



Tales from the Terminal Room June 2007, Issue No. 79

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Published by: RBA Information Services

ISSN 1467-338X

<http://www.rba.co.uk/tftr/>

Tales from the Terminal Room (TFTTR) is a monthly newsletter, with the exception of July and August, which are published as a single issue. TFTTR includes reviews and comparisons of information sources; updates to the RBA Web site Business Sources and other useful resources; dealing with technical and access problems on the Net; and news of RBA's training courses and publications.

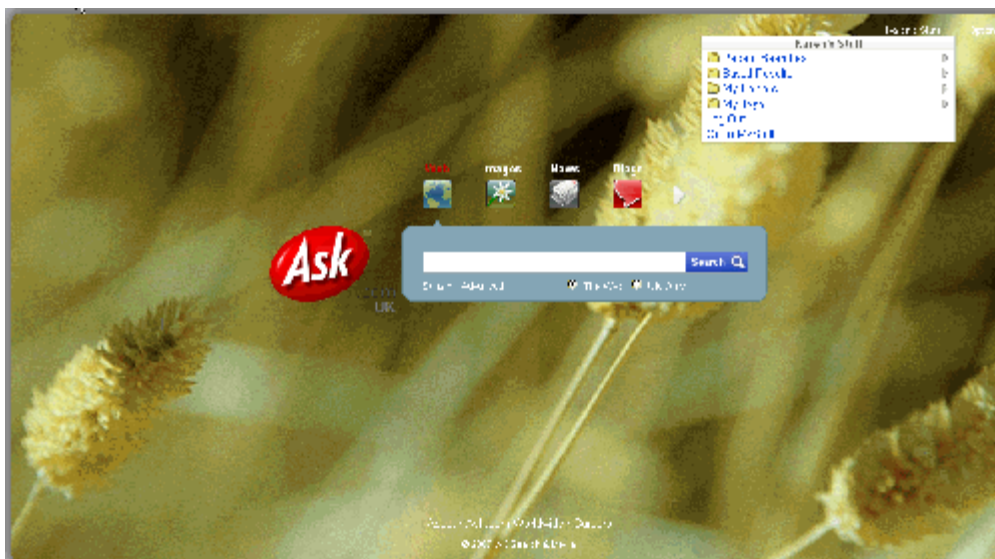
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Search Tools

Ask rolls out new interface



Ask has rolled out its new interface on both its [.com](http://www.ask.com) and [.co.uk](http://www.ask.co.uk) sites. It is essentially Ask X but Ask appear to have listened to comments regarding the Ask X minimalist home page. They have brought back the web, images, news and blogs tabs so you can quickly go those sections rather than having to a general search first. Video and shopping options can be added to the list or you can browse all of the categories. There is also a direct link to the Advanced Search options.

Ask has gone for personalisation in a big way: you can choose a 'skin' from a selection of 11 (I have chosen Golden) and there is a My stuff link in the upper right hand corner. My stuff includes your recent searches (if you have chosen to record them), saved results, my folders and my tags. As you type in your search terms, Ask comes up with suggestions as you type. If you find this irritating you can easily disable it.

The results page is very similar to Ask X. The left hand panel includes a search box together with suggestions to Narrow and Expand your search, and Related Names if you searched on a person. On the right hand side of the screen are sample results from other types of resources including video, news, images, blogs, dictionaries and encyclopaedias.



The middle panel contains your search results. Hover over an entry in the list and an icon with green plus sign pops up. Click on this and you can save it to a folder of your choice and tag it in my "My stuff". Tags are separated by spaces and multi-term tags have to be enclosed in double quotes, for example "climate change". When you have added a page to "My stuff" the green cross change to a red tick, but the pages are not recognised if they appear in a subsequent search so you could end up saving duplicate pages.

Overall, I like the new Ask especially the way it offers information from different types of resources on the results page. There are still some glitches that need attention: my search history does not appear to be working even though it is switched on, and it would be helpful if it recognised pages that you have already saved.

Google image search looks for faces

Hot on the heels of Exalead's new [face recognition search option](#), Google has launched a similar feature. Unlike Exalead, which has a 'Face' option under 'Narrow your search', Google requires you to add `&imgtype=face` to the end of the URL of your results page. As Phil Bradley says [in his blog](#) "A simple button would suffice guys!" Phil also reports that, although clunky, Google's face search seems to return more and better results than Exalead's. My own experience is variable: sometimes Exalead is better, sometimes Google. Which just goes to prove that you really do need to know your way around more than one search engine.

