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[Google to refresh its search](#)

According to the Wall Street Journal, Google is working on an overhaul of its Internet search formula in an attempt to maintain its dominant position.

[Facebook simplifies privacy settings](#)

Facebook - the world's leading social networking site, with over 400 million users - has unveiled simplified privacy controls.

[Google completes AdMob acquisition](#)

It's over six months now since Google announced its plans to acquire the leading mobile ad network, AdMob.

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Google to refresh its search

Tuesday 20 March 2012 | By Heidi Scott, Gosh! Media Copywriter

Tags: [amit](#), [entities](#), [google](#), [search](#), [semantic](#), [singhal](#)

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Google enjoys a market share of around 66% and rakes in more than 75% of all search-related advertising revenue, which accounts for the vast majority of its \$37 billion annual revenue. However, Google is worried about staying ahead of Microsoft's Bing in web search and needs to catch up with Apple in voice-activated mobile search.

Google is reportedly finding ways to churn out more than simply a list of web links but rather present facts and direct answers at the top of the search results. Of course, at the same time, the new methodology could give Google more opportunities to put advertisements in front of searchers.

However, some leading search pundits are questioning whether the changes will really amount to very much. The leading online publication, [Search Engine Land](#), for example, casts doubt on whether there is anything new at all in what has been leaked of Google's plans. Of course, without a definitive statement from Google itself, it is difficult to know whether there is any substance in the changes or whether the media coverage is a terrific PR coup.

It is thought that Google is not replacing its current keyword-based search system - which decides the importance of a site based on factors such as the words it contains and how often other websites link to it - but the search engine is going to use semantic search technology in order to provide more relevant results. 'Semantic' refers to the process of understanding the meaning of words - for example, it can help associate different words with one another, such as a company (eg Google) with its founders (Larry Page and Sergey Brin).

One of Google's top search executives, [Amit Singhal](#), recently said in an interview that the new technology will use a database containing hundreds of millions of 'entities' (people, places and things) that Google has been amassing over the last couple of years. In 2010, Google acquired Metaweb Technologies, which then had an index of 12 million entities such as movies, books, firms and celebrities. This compares with just 3.5 million English entries in the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, albeit that these include much more detailed information. According to Amit Singhal, Google and the Metaweb team have now expanded their index to more than 200 million entities, partly by developing 'extraction algorithms' that can help to organise data scattered across the web.

The pundits at Search Engine Land think that Google is merely going to "ramp up" the results that come from its Google Squared technology - which was closed as a stand-alone service last year, but has remained part of Google search - and its recent acquisitions, and hence the story in the WSJ is nothing more than overblown PR.

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