

## Google and the Personalisation of Search

“Every search engine query is created by an individual with a requirement for a unique answer.”

Google is continually striving to improve the results it provides, each time you enter a search engine query. But what answers are you looking for and how does Google know what answers to provide?

Google has an incredible database of not only knowing what search queries are entered, but also which answers are then viewed and which are rejected having been viewed. Moreover it recognises which results are more successful as the website users stays on a particular site provided in the search results rather than returning to the result lists. In effect Google can track the series of clicks you carry out and then use this data to improve the results to particular search queries.

However about 10% of all searches are brand new for which Google has no search history in its database and over time the answers internet users are actually looking for can change even when they use the same words in their original search query.

One direction Google is looking to improve its search results are where a search query is time and location sensitive. For example, if I search for “meal out in thame” – what am I really looking for?

If I get a list of results of different restaurants and bars in Thame that provide meals I may learn what food is available and where it is available but ultimately its probably a biased view as many of the results will reflect the restaurants or the bars own websites. Then all it may reflect is how good (or how bad) they are at marketing, from the design of their website to the way their text and images portray their business. Being high up in the search engine results for these businesses remains vitally important and all these companies should continually work at maintaining their positions in the search engine results.

However, as a searcher am I any wiser after seeing these websites? Yes I know what food is available and where. Very useful, but if I could combine that information with

other time sensitive, useful information I could make a more informed and more successful decision on where to go.

If I could see some independent reviews of people who have been to the various restaurants and bars and see what they have to say then I can probably make this more informed decision. Google recognises this need and as a result is starting to include search engine results derived from social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites which are time and location sensitive.

It has been shown that on the internet users are more likely to trust reviews and recommendations from other users rather than those direct from the restaurants and bars themselves. Of similar importance is that the most recent reviews are of much more value than those given 12 or 18 months ago.

The sources of these reviews are available on the social networking sites and on blogs where individual pass reviews, recommendations and feedback, buried away in the mindless drivel that makes up much of the social networking chatter. Hence this is just one of the ways that Google is trying to increase the value of the results it delivers to you each time you enter a search query.

With time you will start to see more and more of these time and location sensitive results derived from social networking sites giving you a better response to your search engine queries.