

Bloomberg Businessweek®

How Google Got Its New Look

The design process that led to changes in the all-important search results page



1. Branding matters
The Google logo loses its drop shadows and TM symbol.

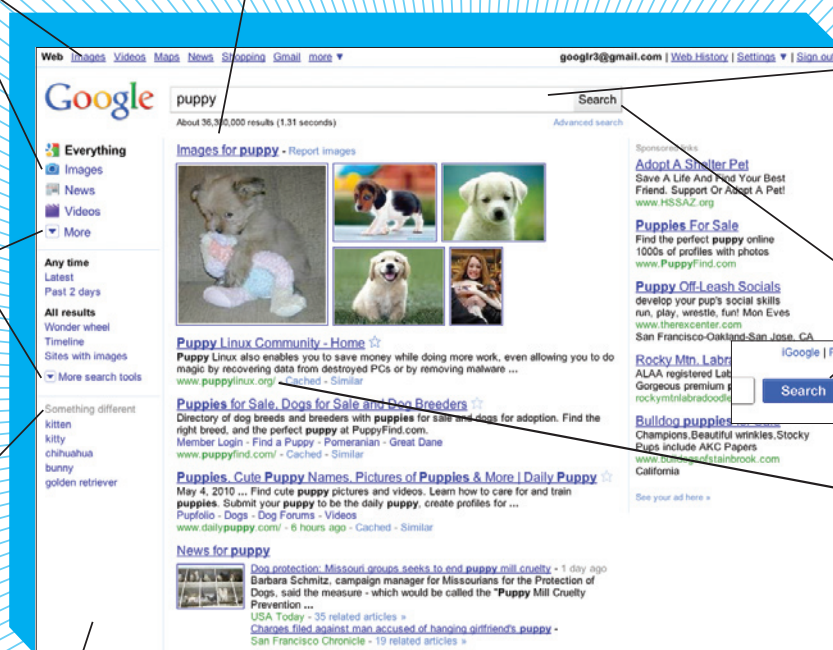


2. Side navigation color
In an early experiment, blue columns frame the results. The idea is rejected.

11. Redundancy is O.K.
Designers include text and icons for images, news, etc., for clarity's sake. Even though some of the links appear twice, the team decides that duplication is better than removing a familiar tool.

12. Pixels matter
White space is added between the search box and the first result after it is determined the increased gap wouldn't slow down click rates.

10. But wait, there's more
The page highlights tools that Google's algorithm determines might be useful.

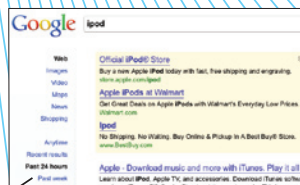
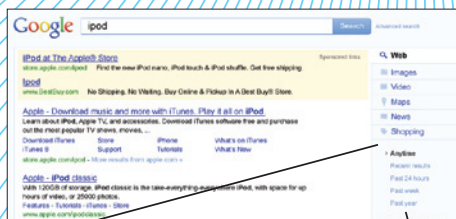


3. Search query box
The length is extended to better establish the width of the results page.

4. Search query box color
Turning the search box blue creates a needless distraction. In the final design, it's gray.

5. Links are no longer underlined
Secondary links have their underlines removed to cut down on visual clutter. Designers want to remove more link lines, but tests show this confuses users.

9. "Something Different"
A new function meant to encourage "sideways search"—a way for users to investigate similar queries. Originally labelled "Not Entirely Unlike" (a tribute to science fiction writer Douglas Adams), the name is changed before launch to avoid confusion.



6. Some things don't change
The extendable "Goooooogle" icon at the bottom of the search results page is considered sacrosanct.

8. Toolbar: Flush left or right?
The placement of the toolbar is tested exhaustively before usability experiments show the eye pays more attention to the left side of the Web page.

7. Text: Flush left or right?
Designers try aligning text on both the left and right sides of the toolbar. Final decision: Flush left.

