

PTSLUG Mac Programs Workshop (SIG)
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Note: Most of the information below is from Google's web site, which can be found on the Google Home Page under under the link "About Google" then "Google Web Search Features", and is copyrighted material.



Special Features

In addition to providing easy access to billions of web pages, Google has many special features to help you to find exactly what you're looking for. Some of its most popular features are listed below.

- [Everyday Essentials](#)
- [Reference Tools](#)
- [Choosing Keywords](#)
- [Local Search](#)
- [Trip Planning](#)
- [Query Refinements](#)
- [Search by Number](#)

Everyday Essentials

Weather



To see the weather for many U.S. and worldwide cities, type "weather" followed by the city and state, U.S. zip code, or city and country.

Example:

Stock Quotes



To see current market data for a given company or fund, type the ticker symbol into the search box. On the results page, you can click the link to see more data from Google Finance.

Example:

Time



To see the time in many cities around the world, type in "time" and the name of the city.

Example:

Sports Scores



To see scores and schedules for sports teams type the team name or league name into the search box. This is enabled for many leagues including the National Basketball Association, National Football League, National Hockey League, and Major League Baseball.

All sports data provided by STATS, Inc.

Example:

Reference Tools

Calculator



To use Google's built-in calculator function, simply enter the calculation you'd like done into the search box.

Example:

Book Search



If you're looking for results from Google Book Search, you can enter the name of the author or book title into the search box and we'll return any book content we have as part of your normal web results. You can click through on the record to view more detailed info about that author or title.

Example:

Earthquakes



To see information about recent earthquakes in a specific area type "earthquake" followed by the city and state or U.S. zip code. For recent earthquake activity around the world simply type "earthquake" in the search box.

Examples:

Unit Conversion



You can use Google to convert between many different units of measurement of height, weight, and volume among many others. Just enter your desired conversion into the search box and we'll do the rest.

Example:

Public Data



To see trends for population and unemployment rates of U.S. states and counties, type "population" or "unemployment rate" followed by a state or county. You can click through to a page that lets you compare different locations.

Example:

People



Profiles

If you're looking for someone you just met or a long-lost friend, enter the name of that person plus some identifying words about him or her to see a list of people with that name.

Example:

Choosing Keywords

Synonym Search



If you want to search not only for your search term but also for its synonyms, place the tilde sign (~) immediately in front of your search term.

Example:

Dictionary Definitions



To see a definition for a word or phrase, simply type the word "define" then a space, then the word(s) you want defined. To see a list of different definitions from various online sources, you can type "define:" followed by a word or phrase. Note that the results will define the entire phrase.

Example:

Spell Checker



Google's spell checking software automatically checks whether your query uses the most common spelling of a given word. If it thinks you're likely to generate better results with an alternative spelling, it will ask "Did you mean: (more common spelling)?". Click the suggested spelling to launch a Google search for that term.

Example:

Local Search

Local Search



If you're looking for a store, restaurant, or other local business you can search for the category of business and the location and we'll return results right on the page, along with a map, reviews, and contact information.

Example:

Movie Showtimes



To find reviews and showtimes for movies playing near you, type "movies" or the name of a current film into the Google search box. If you've already saved your location on a previous search, the top search result will display showtimes for nearby theaters for the movie you've chosen.

Example:

Real Estate and Housing



To see home listings in a given area type "housing", "home", or "real estate" and the name of a city or a U.S. zip code into the Google search box and hit the Enter key or click the Google Search button. Clicking the "Go" button on the results page will display details of individual homes that Google has indexed.

Example:

Trip Planning

Airline Travel Info



To see flight status for arriving and departing U.S. flights, type in the name of the airline and the flight number into the search box. You can also see delays at a specific airport by typing in the name of the city or three-letter airport code followed by the word "airport".

Examples:

Currency Conversion



To use our built-in currency converter, simply enter the conversion you'd like done into the Google search box and we'll provide your answer directly on the results page.

Example:

Maps



Looking for a map? Type in the name or U.S. zip code of a location and the word "map" and we'll return a map of that location. Clicking on the map will take you to a larger version on Google Maps.

Example:

Query Refinements

Plus (+) Operator



Google ignores common words and characters such as where, the, how, and other digits and letters that slow down your search without improving the results. If a common word is essential to getting the results you want, you can make sure we pay attention to it by putting a "+" sign in front of it.

Example:

Related Search



To search for web pages that have similar content to a given site, type "related:" followed by the website address into the Google search box.

Example:

Fill in the Blank



Sometimes the best way to ask a question is to get Google to 'fill in the blank' by adding an asterisk (*) at the part of the sentence or question that you want finished into the Google search box.

