

Topic Page: [Google](#)

Definition: **google** from *The Macquarie Dictionary*

googled, googling

1.

to search for information on the internet, in particular using the Google search engine.

googles, googling, googled

2.

verb (t) /'gʊɡ7/ /'gʊhɡʊh/

googled, googling

to search the internet for information about (something), in particular using the Google search engine

to google the research topic., googles, googling, googled

3.

noun /'gʊɡ7/ /'gʊhɡʊh/

an instance of such a search

to have a little google.

Etymology: from Google

Summary Article: **Google**

From *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*

Although starting life as a simple Internet search engine, Google eventually encompassed so many aspects of Internet life and offered so many services that it would take the length of this entry simply to list all of them. Google can be found in almost every domain of Internet computing and media provision, whether the service comes from the company itself (e.g., Gmail, Google Buzz, or Google Plus), has been acquired from outside (e.g., YouTube), or simply by dint of a Google service (e.g., Chrome and Google Maps) being an integral part of other websites with no direct link to Google. Google has also moved rapidly into the provision of services for mobile computing, particularly the android platform for smart phones. As these devices extend the ubiquity of networked culture and communication in human life, Google is there too.

Google began as a project of Larry Page and Sergey Brin, postgraduate students at Stanford University. They were working on the problem created by the success of the World Wide Web: information was becoming harder to find reliably, quickly, and with precision. Page and Brin came up with a solution. Rather than impose order from outside the information itself (by cataloguing or aggregating into portals), the best way to enable access was to rely on the links and other information inside the web pages themselves. Page and Brin created an algorithm that, using the web itself as the input data, would return for a search request a list of websites that both met the specificity of the request and ranked those websites so the most relevant and useful sites appeared first.

Google was, therefore, not just another search engine alongside many others vying for market share. Google was a different way of searching. It proved the most effective and easily usable. Launched in 1998, Google had achieved effective dominance of Internet searching by the early 2000s. “To google” is now so commonly used that the verb was added to the *Oxford* and *Merriam-Webster* dictionaries in 2006. More importantly, when people say that they will “google” a topic, to find out more about it, they really do mean, in most cases, that they will use the Google search engine. Thus, Google has not just become synonymous with online searching, but also it has become the primary means by which that activity occurs. Google's business might be diverse, including video broadcast, blogging, email, document collaboration, real-time communication, mapping, translating, and so on, but search remains the core of Google's business.

This primacy of search is significant. It honors the fundamental purpose of the company: to find creative solutions to the human problem of having the right information, at the right time, in the right form. Google, for all that it has grown into a multi-billion-dollar global corporation, has an organizational culture deeply rooted in the application of rational engineering to solve problems of information. However, search is also the core of Google's operations because it is linked with Google's advertising-driven business model. Using sophisticated mathematics, driven by data gained from the web itself, Google makes most of its money from the selling of key words that then drive the appearance on a web search page of advertisements for the businesses that have bought the rights to those words. Google's innovation in this respect is to intervene in the process, to arbitrate the value to the *user* of the advertising process as well as to the supplier. Although many other ventures established by brilliant computer scientists have lost touch with such origins, Google remains, first and foremost, an applied research company in which engineering is melded with, rather than subsumed by, commercial imperatives.

Indeed the linking of search with advertising was the making of Google as the first dominant Internet corporation of this century. Unlike other businesses online, which have tended to become more like traditional media, Google remained avowedly a network computing business, seeking solutions in software innovation rather than convergence with old media. And more recent developments, which now create web services for users, rather than just relying on what is already online to be searched, are driven by the desire to create more screen space within which advertising can occur. Google consistently provides services for free that might otherwise require some sort of payment precisely because it can then encourage more use of those services and thus boost income from advertisers; by linking together numerous services and applications, the more effective that strategy becomes. Google has, therefore, most effectively applied the model of the attention economy, commercializing the time and attention of users online as “eyeballs” that can then be sold to advertisers. Because the advertisements can be individually designed, linked to specific immediate needs, and tracked relentlessly for their effectiveness, Google has effectively reinvented marketing for the online world.

Google has been, from its inception, a global company, with global reach and ambitions. Google's approach has challenged 20th-century norms: from intellectual property to privacy, from the relationship of computing to media, to the role of the state in regulating citizens' affairs. The company has been in dispute with publishers and authors about the digitization of books, the owners of the broadcast rights to audio-visual content, and newspaper corporations who challenge Google's right to profit from links to online news stories. Google has both defended its users' rights to privacy from state intervention and acquiesced to state control and itself breached privacy. However, in all cases,

Google has persisted and grown in its capacity to interconnect individuals, wherever in the world, to information and through information to each other. Google has become an iconic example of the disruption and change brought by the Internet to global political economy and social life.

See also:

Computing, Global Communications and Technology, Information Age, Intellectual Property Rights, Internet, Knowledge Management Systems, Microsoft, Web 2.0, Wikipedia

Further Readings

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