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Utilizing search engines

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So much information is on the web, its mind boggling. Thankfully we have search engines to sift through them and categorize them for us. Unfortunately, there is still so much info that even with these search engines, its often a painstakingly slow process (something comparable to death for a hacker) to find exactly what you're looking for.

Lets get right into it.

I use google.com as my primary search engine because it presently tops the charts as far as the sites that it indexes which means more pertinent info per search.

1. Page translation.

Just because someone speaks another language doesn't mean they don't have anything useful to say. I use translation tools like the ones found at

<http://babelfish.altavista.com>
and

<http://world.altavista.com>
to translate a few key words I am searching for. Be specific and creative because these tools aren't the most accurate things on the planet.

2. Directories.

These days everything is about \$\$\$\$. We have to deal w/ SEO (search engine optimization) which seems like a good idea on paper until you do a search for toys and get 5 pornsites in the first 10 results. Using a sites directory will eliminate that. You can narrow your search down easily by looking for the info in specific categories. (PS google DOES have directories, they're at: directory.google.com)

3. Here are some tips that google refers to as "advanced"

- A. "xxxx" / will look for the exact phrase. (google isn't case sensitive)
- B. -x / will search for something excluding a certain term
- C. filetype:xxx / searches for a particular file extension (exe, mp3, etc)
- D. -filetype:xxx / excludes a particular file extension
- E. allinurl:x / term in the url
- F. allintext:x / terms in the text of the page
- G. allintitle:x / terms in the html title of that page
- H. allinanchor:x / terms in the links

4. OR

Self explanatory, one or the other... (ie: binder OR joiner)

5. ~X

Synonyms/similar terms (in case you can't think of any yourself)

6. Numbers in a range.

Lets say you're looking for an mp3 player but only want to spend up to \$90. Why swim through all the others? MP3 player \$0..\$90 The 2 periods will set a numeric range to search between. This also works with dates, weights, etc

7. +

Ever type in a search and see something like this:

"The following words are very common and were not included in your search:"

Well, what if those common words are important in your search? You can force google to search through even the common terms by putting a + in front of the denied word.

8. Preferences

It amazes me when I use other peoples PCs that they dont have their google search preferences saved. When you use google as much as I do, who can afford to not have preferences? They're located on the right of the search box, and have several options, though I only find 2 applicable for myself...

A. Open results in new browser

B. Display 10-100 results per page. (I currently use 50 per page, but thats a resolution preference, and 5X's the default)

9. *

Wildcard searches. Great when applied to a previously mentioned method. If you only know the name of a prog, or are looking for ALL of a particular file (ie. you're DLing tunes) something like *.mp3 would list every mp3.

10. Ever see this?

"In order to show you the most relevant results, we have omitted some entries very similar to the X already displayed. If you like, you can repeat the search with the omitted results included." The answer is YES. yes yes yes. Did I mention yes? I meant to.

11. Search EVERYWHERE

Use the engine to its fullest. If you dont find your answer in the web section, try the group section. Hell, try a whole different search engine. Dont limit yourself, because sometimes engines seem to intentionally leave results out.

ex. use google, yahoo, and altavista. search the same terms... pretty close, right? Now search for disney death. Funny, altavista has plenty of disney, but no death...hmmm.

If you've read this far into this tutorial without saying, "Great, a guy that copied a few google help pages and thinks its useful info" then I will show you WHY (besides accuracy, speed, and consistancy finding info on ANYTHING) its nice to know how a search engine works. You combine it/w your knowledge of other protocol.

Example:

Want free music? Free games? Free software? Free movies? God bless FTP! Try this search:

intitle:"Index of music" "rolling stones" mp3

Substitute rolling stones/w your favorite band. No? Try the song name, or another file format. Play with it.

Assuming SOMEONE made an FTP and uploaded it, you'll find it.

For example....I wanted to find some Sepultura. If you never heard them before, they're a Brazilian heavy metal band that kicks ass. I started with this:

intitle:"Index of music" "Sepultura" mp3 <-- nothing

intitle:"Index of música" "Sepultura" mp3 <-- nothing

intitle:"Index of musica" "Sepultura" mp3 <-- not good enough

intitle:"Index of music" "Sepultura" * <-- found great stuff, but not enough Sepultura

At this point it occurs to me that I may be missing something, so I try:

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intitle:"index of *" "sepultura" mp3 <-- BANG!
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(and thats without searching for spelling errors)

Also try inurl:ftp

I find that * works better for me than trying to guess other peoples mis-spellings.

The same method applies for ebooks, games, movies, SW, anything that may be on an FTP site.

I hope you enjoyed this tutorial, and I saw that recently a book and an article was written on the very same topic. I havn't read them as of yet, but check em out, and get back to me if you feel I missed something important and should include anything else.

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intitle:"index of" "google hacks" ebook
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Ps. I've said it before, I'll say it again... BE CREATIVE.

You'll be surprised what you can find.