

Due: Monday November 17 (extended from Nov. 10), beginning of tutorial.

This assignment is worth 10% of final grade

1. For the next two weeks, keep a diary of (say the first 50) searches that you want to do. For each query, try the search on 3 of the following search engines: Google, Yahoo, Live Search, Teoma/Ask.com, or CUIL.

For each search, classify the “type” of the search. For example, is the search for a specific store, a specific product, historical information, etc? You can define your own classification scheme. Report the number of searches in each of your categories. (For concerns of privacy, I am not asking you to provide the specific searches and queries.)

2. For each of your categories, describe your overall experience in terms of (for example) the following:

- For how many searches, did you successfully satisfy the desired information need?
- For each successful search, how many different queries did you need to use? For each unsuccessful search, how many different queries did you try before giving up?
- For each specific query, how often did you look past the first 10 pages returned. If and when you did look past the first 10 pages returned, what was the lowest ranked page that you looked at?
Here I consider “looked at” to mean that you read the brief excerpt returned whether or not you actually downloaded the page.
- For each specific query, how many pages did you actually download?
- How often did the returned pages for a specific query suggest another a related but different information need. That is, how often (if at all) did such searches lead to some browsing.

3. Compare your satisfaction amongst the search engines used in term of (for example):

- Ease of use.
- Which search engine tended to be more likely to find at least one relevant page satisfying the information need?
- Quality of returned pages. You could keep track of (say) the precision of the top 10 pages.

4. Devise at least one search (information need) which you feel will be difficult to satisfy. Then attempt to satisfy that information need using specific queries. Report on this one experience in terms of whether or not you were successful and how much effort (e.g. different queries) you employed.

5. Given your overall experience, explain why you think some searches are unsuccessful.