Free Chrome Browser Extensions

AHEAD Association on Higher Education And Disability

ILLINOIS / IOWA Regional Chapter

Technology can be a powerful tool to assist students with special needs or any sort of learning challenge. In particular, the Chrome web browser allows users to install a wide variety of web extensions that provide tools that can help all learners, regardless of ability level. The following list contains extensions that are free and do not require an active subscription or purchase.

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Assistive Technologies

Text-to-Speech

Immersive Reader

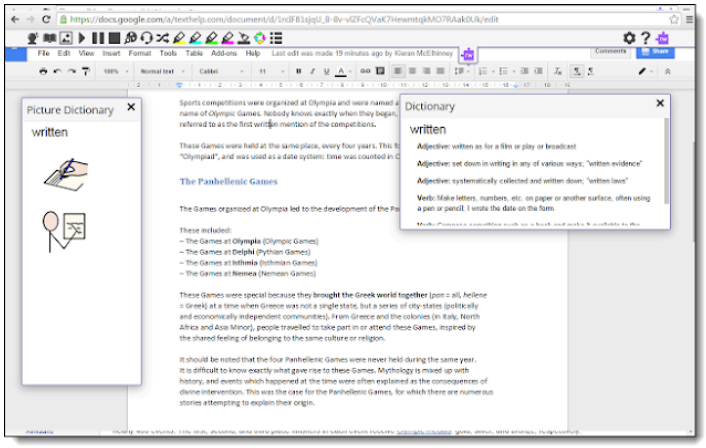
The Immersive Reader extension can read aloud any text you have selected, as well as providing additional reading supports. These include Text Preferences to change the text size, increase or decrease spacing, change fonts, and colors, Grammar Options to break words into syllables, as well as color code and label the parts of speech, and Reading Preferences to turn on or off the picture dictionary option, and to select the language for translation.

PocketBook Reader

Although PocketBook reader does not provide an extension for Chrome's web browser it is a good solution for both web and mobile based text-to-speech users.

PocketBook is a free E-file reader which provides text-to-speech audio playback on mobile devices along with the ability to synchronize E-files, notes, highlights, and bookmarks across multiple devices. You can also use PocketBook Cloud to access, upload, and read PDF and E-Pub files from any browser. For more information refer to PockBook Reader Getting Started Guide.

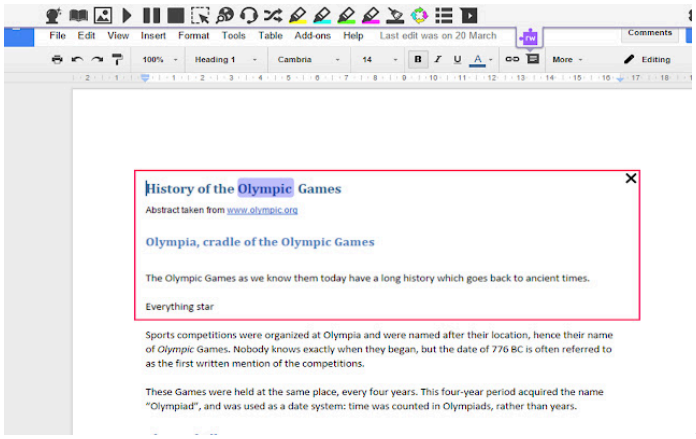
Read&Write for Google Chrome



The "Swiss Army Knife" of extensions with tools including word prediction, dictionary, picture dictionary, text to speech, screenshot reader, speech maker, screen mask, translator, highlighters, voice note, and more. Works on webpages, PDFs, Google Docs, and Google Slides.

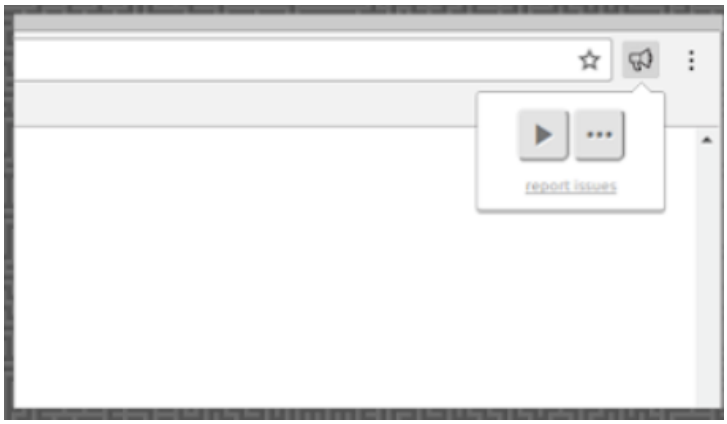
Note: There is a paid version with all the tools and a free version with a subset of the tools. Educators can get the paid version for a year at no cost by filling out the form at: https://www.texthelp.com/products/free-for-teachers/

Screenshot Reader



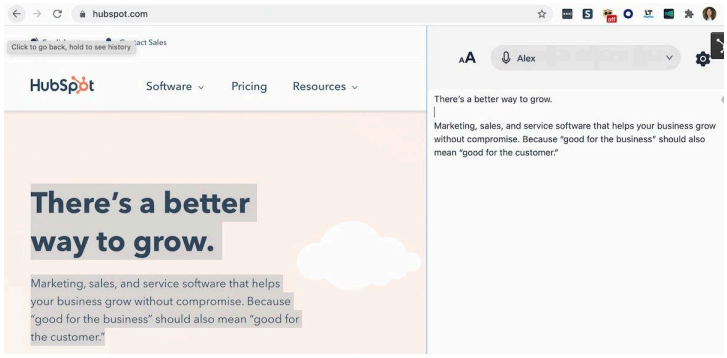
A free Chrome extension that supports OCR and text-to-speech for use with inaccessible web-based content such as textbooks hosted on-line. For step by step instructions refer to TextHelp_Screenshot Reader.pdf

Read Aloud



This text-to-speech extension will read either the entire page or just the text that you have selected. In addition to the normal options to adjust the speed, pitch, and volume of the voice, the best feature is the wide collection of high-quality voices to choose from.

