

The Quest for the Best

a world of opportunity...



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Essential Sites

Craigslist

<http://www.craigslist.org>

Its elementary page design has barely changed in 13 years, even as newer, flashier competitors vie for a chunk of the \$15 billion online classified market. But so what? [Craigslist](#) is a Web pioneer that will never go stale, and remains the essential site for want ads ranging from real estate and used furniture to jobs, romance and one-night stands. Craigslist launched in 100 additional cities this spring, making the site's services available in over 500 cities in 50 countries. To stay ahead of other newcomers with a strong international presence — including [Kijiji](#), [Oodle](#) and [OLX](#) — the venerable Craigslist now makes its listings available in Spanish, French, Italian and German in some cities. This way, you can't blame the language barrier for fumbling your "missed connection."

<http://www.kijiji.com/>
<http://www.oodle.com/>
<http://www.olx.com/>

Google Apps

<http://www.google.com/intl/en/options/>

Much more than a search site, Google has become the Microsoft of the tech world. [Google Docs](#) offers free spreadsheets, word processing and presentations. Google Maps lets you see street-views and save custom-created maps. Google Reader lets you subscribe to your favorite blogs or news feeds, turning the Internet into an email-like inbox. Photo-based [Google Earth](#) now operates inside a browser plug-in, no longer requiring a lengthy download to your desktop. You can even run Google on your mobile phone, including the iPhone. Next Google wants to help you get more out of your online social networks: its [Friend Connect](#) system, due out later this year, will make it easier to interact with your network contacts, even on remote sites. So, for example, Friend Connect might show you which of your Facebook friends also use the community music site [last.fm](#) — with your permission, of course —

allowing you to share your favorite music with them more easily.

<http://docs.google.com/>
<http://maps.google.com/>
<http://www.google.com/reader/>
<http://earth.google.com/>
<http://www.google.com/friendconnect/>

HowCast

<http://www.howcast.com/>

There's a reason no one ever reads the instruction manual. Ho. Hum. That's why the video how-to site [Howcast](http://www.howcast.com/) is such a gem. It breaks from its more staid counterparts, such as [Expert Village](http://www.expertvillage.com/) and [eHow](http://www.ehow.com/), by injecting a necessary dose of humor. Come here to learn "how to make a move on a girl while watching a movie on a couch" and "how to become a saint." Each video is rated — often by thousands of members — so you won't waste bandwidth on the boring ones. We also like [WonderHowTo](http://www.wonderhowto.com/), which neatly indexes and ranks how-to videos from hundreds of other sites.

<http://www.expertvillage.com/>
<http://www.ehow.com/>
<http://www.wonderhowto.com/>

Mint

<http://www.mint.com/>

Can't afford a personal financial planner? Here's the next best thing: the free site [Mint](http://www.mint.com/) pulls information from all your online financial records, including your 401(k), bank accounts and credit-card accounts, then neatly graphs your cash flow and expenditures. Mint's Trends section shows you a pie chart of what you spend and where (on food, travel, shopping, etc.) and suggests money-savers like lower-rate credit cards. The site will even send you mobile alerts to remind you to pay your bills. For a similar service that doubles as a social network where you can share financial goals and tips, check out [Geezeo](https://www.geezeo.com/) from [TheStreet.com](http://www.thestreet.com/).

<https://www.geezeo.com/>
<http://www.thestreet.com/>

Wikipedia.org

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Despite repeated attempts to compromise its integrity, [Wikipedia](#) remains the most popular online encyclopedia on the Web. Since anyone can create or edit a Wikipedia page, both companies and individuals have been caught airbrushing and embellishing their own entries. The Wiki community usually intervenes, however — egregious edits get reported on [WikiScanner](#) and Wiki trolls are given the heave ho — or at least a Wiki humiliation. Now you can even enjoy Wikipedia's wisdom without ever clicking on it. The Microsoft Live search engine automatically pulls up the first paragraph of any relevant Wikipedia entry in its search results. And a new print-it-yourself travel guide called [Offbeat Guides](#) (still in beta as of June 2008) culls information from the site to create custom travel guides tailored to the exact dates of your trip. Now that's neat.

<http://wikiscanner.virgil.gr/>
<http://www.offbeatguides.com/>

Yahoo! Answers

<http://answers.yahoo.com/>

Advice is everywhere on the Web, but nowhere is it more accessible than at [Yahoo! Answers](#). Questions are arranged both by topic and what's most popular (e.g., "Is rinsing your hair with milk good for it?") and get all sorts of amusing, creative and, occasionally, helpful responses. Contributors compete to boost their rankings by answering the most questions and collecting the most positive feedback on their replies. If you've got yet more questions needing answers, visit [Ask Metafilter](#) or the newer [Try This](#).