New Exalead video search (beta)

[Exalead](#) have launched a video search for the YouTube, Dailymotion, Metacafe, Kewego and IFILM web sites. There is a link to the new beta service on the Exalead home page.

On the results page a pull-down box enables you to sort results by relevance, most recent, most rated, most viewed, or length. You can also use the "Narrow your search" panel to refine your search by source (website) or video length. Below the "Narrow your search" panel is a tag cloud showing the tags and categories of the videos appearing in your results, allowing you to refine your search further. Each entry in the results list includes a thumbnail image of the video, a title, summary, author, duration, upload date, and a viewer score represented by stars.

This video search option is different from the one that is offered to the right of the **web search** results page. The latter is the one to go for if you want more serious, business items for example television news reports and interviews.

Exalead UK and new search features

<http://www.exalead.co.uk/>

The screenshot shows the Exalead search interface. At the top, there's a search bar with 'UKeIG' entered and a search button. Below the search bar, the results are displayed under the heading 'Wikipedia'. Three results are shown:

- UKeIG**: The UK information Group (UKeIG) is a professional body for all information professionals, users and developers of electronic information resources. Its ...
- Tony Kent Strix award**: who died in 1997. The award is presented by UKeIG, the UK information Group, a UK based professional body for ...
- Jason Farradane Award**: The Jason Farradane Award is made by UKeIG to an individual or a group of people in recognition ...

On the right side, there is a 'Narrow your search' panel with a list of categories and related terms:

- British awards
- Bruce Royan
- Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
- Cillip City University, London
- Computer science awards
- Donna Harman
- Imperial College
- Jason Farradane Award
- London Metropolitan University
- Long Island University
- Peter Willett
- Professional associations
- Royal Society
- Stella Dextre Clarke
- Tony Kent Strix Award
- TUC
- Tuc History Online
- UK Online User Group
- University of Warwick
- William Mann

At the bottom of the sidebar, there are icons for Categories, Related terms, People, Locations, and Organizations.

Exalead now has a [UK version](#) of its search engine that includes an option to limit your search to UK pages only. Both Exalead.com and Exalead UK have added a Wikipedia search and options to limit your results to blogs or forums. Alternatively, you can choose to exclude those types of sites. The Wikipedia search includes a "Narrow your search" panel on the results page that lists 'tags' for categories, related terms, people, location and organizations.

Exalead has also launched a new version of its image search with over one billion images indexed. The new 'Face' filter enables you to narrow your search results to images containing faces. It is not a hundred per cent accurate and sometimes excludes images that are of faces and includes some in which there are no faces at all, but it is close enough. Other options include size of image, wallpapers, image colour, layout and file type.

Blog Bling

Phil Bradley has already [reported briefly](#) on the double act that he and I performed at the Web 2.0 Forum at the Library and Information show in Birmingham. There are no PowerPoint slides because we made it up as we went along - OK, not strictly true. We discussed via email the areas of web 2.0 'stuff' we would each cover, and decided to adapt our presentations depending on what the other person had just mentioned. It worked! And it was great fun. Phil kicked off with his favourite Web 2.0 stuff (Pageflakes) and instead of going straight into social bookmarking I found myself talking about My Yahoo and Google's personalised home page. Towards the end, Phil waxed lyrical about all the widgets and gizmos that can add pizzazz to your blog, calling them "bling for your blog". Just one week on from that presentation and I was already reading and hearing people call it 'Blog Bling'.

So what is your favourite blog bling?

Information Resources

MarketResearch.com acquires Profound

MarketResearch.com has acquired the Thomson Business Intelligence (TBI) Market Research service, known as Profound. Thomson announced earlier this year that they wanted to sell Profound.

According to the press release "the acquisition expands MarketResearch.com's international reach with additional content and sales presence in Europe and North America. Profound provides a closed-platform, market research service that complements MarketResearch.com's open-format, web-based service." It will be interesting to see what pricing model they adopt for it and how, if at all, they integrate Profound with their existing service. MarketResearch.com bought rival company MindBranch in 2005 but the two sites remain. I suspect that, given the different type of users the services have, Profound will be marketed as a separate product.

Pipl - People Search (beta)

<http://www.pipl.com/>

[Pipl](#) claims to be the most comprehensive people search on the web. Simply type in the first and last names of the person you are looking for, geographic location if known, and Pipl goes off and searches "hidden web" resources as well as the usual Google search. I tried it on myself and it did a pretty good job. The Quick Facts presented at the top of the page were correct, and it pulled in information from blog searches, Google Groups, LinkedIn, Flickr and Google Scholar. Pipl also searches electoral rolls, directories, collections of peer reviewed literature such as Scirus and Google Scholar, Hoovers and Zoominfo. A search on my husband, Chris Rhodes, was less successful and I failed to find him amongst the thousands of other Chris Rhodes out there. Google, however, came up with him in the number 1 and 2 positions in a standard web search.

