Steven Holzner

Sams Teach Yourself Gmail in 10 Minutes

SAMS

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Introduction

Welcome to Gmail! This book is all about Google's fantastically popular online mail program, in use by tens of millions of people.

Gmail is the most popular online mail application in the world. You'll see the reasons for that in this book as you get the full Gmail story. You may be new to Gmail, or you may have used it for years—either way there's a lot coming up in this book for you.

Gmail originally started off as a simple mail program, but it has become more elaborate and powerful. Now you can choose your own level—from basic to super-advanced, Gmail has room for everyone. Whereas the early Gmail was very basic to use, today it can take a little more work to become a Gmail-meister, and the goal of this book is to make that process as effortless as possible.

Want to become a Gmail-meister? Stay tuned, you've come to the right book.

What's in This Book

You're going to get a complete tour of Gmail in this book. That means the Gmail story. You'll see what makes Gmail tick and how to make it easy.

Gmail gives you more than any other online mail program, and a lot more than nearly all desktop mail programs. All the features you'd expect are here—easy composing of mail messages, easy sending, formatting, and reading, and so on. But more than that, Gmail is packed with cool features too numerous to name here—although a starter list can't hurt:

- Vacation responder to let people know you're on vacation when they send you mail.
- The best spam filter in the world. Many people come to Gmail for that reason alone—to never see spam again.
- Automatic forwarding of your mail, which can be useful if you just want to run your mail through Gmail to kill spam.

- Spell-checking for your mail.
- An address book that automatically adds people (called *contacts* in Gmail).
- Autocompletion of email addresses as you type them.
- 7.5GB of space to archive your mail (never delete another mail message!).
- The most advanced mail search capabilities available (search by date range, who the mail messages were from or to, whether the messages have attachments, search only sent mail, and so on).
- Easy ways to organize your mail with a few clicks.

And it's still all free.

That's all not even counting Buzz, Gmail's built-in mini-messaging system (like Google's version of Twitter). Buzz comes with Gmail, meaning when you sign up for Gmail, you also get Buzz.

With Buzz, you post short messages for others to see and they can post messages for you to see. You "follow" people to indicate to Buzz that you want to read their posts, and other people follow you. The complete Buzz story is coming up in Lessons 7 and 8.

In addition to all this, there's Google Chat, which is also part of Gmail. Gmail lets you send mail to other people; Buzz lets you see what you post; and Chat speeds it all up by letting you type back and forth interactively with others.

You can chat with a single person or with multiple people at the same time. Everything they type, you can see; everything you type, they can see. You can even search a transcript of your chat sessions in Gmail. In fact, now audio and video chats are available as well.

All in all, there's a lot coming up on your guided tour!

Conventions Used in This Book

Whenever you need to click a particular button or link in Buzz or one of the other sites described in this book, you'll find the label or name for that item in bold type in the text, such as "click the **Create an Account** button." In addition to the text and figures in this book, you'll also encounter some special boxes labelled Tip, Note, or Caution.

> TIP: Tips offer helpful shortcuts or easier ways to do something.

> NOTE: Notes are extra bits of information related to the text that might help you expand your knowledge or understanding.

> CAUTION: Cautions are warnings or other important information you need to know about the consequences of using a feature or executing a task.

Screen Captures

The figures captured for this book are mainly from the Mozilla Firefox web browser. If you use a different browser, your screens might look slightly different.

Also, keep in mind that the Google developers are constantly working to improve their websites and the services offered on them. New features are added regularly to Gmail, and other web services and old ones change or disappear. This means Gmail changes often, so your own screens might differ from the ones shown in this book. Don't be too alarmed, however. The basics, though they are tweaked in appearance from time to time, stay mostly the same in principle and usage.

What You'll Need

You won't need much to work with Gmail—really just an Internet connection and a browser that Google approves of. Here's the list of fully accepted browsers:

- Google Chrome
- Firefox 2.0+
- Internet Explorer 6.0+ (Internet Explorer 7.0+ recommended)
- Safari 3.0+

These browsers will also work but won't support the latest features:

- IE 5.5+
- Netscape 7.1+
- Mozilla 1.4+
- Firefox 0.8+
- Safari 1.3+

If your browser is not listed above, you'll be directed to a page that uses only basic HTML for Gmail. Here are the browsers that will cause that page to display

- IE 4.0+
- Netscape 4.07+
- Opera 6.03+

Your browser needs to have JavaScript and cookies both turned on to use Gmail, and that's all you need.

Ready to get started? Turn to Lesson 1.

LESSON 5

Organizing People Using Contacts and Groups

In this lesson, you'll see how to create a contact, use contacts to email people quickly, and organize contacts into groups for en masse emailing.

All About Contacts

Gmail excels at organizing, and that includes the people you email. In particular, Gmail lets you create an address book of contacts for easy access when you want to email someone.

Contacts are stored in Contacts pages, which, as you'll see, can store a great deal of information about someone. Gmail makes it easy not only to email your contacts, but also to use your contacts with Google Buzz and Google Chat.

Working with Contacts

To see your Gmail contact pages, click the **Contacts** link at the left in any Gmail page, which opens the Contacts page, as shown in Figure 5.1.

To start, the Contacts page shows a generic page. When you add your own contacts, they'll appear here, in the My Contacts section.

