

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF  
PERSONAL COMPUTER USERS  
WHO FREQUENT THE INTERNET,  
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON GIST  
SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS.

# safe surfing

- HEALTH TIPS
- BYPASS TELEPHONE MENUS
- SEARCH ENGINES
- WEB TRICKS



## Health Tips

I apologize for straying from strictly computer-related and internet-related issues. But, as I encounter important information that might be useful, I feel compelled to share it. And what better way to share than on the internet? So that's how I justify

covering some of these not-strictly-internet-related issues in these pages.

### Bottom Line

I used to subscribe to a newsletter called *Bottom Line*. I found it entertaining and very enlightening. So when the publishers started producing a companion newsletter called *Bottom Line – Health*, I subscribed to that too. I already had subscriptions to a number of other publications such as Consumer Reports, PC Magazine

## Bottom Line Secrets

and Men's Health, so I soon became inundated and never caught up. So I dropped virtually all of my subscriptions. But every now and then one of the publishers sends me a flyer trying to get me to subscribe again and I occasionally fall for their scheme. Most recently I heard from Bottom Line, so I wanted to share some of their "secrets" which, along with others, are also repeated at [www.bottomlinesecrets.com](http://www.bottomlinesecrets.com).

- **Balance** - During the recovery and therapy phases following my two minor knee surgeries the issue of balance arose. I had been researching ways to accelerate my recovery and consistently found that the experts consider a



sense of balance to be both one of the best ways to avoid injury through falls and one of the key measures of physical well-being. Balance can be practiced and improved and Yoga is one easy way to do that. You may recall that the Wii game system has a Wii Fit board and Yoga exercises that make exercising fun. Another way to practice balance is to stand on one foot while moving the other leg around, bent at the knee. Shoot for the best time, trying for a number of minutes and then try it with your eyes closed. You won't be able to go beyond a few seconds at first. But, by doing it several times throughout the day for awhile, you'll find yourself able to reach the 28-second mark, the same time the average 30-year-old can achieve!

- **Amino Acid** - Arginine is recommended as an effective natural substitute for Viagra!

- **Strength Training** - Also during my recovery, I learned that strength training not only restores muscle, but it increases bone density, something I



found I needed after a bone density test. Additionally, it improves mobility and promotes weight loss and cardiovascular fitness. Surprisingly, you don't have to spend hours a week to get these benefits from strength training. Only a half hour a week is needed. Fred Hahn's book, described and advertised at [www.slowburn.typepad.com/](http://www.slowburn.typepad.com/) explains the process in detail. But just knowing the basics -- very slow, repetitive lifting of light weights -- is pretty helpful.

- **Decontaminate Sponges** – You can easily rid your sponges of germs by simply rinsing and wringing them out, then microwaving them for 30 to 60 seconds.

- **Anti-Inflammatory & Painkiller Substitutes** - Here are some simple ways to get the anti-inflammation effects similar to Ibuprofen, glucomsamine and even some addictive drugs:

- Drink one or two cups of hot or cold tea daily (rich in polyphenols)
- Take daily vitamin C (500 to 1000 mg) and vitamin D (400 IUs, which seems to be 10 mcg) supplements
- Try daily willow bark (240 mg) or boswella (1000 mg)
- Eat grapes (one cup of white or red) for the reseravatrol antioxidant and COX-2 inhibitor qualities. Purple grape juice and red wine also contain reseravatrol.



