



Dr Google makes you cyber-sick

Courier Mail, Brisbane, General News, [Rose Brennan](#)

05 May 2015

Page 13 • 350 words • ASR AUD 4,303 • Photo: No • Type: News Item • Size: 245.00 cm² • QLD • Australia • Press • ID: 403063984



USING "Dr Google" to selfdiagnose a health problem won't work in most cases, with symptom-based web searches leading to wrong conclusions and incorrect treatment suggestions putting people's health at risk.

New research by the Queensland University of Technology Information Systems School's Guido Zuccon found major search engines were not able to effectively detect a person's ailment from symptoms. Only three of the first 10 results were highly useful for self-diagnosis.

"For example, you might search for a normal cold using symptoms but it might come up with things like brain cancer," Dr Zuccon said.

Researchers found that searching for "yellow eyes" as a symptom of jaundice resulted in suggestions for simple health issues like allergic reactions, sleep deprivation, intoxication and even the rare disease amyloidosis.

The researchers used "bulging eye" as a symptom of exophthalmos which led to irrelevant results such as thyroid problems, conjunctivitis and even cancerous tumours.

Researchers also found that using the wrong search terms hindered the process with a search of "swollen eye" - a symptom of exophthalmos leading to a website spruiking tea bags as a homemade remedy for puffy eyes.

Dr Zuccon warned people turning to the internet for medical advice were at risk of experiencing "cyberchondria", where one search leads to another and concern escalates unreasonably.

"If you don't get a clear diagnosis after one search you would likely be tempted to keep searching," Dr Zuccon said. "So if you had searched for the symptoms of something like a bad head cold, you could end up thinking you had something far more serious, like an issue with the brain.

"This is partly down to searcher bias and partly down to the way the (internet) search engines work.

"For example, pages about brain cancer are more popular than pages about the flu so the user is driven to these results." More research will be done to help search engines become more effective.

"It's a very difficult problem for us to describe what we have from a medical perspective and it's difficult for the search engine to put up the information exactly matching what we are experiencing and relate it to an actual medical condition," Dr Zuccon said.

[View original](#)

Audience

158,286 CIRCULATION



Dr Google's dodgy diagnosis

Cairns Post, Cairns QLD, General News

05 May 2015

Page 4 • 171 words • ASR AUD 387 • Photo: No • Type: News Item • Size: 87.00 cm² • QLD • Australia • Press • ID: 403118175



USING "Dr Google" to selfdiagnose a health problem won't work in most cases, with symptom-based web searches leading to wrong conclusions and incorrect treatment suggestions, putting people's health at risk.

New research by Queensland University of Technology Information Systems School's Guido Zuccon found major search engines were not able to effectively detect a person's ailment from symptoms. Only three of the first 10 results were highly useful for self-diagnosis.

"For example, you might search for a normal cold using symptoms but it might come up with things like brain cancer," Dr Zuccon said.

Researchers found that searching for "yellow eyes" as a symptom of jaundice resulted in suggestions for simple health issues like allergic reactions, sleep deprivation, intoxication and even the rare disease amyloidosis.

Dr Zuccon warned people turning to the internet for medical advice were at risk of experiencing "cyberchondria", where one search leads to another and concern escalates unreasonably.

"If you don't get a clear diagnosis for symptoms after one search, you would likely be tempted to keep on searching," Dr Zuccon said.

[View original](#)

Audience

16,833 CIRCULATION



Interview with Dr Guido Zuccon, Researcher, QUT about "cyberchondria", in which ...

612 ABC Brisbane, Brisbane, Drive, Rebecca Levingston

05 May 2015 3:08 PM

Duration: 4 mins 47 secs • ASR AUD 2,228 • QLD • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: W00061596638

Interview with Dr Guido Zuccon, Researcher, QUT about "cyberchondria", in which people use the internet to diagnose an illness and end up thinking they are more sick than they actually are. Zuccon says that search engine data showed that it is pretty common for people to search with medically related queries. Zuccon says that it can be dangerous for people to misdiagnose themselves following a Google search.

Audience

19,000 ALL, 6,000 MALE 16+, 13,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Guido Zuccon, Researcher, QUT



Dr Google? Use dose of caution, says study

Age, Melbourne, General News, Amy Corderoy

06 May 2015

Page 11 • 368 words • ASR AUD 10,954 • Photo: No • Type: News Item • Size: 178.00 cm² • VIC • Australia • Press • ID: 403559708



There is no doctor in your computer able to divine your illness from a vague list of symptoms.

