

# Be a Better Googler

BY EVAN DASHEVSKY



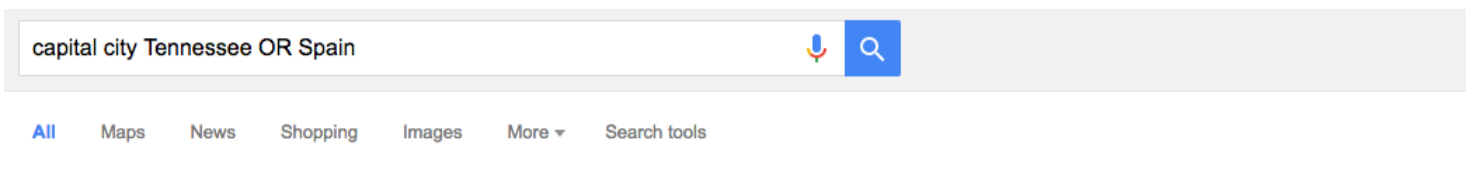
Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

With a decade and a half behind it, Google search has evolved into a complex and versatile technology. But although you may use it every day, you probably don't know everything about Google search. Our tips will help you sharpen your search skills.



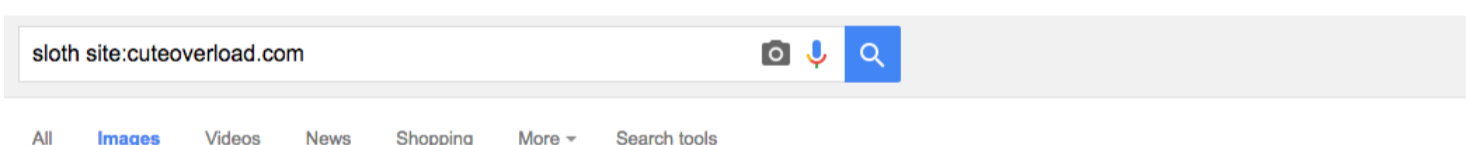
## SEARCH MODIFIERS



Google’s algorithm is adept at returning the information you’re looking for, even when you aren’t quite sure yourself. But when you know exactly what you need, refine your search results by using some basic modifiers.

- **Exclude terms by using a minus (-) symbol:** Say you want to learn about wildfires in the Amazon rainforest but not about Jeff Bezos’s newest hardware. You can use the minus symbol to exclude all the terms you don’t want: for example, *amazon fire -kindle -phone -tv*
- **Use “OR” to combine searches:** Use this modifier when you want to get two separate but related bits of information. Google usually ignores capitalization, but in this kind of search, you need to use an all-capped “OR.” You’ll see different results for *capital city Tennessee or Spain* than for *capital city Tennessee OR Spain*.
- **Use quotations to search for the exact order:** Searching “*Danny DeVito hair*” brings back only results that include all those words in that order. But a search for *Danny DeVito hair* (no quotation marks) brings back a different set of results. They’ll have all those words, but not necessarily in the order you typed them in.

## SEARCH QUALIFIERS



Google search supports a variety of search qualifiers that help to further filter your results.

- **Search inside a single website:** If you want results from within one site only, use site: followed directly by the site’s URL. You must include the site’s domain—*Galaxy S site:pcmag.com*, not *Galaxy S site:pcmag*.
- **Search titles only:** Use the qualifier intitle: to look for words in the webpage title. For example, *grasshoppers intitle:gross* returns only sites about grasshoppers that have the word “gross” in the title. Conversely, allintitle: returns links with multiple words in the title: for instance, *allintitle: cow meat yummy*.

- **Search URLs only:** Similar to the `intitle:` function, using `inurl:` or `allinurl:` lets you search just in the URL.
- **Search text only:** `intext:` and `allintext:` let you search only within the text of a site, leaving out the title and URL, which the search algorithm usually take into consideration. You can use these terms in conjunction with each other or with the previously mentioned modifiers.

## BETTER IMAGE SEARCH



Advanced Image Search

You can use many of the aforementioned search refiners in Google image searches. Get even more accurate results by clicking through to Google’s advanced image search page, which lets you search by image size, region, file type, and even by specific colors.

