

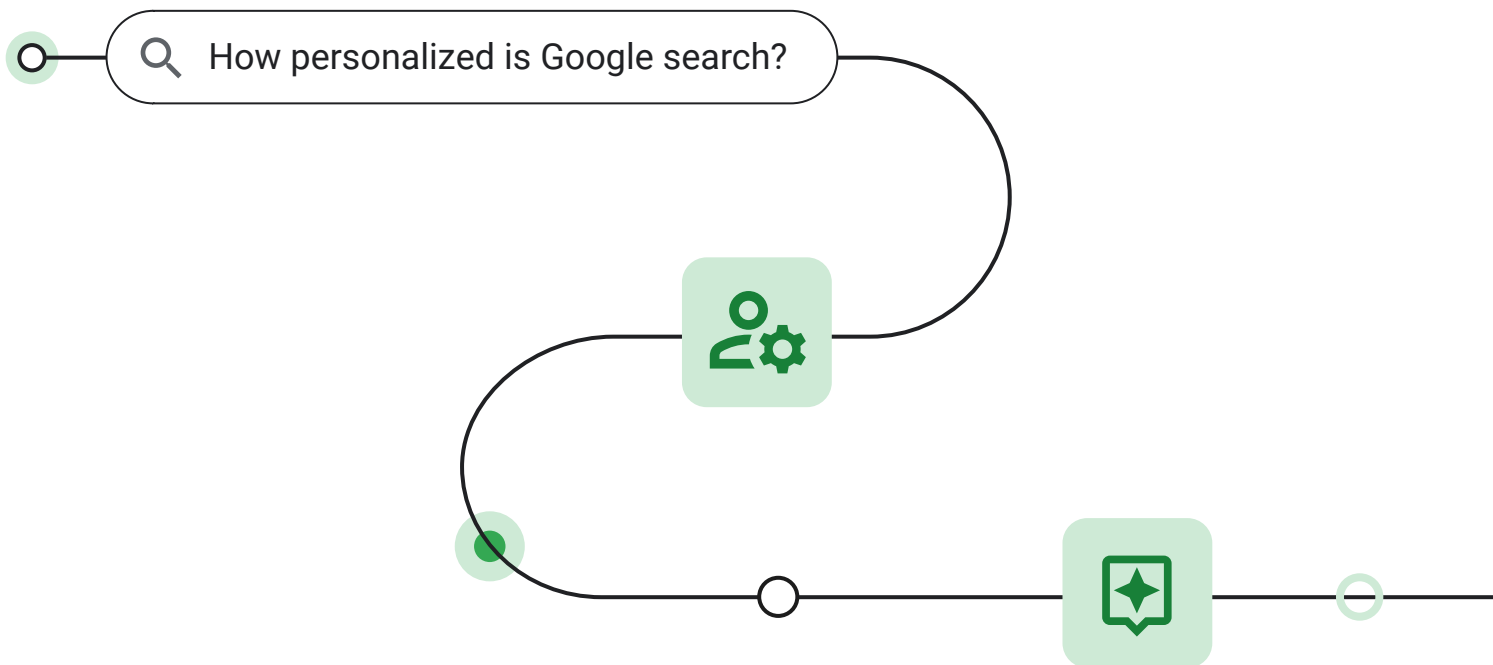


When – and how – your results are personalized on Google Search

Google Search is *not* highly personalized, contrary to a popular misconception

When you're searching for information that's the same anywhere in the world -- like, for example, how gravity works -- you'll get largely the same results as anyone else who's searching for that information (taking into account factors like language settings).

Search doesn't use interest-based personalization in our web results (the "blue links"), or in News ranking (including Top Stories on the main search results page, as well as in News mode). **These results don't vary between individual people due to any type of personalization.**



Information like your location might affect the results you see

Google uses location to deliver locally relevant results like local businesses, relevant information like traffic predictions along a route, and even important emergency information for a given area.

People tend to want locally relevant content, in their primary language.

- Results for “pizza near me” should be different in London than in Rome. That benefits both users and businesses. People tend to want locally relevant content, in their primary language.
- The same is true for important health information like finding vaccines and COVID guidance, which are nationally and regionally dictated, and finding emergency care. It's critical that we take location into account to provide helpful results.

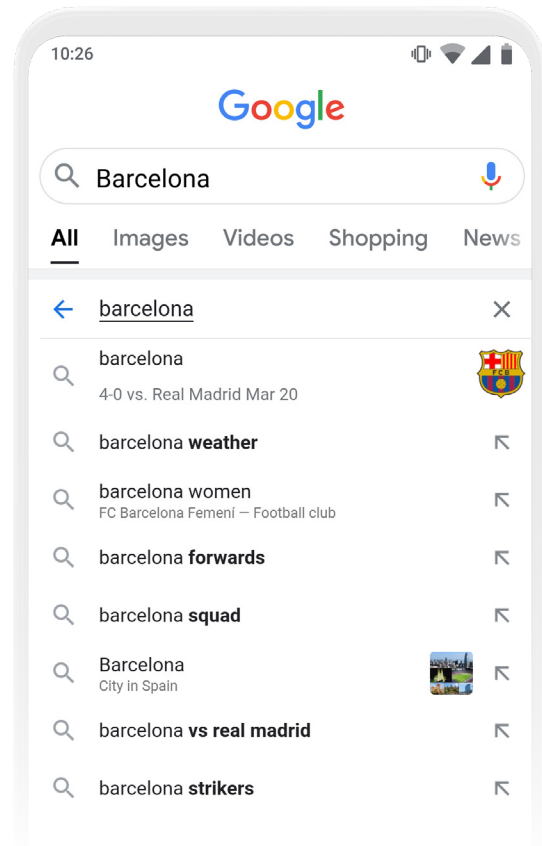
Many queries that are ostensibly the same have different local contexts. It's important that our systems take this into account when providing search results, so we can deliver results that are relevant for a user's specific area.

