



Google-izing legal research

This article features valuable tips to avoid pitfalls and time-wasting detours on the Internet.

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Every day we are asked to “find” something – I’ve found the Google search engine to be a good research tool for many tasks. And now Google has online the beta version of its long-awaited Legal Scholar, which allows you to search for case citations. Don’t give up your West-Law or Lexis subscription, but do check it out. Go to Google, and click on “Other,” then select “Scholar” from the drop-down list. Select “Legal Opinions and Journals” and then enter a cite, let’s say *Dillon v. Legg*. You’ll notice that you can ask for both California and Federal cases, you can specify a time frame (example: 1995 to present) and you can indicate whether you want to see any article that includes the citation or only those that include a summary of the case. If you’re into Boolean logic searches, Scholar features Google’s advanced searching capability, i.e., Boolean logic in disguise. Legal Scholar is pretty neat, and it’s *free!*

Here are other tips on Google searches that you’ll find useful:

Powerpoint™ power

If you use Google’s “advanced search” feature, you can limit your search to Powerpoint™ files.

On the “file format” section, set the search parameter to return only files in the format “Microsoft Powerpoint (.ppt)”. Then enter your search term, e.g., “Laminectomy”. All hits will be in the form of Powerpoint™ presentations. Many of these are posted by medical students, doctors, etc.

Another way to search for PPT presentations is to use your search term

(such as laminectomy) plus the word “powerpoint.”

Google can locate images, most of which can then be downloaded and used in Powerpoint™.

An image search for “laminectomy” returns over 230 hits. The image search is selected from the main (home) page of Google, not on the advanced search page.

And if you are looking for, say, “daubert motion Steven Clark” sometimes you can get lucky there and find them online with a Google search in the general search feature.

Another idea is to do a search for “motion” “brief” with key words – and if you don’t find it at the search result link, use the “cache” feature.

The cache feature will highlight with a different color for each search term everywhere it occurs in the Web page/document. I have found warrants, court orders, etc.

Too many results?

Ever do a search and still feel like you have too many results? Instead of trying a new search, you might have more luck narrowing down the set of matches you’ve already generated. Google makes this process easy through a “Search Within” feature. After performing a search, click on the “Search within results” link that appears at the bottom of the results page, next to the search box, on the results page.

Customize your results using the Preferences Page

Pick the Language – you can do a search in the translation of your choice from the Preferences Page OR you can

translate a page in a language foreign to you by selecting the “translate” feature on the search results page.

Select the number of results per page, the default is 10, but you can select 20, 30, 50 or 100 if you wish. Using the “New Results Page” feature allows you to keep your search page open, and any link clicked on will open in a new browser page/window – this eliminates back browsing and repetitive search requests.

Various search commands

Include search term “+” sign (most do this by default but it will not hurt to use this symbol) - this has the same effect as AND

Exclude search term “-” sign (in effect same as NOT)

Must include phrase “” (quotes around phrase to be included)

Search within designated Web site

The word “site” followed by a colon enables you to restrict your search to a specific site. To do this, use the search term site: sample domain.com syntax in the Google search box.

For example, to find admission information on Stanford’s site, enter:

admission site:www.stanford.edu

Yellow page directory-type search feature

Google Local integrates yellow pages-style information right into your search. Search for pizza 75662 or pizza marshall.tx and up will pop a little compass with a couple of results. Click



the compass, and you'll get a full listing of nearby results, with distance, maps, directions, related Web pages, phone numbers, etc. You can narrow it down by category and distance, and look at a map of all the results. Wireless Froogle is Google's product search service. To use Froogle on your cell phone, just point your phone's browser to <http://wml.froogle.com/> then enter your search terms in the box/select search, using your phone's keypad arrows to scroll through the results. At the store looking for a PDA, whip out your cell phone/use Froogle and never wonder again if you paid too much.

Travel information

To see delays and weather conditions at a particular airport, type the airport's three letter code followed by the word "airport." For example, San Francisco International Airport updates can be found by searching for "sfo airport."

To check the status of a U.S. flight, type the name of the airline followed by the flight number. For example, to see the status for United Airlines flight 11 search for "United 11."

Google has added more search by number features:

- UPS tracking numbers - *example search:* "1Z9999W999999999"
- FedEx tracking numbers - *example search:* "999999999999"
- USPS tracking numbers - *example search:* "9999 9999 9999 9999 9999 99"
- Vehicle ID (VIN) numbers - *example search:* "AAAAA999A9AA99999"
- UPC codes - *example search:* "073333531084"

- Telephone area codes - *example search:* "650"
- Patent numbers - *example search:* "patent 5123123". Remember to put the word "patent" before your patent number.
- FAA airplane registration numbers - *example search:* "n199ua". An airplane's FAA registration number is typically printed on its tail.
- FCC equipment IDs - *example search:* "fcc B4Z-34009-PIR". Remember to put the word "fcc" before the equipment ID.
- **GOOGLE - Desktop Search:** Google Desktop Search is how our brains would work if we had photographic memories. It's a desktop search application that provides full text search over your e-mail, computer files, chats and Web pages you've viewed. By making your computer searchable, Desktop Search puts your information easily within your reach and frees you from having to manually organize your files, e-mails and bookmarks. After downloading Google Desktop Search, the application creates an index of all your searchable information and stores it on your computer, allowing you to search your personal items as easily as you search the Internet using Google. Unlike traditional computer search software that updates once a day, Desktop Search updates continually for most file types; when you receive a new e-mail in Outlook, for example, you can search for it within seconds. To download and read more information on this feature, go to: <http://desktop.Google.com/about.html>
- **Google Earth - Mapping/Image search:** Want to know more about a specific location? Dive right in – Google Earth combines satellite imagery, maps and the power of Google Search to put the world's geographic information at your fingertips. Some of the features include visually flying from space to your neighborhood; type in an address and zoom right in – search for schools, parks, restaurants, hotels, get driving directions; you can tilt and rotate the view to see 3D terrain and buildings. In addition, you can save and share your searches and favorites – even add your own notations.

