

Beat: Miscellaneous

## Google Information Overload

### What Google knows about you

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**USPA NEWS** - The King of Search Engine, Google, is also the King of gathering information. With arms that stretch as far as the NSA's, Google brings us the information we seek, when we seek it. The only problem is that sometimes the information Google shares is the information you want to keep hidden.

Google is undeniably the search engine king. Millions of users around the world access Google every single day and the wonderful algorithms Google uses to collate data are amazing. I could find it hard to name a day that I did not use Google at least a few times. I started looking at the WHO of Google and the things I discovered amazed me. Google certainly is more than meets the eye.

Take a look at Google's own words, "Since the beginning, we've focused on providing the best user experience possible. Whether we're designing a new Internet browser or a new tweak to the look of the homepage, we take great care to ensure that they will ultimately serve you, rather than our own internal goal or bottom line. Our homepage interface is clear and simple, and pages load instantly. Placement in search results is never sold to anyone, and advertising is not only clearly marked as such, it offers relevant content and is not distracting. And when we build new tools and applications, we believe they should work so well you don't have to consider how they might have been designed differently."[\[1\]](#)

I can certainly give Google two thumbs up regarding the experience they have given me over the years. In most instances they find what I am looking for and they do it quickly. Recently I decided to look up myself on Google and was amazed by the sheer volume of information that appeared at my fingertips. How did Google get so much information about me?

The way Google builds its information database is largely based on the users. Google watches, Google Listens, and most of all Google creates databases of information that are available to you and me at the touch of a fingertip. Check out the Google Ads Preferences and you will discover what exactly Google has learned about you. If you use mobile devices Google might even be recording where you are while you are accessing information. Sounds like something out of a bad spy movie doesn't it? Didn't the NSA get in trouble for recording our Internet activity?

Google says, "Once we'd indexed more of the HTML pages on the Internet than any other search service, our engineers turned their attention to information that was not as readily accessible. Sometimes it was just a matter of integrating new databases into search, such as adding a phone number and address lookup and a business directory. Other efforts required a bit more creativity, like adding the ability to search news archives, patents, academic journals, billions of images and millions of books. And our researchers continue looking into ways to bring all the world's information to people seeking answers."[\[2\]](#)

So now I ask, what information may be too much information? Obviously governments have secrets and every week we hear of one or more of those secrets appearing on the Internet. Also what information is relevant? So often on the Internet, we find bad sources of information. What's more disturbing is the many people who use bad information as if the information is factual. Political sites have so much misinformation that often I find it difficult to discern fact from fiction. Google is partly to blame, as the searches do not differentiate factual sites from sites full of misinformation. Information for the sake of information is not a good thing. It promotes ignorance and ignorance leads to bad policies and in some cases violence.

So what can you do to limit the information Google has about you? 1. access the Google Permissions Page. On this page you can limit what apps are using your Google account and accessing your information. 2. Go to Google Ads Preferences and adjust your settings. 3. If you really want to knock down the data go to Google Takeout and remove your data all together. Ultimately, if you take your Google experience into your own hands, then you can control the amounts of information that you share while using the world's greatest search engine.

Here are the links mentioned above. You might will have to sign into your Google account to access them. Once you open the link simply read the directions as offered by Google. Its as simple as that.

Google Permissions Page: <https://security.google.com/settings/security/permissions>

Google Ads Preferences: <https://www.google.com/ads/preferences/>

Google Takeout: <https://www.google.com/takeout>

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