

Fun, Interesting and Useful Websites (In no particular order) 1/21/19

www.google.com - Probably the best and most widely used "search engine" around. The word "Google" has actually been declared a verb. Another popular one is www.bing.com. It appears on MSN's home page. It is written and maintained by Microsoft and has good features such as big maps. You should choose a search engine and get to "know" it. Try "Googling" a friend or relative. Other search engines are: Yahoo, AltaVista, Dogpile (honest), Northern Lights, Overture and www.search.com. Most search engines have a choice to look for images & videos as well as the whole web. Google probably accounts for 2/3 of all searches - it's that good. It's the one I prefer.

www.orbitz.com - A traveler's website that will help you search for the cheapest airfare and hotel. Also www.travelocity.com and www.expedia.com. For motels try www.bestwestern.com. Use www.tripadvisor.com for hotel and restaurant ratings from "real people". Each airline has their own site too, e.g. www.delta.com or www.aa.com. Many hotel chains also have their own site, e.g. www.holidayinn.com, www.sheraton.com. Just FYI not all airlines participate in sites like Orbitz - Example Southwest Airlines does not show up. So go to www.southwest.com. Tabbed browsing (opening several web pages in different tabs) can be helpful.

www.amazon.com - Started out selling books, CD's and DVD's but has branched out to sell watches, radios and lots of stuff at a discount. Now it seems to sell almost everything. Amazon Prime is an optional pay membership that offers many benefits including free shipping. Also Amazon is a great source of book reviews and buyers opinions on all products. This is a must-have for your favorites list, even if you only use it for comparison shopping. If Amazon doesn't sell it, their website will link you to another website that does sell an item.

www.youtube.com - a seemingly endless source of videos that include homemade clips (ala America's Funniest Videos) as well as professional performances of singers, orchestras and comedians. You can also find full length oldie episodes from television (e.g. Twilight Zone, Perry Mason and Star Trek), including classic commercials and variety shows. Your computer can often be connected to your TV using S-video, HDMI or VGA cable. YouTube also has many "how to" videos that show the layman how to repair things. This is a do it yourself (DIY) person's gold mine.

www.maps.google.com - a free feature from Google that lets you view aerial photos of anywhere on earth. Also try www.bingmaps.com to get spectacular aerial shots of your house. Both offer a source of driving directions. Faster and just as good as AAA. Similar to www.mapquest.com

www.restaurant.com, www.urbanspoon.com, www.opentable.com - Information about restaurants all over the world. Open table lets you make reservations at participating restaurants for no charge.

www.whosaliveandwhosdead.com - A site that will tell you about your favorites celebrities. Also try www.findagrave.com to do some genealogy work. www.ancestry.com is good but it is not free.

www.truthorfiction.com - Confirmation or refute old stories or rumors. A good place to check out some of the garbage that circulates via email. www.snopes.com - Another website that goes a long way to debunking urban legends or old wives tales. Always check several sources when in doubt. Even these can be wrong.

www.ebay.com and www.half.com - Two good shopping sites. Can be used to give you guidelines on how much stuff is really worth. Ebay is an auction site. Half is a fixed price site that is run by Ebay. Also try www.mysimon.com for comparison-shopping. Use www.kbb.com for Kelly Blue Book to determine a used car's value.

www.filehippo.com - The reliable source page for all kinds of software - both free and not free. If you get it from this site you can be sure it is legitimate and tested. This is where I go to get Malwarebytes Anti Malware, SuperAntiSpyware, Avast, AVG Free Anti Virus, CCleaner and other programs that are needed to keep your computer running well. Also available from this site are things like Skype, Adobe Reader and the Firefox and Chrome Browsers. This is also a source of a number of video players that may not have been supplied with your computer.

www.imdb.com - Probably the best movie database I've found (imdb stands for Internet Movie Data Base) complete with plot summaries, ratings and viewer reviews. Also a source of trivia and mistakes found in movies. Hours of fun. See also www.rottentomatoes.com for movie reviews. Visits here before going to the show can save you money.

