

## Decoding Google's Search Results

Sometimes we can use a tool, even a fantastic tool like Google, without recognizing some of its operational characteristics. This may be because we make assumptions, or perhaps the context of the labeling is outside our expectations.

There are two common surprises which users report as different from their expectations concerning Google: (1) the number of results which are available, and (2) the search within results feature.

### Number of Google results which are available

So prevalent on every Google search results page is the astonishing number of results found. For example a search for "hat trick" includes the text "Results **1 - 10** of about **20,300,000** for **hat trick**" in the results. Yet if one has the patience to look at all results, one finds the text "Results **821 - 826** of about **20,300,000** for **hat trick**" **at the start of the 820s. At that page end it says,**

*"In order to show you the most relevant results, we have omitted some entries very similar to the 826 already displayed"*

This does not mean that Google has misled us. Indeed no one doubts that they truly have the millions of reported numbers for this search.

What it means, however, is that Google recognizes that there is little value supplying results beyond several hundred results. Indeed, how many searchers pursue their topic beyond the first page or two of results?

In practice, Google, Yahoo, and Bing do not provide beyond 1000 results.

### Google's search within results feature

At the bottom of every Google results page is the offer to "search within results". One might interpret this as searching within the current results on the page. This would be incorrect. What Google means is searching within the entire, in this case, 20,300,000 results.

This means that after the desired term is sent to "search within results", Google then discards the first set of search results – the ones it thought were the best results for the original search term – and then does a new search consisting of the original search term as well as the new "within results" search term. The new search is then reported back to the searcher. This explains why a user might see a result from his first search that does not appear in the subsequent "search within results" search.

### Getting More From Google Results

Antleap Searcher operates as a front-end to Google (or Yahoo or Bing) search engines. It collects all available results from the Search Engine when the search is first run. These results are then available to sort and really *search within results* so that searchers can dynamically and interactively comb the results and quickly isolate and identify relevant results.