

Roll Your Own Search Results With Google's New SearchWiki.

In an attempt to offer a more customized search experience, and to stay ahead of competitors, Google will soon be rolling out its SearchWiki feature to everyone using its services while logged into a Google account. The feature, which has been in testing with select users over the last few months, will allow people to shift around, annotate, add, and delete search results to their liking.

"Have you ever wanted to mark up Google search results?" asked a post on The Official Google Blog. "Maybe you're an avid hiker and the trail map site you always go to is in the 4th or 5th position and you want to move it to the top. Or perhaps it's not there at all and you'd like to add it. Or maybe you'd like to add some notes about what you found on that site and why you thought it was useful. Starting today you can do all this and tailor Google search results to best meet your needs." SearchWiki will actually live up to its name and act as a wiki so that users can see notes made by other users, and view what pages others have added or deleted.



As to what the point of the SearchWiki is, well, Google isn't saying just yet. Google is known for its secretive, magical PageRank system that promotes important search results while demoting others, and PageRank already has some degree of human input on the Google end. We're not sure whether Google plans to incorporate user feedback from SearchWiki into its normal search results, or whether the company simply planned to consider the extra data when determining the relevance of its own rankings.

Microsoft, on the other hand, makes no attempt to hide the fact that it plans to use its own user input to improve its offerings. The company launched U Rank last month, a feature that allows users to edit, organize, and annotate search results, very similar to Google SearchWiki. The company described U Rank as a search engine "research prototype, to help us learn more about how people use such technologies so we can continue to innovate."

It's no surprise then that Google is introducing SearchWiki to more people. At the very least, the company will have data from Internet users (and presumably many, many more of them than Microsoft) that it will be able to analyze for preferences and usage patterns. And theoretically, if the sample size is big enough, people will use SearchWiki in the same way they would use U Rank, ensuring that Microsoft doesn't gain even the slightest edge over Google. For those (like me) dying to try out SearchWiki, you'll just have to be patient. Google is introducing the feature slowly to more users, and it's not showing up yet for everyone just yet.

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- 90% of all new website visitors are delivered by a major search engine and/or directory.
- 98% of all keyword search activity results are powered by the big 4 search engines: Google, Yahoo, MSN and AOL.
- Keyword search results on Google, Yahoo, MSN and AOL are determined by search engine spiders and/or robot crawlers.
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© 1999-2008 Organic SEO Company Peak Positions, LLC 118 A Cass Street | Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2438 | Traverse City, Michigan (MI) USA 49685-2438 Tel: 231-922-9460 | Toll: 866-536-8614 | Fax: 231-929-3398

Tel: 231-922-9460 | Toll: 866-536-8614 | Fax: 231-929-3398 Office Hours: M-F 8AM-9PM EST* | Email: Info@peakpositions.com