



Tales from the Terminal Room April 2013, Issue No. 110

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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/>

Tales from the Terminal Room can be delivered via email as plain text or as a PDF with active links. You can join the distribution list by going to <http://www.rba.co.uk/tftr/index.shtml> and filling in the form. You will be sent an email asking you to confirm that you want to be added to the list. TFTTR is also available as an RSS feed. The URL for the feed is <http://www.rba.co.uk/rss/tftr.xml>

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Search Tools

Test your search skills with SearchReSearch

Many of us seem to be in Google bashing mode at the moment but they do produce good stuff at times, or at least some of their employees do. Dan Russell, who works at Google, has an excellent blog called SearchReSearch at <http://searchresearch1.blogspot.com/>. The blog is "*about search, search skills, teaching search, learning how to search, learning how to use Google effectively, learning how to do research. It also covers a good deal of sensemaking and information foraging*". Dan comes up with a topic for research and invites people to comment on what they find and how they found it. The questions usually arise when Dan is out and about and spots something curious. A recent query was about the roadside use of weedkiller and was asked because he and a friend had noticed brown strips of dead vegetation along the edge of the highway. (See 'How much death at the roadside' <http://searchresearch1.blogspot.com/2013/03/answer-how-much-death-at-roadside.html>).

The questions are a great way to test your search skills and see how others have tackled them. Don't be deterred by the US emphasis. After all, many of us sometimes have to research industries and events in other countries. It's wonderful exercise for the little grey cells.

Now you see it, now you don't

April has been a very busy month for me this year. As well as speaking at conferences I also gave six full day workshops so had to prepare the presentations, handouts and notes well in advance. When it comes to the Google sessions the material the delegates receive never matches exactly what they see on their screens during the practicals. That's par for the course where Google is concerned and it's a great way of getting across to people how Google ~~messes up~~ enhances search results. The main problem I'm having is that Google seems to be subjecting me to several major 'live experiments' and results keep changing second by second. The consequence is that it is impossible for me to pull together a set of consistent screen shots but I, and the delegates, will just have to live with that. And it makes a good story on the day!

If you don't know what Google's 'live experiments' are the YouTube video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5RZOU6vK4Q> will enlighten you. In essence, Google tests out changes to its search and ranking algorithms on users before deciding whether or not to go ahead with the changes. It could be me or you who ends up being one of Google's lab rats. We are not asked if we want to be part of the test nor are we told. Most of the time, the changes are so minor that we don't notice the difference, but occasionally they lead to some very bizarre results. See my blog posting from a couple of years ago when Google decided that coots were really lions (<http://www.rba.co.uk/wordpress/2011/02/12/google-decides-that-coots-are-really-lions/>). What I've been seeing over the last couple of days is not in that league but extremely irritating all the same.

One of test searches is fairly straightforward – copper extraction north wales. This is what I saw:

copper extraction north wales

Web Images Maps Shopping Books More ▾ Search tools

About 9,990,000 results (0.47 seconds)

[History of Mineralogy in Wales | National Museum Wales](#)

www.museumwales.ac.uk › ... › Contents › About Mineralogy

Parys Mountain was the site of extensive copper extraction between 1750 and ... was particularly active in his local area (the Halkyn district of north-east Wales).

[Metal mining in Wales - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metal_mining_in_Wales

The ore extracted was Galena which in many cases had a high silver content, ... the 17th and 19th centuries in north Cardiganshire and west Montgomeryshire: ... Copper mining is probably the oldest known mining activity in Wales with ...

[Parys Mountain - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parys_Mountain

Copper was concentrated and extracted from the remainder using kilns and furnaces on site. ... views of Amlwch Port to the north and the nearby Trysglwyn wind farm to the south. ... Bevins, Richard E; Wales, National Museum of (1994-05).

What's wrong with that you might ask. When I first looked at the results it seemed as though Google was dropping terms from my search because none of them are emboldened in the extracts. On closer inspection, though, the terms and their synonyms **are** present. I ran Verbatim on the search and saw a similar set of results with no emboldening apart from words in the title. I use Chrome as my default browser and wondering if it was an issue with that I tried Firefox. The emboldened terms reappeared.

copper extraction north wales

Web Images Maps Shopping Books More ▾ S

About 9,990,000 results (0.41 seconds)

[History of Mineralogy in Wales | National Museum Wales](#)
www.museumwales.ac.uk > ... > Contents > About Mineralogy
 Parys Mountain was the site of extensive **copper extraction** between 175 particularly active in his local area (the Halkyn district of **north-east Wales**)

[Metal mining in Wales - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metal_mining_in_Wales
 The ore **extracted** was Galena which in many cases had a high silver content 17th and 19th centuries in **north** Cardiganshire and west Montgomeryshire mining is probably the oldest known mining activity in **Wales** with ...

