The Internet as a Source of Relevant High-Quality Information



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Issues with quality did not start with the Internet

- Sir Isaac Newton and the apple
- Spinach contains high levels of iron
 - originated in 1870 with Dr E von Wolf's typographical error
 - or was it Gustav von Bunge in 1890?
- 1912 Piltdown Man hoax
- 1969 Linda McCartney/Eastman was related to the Eastman family, part of the Eastman-Kodak photographic empire – she wasn't!
 - www.beatlesagain.com/bmyths.html
- 2003 Jayson Blair resigns from New York Times



Fit for purpose?

- is it time dependent, for example most recent news on a company or person?
- factual for example company turnover figures ?
- authoritative data, peer reviewed sources required?
- are differing views and opinions wanted?
- expert assessment or forecast of an industry
- nice to know background information?
- mission critical, for example information as part of due diligence relating to a merger or acquisition?

How paranoid do you need to be?!



Quality assessment criteria

- how did you find the information?
 - 'googled', via an evaluated listing, recommended by colleague
- who is the publisher or provider of the information?
- credentials of the author, editor or compiler of the information
- date of publication and/or update
- source list if using a content aggregator
- geographical coverage
- industry sector coverage
- time span and availability of archives
- can you verify the information via an independent source or trace it back to the original source



Checking the domain name

- look at the TLD top level domain
 - country and type of organization
- who owns the domain name
 - http://www.allwhois.com
 - http://www.domaintools.com/
 - insource.cz

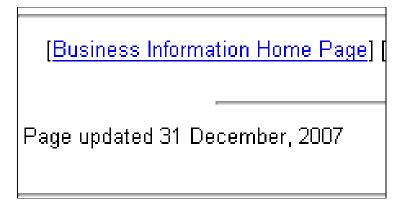
```
contact: SB:VK39-RIPE_XX
org: Albertina icome Praha s.r.o.
name: Albertina icome Praha s.r.o.
address: Stepanska 16
address: Praha 1
address: 110 00
address: CZ
```

people can hide behind intermediaries

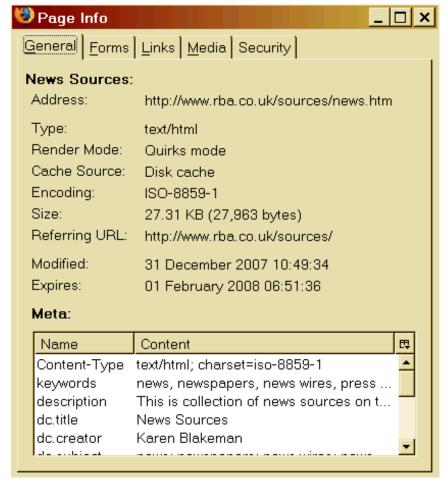


Date published or updated

Do you believe the date given?



Firefox – Tools, Page info



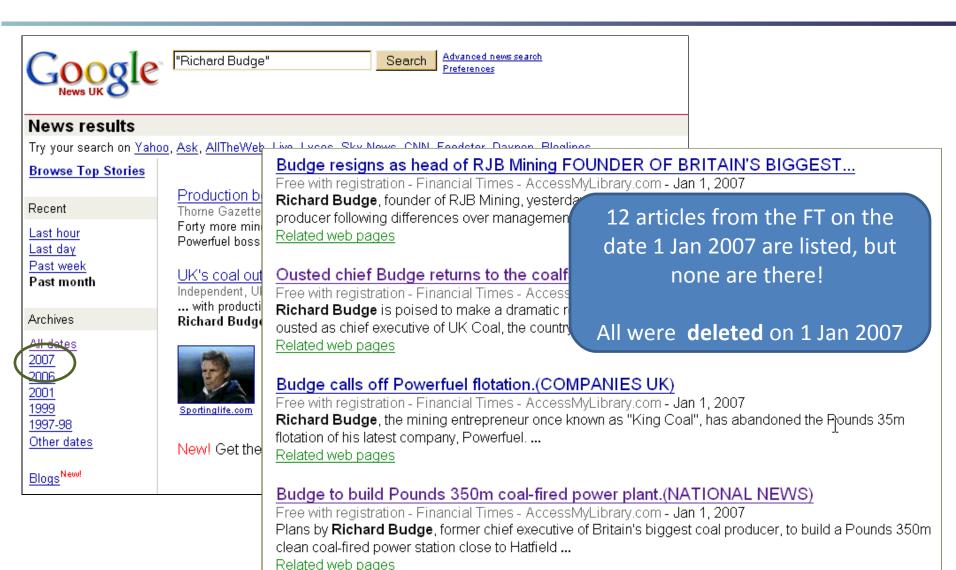


javascript:alert(document.lastModified)





