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So, You Searched Google, Now What? : Searching Beyond Basic Google

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Introduction

We have grown accustom to having information readily available via the Internet. Searching as become so easy, that it can take one by surprise when desired information is not retrieved when doing a basic search on *Google*. This paper gives you searching tips to apply when a basic *Google* search does not produce the results you need.

Google   <www.google.com>

Google is the top search engine choice for searching the Internet. In fact, 'to google' has become a pop culture verb meaning to search the Internet, "I googled him, but didn't find anything." *Google* has long been a favorite search engine because of its size and the breadth of file types that it indexes. It revolutionized Internet searching with its relevance ranking of results based on those sites' linkages and presumed authority. One of the weaknesses of *Google* is that while it covers a lot of the web, it does not necessarily cover it deeply. *Google* only indexes about the first 100-120 KB of a file, so if the information you are looking for is at the end of a really long or graphic rich document, it might not get put into the *Google* search index database. There are also some weaknesses in the ability to refine your search such as using complex nested search strings, like you can in Lexis and Westlaw, but this is a weakness with all large web search engines.

Searching the Internet has become an almost required part of daily operations. With billions of web pages out there, it can be a challenge to find the information you need. When you are trying to retrieve information needed to conduct business or assist a client, you want to find the best results with the least amount of time spent. A basic

search on *Google*, while a good place to begin, should not also be the end of your search.

Utilizing the Advanced Search Options in Google

When a basic search in *Google* fails to produce the results you want, the easiest thing you can do is to make use of the Advanced Search options already built into *Google*. The Advanced Search options make searching easier and your results more relevant. You can access the Advanced Search options in *Google* from a link called "Advanced Search" just to the right of the *Google* search box. You can also access the Advanced Search options in *Google* after you have already run a search by using the 'Search within Results' link at the bottom of the search results page or the 'Advanced Search' link at the top of the page. It is simple to learn these Advanced Search options and to begin applying them to your searching right away. Using Advanced Search options is the single most important thing you can do to improve your search results. Listed below are the Advanced Search options available in *Google* and a brief discussion of how they will refine your search. All major search engines offer similar advanced search options, so you can use many of these same refining tips in either *Yahoo!* or *Live Search* as well as *Google*.

Advanced Search Options in Google

Find Results

In a basic *Google* search, the search engine just looks for web sites containing all of the words you have entered in the search box, and in no particular order. A powerful

feature of Advanced Search options is that it allows you to tell the search engine how to look for your search terms. You can also use any or all of these fields together to craft a very effective search strategy.

- **with all the words** – The limit 'with all of the words' works just like the basic search, looking for all of the words listed in no particular order.

- **with the exact phrase** – The limit 'with the exact phrase' tells the search engine to look for these particular words next to one another just as you have listed them. This feature is the same as enclosing search terms in quotation marks.

- **with at least one of the words** – The limit 'with at least one of the words' allows you to list several search terms, but tells the search engine that you are interested in web sites that include even one of the words listed. This feature allows you to return a wider set of results than you would have gotten from running just a basic search.

- **without the words** – The limit 'without the words' is a powerful way to eliminate results that you know you do not want. The classic example of this came is the early days of search engines during the 1996 presidential campaign, when searching for 'Dole' you would find that you would also want to limit your results using 'without the words' to not include the word 'pineapple.' It is good to use this limit when you have run a search already, but then discover that you have retrieved a significant number of results that are on a specific topic that is distinctly unrelated to your subject.

In the Find Results section, you can also change the number of returned results from

the default of 10 per page to 20, 30, 50, or even 100 per page using a dropdown

menu on the upper right of the page. If you know you want to browse quite a few

results, changing the results returned means less clicking and waiting for results to

load.

Language

      Google allows you to limit using a 'Language' field by using a dropdown menu.

Unfortunately, you can only select one language at a time. However, if English is your

native/only language you are fluent in, then it is often good to limit your search to

English, especially if you are researching a foreign or international topic and you want to

narrow your results returned.

