

ChromeBook – Tips and Tricks

compiled by Eddie Jackson



CUSTOMIZE IT

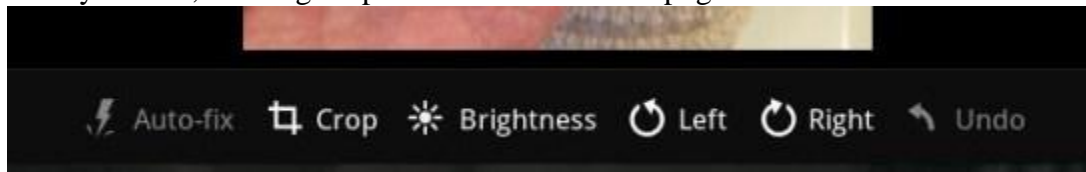
- First enable the sync option so you will get your passwords, bookmarks (and in the future) themes everywhere. You can do it from `chrome://settings/personal` and click on Sync.
- Enable Tap to click - Go to: `chrome://settings/system`. Then click on the checkbox to set 'tap as click' – done.
- Extension that give you [shortcuts to all the 'flags' and settings](#) - I've wrote it because I wanted to have all the shortcuts in one place... it's very productive to have them in one click.
- SSH client - Ctrl+Alt+t
- Open an ssh connection to the given host Y as user X.
- The parameter is optional and defaults to 22.
- Log out - Ctrl+Shift+q
- Lock screen - Ctrl+Alt+I (=L)
- Shortcut keys
- Press F8, then press Ctrl, Shift, Alt (once a key), press F8 again to exit

BETTER BROWSING

- Create a tab - Ctrl+T or click the '+' on top of the window.
- Create a new window - Ctrl+n
- Close a tab – Ctrl-W
- Create a new incognito window - Ctrl+Shift+n
- Refresh current tab - Ctrl+r
- The (one and only) File Manager – Ctrl+m (On chromebook you got almost 16G of SSD).

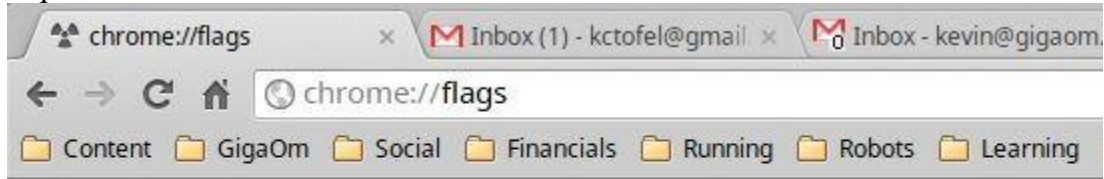
- Switch between different windows - Alt+Tab or press F12 and then use arrow key
 - Change Channel To Beta or Dev Version - Only if you are geeky enough to live on the bleeding edge, visit <chrome://settings/about> and click on “more info” to change channel.
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1. **[AdBlock](#) and [FlashBlock](#)**. There are two great extensions that help with performance. Instead of letting sites run wild with their ads or loading Flash videos, these help keep them at bay. In FlashBlock’s case, you receive a placeholder that you can click on to load the video if and when you want. Each have customization options to tailor them to your needs.
 2. **Use Your webcam with YouTube (and possibly other sites)**. You may run into an issue where a site that can use your webcam will tell you that it cannot be detected. This is because of the version of Flash Chrome OS uses. It comes with 2: the regular Flash plugin (which is disabled by default) and something called Pepper (which is Google’s customized version that is sandboxed for increased security; this is enabled by default). The problem lies with Pepper, but can be fixed. In the Omnibox (where you type in your web address), type **about:plugins**. You will go to a page that lists the various plugins running in Chrome OS. Next to the entry labeled **Shockwave Flash**, click on the “+” sign to expand this section and see two files listed. Underneath the one that has a location of “/opt/google/chrome/pepper/libpepflashplayer.so”, click the **Disable** link. Go back to YouTube and you will now be able to use your webcam. **Note:** In the dev channel for Chrome OS version 16.0.898.0, this will (eventually) no longer be necessary. The latest Pepper plugin build now detects the webcam video, but hangs on detecting the microphone. I would imagine this will be fixed by the stable release. Also note, if you use the [Google Talk plugin](#) for Chrome OS, it depends on the Pepper Flash plugin, so disabling it will also disable the Google Talk plugin.
 3. **Enable CAPS LOCK**. I personally love the replacement of the Caps Lock key with the Search key. While you can change it back to Caps Lock functionality under **Settings > System > Modifier Keys**, you can simply turn it on by the Left and Right Shift keys simultaneously. Repeat this step to disable Caps Lock.
 4. **Switch Update Channels**. Feeling a little daring and want to be on the bleeding edge of Chrome OS updates? Click on the wrench icon and go to **About Chrome OS**. On this tab, at the top it will give you the version, platform, and firmware version. Click on the **More Info** link, and you will see a **Channel** drop-down box, where you can choose between Stable, Beta, and Dev.
 5. **Twitter fan? Try [Silver Bird](#)**. Simply the best Twitter client for Chrome that I have used. The UI is intuitive, provides many options, and includes pop-up notifications when you receive new tweets. I have used this extension for a while and haven’t found anything to beat it.

