

# MelZoo lets you visually search and locate quickly

February 4 2009, By Craig Crossman

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Most of us drive our cars to get from one place to another. Still there are those who enjoy getting underneath the hood and tinkering. It's basically the same with computers these days. There are many who enjoy messing around with the operating system and the hardware to do all kinds of interesting things. Yet most of us today simply want to use the computer to do something functional be it write a document, send e-mail or going online to find something. The computer today is pretty much like an appliance in that we use it to get a job done.

Unlike most dedicated appliances that do one thing, the computer differs in that its uses are many. Take the Internet for example. Used to be when I wanted to find something, I'd use a dedicated resource. If I wanted to find a merchant or a phone number, I'd use the Yellow Pages or dial information. If I wanted to buy or sell something, maybe find a job or rent an apartment, I'd look in the classified or real estate section of the newspaper. Now I just go online. In fact, the computer is the first place I go to look for just about anything.

When it comes to searching, most everyone goes to Google. And while its accuracy in finding and sorting out what you want to locate is almost legendary, it can still be somewhat tedious when presented with those pages and pages of link results. The problem is the process that goes something like this: You click on a link, see if that's the website you want and if it's not, you click on the back arrow, scroll to the next link you think might be something you want, click on it, look, click the back arrow to go to the next link, click again, and on and on it goes. The click-

back process can be enough to wear anyone out. But the great thing about computers is that there's always someone out there that's trying to come up with a better way to do something and online searching is no exception.

You have got to check out MelZoo the next time you are trying to find something on the Internet. It works with most of the popular browsers on all platforms as far as I can determine. As you will see, searching with MelZoo is going to save you a lot of time. Here's how it works. Going to [melzoo.com](http://melzoo.com) presents you with the typical search line into which you type the word or phrase that describes what you want to find. What happens next is really cool. The page you see is split equally into two vertical halves which you can resize by dragging the center dividing line left or right. In the left half you see the typical search results that show descriptive text and associated links. In the right half you see part of a web page. If you have a large display, you will want to stretch the window as wide as you can. The wider you can make the window, the more of the entire web page you will be able to see without scrolling.

Now here's the best part. As you merely hover the mouse over the text links on the left, the corresponding website page will instantly be fully displayed on the right! Move the mouse up and down over the text links and see the actual websites instantly appear. The websites are exactly what you would see if you actually surfed on over to them. I could see no difference in the displayed pages than the actual websites. My suspicion is that MelZoo is somehow showing the real thing and not some mockup that runs the risk of distortion.

To see the actual page is a no-brainer. Just click on the website on the right and you will go to the actual website. Clicking the back arrow takes you back to the same MelZoo link results page so you can continue your search. That's it. Sometimes the most simple solution is the most elegant. I have been doing all kinds of searches with MelZoo. Looking for

something the traditional way compared to the MelZoo way makes me feel like I'm using a phone book. With MelZoo, I have been able to find things in a fraction of the time. But the real convincer is trying MelZoo for yourself. Reading about the experience is no match for actually doing it. When you actually try it, the light bulb is going to turn on and you may not want to go back.

MelZoo is technically still in beta and has only recently become available. After interviewing the company's CEO, I'm told they still have a way to go before the general release. But MelZoo is up and functioning right now. Use it and you'll discover it's the real find the next time you're searching for something.

On the web: [www.melzoo.com](http://www.melzoo.com)

(Craig Crossman is a national newspaper columnist writing about computers and technology. He also hosts the No. 1 daily national computer radio talk show, Computer America, heard on the Business TalkRadio Network and the Lifestyle TalkRadio Network - Monday through Friday, 10 p.m.-midnight ET. For more information, visit his web site at [www.computeramerica.com](http://www.computeramerica.com) .)

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