When you email a person, that person is added by default to the All Contacts section of the Contacts page. You can see the people you've already emailed by clicking the **All Contacts** link at the left in the Contacts page, as shown in Figure 5.2.

To view a contact's specific page, click the person's name in the center column, which will display that person's contact page, as shown in Figure 5.3.

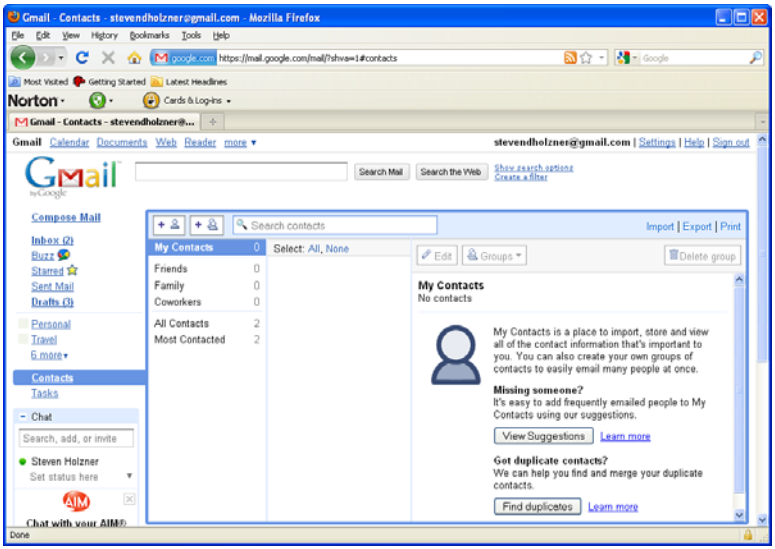

FIGURE 5.1 The My Contacts page.

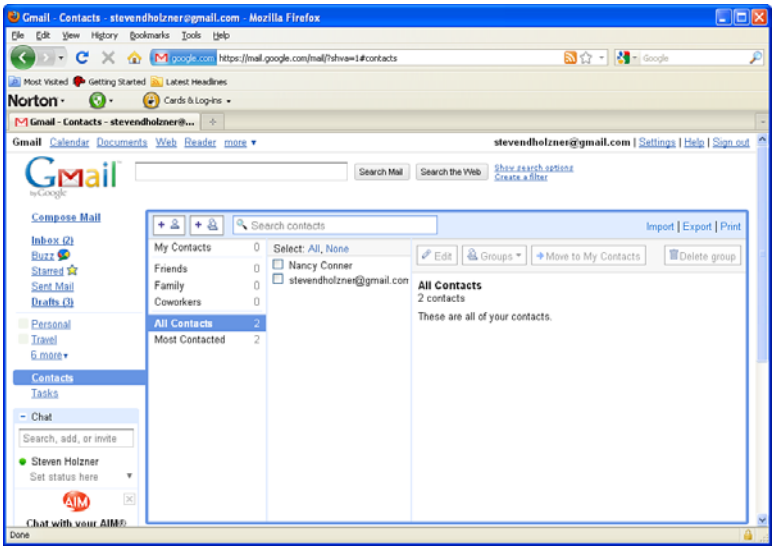

FIGURE 5.2 The All Contacts page.

Note that if the person's Google profile includes a photo, that photo will appear automatically in her Contact page. (If her profile doesn't include a photo, you can add one so that it will appear on her Contact page.)

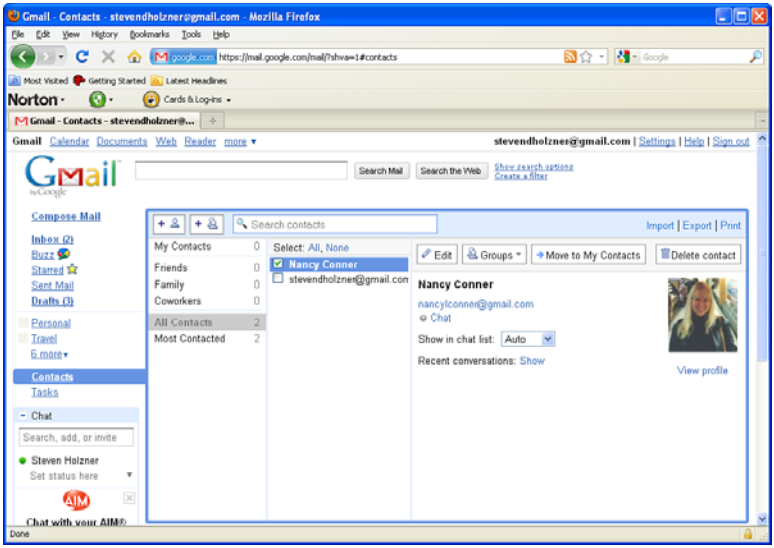

FIGURE 5.3 A sample contact's page.

Note that Gmail keeps track not only of All Contacts, but also the Most Contacted contacts—click the Most Contacted link to see who Gmail thinks you mail the most frequently.

As you can see, the Contacts pages are divided up into My Contacts, All Contacts, and Most Contacted. In addition, as shown in Figure 5.2, there are three default groups of contacts: Friends, Family, and Co-workers.

- My Contacts—These are the contacts you create yourself.
- Friends—A group of contacts for your friends.
- Family—A group of contacts for your family.
- Co-workers—A group of contacts for your co-workers.
- All Contacts—Everyone you've sent mail to.
- Most Contacted—The people you contact most often.

