



## Tales from the Terminal Room July 2012, Issue No. 102

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Tales from the Terminal Room (TFTTR) is an electronic newsletter that includes reviews and comparisons of information sources; useful tools for managing information; technical and access problems on the Net; and news of RBA's training courses and publications. Many of the items and articles will have already appeared on Karen Blakeman's Blog at <http://www.rba.co.uk/wordpress/>

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### In this issue:

- Search tools
    - Yet another irritating Google feature
    - Google maps UK canals
    - Google adds cycling routes to UK maps
  - Beating Google into submission - top tips
  - Twitter Notes
-

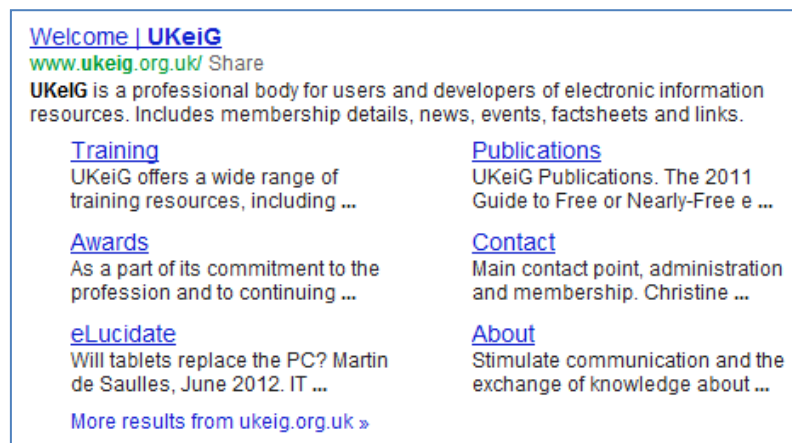
## Search tools

### Yet another irritating Google feature

There was a time when Google would aggregate pages from the same website in your search results. There might be just a couple of entries for the site with a “More from....” link next to the result.



Alternatively you might see a mini sitemap:




This has the advantage that you are not swamped with results from a single website but are given instead a variety of options that might provide you with a better answer to your question.

That has all changed.

You may have noticed that multiple entries from single websites have started appearing in your results. For example, rather than just one Wikipedia entry you see 4, 5, 6 or even more. On the other hand, you might not have noticed anything at all. Some of my colleagues are seeing this and some are not. Google tests new features and algorithms on a small percentage of its users to see how they react so new or test features are not seen by everyone (see How Google makes improvements to its search algorithm – YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5RZOU6vK4Q>). As far as I'm concerned this particular “improvement” is a disaster.

I was running a very general search on the use of biofuels by public transport in the UK. I just want to get an idea of some of the issues that were being discussed before refining my search and went, by default, to Google. My first screen had nothing but results from the UK government Department for Transport (DfT).

biofuels public transport UK 

About 956,000 results (0.93 seconds)

**Biofuels - Department for Transport**  
[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk) > ... > Sustainable travel and environment - Block dft.gov.uk  
 In December 2011 the Government implemented the **transport** elements of the ...  
**UK biofuels** policy to date has included mechanisms to encourage carbon reduction ... by a Non-Departmental **Public** Body, the Renewable Fuels Agency (RFA).

**Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation - Department for Transport**  
[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk) > ... > Sustainable travel and environment > Biofuels - Block dft.gov.uk  
 The Renewable **Transport** Fuel Obligation (RTFO) Order is the principle legislation for the regulation of **biofuels** used for **transport** in the **UK**. The RTFO requires ...

**Biofuel research - Department for Transport**  
[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk) > ... > Sustainable travel and environment > Biofuels - Block dft.gov.uk  
 The Department for **Transport** commissions **biofuel** research to ensure that ... full life of **biofuels** from their production, both in the **UK** and overseas, to their use in ...

**Biofuels use and supply - Department for Transport**  
[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk) > ... > Sustainable travel and environment > Biofuels - Block dft.gov.uk  
 All **transport** topics. ... **Biofuels** used in the **UK** are sourced from many feedstocks originating from over 30 ... Most **biofuel** currently supplied to the **UK** is biodiesel.

**Biofuel legislation - Department for Transport**  
[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk) > ... > Sustainable travel and environment > Biofuels - Block dft.gov.uk  
**Biofuel** regulation in the **UK** is currently principally covered by the Renewable **Transport** Fuels Obligation (RTFO) Order 2007.

