

Chapter 16

More Than Ten Ways to Learn About SketchUp

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Checking out some great, free SketchUp information
 - » Discovering other helpful, paid resources
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SketchUp is like a little digital universe where anything is possible. With all the creative possibilities, you can almost always learn more about new modeling methods, tips, tricks, and tools.

In this chapter, we share a few resources, tools, and topics that help you take the modeling skills you learn in this book even further. Some of the stuff we cover is free, and we think the stuff that costs money is totally worth it.

Free Online Resources

At fancy receptions, Rebecca samples every item on the dessert buffet, and Aidan is the one stuffing his suit pockets with *hors d'oeuvres* wrapped in napkins. We love free stuff *that much*. So without further ado, what follows are five complimentary sources of SketchUp help.

» **SketchUp training resources:** SketchUp publishes first-rate materials right on its website (www.sketchup.com/learn):

- *Video tutorials:* When SketchUp first launched in 2000, it became known for its excellent video tutorials. [Figure 16-1](#) shows the series for beginners. We can't recommend them highly enough; there's nothing like seeing SketchUp in action.
- *Self-paced tutorials:* These are SketchUp files that use scenes to teach different aspects of the program in a "follow along with me" style. If this is how you like to figure things out, have a look.
- *Online Help Center:* The SketchUp Help Center includes hundreds of articles created specifically to help new users along. (Rebecca helped to write many of them.) The easiest way to get to the SketchUp Help Center is to choose Help ⇒ Knowledge Center from the SketchUp menu bar.
- *SketchUp Community Forum:* SketchUp's online forum is a thriving online community and a great place to learn from other SketchUp users. When a 3D modeling issue has you stumped, the folks here can lend you a hand.

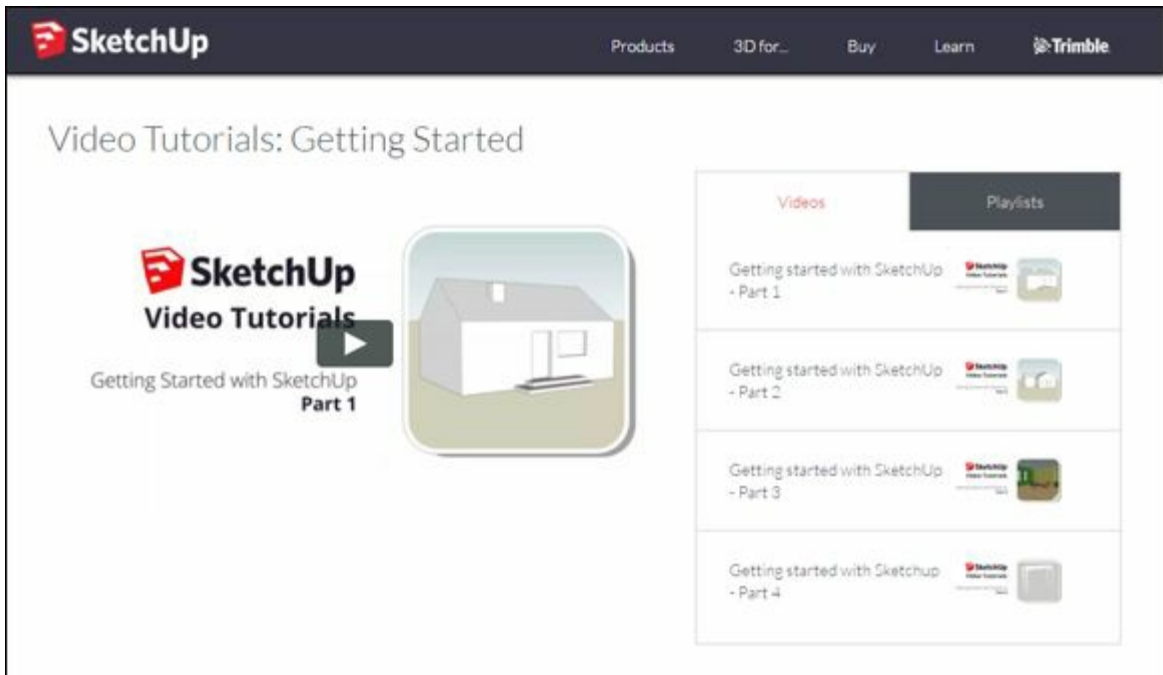
» **SketchUcation:** You find discussions, tutorials, plugins, news, and piles of other good stuff at SketchUcation. You'll also find a large and active forum of users from around the world. (www.sketchucation.com)

» **SketchUp School videos:** This is a terrific YouTube channel. The free videos are first rate, and you can buy a subscription to watch over a hundred more on SketchUp School's website. (www.youtube.com/4sketchupgo2school1)

The School designers have also produced some of the world's finest SketchUp educational/training videos; you can pay for a subscription to watch them on the School website (www.sketchupschool.com). The production quality on these things is outstanding, and Mike Tadros and Alex Oliver (two of the School guys) do an amazing job of teaching SketchUp for both the Windows and Mac operating systems.