<http://ask.metafilter.com/>
<http://trythis.com/>

Yahoo! Finance

<http://finance.yahoo.com/>

A haven for armchair investors and money junkies, [Yahoo! Finance](#) has everything you need to keep up with business — news, stock-specific research, charts, even press releases. In late May, Yahoo! Finance resumed free real-time quotes instead of the standard 20-minute delays on rivals like

[Google Finance](#). (The service had been suspended a couple years ago in a dispute with the major stock exchanges.) Power brokers can shell out \$10.95 a month for real-time stock charting. For all the criticism about Yahoo!'s failure to innovate, its finance site showcases the best of what the company has to offer.

<http://www.google.com/finance>

Yelp

<http://www.yelp.com/dc>

If it's a restaurant, shop or business, it's probably been reviewed on [Yelp](#) — an independent site with millions of user-submitted evaluations. Yelp's got a gaggle of rivals — most notably [Yahoo! Local](#) — but it's the only one that lets reviewees talk back. After businesses complained about their reputation getting trashed by careless reviews, this spring the site began allowing proprietors to e-mail reviewers directly, make instant changes to their company details on the site and see how many people have visited their Yelp listing. For you, that means more rounded and accurate reviews.

<http://local.yahoo.com/>

Books/Reading

Dovegreyreader Scribbles

<http://dovegreyreader.typepad.com/>

This blog is a biblioaholic's dream. Several of us start our day with it before we even look at the news. Begun by a Devonshire based bookaholic, sock-knitting quilter who used to be a community nurse in her spare time, this blog provides readers with summaries and intellectual comments on the latest fiction, or re-read of a classic. Many prominent authors have joined the blog and their comments shed light on their personal reading tastes as well what others have written. It's a great source for gift books for friends who have "read everything".

Education

Academic Earth

<http://academicearth.org/>

Contrary to popular myth, most professors do not ignore their students in favor of research. They deliver inspiring and informative lectures on a variety of subjects ranging from copyright law to art. Academicearth is a great way to learn from the best without even paying tuition. There are loads of interesting subjects to keep you information-bound in your armchair for hours.

Ted.com

<http://www.ted.com/>

The website is truly phenomenal, not so much because of its styling (actually quite spare and functional, and very accessible) but because of its content. Forget YouTube; go to TED.com and be entranced by storytellers who live in the skin and voices of the famous and the fascinating, social analysts who explore the past and future of Africa and other places, graphic designers who create images of the cellular activities in the body for medical classes at Harvard, researchers who explain cutting-edge technology, historians who give mesmerizing reviews of culture and invention, and all sorts of information and commentary found too rarely anywhere, and offered here in a visually stunning manner. A visit a day to TED.com is like an audience with master teachers and entertainers who expand horizons, challenge intellect, warm hearts and tickle emotions, all with the quality and presence of a good friend's coffee visit.

Youtube EDU

<http://www.youtube.com/edu>

Youtube Edu is a repository of all Youtube accounts associated with Colleges and Universities. Quickly access interesting lectures and speaking series to expand your horizons. Click on [Directory](#) to see a list of all participating institutions.

Fashion and Style

Etsy.com

<http://www.etsy.com/>

Etsy is an online marketplace for buying & selling all things handmade. Find interesting clothes and crafts.

Net a Porter

<http://www.net-a-porter.com/>

Fashionistas with no time for real window-shopping can fire up their browser windows and sift through the racks at [Net-a-Porter](#) instead. Even if you can't afford most of the togs you see — the site sells everything from dresses and handbags to shoes, jewelry and sunglasses — it's still fun to browse designer goods.

Nextag

<http://www.nextag.com/>

It may be the plainest comparative-shopping site on the Web, but we like [NexTag](#) because of its speedy, comprehensive search results and integrated product reviews. Sure, there are plenty of other good comparison sites out there, including [BizRate](#), [Shopzilla](#) and [Yahoo! Shopping](#), but we dig NexTag for its no-nonsense approach that's all about finding you the best deal. And unlike its competitors, NexTag graphs the price history of each product you research, so you can see if prices have gone up or down in recent months.

<http://www.bizrate.com/>

<http://www.shopzilla.com/>

<http://shopping.yahoo.com/>

Omiru

<http://www.omiru.com/>

Focused on "real style for real people," [Omiru](#) doesn't just tell you what the fashion trends are — it helps you figure out what actually looks good on you. High-waisted pants aren't flattering on most people (in fact, 70% of people polled by Omiru won't be wearing them this year, even

though they're back in style), but horizontal stripes can be (they don't make you look fat if they're narrow). The site recommends dresses for curvy petites and accessories for your little black dress. Sure, tips like these are sprinkled throughout more mainstream fashion sites like [Glam](#) and [Style](#), but Omiru's laser focus on practical fashion advice makes it a don't-miss.

