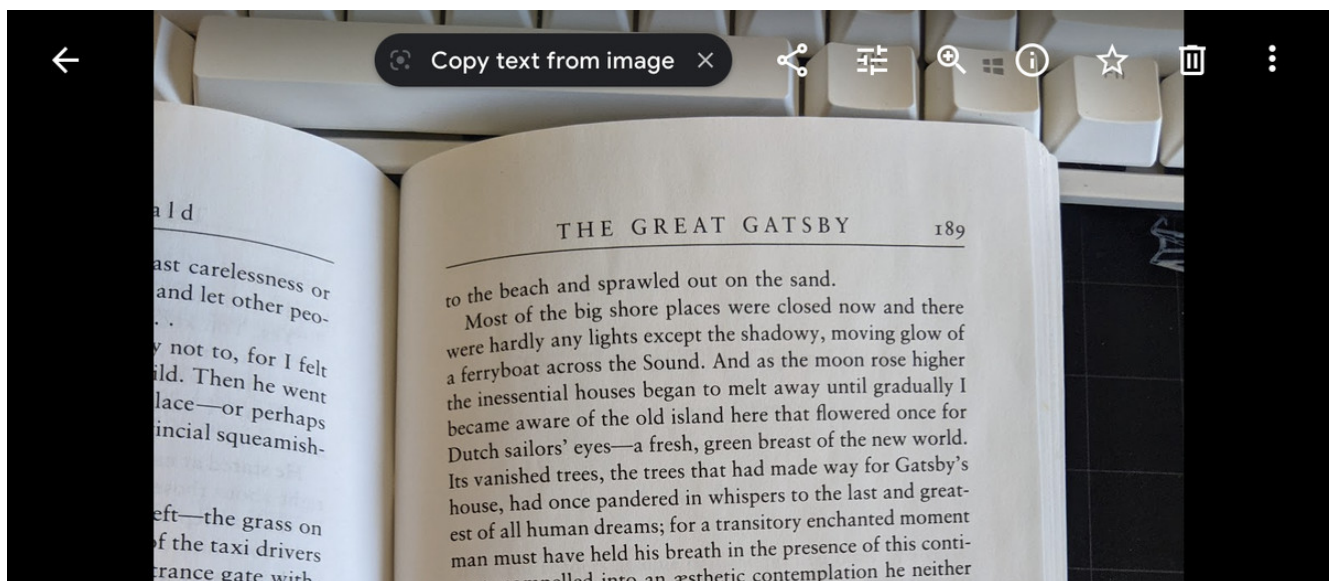


Google Photos just let me copy text from a photo into my web browser

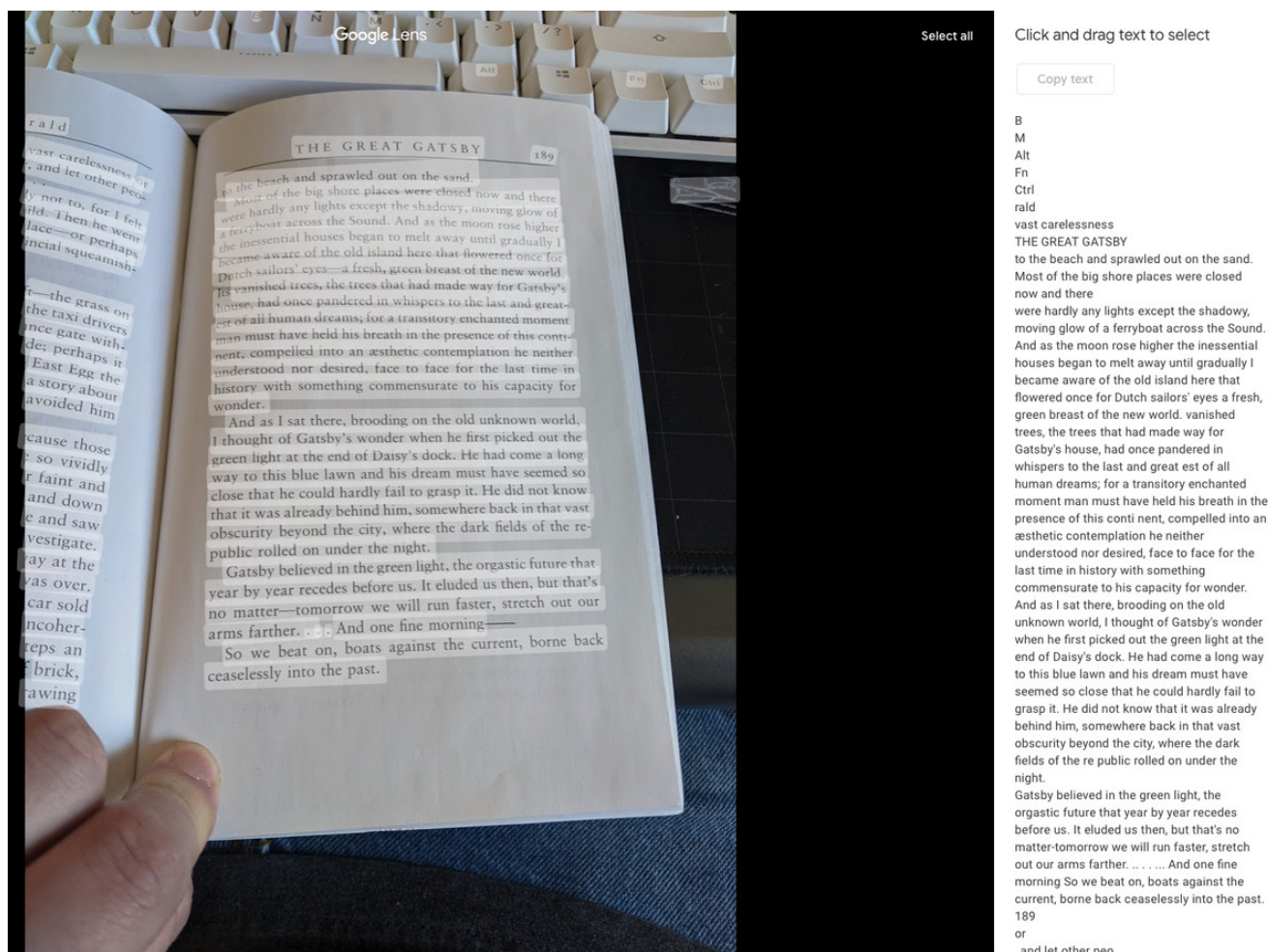
The desktop Google Photos website seems to be getting the ability to scan for text in an image and turn it into copy-and-pasteable text, thanks to Google's Lens technology (via *9to5Google*). Lens has been available in many places on Android for a while, but its optical character recognition (OCR) feature coming to the desktop could make Google Photos an easy and free way to get real-life text onto your computer.

According to *9to5Google*, the feature seems to be rolling out widely, but a writer at *XDA-Developers* didn't have it show up for them. I was able to use it, though. To use it (or to check if you have it yet), load up the Google Photos site and go to a photo where you've captured some text (such as a page of a book, a sign, a receipt, etc). If Google detects words, a "Copy text from image" button should pop up, and clicking that will open a pane that lets you read the text that Google found.



The Copy text from image button will show up on images that Google finds text in.

One practical application of having Lens on desktop could be scanning written text documents and pasting that into something you're writing on a desktop computer. To test this, I took this picture of an open book, and the results were nearly flawless:



You can select the text directly on the photo or use the sidebar.

Lens even managed to interpret an “æ” correctly.

Google Lens has many more abilities on Android (and in the iOS Google Photos app), but it seems that text-copying is the only one that’s made it to the desktop so far. The browser version of Google Photos didn’t offer to translate a picture with Spanish text (though it did let me copy the text), and it doesn’t look like it can identify things like animals or plants.

Still, it’s nice to see one of Lens’ most useful features

coming to the desktop version of Google Photos, and hopefully it's an indication that more are on the way.

<https://www.theverge.com/2021/4/12/22380086/google-photos-desktop-ocr-images-copy-text-lens>