

"Search Tools"

Thursday, May 3, 2001

Can I ever find what I need on the Internet? Will it be easier next week?

The answer to both questions is "YES!" So let's begin with the Basics. Search Engines, Browsing Directories, Meta-Search Tools, and Specialized Search sites provide a wealth of POTENTIAL information.

Formulating a search strategy is the beginning point.

- Figure out the key words or concepts you want to search for think of synonyms, related words, and variant spellings (color, colour) you can include in your search.
- Read the instructions or "help" info for the search engine you'd like to use.
- Decide if Boolean search terms will be helpful.
- Perform your search.
- Investigate the search results.
- Evaluate resources.
- If the results of your search are unsatisfactory,
 - Broaden your search by including more synonyms and using "or."
 - Narrow your search by using more precise terms.
- Try a different search engine.

Find information on searching for building a "log cabin." What are the keywords? What are related words? What restrictions should be made? Let's try your suggestions.

Can we refine the search results? Begin by **excluding** words or phrases found in the search results. Use the (-) minus sign to remove sites that are not relevant. Add multiple-word **phrases** that will more closely identify the topic. The phrase "Mad Cow Disease" will search specifically for these capitalized words and in this exact order. Use **Boolean** operators for creating more complex queries. "**financial aid**" **AND (college OR university)** When in need of assistance with a query, visit the search engine's **Advanced Search** page. Google has a command that will limit the search to a specific URL. It is important to understand the basics of Advanced Searches for 3 or 4 search engines.

Understanding how to interpret the results of a search begins with your knowledge of the subject matter. It will become apparent that some query results are just in "left field." Ignore them. Learn to filter the results with these terms: **Content** [is the material factual, correct and current], **Access** [is the server available, is the content free or fee-based, will the page "load" with your favorite browser], **Authority** [who is the page sponsor, can you contact the author, is the material valid and reliable], **Objectivity** [is there an obvious bias, is there another side], and **Design** [is the page easy to navigate, do you always know how to "Go Home," are there too many levels]. See <http://milton.mse.jhu.edu:8001/research/education/net.html>

Please welcome Vicki Carlson tonight. She has an extensive background in using the Internet for corporate search tasks. While training people to use the Internet effectively, she has developed a very impressive Search Document Heaven. She has graciously agreed to present an overview tonight, and allow a PDF version to be placed on the Internet. Visit the Internet SIG "news" site at www.nwonline.net/lgundy/signews.htm to find her document.

Is Vivísimo a search engine?

Not exactly. Vivísimo does not crawl or index the web. It organizes the outputs of other search engines: URLs, titles, and short descriptions. It is more properly seen as a clustering engine.

Is Vivísimo a meta search engine?

Not exactly. Vivísimo can organize the combined outputs of multiple search engines, so in this sense it is a meta-search engine. But it is best seen as a clustering engine.

What is Vivísimo doing?

The core Vivísimo technology is called *Document clustering*: the automatic organization of documents into meaningful groups.

Vivísimo web search hooks up our clustering engine to the results of different search engines. That is, it:

1. Queries one or more web search engines.
2. Parses their result pages to extract the documents (titles, URLs, and short descriptions).
3. Groups the documents based on this information, [not the full web pages](#).
4. [Orders](#) the groups and the documents within each group.
5. Displays the hierarchical categories.

All this is done in [seconds](#).

OK, so what? Vivísimo is a great way to DISPLAY the results of a search in clusters. Access to individual pages maintains the Windows Explorer-like layout in the left-hand window with the "results page" in the right-hand window. Let us try to solve some suggestions submitted.

drivers for Sony CD-ROM

hot keys shortcuts

FrontPage add pictures to web page

Flowers, "flower arranging", "flower seeds", "perennial flowers", "shade flowers

If you would like more information on the SIG, send email to Larry Gundy at lgundy@webmail.terra.cc.oh.us. And visit the SIG web page at www.nwonline.net/lgundy/signews.htm

Plan to attend the next **free presentation** on **Thursday, June 7, 2001**, at **7:00 PM** in **room ????**. Ross Paulson will present **PC Maintenance**.