

Search

Chapter 5

Where Do You Look For Information?

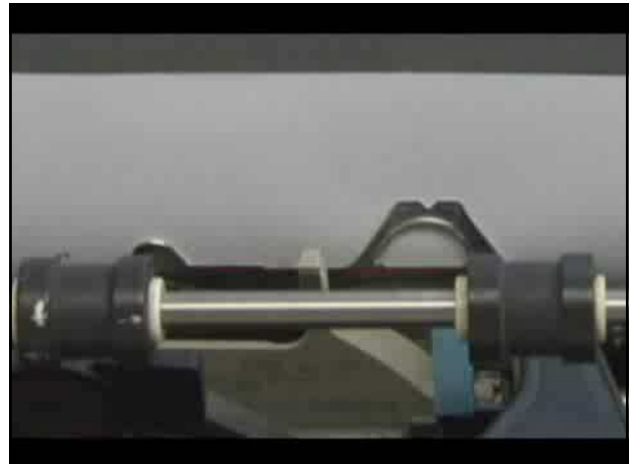
- Where you should look depends on the kind of information

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Look In The "Right" Place

- Dictionary/Thesaurus
 - <http://www.m-w.com>
 - <http://www.dictionary.com>
- Tax forms
 - <http://www.irs.gov/>
- Movie reviews
 - <http://www.imdb.com/>
 - <http://www.rottentomatoes.com/>
- City statistics
 - <http://www.city-data.com/>
- Encyclopedia
 - <http://www.wikipedia.org>
- Videos
 - <http://www.youtube.com>
- Airline tickets
 - <http://www.kayak.com/>
 - <http://southwest.com/>
 - Individual airline websites
- Images
 - <http://images.google.com/>
- Maps
 - <http://maps.google.com/>
 - <http://www.mapquest.com/>
- Books
 - <http://bestbookbuys.com>

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Search Engines

- No one organizes the information posted on the Web.
- Search engines (e.g., Yahoo! And Google) look around to find out what's out there and organize what they find.

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How Search Engines Work

1. Web crawling
 - A **web crawler** visits sites on the Web following every link it sees.
 - The contents of each page are analyzed to determine how it should be **indexed**.
 - Data about web pages are stored in an index database for later use when processing user queries.
2. Query processing
 - When a user enters a query, the engine examines its index and provides a listing of the best-matching web pages.
 - What is the "best-matching" web page?
 - Ideally, it is the exact web page that you are looking for!

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Google's PageRank

- The more links there are to a page, the more relevant it must be.
 - If page A links to page B, consider the link as a vote by page A for page B.
- Not all votes are equal
 - Google also looks at whether the page doing the "voting" is itself highly ranked.

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Effective Web Searching

- Avoid questions
 - ❌
 - ✅
- Be specific
 - ❌
 - ✅
- ... but not too specific
 - ❌
 - ✅
- Source: http://www.googleguide.com/select_terms.html

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Effective Web Searching

- Use likely words
 - ❌
 - ✅
- Know the right terminology
 - ❌
 - ✅
- Be brief
 - ❌
 - ✅
- Source: http://www.googleguide.com/select_terms.html

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More Effective Web Searching

- Use quotes to find exact phrases
 - Example:
- Prefix words you do not want in the search results with a minus symbol
 - Example:
- Search for pages that contain either search term by using the OR operator
 - Example:

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More Effective Web Searching

- Search pages on a particular website using *site*:
 - Example:
- (Google only) Use the tilde (~) before a keyword to look for that word and its synonyms
 - Example:
- (Google Maps) Use the *near* keyword to find nearby locations
 - Example:

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Exercise

- Find contact information for your representatives.
- How long did it take the first person to cross the United States by car and in what year was it done?


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Resources

- Google Guide
 - <http://www.googleguide.com/>
- Advanced Operators
 - <http://www.google.com/help/operators.html>
- Search Features
 - <http://www.google.com/help/features.html>
- Cheat Sheet
 - http://www.googleguide.com/advanced_operators_reference.html
 - <http://www.google.com/help/cheatsheet.html>

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Making Information Find You

- A **web feed** (or **news feed**) lets authors syndicate (publish simultaneously) content automatically.
- Users subscribe to various feeds which can be read using a "feed reader" (or "news reader").
- The two main web feed formats are RSS* and Atom.
- Web feed icon: 



*RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication.

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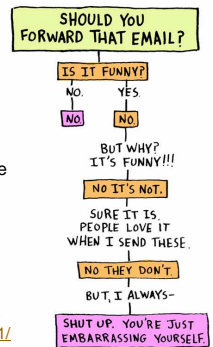
Web Information: Truth Or Fiction?

- Save The Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus
 - <http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/>
- Is the information you found online true?
 - Does it matter?
 - Depends on how crucial it is that the information be true
 - If you find out the information is false, will it adversely affect you or someone else?
 - How authoritative is the source?
 - Does the site include references? Do those check out?
 - Can the information be *independently* verified from other sources?

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Debunking Hoaxes

- In e-mail lingo, "forward this email to everyone you know" means "do not forward this email."
- Snopes.com: Urban Legends Reference
 - <http://www.snopes.com>
- Museum Of Hoaxes
 - <http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/>
- "PLEASE don't forward hoax virus warnings", Linn Barringer, 11/18/2008
 - <http://linnbarringer.blogspot.com/2008/11/dont-forward-hoax-virus-warnings.html>



Shoobox@log.com

-br/ax

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Searching For Online Retailers

- Sometimes lesser-known online retailers can offer the cheapest prices.
 - How do you know if some random retailer found online is reputable?
 - Search for online reviews
 - Check the Better Business Bureau: <http://www.bbb.org/>
 - Use single-use credit card numbers
- How reliable are online reviews?

Contact Info	Scorecard		
	Past 3 Months	Past 6 Months	All-time
Positive (4 or 5)	8	24	406
Neutral (3)	1	2	37
Negative (1 or 2)	3	4	145
Total Reviews	12	30	588
Avg Rating	★★★★☆ 3.67	★★★★☆ 4.13	★★★★☆ 3.74

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Searching For Online Retailers

- ResellerRatings.com
- BBB.org



Complaint Outcome	Complaint Outcome Statistics		
	Last 12 Months	Last 12, 36 Months	Total
Resolved	4	7	11
Consumer received the requested resolution			
Resolved	2	3	5
Consumer received part of the requested resolution			
Administratively Judged	3	5	8
Rejected			
The Company has responded to the complaint(s) addressing the disputed issues. However, the consumer remains dissatisfied			
No Response	10	16	26
The Company has failed to respond to complaints			
TOTAL	19	33	52

- Get a second... third... fourth... fifth opinion.
 - Read reviewer comments. Do lots of research!

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