

Google's World

We're all familiar with doing a simple search on the web using Google. We're not all in touch with all of the things Google does outside of the search bar. Let's look a little deeper at this tech behemoth and see what they're offering the consumer today in terms of tools to make life on the web better for all of us. Google's vast array of tools are free for all of us to use, but the price we pay is with our personal information. Google collects swaths of data about us and compiles very detailed databases on each of us so they can use the information to sell for marketing purposes. It's incredible just how detailed the information is, every search you've ever typed into Google from your sign in or IP address is recorded and used to build a detailed profile of your interests, likes, hobbies, habits and work.

What else can google do other than just search on the web? Lots, here are some popular functions we like and use regularly.

Google Ngram viewer will allow you to search which words were typed into millions of books over hundreds of years to see trends that are happening in society as time unfolds. This is a search tool that only looks for the printed word in books, nothing else. Powerful!

Google Correlate will show you how often people search for certain terms. If you type in generators you'll see the clear patterns of winter seasons and super-sized storms that cause people look for generators who didn't look ahead. You can track searches over time period or between states. It's useful to see how people in various states do or don't look for certain things. If you type in Harvard you'll see that it's mostly typed in by residents of Massachusetts.

Google Trends will allow you to see just that, trends in just about anything from people to politics to sports and anything else you can imagine. See what is popular by country, region or date.

If you're an entrepreneur or in marketing Google Think Insights will help you understand and see what is available from an online marketing perspective. There are a lot of things going on in this space most people are completely unaware of. If you own a business check it out. Want to see what is going on in an industry or a sector, this is the place to find the data and begin strategizing how to capitalize on the opportunities.

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Pollution Crackdown

The United States does a great job here in keeping our country clean and relatively pollution safe. Some would argue they go too far and the EPA is out of hand with trying to regulate anything and everything that moves. I think we're lucky to live here in America and look at how nice our country remains today and how many other countries have pollution issues that are out of control on a lot of levels.

We've been smart about watching a lot of other countries destroy their natural resources for economic gain. We do some resource extraction of course, but nothing like what happens in many other countries and our penchant for law has kept the place really clean on a relative basis. This cleanliness comes at the price of red tape and regulation and a strong EPA to make sure things stay nice at home.

The world health organization has recently released study notes claiming that industrial pollutants have become so hazardous that the health ramifications of the pollutants now rival that of some deadly diseases. The top diseases are typically thought to be worse than Malaria and Tuberculosis. They've identified the top ten list of industries that cause the most health troubles and here they are:

- Lead-Acid battery recycling
- Lead smelting
- Mining and ore processing
- Tannery operations
- Industrial/municipal dump sites
- Industrial estates
- Artisanal gold mining
- Product manufacturing
- Chemical manufacturing
- Dye industry

As the list shows, these are popular businesses that are everywhere in the world today. We've got all of these businesses here and they're typically not around residential areas, but instead are in remote or industrial areas not around housing sites. We've also seen small scale problems on a localized level where the superfund has stepped in and cleaned up countless sites where something bad environmentally happened. The countries that are considered the most polluted are surprising, most people think China has the worst air in the world. This is interesting, but China certainly has issues and those issues are causing people to visit China less as they're worried about the air quality. **(Cont'd on Pg. 3)**

If you have an android smartphone and have the GPS system enabled on your phone there is a record of where you have been, at what time and how fast you were traveling. I had this set up until I realized they were tracking my speed and since I'm always going 5-15 mph over the speed limit I turned it off. Here is a cool tool to track loved ones as well, you'll always know exactly where they are.

<https://maps.google.com/locationhistory>

YouTube is a Google asset and a really cool tool and entertainment option. When Google bought this years ago I wondered why, now it's crystal clear as to why they wanted this and kudos for the vision of what this would become. If you're not a user, YouTube is a wonderful tool for just about anything you can imagine. If you'd like a video tutorial on how to change your oil, fix your brakes, change a timing belt, put on your makeup, paint a room, epoxy your garage, fix a broken TV, match your clothes or just about anything else you can think of, the depth and breadth of what is available on YouTube is truly mindboggling.

