

MARKETING MATTERS

Winter 2014

How to Hack Google (No, Not Like That!)

Google is a superb tool. It's like a Swiss Army Knife: it's so great most people who use it don't know what half of it even does. If you're just typing words and phrases into that omnibox and scanning the first page for what you wanted, you're leaving a lot on the table. Here's how to hack Google for precision, depth, and way, way more accurate searching.



Quote Unquote

Google searches by a set of proprietary algorithms, which means Google won't tell anyone exactly how Google searches. But it only searches for exact words or phrases if you tell it to. Enclose your search term in quotes – "it has to be these," 'these kind don't work' – and Google will find you exactly what you're looking for. Once this worked for phrases: now it works for words as well. If you're searching for something unusual and you don't use quotes you'll get a lot of 'words like' or 'did you mean' results. Use quotes and get exactly what you want.

Minus Figures (and Words!)

You can use the '-' symbol before a word to make sure that Google omits all results bearing that word. That can be useful if you're searching for, say, Linux, but you don't want to hear anything about Ubuntu, Fedora or other offshoots.

Site Search

This one is astoundingly useful. It lets you search a site with Google rather than the site's own, internal search machinery, which is often a little creaky and seldom compares to Google's power. If a site won't give you what you want and you know it's there, or you want a type of result from a specific source, say, psychological research from MIT, you can search: 'site: web.mit.edu psychology research' and there it will be. Site search doesn't need any http://, but you will need to put in the full www.webaddress.com to make it work. (For the record, MIT's site is pretty well put together!)

Wild Card

If you know what kind of thing you want, but you don't know exactly what you want, you can use a wild card, in the form of the asterisk (*) symbol to represent the unknown information. Then you can search for 'NFL running back earns * per year' – and find out what * is. It's like algebraic search.

Related Words

This will be Google's idea of related words. Use the tilde symbol ('~', alt + n if you're a Mac user or shift + ' on most other keyboards) to ask Google to search for what it considers to be words similar in meaning to, or otherwise related to, your search terms. Sometimes this will seem a little random, as words that sound or looks the same might come in as well as words with related meanings.

Time Ranges

Google offers time range search built right into its GUI. But if you want more control, or you just find that using keyboard macros makes you feel like a boss, this one's for you. Put your search term as normal, then two dates separated by two periods, like this:

Ubuntu 2008..2009

File Type Search

Useful for excluding images from searches for large bodies of text or for hunting .doc or .pdf files, as well as for seeking high quality graphics and for many other purposes. File type is as intuitive and simple as you could ask for. You do it by writing 'filetype:' your desired file type, and then your search term, like this:

filetype: png sunset boulevard (filetype: png "sunset boulevard" returns very different search results!)

There's more – but even the basic course in Googlenautics should allow you to waste a lot less time scrolling through unwanted search results and get more done.

*Submitted to the Greater Ocean Township Chamber of Commerce by GOTCC member **John Kalli, CEO of Trinity Worldwide Technologies.** Trinity takes care of your IT and stands out for their reliability and responsiveness, focus on your needs, and personable staff who serve as your long-term business partner. www.Trinityww.com
732.780.8615*