applications such as Gmail, Google Calendar and Google Docs. The extension opens each in a new tab; it also opens a new tab so you can quickly create e-mail, a document, etc. If you just want Gmail access, try Google Mail Checker.
2. Tab Menu
   Tabs at the top of the Chrome browser get tougher to sort through the more tabs you open. With Tab Menu you get a vertical list of all your tabs as well as a search box for easier tab navigation. Tab Menu also lets you close tabs with close buttons and drag-and-drop tabs to rearrange them.
3. StumbleUpon
   I love how StumbleUpon lets you discover Web sites that match your interests.

Now Chrome users can get in on the channel-surfing Web fun with more than 500 topics to explore.

4. Picnik Extension for Chrome

   Like a Web-site image? The Picnik Extension for Chrome lets you snag it and send it with ease. Click the Picnik icon after a page loads and you'll get a thumbnail list of its images. (You can also send a snapshot of what's visible in the browser window to Picnik.) Click a thumbnail, and it opens that image in Picnik to edit, annotate and share.

5. Feedly

   Think of Feedly as your iGoogle page without the pretty theme but with a magazinelike look to organize your favorite content. Feedly integrates with Google Reader, Twitter, YouTube and other sites.

6. WOT

   Web of Trust warns you if a site has a reputation for spam, malware or other dangerous/inappropriate activity. Just click the WOT extension icon for a site's ratings. Sites with a red circle are the most risky while those with a green circle are most safe. WOT also works with search results from Google and Bing, as well as e-mail services such as Gmail and Yahoo! Mail.

7. Brizzly

   This tough little Twitter extension lets you compose and compile tweets as well as access your Twitter profile, mentions, lists and saved searches. Even better, Brizzly displays the content of shortened URLs right in your post stream — be it the full link that got shortened or the full video or image so you can look before you click

To keep up with the latest news on extensions, read the Chromium blog and the Google Chrome blog, and subscribe to the chromium-extensions group.