6. **Caveat for Offline Gmail.** There is a web app from Google for using Gmail offline in Chrome OS. It looks nice, but I found that, when enabled, it was spiking my CPU while I was trying to do other things, like work in Google Docs. If you notice sluggishness in your Chromebook, bring up the Task Manager (either by pressing SHIFT+ESC or “right-clicking”- tapping the touch pad with two fingers- at the top of the screen and selecting “Task Manager”) and see what is taking up your CPU cycles.
7. **Workaround for ZIP support.** As of yet (though it is supposedly coming), Chrome OS does not natively support ZIP files. If this is an issue for you, try the [Open ZIP and RAR With GDocs](#) extension. With this, you can bring up the context menu on a link for a ZIP file (again, click the touch pad with two fingers, the “right-click” equivalent in Chrome OS) and the extension adds an option to send the file to Google Docs, which has unzipping capabilities built-in. From there, you can download the files to your Chromebook. It’s a workaround, but a pretty inventive one.
8. **Built-in SSH Client.** Press CTRL+ALT+T to launch a native SSH client.
9. **Take and edit screen shots.** Thanks to the new built-in photo editor in Chrome OS, this is an easy task. Just press Ctrl and the window switch button for the screen cap. Then press Ctrl – M to open the file manager and see the saved screen shot in the file listing. Double-click the file to open it and click Edit for basics: crop, rotate, brightness. Note that by default, all image captures are saved in the .png format.



10. **Convert .png to .jpg.** Related to the first tip is the use of an online file-conversion tool. Here at GigaOM, we use the .jpg format for images and there’s no way to easily convert .png screen captures or images to .jpg. There are a number of online file conversion sites — I use [CoolUtils](#) — to make the conversion in a matter of seconds. In fact, when I find online tools such as this, I add them to a special Chrome OS folder in my bookmarks (bonus tip!).
11. **Unlock Chrome’s hidden features.** Type “chrome://flags” in the browser and you’ll see dozens of experimental functions, many of which can be used with Chrome OS. Some of the currently available options include: enable smooth scrolling, GPU-accelerated rendering of SVG and CSS filters, preload instant search, enable experimental pipelining of HTTP requests, enable gamepad support, and enable experimental HTML implementation of the task manager dialog, to name a few. Note that some features

require a Chrome OS restart.



Careful, these experiments may bite

- 12. Turn on touchscreen-like scrolling.** Coming from my MacBook Air, where I have the same scrolling direction enabled as on my iPhone, I was originally flustered with the multitouch Chromebook trackpad. When using two fingers to scroll a web page, it went in the opposite direction than I was used to. Then I found the solution. Click the little wrench icon in Chrome OS and choose Settings. Under Device, Pointer Settings, you'll see an option to "enable simple scrolling direction," which reverses the scrolling direction.
- 13. Watch iTunes movie trailers.** Of course, I don't just work with my Chromebook. I try to keep up on the latest upcoming movies using [Apple's iTunes Movie Trailers site](#), but I quickly ran into a problem when using the Chromebook for this: Apple requires QuickTime to stream the trailers, and you can't install QuickTime — or any native apps, really — on a Chromebook. I then realized Apple will allow you to download the trailers, so I tried with a 1080p trailer. Once downloaded, just hit up the file manager and double-click the trailer file, usually in .mov format, and the Chrome OS media player will show the trailer just fine.



- 14. Use the secret caps-lock button.** This is a simple but handy little tip. With the new Chromebooks, Google did away with the caps-lock keyboard button, opting to leave a full-sized search key instead. Tapping the search key opens up a new browser tab, but if you hit search while holding the shift key, you enable the caps-lock function. To remove caps lock, just tap the search button while holding the shift key again.
- 15. Minimize a browser tab.** With Chrome OS, Google has added more desktop-platform-style window management. You can drag browser tabs as if they were windows to the left

or right side of the display, for example. But sometimes I want a tab open and active but hidden: I stream music using Rdio over the web, for example, and I don't need to see that tab at all. I minimize it by first making it a stand-alone tab: Just drag the tab off the browser to do this. Then, place the cursor on the square icon next to the tab-close button at the top right of tab. Drag down from there, and the stand-alone web page is minimized into the Chrome OS dock. Extra tip: Use the dedicated window switch button on a Chromebook to quickly cycle through minimized browser tabs.

16. **Use an external monitor.** Since the Chromebook is a laptop, I didn't expect to use it as a desktop. However, I wanted to see how well the device worked with an external monitor. The Chromebook has a DisplayPort++ interface, so it should work with nearly any external monitor. I bought a cheap (\$6.57) cable from Amazon and [now use my 27-inch iMac as a monitor](#) when working in my home office. Chrome OS works great on a large screen and keeps me going with the distraction-free experience but with more screen real estate when needed.



17. **Enable offline Google Docs.** [Last month Google finally introduced offline support for Docs](#), which is now actually part of Drive. It won't just work automatically, though: You have to enable it in advance. If you don't and you're using a Chromebook without connectivity, you're not going to be able to use offline docs until you first get back online and set it up. To enable it, just open the settings in Google Drive while online and turn on support for offline use. Once you do that, Google will download local copies of your cloud-based files, which could take some time. After that, however, file synchronization is relatively quick, as only files that have changed are synced.
18. **Test new features early.** By default, a new Chromebook is set to receive background updates to Chrome OS as soon as Google releases them to what's called the stable channel. These are the updates that were tested in beta prior and are ready for public consumption. But you can change your Chromebook channel, so to speak, and get early

access to new or experimental features from the beta or dev channels as well. Note the dev channel is specifically dubbed “unstable,” so be prepared for system issues if you use

Version 19.0.1084.57
Platform 2046.137.0 (Official Build) stable-channel lumpy
Firmware Google_Lumpy.2.111.0

Channel



this channel.

To change channels, click the Chrome OS wrench icon and choose About Chrome OS, More Info. Here you can select among the stable, beta and dev channels. To keep an eye on what features Google is working on within each channel, pay attention to the [official Chrome Releases blog](#).