**Biofuels statistics - Department for Transport**  
[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk) > Statistics > Releases - Block dft.gov.uk  
 26 Apr 2012 – This publication presents statistics on the Renewable **Transport** Fuel ... information on the percentage of road fuel supplied in the **UK** that is ...

I scrolled down and saw more DfT pages. I scrolled down further and yet MORE dft pages. OK, Google, so dft.gov.uk is a good place for me to look at biofuels in public transport. I get the message. STOP! There were 27 DfT pages in total flooding the top of my results page, which I have set to display 100 entries at a time. Creeping in at number 28 came the Guardian with 5 results.

**Scrap biofuels targets and focus on improved public transport ...**  
[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk) > ... > Guardian Environment Network  - Block guardian.co.uk  
 10 Feb 2010 – Friends of the Earth's **biofuels** campaigner Kenneth Richter argues that **biofuel** targets are a distraction from tried-and-tested ways of reducing ...

**From landfill to Lamborghini: the future of biofuels | Damian ...**  
[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk) > Environment > Damian Carrington's blog - Block guardian.co.uk  
 14 Mar 2012 – I hope you traveled there by **public transport** and didn't fly! ...  
[http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/blog/climate/biofuels-green-dream-or-climate- ...](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/blog/climate/biofuels-green-dream-or-climate-...)

The Friends of the Earth website had 7 results, and then at last I started to see more variety in my results at around number 40, but still with a lot of repetition.

[Biofuels for Sustainable Transport](#)  
[www.biofuels.fsnet.co.uk/sustain.htm](http://www.biofuels.fsnet.co.uk/sustain.htm) - Block [www.biofuels.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.biofuels.fsnet.co.uk)  
See also **Biofuels** Home Page. Given the current **UK** government policy of electrical generation by renewables, buses and trains - **public transport** - will run on ...

[Biofuels and Sustainable Transport Energy](#)  
[www.biofuels.fsnet.co.uk/](http://www.biofuels.fsnet.co.uk/) - Block [www.biofuels.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.biofuels.fsnet.co.uk)  
6 Apr 2005 – **Biofuels** and Sustainable Transport Energy - the lack of **UK** ... by the **UK** government, that **public transport** was being "integrated" and that low ...

[PPT] [EU Civitas and UK biofuels projects - UEA](#)  
[www.uea.ac.uk/~e680/cred/2006/energy\\_dialogue\\_nktovey.ppt](http://www.uea.ac.uk/~e680/cred/2006/energy_dialogue_nktovey.ppt) - Block [www.uea.ac.uk](http://www.uea.ac.uk)  
File Format: Microsoft Powerpoint - [View as HTML](#)  
Will investment in **public transport** necessarily reduce car journeys? 5. CRed ... In **UK** it is 5% substitution of **biofuels** by volume. Should it be 5% by energy?

[PPT] [EU Civitas and UK biofuels projects - UEA](#)  
[www.uea.ac.uk/~e680/cred/2008/ROSPA.ppt](http://www.uea.ac.uk/~e680/cred/2008/ROSPA.ppt) - Block [www.uea.ac.uk](http://www.uea.ac.uk)  
File Format: Microsoft Powerpoint - [View as HTML](#)  
Transport Issues and **Biofuels** ... Total **UK** emissions are about 550 Mtonnes per annum ... Will investment in **public transport** necessarily reduce car journeys?

[PPT] [EU Civitas and UK biofuels projects - UEA](#)  
[www.uea.ac.uk/~e680/cred/2008/WI\\_2008\\_TRANSPORT.ppt](http://www.uea.ac.uk/~e680/cred/2008/WI_2008_TRANSPORT.ppt) - Block [www.uea.ac.uk](http://www.uea.ac.uk)  
File Format: Microsoft Powerpoint - [View as HTML](#)  
Will investment in **public transport** necessarily reduce car journeys? Privatisation. 4 ... In **UK** it is 5% substitution of **biofuels** by volume. Should it be 5% by energy ...

[PDF] [the real cost of biofuels](#)  
[www.actionaid.org.uk/doc\\_lib/costofbiofuels.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/doc_lib/costofbiofuels.pdf) - Block [www.actionaid.org.uk](http://www.actionaid.org.uk)  
File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat - [Quick View](#)  
**biofuels** (ii). In the **UK**, fuel suppliers have to ensure ... used in **transport** from **biofuels** by 2020, up from 6.25% of ... and the FiFo Institute for **Public Economics** ...