Google Archivenews date search





Blogs

- excellent for analysis, forecasts, discussions and debate on an industry sector, for example http://www.theoildrum.com/
- check the following
 - who is/are the author(s)?
 - is there an author profile or 'about us'
 - the bias of the authors
 - date of last posting and frequency of posting
 - who links to or refers to the blog?
- Search tools for blogs
 - http://www.google.com/blogsearch
 - http://www.ask.com/
 - http://www.exalead.com/
 - http://www.technorati.com/
 - http://www.blogpulse.com/

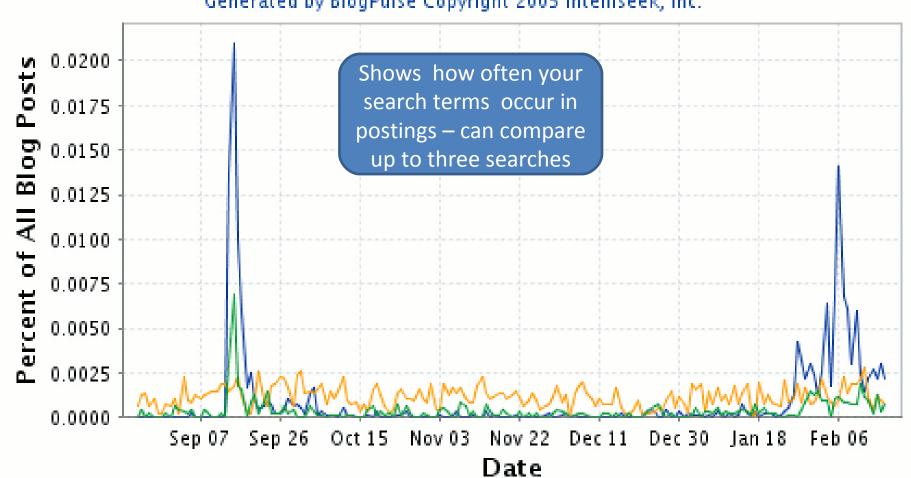


Blogpulse Trends

Home > Tools

Trend Results

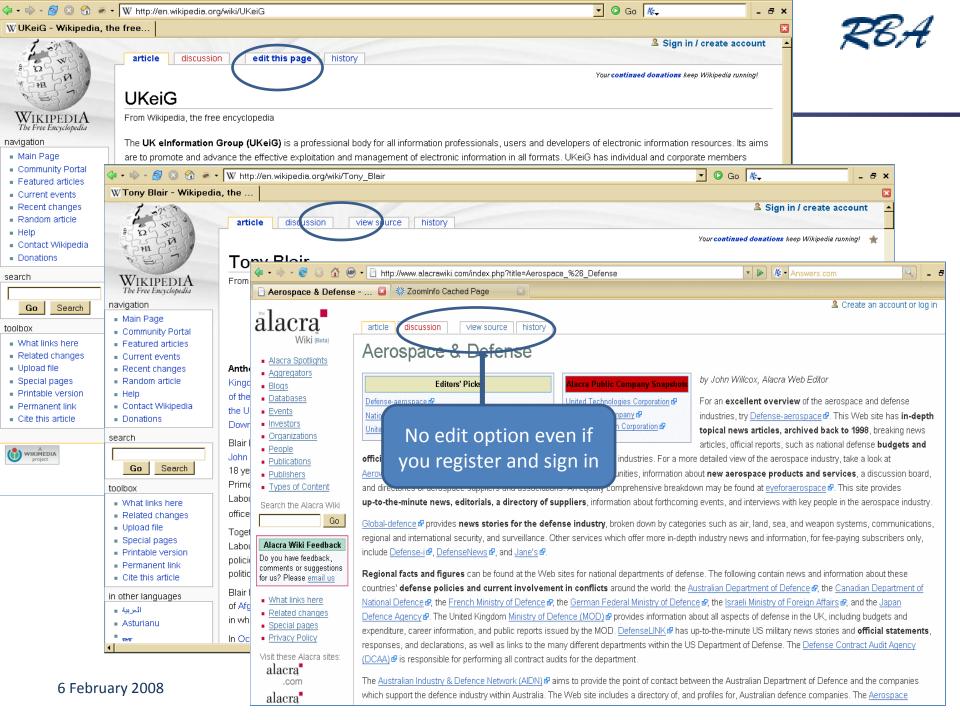






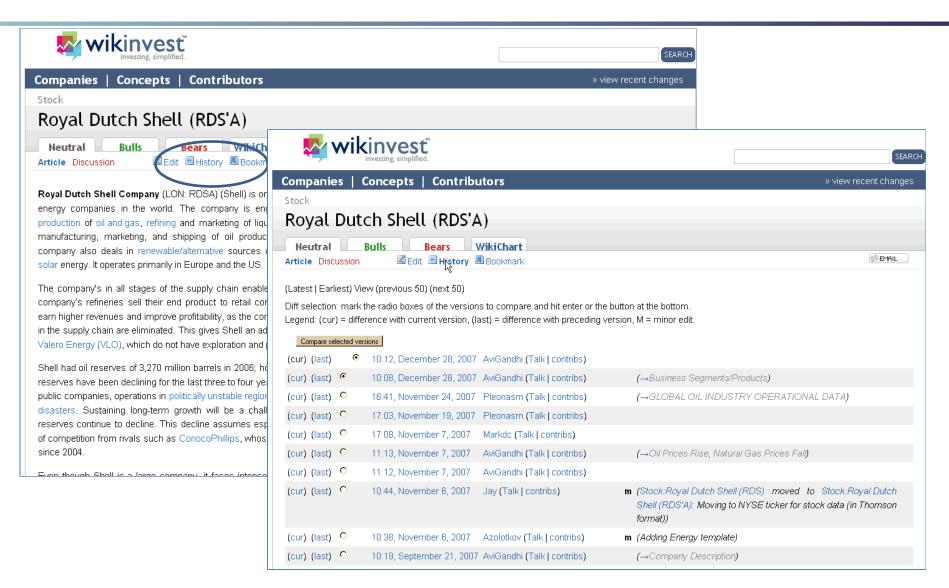
Wikis

- Wikis as sources of information
- Check:
 - who is the main publisher of the wiki?
 - is the purpose and coverage of the wiki clearly stated
 - use the 'history' to see who has made changes to the page
 - are some of the pages locked or restricted for editing
 - use the 'history' to see when a page was last updated, what has been changed and when





