



A Healthy Perspective on Search Behavior

Tony Gentile, VP Product Management

Healthline

April 24, 2006

About Healthline...

**A vertical search engine
focused on
consumer health information**



About me...

- 18 years of software/internet product design, development and management experience...
- As an exec and consultant for various companies, such as:
 - Yahoo!
 - Adobe
 - Kodak
 - Vivendi Universal
 - Knight Ridder
 - PointCast



The point of which...

Is to give you some level of **confidence** that what you're about to hear is the **gospel truth** on search behavior



So it might surprise you to hear me say...

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; **there is nothing new under the sun**. Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new?" It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.

(Ecclesiastes 1:9-14 NIV)



In fact...

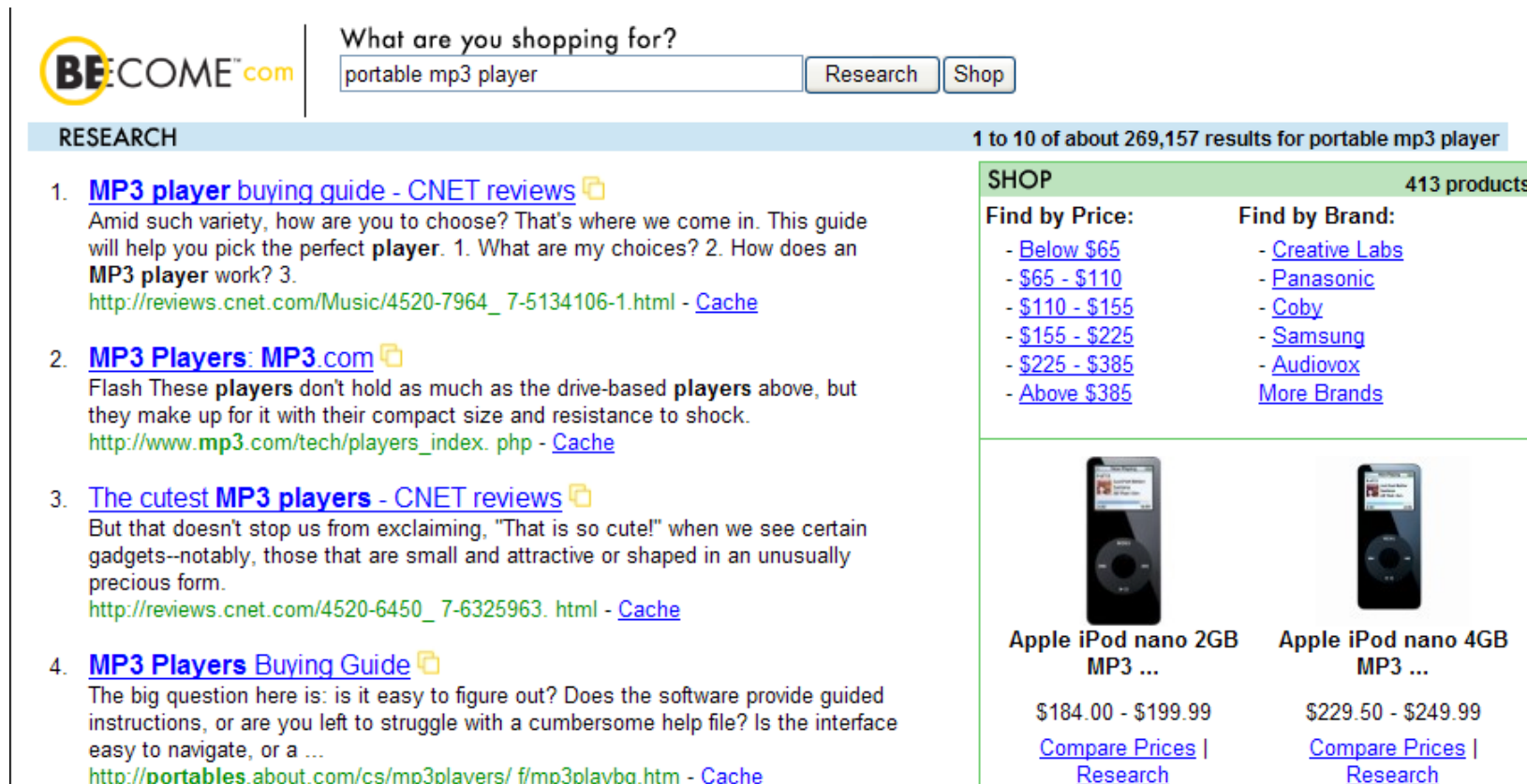
We're continually forgetting and rediscovering some of the basics of search (and online) behavior, including:

