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10-3a Search Engine

According to Larry Page, a good search engine “understands exactly what you mean and gives you back exactly what you want.” This philosophy was the founding principle behind the creation of Google and is a top reason why the Google search engine surpassed competitors.

Google could not have gained such prominence without an in-depth search index of the Web’s content. The company creates this index using programs called “Googlebots” —automated web crawlers that visit webpages, add their content to the index, and then follow the links on those pages to other parts of the Internet. This process is constantly ongoing, with every indexed page periodically revisited to ensure the index contains the most updated material. Google’s index is one of the most extensive in the world, at well over 100 million gigabytes worth of information.

A good search engine’s index must not only be comprehensive but also easily accessible. Therefore, Google uses technology such as PageRank to organize search results according to their perceived relevancy. When a user types a search term into Google’s search box, Google’s index matches the term with what is deemed the most relevant materials and creates a list of these materials for the user. Each search result is followed by a few sentences describing the webpage (called a “snippet”). To maintain a competitive edge, Google responds quickly to its users’ queries, with a response time on Google’s side of approximately one-fourth of a second so users get information as quickly as possible.



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