

Reading 2

Skills:

- Details

Getting started: Do you use any other search engine apart from Google?

THE HISTORY OF GOOGLE AND HOW IT WAS INVENTED



Search engines or internet portals have been around since the early days of the internet. **However**, it was Google, a relative latecomer, that would go on to become the premier destination for finding just about anything on the World Wide Web.

The very popular search engine called Google was invented by computer scientists Larry Page and Sergey Brin. The site was named after a googol—the name for the number 1 followed by 100 zeros—found in the book *Mathematics and the Imagination* by Edward Kasner and James Newman. **Moreover**, to the site's founders, the name represents the immense amount of information that a search engine has to go through.

In 1995, Page and Brin met at Stanford University **while** they were graduate students in computer science. **Firstly**, the pair began collaborating on writing a program for a search engine called Backrub, named after its ability to do backlink analysis. **Later**, the project resulted in a widely popular research paper titled "The Anatomy of a Large-Scale Hypertextual Web Search Engine."

This search engine was unique in that it used a technology they developed called PageRank that determined a website's relevance. This was done by taking into account the number of pages, along with the importance of the pages, that linked back to the original site. **At the time**, search engines ranked results based on how often a **search term** appeared on a webpage.

Next, fueled by the excellent reviews that Backrub received, Page and Brin began working on developing Google. **Despite** the fact that it was a very tough project at the time, the pair built a server network using cheap, used, and borrowed personal computers. They **even** went over the limit of their credit cards buying terabytes of disks at discount prices.

They first tried to license their search engine technology, but **unfortunately**, they failed to find anyone that wanted their product at an early stage of development. Consequently, Page and Brin decided to keep Google and seek more financing, improve the product, and take it to the public themselves when they had a polished product.

Luckily, the strategy worked, and after more development, the Google search engine eventually turned into a hot commodity. Sun Microsystems co-founder Andy Bechtolsheim was so impressed that after a quick demo of Google, he told the pair, "Instead of us discussing all the details, why don't I just write you a check?"

Bechtolsheim's check was for \$100,000 and was made out to Google Inc., **in spite of** the fact that Google as a legal entity did not exist yet. That next step didn't take long, however—Page and Brin established their company on September 4, 1998. The check **also** enabled them to raise \$900,000 more for their initial round of funding.

With sufficient funds, Google Inc. opened its first office in Menlo Park, California. Google.com, a **beta** (test status) search engine, was launched and answered 10,000 search queries every day. On September 21, 1999, Google officially removed the beta from its title.

In 2001, Google received a patent for its PageRank technology that listed Larry Page as the inventor. By then, the company had relocated to a larger space in Palo Alto. **After** the company finally went public, there were concerns that the one-time startup's rapid growth would change the company culture, which was based on the company motto "Do No Evil." The pledge reflected a commitment by the founders and all employees to carry out their work with objectivity and without conflicts of interest and bias. **Thus**, the position of chief culture officer was established **in order to** ensure the company stayed true to its core values.

During the period of rapid growth, the company introduced a variety of products **such as** Gmail, Google Docs, Google Drive, Google Voice, and a web browser called Chrome. **Besides**, it acquired streaming video platforms YouTube and Blogger.com. More recently, there have been incursions in different sectors, **for instance**, Nexus (smartphones), Android (mobile operating system), Pixel (mobile computer hardware), a smart speaker (Google Home), broadband (Google Fi), Chromebooks (laptops), Stadia (gaming), self-driving cars, and numerous other ventures. Advertising revenue generated by search requests remains its biggest earnings driver.

In 2015, Google underwent a restructuring of divisions and personnel under the conglomerate name Alphabet. Sergey Brin became president of the newly-formed parent company, and Larry Page the CEO. Brin's position at Google was filled with the promotion of Sundar Pichai. Collectively, Alphabet and its subsidiaries consistently rank among the top 10 most valuable and influential companies in the world.

**Adapted from <https://www.thoughtco.com/who-invented-google-1991852>*

Glossary:

- **Search engine:** A search engine is a website through which users can search internet content.
- **Search term:** A search term is the exact word or set of words a customer enters when searching on a search engine.
- **Beta:** A beta version of a product (software or a web page) refers to a phase where the product is undergoing testing before it is officially released.

