




Setting Up A Web Page

When the web first began, you needed to know how to write computer code to make a web page. But not anymore! Now web page editors are available, often as a built-in user interface for a particular web space, that make it possible for **anyone** to create a page. If you know how to use a word processor application, know how to get digital photos into your computer and find them again, and have a web browser and a connection to the internet, you have the basic elements needed.

You'll also be happy to know that for your first web page, you can use one of the free web space options. Eventually you may want to purchase your own domain and set up a more professional page, perhaps with a shopping cart if you have goods or services to sell. But for now we want to keep it simple!


-  We'll learn a bit about web pages, addresses, browsers, and internet providers first. We won't get too technical, but it helps to understand the terms you see on the site set-up page. Also, having an idea of what's what and knowing the general goals will help make sense of each step.
-  Next we'll do the preparation. We'll choose a theme for the site (colors, text styles, layout, etc) from the available templates. We'll also write up the text in something like Notepad so it will be easy to copy and paste into the page. Finally, we will choose any photos or other art for the page and have it handy.
-  With the content and style at hand, we'll use the set-up page in Google Sites® to enter and format the text and to upload the photos. One simple web page done!

Want more free activities, tips, and graphics? Look in the Attic!

Learning To Talk The Talk

What Is A Web Page?

A web page is a chunk of computer code that includes text, possibly photos and videos and sounds, and instructions on how this content should be displayed.

<p>This example web page</p>	<pre><!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd"> <HTML><HEAD> <TITLE>Example Page</TITLE> <META HTTP-EQUIV="Content-type" CONTENT="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1"> </HEAD> <BODY BGCOLOR="#0066CC"> <TABLE BORDER="1" CELSPACING="2" CELLPADDING="20"><TR><TD ></TD></ TR> <TR><TD HEIGHT="30" ALIGN="center" style="FONT-SIZE: 18PX; color: #D3F7FF; font-family: Comic_Sans_MS, sans- serif; " >WOW!!!! We're On A Web Page!</TD></TR> </TABLE> </BODY> </HTML></pre>
	
<p>is made with this code:</p> <p>-----</p>	

A web site might have one or many pages. If it has many pages, there will be links to get from one to another, like going to different pages in a book.

What Is A URL?

An important part of any web page is its web address, or URL. In case you've ever wondered, URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator. It's a standard way to describe where the code that makes up a web site is stored. The set-up page will tell you the URL of the site you create. Be sure to write down your new site's address!

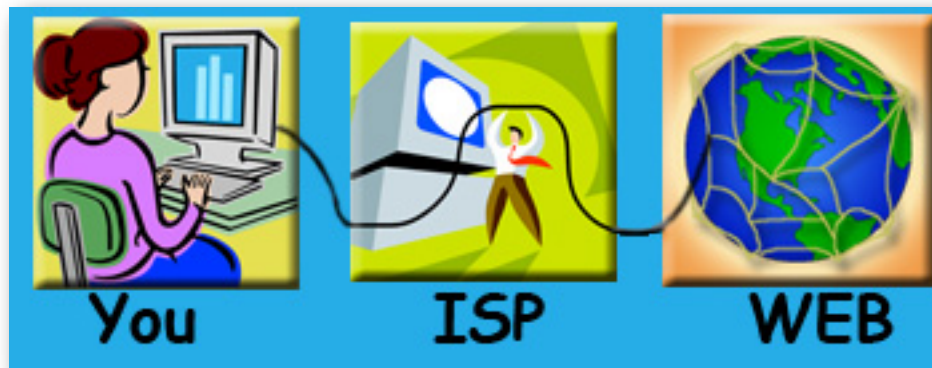
Example of a URL: <http://www.somebodyswebsite.net>

All URLs start with `http://` followed by the specific address. Many, but not all specific addresses, begin with `www`. They end with a suffix such as `.com`, `.net`, `.edu` and so on. Be sure you notice this last part! If you type `.com` for a site which actually ends in `.net`, you'll end up at the wrong address!

