

## **A better way to browse search results.**

The problem with today's search engine, is not in the quality of their results; the problem lies in the linear way in which those results are presented.

I say linear, because all search engines present results in a rank format; from what the algorithm calculates is the best result, downwards. (see picture below for the results 1 - 8 of about 240,000,000 for football). When there are millions, or even just thousands, of potentially relevant results to a search, the first 10, 20 or 50 or presented in the first screen, or one page on the browser. If what you are looking for is not there, you will have to press "next" and read the second set of results.

### [NFL.com - Official Site of the National Football League](#)

Official site of the National **Football** League. It delivers in-depth team pages for all clubs, extensive game-day coverage with real time statistics and ...

[www.nfl.com/](#) - 147k - Jan 6, 2007 - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Football.com](#)

Resources and **football** related sites, chat, software-games.

[www.football.com/](#) - 67k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [American football - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

Following the end of the college **football** regular season, the NFL begins scheduling ...

American **football** is played on a rectangular field 120 yards (110 ...

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_football](#) - 79k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Football \(soccer\) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

**Football** (also known as association **football** or soccer) is a team sport played ... The game is played using a single round ball (the **football**) and two teams ...

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Football\\_\(soccer\)](#) - 110k - Jan 6, 2007 - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

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### [Funbrain.com Power Football](#)

**Football** plus brains equals power. Improve your math skills with a fun game.

[www.funbrain.com/football/](#) - 7k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Home Page - Pro Football Hall of Fame](#)

Honoring the great players of the professional **football** world since 1920. Located in Canton, Ohio.

[www.profootballhof.com/](#) - 54k - Jan 6, 2007 - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Guardian Unlimited Football](#)

Coverage includes breaking news, live match reports and latest scores backed up by columnists, club reports and special reports.

[football.guardian.co.uk/](#) - 66k - Jan 6, 2007 - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Football News, Results, Fixtures and Fantasy Football UK](#)

**Football**.co.uk has the all the latest England **football** news and live scores on the UK

Most of us, will go through two or three pages of such results before retreating in frustration. The challenge, is then to refine the search in such a way that it will reduce the number of potential results. One likely downside of restricting the search, is that we might actually eliminate what we are looking for by being too narrow. Another frustrating outcome is that we are still faced with thousands of results compiled in hundreds of pages.

This state of affairs is also true when search within social network sites such as youtube.com , linkedin.com or flickr.com . What you are looking for, may be spread over pages 2, 4, 8 and 15. What you were really hoping to find may actually be on page 25, but you are not likely to get there and it's not a matter of having the fastest connection to the internet.

What I propose, is a visual representation of all the data; mostly as a graph with a minimal amount of text. This will take the form of a three-dimensional graph where the results will be aggregated over one to five categories, representing cone-like shapes. What the search engine thinks is the top result within a specific category will be at the top of that cone, with the subsequent result implicitly laying below it in decreasing degree of relevance. At the very base of that cone, (where the topography is flat), will be the unlikeliest results. Millions of result can happily lay there, ready to be searched in the same screen.

The first paradigm shift for the typical internet user, is that he will know that what he is looking for, is somewhere on the screen.