Region

      You can limit your search results by country of origin in *Google*. You can only

select one country at a time from a dropdown menu, but it can be helpful if you are

looking specifically for a company, organization, or person from a particular country.

File Format

      Google allows you to limit your results to a specific file format. From a dropdown

menu, you can choose the particular type of file format you are looking for. This feature

is helpful if you would like to locate information in a specific kind of format, such as

limiting the file format to .ppt, so your results will only contain PowerPoint

presentations. *Google* once again also allows for the exclusion of particular file formats

as well.

Date

Also selected from a dropdown menu, the 'Date' field allows you to limit your results to web pages updated 'anytime,' 'past 24 hours,' 'past week,' past month,' 'past 2 months,' 'past 3 months,' 'past 6 months,' or 'past year.'

Numeric Range

The 'Numeric Range' field can be used to locate a webpage that contains any numbers in a given range. You can use it to look for any usage of numbers such as dates, weights, stock quotes, etc. An example of using this field would be to put in prices, such as $50 and $100, in conjunction with a search for "DVD player."

Occurrences

Selected with a dropdown menu, you can use 'Occurrences' to return results where the search terms only occur in specific fields of the web page, such as 'anywhere on the page,' 'in the title of the page,' or 'in the URL of the page.' By limiting your search terms to being located in the source title of the web site, it should improve your relevancy and decrease the number of results returned.

Domain

The 'Domain' field allows you to limit your search to a particular type of web domain, such as .com, .edu, .org, .gov, etc. or to a particular web address, such as

uga.edu or georgia.gov. Limiting to a specific domain name essentially creates a *Google* search of just that website. For example, allowing you to search a website such as the *Institute for Continuing Education in Georgia* <http://www.iclega.org/> that does not offer a separate search field on their website. *Google* also allows you to search everything except a specific domain or web address, an example of which is that you could eliminate college web sites from your returned results by excluding the domain type .edu.

Usage Rights

The field 'Usage Rights' allows you to limit your results to items in a range from 'not filtered by a license' to those that are 'free to use, share or modify, even commercially.' This is helpful when looking for graphics on the web to use in your own work.

SafeSearch

Google's SafeSearch screens for sites that contain explicit sexual content and deletes them from your search results. From the Advanced Search page you can for an individual search change the default from 'No filtering' to 'Filter using SafeSearch.'

Page-Specific Search

There are two types of searches under the Page-Specific Search field that you can use in *Google*. You can use the 'Similar' field to look for pages that are similar to a webpage that you know the URL address for already. There is also a 'Links' search

which will look for webpages that link to a particular website. For example, to see which websites link to the University of Georgia Law Library homepage, you just input the URL for the Law Library and then you can see a list of webpages that link to that website.

Topic-Specific Searches

At the bottom of the Advanced Search page, *Google* gives links to specialized searches that they maintain. Many of these and others can also be accessed on Google's homepage from the links across the top left of the page. Listed on the Advanced Search page are 'Google Book Search' (search the full text of books), 'Google Code Search' (search public source code), 'Google Scholar' (search scholarly papers), 'Google News archive search' (search historical news), 'U.S. Government' (search all U.S. federal, state and local government sites), and 'Universities' (search a specific school's website). From the Google homepage you can search 'Images,' 'Maps,' 'News,' 'Shopping,' and under "More" topics additional topic-specific searches such as 'Video,' 'Finance,' and 'Blogs.' Under "even more" you will find a listing of all of the special searches in *Google*, including searches that are still being beta tested like *Google* 'Patent Search.'

