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Scsi's WebKISS™ Guide #7: What are the Strengths and Weaknesses of Search Tools and Engines?

The four major headings provided on this Web page are listed immediately below:

- [The never-ending Search for the Perfect Search Engine, Search Toolbar, or Search Service](#)
- [Search Engines](#)
- [Search Toolbars](#)
- [Search Services](#)

NOTE: Relevant hyperlinks are included within the associated paragraphs to make your browsing session productive and all the more enjoyable.

The never-ending Search for the Perfect Search Engine, Search Toolbar, or Search Service

The objective of Scsi's WebKISS™ Guide #7: What are the Strengths and Weaknesses of Search Tools and Engines? is simple: Provide its readers with a consolidated list of what key features are either present in or absent from various widely known and used search engines, search toolbars, and search services.

Among the major points covered in this document are the following:

1. Although such a goal can never really be achieved with ultimate finality, Scsi feels that at least a "line drawn in the sand" assessment of some of the more dominant search-driven Web sites (e.g., Google, Yahoo, MSN Search, Clusty, and others) is worth presenting here for others to examine, comment, and draw their own conclusions about.
2. Search engines are wide-ranging in their individual capabilities. Scsi has not yet observed any manifestations for search engine standardization amongst those encountered or adopted by other Web sites or individual end users.
3. Each and every search engine tends to exhibit various limitations that leave much room for improvement. Achieving the ideal "one size fits all" search engine will likely remain just out of reach for the foreseeable future.

Hopefully, you will find the information presented here to be of at least general use in your own quest for whatever you may consider to be an ideal search engine for your particular search-based requirements.

Search Engines

Where to start? If nothing else, the starting point will depend to a great degree upon your preferences for the style and desired features in a search engine.

1. If you want to go with the acknowledged market share search engine leader, it's Google(.com) that you will make use of. If you are married to Microsoft, you'll likely choose MSN Search. If you can Yahoo, and that fills your needs in most cases, then you'll likely take that route.
2. If you want something that looks across a number of search engines all at the same time and creates convenient and selectable categories of search results to choose from, you might choose to go with Clusty (also known as Vivisimo) or some similar offering.
3. If you want to make use of a search engine that doesn't take you literally all the time, you might decide to go with AskJeeves instead.
4. Certainly, you might have a wholly different favorite search engine that you rely on. Examples that come to mind include Altavista, Overture, Lycos, AlltheWeb, and so on.

Whatever works best for your purposes is, of course, the name of the search engine selection game. But let's look at some more specifics of the most popular search engines now -- just in case you'd like to learn more or to compare notes with what Scsi has committed to in writing here.

Google

The simplicity of the google.com search engine Web site belies its underlying complexity. In effect, less is more, and the reason that Google is the top-rated search engine is because it delivers on its promise to provide results that are extensive, rapidly provided, and in a display format that does not require a training manual to both understand and to appreciate. The displayed results are presented in a matter-of-fact format, and Google seldom disappoints Scsi in its findings. Besides, the Scsi P&KT Web site employs the Google search engine for the dual-domain search window (see Scsi's Best Practice #5), so it should prove to be no surprise to the reader that Scsi ranks Google as its overall favorite search tool. Having said all this about Google's search engine, let's now move on to other search engines for comparison purposes.

Other Search Engines

Listed below are just some of the numerous search engines that you might wish to visit and try out for yourself:

- [A9](#)
- [Alltheweb](#)
- [Altavista](#)
- [AOL](#)
- [Ask Jeeves](#)
- [Clusty](#)
- [Dogpile](#)
- [DMOZ](#)
- [Entireweb](#)
- [Gigablast](#)
- [Lycos](#)
- [MSN search](#)
- [Teoma](#)
- [Vivisimo Clustering Engineer](#)
- [Wisenut](#)
- [Yahoo! Search](#)

Is one search engine tool any better than another? That depends on the individual's preferences, doesn't it? After all is said and done, each of us will generally tend to gravitate toward using regularly whatever particular search engine that best "fills the bill" for the way we believe a search engine should. Moreover, this stance is one that should not only be expected but also respected and appreciated by one and all.

Search Toolbars

Well, once a user settles down to using a search engine regularly, incorporation of that search engine's toolbar as part of their Web browser often follows -- when this option is available. After all, if you know what you want and can get it integrated into your favorite Web browser, you've got the best of both worlds working for you. Such a deal you simply can not pass up. Of course, you might have to live with the situation where integration may not be available for your favorite Web browser. For those cases, you'll have to settle for using the search engine in standalone fashion, but that's how things turn out at times.

Scsi encourages you to visit various Search Engines' Web sites to see what they offer, including toolbar-based searching capabilities.

Search Services

Even though many if not most searchers will be happy with either the choice of a search engine or the use of a search toolbar configuration used in conjunction with their favorite Web browser, there will always be some number of users who will decide, for whatever reason(s), to have others do their searching for them. If this is the case for you, here is a sampling of just a few of the many search services available for you to choose from.

HighBeam Research

The [HighBeam™ Research Web site](#) provides its visitors with three tabbed categories of search: Library, Web, and Reference. The respective statements made on the Web site for each category are respectively stated as follows: Library -- More than 34 million documents from over 3,000 sources, going back as far as 20 years; Web -- Choice from among six Research Groups; References -- More than 20 different encyclopedias, almanacs, dictionaries, and thesauri that encompass 300,000 fact-filled reference

documents.

