

Googlewhacking: Or, How to Search Well

Linguistics 445/515

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We're going to have a little competition in class today. When I say *Go!*, you have 5 minutes to find the fewest number of sites that a two-word query on google returns. Note: you cannot use quotation marks.

- Go to <http://www.googlewhack.com>. This website lists pairs of words which generate exactly one – i.e. one and only one – result on <http://www.google.com>. Some previous examples (January 23, 2007) are *squirreling dervishes* and *inculcating skullduggery*.
- It lists the rules:
 - Words must be in google's dictionary
 - Google determines uniqueness, i.e., the number of counts
 - Word lists or randomly generated text are not allowed as googlewhacks.
- As you search for a googlewhack (or as few hits as possible), be thinking of the following and prepared to discuss the following:
 - What kinds of linguistic properties are you relying on to find a googlewhack?
 - How big do you think the internet is?
 - How are unrelated words actually related?
 - What is the relation of this exercise to searching for content that you actually want to find?
 - What are your general search strategies for this challenge?
 - Can you use the feedback from one search to help refine the search?