

A black and white photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The laptop screen displays a search engine results page with various image thumbnails. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a body of water and a building.

Includes great reasons to never use Google, Yahoo, Bing, or Duck Duck Go again

# 2 SEARCH ENGINES THAT DON'T SUCK (And 11 That Do)

A Report On The State Of  
Internet Search

## *Introduction & Executive Summary*

*When the lockdowns started, I realized I was being lied to. My team and I spent days through the early part of the lockdown testing every search engine we could find, to try to figure out which search engine was not helping them lie to us.*

*They were almost exclusively all awful and censored results.*

*Below you will find a report on the search engines that leave a lot to be desired. They simply do not perform the basic purpose of a search engine: providing a user with what that user asked for. Instead they provide the user with what someone else thinks the user should see.*

*They are search engines that suck.*

*Their names are Yahoo, Google, Bing, Duck Duck Go, Swiss Cows, Qwant, Yippy, Internet Archive, Search Encrypt, Gibiru, Verizon's One Search, and Start Page.*

*The worst search engine – worse than Google, worse than Yahoo, worse than Bing by Bill Gates – the worst search engine in our tests was Duck Duck Go. That may leave you asking “What search engines do not suck?” That list is constantly changing.*

*Brave and Yandex are among my current favorites. I go to both of them at times to see which one I like the best for the task at hand. Neither are perfect, but both are better.*

*Brave Search – [Search.Brave.com](https://search.brave.com) – is one of my favorite low censorship search engine currently. Its makers realize that privacy is not the only concern that interests a user, usability is important too. As such, it should provide what is asked for AND provide un-censored results. Brave collects results from other search engines, which comes at a price of quality, but it continues to do a good job being one of the two least censored search engines that I know of. I would love to see Brave stop collecting their search data from other sources and to tackle that challenge of search 100% on their own.*



*Yandex – Yandex.com – is another favorite. It is Russian Big Tech, which means that it is still big tech, but it comes from a different perspective. It has been criticized for censoring results that are critical of the Kremlin. I have no idea whether or not it does. What it does not do is censor results that are critical of Washington, D.C. If I were a political dissident in Russia, I might not use Yandex. As a political dissident in the United States, it does a pretty good job of being what Google used to be.*

*Below you will find many more details about how my team and I conducted that research. I know it is not for everyone, but for me, honest, open, methodical reports about this about the current state of such an important technology is the kind of reading that I could nerd out on all day, and which I often do. I would love to hear your feedback on that at: [allan@RealStevo.com](mailto:allan@RealStevo.com).*

*As promised, I gave you those two useful search engines right up front. If anyone you know would like to receive the most recent version of this report, have them text the word TRUTH to 33777 or to sign up at [www.RealStevo.com/search](http://www.RealStevo.com/search) and I will send that report right over. They will also receive my encouraging and inspiring daily emails.*

*Thank you for being the lion that you are and helping to shape this time in which we live.*

*Allan Stevo*

*Best Selling Author, Community Organizer, & Executive Director of My Body, My Choice, a California-Based Health Freedom Organization*



## **EVEN DUCK DUCK GO IS CENSORING DR. JOSEPH MERCOLA**

Whenever I read an intriguing new idea in the mainstream medical press, rather than embracing the news, I hold off on forming an opinion and pause to identify and research differing opinions. I find as many as I can, and begin to construct a picture of the breadth of arguments on the topic before digging into data-driven approaches, reviewed research, and journal articles.

One of the methods I often use in that early stage is to run an internet search for the topic and to also place “Mercola” in the search parameter. Alternatively, I run an advanced search of the Mercola.com domain.

At Mercola.com, I often find a different view from the mainstream medical literature, often from an article written months or years ahead of the “cutting edge” article I had just read in the mainstream medical press.

The Mercola.com article often comes with extensive research, several opinions from a variety of experts, and journal citations. This offers a useful way for starting a deeper search by identifying web portals where experts are debating a topic. It also makes it easy to create a list of researchers most interested in that topic, making it easier to methodically identify primary sources, rather than relying on the limitations of secondary sources. This is an invaluable resource for a writer. I wish every field had a Mercola.com. Few do.

Mercola has figured out a business model that makes money, and he leads a team that provides innumerable free resources. This combination of monetization and dedication to uncovering the truth makes him dangerous to established interests. Such a combination of monetization and truth telling is highly undesirable and makes a person difficult to censor. It is a business model worthy of emulating.

I do not always agree with Mercola's conclusions, but I have tremendous respect for the research he and his team do and the good will he so plentifully provides. He is unquestionably a force for good in the world. Censoring such a person is so very suspicious. If he were so wild in his views, why wouldn't he just be debated on them and summarily dismissed as a quack. That method does not work on Mercola because of the extensive research he puts behind his claims. Those who seek to censor him, seek to censor the truth.

### **Mercola.com Is Useful For Its Outstanding Research**

Many do not read far beyond the headlines of the mainstream medical press. Those who do are richly rewarded by a website like Mercola.com, where, free of charge to them, they can find references that may save dozens of hours of research.

Whether or not I precisely agree with what Mercola says is not the issue; I can form my own opinion quite well. The breadth of research he provides and the opinion he offers outside the, often narrow, window of permissible discourse is a valuable service.

This is Mercola's great crime. He surveys the landscape of opinion and provides other ways of looking at issues, often very well established and very well researched, by highly credible practitioners and theoreticians, and he does so in an era where we are told that only the tiny permissible window of debate is permissible.

While some may consider this a behavior worthy of punishment, ridicule, and censorship, this is, in reality, among Mercola's great contributions to those who demand a more thoughtful approach.

### **Some Have Claimed There Is Online Censorship**

Some have claimed that there is online censorship from the search engines.

Having noticed an increasing difficulty finding articles on Mercola.com through online search engines, I was curious to test this observation with more structure.

Based on my own experience with search engines no longer returning the results I was used to getting from them, I theorized that it was possible that there was some censoring taking place, but I wouldn't believe that until I had some concrete proof, and while I was seeing greater difficulty, that certainly did not constitute proof.

### **I Constructed An Experiment To Prove Or Disprove This**

Seeking to dispel or demonstrate the notion of search engine censorship, I constructed an experiment using what has long been one of my favorite uses of search engines: using double quotes to search for an exact string.

On May 6-7, 2020, I searched fifteen article titles from Mercola.com. None of those searches turned up the Mercola article on Duck Duck Go, which has prided itself on not behaving like big tech companies. I continued the search on other search engines: Bing, Yahoo, and Google to compare results.

The articles searched for are as follows.

- 1.) "90% of Coronavirus Infections Are Asymptomatic"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/04/28/asymptomatic-covid-19-cases.aspx>  
April 28, 2020
- 2.) "Scientific American Warns: 5G Is Unsafe"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2019/11/13/5g-emf-exposure.aspx>  
November 13, 2019

3.) "Important New Vitamin D Research Papers"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/12/01/important-new-vitamin-d-research-papers.aspx>  
December 1, 2009

4.) "Simple Inexpensive Solution to Radically Lower EMF Exposure"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/08/25/simple-inexpensive-solution-to-radically-lower-emf-exposure.aspx>  
August 25, 2009

5.) "Real Risk of a Sneaky Deficiency for Vegans and Vegetarians"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/01/11/vegan-vitamin-deficiency.aspx>  
January 11, 2020

6.) "Why Is Raw Milk Banned When It's 35,000 Times SAFER Than Others?"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2011/08/31/us-government-data-proves-that-raw-milk-is-safe.aspx>  
August 31, 2011

7.) "How a Root Canal Can Affect Your Health"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2012/10/02/dr-huggins-discusses-root-canals.aspx>  
October 2, 2012

8.) "Vegetarians Twice as Likely To Be Depressed"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2017/09/14/vegetarian-depression-risk.aspx>  
September 14, 2017

9.) "How Does COVID-19 Compare to the Spanish Flu?"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/05/02/how-does-covid-19-compare-to-the-spanish-flu.aspx>  
May 2, 2020

10.) "The Real Pandemic Is Insulin Resistance"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/05/04/insulin-resistance-the-real-pandemic.aspx>  
May 4, 2020

11.) "Magnesium Deficiency May Result in a Shorter Life"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2011/08/27/deficiency-of-this-vital-mineral-may-result-in-a-shorter-life.aspx>  
August 27, 2011

12.) "The Health Benefits of Consuming Organ Meats"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2013/12/30/eating-organ-meats.aspx>  
December 30, 2013

13.) "What Is Kiwifruit Good For?"  
<https://foodfacts.mercola.com/kiwifruit.html>  
October 26, 2016

14.) "Is It Time to Start Growing Your Own Food?"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/04/17/benefits-of-growing-your-own-food.aspx>  
April 17, 2020

15.) "Weston A. Price Foundation to FDA: Soy is No Health Food"  
<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/03/06/weston-a-price-foundation-to-fda-soy-is-no-health-food.aspx>  
March 6, 2018

## THE FOUR MAJOR SEARCH ENGINES

Below are the four major search engines that were initially used in the research.