[Parys Mountain - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parys_Mountain
Copper was concentrated and **extracted** from the remainder using kilns a on site. ... views of Amlwch Port to the **north** and the nearby Trysglwyn wii south. ... Bevins, Richard E; **Wales**, National Museum of (1994-05).

[Driving - North Wales Slate & Copper](#)
www.industrialheritage.org.uk/index.php?...north-wales...copp...
 By following the **North Wales Slate and Copper** Trail you can ride on a na you can see how the slate was **extracted** from both open quarries and ...

Internet Explorer also displayed emboldened terms.

I went back to Chrome and ran the search in an Incognito window. The search terms appeared emboldened in the extracts.

Thinking the problem was due to me being signed in to a Google account I signed out and ran the search. No emboldened terms. I cleared the cache and cookies. No emboldened terms. I disconnected Chrome from my Google account. No emboldened terms. I disabled all of the extensions. No emboldened terms. It was clear that Google was not going to show me emboldened terms when using a normal Chrome window. Why is it so important? Because it is a quick way of initially assessing the relevance of the results. No emboldened terms in the extract suggests that they were not found in the text of the page. If this is indeed an experiment and not a local glitch on my system, and Google decides to roll this out to all users we are all going to waste a lot of time wading through irrelevant results.

On to possible experiment number 2. Google sometimes ignores the setting that tells it how many results to display on a page. I have set mine to 100 but occasionally it reverts to just 10. Refreshing the page or going into settings and saving them again usually works for me. This is a minor irritant, unlike experiment number 3.

Google has started showing just six results for some searches. Phil Bradley is one who is definitely not impressed with this (http://philbradley.typepad.com/phil_bradleys_weblog/2013/03/google-results-down-to-6-on-a-page-and-most-of-those-are-wrong.html). Then I started seeing it for some of my own searches.

Caversham Nash & Co second hand jewellers

[Web](#) [Images](#) [Maps](#) [Shopping](#) [More ▾](#) [Search tools](#)

About 29,100 results (0.32 seconds)

[Nash & Co \(Caversham\) Ltd - Jeweller in RG4 8AA - 192.com](#)

[www.192.com](#) > ... > [Reading businesses](#) > [Jeweller in Reading](#)

Contact details for **Nash & Co (Caversham) Ltd** in Reading RG4 8AA from 192.com Business Directory, the best resource for finding **Jeweller** listings in the UK.

[Jewellers in Caversham | Reviews - Yell](#)

[www.yell.com/s/jewellers-caversham.html](#)

Find **Jewellers in Caversham** on Yell. Get reviews and ... **Nash & Co** - 5 out of 5 Add a review **Nash & Co** - Clock House, 14, Bridge St, **Caversham**, Reading, RG4 8AA. 0.8 miles SW ... Diamond speciality, 2nd **hand** & modern pieces. Bulgari ...

[Jewellers in RG4. Jewellers in Caversham. Jewellers in Reading ...](#)

[www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/Berkshire/Reading/RG4/.../Jewellers](#)

Find **Jewellers in Caversham**, Reading, Sonning Common, and other areas of RG4. ... **Jewellers in** & around RG4. [Return to ... Find **Nash & Co** on a map ...

[Reading Forum • View topic - Bridge St Caversham 45 years ago](#)

[www.reading-forum.co.uk](#) > ... > [Memories of old Reading](#)

6 posts - 4 authors - 5 Jul 2009

In those days they **used** to drive a herd of cattle over the bridge on their way to The **jeweller** is still there and they now trade as **Nash & Co**.

[New Shops Coming To The Town Centre](#) - 35 posts - 6 Mar 2011

[Caversham Secondary School](#) - 14 posts - 18 Jul 2010

[Defunct Pubs](#) - 35 posts - 18 Jun 2008

[More results from reading-forum.co.uk »](#)

Results for similar searches

[Nash & Co Caversham. Reading RG4 8AA. Jewellers](#)

[www.misterwhat.co.uk](#) > [South East England](#) > [Berkshire](#)

Nash & Co in **Caversham**, Reading RG4 8AA - Company Profile, Phone Number, Address, Postcode, Map and more.

