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Making online learning even easier with a re-envisioned Course Builder

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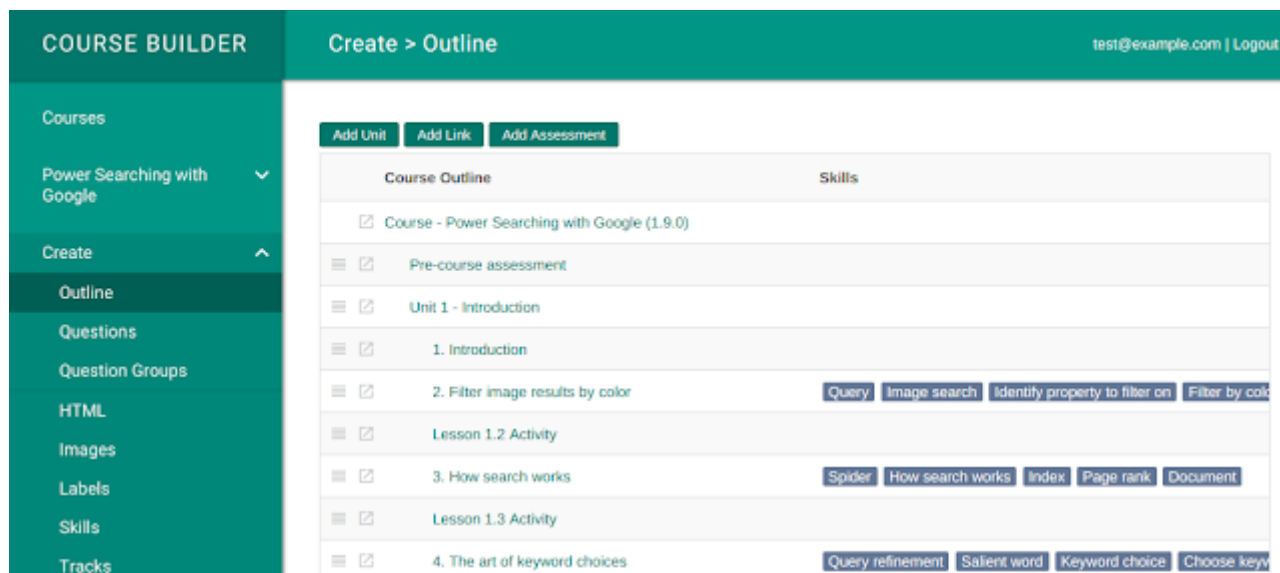
Posted by Adam Feldman, Product Manager and Pavel Simakov, Technical Lead, Course Builder Team

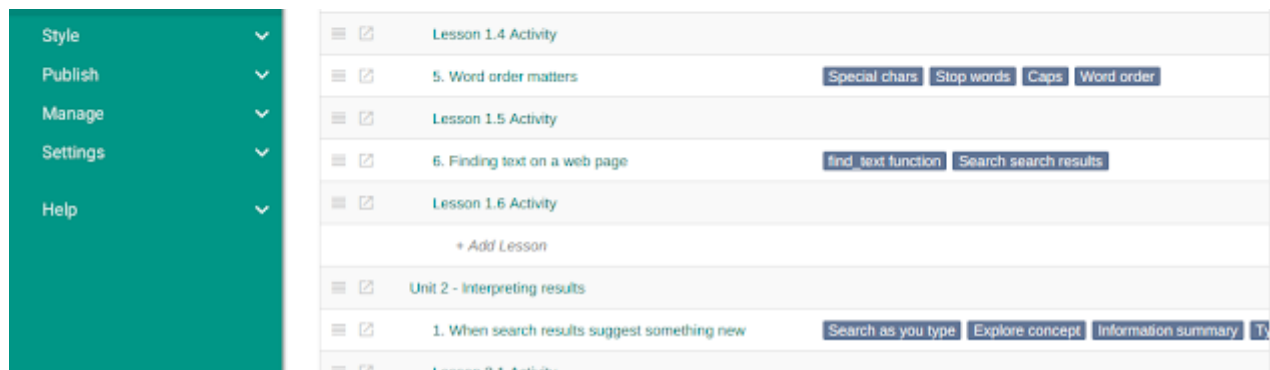
(Cross-posted on the [Google for Education blog](#))

The Course Builder team believes in enabling new and better ways to learn (for both the instructor and learner). Today's release of [Course Builder v1.10](#) furthers these goals in three ways, by being easier to use, embeddable and applicable to more types of content.

Easier to use

We took a step back and re-envisioned the menus and navigation of the administrative interface based on the steps instructors take as they create a course. These are designed to help you through the process of creating, styling, publishing and managing your courses. This re-imagined design gives a solid foundation for future versions of Course Builder.





A completely redesigned navigation simplifies content authoring and configuration.