### Bing

Bing is a Microsoft owned and operated search engine that was rolled out in 2009. It is a successor to several other Microsoft search products. It powers most Yahoo searches, and its searches are used by other companies as well.

The media relations email for Bing is [rrt@we-worldwide.com](mailto:rrt@we-worldwide.com) and the phone number is 425-638-7777. The Microsoft headquarters is in Redmond, Washington. The phone number for the switchboard there is 425-882-8080. Customer service can be reached at [wehelp@microsoft.com](mailto:wehelp@microsoft.com). The customer service number Microsoft often lists is 1-800-Microsoft, which is not entirely accurate, because the word Microsoft has more than seven digits in it. The real number is 1-800-642-7676.

### Duck Duck Go

Duck Duck Go, founded in Pennsylvania in 2008, has led the way with a privacy-oriented search engine, though other search engines have now surpassed those privacy features. It is a commonly used alternative to Google.

Duck Duck Go is based in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania and welcomes general inquiries at this email [open@duckduckgo.com](mailto:open@duckduckgo.com). Its contact page (<https://help.duckduckgo.com/duckduckgo-help-pages/company/contact-us/>) is a handful of transparently shown email addresses. Even in that small detail they appear to value transparency as a company. Its corporate switchboard can be reached at 213-973-2456.

## Google

Google began as an internet search project at Stanford. Larry Page and Sergey Brin went on to start the company.

Google's search engine utilized a concept known as "Page Rank," a play on the name of co-founder Larry Page. Page Rank evaluates how heavily a web page is cited. This borrowed from the credibility associated with how heavily cited a journal article is in academia.

With this approach, Google created the most effective search engine ever used by the public, that has, to this day, been unmatched, and an achievement which Google has significantly watered down in recent years. Though adding many new features to its product offering, and many new inputs to how search returns are produced, Google has stepped back from its once foundational, central mission, to provide users with exactly what it was they were looking for.

Google is headquartered in Mountain View, California. The switchboard there is 650-253-0000. It's media team can be reached at [press@google.com](mailto:press@google.com). The labyrinthine Google has a labyrinthine contact us page. <https://www.google.com/contact/> The page appears to work better if you are logged into a Google account.

## Yahoo

Started in 1994, the website was formerly known as "Jerry and David's Guide to the World Wide Web" ([https://web.archive.org/web/20080713214826/http://yhoo.client.shareholder.com/press/time\\_line.cfm](https://web.archive.org/web/20080713214826/http://yhoo.client.shareholder.com/press/time_line.cfm)). Founders Jerry Yang and David Filo later changed its name to Yahoo.

Yahoo suffered a notable data breach in 2014 that it did not disclose for two years. It may have been the largest data breach ever. Even after disclosing this, it was another year before Yahoo acknowledged the true extent of its data breach. All accounts had been compromised.

Yahoo is now owned by Verizon, after being acquired in 2017. It has been merged into parent company Oath, along with Huffington Post and AOL, another pioneer of the early days of the internet.

Yahoo's headquarters is in Sunnyvale, California. Its switchboard is (408) 349-3300. Verizon Corporate Communication Executive on Cyber Security, Richard Young, can be reached at 202-515-2514 and by email at [richard.j.young@verizon.com](mailto:richard.j.young@verizon.com).

The VP of Communications at Verizon Media Group, Sanette Chao, can be reached by phone 347-949-0179 and by email [sanette.chao@verizon.com](mailto:sanette.chao@verizon.com). These contact details are publicly available on Verizon's website.

# METHODOLOGY

To test the bounds of this observation, I selected a series of 15 articles of varying ages, old and new, on a variety of topics. The 15 articles, their headlines, their links, and the date of publication listed on the article can be found elsewhere in this paper.

I used headlines because I know quite well that if I am not logged into the device where I have a paid subscription to a newspaper and need to get around a newspaper paywall, that I can often reliably search for the headline of the article and find the precise article. This works for papers such as the New York Times, Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, and many others. Seldom does this approach fail me. This experiment was engaged in with the presumption that searching for an original headline on Mercola.com would be as effective as searching for an original headline from the New York Times, since a fundamental function of search is to identify original content.

The goal of this experiment was to mimic how an average user might use one of these search engines to search for content on Mercola.com.

The experiment was constructed to test a unique search term in a way that even a person without a high technical proficiency might do, and to do so across common search platforms.

In each return, the first page of results was viewed during research. The second page was not viewed. The number of entries viewed was not a meaningful variable. All websites either returned the specific article as the top returned or were presumed to not return that article at all.

With such clear and unique search parameters, no effort was made to identify searches that were buried beyond the first page. Some search engines show as many as the first ten returns on the first page of results, some show the first twenty returns on the first page. Because the searched string of words originally appeared at Mercola.com, the only return that was counted as an authentic return was the first return.

Because the title in each case was a unique search, and Mercola in each case was the original user of that unique term on the internet, there is no credible reason for the Mercola.com return to appear anywhere but as the first return. At no time during this process was Mercola.com shown to not be the original source of the unique search term being searched for. Had this occurred, another unique article title could have easily been identified using any of the thousands of articles at Mercola.com and the experiment could have been easily repeated. Again, there was, however, no indication of this problem.

Advertising returns resulting from paid inclusion in searches were ignored. Organic returns only were viewed. This might have led to the first organic search being the fourth or sixth return in some searches. As long as the searched for the Mercola.com article was returned as the first organic search result, it was counted as a successful search.

Adding Yahoo to this may be a redundancy as Yahoo searches indicate “powered by Bing.”

While not meticulously monitored for comparison, the Yahoo search appeared to provided identical results to the Bing results, as did several other search engines. Despite the presumed redundancies, every search on this list was performed on ever search engine.

The searches were conducted in the English language from an iOS device accessing the Internet from the United States from May 7 to May 10, 2020, searching the same 15 strings of searches in double quotation marks, copy and pasted to provide identical results. After the first round of searches, a second and third round were conducted. Those rounds are further described later in this paper.

Results were labeled “SUCCESS” when the exact Mercola.com article at the original Mercola.com page was listed as the first search result. There was no scenario where the Mercola.com article was listed as a return, without being in the first search result.

“FAILURE,” was used in the case that the original Mercola.com article was not linked to as the first return at the original Mercola.com location.

“FAILURE, WITH REFERENCE TO MERCOLA.COM,” was used in the case that the original Mercola.com article was not linked to as the first return at the original Mercola.com location, but in which the first page still makes mention of the Mercola.com domain. This still counted as a failed search result, but provided useful data. Reference to Mercola.com in this scenario was often done inexplicably, making the mention of Mercola.com as a result even stranger to the user who might have no indication why such a result was even returned.

“DID NOT WORK,” was used in the case of two search engines that provided results that were so poor as to not deserve inclusion in this list as a search engine.

## SUMMARY OF EXPERIMENT RESULTS

Out of 56 searches for a unique term on the internet that appears to have first appeared at the subdomain articles.mercola.com, not a single search from Bing, Google, Yahoo, or the “different than the rest” Duck Duck Go returned a correct result. The subdomain foodfacts.mercola.com is excepted from the censored results on Bing, Google, and Yahoo, allowing content from that subdomain to be searched for. Out of the original 60 searches for unique Mercola.com article titles, 3 results were correctly returned.

This is a contrary result to what I expected. I expected to receive the quoted content from its original source as the highest return repeatedly from each search engine. Constructing this test, I had no idea that the level of censorship would be as extensive as what this test demonstrates.

A key takeaway is that attempting to mimic a search for an article in a style that any non-specialist might engage in has provided disappointing results through the use of the four most popular American search engines. Bing, Google, Yahoo, and Duck Duck Go, all failed to provide the original quoted content, with few exceptions.

57 of 60 searches failed in the first round of tests among Bing, Google, Yahoo, and Duck Duck Go. Only 5% of searches to Mercola.com worked in the first round.

The level of censorship at Mercola.com by May 2020, was nearly complete across all major search platforms, with minor subdomain exceptions.

Expanding that process to an additional 9 search engines, proved largely disappointing.

119 of 135 searches failed in the second and third round conducted on Swiss Cows, Qwant, Yippy, Internet Archive, Search Encrypt, Gibiru, Verizon's One Search, Start Page, and Yandex.

176 of 195 searches failed across the 13 search engines that were expected to perform.  
146 of 165 searches failed across the 11 fully functioning search engines. Only 12% of searches were successful in producing uncensored content at Mercola.com. 88% of searches to Mercola.com were censored.

The above results are skewed by the presence of a single search engine largely providing accurate results. More surprising are the details of how poorly 12 of the tested search engines performed this task.

6 search engines correctly returned 0% of searches: Duck Duck Go, Swiss Cows, Qwant, Yippy, Internet Archive, and Search Encrypt. 100% of searches for an original Mercola.com article failed on those platforms.

6 search engines correctly returned 7% of searches: Bing, Google, Yahoo, Gibiru, Verizon's One Search, and Start Page. 93% of searches for an original Mercola.com article failed on those platforms.

Search Encrypt and Internet Archive appeared to not be functioning properly and testing with them should be repeated under different conditions.

