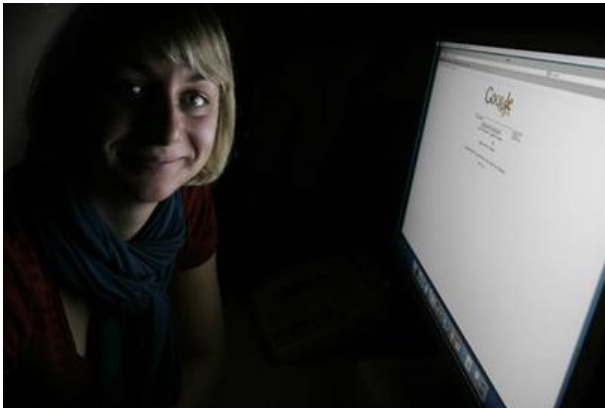


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Google Twins: I want to be number one

Brianna Goldberg, National Post
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Brett Gundlock/National Post

National Post's Brianna Goldberg poses for a picture as she looks over her ranking on Google.

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My identity crisis began a few weeks ago with a simple self-Google. I wanted to find a link to my most recent article, and I really didn't think twice when I keyed "Brianna Goldberg" into the search box. But a mere 0.22 seconds later, at the top of almost 200,000 entries, there she was in the No. 1 spot: my nemesis, my Googlegänger ...

... the Other Brianna Goldberg.

"I am Brianna Goldberg. I am a lesbian who lives in Brooklyn, NY, USA," read her Wikipedia user page, the first hit for our shared name.

Clicking on it, I found a brief autobiography that revealed she'd been "diagnosed with borderline personality disorder" and that she is a pagan who worships the Invisible Pink Unicorn.

I am not a jealous person. I love to share my snacks, my home, whatever. I'd even share my Invisible Pink Unicorn if I had one.

But my Google identity? Not OK.

It's not that I have a problem with the Other Brianna Goldberg's character sketch. It's just that ... it's not mine.

Audio slideshow: [An interview with Jim Killeen, producer of Google Me](#)

<http://www.nationalpost.com/life/story...>

To unseat her from the top of the Brianna Goldberg heap, I knew I would have to consult the experts.

"Ah, ego-surfing," said Alan K'necht when I called him. He is the man behind K'nechtology, a Web consulting company that, among other things, helps businesses increase their Google presence. This is called search-engine optimization, or SEO.

K'necht said that in the rare case that individuals, rather than companies, approach him, it is mainly to bury negative Internet press. But he said he was pleased to help me all the same.

My other advisor was Darius Bashar, who has a Google twin of his own. The Top 10 Darius Bashar search results are all his, however, so he knows whereof he speaks. Bashar describes himself as a social media coach and is a partner at Apollo Media, a Toronto-based company that specializes in making networks such as Facebook a means of "online reputation management."

Bashar explained that the Internet hierarchy is "based on the real world, according to votes." In the Web world, a link equals a vote. So, piggybacking on social-media sites, which already have millions of links to them, would help me immensely in my reach for the top.

My Facebook profile, for example, often ranks highly in the Google search for Brianna Goldberg. That's probably because so many people link to Facebook-at-large, even if not to me, specifically.

Here is the recipe K'necht and Bashar gave me to become Google's top Brianna Goldberg:

1. Get on as many social-networking sites as possible. Multiply and diversify your Internet presence. Snap up - that is, register on - these sites before someone with your name can.
2. Your level of activity seems to make you somehow more visible to Google. So if you're on Digg.com (a site on which you can rate and share articles), make sure you Digg every day. The earlier in the site's existence that you register, the more authoritative Google perceives the link to be.
3. Socialize strategically, but be careful what you click for. Obviously, no drunken photos of you on Flickr. But even at a site like Digg, the stories you endorse are shown along with your profile.
4. Become noteworthy. Ask someone to write a Wikipedia entry about you. Not a user profile but an actual encyclopedia entry. This will work only if you have some sort of public presence.
5. Blog often. Set up a free blog with your name in it, then periodically write short, smart opinion pieces about your area of expertise.
6. Dot-com yourself, even if just to claim the domain. Once Google finds it (it crawls through thousands of pages every hour, searching for unique content to index), it will become the top entry for your name.