» **MasterSketchUp.com:** Matt Donley has put together a nice site dedicated to helpful tips and tricks, videos, and other tutorials. He also self-published a book about LayOut; you can read about it in the next section. (www.mastersketchup.com)

» **The SketchUpdate blog:** Visit the SketchUp blog regularly for news, case studies, tips and tricks, modeler profiles, plugins, and other updates. (<http://blog.sketchup.com/>)



<http://www.sketchup.com/learn/videos/58?playlist=58>

FIGURE 16-1: SketchUp training videos help beginners see how 3D modeling works.

The Ultimate SketchUp Reading List

These books and resources cost a bit of money, but they're worth every penny:

- » **Bonnie Roskes's books:** Bonnie's *The SketchUp Book* (published by 3DVinci) was the first book available, and now she has several titles, including SketchUp books for kids. If you think you want to get another, bigger book about SketchUp (written with architects and other design pros in mind), check out Bonnie's books at www.3dvinci.net.
- » **Daniel Tal's books:** Daniel Tal focuses on specific techniques that can help build advanced 3D-modeling skills. *SketchUp for Site Design: A Guide to Modeling Site Plans, Terrain and Architecture*, 2nd Edition (Wiley) is, simply put, a great book. Dan's latest book (also published by Wiley) is *Rendering in SketchUp: From Modeling to Presentation for Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Interior Design*. It demystifies the dark art of photorealistic rendering in a way that might finally get you to try it. When you're ready to take the next step in your SketchUp relationship, get Dan's books.
- » **Michael Brightman's book:** A recent addition to the SketchUp bookshelf, Michael's *The SketchUp Workflow for Architecture: Modeling Buildings, Visualizing Design, and Creating Construction Documents with SketchUp Pro and LayOut* (Wiley) is a watershed in the history of SketchUp publishing. He came up with a viable workflow for using SketchUp Pro (including LayOut) to produce complete construction document sets that look just like the ones you'd normally use AutoCAD or Revit to make. The stuff in this book is insanely clever — you have to read it to believe it.
- » **Alex Schreyer's book:** The title of *Architectural Design with SketchUp: Component-Based Modeling, Plugins, Rendering, and Scripting* (Wiley) certainly implies that it's a book for architects. That's not strictly true; it's actually a great resource for anyone looking to find out more about all the topics in the subtitle. Alex deserves special credit for his skillful introduction to Ruby scripting for nonprogrammers.
- » **Matt Donley's book:** The man behind MasterSketchUp.com has written an e-book called *SketchUp to LayOut: The Essential Guide to Creating Construction Documents with SketchUp Pro and LayOut*. Unlike Mike Brightman's book (which we mention earlier), Matt's book approaches the subject from more of a beginner's perspective. It also shows woodworking and kitchen and bath examples, which should appeal to people who aren't architects.
- » **Dennis Fukai's books:** Three words: jaw-dropping detail. Dennis's books are hard to describe. He's written seven of them, each is fully illustrated in SketchUp, and each teaches a different subject. If you want to discover more about using SketchUp in building construction or more about construction itself, or you just want to be completely inspired by what you can do with SketchUp, have a look at these books. Search for his name on Amazon (www.amazon.com) or go to his company's website, www.insitebuilders.com.

Other Tools from the Makers of SketchUp

The folks who make SketchUp offer a mindboggling suite of products and tools for 3D modeling and sharing what you model. We introduce the main extras, the 3D Warehouse and LayOut, in [Chapters 5, 12, and 14](#). The following list is a whirlwind tour of your other options:

- » **my.SketchUp:** This free version of SketchUp runs in a web browser. my.SketchUp debuted in 2016 with a limited toolset, but the main cast of drawing tools is all there, as shown in [Figure 16-2](#). You can expect to see more features as the product evolves. All the tools that are available work almost exactly as they do in SketchUp, although you will find some minor differences to accommodate working in a browser instead of in an application installed on your computer. To get started, visit <http://www.sketchup.com/products/my-sketchup>.
- » **Extension Warehouse:** Extensions typically add little bits of functionality for specialized tasks, such as 3D printing. Indeed, it's no coincidence that most of the discussion about extensions occurs in [Chapter 9](#), which is all about 3D printing. Whether you use SketchUp for architecture, woodworking, interior design, movie sets, or something else, you can find whole categories of extensions designed to make specific tasks a little bit easier. Start exploring at <http://extensions.sketchup.com/> or within SketchUp, choose Window ⇒ Extension Warehouse. To actually install an extension in SketchUp, you need to login with a Trimble ID or Google account. When you log in through SketchUp (that is, by choosing Window ⇒ Extension Warehouse), installing an extension is usually pretty easy: Just click the red Install button in the upper left of the extension's details page.



