

HOW DOES A SEARCH ENGINE WORK?

Hector says...



"Hi there! Did you know that the World Wide Web is made up of over a trillion web pages? And more and more pages are added every day!

If you want to find something on the World Wide Web you will need some help. I can show you how right here!"

How can I find things on the World Wide Web?

On the internet there are two ways to find information: web directories and search engines.

Web directories need human input to work. This means they can only list some of the information available on the internet.

Search engines, however, use software programs to find and study thousands of web pages. These software programs work very fast!

A search engine is a special kind of web page. Its job is to help people find things on the World Wide Web.



How do I use a search engine??

You can ask your teacher or parent to make sure you are using a 'safe search' option before you start. Then to use a search engine you will need to choose key words that describe exactly what you are looking for.

It's good to get help from an adult to choose the best key words to use. Remember to check the spelling of your key words.

Each search engine web page has a special box where you will type in the key words you are searching for each time.



A simple search bar interface consisting of a rectangular input field on the left and a button labeled "Search" on the right.

How does a search engine work?

When you type in key words, the search engine will look for those words in a special place called an index.

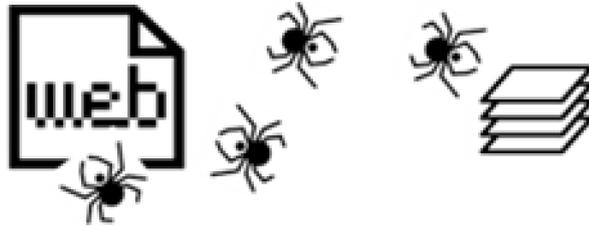
The search engine will show you a list of all the pages and websites it finds in the index that use your key words.

It sounds simple but there is a lot going on behind the scenes!

How do words get in the index?

A crawler search engine will send out armies of spiders to study web pages looking for specific words. A spider is a software program written by engineers. Once the spider has collected information from a page, it finds links to other pages or websites and explores those too.

Each spider sends the information it collects back to the index. The index holds the information so that it is easy to find.



OK, I have a long list of websites, what next?

This is the list of web pages from the index that have your key words on them. It can be a very long list. Some of web pages on the list could be just what you are looking for, but some won't be! Some names may even try to trick you.

Each line on the list will show you a short sentence or two right from that web page.

Read these sentences carefully and decide if they are exactly what you are looking for. Think before you click! It's good to talk to ask an adult to help you decide.

Hector's Tips for Using a Search Engine

Choosing the right key words really helps.

- If you use 'music' as your key word, the search engine list will be very, very long, over one billion websites! That's more than 1,000,000,000.
- If you use 'music club' as your key words, the list will still be very long, over 6 hundred million! That's more than 600,000,000!
- If you use 'Silicon Deep Music Club' as your key words, at the top of the list will be a link to our very own Silicon Deep Music Club. It's a great place to hear and download our cool music.

Hector says...



"Find out more about how a search engine works at your local or school library.

Here's a link to a Common Craft video where you can learn more about 'How a search engine works'

<http://www.commoncraft.com/search>

You can also watch this video which explains how one type of search engine works: <http://www.google.com/howgoogleworks/>"

www.hectorsworld.com

Hector's World Tech Terms

<p>search engine</p> <p>A web page that will help you find information on the world wide web</p>	<p>key words</p> <p>The words that describe what you are looking for on the world wide web</p>	<p>crawler</p> <p>A search engine that sends out armies of robots to study web pages</p>
<p>spider</p> <p>A software program that looks at specific words on web pages</p>	<p>index</p> <p>A central place that holds information about web pages</p>	<p>safe search</p> <p>The search engine chooses safer search results</p>