[More results for caversham nash & co second hand jewellers](#)

I didn't see 6 results but 4! (As an aside, the emboldened search terms in the extract have returned). The fifth was a result for similar searches with an annotation that indicated '& co second hand' had been omitted. A couple of the results were OK-ish but I was hoping for more detailed information. Is there really so little information for this query? Like Phil, when I clicked on to the next page I was back to sensible results. Unlike Phil, using Verbatim on the search worked for me and overrode the experiment, so again I was back to sensible results.

Experiment number 4: annotations below the extracts. Some of these annotations look like headings from the pages themselves but others are not. I cannot replicate what I saw yesterday and didn't take any screenshots of this one. I am sure I didn't dream it because a couple of my network on Twitter have reported similar experiences.

This continual round of disappearing, reappearing, disappearing "features" is infuriating. Yes, we can all go off and use other search engines but there are times when the type of content and level of coverage tempts us back. You do have to know how to use the advanced search commands to get anything sensible out of Google, but even then success is not guaranteed.

Given that Google is now just over 13 years old and a teenager it is not surprising that it has become somewhat truculent. It's when it starts going through the silent grunting phase that we need to really start worrying.

Business information slides and top tips

My latest business information workshop, organised by TFPL, was held in London. A large chunk of the session was taken up with exploring and discussing web sites but we also looked at how advanced search options and commands can be used to focus on higher quality business information. An edited version of the slides is available on authorSTREAM at <http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/karenblakeman-1775787-business-information-key-web-resources/> and Slideshare at <http://www.slideshare.net/KarenBlakeman/business-information-key-web-resources-19252576>.

Towards the end of the afternoon the participants were asked to come up with a list of top 10 tips and tricks. Two more were submitted to me by email soon after, so we have a dozen in total.

1. Verbatim

Google automatically looks for variations on your search terms and sometimes drops terms from your search without telling or asking you. Neither of these are very helpful if you are looking for a company or a person. Quote marks around phrases or individual words do not always force an exact match or inclusion in the search. If you want Google to run your search exactly as you have typed it in, click on 'Search tools' in the menu above your results, then click on the arrow next to 'All results' and from the drop down menu select Verbatim.

2. Reading Level

Try 'Reading level' if Google is failing to return any research or business related documents for a query. Run your search and from the menu above the results select 'Search tools', 'All results' and from the drop menu 'Reading level'. Options for switching between basic, intermediate and advanced reading levels should then appear just above the results. Google does not give much away as to how it calculates the reading level and it has nothing to do with the reading age that publishers assign to publications. It seems to involve an analysis of sentence structure, the length of sentences, the length of the document and whether scientific or industry specific terminology appears in the page.

3. Guardian Data Store <http://www.guardian.co.uk/data>

This section of the Guardian posts articles, charts, graphs and maps on stories in the news using official government data, datasets collected and published relevant organisations and sometimes data obtained via Freedom of Information (Fol) requests. Links to the original datasets are provided so that you can download the raw data.

4. filetype:

Use the filetype: command to limit your research to PowerPoint for presentations, spreadsheets for data and statistics or PDF for research papers and industry/government reports. Note that in Google filetype:ppt and filetype:xls will **not** pick up the newer .pptx and xlsx formats so you will need to incorporate both into your strategy, for example filetype:ppt OR filetype:pptx, or run separate searches for each one. In Bing.com, though, filetype:pptx will pick up both .ppt and .pptx files.

5. site:

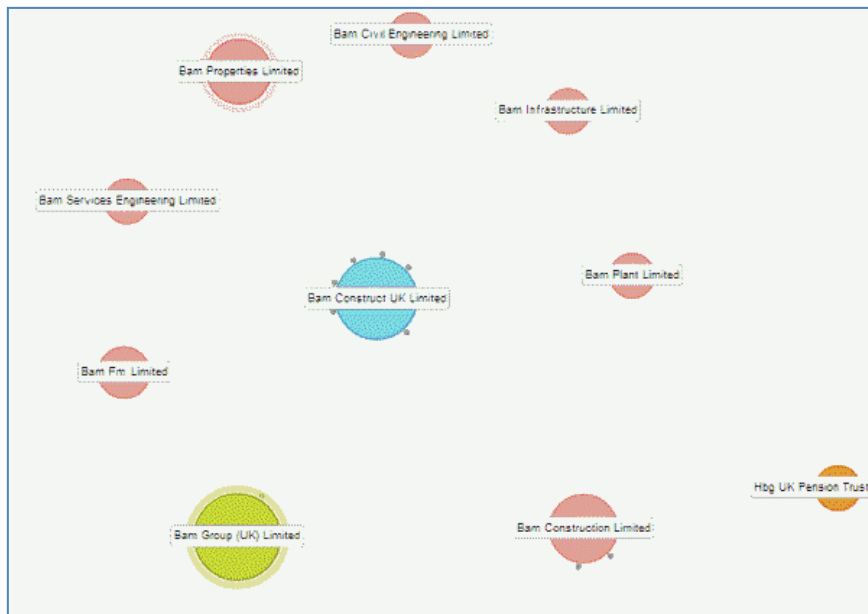
Include the site: command in your search to focus your search on particular types of site, for example site:gov.uk. You can also use -site: to exclude a site or group of sites from your search, for example:

