

Internet know how

Internet Search Techniques

Many of the problems students encounter when searching the internet could be avoided if appropriate search techniques are employed. Most internet searches are conducted using a tool called a **search engine**. There are many search engines and almost everyone has a favourite one. Many are good at searching for one kind of information but not another. The more powerful search engines, like Google and Yahoo!, are quite versatile. Regardless of the search engine you prefer, there are some methods of refining searches that are common to most engines. There are also techniques that are unique to the particular search engine you're using so you can't assume that the information presented here will always provide the most efficient search.

The following information is provided to give you some insight into how these search engines look at your request for information and some generic strategies you can employ to help you get the information that you need. For the most accurate information on how to search for information on the engine that you're using, read the help section provided with that search engine. And beware, what was there today may be gone tomorrow; searching techniques that work on a search engine now may not work later!

Key Words

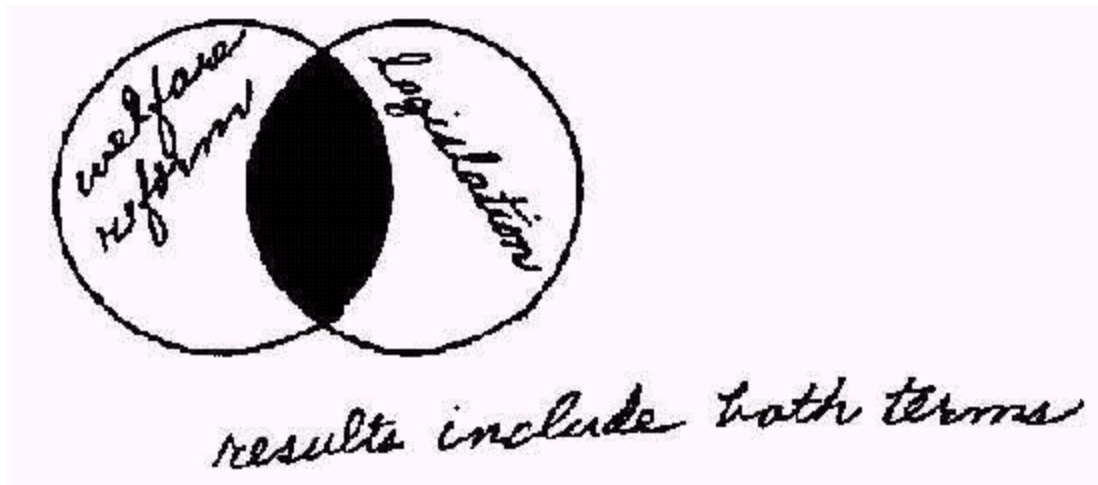
Search engines respond to keywords typed in by the searcher. Before you begin using a search engine, it is a good idea to write down the keywords and phrases for which you are seeking information. Then write down synonyms and related terms for each keyword. Once you have all the terms you might need to use in your search, you may need to link them with certain words and/or symbols. These are called limiters and operators.

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Limiters and Operators

Boolean Logical Operators: These operators allow you to narrow or expand your searches, depending on the relevancy of the results you are getting. Most search engines use "AND" between keywords to narrow a search and "OR" between keywords to broaden a search. Here is how they work:

AND:



For combining multiple terms.

Example: "welfare reform AND legislation." Some search engines use a "+" instead of the word "AND."