As with all of these types of search engine you still have to differentiate between different people with the same name: I do not work for the Honolulu Advertiser and neither am I the marketing director at Laura's Lean Beef Company! And the quality of the results is variable. Nevertheless, Pipl is worth adding to your bookmarks for people search.

These things are sent to try us

Log out of your Google account!

Google offers so many services and personalisation that it is tempting to log in and not bother logging out. You first connect to Google via your Personalised Home Page, look at your RSS feeds in Google Reader, and then do some Blogger work. You know that you are going to be working on one of your Google Documents so no point in logging out. If, like me, you spend most of your time working at home that is no big deal. No-one else, apart from your SO or the sprogs, are going to mosey on in to your Google 'space'. (Actually - it might be a seriously big deal but we won't go into the ramifications of that).

If you are at work, however, where everyone grabs a free terminal wherever and whenever they can, you could find yourself in deep doo-doo. Your arch rival, who is threatening to overtake you on the scrabble up the corporate greasy pole, fires up Google intending to read their own Google Mail but discovers that they can access yours instead - and everything else!. Google does not time you out - and neither does My Yahoo which has a similar set-up. As well as reading all that you have been up to over the last year or so, they could sabotage your account by enabling the search history and conducting "unsavoury" searches and well, it doesn't require much imagination to envisage what could happen.

This can, though, work in reverse. Set up a blemish free Google account with search history enabled, log in, leave it and wait for people to pounce on your unoccupied PC for their lunch-time surfing. Amazing what you could discover. This occurred to me after Phil Bradley and I had given our 'De-mystifying Web 2.0' presentation at the LIS last week in Birmingham. I had logged on to my demo Google account but completely forgot to log out at the end. As I went up to the podium on a damage limitation exercise I saw one of the afternoon presenters Googling away. As soon as I was home I went in to my Google account to have a look at what he had been researching. I regret to say that it was all very boring – North Carolina State University.

Better luck next time.

Meetings and Workshops

Seminar: UKeig and Umbrella 2007 - Practical Issues for Web 2.0 in a Library Environment

Organiser: CILIP/UKeig

Venue: De Havilland Campus, University of Hertfordshire

Date: Thursday 28th June 2007 15.30 – 16.45

Presenter: Phil Bradley

Course fee: Part of the Umbrella 2007 programme

URL: <http://www.umbrella2007.org.uk/>

Outline: UKeig is hosting a seminar at Umbrella 2007, following requests from members for a succinct and relevant review of the Web 2.0 developments and the implication for librarians and information professionals. Who better to take us on this journey than Phil Bradley, who is well known amongst the profession and promises an enlightening and challenging session. Phil will be looking at the Web 2.0 concept from a practical point of view. The emphasis will be on effective information provision while actually saving the information professional time.

Workshop: Untangling Your Web: effective website management

Organiser: Manchester Business School

Venue: Eddie Davies Library, Manchester Business School

Date: Tuesday, 25th September 2007

Presenter: Karen Blakeman.

Course fee: Price for BIS/BINN members/Manchester Momentum £215 + VAT; others £250 +VAT

URL: <http://www.mbs.ac.uk/bis-training>

Outline: Whether you already have a web site or are in the process of setting one up, keeping it in pristine condition and ensuring that your organisation benefits to the full can drive you to distraction. Once it is operational it is all too easy to forget about it; but out of date pages and inaccurate information are bad news! This course looks at how to painlessly manage the process of keeping your web site up to date, how to identify key areas that can drive your business forward, and how to encourage visitors to come back for more.

Workshop: Searching the Internet: Google and Beyond

Organiser: UKeig

Venue: Kings College London, Guy's Campus, London Bridge, London.

Date: Tuesday, 6th November 2007, 9.30-16.30

Presenter: Karen Blakeman.

Course fee: UKeig members £150 + VAT (£176.25); others £180 + VAT (£211.50)

URL: <http://www.ukeig.org.uk/training/2007/november/beyondgoogle.html>

Outline: This workshop looks at recent developments at Google and the alternatives, especially the new kids on the block and Web 2.0 'stuff'. There will be advice on locating serious blogs, RSS feeds, audio, video and podcasts of news broadcasts and interviews. Karen Blakeman will take you through the best of the search engine world and highlight how they can be used to significantly improve your results. By the end of the day, participants will have a vital toolkit to help them search more effectively, including key search tools, comparisons, top tips and essential search techniques.

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