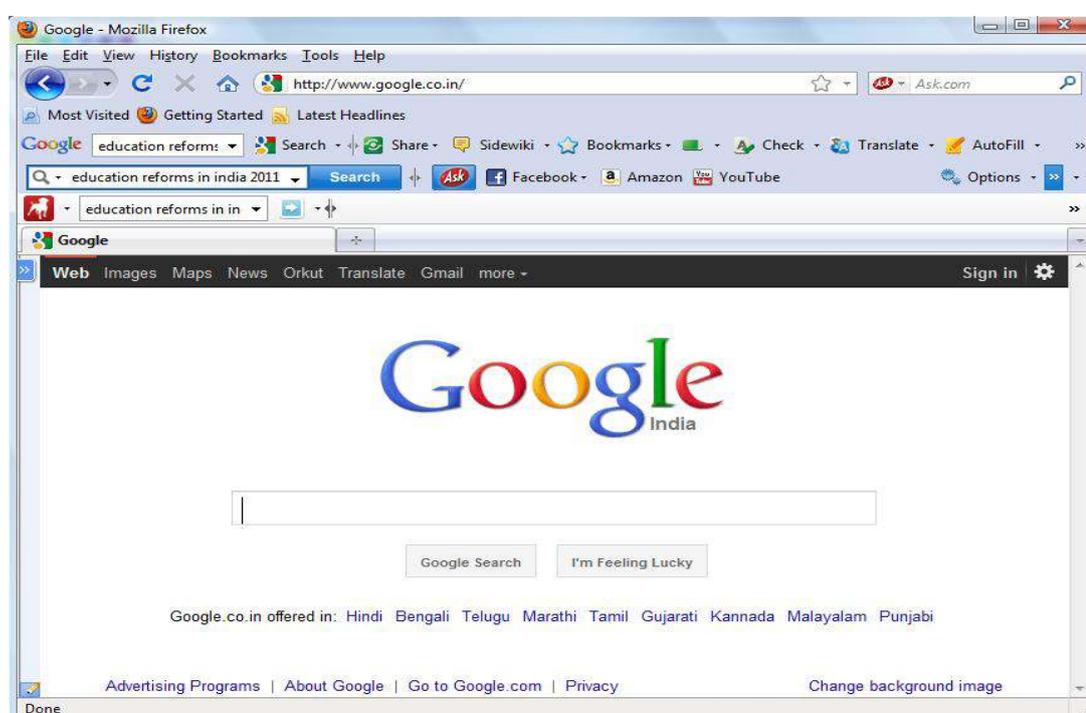


# Section I: The Web of Google Search

# 1 Google Search

**Search** is where it all started and **Google Search** has dominated the market ever since its inception. At the time of writing this book, Google Search's worldwide market share is reported to be above 60%. Such prominence and high usage numbers would make one feel that the Search Engine has everything that users want (which is a fact) and that the users are optimally using all the features available (not true). According to the *Google Search Appliance documentation* published in 2009, 95% of Google Search users **do not** use the advanced features available.

Agreed that the simple search itself is good enough to lead most people to where they want to go or what they want to find, but with the **advanced search** feature and the other **special features** available in the search, one can make their search much *faster, effective and efficient*. In this chapter, you will learn about all the features available in **Google Search** and also the tips and tricks to make your Google Search experience better.



**Figure1.1** Google Search Home Page

The Google Search user interface is as simplistic as it could get. Since Google is available worldwide, in order to enhance the user experience, they have customised the search to cater for various regions/countries. This way, the search delivers results that are most relevant to the user based on his location.

Google has created country specific pages for almost all countries/regions, like *google.it* for Italy and *google.ru* for Russia. Therefore, if you find yourself landing on a country specific Google homepage like *www.google.co.in* instead of *www.google.com*, do not sweat. There is a link available at the bottom of the page that says, “**Go to google.com**”. However, if you'd still prefer to use only *google.com*, then all you need to do is just bookmark the link *http://www.google.com/ncr*, as this link will always take you to the *google.com* page, irrespective of your location.

