

August 2011



This SIG provides more opportunity for sharing of experiences than the more typically structured classroom, lecture or formal setting.

Welcome to Volume 2, Issue 8 of **iDevices** (iPhone, iPod & iPad) SIG Meetings

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Is this the new portable iPad keyboard?

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## NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

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There was a new iOS upgrade last week. I hope you saw it when you synced your iDevice to iTunes

Here is a link to the 106 Best iPhone Apps:

<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/best-iphone-apps>

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### Inside iCloud: Apple's new web services for iOS and Mac OS X Lion

By [Daniel Eran Dilger](#)

Published: 04:00 PM EST

**Apple's iCloud services, announced this summer at the company's Worldwide Developer Conference, are quickly maturing for their initial release. Here's what's new and what's changed.**

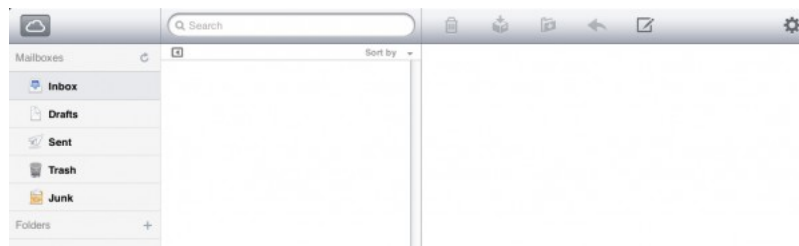
Speaking at WWDC, Apple's chief executive Steve Jobs presented iCloud as three groups of online services that would be provided to iOS and Mac OS X Lion users as a composite package under the new brand name, replacing most of the company's existing MobileMe services.

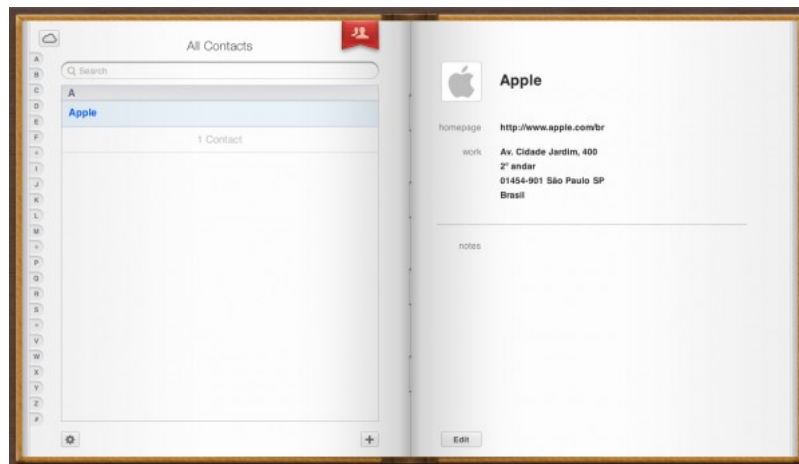
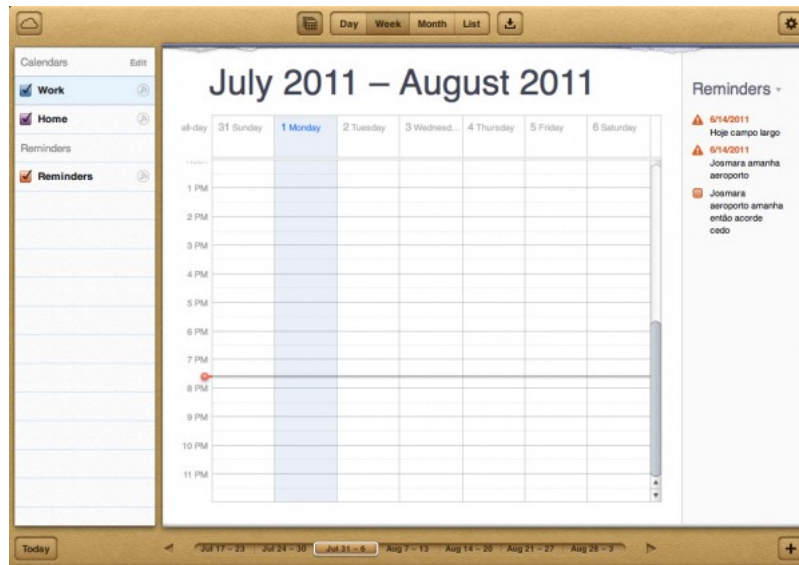
The package is referred to as various "cloud" services because they are hosted on remote servers and available to desktop or mobile clients anywhere on the Internet through its nebulous cloud of network routers.

iCloud combines an improved group of messaging-related services originating in the existing MobileMe (including Mail, Contacts, Calendar) with a greatly expanded document and media-related services (including Photo Stream and Documents & Data), as well as an entirely new iCloud backup and new "iTunes in the Cloud" service to keep content (from music and video to apps and iBooks) wirelessly up to date across a user's devices.

