

Real World Google SketchUp 7

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When you visit <http://sketchup.google.com> SketchUp announces itself as “3D Modeling for Everyone.” I think it lives up to that claim. Now in Version 8, the program is a free download that installs quickly and easily.

This book isn’t designed for those new to SketchUp. It assumes you have a basic grasp of the program and its tools. The information quickly moves past the basics and concentrates on helping you work smarter so your work goes faster and more easily.

The program is very easy to learn. With a few simple tools you can create 3D models of just about any structure you can imagine, from a shed to a mansion. Golf courses, anyone? You can add details to your models, such as photo textures, lighting or working hinged doors. You are designing with “dimensional accuracy,” not to mention proper perspective.

The included DVD has episodes of *The Sketchup Show* (www.go-2-school.com), a website devoted to SketchUp and Google Earth. It was good to know



where the videos originated. Not all played on my computer(s) so I watched those at the website.

The book is in four sections, all focused on easier ways to get the job done right. The first section concentrates on basic program set-up. This includes selecting (or creating) appropriate preferences, workspaces, templates and shortcuts to use. The author also goes into “Ruby Scripts” (macros that make short work of complex tasks), plug-ins and extensions for the program.

Knowing this information and learning how and where to find these helpers is very useful.

The second section deals with importing existing models. Instead of reinventing the wheel (or whatever component you need), you may be able to download it. Many SketchUp users have proudly submitted their creations to the *Google 3D Warehouse* for use by anyone. All the steps to locate and download what you need are here, as are instructions on sizing your new component (both in scale and file size).

The next two chapters deal with importing images into SketchUp. They can become a background for your model, used as a texture or to create a “face” on part of your model. Once imported they are “materials,” and two chapters deal with managing and editing those materials.

The book then moves into “components” (think parts) and how to group, nest and/or otherwise make “dynamic.” Dynamic components become more versatile and give you more control. For instance, you could repaint twelve dining chairs with one command. Then learn how to compose your components into a complete scene, to exactly replicate your vision.

Last is how to export your project and in what format. You may then choose to add your models to *Google Earth*, post them to the *3D Warehouse*, or even print hard copies to share.

The book is interesting and gives good examples, not to mention good advice. I enjoyed working through the subjects. It’s good my learning doesn’t have to end here, particularly because there’s a new version out. I expect to be a regular visitor to their website.

About: *Real World Google SketchUp 7*

Author:	Mike Tadros
Publisher:	Peachpit Press www.peachpit.com
ISBN-10:	9780321660312
ISBN-13:	978-0321660312
Price:	\$49.99, \$36.49 @ Amazon