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White Paper

Getting the Most Out of Google

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March 27, 2007

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Operators

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Google has become the standard for online searches. And research. (Though Yahoo! is a pretty close runner up.) One need only look to the billions of documents and images Google has served up to realize that.

The way Google has evolved over the past few years justifies their position as the leader. They've implemented several features which help users more easily dig deep for results. For instance, "stop words," which are common words like *the, an, of, in, where, who, and is* used to be omitted from web searches, but no longer.

And Google uses various 'operators' to help users refine searches. Operators are basically parameters for a search. For example they now offer the *date:* operator which allows you to restrict search results to pages added or updated within a specified number of months.

To restrict your search to a particular Web site, you can use the *site:* operator, and you can add subdirectories to the end of the domain to restrict the results to a particular section of the site. For example, *white papers site:www.lbrbmarketing.com/news.html*.

Another useful operator to know about is the *link:* operator. *Link:* serves up pages that link to a specified Web page. Follow the *link:* operator with a URL, such as *link:www.starbucks.com* to find pages that link to the Starbuck's home page.

For you Yahoo! aficionados, Yahoo! offers the *linkdomain:* operator, which is similar to Google's *link:* operator. The difference is that it shows links to every page of the specified site.

If you use quotes for phrase searches – "independent marketing agency" – you can shortcut that by simply placing periods between each word: *independent.marketing.agency*. It's all the same to Google.

Search Tools

Google offers a number of great services and tools. Here are some of them:

- ☞ **Google Personalized Search** Orders your search results based on past search queries and the search results that you've previously clicked on
- ☞ **Google Personalized Homepage** Customize Google's home page with your city's weather, your favorite team's scores, past search history, bookmarks, news headlines, and RSS feeds
- ☞ **Google Suggest** Enhancement to the Google search box that suggests search terms based on your initial keystrokes
- ☞ **Google Search History** Remembers your past searches and learns over time, giving you improved search results
- ☞ **Google SMS** Search Google by sending your query as a text message through your cell phone and receive the results back as a text message

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- ☞ **Google Q&A** Rather than returning search results, Google sometimes will answer your search query with a factual answer; built into Google's main search engine
- ☞ **Google Reader** Subscribe to RSS feeds and follow them through this web-based aggregator
- ☞ **Google Web Accelerator** An application for your PC that makes Web pages load faster
- ☞ **Google Blog Search** Not unlike Feedster or PubSub, allows you to search through an index of RSS feeds

Google Personalized Homepage

You can customize Google's home page with local weather, the time and date, sports scores, the latest news items, among other things. To customize your Google home page go to: <http://www.google.com/ig>.



Google Suggest

Google Suggest is a neat little feature that can help you think outside the box when you're doing a search. It's located at <http://google.com/webhp?complete=1>. What Google Suggest does is guess at what you're searching for before you finish entering the search phrase. When you're

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searching you may be locked on to one particular term. Begin typing it and Google throws you a list of key words to help you better zero in on what you're looking for. And the list that's presented is based on search popularity so it's pretty likely you'll get relevant results. Check it by typing in the word buy followed by any letter of the alphabet and you'll get a list of possibilities – even for X! And along with the list Google gives you, you'll see the number of results for each specific term. Google Suggest is also available via a toolbar extension for the Firefox Web browser, available for download from <http://toolbar.google.com/firefox/extensions/suggest>.



Google Search History

The goal of Google's Search History tool is for the search engine to get smarter. Google analyzes your search history so it can serve up more targeted results. And here's a really great feature: As long as you're logged in to your Google account, your search history will be used from whatever computer you're on. You don't need to be on the computer on which you set the account up for your search history to be utilized. So no matter where you're at Google will track your search activity, give you access to past searches so you can do them again and even show you what you clicked on.

(Image on following page.)



To access this feature, go to <http://www.google.com/psearch>.