Note that Friends, Family, and Co-workers are groups of contacts, and that you can create your own groups, as we'll do in this chapter.

You can also create your own contacts, which will be added to My Contacts. See the next task for the steps.

Creating a Contact

You can create a new contact and add it to My Contacts easily—follow these steps:

1. From your Gmail Inbox, click the **Contacts** link. Gmail opens the Contacts page.
2. Click the **My Contacts** link. This causes Gmail to add the new contact to My Contacts.
3. Click the **New Contact** button. This button shows a generic image of a human figure and a plus (+) sign.

This opens the page you see in Figure 5.4.

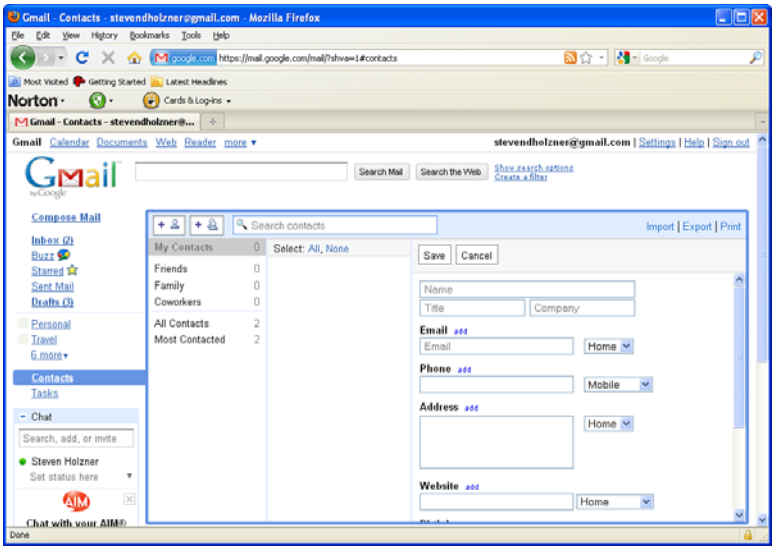

FIGURE 5.4 Creating a contact.

4. Enter the new contact's name, email, and other applicable information as desired.
5. Click the **Save** button.

And that adds a new contact to your My Contacts list.

Emailing a Contact from a Contact Page

It's easy to mail a contact—follow these steps:

1. Click the **Contacts** link. By default, My Contacts are displayed.
2. Click the name of the person you want to mail. The person's contact page appears in the right column of the Contacts page.
3. Click the contact's mail address. Gmail opens the Mail Composer.
4. Enter the subject of the email in the Subject box.
5. Enter the text of the email in the large text box.
6. Click the **Send** button.

That's all it takes to send mail to a contact.

Emailing a Contact Using Autocomplete

Gmail also makes it easy to email people you've added to My Contacts using autocomplete in the Mail Composer. The Mail Composer will suggest people from your contacts automatically when you fill in the To box. Here's how to get that to work:

1. Click the **Compose Mail** link. Gmail opens the Mail Composer.
2. Start to enter the email address of the person you want to email in the To box. If that person is in your contacts, Gmail suggests the full email address under the To box, as shown in Figure 5.5.

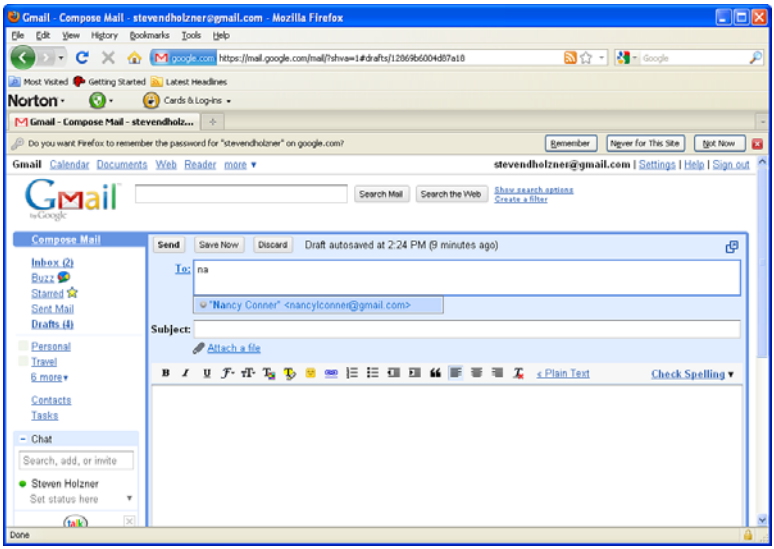

FIGURE 5.5 Autocompleting an email.

3. Click the correct person's email address as suggested by Gmail. Gmail fills in the To box for you.
4. Enter the subject of the email in the Subject box.
5. Enter the text of the email in the large text box.
6. Click the **Send** button.

Now you've sent mail to a contact the easy way.

Moving Contacts from All Contacts to My Contacts

When you email someone, Gmail adds that person to the All Contacts page, and that gives you perhaps the easiest way of creating a contact—letting Gmail create it for you.

However, the All Contacts page contains everyone you've mailed, so it can be tough finding the person you want. It's easier to move any contacts you

want to refer to often to the smaller My Contacts page from the all-encompassing All Contacts page. Here's how to move a contact to My Contacts:

1. Click the **Contacts** link. Gmail opens the Contacts page.
2. Click the **All Contacts** link. This opens the All Contacts page, as shown in Figure 5.6.