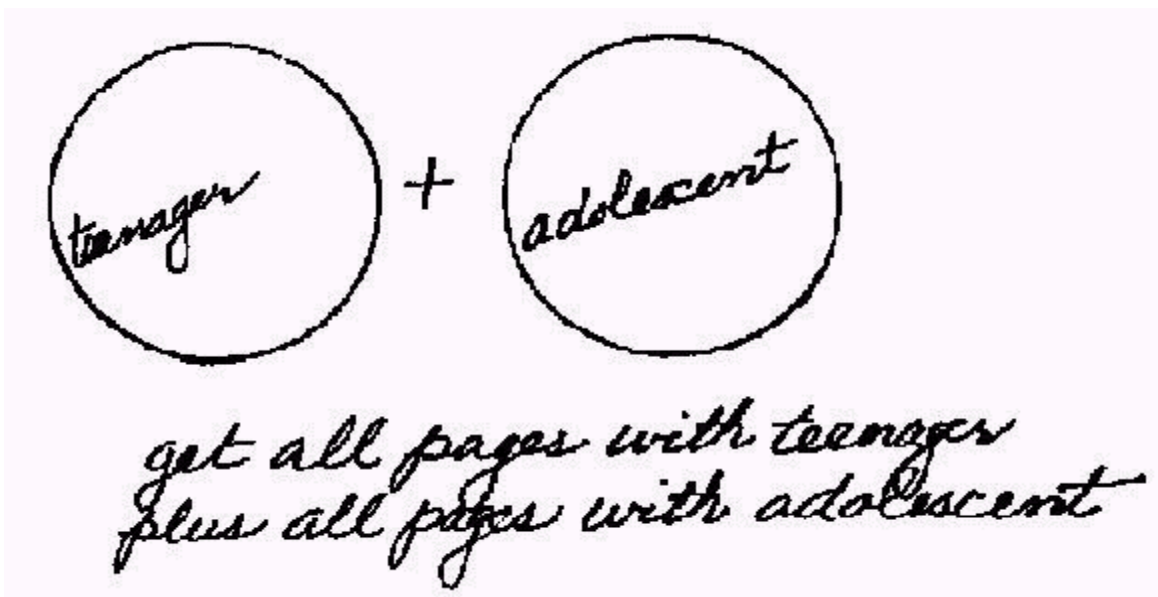
Also to search by specific criteria such as year, state, country.

Example: "election AND 1996."

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OR:

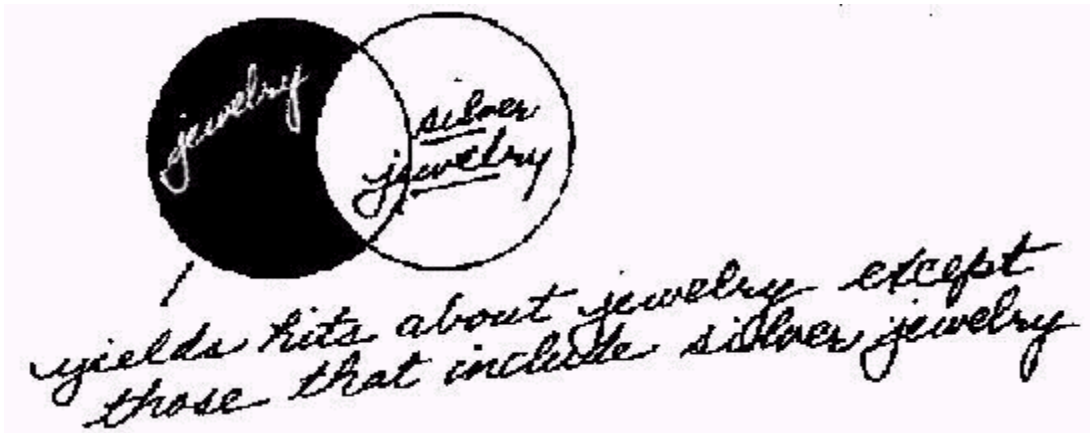


Used to broaden a search, using synonyms and related terms.
Example: teenager OR adolescent.

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NOT:



Some search engines also use "NOT" to exclude keywords or phrases. Example: if you wanted information on jewelry but wanted to exclude silver jewelry, you could type "jewelry NOT silver." Other search engines use a minus sign (-) instead of NOT. Example: jewelry -silver (note that there is never a space between the "-" and the term you want to exclude).

