

What is Google Docs?

Google Docs¹ is a web-based suite of office applications; other similar products include Zoho² and Z Cubes³, these exemplify many of the features regarded as Web 2.0 and can be considered Rich Internet Applications (RIA). Google Doc allows users to create and edit word processed documents, spreadsheets and presentations online while collaborating with other users. Typically one student or academic would initiate a document acting as its owner and then invite others to collaborate. These can be exported and down loaded as Word, PowerPoint and Excel files.

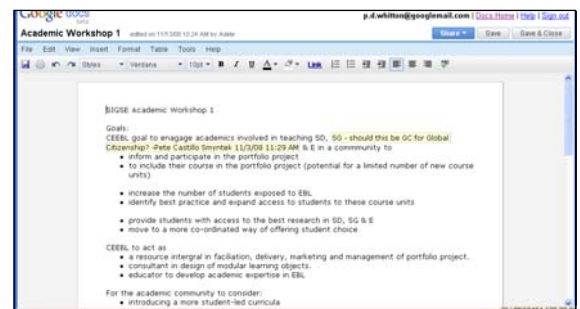
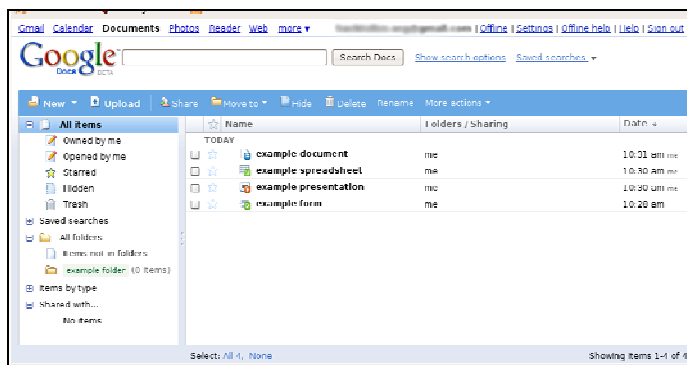
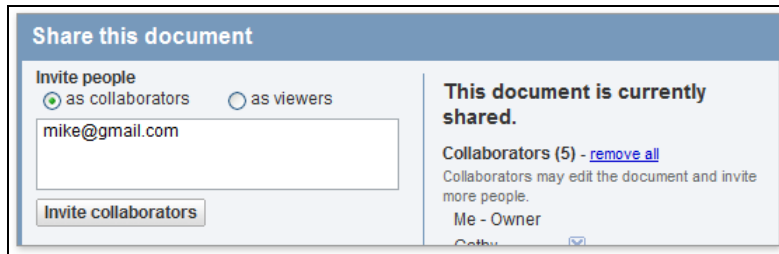


Figure 1: Typical user account in Google Docs, a document and an invitation to collaborate

Why use Google Docs?

Google Docs enables users to collaborate in real time with other students or lecturers create real documents that can be downloaded in editable Microsoft-friendly formats. Google Docs integrates well with other Google products Gmail, Google Sites, Google Reader, iGoogle and uses the same username and pass for all. Users can also publish directly from their Google Doc to their Blogger blog site.

How are Google Docs used in education?

Google Docs is useful for any assignment that requires collaborative writing and editing – co-authoring an article, team reports, brainstorming, creating survey questions, collecting real time data giving feedback on progress, tracking student participation. Google Docs can be used for efficiently creating and editing administrative documents such as agendas, handbooks and lesson plans

Where can I get Google Docs?

Google Docs is free but you will need to sign up for a Google account (<https://www.google.com/accounts/ManageAccount>).

¹ [http:// docs.google.com/](http://docs.google.com/)

² <http://www.zoho.com/>

³ <http://home.zcubes.com/>