



# SEARCHING FOR DISCLOSURE

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*How Search Engines Alert Consumers to the Presence of Advertising in Search Results*

**Part 2 of 3**

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*November 8, 2004*

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# RESULTS BY SEARCH ENGINE

*Continued from Part 1*

## **CNET'S SEARCH.COM**

<http://www.search.com>

Dates tested: April 29, 30 & May 4

See Figure 9

### **Paid Placement**

CNET Search's paid placement results appeared at the top of the page and were distinguished from other listings by a heading—but without a hyperlink or disclosure page. The meta-search engine used results supplied by Google, Ask Jeeves, Business.com, Kanoodle, LookSmart and others.

The site's "Sponsored Links" heading appeared in black lettering on white background and earned praise from all testers for its visibility to users. Although CNET did not offer a disclosure link, the heading itself is hyperlinked. However, clicking on it only expanded the list of sponsored links, which annoyed more than one tester. "The hyperlinking of the heading may be misleading, since it does not lead to a disclosure," said one.

CNET Search featured a section titled "Understanding Search Results" in its help pages, but provided no expla-

nation of paid placement results. One tester questioned the accuracy of the statement: "Search.com now searches Google, Ask Jeeves, LookSmart and dozens of other leading search engines to bring you the best results." Said the tester: "This would make it appear that all results are the best (e.g. most relevant) and that paid placement and/or paid inclusion is not being used."

### **Paid Inclusion**

CNET Search uses paid inclusion, although it did not overtly disclose this fact anywhere on the site. But CNET's reliance on results from search engines that use paid inclusion left little doubt among several testers this practice takes place within the site's main listings.

CNET grouped main listings under the heading "Web Pages," but there was no further explanation or disclosure of these results anywhere on the site. As with the paid placement heading, the "Web Pages" heading was also hyperlinked and, once again, only expanded the available display of results.

Although one tester found it impossible to tell whether CNET used paid inclusion, most thought it did but faulted

FIGURE 9: CNET'S SEARCH.COM

The screenshot shows the search.com homepage with a search bar containing the text "meet singles". The search bar has a "Search" button and a link for "advanced search search by topic". Below the search bar, it says "Results from: Google, Ask Jeeves, Business.com, Kanoodle, LookSmart, MSN, Open Directory, and more." There are also links for "show thumbnails", "advanced", "help", "research by topic", and "hide search history".

Below the search results, there is a box for "related searches" containing links for "free photo personals", "christian singles", "singles", "singles dating", "photo personals", "american singles", "dating", "online dating", and "personals".

There is a "show thumbnails" link above the "Sponsored Links" section.

**Sponsored Links**

- ▶ [Singles, Find Dates Here](#)  
You'll meet singles in your area Profile Pics of Singles here!  
[date.com](#)
- ▶ [Matchmaker.com](#)  
Joins the Millions Who Have tried Matchmaker. com. Sign Up for Free.  
[www.matchmaker.com](#)
- ▶ [Meet Singles](#)  
View Millions of Profiles & Photos. Meet the Perfect Match in Your Area  
[www.americansingles.com](#)

see more Sponsored Links results

**Web Pages**

- ▶ [AdamMeetEve Christian Singles Dating, Christian Personals for ...](#)  
Adam Meet Eve, Meet Christian Singles for pen pals, christian dating, christian chat, Godly marriage. Christians, meet your special, personal Adam or Eve....  
[www.adammeeteve.com](#)
- ▶ [Club Podrushka](#)  
Club Podrushka is an online match-making service where users can meet single Russian women. Visitors to Club Podrushka can also register online for membership to the sites services.  
[www.podrushka.com](#)
- ▶ [Kiss.com Picture Personals](#)  
Offers picture personal ads and the opportunity to meet singles. Join to find fun, friendship, and romance at this Internet dating site.  
[www.kiss.com](#)
- ▶ [Singles - www.Singles.com](#)  
Singles.com is brought to you by National A-1 Advertising, Inc., and is not affiliated with any other Internet site(s). Singles.com is not affiliated with any ...  
[www.singles.com](#)
- ▶ [American Singles Online Dating Personals](#)  
Meet single men and women at this online dating service. Visit chat rooms, engage in anonymous correspondence, get a free membership, and search personalized profiles.  
[www.americansingles.com/default.asp?prm=5104](#)
- ▶ [Mail order brides Singles Philippines and Russia](#)  
meet single asian women online for filipino penpal or penpals. ... nightlife guide to singles bars and clubs. meet local swingers find sexy singles here free. ...  
[manilahotties.com](#)
- ▶ [DateMall.com - Free Adult Dating Service For Singles Seeking Sex](#)  
... Tonight! - Free Membership! Find A New Lover Meet A Perfect New Lover...Hot Local Singles..Meet Local Women For Sex! Find Horny ...  
[www.datemall.com](#)
- ▶ [Best Online Dating Singles Resource, Metrodate.com](#)

