

Beginning Google Photos including Artificial Intelligence

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What is Google Photos?

Google Photos is a free Cloud-based photo and video sharing and storage service. You can use the website on your computer and download the Google Photos app to all of your mobile devices.

How to Get Started Using Google Photos

Visit the website, and download the mobile app.

- Website: <https://photos.google.com/>
- Mobile: Search in your app store for the *Google Photos* app and download.
(May appear and behave differently on iPhone, Android, or Google Pixel phone, etc.)

Log in to each device with your Google account. If you don't have a Google account, you can set it up for free. You will use this same account with all Google tools and products.

1. Sign up for a free Google account.
2. Sign into each device with this same account.
3. Google Photos can synchronize your photos between devices.

Google Photos Privacy

It's understandable to be concerned about the privacy of your photos and videos. Here's what you need to know about Google Photos privacy:

- Your photos are only available to you
- Your account is secured by your personal password
- Your photos are not uploaded to the Internet or searchable with Google.com
- Read the Terms of Service

Google Photos Features

There are a wide range of great features, some of which may not be obvious at first. Google Photos features include:

- Storage (allowing you the option to free up space on your devices - \$)
- Backup (I don't rely on it as your only photo backup)
- Powerful search and retrieval
- Facial and object recognition
- Text recognition (OCR)
- Photo organization

- Sharing and creation tools

Google Photos Storage

You have two options when it comes to your Google Photos storage plan:

1. Free version called *High Quality*
2. Low cost subscription to upgrade photo storage capacity called *Original Quality*.

Option #1: High Quality

- Free
- Unlimited storage
- Image compression (takes up less storage space)
- Photos (Larger than 16 Megapixels (MP) resized to 16MP. Good quality prints up to 24" x 16" meet most needs)
- Videos (If higher than 1080p then resized to HD 1080p)

Option #2: Original Quality

- (\$) Upgrade
- No compression of photos or videos.
- Uses the 15 GB of free storage in your Google account. This storage cap includes everything you have saved in Gmail, Google Drive, and all Google apps.
- When you hit storage limit: Option to purchase additional storage called *Google One*.

Visit [Google One](#) to get all the latest information about plans and features.

Google Photos Back Up and Storage Benefits

Considering the volume of photos and videos we take these days with our phones, and the volume of old family photos we have digitized, storage is a pressing issue. Google Photos can help because:

- It can relieve the storage burden on your phone by giving you a place to store your photos. You can then elect to remove them from any of your devices if you wish.
- The ability to upload, search, organize, edit and share your photos from any device.
- If you lose or break your phone, your photos are stored on the cloud and can be accessed and downloaded again on any device that is signed into your Google account.

I strongly believe it is important to have multiple backups. So, while I see Google Photos as one of my backups, all of my important photos and videos are on my computer which is backed up to the cloud. I use the Cloud backup service [Backblaze](#) and have for many years. If you decide to try them (and they usually offer a [15 day free trial here](#)) , I do appreciate it if you use my link.

How to Upload Photos to Google Photos

There are two ways to add photos from your computer:

1. Click *Upload* at top of the page.
2. Drag and drop photos onto the Google Photos screen.

When using the Google Photos App on a mobile device:

1. Tap your face in the upper right corner of the screen (your account)
2. Tap Photo Settings
3. Turn on *Back Up & Sync*.
4. I recommend turning off *Use cellular data to back up photos / videos*.

In the Settings you will find *Manage device storage*. You can opt to have the original photos and videos removed from your device once they are uploaded to Google Photos. This will free up space and manage the amount of storage the app uses on your device.

How to Delete and Archive Your Photos in Google Photos:

1. Click to select the photo or video (you can select one or multiple) on your computer or tap the photo in the app.
2. Click / tap the trash can icon.

Searching Your Photos and Videos in Google Photos

You can search your photos and videos for:

- *People & Pets*
- *Places*
- *Selfies*
- *Screenshots*

For example, type the word *Selfie* into the search field and Google Photos will retrieve all of the photos that were taken as selfies. Search your photos and videos for *Recently added items*, *Videos* (Type the word *Videos* into the search field), *Favorites*, *Names*, *Dates* (Find photos based on when they were taken. For example, you can search *October 2019 through December 2019*.)

Facial Recognition in Google Photos

After initial set up your backup, Google Photos starts to identify and group faces that are the same. Check your *Settings* to ensure the feature is activated: ***Settings > Group similar faces >*** slide the *Face Grouping* button to the “on” position. It might take a few hours or a few days from your initial setup for this feature to activate. It depends on number of photos and your WiFi connection.

Searching for content that include certain people (faces) is very easy to do.

1. Tap in the search box

2. Tap a face to see all photos for that face.

You can *Show and Hide Faces* and include or exclude *Pet Faces* in the *Settings*. Keep in mind that facial recognition, and object and text search aren't (and realistically can't be) perfect. However, it improves every day thanks to machine learning/artificial intelligence. Learn more about artificial intelligence: Elevenses with Lisa Episode 32 at

<https://lislouiscooke.com/2020/11/10/artificial-intelligence-machine-learning-genealogy/>

You can help train Google Photos to more accurately identify faces in photos by adding names to the faces that you know. You can also answer the questions that Google Photos poses regarding whether two faces are the same or different person.

Object Search in Google Photos

Simply type in the word that represents the object. For example: *Wedding Dress*. This search retrieved content that included weddings and dresses. Narrow in on strictly content where someone is wearing a wedding dress by putting quotation marks around the phrase: "*Wedding Dress*".

Text Search in Google Photos

Searching for words will retrieve any photo or video in Google Photos that mention that word. There are countless uses for this as a genealogist. Example: photos of tombstones can be retrieved simply by searching for the surname that appears on the tombstone. This text recognition applies to all types of text including newspaper articles, signs and more.

Create New Content

Google Photos creates fun projects and content using the photos and videos in your account including Movies, Animations and Collages. The content Google Photos creates can only be seen by you. It is not publicly available on Google's search engine. You decide whether to keep it, share it or delete it. You can download these projects to your computer and share links too.

Learn More:

Book: *The Genealogist's Google Toolbox* by Lisa Louise Cooke

Available at <https://www.shopgenealogygems.com>

20% off Coupon Code: TOOLBOX20 (expires 3/15/21)

Genealogy Gems Premium Membership Video:

[Solving Unidentified Photo Cases](#)

Learn more about Premium Membership at

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