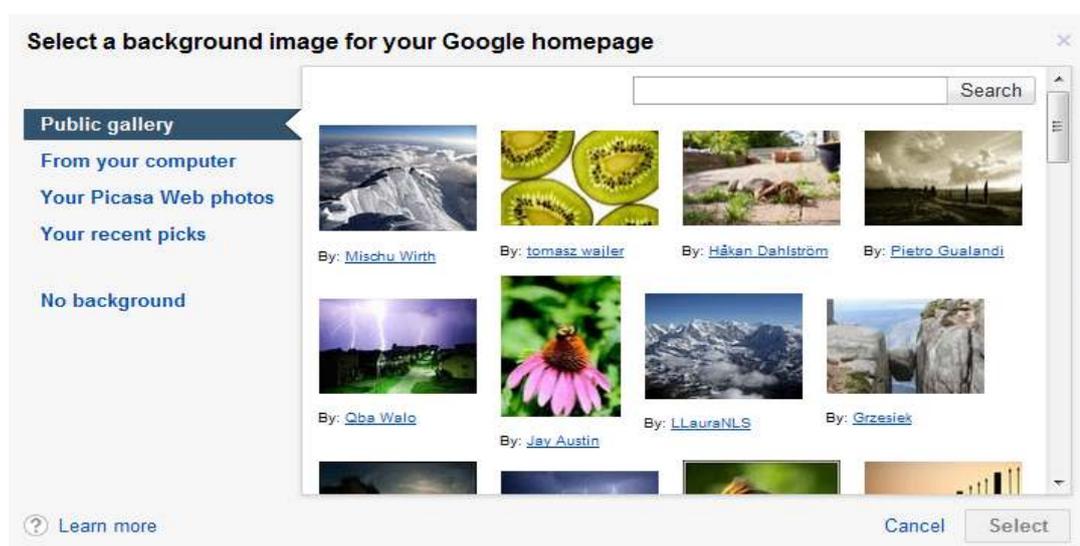
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Since more than 60% of Internet users are already using Google Search we will not discuss much about the standard search and how it works, but head straight to all the *other* things that you can do beyond the standard search.

## 1.1 Customise Your Google Home Page

The **Google Search Home Page** can be customised to suit your requirements, moods and senses. The home page was designed to keep the page clean, simple and fast to load with the **Search bar tool** being the only prominent feature on the page.

However, if you find the look too bland for your taste and would like to spice up the page with a little colour, you do have the option of changing the background. On the Home page a link, “**Change background image**” is available on the left bottom corner. You need to be signed in to use this feature so that Google can remember your preferences. A Background Selection Window, as shown in the Figure 1.2 enables you to select the image of your liking.



**Figure 1.2** Background Selection Window

You have the option to select any image from the **Public Gallery**, **from your Computer**, or **from your Picasa Web Photos**. You can change the background of your Google Home Page to suit your moods, taste or season anytime you want, or even revert back to the ‘**No background**’ home page. Given below is a picture of the Google home page with a background we selected randomly to give you an idea of how colourful it could look by just adding an image.



Figure1.3 Google Home Page with a Background Image

However, please note that your customised Google home page along with the background image will be visible to you only when you **sign in** to your account. Therefore, once you have signed out of your Google account, you will once again see only the bare page.

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## 1.2 Make search more effective using Search Options

Most people have already used the basic **Google Search** sometime or the other. It is what **more** you can do with the search that we want to discuss. There are various options you can use to refine the search to get better results.

By default, the Google Search is set to search all over the web for the query entered in the search box. In figure 1.3 above you can see that the link “**Web**” is highlighted in the top bar. This means that the Search results will comprise everything from the *web*, irrespective of the type of content, be it a news item, a blog, a social networking update, a press release or anything else for that matter.

