

# Google scientist talks about RankBrain for search

October 26 2015, by Nancy Owano

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AI-using search technology RankBrain is becoming important to Google. and is helping to process Google search results.

News sites on Monday promptly picked up on Bloomberg's interview with Greg Corrado, a senior research scientist at Google, involved with RankBrain.

Google has been using it to process 15 percent of search results per day, said Danny Sullivan, a founding editor of *Search Engine Land*, on Monday.

For the past few months, said Bloomberg, a very large fraction of the millions of queries a second that people type into the company's search

engine have been interpreted by the RankBrain system, according to Greg Corrado, a senior research scientist with the company. There is an emerging role of AI in [search](#).

RankBrain can handle queries that Google's systems have not seen before. "Of the [millions](#) of queries it receives each second, about 15 percent of them are completely new to Google. RankBrain helps the search engine better understand these ambiguous queries," said Abhimanyu Ghoshal in *TNW*.

RankBrain's usage of AI means it works differently than the other technologies in the search engine, said Jack Clark in the Bloomberg article.

*Engadget* Senior Editor Devindra Hardawar explained what is special about RankBrain: "RankBrain works by transforming words into 'vectors,' or mathematical entities, which Google's [search engine](#) can use to find similar words or phrases. That allows it to [parse](#) unusual search entries like, 'What's the title of the consumer at the highest level of a food chain?'" Clark at Bloomberg explained what it does with search entries. "If RankBrain sees a word or phrase it isn't familiar with, the machine can make a guess as to what words or phrases might have a similar meaning and filter the result accordingly, making it more effective at handling never-before-seen search queries."

Not that Google's own search algorithm (Hummingbird ) is to be replaced. Sullivan said that the algorithm is "the system that processes what people search for and combs through billions of pages to rank the ones believed to be best first."

(Back in 2013 *Search Engine Land* had discussed the algorithm Hummingbird and said it "should better focus on the meaning behind the words. It may better understand the actual location of your home, if

you've shared that with Google. It might understand that 'place' means you want a brick-and-mortar store. It might get that 'iPhone 5s' is a particular type of electronic device carried by certain stores. Knowing all these meanings may help Google go beyond just finding pages with matching [words](#)." )

According to Bloomberg, RankBrain is one of the "hundreds" of signals that go into an algorithm that determines what results appear on a Google search page and where they are ranked, said Corrado.

In the bigger picture, said Clark in Bloomberg, the addition of RankBrain to search is part of Google's push into AI; the company seeks to embed the technology into every aspect of its business.

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