

## Google Updates its Toolbar with New Rating System

If you have used the Google search engine (<http://www.google.com>) within the last couple of months, you will be aware of their downloadable "Toolbar" .

Google have recently announced a change to their toolbar software which includes two new buttons: a happy face and a frowning face, which users can click on to rate a web pages as they visit them.

The toolbar is free and only works with Internet Explorer 5.0 and runs on Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000 or XP. The toolbar helps you find just what you're looking for online without returning to Google's homepage to perform new searches. Once installed on your system it automatically appears under the Internet Explorer toolbar.

Google's toolbar offers these useful features:

**Search Site:** This function allows you to search the site you're using to find exactly what you're looking for.

**Page Rank:** Check Google's ranking of any page you're visiting.

**Page Info:** Allows you to access more information about a page including pages that link back to it and other similar pages. You can also highlight and find every instance of your search words as they appear on the page which may be helpful in your search optimization efforts.

The new voting system that has been added is not readily apparent after installing it. If you have Google's old toolbar installed you'll also need to uninstall it before installing this beta version.

To get to the new smiley face ranking system to show up on the bar, you'll need to click on Google's logo located on the far left and choose "toolbar options." Scroll down to the "page information" and put a check mark in the "voting buttons" box. Save your changes and look at the bar again. It should now contain a happy face and a frowning face. These faces allow you to rate websites as you visit them, in essence giving them a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down."

So far Google is saying this new voting system is simply a test, but if they do keep it and start using it to rank pages on their site it could make a major impact on search engine optimisation strategies and add yet another dimension in achieving a top Google listing.

How many of will be reminded of our school days and the ubiquitous gold star for good work? And, you might now like to consider how well you would rate your own web site!