To give you an example of how it works, we will search for the terms “**Keira Knightley**”. We get the results as shown in the screenshot below. (Figure 1.4)

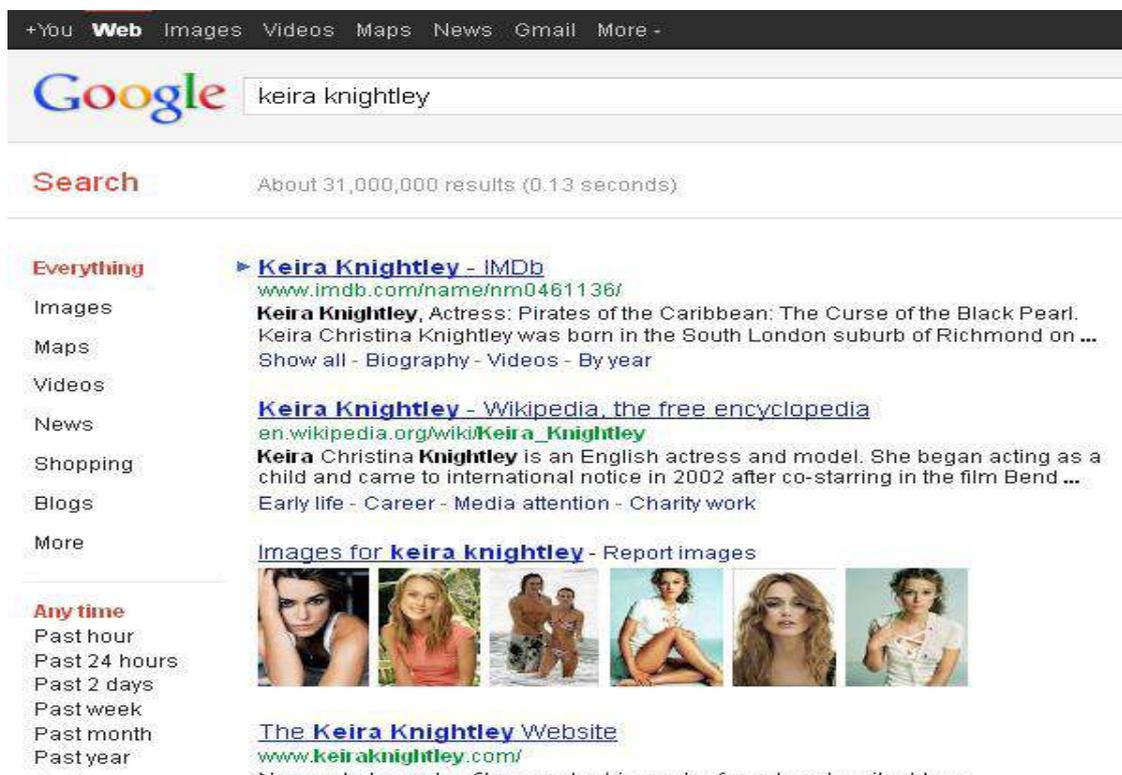
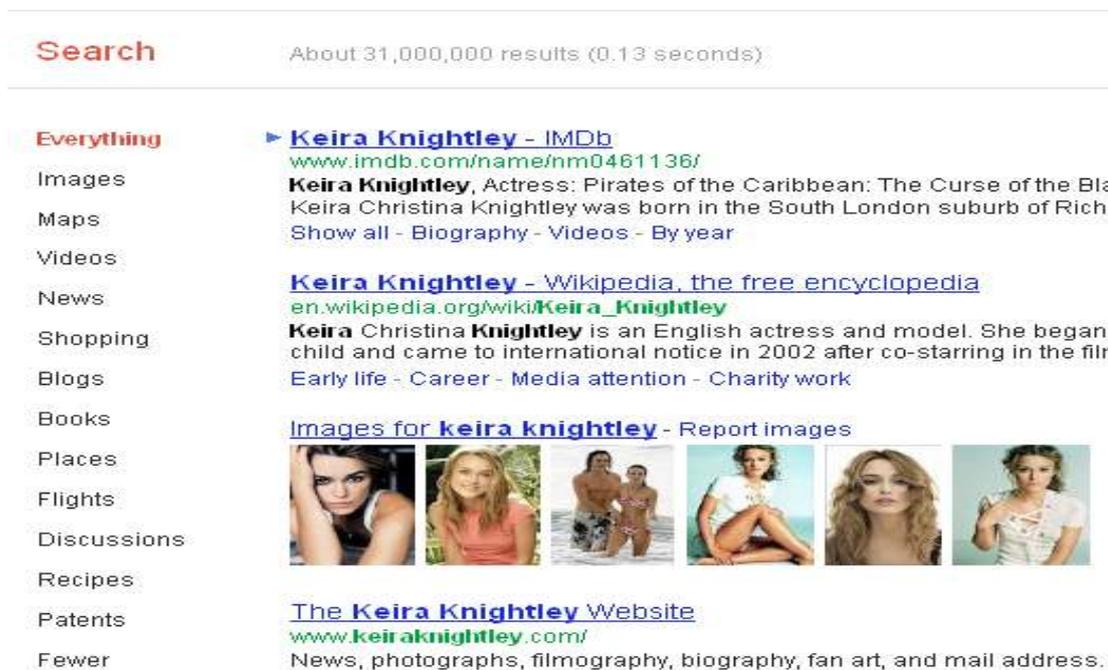