Wikis – history tab



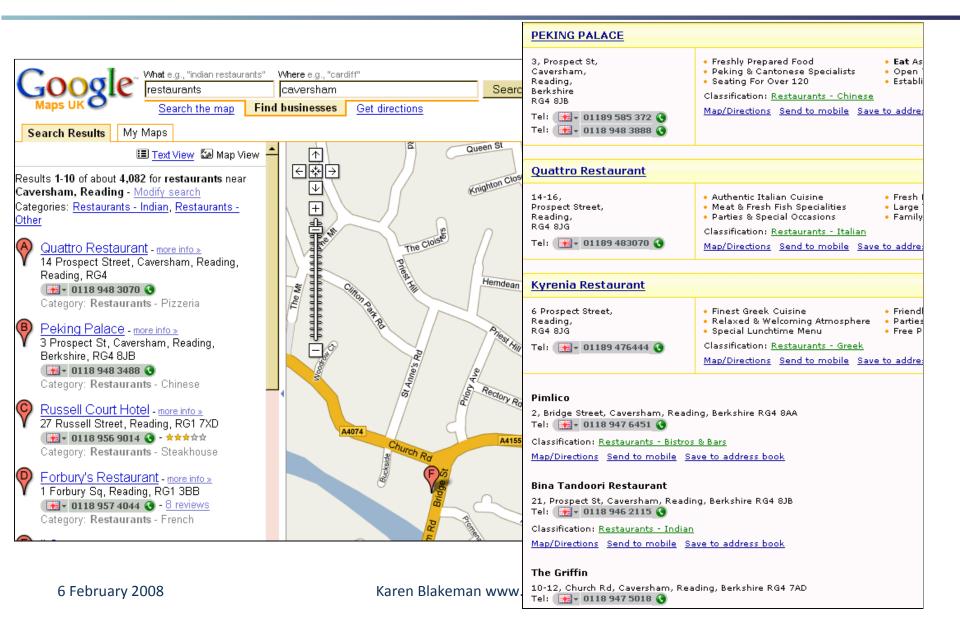


Mashups

- combine information from two or more different sources to create a new presentation of that information
 - for example Yahoo Finance
- quality of the mashups dependent on the quality of the source databases
- mashup process may introduce errors and/or omissions
 - e.g. Google Maps/Local



http://maps.google.com/ vs. the source database





Key starting points for quality information

- Experience!
- People
- Discussion lists
 - BUSLIB-L http://list1.ucc.nau.edu/archives/buslib-l.html
 - AIIP Association of Independent Information Providers
- Evaluated listings
 - for example Alacrawiki Spotlights http://www.alacrawiki.com/
- Google Custom Search Engines
 - Alacrasearch http://www.alacra.com/alacrasearch/
 - Chipwrapper http://www.chipwrapper.co.uk/



Stock markets and share prices

Free

- current share prices 15-30 minutes delayed
- some historical data as charts or figures (Yahoo Finance)
- Yahoo Finance for the 'major stock markets'
- go to individual stock exchange web sites
 - http://www.rba.co.uk/sources/stocks.htm
- Wikinvest http://www.wikinvest.com/

Priced

- for more detailed analysis
- for full historical data
- for stocks that are no longer trading or have merged with another company



Company financials

Free

- good for just a few known companies
- stock exchange listed companies
 - free access to accounts and annual reports on their web site
- official company registers
 - http://www.rba.co.uk/sources/registers.htm

Priced

- for identifying a group of companies using several criteria
 - by sector, country, turnover, number of employees etc.
- for extra download formats, analysis options
- for cross country searching
- check 'cut-off' points and availability of original data if searching harmonised or standardised data
- beware services offering you 'hard to find' information at extortionate prices



