

News, Resources and Useful Information for the Online Investigative and OSINT Professional from Toddington International Inc.



Toddington International Inc.
Online Research and Intelligence Newsletter
MAY 2019 EDITION

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Welcome to the Newsletter

Welcome to the May 2019 edition of the newsletter.

Having just completed the delivery of our newly developed and highly acclaimed 2-day **Critical Thinking for Investigators** training program to in-house audiences in both Toronto and Halifax, we are looking forward to an exciting summer ahead. We will be kicking off the summer training season with the launch of our new 2-day [Social Media Intelligence & Investigation](#) workshop in both Toronto and Vancouver, followed by a series of in-house training events for clients in various locations throughout SE Asia.

We are very pleased to be welcoming Mark Ploszay to the TII team this month. With over 30 years of operational intelligence service in both the military and police domains, Mark has proven himself a highly respected training facilitator with experience delivering to public and private sector audiences the world over. To learn more about Mark's extensive experience, please visit:

<https://www.toddington.com/team-member/mark-ploszay>.

Our featured article this month provides an overview of some of Google's most recent changes, highlighting the challenges investigators and researchers face in keeping up with the search giant and its endless changes. Also in this newsletter, we share our

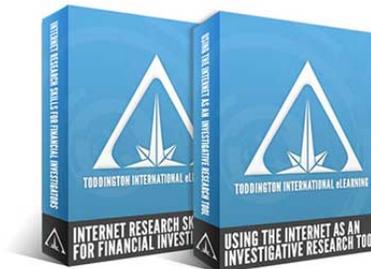


found to be of particular interest.

E-Learning Graduates

Congratulations to the following students who are among the latest to have successfully completed the 40-hour [Using the Internet as an Investigative Research Tool™](#) e-learning

program with TII:



- Máire McCaughey
- Ronald Mathews
- Jenny Burnett
- Brad Weinberger
- Scarlett Kelly
- Anca Davidoiu
- Kristina Balgaranova
- Alex Meyers
- Frank Evans
- Ashley Wells
- Riley C Shultz
- Thomas Cochran
- Tilde Jessen
- Katrin Fiedler
- Tim Berg
- Maurice Bourque
- Pierre Rousseau
- Toby Dunshea
- Cynthia Simmons
- Sharon Valdez
- Paul Mendez

Important Note: As we respect the privacy of our students, we only publish the names of students who have provided express permission to do so. Many of our students are unable to share their completion due to the nature of their employment, or due to online privacy concerns. If your name did not appear in the above list and you wish to announce your completion of the course with TII, please [contact us](#).

Keeping up with Google



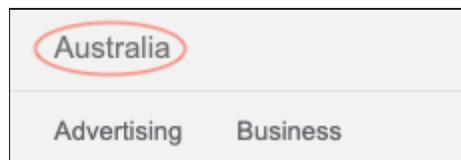
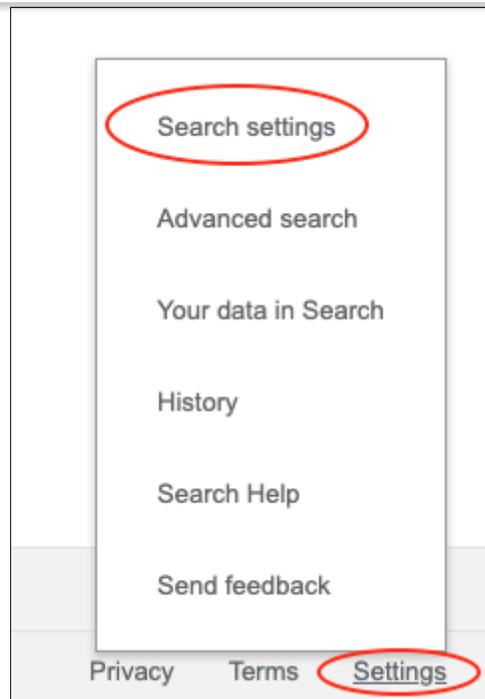
[Source: PhotoMIX Ltd.](#)

With a search engine market share of 75%, Google maintains its position as the world's most popular search engine, and over the past 20 years, has evolved from merely a query-based search engine to a verb synonymous of the term "search." The average person conducts three-to-four Google searches per day; a number significantly greater for investigators and researchers. The world's preferred search engine, whether for searching the web, viewing maps, translating text, or discovering Deep Web databases, its minimalist interface continues to evolve on a daily basis, with an average of three updates to its algorithms, search, and other features each and every day.