www.webmd.com - A great source of medical information. Input your symptoms and see what it says. Careful about too much self diagnosis. This site can also cause paranoia. Side effects from drugs can be found here (great?).

www.weather.com - Worldwide weather, with maps, current conditions and forecasts. www.9news.com - The website for channel nine in Denver. Has a wonderful interactive weather feature including maps showing Doppler radar and storm tracks for anywhere in the country. Also try www.clickondetroit.com. Try weather in your home town.

www.hotmail.com - A place to get yourself a free email address (will end in @hotmail.com). The advantage of doing this is that you can keep it regardless of what Internet Service Provider (ISP) you use. Other free email address can be had at www.yahoo.com and Gmail from www.google.com.

www.pandora.com - A free source of streaming music with limited commercials (pay \$4 per month and get no commercials). Design and save you own "radio station" with the type of music you like. Start your station by naming a music genre or favorite artist. Then fine tune it (no pun intended) as you listen. Also try www.iheart.com to listen to live radio from all over the world. Iheart radio also permits defining a station just like Pandora

www.flightaware.com, www.aeroseek.com/webtrax - Flight-tracking site that give you real-time (up to the minute) information. Can track private planes if you know the tail number.

www.nytimes.com - The website for the New York Times. Also www.wsj.com is the one for the Wall Street Journal. WSJ requires a payment to visit over a long period. Try looking for your hometown newspaper's website to get local news. Most newspapers have websites. Read the hometown flavor on your favorite sports team. Obituaries are always available too. Other news - www.foxnews.com, www.msn.com, www.cnn.com and www.drudgereport.com.

www.finance.yahoo.com - Financial information including stock quotes and charts. www.scottrade.com gives you real-time (not delayed) stock quotes. Scottrade requires registering but is free. Also real-time quotes at www.freestockcharts.com. You can set up your own portfolio at many of these sites.

www.espn.com - Sports stuff including schedules, scores, stories and some video highlights.

www.followmee.com (yes, that's a double "e" at the end) - Register this app on your smart phone and turn it on and people who know your password can follow where you are. Great for following family members on a trip.

www.meetways.com - Enter two addresses and this will tell you where to meet halfway in between.

www.wikipedia.org - an online free encyclopedia. When you do an Internet search, one of the first hits you often get is the Wikipedia entry for the item you are search for. This is sometimes a good place to start to learn the basics of your search. Available in many languages.

www.kbag.org (Phoenix Public Radio) and www.cpr.org (Colorado Public Radio) - The websites for the classical music radio stations in Phoenix and Denver. Gives play lists for the station and allows you to listen (live) no matter where you are. Listening live requires a program like Real Player and works best with high-speed Internet. Many radio stations around the world have a website through which you can listen live. Practice listening to a foreign language by finding a station that uses that language. Also try Iheart radio.

www.coolnsmart.com - a funny website with humorous and 'wise' sayings, organized by subject..

www.lightbulbjokes.com - self explanatory. Visit these just for fun. Try www.brainyquotes.com for quotations that fit any occasion.

www.1000lifehacks.com, www.lifehack.org or simply type "life hacks" into Google and get a multitude of sites that are loaded with often unusual but very practical advice. This is really fun to read.

www.thepeoplehistory.com - Curious what the world was like the year you were born? Or maybe you'd like to show your grandchildren some facts they would think are unbelievable. Try this website and enter a year. It gives cost of living, cost of houses and gas. Also popular toys of that year, births and deaths. Very addictive website.

Tips for Searching

I firmly believe you can find anything on the Internet. Using your favorite search mechanism (engine), type in a keyword or two and see what it finds. Best results are usually shown first. Be alert to "sponsored results" as they pay to be shown on top. Refine your search by adding more words. For locations of things try the zip code. If you want to do a phrase search, surround the phrase with quotation marks in your search. If you type in three key words the first results will contain all three words. Lesser results will contain only two, etc. Use the minus sign "-" to make sure a word is NOT in the results.