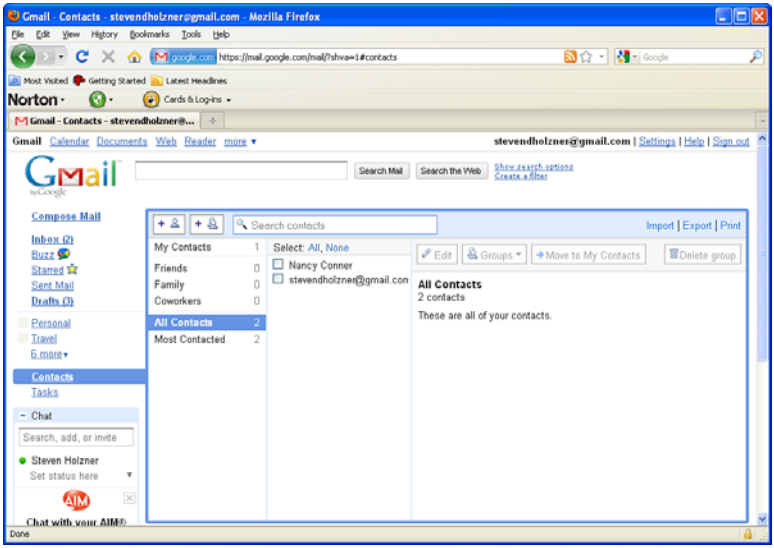

FIGURE 5.6 The All Contacts page.

3. Select the contacts you want to move.

That moves the contact to your My Contacts page, but note that if Gmail created the contact for you automatically, there's no real information about the contact in the page yet. To add that information, see the next task.

Editing a Contact

You can edit a contact's information easily—follow these steps:

1. Click the **Contacts** link. Gmail opens the Contacts page.
2. In the center of the Contacts page, click the contact whose information you want to edit. This opens the contact's page.

3. Click the **Edit** button directly above the contact's page. This opens the contact's page for editing, as you see in Figure 5.7.

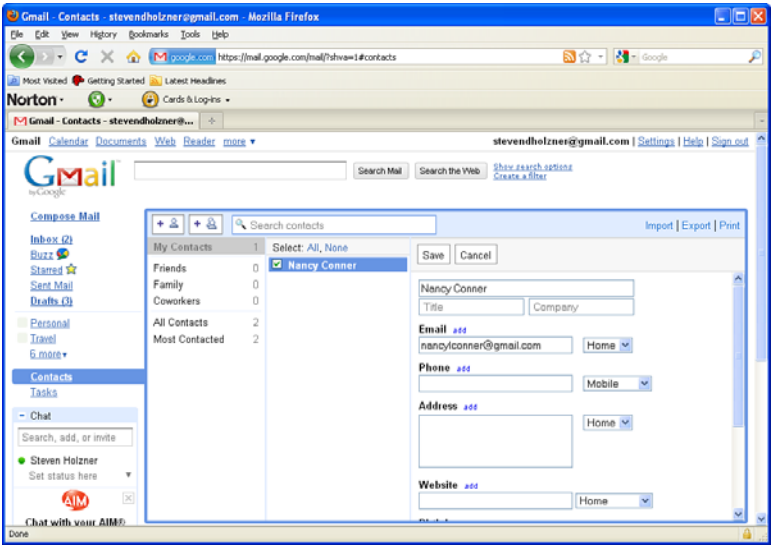

FIGURE 5.7 Editing a contact.

4. Edit the contact's information, such as name, email, and phone as necessary.
5. Click the **Save** button.

Use these steps to make changes to a contact's information at any time.

Deleting a Contact

You can delete contacts without any problem—follow these steps:

1. Click the **Contacts** link. Gmail opens the Contacts page.
2. Find the contact you want to delete and select it. Gmail opens the contact's page.
3. Click the **Delete Contact** button. This button appears above the contact's page.

4. Click the **OK** button in the dialog box that opens. Gmail deletes the contact.

That's all it takes is to delete a contact.

Setting a Contact's Photo

When you create a contact, Gmail tries to find a Google profile page for the person to take a photo from that page and put it into the person's contact page. If that person doesn't have a Google profile with a photo, you're left without a photo in the person's contact page, as you can see in Figure 5.8.

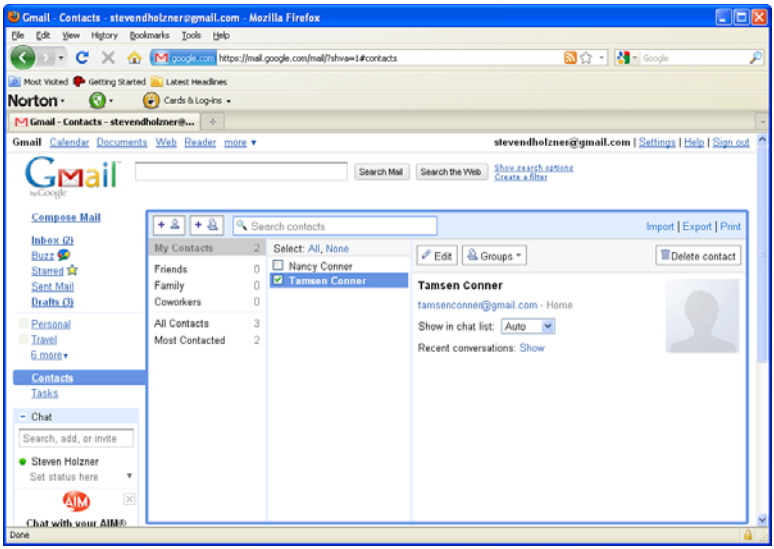

FIGURE 5.8 A contact page without a photo.