Figure1.4 Search Results Page

As you can see in figure 1.4, a navigation bar appears on the left hand side of the page with the following tabs: *Everything*, *Images*, *Videos*, *News*, *Blogs* and *More*; with the tab “**Everything**” highlighted in red.

This means that the search result for your query contains all kinds of content (images, news, videos, blogs etc) available online. Now, you can further narrow down your search results as per your requirement by using the appropriate filters provided in the form of the tabs mentioned above. For example, if you are searching for something specific, like maybe only the latest news items about “**Keira Knightley**”, then all you need to do is click on the “*News*” tab to get all the latest news from all over the web, which can be further sorted out according to the time frame as, **Anytime, Past hour, Past 24 hours, Past week or month** etc. You can also choose if you want to search pages from the whole web or pages only from your country (only if you are on a country specific home page.)

Similarly, one can search through “*Images*”, “*Videos*” or “*Blogs*” by using the tabs provided on the left side bar. There are a number of filters available and if you click on the “**More**” tab you get to see additional filters like: *shopping, books, places, discussions* and *patents*, as shown in figure 1.5 below. You can also choose any of these options to filter the search results. Please remember that there are even more options available and what you see is just what the search engine considers relevant to the topic you are searching for. We will now discuss all the options available to us to filter our results.



**Figure 1.5** Results page Showing “More” Options in the Left Navigation Panel

- **Everything:** Your Google Search will show you unfiltered results, by default, which will show all kinds of content, as explained above.
- **Images:** If you select the **Images** filter, you will get results for images based on your search query. Most users are aware that they can search for images by typing in words or phrases in the search bar. However, it is also possible to search for images using an Image URL or by uploading an image. When you are looking for images you can either filter the results after searching everything or you can directly go to the **Image Search** by clicking on the *Images* tab on the top bar of the Google home page. Either ways you will see a camera icon in the search bar on the right side as shown in the figure 1.6 below.



Figure 1.6 Google Images

You can search for a particular image by using the camera icon, in the search bar, which will open a new window as shown in the figure 1.7 below.

“I studied English for 16 years but...  
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons”  
Jane, Chinese architect

ENGLISH OUT THERE

Click to hear me talking before and after my unique course download





**Figure 1.7** Search by Image Tool Bar

Here, in the box provided, you can either enter the URL of the image you want to search for or you can click on the **Upload an image** link, which will open a dialog box for you to select an image from your computer. You can also drag and drop the image into the search box; however, all browsers may not support this feature.