Example:

Search by Number

Package Tracking



You can track packages by typing the tracking number for your UPS, Fedex or USPS package directly into the search box. We'll return results that include quick links to easily track the status of your shipment.

Example:

Patent Numbers



To search for U.S. patents, enter the word "patent" followed by the patent number into the Google search box and hit the Enter key or click the Google Search button.

Example:

Area and Zip Codes



To see the geographical location for any U.S. telephone area code, just type the three-digit area code into the Google search box and hit the Enter key or click the Google Search button.

Example:

Google search basics: Basic search help

Search is simple: just type whatever comes to mind in the search box, hit Enter or click on the Google Search button, and Google will search the web for pages that are relevant to your query.

Most of the time you'll find exactly what you were looking for with just a basic query. However the following tips can help you refine your technique to make the most of your searches. Throughout the article, we'll use square brackets [] to signal queries, so [black and white] is one query, while [black] and [white] are two.

Some basic facts

- **Every word matters.** Generally, all the words you put in the query will be used. There are some [exceptions](#).
- Search is always case insensitive. Searching for [new york times] is the same as searching for [New York Times].
- With some [exceptions](#), punctuation is ignored (that is, you can't search for @#\$%^&*()=+[]\ and other special characters).

Guidelines for better search

- **Keep it simple.** If you're looking for a particular company, just enter its name, or as much of its name as you can recall. If you're looking for a particular concept, place, or product, start with its name. If you're looking for a pizza restaurant, just enter pizza and the name of your town or your zip code. Most queries do not require advanced operators or unusual syntax. Simple is good.
- **Think how the page you are looking for will be written.** A search engine is not a human, it is a program that matches the words you give to pages on the web. **Use the words that are most likely to appear on the page.** For example, instead of saying [my head hurts], say [headache], because that's the term a medical page will use. The query [in what country are bats considered an omen of good luck?] is very clear to a person, but the document that gives the answer may not have those words. Instead, use the query [bats are considered good luck in] or even just [bats good luck], because that is probably what the right page will say.
- **Describe what you need with as few terms as possible.** The goal of each word in a query is to focus it further. Since all words are used, each additional word limits the results. If you limit too much, you will miss a lot of useful information. The main advantage to starting with fewer keywords is that, if you don't get what you need, the results will likely give you a good indication of what additional words are needed to refine your results on the next search. For example, [weather cancun] is a simple way to find the weather and it is likely to give better results than the longer [weather report for cancun mexico].

- **Choose descriptive words.** The more unique the word is the more likely you are to get relevant results. Words that are not very descriptive, like 'document,' 'website,' 'company,' or 'info,' are usually not needed. Keep in mind, however, that even if the word has the correct meaning but it is not the one most people use, it may not match the pages you need. For example, [celebrity ringtones] is more descriptive and specific than [celebrity sounds].

How to read search results

Google's goal is to provide you with results that are clear and easy to read. The diagram below points out four features that are important to understanding the search results page:



1. The title: The first line of any search result is the title of the webpage
2. The snippet: A description of or an excerpt from the webpage
3. The URL: the web page's address.
4. Cached link: A link to an earlier version of this page. Click here if the page you wanted isn't available.

All these features are important in determining whether the page is what you need. The title is what the author of the page designated as the best short description of the page.

The snippet is Google's algorithmic attempt to extract just the part of the page most relevant to your query. The URL tells you about the site in general.

The basic search information above covers all the most common issues, but sometimes you need a little bit more power. The best way to do this is use the Advanced Search link next to Google search entry block. However you can also structure your search yourself using the information below which covers some of the more advanced features of Google Web Search.

Keep in mind though that even very advanced searchers, such as the members of the search group at Google, use these features less than 5% of the time. Basic simple search is often enough. As always, we use square brackets [] to denote queries, so [to be or not to be] is an example of a query; [to be] or [not to be] are two examples of queries.

- **Phrase search ("")**

By putting double quotes around a set of words, you are telling Google to consider the exact words in that exact order without any change. Google already uses the order and the fact that the words are together as a very strong signal and will stray from it only for a good reason, so quotes are usually unnecessary. By insisting on phrase search you might be missing good results accidentally. For example, a search for ["Alexander Bell"] (with quotes) will miss the pages that refer to Alexander G. Bell.

- **Search within a specific website (site:)**

Google allows you to specify that your search results must come from a given website. For example, the query [iraq site:nytimes.com] will return pages about Iraq but only from nytimes.com. The simpler queries [iraq nytimes.com] or [iraq New York Times] will usually be just as good, though they might return results from other sites that mention the New York Times. You can also specify a whole class of sites, for example [iraq site:.gov] will return results only from a .gov domain and [iraq site:.iq] will return results only from Iraqi sites.

