The journey of a search query begins long before you type your search into Google. We use software robots, known as web crawlers or spiders, that find webpages to include later in Google search results. Google’s software stores data about these pages in data centers. The web is like a book with trillions of pages, and our job is to index that book.

Our index is well over 10,000,000,000 gigabytes. We’ve spent over 1 million computing hours building the index so far.

When you start your search, that’s when Google’s algorithm begins to find the information you’re looking for. The algorithm looks at your query and uses over 200 signals to decide which of the millions of pages and content are the most relevant answers for that query. Google finesses its ranking algorithms with over 500 improvements per year.

Results are ranked in order by relevance and displayed on the page. In addition to showing you results instantly, we also render a preview of those webpages which you can see by hovering on the arrows to the right of the result, so you can quickly decide if it’s a site you want to visit.

Examples of these signals include:
- Synonyms of your search keywords
- Quality of the content on the URL & title of webpage
- Whether the best result is a webpage, image, video, news article, personal result, etc.
- Words on the webpage
- Spell Check
- Personalization (results recommended by people you’re connected to)

Since 2003 Google has answered billions of searches each day on Google. The Instant Previews load in 1/10th of a second on average. Since 2003 Google has answered 450 billion new unique queries. 16% of searches we see every day are new.