



Searching for Information

Search Engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo are amazing sources of information, and they are there to be used. They can find most things, as long as you are fairly specific about what you want to know. Bear in mind that in order for these services to be as helpful as possible they scan websites in detail; and not just for basic topics. They document every word and phrase that appears on the web pages you read – that would have to be trillions! If you want something different for tea and just put “recipe” in the search box, imagine how many would be on the list you are presented with! And not every entry would tell you how to prepare and cook a particular dish. That’s because “recipe” is a **keyword**, so wherever it is used in any text, eg *this was a recipe for disaster*, that will be included in the results of the search.

Whatever you need to know, simply ask the question, like: How to Fix a Leaking Tap? You will be presented with a very long list of websites where that particular subject is mentioned (Google gave us 291,000 results on this search!), but not all will have exactly what you need. The only way is to pick the most likely and try. Just remember the advice about security verifications (Internet Tips IT01) and **avoid going to a website that could be dodgy**.

You may have asked advice of someone who suggested this or that website along with a link or two to click on. Once again, think before you act. The link may be part of the text in an email, supposedly sent by a friend. Is that guaranteed, or just an assumption? If I were you, I’d check with the friend first before clicking on it. Obviously you’ll need to be online to do this and once you activate the link, you’ll go straight there, wherever “there” is. Maybe it will be okay, maybe not – it’s always best to be safe. Even if your friend has confirmed that they’ve had no problems with the website, double-check before going there. Use your Search Engine to **find** the website: **don’t type in WWW**, just the name that comes after, but no more! This site will then appear on the list of results somewhere, with or without a tick of approval.

Even when you have put a specific name in the search box, it is quite possibly not unique. There could be many entries that differ only slightly, but are different nevertheless. The ones at the top aren’t necessarily the closest result to your search specifications – some websites pay to be top of the list – so you may have to scroll down a few pages before you find the one you want. If it doesn’t seem to be there, resist the temptation to give up and take a chance by clicking on the link you are researching; rather spend a bit longer looking for its security credentials.

Time spent in making sure is never wasted. Happy Hunting.

While on the Web Page:

click on the images below to read, download and print information on a variety of topics



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