To support this redesign, we've also completely revamped our documentation. There's now one home for all of Course Builder's materials: [Google Open Online Education](#). Here, you'll find everything you need to conceptualize and construct your content, create a course using Course Builder, and even develop new modules to extend Course Builder's capabilities. The content now reflects the latest features and organization. This re-imagined design gives a solid foundation for future versions of Course Builder.

Embeddable assessment support

What if you want to use some of Course Builder's features but already have an existing learning site? To help with these situations, Course Builder now supports embeddable assessments (graded questions and answers with an optional due date). Simply create your assessments in Course Builder, copy the JavaScript snippet and paste it on any site. Your users will be able to complete the assessments from the comfort of your existing site and you'll be able to benefit from Course Builder's per-question feedback, auto-grading and analytics with just two short lines of code that are automatically generated for you.

We started with embeddable assessments because evaluation is so important to learning, but we don't plan to stop there. Watch for additional embeddable components in the future.

Applicable to more types of content

Many types of online learning content, like tutorials, exercises and documentation, are a lot like online courses. For instance, they might involve presenting content to users, having them do exercises or assessments and allowing them to stop and return later. Yet, you might not think of them as traditional courses.

To make Course Builder a better fit for a broader set of online content, we've added a new "guides" experience. Guides are a new way for students to browse and consume your content. Compared to typical online courses -- which can enforce a strict linear path (from unit 1 to unit 2, etc.) -- guides present your content as a non-numbered list. Users are free to enter and exit in any order. It also allows you to show the content for many courses together.

You could imagine each guide being a documentation page or tutorial section. Guides also work with any existing Course Builder units and can be made available by simply enabling that feature in the dashboard. Here are a couple of our courses, when viewed as guides:



Google Maps

Discover local businesses. View ratings, business information, labels, and suggested results on maps and info cards.

24 min

START

Google Maps Engine Lite

Learn how to create a map, then search for and add points to it. Discover how to enhance your map with polygons and lines.

12 min

START

Interpreting results

Utilize information in Knowledge Graph panels, Instant results, Suggestions, and Related Searches when they appear.

30 min

START

Advanced techniques

Guides

- Mapping with Google
- Power Searching with Google

Within each guide, the user is *guided* through the steps, which could be portions of a docs page or lessons in a unit, as in this example from the “Power Searching with Google” sample course:

Interpreting results

- When search results suggest something new
- Lesson 2.1 Activity
- Thinking more deeply about your search
- Lesson 2.2 Activity
- Understand options for different media
- Lesson 2.3 Activity
- Reading the Search Engine Results Page (SERP)
- Lesson 2.4 Activity

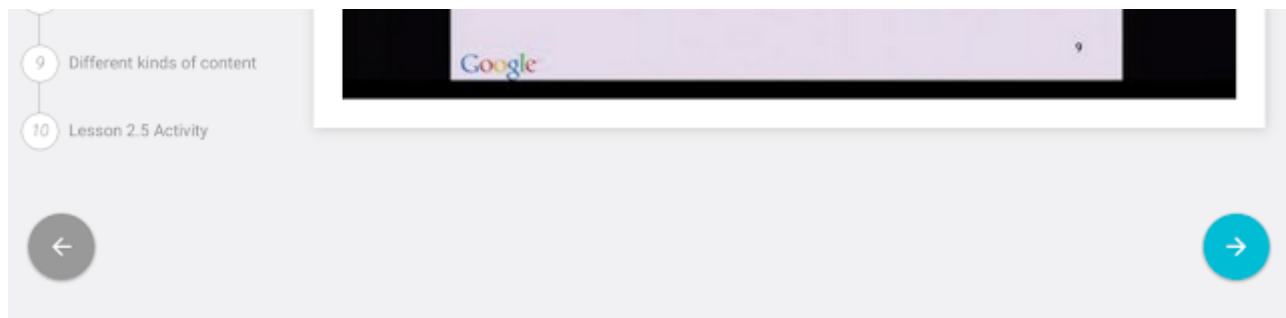
3. Thinking more deeply about your search

- Recognize when search results are offering information that suggests a better/additional search.
- Use 'define' to identify the meaning of words.
- Use dictionary mode to define words that do not appear in traditional dictionaries.

Power Searching with Google Lesson 2.2

Lesson 2.2: Thinking more deeply about your search

- How do you go from idea to understanding?
- Key idea: Make sure you understand what you're seeing



By letting users jump in and out of the content as they like, guides are ideally suited to the on-the-go learner and look great on phones and tablets. It's our first foray into responsive mobile design... but it won't be our last.

Guides currently support public courses, but we'll be adding registration, enhanced statefulness and interface customization, as well as elements of dynamic learning (think of a personalized list of guides).

This release has focused on making Course Builder easier to use and more relevant. It sets up the framework to give future features a natural home. It adds embeddable assessments to make Course Builder useful in more places. And it introduces guides, a new, less linear format for consuming content.

For a full list of features, see the [release notes](#), and let us know what you think. Keep on learning!



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