<http://www.glam.com/>
<http://www.style.com/>

Food

All Recipes

<http://allrecipes.com/>

Boasting one of the largest networks of online cooks in the world, All Recipes has gradually developed one of the most expansive recipe data bases available, with detailed instructions and helpful resources to help you get your recipes off of the page and onto your plate. Recipes come complete with instructions and photos.

Epicurious

<http://www.epicurious.com/>

Epicurious stands head and shoulders above any other Online Recipe site. Though you might be able to find similar recipes and ideas on other sites, Epicurious remembers that food and cooking is ultimately about people. To prove this point, Epicurious has built an interactive, community-oriented site that allows members to share recipes, stories, technique videos and, above all, engage in the most universal love of all: food. So, whether you are just looking to spice up your rolodex with a few new dishes, or want to hone your skills and stay informed of new culinary and lifestyle trends, Epicurious is ideal for chefs, home cooks, aficionados and food lovers of all calibers and tastes.

NibbleDish

<http://www.nibbledish.com/>

The pictures alone on this foodie's wiki-paradise are enough to make you want to strap on your apron and start sautéing. Anyone can submit recipes to [Open Source Food](#), and members can rate them.

Serious Eats

<http://www.serioouseats.com/>

Join foodies for your fill of culinary news, discussions, recipes and restaurant reviews at [Serious Eats](#), an international food blog to which "Molto" Mario Batali sometimes contributes. Whether or not you're a gastronome, reading about Rome's bountiful organic markets and the hearty hot dogs of Santiago, Chile, will surprise and delight you. Entertaining and heated discussions flare up about the most mundane food-related minutiae: the best thing to eat when you're lunching at your office desk; the pros and cons of Ruth's Chris Steak House. If your interest is specifically big-city dining, check out [Savory Cities](#) for terrific videos and chef interviews shot at top restaurants in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle. And for a broader range of consumer reviews, menus and online reservations at eateries around the country, check out [BooRah](#).

<http://www.savorycities.com/newyork/>
<http://www.boorah.com/restaurants/>

Zeer

<http://www.zeer.com/>

This is the kind of site that should have been built years ago. [Zeer](#) displays the nutritional labels for every kind of packaged food you can buy, then lets users rate and comment on their favorite items. Wondering whether you should give Doritos Hint of Lime–flavored chips a try? At Zeer, 14 out of 20 people give them the thumbs-up and will tell you exactly why. While the USDA's [National Nutrient Database](#) has offered similar information for years, Zeer is so much better designed — with a focus on real products instead of hypothetical portions of generic food items — that you might actually use it.

Fun & Entertainment

Criterion Collection Online

<http://www.criterion.com/library/online>

The Criterion Collection presents high quality DVD packages of important classic and contemporary films. On their web site, you can now watch full, high quality films for \$5, from *Au Revoir Les Enfants*, to *Grey Gardens*. If film is your passion, join the online Criterion Collection Community, The Auteurs to share your interests. For other great films, check out Facets Online; this Chicago-based company has recently launched a Netflix-like subscription service, but with a focus on world cinema. Get expert recommendations, and search for obscure-releases from some of your favorite directors.

<http://www.theauteurs.com/>
<http://www.facetsmovies.com/>

Ffffound.com

<http://ffffound.com/>

Most people like showing off their pictures — even though the majority aren't interesting to anyone but their mom. [Ffffound](http://ffffound.com/) is the rare image site that showcases photos and illustrations you'll actually want to browse every day. It's both random and beautiful and never feels stale. We would be more specific, but honestly, it's more fun to explore ffffound on your own. If you like what you find, then click on [Odd Wall](http://www.oddwall.com/) and National Geographic's [Your Shot](http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/your-shot/) for their distinctive image galleries.

<http://www.oddwall.com/>
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/your-shot/>

Hulu

<http://www.hulu.com/>

Before Hulu launched in March 2008, watching TV shows on the Web was more fun in theory than in practice. If your show was even available online, you had to hunt for episodes on cluttered network-TV sites, then view them in Post-it-size boxes onscreen. Hulu changed all that by housing dozens of current shows from Fox and NBC, like

The Simpsons, *House* and *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, as well as hundreds of golden oldies like *The Bionic Woman* and *Fantasy Island*, all under one roof. What's more, Hulu's Web viewer has a full-screen mode and streams high-quality video. Added bonus: way less commercial time. For a bigger warehouse of TV clips and non-network shows, check out [Modern Feed](#).