Google SMS (Short Messaging Service)



Google is in the testing stage for its SMS or Short Messaging Service. You can conduct searches from your cell phone by sending Google your query as a SMS text message to the US shortcode 46645 (GOOGL on most phones).

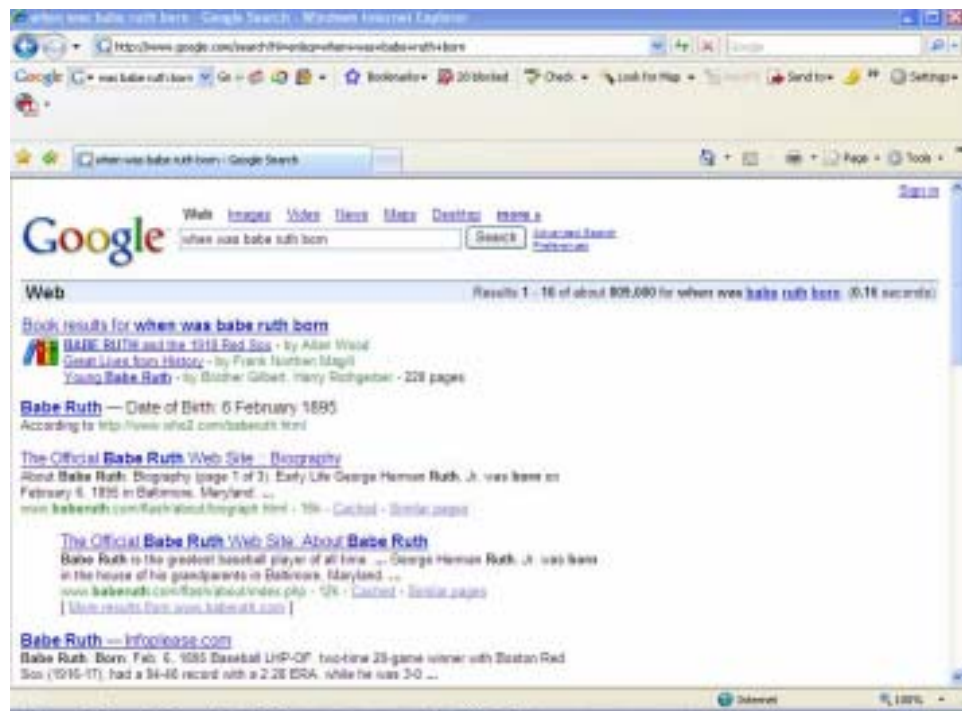
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Google will send you a text message with your results, usually within a minute. If you get more than one result from your search they'll be labeled as "1/3", "2/3", and so on. To get Google SMS help info sent directly to your phone, send the word "help" as a text message to 46645. Visit <http://sms.google.com> for more details.

Google Q&A

The Google Q&A feature isn't necessarily a separate tool, but kicks in when questions rather than words or phrases are entered. When you enter a question rather than a keyword or phrase Google may offer the direct answer and the source of that answer, along with links to other relevant links.

For example, if you type in *when was babe ruth born*, Google returns the date followed by a list of other results.