What Is Needed To Find And Look At A Web Page?

Basically you need two things: a connection to the internet, and an application called a **browser** that can find web sites using their URLs and can understand the computer code (html) of web sites in order to display them.

First, you need a computer that is connected to the web through an ISP, an **internet service provider**. Examples would be `cox.net`, `comcast internet`, `xmission.com`. Typically you pay the ISP a monthly fee to link you to the web. Usually an ISP will also give you email service, often it



will also provide you some web space where you might store code for a web page, or store documents or photos.

Second, you need the browser application. Internet Explorer® is the browser that comes with the Windows® operating system. Another good browser, Firefox®, can be downloaded free. You can use both on the same computer, in fact.

To use a browser, you double-click to launch it just like any other application. As soon as it opens, the browser will check that you have an active connection to the internet. Then it will display whatever you have designated as your home page--sort of home base. At that point,

you can enter any URL into the address line and the browser will find it, read the code, and display the page.

Where Will My Web Page Be?

This may seem like a silly question....on the web, of course! But it's not as silly as you might think. If you knew html, the code language of web pages, you could write all the code for your page and store it on your computer's hard drive. You could preview it there, too, and see it in your browser. But since your computer is **not** open to the web, nobody else could see the page!

So you need to transfer the code, photos, and text to a file server computer that is part of the web. This will be easy for us, because the code will be constructed behind the scenes through the set up page(s), and we can enter our text online as well. All we need to upload are photos and any other art work we decide to use, and possibly PDF's or other files for download.

Overview of the Setup Process

Once you are connected to that set up area, you will have a space into which you can type or paste the text. You can tweak its appearance by setting the size, color, bold, etc pretty much as you do in a word processor.

You will also have a space where you can put in the location of a jpg or gif photo on your hard drive, click a button, and send a copy of the photo to the server. Of course, your copy of both the text and the photo(s) stay on your computer! Here's the neat part: The set up page figures out the code part for you, so you never actually see the code.

When it's finished, the code, text, and photo(s) that make up your web page will be on some other computer, though you may not know where that file server computer really is. As far as the world knows, your page is located at its web address, its URL. Any time someone uses a

browser to display your page, its text and photos are temporarily sent to their computer. So in some ways your page is all over the world all the time! But you still will have a private copy of the text and photos on your computer, just in case.

Let's Get Started

When you actually create your page, you will be given many choices about the way it will look and lay out. Do you want one or several columns? Should there be a slot for a photo on each page? What items do you want in the sidebar? And so on. This can be a bit overwhelming, especially if you haven't even decided what the title will be! The solution is to prepare some things ahead of time, so that you can plug them in.

Have A General Plan

Think about what you want to do with the site. Don't be stressed about it though, because you can pretty well change everything later if need be. But think about the general outline, just as you would in writing a report. See, your teachers were right--it is useful! With a general plan in mind it will be much easier to organize the site. Remember that it doesn't all need to fit on one page. Your first page might be an introduction or welcome, with links to other pages (what would be subheadings in an outline).

Write Text And Paste It In

Write some text in a word processor--Notepad is a good choice--and have it ready to paste in. You can check the spelling ahead of time this way, and read it over and see if you like what you have written. This method also gives you a backup copy of the text for each page, just in case! Keep paragraphs short. Also, think about how much might fit on one screen. People don't always scroll down very far. It's better to break up your site into smaller chunks as linked pages.

Prepare Photos And Art

Photos and art work **must** be either .jpg (JPEG) or .gif for display on a web page. Most digital cameras use .jpg, so photos you have downloaded from your camera are probably already in the correct format. A good plan is to edit all the photos for a page and put them into a single folder so they will be easy to locate and upload. Again, keeping these with the text for each page gives you a backup of your site.

