

Bits and Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

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Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

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Just Google it. There are a lot of search engines and specialized search sites on the Web and more are probably going to appear in the future. If you display the Add-ons Gallery: Search Providers in Internet Explorer 8 you'll find three pages of search providers you can use to locate information on the Web. Is Google still the best search engine to use? That's for you and all the other computer users to decide. All of the sites listed in the Add-ons Gallery have been rated by users, some by just a few, others by several hundred. Bing, offered by Microsoft, is one of the more recent search engines. It's interesting to note that with 255 ratings Bing has earned a five star rating while Google with 284 ratings has earned a four star rating. With that kind of rating you might want to take a look at Bing. Now if you want to go beyond the traditional search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo, and look at some specialized search sites you'll find 713 in the Add-ons Gallery: Most Popular. These are identified as a Search Provider, a Web Slice, or an Accelerator. You do know about Web Slices and Accelerators, don't you? If you want to look for sites by special category there are seventeen choices ranging from Blogging to Weather and an Other category with ninety sites. With all these choices you could spend the next two months reviewing web sites or you could just continue to Google it. In addition to being a good search engine, Google can perform a number of interesting and helpful operations. Let's see how much it costs you to keep black ink in your printer. The black ink cartridge for a Canon Pixma MP640 printer costs approximately \$13.50 and holds 19 ml of ink. How many milliliters are there in a pint? Type "ml in us pint" in the Google search box and tap the enter key. The answer is 473. Now you know that to use a pint of black ink you will have to purchase twenty four ink cartridges ($473 \div 19$). The cost of those twenty four cartridges will be \$324. You don't need Google to figure out that one gallon of ink when purchased in cartridges that hold 19 ml ends up costing \$2,592 ($\324×8). The lesson to be learned from this exercise, always do a print preview before you send something to the printer to make sure you're going to get what you want.

If you want to know what the weather is in a particular city, type "weather" followed by the zip code (weather 72714) in the search box. You can also use city and state or city and country.

If you want to check your favorite stock, just type the ticker symbol in the search box. If you click the stock entry on the drop-down list, Google will take you to the company's page in Google Finance.

If you want to know the time in a particular city, type "time" followed by the city name (time London) in the search box and tap the Enter key.

If you want to check on a sports team, type the team name in the search box. As you start to type, Google will display a drop-down list that will probably include a link to the team you're looking for. For example, type "kansas" in the search box and a drop-down list appears that includes Kansas City Royals and Kansas City Chiefs.

If you're looking for a book you can type either the author's name or the book title in the search box. For example, type "harriet reisen" in the search box and the drop-down list will show you that she has written a book about Louisa May Alcott.

Since the earthquake at Centerton you might want to start checking for activity in the area. In the search box, type "earthquake" followed by the city and state or the zip code and tap the Enter key. Did you know that last week there were two earthquakes centered about fifteen miles northeast of Oklahoma City?

Unit conversion is a great tool. You can convert height, weight, volume, distance, and many others. If you type "acres in" in the search box the drop-down list will show you that there are 640 acres in a square mile. The drop-down list also provides the link to a web site that says there are 167,672,913.14 acres of land in Texas not covered by water. Or you might want to go to the web site that informs you that there are 2.47 acres in a hectare.

Google has a People Profiles option but if you're looking for people in the white pages, businesses in the yellow pages, reverse phone number lookup, or zip code information you might want to try www.addresses.com.

Need a synonym? Google has this feature but you'll probably be more satisfied with the results from www.thesaurus.com since they will provide the part of speech, definition, synonyms, antonyms, and links to other words all on one page.

Most of the time it's easy to locate stores, businesses, restaurants, food, and movies in the local area. In the search box, type what you're looking for followed by the zip code. Don't expect this to be 100% accurate. If you type "avatar 72714" in the search box and tap the Enter key Google will show the Sugar Creek 10 and Rogers Towne Cinema, neither of which are showing Avatar.

If you need to pick up someone that's flying in to XNA, type "xna" in the Google search box. On the drop-down list, click xna arrivals. You can then choose one of the following links: www.nwara.com/travel/arrivals.asp or www.flightstats.com/go/Airport/airportDetails.do?...XNA The nwara site will provide the arrival information on a relatively clean page. On the flightstats site you will need to click Airport Arrivals in the Related Applications section. You will now have access to a lot more information. You can click the airplane symbol in the far right column and see where the flight is located. You can also add weather radar to the display and see what kind of weather the flight will encounter.

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The editor of the Bits and Bytes is suffering from a mild case of writers block. If you have a topic you would like to see covered in the newsletter, add it to the Suggested Topics for Bits and Bytes Articles sheet located on the table at the back of the room.

Having a problem with your computer? Having a problem doing something on the computer? Stop by one of the Open House Help Clinics we have at the John Ruehle Center and see if we can solve your problem. These clinics are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the first Saturday and the third Wednesday of the month. The clinics are open to the public so you can invite a friend or neighbor.