#### A host of improvements over MobileMe

The first segment of iCloud services are essentially the next generation of Apple's existing MobileMe web apps. The company has enhanced its MobileMe web app for Mail, Contacts and Calendars, unifying their look with the company's native iPad apps.





Besides the new look consistent with iPad (and Mac OS X Lion) apps, the other obviously discernible difference in iCloud's online Mail, Contacts and Calendar client is more speed. Working within the apps is simply much faster.

That may be due to the fact that nobody is using iCloud yet apart from Apple's developers testing the new system, but Apple has also greatly expanded its server-capacity with the [introduction](#) of its new data center in North Carolina in addition to newly leased space in Silicon Valley.

One of the core advantages to cloud computing in general is that the vendor can flexibly allocate new server hardware to handle demand from users. This wasn't done exceptionally well for MobileMe, which is fairly slow in the US and painfully lethargic in many other countries.

However, it appears Apple has learned a lot since, and the deployment of its massive new server in North Carolina (along with other leased data center locations) is a long way to backing up the intention of delivering a service that can sustain better performance. It's still not clear whether such a centralized service will work well for users outside the US, without some kind of help from CDN providers or local outposts of Apple-run server locations. With more and more of Apple's business occurring outside the US, this will be an increasingly important issue.

The performance of iCloud's web apps is a combination of server capacity (now greatly enhanced), server-side software sophistication (which keeps improving, as does below), network speed and latency (which Apple can't control for clients) and client-side browser sophistication (which similarly keeps improving, allowing HTML5-sites to increasingly improve in responsiveness, in part by leveraging hardware acceleration and improved JavaScript execution).

#### What's new in iCloud's web apps

All of these factors are advancing in concert, making it no surprise that iCloud's web apps are a marked improvement over the previous generation of MobileMe. C

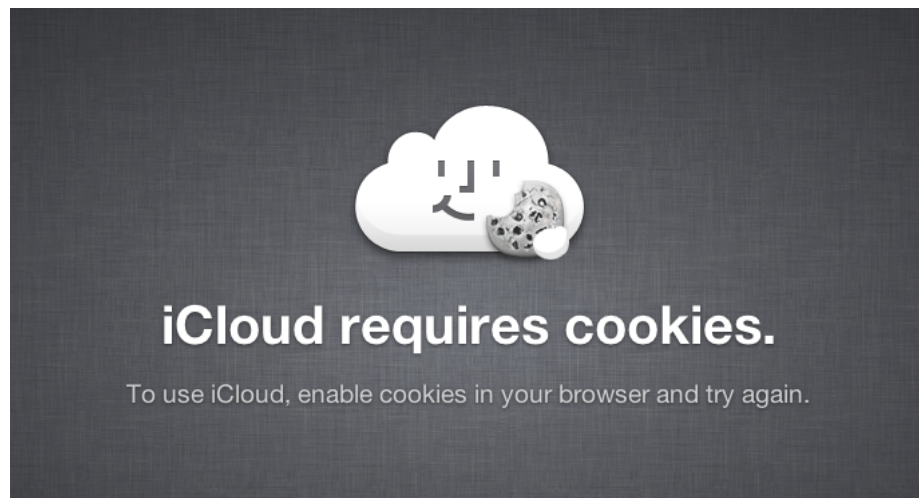
big leap for iCloud's web apps is that they're now officially HTML5.

