

Google™ and Beyond: Finding Information on the Web

The research for every BEEP since the first issue in October 2000 has begun with [Google](#). Recently voted [Most Outstanding Search Engine](#) by [Search Engine Watch](#) readers for the fourth time, Google has a reputation as the top choice for finding information. In spite of many recent changes and, some say, increasing weakness in locating material, it is still the undisputed Web search starting point.

This month's BEEP not only examines various facets of the Google phenomenon, but also looks at alternatives for finding general and subject-specific information. It includes links to the explanation and use of the "Invisible Web" and a list of sites that offer advice on conducting any Web-based research.

Google

"When we began the site in 1997...the Burkhart Guide was a much-needed tool for librarians and beginning researchers. Now we just tell newbies, 'Use Google!'"

(Source: Joyce Burkhart, [The Burkhart Guide to the Internet](#), 2004)

- ["The Anatomy of a Large-Scale Hypertextual Web Search Engine."](#) Seminal scholarly document, written in the late 1990's, by Sergey Brin and Lawrence Page, creators of Google. It explains the structure of the search engine, then just a prototype of what it would later become.
- ["Google for a Grade: UW Class to Study Popular Search Engine."](#) Article by Cynthia Flash in *The Seattle Times*, 2/2/04, about a [graduate course](#) on Google at the University of Washington.
- [Google Guide](#). A detailed online tutorial by [Nancy Blachman](#) that covers query input, understanding results, special Google tools, and more. Particularly useful is the section [How Google Works](#). Another Website that makes Google use easier is [Soople](#), which offers a one-page starting point that covers any kind of Google search possible.
- [Google News](#). Google Website that tracks online news about itself.
- ["Google Teams Up with 17 Colleges to Test Searches for Scholarly Materials."](#) Article by Jeffrey R. Young in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 4/9/04, about a project with MIT and 16 other universities worldwide to find a way to search their collections of scholarly papers. Young's related article, ["Libraries Aim to Widen Google's Eyes."](#) 5/21/04, reports on other academic libraries' desire for Google to index more of the scholarly material in their digital collections.

Alternatives to Google for Finding Information

"Searching for information on the Web requires a different mind-set, a 21st century approach, as it were, and an understanding of the rules..."

(Source: [Finding Information on the Web](#), Frank D'Ascenzo, Connections Magazine, 2001)

- ["Better Search Results Than Google?"](#) ["Little Engines That Can."](#) ["Search Upstarts Storm Google's Gates."](#) Articles written since March 2004, all examining recent Google challengers like [Grokker](#), [Mooter](#), [Eurekster](#), [Dipsie](#), [Quigo](#), and [AskMSR](#).
- [SearchEngine Watch](#). An excellent source for news and other matters related to search engines. It includes reviews of single search engines like [Google](#), [Yahoo](#) and [AskJeeves/Teoma](#), as well as meta-search engines like [Dogpile](#) and [Mamma](#). A similar site, [Search Engine News](#), includes a comparative features' chart of the major engines.
- [Subject Gateways](#). Good Website on the subject done by Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland. Similar terms for "subject gateways" are "specialized search engines," "portals," and "directories." The precise definitions blur, but all refer to sites that link users to pages that have been selected and evaluated by subject experts from reliable sources. Particularly useful for e-learning include [Higher Education Search Engines](#), [Resources/Education](#), [SearchEdu.com](#), [Search Engine Colossus: Academic](#), and the [Virtual Learning Resources Center](#).

The Invisible Web (IV)

"...invisible to search engines...invaluable material resides on 'The Invisible Web...' content-rich data bases from universities, libraries, associations, business and government agencies around the world."

(Source: [Online ad for The Invisible Web](#) by Chris Sherman and Gary Price, 2001)

- [Deepweb.com](#). Using the term "deep web" as a synonym for the IV, this Website defines the problem of the deep web as it affects search engines, Websites and searchers.
- [IncyWincy](#), [BrightPlanet](#), [CompletePlanet](#). Three examples of search tools that claim to concentrate of finding IV sources.
- ["The Invisible Web."](#) Classic paper (2000) by Chris Sherman, who, with Gary Price, has become one of the IV's foremost experts. Besides authoring a book, they maintain a very useful Website, [The Invisible Web Directory](#), with a section on educational sources.
- [Invisible Web: What It Is, Why It Exists, How to Find It, and Its Inherent Ambiguity](#). Extensive examination of the IV by the University of California, Berkeley, library, designed to help researchers trying to find information from this source.
- ["Those Dark Hiding Places: The Invisible Web Revealed."](#) Comprehensive Website maintained by Robert J. Lackie, Rider University (NJ), with useful links to IV sources of all kinds.

Tips and Tutorials for Effective Web Searching

"...search results are only as good as the query you pose and how you search. There is no silver bullet."

(Source: [Guide to Effective Searching of the Internet](#), BrightPlanet.com)

- [Bare Bones 101: A Basic Tutorial on Searching the Web](#). Seventeen excellent lessons by the University of South Carolina library on effective Web searching – in English and Spanish.
- [Finding Information on the Internet: A Tutorial](#). University of California, Berkeley, library.
- [Guide to Effective Searching of the Internet](#). Tutorial by [BrightPlanet.com](#) that offers both a short and long version of instructions for optimizing Web searching.
- [Web Finding Tools](#). Well-organized Website by the Naval Postgraduate School (CA) library that lists links on search techniques, search and meta-search engines, specialized search sites and tools, the Invisible Web, subject directories and Webliographies, with a glossary of terms.

BEEP's Best Bets

Administration

- [OpenCourse \(OCW\) Spreading Worldwide](#). MIT press release, 5/5/04, that looks at the far-reaching effects of its OCW project, now used in parts of Europe, China and Latin America.

Free Information Sources

- ["ERIC Gets \\$34.6 Million Upgrade."](#) Article by Florence Olsen in *Federal Computer Week*, 3/23/04, about an overhaul of the venerable Education Resources Information Center repository, in order to provide better access to data representing the most recent educational research.

Instructional Resources

- [New Web Resource for Faculty from University of Maryland...on Accessibility in Distance Education](#). Article in *Learning & Training Innovations*, 4/7/04, about a new Website for faculty who teach students with disabilities online. It identifies problems and tells how to deal with them.

Student Services

- [New Digital Textbook Service to Reduce Cost of Hundreds of the Leading College Textbooks by Half](#). Press release, 4/30/04, on Pearson Education's plans to offer WebBooks as a new option to its print textbooks, saving students 50% of the suggested list price.

www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/BEEP/BEEP39.htm

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The contents of BEEP were developed under a grant from the U. S. Department of Education (DOE). However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the DOE, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.