Disappointingly, no search engine provided all results correctly for a unique search string, a task that was once standard for any search engine. This is a task that is fully within the means of available technology.

Only one search engine, even came close to providing a high rate of return. It correctly returned 13 of 15 results, or 87%: Yandex.com.

The true picture is contained in the fact that 12 out of 13 search engines have censored Mercola.com. 12 out of 13 companies, many of which claim to provide unfiltered results, some with thousands of employees, have censored Mercola.com.

Russian technology has a poor reputation around privacy, censorship, and independence. Whether that is deserved is a matter for discussion outside of this research. In the context of this research, Yandex performed far better than all others.

If Yandex is removed from the picture, as some might consider it inferior for being a Russian tech company, from the 12 trusted Western search engines studied (Duck Duck Go, Google, Bing, Yahoo, Swiss Cows, Qwant, Yippy, Internet Archive, Search Encrypt, Gibiru, Verizon's One Search, and Start Page), an abysmal 3% of searches were uncensored and returned the correct article. The Western search engine listed have major failures of ethics in their support of censorship. This is made all the more worse by the deceptive nature of marketing to the contrary.

### **Indicative Of How The Entire Process Went: Searching Microsoft's Bing Provided Extremely Poor Results**

By searching the string "90% of Coronavirus Infections Are Asymptomatic" on Bing, a Microsoft search engine. An expected response for a search engine constructed anytime in the last 10-12 years is to list the specific Mercola.com article as the first search result.

Instead, it showed an article (<https://healthy-headlines.com/2020/04/28/90-of-coronavirus-infections-are-asymptomatic/>) at healthy-headlines.com that had two paragraphs of content from the Mercola article then linked back to the Mercola result.

The second search result (<https://hiddenhandnews.com/90-of-coronavirus-infections-are-asymptomatic/>) was from HiddenHandNews.com containing a paragraph from the original article and linking back to the Mercola article.

The third result (<https://ketogenicreviews.com/index.php/2020/05/01/90-of-coronavirus-infections-are-asymptomatic/>) at Ketogenic Reviews offered a paragraph of content with no link back to the Mercola article that I was able to identify.

The fourth result (<https://bestpureessentialoils.com/90-of-coronavirus-infections-are-asymptomatic/>) at BestPureEssentialOil.com appeared to have the entire Mercola article, with no link back to the original, the source for the article was listed as the Mercola RSS feed.

The fifth result (<https://marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2020/03/a-coronavirus-conundrum.html>) at MarginalRevolution.com does not contain the quoted content. It merely had the figure "90%" in one of the comments:

"90% of deaths from coronavirus are 60+ Healthy people under 40 have a 0.2% fatality rate. (which makes it about 2x as dangerous as the standard flu)."

Results six, seven, eight, and nine, similarly did not contain the quoted text. Nestled at the bottom of the page was the domain that the original article came from – the Mercola.com homepage – with no reference to the original search, no indication on how to find that searched for data at Mercola.com, as well as no demonstration of why that search result was returned. Decontextualizing these returns by removing the first result, effectively made these returns useless spam.

There was no link to the original article provided. This result was indicative of the rest of the results from the process.

### **Additionally Notable Results From The Experiment**

Below are a few more notable results from the experiment that provide added, noteworthy color on the search experience.

### **Google Censors Mercola On 5G, Returns Verizon As The Top Result**

While there was no link to Mercola.com in the search results for the public interest article challenging the safety of a new technology being rolled out globally, entitled, "Scientific American Warns: 5G Is Unsafe."

Google linked to a Verizon web page as the primary search result on the topic, a paid result. The result provided offered the opposite perspective of the searched for Mercola article. This would be more acceptable if paid results were more clearly distinguished from "organic" search engine results, and if Google were not so actively censoring a medical professional like Mercola, operating so diligently in the public interest on this topic.

### **Inexplicable Links to Amazon, Facebook**

In several examples, a search engine linked to Joseph Mercola's Amazon page. This was done inexplicably. Nowhere in the search term did Mercola's own name even appear. Clicking through the Amazon link gives no indication of where one might find the searched term. It is merely an "About Joseph Mercola" page on Amazon, seemingly unrelated to the content that was searched for. Again, this was a spam result.

In the example of a Google search on the article "Simple Inexpensive Solution to Radically Lower EMF Exposure" (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/08/25/simple-inexpensive-solution-to-radically-lower-emf-exposure.aspx>), while omitting any results from the Mercola.com domain, Google showed a post from Joseph Mercola's Facebook page from 2009 (<https://m.facebook.com/notes/dr-joseph-mercola/simple-inexpensive-solution-to-radically-lower-emf-exposure/121869868731/>) as one of the top ten search results. This was nice because it contained some searched content, but it certainly did not point to the original article, rather to a derivative work.

### **Censoring Mercola, But Returning Plagiarized Content On Yahoo**

In a search for "Real Risk of a Sneaky Deficiency for Vegans and Vegetarians" on Bing <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/01/11/vegan-vitamin-deficiency.aspx> there was no link to Mercola.com in the first ten results. There was a link however to a Yahoo.com article from April 12, 2020 by a Brigitt Early entitled "14 Sneaky Signs You May Have This Common Vitamin Deficiency" that appears to heavily borrow from the Mercola.com article of three months earlier and does not offer attribution. <https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/14-sneaky-signs-may-common-060000339.html>

In the same search performed on Google, the return links to Mercola's Amazon page as the 9th result, without explanation for why it links to that.

### **Censoring Of Mercola.com, But Not Censoring Of A Similar View**

In a Bing search for the article "Why Is Raw Milk Banned When It's 35,000 Times SAFER Than Others?" there was no link to Mercola in first the ten links, there was a link to an NPR (2020) article that takes an opposing view to the Mercola piece (<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/05/812431219/why-raw-milk-is-more-dangerous-and-costs-more-than-pasteurized-milk>).

Further down on the search, there were also links to several articles that took a similar view to Mercola, but a link to the desired content could not be found. Because issues are not black and white, merely substituting articles with a vaguely similar perspective to Mercola, is not a replacement and still constitutes censorship. A doctor with the level of expertise of Mercola, is not likely to be easily replaced by an NPR article.

A Yahoo search for “Vegetarians Twice as Likely To Be Depressed”(https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2017/09/14/vegetarian-depression-risk.aspx ) provided no link to Mercola in first ten, but returned a *Daily Mail* piece (https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4762624/Vegetarians-likely-glum-meat-eaters.html ) and *Psychology Today* piece (https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/animals-and-us/201812/the-baffling-connection-between-vegetarianism-and-depression ) with a similar headline on the same topic.

To many viewers, this experience is not detrimental, for a Mercola article may be reproduced at a website or similar perspective may be delivered. Not only, though, is the content not the precisely desired content, despite the technology being available to obtain that content, the returned result will additionally be a different level of quality and tenor in its presentation.

If there were ability to more precisely block content, it is likely that more precise blocking of content would be enabled at this time by the search engines in question.

As more complex algorithms are created for identifying viewpoints that are orthodox or unorthodox, the clunky method of blocking an entire domain will become needless. The more precise method of blocking entire articles, blocking domains where their articles are replicated, and blocking the thoughts contained in them will be far easier to achieve with increased precision.

This is a likely next layer of censorship that will be implemented in the name of improving user experience. Without clear indication from users that this does not improve user experience, that explanation will be the likely explanation offered. Eventually, this level of censorship may be considered the responsibility of the company operating the search engine.

### **Google Didn't Provide The Intended Results, But Advertised A New Google Product Offering Meant To Solidify Censorship**

In the search “Magnesium Deficiency May Result in a Shorter Life” ( https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2011/08/27/deficiency-of-this-vital-mineral-may-result-in-a-shorter-life.aspx) Bing, Yahoo, and Duck Duck Go did not return the Mercola.com article on the topic, though provided a full array of alternates.

Google in contrast, provided only three results and offered a blank text box inviting those searching to write a question about magnesium into, noting:

*“Get the answer you’re looking for added to the web,” and “Your question will be shared anonymously with online publishers who may be interested in answering it.”*

Additional verbiage asked me not to include any personal information in my submission. Apparently, Google doesn't approve of me sharing my private information, despite it building one of the world's largest businesses off of that information. This new product from Google would be an attractive proposal, if the answer I was looking for were not already “added to the web.” I can not reach the content, however, because Google, who claims to be scouring the web on my behalf is preventing me, and others, from accessing it.

This approach is exceedingly dishonest. It is censorship couched by Google in such carefully constructed marketing speak, which prevent many from recognizing how much Google is censoring searches.

### **Best Practices: Repeatable Methods That Avoid Censorship To Some Degree**

In this process, three techniques were observed that made it possible to prevent full censorship of content: podcasts, placing full titles in URLs, and mirroring of content.

Podcasts that are distributed across a distribution channel appear to allow content to remain uncensored. Some searches returned podcast results that are not on the Mercola.com domain, but which were created from the original content and by the original website.

Podcasts seem to be a way to get around the censors since it provides for syndication of the original content on a different domain. This is especially useful if a podcast shares the same title of an article and links back to the article.