That's the message for people who try to figure out what's wrong using computer search engines, new Australian research shows.

Whether it's "sharp pain in my finger" or "strange rash on chest", searching about our health is something we've all done online.

Google estimates one in 20 of its 100 billion searches each month is someone looking for health advice and information, and the quality of material available on specific conditions has improved over the past few years.

However, a study from the Queensland University of Technology has found that search engines are very bad at directing people to accurate information when they type in common language descriptions of their conditions.

Guido Zuccon, from QUT's Information Systems School, tested eight common descriptions of conditions against Google and Bing searches, and concluded that search engine results could be putting people's health at risk.

"There were cases where the information was just not useful for the person," Dr Zuccon said. "But it's the web pages that were suggesting something that is just not what you have, or are trying to sell you something and saying 'you have this and this is how you should treat it' - that's when our very big concerns arise."

The researchers examined eight main conditions and several common descriptions of those conditions - such as "extreme red rash on arm" for hives (technically called urticaria), or "puffy sore calf" for oedema.

They found only four or five of the first 10 results on a page would be useful for the person doing the search.

Only three out of 10 were highly relevant.

"A large number of irrelevant documents did contain the query terms but were suggesting a different medical symptom than that underlying the issued query," Dr Zuccon and his co-authors from the CSIRO and the Vienna University of Technology wrote in a paper delivered at the European Conference on Information Retrieval.

At best, the advice could simply be misleading; at worst, it could give them a false sense of security or direct them towards ineffective treatments, he said.

Search companies were not equipped to know from a few words what an individual was experiencing.

[View original](#)

Audience

106,843 CIRCULATION



Net quackery

Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, General News

06 May 2015

Page 12 • 190 words • ASR AUD 7,683 • Photo: No • Type: News Item • Size: 96.00 cm² • NSW • Australia • Press • ID: 403572764



Why Dr Google is not worth a visit There is no doctor in your computer able to divine your illness from a vague list of symptoms. That's the message for people who try to figure out what's wrong using computer search engines, new Australian research shows. Google estimates one in 20 of its 100 billion searches each month is someone looking for health advice and information, and the quality of material available on specific conditions has improved over the past few years. However, a study from the Queensland University of Technology has found search engines are very bad at directing people to accurate information when they type in common language descriptions of their conditions. Guido Zuccon, from QUT's Information Systems School, tested eight common descriptions of conditions against Google and Bing searches, and concluded search engine results could be putting people's health at risk. "There were cases where the information was just not useful for the person," Dr Zuccon said. "But it's the web pages that were suggesting something that is just not what you have, or are trying to sell you something . that's when our very big concerns arise." Amy Corderoy

[View original](#)

Audience

114,634 CIRCULATION



Interview with Dr Bevan Koopman, CSIRO. ...

3AW, Melbourne, Breakfast, Ross Stevenson and John Burns

06 May 2015 8:09 AM

Duration: 3 mins 46 secs • ASR AUD 8,733 • VIC • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: M00061605540

Interview with Dr Bevan Koopman, CSIRO.

Stevenson says a study from the Qld Uni of Technology finds that people searching Google is less than useful. Koopman discusses the use of 'Doctor Google' and how it is widely used in the US. Koopman says search engines provide a wealth of information on disease and illness if you can accurately articulate these in queries. He says there are good quality results for coeliac disease, for instance. Koopman describes self diagnosis and symptom queries that make it difficult for search engines to provide results. He describes Cyberchondria. They chat about medical professionals using searches for clinical decisions.

Audience

207,000 ALL, 91,000 MALE 16+, 111,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Bevan Koopman, CSIRO



Doctors are warning of the dangers of using Google to self-diagnose ailments. A recent ...

[Channel 9, Perth, Nine News 4:30 Edition, Emmy Kubainski](#)

06 May 2015 4:38 PM

Duration: 1 min 47 secs • ASR AUD 2,100 • WA • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: M00061617877

Doctors are warning of the dangers of using Google to self-diagnose ailments. A recent study from Queensland University of Technology has found that search results could be putting peoples' health at risk. The symptoms of 8 conditions were searched on Google and Bing, including red rashes on the arm and sores around the mouth. Researchers found that only 3 of the first 10 hits were highly relevant to the condition. Doctors warn if people are concerned they should visit their GP.