potato yields forecasts 2013 site:gov.uk -site:www.gov.uk

to run the search on UK government web sites but excluding the new www.gov.uk site.

6. Duedil chart

Duedil (<http://www.duedil.com/>) is one of several companies that repackage Companies House data and makes some of available free of charge. The workshop participants particularly liked the company Group visualisations.



Duedil company Group visualisation

7. Company Check <http://www.companycheck.co.uk/> and Company Director Check <http://company-director-check.co.uk/>

Like Duedil, both of these services repackage Companies House data. Company Check provides 5 years of figures and graphs for Cash at Bank, Net Worth, Total Liabilities and Total Current Liabilities free of charge and lists the directors of a company. Click on a director's name and you are taken to the Company Directory Check where you can view other current and past directorships for that person.

8. RSS feeds

Several of those attending the workshop already use or are considering using RSS feeds as a means of monitoring events and companies. Google is closing down Google Reader but Phil Bradley has lists of alternatives at http://philbradley.typepad.com/phil_bradleys_weblog/2013/03/20-alternatives-to-google-reader.html and http://philbradley.typepad.com/phil_bradleys_weblog/2013/03/even-more-33-google-reader-alternatives.html

9. BL BIPC industry Guides

The British Library Business Information and IP Centre's industry guides at <http://www.bl.uk/bipc/dbandpubs/Industry%20guides/industry.html> highlight relevant industry directories, databases, publications and web sites. Excellent starting points if you are new to the sector.

10. Domain Tools <http://www.domaintools.com/>

This is a useful tool for identifying who owns the domain name of a web site. Alarm bells should start ringing in your head if the owner is hiding behind an agent or a privacy protection service.

11. GBRdirect <http://www.gbrdirect.eu/>

A single point of access to the official company registries of 22 European countries. As well as searching for companies you can search company appointments and personnel for some countries, and verify VAT numbers. The amount of information that is disclosed varies depending on the country and details of what is available is included in the price list at <http://gbrdirect.eu/priceList.aspx>. The information that it finds will be in the original language.

12. Numeric range

This command is unique to Google. Use it for anything to do with numbers – years, temperatures, weights, distances, prices etc. Simply type in your two numbers separated by two full stops as part of your search. For example: world oil demand forecasts 2015..2030

This workshop is being held again on Thursday, 19th September 2013 in London. The content will have changed by then – in fact, some things have already changed! – and participants are encouraged to let us know the areas and topics in which they are particularly interested and areas of research that cause them problems. This enables me to tailor the event to the needs of those attending. Hands-on practical sessions are included so that everyone has a chance to try out the sites and techniques for themselves. Further details of the day are on the TFPL website at <http://www.tfpl.com/services/coursedescribe.cfm?id=TR945&pageid=-9&cs1=business%20information&cs2=a>

Factiva discontinues pay as you go service

Factiva is discontinuing its pay as you go option for occasional users as part of a “strategic refocus”. Instead of an annual fee of \$69 plus a per document charge of \$2.95, there will now be a fixed monthly fee of \$249/month. This allows you to download up to 100 documents a month with additional articles above this limit being charged at \$2.95 each. The new pricing took effect from 30th April 2013 and, for existing customers, will be payable from their next renewal date.

I have not used Factiva for over a year and, to be honest, I haven't missed it at all. Much of my research is highly specialised and I find that I am using industry specific sources and scientific papers more and more. Nevertheless, it is a great shame that Factiva has taken this step. Many of the people I work with appreciate the quality of the service but few use it often enough to warrant the \$249 monthly fee.