Placing links in comments sections at Amazon seems to be a way to get around the censors. In such links, having URLs that contain the full name of the title of the article seems to be a way around the censors, and to the original content.

The mirroring of websites is a long-standing method of replicating information so that it is not able to easily be censored by merely censoring a single source. A website is most easily mirrored through an RSS feed, though other methods can be used. A link back to the original content of a mirrored website allows the visitor to avoid search engine censorship by identifying the headline and following the link back to the original content.

The existence of mirrored sites that do this, should not be seen as malicious plagiarizing, but as benevolent distribution of content and cost-free establishment of redundancy. This is especially desirable in an era where a single point of failure in a content distribution network makes censorship of targeted material easy to achieve. With so much censorship taking place, the mirroring of websites should probably be encouraged by content creators.

## **Mercola's Kiwifruit Article Not Banned Across All Platforms – Duck Duck Go, The Worst Of The Group**

I ran an additional test, checking a subdomain of Mercola.com – foodfacts.mercola.com – this segment of the website was not censored by Bing or Yahoo. In fact they returned it as the first result, which was the result I expected every other search on this list to achieve, because it was a unique title of an original piece online.

While Mercola.com appears to be on a prohibited list with these four search engines, the subdomain foodfacts.mercola.com, does not seem to be, indicating that the entire domain Mercola.com is not being blocked. The subdomain articles.mercola.com seems to be blocked by Google, Bing, and Yahoo.

Of the searches to the subdomain articles.mercola.com, a full 100% of articles or 56 out of 56 searches were entirely “blocked,” a colloquial term for a search that has been prevented from reaching the intended content due to a prohibition put in place by the team managing the search engine's algorithm and permissible results.

Of the four searches to foodfacts.mercola.com, three were successful. Bing, Google, and Yahoo did not block foodfacts.mercola.com. The entire domain Mercola.com appears to be blocked by Duck Duck Go. Despite its extensive marketing, its widespread support from those opposed to censorship, and its reputation about being a more friendly search engine that operates so differently from the big tech companies, Duck Duck Go was the only tested search engine that blocked all Mercola content.

## **Duck Duck Go Most Heavily Censored Mercola.com**

As stated in the previous section, the entire domain Mercola.com appears to be blocked by Duck Duck Go.

Bing, Yahoo, and Google only appear to be censoring the subdomain articles.mercola.com and preventing that subdomain from appearing in search results, while foodfacts.mercola.com is able to appear. This reflects an example of more precision in censorship from the three larger search engines than from Duck Duck Go. While hailed as an advancement, precision in censorship is not the ideal. No censorship is the ideal.

This result flies in the face of promises to the contrary from Duck Duck Go.

## **Duck Duck Go Won't Track You, But It Will Censor You**

There are positive aspects to using Duck Duck Go. They care about privacy as an organization, and their privacy policy remains admirable ( <https://duckduckgo.com/privacy> ), but they are far from perfect, as these results indicate. Rather than giving you the results that you are seeking as closely as they are able to, Duck Duck Go, intends to apply their definition of credible to your search results, thereby limiting your ability to access the content you desire.

Duck Duck Go has proven itself the most censorship-friendly of the companies included in this side-by-side test of these four.

To provide users with the information that they wanted, was once the holy grail of search, merely a decade ago. The technology exists to do precisely that. With that technology available, the largest tech companies, best positioned to give the citizens of the internet what they most want, are now saying that they no longer desire to give a user what the user wants. Those companies instead desire to give a user what the companies think the user should have. That was not the promise of the internet, and it was certainly not the claim of Google who has famously been organized around the amorphous notion of “Don't be evil,” that is in Google's corporate code of conduct. (<https://gizmodo.com/google-removes-nearly-all-mentions-of-dont-be-evil-from-1826153393>)

## **Mercola.com Is Heterodox, In An Era When Orthodoxy Is Demanded**

Mercola.com is a heterodox website. It challenges what is considered by the mainstream of medicine as the “orthodox” or “correct opinion.” Being heterodox, it shares a “differing opinion.” In this era in which unanimity of opinion is so preferred, heterodox is seen as a bad word.

Heterodox, I believe, is one of the highest compliments that can be paid a writer and thinker in this era. Though there can be insular thinking among those ascribing the heterodox ideas, the word heterodoxy can be used to represent the opposite of the word “groupthink,” coined by English writer Eric Blair, who wrote under the pen name George Orwell. Reading some of his hard hitting prose one can understand why he might have wanted a pen name. There was suppression of speech in his era as well and repercussion for sticking one’s neck out as a writer. There has always been repercussions for pushing boundaries. That is part of the cost of being able to be someone who advances society.

Without the heterodox, we are left unable to have a marketplace of ideas. To do away with the heterodox is to do away with the development of science. In constant iterations, the heterodox of yesterday becomes the mainstream of today. It is never certain which of the heterodox ideas will become the mainstream, but it is reliably from heterodox ideas that the mainstream emerges. To do away with the heterodox belies the notion of how science is made. Because science can be so very political, it has been said that science progresses one dead scientist at a time. Many established scientists hold firm to their opinions and the opinions of their colleagues.

Only with new scientists appearing in a field do mainstream opinions receive challenge and get discarded in favor of heterodox opinions. Mercola is a repository for a different take, and the medical establishment would like to dismiss it with a dishonest array of insulting adjectives that I do not need to recount here, but really adjectives that are the most atrocious words to say about a doctor.

As a user of his website, it’s evident that Dr. Joseph Mercola holds himself to a very high standard. No doctor gets things right 100% of the time. Though, I have no specific example to point to, I doubt that Mercola is right 100% of the time. From the value of probiotics after taking an antibiotic, in order to discourage a deadly *Clostridium difficile* (C. diff) infection, to the importance of regular sunlight or vitamin D supplementation for the health of the body, to the idea that the food pyramid is not the most trusted source for nutrition, Mercola offers sound advice that the mainstream medical community is decades behind on.

No thinking person should want a source like that censored.

Many people can identify lies easily, but even those who can not at the very least come to learn what news sources work for them and what news sources do not. The internet, has posed a threat to the idea of orthodoxy for more than 20 years now, some would argue longer.

In 1997, a no one from nowhere, who had a small email newsletter found out that Newsweek, then one of the most influential publications in the United States, was going to spike a story about President Clinton and a White House intern. His name was Matt Drudge. He notified his email newsletter and suddenly, out of nowhere so many people were asking questions about that decision by the editors at Newsweek, that Newsweek and their brethren at other publications were forced to run that story. Today, that story still commands headlines. Whatever you think of Matt Drudge, that moment was a turning point in the influence of the internet.

It was, at that moment, that the internet came of age as a source of information. In those months that followed, the editors meeting in back rooms were shown that they could no longer control the news. Washington politicians were shown that they could never again control the news. And though some of those who lost power in those months have since moved out of their roles, many like them have fought to regain control of information, to prevent the free flow of information.

It is for our own benefit, we are assured. But what benefit does this actually bring?

Once a news source has lost credibility with a person, that credibility is seldom regained. That is true whether that news source be a gossiping neighbor in a village three hundred years ago or the local journalist who prints a lie without following it up with a much more attention-grabbing retraction. Attention grabbing retractions may be embarrassing in the short term, but they are helpful to credibility in the long term. Humans are geared to be constantly searching for truth, because it is through truth that we can know reality and live our lives to the best of our ability. Not everyone is geared that way, but overwhelmingly that is how people are geared. They seek truth on the matters that are most important to them.

That might mean answering the question “How do I find the best milk for my children, and what are the trade-offs?” to “What is the best PhD program in astrophysics and what are its shortcomings?” Who am I to say what a person should and should not search for? Who is anyone to say? The tools for effective search need only be placed in users hands for them to use as they see fit.

If curated news was all people wanted, Newsweek would still be important and the internet would still be a thing that most Americans laughed at as irrelevant.

Just as the internet had started to become so meaningful, Paul Krugman of The New York Times famously commented in a June 1998 issue of Red Herring Magazine (<https://web.archive.org/web/19980610100009/http://www.redherring.com/mag/issue55/economics.html>): “By 2005 or so, it will become clear that the Internet's impact on the economy has been no greater than the fax machine's.”

### **Credibility And Quality Are Not The Basis For Censoring Mercola.com**

Mercola may offer catchy titles that will encourage people to share the articles, a behavior that some less-than-credible websites engage in, but writing a title that gets a reader's attention is practiced by many editors, even in the most mainstream of publications.

Mercola's website for the reasons already stated is highly credible, well-documented, and authoritative. Again, I personally consider it an asset to me as a writer.

This credible website is being censored. In contrast, websites whose owners would likely admit that they do not operate high quality websites are not censored. Some of them merely run RSS feeds and do not produce original content. Obviously, neither quality nor credibility are the standard for who is being censored.

This, along with a collection of other unedited content from around the web, is republished at some websites for the sake of attracting attention to boost Google Ad revenue for the site owner. While this is not a very high value addition to the Internet, these websites perform an important service by making available work from Mercola that might otherwise be censored.