Audience

24,000 ALL, 10,000 MALE 16+, 13,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Guido Zuccon, Queensland University of Technology|Dr Mark Herington, GP|Leilani Van Rooyen, mother

Also broadcast from the following 1 station

WIN Western Australia (Perth)



Patients are being warned about the dangers of seeking medical advice through Google. ...

[Channel 9, Melbourne, Nine Afternoon News, Davina Smith](#)

06 May 2015 4:45 PM

Duration: 1 min 59 secs • ASR AUD 75,406 • National • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: M00061614804

Patients are being warned about the dangers of seeking medical advice through Google. A new study from the Queensland University of Technology has found that search engine results could be putting lives at risk.

Audience

487,000 ALL, 234,000 MALE 16+, 229,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Guido Zuccon, Queensland University of Technology|Leilani Van Rooyen, Patient|Mark Herington, GP

Also broadcast from the following 37 stations

Channel 9 (Adelaide), Channel 9 (Brisbane), Channel 9 (Perth), Channel 9 (Sydney), Channel 9 Darwin (Darwin), Channel 9 Gold Coast (Gold Coast North), NBN Central Coast (Gosford), NBN Coffs Harbour (Coffs Harbour), NBN Gold Coast (Gold Coast), NBN Lismore (Lismore), NBN Moree (Upper Namoi), NBN Newcastle Hunter (Newcastle), NBN Tamworth (Tamworth), NBN Taree (Taree), WIN Albury (Albury), WIN Ballarat (Ballarat), WIN Bendigo (Bendigo), WIN Cairns (Cairns), WIN Canberra (Canberra), WIN Dubbo (Dubbo), WIN Gippsland (Sale), WIN Griffith (Griffith), WIN Hobart (Hobart), WIN Mackay (Mackay), WIN Mildura (Mildura), WIN Nine Mt Gambier (Mt Gambier), WIN Orange (Orange), WIN Riverland (Berri), WIN Rockhampton (Rockhampton), WIN Shepparton (Shepparton), WIN Sunshine Coast (Sunshine Coast), WIN Toowoomba (Toowoomba), WIN Townsville (Townsville), WIN Wagga (Wagga Wagga), WIN Western Australia (Perth), WIN Wide Bay (Bundaberg), WIN Wollongong (Wollongong)



Interview with Dr Guido Zuccon, Qld University of Technology, about their study ...

[2GB, Sydney, Sydney Live, Ben Fordham](#)

06 May 2015 5:13 PM

Duration: 2 mins 26 secs • ASR AUD 1,318 • NSW • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: W00061614968

Interview with Dr Guido Zuccon, Qld University of Technology, about their study regarding medical advice on the internet. Fordham explains that Zuccon's research has found that people should refrain from using the internet and Google to self-diagnose illnesses, as the search engines are unreliable and can provide misleading medical advice.

Audience

63,000 ALL, 31,000 MALE 16+, 31,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Guido Zuccon, Qld University of Technology



Interview with Bevan Koopman, CSIRO. Shand says a study by the Queensland ...

[6PR, Perth, Drive, Adam Shand](#)

06 May 2015 5:40 PM

Duration: 6 mins 5 secs • ASR AUD 1,526 • WA • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: M00061616928

Interview with Bevan Koopman, CSIRO. Shand says a study by the Queensland University of Technology and CSIRO has found search engines like Google are bad at directing people to accurate information when they type in common language descriptions of their conditions. Koopman says an alarming number of people try to self diagnose rather than see a doctor. Koopman says he hopes the research helps improve how people search for health advice and how search engines return health results. Koopman says Google in the US has started working with doctors to curate the results of their searches relating to common medical conditions.

Audience

19,000 ALL, 11,000 MALE 16+, 8,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Bevan Koopman, CSIRO



Doctors are warning of the dangers of using Google to self-diagnose ailments. A recent ...

[Channel 9, Melbourne, National Nine News, Peter Hitchener](#)

06 May 2015 6:29 PM

Duration: 2 mins 13 secs • ASR AUD 40,200 • VIC • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: M00061616112

Doctors are warning of the dangers of using Google to self-diagnose ailments. A recent study from Queensland University of Technology has found that search results could be putting peoples' health at risk. The symptoms of 8 conditions were searched on Google and Bing, including red rashes on the arm and sores around the mouth. Researchers found that only 3 of the first 10 hits were highly relevant to the condition. Doctors warn if people are concerned they should visit their GP.