FIGURE 10: GOOGLE

The image shows a screenshot of a Google search results page for the query "Europe + tours". At the top, the Google logo is on the left, and navigation links for "Web", "Images", "Groups", "News", "Froogle", and "more" are on the right. Below the logo is a search bar containing the text "Europe + tours" and a "Search" button. To the right of the search bar are links for "Advanced Search" and "Preferences".

Below the search bar, the results are categorized under "Web". The main heading is "Web" followed by "Results 1 - 10 of about 3,670,000 for Europe + tours. (0.18 seconds)".

The first result is "Tour Europe with Globus" from [www.globusjourneys.com](http://www.globusjourneys.com), with a snippet: "Get \$200 off for two when you buy select Globus European vacations".

The second result is "Europe Vacation Packages" from [www.vacationeurope.com](http://www.vacationeurope.com), with a snippet: "Save on Air, Hotels, Escorted Tours Villas, River & Sea Cruise Packages".

Below these are "News results for Europe + tours - View all the latest headlines". The first news item is "Chinese Prime Minister Tours Europe - Voice of America - 19 hours ago" with a small icon of a newspaper.

There are several "Sponsored Links" on the right side of the page:

- Europe Tours Discounted**: Large selection of European tours. Every package is discounted. [affordabletours.com](http://affordabletours.com)
- Free Airfare to Europe**: Purchase any European tour and get free airfare to Europe! [www.goaheadvacations.com](http://www.goaheadvacations.com)
- Contiki: Save \$100 Europe**: Save on fun affordable Contiki Europe trips for 18-35 year olds. [www.contiki.com/deals.asp](http://www.contiki.com/deals.asp)
- Fully Escorted Tours \$995**: Great Tours & Incredible Prices 52 Years. Smart Shoppers Compare. [CaravanTours.com/](http://CaravanTours.com/)
- Europe vacation deals**: With our deals to Europe it's more expensive to stay home. [www.eurovacations.com](http://www.eurovacations.com)
- Save on Europe Tours**: Escorted Europe tours are up to 40% less than traveling independently. [tourvacationstogo.com](http://tourvacationstogo.com)
- Europe: Travel and Learn**: You're virtually there! Info, pics, maps and video clips. [www.passports.com](http://www.passports.com)
- Europe Cruise Packages**: 10-to-15 day cruisetour from \$2419 plus get a \$200 shipboard credit. [www.cruiseweb.com](http://www.cruiseweb.com)

Other search results include:

- Rick Steves Europe Tours, Rail Passes, Travel Books, Luggage and ...**: ... for 2004 tours! European Railpasses Plan your itinerary and choose the right pass. Order online, and we'll toss in lots of FREE extras. Rick Steves' Europe on ... [www.ricksteves.com/](http://www.ricksteves.com/) - 11k - Cached - Similar pages
- Europe Tours - Tour Europe with your private driver-guide**: Privately guided driving tours of Europe featuring major European cities, historic landmarks and natural sites. Europe Tours, Europe Tours. ... [www.a-la-carte-europe-tours.com/](http://www.a-la-carte-europe-tours.com/) - 20k - May 2, 2004 - Cached - Similar pages
- Europe tours | Europe tour booking online | Travellerspoint**: ... Tours > Tours Europe. Europe Tours. Choose one of the countries below to find tours in Europe and to book securely online. Austria ... [www.travellerspoint.com/tours-by-region.cfm?region=Europe](http://www.travellerspoint.com/tours-by-region.cfm?region=Europe) - 15k - May 2, 2004 - Cached - Similar pages
- EUROPE TOURS ITINERARIES**: ... Southern France to Paris, 14 Days, April to October. CENTRAL EUROPE. Name of Itinerary. Length. Time of Year. ... EASTERN EUROPE. Name of Itinerary. Length. Time of Year. ... [www.ehi.com/tauck/europe-itineraries-tours.htm](http://www.ehi.com/tauck/europe-itineraries-tours.htm) - 37k - Cached - Similar pages
- CENTRAL EUROPE TOURS ITINERARIES**: tllogo2.jpg (10153 bytes). Travel By Fingertip presents... Central Europe Itineraries Toll Free Reservations & Information 1 800 214 8669. ... [www.ehi.com/tauck/central-europe-itineraries-tours.htm](http://www.ehi.com/tauck/central-europe-itineraries-tours.htm) - 17k - Cached - Similar pages
- Contiki - Worldwide Vacations for 18 to 35 Year Olds**: ... Tour Plus Contiki Resort Mykonos - Save US\$50 Combine a Contiki Europe tour of at least 10 days long with a stay of at least 5 nights at the Contiki Resort ... [contiki.com/deals.asp](http://contiki.com/deals.asp) - 52k - May 2, 2004 - Cached - Similar pages