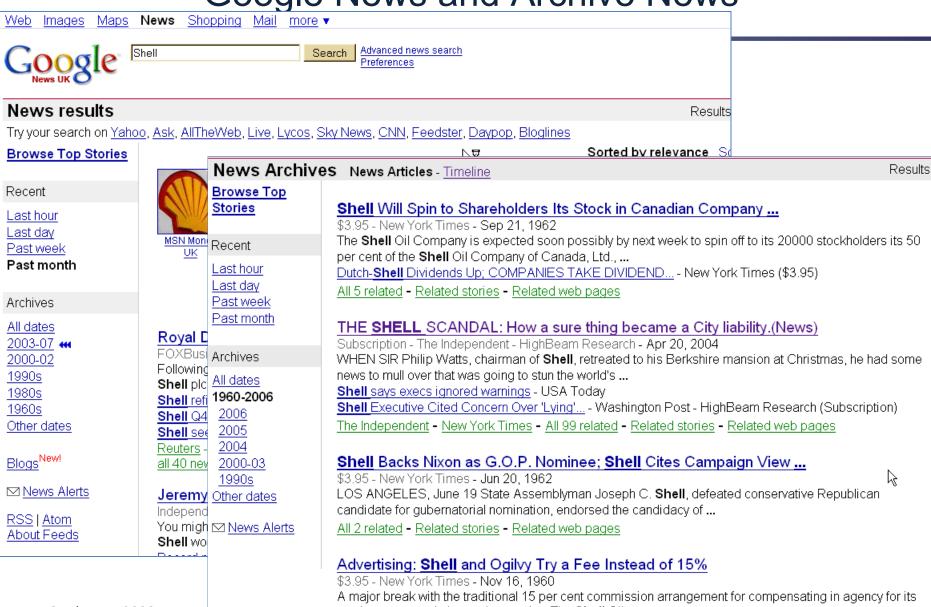
News

Free

- check coverage, archives, search options
- for individual newspapers
 - http://www.abyznewslinks.com/
 - http://www.kidon.com/media-link/index.php
- search engine news options e.g. Yahoo, Google, Live, Ask have only the last 30 days of news
- search engine news options have no source list
- use the country version of Google news
- Google Archivenews (goes back 1-200 years) does not have the same coverage as Google News and much of it is priced



Google News and Archive News



All 2 related - Related stories - Related web pages

6 February 2008

A major break with the traditional 15 per cent commission arrangement for compensating in agency for its services was made known here today. The **Shell** Oil ...



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- Google Custom Search engine
- Searches 15 free UK News Sites
- No date sort option



2. Shell's £14bn profits branded 'obscene' by Unite | Business ...

Oil giant **Royal Dutch Shell** is facing renewed accusations of profiteering after reporting ... January 31 **2008**. **Shell's** record profits branded 'obscene' ... www.guardian.co.uk/business/**2008**/jan/31/**royaldutchshell**.oil?gusrc=rss&feed=networkfront

3. FT.com / Markets data / Companies research

As of Jan 25 **2008** 16:35 GMT. Quotes are delayed by at least 20 minutes. ... Jan 25 **2008** 22:10 GMT. London Stock Exchange Group:LSE, -20.00 -1.14% ... mwprices.ft.com/custom/ft2-com/html-quotechartnews. asp?FTSite=FTCOM&q=RDSB&searchtype&expande... - 51k - Cached - Filter - History

4. Security problems force Shell to scale back in Nigeria | Business ... January 31 2008. Shell's £14bn profits branded 'obscene' by Unite. Oil giant Royal Dutch Shell is facing renewed accusations of profiteering after reporting ... www.guardian.co.uk/business/2008/jan/31/royaldutchshell.oil2 - 20 hours ago

5. BBC NEWS | Business | Shell sets new UK profits record

Oil giant **Royal Dutch Shell** reports record annual profits for a UK-listed company, ... Afghan MPs listen to a speech by a US envoy (30 January **2008**) ... news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7219148.stm



News

Priced for:

- archival material
- advanced search and sort options
 - dates
 - title
 - byline
 - company as the main topic
 - country
- titles not covered by the free search tools



Statistics and market research

Free statistics

- free
- trade, professional, industry associations
- official national statistics offices
- international organisations
- http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/subjects/stats/offstats/
- http://www.nationmaster.com/

Priced

for more detailed breakdowns and analysis



Nationmaster





Market and industry research

- For details and rankings of companies and products priced services
- Aggregators even priced may not be comprehensive
 - check the publisher's own web site or email them to see if there is additional or more recent research available
 - use aggregators as an index to see who is publishing on your topic
 - http://www.marketresearch.com/
 - http://www.mindbranch.com/
 - http://www.researchandmarkets.com/
- For emerging markets http://www.securities.com/



