

Google Site Search Solutions



SITE SEARCH: MYTH VS. REALITY

MYTH: Your customers don't care about the quality of site search results.

FACT: Eighty percent of visitors will abandon a site with poor search functionality¹.

MYTH: Freeware search engine software is good enough for site search.

FACT: Freeware products often end up costing website owners more, both in IT maintenance time and in lost sales and traffic because of poor search results.

MYTH: Site search requires significant IT time for administration and maintenance.

FACT: Integrating hardware, software, and support, Google's search solutions are designed to be fast and easy to administer – which helps your IT staff and your bottom line.

MYTH: Effective site search means a big up-front investment.

FACT: Unlike traditional site search products – where initial costs for installation, configuration, tweaking, and training can be staggering – the Google Search Appliance and the Google Mini let you avoid both the painful up-front expense and the ongoing hidden costs of maintenance contracts and IT staff time.

For more information, visit www.google.com/enterprise

For details, contact us at appliance1@google.com

Your business probably spends a tremendous amount of time, resources, and capital developing your website and online advertising initiatives. Google's site search solutions complement these investments by providing your site's visitors the highest quality search results. It's important that your website has a search engine that can provide highly relevant search results across all of your public information resources, including blogs, wikis, and discussion forums. Google provides a range of cost-effective search solutions to power your website's search engine. Google's site search products include the Google Search Appliance, the Google Mini, and a hosted software-as-a-service (SaaS) offering called Google Custom Search. The importance to your business of having site search that really works, and the low cost of Google's search solutions, add up to a value proposition you can't ignore.

Your website's visitors rely on site search to find what they want

Your website visitors can either browse your site and eventually find what they're looking for, or they can search your site and (hopefully) find information in an instant. Google's web search engine has set a high bar for relevance, speed, and ease of use, and visitors to your site expect your site's search engine to provide similarly accurate and quick results.

Unfortunately, most sites don't meet these high expectations: 85 percent of site searches don't return what the user sought¹, and 22 percent return no results at all². The cost to companies of poor site search is clear as 80 percent of visitors will abandon a site if search functionality is poor³.

Independent third-party research consistently finds that a high quality site search engine, such as one provided by Google, can produce the following results:

- Increased e-commerce revenues by boosting browsing-to-buying conversion rates
- Increased order size and frequency of purchases
- Reduced customer service costs by connecting users to support information
- Increased ability to find products previously not found through navigation alone
- Increased cross-sell and up-sell opportunities
- Increased page views

Google site search solutions

Google defined the standard for search on the internet, and we provide the same high quality of service with our site search products.

We feel relevancy is one of the most important factors that influence user experience on your website. Millions of people use Google daily and are accustomed to quickly finding what they seek after typing just a few keywords. Serving relevant results is no

¹ Enriching Search: Efficiency Without Additional Spending, Jupiter Research

² Unpuzzling Search: Best Practices from Mondosoft Study, IDC

³ Search Technology: Resurrecting the Web's Workhorse, Jupiter Media Metrix

“The Google Search Appliance met all our needs. There wasn’t another vendor that could search all of our web and intranet content and perform to the same level as Google in relevance and spelling.”

Jonathan Grant,
Lead Web Developer,
Sur La Table

easy task, and in fact hundreds of signals and factors are used to evaluate each and every query and document, ultimately aiming to mimic the natural way that humans process information.

Google offers a range of solutions to power your site’s search engine, and all of them feature Google’s relevancy algorithms. What solution you choose depends on your website and what you require in your search engine. Here we will quickly describe the products that we offer, starting with our most affordable and basic option (Google Custom Search), and progressing to higher-valued products that are more advanced (the Google Search Appliance and the Google Mini).

Google Custom Search Engine

Our most pervasive search tool is the Google Custom Search Engine (available at www.google.com/sitesearch). Google Custom Search is a SaaS offering that allows you to create a search engine across any collection of websites – including ones that you do not own. Because sites are already indexed for Google web search, creating a Custom Search Engine takes just a few seconds. Installing the search engine on your website requires copying and pasting a few lines of Javascript code.

More than 200,000 websites use Google Custom Search today. Google provides three tiers within Custom Search:

Free Our most popular option, publishers can use Custom Search for free if they choose to run ads alongside search results. Publishers can link their Custom Search Engine to their AdSense account to earn money from ads. Publishers also have the option of providing their site’s visitors a Google web search engine.

Non-profit Schools, non-profit organizations, and government organizations can disable advertisements and use the Custom Search Engine for free.

Business Edition For-profit businesses that wish to disable ads should purchase Custom Search Business Edition. The Business Edition also provides an XML API to access search results, and this implies that Google branding is optional.

Pricing starts at just \$100 per year for websites with less than 5,000 pages, but scales into thousands of dollars per year for larger sites. Query volumes are also a factor in pricing.

