Google Newsgroup Searches

I've been proclaiming the benefit of Google Newsgroup Searches to find answers to some of my hard to find questions for several years now

http://www.google.com

I still get people telling me they don't know why. I've come to the conclusion that I may not have made myself clear enough.

By default, Google searches the Web--which has a lot of good information, but the really valuable information is found on the newsgroups.

What's a Newsgroup?

A newsgroup is an electronic version of a plain old bulletin board. There's a newsgroup established for just about everything, and savvy programmers (and others) check newsgroups first when they need information about something.

The problem with newsgroups is that you need a newsgroup reader and an ISP that allows you to get to them--and not everyone has access to them.

However, Google can search newsgroups---and that's where the great benefit of Google is.

An Example

For instance, the other day I was converting an old DAO Access application to ADO, and was using a SQL statement in which I was looking for a Pattern match using the Like parameter

SELECT * FROM EMPLOYEE WHERE EMP_LASTNAME LIKE 'SMI*'

This statement should select all the fields from the Employee table where the last name field begins with 'SMI'--unfortunately, although it worked fine in the DAO version of the program, it wasn't working with the ADO version--no records at all were being returned.

Google to the rescue

I went to Google, selected the Groups tab to tell Google I wanted to search the newsgroups (this is important, otherwise you just get Web

sites), typed this into the Search box, and clicked on the Google search button

access ado like sql

Google retrieved 26,000 newsgroup postings, and the answer (to use a % sign instead of the *) was in the first few postings.

Some words of caution.

The results you get back from a Google newsgroup search is one message---and it's usually part of a long thread of messages

To find the original question, you must display the entire thread and go back to the first message in the thread. Then, you should read each of the replies to the original question to see if someone has posted an answer.

Of course, you must also realize that sometimes there is no answer, or that a posted answer may be wrong. However, 99 times out of a 100, I get my answers via Google faster than anywhere else.