

# Wolfram Alpha's research secrets

The machine's future - and its true power - comes from comparing all types of data on its servers.

*Zack Stern*

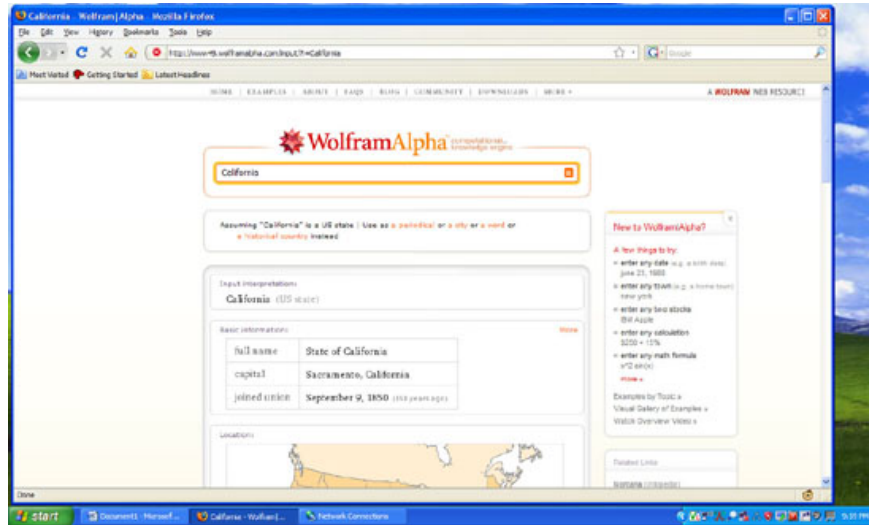
**Network administrator** - I was born 5 hours 17 minutes before the moon started to grow in Minneapolis. The sky is almost clear, the outside temperature is 46 ° F. Such facts were preceded by Wolfram Alpha development team, the Internet's new computing knowledge engine. Someone only said where and when they were born, and the machine gave that detailed information. But the machine's future - and its true power - comes from comparing all data types on its servers.

Wolfram Alpha adds *Googling* to search engines. (Googling is the use of a popular search engine like Google.com to look up something you want to know more about. You can Google neighbors, college roommates or whoever that you recently met to find information about them on the Internet). Instead of relying on spiders to scan Web pages and index the search, the inventors of Wolfram Alpha entered and thoroughly studied its data, using manual methods. public and automatic. The value of this machine comes from making comparisons, making charts, creating tables and graphs to report similarities and differences according to socio-economic data, on the other hand it can help you withdraw draw conclusions from the interwoven information.

Someday, when the data is sufficient, you can compare the record of a baseball player that you like against the time of the game. Framework exists for this type of detailed search and you can create similar queries in other topics.

However, you need to think a little differently than other search engines to do with Wolfram Alpha's capabilities. Here are some tips on how to get started with this new type of comparison machine.

**Start with small queries**



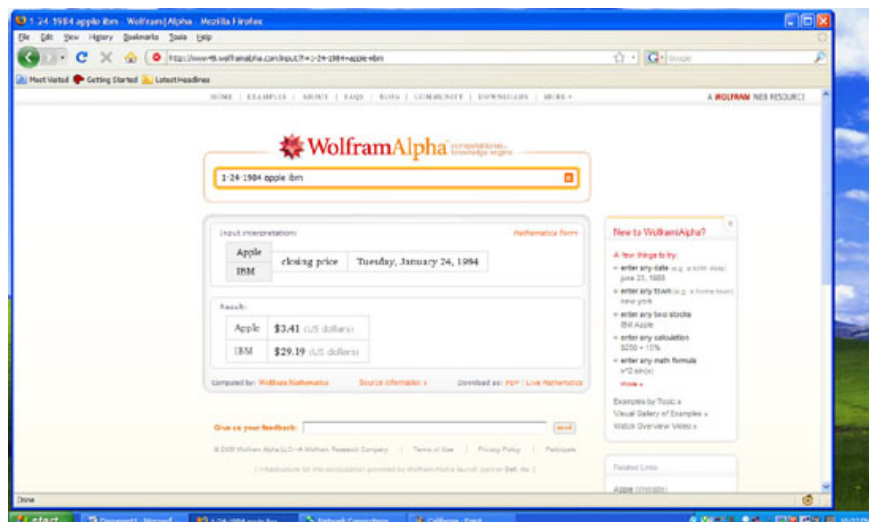
Think of it being developed over the last 5 years, Wolfram Alpha often doesn't understand queries. If you encounter problems with your search string, go back to the smaller searches. Start with a location search - such as 'California'. You will then see how this tool incorporates how closely the current day, for example, when the state joined the US federal block was September 9, 1850, 158 years ago. .

