

Bibleref: a Microformat for Bible References

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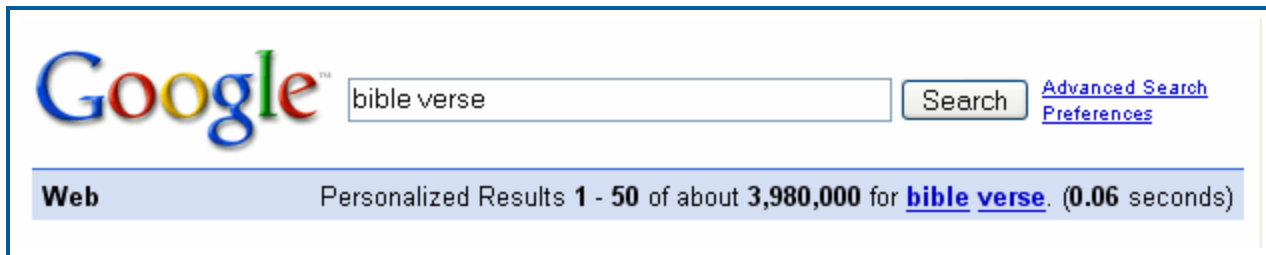
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Slides at <http://semanticbible.com/other/presentations/2008-bibleref/Bibleref.html>



Advanced Technology for Eternal Truth

Motivation: Web Search for Bible References



- Hundreds of thousands of on-line sermons, blog posts, scholarly discussions, etc. reference Bible passages
- The motivation: make it easier and more accurate to search the web for references to Bible passages

Some Problems

- False positives

- *Mark I* (the first chapter of the Gospel According to Mark) is also a *World War I tank*, a type of *British railway carriage*, and one of the first large-scale computers (the *Harvard Mark I*)
- *John 13:2* matches

7, Delphos St. John's 13-2 111

(basketball team with won-lost record and total points)

- Variant book abbreviations

- *John*, *Jn*
- *I John*, *I John*, *First John*

Even More Problems

- Language variants
 - in French, *Jean 3:16*
 - in Spanish, *Juan 3:16*
- Partial matches: *John 4* also matches *I John 4* (wrong book)
- Contextual references:

The Gospel according to Mark is the first Christian text that uses the word "gospel" or "good news" (1:1).

- The fundamental problem: we're using strings to match *data*

The Solution

- Part 1: Explicitly indicate when something is a Bible reference
- Part 2: Explicitly indicate what the intended reference is (if it's not clear)
 - *You can always err on the side of clarity*

What's a MicroFormat?

- Tantek Çelik of Technorati ([2004 ETech presentation](#))
- "lower-case semantic web" that
 - *Solves a specific problem*
 - *Use simple, small pieces loosely joined*
 - *Is evolutionary, not revolutionary: adds semantics to today's web*
 - *Is designed for humans first, machines second*
- Some examples
 - *hCard: people and organizations*
 - *hCalendar: calendars and events*
 - *XFN: social networks*

Microformats vs. POSH

- POSH: "Plain Old Semantic (X)HTML"
 - *Use semantic elements and attributes for their intended purpose*
 - *Use semantic class names and id values*
 - *Use as little HTML as will get the job done*
- All the power and goodness of HTML comes "for free".
- POSH can (and should) be validated using existing standards and tools
- Technically, bibleref is POSH or a "poshformat", not a genuine microformat
 - See the *POSH home page* at microformats.org

Bibleref: A Microformat Solution

- Use "bibleref" as a `class` attribute to identify Bible references (part 1)
 - *Just add the attribute if you're already using an HTML element like a*
 - *Use the `cite` element as a default if no other element is more appropriate*
- Use the `title` attribute when necessary to disambiguate the reference (part 2)
 - *Most real-world data won't need this*
- Markup for Bible *references*, not for Bible *texts*
- If you author web content, *use Bibleref!*

But What Can You Do With Bibleref?

- Once references are identified, with some coding to parse the references you can:
 - *Style it with CSS*
 - *Add hyperlinks*
 - *Add script-based menus, etc.*
 - *Retrieve and insert the text itself*
 - *Build a search index for Bible references*
 - Including smarts about matching a verse to a range, etc.
- Bibleref is intentionally minimal to make it easy

Authoring with Bibleref

- Old-school: edit your HTML and add `class="bibleref"`
 - *(All the Bible references in this HTML file are also marked as `<cite class="bibleref">` and displayed with a light blue background.)*
- Bloggers: use a plug-in
 - Chris Roberts has incorporated bibleref into his [WordPress ESV Plugin](#), as of version 3.1.0.
 - [The Holy Scripturizer 1.7](#) is another WordPress plugin that supports bibleref.
 - [Windows Live Writer](#) plugin?

Even Better: Automatically Tag Your References

- Logos Bible Software's Bibleref Tagger (beta)
- Today: client-side Javascript

```
<script src="http://bible.logos.com/jsapi/referencetagging.js"
  type="text/javascript">
</script>
<script type="text/javascript">
Logos.ReferenceTagging.tag();
</script>
```

Other options: choose Bible version, include Libronix links, specify elements and classes not to search

- Tomorrow: server-side content tagger

Bibleref and Bibleref Tagger

- Bibleref Tagger recognizes (manual) Bibleref and enriches it with auto-generated hyperlinks
- (Manual) Bibleref extends (automated) Bibleref Tagger output, producing ...
- Symbiosis

Beyond Bibleref

- The goal of Bibleref itself is to specify the lowest common denominator to improve web search and enable rich applications
 - *But not to build them,*
 - *And not to design some all-encompassing standard.*

Driving Adoption

- Make it as easy as possible to author with Bibleref
- Communicate the benefits
- Provide a payoff
- Talk it up
- The Bibleref Pioneers Page
(<http://semanticbible.com/bibleref/pioneers.html>)
 - *Adopt Bibleref for your site or blog*
 - *Send me an email with "Bibleref" in the subject and your website URL*
 - *I'll add your site to the Pioneers page*
 - *Offer good for the next 30 days (through Feb 25)*
- Design a Bibleref badge 
- Other ideas?

Conclusions

- A little markup can go a long way toward more useful web data
- Existing web standards allow it
- Existing editing and blogging tools generally make it easy
- The missing pieces are willingness to do it and agreement on an approach
- The Bibleref campaign begins today

References

- The detailed [Bibleref specification](#)
- [Bibleref examples](#)
- microformats.org
- Some [helpful examples](#) of formatting the text of Bible references