Imeem

<http://www.imeem.com/>

[Imeem](#) is a music site on steroids. Not only is it a music store where you can buy and download songs, but it's also an Internet radio station with thousands of channels and it's a social network for sharing your favorite playlists. But what really sets it apart from other online music sellers, like [Pandora](#), [Last FM](#) and [Slacker](#), is that Imeem is the first streaming-music site to secure song rights from all four major music labels (which are rumored to have a stake in Imeem). Requesting a particular song on Pandora, say, is always a crapshoot, but on Imeem you can immediately start listening to most any title you type in. That kind of instant gratification is what the Web is all about — and what has long been missing from other free sites.

<http://www.pandora.com/>
<http://www.last.fm/>
<http://www.slacker.com/>

Metacritic

<http://www.metacritic.com/>

This review site compiles “meta-scores” from a variety of sources, ranking TV shows, films, DVDs, music, video games and more according to the average score.

Websudoku

<http://www.websudoku.com/>

As the name suggests, [Web Sudoku](#) offers one thing: sudoku on the Web. You won't find fancy graphics, live chat rooms or any other distractions here. What you'll get is a sudoku lover's Utopia with thousands of games ranging from "easy" to "evil." A sudoku tutorial explains the number game to newbies, and power users can download a version

of the site to play off-line. Your boss is going to hate us for introducing you to it. Have fun!

Wikisky

<http://www.wikisky.org/>

The World Wide Web may be based here on Earth, but it can give you a bird's-eye view of the rest of the universe. [WikiSky](#) is a stellar place to start stargazing. Its gorgeous images of comets, galaxies and nebula — many of which come from the NASA-funded [Astrophysics Data System](#) at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics — are accompanied by short scientific explanations that will delight astronomy buffs. For a different lens on most objects, click on the [Sloan Digital Sky Survey](#), which gives you the most realistic, high-res images of the night sky. The publicly and privately funded project, which aims to eventually map about a million galaxies and quasars, uses a massive telescope in Apache Point, N.M., and a 120-megapixel camera to capture its images. For breaking space news and more photos, visit [Space.com](#). To the moon!

<http://adswwww.harvard.edu/>
<http://www.sdss.org/>
<http://www.space.com/>

Give Back

Afrigadget.com

<http://www.afrigadget.com/>

There's a lot of international development news that doesn't make it onto CNN. So bookmark [AfriGadget](#), a site dedicated to simple, sustainable inventions in Africa. Recent entries have covered efforts to create biodiesel fuel out of local pine nuts in Sierra Leone, and programs to build bicycles out of bamboo in Ghana and Kenya. AfriGadget isn't updated every day (and sometimes not even once a week), but it offers such distinctive reporting that you won't want to miss a single post. For other good sites addressing sustainable development in Africa, check out the [African Uptimist](#) and [Timbuktu Chronicles](#).

<http://www.agbe.typepad.com/>
<http://timbuktuchronicles.blogspot.com/>

Free Rice

<http://www.freerice.com/>

It's fiendishly simple: the screen presents the viewer with a vocabulary question. Click on the correct answer and FREE RICE donates ten grains of rice to the UN World Food Program. A graphic on the side shows bowls of rice as they fill and accumulate. That's it. Except that now there's another word on the screen, a harder word, so you click on the definition for that one and watch as the score improves. By the time the participant checks out the other topics available -- geography, French, multiplication tables -- dozens of words have been defined and multiple bowls full of rice have been donated. The site's stated goals make it plain. Free Rice exists to provide free education and help end world hunger. Period. Somehow they manage to make it fun in the process.

Kiva

<http://www.kiva.org/>

You don't have to give away money to support a good cause. At [Kiva](#) you can make a small loan instead. A unique peer-to-peer lending site that focuses on microloans, Kiva lets lenders pledge funds — from \$25 and up — to entrepreneurs in developing countries.

VolunteerMatch.org

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>

Volunteer Match links you with community service opportunities that match your interests, availability, and expertise. Listings run the gamut from tutoring, donating toys, serving meals to the homeless, or even hosting an exchange student. The site also offers a variety of virtual volunteer opportunities one can do online, as well as listings of nonprofits and businesses that need volunteers. Volunteering has never been so easy, and in these tough times, more necessary. Volunteer Match takes the toil and intimidation out of signing up for service.