- **News:** If you select this filter you will see results from Google news only. This does not mean that Google is running a news agency. Google aggregates news from various sources and presents them to the user. Thus, in our example, you will see all the news items chronologically presented, about Keira Knightley. An interesting feature about the Google news is that you can *create alerts* (covered in chapter 3, Google Alerts) for your search topic. If you create an alert, Google will notify you (by email) about any fresh content about your search expression, as it is found in real time.
- **Books:** This filter will give you the results for books on your search expression. So if you are looking for recipes, you will get a list of books with *Recipes* as the theme. You will also be able to preview the book and see any reviews, which are there. In addition, if the information is available, you will be able to see the vendors/stores that are selling the book.
- **Videos:** If you would like to see only videos on the topic you are interested in, then you can use the *Video* filter. Again the videos that are displayed as search results could be Google videos or from any other website.
- **Blogs:** The *Blogs* filter focuses on blog search. If you want to see what people are saying about a specific topic you are interested in, then *blogs* filter is the right choice as it is generally individuals who maintain blogs. Even though the blog search includes results in all languages (by default), you can use the *advanced search* feature to restrict the results to a language of your choice.
- **Places:** By using this filter you can restrict the search results to only those from Google places (covered in Chapter 5). Remember that only those places, which are listed or are important enough, will be presented. So, if you type in your name and expect your address to be shown, it won't happen.
- **Shopping:** The shopping filter shows results from the Google product search. It helps you find online stores containing your query product and also compares the products and their prices.
- **Discussions:** The Discussion filter provides results from Groups, Forums and Question & Answers sites.

### 1.2.1 Customise Search by Location

Google customises the search results depending on your location and the automatically detected location is clearly indicated on the left hand side bar of the search results under the search filters. See figure 1.8(a).



Figure1.8(a) Search by Location

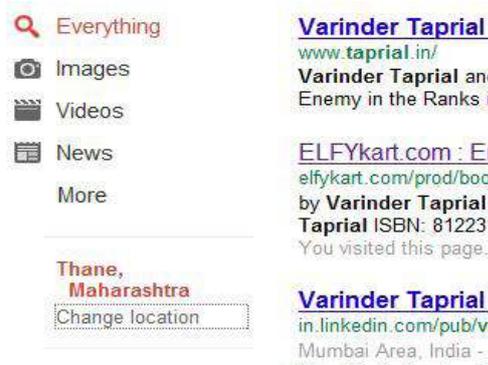


Figure 1.8(b) Change Location Setting

Google automatically detects your location based on the IP address of your computer. However, if the auto-detected location shown is wrong or you wish to change it, for some reason, then use the ‘**Change Location**’ link under the auto-detected location and enter your desired location to **set** it. See figure 1.8 (b)

### 1.2.2 Pages from “Country”

As mentioned earlier, Google displays search results from the entire web by default, but if you want you can click on the option ‘Pages from *Country*’ to get only results only from your own country. This feature will be available only if you are on a country specific Google home page and not when you are on www.google.com.

### 1.2.3 More Search Tools

Google provides for more search options under the Tab ‘*More Search Tools*’ on the left hand side bar. The search tools available are as shown in the figure 1.9 below.

**The web**  
Pages from India

**Any time**  
Past hour  
Past 24 hours  
Past week  
Past month  
Past year  
Custom range...

**All results**  
Sites with images  
Timeline  
Dictionary  
Reading level  
Translated foreign pages

Fewer search tools

Figure 1.9 More Search Tools

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- **Date of Publishing:** By default, the search results are based on many factors like relevance and popularity and are not dependent on the date of publishing and hence you see the text ‘*Any time*’ highlighted. You can choose to be shown only results published within the time frame you specify, like past hour, past 24 hours etc. or define your own custom range.
- **Sites with Images:** This helps you distinguish between pages about ambiguous words and ensures that the sites listed will also have some images. For example, the word *keyboard*, it could be a computer keyboard or a musical keyboard.
- **Timeline:** If you want the results on a subject according to the time period then *Timeline* facilitates that. It is especially useful if you are carrying out research on some subject. When you select the option *Timeline*, you get a Timeline chart with various sections displayed, on top of the results page, as shown in figure 1.10 below. You can select a section to specify the period for which you want the results.