At the bottom right, there is a link: "See your message here..."

the site for its lack of disclosure. “I’m assuming this site uses paid inclusion because some of the search engines included in the search use paid inclusion (e.g. MSN Search),” said one tester.

“They do [use paid inclusion], but do not tell you,” said another. “They tell you where their results come from, but unless you know the policies of each (there are no links to their policies) you wouldn’t know.”

One tester noted there wasn’t “any statement made within this site that could lead consumers as to the basis of which a result is generated.”

## GOOGLE

<http://www.google.com>

Dates tested: April 29, 30 & May 4

See Figure 10

### Paid Placement

Google uses paid placement and supplies its own results. Paid links were visually separated from main results, appearing in the right column and delineated by a vertical blue line. Paid links also appeared across the top of the results field in blue-shaded boxes. Both sets of paid results were further distinguished by headings, but not with a hyperlink or disclosure page.

While Google earned high marks from testers for the clarity with which it visually separated paid links from “pure” results, testers roundly criticized the site for not providing accessible, fuller disclosure information. Google’s “Sponsored Links” heading was deemed an adequate indicator of the site’s use of paid placement, but it blended in with the page due to a thin, gray font. Some testers noted that clicking on the paid placement heading in the blue boxes above the main results misleadingly took users to the advertiser’s site, rather than to an expected disclosure. Google did not link to a disclosure from the results page.

Although the FTC does not require a paid placement disclosure beyond the results page, many of the search engines tested—including those using Google results—did provide disclosure pages. Google, however, did

not. This fact, combined with the difficulty in locating an explanation of Google’s search results puzzled and exasperated several testers—all of whom noted the ease in finding this information on sites supplied by Google.

“It is odd that other sites that use Google seem to link to [Google] disclosure pages I cannot find from Google itself,” commented one.

“The layers-deep disclosure information could also be easily accessed via hyperlinks on the results page,” said another tester. “Interestingly, other search engines dependent on Google for their search results do this.” “Google’s paid placement program is difficult to find information about unless one goes several pages into ‘help screens,’” complained another.

“Most search engines who receive paid placement listings from Google provide disclosure links and pages,” said another tester. “I think Google should do the same.”

### Paid Inclusion

At the time of testing, Google—apart from the sites it supplies with their main results—was the only major search engine that did not use paid inclusion. Engines are not technically required by the FTC to explain if they do not use a paid advertising program. However, given that Google has made it a point to publicly shun paid inclusion and call attention to the purity of its results, it was somewhat odd to discover most testers were unable to find information on the Google site itself regarding whether the engine used paid inclusion.

Only two testers noted Google’s lack of paid inclusion with any certainty, although one acknowledged the difficulty in reaching this conclusion. “Google does not use paid inclusion—not that following the links would tell you,” remarked a tester.

## INFOSPACE WEB SEARCH

<http://www.infospace.com/home/search>

Dates tested: April 29, 30 & May 4

See Figure 11

### Paid Placement

FIGURE 11: INFOSPACE WEB SEARCH

The screenshot shows the InfoSpace website interface. At the top left is the 'InfoSpace' logo. To the right is a 'Home' link with a dropdown arrow. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links: 'yellow pages', 'white pages', 'public records', 'web search', 'maps & directions', 'browse categories', 'reverse lookup', 'near an address', 'email search', and 'world directories'. A search bar contains the text 'breast cancer' and a 'Search' button. To the right of the search bar is a link for 'Advanced Preference'. Below the search bar are radio buttons for search types: 'Web Pages' (selected), 'Images', 'Audio', 'Multimedia', 'News', and 'Shopping'. Below this is a 'Now Searching' section with links to Google, Yahoo, Ask Jeeves, About, Overture, Altavista, and 'Learn More'. The main section is titled 'Web search results for "breast cancer" (1 - 20 of 131)'. On the left, under 'Are you looking for?', there are several links related to breast cancer. On the right, there are two options: 'View By Relevance' (selected) and 'View By Search Engine'. A list of 12 search results follows, each with a title, a brief description, and a sponsored link.

