# The best Google alternative I've tried yet




Hi, friends! Welcome to *Installer* No. 8, your guide to the best and *Verge*-iest stuff in the world. (If you're new here, first of all, hi, hello, welcome, and second of all, you can read all the old editions at the *Installer* homepage.)

This week, I've spent an alarming amount of my free time playing ***EA Sports FC 24***, the new soccer game that just released in full on Friday. I've also been reading about **Apple's plans to change the sports TV world**, the **truly unhinged *Survivor* casting process,** and **Sam Altman's plan to either save the world or end it**. I've been watching ***Special Ops: Lioness***, listening to on repeat, and taking copious notes on **Kashmir Hill's excellent *Longform* interview**.

I also have for you a new VR / AR / MR headset, a browser you should download everywhere, an awesome Android launcher, some *Baldur's Gate 3* fanfiction, and much more. (Also, Linda Yaccarino, I have a lot of questions about your homescreen, so if you want to be in next week's issue, get at me. Mail *and* Gmail? Really?)

As always, the best part of *Installer* is your ideas and tips. What do you want to know more about? What awesome tricks do you know that everyone else should? What app should everyone be using? Tell me everything: installer@theverge.com. And if you want to get every issue of Installer a day early in your email inbox you can subscribe here.

Okay. Let’s go.

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One thing I’ve struggled with in *Installer* so far is how to talk about things that aren’t new but not everybody knows about. I don’t want to bore you with stuff like, “Have you heard of the iPhone, it’s neat!” but I also do see more stuff than your average internet person, you know? So I figure, let’s try this: when I come across something cool that’s new to me (and reasonably likely to be new to most people), I’m going to share a bit about it and why it’s worth checking out.

First up, and the reason I’ve been thinking about this section at all: I’ve become a total convert to **the Kagi search engine**. I wrote a big story about Neeva and search a few months ago, and a bunch of people were like, “Try Kagi! It’s awesome!” It is, in fact, awesome. Here’s what I like about it:

- **It’s customizable.** Kagi looks a lot like Google and generally feels very similar to use. But unlike Google, Kagi lets you block sites you don’t like and promote sites you *do* like. You can also create “lenses” to only search certain sites or domains — Kagi has a bunch built

in, too, like a “Small Web” lens that favors blogs, forums, and other parts of the web that tend to get blotted out by the giants.

- **No ads.** The catch with Kagi is you have to pay for it. You get a few searches a month for free, but $10 buys you unlimited access. That’s a lot of money for a search engine! But the pages are so much cleaner and less confusing that I was surprised how quickly I paid up.
- **It’s great for videos and podcasts.** Podcast search is, like, impossible. But I’ve had surprisingly good luck Kagi-ing topics I’m interested in and finding related podcast episodes, and the engine does a similarly good job of scouring YouTube for interesting stuff.
- **Its AI is handy but not in the way.** For a lot of queries, Kagi puts a little “Quick Answer” button at the top — click it, and you get a brief AI-generated answer, with cited sources you can click on. That’s exactly the amount of AI I’m looking for in most of my searches.
- **The mobile browser is great.** Kagi’s mobile app is a browser called **Orion**, and it’s as no-frills a mobile browser as you’ll find. But that’s cool by me! It’s fast and easy to use. You can also supposedly download Kagi as a Safari extension on iOS, but I haven’t managed to make that work. (On Android, you can just switch to Kagi as your default search engine because Android is much better at this.)
- **It seems… good?** I’ve tried basically all the search engines, and I usually end up back on Google because Google has better results. (Or at least the results I’m expecting and looking for.) With Kagi, I’ve found myself going back to Google less than usual. I don’t know if that’ll hold up forever, but I’m impressed so far.

Ten bucks for search, when Google exists and is great and is free, is a tough ask. But Kagi CEO Vladimir Prelovac tells me the company’s doing well and growing quickly and says he knows he’s not going to reach Google scale with Kagi but also says

he doesn’t need to. “I have all the respect for Google and their people and technology,” he says, “I just don’t like their business model.”

So far, I’m sold just because I can make the search engine work the way I want it to. That’s worth the price to me, at least for now. But I also want to know: do you use a non-Google search engine? What would make you switch? Does anyone even care about search as long as you find what you’re looking for? Let me know; I’m all ears.

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*Here’s what the* Installer *community is into this week. I want to know what you’re into right now as well! Email installer@theverge.com with your recommendations for anything and everything, and we’ll feature some of our favorites here every week.*

“**Energiza Pro**, an app for better battery life in the long term. I bought it a few weeks ago. I’m finding it very useful.” — Dennis

“**Radio Paradise** plays an electric mix of music, ad-free, totally free, and has multiple ‘Mixes’ you can listen to (Rock, Mellow, Main, Global). They play a great mix of music I wouldn’t usually listen to, and you can skip the song if you don’t like it. They even let you customize the stream quality from Low to FLAC quality. They just updated the app to a new interface and are fully listener-supported, and I give when I can.” — Jonathan

“**Bombas socks** and . Both the socks and shoes are so comfortable, and the shoes are easy to put on / slip on and off.” – Marty

“Not sure if this is a new feature, but I just noticed when you’re viewing all tabs in mobile Safari, you can long-press the button that shows how many tabs you have, and it will pop up an option to copy all the links to your clipboard! I’m a pretty obsessive iPhone tips reader and haven’t seen this one before.” – Andrew

“Recently, I’ve been sucked back into ***Thumper***, one of my favorite games of all time. This playthrough on iOS!” – Arden

“My favorite launcher of all time is the . It’s been unsupported for a while now and was eventually taken off the app store (breaking my heart). My second favorite launcher, and the one I’m currently using, is . It’s clean (making your wallpaper visible), can adjust pinned apps automatically by usage, and most importantly, can find any app on your phone one-handed. I love the app scrollbar (reminiscent of the One UI app settings scrollbar) since you can accurately get to any app on your phone in a fraction of a second.” – Samuel

“**Raycast!** It’s this powerful and modern Spotlight replacement for Mac that’s similar to **Alfred** but way better and more modern. I use it all day, every day, and it just keeps getting better. Part of it is due to software updates and new features but most of all because I dig deeper into all the amazing and powerful community-made extensions for it!” – Edvard

“I’m really liking ***Death Glitch*** by Tamara Kneese about how the social platforms and internet culture handle user death. And obvs, I hear really great things about **Kashmir Hill’s new book**.” – Joe