Then choose another term to create a stack or compare results. Try 'California income' to see income in California. Each search result will have its own pop-up window to provide additional original information of Wolfram Alpha.

Try another stacking term, such as 'California New York income'. Wolfram Alpha will create a simple income comparison table in these two states. At this point, you can begin to see its potential.

The site also shows its fledglingness and only serves a few key topics. For example, if you search with the term 'San Francisco income' then you will completely get an empty result. If you cut back later in the search term, Wolfram Alpha still did not provide any more, the entire topic may be missing in the current database. You can see examples of the site to see similar similar topics.

### See if Wolfram Alpha can understand



After entering a query, Wolfram Alpha will provide a feedback about its comprehensive knowledge. If you enter some of the same terms, such as company names, the line representing the input will display all of them. If you change a search, such as '1984 Apple IBM', the display line will show that you want to get the highest, lowest, and average end of the day's stock price, both for that year. company. If you want to see one day, change your search term, for example, 'January 24 1984 Apple IBM'.

## Use knowledge of location

Wolfram Alpha already knows some things about your search before you deserve a character. By using the details of the IP address, it will estimate your location and will provide regional results if possible.

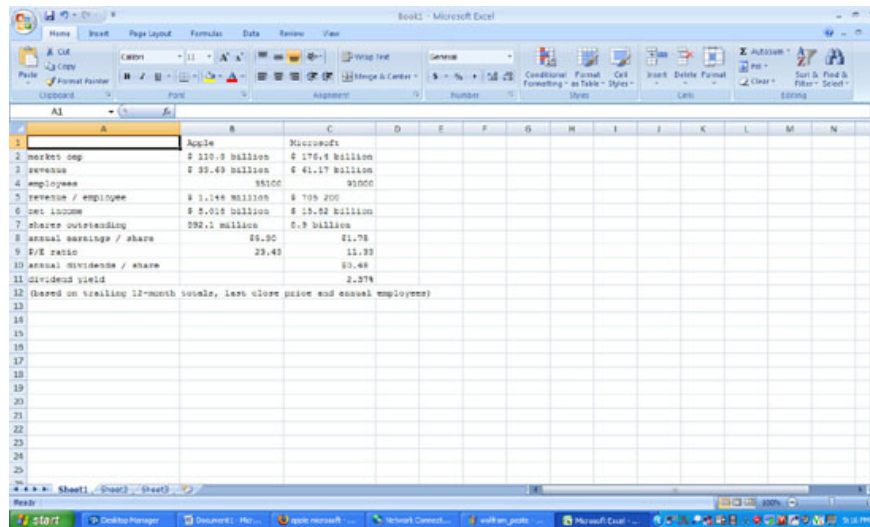
Assume that you are looking from Austin, Minnesota, to that city; Known machines to report those results instead of results for Austin, Texas. However, pop-up menus still allow you to edit the tool in case of another city.

Your position also plays a role in other searches. For example, if you type '7-4-2009' inside the US, the machine will treat 7 as July. If you're in Europe, Wolfram Alpha will consider the number 4 as the number of months.

## Stick to the facts

Suggested topics can be distilled according to the truth: for example, the city's population, website visitor statistics. Wolfram Alpha will calculate according to the actual conditions. However, please refer to the right sidebar on offsite links. If you want to report more, visit Wikipedia and other sources of information.

## Export the results to Excel



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	Apple	Microsoft
1		
2 market cap	\$ 110.0 billion	\$ 176.4 billion
3 revenue	\$ 33.43 billion	\$ 41.17 billion
4 employees	35100	31000
5 revenue / employee	\$ 1.144 million	\$ 109 200
6 net income	\$ 5.012 billion	\$ 15.02 billion
7 shares outstanding	792.1 million	2.9 billion
8 annual earnings / share	\$ 6.30	\$ 5.175
9 P/E ratio	23.43	11.33
10 annual dividend / share		\$ 0.49
11 dividend yield		2.37%
12 (based on trailing 12-month totals, last close price and annual employees)		
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Wolfram Alpha's results are impressive for a web browser, but they don't easily convert into Excel spreadsheet data or into database content. The tool will export as a Live Mathematica file or a PDF file; Click those links in the lower right corner of the results obtained.