Audience

354,000 ALL, 153,000 MALE 16+, 181,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Guido Zuccon, Queensland University of Technology|Dr Mark Herington, GP|Emily Baya|Leilani Van Rooyen

Also broadcast from the following 7 stations

Light FM (Melbourne), WIN Albury (Albury), WIN Ballarat (Ballarat), WIN Bendigo (Bendigo), WIN Gippsland (Sale), WIN Mildura (Mildura), WIN Shepparton (Shepparton)



Doctors are warning of the dangers of using Google to self-diagnose ailments. A recent ...

[Channel 9, Perth, National Nine News, Tim McMillan & Libby Stone](#)

06 May 2015 6:43 PM

Duration: 2 mins 13 secs • ASR AUD 9,851 • WA • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: M00061617371

Doctors are warning of the dangers of using Google to self-diagnose ailments. A recent study from Queensland University of Technology has found that search results could be putting peoples' health at risk. The symptoms of 8 conditions were searched on Google and Bing, including red rashes on the arm and sores around the mouth. Researchers found that only 3 of the first 10 hits were highly relevant to the condition. Doctors warn if people are concerned they should visit their GP.

Audience

90,000 ALL, 39,000 MALE 16+, 45,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Guido Zuccon, Queensland University of Technology|Dr Mark Herington, GP|Emily Baya|Leilani Van Rooyen

Also broadcast from the following 1 station

WIN Western Australia (Perth)



Doctors are warning of the dangers of using Google to self-diagnose ailments. A recent ...

[Channel 9 Darwin, Darwin, National Nine News, Jonathan Uptin](#)

06 May 2015 6:52 PM

Duration: 2 mins 11 secs • ASR AUD 1,747 • NT • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: M00061621326

Doctors are warning of the dangers of using Google to self-diagnose ailments. A recent study from Queensland University of Technology has found that search results could be putting peoples' health at risk. The symptoms of 8 conditions were searched on Google and Bing, including red rashes on the arm and sores around the mouth. Researchers found that only 3 of the first 10 hits were highly relevant to the condition. Doctors warn if people are concerned they should visit their GP.

Audience

N/A ALL, N/A MALE 16+, N/A FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Guido Zuccon, Queensland University of Technology|Dr Mark Herington, GP|Emily Baya|Leilani Van Rooyen



Interview with Qld University of Technology Lecturer Dr Guido Zuccon, regarding self-...

[774 ABC Melbourne, Melbourne, Breakfast, Red Symons](#)

07 May 2015 6:52 AM

Duration: 4 mins 25 secs • ASR AUD 13,878 • VIC • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: W00061620253

Interview with Qld University of Technology Lecturer Dr Guido Zuccon, regarding self-diagnosis online. He advises against relying solely on the practice, due to the potential for incorrect diagnosis. He acknowledges that people often describe symptoms incorrectly when searching online. He notes that Google and Bing were never intended as a replacement for medical professionals, acknowledging that they are great source of information for those who are confident in what they are searching for.

Audience

133,000 ALL, 67,000 MALE 16+, 64,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Guido Zuccon, Qld University of Technology Lecturer



SMS - Listener responds to an earlier interview with Qld University of Technology ...

[774 ABC Melbourne, Melbourne, Breakfast, Red Symons](#)

07 May 2015 7:20 AM

Duration: 1 min 34 secs • ASR AUD 4,923 • VIC • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: W00061620829

SMS - Listener responds to an earlier interview with Qld University of Technology Lecturer Dr Guido Zuccon, regarding self-diagnosis online. They identify as a triage nurse with Health Direct Australia. She claims that many Google their symptoms and put their faith in 'miracle cures'. She encourages Australians to instead consult the Royal Children's Hospital fact sheets and the Australian Better Health Channel.

Audience

133,000 ALL, 67,000 MALE 16+, 64,000 FEMALE 16+



Interview with Dr Guido Zuccon, Queensland University of Technology, about the ways to ...

[666 ABC Canberra](#), [Canberra](#), [Afternoons](#), [Alex Sloan](#)

08 May 2015 1:07 PM

Duration: 7 mins 15 secs • ASR AUD 685 • ACT • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: V00061645018

Interview with Dr Guido Zuccon, Queensland University of Technology, about the ways to improve search engine results in lieu of the Doctor Google Effect.

