

# the QUEST

Increasing student learning through improved engagement!

Quality Enhancement Plan Newsletter  
Volume 1, Issue 1

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## PAGE 1 OVERVIEW

Gives general search tips. Most helpful if you have not used google much OR if want to learn different methods to find info.

## MY FAVORITES

Math Whiz - Page 2  
Solve any math problem!

What's that mean? - Page 2  
Your own personal dictionary!

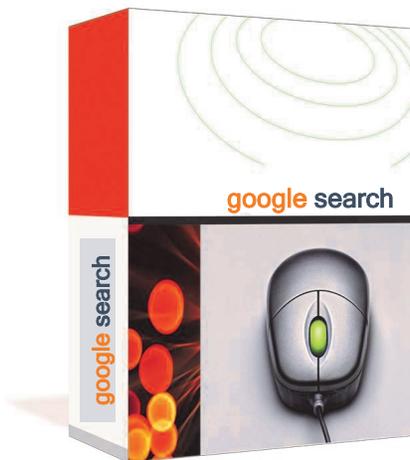
Jet Lag - Page 2  
Time conversion at the palm of your hand!

Coming Soon - Page 3  
A look at future QEP services!

CRIQUETT LEHMAN  
Director of QEP



## Creating a Technology Rich Environment



### Go Google! Helpful Search Tips

Presentation provided by:  
**Kathleen Plinske**, McHenry County College  
NISOD Convention, May 2009

#### GENERAL TIPS

Two of the keys to finding information on the web are choosing search terms wisely and understanding how to enter them in the most efficient way to yield the results you are looking for. A *search term* is the word or phrase that best describes what you are looking for. Often times, your search will yield useful information more quickly if you use multiple search terms appropriately.

For example, perhaps you are interested in learning the population of Harvard, IL. A Google search for **Harvard** yields 78,700,000 results, the first of which are about Harvard University. Not quite what we were looking for. A Google search for **Harvard Illinois** still yields 14,900,000 results. Let's take a little deeper look.

#### ADDING SEARCH TERMS

When we search for **Harvard**, Google returns every webpage that it has indexed that includes the word *harvard*. There are over 78 million pages on the Internet that include the word *harvard*. We narrowed our search by adding the word *illinois*.

When we search for **Harvard Illinois**, Google returns every webpage that it has indexed that includes the words *harvard* and *illinois*. In this case, our search worked out well, but we actually were quite lucky. Google could have very easily returned a page that included the word *harvard* but included information about Illinois in another context (for example, a student from Illinois who attended Harvard). After all, Google doesn't know you're searching for the population of Harvard, Illinois, it just looks for webpages that somewhere include the words *harvard* and *illinois*.

#### ORDER OF SEARCH TERMS

By reversing the order of our search terms (searching for **Illinois harvard**), our results actually change. Sometimes it is not clear which order of search terms is best, but at least be aware that changing the order of search terms changes your results.

#### ADDING MORE SEARCH TERMS

We can narrow our search even more by searching for **Harvard Illinois population**. This limits the number of pages to 152,000. Want to be even more specific? Let's say you only want population figures from a census. Add **+census** to your search. A plus sign requires pages to include the term after the +. A plus sign is also useful when Google informs you that it automatically excluded a common word from your search (such as "a" or "how") and you want to force it as part of your search.

#### EXCLUDING SEARCH TERMS

Perhaps you want to exclude Wikipedia pages from your results. Simply add **-wikipedia** to your search and Google will not display any pages that include the word *wikipedia*.

#### SPECIFIC SOURCE

Perhaps you want to only search webpages that are on the [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) site. Click on **Advanced Search**, and add **census.gov** to the "Search within a site or domain" field.

#### DEFINING TERMS

Google has a built in dictionary. After you submit a search, the search terms you entered appear as hyperlinks near the upper right corner of your search results. Clicking on any of your linked search terms takes you to a dictionary definition page of the term.

#### SEARCHING FOR PHRASES

Often times, a search for keywords doesn't yield the specific information you are looking for. Sometimes an entire phrase works better, such as **mchenry county college**. However, instead of simply searching for the words of the phrase (which will return all pages that somewhere include the word *mchenry*, *county*, and *college*), it is best to search for **"mchenry county college"** (with the quotes included!), which will only return pages that include the entire phrase in quotes.

Phrasing also works well when searching for an individual's name on the Internet. Searching for **kathleen plinske** yields good results, but it will return pages that have the name *kathleen* somewhere in the page and the word *plinske* could be at another location on the page entirely.

Searching for **"kathleen plinske"** yields only pages that have the full name.

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## PAGE 2 OVERVIEW

Specialized search tips and tools. Helpful for those specific needs or curiosities. A quick way to find particular information on almost anything.

## QEP GOAL

Increase student learning through improved engagement:

- \* Transform curriculum and instruction.
- \* Participate in professional development opportunities.
- \* Create a technology rich environment.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The name of the Vernon College QEP is VConnected.



QEP



## Go Google! Specialized Tools

### SYNONYM SEARCH

Use the ~ sign before any word, and Google will search for the word and any synonym. For example, searching for **McHenry County University** doesn't yield McHenry County's finest institution of higher education, but searching for **McHenry County ~University** does, because Google then also searches for synonyms of *University*, such as *College*.

### WILDCARD SEARCH

Use the \* sign as a wildcard. For example, if you're looking for the Crystal Lake \_\_\_\_\_ District, but you're not sure what the exact name of the district is, you can search "**Crystal Lake \* District**" and Google will display many different districts in Crystal Lake. Google uses the \* symbol as a substitute for any word or words.

### WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

I was once called a whippersnapper at an important meeting. I wanted to know if I was being insulted or complemented, so I searched Google for **define: whippersnapper**. I was not necessarily pleased with the results!

### GOOGLE AS A MATH WHIZ

Don't have a calculator nearby? No problem! Use Google for your math needs. Try entering **2+2**. Brilliant! Even more brilliant is Google's ability to do more complex math. Do you want to know how many seconds are in a year? Search for **60\*60\*24\*365**. Or, search **how many seconds in a year**. Try **how many square feet in an acre**. Or, **how many tablespoons in an ounce**. Incredible!

### CHECK YOUR SPELLING!

Not sure how to spell limousine? Or is it limosine? Or limosuine? Search for a spelling that's close, and Google will suggest a corrected spelling in the **Did you mean** section at the top of your search results.

### JET LAG?

If you need to look up what time it is in another city, simply search for **What time is it in \_\_\_\_\_?** (fill in the city you're searching for in the blank). Hint: if you'd like to know what time it is in a tiny town (i.e. Fort Morgan, CO), search for the nearest large city (i.e. Denver, CO) for best results.

### WORLD TRAVELER

Are you interested in the current exchange rate? Simply search for **1 dollar in \_\_\_\_\_ money**, where you would enter the type of money you're interested in (Peruvian, Canadian, etc.). You don't even need to know the name of the other country's currency; Google will find that for you as well!

### EXPECTING MAIL?

Search for any tracking number, and Google will automatically direct you to the appropriate tracking site. Try tracking **790111213780**, and Google automatically recognizes it as a FedEx package.

### POPCORN, ANYONE?

Looking for movie times? Just search Google for the name of the movie. It will automatically ask for your zip code and let you know showtimes for area theaters that are playing your movie.

### SHOULD I TAKE AN UMBRELLA?

Search Google for **weather 78713**. An automatic weather forecast appears!

### WHO JUST CALLED?

Google provides limited caller identification services (for listed numbers only). Try entering a phone number in Google and the complete directory listing will appear.  
Need a phone number? Enter the **company name, zip code** (such as **Pizza Hut, 78713**) for the directory listing.  
Do you want to know where an area code is located? Just search for the area code, and the city listing will appear.

### FLIGHT TRACKING

Enter the name of the airlines followed by the flight number (such as **United 110**). Links to track the status of the flight will automatically appear.

### FINDING IMAGES

Google has a powerful search engine for finding images on the web. Simply visit <http://images.google.com> You can use many of the same search techniques to quickly find images that you use when looking for webpages.

### NEWS HEADLINES

Visit <http://news.google.com> to automatically search the latest news headlines from around the country. These can be sorted by relevance and date.

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## PAGE 3 OVERVIEW

Navigating maps & document collaboration. Use google docs for committees, classes, department meetings, etc. to cut down on emails and encourage group collaboration.

## GOOGLE MAP TIP:

Once map has been provided, click on the orange avatar and drag to your destination. This will give you a street view of your destination. Move avatar up and down map to "walk" the neighborhood.

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## Tools Continued

### GOOGLE MAPS

Visit <http://maps.google.com> and enter your address (be sure to enter either your city/state or zip code or both – 8900 US Highway 14, 60012 or 8900 US Highway 14, Crystal Lake, IL – Google will provide suggestions if it doesn't understand exactly what you mean by your search).

Google provides a map and can provide driving directions to/from the location you entered. Click the **Satellite** link near the upper right corner of your search results page. On the map that appears, use the zoom tools to zoom in and out, and click and drag your mouse over the map to move all over the world.

Want to find businesses nearby? Simply enter the business name or business type (i.e. restaurant, bank, etc.) and Google will plot these for you on the map.

Need directions? Click on the **Get Directions** link near the upper left of the page, and enter your current location and destination. Let Google map the route for you, or click-and-drag the route to avoid certain intersections or make a quick detour on the way.

### COLLABORATE!

Do you need to work on a document with others? Go to <http://docs.google.com> and set up a Google Doc. Invite others to view or edit the document with you. Those individuals that you invite will be able to see the changes you make to the document, and you will be able to see their changes. It's a powerful collaboration tool that's not bound by geography!



## Professional Development Opportunities

### SUPPORT SERVICES

The Instructional Designer, in conjunction with the QEP Director, will be conducting training sessions for faculty and staff members during the 2009-10 academic year. The primary goal will be to provide training and support for those currently using technology and/or other engagement techniques as well as those who would like to learn. Suggested topics may be emailed to Roxie or Criquett.

### QEP WEB PAGE

Estimated date: August 2009  
Resources will include access to: pilot project information; CCSSE, CCFSSSE, and SENSE survey results; scheduled training sessions; newsletter archive; office hours (Vernon and CCC); etc. Suggested resources may be emailed to Roxie or Criquett.

## Transforming Curriculum and Instruction

### PILOT CORNER

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) states that VConnected will be integrated into the overall infrastructure of the college by the end of the implementation phase (2014). As a first step in attaining this goal, pilot projects are a means to test the real-life applicability of VConnected. The following employees have been selected to conduct the 2009-2010 pilot projects.



**Cindy Coufal**  
English  
Instructor



**Melissa Elliott**  
Director of  
Financial Aid



**Mark Holcomb**  
Division Chair/  
Electronics  
Instructor



**Chad Mueller**  
Government  
Instructor



**Dina Neal**  
Psychology  
Instructor

The pilots will also assist in determining what support is needed in order to continue using engagement strategies and be successful in engaging our students. In future issues, this section will explore project details, results, and other interesting facts found during the pilot testing process.