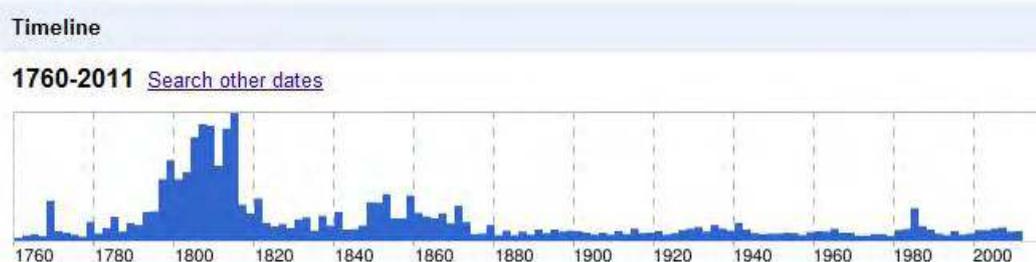


Figure1.10 Timeline

- **Dictionary:** If you want the definition for your search term, you can choose the option *Dictionary*. This option will also give you results regarding synonyms, usage etc.
- **Reading Level:** Depending on your purpose or your age/comfort with the language, you can select the *Reading level* from three choices **Basic**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced**. Google Search results will be displayed as per your selection. As always the default setting is all levels. If you have filtered results by specifying a Reading Level, you can switch back to all results anytime without leaving the page.
- **Translated Foreign Pages:** It is possible that you do not get the desired level of results in the language of your choice. For example, if you are looking for information on a remote Russian village, chances are that the best information will be available online in Russian language. In such cases, you can use the option of *Translated Foreign Pages*. Google will look for pages in the relevant language and then present you with the translated results.

#### 1.2.4 Something Different

For some search queries, Google offers you to try “something different” by providing suggestions about keywords that may be directly or indirectly related to your query. This is really helpful when the precise terms you want to use are eluding you. So if you are searching for Wind Instruments, Google helpfully suggests words like Clarinets, flutes, trombones, violins and oboes. See figure 1.11. This is different from the *Related Searches* offered at the bottom of the result page that are actually suggested to help you focus or be more specific in the query.

The screenshot shows a Google search interface. On the left, there are filters: 'All results' (selected), 'Sites with images', 'More search tools', and 'Something different' (with sub-options: clarinets, flutes, violins, trombones, oboes). The main search results area displays three entries:

- Wind Instruments**, Indian Musical Instruments  
www.indianetzone.com > ... > Indian Music > Indian Musi  
16 Feb 2011 – **Wind Instruments**, Indian Musical Instr  
article on **Wind Instruments**, Indian Musical Instrumen
- Wind Instruments** - Yamaha   
www.yamaha.co.jp/english/product/winds/ - Cached  
All data on the site is property of Yamaha and can't be c  
Custom EX & Z Saxophones. Custom Keyed Trumpets
- How Do **Woodwind Instruments** Work?   
www.phys.unsw.edu.au/jw/woodwind.html - Cached  
**Woodwind instruments** have a long, thin column of air  
the tone holes closed, when the column is longest. Thi

Figure 1.11 Something Different

### 1.2.5 Cached Pages

There may be times when a page does not open due to overload or the web server being down. In this case, you can click on the *Cached* link next to the search result. Google will then open the last stored version of the page.

## 1.3 The Advanced Search

On the search results page, the search bar appears on the top of the page, so that you can modify your search without going back to the Google home page. Next to the search bar you will find a link for the **advanced search**. The advanced search gives you the option to apply filters as discussed above and some more options. According to Google, less than 5% of people use the advanced search features since, they claim, the basic search is good enough for normal users. However, one need not actually go to the advanced search page as all the features of the advanced search can actually be used from the basic search page itself by using the following tips and tricks:

- **Phrase Search:** If you are looking for results to a specific phrase or certain words used in the exact combination as you have specified, you need to enclose the expression in double quotes “ ”. For example the query, “*Best hotel in London*” will get you pages / websites which have the exact term as specified. Without the quotes, you may get generic results about hotels in London and tourism in London.
- **Search exactly as is:** The basic Google search will automatically apply synonyms to certain search words and at times even correct the spelling if it thinks that you have made a mistake. So if you are looking for an exact word in your search, add a “+” sign before the word and Google will exclude all results with synonyms.
- **Exclude a Word:** If you are looking for information on *Himachal Pradesh*, you will find that the result pages are filled with tourism related sites. If you are not interested in tourism, you can exclude the word by specifying it with a “-” sign. The search expression then reads as *Himachal Pradesh -Tourism*. Google search will now exclude all results related to tourism.