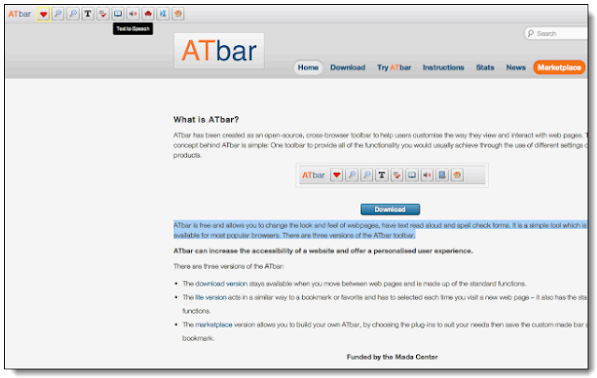
Readme



Readme is a text-to-speech reader that works right within your Chrome browser to increase accessibility as you write or read articles. It can also help you listen to your drafts out loud for proofreading purposes. Listening to your writing can be an excellent way to catch errors.

Readability

ATbar

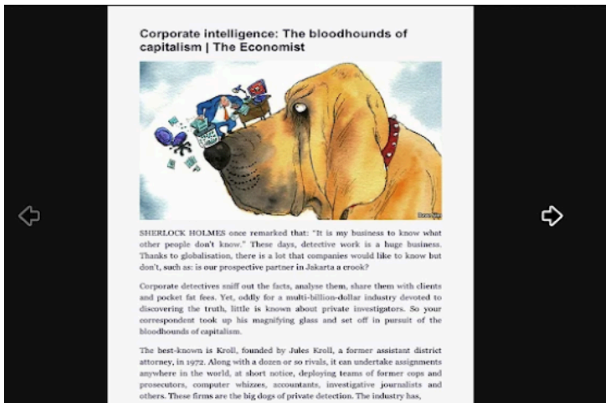


This toolbar can generate color overlays for web pages, but also has features for a dictionary, text to speech, word prediction, and more.

Color Enhancer

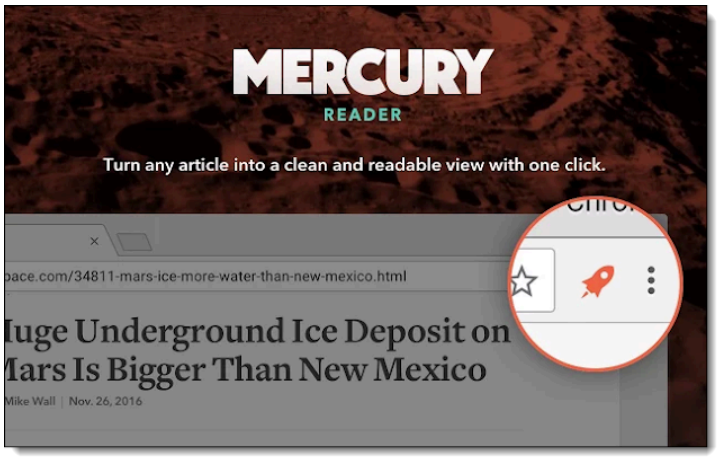
For people who are partially color-blind, this tool can help adjust and improve webpage colors.

MagicScroll Web Reader



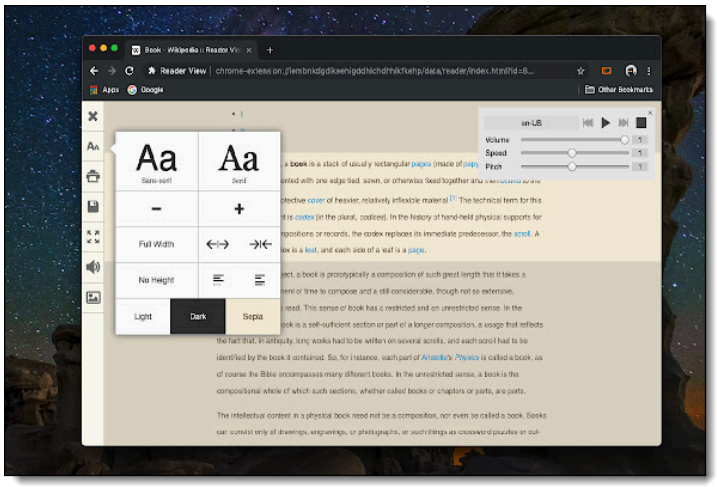
Turn web pages into a flippable e-book with easy clickable or keyboard control, as well as control over font size and page color as well.