You can upload your own photo for the contact (which can lead to some pretty funny contact pages, depending on which photo you use). Follow these steps:

1. Find the contact whose photo you want to upload, and select that photo. Gmail opens that person's contact page.
2. Click the generic photo box (a Change Picture link appears). Gmail opens the photo uploader page you see in Figure 5.9.

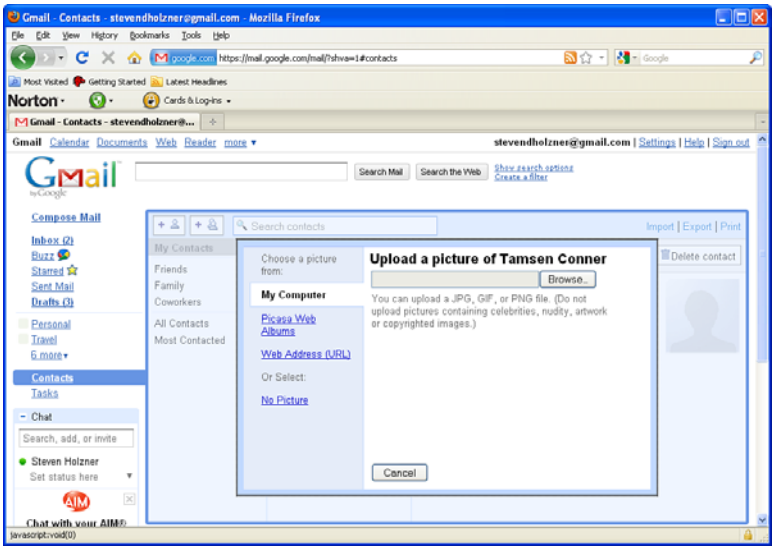

FIGURE 5.9 The photo uploader page.

3. Click the **Browse** button. Gmail opens a dialog box named Upload.
4. Browse to the photo you want to upload, and select it.
5. Click the **Open** button. Gmail opens the photo in a cropping dialog box, as shown in Figure 5.10.
6. Use the sizing box inside the image to crop the photo.
7. Click the **Apply Changes** button. Gmail may open a dialog box asking if it should share the photo with the person you're creating a contact page for.
8. If you want to share the photo with the person you're creating a contact page for, click the **Yes, Suggest This Picture** button. If not, click the **No, Keep This Picture to Myself** button. The person's photo now appears in the contact page, as shown in Figure 5.11.

Now you can set a contact's photo anytime you like.

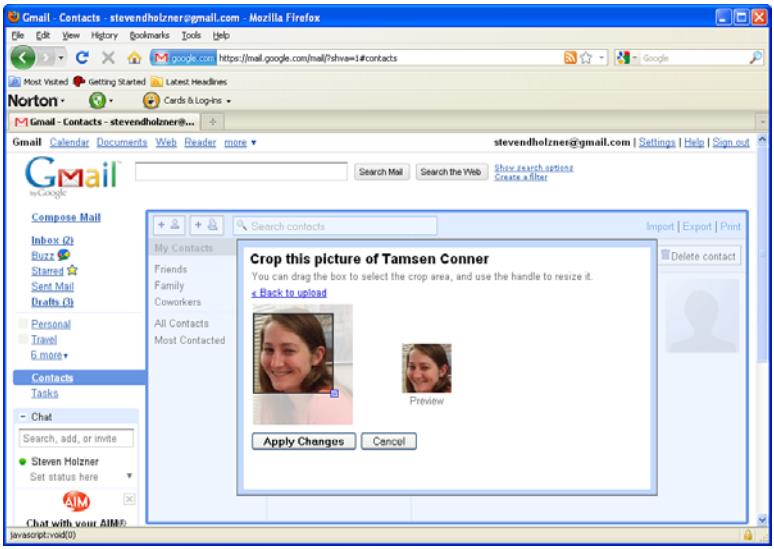

FIGURE 5.10 Cropping a photo.

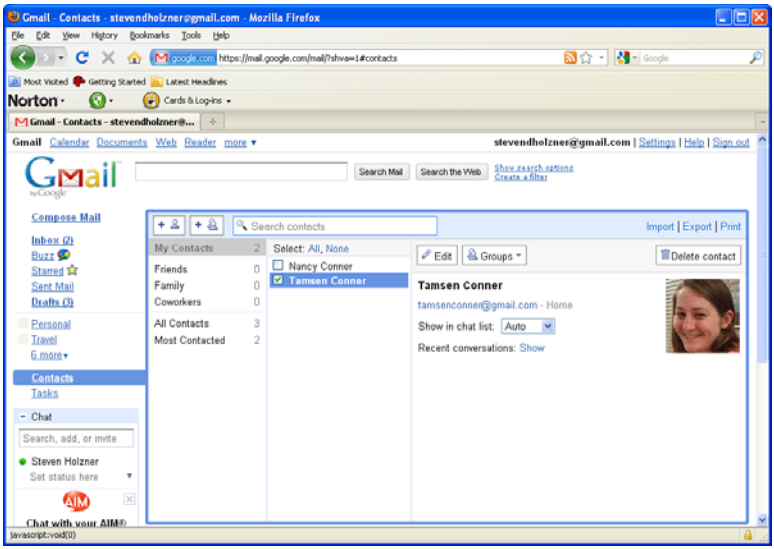

FIGURE 5.11 A new photo in a contact page.