### **Peanut Butter**

If you haven't heard, a Peanut Butter Corporation of America facility in Blakely, Georgia has been found to be the source of some salmonella-contaminated

peanut butter and peanut butter paste. The product has been distributed to 85 companies (only 30 are focused on right now) and 470 people have gotten ill in 43 states (at least six deaths reported). Throw away your Austin,

Keebler and Famous Amos products containing peanut butter, and there are at least 16 products recalled by the Kellogg Company. Read more here:

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/salmonellatyph.html>

## **Bypass Telephone Menus**

Are you frustrated by those automated phone systems? A well-constructed menu tree can be very helpful and effective, but far too often they are ineffective, inefficient and downright maddening! If my "call is very important" to you, then why are you trying to drive me crazy? Here are two sites that tell you how to get around the companies' systems when they just seem to be testing your patience:



[www.get2human.com](http://www.get2human.com)

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



Not only do the site tell you, by company name, how to get around the automated system and to a real person, but they also rate the effectiveness of the companies' systems based upon their readers feedback. And **Get2human** also rates the agents' communications skills based on impediments such as severe accents.

Oddly enough, although I too have had horrible experiences in many cases, I do not

necessarily agree with the ratings I scanned at **Get2human**. For example, although I agree that Dell almost exclusively employs customer service reps in India, I have had great success dealing with them on the many occasions I've had to call. **Get2human** gave them five "red flags" and I would have given them only about one (as a precaution to be especially ready and sensitive to the accent problem). I have many friends who complain about Dell and, similarly, AOL (also with five red flags), so my positive experience may be anomalous. I noted with

some satisfaction though that United Airlines got four red flags. That's about right from my experience.

**DialaHuman** does not have as many features or listings as **Get2Human**, but it's a good resource to remember in case you need help finding a "cheat" for a particular company.

## Search Engines



I know I've raved about **Google** as the only search engine you'll ever need, but there are other search engines out there! And there are reasons you may want to use one over another. **Google** is still my favorite. It's extremely fast, generally accurate and sometimes even seems to be thinking just like I am! But other engines have some interesting characteristics too.

For example, **Clusty.com**, in addition to listing the results of your search like all other engines, displays an additional list of categories (or "clusters," get it?) that show you the number of occurrences by category in parentheses.

**URL.com** is new to me, and seems very interesting. They rank results based on user voting after similar searches using **Google**, **Yahoo** and **MSN** engines.

**Ask.com** and **Copernic.com**, two old veterans, are still around and do great jobs, especially for in-depth searches.

Here, compliments of **InternetTutorials.net**, is a pretty complete list and description of search engines you can try whenever Google doesn't seem to fill the bill, or just when you want to see what else is out there. It'd be fun to try them all sometime if you have about a year of spare time!

### Independent Search Engines

- **Alexa Web Search** - returns results from its own index accompanied by additional information including traffic ranking, number of links to page, ownership and links to related pages of interest
- **AllTheWeb** - returns results quickly from an extremely large database gathered by the Yahoo crawler; offers multimedia and news searches; has a good advanced search interface
- **AltaVista** - searches Web sites and Usenet newsgroups with advanced Boolean and field

search options. See also **BabelFish**, the **AltaVista** translation service.

- **AOL Search** - engine that defaults to "AND" logic and offers an options template for easy search construction; has an option to view results by popularity; offers a directory based on the **Open Directory**
- **Ask.com** - general search engine enhanced by a number of specialty searches including a dictionary, thesaurus, currency converter, encyclopedia, maps, news and more. The site is a merging of the former search engines **Ask Jeeves** and **Teoma**
- **BananaSlug** - uses the **Google** search mechanism and seeds your search with a random word from the category of your choice to return unusual results



- **ChaCha** - search engine that offers live human guides to help answer queries
- **Cuil** - searches a very large index of Web pages and includes thumbnails of sites in its search results
- **Exalead** - offers concept clustering of results, thumbnail images of retrieved sites, and customization options such as

organization of results by file type, geography or modification date

- **Factbites** - beta engine that searches for full topic matches and returns meaningful, full sentence excerpts of sites in its results list
- **Google** - ranks pages by tracking the links from pages ranked high by the service. Also check out **EcoSmartSearch.com**, a **Google**-powered search engine with a black background display that saves energy.
- **Hakia** - accepts plain English queries; derives results from the **Ask.com** index
- **IceRocket** - offers searches of the Web, blogs, and other sources, creates an RSS feed of search results, tracks search terms cited in blog postings, and offers a free RSS builder
- **iSEEK Education** - offers authoritative resources from university, government, and established noncommercial providers; organizes results into concept clusters, and also allows users to recommend and rate sites
- **KoolTorch** - returns results organized by graphical icons into general category clusters that, in turn, generate results within that category
- **Live Search** - Microsoft's search engine that offers searches of the general Web as well as