It is not a lack of credibility that is causing Mercola to be censored. Quite the contrary, it is likely his credibility combined with his willingness to challenge medical orthodoxy, and the massive following he has attracted by doing so, that has made him such a desirable target for the big tech censors. He has developed a business model that can sustain his truth telling and which has made him difficult to silence.

# **WHAT IS MERCOLA'S GREAT CRIME?**

What then, is the great crime for which Mercola should be censored? Dr. Mercola is willing to operate outside the mainstream of medical information and cover the vast possibility that exists beyond that. Mercola.com reports on emerging trends and forgotten trends in a way that repeatedly has been shown to be ahead of the curve. Though I can not recall a single example of dishonest reporting from him in the years of visiting his website, I recall numerous examples of him shifting his opinions as more data becomes available: sometimes becoming more extreme on an initially held view, sometimes turning against that view.

For example, Mercola was once an ardent vegetarian for health purposes. Based on his writing on the topic, he appears to no longer finds that to be the most data driven approach for him.

That is exactly the attitude that should be expected of a public intellectual: to give the most sincere accounting of his beliefs at any given time. It is not to be brought before a committee to determine if his opinions are worthy for popular consumption — as might take place at a newspaper, or now at companies like Duck Duck Go — instead, it is brought before the conscience of the public intellectual for determination of its veracity and pressure-tested against the world in real time.

This is why the public intellectual takes so much more risk and has so much more skin in the game than a newspaper editor. The editor, hidden behind the cloud of a committee may one day lose his job and need to go work on a different committee, the public intellectual may one day lose his credibility. But that is not why the public intellectual speaks, he speaks to share truth. He acts, as a poet, on the periphery between truth and lie, trying to sort out the two and working through this messy and uncomfortable process, both in full view of those who believe in him and also in front of those who hope to see him fail, some of whom may even be cynically working against his best efforts.

Critics are a vital part of the thinking process, though, and must be lauded for their efforts, no matter how intellectually dishonest they may, at times, be. The critic helps keep the public intellectual honest. Even in dishonest moments, the critic helps in the efforts of the public intellectual, by so clearly presenting themselves as a foil to the public intellectual.

The dogged search for truth is made so apparent, by presentation against an almost cliché attack rooted in such intellectual dishonesty. It is so different, at times, as to be a dichotomous black and white.

It is not an easy path that Mercola has chosen, but it is an honorable and fulfilling path, and one for which he has my highest regard.

If only, the world had more people willing to share truth, rather than taking the temperature of those around them and then tempering what they see, then how much more honest the world might feel. We must live in reality though. The reality is: That obedience to the authority of a committee, is the first step toward groupthink and limits one from being a public intellectual.

To constantly be able to know what is true to us and to share it regardless of repercussion, is the goal of those living authentically in a free society. Such behavior brings us closer to a free society. It can be no surprise that the encouragement of our era is not only in opposition to expressing truth, but there is additionally an opposition, and an obfuscation behind knowing the truth.

This is the direction encouraged by following society's lead, by making decisions by committee, by taking the temperature of one's professional network. This all leads to groupthink.

Censorship has long been the tool of those who want to encourage groupthink and to prevent other opinions and voices from emerging. It is not a tool needed for less than credible views like "Jumping off of tall buildings is good for your health." Those opinions don't need censoring. Censorship has long been the tool of those who wanted to silence truth.

### **In Every Era Censorship Has Been The Work Of Those Wanting To Suppress Truth**

In every era, censorship was the work of those who wanted to suppress the truth. Censorship has never been the work of those who wanted to suppress lies. Lies don't need suppressing. The liar is quickly discovered as a liar, and once upon a time, may have been run out of town or no longer believed by anyone. The liar today has a much harder time hiding. That's very frightening to the powers that be.

Of course, they turn to the convenient tool of the tyrant throughout the ages: censorship. They decree anyone who speaks the truth shall be silenced.

It didn't take long for many to realize over these last five years that Google has become a bad search engine that no longer provides accurate results but now provides curated results.

Naturally, Microsoft, its big tech brethren, was doing the same. Yahoo too.

Sadly Duck Duck Go has proven that it is doing the exact same as well. Perhaps Duck Duck Go tracks less user data, which is nice, but as a search engine, all any of us primarily want is something that gives you what you want.

## **BETRAYING THE HOPE OF SEARCH TECHNOLOGY**

In computer science, a search algorithm solves the search problem. As John Battelle writes in the book *The Search*, a search engine seeks to be the "database of our intentions." It needs to do a good job of trying to understand what you mean when you type what you are looking for. This was the business that Google built its empire upon: helping people find what they wanted.

The tech companies, having been so severely politicized, have stepped away from this fundamental goal at the heart of solving the search problem, and instead of giving a searcher what that searcher wants from all the potential of the vast internet, they are eager to provide a user only a curated list, based on the opinion of what an editor considers right or wrong.

Twenty years later and a trillion dollars of investment into the potential of computing, we have returned to the days of Newsweek editors deciding what we get to see, but instead of being an editorial board at Newsweek, they are the equivalent of an editorial board meeting on Zoom and Slack in Silicon Valley and remotely. That is what has become of the Google command "Don't be evil."



## ARE THERE ANY SEARCH ENGINES THAT WORK?

After this process, I was left with an air of disappointment, as I no longer had a search engine to help me perform initial web research for my writing. It would be foolish to imagine that the list of blockaded sites is no bigger than Mercola.com. It also felt good to be disabused of the idea that Bing, Google, Yahoo, or Duck Duck Go were attempting to provide me with the content on the internet that most closely fit what I was looking for.

My use of their search engines constitutes a small fraction of their income, but it is a fraction they no longer deserve if they are content with providing me with an inferior service. The quality of Google Search, once so poignantly capable of fearlessly identifying what a user searched for — at times with breadth and at other times precision, provided that the user understood how to use it — has declined the furthest. From approximately 2010 to 2015, the experience of using Google's search engine provided a renewed sense of the potential of the internet. As their business model of "user as product," increasingly came to light, Duck Duck Go provided hope for a better search engine, only to betray those hopes by censoring.

### Back To The Drawing Board: A New Round Of Searches May 7-8

May 7-8, I performed an additional round of searches on search engines that are not so well known, in hopes of finding a less censored alternative, and ideally focused on the original intent of search: to provide the content the user wants. The original intent of search was certainly not to insert someone else's moral judgment or personal opinion for the purpose of altering the results.

### Summary Of Results From The May 7-8, And May 10 Mercola Test

Running 135 additional searches, or 15 searches on each of 9 websites, the results were little better. There was across-the-board failure of the Mercola test, with one exception.

The following websites got 1 out of 15 searches correct: Gibiru, Verizon One Search, Start Page.

These websites got 0 of 15 searches correct: Yippy, Qwant, Swiss Cows.

Search Encrypt and Internet Archive did not appear to function as intended.

## What About Yippy.com As An Alternative?

Having heard Yippy.com was not censored, I headed to that website to run the same 15 searches there.

Under the leadership of CEO Rich Granville, Yippy bills itself as “The Right Search. Unrivaled Privacy.” The italicized term “right” on their home page appears to be a play on words referencing conservatism, or the political right. With big tech accused of censoring right-leaning views as “extreme,” if Yippy.com is conservative-leaning, one might expect there to be more reticence around censoring search results. Having been such a target of big tech censorship, plenty of conservatives understand why censorship is wrong. This presented a hopeful sign that they were aware of the censorship of the big tech search engines and opposed to it.

As soon as I saw the notice on the Yippy.com homepage “Powered by IBM Watson,” I was skeptical, as it was yet another example of a big tech company being deeply involved in a search engine that markets itself as independent. Yippy.com failed the Mercola test.

It did not return a single result from Mercola.com, not even passing the Kiwifruit test, making it tied for the most censored search engine in this lineup, finishing behind Yahoo, Bing, and Google.

Yippy has an online contact form (<https://yippyinc.com/contact/>) as well as a customer service phone number (877) 947-7901, if you’d like to let them know you saw this research and what you think of the results.

## Gibiru’s “Unfiltered Private Searches” Failed The Test

In its privacy policy, Gibiru.com offers a very good list of honest recommendations for people using the internet. Most companies would not make such statements:

“Third parties may be placing and reading cookies if you are using a traditional web browser that does not have cookie blocking enabled. We highly recommend using the Gibiru Wormhole or a VPN tunnel when browsing the internet. Browse the internet at your own risk.”

Steven Ray Marshall (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/smarshall2>) is founder of Gibiru (<http://gibiru.com/>). Gibiru markets itself as “unfiltered private searches” and “protecting your privacy since 2009.”

It also recommends using a VPN, as a way to help protect your online traffic from prying eyes. Gibiru takes it a step further, by mentioning Express VPN by name, effectively making an endorsement and saving the user the trouble of researching a VPN on their own.

Gibiru’s mission is stated as “Search. Don't be Searched.” It has a privacy policy (<https://gibiru.com/privacy-policy/#privacy-policy>) that is well written. Its Facebook URL is gibiru1776 (<https://m.facebook.com/gibiru1776/>), suggesting an interest in protecting dissent, free speech, and other principles. Some go so far as to claim “Gibiru is the preferred search engine for patriots.”

