

Searching the Internet

handout prepared by Linda S. Bryson
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This presentation is an introduction to searching the Internet. Information was gathered from Internet web sites. If you go to the web sites listed, you will be able to find additional information on a variety of topics including answers to "Frequently Asked Questions".

<http://www.monash.com/spidap.html>

This web site is called *The Spider's Apprentice* and has six parts. It addresses search engines and how to best search the web.

<http://www.monash.com/spidap4.html>

A Helpful Guide to Web Search Engines
How to get the most from search engines like AltaVista, Infoseek, Excite, Webcrawler, Lycos, HotBot, and the Yahoo Directory.
Page 4 -- How Search Engines Work

"Keyword Searching

This is the most common form of text search on the Web. Most search engines do their text query and retrieval using keywords. Unless the author of the Web document specifies the keywords for her document (this is possible by using meta tags in the latest version of HTML), it's up to the search engine to determine them. Essentially, this means that search engines pull out and index words that are believed to be significant. Words that are mentioned towards the top of a document and words that are repeated several times throughout the document are more likely to be deemed important." taken from *The Spider's Apprentice* web site

Lycos and Infoseek are keyword search engines.

"Concept-based searching

Unlike keyword search systems, concept-based search systems try to determine what you mean, not just what you say. In the best circumstances, a concept-based search returns hits on documents that are "about" the subject/theme you're exploring, even if the words in the document don't precisely match the words you enter into the query." taken from *The Spider's Apprentice* web site

Excite is a concept-based search engine.

“Refining Your Search

Most sites offer two different types of searches--"basic" and "refined." In a "basic" search, you just enter a keyword without sifting through any pull down menus of additional options. Depending on the engine, though, "basic" searches can be quite complex.

Search “refining” options differ from one search engine to another, but some of the possibilities include the ability to search on more than one word, to give more weight to one search term than you give to another, and to exclude words that might be likely to muddy the results. You might also be able to search on proper names, on phrases, and on words that are found within a certain proximity to other search terms.

Some search engines also allow you to specify what form you'd like your results to appear in, and whether you wish to restrict your search to certain fields on the internet (i.e., usenet or the Web) or to specific parts of Web documents (i.e., the title or URL).

Many, but not all search engines, allow you to use so-called Boolean operators to refine your search. These are the logical terms AND, OR, NOT, and the so-called proximal locators, NEAR and FOLLOWED BY.

Boolean AND means that all the terms you specify must appear in the documents, i.e., "heart" AND "attack." You might use this if you wanted to exclude common hits that would be irrelevant to your query.

Boolean OR means that at least one of the terms you specify must appear in the documents, i.e., bronchitis, acute OR chronic. You might use this if you didn't want to rule out too much.

Boolean NOT means that at least one of the terms you specify must not appear in the documents. You might use this if you anticipated results that would be totally off-base, i.e., nirvana AND Buddhism, NOT Cobain.

Not quite Boolean: + and –

Some search engines use the characters + and - instead of Boolean operators to include and exclude terms.

NEAR means that the terms you enter should be within a certain number of words of each other. FOLLOWED BY means that one term must directly follow the other. (ADJ, for adjacent, serves the same function.)”

taken from *The Spider's Apprentice* web site

Favorite Web Sites

http://dir.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Internet/World_Wide_Web/Searching_the_Web/Search_Engines/

This web site lists lots and lots of search engines and gives brief descriptions of most of them. Very interesting!

<http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/stories/reviews/0,6755,2394453,00.html>

This web site is for *PC Magazines'* Top 100 Web Sites. It is a good jumping off point for other sites.

<http://howstuffworks.com>

This is an informational web site that explains how different machines work.

<http://bluemountain.com>

Send e-mail greeting cards for any occasion.

<http://dogpile.com>

This is a *mega* search engine. It searches the search engines for you.

Bookmarks

The *bookmarks feature* allows you to save (and organize) your favorite web sites. You can set up folders and then save your bookmarks according to topic.

Suggestion: If you have grandchildren, who come over to play on your computer, set up a folder for them. Put in this folder only those web sites the children are allowed to visit. Good children's sites are "closed" in that the youngsters can't go to any unfriendly sites when they click on a link.