

Improving Your Internet Searching Skills

To narrow your searches, you need to tell the search engine (Bing, Google, Yahoo, etc.) exactly what you do and don't want it to include. You're more likely to find what you're looking for if you **USE**

- Very specific terms (at least two) that highlight the most important, unique words
- “ ” (quotation marks) to search for an exact phrase
- - (the minus sign) to exclude certain words from a search
- + (plus sign) to include certain words like “and” (Ex: right +and wrong to include *and*)
- * (asterisk) to request related words or endings (Ex: talk* for *talks, talked, talking . . .*)
- Well-respected sites, databases, and online libraries that link to information you're looking for and/or allow you to search within the site

Most search engines don't pay attention to certain details, so unless you're searching for a very specific phrase, so most of the time you can usually **IGNORE**

- Common words (*a, the, what, and, etc.*)
- Punctuation (commas, periods, etc.)
- Capitalization

Sometimes you can **SPEED** up searching by

- Taking suggestions from the autocomplete
- Trying new or additional search terms, rather than typing the same phrases over and over Experimenting with another search engine
- Customizing the advanced preference settings
- Experimenting with another search engine

Then you can **CHECK and EVALUATE** your results by

- Hovering your cursor over the arrows or site name (it depends on the search engine): many times this will allow you to see a mini version of the page so you judge its safety and relevance before heading to the site itself
- Avoiding sites that the search engine warns might be harmful
- Opening pages in a new tab or window (try CTRL T, COMMAND T, or right click and select from the menu that appears)
- Prioritizing sites from recognized authorities and experts
- Paying attention to the site's publication date
- Watching for professionalism in the editing, language, and design elements on the pages

KEEP IN MIND that

- Many of the top results are actually sponsored—that means they're not necessarily the best results, they're just sites that have paid to have their information appear at the top.
- CTRL F will open a space on the page that allows you to search for key words on a site. That way you can quickly find whether the search terms you need are on the page—without browsing through a bunch of text.
- You can save time in the future by bookmarking (and organizing your bookmarks) your favorites.

For more ideas on searching, see further information on the website consulted in creating this document:

<http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/10things/10-tips-for-smarter-more-efficient-internet-searching/2439>

<http://www.llrx.com/features/efficientsearch.htm>