

You Can Find That on the Internet?

OK, so we know there's a lot of information on the Internet. Do you know how to find what you need? A lot of great stuff is hidden in plain sight. Learn how to use everyday search engines and social media to sift through the clutter to find stories, investigate people, research data, debunk rumors — and keep yourself from falling for a hoax gone viral.

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Good stuff? Share it: **#mipaf13**

First... know the basics

So... my iPhone has an app that deletes photos 10 seconds after someone sends them to me. Why are we talking about Google? It's so... old.

✓ Technology changes so fast. New information is produced faster than we can process it. More than ever, we have to know how to find the one useful thing we want out of the millions of irrelevant things.

What does that mean for journalism?

✓ Knowing how to find information online helps us check our facts and make sure people are who they say they are. This keeps errors from getting in our stories — and keeps us from having to write an embarrassing correction.

First... know the basics

Why is that important?

- ✓ If it's on the Internet and retweeted a zillion times (even by reputable news sources), it must be true, right? Wrong.
- ✓ As journalists, people rely on us to tell them what's going on. They trust us to be authorities and to get things right. Screw up a fact, a name or — worse — perpetuate an inaccuracy, and our credibility goes right out the window.
- ✓ **Unknowingly spreading misinformation, especially on social media, is not a defense for not checking it out! Journalists have to hold themselves to a higher standard.**

Get to know Google

KITTENS

50 million results

KITTENS &
LANSING
SHELTER

8.4 million results

KITTENS &
"LANSING
SHELTER"

107 results

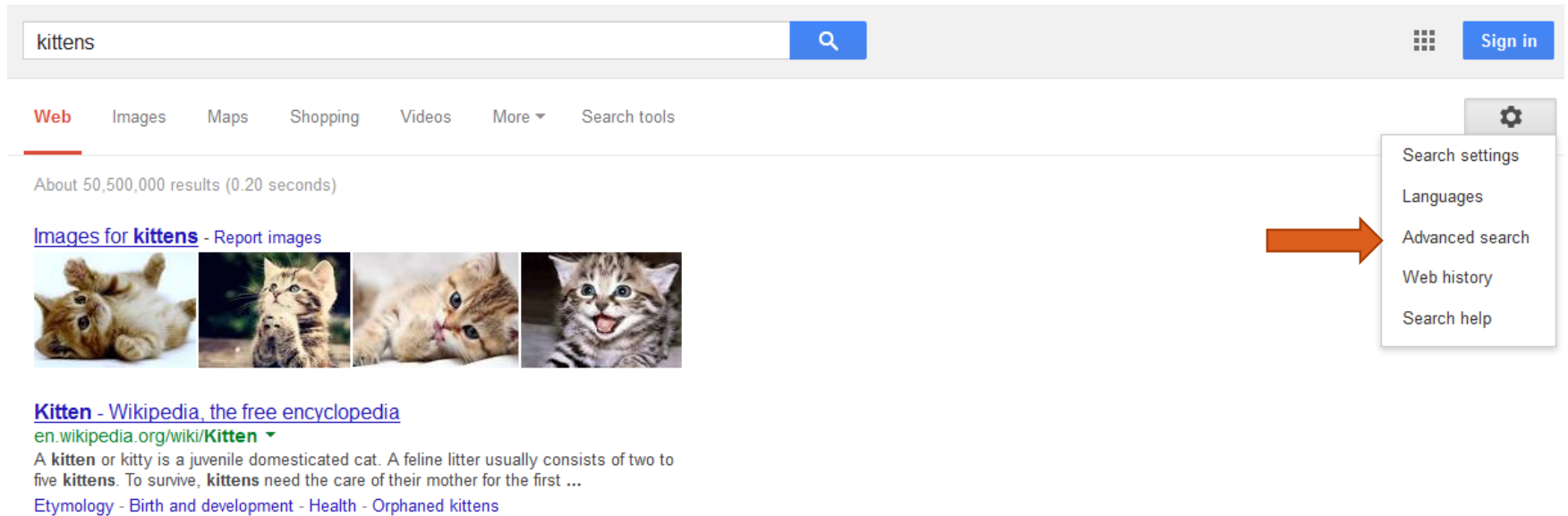
Narrow your results

- ✓ Google is huge, and it doesn't even return everything there is on the Internet.
- ✓ Google automatically inserts AND into searches (see example above). Use quotation marks to highlight exact phrases that give Google very specific instructions on where it should look.