1. Users don't know what they don't know
2. Use cases must accommodate proxied target segments
3. Achieving confidence is key
4. Going vertical (usually) means asking for answers



1. Users don't know what they don't know...

Said another way, there's a difference between **searching for something** and **researching something**.



The screenshot shows the BECOME.com search interface. The search bar contains 'portable mp3 player' with 'Research' and 'Shop' buttons. The results are split into a 'RESEARCH' section and a 'SHOP' section.

RESEARCH 1 to 10 of about 269,157 results for portable mp3 player

- MP3 player buying guide - CNET reviews**
Amid such variety, how are you to choose? That's where we come in. This guide will help you pick the perfect **player**. 1. What are my choices? 2. How does an **MP3 player** work? 3.
http://reviews.cnet.com/Music/4520-7964_7-5134106-1.html - [Cache](#)
- MP3 Players: MP3.com**
Flash These **players** don't hold as much as the drive-based **players** above, but they make up for it with their compact size and resistance to shock.
http://www.mp3.com/tech/players_index.php - [Cache](#)
- The cutest MP3 players - CNET reviews**
But that doesn't stop us from exclaiming, "That is so cute!" when we see certain gadgets--notably, those that are small and attractive or shaped in an unusually precious form.
http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-6450_7-6325963.html - [Cache](#)
- MP3 Players Buying Guide**
The big question here is: is it easy to figure out? Does the software provide guided instructions, or are you left to struggle with a cumbersome help file? Is the interface easy to navigate, or a ...
<http://portables.about.com/cs/mp3players/f/mp3playbq.htm> - [Cache](#)



SHOP 413 products

Find by Price:

- [Below \\$65](#)
- [\\$65 - \\$110](#)
- [\\$110 - \\$155](#)
- [\\$155 - \\$225](#)
- [\\$225 - \\$385](#)
- [Above \\$385](#)

Find by Brand:

- [Creative Labs](#)
- [Panasonic](#)
- [Coby](#)
- [Samsung](#)
- [Audiovox](#)
- [More Brands](#)

	
Apple iPod nano 2GB MP3 ...	Apple iPod nano 4GB MP3 ...
\$184.00 - \$199.99	\$229.50 - \$249.99
Compare Prices Research	Compare Prices Research



This is especially true with health information...

... so Healthline connects consumer and medical vocabulary, and provides 'Medically Guided Search'...



Medically speaking, **the clap** is also known as **Gonorrhea**; Healthline has automatically provided search results for both terms.

