

## Chapter 13 - "Just Google It"

What is this thing called Google? In just a few short years a tiny start-up company has grown and grown and has now become a household word. "Just Google it," you'll hear someone say. And, "I Googled my new boyfriend." If you aren't on the Internet, this may still be mystifying talk. To "Google" has become

synonymous with searching for something on the Internet.

Go to <http://www.google.com>

Google can save you time finding what you need. Can't remember who Adlai Stevenson's running mate was in 1952? Just Google it. Want the price of your stock this minute? Just Google it. Need information on starting your own business? Just Google it. Here's a remarkable statistic. Nine out of 10 people are satisfied with their Internet search ability. The PEW Internet and American Life Project studies how Americans use the Internet. On Jan. 23, 2005, a PEW Internet study about Internet literacy concluded, "92 percent of those who use search engines say they are confident about their searching abilities, with over half of them, 52 percent, saying they're 'very confident.'"



What an amazing number! Do you think 92 percent of Americans are satisfied with their looks? Are 92 percent of Americans pretty confident that they weigh as much as they should or make as much money as they should? As Carolyn Myss, the author of the book, *Anatomy of the Spirit*, has said, "Americans have managed to make lack of self-esteem a national malady."

Americans generally are lacking in self-esteem in almost every category of their lives — except, it would seem, their ability to search the Internet. This is surprising, considering how new the Internet is and how enormous it is. Add to that the complexity of the technology involved: It's astounding how anyone can believe they know all they need to know in this area. Deborah Fallows of the Pew Internet and American Life Project says it this way:

"In a sense, many search-engine users are a little bit like kids with a fancy new toy. They want to go play with it immediately and have a good time, but most don't want to read the instructions or much care to know how it works."

But you are still reading — and that means you're among the 8 percent who believe there is more to learn. For you, here are a few tips on how to do better searches, save time and have fun doing it.

### **Tip #1: Bartlett Never had it This Good**

Always use quotes around words that belong together. This is particularly useful if you only can remember a line or two of a song, a poem or a joke. For example, "Once upon a midnight dreary"; "St. Agnes Eve — ah bitter chill it was"; or "I was stranded in the jungle." Try this at home — you'll win a lot of those dinner table bets.

## **Tip #2: Pictures of Leonardo DiCaprio or News of Leonardo DiCaprio?**

Google can search many things besides websites. One of the most entertaining is to look for photos. Just click the “Images” tab and Google will search for pictures of anything you want — Brazilian rain forests, Derek Jeter and even the Hope Diamond. Similarly, if you’re looking for news articles on a subject, don’t search the entire Web; just click the “News” tab to restrict your results to news about the Brazilian rain forests, Derek Jeter or the Hope Diamond.

## **Tip #3: Triple Google Latte — Half-Decaf and Hold the Whipped Cream, Please.**

Want to keep from seeing explicit pictures? Need Google to talk to you in French? Get Google to work the way you want it to work by using the “Preferences” tab. Google lets you tell it lots of other things — more things than you ever can tell your kids — and, it will listen! The “Preferences” tab is on the Google home page. Give it a look.

## **Tip #4: Just Your News, Sent to You**

Who wants to spend more time on their computer these days? Stop following your nose for hours and hours on end looking for the latest information. Instead, sign up for Google’s “News Alerts.” You can have alerts sent to you on everything from the stocks you own to the latest news about global warming to your favorite soap opera stars. Save time by letting Google send you just the topics you want.

## **Tip #5: It’s a Calculator, It’s a Phone Directory, It’s Super Google!**

This is sort of scary, but type in a telephone number and up comes the name and address of the person who owns that number. You also can type in a stock symbol and, \*Bam\* you have the up-to-the-second price. This list goes on and on. For instance, type in your UPS shipment number (you don’t even have to type in “UPS” because it just somehow knows) to track a package. By the way, when you do type in your UPS tracking number, sure enough, it will tell you that it has been held up in a snowstorm in Memphis.

## **Tip #6: Cache is the Secret of Success**

Ever get those annoying messages that say “Page NOT Found” when you know you have typed in a perfectly good website? Use the “back button” and click on the word “Cached.” Like magic, the website you wanted will appear, and it will even highlight (in different colors!) each of your search terms. Some of our friends use cache all the time just because of the highlighted words.

## **Tip #7: It’s All in How You Say It**

Hang on to your hat for this one. If you are new to all things Google, you might want to skip this paragraph. If you’re a Google veteran, this one’s for you. Lets say you are looking for information about fixed annuities. Add the word “site” to zero-in on the kind of information you need. If you type “fixed annuities” you will have 355,000 results — mostly from sites that want to sell you stuff. However, if you type in “fixed annuities”site:edu, you’ll get much more targeted information from university and educational sites, while leaving the sales guys back at the station, where they belong. We have to keep this short here, but if you want to avoid

looking for every possible mention of your search term (“Adlai Stevenson”) and are only looking for sites that deal with Adlai, start your search by typing intitle:“Adlai Stevenson”. These are just a few of many terms you can use to narrow down your search results and get exactly the kind of information you need.

### **Tip #8: Digital Photography Without Going to the Madhouse**

Google offers photo editing software that is what every software program in the world should be: free and easy-to-use. Picassa 2 does a lot more than just help you edit your photos. At the click of your mouse it will run a slide show of your trip to Bali, send (and size!) photos of Bali to Aunt Jenny and print your pictures any way you like them. You find it under the “More” tab — which is one of those tabs on Google’s impossibly simple home page.

### **Last and Most Important Tip: You’ve Got a Long Way to Go, Baby!**

We’ve told you just a few of the hundreds of things Google can do. Amazing, isn’t it? However, there are a few things Google can’t do. The next time you hear someone tell you that they can find everything on the Internet by just typing a few words into Google, tell them about another part of that PEW Internet report. The fact is that most of the Internet is not available through Google. The PEW study said it this way:

*Finally, there are billions of Web pages that users of the popular search engines have no access to. In fact, despite what feels like a veritable and ever-growing glut of information, only a small fraction of existing Web pages are actually indexed by the popular engines. The rest are hidden on the “invisible Web.”*

The beauty is that there is so much to learn — more to learn about Google, and much more to learn about the Internet. But, since you’re part of the 8 percent, you already knew that.