



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on July 1, 2021

Brave Browser Now Offering “Brave Search”: A Private, Uncensored Search Engine

In an age of nearly ubiquitous digital surveillance, it is important to have tools to protect privacy. Fortunately, as the demand for privacy has grown, companies and organizations have risen to meet that demand. One such company is Brave Software, which produces the Brave browser. Now, Brave also offers a private search engine as an alternative to the surveillance-driven search engines offered by Big Tech.

This writer first wrote about the [Brave browser](#) in 2016. That article focused on the privacy elements baked into the browser itself, as well as the story of how Brendan Eich came to create the browser after being ousted from Mozilla for donating \$1,000 of his own money to support a California ban on same-sex marriage. That article is available [here](#).

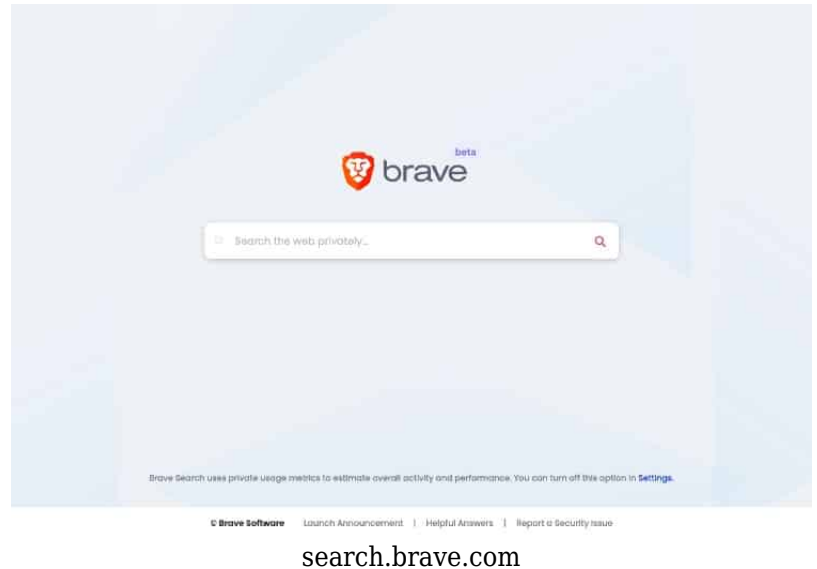
After detailing the features of the browser — including giving users full control over ads and the browser’s ability to break scripts that could be used to track users’ Internet activity — I ended by saying, “At this time the developer versions for both Windows and Mac are available from Brave’s website. As soon as the Linux version is available, this writer plans to check it out.” Not long afterward, Brave moved beyond developer versions and released a version for Linux; I have used it as my daily driver — for both Linux and Android — ever since.

The browser has matured over the past few years and is a feature-rich, easy-to-use browser that protects privacy by default. Recent updates have added new privacy features, including the ability to open links in a private window using the [Tor browser](#) for even greater privacy.

The most recent update brings [Brave Search](#) to the table. Search is an important link in the privacy chain because Big Tech search engines — Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc. — are *all* designed to track users, log searches, and make money by selling your data to data brokers who sell it to advertisers. And while there are already private search engines, such as DuckDuckGo and StartPage, Brave Search has one thing they do not have. Brave search is fully independent of Big Tech.

I have used DuckDuckGo for many years. DuckDuckGo affords users privacy by not harvesting data or logging searches. But, it does not maintain its own search index. It buys search results from Bing (owned by Microsoft). StartPage also protects users by not harvesting data or logging searches, but it buys search results from Google.

As far as privacy goes, that is fine. I cannot imagine anyone seeing a privacy issue in having search





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results come from Bing or Google, so long as those companies cannot see who conducted the search. For a really good explanation of how that works, [check out my interview with StartPage's Senior Product Manager](#) Alexandra Kubiak and [Director of Brand and Content Kelly Finnerty on my podcast Enemy of the \[surveillance\] State](#).

But there is another issue at stake here: censorship and control of information. It is now beyond question that Big Tech filters search results to fit the agenda of those in control. Instead of searches returning results that are filtered by popularity or by users' preferences, those results are filtered by political forces. [This can clearly be seen by looking at William F. Jasper's excellent article on Google from October 10, 2016](#).

And since DuckDuckGo returns results from Bing and StartPage returns results from Google, one should expect that they are seeing results filtered (albeit, that filtering may be ameliorated by the fact that all searches are dumped into the same bucket, regardless of the geography of their origin).

And that is where Brave Search truly stand apart. Besides offering truly private searches with no logging, no tracking, and no surveillance of any kind, Brave Search is also completely independent. As the [website explains](#):

Even supposedly "neutral" or "private" search engines rely on big tech for results. Brave is different. We deliver results based on our own built-from-scratch index. We're beholden to no one.

By creating a search index from scratch, Brave Search is not only fast (I was amazed at the speed of the results), but also avoids the ability for Big Tech to censor the results. You get what you search for. Period. Again, from the website:

Brave Search doesn't use secret methods or algorithms to bias or censor results. We rely on anonymous community contributions to refine results, and community-created alternative ranking models to ensure diversity.

As part of the launch of Brave Search on June 22, Brave issued an announcement promoting the service as "the first independent privacy search/browser alternative to big tech." A look at the service shows that Brave is — once again — living up to its promises. I have been using Brave Search since the day after it launched and have been impressed. Since I use the Brave browser, I am afforded yet another layer of privacy protection. But, I have also used Brave Search in the Firefox browser and found it to be fast and reliable.

As the announcement states:

Starting today, online users have a new independent option for search which gives them unmatched privacy. Whether they are already Brave browser users, looking to expand their online privacy protection with the all-in-one, integrated Brave Search in the Brave browser, or users of other browsers looking for the best-in-breed privacy-preserving search engine, they can all use the newly released Brave Search beta that puts users first, and fully in control of their online experience. Brave Search is built on top of a completely independent index, and doesn't track users, their searches, or their clicks.



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Brave Search is available in beta release globally on all Brave browsers (desktop, Android, and iOS) as one of the search options alongside other search engines, and will become the default search in the Brave browser later this year. It is also available from any other browser at search.brave.com.

Since privacy and unhindered access to reliable, accurate information are important when searching the Internet, services such as Brave Search are always welcome additions to the privacy toolbox. I will certainly continue to use both DuckDuckGo and StartPage, but Brave Search has quickly become my search engine of choice.



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