While MobileMe apps were primarily served up as "XHTML 1.0 Strict," with some HTML5-associated features, iCloud apps are now straight-up HTML5, with its simple DOCTYPE of "html". While everyone is making efforts to support HTML5 in their browsers, that doesn't necessarily mean that iCloud will "just work" everywhere, just navigate to the site on your mobile device (including an iPhone or iPad), for example, and you still get a message to "visit icloud.com on a Mac or PC for the Web".

iCloud's web apps make use of Local Storage, which can, for example, keep a copy of calendar data stored on the client side, allowing the Calendar app to open and operate faster, as long as you're working on a machine where it makes sense to save a local copy (you might not want to copy your data to a shared, public terminal, for example).



iCloud also uses cookies of course, something that the site cutely reminds you of if you attempt to access it with cookies turned off in your browser

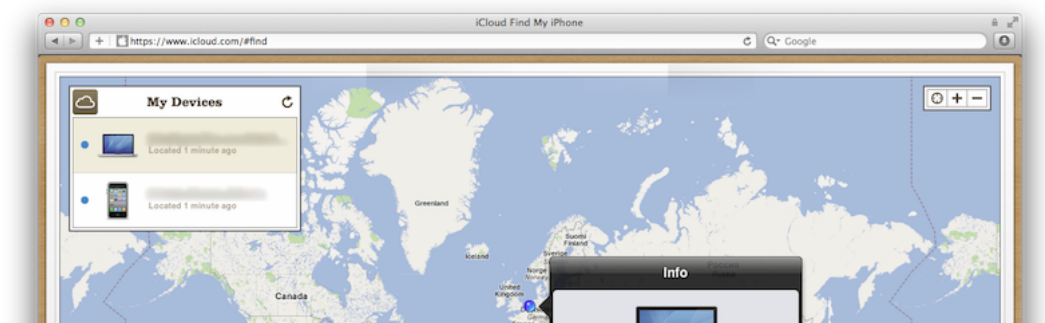


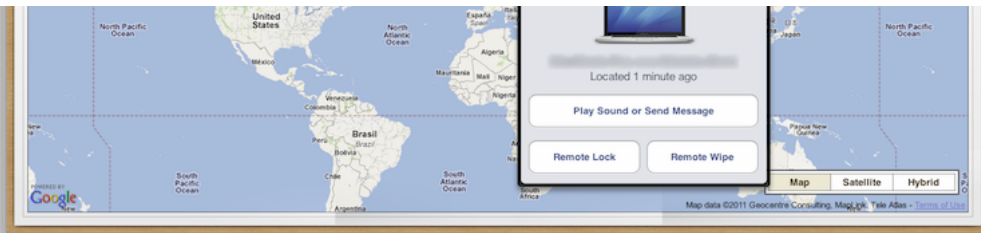
### Expanded web apps

In addition to better, faster versions of its existing web apps, Apple is also expanding what services are available within its web apps. Apple seemingly took forever to get Notes sync to MobileMe in Mac OS X and iOS, and is just now preparing to add Reminders (aka To Dos) sync across the board, with a dedicated Reminders app in iOS and prominent positioning of Notes within Lion Mail and Reminders in the Lion Calendar app.

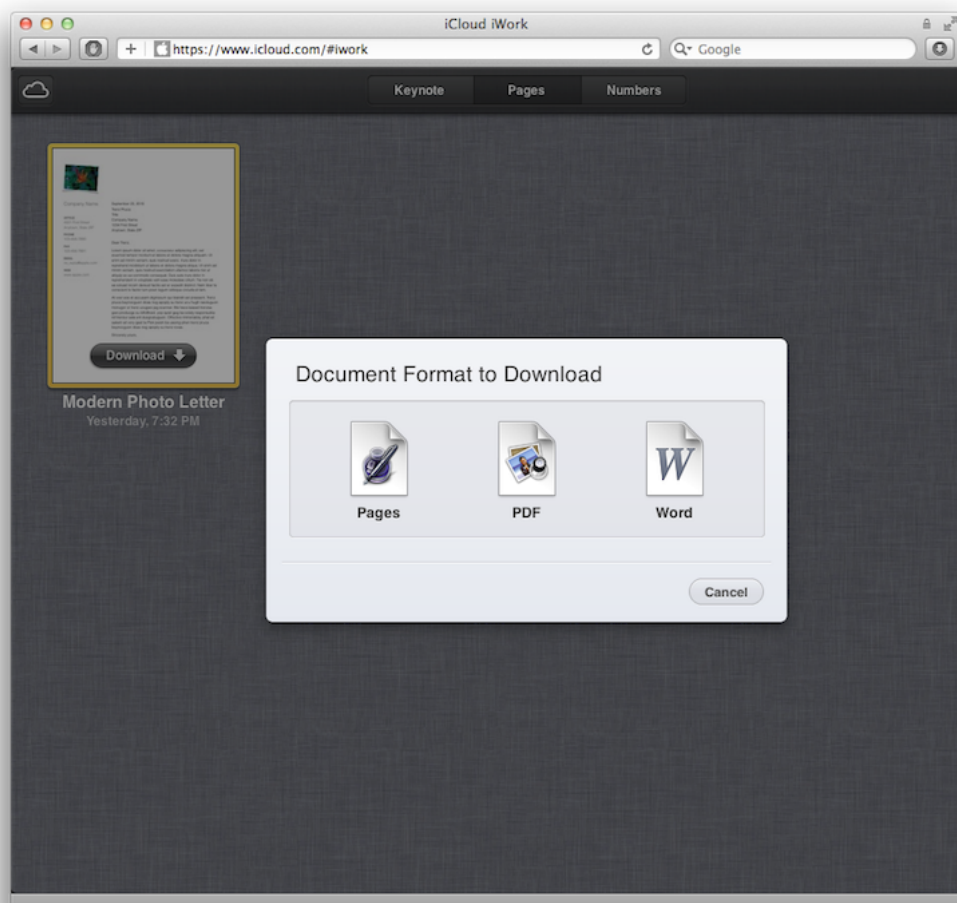
iCloud continues to sync Safari bookmarks, although there is no longer a web interface for accessing them; presumably, if you use bookmark sync, you'll access them through the browser you use, rather than on a web page itself.