[Biofuels con could cost UK motorists an extra £2bn per year ...](#)  
[www.actionaid.org.uk/.../biofuels\\_con\\_could\\_cost\\_uk\\_motorists\\_an...](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/.../biofuels_con_could_cost_uk_motorists_an...) - Block [www.actionaid.org.uk](http://www.actionaid.org.uk)  
2 Feb 2012 – Car drivers in the **UK** will pay up to £2 billion more on the forecourt in ... cost-effective alternatives like improved **public transport** and cleaner ...

Google may think that the DfT is a very important source of information on the topic but I want to decide whether or not to explore more of a particular site. Spamming my results list annoys me and makes me want to go elsewhere. So I did.

DuckDuckGo (<http://www.duckduckgo.com/>) is my main Google alternative and it came up with a decent and varied set of results without repetition, hesitation or deviation.

Bing (<http://www.bing.com/>) and Yandex (<http://www.yandex.com/>) came up with similar, non-repetitive results.

Blekkio (<http://www.blekko.com/>) came up with some interesting alternative pages for me to consider. These would not have been that useful to me in the earlier stages of my research but this test confirmed my feeling that Blekko is good at pulling up information that explores more than the mainstream issues.

If you want to stay with Google how do you deal with multiple listings of sites? The most obvious approach would be to incorporate a '-site:' command in your search, for example:

```
biofuels public transport -site:dft.gov.uk
```

If you are conducting in depth research and are likely to be running many variations on a search, incorporating '-site:' each time can become a chore. Google's own browser Chrome has a Personal Blocklist extension that enables you to block selected sites from results (<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/nolijncfnkgaikbjbdaogikpmpbdcdef>). Once installed a block link appears next to each entry in your results. Click on the link to block the site from all future results. A message appears at the bottom of searches that would normally contain pages from the blocked site warning you about exclusions.

[Environmental focus gives Scania market leadership | Scania ... newsroom.scania.com/.../environmental-focus-gives-scania-ma... - Block newsroom.scania.com](#)  
 1 Dec 2011 – A major order for 121 **biofuel** buses from Nobina strengthens Scania's ... They will be put into service in **public transport** in Uppland and Skåne ...

*Some results were removed by the Personal Blocklist Chrome extension ([show](#)).*

The 'show' link displays and highlights the previously blocked pages and offers an option to unblock them.

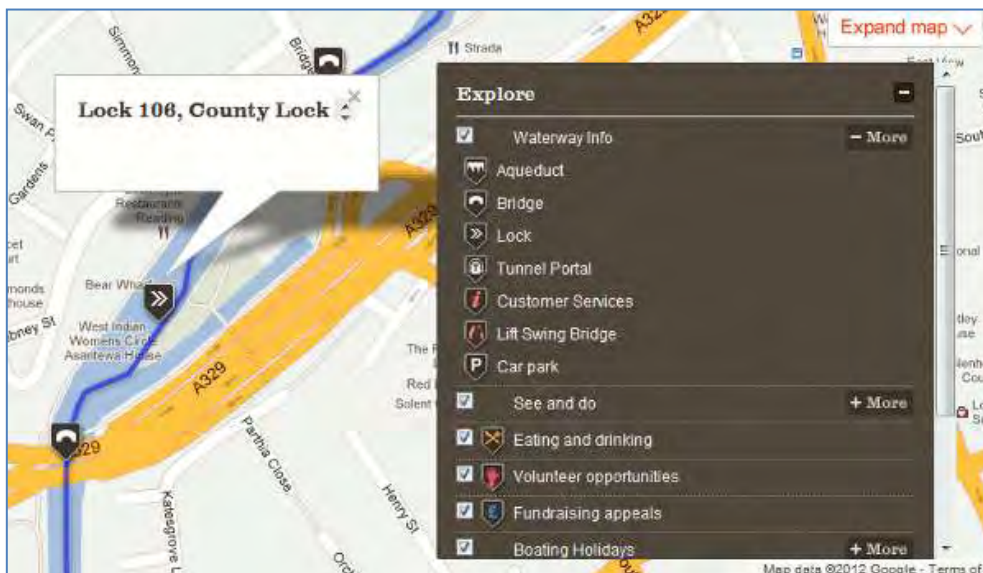
[Creating conditions for alternative fuel use - CIVITAS :: Measure Detail www.civitas-initiative.org/measure\\_sheet.phtml?lan=de&id... - Block civitas-initiative.org](#)  
 Seven **public transport** buses, running on conventional diesel, were converted to run on compressed natural gas (CNG) and **biofuel** in order to improve air ...

