

\*\*\* TOP SECRET \*\*\*

## **Using Search Engines for Computer Help ... An Intro to Effectively Using Search Engines...**

**by Gord Routley**

[www.askgordroutley.com](http://www.askgordroutley.com)

Everyday, people ask me... "how do I fix this XYZ computer problem?". If I don't know the answer right off the top of my head, I simply go online to Google at [www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca) and perform a search for the problem. POOF - there it is in black & white (or red, green, etc.). I then relay the information to my caller - they THINK I'm really smart. In one sense I am - I know how to search the net! It's an acquired skill and the more you use it the better you'll get at it.

If you learn one thing this semester, LEARN HOW TO SEARCH FOR COMPUTER HELP ONLINE! You can thank me later! This page has lots of information that you need, and it's a great place to start the learning process. For a more intensive study of the "science" of using internet search, Boolean search, etc., there's a ton more information at [www.elder-computers.com/search-engines.htm](http://www.elder-computers.com/search-engines.htm).

And, if your searches don't give you the help you need, just go to <http://help.askgordroutley.com> and fill out a quick "trouble ticket". Tell me your computer woes and give me some basic information. I can help you find the results you need pretty quickly. I've had folks ask me why I do it. Simple - after a year or so of your question asking and my answering, I'll have developed a huge compendium of "Frequently Asked Questions" (also called FAQ's) for a lot of common computer issues. It will be just another resource from your own computer guru courtesy of folks just like you. I also challenge you all to become "Guru's" to others as your skills develop. Pass your experience on - that's the basis of "Guruism". I've had dozens of Guru's myself in the 30+ years I've been in the computer industry. That's another reason I do it - to repay what they taught me.

Wouldn't it be great to tell your very computer literate 9 year old grandson that you know the answer to a computer problem that he doesn't! And the more you search for help the better you get. Plus, if you print-off the results you have a permanent record in your computer files.

So here's my secret method of searching for help for my own computer problems and to look like a computer genius. I'll give you a few actual examples of recent searches I've made myself to solve problems.

The first thing I do is hit [www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca) and type in my question. I try to use natural and explicit words to describe the issue. I end the question with a question mark ? (of course). I try to pinpoint the most relevant keywords to emphasize my issues/s. I also try to eliminate a lot of superfluous words ... the ... and's, but's, or's, to's, etc's!

I can also "put the sentence in quotations" to force the engine to search only for that phrase. Internet search is really quite random otherwise. Remember that the top results may be "Sponsored Results". In other words, they paid to be there. Chances are they have no help for you unless you pay for it. Ignore them. After a while they become invisible. We call that "Banner Blindness". You'll get used to ignoring them.

You can also use "+" or "-" signs to force a word (+) or ignore a word (-). For example I was searching for a specific fantastic medication called Pennsaid to add some information to my Osteo Arthritis website ([www.osteo-arthritis.org](http://www.osteo-arthritis.org)). But the searches kept coming back with pages for Lawyers offering to sue someone for me. So, I just used the words ... +Pennsaid, -lawyer, -lawsuit, -malpractice. I then got the product monograph pages I was seeking. Knowing how to eliminate certain words or phrases is really the key to finding what you want.

WWW?? ... the world of internet search engines is actually WWW – 4 W's! It stands for the "searchers credo" of "WHAT, WHEN, WHY, WHO". Yes, that's the same system reporter's use. That's the reason they use it - to find the facts!

Here are some recent Case Studies of my own:

1). An older Pentium III computer won't boot, monitor won't turn on, computer beeps 1 long and 3 short beeps on start-up, then freezes. Have to force shutdown by holding the big "on button" in until it shuts right off. Back to Google and I searched the following ... "award bios post codes". This means I'm looking for the answer to the first question "computer beeps 1 long and 3 short beeps" post code results. POST means the Power On Self Test that every computer has. I knew it was Award BIOS because I saw the actual BIOS chip on the motherboard that clearly said Award. You only hear one beep when your computer starts up normally. I got links to several web pages and had to eliminate a few because I knew they were just "ad magnets" with no real content. In the results I got, I quickly saw that it meant either a ram problem or video card problem. I then removed 2 of the 3 ram chips and tried to boot up. Nope, same problem. Tried another ram stick. No again. Tried to remove & replace the last ram chip and had trouble getting it out of the motherboard because the rear clip was being impeded by crowding the sound card. AHA!! I read something about both ram and video cards in the search results I got! I removed the sound card, buffed its gold contact edges with an art eraser, put it back in and tried to boot. Hooray it works! Note that I didn't even VISIT the websites. I got the info I needed from just the page description capsule of info right on Google.

2). A 2 year old Compaq Presario keeps re-booting itself. It's a serious issue that keeps losing the date & time. The problem started randomly a few days before I had it on my service bench. So I Googled (yes that's a word now) the words "Compaq Presario MODEL# loses time constantly reboots XP". I found in the results that I should replace the motherboard battery. All motherboards take the same CR-2032 lithium coin cell. Sure enough, I just replaced the little battery and re-booted into the BIOS. I adjusted the date & time in the system bios, and then booted ok to Windows. Problem solved. If you don't

know how to replace the motherboard battery yourself just goto Google and type in ... "how replace motherboard battery"?

3). Here's a typical search example that just happened today. I was searching the net looking for some "quick tips to find computer help online" in order to write this article. I kept getting "sponsored" results, pages with little or no content, and pages that were WAY too complicated in what they had to offer. Ironically a lot of Universities have such pages on their websites – still way too complicated. I already have a lot of the same stuff on my Elder Computers site. I searched again & again, using ... -not X word, and +plus Y word ... with little success. So I just decided I'd just write the darned thing myself. I'll then post it on my FAQ page (<http://faq.askgordroutley.com>) and others looking for some basic search tips will find it useful by searching for it. Guruism again.

I've used these same search engine techniques to get my own websites into the top 10 search results for FREE. Just goto Google and type in "End-It-All" or "End-It-All 2" in quotes in 2 different searches. Did you see DoC's Downloads.com in the #1 result? Yes you did, and guess what - I'm the DoC at DoC's Downloads! I get over 3000 visitors a day to DoC's Downloads.com looking for my freeware downloads. It's also been online a very long time. I'm one of the grandfathers of free download websites. Now just type in End-It-All or End-It-All 2 without the quotes like before. Did you get DoC's Downloads in #1 place again? Yep. This is called "Search Engine Optimization" (SEO for you fellow geeks), and I'm one of its pioneers. I even have a website to help other websites get these same results ([www.fastwebsubmit.com](http://www.fastwebsubmit.com)). Also don't forget that when you need free downloads of freeware programs that contain no spyware, [www.docdownloads.com](http://www.docdownloads.com) is THE place to find it.

So in sum, just keep trying to find the answers yourself, and if that fails just remember to visit <http://help.askgordroutley.com> and fill out a quick "trouble ticket". Like I said, tell me your computer troubles and give me some basic information. I can help you find the results you need pretty quickly. I will ask you if you searched for the solution yourself. I'll get back to you within 24 hours (usually less). Happy hunting!

Oh, and YES you can pass this on to your friends. They can download it right from here >>> <http://www.elder-computers.com/simplysearch.htm>.

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