- **Terms you want to exclude (-)**

Attaching a minus sign immediately before a word indicates that you do not want pages that contain this word to appear in your results. The minus sign should appear immediately before the word and should be preceded with a space. For example, in the query [anti-virus software], the minus sign is used as a hyphen and will not be interpreted as an exclusion symbol; whereas the query [anti-virus -software] will search for the words 'anti-virus' but exclude references to software. You can exclude as many words as you want by using the - sign in front of all of them, for example [jaguar -cars -football -os]. The - sign can be used to exclude more than just words. For example, place a hyphen before the 'site:' operator (without a space) to exclude a specific site from your search results.

- **Fill in the blanks (*)**
The *, or wildcard, is a little-known feature that can be very powerful. If you include * within a query, it tells Google to try to treat the star as a placeholder for any unknown term(s) and then find the best matches. For example, the search [Google *] will give you results about many of Google's products (go to next page and next page -- we have many products). The query [Obama voted * on the * bill] will give you stories about different votes on different bills. Note that the * operator works only on whole words, not parts of words.
- **Search exactly as is (+)**
Google employs synonyms automatically, so that it finds pages that mention, for example, childcare for the query [child care] (with a space), or California history for the query [ca history]. But sometimes Google helps out a little too much and gives you a synonym when you don't really want it. By attaching a + immediately before a word (remember, don't add a space after the +), you are telling Google to match that word precisely as you typed it. Putting double quotes around the word will do the same thing.
- **The OR operator**
Google's default behavior is to consider all the words in a search. If you want to specifically allow either one of several words, you can use the OR operator (note that you have to type 'OR' in ALL CAPS). For example, [San Francisco Giants 2004 OR 2005] will give you results about either one of these years, whereas [San Francisco Giants 2004 2005] (without the OR) will show pages that include both years on the same page. The symbol | can be substituted for OR. (The AND operator, by the way, is the default, so it is not needed.)

Exceptions

Search is rarely absolute. Search engines use a variety of techniques to imitate how people think and to approximate their behavior. As a result, most rules have exceptions. For example, the query [for better or for worse] will not be interpreted by Google as an OR query, but as a phrase that matches a (very popular) comic strip. Google will show calculator results for the query [34 * 87] rather than use the 'Fill in the blanks' operator. Both cases follow the obvious intent of the query. Here is a list of exceptions to some of the rules and guidelines that were mentioned in this and the [Basic Search Help](#) article:

Exceptions to 'Every word matters'

- Words that are commonly used, like 'the,' 'a,' and 'for,' are usually ignored (these are called stop words). But there are even exceptions to this exception. The search [the who] likely refers to the band; the query [who] probably refers to the World Health Organization -- Google will not ignore the word 'the' in the first query.

- Synonyms might replace some words in your original query. (Adding + before a word disables synonyms.)
- A particular word might not appear on a page in your results if there is sufficient other evidence that the page is relevant. The evidence might come from language analysis that Google has done or many other sources. For example, the query [overhead view of the bellagio pool] will give you nice overhead pictures from pages that do not include the word 'overhead.'

Punctuation that is not ignored

- Punctuation in popular terms that have particular meanings, like [C++] or [C#] (both are names of programming languages), are not ignored.
- The dollar sign (\$) is used to indicate prices. [nikon 400] and [nikon \$400] will give different results.
- The hyphen - is sometimes used as a signal that the two words around it are very strongly connected. (Unless there is no space after the - and a space before it, in which case it is a negative sign.)
- The underscore symbol _ is not ignored when it connects two words, e.g. [quick_sort].

Features: Google logo changes

From time to time Google modifies the Google logo in honor of holidays celebrated by Google's users around the world. These special logos - Google calls them doodles -- usually run for 24 hours. You can find an archive of our more popular logo variations at <http://www.google.com/holidaylogos.html>. If this piques your interest, check out the Oodles of Doodles entry on the Google Blog at <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2004/06/oodles-of-doodles.html>

Google Preferences

Interface Language

Display Google tips and messages in: Afrikaans Albanian Amharic Arabic Armenian Azerbaijani Basque Belarusian Bengali Bihari Bork, bork, bork! Bosnian Breton Bulgarian Cambodian Catalan Chinese (Simplified) Chinese (Traditional) Corsican Croatian Czech Danish Dutch **Elmer Fudd** English Esperanto Estonian Faroese Filipino Finnish French Frisian Galician Georgian German Greek Guarani Gujarati Hacker Hausa Hebrew Hindi Hungarian Icelandic Indonesian Interlingua Irish Italian Japanese Javanese Kannada Kazakh Kinyarwanda Kirundi **Klingon** Korean Kurdish Kyrgyz Laothian Latin Latvian Lingala Lithuanian Macedonian Malagasy Malay Malayalam Maltese Maori Marathi Moldavian Mongolian Montenegrin Nepali Norwegian Norwegian (Nynorsk) Occitan Oriya Oromo Pashto Persian Pirate Polish Portuguese (Brazil) Portuguese (Portugal) Punjabi Quechua Romanian Romansh Russian Scots Gaelic Serbian Serbo-Croatian Sesotho Shona Sindhi Sinhalese Slovak Slovenian Somali Spanish Sundanese Swahili Swedish Tajik Tamil Tatar Telugu Thai Tigrinya Tonga

