



## TEXT SUPPORT

Carolyn Weaver is the producer and host of Tech Books, in its third season on Tech TV, Book Television, Court TV, MSNBC Canada and Rogers Television. carolyn@fineprintonline.com



In conversation with  
**Chris Sherman**

GOOGLE POWER: UNLEASH THE  
FULL POTENTIAL OF GOOGLE

RATING: ★★★★★

GOOGLE'S SUCCESS STORY IS known around the world. The co-founders, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, were vaulted on to the Forbes 400 list of the world's wealthiest people in August 2004 with the successful IPO.

Chris Sherman, president of Searchwise LLC, a Web consulting firm and editor of a daily newsletter from SearchWatch.com, has written a comprehensive book on everything one needs to know about maximizing the benefits of Google.

The book, *Google Power: Unleash the Full Potential of Google*, covers every topic imaginable from customizing your searches to setting up automated tools that search while you sleep to mining for business intelligence.

The book is well written with excellent visual examples. I had a chance to ask Sherman some questions.

**Research firm IDC estimates that upwards of 50 per cent of all searches fail because people don't know how to use search engines effectively. Does it surprise you that this number is so high?**

No — I was the co-author of the study "The High Cost of Not Finding Information." In fact, we originally did the study back in 2001, and our finding was that only 25 per cent of all searches failed.

After two more years of experience with search engines we found the number jumped to 50 per cent.

I think most people are satisfied with OK answers from search engines that they wouldn't tolerate from any other type of information resource.

**Why is it more effective to use fewer words in your query?**

Using fewer words (in some cases) forces you to think carefully about what you're looking

**FAST**  
**4**

**Favorite author**  
Patrick O'Brien

**Favorite Web site**  
Search Engine Watch

**A good book...**  
Usually takes a lot longer to finish than you think it will when you begin.

**Guilty pleasure:**  
Skiing in Colorado on weekdays when everyone else is working.

for, and express your information needs more precisely. Using a few well-chosen words or phrases helps the search engine throw out most of the haystack and provide you with far fewer needles to choose from.

**What is the benefit of using cached versus direct links?**

Cached links show you exactly what Google saw. Your search terms are also highlighted in colour on cached pages, making it easy to find them even on long pages.

Finally, Google is one of the fastest supercomputers on the planet — viewing a page from Google's cache is often faster than downloading it from its original Web server.

**What are "magic keywords" and is there a down side to too much personal information being too easily accessed?**

Magic keywords are simply words, which used in combination with other words, unlock very specific kinds of information. They don't necessarily reveal personal information, though they can be used that way. And of course, there are significant privacy issues with search engines, but that's a big issue with all kinds of ramifications.

**How important is it to do searches on oneself?**

It depends on how much of a footprint you've left on the Web. If you write a blog or leave other traces of yourself online, it's important to check up on yourself.

By contrast, if you only use the Web to find information

(rather than to produce it), you may be disappointed not to find a trace of yourself online.

**How does one find content that has been removed from the Web and is no longer available at its original source?**

That's a hard question — Google's cache stores deleted information for anywhere from one to 30 days, but then it's erased. The Wayback Machine (<http://archive.org>) has archived random parts of the Web since 1996, but it's very incomplete.

**What is the "invisible Web" and how much government information is accessible through the Web?**

The invisible Web exists on Web sites that search engines either can't or won't index. It's huge — two to 50 times larger than the visible Web. As for government information, most governments around the world are major online publishers (thanks to paperwork reduction acts). It's not always easy to find, but there's tons of great government info online.



INSIDER

## To all the tools I've loved before

**WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE** — THE CONFERENCE CALL wherein some jackass (usually in sales) begins to promise the moon and the stars to the customer, despite your death-ray stare at the speakerphone and your psychically transmitted message to SHUTUP-SHUTUPSHUTUPSHUTUP!

We'd all be better off with the Conference-Call Sense-Maker from Stooples, which allows you to "simulate the voice quality of the village idiot, end their connection and then take over their part of the conference call," according to the latest Stooples catalogue.

It's one of many useful tools available only from Stooples. Tools we all sometimes wish we had: The Mood Lectern (revealing the speaker's state-of-mind — raises all around, or pink slips coming down?), Black Hole Out-Box (how much of your correspondence should really end up in outer space?), Meeting Mellow (which discharges an, um, mood-elevating fragrance during tough negotiations).

Sadly, of course Stooples (corporate motto: Office

Tools for Hopeless Fools) doesn't exist, at least not as an office supply store. The closest you can manage is the Stooples catalogue, brainchild of Kevin Reifler, Nick Vacca and Adam Najberg.

Among the many innovations the Stooples crew would like to bring you: Tex Messaging (with countrified preset SMS messages for every occasion; Tet Messaging is available for Vietnam vets); the RoloHex File (makes it easy to curse or bless competitors, colleagues, superiors, etc.); and Entremature ("especially appropriate for companies where it's about to hit the fan anyway").

Personal faves from the collection? There's the Pocket Shredder ("lets you destroy sensitive documents even when lawyers are present"), the E-Z Crank Rumour Mill (choose from playful, deceitful or better left unsaid), Spotlight Grabber (which attaches to your waist and rises over your head, putting YOU in the spotlight for your achievements, real or imaginary) and the BlackBury After-Death Communicator.



Before you order, though, note that, as usual, Canadian orders get the shaft. "Hey, you hockey heads, you've got to pay extra, eh?" specifies the catalogue. "Include Dominion tax, maple syrup and round bacon tax and the difference between your currency and real money."

No, the products aren't available, but the catalogue's good for a giggle, and also features Stooples memos, reports and resumes. Check out [www.stooples.com](http://www.stooples.com) for more information.

**PSST!** Got an inside scoop? Email us at [insider@itbusiness.ca](mailto:insider@itbusiness.ca)