In Google there are several verbs that work in the search field. Three of them are "convert", "status" and "define". The first converts units, like acres to sq miles or feet to meters. The second gives you flight status, e.g. "status Delta 123" would return the status. Define, followed by a word will obviously give you the definition. If you are not sure about something, try it. Type "day of week June 6, 1944" and watch what happens. Doesn't work the same in Bing. See <http://www.google.com/intl/en/help/features.html> for more hints.

More Websites to Explore (1/28/2019)

Contained here are more websites that you may find interesting and worth a look. Some will find them fascinating and others will, no doubt, be disappointed. Although many of these are repeats from last year, I have added some new ones. Try typing into Google, "useful websites" and study what you get. There are so many good ones, that you should tailor the list to your own interests.

www.tripadvisor.com - A must site to check out before you travel anywhere! Written by people who have been there, you get the honest facts from folks speaking first hand. I have written twenty reviews that have been published. Takes about a day and then they appear. You get rewards after a certain number of contributions.

www.zabasearch.com - This is a person-search website that, due to its specificity, can be quicker and more effective than Google in finding a person with address and phone number. Put in just a last name (if it's not too common) and a state and start the search. If it's a common name use a first name to narrow it down. Have a look nationwide if it is an unusual name. Results may shock you. Finds a lot of history (i.e. old addresses)

www.zillow.com - Type in an address, city and state and it will give you an estimated value of the house you designate. It will also give you square footage and number of rooms. Subscribe to Zillow and it will update you when a property you are interested in changes in value. Remember it's only an estimate. Check out your childhood home or neighborhoods in which you lived. Recent sale price of a home will show - sometimes pictures.

www.oneacross.com - Crossword puzzle help. Type in the clue and the number of letters and it will give you possible answers - rated as to which is most likely. Can take some of the frustration out of finishing that difficult puzzle.

www.legalzoom.com - a website where you can accomplish some legal tasks, such as creating an LLC, at a very reasonable cost. Use this site to create a basic Power of Attorney or Living Will. Maybe a quitclaim deed.

www.about.com - Interesting treatment, including articles and references, of hundred of subjects from removing stains, parenting, acne, yoga or investing. Go here for fun. Explore to learn a little bit about a lot of things. Remember Einstein said, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. So is a lot."

www.howstuffworks.com - Did you ever wonder how a sewing machine worked or a cotton gin (OK, maybe you haven't) but this website gives some pretty straight-forward explanations. Use this website's search field for directions to inventions they discuss. This site is fascinating and a good partner to about.com. If you Google "how does a sewing machine work" it will likely take you here. Personally, I wanted to know how a car's differential operated (engineer, you know). Also try www.ehow.com.

www.craigslist.com - offers regional lists (city and state) of things for sale by private individuals. Go here to shop or put stuff up for sale. This is a very popular online "classified ad" site. If nothing else you can go here and get a feel for how much things are selling for.

www.eeggs.com - An Easter Egg is a gem that is hidden in a movie or piece of software. An example of an Easter Egg in a movie might be the cameo appearance of Alfred Hitchcock in many of his films. This site explains it and provides hours of fun...well, maybe an hour or two. It can also explain why a certain TV program is used in a movie scene or the significance of a license plate number. Did you know Ron Howard's mother was in Apollo 13?

www.classic-tv.com and www.tvland.com - Watch old TV shows -. Play their theme songs. Learn about casts and trivia. Some aspects of this require a paid subscription (Like Netflix) but much is free. Question: What make of car was mentioned in the theme song of "All in the Family"? - find answer here.

www.funtrivia.com and www.triviacafe.com - Trivia is a good exercise for the brain. Try these two sites. They have a multitude of subjects for hours of fun. Use this to prepare for pub-night trivia or a cruise with trivia contests. Also try www.infoplease.com and its many subheadings.