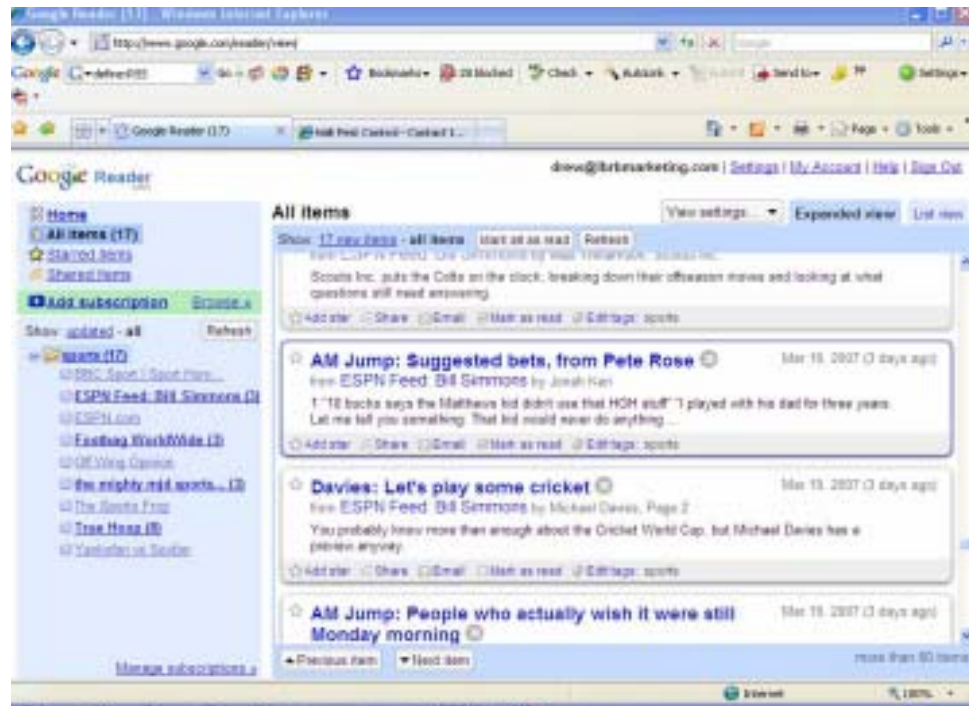


Google Reader

The way people consume the latest news and blog content has come a long way thanks to RSS (Rich Site Summary) feeds. By subscribing to Google Reader (it's free) you'll get feeds of the news and information that's relevant to you.

Google Reader is available at <http://reader.google.com>.

(Image on following page.)



Google Web Accelerator

If your high speed connection isn't high speed enough for you, Google offers a Web Accelerator application. These days, most ISPs provide a similar product as a standard offering and Google's no exception. Similar to other accelerators Google's Web Accelerator is downloaded directly to your computer. It downloads and caches frequently requested pages so that they are instantly available. It also helps you by 'pre-fetching' certain pages by compressing the data before it's sent to you, then downloads only the fresh part of the page if it's been updated.

Google Web Accelerator can be downloaded at <http://webaccelerator.google.com>.

Google Blog Search

Google Blog Search is actually a search engine for RSS feeds rather than blogs. So blogs that don't use RSS feeds won't show up but sites that aren't blogs but do use RSS feeds will. Despite this little shortcoming, Google Blog Search does have a very good advanced search tool which allows you to search by authors, date and blog. Google Blog Search is located at <http://blogsearch.google.com>.

(Image on following page.)



Other Google Features

Gmail

Gmail Google offers free Gmail accounts. You can sign up for a Gmail account, with over a gigabyte of storage space, at <http://gmail.google.com>.

The Google Toolbar

The Google Toolbar is a great utility that offers several features, such as the ability to search your own computer, a set of content specific buttons, a spellcheck for forms, etc. You can download it from <http://toolbar.google.com>.

Google Web Alerts

Google Web Alerts, which is in the BETA stage, allows you to monitor certain topics and receive emails when new content becomes available. This is a great way to be able to stay ahead of a specific event or trend. It's available at <http://www.google.com/alerts>.

Google Groups

Google Groups (<http://groups.google.com/>) offers email-based discussion-group functionality and is integrated with Usenet newsgroup functionality. Search, browse, or participate on Usenet newsgroups or email lists. Or you can start your own email discussion list for free.

Google Base

Google Base is sort of like Craigslist. It's a repository for information – anything that you'd like Google to host for you and make searchable. Signing up requires a Google account and you can access the service at <http://base.google.com>.