SPECIAL NOTE: Membership registration is indicated to be of two types: Basic (free) and Full. However, long before you ever consider making a decision whether or not to make the leap and register at this or any membership-registration-based Web site, regardless of the cited "cover" price, Scsi recommends -- without exception and without your making any assumptions of any kind -- that you always "read the entire set of fine print statements" contained on the Web site's Privacy Policy Web page and on the Terms and Conditions Web page.

JupiterResearch

The [JupiterResearch Web site](#) states, "JupiterResearch provides unbiased research, analysis and advice, backed by proprietary data, to help companies profit from the impact of the Internet and emerging technologies on their business. ." You are encouraged to visit the Web site for additional details and offerings.


LexisNexis

The [LexisNexis Web site](#) provides its visitors with four tabbed categories of search: Product Name, Occupation, Task, and Featured Products. You are encouraged to visit the Web site for additional details and offerings.

Web Page Validation and Contact Information

This Scsi's WebKISS™ Guide #7: What are the strengths and weaknesses of search tools and engines? Page was last updated, validated -- to assure full conformance to W3C's [XHTML 1.0 Strict](#), screen medium cascading style sheet ([CSS](#)), and [WCAG Accessibility](#) (Priorities 1, 2, and 3, inclusive) recommendations -- and uploaded on Sunday, March 23, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. EDT by [Raymond Sonoff](#), President of Sonoff Consulting Services, Inc., 271 Saxony Drive, Crestview Hills, KY 41017 USA: Telephone: (859) 261-5908.

Remember: If you have some questions to ask, wish to request additional information about specific topics, or want to send a request for

proposal, Scsi will always welcome your inquiries and respond promptly -- often the very same day -- to your [e-mail](#) communications. -- 

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BOTTOM	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_7_search_tools_and_engines.html#bottompage
Home	http://sonoffconsulting.com/
Expanded Home	http://sonoffconsulting.com/index_expanded.html
Graphics-based Home	http://sonoffconsulting.com/index_graphics_mapped_version_3.html
About Scsi	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/scsi_corp/scsi_corp.html
Site Map	http://sonoffconsulting.com/site_map/site_map.html
Productivity	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/productivity.html
Scsi's WebKISS™ Guides	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_pkt_webkiss_guides_page.html
Other Web Sites	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/url_links/url_links.html
Contact Us	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/contact_us/contact_us.html
Scsi's Access Keys	http://sonoffconsulting.com/access_keys.html
need professional assistance	http://sonoffconsulting.com/need_professional_assistance.html
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#8: Want to Increase Your Search Engine Rankings?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_8_increase_search_engine_rankings.html
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Scsi's "Perfect 10" Web Site Standard	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features.html
Part 1	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_part1.html
Part 2	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_part2.html
Part 3	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_part3.html
Scsi's Best Practices	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_part2.html#h3_3
#1	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_1_of_10.html
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#8	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_8_of_10.html
#9	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_9_of_10.html
#10	http://sonoffconsulting.com/unique_features_10_of_10.html
Use Any Browser -- by Design!	http://sonoffconsulting.com/any_browser.html
Tips and Notes	http://sonoffconsulting.com/tips.html
Scsi's Privacy Policy	http://sonoffconsulting.com/w3c/scsi_pkt_p3p.html
Clients	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/scsi_corp/clients/client_list.html
Profile	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/scsi_corp/rsonoff_scsi_profile.html
Desktop	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/desktop_tools/desktop_tools.html
Editors and Viewers	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/editors_and_viewers/editors_and_viewers.html
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Mail Programs	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/mail_programs/mail_programs.html
System Utilities	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/system_utilities/system_utilities.html
Web Usability	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/productivity/web_usability/web_usability.html
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#5: How does Adherence to Web Standards Save Both Time and Money?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_5_how_web_std_save_time_and_money.html
#6: What's the Return-On-Investment Rationale for adopting Scsi's World Class Level Best Practices?	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_6_what_is_roi_rationale_for_adopting_scsi_best_practices.html
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Search Toolbars	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_7_search_tools_and_engines.html#h2_3
Search Services	http://sonoffconsulting.com/filters/web_kiss_guides/scsi_wkg_7_search_tools_and_engines.html#h2_4
A9	http://lite.a9.com/
Alltheweb	http://alltheweb.com/
Altavista	http://www.altavista.com/
AOL	http://search.aol.com/aol/webhome
Ask Jeeves	http://www.ask.com/?o=312&o=312
Clusty	http://clusty.com/
Dogpile	http://dogpile.com/
DMOZ	http://www.dmoz.org/
Entireweb	http://entireweb.com/
Gigablast	http://gigablast.com/
Lycos	http://search.lycos.com/
MSN search	http://search.msn.com/
Teoma	http://www.ask.com/?tt=1&qsrc=119
Vivisimo Clustering Engine	http://search.vivisimo.com/
Wisenuit	http://www.wisenuit.com/
Yahoo! Search	http://search.yahoo.com/
HighBeam™ Research Web site	http://www.highbeam.com/
JupiterResearch Web site	http://www.jupiterresearch.com/bin/item.pl/home
LexisNexis Web site	http://www.lexisnexis.com/
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