

Researching on the Internet



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DEBUNKING 3 MYTHS ABOUT THE INTERNET

EVERYTHING IS ON THE INTERNET!

EVERYTHING ON THE INTERNET IS **ACCURATE!**

EVERYTHING ON THE INTERNET IS **FREE!**



ALL THREE STATEMENTS ARE FALSE.

USE THE RIGHT TOOLS

Search Engines

Web search engines use human input and algorithms to return search results. A few of the most popular search engines are:

Google	www.google.com
Bing	www.bing.com
Yahoo! Search	http://search.yahoo.com
Ask	www.ask.com

Meta-search Engines

Meta-search engines crawl through multiple web search engines at once. A few examples are provided below.

The following two meta-search engines *merge* results from multiple search engines. These types of meta-search engines return more results, which can be overwhelming.

- ✓ Best used when a broad overview of the subject is desired.

Clusty <http://clusty.com>

- Returns compiled results from Ask, Bing, Gigablast, Yahoo!, Reuters, CNN, and others
- Returns over 200-500 results on first page
- Groups results into clusters (topics) so results can be further refined
- Also groups results into sources (search engines) and sites (.com, .edu, .org, etc.)

Dogpile <http://www.dogpile.com>

- Returns compiled results from Google, Yahoo!, Bing, Ask
- Tells you from which search engine the results were found

The following two meta-search engines allow you to view results across multiple search engines and search providers from one keyword search. Unlike Clusty and Dogpile, the search results are not merged together.

- ✓ Best used when you you want to compare results across various search engines.

TurboScout <http://www.turboscout.com>

- Also searches other meta-search engines, so nearly 90 search engines are included
- Search across 7 categories: Web, Images, Reference, News, Products, Blogs, Audio/Video
- Search engines/providers change based upon the category (eg. in the Products category, you can compare results from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Buy.com, Deal.com, and 9 others)

Zuula <http://www.zuula.com>

- Search across 6 categories: Web, Images, Video, News, Blog, Jobs
- Search engines/providers change based upon the category (eg. in the Jobs category, you can search across Monster, CareerBuilder, and Hotjobs)
- Includes an Advanced Search screen for additional filters

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Web Directories

Online subject directories are indexes to websites that are evaluated by third parties and are organized into categories or subject areas. Subject directories generally provide a higher level of comfort that the sites returned in a search are (but not always) accurate, reliable, and current. On the downside, not every subject you are looking for may be categorized in a web directory.

✓ Best used when you want to save time

Librarians' Internet Index

<http://www.lii.org>

- sites are vetted by permanent staff and contributing librarians with subject expertise
- sites are categorized into 14 primary subject headings and additional sub-headings
- a summary is provided for each website is included in the index

Infomine: Scholarly Internet Resource Collections

<http://infomine.ucr.edu>

- university level scholarly research sites
- sites are vetted by librarians from the University of California, Wake Forest, Cal State, and others

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More about Google

Input your keyword(s) in the Google search box and click on:

- **Google Search** to search across all web pages
- **Images** to find pictures, cartoons, or photographic representations of the keyword(s)
- **Maps** to search for the keyword(s) on a map
- **News** to find references in news stories
- **Shopping** to find products, compare prices across sellers, and purchase through Google checkout

[Web](#) [Images](#) [Maps](#) [News](#) [Shopping](#) [Gmail](#) [more ▼](#)

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The following additional Google applications are also terrific resources for the researcher:

Video - Searches only for video clips (for example, YouTube)

Books - Book Search relies on Google's mass digitization project with major libraries around the world to provide full text or snippets (depending upon copyright restrictions) of content in books.

Scholar – Finds content in articles in scholarly journals and conference papers. Note that not all content shown in search results will be available for free.

even more ➤

Alerts – Receive email alerts on the latest relevant Google results based on the keywords(s) you request

Patent Search – View/download full text of U.S. issued patents and many patent applications

Special Topics - **Google U.S. Government** search provides links to current governmental news stories and limits searches to U.S. government websites

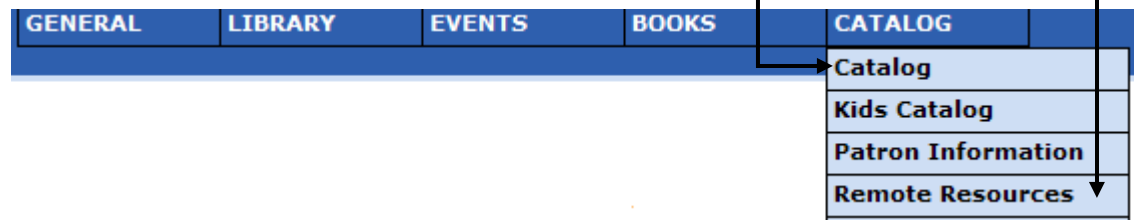
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Subscription Databases (Library Resources on the Web)

Online subscription databases are electronic resources that provide a wide variety of information collected in many different subject areas. Database providers collect and index information and make it available to libraries and other organizations for purchase. Libraries generally provide access to such information (such as indexes to and/or full text of articles in newspapers, journals, and magazines; bibliographic sources; texts of poems, screenplays, or other literary works, etc) to their patrons for free.