[Biofuels and sustainability - Department for Transport www.dft.gov.uk > ... > Biofuels - Unblock dft.gov.uk](#)  
 Firstly, carbon savings are partially offset by the energy that is needed for cultivation, harvesting, processing and **transportation of biofuels**. This can represent a ...

Neither the -site: option nor the Blocklist approach should be necessary. There was nothing wrong with the previous ways of offering additional pages from a site in search results. It wasn't broke but Google did break it by trying to fix it. For me, there are now several Google alternatives that produce quality results and with less irritation. I shall be using them more in future.

## Google maps UK canals

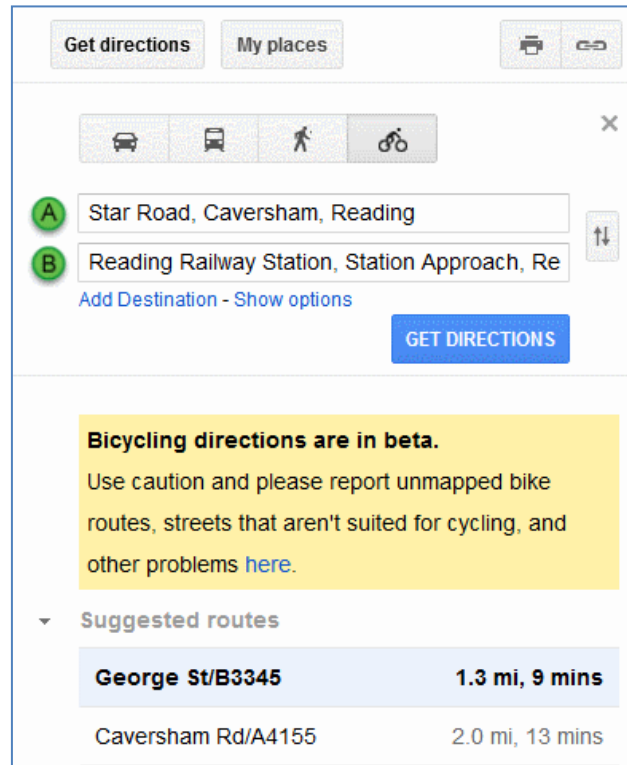
First cycle routes and now canals. Google is collaborating with the Canal and River Trust to provide a Google Map guide to the UK's canal network called In Your Area (<http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/in-your-area>). It is **not** available as part of the standard Google Maps. The map allows you to enter your address or postcode to find the nearest canal. The map shows the locations of canals, canal locks and bridges and also volunteering opportunities, places to eat and drink and boating services and moorings.



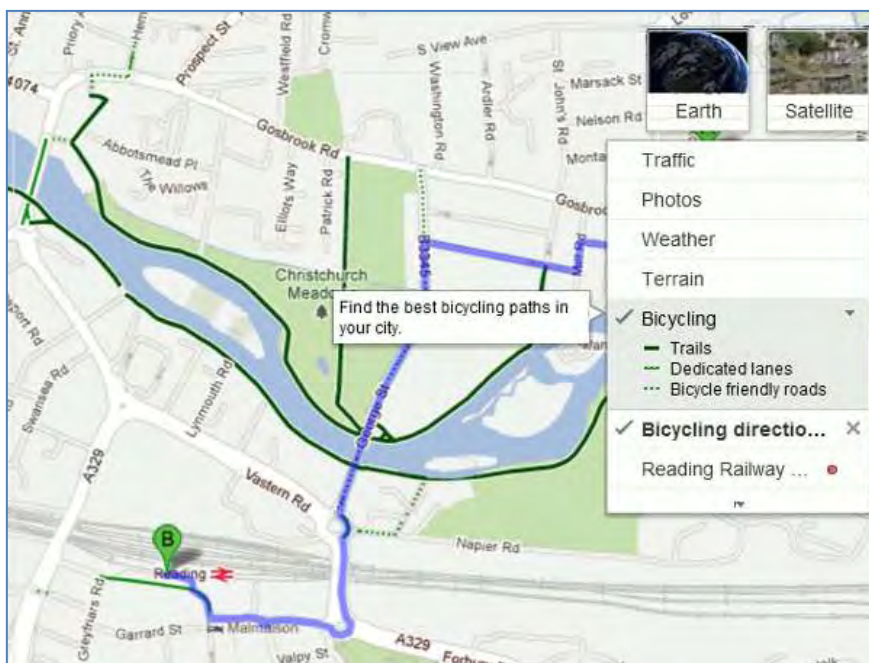
It is early days and not everything is marked up on the map, or at least it isn't for the Kennet and Avon Canal in Reading. Also planned for later this year is the addition of 'Street View' images of the canal and river network. (Please, no lurking in the bushes by the side of the tow paths and pushing the Google cycles into the canal!)