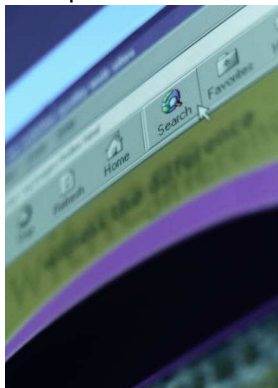


some deep Web sources and focused search including health, local, and questions/answers

- **Lycos** - general search engine that also offers searches of a few deep Web content sources including people look-up, yellow pages and multimedia
- **Quintura** - displays a type of tag cloud with keywords related to your search that can be selected to generate new results
- **SearchEdu.com** - limits results to the .edu, domain; also offers to search well-known dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs, etc.
- **SearchGov.com** - government domain searches
- **SearchMil.com** - military domain searches
- **Ujiko** - features a number of results customization tools in a visual environment that also offers topic classification for subsequent searches
- **Webbrain** - offers results in visual layout of related terms for subsequent searching
- **Yahoo!** - portal with a general Web search and many other content services

#### Meta Search Engines (aggregates or compares other engine results)

- **Cacti Search** - search **Google, Yahoo, MSN and Ask**, and retrieve a collated results list with an option to view results from each engine separately



- **Chubba** - search the Web, a dictionary, thesaurus and encyclopedia
- **Clusty** - tool from the creators of **Vivisimo** that clusters results from a variety of surface and deep Web sources and

organizes them into clusters by topic, site or URL; also offers a variety of customization options, including the creation of a Clusty Cloud

- **Copernic** - client software that searches multiple engines and directories, removes duplicates and dead links, highlights search terms in your results, and offers a variety of search and retrieval options
- **Dogpile** - search 20+ search engines and retrieve results by relevance or separate source engine; also presents concept clusters for viewing results organized by keywords or topics



- **Don Busca** - searches the Web, blogs, news and software and offers a variety of options with each result including concept clusters, a visual thumbnail of the site, a cached version, a link to the site archive in the **Wayback Machine**, site info from a variety of sources and various bookmark management options
- **Fasteagle** - offers searches of many types of Web sites, including the deep Web and the social Web

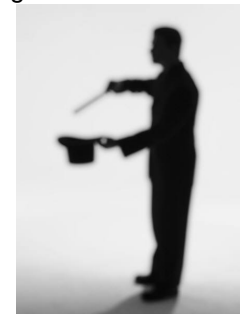
- **Fazzle** - searches several search services on the Web, and also offers specialty searches of downloads, images, video and other topics on the deep Web
- **Findelio** - searches a handful of popular engines and includes a list of related searches along with each set of results
- **FindForward** - searches multiple sources and offers numerous search options including chat search, tags, wildcard and grow word search

- **iBoogie** - offers searches of the Web and multimedia, and supplies real-time concept clustering of results
- **InfoGrid** - offers meta and news searching; portal interface also features the **Open Directory**, topical InfoGrids, with additional customization of topics available in a free download
- **Intelways** - offers a search of multiple search engines, content providers and media types with access to results sets from the individual sources
- **Ixquick** - ranks results based on top ten rankings from the source sites; allows any type of search syntax and will translate and direct your search accordingly
- **Kartoo** - categorizes content into relevant concepts and sites and displays results on a graphical map; requires Flash or offers an HTML version
- **Keotag** - type a keyword or phrase and retrieve results from the past 30 days of blog postings from numerous blog aggregators; you can subscribe to an RSS feed to track this search
- **KillerInfo** - retrieves information from the general Web and various topic-specific sources and organizes results into concept clusters based on **Vivisimo's** technology
- **Mamma** - retrieve results in relevancy ranked order; power search offers a user-friendly template for building a query