Deleting Duplicate Contacts

On occasion, duplicate contacts might end up in your Contacts list. You might forget that you already have someone in your list, for example, and add him again. Using Gmail, you can delete duplicate contacts with the click of a button. Gmail will search for your duplicate contacts, display them, and offer to merge records if appropriate.

What does it take to be considered a duplicate contact? Experience shows that even if two contacts have the same email addresses, that's not enough—they must also have, at a minimum, the same exact name.

Want to search for duplicate contacts and merge them? Here's what you do

1. From the Contacts page with My Contacts selected, click the **None** link at the top of the center column. This deselects any selected contacts, showing you the original generic contacts page you see in Figure 5.12. (If any contact is selected, you'll see that contact's page, which does not display the Find Duplicates button we're about to use.)

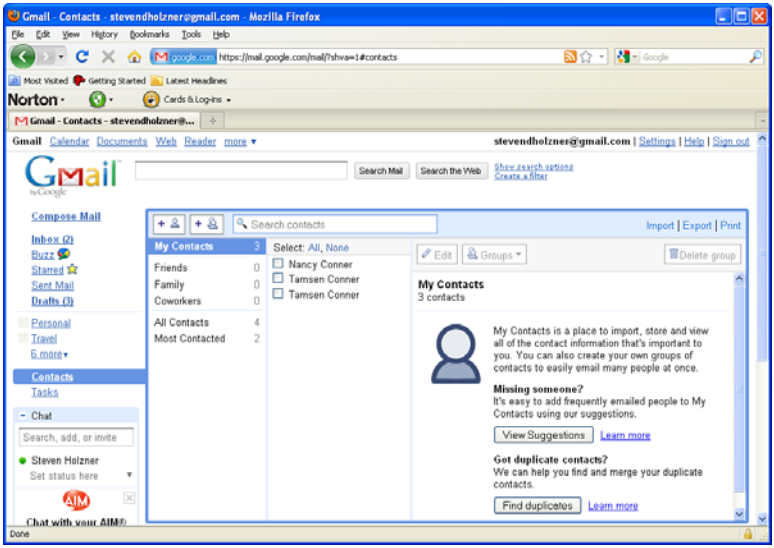

FIGURE 5.12 The generic Contacts page.

2. Click the **Find Duplicates** button. Gmail searches for duplicates and displays any that are found, as shown in Figure 5.13.

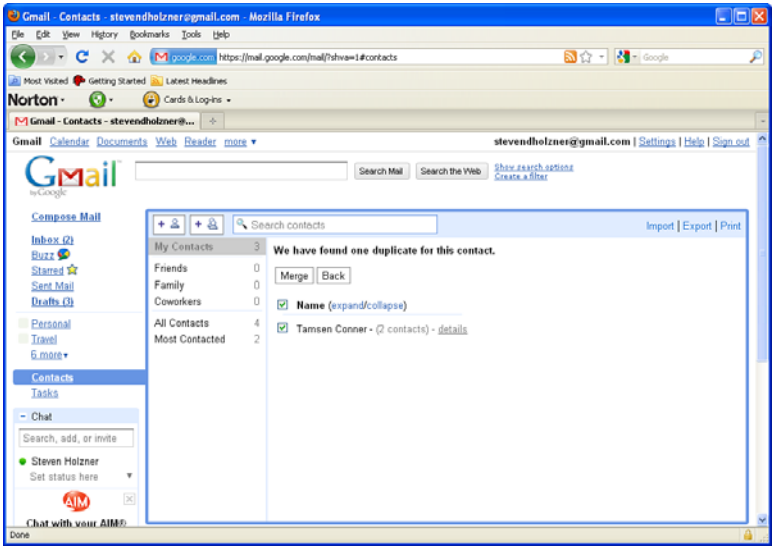

FIGURE 5.13 Duplicate contacts.

3. Click the **Merge** button to merge duplicate contacts. Gmail merges the contacts and returns you to the generic Contacts page you saw in Figure 5.12.

Getting rid of duplicates can be useful as your Contacts list grows.

Searching Contacts

As the Contacts lists get longer, you can search for the contacts you want (this being Google, that should not come as a surprise). Want to search for a particular contact? Follow these steps:

1. From the Contacts page, enter your search term in the Search contacts box at the top of the center column.
2. Press Enter. Gmail searches your contacts for matches to your search term and displays the results, as shown in Figure 5.14.

Note that Gmail has added a new link to the bottom of the left column of the Contacts page, as you see in Figure 5.14—the Search Results item.