## Google adds cycling routes to UK maps

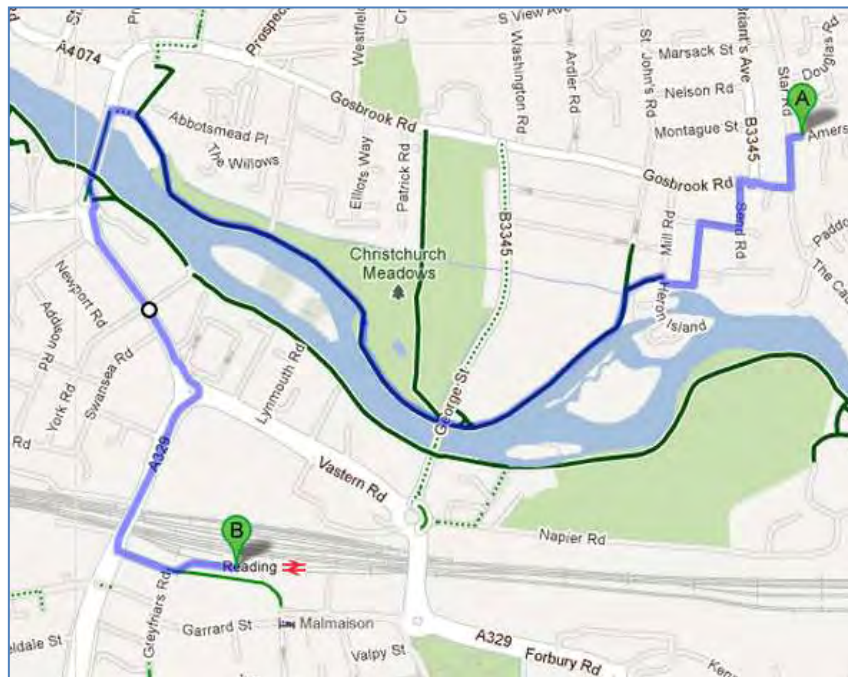
Google has added cycle routes and directions to its UK maps. The feature has been available on US and Canadian maps since 2010 but has now been extended to the Europe and Australia. In the UK Google has been working with Sustrans (<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/>) to include bike trails, lanes and recommended roads. Set your starting point and destination as usual and the directions area on the screen should include a bicycle icon in addition to the car, public transport and walking icons.



Select a suggested route and as well as text instructions it will be outlined in blue on the map. The "bicycling layer" also shows trails (dark green lines), dedicated lanes (light green lines) and bicycle friendly roads (dotted green lines). Google came up with two routes from my house to Reading Railway Station. The first and more direct one followed the roads.



The second suggestion took the scenic route along the river, which would be more pleasant and probably safer during the rush hour.



The directions come with the usual warning that they are in beta and that you should use caution. There is an option to report unmapped bike routes, streets that aren't suited for cycling, and other problems.

Further information is available on Google Lat Long: Biking directions expands into Europe and Australia (<http://google-latlong.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/biking-directions-expands-into-europe.html>). The Guardian Bike Blog has tested out a couple of routes in London (Google Maps' cycle routes: just how good are they? (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/bike-blog/2012/jul/12/google-maps-uk-cycle-routes>?) and set up a Twitter hashtag #cycletest for cyclists to comment on the routes they have tried.

