Target your Google search

1. Introduction

Google has a range of search options. These can help you to focus a search and target the most relevant information. In this activity we will explore some of these search features.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this activity, you should know about:
- Advanced search techniques
- Searching by format
- General search tips
- Showing gap after heading

2. Google filters

When you use Google to search, you usually get a huge number of results. Sometimes you can't find relevant information you want quickly. Google includes a set of filter options that will help you to refine your search results.

The default option is 'All'. This displays a list of unfiltered results, and you can return to this option at any time.

There are filters, for example:
- News
- Images
- Shopping
- Videos
- Maps

Please note that these options may vary depending on the type and version of internet browser you are using.

Google determines which information type will be the most relevant to your search. Select 'More' to find filters for other types of information.

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If you do use these filters, remember that you may find relevant results from more than one option.

A Tools option is also available. This allows you to filter your results by time. You may want the latest news or you may be searching for something which happened three years ago, Google's Tools option allows you to filter your results in both cases.

3. Filter options

Explore the filter options below. Which would you use to filter search results in each of the following scenarios?

Images

Select this filter to find a photograph of a rainbow to illustrate your presentation. It will also be useful if you'd like find pictures of different types of guitar.

This option will display small 'thumbnail' images related to your search.

Select Tools to find options to:
1. Filter images by size, colour or type
2. Find very recent images
3. Focus on image usage rights.

News

Select this filter to find the latest information on a topical issue.

This option will find reports and debates published by local, national and global news services, as well as individual commentators.

It will also be useful if you're searching for book reviews or travelogues.

Select Tools to find options to:
1. Focus on blogs
2. Filter information by timescale
3. Arrange search results by relevance or date.

Books

Select this filter to find digitised copies of classic novels such as Northanger Abbey.

This option is also useful if you'd like to preview a book you're thinking of buying.

Select 'Tools' to find options to:
1. Find books made freely available
2. Focus on magazines
3. Filter by timescale
4. Arrange search results by relevance or publication date.

Videos

Demonstrating each step, a video can guide you through a process such as stretching watercolour paper, or changing the strings on a guitar.

This filter will also help you to find footage of news reports, interviews and debate.

Select Tools to find options to:
1. Filter by duration, e.g. short, medium or long
2. Focus on quality
3. Find very recent material
4. Filter by source
5. Find closed captioned videos.

Maps

Select this filter to open a street map showing the location of a particular venue such as Bletchley Park.

No additional filters are available for this option.

Flights

As well as helping you to find details of flights to destinations around the world, this filter includes accommodation information too.

No additional filters are available for this option.

Shopping

Select this filter to find products available from online retailers.

If you'd like to buy a guitar for example, this option can help you to compare the prices quoted by different sellers.

No additional filters are available for this option.

Finance

Choose this filter to find some financial and market data about a selected company. It includes an option to compare the organisation against its competitors.

No additional filters are available for this option.

4. Advanced searching

Google provides an advanced search which can help you to focus a search. For example, you can search for pages in a particular language or on a particular website.

For example, search for a word or phrase in the title of a web page. Use the 'site or domain' option to limit your search to information posted on a particular website such as bbc.co.uk/news, or a particular type of website such as gov.uk.

5. Summary

This activity introduced some of Google's advanced features. These options can help you to focus a search by targeting a particular type of information, such as news reports, travel information or financial data.

Tips:

- Find out more about Google's advanced search options. They can help you to improve your search results.
- Look out for more advanced search options. Google are always adding new features.
- Don't use too many search options at once. You might miss some useful information if you apply too many limits to a search.
- Know when to stop searching. Sometimes the information isn't there. Or, you may need to select a different search tool.

Next Steps

Next time you use Google to search for information, try using some of the filters and explore the More options to get more out of your results.