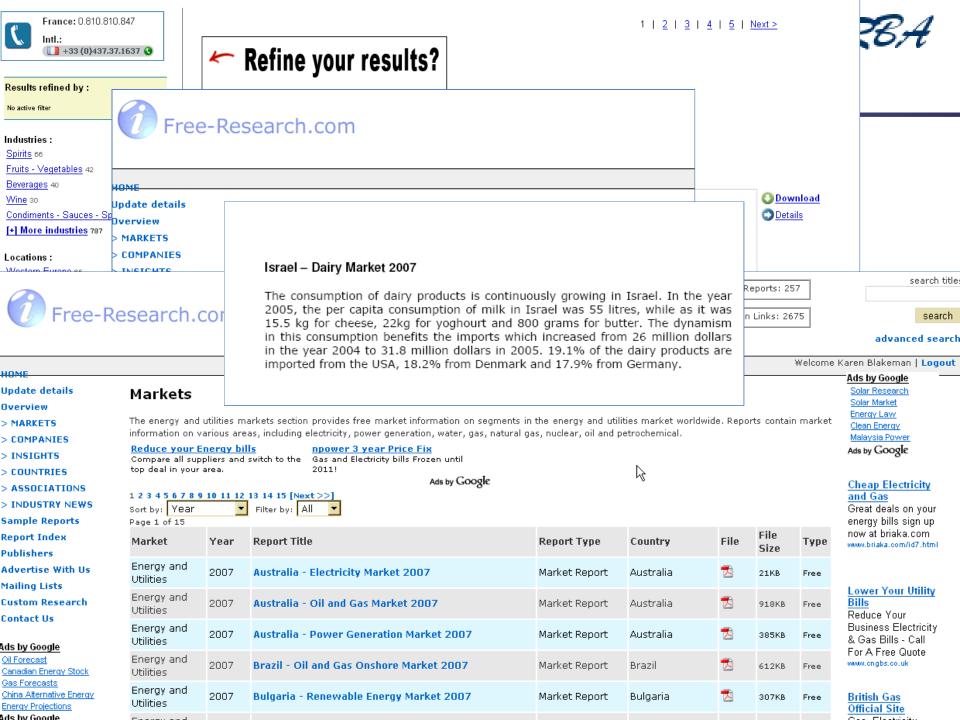
Market and industry research

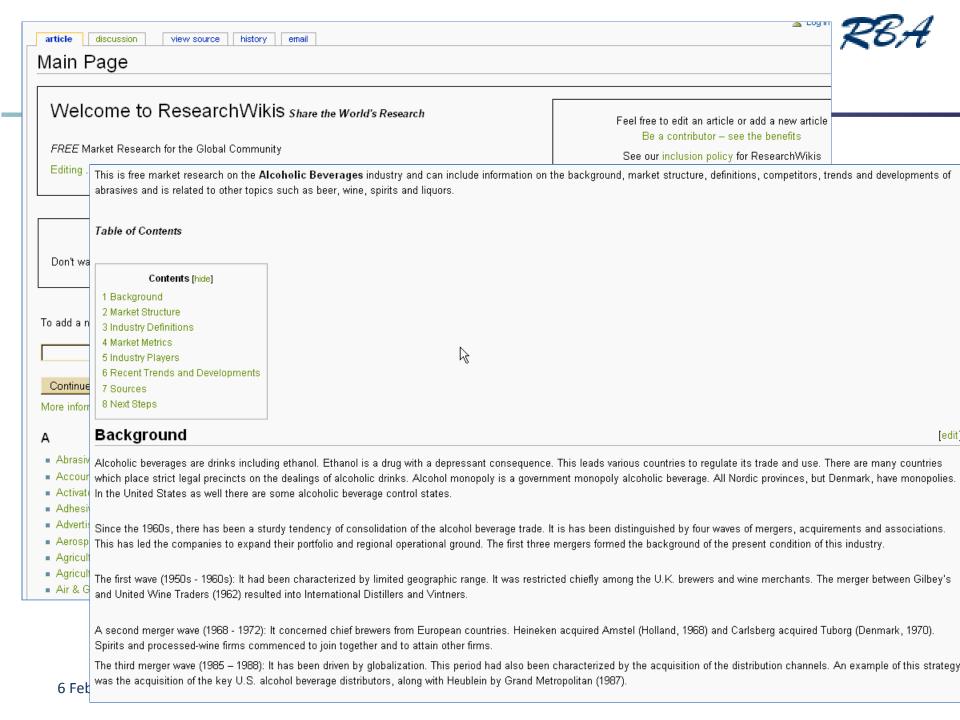
Free

- government bodies e.g. http://www.export.gov/
- regulatory bodies e.g. in the UK Competition Commission,
 Ofcom
- trade, industry, manufacturing associations
- trade and industry press

Searching for free

- http://www.reportlinker.com/
- http://www.free-research.com/
- http://www.researchwikis.com/





The Internet as a Source of Relevant High-Quality Information



- both free and priced services have their place
- free may take longer to track down
- priced may be quicker and have more search, sort and analysis options
- if using multiple sources for market/industry research, may not be comparing like with like
- quality assess every source you use