You may want to crop photos or adjust their contrast or lighting. You also may want to change the size. For example, if your photo is high resolution, such as 3648 X 2736, only a teeny corner would fit on a web page. The browser can shrink it on the fly, but it will take much longer to load, take up more file space, and not look as good as it will if you change the size and save the smaller *COPY* to post on your site. Be sure to keep your original as well!

If you don't have PhotoShop®, there are free online services where you can edit photos and art. One of these is <http://picnik.com/>. Your digital camera probably came with editing software, too.

Create Your First Site


One option for creating a site is to use Google Sites®. It's free, the interface is reasonably easy to use, and the results look quite polished. The main downside is a long URL. There are other free sites available, of course. Their setup interfaces will be slightly different and may include a slightly different menu of choices but the basic needs like text entry, formatting, and a way to upload pictures will be there.

Assuming you have already thought about the type of site you want to build, have written some text to use on the first page, and have assembled and edited the photos for that first page, let's create a simple site on Google Sites.

1. You Need A Google Account

The first step is to open a free Google account, if you don't have one already. This will let you customize your Google home page, and qualifies you to use GMail, iGoogle, and Google Sites, among other things. Click here if you need to open a Google Account:

<https://www.google.com/accounts/NewAccount>

 **Important: Make a note of the email address you use, and your password.**

As soon as you complete the account form and submit it, Google will send an activation notice to the email address you used. Open the mail from Google and follow instructions to activate the account.

2. Sign In To Google Sites



Go back to your browser, and navigate to Google Sites. <http://www.google.com/sites> If you are not yet signed in, you will see a sign in area in the upper right. It should have your email address and password all ready, if you are signed in to your Google account, but check both. Note that there is an option to "stay signed

in". This is a convenience, but **don't set it unless you are on your own computer**. Click the sign in button.

3. Create The Site

Click the **Create Site** button, and begin filling in the information for your site. You have many choices, but most can be changed later.

- You can use a **template**, which has the layout for the front page and various other pages already linked. This can save time, if you see anything similar to your plan. *You can alter

the template in many ways, including changing the basic color scheme, adding or deleting functions, etc.

- Your **site name** will appear at the top of the page, so think of a clever title that describes your site. Examples: Cooking Up A Storm, A Trip To Hawaii, The Craft Patch. This can have spaces, and be several words long.
- Your URL is going to be long enough with the "sites.google.com/site/" beginning, so try to keep the last part short. For the examples above, perhaps cookstorm, hawaiiitrip, and craftpatch. No spaces!

IMPORTANT: Make a note of your URL.

- The theme is the general color scheme and the background for your site. You can change this at any time to give your site a new look.
- Click **More Options**. You can specify if the site is public or private, and enter a brief description that may help locate it in a search engine.
- Type the wiggly letters. This is a security ploy to prevent robots from creating zillions of bogus sites. If you can't figure out the letters, give it a try and it will let you try again if you are wrong.
- Click **Create Site**. If you've filled in everything, you now have your first web site!

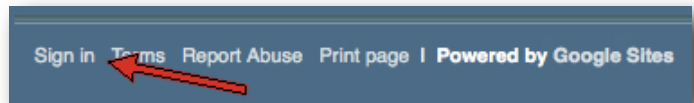
Congratulations!

*I ran into a "template" where the title was part of the background art, so you couldn't change it. Bad template! These templates were all submitted by volunteers for free use, so they may vary in quality. You may do better by just choosing a theme and creating your own layout.

Adding Content And Layout To Your Site

How to Sign In To Work On Your Pages

Let's pretend that you were ready to quit for the day, once you created your site, and that you shut down the computer. How do you get back in to edit the site? First, enter the URL of your new site and go to it. Look down at the very bottom of the page, and you'll see a tiny **Sign in** link. Click it.