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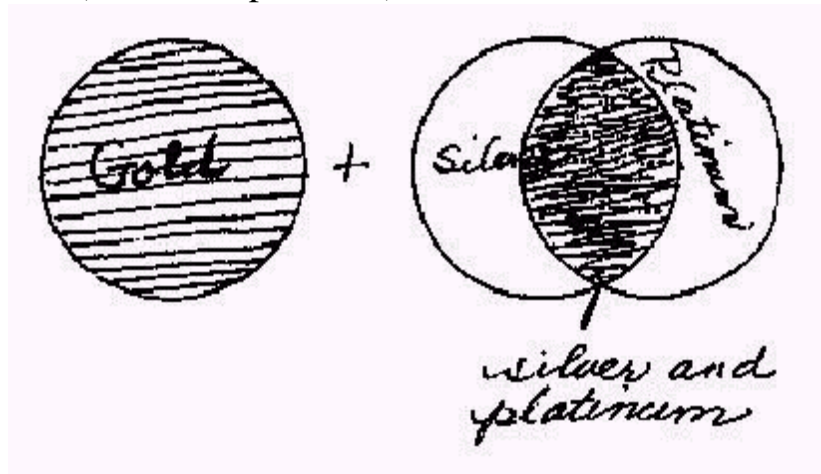
Nesting

The following methods are useful for searching phrases and for complex search phrases. Use **quotation marks** (" ") around keywords that are usually thought of as phrases.

Examples: "budget deficit"; "welfare reform"; "attention deficit disorder"; "Freddie Kruger."

Use **parentheses** (.....) to keep complex searches in order.

Example: gold or (silver and platinum)



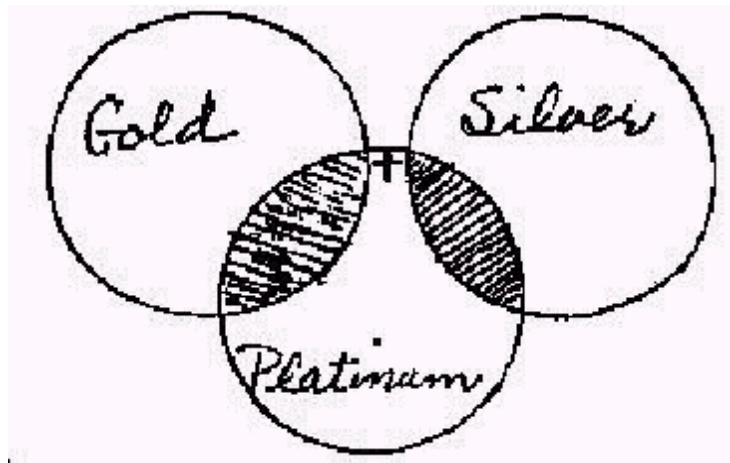
This search will yield:

1. documents that contain only the keyword, "gold."
2. documents that contain "silver" and "platinum."
3. documents that contain all the terms, "gold," "silver," and "platinum."

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The search will not yield documents on only "silver" or only on "platinum."

Example: (gold or silver) and platinum



This search will yield:

4. documents that contain "silver" and "platinum."
5. documents that contain "gold" and "platinum."
6. documents that contain all three.

It will not yield documents that contain only "gold," those that contain only "silver," or those that contain only "platinum".

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Copying Pictures

The internet contains millions of pictures. This simple technique will allow you to copy pictures from an internet document into your document.

Use the preceding internet search techniques to locate a document containing the picture that you want to copy.

Place your cursor over the picture.

Press the right button (right click) on your mouse.

Choose the copy command from the dialogue box that appears.

This procedure places the picture on your computer's clipboard.

Open the destination file (the file you're going to copy the picture to).

Place the cursor where you want the picture to be located.

Click on the Paste icon.

A word about plagiarism: You must give credit to sources of information you use in your assignments. Failure to do so is a serious offence. Pictures are information and credit to the source must be given.

Reference website: <http://webster.gtcc.cc.nc.us/library.internet-techniques.html>

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