## Beating Google into submission – top tips

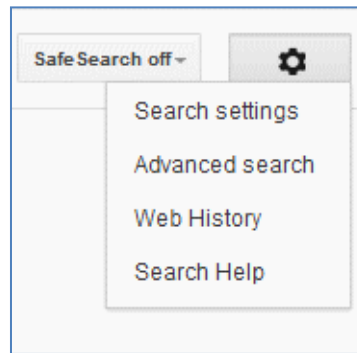
Oh what fun we had beating Google into submission on June 28th! This advanced Google workshop was held at Reading University and covered some of the new goings on at Google (no more 'ANDing' for search terms, personalisation of results) as well as some of the established techniques for making Google behave itself. The following is what the group came up with at the end of the day as their collaborative top tips for persuading Google to run your search the way **you** want it run.

### 1. Search settings

Use the search settings to:

- alter the level of the safe search
- switch on/off Google Instant. This is the feature that changes and displays results as your type in your search. Some people find it useful whilst others find it extremely irritating. A big disadvantage of it is that it only displays 10 results per page.
- increase the number of results per page from 10 to up to 100. Since you can no longer guarantee that you will find the most relevant page in the first 10 results this enables you to view more without having to click through to the next page. Google Instant, which allows only 10 results per page, must be switched off.
- open results in a new browser window or tab. This allows you to view results while leaving your search page intact in a separate tab or window.
- switch on/off or edit your search history. Search history is used by Google to customise your results and some people prefer to switch it off. It can, though, provide a useful record of the searches you have carried out and the pages that you have visited from that search.

Search settings is hidden under the cog wheel which appears in the upper right hand area of your results page. In some browser versions it appears in the top right hand corner of the Google home page. The Advanced Search screen link is also hidden under the cog wheel.



## 2. Sign out of all social media and search engine accounts

Both Google and Bing are experimenting with including content from your social media connections in your search results when you are signed in to your networks. For Google, the Google.com version is where it is happening at the moment and it pulls in content from members of your Google+ circles. To see Bing's new social sidebar, which includes content from Facebook friends and Twitter, you have to use the US version of Bing. The Google+ results are intermingled with the main results whereas Bing displays them in a separate sidebar on the right of the results page. For more details see Danny Sullivan's article Bing Relaunches, Features New Social Sidebar <http://searchengineland.com/the-new-bing-microsoft-tries-again-with-search-meets-social-120728>

Including posts from your social network friends in your results is not always a bad thing. You may uncover valuable information and gain a different perspective on the subject of your research. There is, though, the issue of privacy. A contact in one of your Google+ circles may have posted a comment and restricted it to a circle of which you happen to be a member, so it is **not** public. If you want to include the information in a print out or report for a client you will have to seek permission first. Even if you try and anonymise the information there may still be enough clues to identify the source.

## 3. Check out Google.com as well as Google.co.uk

Apart from presenting your search results in a different order Google.com is where Google tries out new features. As well as seeing pages that may not be highly ranked in Google.co.uk you will get an idea of the future direction of Google search.

## 4. Limit by date.

Use the date options in the menu on the left hand side of the results page to limit your results to the last day, week, month, year or within a custom date range. This tends to work best with blogs and news sources. With ordinary web pages Google looks at the time stamp that is assigned to a page when it is uploaded, or reloaded, to the web site. This can be very different from the date on which it was written. If you are looking for recent material it will, though, exclude pages that have been languishing untouched on a web site for years. To see the date option you have to click on the 'More search tools' options at the bottom of the menu.

## 5. Verbatim.

**The** essential tool for taming Google. Google automatically looks for variations of your terms, which is not always helpful. Prefixing a term with the '+' sign to force an exact match no longer works in web search, but confusingly still does in Google Scholar, and Google has suggested using double quote marks around terms or phrases instead. This does not always work. And now Google no longer looks for all of your terms in a document. If you want Google to run your search exactly as you have typed it in, click on the 'More search tools' options at the bottom of the left hand menu on your results page and then click on Verbatim at the bottom. Unfortunately, Verbatim does not work with the date options but there is a solution....see number 6 below.



**6. Combining with Verbatim with date limits.**

There are two ways to do this: the hard way and the easy way.

First of all the hard way. This uses the 'daterange:' operator and Julian dates. Daterange does not understand the mm/dd/yyyy or dd/mm/yyyy date formats. You have to convert your dates to Julian date format. This is explained on the Julian Date Converter page at <http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/JulianDate.php> and there is a handy tool that will do the date conversion for you. You then copy the Julian date omitting the fraction and paste it into your search. For example if you are looking for pages mentioning housing benefits Cameron between June 20th and June 26th 2012:

```
daterange:2456098-2456104 housing benefits Cameron
```

Once the results are displayed use the Verbatim option to force Google to look for exactly what you've asked for.