Gmail is also a Google property and if you're looking for a webmail tool this is as good as any. You can have as many gmail accounts as you'd like and forward them to outlook and use them for various purposes. Many people have a "real" email for their daily lives and then a gmail account to sign up for things that could be junk or spam or coupons, etc. If you do gmail, you can have it forwarded to your outlook or other PC mail system so everything is integrated. If you'd like to see all of the searches you've ever performed in a google account, you are lucky and able to export all of this data right to your PC. Here is the link to make the export of all searches you've ever performed while on your account. <https://history.google.com>

If you'd like to save all of your Google tools you can now export all of the data from the entire Google ecosystem into one file. There is a lot of data and a lot of sites here, your download, if you choose to do it, will include Google of course, but your YouTube videos, playlists, favorites, etc. It'll include all of your emails in Gmail, all of your saved photos and anything you may have put on your cloud drive whether it's data, pictures, documents, etc. We advise against running a business on these free tools as you don't own or control them and back them up on your own if you're using the cloud drives. You cannot beat the convenience and price of these tools, but you're giving up a lot in control and safety with them. Google is happy to save and host your cloud drive, they'll search and archive every word of your data to market to you. What could happen here with a data breach within Google is just mind bending.

<https://www.google.com/takeout>

If you're a research fanatic or just plain nosy, Google public data explorer is priceless in our opinion. You can track the debt levels by country, the fastest internet speeds per country, the diseases that pop up per country per population, who lives longest, who has the most children, crop levels and productivity, the most dangerous roads in a given country, pump price for fuel across the world, passenger cars per 1000 people, natural resources per country, etc. You can also upload your own data and use the Google engine to crank out the numbers based on your fact sets. We find this useful in determining how each country is behaving financially relative to the others, what trends may pop up based on age, employment, trends, etc.

The Minimum Wage Battle

This is fertile ground for a good battle these days from the political class. Rather than find real solutions to crushing debt loads and constant budget deficits across all developed nations, they'd rather deal with this to attempt to score political points with a swath of voters.

Let's think about it and see the pros and cons of such a move. We've recently seen Washington DC make Walmart pay minimum wages much higher than every other business on a few stores they were going to build there so they pulled the plug on that project of course. Why would one company pay a higher minimum wage than every other in the state? The political class defines pathetic and illogical these days. The theory is that Walmart is making just too much money. What about the fact that Walmart has made more jobs than any other company on the planet? They're all so evil there, making lots of jobs and lowering the prices of product some great and some junk from China, but it's all cheaper thanks to the evil people at Walmart.

We've seen many manufacturing companies move their plants and manufacturing from Detroit, New England, California and Europe to the southern United States for cheaper labor and more flexibility. Boeing tried to move to the Carolina's for the same reason, but the Government wouldn't allow it. It appears capital flows to where it is most welcome and that is a simple law of supply and demand. If laws make capital scared, it's going to move away.

Seattle just passed a law that will bring their minimum wage up to \$15.00 per hour in a few years. We're all for people making more money, but does this solve that problem? Should they make more money for doing the same job with no skills or improvement in education, skills or talent? Should the government dictate how much a person should be paid or should that be whatever the market will bear? We do live in America, nobody is forcing anyone to stay in a minimum wage job for life and support their family. Minimum wage is set to protect people from abuse and to allow entry level jobs. Most minimum wage jobs are held by high school and college kids in industries that don't require any education, skills or special talents. These jobs are not meant to be careers, nor should they pay what a career job should that requires a lot of education or talent. If a business is forced to pay more for wages, it simply increases the costs of doing business and the price of the product or service the business offers is ultimately going to rise. If government force feeds industry certain minimums, industry will respond with automation that removes jobs and replaces them with robots, computers or some other alternative.