This did not prove true for patriots who want to read freely about health and wellness. Its search is not unfiltered.

Gibiru.com has an “all results tab” and an “uncensored” tab for searches. The uncensored tab was not uncensored. It just provided less censored results, showing, for example, a website called Freedom’s Phoenix carrying some of Mercola.com’s content, but among the uncensored results were not Mercola.com.

The search clearly had a blockade on some Mercola.com traffic, but presented a data leak in its algorithm around new articles, preventing the original article from appearing in all but one of the 15 searches, but still allowing topically irrelevant Mercola.com returns to leak into the search results further down the page.

Gibiru failed the Mercola test, providing a correct result in only 7% of the searches, or 1 out of 15.

The following notably appeared in response to a Gibiru search that was a playful response, but was not exactly what I hoped for considering that I was turning to Gibiru to provide a solution to the tyranny of censorship, and it instead provided more of the same. Using the search term “90% of Coronavirus Infections Are Asymptomatic,” Gibiru returned no results with the error message “Now that's some strange shit. We got nothin. Maybe try something a bit less esoteric.”

The same result was returned for the search “Why Is Raw Milk Banned When It's 35,000 Times SAFER Than Others?”

Humor isn’t funny when it’s used by the censor to laugh off something as sinister as censorship.

Gibiru can be contacted by email at [nate@gibiru.com](mailto:nate@gibiru.com).

## **Gibiru Doesn't Entirely Ban Mercola.com, It Just Produces Irrelevant Results, Which Is Just As Effective As Banning**

In response to the query "How Does COVID-19 Compare to the Spanish Flu?" Gibiru inexplicably returned an article on "How to Cook Asparagus" (<https://recipes.mercola.com/how-to-cook-asparagus.aspx>) as the 15th result and an inexplicable link to the homepage Mercola.com as the 17 result, but no link to the original article.

For the search "The Real Pandemic Is Insulin Resistance," (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/05/04/insulin-resistance-the-real-pandemic.aspx>) Gibiru returned "Baked Avocado Recipe For A Healthy Breakfast" (<https://recipes.mercola.com/baked-avocado-recipe.aspx>) as the 5th result, "Cauliflower Crust Pizza Recipe" (<https://recipes.mercola.com/cauliflower-crust-pizza-recipe.aspx>) as the 8th result, the homepage Mercola.com as the 13th result, and "Almond Milk Nutrition Facts" as the 20th result (<https://foodfacts.mercola.com/almond-milk.html>). At no time did it return the requested article. The Mercola article being searched for was written to place Covid-19 into perspective against a much larger societal problem, and one that is entirely within the hands of the individual to control, unlike a respiratory virus. While such a topic may be heretical at the moment, what relevance should that have on whether an algorithm is set to provide objective and mathematically verifiable results to a search query, or subjective and censored results. "The Real Pandemic Is Insulin Resistance" is an original phrase on which Gibiru's "unfiltered private searches" did not return the accurate results. For the search "Is It Time to Start Growing Your Own Food?" (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/04/17/benefits-of-growing-your-own-food.aspx>), the actual article was not returned, but the third result returned by Gibiru was an inexplicable link to a Mercola.com article "Intermediate Plan: Beverages" ([https://www.mercola.com/nutritionplan/intermediate\\_beverages.aspx](https://www.mercola.com/nutritionplan/intermediate_beverages.aspx)).

The big tech companies are obviously not playing fair. Many have accepted that they are corrupt institutions seeking to roll back what has been an age-old fight against censorship among humans. This is a truly vile activity to engage in. The ones who claim to be different really owe an explanation for their failure of the Mercola test.

Again Gibiru lists their customer service contact as [nate@gibiru.com](mailto:nate@gibiru.com).

## **Search Encrypt Would Not Work**

Search Encrypt promises privacy enhancement features such as locally encrypted searches and locally expiring searches that are deleted from your device history after thirty minutes of inactivity. This is a useful features for a shared computer.

The Search Encrypt website presents the scenario in which a person is purchasing an engagement ring for another person on a shared computer and wants to be sure specific browsing activity is not accidentally detected by the person the ring is intended for.

Unfortunately, Search Encrypt (<https://www.searchencrypt.com/search/>) would not work on my device. I ran each of the 15 searches, it returned no results on my device on any browser, and did not return results for any other search term entered. Perhaps search encrypt might prove a useful option on another device.

With offices listed in the Cayman Islands, Search Encrypt can be contacted at [support@searchencrypt.com](mailto:support@searchencrypt.com).

## **Verizon One Search – Big Tech, Great Marketing, Same Results**

Launched at the start of 2020, Verizon's One Search ([www.onesearch.com](http://www.onesearch.com)) is a nicely designed website with great marketing. The search bar reads "private and encrypted" and there's a toggle for encrypted or not encrypted. It really places the marketing of privacy in front of the user.

According to the Verizon website (<https://www.verizon.com/about/news/verizon-media-onesearch>) at the time the browser launched, "OneSearch doesn't track, store, or share personal or search data with advertisers...ads will be contextual, based on factors like search keywords, not cookies or browsing history."

Additional features include "no cookie tracking, retargeting, or personal profiling, no sharing of personal data with advertisers, no storing of user search history, unbiased, unfiltered search results, encrypted search terms."

The website continues "In addition, with Advanced Privacy Mode enabled, OneSearch's encrypted search results link will expire within an hour, adding another layer of privacy."

Despite all the attention to privacy and assurances that the search results are unbiased and unfiltered, this search engine also failed the Mercola test.

Verizon's One Search failed the Mercola test, providing accurate results in only 7% of searches, or only one out of 15.

One Search can be contacted at [contact-onesearch@verizonmedia.com](mailto:contact-onesearch@verizonmedia.com). Brittany Votto is their media contact, she can be reached at 510-501-0704 or [brittany.votto@verizonmedia.com](mailto:brittany.votto@verizonmedia.com). Verizon Corporate Communication on Cyber Security, Richard Young, can be reached at 202-515-2514 and by email at [richard.j.young@verizon.com](mailto:richard.j.young@verizon.com).

The VP of Communications at Verizon Media Group, Sanette Chao, can be reached by phone 347-949-0179 and by email [sanette.chao@verizon.com](mailto:sanette.chao@verizon.com). These contact details are publicly available on Verizon's website. All contact details for all companies listed in this writing are based on publicly available information. No attempt has been made to disclose private contact information.

### Verizon – More Pleasant Marketing

In the search “90% of Coronavirus Infections Are Asymptomatic,” on Verizon's One Search, the return showed photos of Anthony Fauci, Donald Trump, and Andrew Cuomo, but no Mercola.com links.

If what you are looking for in a search for information is the very narrow band of opinion that is presented by showing photos of Fauci, Trump, and Cuomo, then you have come to the right place, but even that is mere window dressing. The actual search results beyond the photos were no more or less biased. If, instead of political window dressing, you want a search engine that provides you with a way to navigate all the relevant and most insightful sources on any given topic regardless of whose toes the writer might step on, this is not your search engine.

Verizon's One Search failed the Mercola test, but did so with stylish marketing.

### Internet Archive – Great Website, Not A Great Search Engine

Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>) is a great website, but not a search engine. Because of the anti-censorship stance of the organization, its search feature was hopefully included in the Mercola test, but it did not prove successful. It represents the best example of a public archive of the internet.

Far from censoring Mercola.com, it has saved snapshots of Mercola.com and archived the website 7,105 times between January 17, 1999, and May 8, 2020. It simply is not very useful for internet searches. Its offices can be contacted at 415-561-6767 and [info@archive.org](mailto:info@archive.org).

### Start Page Failed The Test

Start Page bills itself as “the world's most private search engine.” Startpage.com, was formerly ixquick.com, and has a useful privacy blog that shows how much they care about privacy as an organization. (<https://www.startpage.com/blog/?t=default>) They have a beautiful statement on their website about what they are about:

“That's why back in 2006 we created ‘the world's most private search engine,’ which doesn't log, track or share your personal data. Over the years we added many additional privacy features, like ‘Anonymous View’ for further protection. We're based in Europe, where privacy laws are amongst the most stringent in the world.”

They punctuate that statement with a statement that ideally every internet company would seek to make their motto: “We want you to be able to dance like nobody's watching!”

Once again, private does not mean uncensored. Start Page failed the Mercola test.

Start Page provided correct results in only 7% of searches, or 1 out of 15.

Additionally, Start Page was guilty of the same irrelevant style of search results as Gibiru, while censoring Mercola.com. For the search “The Real Pandemic Is Insulin Resistance,” Start Page returned the inexplicable result “Healthy Quick And Easy Recipes” (<https://recipes.mercola.com/quick-and-easy.aspx>) at Mercola.com and did not return the original article.

For the search “Is It Time To Start Growing Your Own Food?” (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/04/17/benefits-of-growing-your-own-food.aspx>) Start Page did not return the article, but the inexplicable second result was “Intermediate Plan: Beverages” ([https://www.mercola.com/nutritionplan/intermediate\\_beverages.aspx](https://www.mercola.com/nutritionplan/intermediate_beverages.aspx)) at Mercola.com.