Go Green

Carbon Rally

<http://www.carbonrally.com/>

Vie to go green by making it a competition. [CarbonRally](#) posts challenges, like cutting your shower time by two minutes or line-drying your laundry for a month, to motivate you to reduce your carbon footprint. Never cleaned your refrigerator coils? Neither have we. CarbonRally shows you how to do it and explains why it helps. You can compete on your own or, for added incentive, as part of a team. For extra enviro-credit, check out [Zwaggle](#), where you can donate used clothes, appliances, books and other merchandise to members, then "buy" stuff from other Zwagglers with the points you earn.

<http://www.zwaggle.com/>

Treehugger

<http://www.treehugger.com/>

A webmagazine that is the biggest and greatest source of environmental news, stories and products of the net. It's updated up to 16 times a day, 7 days a week, and it has a huge archive of articles that are organized by categories.

Health & Wellness

Health.com

<http://www.health.com/health/>

Reading about health doesn't have to be a pill. Unlike most other health sites, [WebMD](#) and [Revolution Health](#), — which sometimes treat health information like bitter medicine, [Health.com](#) tackles even the most serious matters, like heart disease and depression, with a more sympathetic tone. Although it does not delve as thoroughly into science and treatment as the other sites, Health.com does a better job of addressing the related emotional issues. Its section on breast cancer, for example, explores body image and how the disease can affect your sex life. You'll also find

videos of patients who had successful treatment and the doctors who cared for them. Health.com (which is owned by TIME.com's parent company, Time Inc.) was totally overhauled in May 2008, so if you haven't visited lately, make sure to circle back. For a newsier approach to wellness, we rely on the [Health News](#) section of the *New York Times*.

<http://www.webmd.com/>
<http://www.revolutionhealth.com/>
<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/health/>

Psychcentral

<http://psychcentral.com/>

It's hard for many people to talk openly about their mental-health concerns, so it's especially important to have online resources to rely on. [PsychCentral](#) is a good place to start. Visitors can take simple quizzes to get a general sense of whether they might have a problem, then check the "Ask the Therapist" section for answers to questions about all kinds of topics, ranging from borderline personality disorder to infidelity. There's even a section in which members can rate their personal experiences with prescription drugs. If you want more news and research, visit [MentalHelp.net](#) or the government's more comprehensive [National Institute of Mental Health](#) site.

<http://www.mentalhelp.net/>
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>

Hobbies & Interests

Apartment Therapy

<http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/>

You don't have to live in a tiny space to get great interior-design ideas from [Apartment Therapy](#). Showcasing one-of-a-kind style statements, like an egg-carton lamp and a kitchen wall dotted with bundt pans, this site is for anyone who appreciates distinctive décor. If you like what you see, head to Apartment Therapy's sister sites, [Ohdeedoh](#) (for kid-friendly home ideas) and [The Kitchn](#) (for recipes and tips on entertaining). Delve deeper into design on [Design*Sponge](#), which features sneak peeks of unique

interiors, alerts on décor mini-trends like polka dots and chain link, and quirky DIY projects.

<http://www.ohdeedoh.com/>
<http://www.thekitchn.com/>
<http://www.designspongeonline.com/>

COLOURlovers

<http://www.colourlovers.com/>

What color is your palette? Take a break from the wordy Web and peruse [COLOURlovers](http://www.colourlovers.com/) to find out. Although the site caters to design professionals who want to show off or share ideas about color and pattern, it's fun for lay people too. Browse through the various swatches, palettes and patterns to help inspire your next creative project — or your next clothes-shopping trip. The site's excellent blog doles out tips, like how to dye yarn with Kool-Aid, and will teach you something new about color every day.

DigitalVaults

<http://www.digitalvaults.org/>

Chances are, you won't be poking through the stacks at the National Archives any time soon. But if you want a glimpse of the Federal Government's historical records, [Digital Vaults](http://www.digitalvaults.org/) gives you a curated view of 1,200 of the most impressive holdings. That includes gems like Swedish-born Greta Garbo's application to become a U.S. citizen and a document detailing Laura Ingalls Wilder's real-world little house on the prairie. Not looking for anything in particular? Then click on "shuffle records" to see hundreds of photos, documents, maps, artwork, video clips and audio files, dating from the 1800s to the present. Records are cross-linked by media type, time and theme, such as "Army" or "presidents." You can get lost here for hours — dusty, old documents have never looked so good.

Geni

<http://www.geni.com/>

For an exercise that's all about family, researching your genealogy can be an oddly lonesome affair, filled with long hours spent sifting through records and making awkward phone calls to far-flung relatives. But [Geni](http://www.geni.com/) turns tree-building into a collaborative effort: the free site gives you

the basic tools for diagramming your ancestry, and it also lets you invite others to contribute. If you're serious about tracing your lineage, you'll probably still click on stalwarts like [Ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), [Family Search](http://www.familysearch.org) and the [USGenWeb Project](http://www.usgenweb.org) for their vast digital archives, but Geni makes it easier — and more fun — than ever to create and share your family tree.