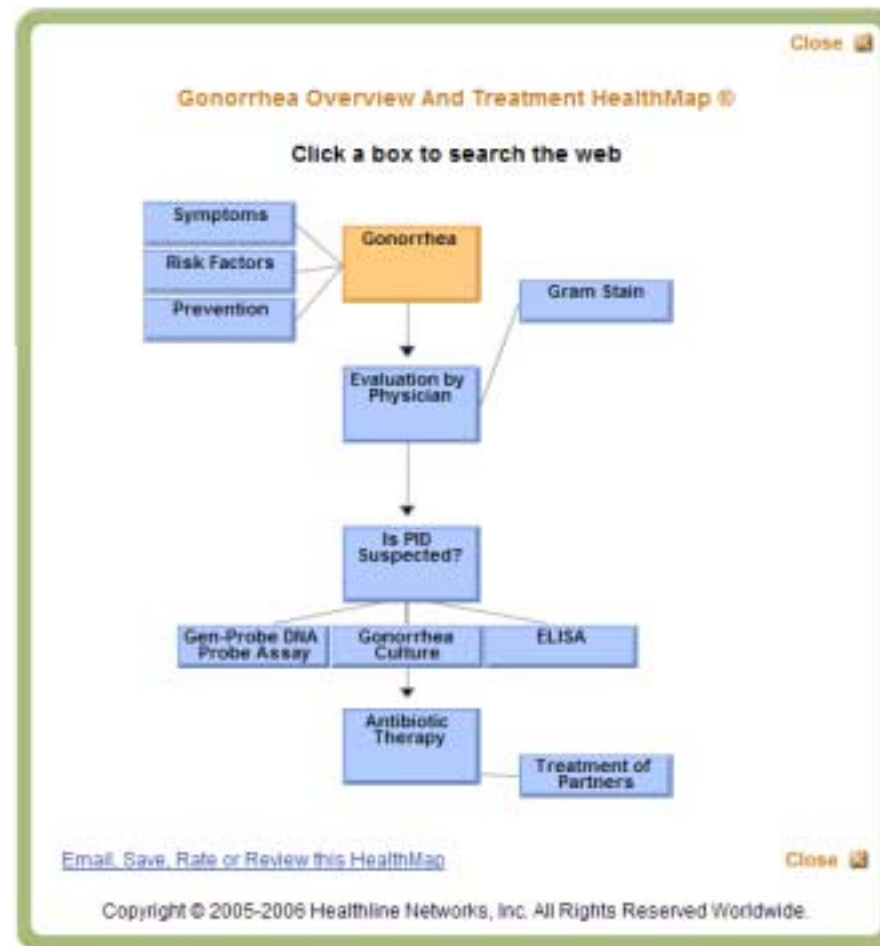
the clap search ideas

HealthMaps	Broaden Search	Narrow Search (11) show less	Related Topics
 Sexually Transmitted Diseases	infections and viruses	gonorrhea treatment	
Gonorrhea Overview And Treatment	sexually transmitted diseases	gonorrhea symptoms	
		gonorrhea causes	
		gonorrhea prevention	
		gonorrhea complications	
		gonorrhea risk factors	
		gonorrhea diagnostic tests	
		gonorrhea of uterus	
		gonococemia	
		gonococcal joint infection nos	
		gonorrhea evaluation by physician	



And, if that's not enough...

... Healthline will draw you a picture, which you can use to search the Web...



2. There may be a Grandmother between you and your users...

- ... You've designed the perfect search/shopping experience for your target demographic... but forgot that:
- In 2005, consumers planned to spend \$681 on gifts during the holidays (*)
- 48% of respondents prefer to buy special gifts the recipients wouldn't buy themselves (*)
- 27% of surveyed consumers said they'd pay more for the perfect gift (*)

* Source: NPD Group



30% of all health searches are done on another's behalf...

... so Healthline provides functionality to easily save, organize and forward information...

1. [Diabetes \(12 Images\)](#) ★★★★★ (Trust Mark: Doctor-Reviewed)

Diabetes is a life-long disease marked by high levels of sugar in the blood. It can be caused by too little insulin (a hormone produced by the pancreas to regulate blood sugar), resistance to insulin... • Reviewer: Kevin Pho, M.D., Attending, Internal Medicine, Boston VA Medical Center, Boston, MA. • Review Date: 2/9/2005

<http://www.healthline.com/health/endocrine/001214.html> [Email](#) | [Save](#)

The screenshot shows the 'My Healthline' interface. At the top, there are navigation links: 'Account | Ratings and Reviews | Subscriptions | News Alerts | Saved Pages | Profile'. Below this is the 'My Saved Pages' section, which includes a filter dropdown set to 'Show All Saved Pages'. A list of three saved pages is displayed, each with a date, time, title, notes, and reminder tags. The first entry is for 'Arthritis' (10/26/2005, 17:10 PM) with notes about early onset and tags for 'arthritis', 'joints', and 'soreness'. The second is 'Cancer' (10/19/2005, 14:10 PM) with notes about a solid overview article and tags for 'for mom', 'cancer', and 'overview'. The third is 'Drug abuse' (10/16/2005, 19:10 PM) with notes about a shared understanding and tags for 'for PTA group', 'drug', and 'abuse'. At the bottom of the section, there is a link to 'Learn more' about the 'Save Pages From Anywhere' tool.