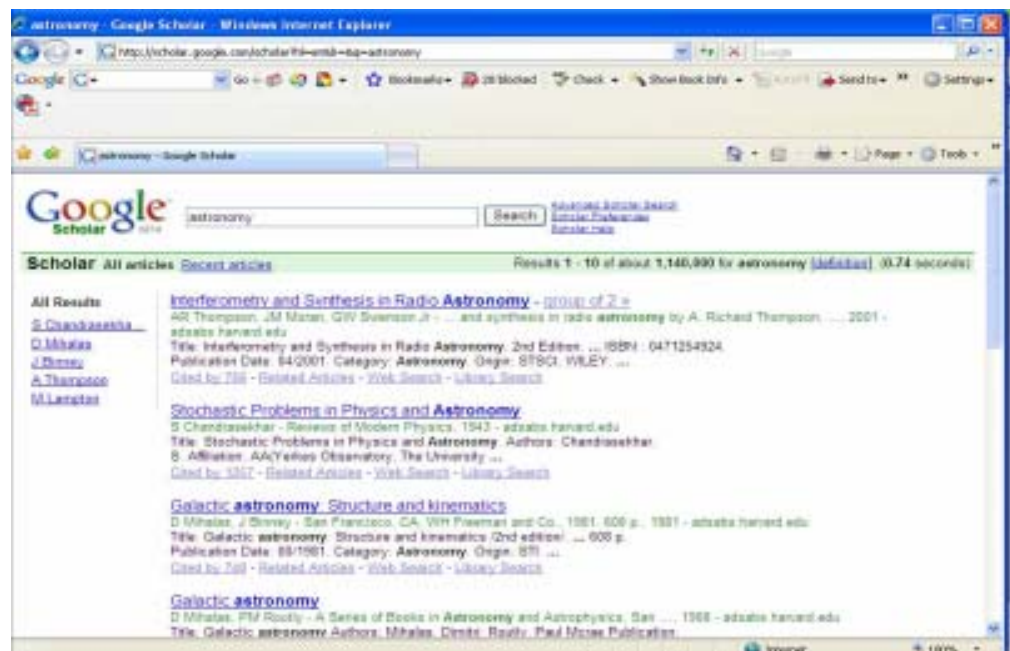
Google Desktop Search

Google Desktop Search is one of our favorite Google tools. You download it to your computer and it allows you to search Outlook emails, Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, instant messages, previously viewed Web pages, and more.

The hitch is it only works on PCs running Windows XP and Windows 2000 Service Pack 3 and above. (As of this writing, we're not sure how or if Windows Vista is supported.) Downloading the application is a breeze and after installation, Google Desktop Search begins indexing all the files on your hard drive. One of the things that's pretty interesting is that it integrates Desktop Search results along with Web search results. Google Desktop also comes with the Sidebar, which continuously displays on your desktop personalized information such as news headlines, RSS feeds, sticky notes, weather, photos, real-time stock quotes, new email messages, maps, and frequently used files and a quick-find feature that lets you launch programs with a few keystrokes.

Google Desktop Search is available to download from <http://desktop.google.com>.