Mercury Reader



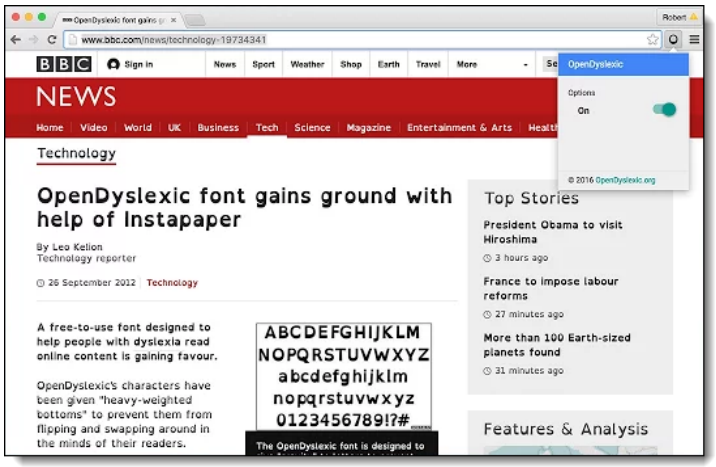
Make any website easier to read by removing ads, comments, and all other distractions, so just the core content remains. Users can also adjust the font size and color scheme of the new text.

Reader View



Strips away clutter like buttons, background images, and changes the page's text size, contrast and layout for better readability. Also includes text to speech, persistent sticky notes, and more.

OpenDyslexic



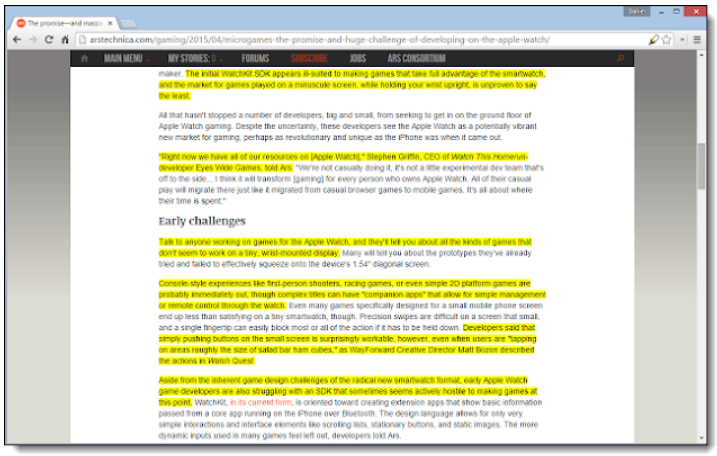
Override all fonts on a webpage with the OpenDyslexic font, making the text more easily readable.

ZoomText Only

Zoom text without distorting the images.

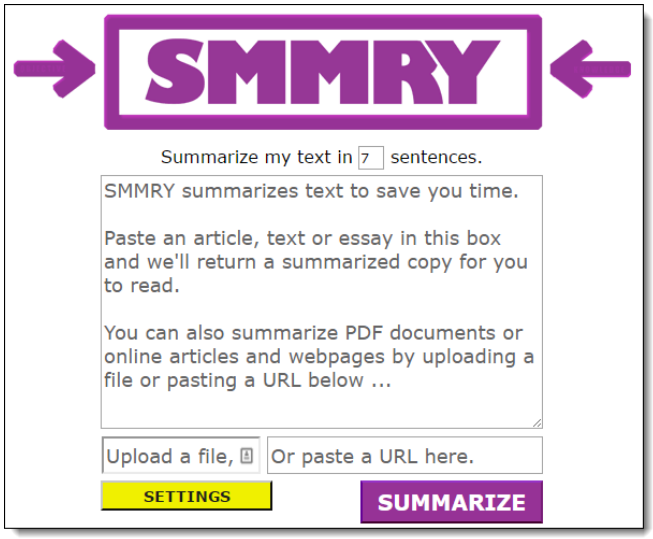
Reading Comprehension

Auto Highlight



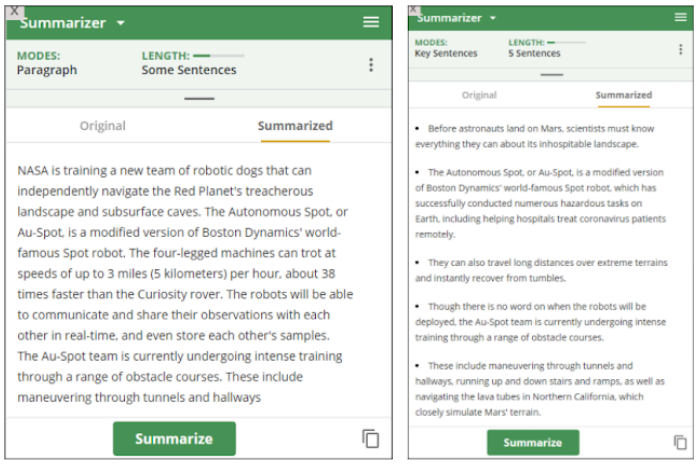
This extension takes a different approach to summarizing. Instead of removing the non-essential portions of the text, it highlights what is most important. This allows the reader to still look at the rest of the article if needed. Three levels of highlighting can be chosen.

SMMRY



While not technically an extension, this tool functions very much like one and is launched from your Chrome bookmarks bar. Summarize any online article with a simple click of the SMMRY bookmark link. This will generate a simplified version with fewer sentences (7 by default) and just the most important information. Settings can be adjusted for longer or shorter summaries, as well as emphasis on certain desired words.