3. It's all a confidence game in the end...

Leading players learned early how important confidence is...

Member Profile: cacardshark (10923)

Feedback Score:	10923
Positive Feedback:	99.7%
Members who left a positive:	10954
Members who left a negative:	33
All positive feedback received:	16280

[Learn about](#) what these numbers mean.

Recent Ratings:

	Past Month	Past 6 Months	Past 12 Months
positive	159	1112	2309
neutral	0	2	8
negative	0	2	10

Bid Retractions (Past 6 months): 0

Member since: May-02-00
Location: United States

- [ID History](#)
- [Items for Sale](#)
- [Visit my Store](#)
- [Add to Favorite Sellers](#)
- [View my Reviews & Guides](#)

[Contact Member](#)

Prices and Stores Tax and shipping estimated for San Francisco, CA 94101 | [Change ZIP](#)

Store Name	Store Rating	Notes	Price	Total price	
Featured Store circuit city	421 store reviews Trusted Store	In stock Free Shipping on Orders \$25 an...	Price: \$227.94 Tax (CA): \$19.37 Free Shipping	\$247.31	Buy It at Circuit City
Featured Store Vanns.com	186 store reviews	In stock 800-769-5668	Price: \$249.98 No Tax (CA) Free Shipping	\$249.98	Buy It at Vanns.com



Healthline sees trust as a key component of confidence...

...via trust indicators, user ratings and reviews, and more...

1. [Diabetes \(12 Images\)](#) ★★★★★ (Trust Mark: Doctor-Reviewed)

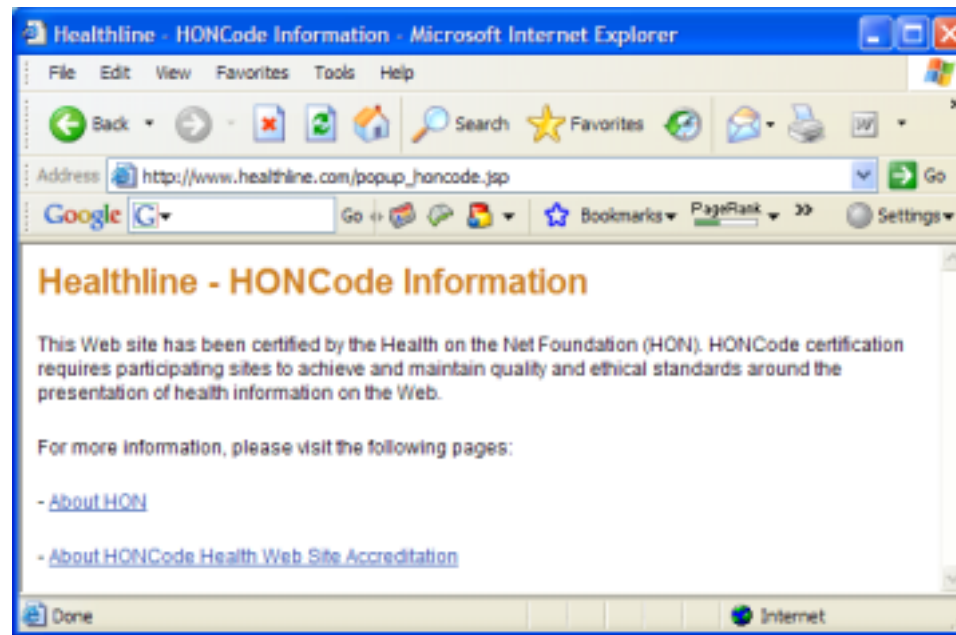
Diabetes is a life-long disease marked by high levels of sugar in the blood. It can be caused by too little insulin (a hormone produced by the pancreas to regulate blood sugar), resistance to insulin... • Reviewer: Kevin Pho, M.D., Attending, Internal Medicine, Boston VA Medical Center, Boston, MA. • Review Date: 2/9/2005

<http://www.healthline.com/health/endocrine/001214.html> | [Email](#) | [Save](#)

6. [Diabetes -- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (Trust Mark: HONcode)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the principal agency in the United States government for protecting the health and safety of all Americans and for providing essential human services, especially for those people who are least able to help themselves.

