

Google It

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Google Books

While we were worrying about the “Millennium Bug” a.k.a the “Y2K Bug”, the folks at Google were talking about creating a text-searchable database of every book in the world.

This is not a weekend project and 7 years has passed since the initial brainstorming.

Status Report

The Google Books Library Project has forged partnerships with an impressive number of institutions including Stanford University (about 9 million books), University of Michigan (about 7 million books), Harvard, Oxford, the University of California system and the New York Public Library, to name a few.

Some of the partners are permitting Google to scan only public domain works and some are allowing Google to scan anything they can fit into the scanner.

To read the final word on how the Library Project is subject to U.S. copyright laws you will probably have to read a U.S. Supreme Court decision sometime down the road. Sooner or later, this issue will end up in front of the Supremes.

Four Flavors

When you go to Google Books at books.google.com you will see the blank Search Term block. You can enter your search terms using the full array of Google search tools. Underneath you will find two Radio Buttons also called Option Buttons. For now, leave it on “All books.”

It's Baack!

My thanks to all of the NTEU folks for pushing management to fund the Google Enterprise search engine feature on the Intranet.

In another Penny Wise, Pound Foolish decision, IRS management ceased funding the Google Enterprise search engine in February 2006. Thousands upon thousands of employees were cast adrift in hundreds of thousands of pages on the Intranet.

The resulting waste of time boggles the mind.

As I write, the technical folks are working on getting things up and running.

The books you will find come in one of four views: Full View – what you see is what you get; Limited Preview – a few full pages; Snippet view – the most frustrating of all. Google shows you up to three snippets of text containing one or more of your search terms. However, you can scroll down and in the right hand column you can search inside the book.

The final view is “No preview available.” What you don't see is what you get.

If you click on the Radio Button for “Full view books” you can avoid frustration but you will limit the results of your research.

(Continued on page 2)

If you have any tips or suggestions feel free to send them to me at: nteumlp@gmail.com

The Search Continues

Google It, Volume 1, Numbers 1 – 3 devoted considerable acreage to the use of search terms and operators. Google Books has an Advanced Book Search link on its home page. The standard Google search terms coupled with the Google operators and the advanced options make for a powerful search capability.

What's it good for?

I assume most folks use Google Books for academic, recreational or hobby research.

This includes the field of genealogy. If you do not want to know that one of your Civil War ancestors was removed from his command for incompetence, don't use Google Books. In my case, the Union army used the IRS model and my ancestor was **promoted** out of his command for incompetence.

I do not have a profile of the most common users of Google Books and Google is still in the early stages of accumulating searchable books.

Trial Run

About every 10 years, the leadership of the Internal Revenue Service gets hauled in front of Congress for imposing employee production quotas against the public interest. The problem goes back a long way and NTEU started providing witnesses to the Ninety-Third Congress in 1973.

When then-Commissioner Donald Alexander testified to a Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations in 1974, he honestly believed his clear instructions to cease and desist would be followed by the IRS.

Some of the hearings took place at the Dirksen Office Building in Chicago, right across the street from my own office.

Commissioner Alexander returned to private practice and the IRS returned to past practice.

Several congressional investigations and promised reforms later, management still has metrics that equate to “work faster, improve the numbers, don't ask questions.”

It's time to research congressional investigations into improper employee production pressure against the public interest, by whatever name it is now called.

Members of academia have been busy beavers. Congressional reports have been scanned but mostly snippets are available.

I searched for “Internal Revenue” + statistics + abuse. Also, “Internal Revenue” + statistics + quality plus other combinations.

I found some good quotes but my trial run was very time consuming. I was too ambitious and I am going back to the drawing board.

Google Maps Revisited

Try this, you will like it.

Go to www.google.com and click on Maps.

Click on [Get directions](#) at the top.

Enter New York in the box on the Left.

Enter Paris in the box on the Right.

Click on “Get Directions.”

In the Left pane, scroll down to Line 21 of the driving instructions and commence reading.

With gasoline prices blowing through \$3.00 per gallon, Google can show you how to save real money.

If you have any tips or suggestions feel free to send them to me at: nteumlp@gmail.com