Together with his colleague from the CSIRO and the Vienna University of Technology, Zuccon says they have researched that search engines are very bad at pointing people to accurate information when they type in common language descriptions of their conditions. He says he tested eight common descriptions of conditions against Google and Bing searches, and established that search engine results could be putting people's health in jeopardy. He says a large number of inappropriate documents did cover the query terms but were suggesting a different medical symptom than that underlying the issued query. Through the research, Zuccon says they aim to understand the user and to improve the search engine technologies available at the moment. He says they have come up with a solution that allows the search engine to assess the quality of information or the level of understandability of the information. He says search engines tend to elicit the meaning behind the medical terms. He cautions people to be wary of accepting or believing information about medical information through search engines. Zuccon says people have to take note of the fact that search engines work by retrieving information that has already been talked about. If the information is not there, he says other people can enter as much information as they want. He says information from search engines were never meant to replace those of medical practitioners.

Audience

4,000 ALL, 2,000 MALE 16+, 2,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Guido Zuccon, Queensland University of Technology



Doctors warn of the dangers of self-diagnosis via Google. A Queensland University of ...

[WIN Hobart](#), [Hobart](#), [WIN News \(Sunday\)](#), [GEORGIA LOVE](#)

10 May 2015 6:37 PM

Duration: 2 mins 10 secs • ASR AUD 2,997 • TAS • Australia • Radio & TV • ID: M00061656133

Doctors warn of the dangers of self-diagnosis via Google. A Queensland University of Technology study has found search results could put peoples health at risk.

Audience

38,000 ALL, 18,000 MALE 16+, 17,000 FEMALE 16+

Interviewees

Dr Mark Herington, GP|Emily Baya, Hairdresser|Leilani Van Rooyen, mother|Prof Guido Zuccon, Queensland University of Technology



05 May 2015
Courier Mail, Brisbane

Author: Rose Brennan • Section: General News • Article type : News Item
Audience : 158,286 • Page: 13 • Printed Size: 245.00cm² • Market: QLD
Country: Australia • ASR: AUD 4,303 • Words: 350 • Item ID: 403063984

 isentia.mediaportal

Provided for client's internal research purposes only. May not be further copied, distributed, sold or published in any form without the prior consent of the copyright owner.



Page 1 of 1

 back

Dr Google makes you cyber-sick

ROSE BRENNAN

USING “Dr Google” to self-diagnose a health problem won’t work in most cases, with symptom-based web searches leading to wrong conclusions and incorrect treatment suggestions putting people’s health at risk.

New research by the Queensland University of Technology Information Systems School’s Guido Zuccon found major search engines were not able to effectively detect a person’s ailment from symptoms. Only three of the first 10 results were highly useful for self-diagnosis.

“For example, you might search for a normal cold using symptoms but it might come up with things like brain cancer,” Dr Zuccon said.

Researchers found that searching for “yellow eyes” as a symptom of jaundice resulted

in suggestions for simple health issues like allergic reactions, sleep deprivation, intoxication and even the rare disease amyloidosis.

The researchers used “bulging eye” as a symptom of exophthalmos which led to irrelevant results such as thyroid problems, conjunctivitis and even cancerous tumours.

Researchers also found that using the wrong search terms hindered the process with a search of “swollen eye” – a symptom of exophthalmos – leading to a website spruiking tea bags as a homemade remedy for puffy eyes.

Dr Zuccon warned people turning to the internet for medical advice were at risk of experiencing “cyberchondria”, where one search leads to another and concern escalates unreasonably.

“If you don’t get a clear diagnosis after one search

you would likely be tempted to keep searching,” Dr Zuccon said. “So if you had searched for the symptoms of something like a bad head cold, you could end up thinking you had something far more serious, like an issue with the brain.

“This is partly down to searcher bias and partly down to the way the (internet) search engines work.

“For example, pages about brain cancer are more popular than pages about the flu so the user is driven to these results.”

More research will be done to help search engines become more effective.

“It’s a very difficult problem for us to describe what we have from a medical perspective and it’s difficult for the search engine to put up the information exactly matching what we are experiencing and relate it to an actual medical condition,” Dr Zuccon said.