<http://www.ancestry.com/>
<http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp>
<http://www.usgenweb.org/>

Petfinder

<http://www.petfinder.com/>

Need a little love in your life? Skip the online dating sites and head to [Petfinder](http://www.petfinder.com) instead. The Web's largest pet-adoption site lets you choose from more than a quarter of a million animals, searchable by age, location and gender. Each listing includes at least one photo and tells you whether the animal is house-trained and has had its shots. Many of the available pets come from a local branch of the Humane Society or a local rescue group, which will screen potential owners to make sure they can take care of the animal. Because only nonprofits are allowed to post listings, you won't find pets sold by breeders or pet stores, and many animals are fully grown. With so many pets to choose from, it may be tough to settle on just one.

Online News

Digg

<http://digg.com/>

Say you stumble across a news story you like. You "Digg" it, by clicking a link at the end of the story. The more people who Digg the same story, the higher it rises in the popularity ranking on [Digg.com](http://digg.com), where other Diggers can read and comment on it. While comments often read more like rants, they serve as an excellent barometer of the issues Web surfers are most interested in. In May, Digg announced plans to collaborate with Facebook, to let users see which of their Facebook friends also have accounts on Digg — as well as which stories they Digg. Next up: a planned recommendation engine that will suggest stories

you might like based on your past Diggs. Handy upgrades like these should help keep Digg from getting buried by competitors such as [Mixx](#) and [Reddit](#).

<http://www.mixx.com/>
<http://www.reddit.com/>

Google News

<http://news.google.com/>

Still the best option for up-to-the minute news stories. Google News is a computer-generated news site that aggregates headlines from more than 4,500 English-language news sources worldwide, groups similar stories together and displays them according to each reader's personalized interests. Edit your own display to create a custom news-layout; create additional sections according to keyword search terms: “independent school”, “iphone”, etc. Compare with Yahoo News

<http://news.yahoo.com/>

Twitter Search

<http://search.twitter.com/>

Keeping up with interesting news and people you care about is one dimension of Twitter, but what if you need to find out what's happening in the world beyond your personal timeline? There is an undeniable need to search, filter, and otherwise interact with the volumes of news and information being transmitted to Twitter every second. Twitter Search helps you filter all the real-time information coursing through our service. Search according to keyword, or upon hashtags (#). Power Twitter users incorporate hashtags in order to create easily traceable stories. For other up-to-the-minute news events, consider searching Wikipedia. You'll be surprised how quickly Wikipedia is updated in the middle of a news-emergency.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Photography

Flickr

<http://www.flickr.com/>

Digital photo-sharing sites have come and gone, but [Flickr](#) has remained. It offers some of the smartest tools for managing your ever expanding picture collection — from Photostream, which lets you scan your pics quickly, to a newly added video tool for pro users (who pay \$25 per year). We also dig Flickr's photo-editing capabilities provided by [Picnik](#). Our quibbles: users who do not pay the annual subscription fee can upload only 100 MB of content per month, and Flickr's Photostream doesn't arrange newly added pics by the date the photo was taken. Other image-sharing sites include Photobucket and Picasa Web Albums.

<http://photobucket.com/>

<http://picasaweb.google.com/>

Picnik

<http://www.picnik.com/>

Anyone can snap a photo. The hard part is turning a digital image into art. Until now, that's been too complicated for mere mortals. Good thing you don't need any special skills to use the free photo-editing tools at [Picnik](#). Aimed at novices, it lets you crop borders, zap red-eye and add a range of special effects — like blurring, tinting and heat-mapping — to any picture you upload. While [FotoFlexer](#), and [Photoshop Express](#) all have similar features, only Picnik presents them with such elegant simplicity

<http://fotoflexer.com/>

<https://www.photoshop.com/express/landing.html>

Productivity/Get Things Done (GTD)

Bookmarks—Delicious.com

<http://delicious.com/>

Have a taste for bookmarking tons of Web sites? Delicious.com can whet that appetite, giving you simple tools to organize those pages, access them later from any Web browser, and share what you save with other users or on your blog. Plus, you can tap into the Delicious community to find sites that other users have saved. To get started, just visit Delicious to create a free account, verify it, and log in. You can select Delicious's Import/Upload link to copy up to 5MB worth of browser bookmarks to your account. You can add new bookmarks individually within a simple form at Delicious, or drag a bookmarklet to your browser's Bookmarks or Links Toolbar, so that you can click Post To Delicious without leaving the window.

