State of Washington Dept of Commerce Webinar
September 13, 2012

Research Tips, Tricks and Techniques

Search Engines

Directories

- Work like a phone directory (e.g. YellowPages)
- Good for broad searches (e.g. an industry)
- Examples:
    - Yahoo! Directory: www.yahoo.com/dir

Index Engines:

- Work like the index of a book
- Good for specific searches (e.g. a company, person, or industry segment)
- Examples:
    - Google: www.google.com
    - Yahoo!: www.yahoo.com
    - Bing: www.bing.com
    - Ask: www.ask.com

Boolean Searches

Examples of Searches

- General
    - To find a document including *all* search terms
        - Word1 + Word2 + Word3
        - Word1 AND Word2 AND Word3
    - To find a document including *any* search terms
        - Word1 OR Word2 OR Word3
    - To find a document including Word1 but *not* including Word2
        - Word1 – Word2
        - Word1 NOT Word2
    - To find a document including a whole phrase
        - "Whole phrase here"

- To find lists or databases of companies

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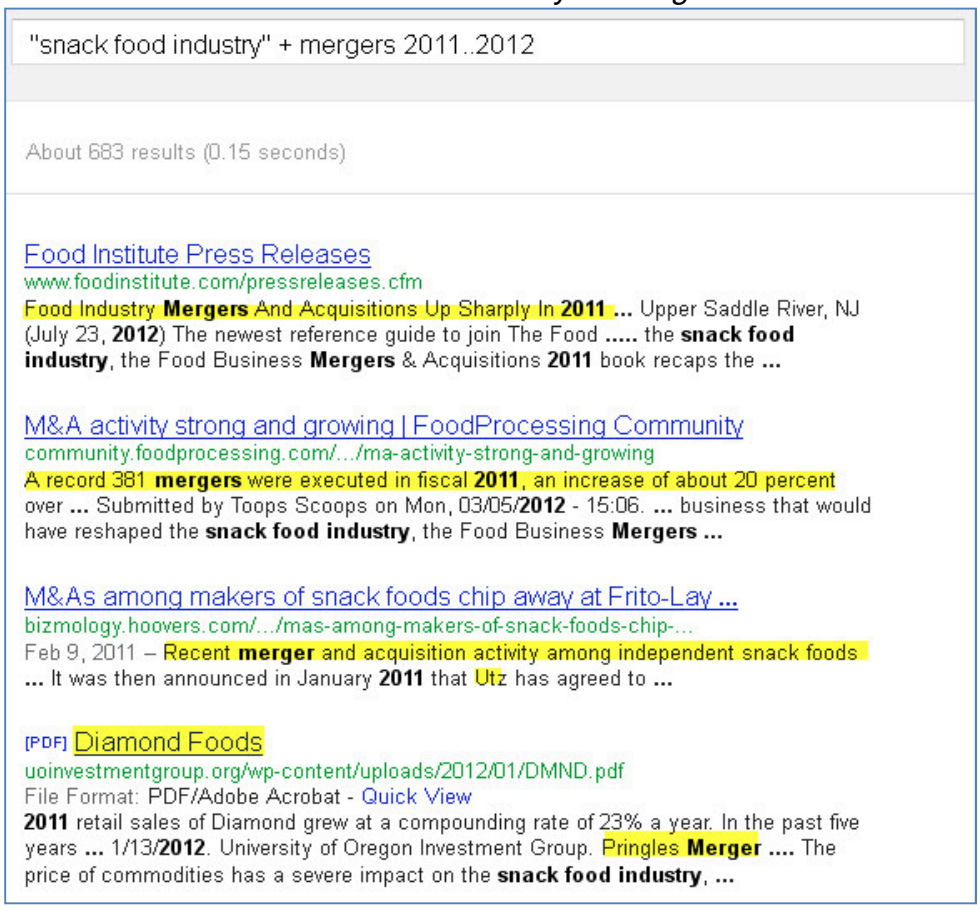
- “Industry segment here” + list
- “Industry segment here” + database

- Advanced Search
  - Remember to use the Advanced Search (sometimes called Power Search) feature as a “cheat sheet” for Boolean searches

Google Search Tips

Historical Search

- Limit your results by using a date range in your Boolean search. Separate the range by two periods.
- Example: To find information about mergers within the snack food industry over the past year, enter the search term *“snack food industry” + mergers 2011..2012*



