Google now offers ‘web’ search — and an AI opt-out button

This is not a joke: Google will now let you perform a “web” search. It’s rolling out “web” searches now, and in my early tests on desktop, it’s looking like it could be an incredibly popular change to Google’s search engine.

The optional setting filters out almost all the other blocks of content that Google crams into a search results page, leaving you with links and text — and Google confirms to *The Verge* that it will block the company’s new AI Overviews as well.

a:hover]:text-gray-63 [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-bd dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63 dark:[&>a]:text-gray-bd dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray”>Screenshot by Sean Hollister / The Verge
“Isn’t every search a web search? What is Google Search if not the web?” you might rightfully ask.

But independent websites like *HouseFresh* and *Retro Dodo* have pointed out how their businesses have gotten “buried deep beneath sponsored posts, Quora advice from 2016, best-of lists from big media sites, and no less than 64 Google Shopping product listings,” in the words of *HouseFresh* managing editor Gisele Navarro.

Now, with one click, a bunch of those blockers seemingly disappear.

Search for “best home arcade cabinets,” one of *Retro Dodo*’s bread-and-butter queries, and it’s no longer buried — it appears on page 1. (Drag our image slider to see the difference.)

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*Normal search on the left, “web” search on the right.*
a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>Again, normal on the left, “web” on the right.

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>I suppose it’s convenient for Google to have zero references to the failed Google Glass on page one, though?
a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>Regular “all” search definitely skews more recent.
a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>Image slider: drag left to see “Web” results, drag right for original.
Admittedly, it’s an answer that Google isn’t likely to get wrong.

As far as I can tell, the *order* of Google’s search results seem to be the same regardless of whether you pick “web” or “all.” It doesn’t block links to YouTube videos or Reddit

posts or SEO factories… and I still saw (smaller!) sponsored ads from Amazon and Verkada and Wyze push down my search results:

a:hover]:text-gray-63 [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-bd dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63 dark:[&>a]:text-gray-bd dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray”>Screenshot by Sean Hollister / The Verge
“Web” is just a filter that removes Google’s knowledge panels and featured snippets and Shopping modules — and Google’s new AI Overviews as well, Google spokesperson Ned Adriance confirms to *The Verge.* “AI Overviews are a feature in Search, just like a knowledge panel or a featured snippet, so they will not appear when someone uses the web filter for a search.”

It doesn’t magically fix some of the issues facing Google’s search engine. But it is a giant opt-out button for people who’ve been aggravated by some of the company’s seemingly self-serving moves, and a way to preserve the spirit of the 10 blue links even as Google’s AI efforts try to leave them behind.

Danny Sullivan, Google’s Public Liaison for Search, says he’s been asking for something like this for years:

As a next step, I’d like to see Google promote the button to make it more visible. Right now, the company warns that it may not always appear in the primary carousel on desktop at all — you may need to click “More” first and then select “Web.”

Here’s hoping this all works well on mobile, too; I’m not seeing it on my phone yet.

https://www.theverge.com/2024/5/14/24074314/google-now-offers-web-search