

Before

You Go To The Internet

- 1. Establish your "search phrase"
Determine the words needed to clearly define your topic
Make sure all words are spelled correctly
- 2. Know synonyms and varied spellings
Determine if other words can be used in place of the ones you chose
Restaurant could also be café or bistro
Computer could also be workstation
Some words have alternative spellings
Theater can also be Theatre
- 3. Know some "web basics"—tricks to make your searching faster and more reliable
(See handout—Web Tricks)
- 4. Know how to widen or narrow your search if you are not getting the results you wanted
(See handout—Setting Search Parameters)

- 5. Learn to use one or two search engines well

General Search Engines

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| • AskJeeves | www.aj.com |
| • Excite | www.excite.com |
| • GO | www.go.com |
| • LookSmart | www.looksmart.com |
| • Lycos | www.lycos.com |
| • NBCi | www.nbc.com |

Search Engines for Students

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| • AskJeeves for Kids | www.ajkids.com |
| • Bess | www.bess.com |
| • CyberPatrol | www.route616.com |
| • CyberSleuth-Kids | www.cybersleuth-kids.com |
| • DinoSearch | www.dinosearch.com |
| • Kid Sites | www.kidsites.net |
| • PlanetZoom | www.planetzoom.com |
| • Searchopolis | www.searchopolis.com |
| • Web Kangaroo | www.webkangaroo.com |
| • Yahooligans | www.yahooligans.com |

Web Tricks



Search Tricks

- Use multiple words to narrow search
- Use similar words
- Use appropriate capitalization
- Use quotation marks to keep a phrase together
- Use plus and minus signs to link words or remove them from the search
- Use a combination of the tricks above

Example: Great Lakes shipping in winter

Example: computer workstation CPU

Example: iMac computer, NeXT technology

Example: "atomic weapons", "ivory tower"

Examples: Sports +Steroids

Technology -computer

Examples: "marine mammals" -whales

technology +computers -iMac

When your search produces too many results (that IS a problem)

- Try to be more specific by adding more keywords
- Try to use as many relevant/unique keywords as possible; it will help to narrowly identify what you're looking for.
- Remember that "Less is More" when searching; fewer sights give you more time to work on your assignment, rather than going over search results

What to do when your search doesn't produce enough results

- Make sure your spelling is correct
- Widen your search; use fewer keywords, or add synonyms
- Try variations on words (remember alternative spellings)
- Use a metasearch engine

•Dogpile	www.dogpile.com
•Geeknet	www.geeknet.com
•Infozoid	www.infozoid.com
•Mamma	www.mamma.com
•MetaCrawler	www.metacrawler.com
•OneSearch	www.onesearch.com
•Webcrawler	www.webcrawler.com

Setting Search Parameters



Remember **"less is more"** or **fewer is better** when doing Internet research. You can't spend all your time researching millions of sites (and you can literally have that many "hits" when you search). You want fewer sites that give you exactly what you are looking for!

How to use "key words" to get just what you need:

Using **AND** links two or more words that **NARROW** the search.

- You are telling the search engine to give you the results for only those pages that have all the words you have connected together (although they don't have to be connected in a phrase on any page).
- The more words you link together, the more you will limit the phrase.
- You can use a plus (+) sign instead of the word "and". The sign goes directly in front of each keyword after the first one.

Examples: Vikings and Invasions Vikings +invasion +England

Using **OR** couples two words that **EXPAND** the search.

- You are telling the search engine to give you the results for all the pages that have one word **OR** the other.
- The more words you connect with the term "or," the more you will inflate the search.
- You can leave a space between all the words you are connecting in this type of search.

Examples: Broadway or Musicals or Operettas cougar puma

Using **NOT** narrows the search by **EXCLUDING** some portion of a large category.

- You are telling the search engine to give you the results that deal with one topic, but you want to eliminate a subcategory
- This can be helpful if you are working with a topic that has a common link or association.
- You can use a minus (-) sign instead of the word "not". The sign goes directly in front of the second keyword.

Examples: Pets not dogs Dogs -Chihuahua

Using **"quotation marks"** keep words together as a **phrase**.

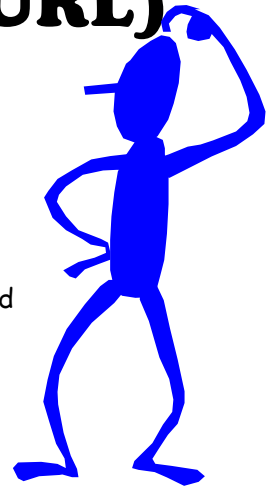
- You are telling the search engine to find the words in the quotes together as you have specified.
- This is especially good for names of groups or organizations, or topics that are compound nouns

Examples: "Secretary of State" "labor union" "missile defense"

Using a **combination** of all the tricks you know will give you the **best search results**.

- ◇ environmental or ecological +organizations
- ◇ "musical theater" +Chicago +Broadway +tickets +availability
- ◇ felines -"domestic cats"
- ◇ cougar "mountain lion" puma
- ◇ chocolate -candy (This search worked fairly well, although I did get some hits on "chocolate labs"—dogs!)

You have the right address (URL) and nothing is there!



Error 404

- The link to the site might be broken or it no longer exists
- The address, or URL (Uniform Resource Locator) has been changed or is not valid

Before You Panic or Give Up On A Site

- Double check the URL to make sure it's entered correctly
- Check the lower/upper case of each character. URLs are partially case-sensitive
- Check all non-alphanumeric symbols; also check that slashes and dots are in the right places

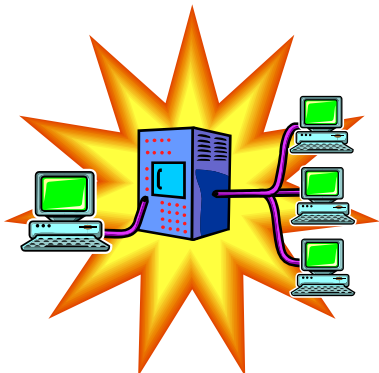
Back Up to the Server and Navigate to the Site

- Start "chopping off" parts of the URL from back to front
 - <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rulib/socsci/hist/amhist.html>
 - ✓ Take off the last portion (amhist.html) and see if you can get to the page that gives you a connecting button/link
 - ✓ If you still cannot get to the site, take out the next portion (hist), and the next (socsci) until you can get a page and navigate your way back to what you're looking for

Sites Move, Disappear, or may be Closed



- Authors may leave a message to indicate a new location or they may provide a link
- Pages might be taken off the web for any reason
- "Permission Denied" means that the site is not open to public access; these may be for classes or organizations



When you cannot access the site's server

The problem may be at the site, not with your search

- "No answer," "Timed Out," or "Too Busy," are common messages; these are problems at the site server
- Try again after a couple of minutes
- Wait until a time when fewer people are likely to access the site
- Avoid prime time hours—noon to 6:00 p.m.

Pre-Search Your Research



When your class is doing Internet research, it will help everyone to work together by finding the very best websites for the topic you are investigating.

Topic: _____

My Website Recommendations

Site 1 URL: _____

Why this is a great site: _____

Site 2 URL: _____

Why this is a great site: _____

Site 3 URL: _____

Why this is a great site: _____
