

FINDING IT ON THE NET

All That Really Useful General Information at Your Fingertips

BY WALTER SHAWLEE 2

While the Internet is truly amazing and its reach is vast, it is also more than a little overwhelming when you just want some simple answers to everyday issues. It's hard to know what to really look for when your search query brings up 80,000 pages.

I have watched more than a few people struggle painfully to get what they wanted to find; so, I thought a listing of really useful general-information sites would be helpful to readers.

To stay well informed and be able to respond effectively to what's going on around you, finding good, basic news is important, but it can be problematic. With the "news-as-entertainment" model now on virtually every TV network — even CNN — getting useful news and actual facts without mindless chatter is fairly difficult.

Here are some of my favorite sites to take you to right to the heart of what's going on in the world:

NEWS/FINANCE

Google is almost magical with its compressed news content of the entire planet all in one quick index: <http://news.google.com>

The Canadian-centric version is at: <http://news.google.ca>

If you need current financial data, look at Google Finance, a treasure trove of fiscal data all neatly branching out from a single well-organized page: <http://finance.google.com/finance>

Of particular utility to some of us is the U.S./Canada exchange rate, which is available at: <http://finance.google.com/finance?q=CADUSD>

Euros to U.S. dollar conversion is at: <http://finance.google.com/finance?q=EURUSD>

Other high-quality U.S. news outlets are:

- *The New York Times*: www.nytimes.com
- ABC News, one of the best: www.abcnews.go.com
- CNN online, much better than the TV version: www.cnn.com
- Shadow Government Statistics, a look behind government economic reports in an attempt to find the true "unadjusted" numbers: www.shadowstats.com
- Bloomberg, for financial world news: www.bloomberg.com/index.html

Are you ever curious to learn from a truly different perspective? Often, the news looks much different to other people throughout the world.

Here is a cross-section of great international news sites offered in English:

- Reuters, for all news: www.reuters.com
- BBC News, for a UK/European view: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>
- Spiegel International, news from Germany/Europe: www.spiegel.de/international

- NHK World, the view from Japan:

www.nhk.or.jp/daily/english

- Globe and Mail, one Canadian perspective:

www.theglobeandmail.com

- CBC, another Canadian view: www.cbc.ca

OIL, GAS, GOLD PRICES

It seems everyone is talking about oil, gas and gold prices, but where on earth do they get all those numbers to throw around? Well, as it happens, they get them right here:

- Gas Buddy, a detailed gas reference for North America: www.gasbuddy.com
- Oil-Price.Net for a quick crude oil snapshot: www.oil-price.net/index.php?lang=en
- The Oil Drum for full discussion: <http://theoil Drum.com>
- Gold Quote.Net for the current gold price: www.gold-quote.net/index.php?lang=en

WEATHER

Finally, do you need to know about serious weather issues? Here are a few key sites to help you plan safely:

- Drought/rainfall problems, all of North America: www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/monitoring/drought/nadm/index.html
- Drought/rainfall problems, U.S. only: www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html
- Hurricane watches at the National Hurricane Center: www.nhc.noaa.gov

Hopefully, these links will help make your search for information easier. Please let us know if you would like to see a specific topic covered in future "Finding It on the Net" columns. Send e-mails to Walter Shawlee 2 at walter2@sphere.bc.ca.

For "Finding It on the Net" links, visit *Avionics News* archives at www.aea.net/avionicsnews.

If you have comments or questions about this article, send e-mails to avionicsnews@aea.net.