Custom Search cannot index content behind your corporate firewall or secure logins. Today the usefulness of your Custom Search Engine depends on whether you have been able to get Google to index your site. If your site is frequently and thoroughly crawled and indexed by Google, your Custom Search Engine will almost certainly provide excellent relevance and reach across your entire website. We encourage you to visit www.google.com/sitesearch to create a free preview of a Custom Search Engine to assess search quality. To further influence Google.com’s crawler, you are encouraged to use Google’s free Webmaster Tools (www.google.com/webmaster)

To see an example deployment of the free Custom Search Engine, visit www.macworld.com. You can read their testimonial at www.macworld.com/article/53533/2006/10/mwgoogle.html

For an example deployment of Custom Search Business Edition, see www.salesforce.com/developer. You can see how Salesforce.com has been successful using Custom Search by watching a video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=INL412SojkQ

The Google Search Appliance and the Google Mini

The Google Search Appliance and the Google Mini are hardware appliances that run a specialized version of the software that powers Google.com's search engine (available at www.google.com/enterprise). The Search Appliance and the Mini can be configured to index your public website, as well as internal content behind your corporate firewall. Both products feature a plug-and-play set up process – you can set up a basic search engine in less than half an hour.

Where the appliances differ from Custom Search is in the depth of their functionality. Unlike Custom Search, you can set the appliances to crawl and index specific URLs at a schedule based on your own discretion. If you publish new content to your website, you can instruct your appliance to immediately recrawl affected pages. The Search Appliance and the Mini also have a number of features currently not available with Custom Search. Some of the most popular features include the following:

Keywordmatch Administrators can configure the search engine to display special promotional messages above the search results for select keywords

Synonyms Administrators can establish that certain keywords are synonyms for others

Faceted navigation Provide your website's visitors with ways to narrow search results based on metadata

Search suggestions Provide your website's visitors with search term suggestions

The Search Appliance and the Mini require more set up than Custom Search, but they are still plug-and-play solutions. They both eliminate large up-front investments and hidden costs that burden the users of traditional site search products:

No added hardware or support costs Google's search appliances include hardware, software, support and product upgrades – eliminating significant, incremental costs of many competing products.

No added deployment costs Traditional site search products require costly professional services for implementation, while the Google Search Appliance and the Google Mini work right out of the box.

No maintenance fees In many cases, the 20 to 25 percent annual maintenance fee charged by enterprise search vendors is greater than the entire annual license fee for a Google search solution.

No manual tweaking of documents Unlike most site search products, the Google Search Appliance and the Google Mini take the burden of organizing information off the administrator with an automated approach that doesn't require complex weighting and tweaking of documents and indexes.

When used for site search, the Search Appliance and the Mini primarily differ in their document capacity. The Search Appliance also has a number of features typically used when searching corporate networks. For example, the Search Appliance has a Connector Framework that enables searching databases, content management systems, and other applications. While both the Mini and the Search Appliance can index and securely serve content to only authorized individuals, the Search Appliance can handle more security mechanisms such as HTTP forms-based authorization.

The Google Search Appliance starts at \$30,000 for search of up to 500,000 documents. For an example deployment of a Google Search Appliance, see www.pcmagazine.com. Find the story of Ziff Davis (PC Magazine) at www.google.com/enterprise/customers.html

The Google Mini starts at \$2,990 for search of up to 50,000 documents, and scales up to \$9,990 for 300,000 documents. For an example deployment of a Google Mini, see www.forex.com. You can find Forex's story and many more success stories at the Google Enterprise Superstars Blog (www.googleenterprisesuperstars.blogspot.com/)

Which site search solution is right for you

We hope that the above descriptions have given you some insight as to which product is the best fit for your business, but in short:

- choose the Google Search Appliance if your site is more than 300,000 web pages, and you require features like control of your crawler, keymatch, or faceted navigation
- choose the Google Mini if your site is less than 300,000 web pages and you require the above features
- choose Custom Search Business Edition if you only need basic features, but want to customize your search result look and feel through use of an XML API for search results
- choose the free Custom Search Engine if you only need basic features and don't mind having ads alongside search results

Closing words

While today we have an assortment of products to address the site search market, it is our belief that a SaaS offering like what we provide today with Google Custom Search is the optimal delivery model for site search. It is our intention to transform Custom Search into a fully-featured site search solution that will be deployed across millions of websites. Today Custom Search lacks some features for site search found in the appliances, and we intend to address these shortcomings in the near future. Google is the only major technology company who will have a viable hosted site search offering that can integrate with Google's other webmaster and marketing tools. As we improve Custom Search to support site search needs, we can work with you to transfer your site from appliance-powered search to our SaaS offering.