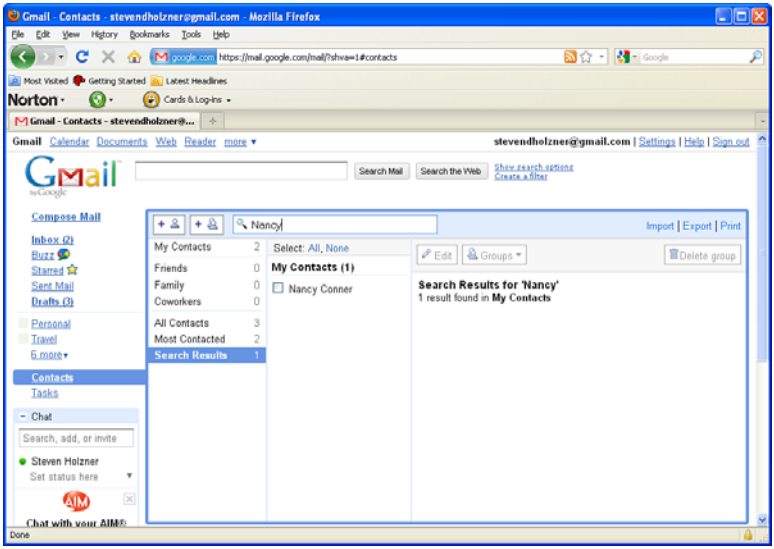

FIGURE 5.14 Searching contacts for a match.

Note that Gmail searches all Contacts lists for matches automatically when you conduct a search.

Importing Contacts

You can import contacts from other mail programs like Outlook or Hotmail into Gmail as well. All you need is to store your contacts in a .csv (comma-separated value) file (see instructions in the following section) and import that.

When you have a .csv file, follow these steps to import it into Gmail:

1. From the Contacts page, click the **Import** link on the top right. Gmail opens the page you see in Figure 5.15.
2. Click the **Browse** button. Gmail opens a dialog box that lets you browse to the .csv file to upload it.

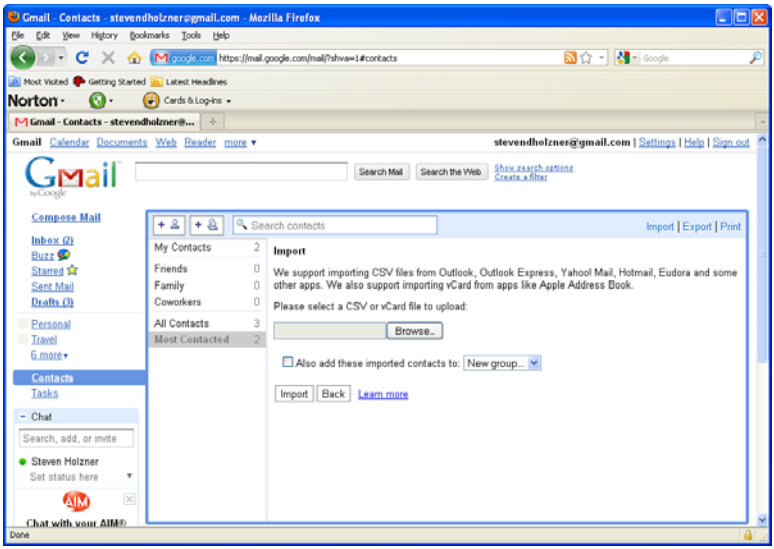

FIGURE 5.15 Importing a Contacts file.

3. Browse to the .csv file to upload and select it.
4. Click the **Open** button in the dialog box. Gmail closes the upload dialog box.
5. Click the **Import** button. Gmail uploads the .csv file and adds it to your contacts.

> TIP: **Adding Your Imported Contacts to a Group**
>
> You can add your imported contacts to their own group—just check the Also Add These Imported Contacts To check box and select a group from the drop-down list.

Creating a .csv File

How do you create a .csv file? The procedure varies by email program. Here are some directions, starting with Microsoft Outlook:

1. Select the **File** menu.
2. Select the **Import/Export** submenu.

3. Select the **Export** menu item. Outlook opens the Export page.
4. Select **Comma Separated Values** (Windows).
5. Select **Contacts**.
6. Save the .csv file.

From Outlook Express:

1. Select the **File** menu.
2. Select the **Export** submenu.
3. Select the **Address Book** menu item. Outlook opens an Export dialog box.
4. Select **Text File** (Comma Separated Values).
5. Click the **Export** button.

Here's a brute-force technique using Microsoft Excel for creating a .csv file of contacts from a Hotmail account:

1. Sign in to your Hotmail account.
2. Click the **Contacts** tab.
3. Click **Print View**.
4. Highlight your contacts by holding down the cursor and dragging it down the list.
5. Press Ctrl+C to copy the contacts.
6. Open Microsoft Excel.
7. Select cell A1 in Excel.
8. Press Ctrl+V to paste the contacts into Excel.
9. Select the **File** menu.
10. Select the **Save As** menu item. A Save As dialog box appears.
11. Select the CSV (comma-delimited) file type.

12. Enter the name you want to save the .csv file under.
13. Click **Save**.

Here's what to do it with Hotmail Live:

1. Sign in to your Hotmail account.
2. Click **Contact List** on the left.
3. Click the **Manage** drop-down menu at the top of the Contacts list.
4. Select the **Export** item. The Export page appears.
5. Click the **Export Contacts** button.
6. When prompted to open or save the file, click **Save**.
7. Select a location to save the file, and click **Save**.