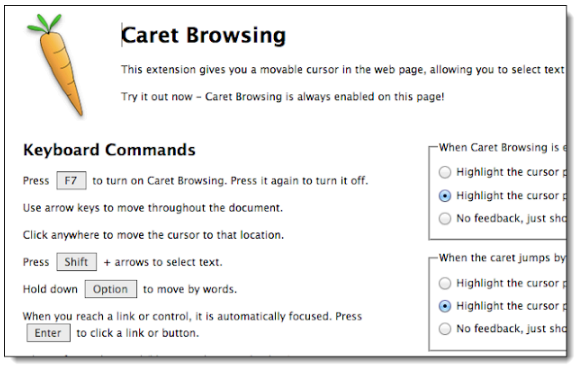
QuillBot



The QuillBot Chrome extension will summarize text as a new paragraph or by key sentences, in multiple levels of length. Sign in with your Google account for free to summarize texts up to 5,000 characters at a time.

Navigation

Caret Browsing

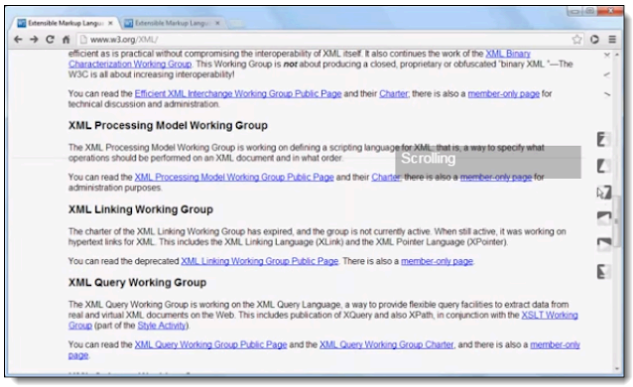


This extension gives you a movable cursor in any web page, allowing you to move through the text with your arrows keys and select text with the keyboard.

Custom Cursor for Chrome

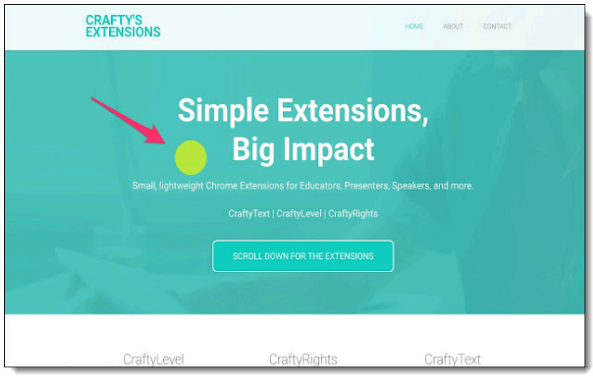
This extension can make it easier for students to locate their mouse cursor by allowing them to customize the size and look of the mouse cursor.

Click-free Browsing



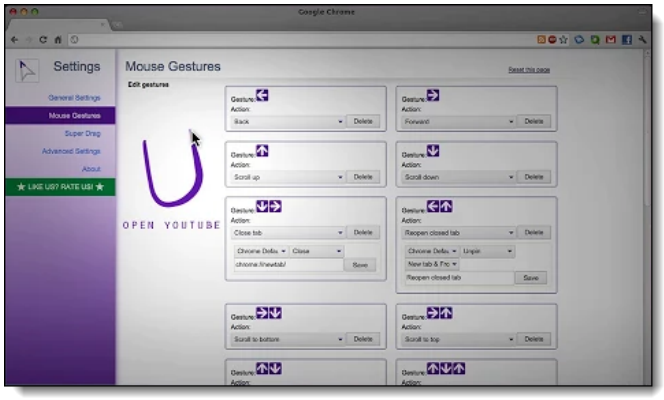
For users who have difficulty clicking a mouse, this extension adds on-screen navigation buttons the user can simply hover over to use.

CrafyCursor



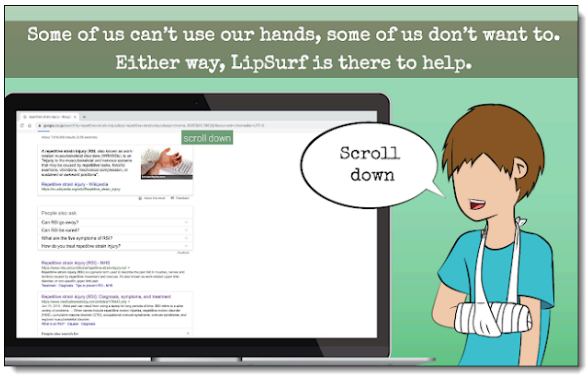
This extension makes it easier for the user to find and track the mouse cursor by putting a highlighted circle around it. The user can choose between several colors for the cursor spotlight.

CrxMouse



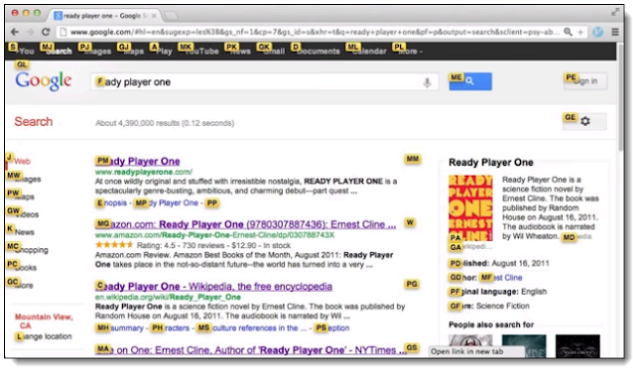
Use mouse gestures to navigate including forward, backward, scrolling, refreshing, switching tabs, and more. The user can even program their own custom mouse gestures to open programs and perform other tasks.