TIP

After you install a few extensions, SketchUp 2017 enables you to choose Window ⇒ Extension Manager for help managing your extensions and keeping them up to date. In earlier versions of SketchUp, you can manage extensions through the online Extension Warehouse online interface.

- » **SketchUp Viewer:** If you need to show models to your clients (who are not likely to have SketchUp installed on their computers), SketchUp Viewer may help you share your SketchUp files. SketchUp Viewer is a separate application that actually comes in three different versions:
 - The desktop version is a free download (get it here: <http://www.sketchup.com/products/sketchup-viewer>).
 - The mobile version is an inexpensive app (about \$10) that you download for iOS or Android.
 - The virtual reality version transports you to Star Trek Holodeck so that you can protect the galaxy within the 3D model of your choice.

Okay not really. The third version does enable you to immerse yourself in a 3D model using virtual reality. As this book goes to press, the virtual reality version is only available via the Microsoft Store on a Microsoft HoloLens. If you're looking for a

cutting-edge way to impress your clients, definitely check out the ways in which you can view holograms of models on a table or jump from one floor to another in the immersive view. If you can't afford a pricey virtual reality viewer just yet, you can at least get a preview of the possibilities in the SketchUp Viewer for HoloLens YouTube video (<https://youtu.be/c2HirT3Nshs>).

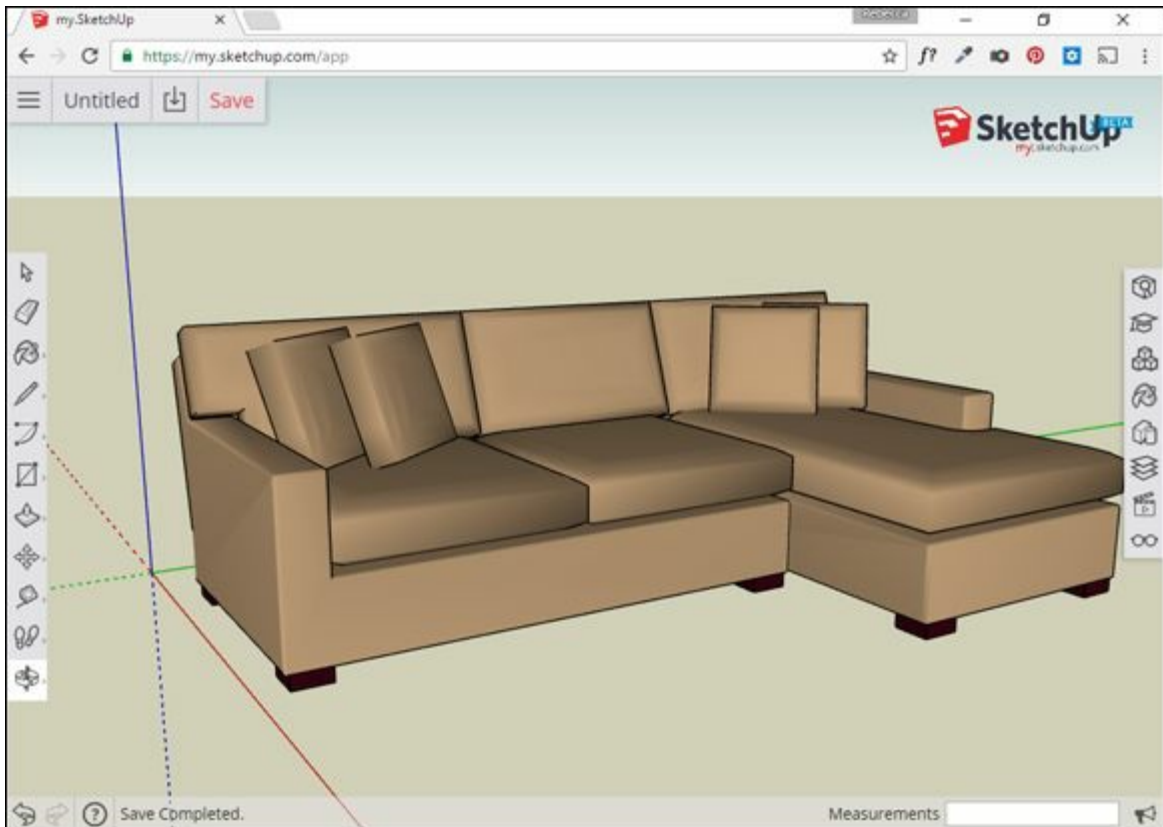


FIGURE 16-2: my.SketchUp enables you to model in a web browser.