Internet Search Tips

Make finding and evaluating information on the web faster and easier
When searching, avoid using full sentences and focus on a few core terms instead:

**Question:** What is the impact of the media on the body image of teen girls?

**Search:** media body image teen girls
Keywords

Tips:

0 Keywords are most often nouns (people, places & things)
0 Avoid including linking terms such as effect, impact, or relationship
0 Make sure all of the major facets or parts of your topic are represented

Try it out! Magnetic Keyword Game
Improving Google Searches

You may have noticed that Google automatically does a few things to improve your search:

- Combines search terms with “and” as a default (all of the words entered must appear in each result)
- Includes single and plural versions of search terms
- Includes simple synonyms, such as adding “allergic rhinitis” to a search for hay fever
- Ranks results
Google Tips: Quotes

Use **quotes** around specific phrases or names

- Ensures that the words appear exactly as you have entered them to weed out irrelevant results
- Do NOT use with full sentences or unique wordings
- Will not change your results if you enclose a single word in quotes

Ex. Fashion models “eating disorders”
- NOT “prevalence of eating disorders among fashion models”
Google Tips: OR

Use OR to include a list of alternate search terms

0 Only one of these words will need to be present for the webpage to be listed – will *increase* number of results

0 Must be capitalized or Google will treat it as another keyword instead

Ex. Recipe cranberry OR blueberry scones
Google Tips: Minus

Put a **minus** sign before a word to keep it from appearing anywhere in your search results

- Best used when differentiating between two very different uses of a single word or phrase since it’s easy to eliminate potentially helpful results otherwise

- i.e. [cats –dogs] isn’t a great search since many websites with great info on cats will probably use the word dog somewhere

Ex. “jersey shore” –MTV
Example:

You have a great resume, but one of the jobs you’re applying for asks for a curriculum vitae instead.

Google tries to be helpful, so it automatically includes the word “resume” in your search. Sometimes that’s great, but right now you want to focus on just CVs and how they are different.
Add **site:** to search within only a certain website or domain (.com, .edu, .org, etc.)

- Useful when specifically looking for academic resources (try limiting to org, gov, or edu) or when a website has no (or a poor) internal search box

**Ex1. copyright permissions site:gov**
- Will search for info on copyright from *only* government sites

**Ex2. Antietam site:www.civilwar.org**
- Will find all the uses of “Antietam” on the CivilWar.org website
Search just government sites to find primary source statistics and in depth, credible information.
Google Tips

0 Narrow by **date** from the results page by expanding the search tools on the left side bar

0 On any website use **ctrl+F** to locate a specific word on the page
   0 Also works in Word/Excel, on pdf documents, etc.

[See All Google Tips & Tricks]
Google Scholar

0 Search “articles, theses, books, abstracts and court opinions, from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities and other web sites”

- scholar.google.com

0 Academically-oriented subset of the Internet

0 Some article links will ask you to pay to read the content – search for the article through Touro or, if unavailable, request it for free via interlibrary loan instead
Find Google Scholar listed with our other article databases
Google Scholar

Make sure Google Scholar is linked with Touro Library to see direct links to the articles that Touro students have electronic access to

0 Open Settings and choose Library links

0 Search “Touro” to add the Touro Consortium

0 If accessing from off campus, you will need to sign-in with your database username and password when opening the links

Touro & Google Scholar
The Internet is an excellent resource. It provides convenient access to an enormous amount of information. But all sources of information on the Internet are NOT equal.

Some content is produced by the government or scholars. Some by teens in their bedrooms. Some is factual, some is biased. Some is just plain wrong.

As researchers and consumers of information, your task is to filter out the credible and useful from the irrelevant or misleading.
The CRAAP Test

When deciding if something on the Internet is a credible source, consider its:

- Currency
- Relevance
- Authority
- Accuracy
- Purpose

CRAAP Test Handout
Is it good, or is it...?

Ask yourself:

0 When was this written? Has this page been updated recently? How current should the information I need be (think medical research vs. critical analysis of a Shakespeare play)? Do the hyperlinks work? [Currency]

0 Does this answer my question or meet my information need? Is there a better place I could find this information? What other sources will I need to accomplish my task? [Relevance]

0 Is the author identified? What are his/her qualifications or degrees? Is this information backed by a reputable institution? Is there contact information? [Authority]

0 Are there references listed? Can this information be verified elsewhere? Is the tone of the language appropriate? [Accuracy]

0 Why was this website created? To educate, to entertain, to persuade, to sell something? Is there excessive advertising? What does the domain reveal (edu/com/net/org/gov, etc)? [Purpose]
A Note on Wikipedia

- If you’re doing any searching on the web, Wikipedia will likely be one of the first results.

- Although largely accurate, it is still susceptible to vandalism, misinformation and incompleteness.

- Wikipedia can be a great resource to look up something you know nothing about or to get context and background information for a topic.

- It is NOT a scholarly resource for academic research, but it can be used to locate better sources for your papers.
Using Wikipedia for Research: Background

0 First, make sure that you’re starting with a good quality article: [How to evaluate a Wikipedia article](#)

0 Use it to gain general background knowledge about the topic

0 Note important terms, people, places and developments for later use as **keywords** when searching the Internet or databases
Using Wikipedia for Research: Sources

- If there are any ideas in the article that you’d like to use, follow the footnotes back to the original source.

- Evaluate individually for credibility and appropriateness.

- If useful, cite the original source NOT Wikipedia (or any encyclopedia, for that matter).

- Peruse References, Further Reading and External Links for additional sources that might be useful.
For More Information

- To find additional resources about these or any other topics related to research and library use, don’t forget to visit the Student Services page on the Library website.
- Go to http://www.tourolib.org/services/students
- Or, find it on the library homepage

And you can always ask a librarian!