Google Scholar



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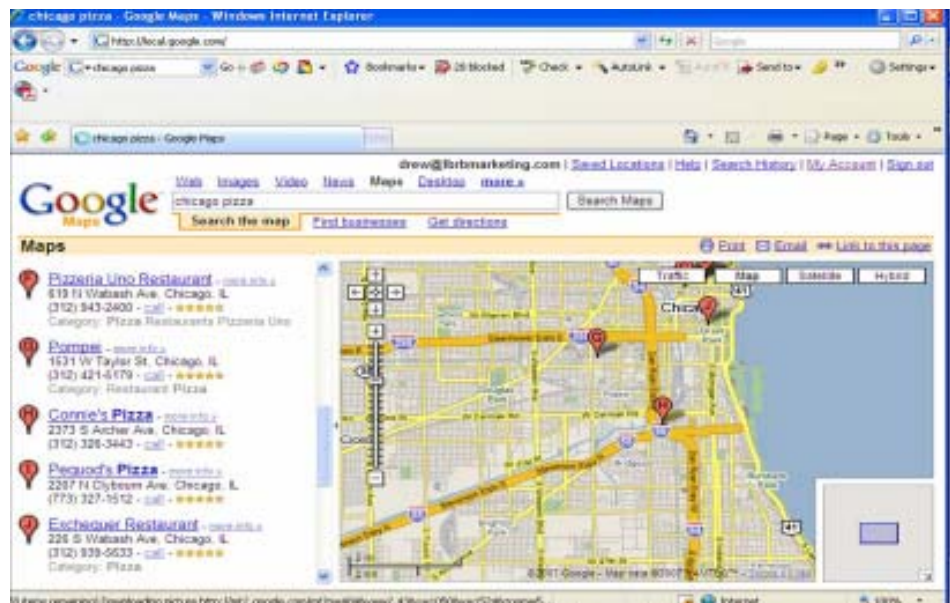
Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com>) allows you to search through academic and scholarly literature, including articles from peer reviewed academic journals. What makes this a great resource is that Google has secured permission from publishers to gain access to subscription-only content that isn't normally accessible to search spiders.

That said, you may be able to view only portions of some articles but Google requires the publishers to provide at least abstracts to Google Scholar searchers. Search results also have a "cited by" link that when clicked on shows you all the citations to that document in the scholarly literature that Google Scholar knows about.

Google Local

If you need to find local businesses or services in the US, Canada, and a few cities abroad, or if you want to explore a region, Google Local (<http://local.google.com>) is very useful. It's especially useful if you're looking for restaurants within a certain distance.

You can using a location name or address and the type of business you're looking for. And you can get driving directions and conduct keyword searches that are restricted to the map region displayed on your screen. (HINT – If you're ever in Chicago, I highly recommend Connie's Pizza. Order a stuffed spinach pizza – you'll never want to settle for anything else!)



Google Local returns phonebook-type listings with associated Web pages on the left, and on the right the top results are all pinpointed on the map. The map interface allows you to toggle between street maps, satellite images, or a hybrid view of both, and you can pan around and zoom without the slow page reloading of other mapping services.

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Google Mobile

Google Mobile (<http://www.google.com/mobile/>) offers a scaled down interface for cell phones and PDAs that have web connections.



Google Earth

Google Earth (<http://earth.google.com>) installs on your PC and allows you to see satellite views of any location on Earth, along with street maps overlaid with optional views. All you need to do is point and click and satellite images and local facts are delivered to your browser. You can also tilt and rotate the view. One of the more interesting bells and whistles is the ability to obtain driving directions and "fly" along your route.

Google Sets

Google Sets (<http://labs.google.com/sets>) is a great tool for helping you think outside the box when you're looking for information. Simply go to the Sets page and enter a list of items. Google presents you with a list of similar items, which you can then click on to see a list of search results. Give it a try by entering nike, adidas and shoes. Select a long or short list and you'll see what a powerful tool this can be.

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Tips for a More Efficient Desktop

Finally, here are some Google-icious things you can do to make your desktop more efficient.

- 1 Create a cheat sheet of the search operators you most want to use, print it, and keep it near your computer.
- 2 Install the Google Toolbar and Google Desktop Search.
- 3 Sign up for Google Reader and select your favorite blogs and news sites so you'll receive their RSS feeds.
- 4 Buy a Google reference book and keep it next to your computer (right under your cheat sheet!).
- 5 Load your key competitors' names, your company and brand names into Google Alerts.
- 6 Set your browser start page to something more useful like the Google Personalized Homepage, Google Reader, or Google News.
- 7 Enable Google Search History to start getting personalized search results.
- 8 If you use a Firefox browser, configure the browser's search box to include in the dropdown list the various Google sites.
- 9 Take the free Google tutorial at GoogleGuide.com.