**InfoSpace** Home | ▾

yellow pages • white pages • public records • web search • maps & directions  
 browse categories • reverse lookup • near an address • email search • world directories

Web Pages  Images  Audio  Multimedia  News  Shopping

breast cancer  [Advanced Preference](#)

Now Searching: [Google](#) • [Yahoo](#) • [Ask Jeeves](#) • [About](#) • [Overture](#) • [Altavista](#) • [Learn More](#)

Web search results for "breast cancer" (1 - 20 of 131)

Are you looking for?

- [About Breast Cancer](#)
- [Information On Breast Cancer](#)
- [Information About Breast Cancer](#)
- [Breast Cancer Causes](#)
- [Breast Cancer In Women](#)
- [American Cancer Society](#)
- [Susan G. Komen](#)
- [Breast Cancer Information](#)

View By Relevance  View By Search Engine

1. [National Breast Cancer Foundation](#)  
 Explore the complete site on **breast cancer** facts. Help save the lives of homeless, batt underserved women. Click to provide free mammograms.  
 Sponsored by: <http://www.nationalbreastcancer.org>
2. [Take Our Metastatic Breast Cancer Survey](#)  
 If you qualify for our study, we will make a donation in your name to a **breast cancer** here to begin the survey.  
 Sponsored by: <http://www.anabus-reports.com>
3. [Dr. Lorraine Day's Videos: \\$18.99](#)  
 Alternative **breast cancer** treatment. Dr. Day's video series and workbook can help pre how the doctor treated her **cancer**. Free health tests, next day shipping.  
 Sponsored by: <http://www.drdaystore.com>
4. [Breast Cancer Treatment Overviews](#)  
 Cancerconsultants provide **cancer** patients with a comprehensive resource that includes information about screening, prevention, and treatment on a disease-specific basis.  
 Sponsored by: <http://www.cancerconsultants.com>
5. [MedMalUSA Breast Cancer](#)  
 A medical malpractice information Web site and national attorney directory.  
 Sponsored by: <http://www.medmalusa.us>
6. [National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations](#)  
 NABCO, the leading non-profit information and education resource on **breast cancer**, free at (888) 80-NABCO. ...  
<http://www.nabco.org/>
7. [BreastCancer.Net](#)  
 News and information on **breast cancer**, updated daily.  
<http://www.breastcancer.net/>
8. [Breast Cancer Facts](#)  
 Get treatment and research info from M. D. Anderson **Cancer** Center.  
 Sponsored by: <http://www.mdanderson.org/>
9. [Breast Cancer](#)  
 genetics study with sisters Quick and easy enrollment  
 Sponsored by: <http://www.genbasix.com/>
10. [Natl Breast Cancer Fd.](#)  
 Premier site for **breast cancer** info Give today to help poor women in US  
 Sponsored by: <http://nationalbreastcancer.org/>
11. [New Liquid Ionic Cesium Chloride](#)  
 Kill **cancer** with pH therapy for \$119.95 with a free 55-day supply of potassium. Check **breast cancer** therapy information on the site. Call for details - \$75 Liquid Cesium.  
 Sponsored by: <http://www.essense-of-life.com>
12. [Breast Cancer Bracelets](#)

This meta-search engine uses paid placement, and culls results from several sources, including Google, Overture and FindWhat. Paid placement listings were interspersed throughout the results page and identified with a heading on a result-by-result basis, as well as a single hyperlink to a disclosure page.

Headings appeared on the last line of each search result and used the same font and faint blue color of the URLs they preceded. Most of the researchers agreed the term “Sponsored by” indicated paid placement, but several complained the headings were easy to miss because of their location, size and color. In fact, one tester failed to spot the headings at all.

“Its [the heading] placement at the bottom of the citation next to, and the same color as, the (unclickable) URL made it very hard for me to spot at first—even when I knew to look for it,” remarked one tester.

Several testers also said the “Learn More” hyperlink, located at the top of the page after a list of participating search engines, was hard to find—an observation borne out by the inability of two testers to locate the link. Although two testers believed the language used for the hyperlink adequately indicated the availability of a disclosure, one did not and said the wording suggested learning more about the search engines themselves, rather than the nature of their business relationships with InfoSpace.

