



Better Searching

Difficulty: Technical ★☆☆

Social ☆☆☆

Time: 20 mins

Workshop Prerequisites

- Install Firefox! There's really no point installing better search in Chrome because it is also spying on you. See our [guide on installing Firefox](#) if you'd like help with this.

Search is Getting Worse

You're not wrong... search is getting worse. Google revolutionized internet search when it launched in 1998, but even the founders of what would become largest advertising company in the world (by revenue) knew how ads would corrupt the useful of search:

“...we expect that advertising funded search engines will be inherently biased towards the advertisers and away from the needs of the consumers.”

The Anatomy of a Large-Scale Hypertextual Web Search Engine

Sergey Brin & Lawrence Page, Google Co-Founders

At a simple level, search engines work by crawling the internet and creating a search index for sites. When you enter your search into the text box, the search engine searches the index to find relevant search results to you.

However today, search results in Google, and Microsoft's copycat competitor Bing, are dominated by paid ads injected at the top of the search results, by junk pages with rankings artificially boosted by search engine optimization techniques (SEO), and now polluted by AI generated websites, known as AI slop.

Your Search Engine is Spying on You

To understand which ads you might be more likely to be interested in, advertising companies like Google typically will track your behaviors:

- Your search terms and patterns
- The ads you're interested in
- The links you click
- The Images you view
- The videos you watch

These companies will offer a profile of your preferences and other personal to advertisers, so they can bid on serving you a relevant ad, all in milliseconds as a web page loads.

To learn more: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real-time_bidding

Some Alternatives

As two alternatives, we are going to look at:

- DuckDuckGo: free, ad supported
- Kagi: paid with a limited free tier

DuckDuckGo

A private USA-based company that generates search results using Yahoo and Bing among 400 other sources. DuckDuckGo earns revenue by serving ads primarily from the Yahoo-Bing search alliance network. The ads are based purely on the keywords and terms of the search you enter. However DuckDuckGo does not track it's users and your location is never set to their servers. DuckDuckGo offers limited tracking protection and can be used for free. DuckDuckGo also offers a free to use web browser called Privacy Browser, that blocks some ad-company tracking technologies. It is available on Windows, Apple Mac, Android and iPhone.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DuckDuckGo>

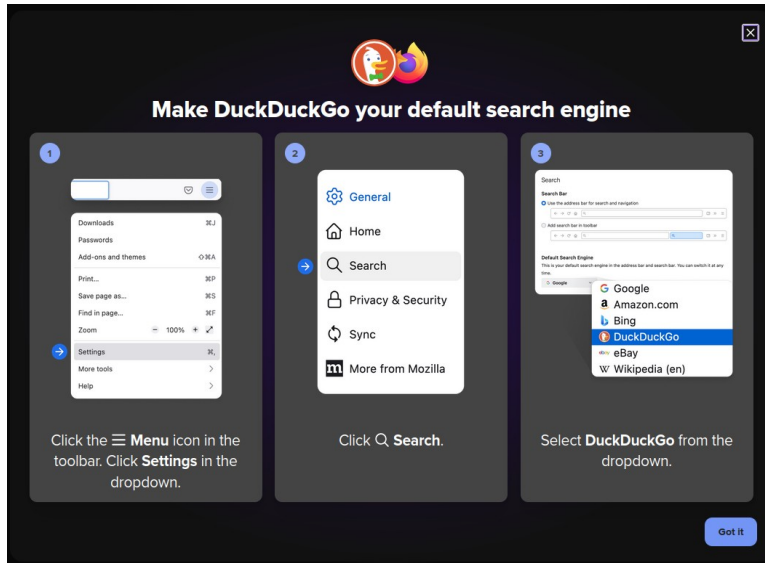
Kagi

A private USA-based company that provides ad-free search results using it's own search index generated from other search companies. In 2025 Kagi introduced Privacy Pass, a mechanism that allows paid customers to use the service without identifying themselves. Kagi is also developing their own telemetry-free web browser called Orion that also blocks ads. It is currently available for Apple Macs, iPhones and iPads. Linux and Windows versions are under development.

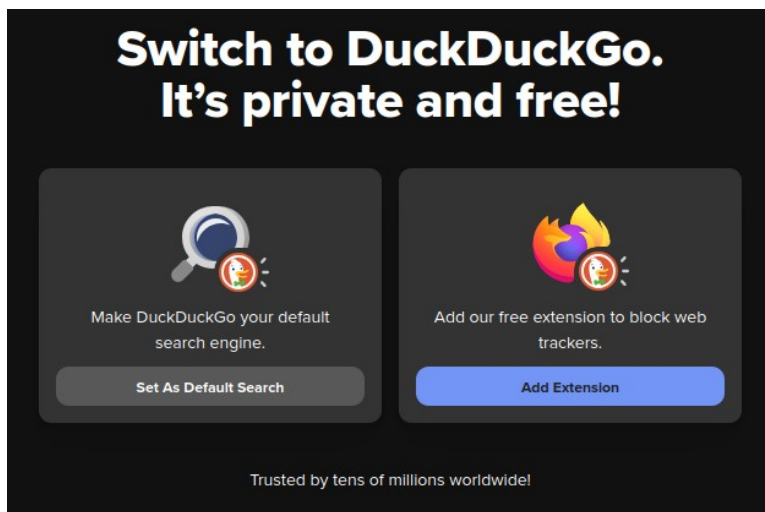
Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kagi_\(search_engine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kagi_(search_engine))

