



Information Technology Quarterly

Vol. 9 No. 1

First Quarter 2007

Edwin Poisson, Director, Information Technology

New Search Helps Users of County Web Site

by Peggy Daniels, eGovernment Division

Oakland County’s award-winning web site www.oakgov.com just got easier to use. The County recently implemented new search technology powered by Google, making government information and services even more accessible to its huge online population. Visitors to the County’s web site can now find what they need with just a few clicks.

Searches are faster and more relevant because pages on the County’s site have been linked to common search words. Search results also include images, and the new Advanced Search function allows users to refine their searches by specific file format or other criteria. The process of looking for the right information has become a breeze.

“Oakland County is in the business of removing barriers to government services. We have a treasure trove of information on our web site, and now it’s easier than ever before to find what you need,” said Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson.

Oakland County Deputy County Executive/CIO Phil Bertolini said, “The number of Oakland County citizens and business people using our web site is growing every day. They’ve told us they need to find the right information on our site fast. This new Google search is the best way we can help them do that.”

The new Google search technology includes these important benefits:

Accurate search results. The County’s custom site search indexes are updated more frequently than the Google index of the entire Web.

More relevant search results. Oakland County is able to link common search terms directly to individual County web pages or documents, producing more controlled search results than those

normally achieved with a standard computer search algorithm. By applying key matches and custom relevancy weighting, the County is able to effectively market information and services on its sites while making it easier for citizens to find what they need faster.

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Search results including images. Images have been linked to pertinent search terms, and will display at the top of the results list with the most relevant search result items.

Faster searches. The Google Search Appliance runs search requests on Oakland County servers instead of sending search requests out to Google servers.

Secure searching. The Google Search Appliance can enforce the County's document-level security policies at the time of search, so that logged-in users will see only the search results that they are authorized to access.

Advanced search. Users are now able to narrow search results with more targeted criteria made easier through the use of multiple search string entry boxes, and search for the occurrence of a search string in the page title, body, URL, or HTML code. Searches can now be done for specific file formats such as PDF, PowerPoint or Excel, and may be limited to certain County web sites such as www.clemis.org or www.oaklandsheriff.com. The Advanced Search page is accessible via the question mark icon located to the right of the Search box, in the upper right corner of every www.oakgov.com page.

To see an example of the new search with images and relevancy weighting in action, visit www.oakgov.com and locate the Search box in the upper right corner of every page. Enter the search string "birth certificate" in the Search box. Note that the search results page no longer simply displays a random list of any page or document containing the search string. The most relevant results now appear at the top of the results list along with an image, making it easier for searchers to quickly locate the best information.

Food For Thought

["Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons."](#)

– Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, 1949.

["I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."](#)

– Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943.

["I have traveled the length and breadth of this country and talked with the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is a fad that won't last out the year."](#)

– The editor in charge of business books for Prentice Hall, 1957.

["There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."](#)

– Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977.

["640K ought to be enough for anybody."](#)

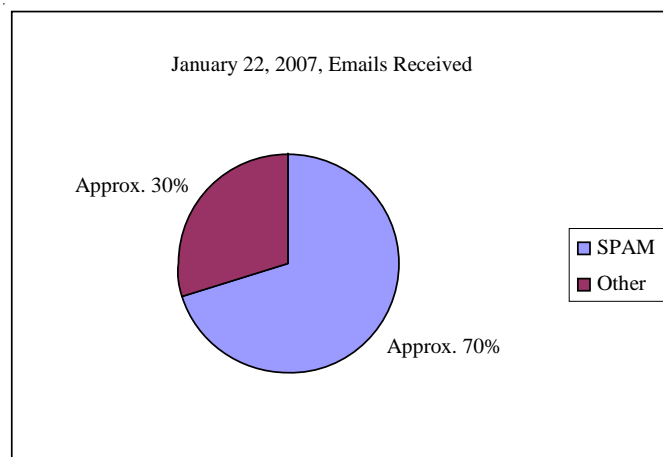
– Bill Gates, 1981.

