

# Google draws upon rival ideas with search changes

March 24 2009, By MICHAEL LIEDTKE , AP Technology Writer

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(AP) -- Google Inc. prides itself on setting trends, but it appears to be copying some of its smaller rivals with the latest refinements to the way it displays Internet search results.

After months of testing, [Google](#) tweaked its technology Tuesday to occasionally display longer descriptions of Web sites in response to search requests consisting of several words. The expanded snippets will contain three or four lines from Web sites instead of the usual one or two lines.

The switch is designed to give Google's audience a better sense of what information a Web site has even before users click on the link. It's something lesser known search engines already have been trying to do, either by posting longer descriptions or providing capsule snapshots of the Web pages that show up in their results.

In another minor change, Google said it has improved its formula for posting suggestions pointing to other topics that might be tied to a search request.

For instance, entering "principles of physics" into Google's search box will generate the usual list of 10 results on the first page, punctuated by a group of links at the bottom suggesting eight other related subjects such as "big bang physics." Now, however, Google thinks it can do a better job of deciphering complicated search requests and will highlight some suggestions near the top of the results page instead of the bottom.

This clustering concept was popularized years ago by IAC/InterActiveCorp.'s Ask.com and has since been copied by other search engines. Google's upgrade was hatched by Ori Allon, who joined Google in 2006 after selling a search startup called Orion to the Mountain View-based company.

Even as it appears to be catching up to Ask.com, Google also may be trying to stay a step ahead of its biggest rival, [Microsoft](#) Corp., said Danny Sullivan, who heads the [Search Engine](#) Land newsletter.

Microsoft has indicated it plans to introduce new ways to suggest searches to its users, giving Google more of an incentive to upgrade its own system, Sullivan said.

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Citation: Google draws upon rival ideas with search changes (2009, March 24) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-03-google-rival-ideas.html>

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