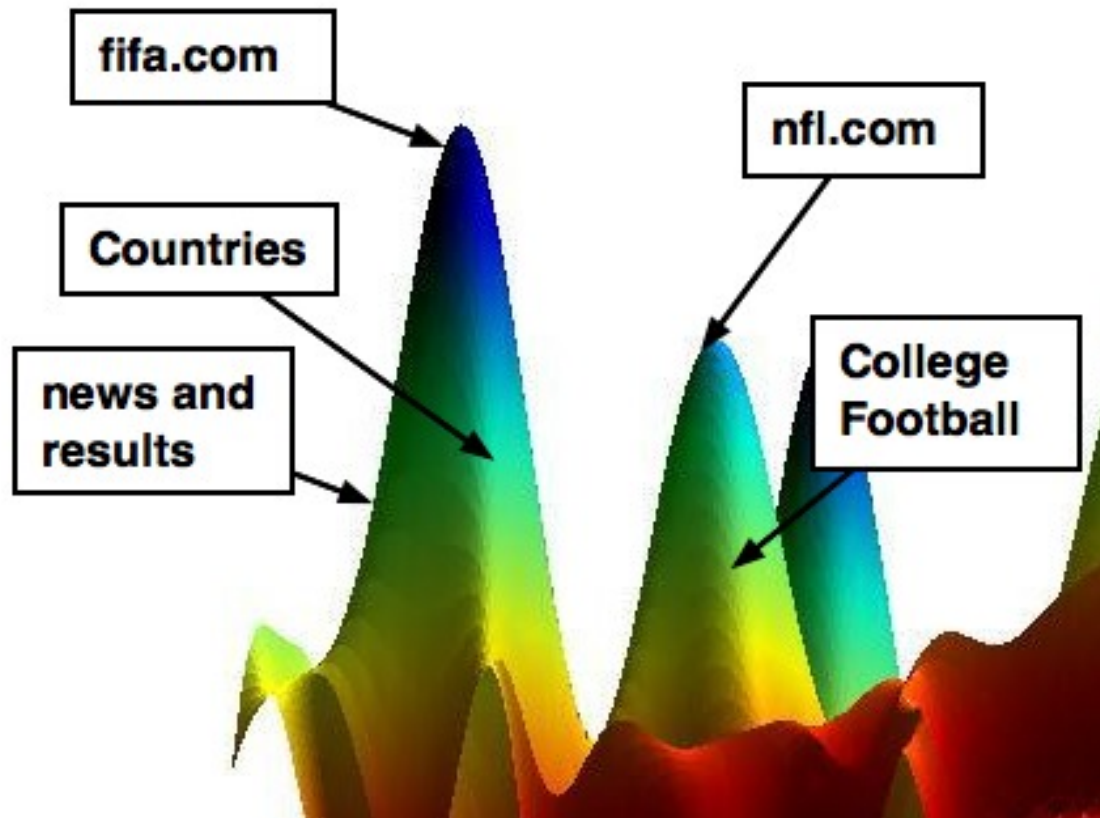
How will he do this?

Take for instance the search for the term “football” in the picture above. Let’s assume that there are two main sets of results for that search (various algorithms may decide otherwise, but I will show that it won’t matter much). The two sets are Football (played with feet) and American football. These sets, will represent two 3-D cones. The top result of each set will be (lets assume again for the sake of the argument) fifa.com for Football and nfl.com for American football.

Right there, in one glance, the user can focus on the cone (or set of results) that he really meant. He will then bring his cursor towards the cone that is relevant to him, and if the top result is not what he hoped for, the cone will then automatically split up into sub-cones, illustrating various sub-categories such as professional football versus amateur, geographic factors etc....

At this point I must point-out that the 3-D representation, should be thought of as a topographic map showing key “landscape” information, but not all of it. (see picture below). Taking the same example, the top results of each cone would appear also as text. Below them though, there would be just marker of various sub-categories. For instance, mid-way through the cone might be signs saying blogs, pictures, videos. Further below, would be Geography, institutions. The user then just needs to direct the cursor where towards one of those key markers to reveal the sub-category and the relevant results for it. In case he realizes what he is looking for is not likely to be there, he can just “zoom-out” as it were and tackle his search from another angle (another sub-category) or height (a category of categories).

It is now clear, that because of the dynamic experience of the user, it does not matter much how the algorithm will organize the results, whether the photos sub-category will be ranked higher than geography, whether they will be in different branches or not. Getting there, will be a matter of seconds at most.



Having illustrated the ideal scenario from the standpoint of the user, I will also suggest one way in which those categories will be created. Always from the same example, you will agree that there will be very little links from a football website, to an American football website and vice-versa. Manchester United or Real Madrid's website are highly more likely to link to fifa.com than they are to nfl.com. It is from this aggregated inter-linkage between sites that know they share something in common that the algorithm will take its cue, refining it with other variables. These will be more or less proprietary and I assume some of it will track the user habits.

Eventually, there could, there should be, a topographic map of the internet, the organization of which will depend upon the algorithm. As long as all websites are include, the way they are organized wont matter much if the navigation is seamless.

It is said that pictures are worth a thousand words. Soon one screen-shot will be worth a billion search results.

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