Get to know Google

Advanced search

✓ Find “Advanced Search” under the settings drop-down menu.



The image shows a Google search interface. At the top, a search bar contains the word "kittens" and a blue search button. To the right of the search bar is a grid icon and a "Sign in" button. Below the search bar, navigation tabs for "Web", "Images", "Maps", "Shopping", "Videos", "More", and "Search tools" are visible. The "Web" tab is selected. Below the tabs, the search results show "About 50,500,000 results (0.20 seconds)". Underneath, there is a link for "Images for kittens" with a "Report images" option, followed by four small images of kittens. Below the images is a link to the Wikipedia page for "Kitten" with a dropdown arrow, and a brief description: "A kitten or kitty is a juvenile domesticated cat. A feline litter usually consists of two to five kittens. To survive, kittens need the care of their mother for the first ...". At the bottom, there are links for "Etymology", "Birth and development", "Health", and "Orphaned kittens". On the right side of the page, a settings gear icon is open, showing a menu with options: "Search settings", "Languages", "Advanced search", "Web history", and "Search help". A large orange arrow points from the right towards the "Advanced search" option in the settings menu.

Get to know Google

Advanced search

- ✓ Narrow your results even more by searching by specific website or file type (just .PDF, or just .XLS, etc.).
- ✓ Google has a tip sheet:

[https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/136861?](https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/136861?hl=en)

Then narrow your results by...

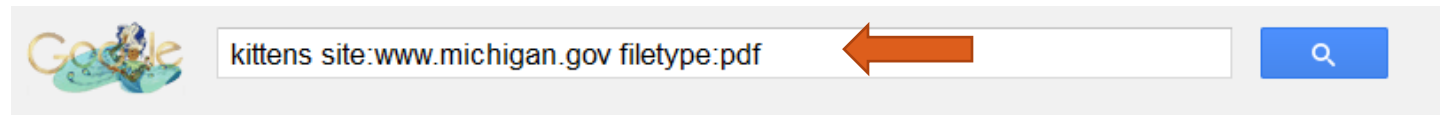
language:	<input type="text" value="any language"/>	Find pages in the language you select.
region:	<input type="text" value="any region"/>	Find pages published in a particular region.
last update:	<input type="text" value="anytime"/>	Find pages updated within the time you specify.
site or domain:	<input type="text" value="www.michigan.gov"/> ←	Search one site (like <code>wikipedia.org</code>) or limit your results to a domain like <code>.edu</code> , <code>.org</code> or <code>.gov</code>
terms appearing:	<input type="text" value="anywhere in the page"/>	Search for terms in the whole page, page title, or web address, or links to the page you're looking for.
SafeSearch:	<input type="text" value="Show most relevant results"/>	Tell SafeSearch whether to filter sexually explicit content.
reading level:	<input type="text" value="no reading level displayed"/>	Find pages at one reading level or just view the level info.
file type:	<input type="text" value="Adobe Acrobat PDF (.pdf)"/> ←	Find pages in the format you prefer.
usage rights:	<input type="text" value="not filtered by license"/>	Find pages you are free to use yourself.

Advanced Search

Get to know Google

Advanced search

✓ Note how specific your results are now. And check out the way Google enters that search in its box. (Knowing how Google codes its searches can be a shortcut as you get more familiar with it.)