This is a great resource for exhibits, school projects – and just for fun. This feature is found at: <http://earth.Google.com/>

Roadside assistance

As you travel the winding road of research on the Web, here are some Websites you may find useful.

• Various Archives

E-Speeches: Everything related to speeches and speech writing. www.espeeches.com/

Speeches.com: Just a click away from everything you need to write a speech. Includes an auto-writer as well as a library of speeches. <http://speeches.com/>

Newjour: Provides a list of new journals, magazines, newsletters or other type of electronic serials on the Internet.

<http://old.library.georgetown.edu/newjour/>
Electronic Journals: This electronic journals collection is a select list of both fully electronic journals and the electronic versions of print journals. All academic disciplines are represented in the list. <http://www.lib.purdue.edu/eresources/readyref/>

Time Zone Converter: An extensive database of over 1500 cities and towns, in 177 individual time zones, across 237 countries. Within seconds you can get the local time for a specific location, correctly adjusted for daylight saving. <http://www.timezoneconverter.com/linkto.html>

• Encyclopedias/Almanacs

Encyclopedia.com: More than 14,000 articles from The Concise Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, Third Edition have been assembled to provide free, quick and useful information on almost any topic. <http://encyclopedia.com/>

Encyclopedia Mythica: Encyclopedia on mythology, folklore and legend. <http://www.pantheon.org/mythica/search.html>

Information Please Almanac:

Searchable database of obscure facts. <http://www.infoplease.com/>

Old Farmer's Almanac: Tide tables, planting charts, weather predictions. <http://www.almanac.com/>



• Language

Acronym Finder: Look up 133,000+ acronyms/abbreviations and their meanings. A searchable database containing common acronyms and abbreviations about all subjects, with a focus on computers, technology, telecommunications, and the military. www.acronymfinder.com/

InvestorWords: Over 5,000 definitions and 15,000 links between related terms, InvestorWords is a comprehensive financial glossary. www.investorwords.com/

Jargon Scout: Jargon Scout aims to give you advance warning of jargon that is just about ready to hatch into the Net's language. <http://www.tbtf.com/jargon%2Dscout.html>

English-Whatever Dictionary: Sources for English translation of many languages. <http://www.tunl.duke.edu/~erics/english.html>

American Slangage: Choose a city and learn the local lingo. <http://www.slanguage.com/>

Dictionary of Street Drug Slang: The Indiana Prevention Resource Center online dictionary contains more than 3,000 street drug slang terms from the Indiana Prevention Resource Center files, with more than 1,200 additions from the National Drug and Crime Clearinghouse slang term list. <http://www.drugs.indiana.edu/drug-slang.aspx>

Cambridge Dictionaries Online: Search the Cambridge Dictionary of American English, Cambridge International Dictionary of English, Cambridge International Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs or

Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

The King's English: The King's English is an indispensable resource for anyone concerned about correct English Usage. <http://www.bartleby.com/116/index.html>

Lexical FreeNet: Searchable database for relationships between words, concepts and people. <http://www.cinfn.com/doc/>

NetLingo: Internet language dictionary. <http://www.netlingo.com/>

One-Look Dictionary: 3,314,968 words in 599 dictionaries indexed. <http://www.onelook.com/>

SpellWeb: Compares two words and returns the preferred spelling. <http://www.spellweb.com/>

Web of Online Dictionaries: A premier Web portal specializing in language. English as well as over 100 foreign dictionaries, language identifiers, specialty English dictionaries, and vocabulary aids. <http://www.yourdictionary.com/>

• Quotations

Project Bartleby: Quotations from classic authors. <http://www.bartleby.com/>

Cliche Finder: Enter any word or combination of words and this search engine will return any cliches which use that phrase. <http://www.westegg.com/cliche/>

Quoteland.com: Find quotations on anything; identify quotations by anyone. <http://www.quoteland.com/>

• Statistics

National Center for Health Statistics: NCHS data systems include data on vital events as well as information on health status, lifestyle and exposure to unhealthy

influences, the onset and diagnosis of illness and disability, and the use of health care. <http://www.cdc.gov/DataStatistics/>

• Library Catalogs and General Research

Library Catalogs: Direct access to catalogs at more than 200 libraries, both inside and outside of the United States. <http://lcweb.loc.gov/z3950/>

The Library of Congress: The world's largest library. Search using keywords, browse-search, an experimental search system (ESS) or by an alphabetical index. <http://lcweb.loc.gov/>

Reference Desk: One-stop research tool for all things found on the Internet. <http://www.refdesk.com>



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