<http://www.cdc.gov/node.do/id/0900f3ec80006cf6/> | [Email](#) | [Save](#)



4. Verticals are about (better) answers

A typical horizontal search experience for flight options:

Web Desktop News Images Local (BETA) Encarta

flight san francisco boston

+Search Builder Settings Help Español

* Were you looking for 'flight san francisco' near Boston, MA

Web Results

Page 1 of 662,271 results containing **flight san francisco boston** (0.20 seconds)

[Plane Ticket Discounts](#) - www.entertainment.com/ SPONSORED SITES
Official Site of the Entertainment® Book. Just Reduced to 1/2 Price!

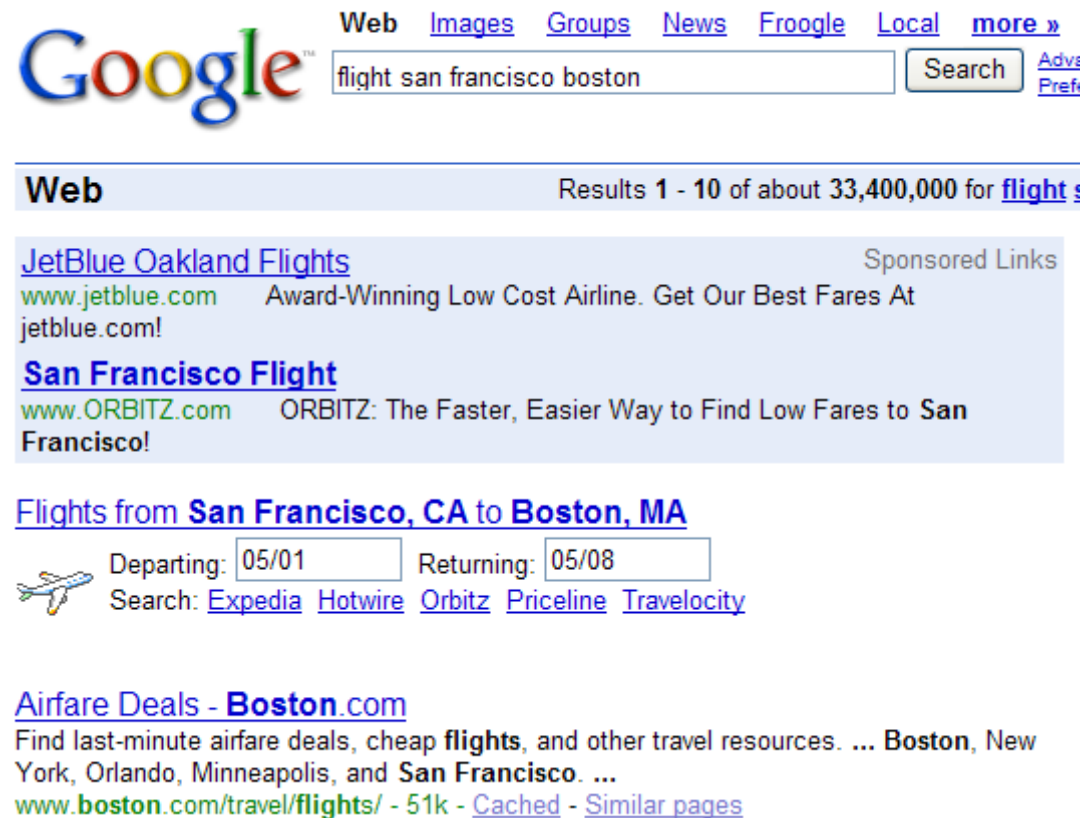
www.commission-junction.com
www.commission-junction.com/track/track.dll?AID=13957&PID=590754...

[Austin-Bergstrom **Flight** and Airline Information](#)
Flight and Airline Information JetBlue announces new service from Austin-Bergstrom to ...
San Diego San Francisco ...
www.ci.austin.tx.us/austinairport/airlines.htm [Cached page](#)



An 'enlightened' horizontal search approach...

... whose primary purpose is to maintain an intermediary position until disintermediation can occur...