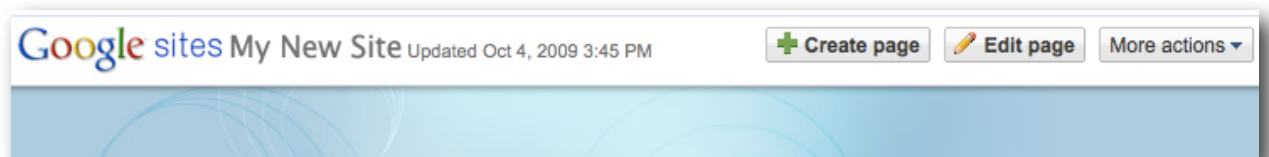
If you are already signed in to Google--perhaps to read GMail or to look at your custom iGoogle page--you will go directly into edit mode. If you are not signed in to iGoogle, you will return to the Google Sites sign in page to enter your email and password.

Template Tips

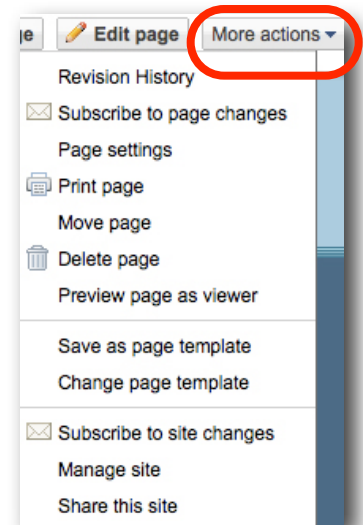
The best helper tool I've seen on Google Sites is a **Tips** section in the information about site templates. It has a diagram with the various features of a page marked, and follows with a brief discussion of each. Even more useful is a list of linked topics along the right sidebar that includes pretty much any change you might want to make. You'll want to be sure you bookmark this link: <http://sites.google.com/site/sitetemplateinfo/tips> This set of tips is so complete I'll just hit the high points to get you started.

Working On Your Web Site

When you sign in as a site owner, you'll see an application toolbar at the top that is not displayed when viewers go to your site. It has three buttons on its right end. The first of the three buttons creates a



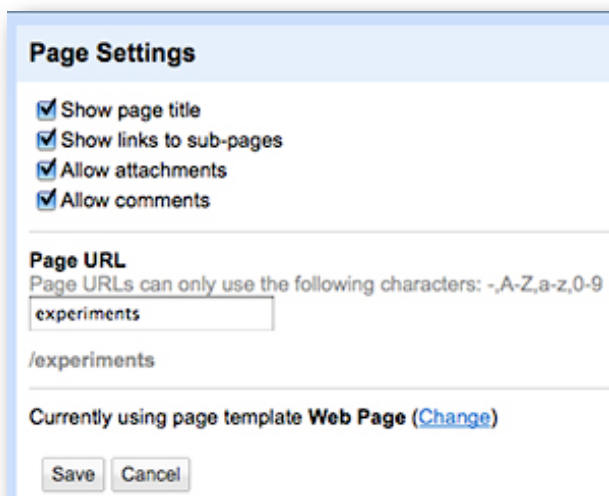
new page for your site. The next one throws you into edit mode for the current page, and will give you an editing toolbar. We'll look at that later. The third choice, **More actions**, has a drop-down menu with several important options that affect the entire site. Let's click **More actions** and look at some of them.



Highlights of the More Actions Menu

1. Page Settings

Take a look at **Page settings**. You have the option to hide several items that are displayed on the page by default. Try hiding and showing these to see the effect. You must save after each change. You also can allow, or not allow, **Attachments** and **Comments**.