Thanks to everyone who sent me details of the changes.

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

5th April

Article on using Creative Book Builder for classes <http://www.appsinclass.com/creative-book-builder.html> #mmit2013

11th April

Dan Benton @dogsbodorg Great new Enterprise & Innovation Hub in Bracknell. Free meeting space for startups! @BracknellJelly is here today <http://pic.twitter.com/4suVacGdV1>

13th April

This is why I delay installing MS updates RT @stephendale: Botched Microsoft Windows 7 Update Kills Computers <http://www.techweekeurope.co.uk/news/microsoft-security-update-windows-7-fails-113041>

Catching up with my reading. @theREALwikiman's posting on 10 non-standard tips for public speaking def. worth reading <http://thewikiman.org/blog/?p=2158>

15th April

Conference organised by the excellent @TheSourceress, September 17th-18th Discover Sourcing <http://discoversourcing.eventbrite.com/> [I'm speaking at the preconference event]

Steve Dale @stephendale Google Reader's Last Product Manager Calls Its Shutdown a Missed Opportunity - Forbes <http://www.forbes.com/sites/alexkantrowitz/2013/04/08/google-readers-last-product-manager-calls-its-shutdown-a-missed-opportunity/> #google #rss #fail

16th April

Presentation by @stephendale New roles and new skills for km (isko) <http://www.slideshare.net/stephendale/new-roles-and-new-skills-for-km-isko> Slide no. 12 very relevant to today's society

17th April

:-) RT @theREALwikiman Hey everyone, I've made a useful decision-tree to help people decide when to use Comic Sans: <http://thewikiman.org/comicsans.htm>

20th April

RT @AlisonMcNab: University recruitment: one fifth of students say social media doesn't work <http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/blog/2013/apr/17/university-student-recruitment-social-media> via @guardian

Forthcoming workshops and events

Workshop: Anything but Google

Date: Thursday, 27th June 2013 and Tuesday, 19th November 2013

Venue: Newcastle (June), London (November)

Organiser: UKeig

Presenter: Karen Blakeman

Outline: This workshop will look at non-Google options for searching the web, different types of information and media. The workshop will cover alternative web search, specialist tools for research information and grey literature, image search tools and archives, statistics and open data, video, news, social media and professional networks.

URL: <http://www.ukeig.org.uk/trainingevent/anything-google-karen-blakeman> and <http://www.ukeig.org.uk/trainingevent/anything-google-karen-blakeman-0>

Workshop: Social Searching

Date: Tuesday, 16th July 2013

Venue: Bristol

Organiser: UKeig

Presenter: Karen Blakeman

Outline: "Social" has become an integral part of search. Companies use social and professional networks to market their services and stay in touch with existing and potential customers. Conference presentations, highlights and videos are shared across multiple platforms. Researchers use social media to discuss and promote their work. And many people now use their social connections to share and ask questions. Google and Bing include social media in their results, and use your network connections to personalise your searches and those of your friends. However, they do not cover everything. Conversations start up in many different places, so knowing where to look is vital. This workshop will look at the impact of social networks on search and the specialist tools that are available.

URL: <http://www.ukeig.org.uk/trainingevent/social-searching-karen-blakeman>

Workshop: Business Information: Key Web Resources

Date: Thursday, 19th September 2013

Venue: London

Organiser: TFPL

Presenter: Karen Blakeman

Outline: This workshop looks in more detail at the resources that are available for different types of information, alerting services and free vs. fee. It also covers search strategies for tracking down industry, market and corporate reports.

URL: <http://www.tfpl.com/services/coursedescribe.cfm?id=TR945&pageid=-9&cs1=business%20information&cs2=a>

Workshop: How to Make Google behave: techniques for better results

Date: Wednesday, 30th October 2013

Venue: London

Organiser: UKeig

Presenter: Karen Blakeman

Outline. Having problems with Google? Fed up with it ignoring your search terms and giving you something completely different? Personalisation, localisation, social networks and semantic search are all being used by Google in an attempt to improve relevance but it can all go horribly wrong. Austria suddenly becomes Australia and your search for goat's cheese turns into identifying different species of buttercups! Nevertheless, just one really good result in the top five is often enough to persuade us to return to Google again and again. There are many tricks we can use to make Google return better results and this workshop will look in detail at the options that are currently available to us.

URL: <http://www.ukeig.org.uk/trainingevent/karen-blakeman-make-google-behave-techniques-better-results-0>

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