

Tips for using Google Search

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Here at AgIT we use Google to search every day. It's a great way to find solutions to new issues we haven't seen before. Unfortunately, it isn't always easy to find that one bit of information you want or need. This article will present some tips and tricks to help make you a Google Search expert! You may know many of them, but there may be a few you haven't yet heard about or have forgotten. Here we go!

1. Use quotes to search for an exact word or phrase.

If you are searching and have a specific word or exact phrase that **must** be in the results of your search, simply enclose that word or phrase in quotes. Google will include only results with that word or phrase. You can use this trick for several words or phrases in the same search. (If Google cannot find the item in quotes, it will indicate search results found that don't have the quoted item.)

2. Use the minus sign to remove words in the search results.

This trick comes in handy when your results are filled with results that are of no interest, making it difficult to find the results you are interested in. Perhaps you are searching for something or someone using the word Swift. You will likely end up with a lot of results including 'Taylor'. To keep all the results related to the famous singer out of your results, simply put a minus sign in front Taylor and search again. i.e. "*Swift*" - Taylor

3. Use an asterisk within quotes for an unknown word within a phrase.

Use this trick when you want to search for a phrase but aren't quite sure of a word within the phrase or the phrase sometimes has variations of the word in question. This trick could also be used to find a descriptive word. "*as green as **" will give results with descriptions of green items.

4. Use images as your results.

This is great if you are looking for an item or type of item but you don't know how to describe it or what it's called. For an example of this, search for *Tents*, then click the word 'Images' just above the results but below the search box. You will get a bewildering variety of tents to pick from.

5. Use Google Search as your spell checker.

Google's search engine has the best spell checker out there. It's not useful for checking documents but if you have a word you are trying to spell and your software just can't quite figure out what you are trying to spell, type your best guess in Google. You will be amazed how effective it is at figuring out your word!

6. Restrict searches by time.

This trick is particularly useful if you are attempting to find information related to a recent event or figure out how to fix a recent software problem. Search for the event or software issue with keywords as normal, then above the results and to the right, click on 'Tools' then click on the small down arrow next to 'Any Time' and select by the past hour, 24 hours, week, month, year, or custom range. This tip will save many hours of wading through unrelated results!

7. Search only within a particular website.

If you want to search a website instead of the entire web, type the website name a colon, then the search terms. For example, if you want to search for stories about Chuck Norris on the Entertainment tonight website, use *site:etonline.com "Chuck Norris"*.

8. Add descriptive words to narrow your search results.

If you find the first results of your search are not as narrow as you'd hoped, keep the original search terms and simply add more descriptive words to the search. This will use the original results and narrow them further as you add words. This will save you scrolling through many less relevant results.

These are some of the most useful techniques for using Google Search to find information online. Use these tips to hone your online search skills.

P.S. Most of these techniques will work on other search engines as well!