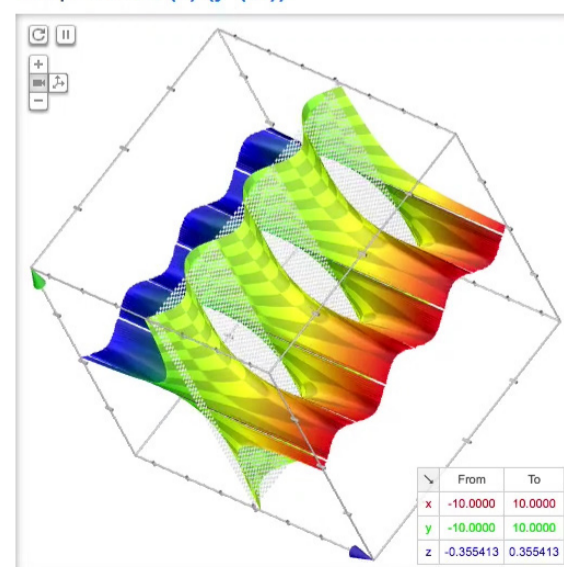
Google also supports “backward” image searches on most browsers. This function lets you find information on an image file. For example, upload a picture of the Eiffel Tower, and Google almost surely will recognize it and give you relevant information. (It works with faces, too.) A backward search can direct you to websites where the uploaded image appears, and it can also show you images that are “visually similar.”

To perform a backward search, go to Google Images search and click the camera icon in the search bar. You can either upload an image or enter an image’s URL that you’d like to search. Updated versions of Chrome, Firefox, and Edge even let you drag image files directly into the search bar.

## MATH IN THE SEARCH BOX

Go ahead and do basic calculations right in your search bar. For example, searching  $34+7$  prompts a calculator below the bar with the correct answer already filled in. You can also ask Google to solve math questions in regular language; searching *what is 3 times 7* prompts the calculator and the correct answer. You can ask more complicated questions, like *what is 20% of \$67.42*, and receive an answer—in fact, you can leave out the “what is” altogether.

Graph for  $\sin(x)/(y*(-3))$



## CONVERT ALMOST ANYTHING

38 usd in icelandic krona

All News Maps Shopping Images More Search tools

About 259,000 results (0.60 seconds)

38 US Dollar equals  
**4694.71 Icelandic Króna**

38 US Dollar  
4694.71 Icelandic Króna

Line graph showing exchange rates from 2012 to 2016. The y-axis ranges from 100 to 160. The x-axis shows years from 2012 to 2016. The line fluctuates between approximately 110 and 150.

For simple conversions (say, 38 Celsius in Fahrenheit) Google not only gives you an answer (100.4, in this case), it also provides an interactive calculator for further converting. Google can supply the answer for some pretty zany conversions; for instance, *17.5 millimeters in light years* (for the record, it's  $1.84979097 \times 10^{-18}$  light years) but it doesn't supply the interactive calculator.

You can find currency conversion rates with just a few keystrokes. This function usually prompts an interactive calculator, too. You don't even need to know the official currency symbol (\$, €, and so on) or ISO designator (USD for the U.S. dollar, GBP for the British pound), since Google's algorithm is able to discern sentence-style queries. For example, a search for *38 dollars in Iceland* returned the answer that (at the time of writing) \$38 was equal to 4,373.80 Icelandic krona. (Note that Google has a disclaimer that it cannot guarantee the up-to-date accuracy of its exchange rates.)

## NARROWING IN

- **Define words:** You can ask Google search to define unfamiliar words (or two-word phrases) using the `define:` (or `definition:`) qualifier. This prompts Google to return a card with the definition, pronunciation, and—when available—a detailed etymology.
- **Track packages:** You can track most packages in your search bar. Just paste the tracking number into the search bar, and Google recognizes it and provides a link to the tracking page.
- **Search file types:** The qualifier `filetype:` filters your search results by (you guessed it) file types. So to find downloadable PDFs featuring llamas, search `llama filetype:pdf`. To find downloadable Microsoft Word docs featuring our camelid friends, search `llama filetype:doc`.
- **Check the weather:** Search *weather*, and Google presents an interactive card with weather information, courtesy of The Weather Channel. By default,

a search for “*weather*” prompts an info card for the location of your IP address. You can also search *weather + [any location]* and find the weather report for just about anywhere in the world: for example, *weather Toledo, OH* or *weather Kabul Afghanistan*.

- **Get stock quotes:** Type in any publicly traded company’s ticker symbol, and Google shows current price information for that company—“GOOG” (for Google), “AAPL” (for Apple), or “YHOO” (for Yahoo). Most of the larger exchanges are in real time; Google offers a comprehensive disclaimer about which exchanges are on a delay.
- **Sunrise, sunset:** Want to know when Mr. Sun will be showing up or checking out in your (IP’s) area? Type in *sunrise* or *sunset*.
- **Flight times:** Type in your flight number, and Google returns a card with updated flight times as well as terminal and gate information.
- **Search with placeholders:** When you’re trying to think of a song lyric or famous movie quote, but can’t remember all of it, type as much of the phrase as you can remember, then place an asterisk (\*) with a space on either side where the missing word(s) should be. Google is usually able to fill in the rest (for example, *Frankly my \* I don’t give a damn*).
- **Find local attractions:** Sometimes you find yourself in the middle of a strange city and have no idea what to do. Search *[city name] attractions* to prompt a long info card with nearby points of interest.



Copyright of PC Magazine is the property of ZDNet and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.