Advanced Search Tips

The 'Advanced Search Tips' link is located in the top right corner of the Advance Search page. The 'Advanced Search Tips' page documents 'search tricks' to use in *Google*, including the little known, but useful, 'fill in the blanks' feature.   You can use one or more asterisks (*) in a natural language search query phrase as wild cards for

search terms. Google will return results that contain the phrase you used with the asterisk wild card filled in, the search Georgia was founded by * will return results with the phrase, "Georgia was founded by Oglethrope" and "Georgia was founded by colonist James Oglethrope." The 'Advanced Search Tips' page also outline how you can use the tilde sign (~) in front of a term to search not only for that term, but for also its synonyms. A search for ~legal brings up results containing the terms legal, law, laws, court, attorney, and lawyer. On the 'Advanced Search Tips' page there is a link to a helpful, printable "Cheat Sheet" that Google has put together to show users how to make use of many of the Advanced Search options without having to go to the Advanced Search page. You can print it off at:

<http://www.google.com/intl/en/help/cheatsheet.html>.

Searching Elsewhere (besides Google)

Other Major Search Engines

There are a number of search engines available for your use on the Internet, each with their strengths and weaknesses, and each covering different web sites. From time-to-time a search engine will start to get some buzz over some new search feature, but for the most part what matters most to people looking for information is familiarity and size. It is in those two departments that the three primary major search engines used today, *Google*, *Yahoo!*, and MSN's *Live Search* dominate the field. Recent news has focused on a possible purchase of *Yahoo!* by Microsoft, so by this time next year, the

major search engines may be down to only two.

Especially if you are trying to do a somewhat comprehensive search or if you are failing to uncover as many results as you would like to find, re-running your search in at least one or two of the other major search engines may uncover additional results not found in your original search. For example, when you run the search *"Erik Moore" archivist* in *Google* and in *Live Search* then review the first 20 results in each search engine, you will find that there are only 2 web pages that appear on both lists. With this particular search you will also find that the results in *Live Search* are much more relevant that in the *Google* search.   Results returning links to the specific 'Erik Moore' being searched made up only 6 out of the top 20 *Google* results, but 18 out of the top 20 *Live Search* results. You cannot predict which general search engine will offer you more relevant results on any given search, which is why it is good to remember to search a different search engine if your basic *Google* search returns disappointing results (or even if it doesn't!).

Live Search <www.live.com>

MSN completely overhauled their search index database and re-launched it under the name *Live Search* in September 2006. It is contains more unique and fresher information than you might find in *Google* or *Yahoo!* because of this more recent overhaul. *Live Search,* like *Google*, supports many additional databases such as 'Images,' 'Video,' 'News,' 'Maps,' 'MSN,' as well as 'Academic,' 'Books,' 'Feeds,' 'Health,' and 'QnA.' Under 'Search Options' it sets defaults to automatically make your results more relevant, including a default current local location, language defaults, and a

moderate filtering of images for sexual content. *Live Search* also has a site-clustering

feature, so it defaults to showing no more than two hits per web site, which can be

helpful if you want to scan several options, but you can increase or decrease the site-

filtering also under 'Search Options.'

Yahoo! <www.yahoo.com>

     Yahoo! introduced its own unique and sizable search index database in February

2004. You can access it on the *Yahoo!* homepage or go to the specific search engine

address <search.yahoo.com>. *Yahoo!* also contains links to the *Yahoo! Directory*, which

are collections of links that arranged into useful subject areas by humans instead of

machines, in addition to specialized search databases such as 'Images,' 'Video,' 'Local,'

'Shopping,' 'Audio,' 'Answers,' 'Jobs,' and 'News.' *Yahoo!* does offer more powerful

Boolean search capabilities and indexes more of a file (500 KB) than *Google*. The

"Options" offer many similar advanced search fields as Google. In addition, you can use

the field 'Subscriptions' that allows you to enable searches across premium content like

Factiva and LexisNexis that you already pay for. Returning to our earlier search for

"Erik Moore" archivist we find that in *Yahoo!* we get only 3 websites that overlap with

our *Google* search and we find the results to be a highly relevant 18 out of the top 20

match for the "Erik Moore" we are searching for.

Subject Specific Search Engines

     Another approach to refining your search for information is to avoid the major

search engines altogether. Instead, utilize a subject specific search engine that focuses on legal or government topics. Below are several subject specific search engines that may be useful in your research.

