The Computer Compass: Advanced Internet Search Tools
Sponsored by Middle Georgia Regional Library

Popular Search Engines
www.google.com   www.ask.com
www.yahoo.com   www.bing.com

Before You Start Searching

1) Identify the main idea of your topic.
"Bullying" is too general & will pull up too many results.
"Bullying in elementary schools in America" is more specific & has main concepts.

2) Identify which keywords you will use.
Bullying, elementary school, America

3) Look for synonyms (words that have similar meanings) to your keywords.
Bullying → harassment
elementary school → primary school, grammar school
America → United States, U.S.

4) Be specific.
Maybe you want to search only *public schools.*
Maybe there is a certain age group you are targeting, such as *preschool through first grade.*

Using Operators In Your Search

Phrases should be distinguished with quotation marks: **" "**
<u>EXAMPLE</u>*: **"United States"** or **"Restless Leg Syndrome"***

Boolean Operators:

AND narrows the search (*Coca Cola **AND** Pepsi* retrieves results about *both* topics.)
[<u>NOTE:</u> "AND" does not work in Google.]

OR   broadens a search ("*Coca Cola" **OR** "Pepsi"* retrieves results for *either* topic)

NOT limits the search and eliminates items. Use a minus sign to designate this operator. (*Cola -Pepsi* retrieves information about various colas but *not* Pepsi)

Symbols as Operators
(<u>NOTE:</u> These will not work in Google)
* - fills in the blanks (*educat***** retrieves educate, education, educator, educated*, etc.)
~ - searches for similar words (*~boat retrieves boating, ferry, & marine*)

General Advice

● Capitalization is not important when searching, neither is word order.
● Spelling can be corrected by the search engine.
If Google thinks your search query was spelled incorrectly, it will automatically search for the corrected spelling.
● Google will also search for the "incorrect" spelling if you choose for it to do so.

Google Tools

<u>Dictionary</u>: type "define" prior to the search word or phrase (EX: *define ludicrous*)

<u>Calculator</u>: type calculation in search box to get an instant answer.
to add, use   **+**   (*5+3*)
to subtract, use   **-**   (*6-4*)
to multiply, use   *****   (*6*4*)
to divide, use   **/**   (*24**/**6*)

<u>Local Weather</u>: In the search box, type: weather zip code
(EX: *weather 31088*)

<u>Local Movie Times</u>: In the search box, type: showtimes zip code/city name
(EX: *showtimes 31210*)

Evaluating Search Results

Check the URL
- Is it a personal webpage?
- Is the domain name appropriate for its content?
   Restricted domains: .edu, .gov, .mil
   Unrestricted domains: .com, .org, .net

Make sure the information is published by a legit source
- News from its source
- Advice from valid agency
   EX: Health information should come from a medi-
   cal agency, such as the National Institutes
   of Health [*www.nih.gov*]

Can you tell who wrote it?
Check the bottom of the webpage for any authoring
information.
- Is anyone credited for providing the information?
  (Is there an author?)
- Is this information coming from an organization,
  institution, or agency you recognize?

What are the credentials for the subject matter?
- Look for links to: "About Us," "Philosophy,"
  "Background," and/or "Biography"

Is the information current enough?
- Look for "last updated" date, sometimes found
  at the bottom of the webpage

What is the webpage's purpose?
- To inform
- To persuade or sell (watch out for bias!)
- Serves as parody or satire
   Is this content appropriate for your purpose?
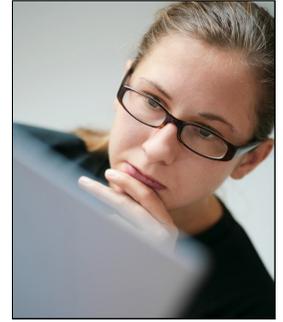
Evaluating Websites

Snopes - *www.snopes.com* – the definitive Internet
   reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths,
   rumors, and misinformation.
FactCheck - *www.factcheck.org* – monitors the factual
   accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political
   players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches,
   interviews & news releases.
ScamBusters - *www.scambusters.org* - publicizes Internet
   scams, spam and urban legends
Ripoff Report - *www.ripoffreport.com* – consumers
   inform consumers about bad businesses
Better Business Bureau – *www.bbb.org/us*
Federal Trade Commission – *www.ftc.gov/index.shtml*
Internet Crime Complaint Center – *www.ic3.gov*
Quackwatch – *www.quackwatch.org* – informs
   consumers of health fraud

Accessing More Google Databases

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databases

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Google Search   I'm Feeling Lucky