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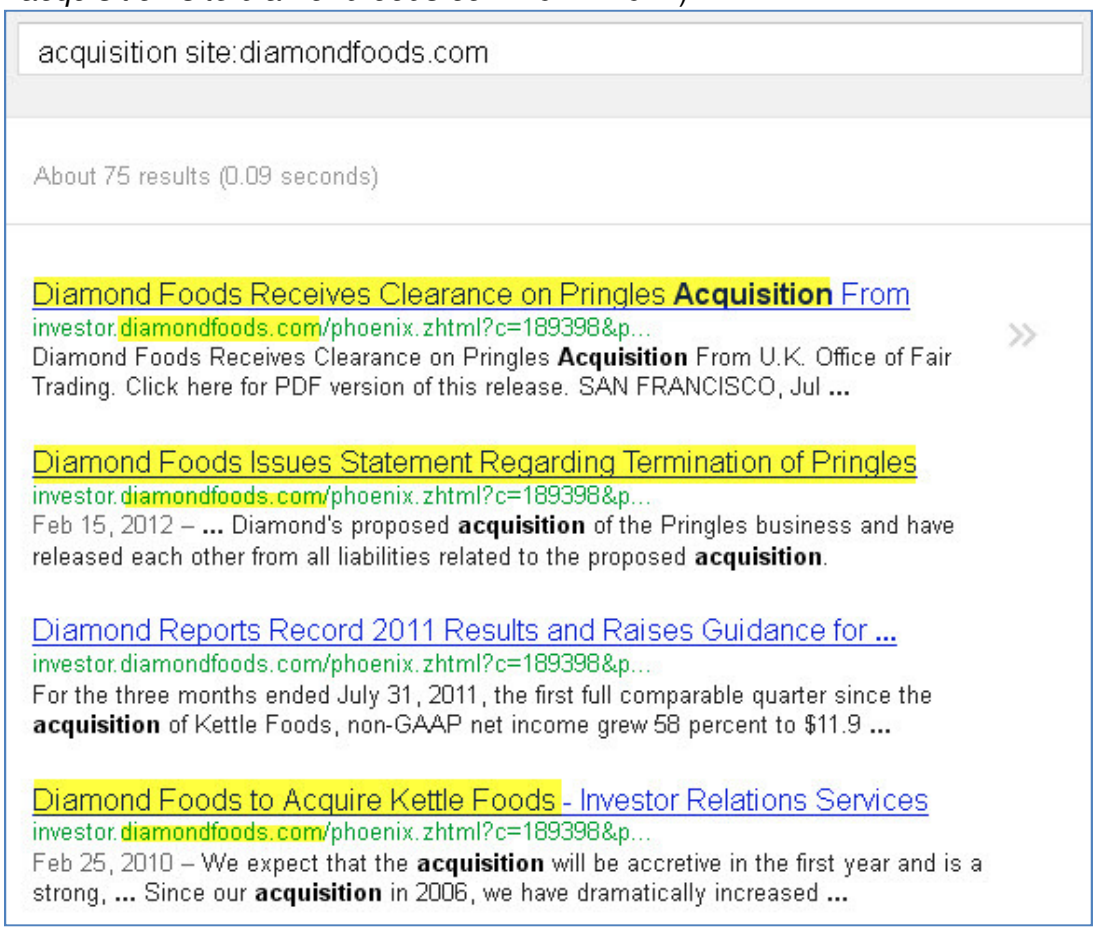
Site Search

- Limit your results by searching only on a specific website. Use the command 'site:' followed by the website URL. Can be found in most Advanced Searches.
- Example: To search any mention of an acquisition on Diamond Food's website, enter the search term *acquisition site:diamondfoods.com*
    - For even more narrowed results, combine with the historical search (e.g. *acquisition site:diamondfoods.com 2011..2012*)



File/Document Search

- Limit your results by searching only for a specific type of file or document. Use the command 'filetype:' followed by the type of file you want to find (pdf, ppt, xls, doc, rtf….). Can be found in most Advanced Searches.
- This can be particularly helpful when trying to find product guides, user manuals, brochures, etc.

