

# Google Code Search vs. Koders.com

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Last year I've written about Koders.com, a search engine that crawled open source code repositories and allowed developers to search for code; an extremely interesting and valuable tool indeed. When I first saw Koders.com I thought (and I wrote that down as well) that they would be soon bought by Google, because everything in Koders.com looks at first glance like a Google application. But actually, something different happened: Google came up with Google Code Search, its own code search engine. Here's a quick comparison of both.

The first difference between both systems is the interface; Google Code Search, as the other Google applications, has a simpler interface and uses a "command-line syntax" to narrow searches: for example, if you type "lang:c++ #include " it will bring all files containing GPL code written in C++ that include the STL stack template class. Trying the same search in Koders.com means to select the proper values in the drop-down menus, and you get somewhat different results. Then you can click on any filename of the result list, and see the code inside. No need to browse SourceForge or Tigris; fast and easy. Very neat.

I must say that I like the command-line thingy of Google (I just use it every day in the "normal" Google, doing things like "filetype:pdf" to narrow searches) and I found that Google Code Search brings more relevant results (heh, this is Google after all). But... the code preview of Koders.com is still above that of Google. Koders.com provides nicer syntax highlighting for every possible language, and the special pages for projects (for example, this is the page of the Subversion project) are simply out of this planet. On the other hand, Google allows you to search the contents of tar.gz or zip files, when they match your search criteria.

If I can make a wish, this is it: Google buys Koders.com, they merge the display technology of Koders.com and the search capabilities of Google into a simple product. Now that would be great. But... maybe both tools are targeting different but complementary needs? In any case, they are both welcome in my toolkit.

PS: I learnt about Google Code Search after reading this posting from Scott's Theocacao. Thanks!

Update, October 13th, 2006: You can really find anything in Koders and Google Code Search :)