Westlaw WebPlus <websearch.thomson.com>

Westlaw WebPlus is a new and evolving search engine from Thomson West released for use in 2007. Still in beta test, it is difficult to say how and where this search engine will be used in the future. Currently you can see a demo of it at the above address, but if you want to search it you have to log into your Westlaw account. Access to the search engine is free, however. *WebPlus* searches the web in much the same way a major search engine such as *Google* or *Live Search* does, but it is applying a different ranking system to the results in order to promote webpages that contain significant legal content. Westlaw editors are also selecting webpages that they identify as important in their subject areas and these handpicked websites are being given a higher rank in the returned results. Search results returned in Westlaw WebPlus can be refined by selecting 'Subject,' 'Domain,' or 'File Format' to filter the search results further.

Legal Research Search Engine
<library.lawschool.cornell.edu/WhatWeDo/ResearchGuides/Legal-Research-Engine.cfm>

The Law Library at Cornell University maintains the *LegalResearch Search Engine* as a tool for accessing authoritative legal research guides and locating substantive legal information that has been identified by the law librarians as useful.

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There are four different search boxes to select, the first one is for accessing legal

research guides, the second one searches the Cornell Law Library e-newsletter *InSITE*

that features descriptions of important and useful legal webpages, and the third one

searches across a selected group of academic legal blogs. The fourth one called, "I want

it all!," allows you to do a combined search of the other three. While the total number of

results returned in the *Legal Research Search Engine* is much less than a traditional

search engine, it has a much higher rate of relevancy for legal research needs.

Findlaw LawCrawler <lawcrawler. findlaw.com>

 LawCrawler, available on the *Findlaw* website, is the oldest search engine

specializing in legal topics. Its weakness is that it treats most legal websites the same

focusing on frequency to term use, unlike the newer *Westlaw WebPlus* or *Legal*

Research Search Engine both of which use human editors as well as automated limits to

identify on topic websites, giving less weight to legal websites that are purely

commercial and have no real legal content.

USA.gov <www.usa.gov>

 If you are looking for information from a Federal government agency or

department, then start your search at the Federal government's search engine at

USA.gov. Began in 2000 and evolved through several name changes, the USA.gov

search engine allows you to search all federal government websites helping to narrow

your search for federal information, rules, and reports.

Directories and Wikis

The search engine has become the dominate research tool on the Internet because the shear volume of webpages available makes it difficult to find information any other way. Sometimes research does not call for an exhaustive search, but rather the need to locate one or two highly relevant sources. Directories and wikis maintain human selected and analyzed information links often giving them a high level of relevancy. They offer the ability to browse predetermined categories that can be especially useful when you are uncertain of what search terms to use. Most directories and wikis also have a search available for the content of their site, but their real strength lies in their browsable topical or alphabetical arrangement, not unlike traditional print reference sources. A few popular examples are listed below.

Findlaw <www.findlaw.com>

Findlaw is the most well know and popular site on the Internet for legal information. The tab on the top 'For Legal Professionals' takes one to a well organized directory of links perceived to be of interest to the practicing lawyer. Areas highlighted include 'Research the Law,' 'In the News,' 'Legal Market Center,' and 'Practice Tools.'

Blawg Search <blawgsearch.justia.com>

Blawg Search is both a search engine of the content of legal blogs or "blawgs" and a directory of the blogs themselves. The directory is very helpful if you are trying to identify legal blogs in particular practice areas or jurisdictions. At the top of the page

you can see the 'Most Popular' legal blogs, based on what users of Blawg Search are accessing most frequently. The 'Categories' section features more than 60 topics plus additional links to law schools, states, and countries, covering around 2500 legal blogs.

Wikipedia <www.wikipedia.org>

Wikipedia is the best known wiki on the Internet, providing users with encyclopedia style entries for traditional subjects, professional topics, and pop culture items, currently numbering over 2 million entries in English alone. It makes a useful reference resource for basic definitions and histories for many legal topics. *Wikipedia* under 'contents' maintains a categorical index as well as an alphabetical list of entries. All wikis, such as *Wikipedia*, are maintained by their users, so reliability is an issue to keep in mind when using one as a source.