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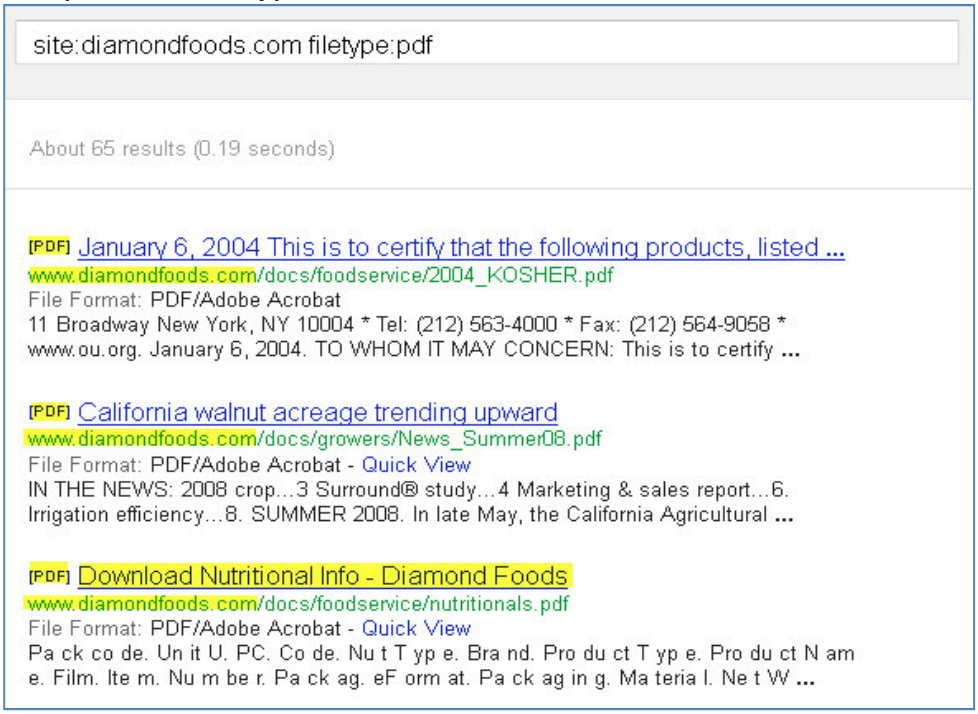
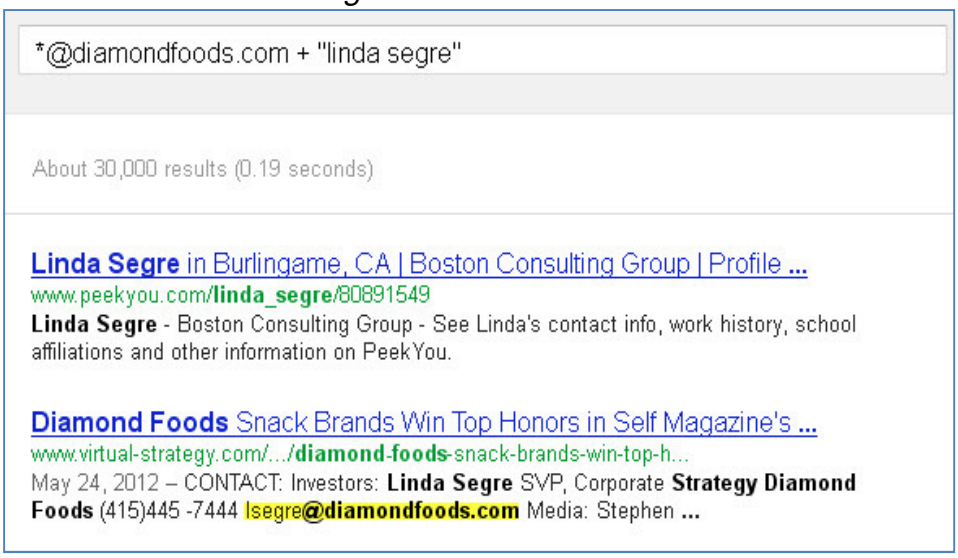
- Example: For product info, type in the search term, *site:diamondfoods.com filetype:pdf*



Finding Unknowns

- Use asterisks to fill in for unknown words.
- Example: Did you forget a contact's last name? Enter the information you do know, using an asterisks for the unknown factor: *"Jami * " + "Whittaker Associates Inc"*
- Example: To find an email address for a person (Linda Segre), enter the search term: **@diamondfoods.com + "Linda Segre"*



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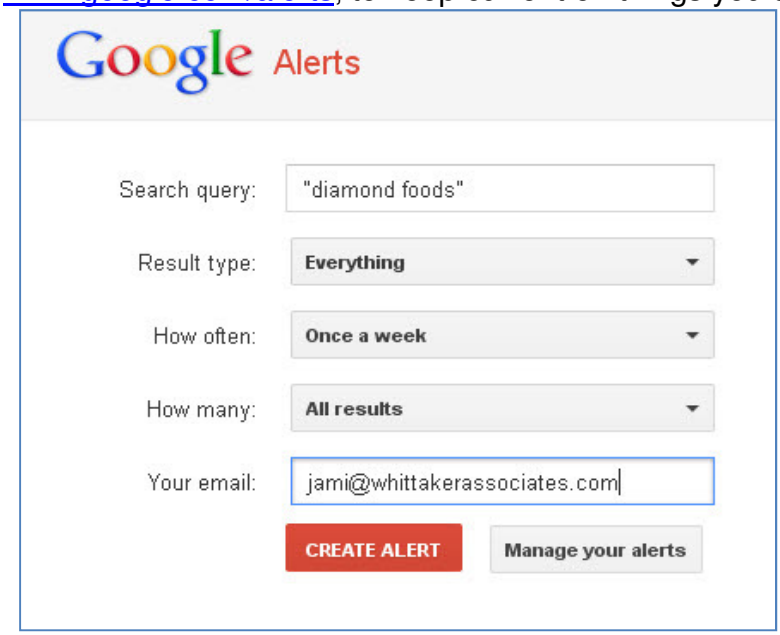
Google Alerts

- Set up Google Alerts to keep tabs on industries, companies, people, competitors, and products. Go to www.google.com/alerts, to keep current on things you are interested in.



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