

Ten incredibly useful online sites you didn't know about until now

By Kim Komando, Komando.com, February 10, 2018

If you had to guess, how many different websites do you think exist in the world today? From simple blogs to complex businesses, the internet spans the gamut dispensing and gathering a myriad of information. At the time of writing, that number was 1,331,525,090.

Luckily, all kinds of websites offer free ways to perform simple yet essential tasks. These websites can tell you what's streaming, clean up your email, fix your grammar, edit your photos, and test your router, and most of them require only one or two steps. Here are some lesser-known sites you'll use time and time again.

1. A search site just for streaming movies and programs

You want to watch a movie. What's the easiest way to find out if that movie is available on Netflix, iTunes, Amazon, Hulu, YouTube, HBO Now, CW, Starz, Showtime, PlayStation, or another streaming service? Most importantly, if it's free on Netflix or HBO Now, then there is no need to pay to rent it on iTunes or Amazon.

Who knew that browsing online movies could be so arduous? Actually, finding which streaming service best suits your channel and programming needs is in itself very confusing.

The site JustWatch sifts through almost every streaming service out there to find a specific title or show you what's new on a particular service. In just a few clicks, JustWatch will tell you where to find it, whether it's available on a subscription service, and how much it costs to rent or buy. Since platforms like Netflix vary around the world, you can also search by country for available content. Link: justwatch.com

2. Simple way to send large files privately and securely

It's bound to happen. You have a large file that you need to email. Your email program chokes on the file's size and your service provider politely posts a message that says, "The file size exceeds the limit allowed." Thanks.

Send to the rescue. It lets you share files in a fast, safe and temporary way. Upload a file – up to a gigabyte, in almost any format – and Send will create a URL, which you send to the recipient. Once the file is downloaded somewhere else, it's deleted from the internet, and it automatically vanishes after 24 hours.

This, as well as Firefox's respected encryption software, ensures that your file won't fall into the hands of some hacker. You can also check and see whether the file was downloaded on the other end, so you don't have to wait for the recipient to send confirmation. Link: send.firefox.com

3. Make sure hackers are not lurking in your router

You're using internet security software. You have secured your wireless network. You've enabled your network's firewall. You've got complex passwords that contain an uppercase letter, a number, a sign, and the name of your 4th-grade teacher. All done, right?

One of the most overlooked vulnerabilities is your router. Hackers can break into this device as easily as any other, a process called "DNS hijacking," and most victims wouldn't think to check whether it's secure.

This site offers a free service that's specially designed to scan your router for break-ins. You may be surprised how easy and fast this diagnostic is; just click the "Check Your Router" icon, and you'll receive a near-instantaneous report.

Link: <https://campaigns.f-secure.com/router-checker/>

4. Write like your English teacher wants you to

Ernest Hemingway was great at a lot of things: hunting wild animals, out-drinking his friends and writing very concise sentences. Hemingway was famous for his stripped-down literary style, omitting any adjective and passive verb that wasn't necessary.

[Hemingway Editor](#) is designed to mimic his minimalist prose. Copy and paste a few paragraphs into the site's text box, and the editor will outline problematic parts such as long sentences, obscure words, and confusing passages.

For an all-encompassing grammar checker, [Grammarly](#) has taken homes and offices by storm. You can paste a document and have it checked at the Grammarly site. The app and browser extension works across programs and platforms, pointing out your split infinitives in emails, word processors, websites, or on social media. After all, using bad grammar on Facebook can create a tense situation. Link: <https://www.grammarly.com/>

5. For the tinkerers among us

Apps, browsers, devices, smart gadgets – they all come in different forms, and they don't all cooperate with each other. We often struggle to hook up one service to another, especially when they were created by rival developers. Sure, some

adept people can easily figure out in minutes how to tell their Amazon Echo to start their Roomba vacuum and lock up the house. But then, there's this gem for the rest of us.

IFTTT is short for "if this then that," and the site is designed to help different devices and services talk to each other. These so-called "recipes" can make your gadgets do things as in a chain of events. Want your smart lights to blink three times when you are tagged in a photo on Facebook? Or how about getting a notification on your phone when your favorite artist tweets about tickets to a concert?

IFTTT can automate web-based tasks, and you can set up "triggers" and "applets" to set certain behaviors in motion. If you're ready to take your tech to the next level, [click here to learn more about creating your own recipes](#).

6. Powerful photo editor that doesn't require a graphics degree

Adobe's Creative Cloud boasts some of the most sophisticated multimedia software on the planet. But not everybody wants to muddle through Photoshop, with its complex and suite and thousands of minute visual options. That's probably why Adobe acquired Aviary, the simple-to-use site that can turn ordinary images into photographic masterpieces.

Aviary has many familiar tools, such as the cool filters of Instagram and the corrective tools of Apple Photos. But Aviary has a particularly friendly interface and can be used both on your desktop and portable device. If you like to edit photos, you're going to love this site. Link: <https://www.aviary.com/>

7. A truly boring site that you'll tap into a lot

Many people struggle to convert a Word document into a PDF. Or they have a WAV file that they need to condense into an MP3. What about a PNG that you want in JPG form, an XLS to CSV, or EPUB to MOBI?

Don't sweat it. I've used this site for years. It is designed to handle all sorts of file format conversions, from one type to another type and back again. Simply upload your file, decide the output format, and click "Convert," and the website will do the rest. This is a real godsend if you work with lots of different media.

Link: <https://www.freefileconvert.com/>

8. Be the inbox envy of your friends

If you are failing at obtaining the zen-like "zero inbox" status, this site might help. It doesn't take long for a busy person to accumulate a few thousand emails. As I write this, I have 156 unread messages waiting for my attention.

When you apply [Clean Email](#) to your inbox, you receive a detailed (but readable) report, with sophisticated data about your correspondence. You learn about the senders, your response rate, and which emails can be safely eliminated. Clean Email is free for the first thousand emails, and then there's a monthly subscription fee. You can also use it across multiple accounts.

Or you can do what I have done to obtain zero inbox status. Simply delete all the inbox email and see who reaches out again because they will if it's that important.

9. Get your stuff organized

Whether it's your baseball card collection or bowling league teammates, you're keeping a list of things. When it comes to technology, lists can be put into a program called a database. The individual items are called records. Once you enter the records into a database, you can categorize, identify, total, and sort all kinds of ways.

Using a secret URL, [Sodadb](#) gives you a template to build an online database, and you can manage up to 10,000 individual records for free. There's no signup or subscription fee; you don't even have to sign into anything.

Sodadb (which stands for "Simple Online Database") arranges your data and keeps it safe from hackers, using SSL security. You could use this online database for business, collectibles, sports teams, gifts – anything you like.

10. Print online articles without all the ads

You would think, after all these decades, it would be easier to print pages off the internet. But printers and websites have never been on good terms, and you never know what kind of garbled papers will scroll out of your machine.

Print Friendly takes the headache out of this process: Just paste a URL into the field and hit "Preview." Print Friendly trims away a lot of the extraneous information and gives you the meat of the page, and you can review your document as a PDF before hitting "Print." The service works better for some websites than for others, but it's shockingly effective, especially for software that's free. Link: <https://www.printfriendly.com/>

Alternatively, you can use the browser extension CleanPrint. Technically, this is not a website but it works like a charm.

Chrome: <http://www.formatdynamics.com/bookmarklets/>