– from <http://www.juliantrubin.com/computerjokes.html>

Spam, Meat or Mail? *by Ken Jaworski, Technical Systems and Networking*

Unsolicited electronic communications, also known as spam, are flooding the Internet in an attempt to force messages on people who would not otherwise choose to receive them. Most spam is commercial advertising, often for dubious products, get-rich-quick schemes, quasi-legal services, or mail with fraudulent intent. One of the reasons for spam, besides the fact that people actually do respond back to this form of advertisement, is that it costs the sender very little to send.

On any given day, Information Technology's email system may be bombarded by hundreds of thousands of email messages. For example, on Monday, January 22, 2007, the email system processed 218,000 emails. Of those emails, only 68,730 messages, or 31% received, were allowed to pass through to the intended account. The remaining email messages were discarded as illegitimate or spam.



In those rare instances that suspect emails are received by the end-user, the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) Coordination Center, a federally funded organization dedicated to cybersecurity, devised the so-called "KRESV" test to ensure email safety.

KRESV stands for Know, Receive, Expect, Sense, and Virus. CERT suggests, "You should apply these five tests to every piece of email with an attachment that you receive. If any test fails, toss that email. If they all pass, then you still need to exercise care and watch for unexpected results as you read it."

Here are steps you can use to help you decide what to do with every email message with an attachment that you receive:

1. The **Know** test: Is the email from someone that you know?
2. The **Received** test: Have you received email from this sender before? If you have not, there may be an underlying factor such as "Identity Theft."
3. The **Expect** test: Were you expecting email with an attachment from this sender? Attachments are necessary in the "normal course of business." However, an attachment from a stranger is not the "normal course of business."

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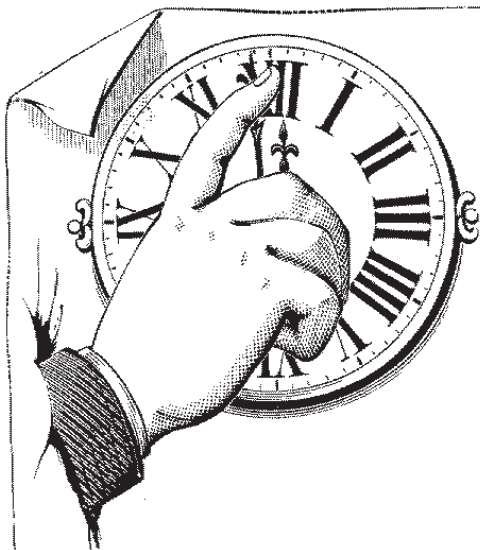
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4. The **Sense** test: Does email from the sender with the contents as described in the Subject line and the name of the attachment(s) make sense? For example, would you expect the sender—let's say your mother—to send you an email message with the subject line "Here you have, ;o)" that contains a message with attachment—let's say AnnaKournikova.jpg.vbs? A message like that probably doesn't make sense. In fact, it happens to be an instance of the Anna Kournikova worm, and reading it can damage your system.
5. The **Virus** test: Does this email contain a virus? This question is typically covered by Oakland County Information Technology's email system which performs virus scans prior to delivery.

The **KRESV** tests helps you focus on the most important issues when sending and receiving email with attachments. You still need to exercise care. While technical countermeasures are in place, there will always be a short lag between when a virus or spam is discovered and when technical countermeasures are updated to recognize the new threats.

In support of Information Technology's multilayered Security In-Depth approach to securing Information Systems, we not only rely on antivirus, firewalls, and other technologies to secure the County's email system, but also wholeheartedly support your continued exercise in good judgment when sending and receiving electronic messages. The documentation for Anti-Spam setup can be found on the IT Training web site, specifically www.oakgov.com/ittrain/assets/docs/spam2.pdf.

Daylight Saving Time (DST) Patch



A software upgrade to address the change in Daylight Saving Time (as mandated by the Energy Policy Act of 2005) was completed this month. If you are having any issues regarding this upgrade, please contact the IT Service Center at 248-858-8812.

Information Technology Quarterly

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This newsletter is designed to share useful technology news and information with Oakland County Employees!

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