The New York Society Library <http://www.nysoclib.org/remote.html>

Access the Library's subscription databases from the **Catalog** page or from the **Remote Resources** page on the website:



Subscription databases include:

American Book Prices Current (in-library use only)

American National Biography

Historical Statistics of the United States

JStor: Journal Storage

The New York Review of Books

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Oxford English Dictionary

Oxford Reference Online

Patron Books in Print

Project Muse

Proquest NY Times Archives (in library use only)

Times Literary Supplement

Wilson Web Readers Guide Full Text

The following public library systems in New York allow its patrons access to a wide variety of subscription databases for **free with a library card**. Most of the databases can be accessed from your computer from anywhere using your library card number.

New York Public Library <http://www.nypl.org/databases>

The databases link allows you to search multiple subscription databases at one time. You may search across all of the databases at once, across a specific subject area or in one specific database.

You can also browse the many databases available by:

Subject, such as *health & medicine* or *performing arts*

Type of Resource, for example *dictionaries and encyclopedias* or *newspapers and magazines*

Location, databases you can access from home or only at specific NYPL locations

Title, if you know the specific database you need

Subscription Databases continued

Queens Library

Input a term into the online public access catalog (OPAC) and it will return results found in its book, ebook, DVD, and music collections, plus its collection of electronic (subscription) databases of websites and journal and magazine articles.

Alternatively, click on the **Research Databases** link from the home page

<http://www.queenslibrary.org>



Brooklyn Public Library

Input a keyword and select **Articles and Databases** to search across all subscription databases.

<http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org>



Or click the **Articles & Databases** link to browse through the databases by subject area or by title

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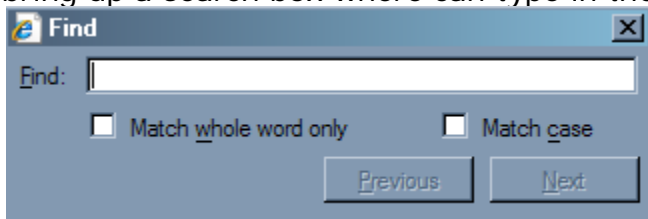
DEVELOP A SEARCHING STRATEGY

Think about the **terms** and **keywords** you will use in your search:

1. Vocalize your question
2. Pull out the 2 or 3 keywords that frame your question
3. Identify any other keywords that could be used:
more specific terms, more current terms, more popular terms
4. Think about how these keywords could be combined to search:
AND, NOT, OR are called Boolean operators and are very useful in limiting results

Searching Tips

- To limit to a specific site domain type, type the following after the keywords in the search box:
site:gov to limit your search to United States government sites
site:edu for United States educational sites
site:org for non-governmental, non-profit making organizations
site:com for commercial and all other U.S. based sites
- To search within a specific site, type **site:wikipedia.org**, for example
- Use Boolean operators to describe relationships between your keywords
AND will return web pages that use both keywords
OR will return web pages that use one or other of the keywords
NOT will return web pages that use the first keyword or phrase but not the second (note that in Google, you must use a – sign before the term to reflect the boolean operator NOT)
- Use bound phrases to search for terms or names that remain together, for example: “George Sand”. This is not always necessary in search engines, which are set up to assume that words are kept together but imperative for searching databases
- Click on **Options** or **Advanced Search** to get more options for limiting your search, like selecting certain languages, countries
- Finally, look for the **Help**, **About**, or **Tips** icons to find out more about searching using the search engine or site you have chosen
- To search for specific terms within a webpage, hit **Ctrl** and **F** keys simultaneously. This will bring up a search box where can type in the word or words you are looking for.



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Evaluate Your Search Results

Information on the web can vary tremendously in terms of accuracy and reliability. Sponsored sites (organizations trying to sell you something) will be displayed next to educational and scholarly sites, often making it hard to distinguish between biased and unbiased information.

Who is responsible for the site?

Is the author or organization a name you know? Check for the author and organization publishing the website in the ***About Us*** section or in ***Contact Information***.

Does the site include links to other reputable websites? Do other sites link to it?

Look for a bibliography of sources, citations, or links to other established sites.

How current is the information?

If you're looking for your congressman's contact information, you don't want information that was updated before the last election. Check for a ***Last Updated date*** or check for other giveaway statements that mention dates. A significant number of dead links is a good sign that the site has not been updated in a while.

Whenever possible, review several sources to confirm information.

However, beware that this is not always foolproof. Websites often pick up links and information from other websites without checking its accuracy and the resulting proliferation of bad information can often be mistaken for fact.