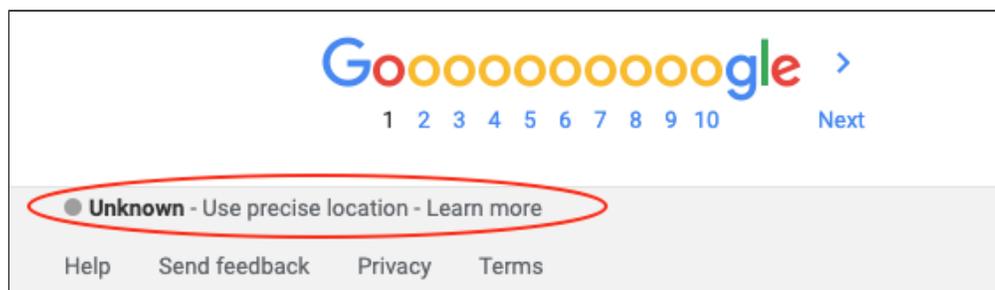
Google's constant evolution can pose significant challenges for investigators and researchers, who very often work under time constraints, as a search technique may not work as expected, and a last minute work-around may need to be found; to keep up-to-date with the constant changes in the digital world, the TII team allocates at least an hour per day to explore and track significant changes. With the many features offered by Google, it can often be difficult to remain current on each and every change. Google Search alone has undergone significant changes over the years, to which the average user may be oblivious. However, as investigators or researchers, we come to rely on certain search techniques, operators, and filters; when these are discontinued or rendered ineffective, it can profoundly impact our work.

New Filtering for Date Ranges

As you may already know, Google allows results to be filtered by time via the "Tools" menu, and as of recent, has brought this function directly to the search field through the



While the above option allows us to select a specific region for our results, what if we don't want our results to be restricted by region? Our team has been testing a temporary work-around which seemingly forces Google to use "www.google.com" instead of say "www.google.ca" or "www.google.co.uk." By clicking on [this link](#), we will initially be directed to the Google results page for "Sprint Corporation"; while this may seem odd, it nonetheless works in preventing a location redirect. Simply navigate to the above results page, erase the text in the search field, and enter your keywords. Note the location is "unknown" when conducting a search from this page.



We recommend you take the time to test this work-around to see if it works for you. Try a search for "shopping" or "mall" and see if you are being directed to local results. If you find the results are not location-specific, you may want to bookmark this page as an alternative to NCR – at least until Google introduces a new solution.

Boolean and Enforced Term Operators are not new to investigators; they have been around since the early days of search, when they were more than necessary for conducting an effective search. While simple to use, the challenge lies with knowing which operators are effective, and compounding this challenge is Google's constant evolution; once you finally think you have a grasp on Google's advanced search operators, something will inevitably change (remember, Google sees approximately three updates each day). If we don't take the time to regularly refresh our knowledge of search operators, and to learn new search techniques, we run the risk of using operators that no longer function as they once did, or of using search techniques that are no longer effective; doing so can greatly skew our search results, and possibly investigative/research outcomes.

It is good practice to regularly run through a list of search operators (or techniques) to test their effectiveness. Google and other search engines typically publish a list of search operators they support; Google's search operator listing can be viewed [here](#). Search operator listings for other search engines can be located via a simple Google search (i.e., Bing search operators / Bing advanced search).

To get you started, our team has tested and compiled an updated list of operators that are currently effective with the Google search engine. Note that some operators which are no longer effective with Google may still be effective with other search engines (i.e., Bing, DuckDuckGo).

Effective

“ “ The quote mark operator can be used in place of AND and + to force Google to include a search term in the results, and when conducting a forced phrase search. Inserting quotes around words will ensure an exact match (i.e., "Toddington International" / "this is a phrase search enclosed in quotes" / "John M. Doe").

- The minus symbol is effective for removing specific terms in a Google search. It replaces the NOT operator as it will exclude the term it directly precedes (i.e. trafficking - human -drugs).

* The wildcard operator functions as a placeholder for one or more words (i.e., "there are * RCMP members in Ontario"). *Effectiveness is questionable right now. No longer listed on the Google search operators page.*

OR – The OR operator is still effective and can be utilized to get alternative search results (i.e., organized OR organised / marijuana OR marihuana). Essentially this operator works by combining results for the different variations (i.e., results for the North American spelling of "organized" as well as the British spelling "organised").

site: – Limits search results to a specific site or domain (i.e., site:toddington.com "OSINT

related: – Searches for similar or related websites (i.e., related:facebook.com).

cache: – Produces the cached version of a website (i.e., cache:toddington.com).

Ineffective

AND – This operator is now inherent in Google and is rendered ineffective.

NOT – This operator no longer functions as a way to remove words, and is now treated as a separate search term. Google replaced this operator with the minus symbol as explained above.

| The pipeline operator is no longer effective when adding alternative terms in a Google search. Instead, Google recognizes the OR operator explained above.

+ The plus symbol is no longer effective in adding words as it is used in arithmetic equations on Google.

Link: – The "link" operator (or "in-link" operator) is no longer effective with Google in locating other sites that link to a specific website.

Conclusion

Although the average person may not find it necessary to stay up-to-date with search changes such as these, it is essential that online investigators and researchers take the time to remain current on industry trends. Being proficient in search will increase the efficiency of investigative and research processes. As such, we recommend dedicating a set amount of time each day (or each week) to research updates or changes made to the search tools we use. Subscribing to industry-related newsletters and mailing lists can also assist in remaining current on industry trends; authors of these publications often alert their readers to changes that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. Finally, continuing professional development of our tradecraft is key; it is important that we take the time to receive training on the skills needed to be proficient investigators and researchers.