Apple also [rewrote](#) its Find My Phone web app for iCloud, which now incorporates support for finding Mac OS X Lion Macs connected to the same iCloud account. In addition to locating devices, the service can remotely lock or wipe a configured Mac.





There is also a new iWork component in the iCloud web apps, which allows users to see and download (in iWork, Office or PDF formats) any of the documents the stored in the cloud using native iWork apps on either the Mac or iOS. This functionality, related to iCloud's new Documents & Data feature, will be examined more in the following segment.



#### Banished components of MobileMe

There are also two missing components that are currently included in MobileMe: iDisk and Gallery. Rather than providing simple cloud storage for photos and documents like MobileMe, iCloud offers a far more sophisticated type of cloud storage, complete with version management and push updating across the devices you use.

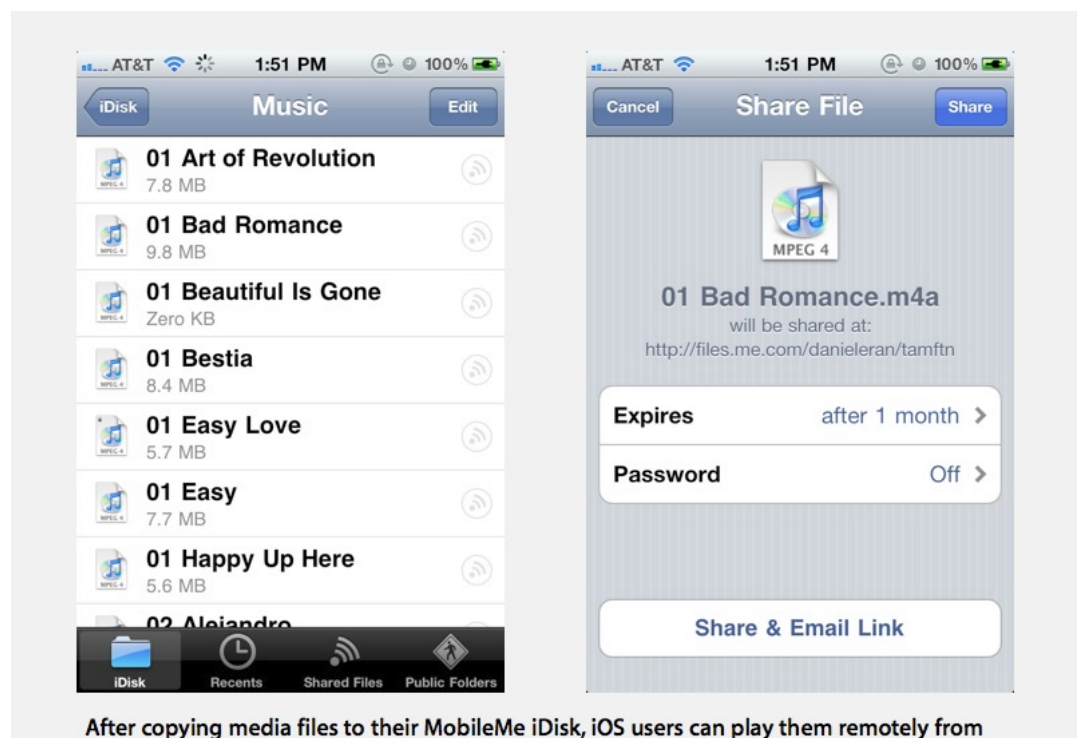
Rather than being a "virtual disk in the cloud" like Dropbox or the former iDisk, there's now no need for users to manually copy documents to iCloud, manage documents between devices, or think about how to retrieve those documents from their computers or mobile devices. iCloud taps into both iOS 5 and Mac OS X Lion system level, turning iCloud into a core operating system feature that just happens to be hosted by Apple rather than running locally on the machine.

