

Search engines: a first step to finding information: preliminary findings from a study of observed searches.

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This paper reports on the preliminary results of a study into the search behaviours of the general public. Observations were made on nine volunteers, engaged on a variety of search tasks. Qualitative findings are presented, in addition to proposals for quantitative search measures.

Findings to date suggest that the best search strategy is a combination of simplicity and scrutiny. Volunteers who entered a few search terms but then carefully studied the results, appeared to be more successful than those who attempted to be prescriptive and entered a long series of terms.