Switching to DuckDuckGo

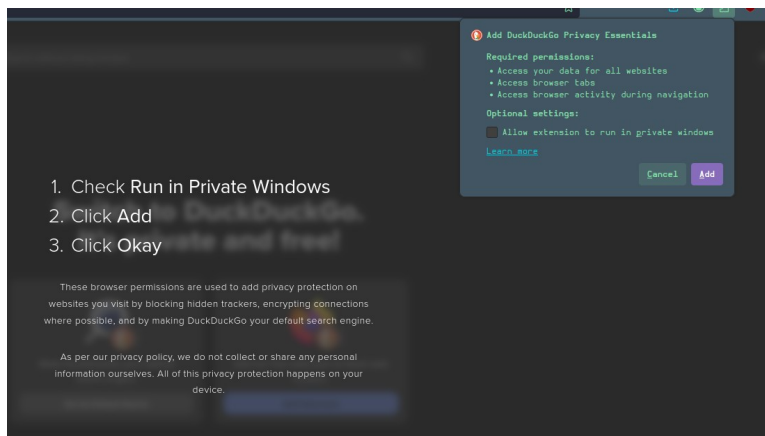
1. In Firefox, enter <https://www.duckduckgo.com> in the search bar:



2. Follow the instructions:



3. Optionally install the Privacy Essentials Extension



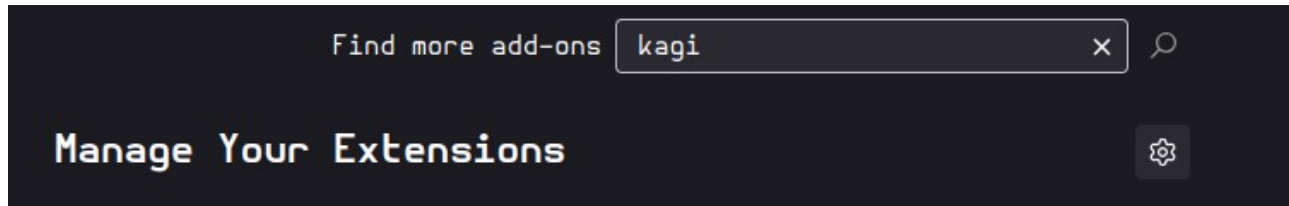
Switching to Kagi

Kagi is installed as a Firefox extension.

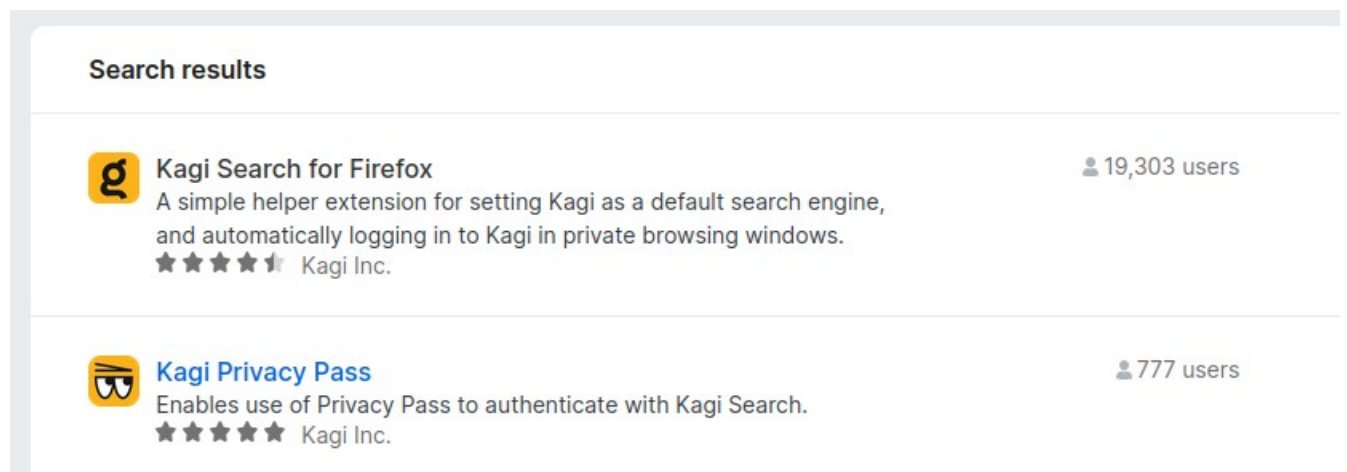
1. To the right of the URL/search bar, click on the jigsaw puzzle piece then select Manage Extensions:



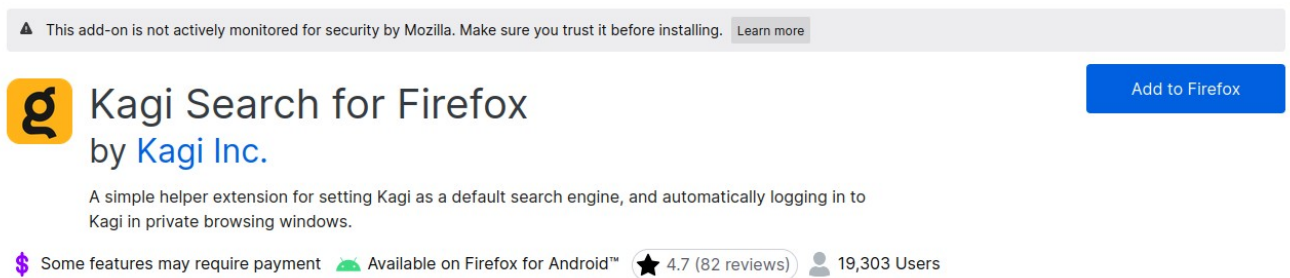
2. Search for kagi in the Find more add-ons search box:



3. Click on Kagi Search for Firefox:



4. Click on Add to Firefox.



5. Firefox will ask if you want to use Kagi as your search engine (select yes) and whether you want to pin the extension to the bar (yes if you want).