

Advanced Internet Search Techniques

Front Range PC Users Group

A. Search resources available on the World Wide Web.

I. Search Engines and Meta Search Engines.

- a. Spider or robot that can harvest the full text from web sites on the Internet.
- b. Computer database that can store the information efficiently.
- c. User interface that allows access to the database.
- d. Meta Search Engine parse requests and uses other Search Engines to resolve search.
- e. Examples include Google, Microsoft, Yahoo, and Ask.com,
- f. Meta Search Engines include Ixquick, Metacrawler and DogPile.

II. Subject Directories.

- a. Human selected topics.
- b. Sometimes evaluated for content value.
- c. Usually arranged in hierarchical categories
- d. Examples, Yahoo, Infomine, and About.com.

III. Specialized Databases, the Invisible Web.

- a. Locate by Subject Directory or Keyword search.
- b. Web page that provides access to a database of specialized information.
- c. Subscription required in some cases.
- d. Example Google maps, e.g. mash-ups of information and location.

B. How to begin. <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html>.

I. Five step search strategy.

- a. Step #1. Analyze your topic to decide where to begin**
- b. Step #2. Pick the right starting place using this table:**
- c. Step #3. Learn as you go & VARY your approach with what you learn.**
- d. Step #4. Don't bog down in any strategy that doesn't work.**
- e. Step #5. Return to previous strategies better informed.**

II. Strategies NOT recommended.

III. Match your search with the features of the search engine.

C. Evaluating web resources.

- I. URL clues to look for, numbers or domain name.
- II. Scan the page for clues, last update, contacts and any information about the author.
- III. Look for indicators of quality, links to reputable web sites.
- IV. What do others have to say about the site, links, and Usenet news groups.
- V. Does it all add up, if still in doubt, ask someone else for their view.

D. Glossary, <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Glossary.html>

E. Other resources.

- I. <http://www.google.com>, multiple categories of searches available.
- II. <http://www.searchengineshowdown.com>, multiple categories of searches available.
- III. <http://www.ask.com>, expert ranking searches for better results.
- IV. <http://gigablast.com> custom searches available for individual web pages.
- V. <http://go.com> , Go is more of a portal, ABC News.
- VI. <http://kanoodle.com> , marketing targeted sponsored links.
- VII. <http://www.looksmart.com> , vertical search, with directories.
- VIII. <http://www.content.overture.com> , search advertising web pages, owned by Yahoo.
- IX. <http://dogpile.com> , Dogpile is a Meta Search tool.
- X. <http://wisenut.com> , search exactly.
- XI. <http://hotbot.com> , another meta search tool.
- XII. <http://altavista.com> , one of the original full text search tools.

F. Exercises

- I. Find the definition of the word that won the Scripps National Spelling Bee competition.
- II. Find IRS forms and Instructions for Non-Cash Charitable Contributions
- III. Who were the tallest and shortest United States presidents?
- IV. Find the Sunrise and Sunset for the day you were born, location and time of day.
- V. What is the current exchange rate for US Dollars to Euros?
- VI. How to Make a Duct Tape Wallet.
- VII. Where was the highest bridge in the Trans Continental railroad?
- VIII. What year were time zones established in the U.S.?
- IX. What year was the first Mardi Gras was celebrated.
- X. Compare price of gasoline between East, Central and West parts of United States.
- XI. Get driving directions and distance between your home and Washington D.C.
- XII. How much does it cost to mail a Certified letter with a return receipt in the U.S.
- XIII. What is the average weight of a new born baby opossum.
- XIV. What was the latest closing price of Gold in the U.S. Metals market?