File-Sharing—Dropbox

<http://www.getdropbox.com/>

Did you ever want to share a large file with a friend or colleague, but find that it is too large for your email? Online file-sharing services allow you to easily upload files. You can then email users a URL where they can easily download your document. Dropbox takes this one step further, by allowing you to create a folder on your desktop that automatically syncs online, and even on multiple computers. Drag a file into the folder from home, and then easily have access to it at work! Other services are also available, such as Drop.io, and Yousendit.

<http://drop.io/>

<http://www.yousendit.com/>

Online Notes—Evernote

<http://evernote.com/>

This productivity tool is an online note-taking/notebook tool. With downloadable PC and Mac applications that sync online, you can access your notes from anywhere! The online note-taking feature includes an easy e-mail

forwarding link, so you can add emails to Evernote, and you can even capture web sites in order to view them later.

Online Notes—Zotero

<http://www.zotero.org/>

An online bibliographic and notetaking service that plugs into Firefox. With this service you can easily track web sites, and easily create bibliographies using a Microsoft Word plug in. This is a great research tool.

RSS Reader—Google Reader

<http://www.google.com/reader/>

Like an email for the entire Internet, Google Reader lets you subscribe to news streams of popular blog and news organizations. All new streams come into Google Reader as bolded items, and once you view them they become unbolded. In this way you can keep track of what you have read. Once you have a large stock-pile of posts, it is incredibly easy to search Google Reader for articles you have read in the past.

Technology Reference—Lifehacker (blog)

<http://lifehacker.com/>

This is a great web resource to learn about all kinds of technology and productivity trends. Find out about new web services, new gadgets, and productivity tips.

Web-address Shrinking—Tinyurl.com

<http://tinyurl.com/>

Web addresses are annoyingly long and unwieldy — especially when you're displaying search results from just about any website. If you want to cut a seemingly infinite URL down to size, head to [TinyURL](#), plug in the long version, and voilà! Out pops a unique shortcut to use in its place. The abbreviated addresses that TinyURL generates are fewer than 20 characters long and never expire. (Also check out the equally helpful [SnipURL](#) and [QurlyQ](#).)

<http://snipurl.com/>
<http://qurlyq.com/>

Search Engines

Dogpile

<http://www.dogpile.com/>

This interesting web search incorporates a variety of search engines, including Google, Yahoo, LiveSearch and Ask into one!

SearchMe

<http://www.searchme.com/>

View Internet search results through a new lens at [SearchMe](#), an engine that displays results not in the usual text-list format (that's so Google), but as a slick image gallery of actual Web pages you can flip through and filter results by topic. A query on Montana, for example, lets you narrow results into categories like real estate, lodgings, weather and fishing. SearchMe isn't the only visual search engine — rivals include the meta-search site [KartOO](#) and newcomer [Viewzi](#) (which was still in private beta as of June 2008) — but its clean, intuitive interface sets it apart.

<http://www.kartoo.com/>
<http://viewzi.com/>

Wayback Machine

<http://www.archive.org>

The Internet Archive, is a growing digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Use the Wayback Machine to view the changing designs of web sites over time.

Social Networking

Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/>

If [MySpace](#) is a PC, then [Facebook](#) is a Mac. The former may have more users, but the latter is classier and cleaner

in design. Facebook also makes it super easy to find people you know, and it has won more fans among professionals and the thirtysomething crowd. The site has more than 30,000 add-on applications — among them, games, interactive maps and quizzes — to bling out your personal page (or spam your friends), and a redesign planned for later this year will restore the tidy Facebook look that the add-on apps have begun to clutter up. If you're on the hunt for new social networks to ply, check out upstarts [Bebo](#) and [hi5](#).

<http://www.myspace.com/>
<http://www.bebo.com/>
<http://www.bebo.com/>

Mobaganda.com

<http://www.mobaganda.com/>

Evite is out. [Mobaganda](#) is in. Launched in May, this new site simplifies online party invitations and RSVPs. To create an invite, simply enter a name for your event, then add the date and details. Mobaganda will then generate a custom URL you can e-mail to friends, and keep an updated tally of yeses and nos. (Sorry, no maybes allowed.) Mobaganda does everything else Evite does, only without extraneous bells or whistles — and you won't have to register or log in. Invitations are good for 60 days (when your custom URL vanishes), so Mobaganda works best for casual get-togethers, not wedding receptions.

<http://www.evite.com/>

Twitter

<http://twitter.com/>

Twitter is a lot of things in one. It's an easy way to leave messages with your friends, pose questions to a vast network, and even a way to search for news events as they unfold.

