



A roundup of Search Commands

www.searchcommands.com, October 18, 2005

URL: <http://www.pr9.net/comp/internet/2792october.html>

The new Search Commands site explores the myriad of search engine commands including the rare, powerful and the commands which do not work as advertised.

PR9.NET October 18, 2005 - Search Commands launched in beta public release today with the promise to keep it simple and useful. Search Commands' free service is to provide a roundup of the myriad of commands search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN respond to.

"Pretty much everyone thinks they know the basics of a search engine," explained Andrew Girdwood of Search Commands, "but even among search engine optimisation community there are experts who would not know how to calculate Julian dates for Google's daterange command. There are those who may not even know Google has a daterange command."

The daterange search command is just one example a rarely used search engine function. Yahoo allows users to search to limit their searches just to pages without meta tags or to pages which contain audio files. The MSN search engine allows users to hunt down websites which share a single IP address or reveal how many inbound links an entire domain, rather than just a single page, enjoys.

These advanced search commands are not just there for power users as new search engine users can use the cheat sheets at <http://www.searchcommands.com> to assist in every day searches.

For example, searching for helpful information on credit cards is often a challenge as the search engines are often loaded with low quality affiliate sites and even spam sites at the top of the search results. Using an advanced search command to specifically target exactly what you want is a good way to avoid the trash.

"Targeting sites in the same country as you is often a quick win to good search results," begins Andrew, "you do not need to find a country specific Microsoft search portal to do this as you can use the search command 'location'. Let us go to <http://search.msn.com> and begin our advanced search by typing in location:gb.

Let us also assume that a quality information site will have a helpful PDF accompanying the web page. This may not always be the case but in this instance it will help find those sites with just a little more resources. With the MSN search engine we can focus our search in that way by adding the command 'contains:pdf'. We might also add the word 'guide' to our search to stress that we are looking for information rather than the hard sell. Nevertheless our primary goal is to find out about credit cards so in MSN we can also use the 'prefer:' search command to add emphasis.

The resulting search command looks something like this:

```
location:gb contains:pdf prefer:credit card guide
http://search.msn.com/results.aspx?q=location%3Agb+contains%3Apdf+prefer%3Acredit+card+guide
```

In another example, Andrew explains how the lesser known daterange command at Google can be used to find recently pages published. An advanced search seeking up to date pages for toys which did well last Christmas could result in a Google query like:

```
daterange:2453655-2453663 toys "last christmas by storm"
http://www.google.com/search?q=daterange%3A2453655-2453663+toys+%22last+christmas+by+storm%22
```

This advanced search looks for pages published in the third week of October 2005, with toys as a keyword and which talk about those which took last Christmas by storm. It is an example which shows lots of PPC activity but very little organic.

Search Commands highlights the mistakes the search engines can make. Yahoo offers a conversion shortcut service which supports a wide range of units but not all the units the search engine claims. Trying the search command 'convert 3 tbspuk' does not offering any conversion help for 3 UK tablespoon measures as Yahoo suggests but it does return the page where Yahoo makes the claim at the very top of the search results.

Andrew concludes, "The site explores the search engine world through the eyes of the query interface. Search Commands lets you know that Yahoo lets users restrict searches to just the Mediterranean (and we assume they mean the Mediterranean's coast rather than the actual sea) or that Google's Web Accelerator might be mistaken for an ICC Profile TagData Overflow."

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About www.searchcommands.com

Search Commands is a website dedicated to users interacting with search engines. It was established in October 2005 with the mission to shed light on some of the lesser known commands.

<http://www.searchcommands.com>

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