GOOGLE SEARCH

TIPS FOR JOURNALISTS

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Expertise Finder

You Will Learn How To:

[Use Search Bar Operators](#)

[Write a Search Query](#)

[Investigate Image Search](#)

Why Stronger Google Search Helps a Journalist

- concepts work across Google services from YouTube to patents
- skills no matter where you go and what you do
- architects of tomorrow harness Google

Search Bar Operators

Use the filters below in combination to maximize results.

Site Search

Use site: to restrict by domain (org, ca) or website (site:nytimes.com). Enter search term before or after site:url. No space after the colon.

site:gov terrorism expert

site:nytimes.com terrorism expert

Exclude Terms

Exclude as many terms as you like. The minus sign excludes the term from results (no spaces). You can exclude multiple terms.

```
terrorism expert -uk -ireland
```

OR operator

Use it to focus on two or more specific terms (including synonyms). Note: OR must be capitalized.

```
terrorist attack OR hate crime
```

Double Quotes

Look for an exact phrase or uncommon spelling. The example only searches Russell with two Ls.
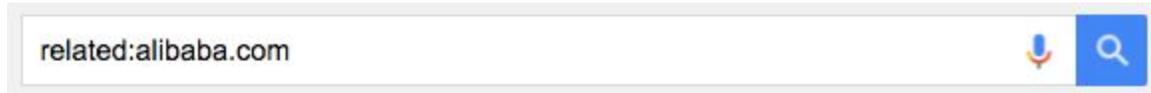
```
"Daniel Russell"
```

Wildcard *

Variants for a word combination. The results of this example include "bank prime rate", "bank mortgage rate" and "bank lending rate".

```
bank * rate
```

Find Related Sites

Results include similar web pages. This example is used to search for competitors to the Chinese marketplace Alibaba.

related:alibaba.com

Writing a Search Query

Don't Search First Words That Pop Into Your Mind

You need to be articulate and clear about what you are searching for.

Here is an example of a bad query:

an expert on police officer altercations with African American youth in the Western United States

Here's a more focused and less academic version of the same query:

an expert on police shootings of young black men in California
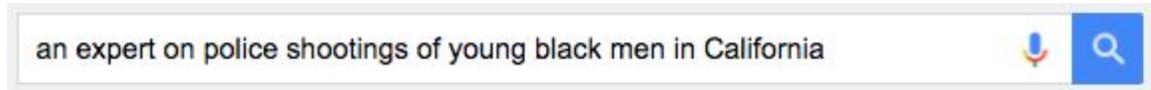
Stop Words

'Stop Words' are partially or completely ignored by Google. Here are the common ones:
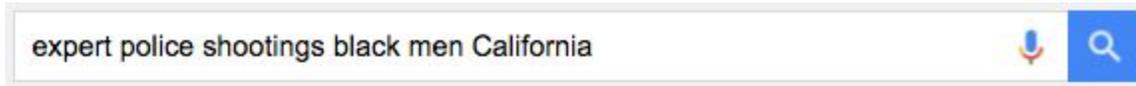
a, an, and, is, many, on, of, or, the, was, with

The list of Google stop words is short. I was unable to find a definitive list. Just remember that they do not impact your search.

Eliminate Words

expert police shootings black men California

Start a search only using these core words. Because we already focused the search we only cut 'young'. As 'an' 'on' 'of' and 'in' are stop words it doesn't matter whether we cut them.

Stand in the Shoes of the Writer

Think about what words the person writing the page you hope to find would use.

Use formal words, ex: broken not busted, and uncommon terms like 'ghost town' when they exist as they appear on fewer pages.

Use 5-7 Words Per Query

This is considered a good rule of thumb.

If results too wide:

- Cut one of the words and search again
- Add one new word and search again (try a different new word as needed)
- Add additional words if needed

If results too narrow:

- Cut one of the words

- Play around with which word(s) you cut
- Use a related word instead

Not Case Sensitive

Google doesn't differentiate between lowercase and UPPERCASE. So use lowercase as it's faster to type.

Accents Don't Make Much of a Difference

In most cases Google is capable of guessing the language of results desired based on your previous behaviour even without accents.

For example if Google knows you use the web in French, when you search 'operation' rather than 'opération' your search will include French language results.

Search without accents if it allows you to type faster.

Image Search

Reverse Image Search

This can be a powerful investigative or verification tool.