- **The OR Operator:** Generally, Google will consider all the words in the search expression and present relevant results accordingly. However, if you have some confusion about words or years you can specify the same in the search expression by using the **OR** operator. For example, if you are looking for details of *Tourism* and *Travels* in *Himachal Pradesh* but do not want both the terms to be mixed up, you can enter the search expression *Himachal Pradesh Tourism OR Travels*. This will give you results with only one of the two options. Remember that the **OR** operator has to be in upper case and if you like you can use the symbol ‘|’ in lieu.
- **The Wildcard Operator:** If there is a term or fact which you are not sure of you can use the wildcard operator “ \* ” for Google to try and guess the word for you. For example, the query *Black \* Recipes* will give you results of Black beans recipes, Black Forest recipes and Black Truffle recipes.
- **Search Within A Site:** Suppose you had read an article about iPhones on the BBC site and wish to go through it again, then you can specifically indicate to Google Search that it should look into the BBC website only by using the expression *iphones site:bbc.co.uk*. Similarly, you can specify the class of sites like .gov or .org in your search query like *iphones site:.gov* which will produce results only from the .gov domain.
- **Search Word in URL/Title:** If you want only pages which have a particular word in the URL, you can use the query *inurl:* For example, the query *inurl:cricket* will return only pages that have the word cricket in the URL of the page. Similarly, you can use the expression *intitle:* for getting pages that have the specific word in the title of the page. Remember that only the word immediately succeeding the *inurl:* or *intitle:* expression will be considered and any other words will be matched anywhere on the pages. If you want all the words to appear in the URL or Title then you can use the expressions *allinurl:* or *allintitle:*

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## 1.4 Google Search Special Features

In addition to the basic and advanced search, Google has many special features to make life easier for you. Again, by using certain trigger words, these features can be used from within the basic search tool bar in the home page as indicated below.

- **Weather:** The word *weather* followed by a city name will return weather for that particular city. Example *weather Mumbai*
- **Time:** *Time* followed by a city name will give you the current time at that city.
- **Stock Quote:** *Stock* followed by the company name or the ticker symbol will give you the latest market data for the company.
- **Sunrise and Sunset Time:** *Sunrise* or *Sunset* followed by the city name will return the sunrise or sunset time in the indicated city.
- **Calculator:** Next time you need an answer to a mathematical calculation you do not have to open the calculator application in your computer, just type in the query in the Google search box and it will provide you the answer. Example:  $(97+26)^2/(\text{sqrt } 24)$ .
- **Unit Conversion:** Conversion into different units is simple with Google search. Type in the desired conversion in the search box and you get the answer. For example, *27.8 inches in mm*.
- **Currency Conversion:** Enter the conversion you want done directly into the search box and you get the result. For example *45 USD to INR*
- **Dictionary Definitions:** If you are looking for the dictionary definitions of a word just precede the word with *define*. For example *define periodical*.

There are other special features like sports scores, movie showtimes, public data, and travel data that are currently fully functional for the United States only but are expected to be available for other countries in the future.

## 1.5 Google Scholar

Google Scholar is a freely accessible web search for scholarly literature. It helps one to find relevant work in research from across the world. The material available and indexed includes articles, thesis, books, abstracts from various sources. It helps researchers locate the full documents through the web or a library. (Covered in Chapter 7).

Google Scholar is available at <http://scholar.google.com>

## 1.6 Google Desktop

Now that we are on search, did you know that you could use the Google search for your computer also? Yes, the application is called **Google Desktop** and like most things Google, it is free, simple to install, and use.

With Google Desktop, you can search your computer for files as easily as you search for information on the web with Google search. Google Desktop provides full text search for documents, images, music, chats, email etc. When you install Google Desktop it indexes all your files including the mail and the web pages that you view. It also creates cached copies of your files and stores them on the hard disk so that if you accidentally delete any file you can still retrieve the contents instead of working on it all over again.

You can download and install Google Desktop at <http://desktop.google.com> The Desktop is available for Windows, Mac as well as Linux.

The Linux and Windows versions of the Desktop come with a sidebar. The sidebar comes with some pre-installed Gadgets and resides on one side of the desktop.