Turkish Turkmen Twi Uighur Ukrainian Urdu Uzbek Vietnamese Welsh Xhosa Yiddish
Yoruba Zulu

If you do not find your native language in the pulldown menu, you can help Google create it through our [Google in Your Language program](#).

Search Language

Search for pages written in any language ([Recommended](#)).
You can specify that you “Prefer pages written in a particular language(s)

SafeSearch Filtering

[Google's SafeSearch](#) blocks web pages containing explicit sexual content from appearing in search results. You can:

Use strict filtering (Filter both explicit text and explicit images)
Use moderate filtering (Filter explicit images only - default behavior)
Do not filter my search results.

Number of Results

Google's default (10 results) provides the fastest results.
You can specify a display of 10 to 100 results per page.

Results Window

You can tell google to “Open search results in a new browser window.”

Query Suggestions

You can specify “Provide query suggestions in the search box.” or “Do not provide query suggestions in the search box.”

Subscribed Links

You must have a Google Account to use Subscribed Links. [Sign in](#) to your Google Account to get started, or create one if you don't already have one.

Save your preferences when finished and return to search.

Searching Across Languages

To the right of the Google search bar is an option for “Language Tools”

This will allow you to type a search phrase in your own language and find pages in another language. Google will translate the results for you to read.

Another useful feature on this page is the ability to translate text from one language to another.

You can also use this page to translate a web page into English or another language.

Some of the Special features of Google's Advanced Search link.

Google Book Search can search over the full text of some seven millions books. Whenever you do a Google web search, you're also searching Google's book index; any relevant hits will appear in your search results, and clicking on a result will take you to the relevant page in the book, where you can browse a few more pages and learn where to borrow or buy it. The books in Google Book Search come from two sources: The Library Project and the The Partner Program. More on these on the Google web site.

Google Scholar provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. From one place, you can search across many disciplines and sources: peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts and articles, from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities and other scholarly organizations. Google Scholar helps you identify the most relevant research across the world of scholarly research.

News Archive search provides an easy way to search and explore historical archives. In addition to helping you search, News archive search can automatically create timelines which show selected results from relevant time periods.

Apple Macintosh has special features for the Mac.

The **U.S. Government** link searches government web pages.

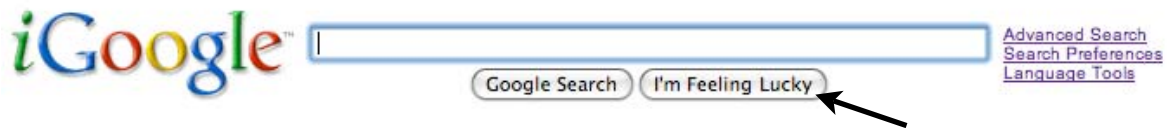
Google's **Universities** link enables you to narrow your search to a specific school website. Try it for things like admissions information, course schedules, or alumni news. To get into your target school, just click the name.



iGoogle (formerly Google Personalized Homepage and Google IG), a service of Google, is a customizable start page or personal web portal much like My Yahoo and Apple's

MobileMe. Its features include the capability to add web pages and Google Gadgets similar to those available on Google Desktop. It is currently available in many localized versions in 42 languages and in over 70 country domain names.

The "I'm Feeling Lucky™" button automatically takes you to the first web page returned for your query. An "I'm Feeling Lucky" search means less time searching for web pages and more time looking at them.



Other forms of Google searches



Some Other General Search Engines

For a complete list of search engines, general and specialized, visit Wikipedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_search_engines

Dogpile, Alta Vista, Ask.com, MSN, AllTheWeb, HotBob, Excite, Yahoo!, Lycos, Magellen, Go

For a comparison of Search Engine features visit one of these sites:

<http://www.llrx.com/node/1177/print>

<http://www.searchengineshowdown.com/features/>

<http://www.mlb.ilstu.edu/ressubj/subject/intrnt/srcheng.htm>

<http://www.noodletools.com/debbie/literacies/information/5locate/adviceengine.html>

<http://www.infopeople.org/search/chart.html>