LipSurf



Control the browser with your voice with 75+ default commands.

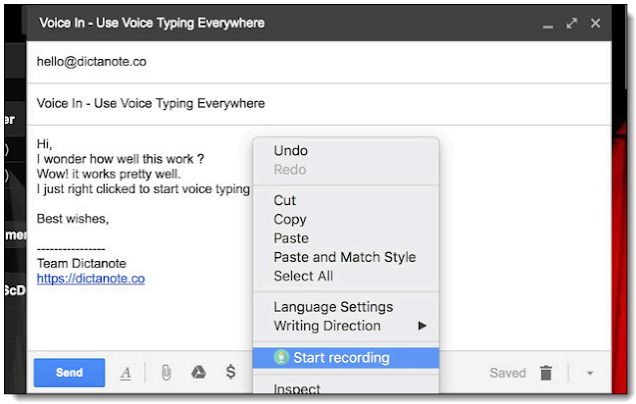
Vimium



Provides keyboard shortcuts for navigation and control for someone with difficulty using a mouse.

Voice Typing

VoiceIn Voice Typing

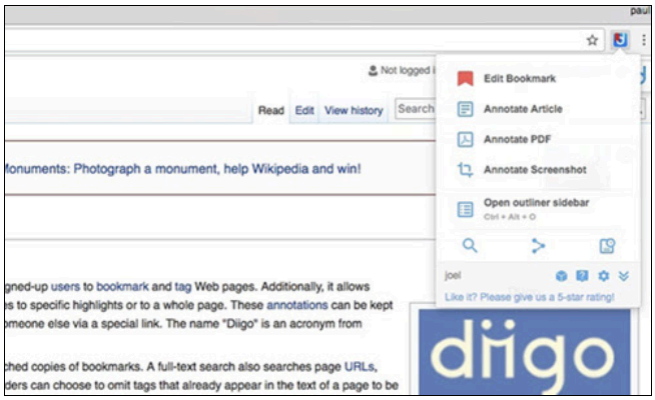


This speech-to-text extension allows the user to dictate text for any text box or text entry portion of a web page. You can either click the extension or right-click and choose "Start recording" to use it. Be sure to click the extension again to turn off the speech-to-text function when done.

General Technologies

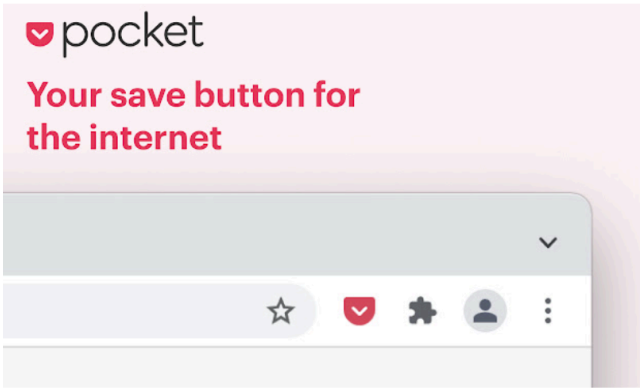
Bookmark Management

Diigo Web Collector



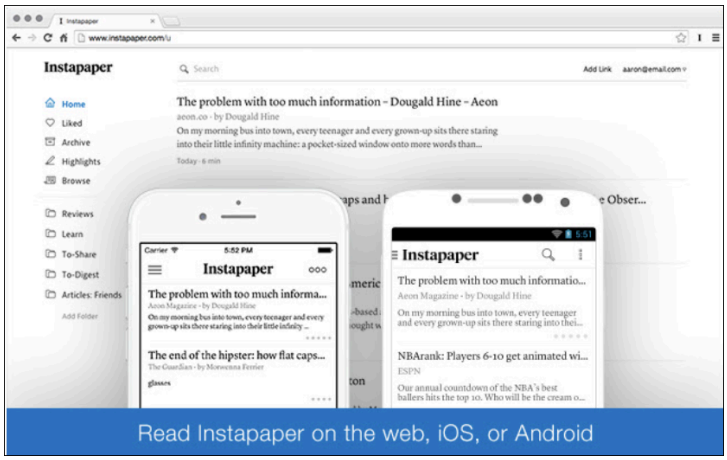
Capture and Annotate: Bookmark, Archive, Screenshot & Markup - All-In-One Web Collector, must-have research tool Diigo is the #1 extension for annotating, archiving and bookmarking web pages.

Save to Pocket



The easiest, fastest way to capture articles, videos, and more. Pocket's Chrome extension is the easiest, fastest way to capture articles, videos, and anything else you find on the web. With one click, the content you've collected appears across all your devices in a clean and distraction-free manner.