Start Page customer service can be contacted here <https://support.startpage.com/index.php?/Tickets/Submit/RenderForm#>

if you would like to open a ticket or by email at [info@startpage.com](mailto:info@startpage.com).

## Safe Search Engine Swiss Cows Failed The Test

Swiss Cows (<https://swisscows.ch>) markets itself as “privacy safe web search.” It also has an app. One reviewer pointed out about Swiss Cows, formerly Hulbee, “It is quite popular among parents who want child-appropriate search results for their kids. The built-in filter for pornographic and violent content in the search engine cannot be overridden.” (<https://fossbytes.com/google-alternative-best-search-engine/>)

Because Swiss Cows provides the ability for a parent to toggle between safe searches and unsafe searches, it could be expected that they would also have the ability and incentive to produce very much uncensored searches. That is not what Swiss Cows does.

Swiss Cows appears to merely use Bing as their search engine, interspersing an optional parental filter layer. Swiss Cows failed the Mercola test. Their “unfiltered” searches tied for last place, returning 0 out of 15 searches correctly.

Based in Switzerland, its team can be contacted by phone +41 (0) 716 667 931, by email [info@swisscows.com](mailto:info@swisscows.com), and by webform <https://company.swisscows.ch/en/contact>.

## Qwant Failed The Mercola Test

While researching and writing this piece, Mercola.com ran a story relevant to it (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/05/10/google-and-your-privacy.aspx>). As I was eagerly seeking a functioning search engine that provides uncensored results, the suggestion of a good search engine from Mercola caught my attention. Mercola writes:

“Robert Epstein is a Harvard trained psychologist who has exposed how Google is manipulating public opinion through their search engine so they can change the results of elections and many other important areas.

“Alternative search engines suggested by Epstein include SwissCows and Qwant. He recommends avoiding StartPage, as it was recently bought by an aggressive online marketing company, which, like Google, depends on surveillance.”

After reading this insight from Mercola.com pointing to Qwant (<https://www.qwant.com>) as a possible option, on May 10, I hopefully ran the search on Qwant with similar results.

The French company promises “Qwant is the first search engine which protects its users freedoms and ensures that the digital ecosystem remains healthy. Our keywords: privacy and neutrality.” Unfortunately, Qwant failed the Mercola test as well.

Qwant, the private and neutral search engine, tied for last place, returning an abysmal 0 out of 15 searches correctly.

Qwant appears to also have an anti-spam filter that may be overly sensitive. After my tenth search on Qwant, I received the warning “A high amount of connections have been detected on your device,” indicating my device was coming into contact with some type of tracking software on the Qwant website. I did not receive that message from any other search engine in this test.

Based in Paris, Qwant can be contacted by email [contact@qwant.com](mailto:contact@qwant.com) or phone +330183648937.

## The Kiwifruit Test Repeated

The Kiwifruit Test that was run on Google, Bing, Yahoo, and Duck Duck Go was repeated on this selection.

In the search “What Is Kiwifruit Good For?” (<https://foodfacts.mercola.com/kiwifruit.html>), Gibiru returned the original Mercola article first and the home page Mercola.com second, Verizon’s One Search showed the article as the first organic return, with an ad for enow.com above it, and Start Page showed the original article as the first return. Swiss Cows and Qwant did not. These first three searches - Gibiru, One Search, and Start Page - though they prevent their users from accessing the vast amount of content at Mercola.com appear to make some exception in their censorship for articles on the subdomain [foodfacts.mercola.com](https://foodfacts.mercola.com).

## What Does Work?

My proud American spirit was saddened by a detail I learned in the process. Not only was the land of the free and home of the brave not providing a solid search engine, of all places, it was Russia that provided a search engine with the best results in this search. How many times I have been assured that America is superior to Russia in all ways, especially more free, yet here is a glaring example of exactly the opposite being true.

If Russia houses American privacy advocate Edward Snowden, why should I be surprised by its housing of the least censored search engine in our Mercola test. It is not Moscow, but Silicon Valley that is seen as the tech capital of the world, unfortunately Silicon Valley is also the tech censorship capital of the world. Out of Silicon Valley’s hubris, and the decency of the team at Yandex, Russia is able to offer the far superior product.

Yandex.com returned 13 of 15 searches correctly. Yandex is a large Russian technology conglomerate, akin to the Google of Russia.

Nothing against Russians, there are plenty of great people and some awful people in Russia, just like anywhere else. And noting against Yandex. I just don't trust a big tech conglomerate to do right by me. A company is not a human and it would be silly to expect a company to act like a human, let alone like a friend watching out for my best interest.

I would imagine that a major Russian tech conglomerate might encounter censorship and privacy pressures of its own, but for the purposes of needing a search engine that can locate Mercola.com content, it produced the best results. It remains worthy of further investigation why two of the articles were not returned by Yandex: one on 5G (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2019/11/13/5g-emf-exposure.aspx>) and a second on food shortages and home gardening (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/04/17/benefits-of-growing-your-own-food.aspx>).

Yandex is the unquestionable champion of this search test. Thank you to the team at Yandex for being different. With exceptional technology available for search engines, you were the only one of the 13 search engines tested that passed the Mercola test with flying colors.

The others were Google, Bing, Yahoo, Duck Duck Go, Gibiru, Start Page, Verizon One Search, Internet Archive, Yippy, Qwant, Swiss Cows, Search Encrypt, and Internet Archive.

Based in Moscow, Russia, the Yandex switchboard can be reached by phone +74957397000 and their public relations team can be reached by e-mail [pr@yandex-team.ru](mailto:pr@yandex-team.ru).

### **The Russian Calumny**

With the politics of our era, a common calumny against a person has been to refer to him or her as a Russian agent or Russian asset. These claims have such effective ability to neutralize a person. Perhaps I will now be accused of being a Kremlin shill for sharing the data of an experiment that quantified a superior search alternative over its more censored competition. Such suggestions would occur merely because the company is located in what less-than-credible observers deem the suspicion-provoking land of Russia. The Russian calumny is a sad ad hominem of our era that works in opposition to thought, and on this topic shows support for censorship.

I have no conflicts of interest to report on this research. I would just as soon have seen an American website like Duck Duck Go or even Google be the least censored alternative, or a friendly Western European site like Swiss Cows or Qwant. They simply aren't. For my purposes, they are far inferior products. That was quantified by this test. Further tests will need to occur to identify other strengths and limits of the search engines.

### **Yandex Was Spot-On In 13 Out Of 15 Searches**

Yandex returned 13 of 15 results correctly, an 87% success rate. The best finisher after Yandex had a 7% success rate.

The two that it did not return a result on were related to 5G, "Scientific American Warns: 5G Is Unsafe," (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2019/11/13/5g-emf-exposure.aspx>) and a search on food shortages, "Is It Time to Start Growing Your Own Food?" (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/04/17/benefits-of-growing-your-own-food.aspx>). It is not clear why that was. The 5G return showed the Mercola article reprinted at other websites, such as LewRockwell.com (<https://www.lewrockwell.com/2019/11/joseph-mercola/scientific-american-warns-5g-is-unsafe/>), but blocked the original Mercola return. Across platforms, this was counted as a failure in the test, as it did not link to the original Mercola text. The returns for the food shortage article were not helpful. The question of why no search engine provided 100% return of the original and unique results remains unanswered and a disappointing detail that societally should not even be an issue in the year 2020, as the technology to provide those results has long existed.

In contrast, Yandex proved itself the least censored search engine with the following, often not just fine results, but with phenomenal results at Mercola.com beyond the original piece searched for, providing an array of Mercola articles on precisely the topic searched for. Mercola.com tends to carry numerous articles on each topic covered there as new data comes to light on each topic. Because of the number of articles on the topic, it would make sense that numerous articles might be returned by a search engine on each topic. This is a secondary detail that Yandex handled exceedingly well.

In the search "A Search for "90% of Coronavirus Infections Are Asymptomatic," (<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/04/28/asymptomatic-covid-19-cases.aspx>) Yandex returned Mercola as the first and second return, and nothing else. There was no obligatory New York Times, NPR, or Snopes article to balance out the Mercola mention. Yandex provided exactly what was asked for on this search with no editorializing.

For the search “Important New Vitamin D Research Papers,” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/12/01/important-new-vitamin-d-research-papers.aspx> ) Yandex returned the top 5 results from Mercola.com, including the intended result as the first result.

“Simple Inexpensive Solution to Radically Lower EMF Exposure” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2009/08/25/simple-inexpensive-solution-to-radically-lower-emf-exposure.aspx> ) returned 2 results: the original Mercola article and a link to a Mercola podcast on the topic. Whereas other search engines just showed Mercola podcasts not hosted on the Mercola domain, and other pieces that were not from Mercola.com.

In response to the query “Real Risk of a Sneaky Deficiency for Vegans and Vegetarians,” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/01/11/vegan-vitamin-deficiency.aspx> ) Yandex provided two results, the top result being the original article on Mercola.