Upcoming Select Public Courses



Social Media Intelligence & Investigations

To recognize, collect, and leverage the value of social platform-sourced information, research and investigative professionals must fully understand the restrictions and implications of obtaining and utilizing such information in a manner that does not violate user privacy expectations, license agreements, and other legal limitations. This course will introduce research and investigative professionals to a variety of innovative tools and techniques that will enable you to locate, collect, and utilize social platform-sourced information, while considering the implications of leveraging this type of information safely, quickly, and appropriately.

[May 16-17, 2019, Vancouver, BC](#)

Registration closed - [contact us](#) to join the wait list for our next installment.

[June 6-7, 2019, Toronto, ON](#)

Advanced Internet Intelligence & Online Investigations

Aimed at managers, frontline investigators, researchers, and analysts alike, this advanced training program will provide detailed instruction on effectively using the Internet as an Open Source Intelligence, research, and investigation tool. Demonstrating advanced search and analysis techniques for mining Web-based and social media information, this comprehensive training program will also examine a number of essential privacy tools for ensuring data, communication, and online security. Techniques being used by the criminal element to conceal their identity, location, and illegal behaviour will also be introduced.

[September 8-11, 2019, Cambridge, UK](#)

(3-day course and evening social, in partnership with the International Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Crime Services)

Australia- & Asia-Based Training

months. For dates, locations, and pricing information, please [contact us](#).

TII is pleased to offer a number of specialized and customizable in-house training programs for both the public and private sector in a variety of formats. We also have available a number of expert speakers available. To learn more about what we can do to empower your workforce, [contact us](#).

Resources for the OSINT Professional

<https://t.co/pK3e3J11Gr> - PictureMate: Chrome extension that lets you view tagged photos of Facebook users using their Facebook ID (note: non-official Facebook app)

<http://findthat.email> - Chrome extension that finds emails on social networks

<https://web.stagram.com/search> - Instagram search tool, searchable by username or hashtag

<https://ptrack.konafarry.com> - New transit tracking tool for the Puget Sound/Seattle region

<https://contactout.com> - Chrome extension that lets you view email addresses on LinkedIn

<https://namechk.com> - Check usernames on social networking and bookmarking sites

<http://www.getlinkinfo.com> - Expand and preview a shortened URL

<https://camfindapp.com> - Visual search engine that allows users to take an image of an object and determine what it is

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/vies/?locale=en - VAT number validator

<https://opencorporates.com> - Search engine for corporation registration information, including direct links to originating registries

<https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018> - Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index and ratings

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/index.html> - World Factbook: provides information on countries around the world

Follow us on [Twitter](#) for our "resource of the day", or visit our [Free Open Source Intelligence Resources](#) page to see more resources like these.

More Online Training

Open Source Intelligence for Financial Investigators 40-Hour E-Learning Program

Essential for all financial institutions and corporations required to comply with the *European Union Fourth Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Directive* and similar legislation, or otherwise engaging in enhanced due diligence activities, this comprehensive training provides financial and business professionals with the latest tools and techniques required to effectively gather online OSINT, with the aim of enhancing compliance activities and minimizing potentially detrimental risks to an organization — both quickly and accurately. **Sign up or learn more [here](#).**

Introduction to Intelligence Analysis 40-Hour E-Learning Program

This program provides a rich and interesting opportunity to explore the key concepts and intellectual foundations which inform intelligence analysis activity. Students will develop awareness of, and experience in, using common tools and methodologies to conduct analysis assignments, as well as learn how to fashion one's insights and ideas in a way that communicates effectively to clients and other intelligence consumers. **Sign up or learn more [here](#).**

Criminal Intelligence Analysis 40-Hour E-Learning Program

This program is designed to equip aspiring and inexperienced analysts, as well as other interested law enforcement and investigative professionals, with the knowledge and skills required to undertake criminal intelligence analysis work, and to understand criminal intelligence analysis products when encountered. **Sign up or learn more [here](#).**

Strategic Intelligence Analysis 40-Hour E-Learning Program

This program is intended for professionals working in public sector enforcement,

plan, and implement strategic analysis projects, and deliver impactful strategic advice to clients and other end users. **Sign up or learn more** [here](#).

"How-Tos" and Articles of Interest for the OSINT Professional

["Your Google data is getting the auto-delete tool it always needed"](#)

["Meet the fake people who will soon crowd your timelines"](#)

["FBI Releases the Internet Crime Complaint Center 2018 Internet Crime Report"](#)

["It's Complicated: Mozilla's 2019 Internet Health Report"](#)

["Insurers Want to Know How Many Steps You Took Today"](#)

["Internet Explorer zero-day exploit makes files vulnerable to hacks on Windows PCs"](#)

["Google's Sensorvault Is a Boon for Law Enforcement. This Is How It Works."](#)

["10 Tools and tricks to verify Instagram posts"](#)

["Researchers find 540 million Facebook user records on exposed servers"](#)

["How to stop emails from spying on you"](#)

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