Dr Google's dodgy diagnosis

USING “Dr Google” to self-diagnose a health problem won't work in most cases, with symptom-based web searches leading to wrong conclusions and incorrect treatment suggestions, putting people's health at risk.

New research by Queensland University of Technology Information Systems School's Guido Zuccon found major search engines were not able to effectively detect a person's ail-

ment from symptoms. Only three of the first 10 results were highly useful for self-diagnosis.

“For example, you might search for a normal cold using symptoms but it might come up with things like brain cancer,” Dr Zuccon said.

Researchers found that searching for “yellow eyes” as a symptom of jaundice resulted in suggestions for simple health issues like allergic reactions, sleep deprivation, intoxi-

cation and even the rare disease amyloidosis.

Dr Zuccon warned people turning to the internet for medical advice were at risk of experiencing “cyberchondria”, where one search leads to another and concern escalates unreasonably.

“If you don't get a clear diagnosis for symptoms after one search, you would likely be tempted to keep on searching,” Dr Zuccon said.



06 May 2015
Age, Melbourne

Author: Amy Corderoy • Section: General News • Article type : News Item
Audience : 106,843 • Page: 11 • Printed Size: 178.00cm² • Market: VIC
Country: Australia • ASR: AUD 10,954 • Words: 368 • Item ID: 403559708

 isentia.mediaportal

Provided for client's internal research purposes only. May not be further copied, distributed, sold or published in any form without the prior consent of the copyright owner.



Page 1 of 1


back

Dr Google? Use dose of caution, says study

■ Amy Corderoy

There is no doctor in your computer able to divine your illness from a vague list of symptoms.

That's the message for people who try to figure out what's wrong using computer search engines, new Australian research shows.

Whether it's "sharp pain in my finger" or "strange rash on chest", searching about our health is something we've all done online.

Google estimates one in 20 of its 100 billion searches each month is someone looking for health advice and information, and the quality of material available on specific conditions has improved over the past few years.

However, a study from the Queensland University of Technology has found that search engines are very bad at directing people to accurate information when they type in common language descriptions of their conditions.

Guido Zuccon, from QUT's Information Systems School, tested eight common descriptions of conditions against Google and Bing searches, and concluded that search engine results could be putting people's health at risk.

"There were cases where the information was just not useful for the person," Dr Zuccon said. "But it's the web pages that were sug-

gesting something that is just not what you have, or are trying to sell you something and saying 'you have this and this is how you should treat it' - that's when our very big concerns arise."

The researchers examined eight main conditions and several common descriptions of those conditions - such as "extreme red rash on arm" for hives (technically called urticaria), or "puffy sore calf" for oedema.

They found only four or five of the first 10 results on a page would be useful for the person doing the search.

Only three out of 10 were highly relevant.

"A large number of irrelevant documents did contain the query terms but were suggesting a different medical symptom than that underlying the issued query," Dr Zuccon and his co-authors from the CSIRO and the Vienna University of Technology wrote in a paper delivered at the European Conference on Information Retrieval.

At best, the advice could simply be misleading; at worst, it could give them a false sense of security or direct them towards ineffective treatments, he said.

Search companies were not equipped to know from a few words what an individual was experiencing.



06 May 2015
Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney

Section: General News • Article type : News Item • Audience : 114,634 • Page: 12
Printed Size: 96.00cm² • Market: NSW • Country: Australia • ASR: AUD 7,683
Words: 190 • Item ID: 403572764

 isentia.mediaportal

Provided for client's internal research purposes only. May not be further copied, distributed, sold or published in any form without the prior consent of the copyright owner.



Page 1 of 1

 [back](#)

Net quackery



Why Dr Google is not worth a visit

There is no doctor in your computer able to divine your illness from a vague list of symptoms. That's the message for people who try to figure out what's wrong using computer search engines, new Australian research shows. Google estimates one in 20 of its 100 billion searches each month is someone looking for health advice and information, and the quality of material available on specific conditions has improved over the past few years. However, a study from the Queensland University of Technology has found search engines are very bad at directing people to accurate information when they type in common language descriptions of their conditions. Guido Zuccon, from QUT's Information Systems School, tested eight common descriptions of conditions against Google and Bing searches, and concluded search engine results could be putting people's health at risk. "There were cases where the information was just not useful for the person," Dr Zuccon said. "But it's the web pages that were suggesting something that is just not what you have, or are trying to sell you something ... that's when our very big concerns arise." Amy Corderoy