- **MetaCrawler** - retrieve results in relevancy ranked order; useful power search available with a template of search options
- **metaEUREKA** - sorts results by relevancy and offers a "Site info" link that returns information on the server, date last modified, size, and descriptive information if available; also links to site history via the **Wayback Machine** and popularity ratings from **Alexa**
- **Mnemomap** - provides results in a graphical format that provides search refinements and draws results from **Yahoo!**, **Flickr** and **YouTube**
- **Monster Crawler** - simultaneously searches **Google**, **Yahoo!**, **LiveSearch** and **Ask**
- **Mooter** - meta engine that presents initial search results in graphical format and organizes results into concept clusters
- **Own Mine** - searches major search engines and offers the option to chat with users conducting similar searches
- **Pandia Search Central** - searches multiple engines and directories and also offers searches of news, books, music, videos and other specialty databases; includes a searchable version of the **Open Directory**
- **Slurk** - searches **Google**, **Yahoo!** and **MSN**, and gives keyword search suggestions and immediate results as you type
- **Sproose** - allows users to comment on and vote on its search results
- **SurfWax** - offers options to see a quick view of sites in the search results list to determine relevancy and choose alternative search terms for a subsequent search from a thesaurus; offers personalization options; offers **SurfWax LookAhead** with "Dynamic Search Navigation" that retrieves results from RSS feeds as you type various kinds of queries
- **Trexy** - tracks "trails" of the Web pages visited and therefore valued by other searchers; users can "Add Engine" to extend the range of the search engines that **Trexy** uses
- **URL.com** - returns the top ten results from **Google**, **Yahoo!** and **MSN**, and allows users to comment and vote on results.
- **Virtual Learning Resources Center** - searches several high quality directories; also offers its own directory
- **WhoNu** - semantic tool that searches a large number of resource types, including deep Web sources, and suggests alternate topics
- **Yooci** - metasearch tool



- that retrieves no more than 250 results for any search
- **ZapMeta** - organizes results by relevance, popularity, title, source or domain, allows users to set preferences, and features a useful advanced search interface
- **Zuula** - searches the Web, images, news, blogs and jobs postings, and returns results from multiple engine sources.



## Web Tricks

Every now and then **PCWorld** publishes what they call "Web Tricks." Among a recent collection of tricks were ideas that range from useful and productive, to clever but useless, and all the way to ideas bordering on cyber terrorism.

One of the two or three with some actual usefulness and that do not challenge my sense of ethics is a little program called "**SlyDial**." Just dial 267-SLYDIAL, enter the number you want to leave a voicemail with, and then, when prompted, leave your message that will be delivered directly to your contacts' voicemail -- whether they've got their phone turned on or not. When would you use that? Well, maybe you're too busy to engage in a normal conversation, or you don't want to have to be rude to that special friend who is particularly long-winded, or you're just too chicken to discuss some sensitive topic.

How about a way to monitor your home or office using a simple webcam from any place from which you have web access? **WebCamXP** at gives you web streaming capability for free:

<http://www.webcamxp.com/>

Another potentially useful program, **DidTheyReadIt**, gets you proof of an email recipient having actually opened your message and tells you how long it was open. You may not retain your reputation as "most popular" with this program, but it probably will cut down on both the number of times you hear "I didn't get that message!" and on your number of friends:

<http://www.didtheyreadit.com/>

There are several other tricks listed, but, although I can see the humor in some of them, most of them have absolutely no redeeming value:

[http://www.pcworld.com/article/150141-3/12\\_sly\\_web\\_tricks\\_that\\_put\\_you\\_in\\_control.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/150141-3/12_sly_web_tricks_that_put_you_in_control.html)



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