The recent strike by the food industry workers in trying to force them to pay a minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour for all fast food workers certainly sped up the rate at which automated attendants will show up at your local fast food joint. Expect to work with more machines moving forward. Some restaurant chains are now experimenting with automated servers after the strike. These policies that are being pushed do nothing more than raise the costs of doing business and destroy jobs. Europe experimented with this model in the 70's and it landed them in the hot seat. Germany has no minimum wage and it's the healthiest part of all of Europe. Our government's recent track record of going down the road of known failure is certainly mind boggling. Why not just pay everyone \$100.00 per hour if it really doesn't matter? Small business are hurt the most by this thinking.

Noteworthy News!!!

- Congratulations to Ian & Brittany Sherwood on the purchase of their new home! ☺
- Congratulations to Jeff & Mariel McDonald on the purchase of their new home! ☺
- Our condolences to the Hull family on the passing of Bill, a wonderful man, son, husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend.

Question & Answer

Ask any financial question you have and we'll address it here.

Q: What does it mean that Europe now has negative interest rates?

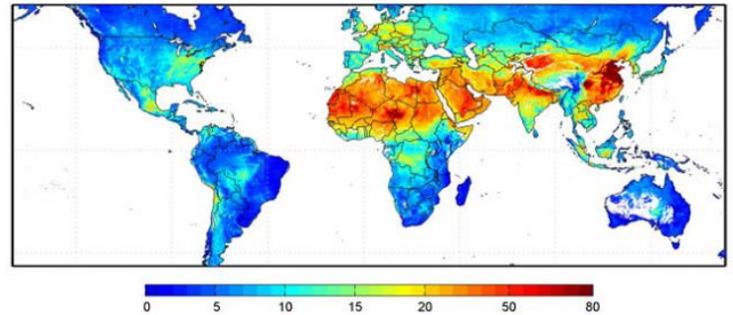
This is new and newsworthy indeed. The ECB (European Central Bank, the equivalent of the Fed of Europe) just last week decided to make the intrabank rates negative. What this means is banks now pay to have money on deposit with the ECB. Most modern economies pay the banks a little bit (currently 0.25% or so depending on the country) to place excess reserves on deposit with the Fed of their respective country. This gives the bank a nice spot for the capital they must have to offset all of the loans they've made over the years.

This move just pushes the nontraditional monetary policy envelope further from where it has been for the past two or three years, which is already off the deep end and not doing much for the real economy. The idea is that if the banks have to pay to keep excess reserves on deposit with the ECB, they will be more inclined to lend that money out and not keep it on deposit with the ECB and make a little interest on it.

This is an aggressive concept in theory, but we're not considering here the underwriting standards that banks must use to determine if people or businesses are a good credit risk. If banks had ample demand for loans with solid underwriting risks, they'd have already lent the money out to help grow their business. Banks don't want idle money on deposit with the ECB, they want to lend it out as banks view loans as assets and deposits as liabilities. They're not doing it because there is a clear lack of quality credit risks and they don't want to go right back into the crisis they just left. Banks today have been recovering from the period where loans were made with very lax (some say downright stupid and I cannot disagree) lending standards over the past 4-5 years. Many banks are in much better shape than they were at the height of the crisis, but many more are still in trouble. European banks especially face certain risks as they're balance sheets are loaded with the paper (bills, bonds and notes) of the governments where they do business. In theory government paper is safe and "risk free" but in reality that is the furthest thing from the case. Yields are very low today, which on the surface makes one think this paper is safe, but it's not at all. The fact that the lower European block of countries can now borrow money at 3 or 4 or 5% proves the absolute dysfunction of the risk and reward system of government bonds today. Easy money has made it appear there is no longer any risk in the financial system. The reality is just the opposite, the risks of the system are higher than they've been in a long time, but they're masked. We can see very clearly through this façade.

