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# In Search of Search Privacy

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

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in the

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## Summary

Search engines have become integral to the way in which we use the Web of today. Not only are they an important real time source of links to relevant information, but they also serve as a starting point to the Web. A veritable treasure trove of the latest news, satellite images, directions from anywhere to anywhere, local traffic updates and global trends ranging from the spread of influenza to which celebrity happens to be the most popular at a particular time.

The more popular search engines are collecting incredible amounts of information. In addition to indexing significant portions of the Web they record what hundreds of millions of users around the world are searching for. As more people use a particular search engine, it has the potential to record more information on what is deemed relevant (and in doing so provide better relevance in the future, thereby attracting more users). Unfortunately, the relevance derived from this cycle between the search user and the search engine comes at a cost: privacy. In this work, we take an in depth look at what privacy means within the context of search. We discuss why it is that the search engine must be considered a threat to search privacy. We then investigate potential solutions and eventually propose our own in a bid to enhance search privacy.

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The whole experience: full time, part time, on campus, off campus, jobs, sundays, bursaries, friends, labs, exams, tutorials, workgroups, papers, reviews, conferences, questions, rejections, acceptance, and on and on. All of it an incredible journey that I cherish and remember fondly.

Happy days.

# Contents

# List of Figures

# List of Tables