Clicking on the hyperlink directed users to a page headlined “Why is Metasearch Better?” Scrolling down the page approximately one full screen took users to an explanation of the site’s paid placement program as well as a partial list of engines providing these results.

Although the three testers who managed to locate disclosure gave InfoSpace high marks for its easy-to-understand language explaining its paid placement program, two doubted consumers would ever find it, given the unusual placement of the hyperlink and the lack of any instructions on the page to scroll down.

Since testing concluded, InfoSpace’s disclosure page has changed and no longer carries a headline,

although the browser window bears the title, “About Results—InfoSpace.” Also, the disclosure page now explains “results returned from these search engines including commercial (sponsored) and non-commercial results.” The explanation of the engine’s paid-placement program specifically has been reduced to one sentence: “Pay-for-Placement: Engines that return relevant sponsored listings.”

### **Paid Inclusion**

InfoSpace uses paid inclusion but did not disclose this fact. Like other meta-engines tested, InfoSpace strips out any disclosure language from the search engines whose results it displays. Unless one knows the business practices of these engines—which should not be expected of the average consumer—there is no way to tell if InfoSpace uses paid inclusion.

The meta-engine’s stated use of results from Yahoo, Ask Jeeves and Alta Vista alerted testers as to InfoSpace’s use of paid inclusion. One tester noted: “Although paid inclusion certainly takes place—since this is a meta-search engine that uses other engines known to use paid inclusion—there is no disclosure whatsoever, either on the results page or on a disclosure page.”

Other researchers were unsure. “You cannot tell—I presume they at least inherit it from the engines that they search,” said one tester. “In looking at a search engine where the provenance of search results is so hard to trace, it’s hard to rule out the presence of results that were part of a paid inclusion program,” remarked another.

## **LYCOS NETWORK SEARCH**

<http://www.lycos.com>

Dates tested: April 30 & May 3, 4

See Figure 12

### **Paid Placement**

Lycos used paid placement results provided by Google. Visually, they were grouped above and below the main listings, and distinguished by a heading and hyperlink to a disclosure page. Unlike the main results, which were numbered, paid placement results were preceded by a

FIGURE 12: LYCOS NETWORK SEARCH

The screenshot shows a search engine interface with the Lycos logo on the left. A search bar contains the text "buy + mutual funds", and a dropdown menu is set to "Web". A "Search" button is to the right. Below the search bar, it says "Find 'buy + mutual funds' in: News | Shopping". On the right side, there is a "New! Get Sidesea" link and a "Help" icon.

Below the search bar, there are two columns of sponsored links. The left column lists several links related to buying mutual funds, including "Buy Mutual Funds", "Buy Stocks For Just \$4", "Vanguard Mutual Funds", "Brown|Co - \$5 trades", "Free Mutual Fund Guide", and "Mutual Funds". The right column lists links for "Online Investments", "Free Mutual Fund Info", "Mutual Fund Info", and "Mutual Fund Guide".

Below the sponsored links, there is a section for "WEB RESULTS: Showing Results 1 thru 10 of 558,460 (info)". The results are numbered 1 through 6, each with a title, a brief description, and a URL with the date and file size.

At the bottom right of the page, there is a "Place Your Ad Here..." link.



bullet. Additional paid placement listings also appeared on the right-hand side of the results page in shaded boxes, under a separate heading.

Most of the reviewers believed the “Sponsored Links” heading clearly conveyed the existence of paid placement listings, and all of them praised the eye-catching, red font above the paid results, as well as the hard-to-miss boxes on the right. The link to the site’s disclosure page was deemed easy to spot, thanks to the use of blue and red colors, and testers thought the “info” label was effective.

Clicking on the hyperlink opened a pop-up window titled “Sponsored Search Links” containing only the paid placement disclosure. Below the disclosure, users were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to the question: “Did this answer your question?” Clicking “no” took users to another pop-up with seven hyperlinked subjects: 1) Web Results; 2) Sponsored Search Links; 3) What are the various Search Results Page sections?; 4) News Search; 5) From the Lycos Network; 6) Lycos Search Box; and 7) Shopping Search.

Clicking on the first option took users to a disclosure of the site’s paid inclusion program. Clicking on the second link took users back to the initial paid placement disclosure, while the third link connected to a page containing both disclosures. None of the other options offered any further explanation of either program.

Although testers agreed the disclosure language was easy to understand, some found it somewhat too simple. They also were divided as to how straightforward the content was given the site’s use of seven links for more information. “The hyperlink initially provides only minimal information describing sponsored search links,” remarked a tester. “To dig further.... the searcher is redirected to a choice of seven additional links to more detailed information on search engine marketing.”