Also missing from MobileMe is the entire concept of web hosting. Apple initially sold its .Mac service as an assortment of email and web hosting features, but realized the value in having Apple host their content; for users with serious needs for web hosting, Apple's offerings were too little, while casual users rarely had enough for web hosting to make figuring out how to use .Mac worth their while.

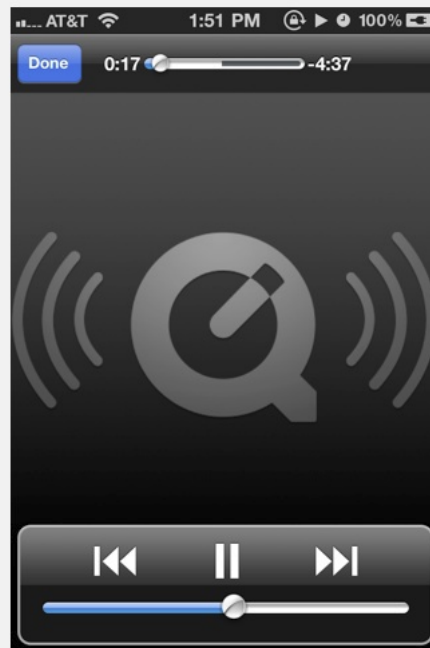
With the transition to MobileMe, Apple downplayed its web hosting services and focused on push messaging, aiming directly at mobile users. This proved to be popular and valuable to Apple's customers. The move to iCloud just moves further in that direction, erasing web hosting entirely along with the little used iWeb app on OS X, and instead delivering personal document management tools that will be more valuable to most Mac and iOS users.

The result is that iCloud's services are now free rather than \$99 per year, with users only needing to pay if they use more than 5GB of storage. The downside is that MobileMe users will need to find alternative web hosting services. Fortunately, there are plenty of free or inexpensive web and cloud storage services available to fill the gap Apple is leaving behind.

Apple's MobileMe iDisk features were so little used that various features, such as its ability to stream background music playback, were [not discovered](#) by the mainstream media until nearly a month after they were released, and services offering similar features, such as Google Music, are still commonly believed to be unmatched by many tech pundits.



the cloud, or share them with other users via iDisk's Public Folders or as a password protected share that can be announced to other users via an email web link.



When opened from iDisk, media files play within the iOS QuickTime player, but without album art or any metadata. iDisk also supports Background Audio under iOS 4.

#### Beyond web apps

It's important to keep in mind that iCloud itself goes beyond just being a suite of web apps; just like MobileMe before it, iCloud is integrated right into the operating system as a core service on both iOS 5 and Mac OS X Lion.

Developers have expanded opportunities for integrating the new service into their own apps, and Apple has taken the lead in weaving its iCloud services deep into iTunes, iWork, messaging apps, and even core OS features such as Mac OS X's "Back to My Mac," which provides a secure way to discover and reach network services on your home machine remotely across the Internet.

The next segment looking at iCloud will examine how Apple is serving up its new generation of cloud storage and document sync features that extend beyond traditional apps, basic push messaging and content sync features of today's MobileMe.

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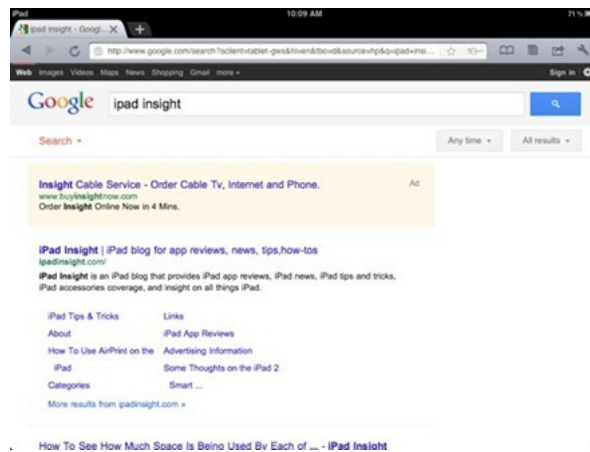
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# What about the iPad???