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7. Make e-friends. The more people who link to your social-networking sites, blogs, Web site, etc., the more votes you will register in the Internet democracy and the higher-ranked your profile will be.

8. Be prepared to wait. Both K'necht and Bashar told me that no matter how hard I worked at it, it would take up to four weeks for the full glory of my new Internet presence to appear.

Which brings me back to my quest for the No. 1 spot.

For a week, I vigorously socially networked and Digged and dot-commed myself for about a third of each workday (and, truthfully, many hours before and after that), an effort of at least 20 hours that week. At the end of the day I felt like I had to peel my eyes off the computer screen, so intense was my obsession.

"I have so much more of a kumbaya approach to it than you do. It's not a game, you know," joked Jim Killeen, the producer of a documentary called Google Me.

For his film, which came out in April, Killeen found and met several of his Google twins from around the world. One Jim Killeen is a sexual swinger in Denver. One is a priest in Ireland. Killeen asked all of them the same 30 questions, to find out if there was any "essence" of Jim Killeenness.

I began to wonder whether there was a certain Brianna Goldbergness when, several days into my quest, I discovered a third Brianna Goldberg.

She's a Sagittarius. So am I. She plays bass. Like me. And she lives just a few minutes away from my boyfriend's home in Boston.

And then, it happened. I hit No. 1. I couldn't believe it. I asked co-workers to search me, just to make sure it wasn't a Google accident (which happens). But there on each of our screens, in the top spot, was a round-up of my articles at the Post. One. One. One!

I was giddy with victory, but felt deep down that it wouldn't last.

That's when K'necht messaged me through Linked In to congratulate me on becoming the No. 1 Brianna Goldberg.

I asked him why, if I had been Linked-Ining and blogging away, those sites remained unindexed, but the previously invisible National Post round-up, which I hadn't pumped in anyway, had shot up to No. 1.

"The only thing we can say is, that's why they call it the Web," he wrote back.

"Seemingly unrelated stuff is actually connected."

In the three weeks since I began this experiment, me-related links have slowly stocked the Brianna Goldberg search results. My competitiveness about it began to calm.

But to clinch my rankings, I purchased briannagoldberg.com and set up a simple blog as a sort of online business card. That topped the Google rankings almost immediately, per K'necht's advice.

My Wikipedia entry also became a strong contender but is still consistently outranked

<http://www.nationalpost.com/life/story...>

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Google Twins: I want to be number one by the Other Brianna Goldberg's Wikipedia user page that started this project in the first place.

And then there are the links to my articles, and the host of odd social-networking sites I joined.

Despite all my e-efforts, as Google continuously crawls the Web, my hits remain ephemeral. I'm not always number one (the other Brianna's darn Wikipedia user page just has so much power), though I am a lot of the time.

But now I fill the overwhelming bulk of the results with a consistently professional - though fun - profile. And I vow to keep working to have a steady top spot.

One funny postscript: I recently learned from her Myspace page that the Other Brianna Goldberg, the one who worships the Invisible Pink Unicorn, is male-to-female transgendered. Thus, Brianna Goldberg wasn't originally her name.

Apparently, there was a time when I was the No. 1 Brianna Goldberg. And that time will come again.

Related links:

[Brianna's National Post roundup, that ended up as number one Google hit](#)

[The Other Brianna Goldberg's Wikipedia entry that won't go away](#)

[Link to Google Me The Movie](#)

[Web site of Alan K'necht](#)

[Web site of Darius Bashar's company, Apollo Media](#)

[For more on Brianna's Google Twin experiment, visit her blog](#)

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