### **Paid Inclusion**

Lycos used paid inclusion results from Inktomi (which is owned by Yahoo), LookSmart and FAST, which it disclosed with a heading and a link to a disclosure

page. Lycos sometimes promoted its own content at the top of the main results, which it acknowledged in the disclosure.

None of the testers believed the “Web Results” heading adequately conveyed the use of paid inclusion, although all said it was very noticeable. Remarks regarding the “info” link echoed those for the paid placement link: Good visibility and wording.

But one tester failed to notice the paid inclusion hyperlink, which was separated from the heading with a sentence describing the number of results found such as: “Showing Results 1 thru 11 of 4,658,499.” This appeared to support the FTC’s sentiment that users encounter problems when hyperlinks are separated from headings, even if only by a few inches.


Clicking on the “info” link opened a pop-up window headlined “Web Results” containing the paid inclusion disclosure. As with paid placement, below the disclosure users were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to the question: “Did this answer your question?” Clicking “no” takes the user to another pop-up with the same seven hyperlinked subjects detailed above in the evaluation of paid placement.

Some testers found the disclosure lacking in clarity and candor. “The disclosure explicitly states that ‘Participation in Lycos InSite, our paid inclusion program does not improve placement in search results,’ but does not explicitly state that participation in the LookSmart paid inclusion program does not improve placement,” noted one tester.

Another reviewer echoed this complaint: “The disclosure is confusing and incomplete, since it mentions more than one source of paid inclusion without explaining how all of them work. It says the ‘Lycos InSite’ paid inclusion program does not improve placement in the search results, but it doesn’t clearly indicate whether results from FAST or Looksmart are part of this program—let alone how they operate. Finally, the links that it does provide (why no link to FAST?) don’t take you to specific information, just homepages that require further searching.”

FIGURE 13: MSN SEARCH

MSN Home | My MSN | Hotmail | Shopping | Money | People & Chat

msn Search 


Home | Advanced Search | My Preferences | Submit a Site | Help

Viagra   [Block pop-up ads](#)

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Results 1-15 of about 1366495 containing "Viagra" [NEXT >>](#)

FEATURED SITES - ABOUT

1. [Pfizer - Viagra](#)  **Top Pick**  
Read technical information from the makers of the drug, sildenafil citrate (**Viagra**), that treats impotence.  
www.viagra.com
2. [Viagra.com](#)  
Visit the official site for VIAGRA® (sildenafil citrate) to learn how it works and how to get the best results.  
www.Viagra.com
3. [drugstore.com](#)  
Get significant savings on your next prescription of **Viagra**.  
www.drugstore.com
4. [Viagra \(Sildenafil\)](#)  
Learn about use, precautions and interactions.  
health.msn.com

WEB PAGES - ABOUT

5. [Cheap Viagra Online - A Guide for Consumers](#)  
**Viagra** Tips · **Viagra** info. Bontril · Pharmacies. Service Comparison. ePillGuide.com. This guide contains: 1. A list of reliable suppliers. 2. Clear price comparisons to help you locate the best deals. **Viagra** consumer info. **Viagra** OnlineGuide ... Information and facts on **Viagra** and other medications. ...  
www.epillguide.com
6. [- Viagra, Buy Viagra, Buy Viagra Online, Viagra Soft, Viagra Soft Tabs -](#)  
... **Viagra** has revolutionized the way physicians treat men suffering erectile dysfunction and ... **Viagra** has revolutionized the way physicians treat men suffering from erectile dysfunction ...  
viagra-soft-tabs-rx-store.com
7. [Viagra](#)  
**Viagra** Information. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Pfizer Inc. are advising doctors about new warnings and information in the product labeling for **Viagra** (sildenafil) in response to postmarketing reports of serious adverse events. ... labeling which warned against the concomitant use of **Viagra** and nitrates. ...  
www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/viagra
8. [Buy Viagra, Viagra Online from #1 Buy Viagra Online](#)  
#1 Buy **Viagra** Online - Your choice for **viagra**. ... 1 Buy **Viagra** Online provides the most effective, the most known, the most widely used medications to treat men sexual ...  
www.1-buy-viagra-online-1.com
9. [Viagra Online Price Comparison - Cheap Viagra Online](#)  
**Viagra** online price comparison and information. The ultimate online **Viagra** consumer guide. ... **VIAGRA ONLINE PRICE COMPARISON - CHEAP VIAGRA ONLINE. Viagra** Information | Buy **Viagra** Online | **Viagra** Safety. **Viagra** is a prescription drug used to ...  
www.whichrx.com
10. [Viagra » SEE THIS BEFORE YOU BUY!](#)  
**Viagra** » purchase without prescription from our Online pharmacy and get **viagra** for the best price online. Plus, buy **viagra** for over \$100 and get free shipping. ... seen in **viagra** sydenham chorea are involuntary, **viagra** cheap, and purposeless **viagra**. They are not **viagra** rhythmic