Now the easy way. There are several tools that will carry out a date limited Google search and one of them can be found at <http://qmacker.com/web/content/qDateRange/qdr.htm> (many thanks to Richard Clauson who found this for us). Simply fill in the boxes and on the Google results page click on Verbatim at the bottom of the left hand menu.

Why have I detailed the hard way? Because the easy tools may stop working or disappear without trace.

**7. Results page sidebar.**

Use the sidebar on the left hand side of the results page to focus your search and extra search features. To see all of the options click on the 'More' and 'More search tools' links. The content of the sidebar changes with the type of search you are running, for example Image search has a colour option.

**8. Google Art Project** <http://www.googleartproject.com/>

This is a collaboration between Google and over 150 galleries from across the world. You can take a virtual tour of a gallery and zoom in on a painting to see the brushstrokes. You can view paintings and drawings by gallery or by artist. Warning: this is highly addictive!

**9. Numeric range.**

Use this for anything to do with numbers – years, temperatures, weights, distances, prices etc. Use the boxes on the Advanced Search screen or just type in your two numbers separated by two full stops as part of your search. For example:

```
world oil demand forecasts 2015..2030
```

**10. Repeat your search terms one or more times.**

Ideal for getting out of a search rut or forcing Google to give you different results. Repeat your main search term or terms to change the order of your results – sometimes radically.

**Twitter Notes**

The following are some of my recent tweets and retweets. They are selected because they contain links to resources or announcements that may be of general interest. I have unshortened the shortened URLs.

**14th June 2012**

How Much Do Social Signals Play Into Google Rankings? – Search Engine Watch

<http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2184210/How-Much-Do-Social-Signals-Play-Into-Google-Rankings>

**June 15th**

RT @opencorporates: Norway becomes first Open Govt Partnership country to open company register as #opendata <http://blog.opencorporates.com/2012/06/12/norway-becomes-first-ogp-country-to-open-its-company-data-and-belgium-announces-it-will-too/>

**June 22nd**

MT @MeganJRoberts finding Bing is producing way better results than Google or DuckDuckGo right now – more likely to get the right site

**June 25th**

RT @briankelly “Conferences don’t end at the end anymore” What #IWMW12 still offers slides, photos, videos, discussions <http://ukwebfocus.wordpress.com/2012/06/25/conferences-dont-end-at-the-end-anymore-what-iwmw-2012-still-offers/>

**June 26th**

Yammer acquired by Microsoft: Yammer’s Next Chapter | Yammer Blog <http://blog.yammer.com/blog/2012/06/yammers-next-chapter.html>

**July 4th**

Google to close down iGoogle and Google Video “Spring cleaning in summer” <http://googleblog.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/spring-cleaning-in-summer.html>

RT @jim68000: OK, so they’ve announced the Higgs Boson, but no word on pricing or whether it will ship by Christmas. #fail

**July 7th**

RT @LynParker: Wellcome Trust will penalise scientists who don’t embrace open access | @scoopit via @redsontour <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2012/jun/28/wellcome-trust-scientists-open-access>

**July 10th**

BBC News – Is it possible to quit Google? <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18777671>  
Includes comments from @benjaminellis

**July 13th**

From iGoogle to Netvibes in 3 Easy Steps <http://blog.netvibes.com/from-igoogle-to-netvibes-in-3-easy-steps/>

**July 16th**

2011 census results: how many people live in your local authority? <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/datablog/2012/jul/16/2011-census-results-data>

**July 18th**

RT @NazlinBhimani: What about the authors who can’t pay? Why the government’s embrace of gold open access isn’t something to celebrate <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/07/17/finch-what-about-authors-who-cant-pay/>

## July 20th

Google Reports \$12.2 Billion in Q2 2012 Revenue 35% YoY Growth. Search Engine Watch <http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2193073/Google-Reports-12.2-Billion-in-Q2-2012-Revenue-35-YoY-Growth> . Google's own announcement is at [http://investor.google.com/earnings/2012/Q2\\_google\\_earnings.html](http://investor.google.com/earnings/2012/Q2_google_earnings.html)

Just caught up with this via my South African friends. NMMU Choir's tribute to Nelson Mandela's 94th birthday [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbxbAz\\_OXNM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbxbAz_OXNM) Thanks to @JeanThomas2310 for the link

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