



Tuesday's Tip

information provided by Adriance Memorial Library to make your life a little bit easier

Location Sensitive Searching in Google (And Can You Opt-Out?)

March 20, 2012

The Google Search Engine has many wonderful features, and one of them is geographical narrowing of results for your searches. Notice how your results will automatically be locally tailored when you type in a search phrase like "thai restaurants".

On the left, you are shown the current default location. You can click 'change location'.

A regional map appears, to the right of the screen, pinpointing locations of the listed results.

This is great if you're in Poughkeepsie, but if you want to scout restaurants for a future trip, you should use specific place names in your original search (e.g. thai restaurants seattle) or use the 'change location' box...

There is a search box in which you can change location settings.

Google uses your computer's specific IP location and, if you use the Google Toolbar for searching, it uses 'location detection' software—probably GPS tracking on wireless signals that would work well on mobile devices.

Below is a detailed discussion of the location features in Google for a basic Web search:

Location

More ways to customize

Save search history

Blocked sites

Location

Location

Google will always provide the results that we believe are most relevant to your search. Location is one of a number of factors that we use to provide these relevant results. For example, if you search for a restaurant chain, you may want to find one near you. When searching for movie showtimes, you may want listings in your area. Such search results are made possible by location-based customization.

The location used to customize your results is clearly indicated on the left side of your results page. Our location detection technology will automatically set a location for you, or you can easily specify an alternate location.

Automatically detected location

To provide you with the most relevant results, Google attempts to automatically detect your location and customize results based on that detected location. A location that's labeled "Auto-detected" is chosen based on the following factors:

- Your [IP address](#).
- Google Toolbar's My Location feature. If you have Google Toolbar installed and have the [My Location feature](#) enabled, your approximate location (if detected) will be used to customize your search results. If you don't want Toolbar to attempt to determine your approximate location, you can [turn off My Location](#).

▼ [See the wrong location?](#)

We're continuing to improve our location detection technology, and the automatically detected location may be less accurate in certain areas. If you notice an incorrect location, please set your location manually by following the instructions below. If you're being redirected to a Google domain that doesn't match the country you're in (for example, Google.com.au instead of Google.com), please [let us know](#); we may be incorrectly detecting your IP address.

▼ [Don't see a location?](#)

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Customize your experience > Search settings
- [Unusual traffic from your computer network](#)
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- [Google.com automatically takes me to another Google site](#)
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- [Results don't appear while I type](#)
> I don't see results appear when I type
- [Delete search history](#)
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Location - Web Search Help - Windows Internet Explorer

http://support.google.com/websearch/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=179386

thai restaurants

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Specify your preferred location

- If you'd like to change your location, click **Change Location** and enter a street address, zip code, city and state, or country in the box that appears. Click **Set** to save your location setting.
- You can only specify a location within the country of your current Google domain. For instance, it's not possible to set a U.S. address on www.google.es, the Google domain for Spain. If you'd like to see results for a region outside of your Google domain, please specify the location in the search query (like [`bicycle repair paris`]) or visit a different Google local domain instead.
- If you don't already have a location set, enter a location in the box next to "Search near," then click **Set**.

Your manually set location will be saved in a browser cookie on your specific computer and internet browser only. When you use the same computer and browser, this manually set location will be used to customize your search results instead of the automatically detected location. If your location preference doesn't remain saved on the browser or computer where you set it, please [check your browser settings](#).

To clear your manually set location, click **Change location**, then click on the auto-detected location that appears. This will clear the location setting saved in your browser cookie, and your results will be customized based on the automatically detected location.

▼ [Can I turn off location-based customization?](#)

The customization of search results based on location is an important component of a consistent, high-quality search experience. Therefore, we haven't provided a way to turn off location customization, although we've made it easy for you to set your own location or to customize using a general location as broad as the country that matches your local domain.

If you find that your results for a particular search are more local than what you're looking for, you can set your location to a broader geographical area (such as a country instead of a city, zip code, or street address). Please note that this will greatly reduce the amount of locally relevant results that you'll see.