Looking for the Invisible Web

Knowing a few basic things about all search engines can help you retrieve the search results you want. First, you need to remember that not all information is on the Internet. While there is a significant amount of information on the Internet, it is not necessarily the exact information you are looking for. There has to have been some reason or purpose for a certain piece of information to have been posted to the Internet to begin with in order for you to find it later. This is especially true when looking for information about people or events.

Second, even if the information is available on the Internet, you may not be able to find it using a search engine. Search engines are actually databases of indexed web content covering only portions of the Internet. This is why the fact that *Google* indexes less of each webpage visited than *Yahoo!* or *Live Search* can be significant to your search results. There are also parts of the Internet that search engines cannot index for various reasons, commonly because the information contained at a particular website can only be accessed by querying a database on that website – otherwise the information does not exist in a format that a search engine could gather. This type of information is what makes up what is referred to as 'the invisible web.'

Sometimes the best way to begin your search in *Google*, or any search engine for that matter, is not to look for the specific piece of information you need, but instead to look for a web resource that would be likely to contain the information you are seeking. Use *Google* to conduct searches for databases and other searchable resources on the Internet. This search method is one way to uncover the invisible web. For example, if you want to find out what the currency exchange rate was for Canadian dollars to US dollars on February 22, 2000, just putting in *currency rates Canadian dollar February 22, 2000* will not return an exact answer. The more efficient way to access this information is rather than putting in the exact date, to insert instead the words 'historical' and 'database.' Using the search terms *currency rates Canadian dollar historical database* you get several historical currency databases as the top choices. You then look at one or two of those, inputting the date you are interested in, and you will have the answer you are looking for. The trick is to add the term 'database' to your search terms in order to locate of these types of web resources.

Conclusion

The Internet is a cost-effective, content rich collection of resources that can

provide you with facts you need. Often a basic search in *Google* will bring up the exact

information you are looking for. When a basic *Google* search fails to return relevant

results, however, do not give up thinking that the information is not available. Instead,

make use of the Advanced Search options in *Google*, search other major search engines,

such as *Live Search* and *Yahoo!*, use a subject specific search engine or directory if

known, and search for resources rather than facts. Taking the initiative to search

beyond basic *Google* will provide you with the confidence that you are locating the

information you need and will make your searching of the Internet more successful.

Sources for Further Learning

The sources listed below provide expanded information on the topics discussed in

this paper and will be useful for further learning or reference.

Rich, Tracey R. **"How Lawyers Can Improve Search Results,"** National Law
    Journal lawjobs.com Career Center – Career Advancement (July 25, 2007).
    http://www.law.com/jsp/law/careercenter/lawArticleCareerCenter.jsp?id=11852
    67998904

An excellent short article offering tips on using the Advanced Search options in

Google to maximize relevant results.

Levitt, Carole A. and Mark E. Rosch. **<u>The Lawyer's Guide to Fact Finding on the</u>**
<u>**Internet**</u>. 3rd ed. Chicago: American Bar Association Law Practice Management
Section, 2006.

Designed for practicing lawyers, the 3rd edition of this book was published in late

2006 and offers a lot of advice on searching strategies as well as detailed coverage of

preferred web sites covering a range of subject research areas.

The Virtual Chase <www.virtualchase.com>

Designed with experienced researchers, lawyers, and other legal professionals in

mind, the purpose of *The Virtual Chase* is to inform about websites and research

strategies for finding the law. The website offers 'Internet Research' guides, tips on

evaluating Internet sources, and current research news with a RSS feed alert service.

LLRX <www.llrx.com>

LLRX.com is a free Web journal dedicated to providing legal, library, IT/IS,

marketing and administrative professionals with up-to-date information on a wide

range of Internet research and technology-related issues, applications, resources and

tools, since 1996. This legal web journal provides legal columns, feature articles, topical

research guides, and legal-tech and library related news resources.