



Google Search: Techniques

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Introduction

Knowing how to utilize Google Search is powerful. Search skills are an essential 21st century skill that will serve you in finding, organizing, and leveraging information faster and more reliably—thereby increasing productivity and improving your quality of life online.

Digital literacy favors those who are curious, willing to experiment, and change. Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful (Mission of Google). As Google's search engine has evolved in fulfilling its mission, it has matured into a calculator, dictionary, recipe book, unit and currency converter, even a weather forecaster, translator and more! You can use it for almost anything now. By exploring and experimenting with search techniques, you will become more efficient in accessing and making use of the world's information.

Search Techniques

Has performing a Google search ever been a frustrating experience? Have your search queries often produced disappointing results? Let's say you're in search of the most up-to-date information about a particular topic only for old, outdated links to be displayed. It's frustrating when you can't find what you're looking for in the Internet's vast sea of content.

By utilizing the advanced search techniques in Table 1 you can refine your search results, helping you find precisely what you're looking for. These search techniques (Tips and Tricks, 2013) will not only enhance your Google search experience, but also save you valuable time:

Table 1. Google Search Techniques

Search Techniques	Example	Notes
author:	author:blanchard	In Google Scholar, filter search results of articles by a specific author.
define:	define:incredulous	Search for a definition of any word.
time:	time:hurricane, utah	Find the current time for any location in the world.
unit conversion	5280 feet to miles	Try converting currency, lengths, mass, time, temperature, and more. Type “unit conversion” in the search bar.
stocks:	stocks:goog	Get the latest stock performance for ticker symbols.
weather:	weather:honolulu, hi	Find the current weather for any location in the world.
image search	Enter search terms (i.e., noxious weeds), then click “Images”	Search for an image by dragging it into the search bar or visit images.google.com click the camera icon and select “upload image from file”
filetype:	filetype:pdf utah 4-H member registration	Use ppt, doc, xls, jpg, png and others to find documents containing the other keywords in your search.
control+F	<p>PC: Press the Control & F keys at the same time.</p> <p>Apple: Press the Command & F keys at the same time.</p> <p>Android tablets: In a browser window, touch the menu</p>	Locates specific words on a page.

	<p>button in the top right of the screen, then select “find on page.”</p> <p>Safari on iPad tablets: Click the cursor in the search box in the upper right corner of the screen. Directly above the keyboard, a “find on page” box will open.</p>	
inurl:	inurl:getoutdoorsday	Filter search results to contain certain words in a URL.
site:	site:.gov and “national parks”	Limit search to a specific class of sites or domain use.
related:	related:utah4-h.org	Find a page you like? Use related: to find similar sites.
site:	apples site:extension.usu.edu	Including "site:" in a query will display results for a certain website. This also works when searching within specific domains such as like .org, .gov, or .edu.
intitle:	intitle:situational leadership	Limit search by specific words in the title of a webpage.

Conclusion

Google Search has an incredibly deep query language with dozens of options that allows you to filter and refine your searches. By exploring and experimenting with these techniques of search, you will become more efficient in accessing and making use of the world’s information. Search is a remarkable skill every critical thinker needs to learn in order to improve independent learning.

If you’d like to continue improving your search skills, consider taking the free online courses Google offers at powersearchingwithgoogle.com (Russell, 2012).

References

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