The screenshot shows a Google search bar with the query "kittens site:www.michigan.gov filetype:pdf". An orange arrow points to the search box. Below the search bar are navigation tabs for "Web", "Images", "Maps", "Shopping", "Videos", "More", and "Search tools". The "Web" tab is selected. Below the tabs, it says "About 54 results (0.07 seconds)". The search results are listed below:

- [\[PDF\] 2005 Rabies Report in Michigan - State of Michigan](#)
www.michigan.gov/.../MDA_2005_Rabies_Report_154392_7.pdf ▼
Feb 3, 2005 - Stray **kittens** found in field, patient and child rescued **kittens** and were bitten. Taken to vet and 1 tested positive. 2 dogs rec'd booster. 19 people ...
- [\[PDF\] Rabies in Michigan Report 2006 - State of Michigan](#)
www.michigan.gov/.../Rabies_in_Michigan_2006_updated_2011_3593... ▼
Jan 19, 2006 - may have been exposed and as the **kitten** was unvaccinated ... **kitten** vaccinated against rabies after the exposure to the bat., and the **kitten** was ...
- [\[PDF\] SC010200 Unit Outline Introduction to Scientific Description and ...](#)
www.michigan.gov/documents/sc010200_unit_outline_40456_7.pdf ▼
Jul 26, 2002 - parents, such as dog/puppy, cat/**kitten**, and plant/seed. Children classify humans, animals, and plants as either parent or young/offspring.
- [\[PDF\] Ferret Health Advisory Memo - State of Michigan](#)
www.michigan.gov/.../MDA_FERRET_HEALTH_ADVISORY_MEMO... ▼
used for puppies and **kittens**. Pet stores may not sell ferrets before eight weeks of age,

Plus, Google can do this!

Flight tracker

- ✓ Enter a flight number and find out its departure and arrival times, and watch it move in midair. (Parents like this when you're flying somewhere for spring break.)

Unit conversions

- ✓ How many kilometers are in a mile? Yeah, I don't know, either. But Google does. Type "1 mile to kilometer" in the search box and watch the magic happen. Play with the drop-down menu to try other conversions.

Google Public Data

- ✓ Tons of public data, all gathered in one place. (Most of it is probably more than you need, but there are links to the Census and population estimates that could be helpful if you ever wanted to look up your hometown or county.)
- ✓ <http://www.google.com/publicdata/directory>

Easter eggs

- ✓ "Google in 1998"
- ✓ "do a barrel roll"
- ✓ "askew"
- ✓ "let it snow" (Turn Instant Search off, then click "I'm Feeling Lucky")

What about Wikipedia?

Wikipedia's awesome. It knows everything, right? Beware: It even knows things that aren't true.

A few things to keep in mind before you use it as a source:

- ✓ Never use Wikipedia as a source.
- ✓ Since it's a user-generated "encyclopedia," anyone can upload information. Assume everything you read is untrue until you can verify it.
- ✓ Verify, verify, verify: The best thing about Wikipedia is its collection of sources at the bottom of every article. Follow the footnotes to link to the media reports, scientific journals and other materials used to compile the wiki. (Think of it like the bibliography in a research paper — you have to show your sources, there has to be more than one and they have to be credible.)
- ✓ Search revision history to find out when the page was last updated. This is especially relevant in breaking news events.



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Article [Talk](#)

Read [Edit](#) [View history](#)

2013 Bohol earthquake

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Getting social

Facebook

- ✓ Graph Search <https://www.facebook.com/about/graphsearch>
- ✓ Public postings

Twitter

- ✓ Top/All/People You Follow search

Pipl <https://pipl.com/>

Social Mention <http://socialmention.com/>

Whos Talkin <http://www.whostalkin.com/>

IceRocket <http://www.icerocket.com/>

PeekYou <http://www.peakyou.com/>

- ✓ Find possible family members

White Pages <http://www.whitepages.com/>

- ✓ Reverse address search to find neighbors

Getting social

Geofeedia <http://corp.geofeedia.com/>

- ✓ Location-based social media search: Find out what people are saying near where you live.
- ✓ Unsure if free. Login required.

All My Tweets <http://www.allmytweets.net/connect.php>

- ✓ View all your tweets (or, possibly, anyone else's) on one page.

State license records

<http://www7.dleg.state.mi.us/free/> (health professions)

<https://www2.dleg.state.mi.us/colaLicVerify/ICityCounty.jsp> (other occupations)

- ✓ Check whether doctors, nurses, cosmetologists & carnival workers are licensed with the state and in good standing. Useful after accidents or investigations.

Court records

- ✓ Some counties and cities have criminal and civil court records searchable for free online. ALL of these are public records and anyone has the right to request them. Check your county or city government website to see if there is a database. If not, you can still access these records in person at the court clerk's office.