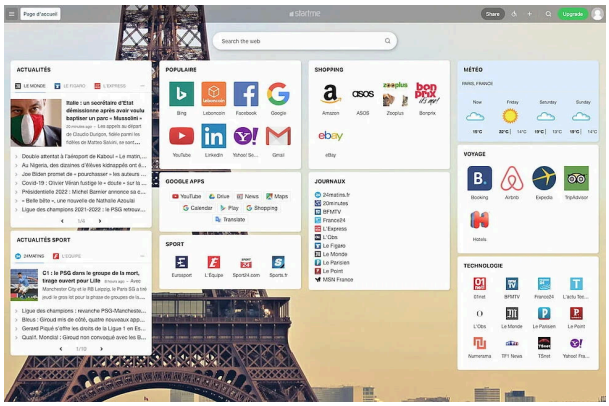
Instapaper



Instapaper is a simple tool for saving web pages to read later on your iPhone, iPad, Android, computer, or Kindle. This browser extension may be used in place of the bookmarklet to save articles directly into your Instapaper queue.

New Tab, Bookmarks, Notes

Start.me

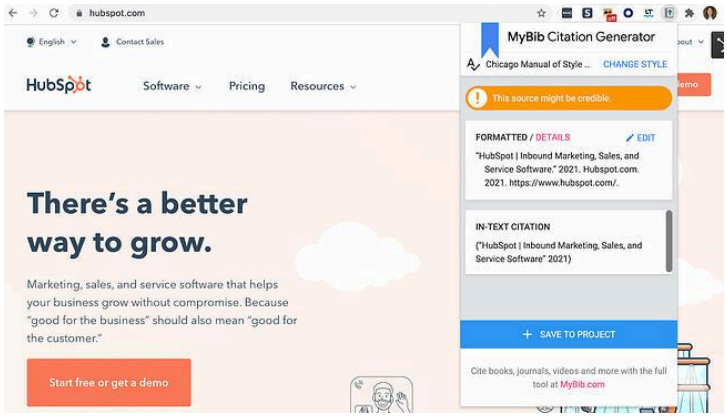


With Start.me, you turn each new tab you open in Chrome into a personal dashboard. You can populate this dashboard with web page bookmarks, productivity widgets, news feeds from specific websites, and various photos and videos.

Note Curation

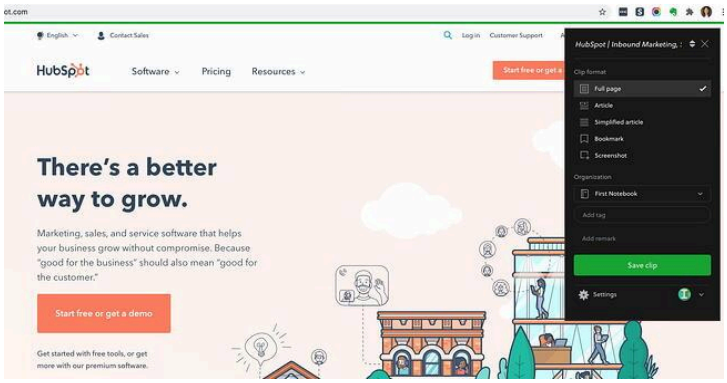
Sometimes you just need a good content curation tool to help you save important information while you're researching or writing a blog post.

MyBib



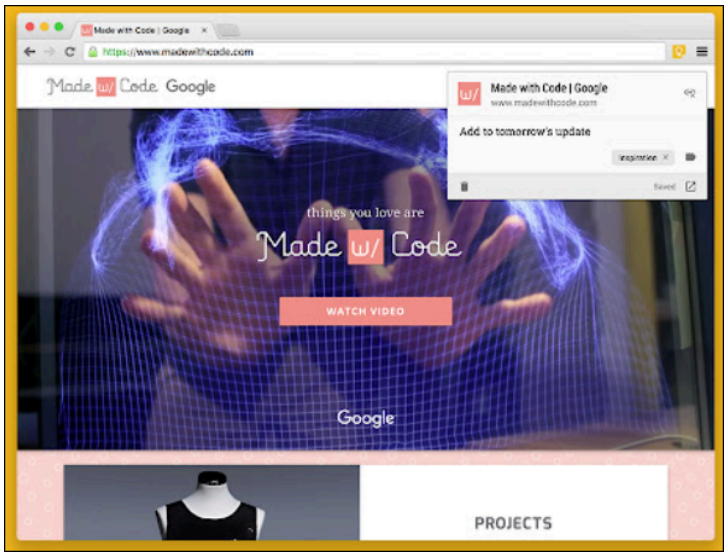
Do you list citations in your blog posts and articles? Use the MyBib Chrome extension to create citations right within the browser. Simply travel to the page, Tweet, article, or video you'd like to cite, select the format you'd like to cite it in, and then copy and paste. Alternatively, if you're collecting various sources, save it to a "Project." You'll then be able to download all of your works cited in any format you prefer. Bonus: It gives you an in-text citation, too. Absolutely brilliant.

Evernote Web Clipper



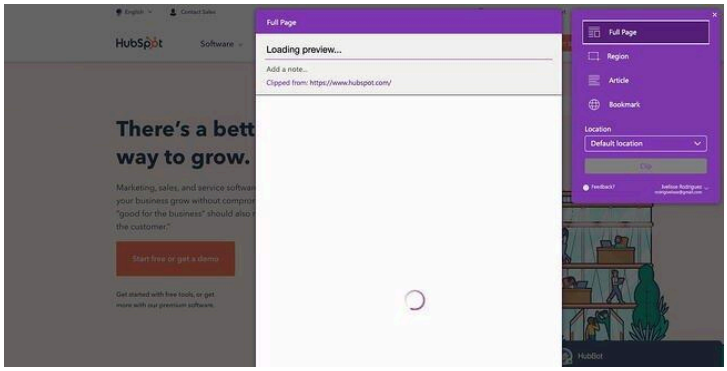
Evernote is a note-taking and organization app that can be shared across teams for content collaboration. With the Evernote Web Clipper extension, users can save links onto a clipboard within their Evernote app for later reading and reference.