Pollution Crackdown (cont'd from pg. 1)

Look at the following chart, which shows how various countries have scored on a global measure by NASA of how much pollution exists in the air in each place. As you can see, the darkest reds and oranges are where pollution is the most acute. The biggest issues are currently across southern Asia, the Middle East and northern Africa. Thanks to NASA for the chart!



We'll focus on the area with the deepest reds, the Beijing region of China and it's so bad there we see people regularly wearing masks in their daily lives and the country needed to close roads and businesses to remove the smog for the Olympics. Check out how some countries are changing their travel habits to the area:

Decrease in tourists to Beijing, Jan. 2013 to Nov. 2013



Quartz | qz.com

Data: bjta.gov.cn

Thanks to the Beijing Municipal Tourism Committee and Google's Chrome Translate tool for the chart! ☺ (I must admit, it's really cool being able to surf foreign websites with Chrome's translate tool. It's almost like it was done in English, we cannot read all of the sites, but we can certainly get the messages. This is a beautiful thing about our technology today, reading the news in any country in any language right from your home or office.)

This is in just one year how travel has decreased to the region. I hear regularly from friends and clients who travel there how there is a difference in the air that they can feel as they breathe. The above chart from NASA measures the air quality in how many particulates of a certain size are on a square meter of air. Our air is very clean compared to many places here in America, especially if you live in a lowly populated area. Cities and business districts are by definition dirtier of course.

We're going through somewhat of an energy revolution here in America as we've found ways to extract oil through the fracking process, have discovered centuries of new natural gas deposits and now lots of new clean energy projects. We'll likely keep our country relatively clean as we move into the next generation. ☺

Money Quiz

This month's challenge is to tell us about Warren Buffet's fame machine. He had 40,000 people at this year's Berkshire investors meeting. How many were there in 1981? Last month's quiz wasn't won, on 09/03/08 the Federal Reserve had 480 Billion in debt outstanding. How much did it have on 4/30/14, a staggering 4.03 Trillion. It's only up about 900% in a few years, great stewardship of a nation! 😊 Winner goes to Ruby Tuesday on us!

05/19/14:5

Solar Panels Evolve

There is some new and exciting things happening in solar today that we should be aware of. This may be a new wave we'll be able to ride for some time, but it's still a little way down the horizon. We all know how solar panels work and as they gain efficiency they're becoming a more real alternative to traditional electricity or "juice" in various applications.

Solar panels on rooftops are not news, they're everywhere and for good reason. They're still super expensive and require loans or leases to obtain them, but in time as production continues to ramp the efficiencies of scale may ultimately make the prices reasonable for the average person without the need for loans, leases and tax rebates. Solar panels today can produce both electricity and heat, killing two birds with one stone. It's amazing to think the panels are now on homes, businesses, cars, airplanes, lights, signs, and a host of other gadgets we all use and live with day to day. If you're a hiker or camper or survivalist you likely have a solar charger for your cell phone, there is no other way to get the juice if you're far from civilization.

Not everyone realizes we've now built solar farms in our deserts with tens of thousands of mirrors that move all day long to keep a beam of sun focusing in on a tower that produces heat and generates electricity. This is a monster version of what we all did with the sun as children with burning a hole in paper with a magnifying glass. This is an awesome thing to see, check out the following link:

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/take-a-look-at-the-worlds-largest-solar-thermal-farm-91577483/?no-ist>

The neat thing coming down the pike is what solar science is being applied to. We now have solar paint, solar shingles and solar pavement. This is all real and in production and for sale. Still not ready for the masses, but incredible in theory and application. If we don't find a game changing energy source, such as making fuel cells as easy as oil or gas, solar may be the ultimate solution to our energy issues. If we were to repave the roads in this country with solar panels, we'd generate triple the juice that we use each year. The challenge is the scope and size of that project as well as distribution and gathering of the juice from such a diverse network of generation sites. Buildings can now be net generators of juice rather than endless users of it if they're equipped with solar shingles and painted with solar paint. I think this is a very exciting industry in its infancy. We'll keep an eye on this technology and hop on when and if the time is right.