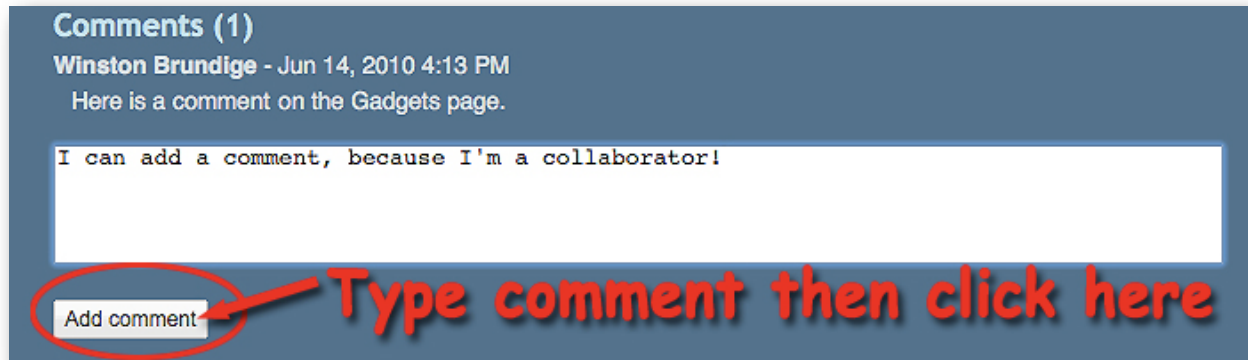


Allow Comments?

Comments are restricted to a list of people, such as students for a class, family members, or business colleagues, that you invite to your site as **collaborators** (see section on **Sharing**) below. The reason for that restriction is, without it you'd get an avalanche of spam having nothing to do with

your site with potentially harmful links, posted among the comments. Although it doesn't say so, only those **currently signed in to their Google accounts** can leave comments, according to the Help Forum.

On a page for which you allow comments, **collaborators** must click **Sign in** in the lower left corner of the site, just as you would do to edit the site. They will then see a text box where they can enter the comment, and a button to **Add comment** which must be clicked to post it. Of



Comments (1)
Winston Brundige - Jun 14, 2010 4:13 PM
Here is a comment on the Gadgets page.

I can add a comment, because I'm a collaborator!

Add comment **Type comment then click here**

course, as site owner, you also have access to the text box and button while you're signed in, enabling you to reply to a comment. For other viewers who are not collaborators, comments can be read but there is no way to post a comment. Used in this way, comments are a great opportunity to have an online discussion!

Allow Attachments?

This option is just what you need if you want to post handouts or other materials on your site for download or viewing. PDF documents can be uploaded as is, but plan to compress anything else. Be aware that collaborators also can upload files to any page where you have allowed attachments! You could use that as a way for students to hand in their work in an online class. Anyone can click on an attachment's **View** or **Download** buttons, but only you and the collaborator who uploaded the file can remove it.

2. Save as page template

Each site template, even the blank one, has some page templates associated with it that you can invoke to change the layout of any page. If you've set up a page layout manually, you'd certainly want to save it so that you can apply it to other pages without having to start from scratch. Use the option **Save as page template** to do this.

3. Change Page Template

The next item, **Change page template**, lets you instantly change the layout to any of the page templates that came with the site template