For instance, if a user in Chicago and a user in London both search “football”, Google will most likely show them different results.

Your search history might influence the results you see

In some instances, Google Search may use the context of your recent searches to help get you what you're looking for more quickly.

— For example, if you search for “Barcelona” and recently searched for “Barcelona vs Arsenal”, that could be an important clue that you want information about the football club, not the city.



The passing of time can also affect Search results

The web, and Google’s understanding of it, are constantly changing. There are x new web pages published and y web pages updated every second.

When there’s an event in the world that many people are trying to better understand, news outlets tend to publish information first, followed by commentary and pundits, and sometimes then studies and retrospectives, all on the same topic. Take an election as an example. The minutes leading up to an election result and the minutes after an election is called will (and should!) produce very different results.

On Search, we do offer some distinct features that provide interest-based recommendations

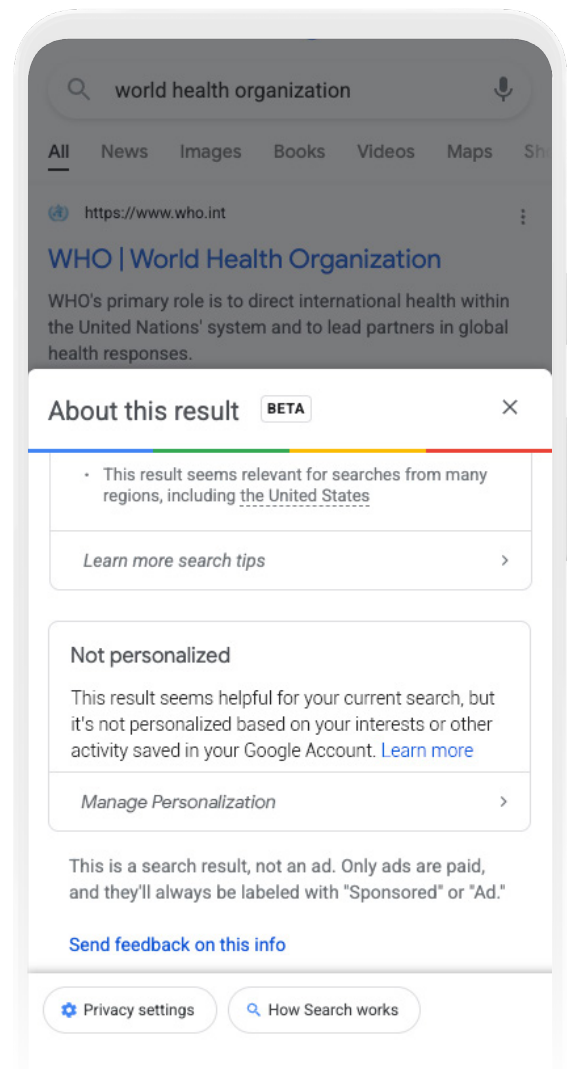
Search will sometimes provide recommendations for TV shows to watch, recipes, music and more based on activity within your Google account, making it easier to find content you might like. These recommendations are distinct from blue link web listings in your search results and are clearly labeled with text like “Recommended for you”.

— For example, if you search for “events near me” Google may tailor some event listings to categories we think you may be interested in. **These systems are designed to match your interests, but they are not designed to infer sensitive characteristics like your race, religion, or political party.**

On features where we do offer recommendations, we provide easy access to controls.

You can easily see if, and how, the results to your search query have been personalized to you

If you want more details about why Google is showing you a particular result to your search query, you can find out by clicking on the three vertical dots to the right of the result’s URL. Our **“About this result”** feature lets you see why Google’s algorithms think that result is relevant to your search query. It also tells you whether the results have been personalized, based on your activity on Google services.



Search is an open platform and you can easily adjust settings

Search settings, such as preferred language or region, are an important indicator of which results a user is likely to find useful. You can also set preferences to see results in multiple languages, if you'd like to.

But we make it easy for people to adjust their settings in their [Google Account](#). You can also access these settings by clicking the gear icon on the search results page.

We also provide settings to control personalization, so those that don't want any personalized recommendations from Google that are tailored to their interests can turn it off. To disable Search personalization based on activity in your account, turn off Web & App Activity.

For more information visit g.co/HowSearchWorks