## New Google Search Pages on iPad Look Great

by [patrickj](#) on August 4, 2011

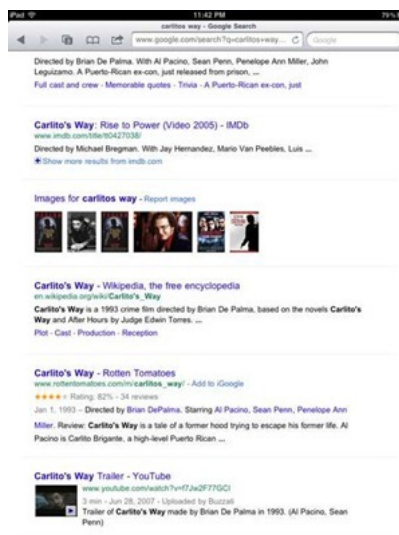
in [iPad News](#)



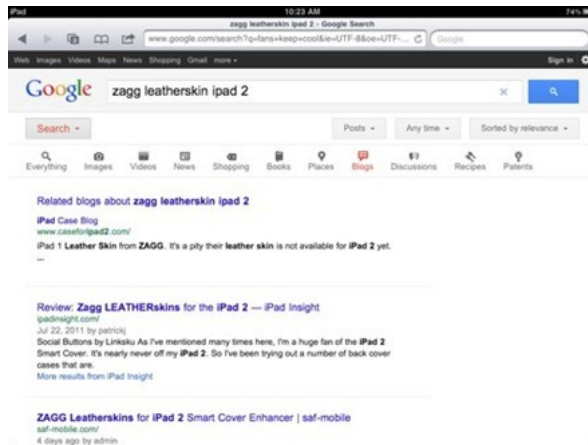
I'd been hearing for several days that Google was rolling out new and improved search pages for the iPad and tablet devices. Last night the changes hit my iPad, been messing around with them a fair bit since then. I think the changes are great, and the search pages look miles better on the iPad.

The new search results pages have been simplified and the size of elements on the pages (text, buttons etc.) has been increased. The result is that the pages look much cleaner and easier to work with.

New search pages look equally good in portrait and landscape ...

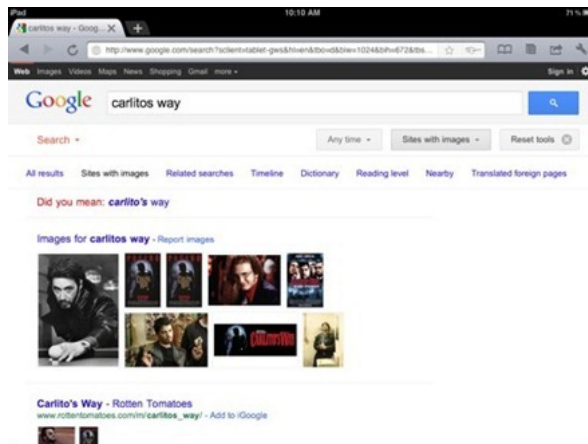


Google has also added an additional search button below the search box – where you can tap to narrow your results to certain types – images, videos, places, books, etc.



Once you choose one of the specific search types and see new results you'll also see a new set of buttons below the search bar, offering clever filters for the results you're looking at. For example, with blogs you'll see a Posts button which will let you see results for home pages or posts. For images results there are buttons for safe search levels, size, color, and type.

With general results there are also two new buttons to help you filter and find exactly what you're after. The 'Any time' button gives you links for Past hour, Past 24 hours, Past week, Past month, Archives, and Custom range. The second button lets you toggle between sorting by relevance (the default) or by date.



So far I haven't seen anything I don't like about the new search pages. They are wonderfully clean feeling, and easy to get around quickly. The new buttons and filters make it much easier to get more precise results.

It's always great to see design that is strong on both appearance and functionality – and these new search pages do just that.

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**Here is another book that you can use that shows how to use the iPad:**

<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/download-five-star-guide-for-your-ipad>

It is a .pdf file that you can then load onto your iPad for viewing.

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**Here is an iPhone user guide that you can download and install on your iPhone:**

<http://manuals.makeuseof.com.s3.amazonaws.com/the-iphone-guide.pdf>

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Time for questions, observations and special apps from the audience

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The next meeting is on Wednesday, September 14, 2011

