

How Search Engines Work

Robots of a Worldwide Bookstore

To understand how search engines work, pretend that the Web is a giant bookstore, and a search engine is a robot inside that bookstore.

Say you want to find out more about what monkeys eat, so you ask the robot to find books on bananas. The robot would scan every book in the bookstore and rip out every page in every book that contained the word bananas.

You might get pages from cookbooks, from books on monkeys and maybe from joke books, all mixed together. Not every page would be relevant to monkeys, and some of the pages would have information that is just plain false (from the joke books, for example).

Do you see how robots (search engines) aren't so smart after all? You need to do the real thinking part and determine if a Web site has the information you want, as well as the information you can trust.

To get smarter about finding good web sites, read the "[Evaluating Web Sites](#)" section of this guide.



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