www.englishgrammarsecrets.com and www.grammarly.com - we have all spoken English for decades but many are still occasionally confused with "affect vs. effect" or "who vs. whom" or "lay vs. lie". These sites give you some easily remembered tips and some very down-to-earth explanations. I still have a hard time with understanding "passive voice"... ha. Try this English quiz https://www.women.com/angie/quiz-only-1-in-50-people-can-identify-these-16-grammar-mistakes-can-you?utm_source=wdc_fb#/question-e067dbe9.

www.wordle.net - a website where you give it a list of words or names and it creates a collage or mosaic of those names. Can be used to make interesting scrap book entries or even pictures suitable for framing. Also create one of these to personalize a birthday card. Lots of fun.

www.howsecureismypassword.net - type a password in the field at the top and it will give you an estimate on how long it would take a "password breaking" program to figure it out. Obviously avoid passwords that can be broken in seconds.

www.streamfare.com - One of many websites that lets you stream live TV for free, e.g. Fox News, MSNBC, etc.

www.dailylit.com - sign up for daily email that gives you a book section. You can read War and Peace this way in about two years. Many free choices from which to pick.

www.timeanddate.com - find out the exact time in any city in the world. A helpful website if you are travelling far away or maybe wanting to contact someone on a different continent. Maybe you want to know what time it really is where you are. (As the song says, "Does anybody really know what time it is??")

www.cliffsnotes.com - Takes you back to high school and gives you quick facts about a lot of things, not only books.

www.asoftmurmur.com - kind of like a sound machine that lets you mix sounds. Rain, thunder and crickets. Or how about the background sound of a coffee shop. Makes a good distraction or perhaps give you some white noise to lull you to sleep.

www.pinterest.com - Called a "catalog of ideas". Good for hobbyists.

www.allegro-c.de/formate/cmm.htm - Classical music is found everywhere in movies. Remember the beginning of "2001 - A Space Odyssey"? After that movie, many people call that the Space Odyssey music when actually it is the sunrise introduction to Richard Strauss' "Also sprach Zarathustra". This site lists composers alphabetically, their works and what movies used those compositions. If you are curious what music was used in your favorite movie, do the "Ctrl-F" (open a Find window) and search my movie title. If your favorite movie is missing, there is always Google. Google can help you find music used in TV shows too.

<https://translate.google.com/> - Enter a phrase in any language and tell it what language you want it translated to. If you are not sure about the language, it can also be used to detect the language. Guesses wrong sometimes.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/foreign-words-and-phrases> - Did you ever listen to a speaker, who is perhaps trying to be pretentious, who used a phrase like "sine qua non" or "je ne sais quoi". Use this website to find out what they mean and perhaps learn a few more that you can use to impress (or disgust) your friends.

<http://dictionary.law.com/> - Did you ever hear a legal term while watching Law and Order and wonder what it meant? Try this website. In TV's The Big Bang Theory, in court, Sheldon once said "Quod est necessarium est licitum".

www.dictionary.com and www.thesaurus.com - The dictionary site, besides giving definitions, can play an oral pronunciation. This is easier than trying to figure out the phonetic description. Thesaurus is part of the dictionary website. Did you ever wonder if there was a synonym for the word thesaurus? Probably not.

If you want to discover your own websites for fun, ask a search engine (Google) to find you something that interests you - jokes, trivia, music, literature, science, pictures, poetry, news, computers, etc. The Internet went over 1 Billion websites in 2014. I'm sure it's still growing. Whew!!!

Some of the websites in this handout may ask you to register with your email address - usually for free. Remember sometimes this can generate cookies and unwanted emails. Registering can be necessary if they are going to send you something. Decide for yourself if it's worth it.

Afterword - If you are fascinated by Siri (The iPhone voice lady) access www.google.com through the Chrome browser and you will have the ability to use voice to make searches. Just click on the microphone and try it. With Windows 10 Microsoft offers Cortana, which is their answer to Siri. And don't forget some of the new toys out there such as Amazon Echo and Google Home. They are all fascinating. BTW if you get an unsatisfactory answer to an oral inquiry, try rephrasing the question. For example "Who were Henry VIII's wives?" many not get a good answer, but "Who were the spouses of Henry VIII?" may work.

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