Here is a useful list of 20+ great things people do that make life easier. We'll happily share anything we come across that can help you improve your outcomes. All of these things are amazingly simple, but we need to give credit to those who thought them up and put them into action. Here we go:

- To get ready in the morning in a timely fashion, create a playlist that gives you just enough time. This should set your body to a rhythm to make it happen in the set time frame.
- If you think someone is giving you a fake number, read it back to them incorrectly, if they agree with what you read you'll know it's no good.
- Grocery shop after eating a meal, you'll spend less if you shop with a full stomach.
- Hang a wrinkled shirt or dress in the bathroom before you take a hot shower, the steam will help remove wrinkles.
- Create a stop time to end the eating day to avoid eating too much.
- When someone tells you their name, say it out loud back to them and look them in the eye as you shake their hand, you'll be more likely to remember their name and their eyes.
- Break in your shoes in no time with a blow-dryer and thick socks.
- Pay for things in cash so it's not "fake" or "imaginary" money, you'll be far less likely to waste it.
- When you eat, focus only on eating, no TV or internet distractions and you'll eat less.
- Don't make promises when you're in a good mood.
- Always arrive 10 minutes early to everything, once it's a habit you won't stress about being late ever again.
- Put your clothes in your closet with the hangers reversed. When you put them back in put the hangers in the normal way. Whatever clothes you didn't use, donate to charity.
- If you have brain freeze from too much ice cream, press the underside of your tongue against the roof of your mouth.
- Put your alarm clock at the far side of the room rather than next to your bed.
- Paint the inside of your rings with clear nail polish to avoid staining your fingers as the metals age.
- When packing roll your clothes, prevents wrinkles and saves space.
- Use a highlighter to get permanent marker stains off your body.
- Avoid clutter by throwing away one or two things for each new thing you bring home. (reverse hoarding) 😊
- Buy experiences, not things and take pictures not souvenirs.
- If it takes less than two minutes, do it now! 😊 BAM!

Inspirational Quotes

- A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions, Confucius
- Attitudes are more important than facts, Karl Menninger
- If you'll not settle for anything less than your best, you'll be amazed at what you can accomplish in your lives, Vince Lombardi
- Do not wait; the time will never be "just right." Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along. Napoleon Hill
- Genius without education is like silver in the mine, Ben Franklin
- The speed of the leader is the speed of the gang. Mary Kay Ash
- The less you open your heart to others, the more your heart suffers, Deepok Chopra
- Better to keep your mouth shut and look stupid rather than to open it and remove all doubt, Mark Twain
- We can throw stones, complain about them, stumble on them, climb over them, or build with them, William Arthur Ward



We can piece the puzzle together and make your money work for you!

Don't make excuses; make things happen; make changes; make history!

Cell phones, do they need one and at what age should our little ones get a cell phone? This is a big societal debate and clearly they're not needs, but wants. We parents make a litany of logical arguments to justify the purchase of a cell phone for our children after they wear us down asking a thousand times. I've heard we need one because they're home alone, they're at sports and I need to pick them up, they're in band, dance, math counts, odyssey of the mind or some other program where we don't know exactly when they'll be done and when to go and get them. Bottom line is the kids need a cell phone like I need another hole in my head. It is nice and convenient no question, but not a need. It's great to be able to reach them anytime or text them quickly, but all of these things are wants and conveniences not needs. They're so useful they appear to be needs and they greatly enhance our lives. Our princesses don't have them yet and they're better communicators because of it. It's just a matter of time, they'll have them at some point but make sure the little ones in your life master one on one communication as that's not a want, but a need! ☺

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New York Directory (315) 682.0348

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- Josh josh@fiscalwisdom.com
- Jackie jackie@fiscalwisdom.com
- Tom tom@fiscalwisdom.com

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