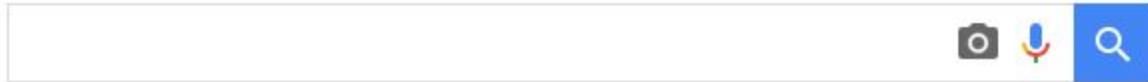When you search using an image, your search results may include:

- Similar images
- Sites that include the image
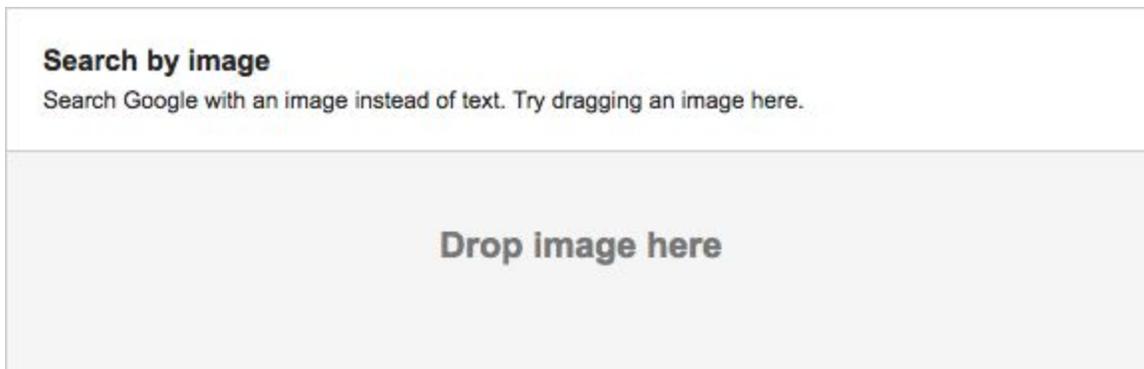- Other sizes of the image you searched for

Upload Image

You can also upload an image. Click on camera icon in the search bar when you are on a Google images page (there is no camera icon on in the search bar on non Google image pages).

Drag Image

Drag an image you find on the web into the search bar or URL bar and find webpages where it appears online. When the image is overtop the search bar it transforms to look like this:

Search by image
Search Google with an image instead of text. Try dragging an image here.

Drop image here

After let go of mouse button the results pages looks like this:

Image Search Using Phone or Tablet

The following is available on the Chrome app (Android and iPhone or iPad).

- Touch the image you want to search with to open a larger version of the image.
- Press and hold the image. In the box that appears, touch Search Google for this image.

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Using Image URL

Enter the URL of the image into the Google Image search bar. You can get the URL by right clicking on the image and selecting 'Copy Image Address' (Chrome) / 'Copy Image Location' (Firefox). If you are looking at a thumbnail of the image you will need to first click on it to open it before copying the URL:
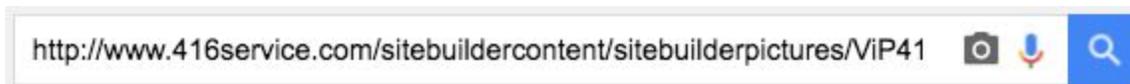
Visually Similar Images

After searching an image the results will include a section called 'Visually Similar Images'. For the example below I uploaded a photo of Gandhi. In the middle of the results page was this section:

Clicking on another image will bring you along another image path. Useful when the source or details related to an image are unclear or to uncover avenues not considered before.

Take Your Own Photo

A tool to try to identify something. If you have a physical object or a printed version of an image take a photo of it and upload it to Google Image search (see Upload Image above). Place the object on a white background before shooting for best results.

Image Search Chrome Extension

Google also has an Image Search Chrome extension that allows you to start a Google search using any image on the web.

https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/search-by-image-by-google/dajedkncpodkgg klbegccjpmnglmnflm

Advanced Image Search Video

This is better to watch rather than to read. Here is a link to a section of a course Google created a few years ago that outlines advanced Google image search features (5:28):

https://coursebuilder.withgoogle.com/sample/unit?unit=36

If You Want To Go Deeper

Watch this free online course by Nicholas Whitaker of Google News Labs. It's a thorough, yet accessible, overview of Google search (total time 40 minutes):

http://learno.net/courses/google-search-for-journalists

Visit our Google Search Tips for Journalists page:

http://expertisefinder.com/google-search-tips-journalists/