Using Existing Groups

Gmail comes with some built-in groups that you can use to organize your contact. You can add your contacts to any of the three existing Gmail groups:

- Friends
- Family
- Co-workers

Adding contacts to a group makes it simple to email all those contacts at once. Want to add a contact to an existing group? Follow these steps:

1. From the Contacts page, select the contact you want to add to an existing group, opening that person's Contact page.
2. Click the **Groups** button. A drop-down list appears.
3. Select the preexisting group you want to add the contact to. For example, a contact was added to the Friends group in Figure 5.16.

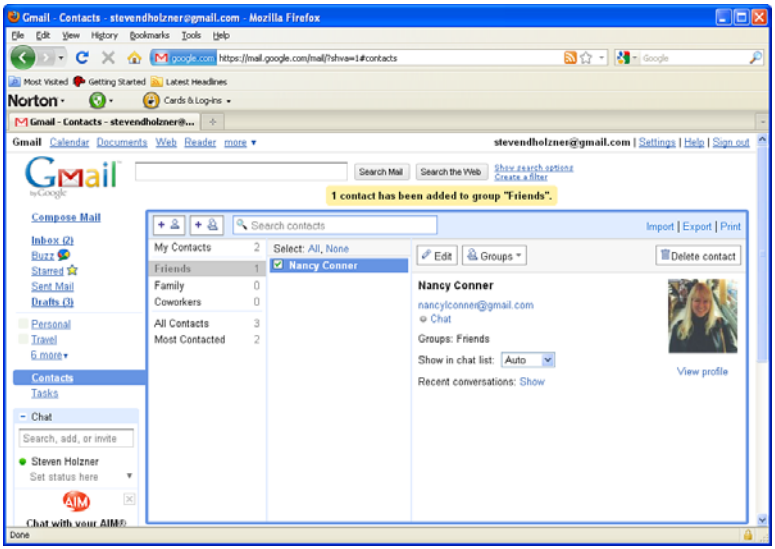

FIGURE 5.16 Adding a contact to a group.

Note that adding a contact to a group does not remove that contact from My Contacts or All Contacts.

Creating a Group

You can create your own groups if the preexisting groups don't work for you. For example, you might want to create a group for your comic book club or a fund drive's members.

Here's how to create your own group:

1. From the Contacts page, click the **New Group** button (that's the button displaying two generic human figures and a plus [+] sign). A dialog box opens.
2. Enter the name of the new group in the dialog box.
3. Click the **OK** button in the dialog box. The new group is created and added to the list of groups in the contacts page.

Creating your own custom groups is great for organizing your contacts as you get more and more contacts over time.

> TIP: **Creating Group Profiles**
>
> You can even create your own Google profile for your own custom groups.

Emailing a Group

You can email all the members of a group at once—follow these steps:

1. From the Inbox click the **Compose Mail** link. Gmail opens the Mail Composer.
2. Start to enter the group's name to mail in the To box. If that group is in your contacts, Gmail suggests the group's full name under the To box, as shown in Figure 5.17.

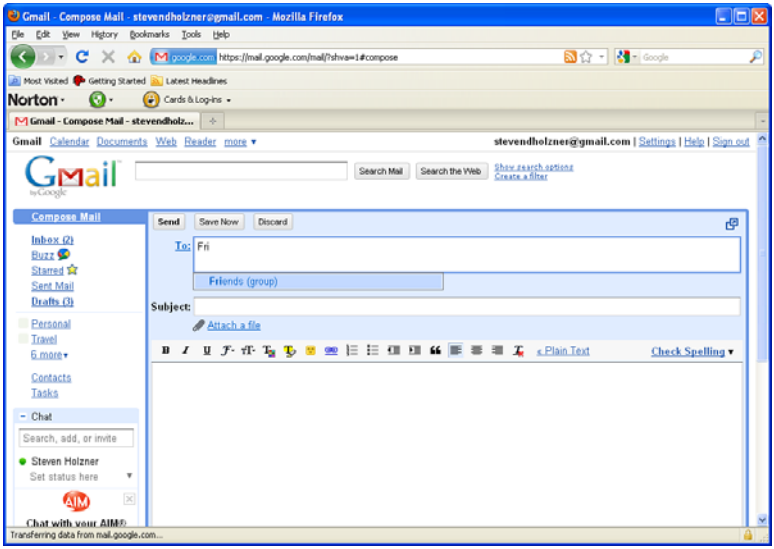

FIGURE 5.17 Autocompleting a group name.

3. Click the correct group name as suggested by Gmail. Gmail fills in the To box for you.
4. Enter the subject of the email in the Subject box.
5. Enter the text of the email in the large text box.
6. Click the **Send** button.

Now you've sent mail to all the members of a group the easy way.

Deleting a Group

Suppose that one of your Gmail groups has outlived its usefulness. For example, you may have put together a temporary group to mail people about some big event and now you want to get rid of the group. How can you do that?

Follow these steps:

1. From the Contacts page, select the group you want to delete in the left column of the Contacts page.
2. Click the **Delete Group** button. Gmail displays a confirming dialog box, as you can see in Figure 5.18.

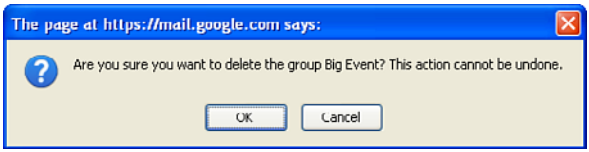

FIGURE 5.18 Deleting a group.

3. Click **OK**. Gmail deletes the group you selected.

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