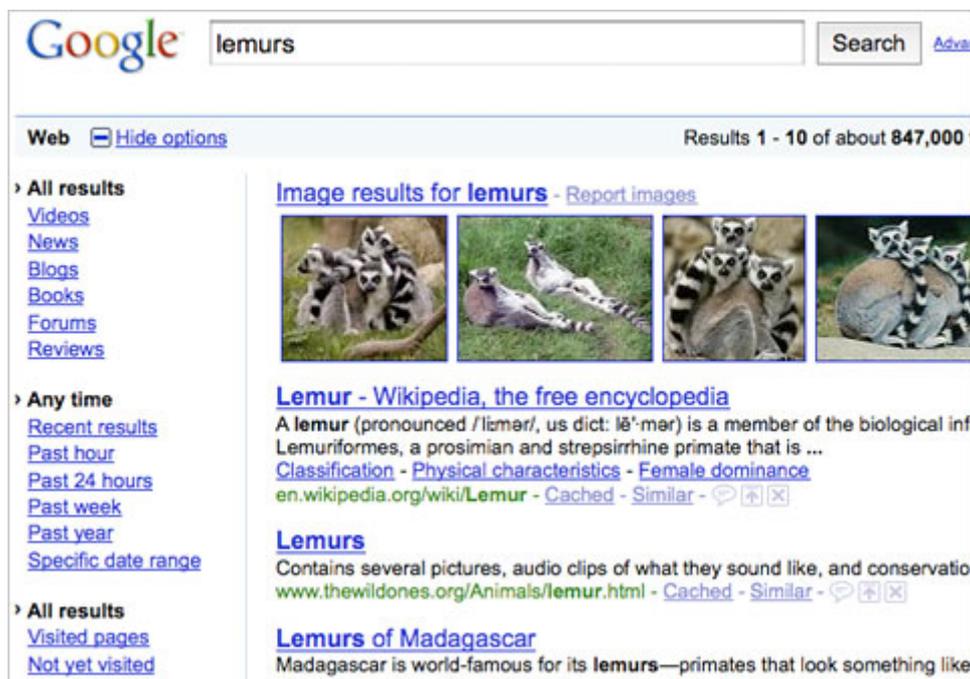


Google brings new options to search

Miguel Helft

Perhaps not to be outdone by Microsoft's recent quickened pace of innovation in search, Google is adding new ways to slice and dice search results.

On Thursday, Google introduced more categories to its "search options," a feature brought out in May that allows users to filter results by time (recent results, past year, past month, past week), type of result (videos, forums, reviews) and other criteria.



The new search options allow users to filter for results Google found in the past hour, and for books, blogs and news. Google also added the ability to emphasize or de-emphasize shopping-related results. And it is also allowing users of its search history feature to see only results they have seen before, giving them a quick way to find a page they have already seen.

Nundu Janakiram, a search product manager at Google, said all the new options were intended to give users a quicker way to get to the information they want. He said that the ability to search for items that have appeared on the Web in the past hour showcases Google's constant indexing and crawling of the Web. But he said it is different from "real-time search," a much ballyhooed and somewhat amorphous concept that typically refers to searches of services like Twitter or Facebook, where conversations between users are constantly updated.

Mr. Janakiram said that the ability to de-emphasize shopping sites would be useful for someone who was researching a new product, say a digital camera, and wanted to see product reviews and specifications. The same user may want to emphasize shopping sites when he is ready to buy an item.

Google introduced a string of other new search features in the past week. On Friday, for instance, Google enhanced search snippets for some results, allowing users to jump directly to the information they were looking for inside a Web page. In a search for trans fats, for example, a user might see a Wikipedia entry and links to jump from the snippet directly into sections of the page that discuss the chemistry of trans fats, their presence in certain foods or nutritional guidelines.

On Monday, Google began showing its popular hot trends directly on results pages for some of the most popular search keywords at a given time.

And late Wednesday, Google added links to discussion forum entries to search snippets from sites that have such forums. For instance, a search for "getting from Rome to Florence" will return a result from a travel site, with links to discussion forum entries on that site that touch on the topic.

"This past week of launches demonstrates how Google is enhancing the search experience," Mr. Janakiram said.

A Google spokesman said the quick rollout of new features was not a response to Microsoft's Bing but rather a reflection of how Google had always innovated in search and other parts of its business.

New York Times, New York, Oct. 1st 2009, Technology, online.

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