▼ [What information about location does Google store?](#)

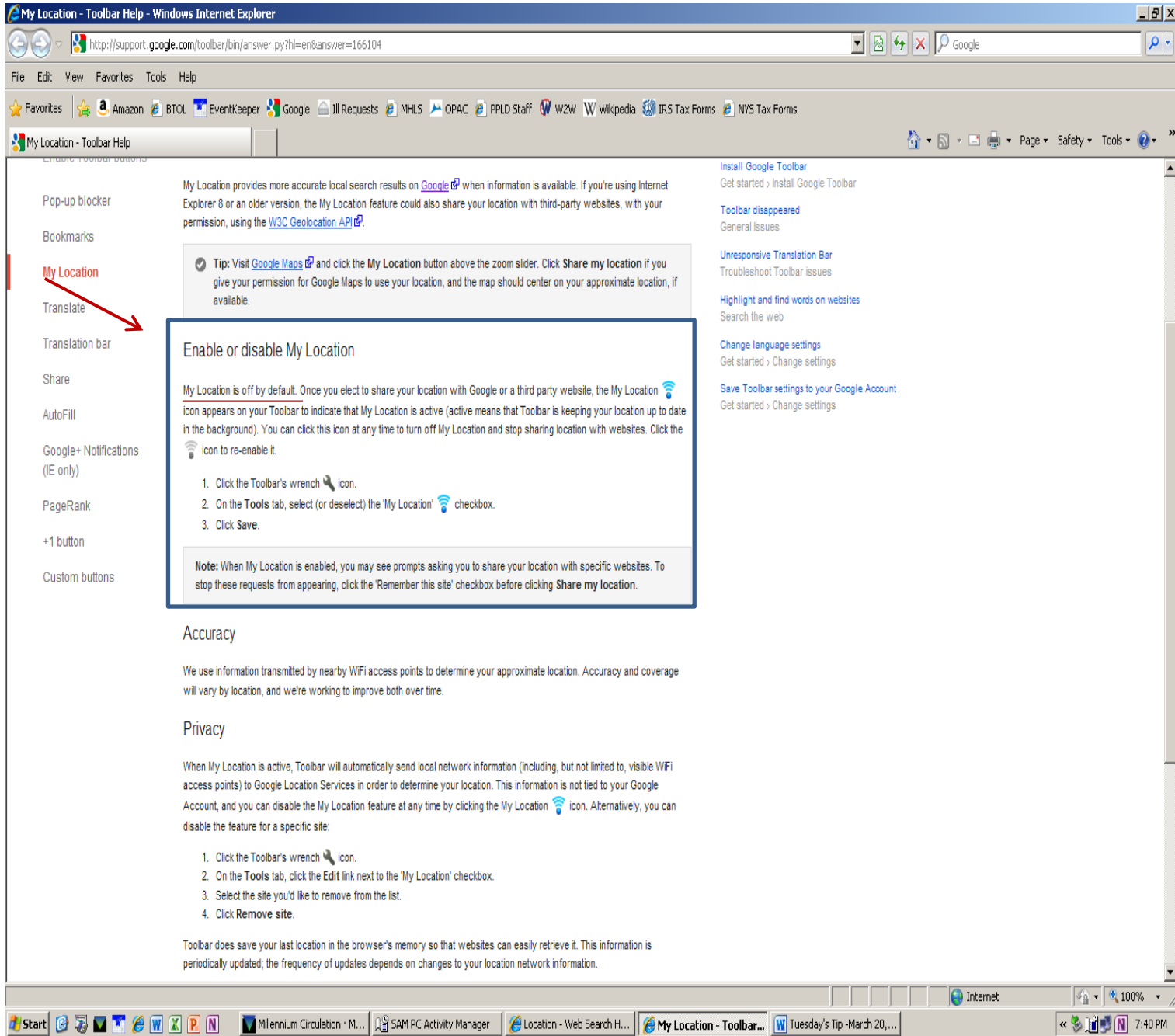
Google has many services that collect or use location data, including Google Maps, Latitude, Toolbar, and others. If you have questions about our privacy policy, please refer to our [privacy center](#).

Internet 100%

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There appears to be an inconsistency, in that if you install and use the [Google Toolbar](#) you seem to have the option of more control to opt-out... or rather, it seems you must opt-in.



This information above refers to Toolbar using Internet Explorer.

Toolbar for Firefox: The My Location feature is not available in Google Toolbar for Firefox. However, Firefox offers a location-aware browsing feature built into the browser. Please reference Mozilla's [Location-Aware Browsing](#) site to find out more details, including info on how to disable the feature.