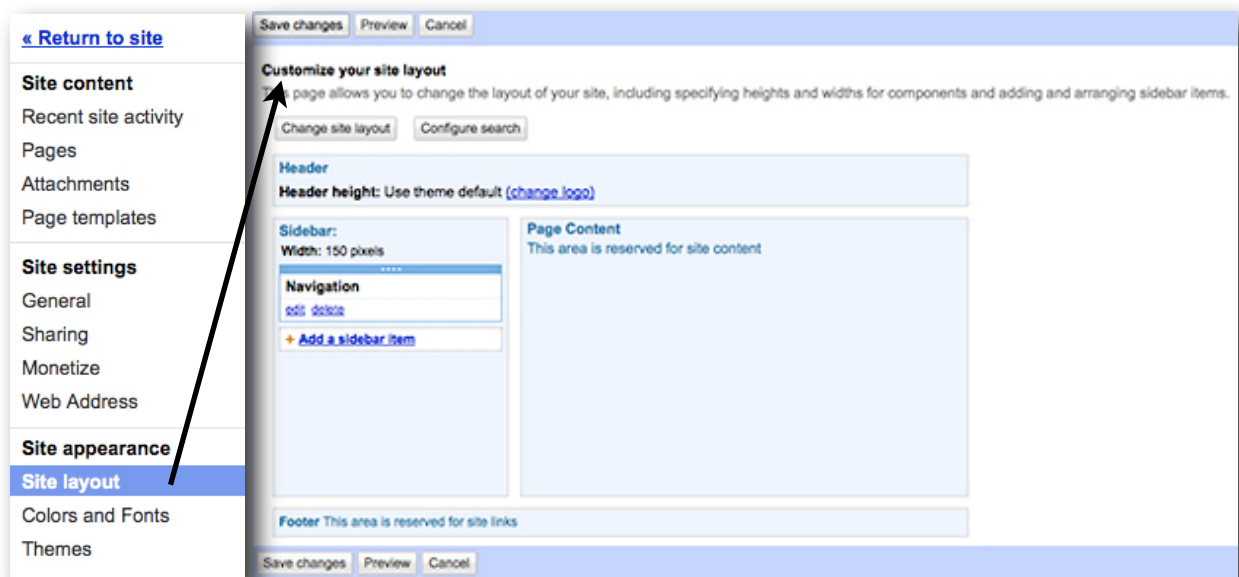
or to one you've set up and saved. Note that this isn't the same as a site template, it's a way to change the layout and functions of an individual page.

4. Share This Site

Let's jump down to the last choice, **Share this site**. When you created the site, you had a chance to either make the site completely public or to limit access to only a few people. Here is where you make that sharing choice more specific. You can invite **specific** people by listing their email addresses and set their access level to **owner** (can sign in and make major changes), **collaborator** (may post comments, upload attachments, and use Google Apps) or as **viewers** only. You can combine options. For example, you could make the site open to viewing by the public, and also have a limited list of collaborators.

5. Manage Site

I skipped over this item because there is so much under it. It includes the **Sharing** options, has information about recent site activity, what page templates are available, what pages and attachments you've added, the web address of your site, and options to change its appearance, including the theme. You can even change the site title and

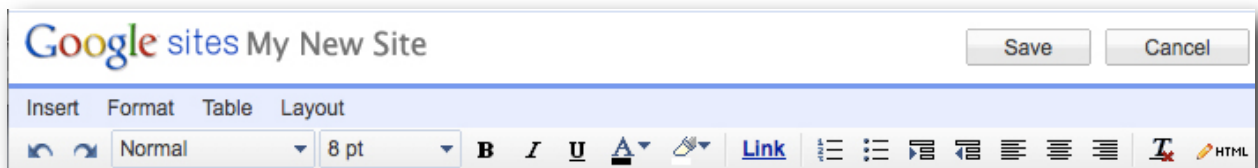


description! Look over this section so that you'll know these options are available, although you probably won't use all of them now.

Also under **Manage site** is a topic called **Monetize**. This explains how you can add Google ads to your site and perhaps make a little money! It's nice that you don't have ads unless you ask for them, unusual for a free web site.

Edit Mode Options

Okay, let's go ahead and click that **Edit Page** button and begin adding content. The first change you'll see after clicking the button is that the *Create Page*, *Edit Page*, and *More Actions* buttons in the application toolbar go away and in their place you now have **Save** and **Cancel** buttons. Just under the application toolbar you now see a new toolbar with the various editing options.