SPONSORED SITES - ABOUT

[Visit the Official Site for VIAGRA](#)  
Visit the official site for **Viagra**® (sildenafil citrate) and ask your...  
www.viagra.com

[Viagra Alternative for Less](#)  
Erectile dysfunction pills. Learn about **Viagra** and compare prices to...  
www.vipra.us

[Online Pharmacy: Viagra](#)  
Secure source for prescription medicines. **Viagra** from Drugstores...  
www.drugstores-online...

[Is Viagra Right For You?](#)  
Learn more about **Viagra** and non-prescription **Viagra** alternatives. Get...  
www.slimstore.com

[Discount Viagra Alternatives Online](#)  
Learn how to safely order discount **Viagra** alternatives online. Get...  
www.viagrabenefits.com

## MSN SEARCH

<http://www.search.msn.com>

Dates tested: April 30 & May 3, 4, 5

See Figure 13

### Paid Placement

MSN Search uses paid placement, with results provided by Yahoo-owned Overture. Paid placement results appeared on the right-hand side of the page, boxed by a thin, blue line. Paid placement results sometimes also occurred at the top of the results page. Both sets of listings featured a heading and hyperlink to a disclosure pop-up.

MSN was using “content promotion” during testing (a practice it terminated in July), which included both MSN and advertiser results selected by editors. These links were often placed at the top of the results page. Although they were disclosed by a heading (“Featured Sites”) and a hyperlink, they caused considerable confusion among testers, who mistook them for both paid placement and paid inclusion listings. The following sentence in the content promotion disclosure was a considerable source of confusion: “Microsoft accepts payment for listings from these [advertising] partners.”

While testers approved of the language of the “Sponsored Sites” heading, they criticized the light gray font, which was difficult to spot. One tester mistook the “Recommended Sites” content promotion heading for a paid placement indicator, again underscoring the troubles content promotion creates for users.

Most reviewers believed the “About” hyperlink indicated the availability of a disclosure, but most also noted the gray font made the hyperlink easy to overlook. Clicking on the hyperlink opened a narrow, vertical pop-up window titled “About MSN Results” that ran the length of the far right-hand screen. Finding the “Sponsored Sites” disclosure required scrolling to a brief disclosure. Additionally, users were required to scroll further to a hyperlink labeled “About Sponsored Sites search results” to access the full disclosure—a lengthy process testers criticized as too cumbersome.

“It takes several pages to piece together a complete disclosure,” said one. “You must scroll down to find links

to further details and even these are incomplete,” complained another. “Too much scrolling and clicking required,” said another.

### Paid Inclusion

Although MSN had long used paid inclusion listings under its “Web Pages” heading, several weeks before testing began, the site inexplicably ceased disclosing this practice—despite receiving its main results from Yahoo, which featured paid inclusion. Then in early July, MSN announced it was getting out of the paid inclusion business and would begin removing those listings from its Yahoo-supplied results.

This lack of disclosure perplexed testers, and the general confusion was only exacerbated by MSN’s content promotion listings (“Featured Sites”), which two reviewers mistook for paid inclusion listings.

Regardless of which heading the testers identified (“Web Pages” or “Featured Sites”), most said the gray font was easy to overlook, and none thought the wording indicated paid inclusion. Most reviews faulted the “About” hyperlink for poor visibility.

Clicking on the hyperlink required an identical amount of scrolling and clicking to locate the complete disclosure. Regardless of which disclosure the testers clicked on, almost all were critical of the effort involved.

Testers were confused about whether MSN used paid inclusion from the vaguely worded disclosure: “Web Page search results include all Internet-wide Web sites that best match your search words.” Said one reviewer: “It is not clear from this statement which sites are searched and how they are identified for inclusion in the search results. MSN does a better job disclosing paid placement than providing any indication of whether they use paid inclusion.”