Google Keep



Keep allows users to save and retrieve any information they come across including text, links, pictures, speech, handwriting, doodles, and more. The tool works as an extension, web site, Android app, and iOS app, and integrates into Google Docs, Slides, and Drawings.

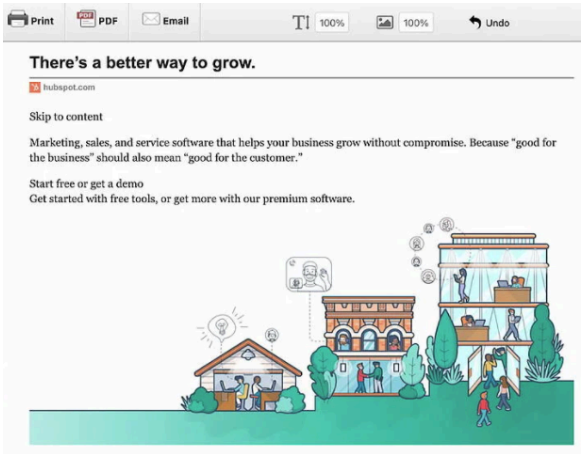
OneNote Web Clipper



Are you a OneNote user? Whether you're conducting research for a project or simply reading different articles online, you most likely come across resources that you want to save and return to for later use. That's where OneNote Web Clipper comes in. Instead of saving content to another application or document, you can save it directly to your existing OneNote notebooks for easy reference when you sit down to write a blog post or web page. The best part? Everything will be available on any device where you use OneNote.

Printing

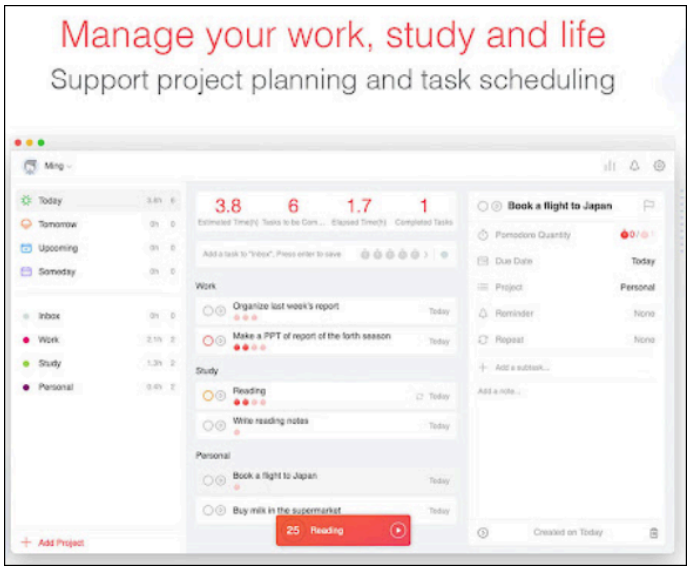
Print Friendly & PDF



If you ever need to save a page in a print-friendly format or as a PDF, you can easily do so with the Print Friendly & PDF Chrome extension. The extension removes ads and other cluttering elements from the web page to turn it into a pleasant reading experience.

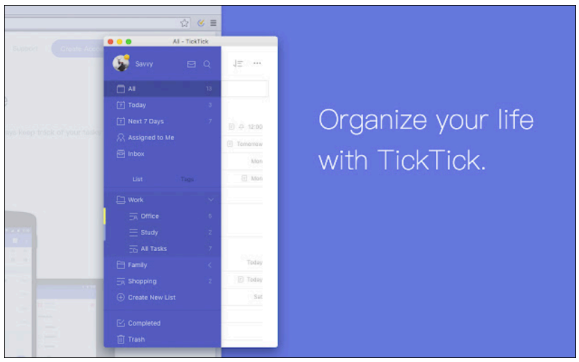
Time Management

Focus To Do with Pomodora Timer



Focus To-Do combines Pomodoro Timer with Task Management, it is a science-based app that will motivate you to stay focused and get things done. It brings Pomodoro Technique and To Do List into one place, you can capture and organize tasks into your todo lists, start focus timer and focus on work & study, set reminders for important tasks and errands, check the time spent at work.

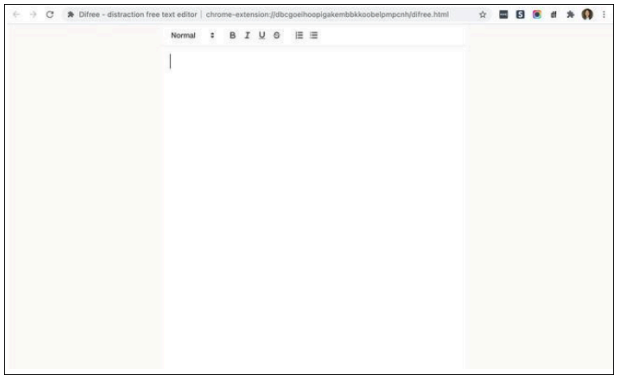
TickTick with Pomodora Timer



Your wonderful to-do & task list to make all things done and get life well organized. Your daily must-have to-do & task list to make all things done and get life well organized.

