



Project Manager, Gareth McGuinness talks about Learning Search:

"The Web team's objectives were based on visitors finding information faster. This included many of Statistics' information centre staff, who were so frustrated by the slow and ineffective incumbent search technology especially when their job included helping enquirers find information on a one-to-one basis."

"Statistics has changed some content on the site since learning about its visitors' search behavior from Learning Search. This information will also influence the team's forthcoming purge of jargon, which should make all content more user-friendly."

"We can tell from the reports from SLI Systems that the vast majority were finding something useful."

"SLI Systems' Learning Search benefits have outweighed the cost of investment because search performance - and therefore the ability to access public knowledge - has improved"

"Those 30,000 visitors per month previously frustrated in their search attempts will be thanking Statistics for putting the information they need closer to their fingertips."

You too can improve your search stats with Learning Search™

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They refused to become just another statistic

Statistics New Zealand know that a little search box carries a lot of responsibility when more than half your Web site's 60,000 visitors per month rely on search to find the right page out of 50,000.

The weight of this responsibility fell to Learning Search – the hosted site search service that gets better the more it is utilized.

In 2001, Statistics embarked on a major Web site revamp. It became clear that the incumbent search facility did not have the horsepower to handle the myriad of inquiries the site would process. It did not effectively rank results or allow for misspellings, synonyms, or guesses at search terms taken by visitors who were confused by statistical terms.

When you are trying to provide as many New Zealanders with as much information as possible, effective search is essential. Statistics New Zealand chose search technology from SLI Systems as the most intelligent option.

Their Web team's criteria for the selection of the successful search technology were:

- The most useful results to rank most highly
- The descriptions to give a good indication of the content of the page
- Wording in the search results description to be easy to understand
- It would strip out completely irrelevant results
- It would list the total number of results from each search

They learned very quickly.

Even though they used Google as their benchmark, after evaluating a range of options, Statistics chose SLI Systems' Learning Search. This fast search learns from the search behavior of visitors, promoting pages that prove to be popular and presenting search suggestions to users based on what others have found useful.

It keeps getting better – by all reports.

Learning Search includes analytical tools that provide Web masters and marketing staff with useful search behavior information such as what keywords and phrases visitors are using, and what keywords are yielding poor results. This provides staff the ability to alter site content so that the search yields more fruitful results for visitors.

Web staff can also manually promote the rank of particular pages, such as those that best answer frequently searched topics.

It's public knowledge that there was an immediate improvement

In the first month that SLI Systems' search was installed on the Statistics site, 60,000 unique visitors performed 66,000 searches – a dramatic improvement.

For instance, the average rank of the results selected by visitors after a search improved from the 14th ranked result (ie, they were on the second page of results before finding a result relevant enough to click) to the fourth. Another positive indicator is that information centre staff are again using search as a matter of course.