Google Web Images Groups News Froogle Local more »
flight san francisco boston Search Adv Pref

Web Results 1 - 10 of about 33,400,000 for [flight s](#)

[JetBlue Oakland Flights](#) Sponsored Links
[www.jetblue.com](#) Award-Winning Low Cost Airline. Get Our Best Fares At jetblue.com!

[San Francisco Flight](#)
[www.ORBITZ.com](#) ORBITZ: The Faster, Easier Way to Find Low Fares to **San Francisco!**

[Flights from San Francisco, CA to Boston, MA](#)
Departing: Returning:
Search: [Expedia](#) [Hotwire](#) [Orbitz](#) [Priceline](#) [Travelocity](#)

[Airfare Deals - Boston.com](#)
Find last-minute airfare deals, cheap **flights**, and other travel resources. ... **Boston**, New York, Orlando, Minneapolis, and **San Francisco**. ...
[www.boston.com/travel/flights/](#) - 51k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)



...whereas the Vertical answers the question...

San Francisco, CA (SFO) to Boston, MA (BOS)

	 All Results	 America West	 US Airways	 American Airlines	 United	 Alaska Airlines
Nonstop	from \$383 see below	---	from \$423	from \$383	from \$383	from \$443
1 stop	from \$377 see below	from \$377	from \$377	from \$386	from \$386	---
2+ stops	from \$1069 see below	---	---	---	---	---

[Show more airlines »](#)




Are your travel dates flexible? [See our Fare Comparison Calendar](#)

Note: The prices shown below are for the **flight only**; they are e-ticket prices and include [all flight taxes and fees](#). If your itinerary requires paper tickets there will be an [additional charge](#). These results cover a metro area with [several airports](#). Review your choices carefully.

1 [Choose a departing flight](#) or [view complete roundtrips](#)

Sort by: Price Preferred departure time Duration Departure time Arrival time

 from **\$377** Roundtrip

12:49 pm Depart San Francisco (SFO)
Arrive Boston (BOS) **11:06 pm**

Mon 1-May
Duration: 7hr 17mn

 **US Airways** ↗↖6580 / ↖↗5866
Connect in Washington DC (IAD)

[Preview seat availability](#)

[➔ Choose this departure](#)



Healthline provides answers...

...through licensed content and deep links...

Diabetes Health Article Licensed from  [Print](#) [Email](#) [Save](#)

[Table of Contents](#)
[Definition](#)
[Alternative Names](#)
[Causes, incidence, and risk factors](#)
[Symptoms](#)
[Signs and tests](#)
[Treatment](#)
[Support Groups](#)
[Expectations \(prognosis\)](#)
[Complications](#)

 **Reviewer Info:** Kevin Pho, M.D., Attending, Internal Medicine, Boston VA Medical Center, Boston, MA. ; [ADAM Health Illustrated Encyclopedia](#), 2/9/2005

Members' Average Rating: ★★★★★
[What do you think of this article?](#) | [Read 2 Reviews](#)

Page: **1** [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [Next >](#)

Definition

Diabetes is a life-long disease marked by high levels of sugar in the blood. It affects the pancreas.

Illustrations and Images

-  Endocrine glands
-  Food and insulin release
-  Insulin production and diabetes
-  Diabetic retinopathy
-  Islets of Langerhans
-  Blood test

DIABETES INFORMATION

 Glucose Meters & Diabetes Management	 Insulin	 Diabetes Pills	 Lancing Devices & Sharps Disposal
 Food & Meal Planning	 Complications of Diabetes	 Q's & A's About Diabetes and FDA	 Other Resources

Search for: in [Diabetes](#) (Powered by Google)

Diabetes News... *Welcome to the FDA web site on diabetes.* We hope that the





Takeaways...

- Assume your users are researching, not just searching. Arm them with context to eliminate confusion and increase confidence.
- Assume others are searching on behalf of your perceived target audience; give them the tools they need to help those downstream.
- Confidence is key. Help a user achieve that bar easily and conveniently and they'll likely return... with friends in tow.
- If you're a vertical, deliver a superior experience by providing an answer, not just a list of likely sources for answers.



Questions and comments?

tgentile@healthline.com

