

# Exploiting Google: Top Tips

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A lot is happening at Google and it is not just the new logo. Technologies such as artificial intelligence are being used across all of Google's projects and that includes search. So we decided it was time to revamp and extensively update the UKeIG advanced Google workshop to include Google's new approach to search and how it affects results. The first "New Google, New Challenges" was hosted by Manchester University Library on the 10<sup>th</sup> September. Understanding how Google works "underneath the bonnet" is just the start. You then have to work out how to use the search tools and specialist databases - many of which are well hidden - to ensure that you are getting quality results. Towards the end of the day I asked the workshop participants to compile a list of Top 10 Tips. This is what they came up with.

## 1. Verbatim

This is an essential tool for making Google carry out your search the way you want it run, but it is not easy to find. Google automatically looks for variations on your terms and sometimes drops terms from your search. To make Google carry out your search as you have typed it in, first run your search. Then click on 'Search tools' in the menu that runs across the top of your results. A second row of options should appear. Click on 'All results' and from the drop down menu select Verbatim. Google will then search for your terms without any variations or omissions. If you are carrying out in-depth research it is worth trying out Verbatim even if the "normal" Google results seem OK. You may see very different and possibly more relevant content.

## 2. Advanced commands *site:* and *filetype:*

Use the *site:* command to focus your search on particular types of sites, for example *site:ac.uk* to search just UK academic sites, or to search inside a large rambling site such as the UK government's main site (*site:www.gov.uk*). If you prefer you can use the advanced search screen at [http://www.google.co.uk/advanced\\_search](http://www.google.co.uk/advanced_search) and fill in the 'site or domain' box. You can also use *-site:* to exclude sites from your search.

Use the *filetype:* command to limit your research to specific formats or types of information: PowerPoint for presentations; spreadsheets for data and statistics; PDF for research papers and industry/government reports. Type in your keywords and include *filetype:* immediately followed by the file extension of the format you require.

For example:

*hydraulic fracturing UK filetype:ppt*

Note that you have to search for the newer Microsoft Office file extensions separately, for example:

*hydraulic fracturing UK filetype:pptx*

Combine the two commands for more focused searches:

*hydraulic fracturing UK filetype:ppt site:ac.uk*

### 3. Minus sign to exclude terms

Use the minus sign immediately before a term to exclude documents containing that term, but use with care as you may lose valuable information. It can also be used with commands to exclude websites or file formats from your search. For example, *site:www.gov.uk*, or *-filetype:pdf*

### 4. Go direct to a specific country version of Google */ncr*

The different country versions of Google are a great way of finding local content for a search on a company, person or research group that live or work in that country. However, Google has a habit of ignoring what you have entered as your preferred Google and takes you to your own local Google, for example *google.co.uk*. To force Google to take you to the version you want add */ncr* to the URL, for example *google.com/ncr*. It stands for *no country redirect*.

As *Google.com* often has search and display features that are not yet available worldwide, *google.com/ncr* is a useful place to start exploring and experimenting.

### 5. Public Data Explorer

Along with Verbatim, the [Public Data Explorer](#) is one of Google's best-kept secrets. It enables you to search open data sets from organisations such as the IMF, OECD, Eurostat and the World Bank. You can select the elements within the datasets you want to compare and there are several charting options.

### 6. Image Search

Don't just click on the images that Google gives you in the general web search results. Either use <http://images.google.co.uk/> or click on the Images link in the search options menu bar at the top of your results. You will then be able to browse by category, or use the 'Search tools' button to bring up options for limiting your search by size, colour and copyright license (Usage rights). If you use Usage rights for images that you can re-use in your own work always double check the copyright status by going to the page that hosts that image.

### 7. Reverse image search

If you already have an image and want to search for different sizes, or images that are similar to it, then use the reverse image search. The Google Images search box has a camera icon to the left of the search button. Click on the camera and you will be given the option to either paste in the URL of the image or upload an image. It is also useful if you want to check an image that has been used to illustrate what you suspect might be a

hoax. See <http://theconversation.com/six-easy-ways-to-tell-if-that-viral-story-is-a-hoax-47673> for an example.

#### 8. Ngram viewer

[Ngram viewer](#) charts how the use of words and phrases has changed over time. See <http://googleresearch.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/enhancing-linguistic-search-with-google.html> for more information and details of search features.

#### 9. Google trends

[Google Trends](#) lets you see and compare how often people are searching on topics. On the results page you can further refine your search by date and/or country. The frequency graph is annotated with news items that may explain unexpected peaks so you can generate a timeline of events and search interest for companies and products. Trends can show, for example, whether a marketing campaign has been successful and increased the level of awareness of a brand or product, or how competitors are faring in the search popularity stakes.

#### 10. Art Project

[Art Project](#) is a collaboration between Google and museums and art galleries from across the world. You can search for collections, artists or individual works of art and take a virtual tour of some of the galleries. Warning: this is highly addictive!

The above is a small selection of what we cover in New Google, New Challenges and, apart from a couple of tips such as *verbatim* and *filetype/site*; every group generates a different Top 10. If you are interested in learning more and how to get the best from Google the workshop is being run again next year. Look out for UKeiG's 2016 training opportunities on our regularly updated [training workshops](#) diary.