Another tester expressed frustration with the various terms and definitions found on the disclosure pages. “I struggled with MSN’s ‘word game’ definitions—Popular Topics, Featured Sites, Sponsored Sites—and how they may, or may not, interrelate,” remarked one tester.

FIGURE 14: MY SEARCH

The screenshot displays the MySearch website interface. At the top left is the MySearch logo. A search bar at the top right contains the text "digital cameras". Below the search bar, there is a row of search engine providers: Google, AltaVista, Ask Jeeves, AlltheWeb, and a partially visible "Lo". The search results are displayed below, starting with "Search Results · News · Images · Video · MP3 Files". A section for "sponsored listings" follows, containing several links and descriptions for digital cameras, such as "Digital Cameras at Dell", "Digital Cameras" (Up To 45% Off), "Digital Cameras" (Shop for Digital Cameras!), "Gateway Digital Cameras", "Digital Cameras" (Choose from a wide selection), and "PriceSCAN.com". A "More Sp" link is visible on the right. Below the sponsored listings, it says "Web Results | powered by AlltheWeb" and "Results 1-10 of ab". The main search results include a link to "Digital Camera Reviews and News: Digital Photography Review: Forums, Glossary, FAQ" with a description and URL. A decorative wavy line separates the results from the pagination and search options. The pagination shows "Result Page: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Next". Below this is a search box for "digital cameras" in Yellow Pages, with fields for City, State, and Zip, and a "Find" button. A link to "Find people fast with the Free White Pages Directory from SMARTpages.com" is also present. At the bottom, there is another search bar with "digital cameras" and a "Search" button, followed by the same search engine provider row. A link to "Change Default search provider - Click Here" is provided. The footer contains links for "About My Search", "Terms", "Partner with My Search", "Comments", "Help", and "About Search Results", along with the copyright notice "© My Search 2002-2004".

"Popular Topics can be Sponsored Sites, but are usually not Featured Sites. Featured Sites are MSN-affiliated, but it is Web Pages that 'best match your search words.'"

## MY SEARCH

<http://www.mysearch.com/jsp/home.jsp>

Dates tested: May 1, 3, 4 & 5

See Figure 14

### Paid Placement

My Search used paid placement and relied on results from Google, among others. A type of search engine portal, My Search allowed users to choose from one of several search engines. Testers were asked to search using "AlltheWeb" (an option no longer offered) to cover the spectrum of results. Paid placement listings appeared at the top of the results page and were disclosed with a heading and hyperlink to a disclosure page.

Most of the testers found the tiny, gray font used for the "Sponsored Listings" heading too difficult to detect, and all but one thought the label clearly signified advertising-driven results.

Most testers believed the "About Search Results" hyperlink clearly suggested the availability of a disclosure and contrasted well with the page for easier visibility. But any enthusiasm was more than tempered by the link's inconspicuous placement at the bottom right-hand corner of the page. "The hyperlink was buried," said one tester, speaking for the others.

Clicking on the hyperlink opened a large pop-up window and took users to a disclosure for "All the Web" results. Users were required to scroll up the page to find the "About My Search Sponsored Listings" heading at the top of the page.

While several testers complained about the location of the link and the need to scroll, most found the language itself simple and straightforward. "Although it takes a little while to find the 'About Search Results' link at the very bottom of the page, the policy is clearly stated," said one.

### Paid Inclusion

When searching with "AlltheWeb," My Search used paid inclusion, but not with other results from sites that do not employ it. Results were supplied by FAST and disclosed with a heading and hyperlink to a disclosure page—the same link used to disclose paid placement.

None of the testers believed the "Web Results powered by AlltheWeb" heading adequately conveyed paid inclusion, and all said the size and color of the font made the heading blend in with the page. "Light gray on white with very small print makes the words less visible," noted one.

Since My Search used the same "About Search Results" link to disclose paid inclusion as well, comments echoed those above. "Again, the disclosure hyperlink is easy to miss, since it is buried at the bottom of the page, rather than adjacent to the header," noted one.

Clicking on the hyperlink opened a large pop-up window that took users directly to a disclosure for "AlltheWeb" results. Reviews were mixed about the quality of the disclosure itself. While testers agreed consumers could easily find the disclosure, doubts were raised when asked to analyze and interpret that language.

"I became lost in the discussion of page ranking technology," said one tester.

"The explanation repeats twice that they receive payment from less than 1% of the Web sites," noted another tester. "But this has nothing to do with the case. The crucial number is the frequency with which paid Web sites are included in results compared with unpaid sites."

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*Continued in Part 3*