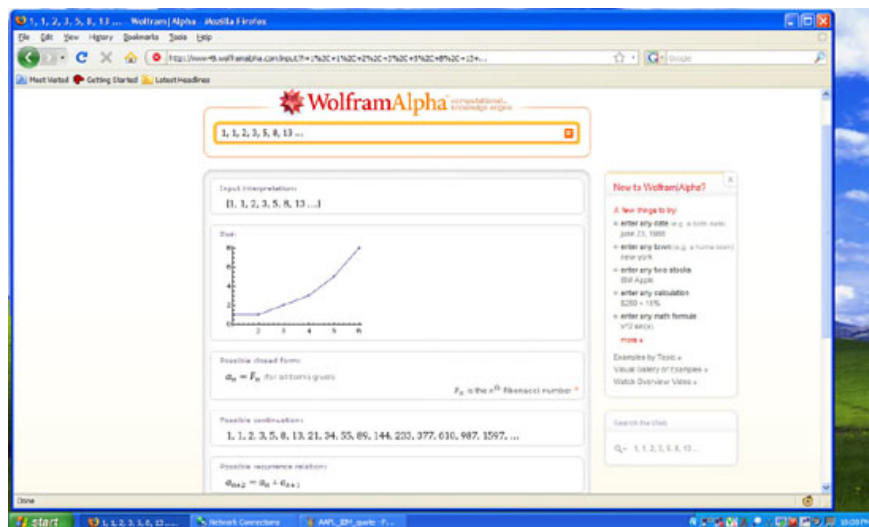
Text results are also rendered as images, so you cannot copy and paste it into Excel. You can temporarily adjust the images back to text, but if you do, they will lose the cell format. There is a way you can transfer its data into Excel.

Paste text data into Microsoft Word. Note the characters |. Use Find and Replace to convert them into tabs. Click the *Replace* button in the lower right section and enter | into the search field. Enter ^ t in the replacement field, and then click *Replace All*.

Copy the text again and paste it into Excel. It will automatically allocate to cells. If you are using another database or spreadsheet that lacks this feature, import the tabbed text file; Almost all database applications can recognize those tab breaks.

Wolfram Alpha Professional will have a direct export feature to Excel. A company spokesman said so, and the paid version will be released in the next few months, with the price already decided. Another feature of the Professional version will be the option to reference cross-reference of your private data with search results.

## Enter the math query



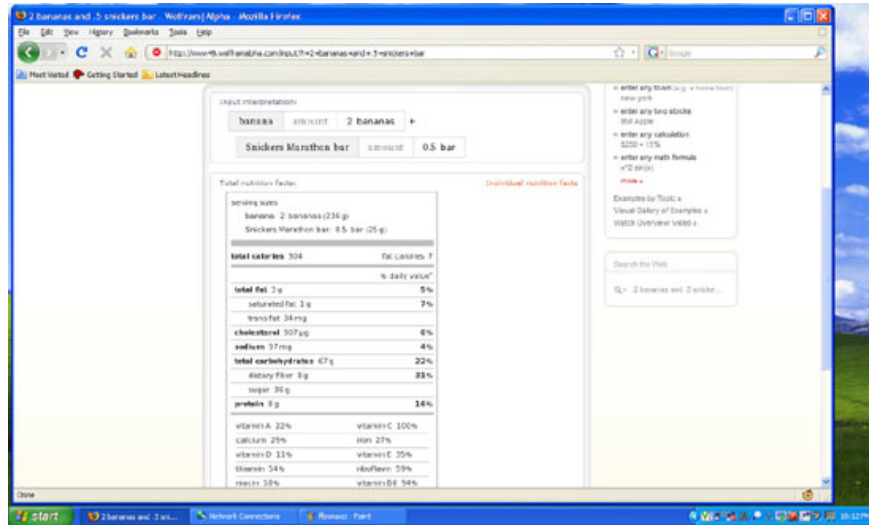
Since this search engine is built on math, another computing tool, Wolfram Alpha has built in it a great math aid. It can understand many equations and terms from industries such as chemistry, mechanical engineering, physics and other sciences. You can even type a value such as 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 ., the tool will provide hints on the original formula in the rules of the sequence.

## Compare medical results

Using its socio-economic and medical data, Wolfram Alpha can provide very useful medical basics. Suppose you have a cholesterol test and don't know the meaning of the numbers in it.

Let's start with a simple query, 'cholesterol 153'. (note that the term '153 cholesterol' will not work when pressed - an example of a machine's limited understanding.) That query has created a distribution in the entire US population. You can add gender and your age to get more detailed results.

## Show nutritional indicators



The Wolfram Alpha database stores detailed information about the composition of food. Do a search with the term 'banana' you will get a complete result of the diet content of bananas. But try searching for '2 bananas and .5 Snickers bar', you will get a combined result of both search terms. Note that the 'and' operator is very important here; without it, the search engine will think that you want to make a comparison, not a sum.

## Let's start with Wolfram Alpha

Wolfram Alpha's categories even have more topics, including color theory, astronomy, music and transitions. Let's start with the search in a field that interests you most to see the intelligence of this search engine. If you have any problems, check out the demo video or its example pages.

Wolfram Alpha is still a machine with a young age, but it is really useful in many topics - and its value will expand with its real database.

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