Fact or fiction?



Remember this picture? It was posted shortly after Superstorm Sandy and immediately went viral. What a powerful image.

Fact or fiction?

Guess what? It's a hoax.



This photo (above) is the original image, superimposed over the statue.



Fact or fiction?

TinEye <http://tineye.com/>

✓ This site does a reverse image search and allows you to view results by “Most Changed.” Think of it as Snopes, but for photos.

TinEye
Reverse Image Search



JPEG, 600x400, 36.3 KB

238 Results

Searched over [3.8910 billion](#) images in 0.013 seconds.

for file: [http://img2.nairaland.com/attachments/868845_statue_of li...](http://img2.nairaland.com/attachments/868845_statue_of_li...)

- These results expire in **72 hours**. [Why?](#)
- [Share a success story!](#)
- TinEye is [free](#) to use for non-commercial purposes.



[Download](#) the official TinEye extension for Firefox with right-click functionality!

Sort by:

Best Match

Most Changed

Biggest Image

Newest

new



Compare | Link

www.kccconfidential.com

[tornado-300x200.jpg](#)

www.kccconfidential.com/?p=16166

Crawled on 2010-05-25

Grow Twitter Followers

Twitter.com/Advertising

Get More Twitter Followers With Twitter Advertising. Start Today!



Is He Cheating On You?



Fact or fiction?

Whenever possible, go straight to the source.



A screenshot of a tweet from the official Twitter account of the Boston Police Department. The tweet text reads: "Suspect in custody. Officers sweeping the area. Stand by for further info." The tweet has 74,893 retweets and 19,073 favorites. The interface shows the Boston Police Dept. profile picture, name, and handle (@bostonpolice), along with a "Follow" button. Below the text are icons for Reply, Retweet, Favorite, and More. At the bottom, there are icons for document attachments, a grid of user avatars, and a green egg icon.

 **Boston Police Dept.** 
@bostonpolice 

Suspect in custody. Officers sweeping the area. Stand by for further info.

 Reply  Retweet  Favorite  More

74,893 RETWEETS **19,073** FAVORITES

8:45 PM - 19 Apr 13

Fact or fiction?

Tweeted Oct. 10 by **Alex Fitzpatrick**, Time magazine's homepage editor:



Alex Fitzpatrick ✓

@AlexJamesFitz

Follow

Via @Reddit, the absolute saddest #shutdown photo you will see

10:31 AM - 10 Oct 2013

4,233 RETWEETS 888 FAVORITES



Fact or fiction?

That photo went viral. Easy to understand. Cute kid, closed zoo.
Except that photo had nothing to do with the federal government shutdown.

The next day, The Washington Post's **Anne Midgette** posted this blog entry, titled "I know the sad kid at the Zoo." An excerpt:

"There is, it's true, something scary, or sad, about this picture. But it's not the shutdown. It's that a father took his son out for a walk in the neighborhood and sent a funny snapshot to his wife, and she put it up on Instagram, and someone else put it up on Facebook, and someone else put it up on Reddit, and within a matter of hours, bam, there was the toddler on the NBC Nightly News, fair game for commenters around the nation."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/style-blog/wp/2013/10/11/i-know-the-sad-kid-at-the-zoo/>

What's wrong with this?

It's an assumption without first gathering all the facts.

Parting thoughts

- ✓ **Just because it's on the Internet doesn't mean it's true.** Use your reporter's instinct and always, ALWAYS double-check.
- ✓ **Think before you retweet.** Even if your profile says retweets are not endorsements, as a journalist people trust that the information you share via social media is accurate. If you're not sure whether something's true, play it safe: Don't share. Or at least wait until you double check it yourself.
- ✓ **Go straight to the source.** Media reports after the Boston Marathon bombings initially said a suspect had been arrested (hours before they finally did). The Boston Police Department's official Twitter account released a statement refuting that reporting. Whenever possible, track down the primary source.
- ✓ **Always assume there's a document out there.** Play around with Google's advanced search techniques. Try searching for a PDF, or an XLS spreadsheet. Odds are, the information you're looking for is out there. You just might not know it exists.