The search at Yandex “Why Is Raw Milk Banned When It's 35,000 Times SAFER Than Others?” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2011/08/31/us-government-data-proves-that-raw-milk-is-safe.aspx> ) produced 6 results at Mercola.com, including the intended article as the first result.

In contrast, the same search at Gibiru.com returned the result “Now that's some strange shit. We got nothin. Maybe try something a bit less esoteric.” All other search engines ignored the Mercola expertise on this topic. Once again Yandex returned 6 results at Mercola.com on this topic for which Mercola is highly qualified to deliver an opinion.

“How a Root Canal Can Affect Your Health” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2012/10/02/dr-huggins-discusses-root-canals.aspx> ) returned two Mercola results on Yandex, with the intended article returned first.

For the search “Vegetarians Twice as Likely To Be Depressed” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2017/09/14/vegetarian-depression-risk.aspx> ), Yandex provided the original article from Mercola as the top result. This ignored article by the other search engines is notable, as Mercola was once a vegetarian. His personal experience and his nutritional expertise make his commentary on vegetarian diets, or any diet at all, particularly useful.

The Yandex search “How Does COVID-19 Compare to the Spanish Flu?” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/05/02/how-does-covid-19-compare-to-the-spanish-flu.aspx> ) returned 3 results from Mercola.com, including the proper return first. Compare this to all other search engines ignoring Mercola’s article or Gibiru returning “How to Cook Asparagus” ( <https://recipes.mercola.com/how-to-cook-asparagus.aspx> ) as the 15th result and an inexplicable link to the Mercola.com homepage as the 17 result, but no link to the original article.

“The Real Pandemic Is Insulin Resistance” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2020/05/04/insulin-resistance-the-real-pandemic.aspx> ) on Yandex returned two Mercola.com and two LewRockwell.com responses. Compare this to all others ignoring the article and Start Page providing the inexplicable result downpage “Healthy Quick and Easy Recipes” ( <https://recipes.mercola.com/quick-and-easy.aspx> ) at Mercola.com. 13 out of 15 times Yandex got it right, returning the right article as the first result, with other search engines shockingly only getting 0 out of 15 right or 1 out of 15 right.

“Magnesium Deficiency May Result in a Shorter Life”( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2011/08/27/deficiency-of-this-vital-mineral-may-result-in-a-shorter-life.aspx> ) returned four articles, all four from Mercola, including the intended article first.

“The Health Benefits of Consuming Organ Meats” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2013/12/30/eating-organ-meats.aspx> ) produced three good results at Mercola.com. This included the intended article first.

Yandex passed the Kiwifruit test, returning the proper article in response to the query “What Is Kiwifruit Good For?” ( <https://foodfacts.mercola.com/kiwifruit.html> )

“Weston A. Price Foundation to FDA: Soy is No Health Food” ( <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2008/03/06/weston-a-price-foundation-to-fda-soy-is-no-health-food.aspx> ) was returned as the top result.

### **The Best Approach**

The best approach for search is not to rely on any one company and to not get comfortable with any one company.

Yandex is likely going to have some censored content that might look different than the censored content of Google or Bing or any of the others on this list. Google and Bing will be atrocious for privacy. Yandex may be as well. I have not investigated the strengths and weaknesses of Yandex for privacy or censorship, beyond the research presented here.

I continue to use Google, very seldom, never as my default, only as a way to check results between two search engines or to run a specialized search that another search engine has not yet perfected. I see no reason why Google should ever be seen as a default search engine. As demonstrated by this test, it produces inferior, censored results. The quality advantage in search that Google once had no longer exists. The amount of data that Google collects about a user and sells to the world, thereby reducing the price of your personal data, makes it a net negative to use.

Ideally, keep an eye on news about your search engines. That would include doing a very basic news search or even by periodically viewing Wikipedia entries about specific search engines to identify updates about managerial decisions around those search engines. It's good, as well, to keep an eye out for new investments in your search engine that might alter the priorities of management. Though Wikipedia, too, is censored, it can be one place to identify controversy and debates about a company. It has a low bar to entry for adding information and can therefore be a useful counterweight to the newsfeeds of the major search engines as a way of identifying other useful sources. It is not trustworthy as the final word, but is a good place to start research.

Many search engines have blogs where they openly disclose changes in business practices and protocols. Reading what a company is saying about itself on their blog can be a useful source of information, as there is often considerable transparency in such blog posts.

If a high quality search with a low level of privacy sacrificed and no censorship is what you want, then vigilance is needed to ensure you get that, by staying on top of the latest news about the search engines you most interact with.

### **How To Run Your Own Test**

To periodically check your own search engine, you can run your own test. You can copy and paste each of the search terms I used in a search box and try it out. You can share your results by writing my team and I at [allan@realstevo.com](mailto:allan@realstevo.com) for possible inclusion in a future edition of this report.

### **“Privacy” Does Not Mean “Uncensored”**

Just as “all natural” can be used by some marketers in an authentic way, it is far more likely to be a weasel word that doesn't mean “free range,” “grass fed,” or “organic.” Those words, too, are all terms that can be weasel words in their own right.

Unless you know the farmer, have some detailed conversations, and have some familiarity with the farm and the staff, it's hard to know what these words mean in practice on that farm. Luckily, there are ways of learning about the farm without going through all that work. It just takes some diligence. Similarly, in the search world “private,” “encrypted,” and “friendly” do not mean uncensored. They can be weasel words and there are varying degrees of each of these items.

### **Definition Of Censorship**

For the purposes of this test, censorship means “an artificially imposed blockade against existing information.”

Each search in this test, the Mercola test, is run based on previous knowledge of an original article on Mercola.com, a major alternative health website. Despite being banned by every major search engine, it remains one of the top 11,000 websites globally (<https://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/mercola.com>) in late 2020, according to Alexa.com, an Amazon owned company. Consequently, after publication, a Mercola.com article after publication is almost immediately identified and indexed by web crawlers. Rather than present that indexed website as a search result, somewhere along the way Mercola.com is blocked.

This blocking of the website is what I refer to here as censorship. The common big tech explanation for this is that they try to get as many people the content that they want. Individual searches garner individual returns based on the model of the person searching. That is not a sufficient explanation. There is active censoring of Mercola.com taking place, and likely many other websites. The impressive, transparent Alexa.com has since been discontinued by Amazon management. On May 1, 2022, as we were updating this research report, we identified the following on the front page of Alexa.com: “We retired Alexa.com on May 1, 2022, after more than two decades of helping you find, reach, and convert your digital audience. Thank you for making us your go-to resource for content research, competitive analysis, keyword research, and so much more.”

### **Search Engines Are Artificial Intelligence Schools**

Search engines are a giant laboratory for building the ability for artificial intelligence to better model people and for artificial intelligence to better interact with people. Every search you do adds to that laboratory. Not only is the search process monetized, but it largely exists to help build datasets to make artificial intelligence function better.

Some people really just want the content that they asked the search engine for, rather than content that they are told they are allowed to have. They don't care either way about helping to develop artificial intelligence. They also may not care about being tracked.

It is effectively all one business model and all one direction in the technology. Those who will both respect privacy and oppose all censorship are few in number, but those are the people who understand the ills of allowing for intrusions in either of those areas. It's an intrusion that starts out as simply as not being able to find a Mercola.com article and ends in the possibility of far more unpleasant scenarios.

This technology has existed for more than a decade and has been available for consumer use. Effectively, each user is being told, they can use state-of-the-art technology if they seek permissible opinions. If they seek opinions that are not permissible, they can go back to using the card catalogue. This is censorship at the most fundamental level, and the marketplace desires a better option.

Additionally, it is not a scenario that will last long. The trend of the internet has been "information wants to be free." Consistently, those who seek to control the flow of information, have their plans foiled. The technology to make information easily accessible is so easy to be proficient in and is so affordable to implement.

### **Where There Is A Problem, An Entrepreneur Sees An Opportunity**

Out of this long list of search engines, there is poor concern for providing the results a person seeks. Many search engines are merely "wrappers" around another company's search engine. That means the people who operate that wrapper don't have a great deal of control over the results. They have merely accepted that Google or Bing can do it better, and that it is well worth it to pay Google or Bing to do that work.

That response to this problem is not sufficient. The environment is perfect for the entry of a search engine that will not censor, even more so for a search engine that will also not sell user data. "How will you monetize your product?" is an often repeated question of our era. "Monetize!" is practically a mantra.

A search engine takes effort to make.

A paid search engine would be a step better. I would pay a few hundred dollars a year for a top quality search engine that didn't use my data, censor my searches, or create a profile of me to sell to others. Perhaps there are others like me.

Perhaps there are some who would pay \$10 or \$20 a year for a basic service from such a search engine. I might pay more for a search engine that would allow me the chance to customize my searches and would not just stop at agreeing to not monetize my data, but would take it a step further and would allow me to have full control of my data. I would pay for a search engine run by a company that didn't just pay lip service to an amorphous notion of not being evil, but which had concrete principles for what that means, regardless of how much money there is in doing the contrary.

Google and Bing have done great work developing the technology and demonstrating the potential of search. The time for a paid search engine has arrived. It's time for a more responsible participant to enter the industry.

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