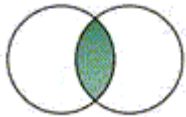
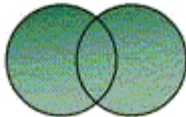
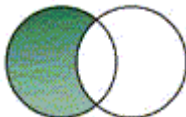


Boolean Searching and Other Tips for the Web and Online Subscription Databases

If you are not happy with your results, try another search engine, check your spelling, or try synonyms or related, broader, or narrower terms. *Mine* your results for new keywords. By all means, use some strategy. Though they have many quirks, most engines allow users the following advanced techniques. Check the “search tips,” “cheat sheet,” or “help” pages of your favorite search tools for the proper way to express these strategies. Remember: You can use these strategies more easily in the advanced search screens.

| Boolean Operator/ Strategy | Why You'll Use It |
|---|---|
| Vietnam AND Protest  AND all the words + | limits your search, requiring that all words appear Vietnam AND protest +Japan +cooking +eagles +habitat +endangered In Google, use + to include common words overlooked by search engines A growing number of search engines assume an AND. You still need to express AND in databases! |
| car OR automobile  OR any of the words ~ | is used to capture synonyms or related words car OR automobile coronary OR heart Google uses ~ to expresses synonyms |
| Martin Luther NOT King  NOT AND NOT exclude - | eliminates possibilities that will cause problem results Martin Luther NOT King + eagles -Philadelphia -football |
| <p><i>(Most search engines allow you to use “+” and “-” for AND and NOT. These characters must appear immediately before your search terms. Do not separate them with spaces.) Some search engines allow you to exclude words in their advanced search screens.</i></p> | |
| Wildcards, Truncation, Stemming | Many search tools allow you to use an asterisk (*) to stand for any character or string of characters. This method is especially useful if you are uncertain of spelling or if you want to pick up various forms of a word or word endings. teen* (picks up teenage, teenagers, or teens) Herz* (for Herzegovina) |
| Phrases | Very often you will want words to appear together in specific order. Quotation marks (“...”) set words off as phrases to be searched as a whole. A great strategy for names and titles too! “vitamin A” “raisin in the sun” “George Washington Carver” |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Proximity | Words are often not meaningful in a search unless they appear near each other in a document. In large documents, words separated by lots of text are generally unrelated. NEAR/25 specifies that two words appear within 25 words of each other (Used in AltaVista and AOL Search) Eric Clapton NEAR/10 Cream |
| Field Searching | This strategy restricts searches to certain portions of Web documents. It allows you to specify that search terms appear, for instance, in the title or URL of your results. (Used in a variety of ways in AltaVista, Alltheweb, and Google and often easier to use in the advanced screen.) title: cancer URL: epa domain: edu + "graphic organizers" inurl: nasa (used in Google) filetype: pdf |
| Case Sensitivity | Most search engines are case <i>insensitive</i> by default; that is, they treat upper- and lowercase letters the same. However, there are some that recognize uppercase and lowercase variations. It is good practice to search using lowercase letters unless you have a specific strategy in mind. In <i>case sensitive</i> search tools: Baker (retrieves name and eliminates most references to cake and bread makers) AIDS (eliminates reference to helpers) China (eliminates references to dishes) |
| Combining Strategies | Check to see if the search tool allows you to combine strategies. For instance, you might find it helpful to combine Boolean operators. Use () to nest, or group your ORs and ANDs in more sophisticated searching. Like in algebra, what's in parentheses gets processed first. +dolphins +(behavior OR behaviour) -miami Sample using Google syntax: inurl: nasa +saturn |
| Searching within Your Search | If you have a long result list, and even if you don't, you might choose to search for targeted words within your search. Several search engines offer a handy feature to help you narrow your result lists. After you perform your first search, look for a "search within results" feature. If no such feature exists, you can use your browser's own "find" feature to search within each page. |
| Natural Language Searches | Some search engines (Ask Jeeves or IxQuick, for instance) allow you to type questions as you would think or speak them. "Why is the sky blue?" |

TIP ABOUT TIPS

Every search engine is slightly different. For instance, Google uses an automatic AND. Some search engines allow for "natural language" searching. Remember to carefully read the "tips page" of the search tools you use most frequently. These pages discuss the syntax, or the specific search language, used by that particular search engine or directory.