Travel

Gas Buddy

<http://gasbuddy.com/>

Inquiring minds want to know: Where's the cheapest gas? [GasBuddy](#) can tell you. The site collects real-time prices from some 750,000 volunteer price "spotters," who send in daily updates from their local stations. With prices varying by up to 50 cents from one station to the next in some cities, it pays to stay informed. A heat map displays where prices are currently the highest (California) and lowest (Wyoming). GasBuddy also shows you how prices have changed over time and can send mobile updates to your phone. Other similar but less comprehensive services include MapQuest's [Gas Prices](#) and [Gas Price Watch](#).

<http://gasprices.mapquest.com/>

<http://www.gaspricewatch.com/>

Lonely Planet

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>

An online guide to the world. Explore the richest source of global travel content on the web and let it fire your imagination. Shop up a storm at Lonely Planet's online shop. Get guidebooks, maps, downloads, DVDs, journals, audio guides and other bargains, and get your next big trip on the roll. Browse, book and bed down with their online accommodation booking service. Houseboat or hotel? Hollywood or Hull? Their in-depth author reviews and travellers' opinions will steer you in the right direction. Their Travel Services will hook you up with cheap flights, insurance, travel gear, the works - everything you need to make your travel dreams a reality. Create your own profile, update your details, add a picture, share a plan, meet a friend, join a group. Get down to the real nitty-gritty on the Thorn Tree, Lonely Planet's online travel forum where you can exchange advice and opinion with your fellow travellers. Dreaming of a Croatian summer holiday or Japan in cherry blossom time? Start dragging and dropping your favorite places into a trip plan. Before you know it, you're living it.

MapJack

<http://www.mapjack.com/>

Immerse yourself in panoramic views of Yosemite National Park; Chiang Mai, Thailand; and San Francisco using [MapJack](#), a new alternative to [Google Street View](#) and Microsoft's [Live Search Maps](#). MapJack has brighter, sharper photos than the others, and better navigation tools. To start exploring, just click and drag the icon of a person along the map in the bottom half of your browser; the photographic images in the upper portion will automatically refresh. Start-ups like [Earthmine](#) and [EveryScape](#) are developing similar next-gen maps, but for now, MapJack offers the best preview of the future of digital mapping.

<http://maps.google.com/help/maps/streetview/>
<http://maps.live.com/>
<http://www.earthmine.com/>
<http://www.everyscape.com/>

TravelZoo

<http://www.travelzoo.com/>

Those who love to travel often make good use of the many services offered on the world wide web and one of them is *Travelzoo.com*, a web service that offers great deals on travel. Reviewers of Travelzoo.com like the Top Twenty list most of all, as noted by one reviewer who proclaims: "Excellent Deals Published Weekly with their Top 20 Deals". But reviewers also appreciate the exciting travel deals offered around the clock by Travelzoo.com. One drawback with Travelzoo.com is the fact that the deals are often so good, they sell out quickly, but this is a small price to pay for a web site considered among the best [Travel Web Sites](#) on the internet.

TripKick

<http://www.tripkick.com/>

Ever spent top dollar on a hotel, only to get stuck in a crummy room? [TripKick](#), which launched in May 2008, solves this dilemma by telling you which floors are best and which rooms to avoid. When we searched for the Hilton Las Vegas, for example, TripKick told us not only which rooms

had the best view, but also which were too close to the elevators and noisy vending machines. Travelers can also add their own room ratings. For now, TripKick covers 250 hotels in 12 U.S. cities — and it's adding a new city each month. The site borrows its concept from the airline-seat rating service [SeatGuru](#), which has provided clear maps of the interior of commercial planes for years. Both sites improve your odds of having a truly *bon voyage*.

<http://www.seatguru.com/>

WikiTravel

<http://wikitravel.org/>

The best travel guides have one thing in common: they're up to date. That's why [WikiTravel](#) has become the most invaluable travel resource on the Web. While message boards like Lonely Planet's [Thorn Tree Travel Forum](#) are great for specific questions — such as "Should I spend more than a day at Angkor Wat?" — and community sites like [TripAdvisor](#) are useful for seeing other folks' photos and reviews, only WikiTravel keeps a concise, current directory of nearly 20,000 destinations. It's so complete, you'll be tempted to skip the guidebook altogether.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/>
<http://www.tripadvisor.com/>

Yapta.com

<http://www.yapta.com/>

Yapta is intended to help you get a handle on fluctuating travel prices so that you know when to "buy low". Yapta conducts daily price checks on the specific flights and hotels that you choose, and alerts you when prices drop or when they fall within your budget. Yapta also alerts you when you can use your frequent flier miles to book award seats on the flights of your choice.