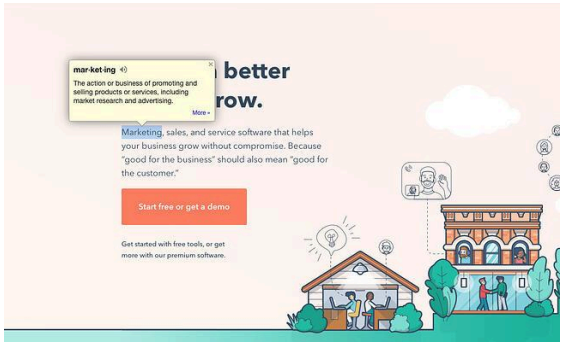
Writing

Difree



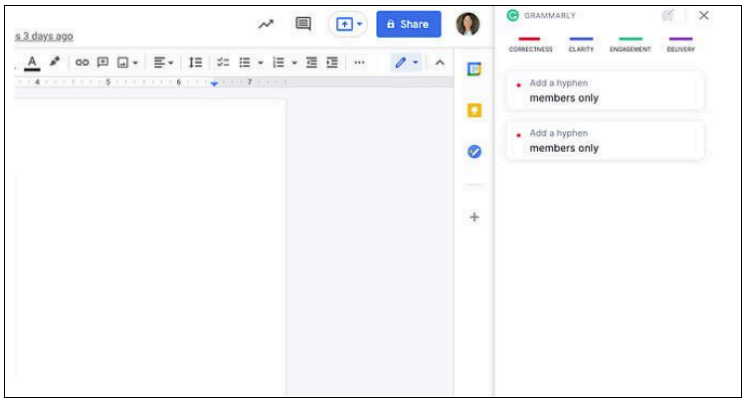
Sometimes it's hard to free yourself of distractions to write productively, especially if you're writing online. This new extension quickly opens a new tab for a clean and neutral text editor that auto-saves while you're working if you need a break from where you normally write.

Google Dictionary



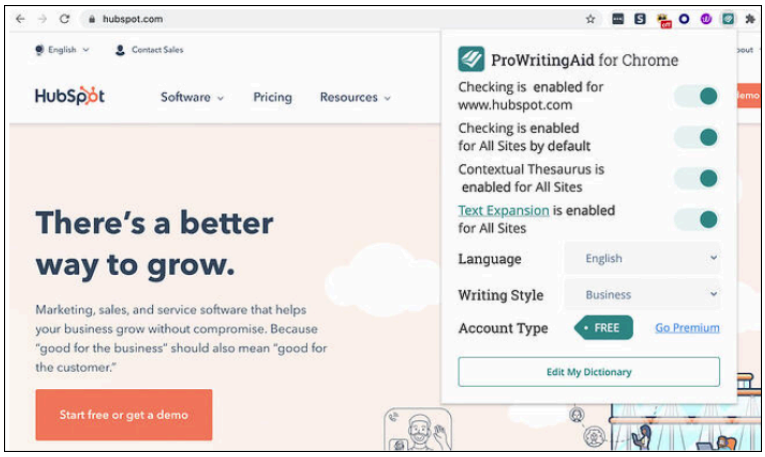
Have you ever come across a word you're not familiar with while doing research online? Instead of Googling it in a separate tab, quickly highlight the word and click on the Google Dictionary extension to get the definition.

Grammarly



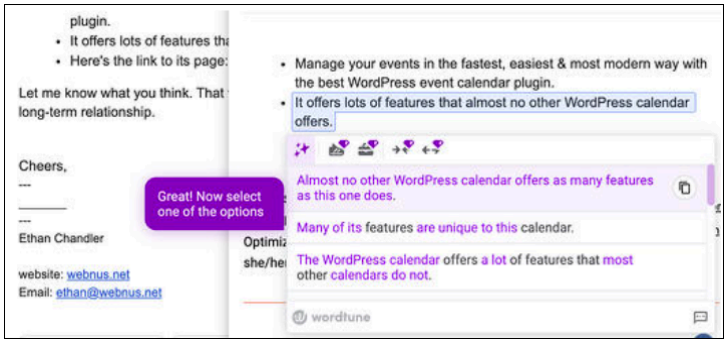
Grammarly is a go-to app for reviewing your writing for proper spelling, grammar, and word use. You can drop large pieces of text into the desktop application for review, or you can use the handy Chrome extension to call out any grammar errors you're making while typing on the web.

ProWritingAid



ProWritingAid is another smart Chrome extension for checking the grammar, spelling, and clarity of your blog posts, web pages, and articles. Like the other tools on this list, it works with Google Docs and any text editor in your browser. It will catch any errors you make as you write and suggest corrections.

Wordtune



Wordtune is an AI-powered Chrome extension that provides several alternatives to what's currently on the page. No matter what tool you're using — whether it's Google Docs, Outlook, or another text editor — you can highlight the sentence or phrase you'd like to rewrite, and Wordtune will provide several alternatives. After that, you only have to choose the one you like best. **Note**: The free account is limited to 20 users per day.