Crafting Search Statements

Always check the “Help” section of a web search engine or database for exact directions.

1. Adjacency or Phrase Searching

A phrase is a group of words that must appear next to each other in a specific order. Many search engines use “ “ (double quotation marks) to represent a phrase.

Examples

• “Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies”
• endangered ADJ species
• stem cell research

2. Boolean Searching

Boolean operators act like connectors in the search statement. They link concepts together in a meaningful way so that you retrieve useful results.

**AND**

- Use to narrow search results
- Use to connect different concepts of your search
- Similar to the search engine option, “Search All Words”

**OR**

- Use to expand search results
- Use OR to combine synonyms and other terms related to a concept.
- Similar to the common search engine option, “Search Any Words”

**NOT**

- Use to remove or exclude terms from your search results.
- Use with caution as it can remove records you want if it also contains the term you do not want.
3. Field Searching

Most Web pages contain more than text. They consist of different parts (fields), many of which can be searched.

Examples

- Image: “Marvin the Martian”
- Domain:edu
- Title:”web search tips”
- Link:www.library.kent.edu
- url:athletics

4. Nesting Search Terms

Use parentheses to

- Group search concepts
- Give order to searching concepts

Examples

- (market ADJ (size OR share)) AND Honda
- (occupation OR job OR profession) AND salary
- “global warming” AND “United States”