



Google Search Appliance enhances BP's search speed five-fold, increases internal and public searches by 80%

AT A GLANCE

What they needed:

- Fast, reliable access to information on numerous public and internal web site

What they did:

- Delivered accurate search results to public and employee users from the first day of use
- Improved search "straight out of the box," even before any IT optimisation
- Reduced the server and headcount requirements needed to support search

What they accomplished:

- Increased user search interaction on their public web site by 80%
 - Implemented multilingual search with virtually no IT investment
-



Overview

British Petroleum (BP) is one of the world's largest companies with operations in more than 100 countries and employs over 96,000 staff. BP's key business segments – Exploration, Production, Refining, and Marketing, along with a growing alternative energy business – serve more than 15 million customers each day.

Challenge

With any organisation of BP's size, making information accessible is a momentous task. From varying languages and numerous document formats to the differing uses of technical data between departments and brands, the breadth of information used at BP is as diverse as its employee population and customer base.

In theory, keeping information online should make it easier to share. However, if readers are unable to find what they are looking for, work can become frustrating. In addition, every week new sites are created on BP's intranet, which made it very difficult for the previous search system to keep track, despite its sophistication.

"Despite the theoretical power of our previous search system, in practice it did not return relevant results and was quickly abandoned by staff," explains Sébastien Olive, Project Manager for the Information Technology & Services team at BP. "It was very complex, expensive and time-consuming to implement and maintain and when searching, people were faced with endless lists of results that lacked relevancy."

BP recognised it needed an enterprise search system that was not only fast but also provided access to information from the 250+ public-facing and 1,000+ intranet websites used to share information with key stakeholders.

"The Google Search Appliance has brought consistency and cost savings to both our intranet and public-facing websites while also making a contribution to the efficacy of our messaging."

Giles Sutehall, Head of Corporate Reporting & Internet

Solution

The Information Technology & Services team at BP was called on to improve the search system and an audit showed a need to consider alternative search tools.

"We had a significant investment in a search solution from a market leader, so the initial brief was not to replace it, but to improve it. However, when we evaluated the scope of work required to improve the system, it became evident that a different approach could prove more effective, from a cost and functionality perspective," says Sébastien.

As a result, BP asked vendors to create proof of concepts so that it could compare the performance of different search systems on actual BP content.

The team tested these products with a range of keywords and pre-determined expected results. A "traffic light" marking system was put in place that scored each search by its position: the five top search results were shown in the colour green; the five results listed on the bottom of the first page in orange; and the results listed beyond the first search page in red. The Google Search Appliance returned a high proportion of "green" results straight out of the box, even before any fine-tuning took place.

“The pairing of the Google Search Appliance’s administrative and indexing capabilities with the fact it consistently delivered relevant results made it a simple choice for us.”

Sébastien Olive
Project Manager

Information Technology & Services

ABOUT THE GOOGLE SEARCH APPLIANCE

The Google Search Appliance (GSA) is an integrated hardware and software search solution that extends Google’s award-winning search technology to websites of all kinds, including corporate sites and intranets. Organisations can use the Google Search Appliance to make data on servers, content management systems, databases and business applications instantly and securely available from a single familiar search box. More than 20,000 companies worldwide use Google Enterprise search solutions.

For more information, visit
www.google.co.uk/enterprise



“The results of the test made our decision easy. The relevance factor was important for us and Google knows how readers think – and search. Typically, people type in one or two keywords at most and these are usually not very precise. What they expect the search engine to do is read their minds to find out what they are looking for – if it does not deliver, they quickly stop using the tool,” says Sébastien. “The Google Search Appliance appears to have this ‘mind reading’ skill and has the additional advantage of being a trusted brand.”

“The pairing of the sophistication of the Google Search Appliance’s administrative and indexing capabilities with the fact it consistently delivered relevant results made it a simple choice for us. In addition, readers had an understanding on how to get the most from it from their experience of the web,” continues Sébastien.

“A tertiary benefit we’ve seen is that the Google Search Appliance has provided an incentive for editors to work on improving their content,” points out Giles Sutehall, Head of Corporate Reporting & Internet.

“The Google brand is trusted and editors no longer blame the search engine for not delivering the right result. Instead, they’re coming to Communications asking for help to improve the quality of their messaging in order to improve their search ranking,” he said.

After reviewing products from a number of search engine suppliers BP chose the Google Search Appliance, a product that supports “Universal Search” across websites, file systems, enterprise applications, and intranets. The appliance indexes and searches over 220 file types, presenting relevant results back to readers with the simplicity and clarity readers expect from Google.

Results

The Google Search Appliance delivers more relevant results five times faster than the previous system, making it more appealing to users. As a result internal searches have increased by 80% and click-through rates rose by 20%. There has also been an increase in reader searches of 80% to 90% on public-facing websites.

As a result of the success of the internal search overhaul, BP subsequently decided to tackle the challenge of its 250+ public-facing websites, featuring a variety of different languages and brands that represent BP’s offerings worldwide, including ampm, Aral, Arco, Castrol, and Wild Bean Café. Each site required a localised, appropriately branded search page in the correct language.

“We were faced with the enormous task of creating more than 250 unique, multilingual search pages, allowing readers to search content in many languages,” Sébastien continues.

“We decided to test the shortlisted products with the same traffic light marking system we had used for our intranet project. While there were some attractive features in the other products we reviewed, relevance was once again the key factor for our readers and the area where Google came out on top,” he said.

“When we went live with the external search solution, we had an 80% increase in searches – a great testament to the fact that readers are pleased with the search results they are receiving.”

“The Google Search Appliance has worked extremely well. Not only has it been reliable from a technology perspective, but it has brought consistency and cost savings to both our intranet and public-facing websites while also making a contribution to the efficacy of our messaging,” Giles concludes.

“The pairing of the sophistication of the Google Search Appliance’s administrative and indexing capabilities with the fact it consistently delivered relevant results made it a simple choice for us.”