Text editing tools

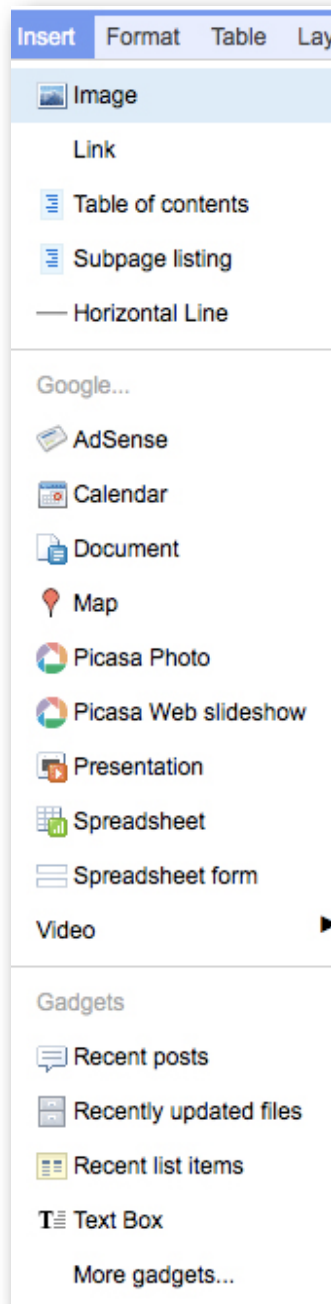
The icons along the lower row of the editing toolbar are similar to what you use in a word processor to format text. There are undo and redo arrows, a drop down to set text as normal, bold, etc, a place to change font size, and familiar functions such as bold, underline, font color, and alignment. There are also options to make highlighted text a link to another page or site, change indent, create lists, remove formatting, and even a way to add html.

Additional Options

Above the text editing tools you have four links to other functions. The first, **Insert**, we'll explore in detail a bit later, because it is what

enables you to add everything besides text. **Format** has more options for editing text, including shortcuts to make highlighted text into headings of various sizes and the superscript and subscript options. **Layout** is a quick way to change the number of columns, subheadings, and sidebars for the page.

The Insert Menu



Now take a closer look at the options under **Insert**. Some of these options you will use frequently, some may be things to add later, others may not fit your site.

Special Functions: Spreadsheets, Calendars, etc.

I found some very helpful information on some of the special items like spreadsheets, documents, and calendars in the **Template Tips** section I mentioned earlier. Topics are set up to tell you how to replace these, but if you open the topic, it turns out there is also information on how to set up these items if you don't already have them. The Tips link again is:

<http://sites.google.com/site/sitetemplateinfo/tips>

Insert-->Image

The very top item on the **Insert** menu is one you will definitely use: **Image**. Clicking this lets you add photos and artwork to the page. You can set up a link to an image somewhere on the web, choose an image that you've already uploaded, or you can browse and find a new image file on your hard drive and upload it. Remember that it must be .jpg or .gif.

Click on the thumbnail of the uploaded image to put it onto the page. Once it is on the page, if you click an image while you are in Edit page mode, a set of options (sizes, alignment, remove) will appear at the bottom to help you position the image. Images you upload remain in the Image list, so to use an image again you can go to **Insert-->Image** and choose it.

Insert-->Video

Farther down the Insert menu is the **Video** option. Use it to link to and display a YouTube or Google Video as part of your page. You should have copied or made a note of the URL of the video, since you'll have to enter that in a form.

Insert-->Gadgets

Notice the **Gadgets** section at the bottom of the menu. These are mini applications you can add to the page. Not all of these can be used on every page. For example, there is a **Recent Posts** gadget. But it can only be used to list posts from an announcement page, not the default web page template used for most pages in your site. To use that gadget, you would first have to create a new page, make it an announcement-type page, and write some posts on it. You'll want to investigate these options later, to add new functions to your site. Do notice the **More gadgets...** item at the bottom of the **Insert** menu. You can add anything from a Pac Man game to a package tracker gadget!

Start Simple

As you can see, there are tools on the Google Sites editing interface for extremely complex web sites. My suggestion is to start simple and learn as you make changes. Having an active web site keeps people--and the Google search robots--interested in your site. So experiment fearlessly, delete what you don't like, and have fun creating a very professional-looking first web site!